

CULTURAL LITERACY ASSIMILATION: THE LITERACY EXPERIENCES OF CHILDREN OF IMMIGRANTS

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CULTURAL LITERACY ASSIMILATION

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION:

Cultural Literacy Assimilation: The Literacy Experiences of Children of Immigrants

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Although students' literacy practices are influenced by a variety of sources, including texts, teachers, peers, the media, and their home culture (Dyson, 1993), the process of becoming literate is truly grounded in their cultural beliefs (Ferdman, 1990). Literacy skills are embedded in cultural practice, and cultural practice is learned implicitly through participating within the culture (Purcell-Gates, 1995). This research explored the literate worlds of non-mainstream families to determine how culture and literacy could be merged effectively. The purpose of this comparative case study was to determine how literacy practices are developed through cultural and family ideologies, or the ideas reflecting the social needs and aspirations of a culture.

The research attempted to find what types of culturally specific literacy practices existed among students of immigrant families by concentrating on literacy practices, purposes for literacy, and cultural values. Other questions explored how these practices contributed to literacy development, how particular purposes for literacy guided the learner's sense of cultural action, and how literacy and identity varied across cultures.

The goal of this study was to recognize and acknowledge the complex nature of transnational communities and their cultural systems that contributed to the literacy practices within and among immigrant families. Another important goal was to understand how these experiences interfaced with school and community literacy practices. Using a comparative case study methodology (Creswell, 1998), this study explored the interaction between literacy and

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culture to portray the literacy events and practices of four 2nd grade students from a local elementary school.

Data were collected through observations, interviews, questionnaires, home visits, photographic evidence, and journals. Data consisted of one survey for the parents to indicate components of family history and ethnicity. I also asked students to use a journal to write about their language, literacy, or cultural events, and take photographs of their home. I then asked students to discuss and describe their journals and photographs together in a focus group interview. The data also consisted of two (or more) home visits to gain firsthand knowledge of the family dynamics, the home layout, and material artifacts, as well as two interviews with the family members to determine relevant background and cultural information. Interview protocols, observation records, and artifact collection forms were designed to investigate further the central research questions as well as issues raised by the literature review, and finally, to facilitate data analysis.

The research was viewed through a sociocultural lens. A sociocultural perspective maintains that behavior and cognitive processes are shaped in a large part by a social and cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). Sociocultural theory, best explained through the work of Vygotsky (1978/1986), asserts that in order to fully understand a child, one must first examine the social world in which his or her life developed.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my brother Karl. May you be presented with the same opportunities and support that I have received over the years.

Finally, to all of those communities, schools, families and students' lives I hope to touch in the future. It is because of you that I push myself to succeed in this profession.

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"Over the years, I've given myself a thousand reasons to keep running, but it always comes back to where it started. It comes down to self-satisfaction and a sense of achievement."
Steve Prefontaine

The task of producing high quality work is not without its costs. That said, there are several individuals whom I would like to recognize for their support and contribution to the completion of this study.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Problem Statement

American immigration (understood as immigration to the United States) has been a major source of population growth and cultural change throughout much of American history (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). In 2004, approximately 35 million people, or 12 percent of the U.S. population, were identified as foreign-born, with one out of five children—totaling over 15 million—currently living in an immigrant family (Haskins et al., 2004; Office of Immigration Statistics, 2009). Hailing from countries around the world, these immigrants settled throughout the United States, in time shaping the culture and perception of their new home to make the nation it is today (Qin-Hilliard et al., 2001).

As these immigrant populations continue to grow in and across the United States, George, Raphael, and Florio-Ruane (2003) predict that within the next two decades, over half of the US school population will be members of language, ethnic, and socioeconomic minority groups. The increase in racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity in American schools is reflected in many early childhood classrooms, and this diverse composition brings many challenges as well as many opportunities to educators (Rodriguez & Caplan, 1998). With greater numbers of children of immigrants entering U.S. classrooms, it is important to acknowledge and value the diverse cultures and language interactions while still teaching the school curriculum (Mays, 2008). In order to meet the needs of children from immigrant families, it becomes increasingly important to understand their complex and unique experiences, and to provide them with genuine educational opportunities.

As the next chapter will discuss, not all families and cultures come to school with the same expectations and knowledge of literacy learning (Dunsmore & Fisher, 2010). Diverse family literacy routines, both at-home and out of school, are rooted in cultural practices, family beliefs, and society events (Heath, 1983; Hicks, 2000; Genishi & Dyson, 2003). It is important for researchers and practitioners alike to become aware of the family traditions that characterize and influence students' academic knowledge, in general, and their language and literacy development, more specifically (Leseman & van Tuijl, 2005). Through this study, I intended to highlight the importance of acknowledging culturally specific literacy practices and their relevance not only to children of immigrants, but to all Americans concerned with the education of U.S. youth.

By looking across multiple layers of literacy practices developed within ethnic, linguistic, and cultural realms, this study focuses on the literacy learning environments of immigrant families at home and outside of school. In addition, by recognizing the important role that language plays during cultural and social exchanges, this study provides implications for researchers and teachers when creating authentic learning opportunities for children of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Rationale

Stemming from the broad knowledge of literacy development that sees the home environment as an important factor in learning and meaning making (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gregory et al., 2004; Heath, 1983; Moll et al., 1992), this study takes into account several family migrations from other parts of the world to the United States. Their stories call attention to perspectives of socially, linguistically, and culturally diverse patterns within their daily lives,

including how they experienced reading and writing across multiple languages and discourses, and how their image of the home and the community was represented.

The purpose of this comparative case study was to determine the types of literacy practices in which immigrant families take part. In particular, the research attempts to identify the types of culturally specific literacy practices that contribute to the literacy development of children of immigrant families. By concentrating on literacy spaces, purposes for literacy, and cultural values, this study explores how literacy practices vary across cultures, and how particular purposes for literacy reflect the social needs and aspirations of a family.

Research Questions

The overarching research question for this study is as follows:

- What kinds of literacy practices do children of immigrant families participate at home and outside of school to foster learning?

In addition, the following related questions are addressed:

- What are participants' perceptions of the role that language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices?
- What types of literacy practices are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?
- What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students?

Goals and Objectives

The goal of this study was to recognize the complexity and multiplicity of language and literacy practices among immigrant families, and to understand how these at-home experiences interface with those within the local community. It was also my goal to recognize immigrant

families as culturally rich and argue for the importance of acknowledging their multiliterate practices within the school setting. I believe that maintaining multilingual capacity and cultural competency both supports and preserves cultural values and fluency in the home language. Therefore, I find it important to provide encouragement and support to children of immigrant families as they establish social relations and engage in literacy activities within their new surroundings.

This research recounts the stories of four immigrant families, placing special focus on their experiences with language and literacy, as “stories of immigrants are often stories of understanding, but also of frequent misunderstanding” (Qin-Hilliard et al., 2001, p. xi). Histories of particular localities and families, and of student’s individualized histories within them, can be lost in an effort to create a generalized language of practice (Hicks, 2002). I documented the families’ and children’s histories as readers and writers, with a commitment to viewing their literacy development as a situated practice within the social world. Shaping these complex histories in part through narrative form allows me to see their lives in a closer, more richly detailed composition. This study also sought to contribute to a greater understanding of families’ migrations through their personal experiences. I described how children use language and literacy to negotiate identities and knowledge in the cultural worlds in which they come to be and know (Hicks, 2002). I specifically looked at how language and literacy practices mediate these social “beings and knowings” by focusing on everyday routines and activities, and on the ways in which their lives have been shaped through the process of migration.

Significance of the Study

Each wave of immigration brings its own unique story, and as the newest wave of

immigration continues to grow, it becomes clear that more attention needs to be turned toward the children of immigrant families (Qin-Hilliard et al., 2001). However, the study of immigration and education is relatively new, and many issues are as yet unexplored. Few studies focus on how children of immigrants manage the complex social and psychological experiences of maintaining multicultural competencies. This research takes a new, interdisciplinary perspective that considers the intersection of historical and anthropological factors (e.g., social attitudes and opportunities) that may lead to divergent pathways of identity formation among children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This study was aimed at detailing the language, culture, and values that immigrant families bring with them, along with the ones that they leave behind, as they forge an identity in the United States.

Children learning English or a language not used at home are discussed in a variety of ways: English Language Learners (ELLs), English as a second language (ESLs), limited English proficient (LEPs), and Emergent Bilinguals (EBs) (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). However referenced, these children are the most rapidly growing population in United States schools. In the 10 years between 1993 and 2003, EBs in elementary and secondary schools increased by over 50%, from 2.8 to more than 43 million children (Consentino di Cohen et al., 2005). Data from the 2000 census (United States Census Bureau [NSCB], 2000) revealed that 20% of all children in the United States have at least one parent who is an immigrant. Recent documentation also reveals that immigrants in all 50 states are eager to establish roots in their new country (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). For example, 80% of children in immigrant families are born in the United States. Of those, about 74% between birth and 17 years of age are fluent in English, while 46% of them speak another language at home (Hernandez et al., 2007). Acknowledging

linguistic diversity as a resource rather than a deficit is important: children learning English don't necessarily lack knowledge (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). In short, the number of families in the United States with complex demographic and linguistic histories is on the rise.

Previous studies of immigrant families primarily focused on the two largest groups—those from Latin America and Asia (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Little attention was placed on new immigrants from Eastern Europe; however, the number of legal immigrants arriving from Bosnia, Romania, and Russia, for example, increased from 18,260 in 1987 to 121,083 in 2001 (Migration Information Source, 2007). Similarly, little research considered the diverse ethnic identities and experiences of these new immigrants from countries in the Middle East [the Islamic region of Southwest Asia and North Africa, including the areas of Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Turkey, Jordan, etc. (Marvasti & McKinnely, 2004)], but it is estimated that the population of Arabs in America is 1.2 million (Marger, 2006). Such a major increase in the United States population from these two ethnic groups requires a closer look at the cultural and literate practices in which they participate. Until the recent past, scholarly attention has focused on adult immigrants to the neglect of immigrant offspring, creating a profound gap between the strategic importance of these children and the knowledge about their conditions (Zhou, 1997). Therefore, the focus of this research was placed on families in which the parents are first generation immigrants from Eastern European or Middle Eastern countries. In addition, most of the previous research on family literacy focused on the low-income, working-class, or minority families (Purcell-Gates, 2000), and was primarily concerned with school-related outcomes measured by standardized test scores. Few studies documented the social lives and diverse literacy practices of children from first generation immigrant families in middle- to

upper middle-class communities and this is precisely the story my research intended to capture. Indeed, this is a study of the more advantaged: the families who participated were well educated and came from literate backgrounds, placed their children in a good school district, and were generally members of a higher socio-economic class.

Furthermore, many of the previous studies attended to the linguistic abilities and resources of immigrant children between the ages of three and six (e.g., Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Middle childhood, ranging roughly between the ages of six and ten, is a crucial time in children's development (Eccles, 1999), yet it is believed that this period received less attention from the research community than infancy, the preschool years, and adolescence (Collins, 1984). Additionally, little information exists about the process of literacy development in middle childhood (Vygotsky, 1978; Eccles, 1999). By focusing on the period referred to as "middle childhood," this research is designed to capture a unique period in children's literacy and identity development (National Institute of Health [NIH], 1993; Eccles, 1999). The decision to study this age demographic arises from a variety of reasons, primarily because it is in middle childhood when the near-universal experience of schooling brings children of immigrants in constant contact with mainstream culture (Garica-Coll & Marks, 2009). Therefore, by focusing on children of immigrants between the ages of six and eight, this study intends to fill a gap in the scientific literature that was previously concentrated on young children or adults (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 1995; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

In the past, research on literacy considered the ways in which families influence children's opportunities for literacy through reading and writing practices (Baker et al., 1994), as well as the ways in which children's growing understanding of literacy is shaped through

their interactions with parents and adults (Wasik, 2004). Very little consideration was given to the cultural variations among immigrant families, and the literacy practices influenced by their immigrant status or their practices within a particular cultural group (Hill, 2006). As ethnographic studies of literacy practices accumulated during the 1980s (e.g., Heath, 1983; Delpit, 1995), a new way of understanding the development, acquisition, and use of literacy among non-mainstream families and communities became necessary. This research represents the urgent need for research and advocacy among ethnically diverse and language minority children to recognize individual approaches to literacy, and to identify distinct ways of learning literacy (Hicks, 2002). The present study advances cultural literacy research by taking a closer look at the social lives and diverse literacy practices of families who participate in multiliterate, social, and educational exchanges.

This study was formed out of previous scholarly work in the field of literacy that examined the literacy practices within a variety of contexts and communities (e.g. Dyson, 2003a; Heath, 1983). Several ethnographers (e.g., Hicks, 2002; Heath, 1983; Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 1989/1993) conducted research by spending a considerable amount of time within an urban, multiethnic, working class community to describe the social lives and diverse literacy learning practices of children and families. I drew on such ethnographic studies of literacy practices that illustrated the at-home and out-of-school practices of children, young people, and adults, specifically those that considered how visual and linguistic modes interact and work together in communicative landscapes. My research also supports the need to study how the everyday stream of family routines and parent-child interactions help to situate literacy practices in a social context (Orellana et al., 2003).

In addition, this research reflects the position statements of The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC, 1995/2009b), which emphasizes the importance of integrating the knowledge and diverse characteristics of children, families, and their communities in order to create meaningful learning environments for all children. This statement exemplifies how parents in certain sociolinguistic minorities may hold certain cultural and religious child rearing beliefs, attach importance to the early development of second language learning and literacy, value different education patterns, and have varying degrees of social and cultural integration (oftentimes determined by the number of years in residence in the new country).

The goal of this research was to learn from families and children with diverse language, literacy, and cultural practices, and to acknowledge the importance of intergenerational relationships between parents and children. A closer look into the lives of immigrant families and communities reveals a rich connection between the developmental, interactional, and ideological uses of language and literacy. Although considerable research on second language acquisition in young children exists, much less research on early literacy acquisition of bilingual children is available (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Clearly this is an important topic, not only in theoretical models that illustrate the comparative process of literacy acquisition, but in research, too, as more and more bilingual children are entering schools in the United States (Census, 2010). The next chapter provides evidence that "immigrant families cultivate rich contexts for literacy development and that they support family literacy with effort and imagination" (Morrow & Neuman, 1995, p. 550).

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

When exploring the language constructs and literacy development in children of immigrants, it is important to acknowledge the literature that accompanies this topic. Beginning with a broad overview of language, literacy, and culture, along with a general definition of terms, the literature review expands upon three main elements to form a basis for this research: Multiple Literacies, Family Ideologies, and Immigrant Communities. Following that, I present a theoretical framework that explains the sociocultural nature of learning.

Using a theory that all learning is socially constructed, literacy is understood as the ways in which reading and writing are practiced through meaningful social interactions. Literacy involves the institutional modes of talking, reading, and writing, along with the histories of learning that shape connections between home and school literacy (Hicks, 2002). The process of becoming literate involves participating in activities and cultural events. As Ferdman (1990) explains,

Becoming literate means developing mastery not only over processes, but also over the symbolic media of the culture – the ways in which cultural values, beliefs, and norms are represented. *Being* literate implies actively maintaining contact with collective symbols and the processes by which they are represented. (p. 188)

More importantly, becoming literate for the first time, learning the conventions of a new language, or achieving literacy within a specific context, calls attention to the importance

of “literacy events” and “literacy practices.” Literacy events and literacy practices are the keys to understanding literacy as a social phenomenon.

Literacy Practices. Barton and Hamilton (2000) simply state that “literacy practices are what people do with literacy” (p. 8). Adding more depth to this basic understanding, Scribner and Cole (1981) recognize *literacy practices* as the socially organized experiences in which individuals engage. Literacy practices and traditions are learned through participating within a cultural system, using texts such as books, newspapers, magazines, and religious material (Purcell-Gates, 1995). These practices may be shaped by cultural, economic, political, and ideological factors (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Purcell-Gates, 2007; Street, 2001). Since this understanding of literacy as a social practice perceives the everyday ways in which people use reading, writing, and texts in the world, literacy practices look different among different people, in different places, and in different historical times (Barton & Hamilton, 2000). Au (1993) explains that,

Literacy practices are very much a part of culture. For the benefit of students of diverse backgrounds, school literacy should be redefined to highlight the study of multicultural literature, instructional practices that involve an active process of meaning making, writing instruction that makes students' background experiences central, culturally responsive instruction, and the development of critical literacy. (pp. 33-34)

Literacy practices involve values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships. They have to do with how people in a particular culture construct literacy, how they talk about literacy and make sense of it (Rush, 2003). The possibilities and purposes for literacy practices are

affected by the activity settings, the materials, the participants, and the cultural meaning of the interactions (Scribner & Cole, 1981). For example, children rely on familiar social and literacy practices from their experiences among family and community to generate knowledge, but must learn to adapt their diverse experiences and cultural resources to fit the situation (Genishi & Dyson, 2009).

What they learn, however, varies according to the settings, local practices, and values. Local literacy practices cannot be understood without reference to the local context in which they exist; these activity settings come to shape children's first literacy experiences, and give opportunities for children to learn and develop through observation and apprenticeship (Neuman & Celano, 2001). It is in these settings that young children observe and participate in the styles of interaction and literacy activities that are so crucial to their development.

For this study specifically, literacy practices are explored as a social (Vygotsky, 1978) and multimodal (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000) convention from both a local and global perspective. Together, these points lead to the understanding of immigrant families' daily routines and activities associated with (but not limited to) printed material (e.g., books, pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines) and non-printed material (e.g., websites, computer games, movies, artifacts, and photographs), as they played out at home and outside of school (Marshall & Sensoy, 2011).

Literacy Events. Literacy practices are complex social phenomena which include the larger social and cultural meanings that participants ascribe to a given literacy event (Reder & Davila, 2005). Literacy practices are embedded within the existing social structures, and cannot be separated from the ideologies that participants bring to any literacy event. Literacy events

encompass the observable aspects of literacy practices, and may involve any interaction around a given text, such as reading, writing, or talking in association with the text (Heath, 1983).

Simply stated, a literacy event is any activity in which reading, writing and text come up in any way (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2003), and literacy events serve as the concrete evidence of literacy practices (Heath, 1983).

Several researchers attempt to extend this definition of literacy events. For example, Heath (1983) developed the notion of literacy events as a tool for examining the forms and functions of oral and written language. This definition views a literacy event as “any occasion in which a piece of writing is integral to the nature of the participants’ interactions and their interpretative processes” (Heath, 1983, p. 93). In addition, Barton (1994) defined literacy events as “all sorts of occasions in everyday life where the written word has a role” (p. 36), and later extended this definition of literacy events to include “observable episodes which arise from practices and are shaped by them” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). Dyson (1993) explains that any activity in which literacy has a role is a literacy event: going to the movies, watching TV shows, singing songs, and watching or playing posts are all anticipated events that define family life, and the possible sources of retold stories and jokes. Several other examples of literacy events include being read to, choosing a book, writing a name on a drawing, talking about environmental print, or a child reading to him or herself. Therefore literacy, being socially situated, is made up of literacy events that expand beyond the reaches of the classroom (Purcell-Gates, 1995). Similarly, Brandt and Clinton (2000) suggest that a key factor in literacy development is that it allows for multiple participants to influence a given literacy event and to shape literacy practices. I used a combination of the above definitions of literacy events to

provide structure to the observation, interviews, and artifactual data collection in this study. I also documented literacy events, or activities in which literacy has a role, to understand literacy practices and the values and beliefs related to literacy among the families.

Early literacy research also includes a consideration of the literacy tools and objects available for children; who sponsored (e.g., provided for) their presence, how they are shared, and the benefit incurred (Heath, 1983; Brandt & Clinton, 2002). Literacy events reflect ideologies of people, cultural groups, and institutions who enable, support, teach, model, and make the acquisition and practice of literacy possible (Brandt, 1998), thereby highlighting the ways that multiple forces are involved in local literacy events and practices (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). These literacy practices, events, and objects (e.g., texts, instruments, paper, toys, computers) provide clues for literacy support available in young children's homes, communities, and schools to help expose the ways in which literacy practices are part of institutional activities and ideologies (Heath, 1983).

Together, literacy events and literacy practices represent the relationship between what people actually do with literacy and the ways that these textual actions connect with and reflect social, cultural, political, and ideological realities (Jewitt, 2008). Participating in literacy events, and effectively interacting with different texts such as those listed above, requires knowledge about how texts fit with everyday social activities (Street, 1995). In every society, there are typical events that call for typical types of texts or genres, and children learn from their parents, teachers, popular figures, and community members as they observe and participate in these events (Genishi & Dyson, 2009).

To understand how literacy events and practices are used for a growing population of

children of immigrants, a look into their family life, including how they understand and utilize literacy in its many forms becomes necessary (Dunsmore & Fisher, 2010).

Multiple Literacies

The definitions of literacy events and practices, along with their associated ideologies, can be used to explain how literacy is used by children of immigrants. While most children engage in a variety of literacy events and practices both at home and at school, children of immigrants may engage in specific modes or multiple modes for meaning making and expression as a result of their cultural background or upbringing. Because of varying beliefs, cultures, and expectations, immigrant families and their children experience different linguistic aspects of language and different beliefs and traditions associated with language, symbols, objects, tools, and places (Gee, 1999). Observing the diverse forms of literacy available for use by different cultures and communities, along with the materials judged significant by certain societies, gives a unique insight into the cultural context of literacy learning.

By examining literacy across cultural, social, and historical contexts, one can begin to see how children of immigrants engage in complex ways of thinking and language use, and how they use a variety of resources to shape their daily literacy experiences (Ladson-Billings, 2010). For example, children can draw from ethnic, ideological, religious, script, technical, and identity statuses (Saxena, 1994). For the purposes of this study, multiple literacies are explained through the concepts of Multimodal Literacy, Bilingual Practices, and Artifactual Literacy.

Multimodal Literacies. An original definition of literacy suggests that it is simply “people's willingness to use literacy, the connections between reading and writing...and the importance of printed text” (Au, 1993, p. 33). Although reading and writing are still the

foundation of knowledge, literacy in this age means more than the ability to read and write; it requires a complex set of skills including access, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and use of information in a variety of modes (Cordes, 1999). To further this historically restricted view of reading and writing, Cope and Kalantzis (2000) modified the conventional views of literacy to include digital literacy, visual literacy, and critical literacy. By accumulation several new modes of literacy, "New Literacy Studies" (Gee, 1991; Street, 1996) characterizes a new tradition that sees literacy as a social practice and focuses on the developmental nature of literacy, rather than the acquisition of skills (Street, 1995). New Literacy Studies identifies a new pattern of behaviors surrounding literacy use in which people engage in several modes at once to make meaning of their lives at home and outside of school. Understanding and producing a variety of texts over time using multiple modes of literacy may explain how literacy in both working lives and private lives has become increasingly multimodal. The definition of multimodal literacy provides a structure to look at how literacy and learning are developing in society (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). Multimodal literacy can also be defined as the combination and interaction of multiple modes, such as image, text, writing, speech, and gesture or visual representation to convey a message (Jewitt & Kress, 2003). For this study, I used a definition of multimodal literacy that embraces literacy development across multiple social situations and the various means by which they are carried out (Crafton et al., 2007; The New London Group, 2000).

Several ethnographic studies (e.g., Smith, 2002; Gillen, 2002; Wohlwend, 2009) illustrate how children use multiple modalities such as drawing, acting, playing, talking, and even technology, to construct meaning (Razfar & Yang, 2010). These represent hybrid texts, and therefore, the term hybrid mediation denotes the intermixing of multiple signs, symbols, texts,

and artifacts from a variety of oral, visual, and literate genres for the purpose of making meaning in a variety of situations and contexts (Razfar & Yang, 2010). The ethnographic studies of children in immigrant and non-dominant homes continue to demonstrate the sophisticated and diverse selection of tools available to them. In addition, the various tools used allow children to maintain linguistic and cultural connections to their heritage more easily than in previous generations (Razfar & Yang, 2010).

An approach to literacy that involves multimodal textual practices (e.g., linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial modes) working together falls under the umbrella of multiliteracies (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). “Multiliteracies” implies that literacy is multiple, diverse, and multilingual. It also supports the idea that literacy is culturally grounded, reaching across at-home and out-of-school spaces (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Many researchers and theorists add to the description of multiliteracies to include the integration of listening, speaking, reading, writing, and critical thinking (New London Group, 2000; Kress, 2003). Multiliteracies also refers to the multiple uses of languages and dialects, multiple community histories, life experiences, multiple intelligences, and multiple ways of being that provide opportunities to learn and grow within both instructional and ecological settings (Hicks, 2002; Lankshear, 1997).

Most important to this research is the understanding that multiliteracies may encompass multiple modes of literacy that children encounter at home and outside of school (Machado, 2009). This framework of multiliteracies relies on the belief that “meaning is made in ways that are increasingly multimodal,” and as a result, “there cannot be one set of standards or skills that constitutes the ends of literacy” (Kress, 2003, p. 6). This semiotic aspect

refers to situated meaning and cultural models connected to various sign systems such as language, gestures, images, or other symbolic systems (e.g., Gumperz, 1992; Kress & van Leeuwen, 1996). Viewing this concern through a sociocultural lens, these multiple modes of meaning making help to a) situate individuals as social players within their cultural group, and b) develop their identity amid diverse populations (Tabyanian, 2005). The modes—visual, gesturing, symbolic, expressive, spatial, linguistic, and multimodal (which is a combination of the other modes)—that have a direct relationship to this research are briefly explained to set the stage for how immigrant families and their children use multiple modes of representation in their daily lives.

To start, the visual mode of representation in some cultural contexts (e.g., religious icons, art movements, or diagrams), may be much more powerful and closely related to language than literacy. The use of the visual mode connects certain cultures through a unique understanding of perception and communication (Kress, 2000). Although some cultures may differ in the way they developed the visual mode into a fully articulated system of communication, (e.g., Chinese pictographic writing or Australian aboriginal art) one can assume that the use of visual elements indicate a set of social relations judged to be significant in that society.

Some cultures may derive meaning from motion or gestures, such as mystical practices or words with powers of transcendence [e.g., certain religious based literacy practices, or devotional reading, which requires reading holy books while rocking or gesturing (Saxena, 1994)]. Some others developed bodily movement, either in gestured language or interpretive dance (Kress, 2000). These practices are critical to the reading of the text, so it becomes

important to regard these scripts within a multiliteracies framework, as well (Kress, 2000).

The symbolic mode of communication, which typically involves the use of drawings, photographs, and sketches on surfaces such as a wall, canvas, computer screen, paper, or stone, is used by many cultures to relate ideas, to convey a message, to entertain, or to inform (Barnard, 2005). The symbolic mode of communication uses socially shared signals that help to situate users within a specific cultural group. Although the main underpinnings of the symbolic mode of communication and the differences between verbal or linguistic communication have not been adequately spelled out, one can conclude that various symbols fit together and are related to each other in such a way as to offer a comprehensive perspective on life (Buck & Van Lear, 2002).

The spatial mode of literacy takes on two roles in this research. The first is to recognize the spaces that are significant in the homes and daily lives of immigrant families. This is measured by how the spaces reflect and shape literacy practices, such as the value of having a casual conversation, the value of hands-on, active learning, and the value of being able to integrate multiple activities (e.g., writing, searching, and computing) in that given space (Hyland, 2000). The second is to realize what takes up space in the homes of immigrant families, be it pictures, artifacts, or individuals, as these all help to tell a story and bring meaning to their lives. As a result, these spatial modes and literacy tools frame interactions in ways that are both social and cultural (Gaines, 2006).

The use of expressive language, which refers to the ability to express wants and needs through appropriate content (e.g., vocabulary, concepts, classification, comprehension), form (e.g., grammar, morphology, word order), and use (e.g., verbal and nonverbal functions,

discourse rules, prosodic features) may help people of diverse cultures communicate about events, objects, and beliefs as they engage in the workplace, neighborhoods, and communities (Gaines, 2006). Through a linguistic mode of communication, a certain message is transported from the speaker to the listener, and one can learn how decisions about vocabulary and topic matter, deliberate changes in sentence syntax, in voice and prosody, or in the arrangement of words vary between cultural groups (Blumenthal, 1970).

From these multiple modes, texts, and daily experiences, children appropriate appealing content knowledge (e.g., names of sports teams, singing starts, media events, narrative material, movie characters); communicative practices (e.g., reporting game results, improvising love songs); technological conventions (e.g., graphic displays, symbols, or initials); and ideologies (e.g., gender, wealth, power); all of which are used to construct multimodal texts for varied means (Genishi & Dyson, 2009; Dyson, 2003a). Multimodal texts take on a variety of forms (e.g., cards, books, movies, web sites, and video games) and reflect a range of tools, skills, and sensibilities. The relationship between these forms is often multimodal and potentially multilingual (e.g., videos with captions in a home language, or first language newspapers with photos of popular figures [Kenner, 2005]). In addition, diversity in children's audiovisual productions (e.g., sports shows, movies), are all forms of multimodal texts and can require a collaborative or individual effort within a social context (Genishi & Dyson; 2009).

When observing the literacy practices of children from immigrant families, I looked for the ways in which the children used multiple literacy forms and texts through multiple social contexts and multiple languages to accomplish social goals and to make meaning of the world around them. Cope and Kalantzis (2000) concur that multiple literacy practices enable children

to work towards using language and interaction to achieve various cultural purposes and enhance meaning making. Young children practice multimodal literacy naturally and spontaneously. They easily combine and move between drama, art, text, music, speech, sound, physical movement, and animation or gaming (Cordes, 1999; National Council for Teachers of English [NCTE], 2005). While these changes affect children of immigrants in a variety of ways, the aspect that most involves literacy education deals with the increasing cultural and linguistic diversity that requires social interaction using multiple languages and communication patterns across cultural, community, and national boundaries (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Therefore, a multiliteracies pedagogy supports a social view of both language and literacy.

Multimodal literacy also encompasses an important thread that deals with emerging cultural, institutional, and global concerns (New London Group, 2000). This principle of multiliteracies believes that the increasing diversity—on both the local and global level—has resulted in social changes and diverse communication styles. This definition is beneficial in explaining and exploring how text and speech practices are intertwined in daily use, and how local and global contexts inevitably shape the uses of literacy. Lo Bianco (2000) agrees that multiliteracies calls for a new foundation in social literacy which requires an understanding of increasingly diverse literacy practices.

Children of immigrants are often caught between multiple and intersecting social worlds—imagined, experiential, and ongoing worlds—and it is within these socially and culturally diverse contexts that they experience multiple literacy practices and discourses (Fitzgerald, 2003; Jiménez, 2003). It is within these worlds that children of immigrants construct particular kinds of social work and value particular kinds of ways with words (Heath,

1983; Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Different cultural norms affect students' perception of time (e.g., punctuality), group work, and importance of education, authority, or competition. Likewise, nonverbal messages expressed through facial expressions, eye contact, voice tone, touch, gestures, and personal space can have different meanings in different cultures. It is important to understand that they might be acting in accordance with their cultural norms (Moore, 2012).

Multilingual Capabilities. The features of these multiliteracy and multimodal experiences both confirm and repeat patterns from culture, society, and the community. However, a discussion of the experiences of children of immigrants would not be complete without mention of multilingualism and bilingual education. Multilingualism is the act of using, or promoting the use of, multiple languages either by an individual speaker or by a community of speakers (Tucker, 1999). A multilingual person can communicate in more than one language, be it actively (through speaking, writing, or signing) or passively (through listening, reading, or perceiving) (Webster's New World College Dictionary, 2010). The terms "bilingual" and "trilingual" are used to describe situations in which two or three languages are involved. Biliteracy refers to any and all instances in which communication occurs in two (or more) languages in or around writing whose linguistic structures vary from similar to dissimilar (Hornberger, 1989). Bilingualism is both the product of migration and of social interaction, and can be studied through research, teaching, and language planning in linguistically diverse settings. Multilingual, bilingual, and trilingual practices have dimensions and complexities that a theory of communication and meaning making must acknowledge (Hornberger, 2004).

Multilingual speakers acquire and maintain at least one language during childhood,

usually their first language. A child's first language (sometimes referred to as their mother tongue) is typically developed without formal education. It is also possible that a child becomes naturally bi- or trilingual by having a mother and father with separate languages being brought up in a third language environment (Santrock, 2008). Contrary to previous concerns, learning a second or third language does not cause language confusion, language delay or cognitive deficit (Werker & Byes-Heinlein, 2008). Cook (2003) argues that those who have the capacity to use more than one language have different minds from those with only one language, because knowing two languages changes the way people use their first language. In fact, according to studies at the Cornell Language Acquisition Lab (CLAL), children who learn a second language may obtain cognitive benefits that contribute to their future academic success (Lust et al., 2011). Learning two languages typically takes time and effort, but as children progress in their English skills, language learning can accelerate.

Language can also be described using the terms *events* and *practices*. A language *event* is defined as “any social event in which language is nontrivial to that event” (Bloome et al., 2008, p, 10). The term *language practice* refers to the opportunity for students to explore their language through spoken or written exchange with adult mentors of the society (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). This definition acknowledges the situated nature of language learning (Heath, 1983), and considers the social and cognitive processes involved in language development (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; John-Steiner & Mahn, 2006). It is the multiple uses of languages and dialects, multiple community histories and life experiences, multiple intelligences, and multiple ways of being that provide opportunities to learn and grow within instructional and ecological settings (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). Users of language experience and understand the world

mostly through language events and practices, and since language is a cultural means of expression, rather than a clearly defined entity, it varies by person, neighborhood, region, country and social situation (Cazden, 1970). It is important to note here that while “language” and “literacy” are often thought of as syncretic, as the combination of different practices, these terms are autonomous and should be viewed as such. Language is a unit, a small piece of the whole, whereas literacy is a method, a manner of techniques characteristic of a particular discipline (Jennifer Rowsell, personal communication, November 13, 2013).

Bilingualism is spreading widely throughout the world, but varies according to the conditions under which people become bilingual, the uses they have for their various languages, and the societal status of the language (August & Hakuta, 1997). On a daily basis, people engage in the complicated social, political, cultural, and psychological work of learning and using literacies in multiple ways for multiple purposes. Hornberger (1990) describes a model of biliteracy that identifies multiple and complex relationships between bilingualism and literacy, along with the importance of the settings and interactions through which biliteracy develops. Hornberger’s landmark framework, which discusses the continua of biliteracy, demonstrates the development of literacy from first to second language, and from oral to written skills through two (or more) languages (Hornberger, 1990, p. 213). The purpose of using this model is to draw attention to the continuity of experiences, skills, practices, and knowledge that stretch across one families’ history.

While immigrant families may continue to use their native language at home, and learn the dominant language of their new society only as required for work or public encounters, their children may become fully bilingual or bilingual with the new language primarily

overriding the old (August & Hakuta, 1997). These children are fortunate enough to draw upon cultural resources from two worlds, and as a result, may have bilingual and bicultural capabilities that enhance their literate practices outside of school (Blake, 2001). The extent to which multicultural children are able to feel a sense of belonging in any of their cultures is related to being able to use the language of that culture. These are the children of particular interest in this study.

To arrive at an understanding of how young bilingual children acquire language and develop literacy skills, it is important to examine their experiences with sociocultural learning as well as with formal reading instruction. The sociocultural aspect refers to the personal, social, and cultural knowledge, feelings, and identities relevant in interactions (e.g., Gee, 1992; Gumperz, 1982). Observing the learning that occurs in both social and instructional environments may shed light on how young children acquire more than one language, and on how bilingualism affects young children as they begin the reading process (Santrock, 2008). To account for the social learning part of this equation, Dutcher (2004) suggests that these children learn a second language in different ways depending upon their culture and their individual personality. Children of immigrants may have additional opportunities for using language related to cultural, linguistic, and socioeconomic factors because of their dual nationalities (Heath, 1983). Combined with their personal interests and dispositions, these factors shape how and when these children can begin formal instruction in language and literacy. To account for their formal learning, these bilingual children may be expected to begin the formal process of learning to read and write as soon as they enter the classroom. Resources available to children because of their bilingual proficiency, including their primary

language and the media, can influence their formal learning regardless of their literacy levels (Dyson, 2001). Together, social learning and formal reading instruction support young bilingual children in their language and literacy development.

In addition, appropriate bilingual education can assure that children prosper academically, and develop or maintain competencies in two languages (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Bilingual education programs have ranged from English language immersion to dual language, where proficiency in both languages (and therefore bilingualism and biculturalism) is desired. Tabors and Snow (2001) describe several programs that may exist in the early elementary grades for children with bilingual capabilities. These include a first-language program, transitional bilingual education, two-way bilingual instruction, or mainstream classroom with or without ESL resources, and their services begin with establishing literacy in the child's dominant language and work towards exiting children into mainstream English-only classrooms (Tabors & Snow, 2001; Dyson, 2001). However, problems arise when decisions are made concerning the language or languages in which this instruction will occur (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Important questions must be asked then, such as: *Are children capable of developing the full array of literacy skills in both languages simultaneously?...Will development of the home language be suspended as families and children start to acquire the language of the society?...What happens to the development of these literacy and pre-literacy skills when children are exposed to a second language in the early childhood years?* (Snow et al., 2001). Developing sensitivity to children's language use and acquisition helps to develop the viewpoint that bilingualism is an asset, not a deficit to be remedied (Gomez, 1991).

Children exhibit sociolinguistic flexibility as they use different cultural materials—

different themes, discourse structures, and styles, as they share in the social nature of language and literature within different cultural spaces (Youssef, 1993). Children develop multiple literacy practices through participation in socially organized activities, such as play, oral storytelling, and painting (Razfar & Yang, 2010). It becomes necessary, then, not only to examine the activity, but the activity setting, the participants, the materials used, the recurring patterns of communication, and the important goals, values and beliefs connecting them (Cooper et al., 1998). Using familiar tools and cultural art forms to construct their social lives together is another aspect of literacy, recognized as Artifactual Literacy (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010), which are considered and evaluated throughout this study.

Artifactual Literacy. Artifactual literacy builds on a multimodal framework as a way to integrate stories of cultures and objects with experiences. The primary definition of artifactual literacy used in this study tells how artifacts (pieces of everyday, material culture) unite with literacy (the story they tell or the story told about them) to facilitate expression and representation. The material aspect consists of actors, place (space), time, and objects present or referred to during interaction (e.g., Bloome & Bailey, 1992; Fairclough, 1992). A secondary definition of artifactual literacy represents a method of studying literacy that draws from a sociocultural, ethnographic perspective of multimodal literacy. This demonstrates how artifactual literacy acts as a link between multiliteracies, multimodality, material culture, and everyday lives (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

To address the first part of this definition, an artifactual literacy perspective acknowledges that stories are often told about objects within the home or community setting (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Memories and aspirations are laid out in certain artifacts, including

photographs, furniture, and clothing, which all contribute to families' cumulative life texts. In this case, their "stuff" (e.g., superficial decorations, ornaments, posters, calendars, and even clothing, housing, and the media) takes up physical space in their homes, as well as mental space in the way that they value and think about these things. Therefore, stuff contributes to the very formation of a person, and is integral to the way that people and material objects connect (Miller, 2010). These materials are the stuff (Miller, 2010) that stories are made of (Gadsden, 2000), and by sharing stories of these artifacts, a variety of languages and cultural experiences can be represented (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

A second artifactual literacy perspective may help explain the social construction of families and the impact of daily experiences on children's lives, as well as the differences in type and quality of everyday experiences (Neuman & Celano, 2001). By taking an artifactual literacy perspective based on the above definition, this research examines materials and experiences related to ideologies, discourses, and practices in the homes of immigrant families. In addition, the wide range of artifacts are identified and respected as a way for understanding people and relationships. Artifactual literacy may also offer a story of immigration by bringing to life the actual objects, either presented or remembered, that evoke experiences of the home country (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Artifacts are non-verbal but hold diverse memories and heritages, which can create opportunities for a richer type of storytelling (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). For example, artifacts associated with particular religious or social practices can be found in homes, and articulated in relation to migration. The artifactual nature of oral and written storytelling demonstrates how these stories are most often tied to objects (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

In addition, artifacts can link students' everyday lives and cultural histories and provide

the connecting piece as they travel across home and school sites. Artifactual literacy unites personal and social worlds by helping students and families overcome the psychological distance between their home country and the United States (McCarthy, 1997). In order to understand the role of artifacts in everyday life, one must consider the everyday cultural practice in which people learn how to interact with each other over time (Comber et al., 2001). Finding out about the artifacts in homes and communities is a way of understanding cultural literacy practices and creating a pathway for social inclusion. Even drawing out stories about these artifacts opens up students' home and community experiences that may otherwise go unnoticed within the school setting (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

Some artifacts, through their use, activity, and appreciation, have the ability to unite a family across generations. Along with things to treasure, certain inherited traditions, skills of cooking, social conscience, and intergenerational continuity are passed down from parents to their children at appropriate times in an effort to preserve (Miller, 2010). Although the cultural structure of a family is more than a matter of material resources (Gallimore & Goldenberg, 1993), there remains an appreciation in these materials, and these materials are used to communicate deliberate purposes or representation (Kress, 2000). Since traditions and artifacts represent a combination of disciplines from anthropology, archaeology, sociology, psychology, geography, and history, it must be with combined effort that the complicated interactions between generations and things are explored (Miller, 2010).

When exploring material culture, it is also important to note the valuable cultural and linguistic interactions between symbols, artifacts, and text as they are played out in the home. To gain access to these diverse kinds of cultural materials, it is necessary to observe families

and children as they engage in a variety of spaces and situations (Dyson, 2001). Children experience artifacts within the spaces they exist, and use objects and spaces as cultural tools to form appropriate literacy events (Gutierrez & Stone, 2002). Material spaces are created through a variety of social practices, and since spaces themselves are agents for change, changed spaces will change practice (Joint Information Systems Committee [JISC], 2006). These spaces provide opportunities for learning interactions; spaces produce certain kinds of interactions and are in turn shaped by them (Rowe, 2010). As children of immigrants experience spaces and situations in the school, home, or community, their familiarity with cultural practices or literacy events may evolve and change. Neither identity nor language use is a fixed notion; both are dynamic, depending upon time and place (Norton, 1995). Materials and tools available for literacy carry an ideological significance formed by other events in which they have historically been used (Brandt & Clinton, 2002). Therefore, it is important to approach family histories and ideologies through the study of spaces and places available for material cultural.

Methods for studying artifactual literacy and material culture are still exploratory and experimental, and although several research models have been proposed, formal doctrines have not yet been established (Miller, 2008/2010). However, researchers agree that studies need to build on examination of material culture and incorporate thoughtful analysis and interpretation of these objects in cultural context in order to paint a full picture (Miller, 2010). Therefore, when observing materials in the home, it is necessary to look at how these artifacts assist in answering the questions of why things were made, how they take the forms they did, their importance to the family or culture, and what social, functional, or artistic needs they

serve (Miller, 1998).

Children often encounter multiple literacies through artifacts (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Experiences with multiple linguistic and cultural differences has now become commonplace in our daily lives. As different life-worlds engage in education, literacy opportunities are often measured in terms of access to material resources, employment, political participation, and a sense of belonging to a broader or localized community (Kalantzis & Cope, 2004). Especially within communities that are linguistically and culturally diverse, incorporating a respect of the culture, language, and worldviews is an important step towards unity. Stories are told among families as a result of their experiences, and can be multilingual or incorporate crossings of languages. By placing literacy in a social, historical, and cultural context, parents and teachers can engage children in more complex ways of thinking (Ladson-Billings, 2010). Therefore, focusing on diverse families—diverse not only in ethnicity, race, and culture, but also in family form, class, age, and stage within the course of immigration (Gadsden, 2000)—is an urgent need. Accepting and acknowledging the important role of diverse families and cultures in language and literacy learning is the second of three main topics informing this research, and is discussed in more detail in the following section.

Family Ideologies

Recognizing families' multiple identities, multiple literacies, varying discourses, and the complex ways of "reading" their worlds is an integral aspect of understanding family ideologies (Ordonez-Jasis, 2010). The term *ideology* is defined as the "representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (Woolard, 1998, p. 3). It is important to note that the term *family* includes a range of

individuals who live together and function in a more or less traditionally familial way. For children of immigrants, *family* typically includes a two parent household with other relatives and nonrelatives also living in their homes (Hernandez, 2004). A *parent* is anyone fulfilling the responsibilities usually associated with the parent of a child or children over a sustained period of time (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). Together, family members and parents play an important role in developing a child's primary discourse, including how they view their at-home and school responsibilities for literacy development, how they learn the skills to develop and encourage their child's literacy, and how they define and characterize literacy practices. This study examines the beliefs and ideologies that immigrant families hold about literacy learning for their children.

However, tensions exist between positions on family literacy. One side supports a school centered approach in which school-based literacy tasks are simply conducted in the home setting. The belief rests on the idea that children should adopt school literacy practices at home in order to flourish. The other side promotes home-based programs that are responsive to the family's culture and support diverse literacy skills (Tett & St. Clair, 1997). These advocates express how cultures have different ways of reading texts, and how cultural practices at home inform the learning of texts.

In her extensive study, Auerbach (1989) suggested that a definition of family literacy in which families simply perform school-like literacy activities at home was far too narrow. She identified many programs whose goal was to strengthen ties between home and school only by teaching parents about how to incorporate mainstream school literacy tasks at home. This model suggests that success is determined by the parents' ability to extend school like activities

in the home. Auerbach (1983) proposed reevaluating and broadening that notion of family literacy to one that supports a sociocultural approach and incorporates family, culture, and community. With this view of family, the social context becomes a rich resource that can inform rather than inhibit learning.

Taylor (1981/1983) provides evidence that a wide range of home experiences and interaction patterns are found in the homes of successful readers. For successful readers, literacy is integrated in a socially significant way into many aspects of family life and everyday routines. Clearly, effective literacy instruction builds upon multiple modes, materials, and literacies, as well as cultural and linguistic backgrounds, ways of making meaning, and prior knowledge that all children bring to the classroom (Willis, 2000). Dutcher (2004) agrees that school success and the child's mastery of cognitive (academic) language is very different from the social language used at home. The growing proportion of non-mainstream students in both social and educational settings requires a theoretical framework that considers the fundamental role of multiple and intersecting social worlds (Valdes et al., 2003).

Heath (1983) and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1988) remind us that literacy practices are present in all families, but that these practices sometimes contrast with school based literacy. In my experience with these four young people, practices were not conflicting but rather at harmony with each other. The children and families built onto school literacy with involvement from home. Therefore, my position on family literacy is that it is necessary to support and value home-based literacy in ways which genuinely reflect the lived experience of children and their families (Tett & St. Claire, 1997).

Although the field of family literacy is relatively new, and lacks a widely agreed-upon

definition, there is a growing interest in exploring family literacy as a means of promoting literacy development in the home (Strickland, 1996). Broadly defined, *family literacy* is “the ways families, children, and extended family members use literacy at home and in the community” (Morrow et al., 2010, p. 83). The legislation authorizing several federally funded programs (e.g., Head Start, Even Start, ABLE, and Title I) have developed a more concise definition of *family literacy* that entails four components (Padak et al., 2008), three of which directly relate to this study:

- Early childhood education for preschool and school-age children to help them prepare for success in school and life experiences.
- Parent education in which parents and caregivers discuss parenting practices and the importance of literacy experiences in the home.
- Time for adults and children to practice literacy activities together.

Family literacy, whether authentic or generated through formal programs, allows families to incorporate the spoken and written word into meaningful activities. While improving their reading, writing and speaking skills, parents have an opportunity to practice language strategies with their children in areas such as storybook reading, discipline, play, and exploration. This becomes the legacy of language practices that passes from one generation to the next (Padak et al., 2008).

Understanding *family literacy* within these settings allows for the above definition to incorporate the study of literacy within the family, the contributions of family members in the literacy development of their children, and the programs designed to enhance the literacy skills of more than one family member (Wasik et al., 2000). It must be stressed that understanding how a family interacts within a social context is the key to uniting children’s literacy

development and experiences at home and outside of school. When exploring the literacy practices of immigrant families at home and out of school, it is necessary to focus on literacy, including the interactions of parents and children using language (e.g., talking, playing, exploring, soothing, explaining, encouraging, and nurturing), as well as intergenerational family literacy, which involves a child learning to navigate his or her world with the help and support of adults in his or her life. Their experiences with language, communicating needs to others, developing emotional ties to parents and siblings, and learning the ideals of the culture are the prime examples of intergenerational family literacy practices (Padak et al., 2008).

Clearly, family members play a major role in supporting literacy and learning for children as they go about their daily lives (Wasik, 2004). Of the activities mentioned above, one of the most important components of any family literacy routine is sharing books with children on a regular basis. Children learn to make meaning from these experiences, gain an increased motivation, enjoyment, and value of reading, and develop oral language and emergent literacy skills [e.g., book knowledge, comprehension, print knowledge, letter naming fluency, rhyming, and initial sound fluency (Kreider, 2011)]. However, books are no longer the only way that children engage in literacy. Digital literacy, such as emails and internet sites, television programs, CD-ROMs, videos and DVDs, and computer games are becoming increasingly more popular in both family communication and literacy development (Gee, 2001). Other literacy experiences include viewing signs, labels and logos (e.g., street signs, advertisements, food packaging and symbols on clothing), reading and sending letters or cards, phone messages, reading magazines, newspapers and catalogues, playing cards or board games, and drawing or writing using paper or computer software (Arthur, 2005).

Family literacy also incorporates the research and the implementation of programs involving parents, children, and extended family members, along with the ways in which they support and use literacy in their homes and in their communities (Strickland & Riley-Ayers, 2006). Many organizations, such as libraries, healthcare centers, community centers, schools, places of worship or religious organizations, YMCA (Young Men's Christian Association), boys and girls club and scouts, sports leagues, 4-H clubs, local recreation departments or cultural associations, and even restaurants provide opportunities for family reading, language development, and critical thinking (Heath, 2010). Similarly, many educational groups and community partners, such as non-governmental education programs and associations, local departments of education, educational and cultural publishers, reading clubs or booksellers, and religious groups, social workers, counselors, and community workers, provide opportunities for literacy events and activities. Together, these community organizations and educational groups offer resources for families and parents to participate in reading outside of the home, for children to become involved with their cultural system, and for all to have the possibility of contributing to literacy development across multiple contexts and multiple generations (Heath, 2010).

Family ideologies surrounding literacy practices have been studied under various terms, such as home, intergenerational, and emergent literacy (Gadsden, 1994; Purcell-Gates, 2000). However, family ideologies surrounding literacy and language are not about language alone; Woolard (1998) maintains that they tie language to identity and underpin "the very notion of person and the social group, as well as such fundamental social institutions as religious rites, child socialization, gender relations, the nation-state, schooling, and law" (p. 3). This extension

of the definition fits well within a sociocultural lens that sees how social perspectives affect literacy and cultural learning.

An important aspect of family literacy is the shared practices and events fashioned from complex social and cultural contexts (Luke, 2003). To examine the relationship between family, literacy, and related ideologies, the following section explores how literacy is supported among families with varied cultural, social, and linguistic histories. Sub-sections examine the role of Intergenerational Paths, Family Routines, and Childhood Identities to recognize the connection between goals and cultures of the family unit, the real and perceived roles of family members within and outside the home, and various issues of identity, ethnicity, and culture.

Intergenerational Paths. Issues in family and intergenerational literacy have been at the center of discussion in education and the social sciences since the 1960s, when researchers in reading, linguistics, educational and developmental psychology, and sociology attempted to identify factors in the home that contribute to the children's learning (Gadsden, 1994). Over the past decade, intergenerational literacy is also an increasingly significant domain in educational research and practice (Gadsden, 1998). Research on intergenerational literacy and learning is uniquely situated within socially and culturally diverse populations to examine the constructs that influence reading, writing, and problem solving within the family lineage (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Several researchers (e.g., Edwards, 1990/1995; Strickland, 1981; Teale, 1981; Teale & Sulzby, 1986) contribute theoretical and pedagogical frameworks for the emerging field of intergenerational family literacy. The collection of research identifies family cultures, literacies, and the influence of home and community as social contexts for intergenerational learners. Their findings suggest a need to recognize the different features of

learning, literacy, families, and human development, and seek to gain knowledge of learning and literacy from one generation to another (Johnson, 2010). Specifically, children of immigrants are good cases to think about intergenerational relations because the immigrant experience may evoke a change in family processes and relationships (Orellana, 2009). Their interactions with adults will illustrate the socially constructed nature of intergenerational relationships.

Gadsden (2000) describes how the basic premise of intergenerational literacy revolves around families, parents, and the transfer of behaviors beliefs practice, expectations, and potential to their children. Intergenerational literacy includes activities in the processes of learning and teaching, such as the engagement of children by their parents, family members, and teachers in the acts of reading and writing, and the repetition of values and practices that sustain such engagement (Gadsden, 2000). The historical context of research on intergenerational literacy is intermingled with family literacy in such a way that makes it is difficult to tease apart. In reading research, the definitions of family literacy and intergenerational literacy are used interchangeably. However, intergenerational literacy should serve as a separate and complementary piece of family literacy—a specific strand because of the focus on the exchange of knowledge and behaviors—because intergenerational literacy encompasses more than simply the beliefs, practices, or historiography of families (Gadsden, 1994/2000). Sonnenschein, Brody, and Munsterman (1996) suggest that when focusing on family influence on children’s literacies, it is important to “consider the child as a member of the family system operating within the constraints of various cultural rules” (p. 4). The study of intergenerational literacy focuses on children, parents, other family members and their

relationships from the role of parents in children's reading to the impact of childhood beliefs. Clearly, the intersection of these multiple generations influence support and challenge child literacy development, and allow the family culture to act as an important resource (Gadsden, 1998/2000).

Family cultures consist of the cumulative life texts of individual family members that contribute to the life course of the family. Life course histories of family members, along with their intergenerational practices of learning, are formed by the interface of accepted ethnic traditions, cultural rituals, religious practices and beliefs, and negotiated roles within families over time (Gadsden, 2000). Gadsden (2000) also explains how in family cultures, family members construct traditions, practices, beliefs, and behaviors that they believe are critical to achievement and that are embedded in their own family histories. Hymes (1996) describes the importance of stories about place that were told, retold, and shaped into a narrative: the storytelling become something greater than just a story; it represents "life, as a source of narrative" (p. 118). People from every culture have stories: whether tales of familial history told around the kitchen table, stories repeated in cultural festivals, or the retellings of fables. Regardless of the vehicle, families seem to enjoy and thrive on stories.

Analysis of intergenerational literacy practices should include the context which locates the learner, family members, and tasks of literacy within the home. For the purposes of this study, the contributions of the family members were recognized as influential aspects on children's reading and writing development (Casper, 2003). This study focuses on the knowledge and experience of children and families, the relationship of individual family members, and the factors that affect family life and families' interpretations of literacy that

were relatively unexplored in previous studies.

Family Routines. Immigrant families are structured in a variety of culturally relative ways. In some cases, the nuclear family (e.g., father, mother, and children) is ideal. In other situations, however, matrilineal patterns (e.g., mother as head of the family) or extended members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, and uncles) are integral to the system (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). Each of these situations may result in different routines and interactional patterns within the home. In addition, their child-rearing practices, gender roles and responsibilities, and socioeconomic background may influence the way that families adapt in the new land (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). Therefore, it is not always appropriate to assume that mainstream, middle-class family standards apply to immigrant family dynamics (Falicov, 1998).

The most important element of these parent-child interactions is that they are part of everyday family life. The structure of families' lives typically hinges on common routines and practices, often drawing on ways of doing and being that parents and grandparents have handed down over generations. Repeated over and over again, these routines send powerful messages to children about their role as learners and participants within the family. Part of their everyday life and family routine includes how individuals communicate with other family members and friends and how they participate in leisure activities (Arthur, 2005). Cooking and eating together, going to the grocery store, playing games together, and doing household chores also present opportunities for parents to help children establish routines. These everyday routines support children's language development and reading related skills (Beals, 2001; Baker et al., 1997; Snow et al., 1991; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; DeTemple, 2001).

Family routines often involve talking together. Indeed, one important component of language development is how parents talk to their young children. Children learn about language through the speech they hear at home (Heath, 1983; DeTemple, 2001). Parents can help children notice, name, recall, and relate language to things and events, and can motivate their children by supporting their efforts, repeating and expanding on what they said, and offering them praise (Hart & Risley, 1995). In addition, several types of parent and child interactions facilitate children's language skill development. For example, parents can introduce children to vocabulary and the sounds of language by pointing to objects and naming them, explaining how objects are used and how they work, playing word games, using rhymes and poetry to help children focus on the sounds, taking children to new places and talking about them. For children, and children of immigrants especially, their ways of talking and telling stories are learned through observing and participating in narrative practices within their families, and eventually in their schools, peer groups, or the wider popular culture (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). For immigrant families the cultural narratives that they produce help to demonstrate their association within a specific cultural or literate community. However, these storytelling techniques vary across different sociocultural practices, communicative situations, and sociolinguistic flexibilities, and may contribute to how and what story is told (Dyson, 1993). For example, cultural storytelling may include the rhythmic use of language, patterns of repetition and variation, expressive sounds, and encourage participatory sense making, like dialogue, hyperbole, and call and response (Heath, 1983). The discourse structure and linguistic features of told stories were previously highlighted in research on young children's literacy (Dyson, 1993). This study includes stories told within a social realm to add to previous research

and support ongoing research.

Parents can also use print as a tool to build children's reading related skills, they can make use of environmental print (e.g., labels, newspapers, cereal boxes, signs) to help children learn to recognize letters and words and to help children practice reading skills, and they can also encourage children to write their own stories and then read them as they would a book (Griffin & Morrison, 1997). Recognizing patterns of oral and written language uses that emerge from their lives tell us about the changes surrounding family literacy--reading and writing carried out jointly between adults and children in the home (Heath, 1983). For example, writing stories about family photographs and making them into an album provides children with an opportunity to read about something of great personal interest-- their family. Writing stories, drawing pictures, writing letters to friends, making grocery lists are all family activities and routines that help children practice language and reading related skills.

Snow and Tabors (1993) suggest that family routines in which family members discuss recent events and plan new ones are particularly rich for young children. Higher amounts of *narrative talk* (e.g., telling about an event that has happened or will happen) is closely associated with school learning, as a majority of children's first exposure to print in school is in the form of narratives or stories. Narrative talk helps young children learn what kind of information goes into a good story, and how to organize a set of events in a sequence so that the narrative is told clearly. On the other hand, higher levels of *explanatory talk* (e.g., discussion of explanations such as cause-and-effect relations and connections between ideas, events, and actions) were associated with children's ability to connect a word to the correct picture. It is a valuable practice for parents and other adult caregivers to take time each day for

extended discussions with children and to encourage children to tell about their day or experiences (Beals, 2001).

Parent-child interactions that occur within a home and family environment should be predictable and orderly so children can learn the meaning and function of things. Researchers identify a number of features of the environment that support children's development, including regular locations for things, established times for meals and other routine activities, appropriate numbers of toys accessible to the child at any given time, and limits on background noise and crowding in the home (Wachs & Gruen, 1992). Clearly, young children flourish in predictable settings and routines, such as parent-child book reading, and various other parent-child interactions that occur within the home environment (Wachs & Gruen, 1992). Learning language and learning to read is the major work of young children, and requires supports from the adults around them (NAEYC, 1998).

Everyday parent-child interactions have a positive impact on children's language and reading related skills, so therefore, it is important for parents to build strong literacy routines at home. Parents boast a range of knowledge, skills, and behaviors surrounding at-home literacy routines that have a direct impact on children's language and reading related skills. Many children experience everyday relationships interwoven with texts, situated within both family practices (e.g., daily travel down familiar streets, grocery shopping, and sports media watching) and peer practices (e.g., traditional chase games and space-age cartoons).

Parents have many opportunities to help children practice language during everyday family interactions. Parents play a critical role in their young children's cognitive development: they set the stage for their children's language and reading related skill development through

everyday family interactions. They have an impact on their children's literacy development whether they recognize the importance of their interactions with their children or not (Wachs & Gruen, 1992). Parents support their children's reading skills through language-rich parent child interactions and supportive literacy environments within the home (Scarborough & Dobrich, 1994).

Everyday exchanges in families are embedded in a context that supports or limits the development of children's language and literacy competence. For example, labeling items with a child's name, drawing children's attention to print in everyday items such as food labels, newspapers and magazines for children's use (e.g., cutting out words or letters), and samples of children's work and magnetic letters on the refrigerator, all impact a child's literacy development. More broadly, instances such as frequency of library card use, number of child and adult magazine subscriptions, number of newspaper subscriptions, number of books the child owns, hours of television viewed per week by the child, and how often the father and mother read to themselves, has been found to be predictive of children's receptive vocabulary, general knowledge, and reading scores (Griffin & Morrison, 1997).

All of this leads to the fact that children of immigrants experience different types of literacy informed by various cultural traditions. Parents hold knowledge, beliefs, and values about child development and appropriate parental roles in supporting children's literacy development and learning. In addition, parents manage home environments by making decisions about their family's daily routines and what activities they make available to their children. Immigrant family literacy is most effective when it identifies and draws upon existing strengths and resources of participating families. The Immigrant Family Literacy Alliance (IFLA,

2005) explains that in the case of immigrants, these strengths usually include linguistic, cultural and family resources; a supportive community; and the extraordinary courage and resilience required to seek a better life in a new land. In summary, there are a range of parenting practices and styles that include the quality of parents' verbal exchanges with their child, level of involvement in their child's learning, and approach to discipline that may affect the outcome of their child's identity formation in as they navigate between two worlds.

Childhood Identities. Experiences with literacy and family routines contribute to a child's ability to develop an understanding for the role of words in their everyday lives. Different experiences interest and inspire different children, and certain interests grow stronger as children begin to develop their own identity. Building an identity is especially challenging for children of immigrants, who may first become literate in a language other than English at home (or in their home country) and must maintain their former literacy practices while learning and adapting to the common practices in this country (Bialystok, 1997; Bialystok & Hermann, 1995). The children's sense of identity may also become associated with the practices of their family, in such a way that preserved the ties of the home culture while the child acquired the skills needed to cope successfully in the mainstream culture. Differing from their immigrant parents, children of immigrants lack meaningful connections to their "old" world. They are thus unlikely to consider a foreign country as a place to return to or as a point of reference. They instead are prone to evaluate themselves or to be evaluated by others by the standards of their new country (Gans, 1992; Portes, 1996). Because of the duality of their young identities, these children may feel that they are stuck between two worlds or that they are straddling two worlds simultaneously.

It is important to note that for the purposes of this research, “children of immigrants” will be used in favor of “immigrant children.” Designating the participants as children of immigrants classifies them as both U.S.-born or foreign-born children. Certainly, the experiences of U.S-born and foreign-born children differ in many respects (most importantly, all U.S.-born children are U.S. Citizens), but they share an important common denominator: immigrant parents. Children of immigrants have such very different backgrounds that defy easy generalizations, and increasing knowledge of the developmental studies of children of immigrants may illuminate the pathways that are created, initiated, or maintained that place children along certain life trajectories (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002).

The experiences of children of immigrants offer a particularly powerful lens to view the workings of identity, as they can achieve bicultural and bilingual competencies that become an integral part of their sense of self. Immigrant childhoods are particularly useful for viewing the socially constructed nature of childhoods because changes are often hastened through families’ movement across cultural and geographical borders (Orellana, 2009). For example, children may have been taught about cyclical time, (e.g., how events such as holidays recur in the same sequence over and over again) or linear time, (e.g., when events tend to be unrepeated and have a beginning, middle, and end) but learned that holidays and events differ from country to country (Levine, 1997). Identity formation based on knowledge of diverse time frames, countries, and cultures enables the children to act as agents who contribute to the creation of harmony between diverse races and cultures (Stonequist, 1937).

Although some similarities may be found in the resources guiding children’s identity formation and their participation across cultures, different activity settings can support

different functions, interactions, and communications (Rogoff et al., 1993). Issues such as race, social class, cultural and linguistic background play a role in how children make sense of those literate practices and how they engage in culturally specific ways (Au, 1993; Heath, 1983). Similarly, issues of race and culture are deeply embedded in family cultures, and are manipulated by societal events and shifts in family mobility. Germain (1983/1994) notes that these transitions and events are both predictable and unpredictable and may be experienced as stressors or challenges, depending on the relationships among personal, cultural, and environmental factors.

Many ingredients play a part in identity formation, such as the family, school, peer group, and community. These elements are embedded within the daily social worlds that surround and support the immigrant child. For example, one important aspect in the successful adaptation and identity formation are the parents' ability to maintain respect for the family and the child's connection to their culture of origin. The children whose parents encourage them to achieve "bicultural competencies" are better able to take full advantage of available opportunities (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Furthermore, the adaptation to school provides a significant predictor of a child's future well-being and contributions to society (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Focusing attention on their schooling becomes important, as this may be one of the first places where children of immigrants come into contact with a new culture and an important site of cultural contact and identity formation for these children.

Language also serves a marker of identity. For children of immigrants, literacy plays an important role in the development of language and in the formation of their identity (Bialystok

et al., 2005). Through oral and written texts, members of a social group construct local or situated meaning, identities, and worlds that vary across situations or events (Gee & Green, 1998). English quickly becomes the dominant language for the vast majority of these children (National Research Council [NRC], 1998), but the longer the children are in this country, the more likely they are to distance themselves linguistically from their parents, and eventually lose their native language (Portes & Hao, 1998). However, native language is intrinsic to ethnicity. Under certain conditions, it allows children of immigrants to gain access to some kind of social capital generated from a distinctive ethnic identity.

Data on language attitudes and behaviors among immigrants show that immigrants care deeply about learning English (Portes & Hao, 1998). Even in areas with large immigrant populations, knowledge of English among children is nearly universal (Portes & Schauffler, 1994). Valuing English, however, does not mean abandoning one's language of origin: in their study of immigrant children, Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco (2001) indicate that 90 percent of children of immigrants also think that maintaining their first language is very important to maintaining their constructed identity. Therefore, if parents support and use English and the native language, the children are more apt to use both in the appropriate situation. Waters (1990/1994) emphasizes the importance of identity, the importance of ethnic characteristics of both the group and the individual in their acculturation and identity process, including the need to learn how to navigate multiple worlds, and the fluidity of all these processes combined.

The current research contributes to a better understanding of the social worlds of childhood, the ways in which their social lives shape their literacy practices, and how social worlds come together to build identities. Children represent their social world through images,

through interaction, and through their own eyes. They surround themselves with objects and images to help them establish, express, and maintain their self-identity (Glos & Umaschi, 1997). Peering into these social places reveals children engaged in social work and using story or other art forms to manage their social relationships with others (Dyson, 1993). These objects and images, including television characters, toys, and video games can act as the physical embodiment of aspects of the self, providing external proof of identity. It is important to recognize that identities and literacy practices are linked. As McCarthy and Moje (2002) explain, people's identities involve various group affiliations and shared purposes for reading.

Children draw on diverse cultural resources to negotiate their membership in these groups and to situate themselves within the broader context of these worlds (Dyson, 2003a; Heath, 1983). The availability of resources promotes sociolinguistic flexibility (Genishi & Dyson, 2009) which refers to a child's use of talk to create a social scene. They exhibit sociolinguistic flexibility as they use different cultural materials—different themes, discourse structures, and styles, as they share in the social nature of language and literature within these different cultural spaces (Youssef, 1993). They build relationships and communicate among themselves and others, using familiar tools from their lives, such as stories, jokes, songs, language plays, and other cultural art forms or genres that people create as they construct their social lives together (Dyson, 2003a).

The children, true to childhood cultures, play with cultural identities and use appropriated material to situate themselves in alternative relationships. Children in these contexts are not only preserving their heritage languages and cultural tools, but they are also developing new forms that merge multiple national languages, literacies, and discourses, which

can be captured under the context of multilingualism (Razfar & Yang, 2010). By doing so, they are constructing a complex version of self who participates in a variety of social institutions, and social and cultural spheres. For example, children's appropriations from available cultural materials also situate them in their present lives as participants in churches, families, neighborhoods, and schools (Dyson, 2003a).

Sociolinguistic flexibility is enhanced by the unhurried time of childhood. A child's socio-ideological landscape provides them with their textual and cultural material—particular words and phrases or types of genres—that become the stuff with which they construct their present lives, remember their pasts, and anticipate their youthful futures (Dyson, 2003b). For example, elementary aged children discuss their “child time” in terms of the past (preschool, kindergarten, and home life) their present lives (both socially and academically), and the future (their anticipated teenage years) (Dyson, 2003a; Langer, 2004). Furthermore, a child's expressive practices, social intentions, and articulated ideologies are all produced as they draw upon their shared histories and cultural resources to engage with others in official and unofficial spaces (Dyson, 2003a). In time, children create their own place within the social world as they experiment with oral and written language genres, draw upon discourse traditions, and build relationships with others (Dyson, 1993).

Although a majority of research has focused on identity formation in adolescence, most specifically gender identity, there is relatively little research regarding ethnic identity development prior to adolescence (Phinney, 1990). A young child's identity is largely a result of socialization patterns and emerging cognitive abilities (Corenblum & Annis, 1993). A similar body of research has described the physiological aspects of ethnic identities [e.g., how proud

someone is of his or her heritage (Phinney, 1990)]. Several scholars conducted ethnic identity research with children during their early and middle childhood, and found early signs of “identity work” (Thorne, 2005). Children even as young as six are actively trying to make sense of who they are in terms of ethnicity and culture, and of how they feel and act accordingly (Garcia-Coll & Marks, 2009). Starting in middle childhood, children not only identify themselves with an ethnic category, but they show increasing confidence from prior experiences that their membership in that category will not change over time. In addition, their explanations of why they are members of a particular ethnic group become more complex and abstract over the period of middle childhood (Bernal & Knight, 1993). They develop increasing understanding and knowledge about their ethnic membership may be fostered by cultural socialization with the home. Furthermore, children whose families engage in cultural socialization have been shown to possess a greater knowledge of cultural tradition, show preference for ethnic behaviors, and have more positive ethnic identities (Hughes et al., 2006).

As cognitive abilities mature, children understand their own ethnic identity (and that of others). Ethnic labels have a more complex meaning and children have rudimentary understanding of the constancy of their own ethnicity and the behavioral consequences of ethnic membership during middle childhood (6-8 years of age) (Bernal & Knight, 1993; Phinney, 1996). Ethnic identity has important implications for other behavior, cognitive, and affective systems, such as social interactions and perceptions of self and others. The social identity theory proposes that a comparative model leads people to evaluate differences between their own groups and others (Tajfel, 1978). Tajfel (1978) argued that children must be able to categorize ethnic groups in order to identify with one (establish some sort of ethnic identity)

and demonstrate both in-group and out-group attitudes.

There is little understanding of how the processes of family migration patterns affect middle childhood development, such as the formation of academic pathways and the formulation of an ethnic identity as part of an emerging sense of self, especially among children of immigrants (Quintana, 1994). There are many social, emotional, and developmental tasks associated with middle childhood, all of which take place in the various social contexts. Two tasks that are particularly salient to children of immigrants include the development of cultural attitudes and identifications, and of academic pathways. To address issues of the former claim, it is important to determine just how children develop cultural attitudes and identifications. Much is known from previous research of how children as young as three years old observe wide individual and group differences. Because the children are aware of these differences, they can begin to describe their membership within certain groups, however superficially. As they actively explore the roles of the group, they can form a more concrete identity with these groups (Eccles, 1999). The diversity of childhood identities—the sociocultural (shared among themselves), the popular (shared among the wider world), and the written (shared among the official school world), are a helpful way of approaching and thinking about the complexity of their social and language lives (Dyson, 1993). The intersection of children, their knowledge, and their immigrant culture is discussed in the next section.

Immigrant Culture

Whenever people talk about roots—the legacy of one's homeland—it's automatically presumed to be a positive account. Immigrants believe that their heritage provides them with a good foundation in the new land. However, immigrants who carry with them expectations

based on long-standing traditions of particular cultural orders may find their legacy to be ill-matched to their new setting (Gadsden, 2000). Most likely, these immigrants remain close to the customs of their homeland and react to the separation by reverting back to the daily habits of their childhood (Greene, 1994). However, an important aspect of immigration is the ability to merge and manage two cultures into one world. The true definition of immigration fails to capture this ability as immigrants maintain an integrated life that transcends distances in space or time. This transformation of everyday practices—of everyday ways of being and doing and acting in a space—is an important way in which immigrants adapt to new contexts.

There are many factors that contribute to immigration and immigrant experiences, including powerful legal, natural, and social hurdles. However, for the purposes of this research, I looked primarily at the important psychological and social implications for the individual and the family group (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). From a sociological standpoint, immigration is viewed as both social and interpersonal. Sociologists observed how the first migrants create connections in the new land that become essential to subsequent immigrants from the same point of origin (Zhou, 1997). For example, the first immigrants take great effort to collect information, make contacts, and decide upon places to live, schools, and communities. From an historical standpoint, on the other hand, immigration is viewed as a cultural shift. Anthropologists study changes in cultural patterns over time, such as reasons for leaving the home country, assimilation to the new country, and other factors that play into the history of immigration. These social and cultural forces that immigrants are likely to encounter ultimately shape their life experiences, opportunities, and outcomes (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Suárez-Orozco and Suárez-Orozco (2001) use Bourdieu's (1973) theory of "cultural capital" to explain another clear influence on immigrant experiences. When exploring the social adaptation of children of immigrants, the "cultural capital" that the immigrant families bring with them, such as their educational background and social supports, has a clear influence on the journey to and experiences within the United States (Maira, 1998; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Recent research (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001) also indicates that assimilation patterns may play a role in immigrant experiences. Each family and each ethnic group has its own way of assimilating in this country; however, the most common practices include retaining aspects from the original culture while incorporating some aspects of American culture (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). More and more immigrant families develop strong transnational ties to more than one home country, blurring the congruence of social space and geographic space (Dolby & Cornbleth, 2001).

Furthermore, the way in which individuals experience the process of migration depends on a variety of factors. For example, some academic socialization patterns may also contribute to the experiences of immigrant parents and their children. Literature explains how academic socialization amongst immigrant families is a major influence on children's attitudes and success in school (Garcia-Coll & Marks, 2009). The varied socioeconomic and educational backgrounds of immigrant families may affect the child's educational opportunities and experiences in different ways. Issues such as the lack of familiarity with the United States educational system, different beliefs about child rearing and expectations for schooling, or in observed strategies for teaching and academic achievement may impact educational opportunities (NAEYC, 2009a/2009b). Similarly, immigrant families may adapt in a different

way based on how much they maintain traditional cultural practices (e.g., native language and customs) and how much cultural socialization they impart to their children. Families may also choose to preserve or terminate certain religious, cultural, and linguistic practices. The variety of influences impact immigrant experiences as they adjust their immigrant culture to the established culture and society. Therefore, it becomes important to look at the variety of experiences and diverse cultural backgrounds within and among immigrant societies, and recognize that these experiences are partly the result of global connectedness and transnationalism (Pieterse, 2004).

Immigrant cultures and immigrant societies are communities made up of individuals or groups within different national societies who act on the basis of shared interests, be it territorial, religious or linguistic (Kastoryano, 2002). The society at large is undoubtedly enriched because of the diverse language and culture that immigrant societies bring to the United States. Everyone has some form of cultural identity based in the notion of ethnicity, but ethnicity is not just about identity. It is about participating in the social conditions of a group or exhibiting a strong sense of belonging and identification to a particular group that transcends national and international borders (Anthias, 1998; Bhabha, 1994; Cohen, 1999).

For the purpose of this research, the term *ethnic identity* refers to a feeling shared by the individuals of a given group based on their common origins, common beliefs and values, and common goals (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The term *globalization* [which has been used interchangeably with *transnationalism* or *postnationality* (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004)] suggests that individuals endeavor to create hybrid identities and cultural formations that transform the “old” ethnic culture and the “new” majority culture in creative

ways (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The term *transnationalism* describes sustained social, cultural, and economic activities and relations among individuals and organizations that extend beyond national boundaries (Portes et al., 1999). *Transnationalism* refers to the social connections between receiving and sending countries; therefore a *transmigrant* is anyone who forged and kept those ties alive (Glick-Schiller et al., 1992). In this contemporary age of migration, “transmigrants. . . maintain, build, and reinforce multiple linkages with their countries of origins” (Basch et al., 1995, p. 52). These terms and concepts help situate the participants of this study as members of a global society in the process of maintaining or creating transnational identities for themselves and their children.

As mentioned earlier, this research takes a new, interdisciplinary perspective that considers the intersection of historical, psychological, and anthropological factors (e.g., social attitudes and opportunities) and one that may lead to divergent pathways of identity formation among children of immigrants (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). In addition, this research is designed to provide an overview of the major themes in the lives of children of immigrants, in particular, their experiences, perceptions and subsequent transformations. The final section of the literature review expounds Stack and Burton’s (1993) research that was both multicultural and intergenerational to develop a framework for understanding immigrant families. The sub-sections of Globalized Lives, Multicultural Practices, and Social Spaces contain information about the transitions of transnational migrants, the negotiation of interdependent factors in family norms, and the social science of childhood, respectively.

Globalized Lives. Globalization defines our era, and is responsible for shaping the lives of children in and out of schools (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). Children growing up in

multicultural countries like the United States will undoubtedly enter situations with individuals from different national, linguistic, religious, and racial backgrounds. They are challenged to work amongst the complicated models of kinship, language, and ethnicity (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004). The goal of immigration for these children is to craft a globalized identity. They creatively fuse aspects of two or more cultures—the parent tradition and the mainstream culture—to synthesize an identity that allows them to incorporate important elements of both. In some cases, children of immigrants may retain identity with their culture of origin, while in other cases, may completely assimilate with the mainstream American culture. In still other cases, a new identity emerges that incorporates selected aspects of both the culture of origin and the mainstream culture (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). In an age of globalization and multiculturalism, children of immigrants can easily manipulate their “transcultural” identities (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Virtually all aspects of modern life—jobs, culture, relationships—are being transformed by the forces of globalization. Education is at the heart of globalization, yet these global transformations require youth to develop new skills, sensibilities, and habits of mind that are far ahead of what most educational systems can now deliver. In addition to the educational dissimilarity that immigrant families experience, children of immigrants often experience differences or discrepancies in their language development (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). Many immigrant families speak a language other than English at home, which makes the home language environment distant from the “mainstream” English speaking household. Language is a cultural practice shaped by the beliefs about intergenerational relations. Immigrant family literacy enhances the English language proficiency of new arrivals to this country, while at the

same time, gives them the skills essential for taking full advantage of the many cultural and educational opportunities (IFLA, 2005). Children have to negotiate their families' ways of being along with the dominant cultural norms, and together, these beliefs shape their childhoods. Another feature of globalization is the new patterns of large scale immigration (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Immigration not only generates new identities, but also acts as a powerful metaphor for the cultural adaptations, changing roles, and social practices, and multiple identities (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). However, the issue of identity within the era of globalization is of particular interest to this study, as it focuses on the challenges facing children of immigrants in their adaptation to a new society. Increasing globalization complicates the identities of children of immigrants: these children may face the complex task of forming a new identity or juggling multiple identities (Geertz, 1975).

Sometimes, children of such families craft their identities through a process of transculturation that blends two systems at once, creatively fusing aspects of both the parent culture and the new culture. These children are part of the "one-and-a-half generation," a term coined by Rumbaut to characterize the children who straddle the old and the new worlds but are fully part of neither (Rumbaut, 1991). They are involved in the task of negotiating a new identity that combines element of the culture of origin with those of the receiving culture (Suárez-Orozco, 2004). The challenges of their parents—the first generation—are considerably different from their children. While the first generation is primarily concerned with adjusting to the new context, their children find their challenge in forging a sense of identity.

The immigrant experience is continuously changing, though, and the idea that new immigrants will assimilate into the mainstream culture is no longer valid: the American society

no longer consists of a uniform or mainstream system, and therefore it is impossible to assume that new immigrants will assimilate into a coherent mainstream (Portes, 1996; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). For children of immigrants, growing up American can be a matter of smooth acceptance or of traumatic confrontation. These children are generally eager to embrace American culture and to acquire an American identity by becoming indistinguishable from their American peers (Zhou, 1997). If they do identify with what they believe to be the mainstream culture, it may result in a weakening of ties to members of their own ethnic group. Immigrants must contend with a much more complex “culture of multiculturalism” (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001, p. 62) which they must learn to navigate. In the culture of multiculturalism, identities are created by the individual as well as by those around him, both crafted and imposed to fit into existing categories (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). The outcome may be that immigrants are sometimes pushed to become socialized or forced into a stereotype of ethnicity, even if it has little resonance with their true identity.

Assuming that all families seek to make meaningful accommodations through sustainable practices of daily living, identity formation involves both individual and socially constructed negotiations. To address this notion, Stack and Burton (1993) developed “kinscripts” on the premise that immigrant families have their own agenda, their own interpretation of cultural norms, and their own histories. The framework of kinscripts is instructive in understanding the various roles in which individuals engage among families, in general. More specifically, when combined with concepts from family and international migration, kinscripts (Stack & Burton, 1993) inform “kinwork,” or the roles and responsibilities distributed among members of the transnational family. Kinwork plays an essential part of the

immigrant family experience, especially in the labor and tasks that families need to accomplish to survive from generation to generation. There is an increasing need to address the roles and functioning of immigrant families, particularly in the face of continued international migration.

When immigrants move to other places, some of the transitions they must make are not as pronounced, while other differences may be more pronounced (Orellana, 2009). They apply new societal expectations about lifestyles and quality of living, and may become acutely aware of behaviors that, although seemingly “normal” at home, will set them apart as “foreign” in public.

Immigrants not only reshape the customs of their new communities, but are responsible for the social transformations of ideas, values, and interpersonal practices acquired in their new homeland (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). This becomes evident as immigrants take advantage of what is good about both countries. In addition, middle class immigrants who are able to join a more integrated and affluent community come to experience a very different America than those who settle among other immigrants. They are better able to maximize the opportunities that led them to migrate in the first place (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Not only do parents’ beliefs and behaviors influence children’s literacy development, but their ability to settle in more affluent and integrated neighborhoods, attend better schools, provide additional books, computers, learning tools, or tutors may contribute to school-based learning. The neighborhood shapes the lives for children of immigrants in many ways. The neighborhoods and schools that parents can provide their children also play an important role in shaping their futures (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). However, what holds true for the parents may not hold true for their children: While children born and raised here may

share a number of characteristics with their parents, such as an appreciation for new opportunities, and a general optimism about the future, many don't have the same clear cut frame of reference against which to measure their current situation. While children of immigrants are quick to catch on to the dominant culture, their parents inevitably struggle with ambivalence (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

When considering the identities of new immigrants from a home place such as Eastern Europe or the Middle East, it is necessary to reflect on what happens when ethnic, religious, cultural, national, social, family, and personal identities intersect. Multiple identities can occur when families negotiate multiple associations with cultural norms and practices connected to two or more home places, or when moving between two cultures. The fluidity of identity becomes particularly important when considering the lives of new immigrant families (Blume & De Reus, 2009). The fluidity of ethnic identity enables the new immigrant to create a unique space for understanding their ethnic diversity and examine the retelling of family history from before and after the immigration (Anthias, 2002).

Increasingly, immigrants to the U.S. have immediate or extended family members residing not only in different households, but also in several different nations, as well as in their country of origin. The work involved in maintaining family connections occurs to a greater or lesser extent in all immigrant families, regardless of their national origin or their settlement location (Forsythe-Brown, 2007). International migration creates the need to study transnational families and kin networks. Additionally, within international migration literature, the means by which immigrants maintain transnational family and kinship ties has been largely under-investigated. The growing numbers of immigrants coming to the U.S. has focused

research attention on the development of transnational immigrant social fields (Portes, 2001). Immigrants and their families are now portrayed as actors in an increasingly transnational stage. Transnational immigrants maintain connections with their country of origin, thanks to the presence of new communication and information technologies, as well as the ease of transportation. Many immigrants are said to be at once “here” and “there,” by bridging increasingly unbound national spaces (Basch et al., 1995).

Brandt and Clinton (2002) continue this discussion by suggesting that certain practices are localized to meet personal needs and to match social structures, but can be connected globally to have far-reaching implications and uses outside of the local context. For the children of immigrants, such global and local exchanges are revealed by shuttling between schools, or spending whole summers in the country of origin. Some researchers suggest that this strategy is developed in order to maximize opportunities in a global society (Portes, 1998). One problem in the field is a lack of research examining how transnationalism is affecting the everyday lives of immigrant children and families. Another problem is that the term transnationalism often means different things to different people. Some use the term to refer to the immigrants’ back and forth movement between their old and new countries, while others concentrate on how cultural models and social practices seem to separate new immigrants from mainstream culture and society (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

The bonds of a transnational immigrant community presumably involves, on the part of individuals, a relatively powerful identification with the group that is defined in terms of shared histories, traditions, values, and so forth. Many people immigrate to the United States because it is (and has always been) a multicultural society. Indeed, multicultural issues are a significant

factor in the response to global migration, and are discussed further.

Multicultural Practices. Kress (2000) examines how the term “multicultural” calls for a more flexible structure to assist non-mainstream families in their attempt to accommodate cultural and regional differences. Among sociologists and anthropologists, debate has persisted for several generations over the definition of “culture.” The older definition of culture—the entire way of life of a people, or everything one would need to know to become a functioning member of a society (Geertz, 1973)—is overshadowed by a definition that views culture as the available forms through which people experience and express meaning (Keesing, 1974). In addition, culture can be understood as the knowledge and experience one should have to thrive among diverse cultures, along with the awareness of people of diverse ethnicities, religions, and backgrounds (Rodriguez & Caplan, 1998). Expressed in this way, culture may be perceived as something very different for every individual.

For purposes of this study, culture consists of such symbolic vehicles of meaning, including beliefs, ritual practices, art forms, and ceremonies, as well as informal cultural practices such as language, gossip, stories, and rituals of daily life (Swidler, 1986). The term “culture” refers to the habits of using time, space, and language; modes of dress; using new ways of participating in formal and informal events in work and play settings and in social roles and activities (Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002); and using new strategies of action to learn styles of self, relationship, cooperation, and authority in their new surroundings. Culture consists of all transmitted social knowledge, and provides shared understandings and models for making meaning of new experiences.

The concept of “cultural practice” helps define the ways in which every day events come packed with values, morals, and so on (Miller & Goodnow, 1995). Multicultural practices include the ability to acknowledge, compare, contrast, and appreciate commonalities and differences in cultural behaviors beliefs and values, within and between cultures.

Multiculturalism seeks to reduce tensions by teaching values that support diversity and acknowledge the contributions of all communities. In addition, the concept of cultural practice emphasizes identity formation and ideologies (assumptions about values, ideas, and relationships between people). The following practices can all provide insight into the affiliation with one’s cultural contact: the language of origin (e.g., the language used most comfortably), preferences in religious practices (e.g., the religious practices that are important, that occur on a daily basis, or primarily as a social function), foods (e.g., enjoyed at home or during social settings), holidays (e.g., those of the culture of origin, of the host society, or a combination of the two), entertainment (e.g., radio or television, movies or videos), and sports participation (e.g., baseball versus basketball versus soccer) (Suárez-Orozco, 2004).

Cultural patterns and traditions provide the structure against which immigrants can develop particular strategies, and eventually organize their new life (Swider, 1986). The underlying view of culture depicts how social systems exist to realize their core values, and values explain how different actions are taken even in similar situations (Parsons, 1951). Therefore, a definition of culture can explain how a person acts in a new situation. Immigrants, for example, act in culturally determined ways when they preserve traditional habits in new circumstances (Thomas & Znaniecki, 1918). This analysis of culture views culture as a "tool kit" of symbols, stories, rituals, and world-views that people may use in varying arrangements to

solve different kinds of problems (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, culture is viewed as the attitudes and behavior characteristic of a particular social group or organization, and particular attention is placed on acculturation, or the knowledge and values shared by a society. Cultural values are defined as "an element of a shared symbolic system which serves as a criterion or standard" (Parsons, 1951, p. 11-12). Therefore, cultural values influence action by shaping a repertoire of habits, skills, and styles (Swidler, 1986). Indeed, the skills required for adopting a line of conduct involve much more than such matters as how to dress or talk in the appropriate style (Swidler, 1986). Defining "cultural values" in this way creates an awareness of how different people in different groups live their everyday lives and what systems of meaning are used as a basis of expression (Geertz, 1983).

Children from culturally diverse families may bring with them a different set of cultural values and practices. In order to interact effectively with people of different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds, these children need to develop a sense of multicultural competency (Gay, 2010). Multicultural competency encompasses not only linguistic understanding, but also the ability to respect and appreciate traditional norms. Multicultural competency, therefore, can be understood as the knowledge and skills "based in different ethnic groups, cultures, families, and communities" (Gay, 2010, p. 161). Outside of school, immigrant parents may find themselves in a tricky situation, as they encourage their children to develop the cultural competencies necessary to function in the new land, but also encourage them to maintain the traditions and language of home. Many immigrants struggle to maintain the elements of the old culture in part because traditions and cultural behaviors provide both internalized standards of behavior and social safety. Certain cultural practices offer models for

understanding and sorting out meanings, and also provide interpersonal networks and shared understandings.

Language and literacy skills are also embedded in cultural practice, which is learned implicitly through participating within the culture (Purcell-Gates, 1995). Therefore, it is important to consider Schiffman's (1996) conceptualization of linguistic culture, which has much in common with views of language ideology. He defines linguistic cultures as behaviors, assumptions, cultural forms, prejudices, folk belief systems, attitudes, stereotypes, beliefs, myths, and ways of thinking about language as well as religious and historical circumstances associated with a particular language or culture (Schiffman, 1996). He includes in his definition all other cultural assets that individuals bring to their dealings with language from their culture. Irvine (1989) defines language ideology as “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests” (p. 5) and Kroskrity (2000) emphasizes that it is “constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group” (p. 8). An understanding of linguistic culture is fundamental to understanding the set of positions, principles, patterns, and decisions made by particular communities.

Multicultural approaches to teaching and curriculum allow for a variety of ways to introduce children to the ways of being and acting in the world. The benefit of using cultural knowledge in the academic setting is to allow ethnically diverse students to feel that their language and heritage are valued, and to provide a meaningful context for them to learn (Chisholm, 1994). In addition to validating culture, the developmentally appropriate teaching style allows teachers to work with the different ways that children acquire language and interact within their social networks.

Adapting interactions within the classroom allows teachers to accommodate for various cultural communication patterns. For example, some cultures discourage calling attention to oneself and showing knowledge; children from this type of background may choose not participate verbally in classroom activities (Quintero, 1994; Villegas, 1991). By identifying and acknowledging such cultural patterns of literacy and communication, teachers can help children become comfortable and confident in the classroom setting. McLaughlin (1995) suggests that by validating the students' cultures and using communication patterns familiar to them, teachers provide a much richer and more effective approach to culturally sensitive instruction.

To briefly address the issue of culture and diversity in school, it is important to identify and understand the educational practices of students outside the cultural mainstream. Luis Moll (1994) coined the phrase "cultural funds of knowledge" in his investigation of everyday tasks and cultural activities within a specific community. "Cultural funds of knowledge" include the practice, values, and beliefs of non-mainstream students, and must be recognized at the instructional level in order to create a bridge between school and home. Teachers can validate students' cultural funds of knowledge by encouraging multiple forms of cultural and community engagement, by satisfying the needs, values, and preferences of the families and communities being served, and by acknowledging the variety of literacy and cultural experiences that students bring with them from their family and community interactions. A balance of school-based culture with home culture provides a bridge to this concept of validation, as new learning is strongest when teachers are able to help students make connections between their cultural funds of knowledge and disciplinary knowledge (Roser, 2010). However, it still is important to

remember that school based literacy practices are cultural homes to some, but not to all (Dunsmore & Fisher, 2010).

Issues of culture are deeply embedded in family lives, and are manipulated by societal events and shifts in family mobility. These issues seem to revolve around defined practices that family members hold as central to their purpose and to the life trajectory of their children. Germain (1983/1994) noted that these transitions and events are both predictable and unpredictable and may be experienced as stressors or challenges, depending on the relationships among personal, cultural, and environmental factors. Some transitions and events are experienced by all families, and others differentiate families, but transformations for the entire family unit are precipitated within social spaces (Germain, 1973).

Social Spaces. *Space* is a term used to describe dimensional aspects existing between other, significant occurrences. The study of space as a semiotic phenomenon suggests that the meaning of space is generally understood in relation to other contexts (Gaines, 2006). The semiotics of space describes the relationships between objects and the space that they occupy. However, space is generally overlooked as the background to other objects of attention. Space can be the paper on which important words are written, and the distance between objects whose meanings are dependent on spatial relations.

An ecological perspective on immigrant families focuses on people's reliance on resources and social spaces to access different parts of a community in day-to-day life and how this impacts on identities (Neuman & Celano, 2001). Within a community, the heart of the activity can be found in places such as libraries, post offices, community centers, faith groups, etc., where certain types of community members, customers, and patrons meet and

congregate, and where local practices and common texts circulate, and where frequent interactions occur (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). When considering *community*, one may see it as a social context of people and their environment, but the true definition of a community is a group of people with a common purpose, shared values, and agreement on goals (Bickford & Wright, 2006). Peck (1993) further defined community as a group whose members have made a commitment to communicating with one another on an ever more deep and authentic level. In a community, the learners are enriched by collective meaning-making, mentorship, encouragement, and an understanding of the perspectives and unique qualities of an increasingly diverse membership (Bickford & Wright, 2006). A real community, however, exists only when its members interact in a meaningful way that deepens their understanding of each other and leads to learning (Bickford & Wright, 2006). In contrast to the larger communities, people also exist within personal, smaller communities of friends and family (Speer & Perkins, 2002). Connecting spaces, whether physical or virtual, can have a significant impact on learning (Bickford & Wright, 2006). Clearly, learning is a social process that works best in social spaces, yielding the best use of societal resources.

Communities can be acknowledged with respect to place, social networks, and interactions. The perspective from which a community is viewed affects the sense of its space. In everyday life, space isn't necessarily regarded independently, but rather taken as background to other objects and relationships. To clarify, space only becomes important once it serves as the background for something else. However, when space is seen as independent of objects or matter, new meanings emerge and distinctions made as to the unique qualities of space (Gaines, 2006). The processes for understanding meanings require the mind to organize

information, establish relationships, and make connections between objects, ideas, events and relationships (Gaines, 2006). Space plays a less obvious part in constructing meaning than other, more active modes of communication. Indeed, maintaining social spaces is essential for effective communication within communities. Space contributes to the meanings of communicated messages without being obvious (Gaines, 2006). Although it's not always apparent how space has the capacity to affect the meanings of things, humans intentionally construct and control aspects of space (Gaines, 2006). Within certain spaces, meaningful settings are constructed in order to carry out social processes according to established notions of how people and objects are organized.

The experience of space involves moving between memories of a place, experiences of a place, and construction of a new place through interaction (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Buttimer (1968) makes the following observation that has relevance for what follows: space has different meanings for different societies and thus distance and spatial movement can be considered in terms of the dimensions perceived by human interactions. Each group, because of economic, historical, cultural, or other reasons, may possess an entirely different conception of space. Some groups may have a social network that scarcely extends the block in which they live, while others may have social contacts with relatives thousands of miles away. Whether contact with distant relatives is frequent or rare does not influence the fact that a bond is perceived which ignores the barriers of space and time. In this scenario, the former is located in geographic space or the social environment, and the latter refers to the subjective element of space that frames the capacity of groups to construct social space.

In addition to identifying movement within social spaces, it is important to understand a

culture with respect to its sense of time (Levine, 1997). Time, in this case, refers to a type of temporal space embodied by different cultures. According to Levine (1997), all cultures have something to learn from others' conceptions of time. However, mastering another culture's time, understanding the temporal rules, and adjusting to another time sense of other groups is difficult. Accessing the temporal codes of other cultures requires effort, as temporal patterns are at the crossroads of multiple cultural characteristics. For example, Levine (1997) uses the concept of temporal time as the ability of individuals to bridge incongruous lives and adapt to different conceptions of time. Immigrant families traverse time (e.g., time zones) and space (e.g., distances) as they adjust to one culture from another and move from one country to another (Levine, 1997). They often need to negotiate new rules and customs and understand the transformation of everyday practices—the everyday ways of being and doing and acting within a space—to demonstrate that they are attuned to new contexts (Gaines, 2006). Many of these practices are incorporated into new settings when families arrive in new communities (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

Few immigrant groups seek to isolate themselves entirely from the impact of their host society. For example, it is there that they send their children to schools and universities, work in multiethnic settings, live in multiethnic neighborhoods, and are increasingly exposed to the mass entertainment industry and popular culture in general. Contemporary immigrants seek to preserve aspects of their heritage while simultaneously being open to the impact of the general way of life of the receiving nation. While social scientists (e.g., Clark, 2003; Waters & Jiménez, 2005) originally defined this process as immigrant assimilation, in which immigrants fully integrate themselves into a new country, I am relying on Piaget's (1983) notion of assimilation,

by which immigrants take in new information or experiences and incorporate them their existing ideas. Assimilation, therefore, allows for the persistence of ethnic identities and communities over time, as immigrants and their offspring interact in a wide variety of settings with people outside of the ethnic group.

Kostogriz (2002) calls for an investigation of multiethnic spaces in which we live and learn in order to reveal contradictions between the global and the local, between the individual and the social, and between the politics of universal knowledge and situated knowing in everyday practices. Knowledge of the production of cultural, semiotic, and intellectual spheres in multicultural conditions will allow for the possibility of crossing, or “translation” of the boundaries in the cultural production of identities and textual meanings (Gaines, 2006).

According to Medina (2010), the scholarly attention that is paid to immigration, Diasporas, and globalization provides new perspectives for understanding diverse cultural and literacy practices. The particular kinds of literacy practices and events that these families may share with their children may influence school success (Strickland, 1996). As a result, children of immigrants are greatly affected by cultural misunderstanding, language barriers, and feelings of isolation within the school atmosphere (Garcia et al., 2006; Gibson & Rios, 2006).

If the mission of education is to ensure that all children benefit from learning in ways that allow them to participate in public, community, and economic life, it is important to broaden the understanding of literacy and literacy teaching and learning to include negotiating a multiplicity of discourses (New London Group, 2000). When the family and the community offer love and support, they can extend ambition and hope to children as they interact with the outside world. The challenge, therefore, is to create spaces for social lives where local and

specific meanings can be made. The framework for this research identifies the importance of creating and observing social lives of families.

Theoretical Framework

The social and cultural perspectives of literacy learning presented throughout this chapter suggest that children learn literacy from social interaction and participation (Rowe, 2010). Social and cultural perspectives are valuable for studying early literacy development because they posit meaning making and other aspects of literacy learning “in relations between people, within groups and communities” (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8). That is, children learn the procedures, roles, literacy processes, textual intentions, and ideologies valued by their parents and cultural groups in particular types of literacy events (Street, 1995; Barton & Hamilton, 2000). A major contribution of social and cultural perspectives is that children’s participation in literacy events has embedded within it ideological assumptions about what counts as reading and writing.

These social and cultural perspectives push researchers to ask what cultural based models of reading and writing are explicit and implicit in literacy events in which young children participate (Rowe, 2010). In addition, these perspectives turn the attention to social and cultural contexts in which literacy events occur, and challenge the search for universal patterns of early literacy teaching (Rowe, 2010). Finally, social and cultural perspectives combine with semiotic theories (Kress, 1997) to represent how literacy is shaped by and produced through the material and spatial resources that are available. Therefore, the view offered by social and cultural theories expands the scope of what and who should be studied in early literacy research so as to turn the attention to children’s participation in literacy events (Rowe, 2010).

The theoretical framework that follows offers an important lens for viewing literacy learning.

This research is guided by a sociocultural perspective of language and literacy (Vygotsky, 1978/1986) which views language as the central cultural and symbolic tool connecting people within or across certain cultures. Their cultural and linguistic “tool kit” (Wertsch, 1991) helps individuals navigate their social world, construct meaning, represent and communicate experiences, and construct their identity (Lindfors, 1999). Implicit in the sociocultural view of children’s language learning is the importance of learning about the child within a social sense, whose knowledge and resources come from diverse interactions (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). When merging language, literacy, and culture, the sociocultural lens allows the researcher to view how language and literacy are formed within the family and the community. Sociocultural approaches to language and literacy (Lave & Wagner, 1991) maintain that immersion in a community of learners engaged in authentic versions of such practice is necessary. Authentic, or situated practice, “defines how human knowledge is primarily situated in sociocultural settings and heavily determined by specific knowledge and practices, and is ultimately tied to the ability to act on patterns of experience” (Lave & Wagner, 1991, p. 31). In other words, human knowledge is embedded in social, cultural, and material contexts. It is initially developed as part of a collaborative interaction between a mentor or adult (e.g., friend, family member, participant in community or cultural organizations) who guides the child in his or her learning of new cultural practices and skills (Gregory, 2004). In this way, they become a community of learners engaged in common practices.

Linguistic anthropologists and educational researchers (Gee, 1999; The New London Group, 2000) have proposed a sociocultural framework for language and literacy that pays

special attention to literacy activities and events and their associated ideologies as they take place within particular social and historical contexts. The contextual factors matter in how children use language and select purposes for communication. This refers to ethnographic context, which includes physical, historical, environmental, and social ideals that traverse local spaces and surround something such as a word, passage, or work of art (Gupta & Ferguson, 1997). The physical context reflects the space around something and how that influences the way in which an individual views it. Physical context can be found by answering the questions, *Where is it? What does it have to do with the place in which it can be found?* and *What is the piece and the community in which it is found?* For example, a photograph of a family member appears when it is framed in and on display, as opposed to when it appears in a photo album. The social context, or “situational context” (Goodwin & Duranti, 1992, p. 8) refers to the social environment that surrounds something's creation or intended audience. The social context influences how something is viewed. For example, when watching a movie at the theater, it may seem different than when watching a movie in class or for an assignment; one may seem more like entertainment and the other may require more thinking. The experience of watching each movie will vary depending on the where each one is viewed. Answering the questions, *Who created it?* and, *Who was the audience?* help determine the effect of social context. And finally, the historical context reflects the time in which something takes place or was created and how that influences it the event or object is interpreted. The historical context can be found by answering the questions, *When do you think it was made?* and *What was going on at the time?* This may help examine which types of language and literacy practices are valued in and across cultures.

From a cultural-historical perspective, literacy learning occurs during particular activities mediated by social, cultural, and linguistic resources and tools (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). The ethnographic literature on family literacy, which compares home and school literacy practices, fits within this tradition as it attempts to explain how literacy practices differ at home and at school, and how this disconnection can have material and social consequences for certain populations (Orellana et al., 2003). Ethnographic researchers most often employed a sociocultural approach for data inquiry to describe the range and diversity of literacy experiences within and across societies, and to trace patterns of literacy practices (Auerbach, 1989; Heath, 1983). Their primary interest was to document patterned diversity of literacy practices within societies before making judgments on what these literacy experiences and events might mean to any specific group.

To conceptualize the literacy experiences and cultural practices of children, especially those from non-mainstream families, this study is situated within a theoretical framework that views language (and, thus, literacy) as inseparable from culture. My definition of *culture* includes patterns of behaviors, beliefs, values, and norms (Ferdman, 1990); the various funds of knowledge held by communities or other groups of people (Gonzalez et al., 2005); material artifacts (Adams & Markus, 2004), such as written texts; and the “subtle, tacit, taken-for-granted events and ways of doing things” of a community (Rogoff, 2003, p. 11). In addition, culture is defined as the shared learned patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs, and affective understandings learned through a process of socialization (Bourdieu, 1973; Connerly & Pedersen, 2005). These shared patterns identify the members of a cultural group while also distinguishing those of another group. It is a way of life and gives individuals a

sense of who they are and how they should behave (Gay, 2000). Culture serves as the median through which all human activity is transmitted and interpreted.

Recent reviews and critiques of the “New Literacy Studies” (e.g., Brandt & Clinton, 2002; Street, 2003) are reaching toward new theoretical ground to address emerging concerns about the adequacy of current literacy theories framed in terms of locally situated social practices. These theorists began to organize new ways of understanding the development, acquisition, and use of literacy. This new work should be of interest not only to those working in the field of literacy but to applied linguists as well, because the core issues have to do with the nature and role of context in language use in oral or written form.

A sociocultural view of language and literacy learning accounts for all children learning language, but their learning is cultural and shaped by socioeconomic and linguistic circumstances in which their lives take place (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Sociologists, psychologists, anthropologists, and sociolinguists point out that language use is tied closely to personal identity, to cultural identification, to national or ethnic pride, to specific communicative tasks or situations, and to a set of attitudes and beliefs that have an impact on second language acquisition (Snow, 1993). Sociocultural approaches to second language acquisition are helpful in understanding the social and cultural pressures affecting language learners in situations where the social value attached to their first and second language (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2001). Sociocultural approaches to second language acquisition also open up an additional domain of complexity about the rules governing communicative effectiveness and social appropriateness. Through the sociocultural approach that learning a second language means joining or participating as a member of a certain cultural group,

engaging in a variety of social interactions, and establishing an enhanced personal identity (Snow, 1993).

Children are socialized into language from different families, regions, and sociocultural histories. They learn ways of telling stories, of playing, of asking questions through the human relationships and daily events that give their lives meaning (Heath, 1983). In addition, conversation skills are rooted in family and community life, and reflect children's knowledge of their home language and cultural communication skills (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Through interactive experiences, children develop a dual understanding—through both linguistic and social sources—of how language is used in particular social situations. Sociolinguistics refers to this “dual knowledge” as communicative competence (Hymes, 1972). For the purpose of this study, dual knowledge is referred to as sociolinguistic flexibility.

The sociocultural theory also suggests that behavior and cognitive processes are shaped in a large part by a social and cultural context (Vygotsky, 1978). Vygotsky's (1978) theory emphasized the influence of culture, peers, and adults on the developing child, but can be extended to inform the research on language and literacy within cultures. Vygotsky (1986) also discussed the importance of cultural tools to the sociocultural approach. These cultural “tool kits” include items such as computers, books, artifacts, and traditions that teach children about the expectations of the group (Wertsch, 1991). Children draw on these diverse cultural resources to situate themselves within the broader social context, and to negotiate their membership in these groups (Dyson, 2003a; Heath, 1983). It encourages researchers to consider one's cultural background when examining the cognitive and linguistic development of learners. This view contends that individual literacy learning and development must be

understood and examined as the outcome of activity systems where participants, tools, and artifacts, mediate literacy and affect how students make sense of texts (Pacheco, 2010). By participating in the cultural activities and using the tools of the society, the child learns what is important in his culture. Therefore, by looking at the relationship between social interactions, language, and learning, one can gain an extensive insight into students' cultural knowledge.

For socioculturalists, literacy constitutes one of the most critical semiotic mediational tools, and reading and writing should always be natural, purposeful, and developed through appropriate interactions and operations in the child's environment (John-Steiner & Mahn, 2003). A longstanding theme in sociocultural approaches to learning is multilingual mediation—the use of multiple languages, literacies, and discourse in immigrant and non-dominant populations (Razfar & Yang, 2010). The sociocultural literature on early literacy development in just the last decade has focused on the use of multiple languages, literacies, and discourses. In previous decades, sociocultural inquiry provided valuable insight into children's home and community literacy practice, and an understanding of what should count as literacy (Razfar & Gutierrez, 2003). While sociocultural research continues to address these topics, it is necessary to include the emerging phenomenon in relation to early literacy development of semiotic mediation, especially as it relates to multiple languages (multilingual mediation) (Razfar & Yang, 2010). Semiotic mediation refers to the study of signs and symbols, especially as means of language or communication theory of signs and symbols in language and the meanings they convey. From a sociocultural standpoint, learning is fundamentally social and mediated by signs, symbols, and cultural artifacts that have been used over many generations.

Semiotic mediation is one of the fundamentals of a sociocultural approach to literacy (Razfar & Yang, 2010). It connects the social with the individual, and helps to explain how meaning making is experienced through social, cultural and physical interactions. Through mediation and interaction with adults, children learn to use the symbolic tools appropriately as they participate in social activities and engage in meaning making (Razfar & Yang, 2010). Children learn to participate, negotiate, and interact in cultural and social practices. Furthermore, they act and interact with the world through semiotic tools, and become increasingly adept at using these tools without assistance (Razfar & Yang, 2010). Semiotic tools include language, number systems, drawings, diagrams, maps, and all sorts of conventional signs (Vygotsky, 1986). The concept of semiotic mediation leads to an understanding of literacy development as dialectical, collaborative effort of a community of learners (Razfar & Yang, 2010). Vygotsky (1978/1986) showed the significance of semiotic mediation in children's development of higher cognitive ability through the transformation of objects into symbols. As understood by semiotics, in a linguistic event a set of conventions is used to express a particular meaning. The implications for literacy development are significant, and certainly, a sociocultural or cultural historical approach to literacy development is an invaluable tool for understanding these rapid historical shifts (Razfar & Yang, 2010).

Tharp and Gallimore (1988) believe that a sociocultural perspective has implications for understanding school-based learning. In educational settings, a sociocultural approach corresponds with situated learning, or learning that takes place in the same context in which it is applied. Lave and Wagner (1991) further explain that learning should not be simply involve the transmission of abstract and decontextualized knowledge from one individual to another,

but rather, include a social process in which knowledge is co-constructed by both teacher and learner. Several researchers also explored how crossing physical and social boundaries affects literacy and school practices (Gutierrez et al., 1997; Moll et al., 1992). Others still observed through patterns of social practice how reading and writing appear highly contextual, interwoven into local ways of life, sustained by talk, various in form and consequences, and sensitive to ideological complexities of time and place (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Besnier, 1995; Heath, 1983; Scribner & Cole, 1981). Recognizing various community-based or culturally derived organizations in which children and families participate, the affordances of these organizations to literacy practices, and the literacy choices made by non-mainstream families can potentially help literacy researchers understand the complexity of literacy practices and literate identities for children and families.

Through consistent education and support from the adult or community, and participation in social activities that require cognitive and communicative tasks, children gradually master an action or ideal that is valued within their cultural group. What appears to cause enhanced school based literacy abilities are family, community, and school language environments in which children interact intensively with adults and peers to experience talk and text in different genres of oral and written language (Gee, 2001). In particular, teachers and adults play an important role in children's sociocultural literacy learning, as they organize their day with recurrent, interactive literacy events, like morning routines, story time, and sharing. Within the structure of these familiar events, children are provided with things to talk about and people with whom to talk. Teachers and adults also influence the interactional setting by arranging the environment, modeling how to interact with objects and people.

When using a sociocultural lens to understand and analyze the data, one can report the importance of language and literacy as it relates to culture and identity. In theories of learning that align themselves with Cultural-Historical and Activity Theory frameworks (CHAT) (Hicks, 2002), language practices are viewed as central to how culturally specific knowledge is constructed. Sociocultural theory insists that literacy research cannot be divorced from feeling, belonging, and acting to produce situated accounts that link place, history, and relationships (Vygotsky, 1978). Cultural literacy researchers tell about processes of socialization that involve language practices, ways of acting, values and beliefs (Heath, 1983). Children learn that these culturally specific ways with words are related in important ways to how children engage with school literacies (Hicks, 2002). The fact that these ways of knowing and becoming might not mesh with school literacy practices is central to this research.

These ways of knowing are unique to a particular social, cultural, and educational group. The adoption of social and cultural perspectives on literacy learning has inspired broader acceptance and exploration of shared literacy experiences. This view of learning became known as a sociocultural experience (Alexander, 1996), which describes the experience of a learner as a member of a learning community (Brown & Campione, 1990). Research in literacy education seeks to capture the shared understanding of a multitude of knowledge. Gee (1999) explains that a view of reading is a process embedded in a context of social interaction and culture. As children learn social languages, they are also socialized into the communities of practice. Children build cultural models that help them to understand what linguistically normal behavior is for that community. Certainly, a sociocultural perspective on literacy challenges us to examine what counts as literacy in various contexts, the literacy resources available in those

contexts, and the ways in which literacy practices are adopted, rejected, adapted, and/or transformed (Luke, 2003). In an attempt to bridge the sociocultural gap and enhance educational outcomes, students and teachers should work together in developing compatibility between contrasting learning styles, cultures and beliefs.

Language (including print literacy) is one patterned cultural system through which people make sense of the world around them. Individuals have multiple purposes and uses for literacies in their daily lives (Street, 2001). The texts they read, write, and otherwise interact with vary according to the context and purpose. Positioned within such a theoretical framework, this work draws upon perspectives that view language and literacy as a social and cultural practice.

This review of the literature challenges dominant notions of reading and writing as culturally neutral cognitive skills, and expands on the multiple forms of literacy that exist in communities around the world. It is important for literacy practices to be understood within sociocultural contexts, such as the means of communication found within relationships, society, and culture (Besnier, 1995). However, a gap in the literature reveals the need for a study such as this to examine the combination of literacy practices and family ideologies among immigrant families. This research addresses both the sociocultural and multiliterate dimensions of family literacy practices by exploring how these practices are developed at-home and outside of school among first generation immigrant families. In the next chapter, I explain how this study has done that.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Overview

Using the review of the literature above as a point of departure, this chapter presents the overall research design and methodology of my study. I also describe the individual participants, the school, and the town involved in the study. I continue by explaining my data-gathering techniques, management procedures and analysis strategies. Finally I address ethical considerations (including researcher positionality), issues of validity, limitations of the study, and the steps taken to safeguard trustworthiness.

The nature of the questions I set out to examine necessitated a qualitative case study approach. I used data collection methods such as participant observations, interviews, and life histories to investigate the role, scope, and nature of literacy in people's lives as well as in the histories and traditions of which these are a part. This task was greatly assisted by my position as an insider, and access to the families was made possible by my role as a teacher, resident, and even one time student in the district. Because of my various roles, I was able to build a relationship of trust with the children and families.

Qualitative case study research amasses huge amounts of raw data; therefore, it was essential to maintain the data in an organized and timely fashion (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Huberman & Miles, 1983; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1994/1995; Yin, 2003). Stake (1994) emphasizes that data is continuously interpreted since qualitative research is inherently reflective, so data analysis procedures attempted to organize the data as it was collected. Therefore, my data analysis developed by noting patterns and themes in the research and

arriving at comparisons and contrasts to determine conceptual explanations of the case study (Miles & Huberman, 1994). More importantly, my preliminary data analysis was conducted either immediately (post-collection) or simultaneously (with data collection) while the information was fresh in my mind (Merriam, 1998).

Like other qualitative research on language and literacy (e.g., Cazden et al., 1972; Heath, 1983), this study focused on members of particular sociocultural groups previously underrepresented in research and followed them across a variety of literacy events and practices. The questions this study posed lent themselves to a qualitative approach because according to Merriam (2001), “qualitative researchers are interested in understanding the meaning people have constructed...how they make sense of their world and the experiences they have in the world” (p. 6). As Merriam (2001) points out, a strength of case study research is that “[it] offers a means of investigating complex social units consisting of multiple variables of potential importance in understanding the phenomenon” (p. 40).

Yin (1984) defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23). Indeed, case study research offers a better understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. The process of investigating uses of cultural and community events and a subsequent understanding of the social nature of family literacy is best accomplished utilizing case study methodology as the research framework (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). A natural fit emerges in case study research exploring the nature of sociocultural

literacy practices. Within each case, the participants demonstrated how personal qualities like being talkative, literate, or even logical in language use were socially interpreted responses to situations.

The focus of this research was to observe the daily routines and literacy practices of immigrant families at home and out of school. I was primarily interested by the ways in which both cultural and personal experiences shaped the literacy practices of these families. I also wanted to investigate the ways in which the children of immigrant families negotiated the daily routines and literacy practices and they formed their cultural identity. This study attempted to detail the literacy events and practices of four 2nd grade students and their families through teacher observations, interviews, questionnaires, home visits, photographic evidence, and journals. More specifically, this qualitative research study focused on the ways in which children and their families made meaning of their lives within particular contexts. While observing children and their families in their endeavors to read, write, or talk in a first or second language, I assumed that the participants all made sense of oral and written language through their involvement in social and cultural activities (Dyson & Genishi, 1992).

Setting and Participants

To ensure confidentiality, pseudonyms were used for the name of the town, for the schools within the district, and for identifying and discussing the participants.

Setting. The study took place in a public primary school setting in Mallorca Township, New Jersey. Mallorca is a diverse and affluent community in central New Jersey. Mallorca is a thriving community with a rich history, excellent schools, diverse recreation opportunities and a collective commitment to preserving open land and protecting natural resources. The

community has successfully merged rural and suburban lifestyles in a cosmopolitan region. According to the latest U.S. Census Bureau estimates available for 2008, there are approximately 22,958 people calling Mallorca home (Census, 2010), making up 5,803 households and 4,781 families residing in the township. The population density is 535.9 people per square mile. The racial makeup of the township is 84.55% White, 11.52% Asian American, 2.07% African-American, and .09% Native American. Hispanic or Latino of any race was 2.21% of the population.

The median income for a household in the township in 2010 was \$118,850, and the median income for a family was \$129,150. Approximately seventy percent of the residents had a college education or better, and 89.8% were white collar workers. Males had a median income of \$86,687 versus \$55,441 for females. The per capita income for the township was \$48,699 (Census, 2010). The Mallorca Township School District is a comprehensive public school district that serves students in Kindergarten through 12th grade. With the opening of the new high school building in 2005, the new school grade configuration is Orange Elementary School (kindergarten through grade two), Vine Elementary School (grades three and four), Mallorca Lower Middle School (grades five and six), Mallorca Upper Middle School (grades seven and eight) and Mallorca High School (grades nine through twelve).

Participants. Because I was interested in the ways young children negotiated various practices during the emergent literacy stage, I studied families with young children in second grade. Prior research examining immigrant communities focused on children over the age of 11 years (e.g., Hall & Sham, 2007; Orellana et al., 2003; Tse, 1996), so this study has the potential to add to the knowledge about young children and what the early development of their literacy

skills might entail. The purpose of my selection was to determine if a relationship existed between young students' language, literacy, and cultural practices, particularly in terms of what literacy practices are valued among cultures.

Patton (1990) explains that the logic behind purposeful sampling lies in choosing information-rich cases for in depth study. There are several strategies for doing so, and the method employed for this qualitative study is known as comparative studies sampling, as it involved two or more population groups with distinct characteristics (Patton, 1990). Since I already knew that I was looking to fill certain parameters, purposeful selection of the sample allowed me to "hand-pick" participants. As Dane (1990) points out, the advantage of purposeful sampling allowed me to hone in on people and events critical for answering the research questions and objectives.

As previously mentioned, this study attempted to fill the gaps in research on Middle Eastern and Eastern European immigrant families. Therefore, I was looking for families of Russian, Polish, Arabic, or Turkish descent, as these groups represented the most rapidly growing immigrant populations from Eastern European and Middle Eastern countries within the community (Migration Information Source, 2007; Marvasti & McKinnely, 2004).

The sample groups were somewhat homogeneous, however, as all of the participants were of a particular population: they were well educated and came from literate backgrounds, lived in a fairly affluent community, and placed their children in a good school district. Indeed, the role of social class was very important to this research. Because these families experienced a middle- to upper middle-class lifestyle, they could better adjust and fit into the mainstream language and culture while still maintaining their own culture and literacy practices. Clearly,

there are many different immigrant experiences. Conducting this study with other groups of families (e.g., those less fortunate or from a lower social class) might have produced a much different outcome to this study.

For this study, eight 2nd grade students were selected purposefully (Miles & Huberman, 1994) based on their home language, immigrant status, and cultural background. I gained initial data using Genesis, the Mallorca Township online student information system. I logged on using my teacher account, and clicked on the tab for Student Data. This opened up the possibility to search for student contact information, grade level, and demographic details for every student in the district. From this page, I navigated to the advanced search engine and specified on the drop down menu under “grade” to search for students currently enrolled in second grade. I simultaneously indicated on the drop down menu under “home language,” to search for Russian. The results of this search yielded two children in the second grade who spoke Russian as their home language. I clicked on their student identification number to access their contact information, and recorded this in my research notebook. I repeated the same search process for the “home language” of Polish, which revealed another three students; Arabic, two students; and Turkish, one student. The search for students who spoke Hebrew, Slovak, Slovenian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, or Ukrainian as their home language yielded no results. Therefore, my search turned up a total of eight students as possible participants.

Using the contact information gained from Genesis, I reached out to the eight possible participants. An initial email was sent to the eight families to introduce myself, to describe the nature of the research, and to determine if they would like to take part in the study. Five families replied to the email, indicating that they would be happy to help. The children of these

families were called to my classroom before school one day, where I formally introduced myself and explained how I was going to proceed with the research. I handed them each an envelope containing both the student consent and parent consent forms. Together, we read through the student consent form, and I asked if they had any questions. I instructed them to take both of the forms home via backpack mail to reread with their parents, sign, and return when they were ready. I explained that once I had all of the forms, we could start the project. By the end of the week, I received four of the student and parent consent forms. I contacted the fifth family again, but did not get a response. The child indicated that her mom did not want her to participate in the study after all, so I continued the study with the remaining four participants.

The four children were once again called to my classroom before school to receive their materials, which included a notebook for writing or drawing, markers, and a disposable camera. They were instructed on how to use the camera, and were asked to take pictures of places in their home or outside of school where they like to read, write, etc., as well as the people with whom they liked to perform these activities. They were given written instructions to review at home, and could come back to my classroom at any time if they had questions. They were asked to return the notebook and the camera within a two week time frame so that I could develop the pictures and set a date for the student focus group interview. Along with these materials, a parent questionnaire was included for the families (see appendix A). The questionnaire asked for information regarding their family make-up, daily routines and literacy practices, and immigration status. The purpose of the parent questionnaire was primarily to determine if the families would fit the limitation of "immigrant status," and all of the parents indicated that they were the first generation of their family to come to America. The term "first

generation" refers to the actual immigrant. They are the first in their lineage to immigrate to a new country. The term "second generation" may be used to describe the children of immigrant parents, first in a family line to be born in the new country (The American Heritage® Dictionary of the English Language, 2009).

Students. Children's participation in research has come into focus recently, building on the beliefs that children, just like adults, hold their own views and opinions (Einarsdottir, 2005). In order to privilege children as the subjects of research, researchers have used a range of methods that such as participant observation, focus groups, small group discussion, interviews and structured activities (Mauthner, 1997), and allowed children to express their beliefs and views through means other than verbal language; using, for example, art work, photography, songs, videos and picture stories (Mauthner, 1997). From a sociocultural perspective (Vygotsky, 1978), childhood is viewed as a social construction (and children, the social actors), so this growing trend involving children in research not only gives them a voice, but also allows for them to take part in factors that influence their lives.

The decision to work with approximately four participants was based on the results of the pilot study in which I worked with only one child and his family. I felt that working with one participant was too small a number to provide a wide range of experience for meaningful comparisons or analyses. I also found that the information gained from only one family's experience was too limiting in my attempt to appreciate and understand the kinds of literacy practices developed through participation in cultural and community organizations. Therefore, in selecting students for participation in this study, I considered four to be a large enough number to observe the maximum variety in the types of literacy practices that are developed

amongst diverse cultures and communities. In addition, four participants seemed to be a manageable size for scheduling interviews and observations and for manipulating the data.

The students selected for participation represented a range of ethnicities, cultures, and languages. Of the four students who continued with the study, one was female, and three were male. Two of the children (one male, one female) had families who originated from Russia, and spoke Russian at home. One (male) child's family came to the United States from Turkey, and spoke Turkish at home (speaking Arabic only for religious purposes). And lastly, one (male) child's family came from Egypt, and spoke Arabic at home.

Families. The pilot study also revealed that the ideal participant for this study was a family in which the parents have recently immigrated to the United States, have diverse cultural and literacy practices, and who were willing to record the cultural and literacy practices that took place at-home and outside of school. The rationale for doing so was to facilitate a focus on similarities, in addition to differences, in what the participants experience.

Families were also an important component of the research. As previously mentioned, families were selected based on their cultural background, as indicated on a parent questionnaire (see Appendix A), and must be first generation immigrants to this country. Lacking in most data collection and analyses that link families, literacy, and intergenerationality is an examination of the variations in family forms and structures and the role of non-parent family members (Gadsden, 2000). Therefore, considering variations of family and the role of non-parent family members became very important, as considerable data suggests that children access and have available to them a wider circle of caregivers who are likely to make significant contributions to their cognitive and social development (Taylor et al., 1990). For the

purposes of this study, therefore, “family” was defined as a group of people living together and functioning as a single household. This definition primarily consisted of parents and their children, but included any member of the extended family living in the primary household: parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, and grandparents, who shared a responsibility in the children’s success, and were involved in supporting the children as they learn and develop (Rodriguez-Brown, 2010; de la Vega, 2007). With this definition in mind, I asked all members living in the household to review and sign consent forms in the case that I decided to include a portion of their information in the data. However, I focused primarily on the words and actions (gained from observations and interviews) of the primary caregivers during data analysis.

The family played an important role in supporting the purpose of this study, as I primarily looked at the interactions between people and the culture valued within the family. I also paid close attention to the inter-generational piece, including the parent’s story of how and when they learned to read, how they felt about their children’s literacy, the ways in which they scaffolded learning for younger students, and who played the role of the dominant literacy mentor within the family. Finally, I discussed with the family their feelings about moving to a new country and their experiences as they forged a new identity within the United States.

Duration of the Project

The data collection phase of the project lasted for a total of three months. In the first week, parents completed their surveys. In the second and third weeks, the students selected had time to collect information at home. In the fourth week, (or shortly thereafter, as soon as the photographs were developed) students had an opportunity to discuss and debrief about the project during a group interview and follow up session. The second and third month of the

research was allocated for family visits, background interviews, and semi-structured interviews.

Table 1. Data Collection Timeline

WEEK NUMBER	ACTIVITY
1	Parent Questionnaires distributed
2	Students and families purposefully selected to participate
3-4	Student journal and photograph at-home literacy practices
5	Student Focus Group Interview
6-7	Home observation #1/ Literacy Interview
8-9	Home observation #2/Cultural Interview
10	Follow-up

The data consisted of 43 hours of home visits and observations, 12 hours of transcribed interviews, as well as seven memos documenting insights and questions that emerged from my participation with the family (see Table 1).

Data Collection

Data collection took place during the fall of 2010. Work on gaining access, recruiting participants, and outlining the IRB procedures was completed during the summer prior to data collection.

Data Gathering Procedure

The evaluation methodology was applied by implementing procedures designed to address the research questions and achieve the purpose of this study. The participants were selected from the public school system in Mallorca Township in New Jersey, United States of America. I selected students enrolled in the 2nd grade of this public school and their families to participate in the study based on their home language and immigrant status. Information regarding their home language was gained from the online student information system;

information regarding immigrant status was later gained from a parent questionnaire, which also included components of family history and ethnicity. The students were personally invited to participate in the study. They were asked to use a journal to write about their language, literacy, or cultural events, and take photographs of daily routines or literacy practices within their home. The students discussed and described their journals and photographs during one 45-minute focus group interview during the school day. The parents were invited to participate through email communication and backpack mail. The completion of two one-hour home visits with each family helped to gain firsthand knowledge of family dynamics, home layout, and material artifacts. Two 30-minute interviews were also conducted with each family to learn the educational background and cultural information of adult participants.

In accordance with qualitative research tradition (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2003), multiple data sources were collected. All data sources were collected by the primary investigator and stored for purposes of confidentiality in a locked cabinet within the home office of the primary investigator. In addition, all data gathered from participant resources were collected with explicit permission from the participants and in full compliance with Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines. In order to get an in-depth look into the realm of literacy and culture in the at-home environment, I relied upon primary sources of data for this study: observational field notes, audiotapes, transcribed interviews, home visits, photographic evidence, artifacts, and journals. Interview data was gained from two half-hour audio semi-structured interviews. The interview protocols (see Appendix B, C), observations (see Appendix E, H), and artifact collection (see Appendix D) were designed to investigate further the central research questions as well as issues raised by the literature

review, and finally, to facilitate data analysis. The data was collected and reviewed on a case-by-case basis to detail the cultural backgrounds and literacy events that had the possibility of contributing to learning.

Data Sources

The dataset included interviews, home visits, and photographs. I analyzed the data reflexively and considered not only how my presence generated narratives but how it influenced what I encountered within homes. Typed field notes, typed researcher memos, and transcribed interviews were coded manually several times, consistent with the sociocultural emphasis on the semiotic mediation of student learning that occurs in and through every day practices, which includes both material (e.g., books) and ideational (e.g. character analysis) tools and artifacts (Cole, 1996; Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

Table 2. Data Sources

SOURCE	Question #1	Question #2	Question #3	Question #4
Parent Questionnaire				
Student Photographs/Notebooks	*	*	*	
Student Interview	*	*	*	*
Education Interview	*	*	*	*
Cultural Interview	*	*	*	*
Home Observation	*			
Photographs/Artifacts	*			
Field Notes				

As shown in the table, the primary data sources for this analysis were the transcribed

audio recording from the student focus group interview and the transcribed audio recordings from the four family focus group interviews. Although I collected data from a variety of sources, I mainly used the transcribed interview data for coding purposes. Other sources, such as photographs, artifact catalogs, and home observations, were coded (if possible) but were primarily used for triangulating the data.

Parent Questionnaires. The initial data was gained from a parent questionnaire (see Appendix A) administered to the parents of four 2nd grade students. The questionnaire was sent home via backpack mail with the children at the start of the study (late September). The questionnaire was generated to help me gain a broader picture of the family's daily routines and literacy practices, along with their demographic information, so that I could start to gather their "focused life history" (Seidman, 1998, p.11). The "focused" portion of the questionnaire provided a brief overview of the families' home literacy experiences, including their cultural and linguistic background, languages spoken, and family history. Sample questions include, "When did you (and your family) come to America," "What languages are spoken at home," and "Are you a first or second generation American." The parents returned the questionnaires within five school days.

Student Journals and Photographs. Data was also collected through notebook entries and photographs prepared by the children. The students were given oral and written instructions for carrying out the responsibilities of journaling and photographing. First, they were called to my classroom one morning to review all of the materials they had at their disposal to complete their "project." The students were asked to write, draw, or photograph anything they felt was evidence of literacy in their daily lives. Together we discussed and

described some examples of the experiences they could potentially capture for their assignment. Then, they were given a tutorial on how to use the camera. The students were asked to return the cameras and journals in two weeks and were encouraged to visit me in the classroom if they had any questions. Written instructions (see appendix D) were included in an envelope along with the materials for children and parents to review at home. The written instructions explained the timeline for the project and gave examples of items or pictures they could capture to show their at-home language, literacy, and cultural experiences. Examples included the places where they read and write, the family members with whom they read and write, the books that they own, any cultural traditions (holiday celebrations or family gatherings), different spaces, different playthings, their artwork, and other children. Although it was undeterminable what would be returned, I expected that the photos would depict several areas of everyday life, such as (a) family and home, (b) playmates, (c) the children's media, (d) leisure time activities, (e) work and chores, (f) children's consumer habits, and (g) the neighborhood or environment.

The decision to provide students with a camera was again from the pilot study and the potential that photographs have in revealing information. When the children used a camera to explain what they found important in their daily lives, they did not have to rely solely on verbal language. The photographs provided a graphic element that they could use to combine visual and verbal language as they communicated their ideas and values. Photography is an expanding method in research with children and is regarded as having many advantages as a method to use with children. Several researchers have noted that by giving the children cameras that they can use to take pictures of what they want, an attempt is made to increase

children's power (Clark & Moss, 2001; Barker & Weller, 2003; Cook & Hess, 2003).

Since I asked students to take photographs of the social spaces within their homes (e.g., in the family room, the kitchen, etc.), and then used the photographs during the student focus group interview, the photographs provided a very flexible type of data. In this way, photographs were also used to engage in dialogue and to look beyond the content and further into the spaces and practices of immigrant families. This openness to interpretation left room for collaboration on the data material in the analytical phase.

Collier and Collier (1986) explain how photography can be used, not only for illustrations, but as a research method that could replace field notes as data for analysis and can be used as a medium for dialogue in interviews. Therefore, adding visuals to this qualitative data helped to explain important social processes, as the images could be interpreted and analyzed in their social and historical context by those who are able to use their personal knowledge to describe that context. In addition, photographs helped to reduce the ambiguity of what the data actually convey. Another value is that photographic data can be interpreted by the participants in the study as the "potential range of data enlarges beyond that contained in the photographs themselves" (Collier & Collier, 1986, p.99).

In addition to the photographs, the children were asked to write and/or illustrate in their journal about language and literacy use or cultural events at home and outside of school. They were encouraged, but not limited, to write about instances when they engage in language or literacy practices, such as where they read, what they read, and their feelings about reading. They were also instructed to indicate places in their home where they could write and draw, such as a desk or writing table, and discuss the materials that were available for this practice.

They were asked to write in the journal that was given to them and photograph any community activities or events in which they participated, such as church or temple, dance, and sports, but in all of the cases, the children only included at-home experiences.

Using journals and photography was particularly beneficial when working with young children, especially children with diverse written or verbal language (Cook & Hess, 2003). The children were active participants, as they were able to capture meaningful parts in their own lives. Allowing children the chance to take photographs also provided them with a concrete product in which they could take pride. The photographs also provided them with an artifact that they could discuss and analyze later during the focused group interview (Clark & Moss, 2001; Cook & Hess, 2003). Finally, giving the children the responsibility of a camera helped to forge a relationship of trust with the researcher (Barker & Weller, 2003).

One advantage of asking children to participate in the research was to allow them to take control of their own learning. Their photographs and journal entries reflected matters (such as situations, spaces, or events) of importance to them. Additionally, as the children discussed, interpreted, and explained their information in the focus group interviews, they were empowered by offering personal evidence of literacy practices and events.

Allowing children to document certain items or practices might also be seen as a limitation. It is possible for the children to overlook part of their daily routines that could be extremely informative or revealing of their literacy practices. In this situation, I relied on their ability to judge what was important in their lives to lead the discussion and augment the data. I also used the focus group interview to gain insight or elaborate on any instances that weren't documented by the students. In addition, another possible limitation is a child's intention

versus action. It may have been their intention to capture a family member or a book in their picture, but instead, they photographed the couch by mistake. Again, I used the focus group interview to clarify any of the mistakes that were made, and followed up with the at-home observations to fill in any gaps.

Student Focus Group Interview. Once the two-week period of journaling and data collection was complete and the photographs were developed, the children were invited to participate in a focus group interview. The focus group interview occurred during the lunch period at school. While the rest of the 2nd grade ate lunch in the cafeteria, the four children and I met in my classroom. We used the entire 45-minute period to discuss and review the journals and photographs. The conversations were tape-recorded and transcribed, and an extra set of photographs was made for the children to take home.

We talked about the journals and photographs, and discussed their thoughts and opinions on how their literacy practices and family traditions were developed at home. Several questions required the children to think about their daily routines surrounding literacy, such as, “Can you tell more me about this picture, like what were you reading?” and “Can you tell me about some of your favorite places to read in your house?” They were all eager to share, and many had a picture or a memory to accompany their answer. In a few cases, children who had already answered wanted to share again based on another child’s response.

Reviewing the photographs during the focus group interviews assisted in the on-going data collection, not just as a tool to double-check the accuracy of previously-collected data. For example, as the students discussed their at-home literacy experiences, I took notes of what to look for in my future interviews and observations. I was able to recognize and pinpoint several

items depicted in the photographs while carrying out the home observations.

The purpose of interviewing the students during the current study was to determine the literacy practices, both within the home and the community that they believed to be important to their literacy development. By using children's journals and photographs to guide the interview, the children were able to speak from their own perspective. They ultimately decided what to photograph and what to discuss, and thus, the questions had to be adapted to the photos (Clark & Moss, 2001; Cook & Hess, 2003). An added benefit of conducting a focus group interview was the possibility that others would want to "join in" on the conversation, or "recall experiences" when one person mentioned something that spurred their own memories and opinions (Lofland & Lofland, 1984). Based on a previously conducted study, I found that including data from focus groups helped to make the research come alive. The data gained from the students who participated in the focus group interview was very insightful, as it revealed what they perceived to be important in their cultural and literate lives.

The decision to conduct student interviews in a focus group came not only from a previous independent study, but also from several previous studies documenting the effectiveness of this practice. For example, Schutt (1996) defined focus groups as an unstructured group interview in which the group leader actively encourages discussion among participants and relies on in-group interaction and discussion of pertinent topics. Focus groups with children are a valuable method for eliciting their views and experiences while discussing important questions relevant to the study (Krueger, 1988; Morgan, 1997; Peek & Fothergill, 2007). Focus groups with children not only capture their perspectives, original ideas, and insights, but also serve as an innovative approach to understanding their experiences from a

developmental perspective, as the responses that they generate may not come to light in structured data collection (Graue & Walsh, 1998). In addition, several authors have also recommended interviewing children in pairs or groups (Graue & Walsh, 1998; Greig & Taylor, 1999; Einarsdottir, 2002). Graue and Walsh (1998) suggested that children are more relaxed with friends than alone with an adult. In addition, friends help each other with the answers and help keep answers truthful (Graue & Walsh, 1998).

The advantages of conducting a group interview were weighed against the disadvantages. Several drawbacks to using a focus group may be, for example, that the quieter children are influenced by one or two dominant children in the session. As the moderator of the focus group, I made every effort to manage the discussion so that all children had an equal share in the conversation. Since this was a study involving only four children, the results from these sessions may not represent a larger number of people. Furthermore, focus groups are typically conducted in a somewhat artificial environment, such as a meeting room. Since this interview took place in my classroom, the location may have influenced the responses generated. This is frequently the argument that researchers will use when recommending an alternative to focus groups; however, these considerations did not deter me from using a focus group because I felt these children were very comfortable in this situation. Another potential drawback was that sometimes children display atypical behavior when they are in school. Based on my initial meeting with these children, and impromptu discussions with their classroom teachers, I was confident that they would be cooperative and earnest during our interview.

Family Literacy Interview. I conducted one literacy interview with each family for a

total of four interviews. The literacy interview focused on the parents' educational history, including how and when they learned to read, in what language or country of origin, and how they felt about their own schooling. I focused on the parents' literate lives and educational history, their cultural background and experience, family ideologies, and their ability to forge an identity within the United States. By doing so, I attempted to gain insight on how they have become involved in the local community, and how the move affected their family and their cultural traditions. For example, some questions asked, "Can you tell me about your reading history?" and "When and how did you learn to read?" The interviews also asked for the parents' perception of their child's literacy development. Other questions included, "How do you feel about your children's literacy?" and "Can you tell me about how you incorporate family stories into your daily lives?" One drawback to conducting family literacy interviews was the possibility that participants would only provide idealized versions of procedures (Mehan, 1979). However, by making home visits and triangulating the data, my goal was to understand literacy practices in their likely unaltered state. The literacy interviews also informed the families' use of artifacts within the home. I made sure to concentrate on any objects or artifacts that were mentioned during the interviews, to discover admired qualities and infer about underlying norms and themes, and to use as a basis for further questioning. When I asked, "Can you tell me about any special artifacts (or things) in your home," each family pointed out several specific items and gave a detailed account of what the item was, what it was used for, and why they had it in their home.

Family Cultural Interviews. I also conducted one semi-structured cultural interview. The cultural interview focused on the norms, values, understandings, and rules of behavior for

a group or society (Rubin & Rubin, 1995). This type of interview reports on typical shared activities and their meanings. The cultural interview, besides being the expert's story, is credible because it consists of the words of members of the culture. In cultural interviews, one learns "how the people see, understand, and interpret their world" (Rubin & Rubin, 1995, p.195). Since good interview skills require practice and reflection, which aid in the analysis and reporting of results (Rubin & Rubin, 1995), I listened to what my participants had to say about their experiences, and identified commonalities in what they revealed and found to be important or concerning. Sample questions on the cultural interview included, "Can you tell me about your life in a new country, and a new community?" and "Can you tell me about any traditions that you've continued in this country?"

The interviews were scheduled in advance so that I could come prepared with some guiding questions. Each of the interviews took place in a time and location of the participant's choosing and typically lasted between 30 minutes and 1 hour. Although I was willing to make accommodations for participants' schedules and preferences to conduct interviews at an alternate location, I was fortunate enough that all of the families welcomed me into their home. Only once was it necessary to conduct a phone interview to accommodate for scheduling needs. I audiotaped conversations with participants including children, parents, and other family members who were present in the household. I transcribed the audiotapes soon after they were made. My transcriptions also included any non-verbal events (moments of silence and their duration, modulations, emphasis, meaningful gestures and expressions, etc.) as well as the verbal events. Handwritten notes assisted in recording such events and were used to supplement the interview data.

The semi-structured interviews were in depth and covered multiple aspects of the participants' lives, such as general life circumstances, literacy at home and outside of school, and cultural and educational experiences. These interviews enabled me to carry out a research method in which the questions were prepared in advance and I could guide the questions to focus the study. To clarify on the meaning that participants provided throughout each interview, I sometimes inserted additional questions or combined questions from interviews to account for a new focus or purpose.

Artifact Collection. Artifact cataloging was an important part of the data collection. It proved to be a less intrusive method of collecting data while also providing additional detail and evidence of corroboration or contradiction as compared to other collected data (Merriam, 1998). Following Yin's (2003) caution, though, I decided that while gleaning material from artifacts, I had to remember that these artifacts were designed for purposes other than research; therefore, I used these sources judiciously.

Objects such as collections of glasses, trophies, and the like, are just some examples of possessions that show one's need to make things tangible, including relationships, as they manifest themselves in accumulation. Each family identified materials that were either historically, culturally, or personally important to them, such as a Russian Matryoskha doll, or Egyptian Papyrus paper. Each item was recorded in the artifact catalog (see Appendix D) used to collect data related to certain material objects found in the participant's home. The detailed questions from the artifact catalog, such as "Who made it?", "What is it made of?" and "What is it used for?" led me to a greater understanding of the material being observed. I also recorded a complete description by observing the size, weight, and style or pattern (if possible).

Since material culture can be described as a subset of culture (Miller, 2010), this part of the data collection provided a deeper understanding of what was important within social and cultural contexts and the implications for learners. The collection of artifacts displayed in the homes of these families, accompanied by the stories of how they've been accumulated, helped me see how a particular group of immigrants might maintain their cultural practices through a multitude of diverse materials.

Home Observation. Similar to interviews, home observations were conducted carefully with strict consideration for the research participants. The families were all very cooperative, which made the home observations feel casual and comfortable. I had known two of the families previously, so I felt a little more comfortable creating a level of closeness with them. In one case, I taught the older brother of one of the participants and had come to know the parents through school. In another instance, I was the summer camp counselor for one of the participants and spoke with the family on occasion. The two families with whom I did not have a previous relationship were still very welcoming and made every effort to make me feel at ease when I entered the home.

I completed two home visits to conduct observations and interviews. Although I requested to observe only everyday interactions and routines as opposed to special occasions or events, I ultimately left the invitation entirely up to the individual family. For example, they invited me into their home for an afternoon visit, an evening meal, or a holiday celebration. I looked for evidence of the material culture, religious or cultural artifacts, and the physical layout of the home within the place that the family had chosen to inhabit. During the home visit, I also inquired if the family participated in any community-based activities, such as church

or temple, dance, sports, and childcare.

In addition, I observed and recorded instances when the child or the caregiver initiated book sharing at any time during the home visit. The information obtained enabled me to hone in on the family's literacy behaviors and the interactions among family members in their usual surroundings. The observations of the home environment also took into account the presence of children's books and adult reading materials. For example, I asked one family to give me a tour of their house and requested especially to see what they read and where they read. I noted their perception of appropriate and accessible reading material and what they believed to be important in their everyday literacy routine, such as books, magazines, maps, or online information. I also took special consideration of how materials in their native language were used within the home space and literacy routines.

Also within the home setting I noted the arrangement of seating, the location of children's individual possessions, and the placement of shared materials. For example, supplies such as pencils, markers, and paper may be in a central shared location within reach of all family members. The spatial distribution of reading and reference materials, along with any computer or other electronic equipment, mattered in my observation as well. I was looking to see if these materials were in reach of children as well as adults, if they were in designated areas or in separate locations (e.g., a computer room). I was also looking at the kind of material that was on the wall, such as objects or decorations. I prepared initial maps of home spaces that were useful not only in and of themselves, but also potentially as data collection tools. For example, I was interested in how family members arrange themselves when choosing a seating arrangement, or when circulating among places and spaces in the home (Dyson & Genishi,

2005).

Because students display their cultural values and knowledge results from their family, observing them at their residence was a necessary component of this study. My role as the observer in this study played out as “observer-as-participant” (Adler & Adler, 1994). Moll & Cammarota (2010) explain that documenting knowledge of households provides an important cultural framing of families and students with implications for the teaching of literacy as a meaningful practice. Therefore, by including students’ home language and cultural experiences into their schooling, the research that includes home observation “advances an academic agenda while situating the students' work in the broader social context of household and community life” (Moll & Cammarota, 2010, p. 291).

Field Notes. Field notes were also taken during the interviews with the purpose of extending questions or as personal notes for further investigation. These notes allowed me to extend the understanding of what was being observed, and sometimes help to interpret activities from participants’ perspectives. Much of what I wanted to know about language and literacy was embedded in observable every day activities within the home, as I attempted to seek multiple views on the world that immigrant families were exploring. I added a section for notes about parenting styles, child’s behaviors, and communication patterns to reflect the social practices associated with everyday life. The interaction reports (see appendix H) and the three-column field notes (see appendix F) reflected the theoretical assumptions that interaction with adult members of the family or community play a role in young children’s composing language and are dynamically linked to their efforts. A description of nonverbal behavior incorporates modes of expression that are lost in the audio recording. I also wrote conceptual

memos to reflect on my observations and research. These memos were usually written shortly after conducting an interview or home observation to record my thoughts or inferences during the exchange. The memos were primarily used to give life to the transcribed interview data and were used for purposes of data triangulation. The memos were taken after visiting with families to capture any expressions or actions that were not recorded by the tape recorder. They were taken as a tool to help examine ideas, raise questions, and record my thinking. Ultimately, these notes helped to give an ethnographic sense of being in the world of the case.

Follow up

Follow up was offered to the student participants during a whole group interview session, at which time they were able to meet with the researcher in the educational setting. They had time to review and discuss the photographs and describe how their language, literacy, or cultural background was depicted. They also had the opportunity to identify any events or activities that they felt impacted their literacy development. Follow up was also offered to the families during subsequent contact to review the transcribed interviews and determine if anything had been left out.

Data Analysis

Framework of Analysis. The design of this study relied on a sociocultural framework (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1985) to analyze and interpret the data. The analysis was designed to investigate closely the relationship between the social and cultural elements of literacy and language development.

First I categorized the everyday literacy practices in individual immigrant families, generating descriptive codes for the tasks, events, and routines documented. Second, I sought

to determine the normative practices that constituted literacy activity in particular—or the sociocultural organization of the children’s engagement with and around the texts used. That is, in addition to describing how language and literacy were routinely organized, my aim was to generate a typology about how particular “ways with texts” constituted families’ notions of involvement in literacy activities. Third, I used analytic coding to examine closely the literacy activities that involved engagement into and beyond texts, including discussion, artifacts, and cultural practices.

Specifically, I examined the discourse practices, participation structures and interactional patterns (Au, 1980). At the same time, I used ongoing analysis during data collection to determine if and how individual families’ experiences differed. The data amounted to a complex collage of materials, which were analyzed with reference to detailed field notes, recorded just after each field visit.

The data was analyzed as follows:

Table 3. Data Analysis

DATA COLLECTION	PROCESS OF ANALYSIS
Parent Questionnaire	Surveys reviewed for information related to personal histories, home language, and children’s reading preferences.
Student Journals	Close reading of journals analyzed for children’s literacy practices and reading preferences.
Student Focus Group Interview	Interview transcripts analyzed for children’s linguistic flexibility and literacy practices. Also analyzed were the children’s reflections on photographs.
Home observations	Home observations analyzed for interaction setting, including how living spaces were organized and used, and how artifacts were displayed within the home.

Cultural and Literacy Interview	Close reading of transcripts were analyzed for descriptions of cultural or religious traditions and the literacy practices or events in which families and children engaged.
Photographs/Artifacts	Discussion of photographs and artifact catalogue analyzed for personal/social/emotional elements and the relationship between visual and historical effects.
Researcher Memos	Collection of relevant facts used in order to adequately addresses the research questions.

This study called for two levels of analysis. The first level consisted of a case-by-case analysis to describe the families' life histories. The second level consisted of cross case analysis to identify common themes among the cases. Explanations in the data came from cycling back and forth to understand the dynamics of the individual cases and across cases for the effects of key variables. Comparisons within and between cases were made to identify similarities and differences among patterns of social and cultural practices of literacy learning. By using a sociocultural theory of literacy development (Vygotsky, 1978), the analysis of the data enabled me to gain an understanding of how social and cultural events shaped the literacy practices of immigrant children. An analysis of this data formed the basis for the discussion of the study. The discussion and the recommendations that follow were grounded in the preceding review of literature and used to further the research and practice in the field.

Coding Scheme. For purposes of this study the coding process was guided by the primary research question: What kinds of literacy practices do children of immigrant families participate in at home and outside of school to foster learning? In addition, the three sub-questions were instrumental in directing the coding system. Beginning during data collection,

coding and analysis continued throughout the study in an overlapping, cyclical process (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss & Corbin, 1990), involving the constant comparison of data and the development of themes (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For example, with transcribed interviews I read each line of the transcript, coded excerpts into with meaningful labels that described what was going on in the section. Then, I conducted a second, more in-depth reading and categorization to reflect on previous codes, discover new relationships, and begin identifying common themes across the data. Finally, further in-depth coding examined the tools and artifacts that families used to maintain cultural practices, but I also drew on conceptual categories to analyze the affordances, consequences, and outcomes related to the practices that constituted literacy activity.

I initially developed six categories that stemmed from the literature review. Since I was interested in finding the types of literacy practices at home and outside of school, as well as the participants' perceptions of the value of these literacy practices, I developed the codes of *literacy practices* (Heath, 1983) and *interaction setting* (Genishi & Dyson, 2009) to capture the pieces of the data that pertained to the related research question. For example, Kaban described how his bedroom had some toys and sporting equipment, a book shelf, and a desk used for reading and other homework. Their use of this shared space for certain activities was coded for literacy practices and interaction setting. Additionally, I was looking for the participants' perception of the role of language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices. Therefore, I developed the codes of *sociolinguistic flexibility* (Youssef, 1993) and *biography* (Seidman, 1998) to isolate pieces of the data that described their language use, as well as their social, cultural, and historical background. For example, Mrs. Feigen explained

how she grew up in Armenia, but attended a Russian school and therefore learned to speak and read in both Armenian and Russian. This was coded for sociolinguistic flexibility because of her use of dual languages, and also for biography because she was describing her educational background. Finally, to answer the question of what kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students, I used the codes of *intergenerational patterns* (Gadsden, 2000) and *multitemporality* (Levine, 1997) to illustrate the relationships between parents, children, communities. Once I coded the data into these categories, I realized that further coding was needed to create distinct piles of information. Therefore, within each coding category, several sub-codes were developed to adequately explain the findings. Further discussion of each code and sub code follows the table.

Table 4. Coding Scheme

CODE	SUBCODE	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Biography	Experiences/Narratives: Cultural Identity, Educational History	Family, Social, Religious, Class, and Cultural Background	Parent's narrative of their educational history.
Literacy Practices	Daily Routines, Navigating Texts	Daily routines involving literacy, vocabulary used	Reading with adults/parents before bedtime.
Linguistic Flexibility	Language used at home, Maintaining language through literacy	Discourse patterns within the family and community	Switching between two languages.
Intergenerational Patterns	Working with relatives, Communicating with relatives, Group Identity	Interactions among family members, especially parents, grandparents	Grandparents/parents helping children with homework

Interaction Setting	At Home Outside of School	People and places involved in experiencing culture or literacy	Participating in reading and writing at home or outside of school.
Multitemporality	Time Space	Relating to the sequence of time, distinguished from spaces used.	Discussion or storytelling about home or artifacts

For the category of “Biography,” I identified instances from the transcribed interviews where parents described their life history, such as what life was like in their home country, or their reflection on their own education before coming to the United States. Since much of the interview data focused on the life history of each family, it became necessary to develop two sub codes to handle the many excerpts. Therefore, the sub code of Experiences/Narratives for educational history was created to capture the participants’ stories and educational experiences, both in their home country and in the United States. For example, Mr. Feigen shared with me that he finished college in his home country, but left to visit the United States before he could take his comprehensive exam. He never returned to take the test, and therefore, never graduated from college. Additionally, the sub code of “Experiences/Narratives of Cultural Identity” was used for the excerpts that contained participants’ accounts of their heritage, along with their perception of cultural identity as they create a home in the United States.

For the category of “Literacy Practices,” I coded instances from both transcribed interviews and home observations that depicted the literacy events and practices experienced by participating within the family and cultural system. Several other data sources, such as

photographs and artifacts, were used for purposes of triangulation. Since my framework for understanding of literacy as a social practice viewed the everyday ways in which people use reading, writing, and texts in the world, this coding category is strongly linked to my overarching research question. However, as my coded excerpts on literacy practices grew in number, it became necessary to further distribute the data into two sub codes: “Daily Routines” and “Navigating Texts.” The first identified were the literacy practices that occurred within families’ daily routines. For example, one family described how they told stories together, mainly at bedtime, or the mother would read to them in her native language. This was coded as a daily literacy routine. The second sub code contained excerpts on how families used a variety of texts, such as books, newspapers, magazines, and religious material, at some point in carrying out their literacy events and practices.

For the category of “Linguistic Flexibility,” I was looking for instances of reading, writing, or speaking at home or outside of school that were conducted in either English or the home language(s). This code was born from the second research question that was primarily interested in learning the participants’ perceptions of the role that language and identity play in literacy practices. Therefore, I began by coding excerpts from the transcribed interviews in which the participants described their preference for using one language over another in their home. As the data for this code was compiled, I noticed the need to create sub codes for “Language Use at Home” and “Maintaining Language through Literacy.” For example, the first sub code contained an excerpt that explains how one family speaks English at home, because the wife is American, but the father and child speak in the native language in order to communicate with the grandparents, who only speak Russian. This passage from the data not

only shows their ability to switch back and forth between languages, but their reasons for doing so within the home. The second sub code of maintaining language through literacy contains excerpts was used to capture instances where parents and children would take part in reading and writing activities at home and outside of school, either English or their native language, to serve a particular purpose or to complete an assignment.

For the category of “Intergenerational patterns,” I coded excerpts from transcribed interviews to identify interactions among family members, especially children with parents or grandparents. Again, I used other data sources, such as photographs and home observations, to triangulate the data from the interviews. I was looking for the ways in which education from adults gave children the support to master an action or ideal that is valued within their cultural group. By interacting with other family members, children can acquire the values and beliefs that have the potential to shape their school success and reading development. As the data emerged, I found that I could further separate the quotes into two sub codes. The first, “Working with Relatives,” contained examples where children were helped and supported in their school work or their at home language use by parents or other adults in the family. The second sub code, “Communicating with Relatives,” contained information on how parents and children maintained connections with their family members both here and overseas. This coding category helped to answer the research questions that asked about the kinds of ideologies about literacy that immigrant communities promote among parents and students.

For the category of “Interaction Setting,” I looked for places in which the daily routines and the intergenerational communications occurred. In particular, I paid close attention to the places at home and outside of school that the families frequented, and to the ways in which

language and literacy were situated within family and community settings. Again, the transcribed interview data, along with select photographs and the home observations provided me with the greatest sources of information for this coding category. As the quoted text and images emerged from the data, I developed additional sub codes to further separate the information. I designated one sub code to categorize interaction settings within the “Home,” and a second sub code designated for experiences set “Outside of School.” This code and ensuing sub code directly related to my original research question, which focuses on the types of literacy practices that children of immigrant families participate in at home and outside of school to foster learning. An example of an excerpt that was coded in this section comes from the Feigen family, who explained, “We send [Janna], to Russian school on Sundays, where she learns pretty much everything—math, chess, reading—all in Russian.” This excerpt was coded as an example of *learning outside of school*. Excerpts such as these helped to detail elements of the situated nature of literacy and learning among children of immigrants.

For the coding category of “Multitemporality,” I looked for issues of time and space to explain how families bridged time and distance between their home country and the United States. In particular, I was interested in discovering how material culture was displayed in the home, used as discussion points for the family, or valued as mementos of their home country. Objects and artifacts have the possibility of spanning time by being passed down through generations or being of historic quality, and also have the possibility of spanning the space between the home country and the United States. Shared patterns of cultural activity and objects identify the members of a cultural group, and distinguishing one group from another. Therefore, it was important to view culture, including material culture, as inseparable from

language and literacy. This coding category was developed to recognize how objects and artifacts complemented the types of literacy practices used or valued by members of diverse cultural systems, or contributed to the ideologies about literacy among parents and students. This category directly relates to the literature on social spaces, and helps to answer the research question that sought to identify the ideologies about literacy that immigrant communities promote among parents and students.

Coding Process—Case by Case. I first transcribed the interviews, typed up observation and field notes, and completed artifact catalogs to get my data into codable form. I made two copies of each page for use in sorting at a later time. As I began reading the raw data, I identified examples of children and families engaged in literacy practices. Therefore, the two units of analysis that served as scanning devices for coding my data were *children and families* and *literacy practices*. When I felt that I had a strong sense of the raw data, I set out to find my units of analysis and code them so that I could assemble the examples into an answer for my question. Whenever I came across a quote or passage that included one or both of these units, I marked the beginning and the end of the excerpt that contained that unit. I isolated the units of analysis by going through the pages of data and marking the beginning and the end of the excerpt that constitutes or contains that unit. After I located an excerpt that seemed to have an example of my unit of analysis, I wrote a code next to the excerpt in the margin that captured what I was seeing there. As I moved through some of the data, I discovered that several excerpts required more than one code because they contained several examples of my units of analysis. For example, if I had an entire paragraph within a transcript, a code began where I identified children and families or working together. This may have overlapped with an

instance where literacy practices (e.g., communication, reading, writing) were also involved. Often, the code ended or changed when another question was asked or when the discussion shifted to a new idea. I continued the process of marking units of analysis and devising codes to capture what was seen across all data sources.

After coding my data, I cut out each excerpt I coded from the pages of data to generate a pile of excerpts containing an example of my unit of analysis, each with a code and a citation on it. I sorted the coded excerpts by taking on and putting them into a pile according to which codes seemed to go together. I used the codes, not the quotes themselves, to decide how to categorized the excerpts. For example, when coding the excerpt of an interview with Mazhar Rashid, the following codes were used:

Immigration/
Family Experience

Well, my family came here in 1999. It was my mom and dad, and me and the two other older siblings. My younger sister was born here, in 2000, and then Maged was born in

Educational history

2003. So, they were the only two born here. We originally came to Sayville, and my dad started going to school in R-University. We were there for 8 or 9 years, then we moved

Issues of/
Time/ space

Mallorca.

I cut these sentences out of the excerpt and put them into different piles. When the piles started to take shape with three or four examples each, I used sticky notes to label the piles with terms that expressed what the codes in that one pile had in common. For example, the first two excerpts were placed into the pile labeled "Biography." When I finished sorting all of the examples into piles, I checked the codes on the excerpts in each pile to make sure they were relevant, and all excerpts belonged into that pile. I moved some excerpts if necessary and gradually refined the piles until all the codes shared significant characteristics. There were

some excerpts that didn't fit into any pile, so those were placed in an extras pile for a later time. Occasionally the extra excerpts could be placed as the coding piles were continually checked and updated. Other times, the extra excerpts could be used for clarification or data triangulation.

This coding process was completed for each family; therefore, I had four distinct piles of data, each of which was further sorted into piles of coded data. For example, the parent questionnaire, student journal and photographs, transcribed interview data, and artifact catalog from Malik's family formed one pile. The relevant excerpts were coded and cut out from each source and were then separated into one of the main coding categories: *biography*, *literacy practices*, *linguistic flexibility*, *intergenerational patterns*, *interaction setting*, and *multi-temporality*.

Coding Process—Across Cases. I repeated a similar coding process in order to view the data across cases. Again, I scanned the raw data for examples of children and families engaged in literacy practices. To complete a cross case analysis, however, I developed three units of analysis to code and assemble into an answer for my question. Whenever I came across instances that included *children and parents*, *household structures*, or *literacy practices*, I marked the portion of the excerpt that contained that unit. After I located an example of my unit of analysis, I wrote a code next to the excerpt in the margin to capture what I was seeing there. I continued the process of marking units of analysis and devising a code to capture what is seen across all data sets. As I moved through some of the data, I discovered that several excerpts (mainly longer excerpts) required more than one code because it contained several units of analysis. In this case, I gave that excerpt two or three different codes.

Unlike the case by case coding process, where the data sources remained in one pile for each family, coding and sorting the data across cases involved combining the data into different piles. To sidestep any disorder in my organization and management of the cut out excerpts, I color coded the pages of data. For example, the data collected from Malik's family was copied onto blue paper, Janna's family was copied on pink paper, Kaban's on yellow paper and Mikhail's on white paper. Therefore, even when I arranged the data into different piles, I could identify excerpts from individual families if necessary.

Case by Case Analysis

Parent Questionnaire. The parent questionnaires required little in the way of analysis. They were simply used to gain information on the home language, cultural background, and the make-up of each family. The questionnaire was also used for triangulation of interview data.

Student Journals and Photographs. Among student journals and photographs, I was looking for the children's perception of literacy experiences, including the people with whom and the places where literacy occurred. In their journals, children wrote about their experiences and preferences for reading and writing at home. For example, Janna wrote: *My favorite place to read is in my bed because it is cozy and soft and I can see what I am reading.* Since Janna described the place she liked to read, this excerpt was coded for both literacy practice and setting, and placed within the appropriate coding category. As I read each journal, I analyzed the information in conjunction with the data from family literacy and cultural interviews to compile a more complete picture of the participants' perception of literacy practices within the home. The same process of analysis was performed for each journal.

The photographs were analyzed using a "layered analysis" strategy for the

interpretation of photographic images (Dowdall & Golden, 1989). My analysis began with an appraisal of the images in their social and historical context, and continued by comparing the visual data with other written sources and interview data. For example, I matched the photograph of Kaban standing in front of the bookcase in his bedroom with the actual bookcase when I conducted the home observation. During my visit, I was able to see first-hand where the bookcase was located, and was therefore able to triangulate the two data sources. The photograph and observation log was analyzed and coded for both literacy practices and setting. The pictures also offered visual evidence of what the children and families expressed in the focus group interviews. In this way, student journals and photographs served not only as points of analysis, but points of data triangulation.

The second level of analysis, termed “inquiry,” concentrated on collecting images containing certain themes and patterns. For example, among Janna’s photographs, four contained images of Janna or her family members reading a book in a comfortable place within their home. My analysis examined the prevalence of people and places within the home, and these photographs were coded for literacy practices, interactions, and setting. I then examined each set of photograph to see if this theme was common across cases.

The third stage of the layered analysis, what Dowdall and Golden (1989) call “interpretation,” occurred as I focused attention on individual images and made an effort to explain how the participants perceived the context and meaning of the scenes that were depicted. For example, using the photographs taken by the children, I was able to infer that children enjoyed reading in their home, either with a family member or alone, and were encouraged to read by their parents who acted as mentors for reading.

Student Focus Group Interview. To achieve a case-by-case analysis of the focus group interview, I read through and separated the answers given by individual students by color coding the initials of each participant. If more than one student discussed an answer to a question, I treated each quote like a separate excerpt: I highlighted each child's answer, applied a code to each answer, cut out each one, and added it to the stack of raw data being compiled for each family. For example, I asked the question, "Where are some of the places you like to read?" Janna answered, "I like sitting down outside, but I only sit there when it's nice outside. During the school year I read inside," and Mikhail answered, "This is my desk where I do my homework, it's in my kitchen." Since I received two different answers to the same question, I used a different color to highlight each child's answers. I coded their answers for reading and writing at home and cut out each answer to add to the pile coded for literacy practices and setting. Then, when analyzing each case, I took into consideration the students' individual answers and their perceptions regarding at-home literacy events and practices.

Family Literacy Interview. Multiple readings of the transcribed interviews allowed for in depth coding of the family literacy interview. For each case, I identified quotes from the text that described their educational history, literacy practices, and linguistic flexibility. When coding for "Biography," I pulled out examples within the transcribed interview data that depicted educational histories, personal attitudes, and cultural backgrounds. In addition, I looked for instances of an individual's educational history, which has embedded in it the ideological assumption about what counts as learning. This perspective places attention on social and cultural background in which these individuals experienced school based education. For example, Mr. Gusarov compared his Russian education to Mikhail's American education: "In

Russia, it is very regimented, very strict, we go to school for mostly studying math and science. [In America], I like that it allows him to be more creative, and they do things for art, science, and he has more fun.” The codes that I wrote in the margin for this excerpt were *cultural experiences in education*, and *personal attitudes towards education*, to characterize Mr. Gusarov’s experience and beliefs, respectively. These codes were developed to help answer the research question that asked about the kinds of ideologies about literacy that immigrant communities promote among parents and students.

I also recognized instances where families described their reading experiences at home and outside of school. “Literacy Practices” became the initial category for coding this data. Among literacy practices, I was looking for examples of each family’s daily routines involving literacy. An example of a quote that was coded as a daily literacy practice comes from the Ecker family, who explained, “Yes, we tell stories, I tell stories before bedtime and we make up stories.” In fact, this excerpt contained several examples of my unit of analysis, and was coded in the margin for *parents and children together* and *storytelling*, as it described how the parents and children engaged in the social nature of literacy experiences. I was then able to understand how language and literacy were connected to specific communicative tasks, especially how children learn ways of telling stories and asking questions through the relationships and daily events that shape their lives.

Finally, I coded the transcribed literacy interview data for aspects of “Linguistic Flexibility.” I was looking for instances where the family described using both languages at home or outside of school. For example, Mrs. Feigen explained, “Yes, we speak only in Russian at home, and Julia’s grandmother speaks with the girls in Russian.” The codes I wrote in the

margin included *using two languages*, since both Janna and her sister speak English in school and Russian at home, and also *childhood identities*, since their ability to switch back and forth between languages in a given day served as an example of their unique sociolinguistic ability. Several excerpts showed how families engaged in literacy practices to maintain their home language well into the next generation.

Family Cultural Interview. When I initially began reading the transcribed interview data, I was looking for instances where individuals described their life history, intergenerational pattern, interaction setting, and connections between time and space. To pull out instances of “Biography,” I coded excerpts in which experiences of migration and personal life histories were described. For example, Mr. Gusarov told me: “Yes, well, I came to New Jersey in 1990. Twenty years ago exactly. I came here when I was 30, I finished my Masters education in Russia, and came here, I started working at a gas station until I could find work in my field.” This quote was given several codes, as it contained multiple examples of my unit of analysis. The codes written in the margin included *moving to New Jersey*, *educational history*, and *work experience*. The coding of this data required a broader view of the sociocultural theory (including sociological, psychological, and anthropological perspectives) to explain how individual stories and experiences of migration influence beliefs and attitudes. In this way, personal accounts helped to answer the research questions that sought the perspective of literacy and learning from members of diverse cultural systems and communities.

I also read the transcribed interview data to pull out instances of “Intergenerational Patterns,” including relationships between children, parents, and grandparents. To compile excerpts for this coding category, I was looking for examples of how children and adults

engaged in authentic literacy or learning practices. For example, Mikhail explained his daily routines, which described an interaction with his grandparents: “If it is Tuesday or Thursday, I take the bus home and my grandparents are here, I have a snack and do my homework. . . and they help me with my Russian.” This quote was given the codes *daily routines*, and *working with relatives* to capture the how the family works together on a regular basis. This coding category directly related to the underlying precept of the research questions, which emphasized the importance of examining the practices within immigrant families.

The transcripts were also coded and categorized for instances of “Multitemporality,” which took into account the families’ explanation of objects and artifacts collected over time, and how these items occupied space within the home. For example, Mrs. Ekor described an artifact that she brought from Turkey for use in her family’s daily routines: “You can see the Turkish tea pot, it has tea on top and water heats on the bottom. It is very strong tea, and depending on how much water you add, you can make it weaker. It is very traditional, my husband and I drink so much—maybe four cups—at the night.” I coded this excerpt for *objects within the home* and *daily routines*. I analyzed how this object played a role in maintaining the family’s cultural heritage and identity, and considered the associated ideologies that the object represented. As a result, I was able to infer how objects and artifacts, along with the stories they keep, could be seen as a literacy infused cultural tradition. I was able to relate this to the third and fourth research question that asked, “What types of literacy practices are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?” and “What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students?”

I also took into consideration the “Interaction Setting.” I coded for instances within the

interview data where children or families described the place in which they worked, read, or completed daily routines. In several instances, children's photographs and home observations helped to triangulate data of location. For example, Mikhail took a photograph of the desk in his kitchen where he works on his homework. During a home observation and interview session, I saw his desk, and asked, "Is this where you took your picture? This is where you do your homework?" Mikhail answered, "Yes, this is my desk. I do my reading and math here, and Russian." This excerpt was coded as *homework area/working space at home*. I was directly able to cycle back to my research question that asked to identify the types of literacy practices that occurred at home or outside of school. Coding excerpts for interaction setting allowed me to pay special attention to activities and events as they took place within a particular setting or context. I considered both the ethnographic context, which included the historical, environmental, and social ideals, and also the physical context, which represents the place occupied during a particular exchange, and how that space influences the way an interaction is examined. This coding category went directly to answering the overarching research question, which asked about the kinds of practices that took place at home and outside of school.

Artifact Catalog. The artifact catalog was developed to help remember objects that were seen or described during the home observation. The artifact catalog was not coded in the same way as the interview data. Instead, it was primarily used to remember what artifacts were in sight, and to triangulate interview data.

Home Observation. During and after the home observation, I completed a home observation log. The log was used to record information such as which family was visited, the date of the visit, and the observation goal or specific item I hoped to observe. Some other

questions that helped me reflect on the people and setting included, “Who was present in the home during the visit?” and “Briefly recap what you did there.” I also recorded any new learning or parenting behaviors if I was completing my second home observation.

The home observation log, much like the artifact catalog, was not coded in the same way as the interview data. Instead, it was primarily used to remember what was observed in the home, and to triangulate interview data.

Field Notes. Throughout the research process, I wrote both analytical and conceptual memos (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The analytical memos contained information on interactions between parents and children. The interaction report provided a checklist for inferring parent’s perception of literacy events in the home. For example, I noted that a parent adjusted his use of language by switching from English to Russian to support his child. I also noted how one parent responded to her child’s verbal cues more often than she responded to their child’s behavioral cues. These analytical field notes provided an opportunity for continuous reflection on the data and allowed me to direct my attention to patterns of family actions, interactions, and exchanges.

Cross Case Analysis

Upon completion of the case-by-case analysis, I had developed categories to provide a rich retelling of the family life histories. After portraits and descriptions were developed, all of the data sources were examined again, and analyzed for similarities and differences among the cases. The parent questionnaire, student journals, and photographs presented the same data sources, a cross case analysis was not necessary. The cross case analysis provided insight into

individual family's literacy practices and cultural traditions. The section that follows tells specifically about the issues unique to the cross case analysis.

Student Focus Group Interview. In order to achieve a cross case analysis of the student focus group interview, I again read through the answers given by individual students, but did not color code the initials of each participant. Unlike the case-by-case analysis, if more than one student discussed an answer to a question, I treated it like one answer, and applied a code to describe the similarities between the two children. For example, when I asked Janna, "Do you talk in Russian, also, or just read in Russian (at home)?" she replied, "I read in Russian and talk in Russian," and Mikhail chimed in, "Me, too." The code written in the margin was *native language use at home*, and this excerpt was placed under the category of sociolinguistic flexibility. I was especially interested in children's' participation in literacy events as they were embedded in ideological assumptions about reading and writing. Therefore, I concentrated on pulling from the data the ways in which children learned the procedures, roles, processes, and ideologies surrounding literacy from interaction with adult mentors. Children are socialized into language from their family and sociocultural histories, and as a result they learn ways of telling stories, of playing, and of asking questions through the human relationships and daily events that give their lives meaning. With this in mind, I reflected on the ways in which these children communicated effectively with members of their family and cultural group by using their home language to answer the overarching research question.

Although not every student answered every question during our discussion, I was able to compare many excerpts to gain an overall idea of the similarities and differences that existed between among the children.

Family Literacy Interview. In order to achieve a cross case analysis of the family literacy interviews, I reread the transcribed interview data to identify similarities and differences between immigrant families' educational history, their attitudes towards literacy for their children, and their language and literacy practices. Although many of the excerpts were given the same (or similar) codes, I was able to compare practices across family groups and reflect on the data in new ways. For example, in an excerpt from the Feigen interview, Mrs. Feigen explained, "I grew up in Armenia, but attended a Russian school for all of my education. I learned to speak and read in both Armenian and Russian, the Armenian language and grammar rules are much more difficult, so I am more comfortable in Russian." I coded this passage for *education in the home country* and *literacy preferences*, as well as *multilingual experiences*. On the other hand, an excerpt from the Rashid interview depicts much less facility with language and literacy experiences. Mazhar Rashid explained, "Well, my mom has trouble speaking in English, she doesn't know a lot of words, but the kids are getting better in English. We speak Arabic at home." Again, I coded this passage for *literacy preferences* and *multilingual experiences* to link the similarities across cases, but I was also able to compare this to the previous excerpt to illuminate the apparent differences between immigrant families and level of literacy education in their home countries and the differences in participant preference when using English.

I also recognized instances within the interview data where families described their reading experiences at home and outside of school. "Literacy Practices" became the category that contained coded data related to these experiences. I was looking for examples of similarities and differences between each family's daily routines involving literacy. In one

excerpt, I coded an example of *parents and children together* and *storytelling*, as it described how the parents and children engaged in the social nature of literacy experiences. I compared this with a quote from Mr. Gusarov, who explained a daily literacy practice that took place, which was again coded for *parents and children together*, but also contained information about the types of texts read, and was therefore also coded for *reading classic texts* instead of *storytelling*. By conducting analysis across cases, I was able to identify how children learned ways of participating in daily routines, and how their literate lives were shaped by certain events and practices.

Finally, I coded the transcribed literacy interview data. I was looking for examples of similarities and differences among the families' description of using either their native language or English at home or outside of school, which I coded as "Linguistic Flexibility." One excerpt, in which Janna depicted her enjoyment of reading, along with her ability to read for pleasure in both languages, contained codes in the margin that depicted *reading in two languages* and *children's preferred texts*. I compared this with a quote from the Rashid interview, in which Mazhar was asked if the family had a lot of books and materials in Arabic. The excerpt was again coded for *reading in two languages*, as it demonstrated their ability to alternate between different types of texts. However, I also coded this excerpt as *required reading* and *finding appropriate texts*, as it showed differences in this family's purposes for reading (e.g., academic and religious reasons) as opposed to reading for pleasure. I compared the data by viewing the preferences, roles, processes, and intentions surrounding the use of dual languages in daily literacy events. I also came to understand how the literacy events, infused with cultural and social perspectives, have embedded within them certain ideological assumptions about what

counts as reading and writing. The analysis of this interview data provided several answers to my overarching research question.

Family Cultural Interview. When I reread the transcribed interview data to perform a cross case analysis, I again coded for instances of “Biography,” “Intergenerational Patterns,” and “Multi-temporality.” When coding for “Biography,” I relied on a broader view of the sociocultural theory (including sociological, psychological, and anthropological perspectives) to explain how individual stories and experiences of migration influence and are influenced by personal hardships and attitudes. In this way, personal accounts helped to answer the research question that sought the perspective of cultural values and beliefs from members of diverse cultural systems and communities.

I read the transcribed interview data to pull out instances of “Intergenerational Patterns,” including relationships between children, parents, and grandparents. I was looking for similarities or differences in how families engaged in authentic literacy or learning practices together. The coding of these excerpts, and the similarities and differences discovered between the two families, provided a base for answering the last two research question that asked about the kinds of ideologies about literacy that immigrant communities promote among parents and students.

The transcripts were also coded for instances of “Multitemporality,” which took into account the families’ explanation of objects and artifacts collected over time, along with how these items occupied space within the home. I analyzed how certain objects played a role in maintaining the family’s cultural heritage and identity, and considered the associated ideologies that the object represented. When analyzing contrasting explanations of family artifacts, I was

able to infer how objects and artifacts remain integral to the family's identity; some play a more prominent role, while others have been pushed aside because of adjustments and adaptations to a new life in this country. I was able to use my analysis when answering the third and fourth research questions, which asked: "What types of literacy practices that are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?" and "What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students?"

Finally, when analyzing the cultural interview data, I took into consideration the "Interaction Setting." I coded for instances in which children or families described a place where work, reading, or daily routines occurred. In several instances, children's photographs and home observations helped to triangulate data of location. I placed special attention to the spaces within the homes that were used for daily routines and practices. I considered both the ethnographic context, which included the environmental and social details, and also the physical context, which represented the place occupied during a particular routine, along with how that space was portrayed through the participant's explanation. In this way, my interpretations involved making connections between the excerpts and the social spaces in which they occurred. The coding of this data was helpful in answering the overarching research question, which asked about the kinds of practices that took place at home and outside of school.

Artifact Catalog. The data analysis dealing with photographs, videos, and artifacts was coded into four conceptual categories: social practices, social spaces, family ideologies, and literacy events. The artifact catalog was a written record of how the immigrant families discover their own values through the design and objectification of stuff within their homes.

Certain pieces or mementos relayed information of family traditions connected to the literacy practices valued by members of diverse cultural systems. The artifacts represented a means of expression for individualism and mobility associated with the world outside the home. The analysis of artifacts was framed in such a way that illustrated material culture as a family's actual representation of values. I also analyzed artifacts with respect to their value within the home interior. Much like my analysis of the photographs, I summed up the results of the analysis of the artifacts to shed light on the types of literacy spaces and practices utilized amongst diverse families, each representing diverse cultural backgrounds and ideologies.

Home Observation. I analyzed the home observation logs across cases by comparing the reports to identify similarities and differences. I first highlighted similarities among families using a red pen, and differences using a black pen. I identified and coded similar patterns within the observation log. For example, places within the home, such as kitchens and bedrooms, were repeatedly observed. Therefore, I coded these for “interaction setting” to reveal how families from diverse cultures tend to interact in common places. I also identified and coded differences that were seen across home observations. For example, different family members were present for each of the observation sessions. During one observation, only the father was home, yet during another, the parents, sibling, and uncle were all present. I coded these for “intergenerational patterns” to depict family connections within the home setting.

I used the home observation log to trace patterns of cultural practices within the home, and to document patterns of family diversity before making judgments on what their experiences might mean. However, because the data was being used in an ethnographic study, it had the possibility to vary widely among each of the families.

Field Notes. I used my analytical and conceptual memos to compare information on interactions between parents and children. For example, I noted that a parent adjusted his use of language by switching from English to Russian to support his child. I also noted how one parent responded to her child's verbal cues more often than she responded to their child's behavioral cues. These analytical field notes provided an opportunity for continuous reflection on the data, and allowed me to direct my attention to patterns of family actions, interactions, and exchanges. The memos were primarily used to give life to the transcribed interview data, and were used for purposes of data triangulation.

Standards of Quality

Validity and reliability in qualitative research can be defined under the umbrella of Standards of Quality. Validity is defined as the extent to which the data is plausible, credible and trustworthy; and thus can be defended when challenged (Creswell & Miller, 2000). External validity is also an important issue to consider in this research. It is necessary to provide detailed descriptions of the characteristics of the participants being studied to allow other researchers to compare findings with future studies or participants. Descriptive validity, or the accuracy of what is reported by the researcher, was addressed in terms of the events, the objects, the behaviors, and the setting, with regard to what was heard or observed (Maxwell, 1992). Through several rereadings and triangulation of the data, I tried to make sure that my interpretation of participant's views, thoughts, feelings, intentions, and experiences in the study were as thorough as possible.

Throughout this study, I used the following strategies to address issues of credibility: rich description, triangulation, and member checking. I used descriptions that expressed the

participants' accounts and researcher's field notes, such as direct quotes, as often as possible. Similarly, I decided to rely on multiple data sources, such as photographs, interviews, observations, surveys, and journals, to study the children's literacy and cultural practices. Finally, in order to carry out standards of member checking issues, I spent time discussing and reviewing with the students any questions, interpretations and conclusions I had about their journal entries or photographs to acquire verification and insight. I asked relevant questions about their responses, such as, "Is this what you meant?" or "Is this what you did?" I also examined myself prior to and during the study to detect potential inclinations or biases that may have affected my conclusions.

Triangulation of the multiple data sources was built into data collection and analysis for the purpose of achieving trustworthiness. "Triangulation has been generally considered a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation...triangulation serves also to clarify meaning by identifying different ways the phenomenon is being seen" (Stake, 1994, p. 241). Member checking was also an important part of triangulating my observations and interpretations. As Stake (1995) suggests, when research participants review interview transcripts, observation notes or narrative text, they often provide corroboration and feedback. Therefore, each research participant was be given many opportunities to review data materials and provide further response to the research questions.

Data triangulation was made possible through multiple data sources. I had extensive contact with the participating families throughout the fall when data collection was taking place. I obtained the families' consent and was able to stay in touch with them as I wrote up

the findings of the study. Member checks were ongoing, as well, and often occurred during informal conversations with the families.

Ethics

The ethical considerations related to the study include approval from school officials, since participants were recruited through school and through parents or guardians of the students. The parents first gave approval for their child to participate in this research study, and then the information was relayed to the children in developmentally appropriate language so they could choose to take part in the study. The students were empowered by the responsibility of defining and limiting their rights to privacy, as they were allowed to photograph and journal instances of language, literacy, and culture on their own.

Researcher's Roles in the Community and the Study

My positionality as a researcher was crucial to this study. I am a native English speaker and a middle-class Caucasian American female. I was a teacher in the school, so I represented access to education and the school system.

Limitations

One limitation to the study was that I did not speak any of the languages spoken by the families. As a result, I felt that I missed out on some aspects of context, culture, and talk about texts. Had I been able to communicate with the participant's in their native language, I may have gained a richer understanding of their cultural and literacy practices within the family. Given the participants' considerable abilities in the English language, however, I didn't see this as a serious limitation. I was always able to communicate effectively with participants, and when translation issues did occur, they were minor and typically easily managed by the children

or other family members. Therefore, my lack of foreign language knowledge and cultural knowledge was only a small limitation to this study.

Another limitation to this study was the setting in which it occurred. Although Mallorca Township is becoming more diverse in its ethnic configuration, this township is not ideal because of the relatively low numbers of first generation immigrant families from Eastern European or Middle Eastern countries. It lacks certain “pockets” or communities of these immigrants, which may have yielded more participants for the study. However, this site was chosen because I have worked as a teacher in the district for six years, and had easy access to classrooms, students, and families. I also attended this school as a student, which provided me with additional knowledge on the residential experiences, school achievements, community programs, and the ability to see change over the years.

One unanticipated limitation that occurred was that I originally intended to research literacy practices at home and outside of school. Unfortunately, much of the data gained dealt with literacy practices at home, and little outside of the home. It is possible that more time spent in the field could have uncovered additional literacy practices not carried out at home.

CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPANT NARRATIVES

Introduction

This chapter presents the single case findings from the research. Using excerpts from transcribed interview data, along with the home observations and artifact catalogues, the participant narratives are included to tell the story of all four children and their families. Encouraging children to tell stories from lived experience connects talk to literacy, as they tell stories rich with details from their lives. The personal narratives expressed in this chapter contribute answers to all four of the research questions in the form of individual reflections and perceptions. However, since the interviews and home observations were personal, I was privy to the participants' perceptions, values, and ideologies. Therefore, while these stories assist in answering the first research question, "What kinds of literacy practices do children of immigrant families participate at home and outside of school to foster learning?" they inadvertently satisfy the three sub-questions, as well.

What is special to this research was spending time in homes, talking to the families and children, and finding out about the cultural and material objects that helped construct their stories over time. My relationship with the children and their families created an interpretive lens that itself shaped the stories. As a researcher entering into such personal settings as family life and the home, I made certain to maintain sensitivity so as to understand each case as thoroughly as possible. As a result, I was able to learn how each family's experience was in some way affected by social class, cultural beliefs, existing practices, and expectations. The participant narratives follow the ideals of qualitative research, as each takes place in a natural

setting (the private home) and strives to give a holistic interpretation of the situation under study. Following the introduction to the cases, I compared the interaction between literacy and culture among the participants using a comparative case study methodology (Creswell, 1998). The comparative case study design was chosen so information could be gathered in multiple research settings and compared for possible similarities, allowing for an opportunity to identify significant characteristics and behaviors among participants.

Overview

The chapter has been organized to describe each case in a very specific narrative way. I found that by developing the topics of history, family, spaces, educations, and tradition (outlined below), I could best illustrate the similarities within each case. In addition, I could better account for the knowledge gained from all participants. All names are pseudonyms.

History. An important aspect of the interview data was to discover the family history, including the timing and reasoning behind the parent's immigration to the United States, their ability to adapt to life in this country, and their purposes for staying here. I learned that the life course histories of family members, along with their intergenerational practices, were formed by combining ethnic traditions, cultural rituals, religious beliefs, and negotiated roles within families over time (Gadsden, 2000). Throughout the course of the study, I also learned that stories of family history were retold often so that the parents and children would never forget their heritage. It became clear throughout the study that recalling personal histories was a literacy practice that was highly valued by the participants.

Family. The literature reminds us that families are structured in a variety of culturally relative ways. I learned that a nuclear family (e.g., father, mother, and children) was the most

eminent among the four participating families, but relationships with extended family members (e.g., grandparents, aunts, and uncles) were important in each arrangement (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). Their description of their interactions between family members demonstrated how each family believed strongly in maintaining family traditions and cultural heritage. The analysis of the data secured my knowledge in their ideological constructs regarding interactional patterns within the home, child-rearing practices, and gender roles and responsibilities.

Spaces. The home observations were instrumental in determining how these immigrant families maintained social spaces. It became evident from the data that maintaining spaces and artifacts was essential for these families. Fixed objects were arranged within the home space, and the nature of the objects (e.g., the traditional and cultural values they held for each family) along with their spatial distribution (e.g., visible within the used rooms of the home) began to define the meaning of the space in a room according to the potential uses of the objects and their relationships with people. The participants perceived that the spaces they inhabited and the artifacts they displayed impacted their identity formation in this country (Gee, 2000/2001; McCarthy & Moje, 2002).

Education. The educational patterns that contributed to the experiences of immigrant parents and their children were also an outcome of this research. In particular, it was important to draw out the families' educational values and their influence on children's attitudes and success in school (Garcia-Coll & Marks, 2009) along with their opportunities and experiences. I learned from some immigrant parents that they came to the United States to pursue higher education, and stayed because they believed their children could receive a better

education here than in their home country. More specifically, educational practices surrounding literacy (such as reading and writing in more than one language) were valued by the participants.

Traditions. Each of the families described several traditions (e.g., family customs, holidays, and religious observances) that they experienced in their home country, and identified some that they felt were important to continue in the United States. I learned that the children were aware of the traditions and holidays celebrated with their family, but also enjoyed the mainstream traditions celebrated in the United States. Traditions (and the language surrounding these traditions) played a significant role in establishing and maintaining culturally based practices in the United States (Vygotsky, 1978). When analyzing traditions within cases, I felt that the participants disclosed their perceptions, values, and ideologies without hesitation (Gee, 1999).

Malik's Story. Malik was a bright and energetic 2nd grade student. An avid learner, Malik was knowledgeable about the world, nature, and science. He made frequent connections to other children based on his experiences, and enjoyed talking and telling stories. Although he spoke with a slight accent, he was rarely at a loss for an English word. He explained during the focus group interview that when he thinks about something in Arabic, he could verbalize his thoughts in Arabic or English. However, when he thought in English, he could only express himself in English. His ability to move back and forth between two languages demonstrated his multilingual capabilities, which I believe to be a unique characteristic of children of immigrants (Lo Bianco, 2000; Jiménez, 2003). Malik seemed to be proud of his exceptional skill, but also described how speaking a different language made him feel like his true identity was Arabic at

home and outside of school. This affected the literacy practices he engaged in at home, as he explained during the focus group interview (while looking at his photographs):

MR: In this picture I was reading the Arabic book.

DR: Are those better for you—do you always read those?

MR: I read some but the other ones didn't come out in the camera. (Malik Rashid, personal communication, October 28, 2010)

Conversely, he also explained how alike he was to his peers. During the focus group interview, I learned that his interests were comparable to many other children in the United States: he claimed to enjoy “playing outside, playing video games, talking, building structures, basketball, and watching cartoons” (Malik Rashid, personal communication, October 28, 2010). By taking part in these activities, Malik had created an identity similar to that of his American friends (Tabyanian, 2005).

History. Malik's family had a unique history of immigration. Malik's parents were both born in Egypt and immigrated to the United States in their early twenties (the parents are now in their late forties). They made several moves during that time, living in Cairo for several years, moving to the United States, and eventually going back to Egypt to be closer to their family. The parents gave birth to three oldest children while in Egypt and moved to New Jersey from Egypt in 1999. The family lived in a township approximately 40 minutes away from Mallorca Township (roughly 24 miles southwest of downtown New York City); one that is more urban than suburban because of its proximity to New York City. The two youngest children were born in the United States during that time. The family returned to Egypt in 2006 for one year, but again moved back to the United States. This last move in 2007 brought them to

Mallorca Township for the chance to live in a more suburban community, and for the chance to attend a better school system. As Mazhar explained during our interview, “We moved back here for my dad to finish school, and we came to Montgomery because the schools were good for the younger kids” (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 4, 2010). They strongly valued education, which became apparent during their description of various moves to and within New Jersey in search of the best school system (Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Family. Malik was the youngest of five children. The oldest son was 18 and in his second year at the local university. The second and third children were 16 and 15 years old, respectively. As Mazhar explained during the interview,

Well, my family came here in 1999. It was my mom and dad, and me and the two other older siblings. My younger sister was born here, in 2000, and then Malik was born in 2003. So, they were the only two born here. . . We were here for 8 or 9 years, then we moved back to Egypt in 2007, maybe for a year, year and a half, before we came back to live in Mallorca Township. (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 4, 2010)

Although there was a significant age gap between the five children, the closeness of these family members was evident in the amount of support they provided each other. For example, the older siblings supported the young children by assisting them with school work. In my interpretation of the family situation, the children were learning within a social sense, thereby gaining knowledge and resources from diverse interactions (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Using a sociocultural approach to understand language and literacy in these situations, it is possible to view this family as a community of learners engaged in authentic versions of language practice (Lave & Wagner, 1991).

Spaces. The closeness of the family was also evident in the proximity of the personal space in which they lived. The three bedroom townhouse was not very large, and many of the common areas (e.g., living room, kitchen) were used by all (Youssef, 1993). Malik and one of the older brothers shared a room, which contained two beds, a book shelf, and several posters on the wall. A small study area downstairs was used for working or reading, but the main work station was in the family room, which housed three computers, two desks, bookshelves, framed pictures, and games. Mr. Rashid and the children spent their nights working on school assignments or reading in this general area. The children also used the kitchen table for their homework or larger projects. In a smaller section of the family room was a television with many DVDs. I learned that many of the photographs were in albums, instead of displayed on the walls. When asked for the reason behind this, the oldest son explained that space in the home was limited, and they also wanted these to stay private and well preserved (Miller, 2010). I interpreted that although spaces within the home were cramped at times, the proximity of the rooms united an otherwise diverse family (Gaines, 2006).

Prior to the interviews and home visit, Malik used his disposable camera to take pictures of the places in his home where he spent time reading and writing, and the people with whom he conducted these literacy activities. During the home observation, I made an effort to revisit the places and objects portrayed in the photos. For example, in one of his favorite pictures, Malik was sitting at the computer desk reading a book in English. He showed me this area during the home visit.

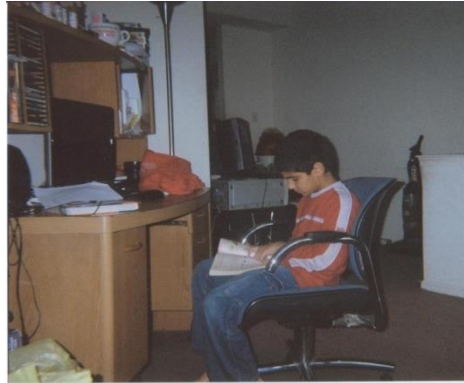


Fig. 1 Malik's Reading Spaces.

The computer area had framed pictures of his family, artifacts such as decorative bowls and bottles, and stacks of books and paperwork, which he believed to be in both English and Arabic. The computer area also contained CDs, computer games and programs that the entire family used. Additional pictures showed the reading area in his bedroom, which contained a book shelf with books in English and Arabic books, along with electronic games, all of which were noted during the observation. Malik explained that he and his siblings used both English and Arabic to communicate, and used a variety of modalities such as reading, writing, and technology use to complete assignments and enhance their literacy skills. It seemed that the family valued both culturally based literacy practices that kept them connected to their heritage, as well as modern day literacy practices that helped them navigate life in the United States (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000).

Education. Malik and the rest of the children have been attending public school in America; the older children are now attending college or in their junior and sophomore years at Mallorca Township High School. Malik, therefore, began primary school in Mallorca Township midway through the 1st grade. He was initially enrolled in the pull-out program for ESL students, but exited out before the 2nd grade.

The family shared their thoughts on the American education system in comparison with

the Egyptian education system. Speaking for his mother to describe the education system in Egypt, Mazhar said,

I know that school is pretty much the same; they start when they're 6 and then they go until they are 14, then they can go to a high school until they are 17, and then some people go to college. More people are going to the upper levels of school, which are free, but it is hard, and a lot of people stop school to do working. (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 4, 2010)

I also learned that only primary and preparatory school are required, and all levels of education are free in any government run school. That said, Mrs. Rashid was the only member of the family who completed the full track of education in Egypt. She finished the formal teacher's qualification, including the required four years of pre-service courses at University to enter the teaching profession. Although Mrs. Rashid believed the University education in Egypt to be rather good, she expressed that still the education experience is unfair, as people who have more money have access to a better education. Therefore, she explained that one of the main reasons they came back to the United States was to pursue a better life, including a better education (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2001; Suárez-Orozco & Qin-Hilliard, 2004).

Traditions. Malik and his family have maintained their native Arabic at home. The children spoke English together on occasion, but spoke only Arabic around their parents (since Mr. and Mrs. Rashid believed that their English was not good enough to engage in a proper conversation). In turn, the children help Mrs. Rashid communicate and learn in English because she "has not so many words." Mrs. Rashid was an Arabic teacher in Egypt (the equivalent of an English teacher in the United States) and continued to teach Malik a little bit every day. Malik

explained that he “liked to read his language books, and liked to read in his language, and felt that he was good in both languages” (Malik Rashid, personal communication, October 28, 2010). Along with speaking Arabic, the family also read a variety of Arabic texts. They only read English textbooks when required for school assignments. The children also explained that when they use the Internet, phone applications, and other media, it was typically done in English.

They described some of the other traditions that they have upheld, such as religious holidays, family stories, and showed several artifacts of value to them. I learned that family celebrated Ramadan (an Islamic month of fasting). These religious traditions were observed for personal reasons, as the parents felt it connected them to their homeland (Gadsden, 2000). They had not joined a Mosque at the time of the interview.

The older son also explained during the interview that the family preferred to eat typical Middle Eastern foods, such as hummus (even though it is now widely available in most supermarkets). They went to a specialty store one hour from their home to purchase favorite items that are not commercially available, such as galesh, a sticky sweet dessert made with water and syrup (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991). Although the entire family enjoyed traditional foods, they also liked the convenience of mass supermarkets. Malik explained that he liked eating the school lunches, especially when it was pizza day.

The family also brought out a traditional Egyptian artifact—homemade papyrus paper. Although they didn’t display it in the house, the oldest son explained that it was an important object, as it reminded them of their home. The traditions that Malik and his family upheld were not common in mainstream America, so it became clear during the interviews that maintaining

the Egyptian way of life was important and necessary for the family to function in this country (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010; Miller, 2010).

Kaban's Story. Kaban was a sensitive and pleasant eight year old boy. He enjoyed talking, storytelling, and making jokes, playing basketball, playing outside, reading and drawing, Star Wars, Lego's, exploring, and playing on the computer. Like Malik, Kaban created a childhood identity that was similar to his American peers. Kaban was the younger of two boys and was very eager to share his connections to the Turkish heritage. His older brother, Ayben, was also very proud of his Turkish roots. It became obvious during the interviews and home observation that culture was very important to the boys, and that they continued to be immersed in their home culture while living in the United States (Vygotsky, 1978).

History. Kaban's family seemed to have a very conventional story of immigration. Mr. Ecker was from a small town in Turkey, half way between the capital city of Ankara and Cappadocia. Mr. Ecker came to the United States in 1996 to attend University in New Jersey. He only intended to finish his college degree and then return to Turkey, but he was offered a job and a green card upon graduation. He stayed here, started his own business, and began a family. He explained that he liked his life here and felt like he made a comfortable life for his wife and children in this country.

Mrs. Ecker came to America from Istanbul, one of the largest cities in Turkey, in 1998. She was already engaged to Mr. Ecker, and she came here to join him. They returned to Turkey for the wedding, since their family members could not all come to the United States. Although the Eckers have seemingly adapted to life in the United States, it became evident during our interview that their immigration was bittersweet, and they missed their family in Turkey. I

gained from the discussion of their family history that they valued their home country and perceived their immigration to be more of a challenge at the beginning, but was less stressful now (Gadsden, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001).

Family. The Eckor family consists of Mr. and Mrs. Eckor, Kaban, and his older brother Ayben. During the interviews and home observation, however, I felt that little emphasis was placed on the immediate family. Instead, the Eckors were eager to tell me about their extended family and those left behind in Turkey.

When discussing his extended family, Mr. Eckor reminisced about his parents, who were unable to come to the United States for financial and educational reasons. He detailed the small town in Turkey where his parents still lived in a small house with a fruit and vegetable garden that provided them with their own food. Mr. Eckor explained the importance of visiting his family every two years so that his children could know their grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. They valued the influence of culture and adults on the developing child, which I extended in my analysis to inform the research question about literacy practices within diverse cultures (Vygotsky, 1978).

Spaces. Kaban and his brother had separate bedrooms in their townhouse. The rooms both had some toys and sporting equipment, a book shelf, and a desk. They used their personal spaces to complete homework and other independent work. This was evidenced during the home observation, and supplemented by Kaban's picture.



Fig. 2. Kaban's Bookshelf

The living room, dining room, kitchen, and additional common areas were used by all for playing, reading, and family time. The living room contained two couches and a television; the kitchen area had a small table for keeping papers and assignments in order and a chest of drawers to hold pencils and books for the children to use while they are doing their homework or waiting for dinner.

The spaces that I observed during the home visit were tidy and minimally decorated with framed photographs and paintings. Mrs. Ekor explained that more precious mementos and photographs were still very important to them, but were kept safe in their upstairs bedroom. I observed in the home several objects that seemed unique and traditional. When I asked about their meaning and importance, Mrs. Ekor showed her Turkish tea set (with the Turkish tea kettle and tea glasses) and her Turkish cini (china), which were miniature hand painted cups and plates used for decoration or ceremonial purposes in Turkey. That these were visible in the home as a daily reminder of their Turkish heritage indicated the importance of displaying pieces of their homeland in a new and unfamiliar space (Swidler, 1986; Miller, 2010). Furthermore, I felt like they were able to incorporate selected aspects of both the culture of origin and the mainstream culture (Suárez-Orozco, 2004).

Education. Kaban and his brother began their elementary schooling in Mallorca Township. Kaban explained during the focus group interview that he enjoyed school, and he

has liked all of his teachers so far. He worked diligently on his assignments in school, and while he certainly enjoyed playing with his toys, he also liked spending time reading and writing. During the school year, Kaban and Ayben occasionally completed assignments given by their mother to maintain their skills in Turkish or Arabic. During the summer vacation, though, the boys spent four weeks in Turkish summer school (taught by their mother) using the books and materials sent by their family in Turkey. Mrs. Eckor started to teach the boys how to read the Koran because she believed it was important to maintain their religious education. Although the boys spoke English at school and outside of the home (or with their peers), the family maintained their native Turkish at home. I found their ability to manage multiple languages, both in spoken, written, and oral communication, to be very impressive. In addition, both Kaban and Ayben participated in literacy practices at home and outside of school that fostered learning in multiple languages. As indicated by the above examples, their literacy learning occurred during particular activities determined by cultural and linguistic resources that were valued and maintained by the family structure (Vygotsky, 1978; Lave & Wagner, 1991).

Mrs. Eckor also explained the schooling in Turkey is somewhat different than in the United States in such a way that children attend one of two sessions—the morning session, beginning at 6 am and ending at noon, or the afternoon session, beginning at 12:30 and ending at 6:30 pm. Higher education in Turkey was free, but it was very difficult to be selected for university: one must take a difficult exam, and the score then determined which program they could enter. She preferred the education system in America, as it allowed for children to enjoy a wide variety of subjects and extra-curricular activities. Mrs. Eckor explained right away in the interview that, “We lived in Hitown (pseudonym) at first but moved to Mallorca for the good

school” (Mrs. Ekor, personal communication, November 28, 2010). It was clear that Mrs. Ekor valued the high quality of education that her children were receiving, but she wanted to supplement their education with a cultural and traditional foundation for learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Wertsch, 1991).

Traditions. The Ekor family were making every attempt to uphold the traditional Turkish holidays and consume the customary foods that they enjoyed in their homeland. For example, Kaban told me about the holiday Eid, a Muslim religious festival celebration that required a ritual sacrifice at the end of the month of Ramadan. The family still participated in the rituals of Ramadan, including a month of fasting, and Mr. Ekor explained how in Turkey families would sacrifice a lamb and give pieces of meat and organs to those in need (Gadsden, 2000; Swidler, 1986). In the United States, they continued the custom by donating money to a butcher, who carried out the process of donating the meat to families in need (Vygotsky, 1978). The Ekor family also observed the daily traditions of the Muslim religion. While at home, Mrs. Ekor tried to pray five times a day and bought mainly Halal meats—those that have been blessed.

During the cultural interview, Mrs. Ekor explained some of the ritual celebrations that took place in Turkey, such as the night of henna for brides and grooms. As she flipped through a family photo album, she showed pictures of one of these ceremonies held the night before the wedding. Mrs. Ekor also explained that according to Muslim law, women could choose to wear the customary headdress, the Hijab, but based on their personal preference or their interpretation of the Koran, they could decide whether to cover up partially or completely (Swidler, 1986). For example, she showed a picture of herself with her family in Turkey in which she and her sister did not wear the Hijab, but her mother did. In another picture, Mrs. Ekor

was about to enter a Mosque in Istanbul and wore the Hijab out of respect for the Koran. I learned that certain ideologies revolved around religion for this family, and in turn, their literacy practices were connected to religious texts in order to maintain the Arabic language.

On her travels back home to Turkey, Mrs. Eckor typically looked for traditional or unique objects that she could bring back. Her favorites included Turkish tea glasses with interesting designs, which she proudly used during my visit. She also liked to bring back traditional food items such as apricot seeds (eaten like nuts), plus organic herbs, teas, and dried fruits that she cannot find State side. When in the United States, she makes a trip to the Turkish shop about one hour north of Mallorca Township in order to purchase these specialty meats, herbs, seeds, coffees, and teas (Vygotsky, 1978).

Both Kaban and his older brother had very traditional Turkish names. Mrs. Eckor explained that she selected the boys' names based on their meaning: they both represent strong leaders in the Ottoman Empire. Although she thought that the names might be difficult for Americans to pronounce, she was pleased with her decision every time she thought about their names. I was able to ascertain that upholding traditions—both of a religious and cultural nature—was very important for the Eckor family. It enabled them to stay connected to their extended family and their native country (Vygotsky, 1978).

Janna's Story. Janna Feigen was a bright and energetic eight year old girl. She enjoyed reading, writing, cooking, exploring, art, painting pictures, and talking with friends. She could more often than not be found learning, exploring, and creating works of art. During our interview, Janna described herself as a dedicated learner, and explained that she knew a lot about reading and art. According to her parents, Janna was an independent thinker, very

competitive, and continued to build upon a foundation and math and other skills in 2nd grade.

History. I was intrigued by the Feigen's history of immigration. Mr. Feigen came to the United States in 1991. He originally came for a visit, but decided to stay instead of returning to Russia. He later sent for his mother, who moved to a neighboring community and helped to take care of the girls on a daily basis. Mrs. Feigen arrived in the United States in 2001. She grew up in Armenia, but attended a Russian school from the onset of her education. Although she learned to speak and read in both Armenian and Russian, she explained that the Armenian language and grammar rules are much more difficult, so she was more comfortable conversing, reading, and writing in Russian. She met her husband within months of coming to the United States, and together they decided to move to Mallorca Township (because of the schools) and start a family. Her brother and his family had immigrated several years earlier, and lived in a nearby town also known for their excellent education system. The Feigens were the only participants in this study to have a large extended family in the United States. They explained that by having their loved ones close by, they felt a little less lonely and a little closer to their roots.

Family. The Feigen family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Feigen, eight year old Janna, and five year old Nikka. The family spoke exclusively in Russian within the home, and therefore, the girls were already proficient in Russian conversation. They were beginning to learn how to read and write in Russian as well. The girls shared a bedroom in their two story home, complete with a loft style bunk bed. The bunk bed frame was a storehouse for all of their little trinkets, toys, gems, and of course, books. Janna had a box filled with her 2nd grade reading material, and as she explained, when she finished one, she immediately picked the next one from the top

of the stack. Another bookcase was filled with Russian reading material, such as fairy tales, picture books, and poetry. Janna started reading these books for Russian school and explained that she must memorize and read a passage in order to pass her “Russian test.” Mrs. Feigen explained that she wanted the girls to be able to read in Russian and continue to learn about other parts of the culture (Purcell-Gates, 1995).

The family has visited Russia twice—once when Janna was two years old and once when Nikka was two years old. They tried to visit Russia every few years to maintain elements of their home. I asked during the interview if Mrs. Feigen saw Russia or America as her home, and explained that Russia, on one hand, was her home, but she felt so far removed from her roots. America, on the other hand, was not yet a place that she felt fully assimilated. Instead, she was somewhere in the middle, in a place that was neither here nor there. She expected that her children would be fully Americanized because they had been born in the United States and began school here. To counteract this effect and maintain their Russian identity, she made it her goal to teach her children the culture, language, and beliefs important to her homeland (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Orellana et al., 2004).

Space. Janna and her younger sister shared many school supplies, toys, and books in their home. They had a sitting area adjacent to the formal family room where they could read, practice the keyboard, or play with their toys. Typically, Janna enjoyed spreading out to read in this room, as seen in her picture:



Fig. 3. Janna's Book Reading

Their family room was more formal and mainly used for entertaining guests. It had a television (that Mrs. Feigen explained was rarely turned on) and many CDs. The kitchen area had a small niche for the table, and on it were some crayons and paper and more books for the children to use while they were doing their homework or waiting for dinner. The open spaces in the house were decorated with many of the family's favorite paintings and photographs, valuable items, and various trinkets placed on shelves or in cabinets where the girls could not reach. For example, the sitting area had a glass enclosed wall-length book case filled with old fashioned Russian books, dolls, and other valuables brought over from Russia. It became clear during the home visit that their space was family friendly, but also an important vehicle for displaying objects of importance to their heritage (Miller, 2010).

Education. Janna and her sister both attended school in Mallorca Township. As mentioned before, the Feigens chose this area based on the quality of education. Janna also attended Russian school on the weekend, where she engaged in reading, writing, and math in Russian. She explained during the interview that she enjoyed going to Russian school and had some friends there (including Mikhail, who will be identified in the next narrative). At the time of the family interview, Janna had been working on reading a passage from her Russian storybook so that she could pass the test and go on to the next reading level. She explained

that math was easier, because “numbers are still numbers” (Janna, personal communication, November 29, 2010).

Mr. Feigen explained that he was impressed by the education system in America. He could see his daughters becoming independent thinkers. He was also pleased that the schools promoted creativity, as he knew that the girls were very imaginative. Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Feigen completed their education in their home country. Mr. Feigen explained that he completed all of his college course work but left before he could finish his final examination; therefore, he did not have a college degree, but continued to work in the computer sciences industry in New Jersey. Mrs. Feigen began working in New York when she arrived in the United States, but unfortunately she lost her job after the September 11th attacks. She enrolled in nursing school in 2012 and now worked in the area hospital.

From the interviews and home visits, literacy in the home looked like a multilingual smorgasbord. Russian and English versions of movies, books, toys, paintings, and CDs could be found throughout the home. The family was proud of their culture and wished to preserve the Russian language so that the girls maintain a link to their Russian heritage (Edwards & Pleasants, 1998; Klingner & Edwards, 2006).

Traditions. The Feigens explained that they upheld many traditions in their household, including speaking Russian together and eating some traditional Russian foods. The most visible traditions, however, were the traditional Russian artifacts: Russian books and Russian dolls (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Mrs. Feigen described how important these objects were to her by saying that those were “some of the most important objects that [she] brought with her from Russia” (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 29, 2010). She had school

books and classical novels that she still enjoyed reading in Russian because she could fully appreciate the humor, whereas she felt the humor was lost on her when reading the same book in English. Another artifact she prominently displayed in the bookcase was the traditional Russian nesting doll (known as a matryoshka doll, a set of dolls of decreasing sizes placed one inside the other). Mrs. Feigen explained that from the time she was a little girl, she loved these dolls, and when it came time for her to start her own family, she encouraged friends and family to purchase these dolls for her own girls. She made sure I knew that her dolls were brought from Russia, as these dolls were of much higher quality but cost merely \$5. In America, the same dolls could cost upwards of \$200 because artists would try to capitalize on the traditional Russian pieces (Miller, 2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

From the observation and interviews, it was clear that upholding traditions was important to the Feigen family. I felt that the family perceived the reality of their situation: they were living in a new country and had to start new traditions with their family. These shared patterns and traditions identified the Feigens as members of their cultural group, while also distinguishing them from any other group (Gay, 2000).

Mikhail's Story. Mikhail was a quiet but thoughtful eight-year-old boy. Like the other boys who took part in this study, Mikhail enjoyed playing with Lego's and making potions. Mikhail was the only participant who was an only child, but he spent time with family and friends to circumvent loneliness. Mikhail took fencing lessons with a Russian coach and also attended Russian school on the weekend (with Janna, as mentioned above). His afternoon routine included either attending after school care or spending time with his grandparents, finishing his school homework, then working on his Russian homework (Lave & Wagner, 1991).

History. The Gusarovs had a history of immigration quite unlike any of the other participants. Mr. Gusarov came to the United States with his parents in 1990 at the age of 30. He did not have any other family members living in Russia. When he arrived in America, he could not speak any English. Therefore, even though he had completed his education at the graduate level in Russia, he began working at a gas station in the United States and slowly learned English. Eventually, he found a job in his field. He met his wife here, and they were married about ten years ago. It was at this time that they moved into a 900 square foot ranch house in Mallorca Township. Mr. Gusarov's parents lived in a neighboring town and were responsible for Mikhail's Russian education and shared in his after school care two days a week. I learned that having the extended family play a role in Mikhail's upbringing was a cultural practice that was valued by the Gusarovs, and during a recent vacation to Russia myself, I found that nuclear families were typically composed of multiple generations.

Family. The immediate family consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Gusarov and Mikhail, and as mentioned above, Mikhail regularly spent time with his grandparents. Mikhail's grandmother spoke little English, and his grandfather spoke limited English, so Mikhail's only option for communicating with them was to speak in Russian. Mikhail shared with me during the interview that he found it easy to understand them, but he was still working on being able to speak to them (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). Mrs. Gusarov was the only member of the family who didn't speak Russian, but Mr. Gusarov explained that his wife was the most adamant about Mikhail maintaining the language.

Spaces. During the home observation, Mr. Gusarov and Mikhail showed certain spaces used for literacy in their home, along with spaces that were decorated with traditional Russian

artifacts and works of art, including pictures or paintings of the town square of St. Petersburg. Mr. Gusarov had been fencing for 35 years, and several 17th century Russian sabers decorated the wall (Miller, 2010). He explained that some of the decorations and artifacts in his home came from his love of the sport (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

A small area in the kitchen was set up with a small wooden desk where Mikhail could complete his homework (both his daily homework and his Russian homework). All of Mikhail's books and school supplies were stored in this area, so he associated this space with literacy. Similarly, the couch in the living room was nestled next to a bookshelf, and they explained that this was the area in which Mr. Gusarov and Mikhail would read Russian books every night. On the bookshelf were many hardbound Russian books that Mr. Gusarov brought with him from Russia.

Their living room also had a television and a drawer with several Russian DVDs, but Mikhail explained that he didn't watch much TV. Mr. Gusarov explained that his parents (Mikhail's grandparents) were more apt to watch the Russian television channels, read Russian newspapers and online reports, and stay connected in those ways. Our discussion of multimedia led me to believe that literacy practices in the Gusarov home fostered learning by including examples in both languages. Their preferences also supported and maintained their native tongue (Hornberger, 1990/2004).

Education. Mikhail had been attending school in Mallorca Township since Kindergarten. He also attended an after school program three days a week while his parents were at work. Mikhail explained during the interview that he liked going to school, his teachers were nice, and he especially enjoyed science and math. Mikhail also attended Russian school on the weekend,

which mainly consisted of reading, writing, and vocabulary lessons. Mikhail showed me the folder of Russian assignments that he was working on, and he practiced reading something for me during the home visit. Mr. Gusarov explained that Mikhail was starting to get very good at Russian and had made so much progress in just the past year.

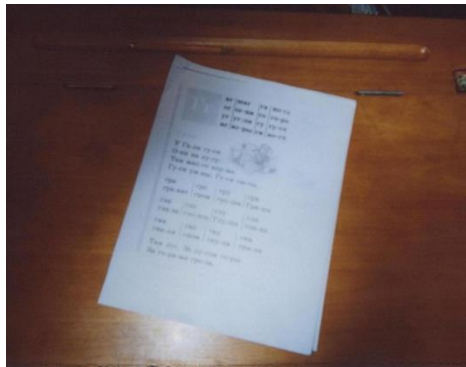


Fig. 4. Mikhail's Russian Assignment

Mr. Gusarov described education in Russia as being much different than in the United States. For example, when he attended primary school, school started in the first grade when the children were 7 and finished at the 10th grade. He explained that before 1990, the course of school training in Soviet Union was 10-years, but as he was leaving in 1990, the change was made to the 11-year course. The curriculum was very regimented and unified across the country. Mr. Gusarov preferred the education here because it was more social and allowed his son to be more creative. He clearly valued education and was optimistic that his son was becoming a well-rounded student.

Traditions. Many traditions were upheld in the Gusarov household, such as eating traditional Russian food. Mikhail told me that he especially enjoyed his baba's cooking, because "she made the best blini (crepes), shishliki (shish-kabobs), and vatrushka (cake)" (Mikhail, personal communication, November 28, 2010). Mikhail has also had Russian caviar

and “actually liked it!” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 28, 2010)

In order to preserve traditions from Russia, the family spent time with other Russian families, some who became friends with Mikhail’s grandparents when they first arrived in the United States. (His grandfather worked as an adjunct professor at Princeton University, which had a renowned Slavic department, and he met many immigrants through the University.) By spending time with other Russian families, the Gusarovs were able to connect with people who possibly held the same beliefs and values of their homeland. Mr. Gusarov explained that their Russian traditions took priority over traditions held in the United States. For example, on Thanksgiving, the family met with Russian and American friends. While some enjoyed a traditional turkey and stuffing dinner, the Gusarovs and their Russian friends brought traditional Russian dishes to eat (Vygotsky, 1978).

Mr. Gusarov described during the interview that he was also ready to start new traditions with his family. For example, he wanted to travel more with his family. His goal was to take Mikhail to visit Russia, especially the magnificent St. Petersburg, but he wanted to wait for another two years or so until Mikhail was a little older. He explained, “I would be interested in going somewhere else. I would really like Max to have that experience. I have really felt good about my experience moving overseas, and think Max would benefit when he is older, of course, to be so worldly” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 28, 2010).

Religious traditions were somewhat nonexistent in the Gusarov household. Mr. Gusarov explained that when he was living in Russia, religion was not allowed under the Communist rule, so he was not used to celebrating holidays. Only after he left was religion let back into the country. In America, he preferred to keep holidays simple. For example, he and

his wife decided that they would enjoy a small family gathering for Christmas without the exchange of presents. From the observation and interviews, upholding traditions and maintaining their identity as part of the larger Russian cultural group were important measures.

Summary of Narratives

Dominant notions of reading and writing see certain practices as culturally neutral cognitive skills (Street, 2003). The preceding personal narrative, however, counter these notions by describing how reading and writing are seen within the realm of cultural and traditional aptitudes. The children and their families had unique experiences and stories of migration. All of the parents gave the impression that they valued the language of their homeland and made every attempt to keep it alive for their children. Therefore, their at-home literacy practices were carried out in both their first language and in English. Similarly, they believed that maintaining the language and various other cultural traditions allowed them to maintain connections to their home while propelling them into the larger immigrant community. As a result, the children perceived their language and cultural heritage to be important, and began to shape their identity around the fact that they had a diverse background from their peers (Zhou, 1997).

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter presents findings directed towards answering the original research question and three sub-questions:

(Q1) What kinds of literacy practices do children of immigrant families participate at home and outside of school to foster learning?

(Q2): What are participants' perceptions of the role that language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices?

(Q3) What types of literacy practices are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?

(Q4) What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students?

I have identified two major themes to assist in answering these questions: "Children as Sociolinguistic Acrobats" and "Personal Cultural Spaces." A summary of the findings brings the chapter to a close, and paves the way for a discussion in chapter six.

Overview

The four cases represent the range and contexts for immigrants and their children during the process of immigration as it plays out in everyday life (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2002). These contexts are constituted by what people are doing and where and when (and with whom) they are doing it (Gee & Green, 1998). A contrastive analysis is useful for exposing dimension of social contexts that matter for children's experiences, including the

resources, opportunities and support they encounter as they shape their identity (Orellana, 2009). Contrast can occur at any level of analysis, but the key is to show the relevance of this contrast in understanding what members are doing together (Gee & Green, 1998). The four children and their families exhibited a range of conditions for participating in literacy practices. Looking across these families, one can sense how their cultural contexts shaped the children's daily life experiences, including their opportunities for literacy learning and development. First, the setting (at-home) facilitated regular participation in their first language. Second, the different purposes and materials available for each practice influenced how children's actions were seen and understood by others. The table below indicates the six common literacy practices in which children of immigrant families participated at home and outside of school to foster learning.

Table 5. Literacy-related activities at home and out-of school (research Q1).

TYPE OF PRACTICE	SETTING	PARTICIPANTS	PURPOSE	MATERIALS	ROLE OF CHILD	LANGUAGE
Reading	At-Home	Children Adults	Learning Enjoyment	Books	Learner	Native English
Homework	At-Home	Children Adults	Learning	Paper Pencils	Learner	Native English
Speaking	At-home Outside of School	Children Adults	Communi- cating	Phone	Listener Speaker	Native English
Storytelling	At-home	Children Adults	Learning Enjoyment	n/a	Listener Storyteller	Native English

Computer Use	At-home	Children	Learning Enjoyment	Games Internet	Learner	Native English
Watching Movies	At-home	Children Adults	Enjoyment	TV DVDs	Listener	Native English

About the Two Themes

When looking across cases at the literacy-related activities at home and out-of school, two major themes emerged. The themes represent the choices and actions that parents and children made, and directly relate to the research questions. The first theme “Children as Sociolinguistic Acrobats,” encompasses the children’s ability to employ linguistic flexibility in a variety of cultural and social situations, which directly answers the first and second research questions, (Q1): What kinds of literacy practices do children of immigrant families participate at home and outside of school to foster learning?, and (Q2): What are participants’ perceptions of the role that language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices? The findings in this theme are structured into four categories: *Daily Reading Experiences*, *Experiences with Multimodal Texts*, *Parents as Catalysts in Language and Literacy*, and *Interactions between Generations*. The second theme, “Personal Cultural Spaces,” encompasses issues of time and space and cultural self-assessment, which answered the third and fourth research questions, (Q3) What types of literacy practices are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?, and (Q4) What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students? The results are again organized into four categories: *A Place to Call*

Home, A Nation in Still Life, Parents as Catalysts in Culture and Learning, and Issues of Time and Space.

Theme I: Children as Sociolinguistic Acrobats

The interpretations of my research described by this theme identify and explain the types of literacy practices in which children of immigrants engage at home and outside of school. I learned how central these practices were to the children's language and identity, as confirmed by their personal evaluations and experiences. The analysis offered in this theme shows the unique dexterity of children of immigrants as they aligned themselves with two languages and two cultures simultaneously.

Daily Reading Experiences. Children's daily routines involving literacy were infused by language use and interactions with family members to provide them with a rich context for learning. As confirmed by previous research, family members played a major role in supporting literacy and learning for children as they went about their daily lives (Wasik, 2004).

All of the children engaged in literacy practices at home and outside of school. Their literacy practices were observable within the framework of daily routines, which included reading independently, shared book reading, and reading in different languages. Their routines supported language development and reading related skills (Beals, 2001; Baker et al., 1997; Snow et al., 1991; Sulzby & Teale, 1991; DeTemple, 2001).

Typically, the children's daily routines began when they arrived home from school. Either their parent or another caretaker was available to assist them with their homework, which consisted of spelling, math, and reading assignments. Approximately twenty to thirty minutes a night were required of the second graders; however, these children loved reading so

much that they typically extended that time to upwards of an hour. As second graders, the four children were able to read beginning chapter books independently and quite often became absorbed in their books. Some of their favorites included the Wimpy Kid series and Mercy Watson books. The children also liked to read popular mystery books and scary stories, as Kaban explained in a journal entry,

I mostly love to read scary books abot [*sic*] monsters and scary crecheres [*sic*] that scare the socks of [*sic*] me! Me [*sic*] and my dad read on bed sometimes. Sometimes we like to close the windows and chlos [*sic*] the lihts [*sic*] and read from the tv [*sic*]. (Kaban, written communication, September 28, 2010)

Their ability to read these books, along with the pleasure gained from them, allowed for reading to be a welcomed part of their daily routine. Since a unique aspect of this study was looking at the daily literacy practices of children of immigrants, I was also interested in any information that would add to previous research. I learned that as 2nd graders, all of the children were beginning to read in their native language (Gutierrez, 1975). In some cases, the children were exploring, while others were becoming more independent in these texts. Regardless, they were eager to incorporate their native language texts into their weekly, if not daily, reading routines. In another journal entry, Kaban expressed,

I can read Turkish. It's easy to read Turkish [*sic*] books. My mom tought (sic) me last summer how to read Turkish. As soon as I fund (sic) out how to read the Turkish book's I started reading a lot than I got batter and batter (sic) to read about it. And than (sic) I got intermedement (sic) so I started to read lost (sic) of chapter book's (sic) of Turkish. (Kaban, written communication, September 28, 2010)

For Kaban, learning to read in his native language occurred in his home. His mother's summer school lessons lasted throughout the year as he continued to challenge himself in his daily reading of Turkish. Kaban's participation in literacy events was both social and cultural, as evidenced by his mother's involvement and the use of Turkish texts. From the standpoint of a sociocultural framework, this excerpt also represented how language and literacy were inseparable from culture (Baker et al., 1997).

Like Kaban, Malik also learned to read in his native language at home. Malik's daily routine consisted of one half hour of Arabic with his mother. Mazhar Rashid explained,

Well, my mom, she's an Arabic teacher, kind of like the equivalent of an English teacher here. She teaches Malik how to read in Arabic every day, and he also helps her with some words in English. (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, November 9, 2010)

It is interesting to note that both mother and son acted as teachers and learners in this situation. Again, family members played an important role in the development of literacy. As such, Malik developed a flexible way of using language: he learned enough English to teach his parents and also helped them translate from Arabic to English. His ability to switch back and forth between these two vastly different texts—two alphabets, two scripts—signified his unique dexterity as a child of immigrant parents (Hakuta, 1986b; Lightfoot, Cole & Cole, 2008).

For Mikhail and Janna, learning to read in their native language took place at home and outside of school. Both Mikhail and Janna explained during our focus group interview that they attended Russian school. While there, they learned to read in Russian; they learned the Russian alphabet; they learned how to play the traditional Russian game of chess, and how to solve math problems. The children explained that at first, learning to read in their native language

was difficult, but they were catching on quickly. During our interview, Mr. Gusarov confirmed that, “In Russian, he (Mikhail) is working really hard for reading, and something really clicked, in the past year he has gotten better” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 25, 2010). Consistent practice, guidance, and encouragement from their parents and Russian teacher enabled Janna and Mikhail to develop their reading ability and gradually improve their literacy skills (Vygotsky, 1978). All of the children were guided by an adult during their daily reading experiences, which created a unique ability and flexibility when reading texts in multiple languages. The availability of resources promoted sociolinguistic flexibility (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Their capacity to incorporate English and native language texts in their daily routines showed children’s agility and determination. The most poignant example of this was during a visit to Janna’s house where she showed her collection of English and Russian books. Janna informed me of her process,

These are my books, English books, and I have them in a row, so when I finish one, I know which one comes next to read! I also have—look under here, on the bookshelf—I also have Russian books. This is the book I had to read for my Russian test. It was a little hard, but I practiced. (Janna, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

As evidenced from this quote and the related picture, Janna’s reading occurred in both languages. The English books she selected were typically beginner to mid-level chapter books that were appropriate for a 2nd grader, but contained complex concepts or vocabulary. She enjoyed the success she achieved from practicing and reading challenging texts, and she was eager to maintain a constant flow of books. She designated spaces within her house for keeping important reading materials and for reading in comfort, and she indicated these

through her photographs, written communication, and interviews (Gaines, 2006).

Most of the routines described by these children and their families could have been from any 2nd grade child. However, what separated children of immigrants from mainstream children was the propensity to engage in texts that were both multimodal and multilingual. When sorting through the interview excerpts, it became clear that the children understood the role that language and identity played in these culturally based literacy practices. This research complements previous studies that explored how the children's connection to their native language and culture increased their aptitude to read in both languages (e.g., McLaughlin, 1992; Hakuta, 1986a; Bialystok, 1997).

It was also possible that the parents' engagement in their child's everyday literacy routines was the key to fostering learning. Gregory (2004) described how learning is embedded in social, cultural, and material contexts, and is initially developed as part of a collaborative interaction between a mentor or adult (e.g., friend, family member, participant in community or cultural organizations) who guides the child in his or her learning of new cultural practices and skills. The parents seemed to recognize the importance of reading together with their children to connect literature and life and to promote reading enjoyment. Parents joined their children for shared reading experiences, which allowed the children to experience the social aspect of literacy (Vygotsky, 1978).

Shared reading was one of many daily routines that involved literacy, but one in which all families participated. For example, Mr. Gusarov explained during my home observation that he reads some of the more advanced chapter books in English for his son. "On the lower shelf is [*sic*] English books that I read for Mikhail. We just finished reading Harry Potter, and

next...what's next? The Chronicles of Narnia?" (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 25, 2010). Parents not only monitored and upheld daily routines, but encouraged their child's literacy learning. Although the families led busy lives and upheld hectic schedules, they all reserved a time to read with their children (Wasik, 2004).

At times, this daily reading ritual occurred in both languages (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Typically, the children or parents would choose a book to read in English first, possibly a library book or school book of interest to the readers. When that book (or a section of that book) had been completed, the parents would choose from the books in their home language to read to their child. The books chosen by parents were sometimes popular children's stories, fairy tales and fables, or sometimes old favorites, such as the classics they read when they were a child. Regardless, the parents modeled for their children what reading sounded like in their home language and attempted to promote a unique connection to their homeland by reading these texts (Vygotsky, 1978). Additionally, they longed for their children to create a special place in their heart for their native country by reading native language texts as part of their daily routines. During my home observation, Mr. Gusarov pointed out, "On the top shelf is [*sic*] my old Russian books. My favorite is *Winnie the Pooh*. It is the classic version, see? I love it, and I am reading that to Mikhail every night" (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 25, 2010).

The parents were proud of the books and reading materials they kept in the home, especially those that represented their native language and culture. Parents encouraged their children to practice navigating multiple languages in a variety of texts while becoming aware of the ideals and traditions of their home (NAEYC, 2009a/2009b). During our interview and home

observation, Mrs. Ekor explained how they maintain language and culture in their home. “On Sundays mainly we read to the children read in Turkish and in English, we are trying to help Ayben and Kaban especially to read Arabic for the Koran” (Mrs. Ekor, personal communication, November 15, 2010). As evidenced from both the quote and the related picture, Kaban had a variety of texts available to him and took pride in his collection. His family provided him with the materials necessary to achieve success in his literacy learning and offered their support as he challenged himself with books in both languages (McLaughlin, 1995).

The parents were eager to maintain their language and used the daily literacy routines as an opportunity to infuse their children’s lives with the tools needed to engage with texts. Although the literacy practices of the children in this study may not seem much different than those experienced by a regular second grade child, their ability to perform these practices in one or both languages separated them from their peers. Engaging in daily literacy routines, either in English or in their native language seemed to foster learning by creating two separate but diverging pathways for thought, cognition, and meaning making (Marigliano & Russo, 2011). Furthermore, by incorporating their native language into daily literacy routines, it became clear that the participants believed language played an important role in culturally based literacy practices.

Throughout the observations and interviews, I noted how the children combined different literacies and utilized different ways of becoming literate in their lives. The children were able to alternate between languages to accommodate their strengths (McLaughlin, 1995). Their daily activities were uniquely positioned within the context of dual language use and interactions with family members, who offer children a rich learning environment and heighten

their linguistic awareness. Through consistent education and support from adult mentors and participation in social activities requiring cognitive and communicative tasks, the children gradually mastered the ideals of reading and writing in the languages valued by their cultural group (Vygotsky, 1978; NAEYC, 2009b). The social component that relates to the personal, social, and cultural knowledge, feelings, and identities comprise the knowledge about activities that were the subject of analysis (Gee & Green, 1998).

Experiences with Multimodal Texts. The interviews and home observations revealed the extent to which these families incorporated multiple texts and multiple modes of learning into their daily lives. Multimodal texts and activities within the homes included reading online, playing computer games, watching TV or DVDs, and talking on the phone. As with their daily reading routines, multimodal activities took place in both languages. The children demonstrated how they merged their traditional culture with today's popular culture to create a unique personal identity; however, their multimodal literacy learning sometimes symbolized a wider contrast between language and the identities they were trying to form (Wohlwend, 2009). In addition, families used unique artifacts, such as objects and photographs, to serve as multimodal texts. The semiotic aspect allowed for an analysis connection situated meaning and cultural models with various languages, gestures, or images (e.g., Gumperz, 1992; Kress & vanLeeuwen, 1996). Although these objects didn't necessarily have a language of their own, the stories the families told related to these objects or photos determined the language that was associated with it. Memories and aspirations were laid out in certain artifacts, including photographs, furniture, and clothing, which all contributed to families' cumulative life texts. By

sharing stories of these artifacts, a variety of languages and cultural experiences were represented (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010).

Two of the families explained their inclination to seek out media in their home language for reading, watching, and playing (Gee, 2001). They described how they received some of the materials (e.g., books, movies, magazines) as gifts from family members back home, and brought others back with them after a visit. While the parents acknowledged that these materials could potentially foster learning, they mainly used these resources for enjoyment or for supporting family unity. The material components of actors, place (space), and objects present or referred to during family interactions were the key to analysis and helped develop a broader picture (Gee & Green, 1998; Bloome & Bailey, 1992). As Mr. Gusarov noted, “We have a few DVDs that we can watch, like cartoons, in Russian, and sometimes I watch grownup movies in Russian with Mikhail” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 25, 2010). Similarly, Janna and her family enjoyed spending time together, either watching movies or listening to music. During the home visit, Mrs. Feigen explained,

We really don’t watch TV, but we have some movies in Russian that we can watch.

What did we just see? Oh—Cinderella in Russian. It is our favorite. Also, you can see our CDs—before when we first got married, we had these in reach, and we listened to Russian music, a lot of music, really. (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 28, 2010)

The parents took pleasure in their Russian movies and music as they reminisced about their home countries. The children also benefited from watching and listening as they

experienced language from another person's perspective (Swidler, 1986). Together, families created a unique learning environment that blended their traditional and popular culture.

The children and their families demonstrated flexibility in all aspects of their social and linguistic lives (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Of the four families, three of them explained that they knew of several options that would allow them to access more information and resources in their home language; however, they typically selected English materials instead. During the home observation and interview, Mrs. Eckor explained,

We read the Turkish news online, but that is all. We watch TV in English, and there are some TV channels that are in Turkish, but we don't get them. We also know a Turkish radio station, but we don't listen to it. (Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

Mrs. Eckor's comments suggested that with all of the possibilities for experiencing multimodal texts, the families were willing to blend their traditional culture with popular culture, but not allow digital media to take over completely.

Similarly, when asked if he and his family read newspapers, either in print or online, in either language, or accessed radio or TV stations, Mazhar Rashid said, "I think they are available, but we don't get those" (M. Rashid, personal communication, December 4, 2010). Mr. Gusarov agreed, "My parents read things more in Russian, like reading the newspaper online, and they also get Russian channels on TV and radio, but we don't have those" (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, December 5, 2010). The participants explained how they were beginning to incorporate their traditional texts with new forms of digital literacy. Digital literacy requires certain skill sets that are interdisciplinary in nature, which are likely already

practiced by these children (Gee, 2001). Parents were encouraged by the potential for new media in helping their students understand the standard and non-standard ways of making meaning.

As evidenced in the picture below, Malik had a wide array of multimodal texts and multimedia available to him. He was reading an Arabic book while sitting at one of his family's computer desks. Another computer was in the background, and many pictures, CDs, and games were scattered around.

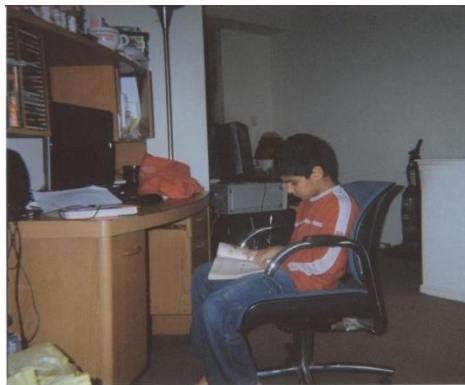


Fig. 5. Malik's Multimodal texts.

Although the four children didn't own cell phones and therefore didn't make use of interactive written communication (e.g., text messaging, g-chat, and e-mail), they were permitted to spend some of their free time playing video or computer games. In addition, parents used multimedia tools to bridge the divide between speech and writing. The Eckor and the Feigen families both described their reliance on email, the Internet, and cell phones to send and receive messages, search for information, and store photographs (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Gee, 2001). Their ability to use information and communication technology allowed them to merge traditional forms of narrative texts with image, sounds, and video to bring together information in entirely new ways (Cordes, 1999).

To balance the extensive list of multimodal activities and multimedia tools available for literacy and entertainment, (e.g., television, the Internet, video games, radio), the families also engaged in storytelling. They weaved storytelling into their nightly routine, especially in the form of parents or an older sibling telling stories to children. Their narratives were formed not only from traditional tales, tall tales, or other literature, but also from personal stories or experiences that had special meaning (Hymes, 1996). Two families in particular described their tendency to tell stories. Mr. Eckor explained, “We tell stories together, I tell stories to Ayben and Kaban before bedtime and we make up stories” (Mr. Eckor, personal communication, December 15, 2010). Likewise, Mrs. Feigen stated, “We tell stories together, mainly at bedtime, or I’ll read to them in Russian” (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 28, 2010).

Since all four families typically spoke in their native tongue at home, their stories were also told in their home language. However, the most important aspect of this story telling time was not necessarily to impart stories of family, fun, and life lessons, but to enhance family relationships (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). First, their storytelling acknowledged the relationship of the storyteller to the listener. Secondly, it gave the listener a tangible relationship to the story, which set the framework, the context, in which the story was told.

Literacy, in its many forms, acted as a link to the past while catapulting several of the participants into the future. It allowed both parents and children to become world citizens, not simply a member of one community or another. The salience of the mixed material and multimodal texts in the lives of these immigrant families showed that, aside from remaking

their identity as a member of the immigrant community, they were utilizing modern tools to create an identity in their present community (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Razfar & Yang, 2010).

Parents as Catalysts in Language and Literacy. Throughout the home observations and literacy interviews, it became clear that parents not only acted as positive role models but also played an important function in the literacy education of their children. In addition, the parents gave their children access to the sort of language literacy activities that they hoped their children would use later in life. They played a vital role in fostering language and literacy development, most notably by supporting their children at home and outside of school. All of the parents acted as role models, or catalysts, of opportunities in their children's language and literacy lives (Gregory & Williams, 2000).

Parents encouraged their child's language and literacy learning and were most often their first literacy mentor. Teaching their children was a value held by their culture, but in doing so, sought help from extended family and support from the community. As previously mentioned, Janna's and Mikhail's mother, father, and grandparents played a role in guiding the children in language learning, homework help, or the practicing of new skills. This is supported by the sociocultural framework that describes how learning is shaped by parent/child interaction (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). Sociocultural approaches to language and literacy (Lave & Wagner, 1991) argue that immersion in a community of learners engaged in authentic versions of such practice is necessary. Janna and Mikhail also had support from the community, as they engaged in learning at a Russian school.

Mikhail's wooden desk had a special place in the kitchen where he could complete his homework under the watchful eye of his family. His daily after school routine consisted of

finishing his 2nd grade homework, working on his Russian homework, reading in English, and finally, reading in Russian. He was supported and encouraged to keep up the hard work, and as a result, was successful learning literacy in dual languages. Their experience in learning a language and being supported within a certain cultural group allowed the children to engage in a variety of social interactions, both at home and outside of school (Razfar & Yang, 2010). They were encouraged to extend their understanding beyond literacy to cover a variety of learning contexts. Mrs. Feigen said in the interview,

Yes, we speak only in Russian at home, and Janna's grandmother speaks with the girls in Russian. She also goes to Russian school on Sundays, and learns pretty much everything—math, chess, reading—all in Russian. (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

The parents provided access for the children to points of culture and literacy outside the home. The parents realized the importance of encouraging their children to learn language and literacy related skills, in part based on their own beliefs and world views. This helps to answer the question related to the families' perceptions of the role that language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices. In addition, Mr. Gusarov explained that he valued having the opportunity for his son to learn Russian and to become worldly. During our interview, Mr. Gusarov explained,

I also think—you know, in every other country children all know more than one language, it is only here that they don't have to—but I think it is important for Mikhail to learn because it is more practical in the rest of the world. (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 25, 2010)

The acquisition and maintenance of the mother tongue seemed important among all families. The parents made sure that their children's language and literacy were fostered in whatever way possible and helped them become flexible in using their language skills. By doing so, I was able to learn that families' perceived that language and identity played an important role in culturally based literacy practices. Language is a central feature of human identity, as it provides a connection between internal and external representations of the self (Gibson, 2004).

Language lent itself perhaps most easily to syncretism, as the children felt equally confident speaking in their home language as in English, and even mixing both languages was not a problem for them (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). The children explained that they felt more confident reading and writing in English, but when speaking, they preferred to communicate in their home language. The children also experienced their native language by speaking to their relatives. For example, Mr. Gusarov explained, "My mother doesn't speak English, and my father only speaks a little, so the only way that Mikhail can communicate with them is in Russian" (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 25, 2010). Similarly, Mrs. Ecker described their experiences when visiting their family in Turkey by claiming, "If the boys want to talk to them, they have to talk in Turkish, because our parents mainly they don't speak English" (Mrs. Ecker, personal communication, November 5, 2010).

In some instances, like when visitors were present, the children moved back and forth between both languages with ease and simply replied in whatever language they begin the conversation. True to their own convictions about improving their English, however, the parents tried to improve their skills by choosing to read in English with their children at times.

In return, the children accepted and attempted to help their parents as they learned. During our focus group interview, Malik explained,

I sometimes help my mom; she has not so many words. She is still learning some English, and she doesn't know that much, she knows more in Arabic than she does in English. (Malik Rashid, group interview, October 18, 2010)

Similarly, their language use mirrored the way each of the children viewed their identities.

Janna and Mikhail described themselves as Russian because they speak Russian and can identify primarily with the Russian culture. Malik and Kaban described themselves as Arabic and Turkish, respectively, for the same reasons. However, all of their parents came to this country with limited English ability and made a point of immersing themselves into the society to improve their receptive and expressive language. The parents' ethnic language was intrinsic to their ethnicity, and their children also found that literacy in their ethnic language was strongly associated with their self-identification (Bankston & Zhou, 1995). Interestingly, Bankston and Zhou (1995) also concluded that ethnic language abilities, such as literacy, were related to school achievement because ethnic language skills tied immigrant children more closely to their traditions, their families, and their communities that enforced the values of academic achievement. All of the children also described during various points in the data collection how they liked school and felt they were good students.

Interactions between Generations. Grandparents, parents, and children played a key role in the intergenerational interactions of each family. All of the participants described a deep interest in preserving their connections with extended family, mainly to understand the values held by each generation and the differences among them. Similarly, families generate

beliefs about literacy from generations before them. Therefore, by connecting with family members across generations, families intended to learn from their experiences and pass down important beliefs and attitudes to their children while allowing them to advance their personal knowledge and pleasure.

Both Mr. Feigen and Mr. Gusarov came to the United States with their parents, who not only acted as caretakers for the children, but also supported the children's language learning and cultural acquisition. Janna and Mikhail both received additional support from their grandparents in maintaining their language and literacy during daily routines. During our interview, Mrs. Feigen explained,

I later sent for my mother, who used to live across the road where you live, but she now lives a little bit farther away. Since we are working, she helps take care of the girls during the day. She picks them up from school and activities for us.

(Mr. Feigen, personal communication, November 29, 2010)

The grandparents of both families lived in nearby communities, and they played an active role in the daily literacy routines and language practices. The grandparents provided authentic learning situations for the children to communicate in their native language and to come into contact with their cultural heritage. Mr. Gusarov spoke about his parents' involvement in raising Mikhail during the home visit. "On Tuesdays and Thursdays," he stated, "my parents pick him up from school, and they help him with his Russian" (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, December 5, 2010). Both of the families from Russia had maintained relationships with their extended family and modeled the importance of intergenerational interactions for their children. Participants maintained these ties by visiting their home country,

by calling on the phone, and by bringing their family here to live or visit. However, while living in the context of their household, the most important intergenerational relationship they had was with their parents. More specifically, Malik and Kaban explained during the interviews that their mothers were responsible for giving written and spoken instruction in their native language. The mothers were important role models for literacy and language learning in these two families and were largely responsible for providing important lessons, imparting family values and beliefs, and creating authentic learning situations for the children. The theoretical framework suggests that through interaction with adults, children learned to use literacy and language tools appropriately, and drew on these diverse cultural resources to situate themselves within the broader social context (Dyson, 2003a; Heath, 1983; Razfar & Yang, 2010). For example, Kaban explained one of his photographs during our focus group interview,

This picture is of my brother's and my work room. I'm doing my homework. We used to have homework in Turkish. During the summer, my mom gives us Turkish summer school so we have homework in Turkish. (Kaban, group interview, October 18, 2010)

Mrs. Ekor conducted Turkish summer school with her children with the hope that when they returned to Turkey for a visit, the boys would remember important vocabulary and communication skills. Mr. and Mrs. Ekor felt that providing the boys a time to visit with extended family members was important, which was why they attempted to return to Turkey every other summer. When they were not able to be together, though, the parents continued to model the values and beliefs of generations before them. Mrs. Ekor described the importance of maintaining connections,

We are close with our family, it is customary to show respect by calling your family, so we call once a week. We talk to them, and even when we go there, we sometimes forget the words, and they are saying how can you forget? But we remember in no time. (Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

All of the parents explained how communicating with relatives in their home language was an important value held in their family, which was why they insisted upon having their children learn their home language (Portes & Hao, 1998). During our interview, Mr. Gusarov also explained the importance of maintaining language. He stated, “Interestingly enough, my wife is more adamant about him learning, she wants to preserve the language, but yes, it’s important so he can communicate with my parents” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 28, 2010).

The parents and children held on to their language for the purpose of maintaining their cultural and linguistic identities and keeping the lines of intergenerational communication open. Speaking with family members with limited English skills encouraged the children to remember and retain important vocabulary and customary forms of conversation. Their experience in communicating with members of their cultural group and engaging in a variety of social interactions allowed them to begin establishing an enhanced personal identity and understanding of the customs valued by their society (Jenkins et al., 2006).

Although the connections across families differed and were influenced by issues of time and space, the children had come to learn the tools and vocabulary to speak with their relatives in their native language. Maintaining this level of communication was not only a personal belief for each of the families, but it was also a cultural tradition to maintain connections and show

respect (Portes & Hao, 1998; Orellana, 2009). With this knowledge, I determined that participants perceived language and identity to play an overlapping role in their culturally based literacy practices: one could not exist without the other (John-Steiner & Mahn, 1996). The four families all explained that they were fortunate enough to come to this country for a better life and worked diligently to learn English. However, many family members (those either living here or in their home country) were only able to speak in the native tongue; so in order to facilitate communication between generations, it became imperative for the children to speak the same language.

Family members acted as role models for, and supporters of, learning. Interactions included sharing stories and cultural narratives and speaking for a variety of purposes (Gregory & Williams, 2000). Interactions between children and family members were primarily observed during home visits. The home observation logs detailed the types of interactions, along with attitudes towards literacy and parenting behaviors that fostered learning. From the cases, interacting with family members enhanced families' daily literacy routines (Gregory & Williams, 2000).

Summary of Theme I

Throughout the study, it became apparent that the variety of texts in multiple languages available to the children of immigrants played a key role in answering the first research question. These texts became the substance of the children's daily literacy practices at home and also had the power to help them engage more fully in meaning making behaviors. The research addressed different issues as I attempted to piece together a complex puzzle of the role of reading in the lives of families and their literacy learning practices at-home.

Theme I, “Children as Sociolinguistic Acrobats” described how the activities in which children and their families engaged were affected by the structure of their language and patterns of interaction and communication. Children navigated through texts and experiences to make meaning, to learn language and literacy, and to create their personal identity. Guided by a sociocultural theory, the day-to-day practices and family routines surrounding language and literacy provided multiple opportunities for children of immigrants to have ongoing access to linguistic, cultural, and cognitive resources. Each child fused two relatively distinct identities. I felt it was crucial not only to expose the ethnic and linguistic communities represented in the school, but to also show examples of how the children navigate such diversity to become culturally competent.

The children’s language and literacy learning was uniquely characterized by family members and cultural resources that were available to them. The children acted as sociolinguistic acrobats in such a way as to show the back and forth nature of their language use through multiple modes of text, media, and conversation. I was able to pinpoint these activities and events as the kinds of literacy practices that children of immigrant families participate at home and outside of school to foster learning. In addition, the children moved between two cultural situations—home and school. This information helped to answer the second research question regarding participants’ perceptions of the role that language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices. They were confident of their identities within both and were able to navigate the different languages needed for communication.

Theme II: Personal Cultural Spaces

Theme II represents an appreciation for immigrant families and their diverse experiences, resources, and knowledge. Learning contexts are inherently multivoiced and multiscritped, which created multiple ways of being for these families (Gutierrez et al., 1999). I examined the cultural discourses and practices within the various personal and social spaces of immigrant families. It was possible to examine the data to identify the social processes and practices that were constructed, the meanings that were developed, and what counted as appropriate actions or knowledge (Gee & Gumperz, 1998). The analysis throughout the theme of Personal Cultural Spaces allowed me to identify the types of literacy practices that were valued by members of diverse cultural systems and to determine the kinds of ideologies about literacy immigrant communities promote among parents and students. The findings in this theme were organized into four categories: A Place to Call Home, A Nation in Still Life, Parents as Catalysts in Culture and Learning, and Issues of Time and Space. The second theme, “Personal Cultural Spaces,” encompasses issues of time, space, and cultural self-assessment. The findings in this theme help to answer the third and fourth research questions, (Q3) What types of literacy practices are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?, and (Q4) What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students?

A Place to Call Home. When most new immigrants come to the United States, they are in search of a home. For the parents in this study, this took on new meanings and contexts: some never intended to call the United States home; some were in pursuit for a parallel version of home, while some abandoned their search to create one home (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Orellana, 2009).

Interestingly enough, two of the four families did not intend to stay in the United States. Initially, Mr. Ekor had come to this country to receive a good education and then planned to return to Turkey. However, when the opportunity presented itself to remain in the United States for work, he felt that he could not turn it down. Mr. Ekor explained the following during a home visit,

I came to United States in 1996 to go to Rutgers. I thought that I would go back to Turkey when I finished, but I got a green card to work here. Then I started my own business and so we will stay here. (Mr. Ekor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

Mrs. Ekor then added, “And I came here in 1998, we were already engaged in Turkey, so when he got the green card I came here too” (Mrs. Ekor, personal communication, December 5, 2010).

Similarly, Mr. Feigen explained, “I came to the United States in 1991. I originally came for a visit, but decided to stay instead of returning to Russia.” These parents felt that the United States would become a place where they could call home and enjoy all of the possibilities that America could offer (Maira, 1998; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). However, it proved to be a misconception that all immigrants in America claim to have a better life and more freedom in the USA than in their home country. The parents in this study eventually experienced feelings of isolation and confusion while creating their home in the United States. Mrs. Ekor described her initial discontent,

It was hard being here in the beginning, the first three years I only just wanted to go back. I didn’t have anything to do and I didn’t know anyone, but once I had

Ayben it got better. We are still deciding if we should go back, we don't know.

(Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

Although they had a comfortable house and a loving family, their lives were incomplete—void of their old life and culture. As a result, the parents went in search for these missing people and pieces. Mrs. Eckor described the material objects that made her feel more at home,

Yes, well, there is a Turkish community in Paterson that has book stores and groceries, so I go up there maybe one or two times a month to get the special things I need. There are a few Turkish people in this area, so we can talk and trade books, but not very much. (Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 7, 2010)

By seeking out neighborhoods and friends that were similar to those left behind, the Eckor family attempted to make new connections that would resemble their old life. They placed significant value on the customs, traditions, and social interactions of their home, which was why they tried to keep “home” alive for their children. They were seemingly making every effort to find a local Turkish community and take advantage of what it could offer their home (Razfar & Yang, 2010; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

The Rashid family found different ways of keeping the ties alive. Even within the giant melting pot that is the United States, with every resource imaginable at their fingertips, they did not seek to belong to a community like the one they left behind. When asked if they knew of or associated with a local Middle Eastern community, Mazhar Rashid explained, “No, I don't think so. There are a couple of pockets around here, Hitown maybe, that have a Mosque and

more people from Middle Eastern countries, though” (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 4, 2010). They explained how they maintained the customs and traditions of their home country only within the walls of their house. Although they did not really try to seek out home communities in the USA, they sought to maintain this connection in other ways, such as through reading texts in their native language and keeping up with the connections within their immediate family (Gadsden, 2000).

The Gusarov family, on the other hand, neatly combined pieces of their home with new customs in the United States. Mr. Gusarov described his need to keep his favorite traditions alive stating, “Yes, we have some friends that get together for Thanksgiving, some American and some Russian friends, and the Americans have their turkey and we eat our Russian foods!” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 15, 2010)

When asked if he sought out Russian friends by choice, or met them within a local community, Mr. Gusarov explained,

No, it was just by coincidence. My father sometimes lectures at Princeton University, you know they have a large Slavic department, and he met some people, and we also met some people from Russia. But not from a community, like Brighton Beach, in New York, if that’s what you mean. (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 15, 2010)

While Mallorca Township itself lacks distinct community associations, the families were able to seek out nearby areas where pockets of other immigrants settled. The four families sought to keep home alive in some distinct way throughout their time in the United States, and promoting practices reminiscent of their home seemed to be among their top priorities. Their

ideologies about preserving home convey their beliefs about preserving the literacy practices of their home (e.g., Heath, 1983; Jewitt, 2008; Genishi & Dyson, 2009).

A Nation in Still Life. Participants' cultural artifacts gave them a sense of identity in their new country, and all of the parents shared with me the reasons why they chose to keep or display certain pieces. The aspect of this study that focused on the artifacts in the homes of immigrant families provided interesting insight into the items that were cherished and valued.

All of the parents shared with me some of the special items that they either brought with them to the United States or had sent over to them later. Interestingly enough, the two Russian families both brought books with them—favorite books, classic books, and special editions—to start their new life in a new country. Mrs. Feigen explained,

We have our special things in this built-in bookcase. You can see the books.

Those are mainly Russian books. Most of my boxes when I came here were filled with books! I still read them, mainly when I want to laugh, because, I don't know, I can't get the humor when I read the same books in English, especially the classic books. (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 20, 2010)

Books seemed to situate these families within their comfort zone. When everything else around them in the new country was unfamiliar, a book always brought them back. To this end, I learned that one of the most important items that parents brought to the United States from their home country was a selection of their favorite books. Once here, though, the parents sought out alternate means for acquiring these books and reading materials. These books enabled them to maintain their language and culture as they navigated life in a new country. I ascertained that the parents valued literacy practices that reflected their own

upbringing and believed that promoting literacy in their native language kept them close to their roots (Vygotsky, 1978).

The Feigen and Gusarov families both had objects that were uniquely Russian. These items not only served as markers of their identity, but as decoration in their house and centerpieces for discussion (Miller, 2008/2010; Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). During the home observation, Mrs. Feigen showed her special display and stated,

I also have these dolls. From the time I was a little girl, I always loved these dolls. When it came time for me to start my own family, she asked my friends and family to buy these dolls for my own little girls. In Russia, these dolls are of high quality. (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 20, 2010)

The story that accompanied her artifacts illustrated how she connected literacy with cultural heritage, which confirmed that she valued the stories that could be told about her country (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). Similarly, Mr. Gusarov combined uniquely Russian objects with a passion for sport and his country,

These are my 17th century swords (on the wall) but they are only used for decoration. Mikhail does Fencing on Saturdays, ironically with a Russian coach. And I have been fencing for 35 years. (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, November 29, 2010)

This display of fine objects in the home allowed each of these families to recall the stories associated with each item, along with the memories they evoke. The Eckor and Rashid families, on the other hand, both acknowledged food as an object of appreciation. Food shaped these individuals and the culture, and this notion of food as an artifact may reflect the

cultural attitudes or symbolic significance toward certain cuisines, or some other dimension of their history (Palmer, 1998). As Mazhar Rashid explained,

We typically get...I don't know the word in English, but in Arabic it is galesh, this sweet, I don't know, made out of syrup, heated with water, a lot of sweets are really good. Also, obviously, things like humus, but you can get those from any store now. (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 3, 2010)

It seemed that everything having to do with food—its purchase, cultivation, preparation, and consumption—represented a cultural act that these families truly valued. Essentially, food was an edible history for these immigrant families. As Mrs. Eckor explained during the home visit,

We have for dinner—early, like when my husband comes home—some soup and maybe noodles or rice. Now we have a snack, this is Borek (a Turkish pastry with ground meat and either cream cheese) and stuffed cabbage leaves, and maybe something sweet. This is my version of pumpkin pie. We also like Turkish delight. (Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

Another view of food as a cultural artifact is that it was a product shaped by climate, geography, the pursuit of pleasure, or the desire for good health. The quote by gastronome Jean Anthelme Brillat-Savarin (1825), “Tell me what you eat, and I'll tell you who you are,” can be used to describe importance of food for these families as they attempted to maintain elements of their cultural identity in the United States. Their cultural and culinary traditions helped the families navigate their social world, unite experiences, and construct their identity (Lindfors, 1999). For example, Mrs. Eckor explained,

We also get apricot seeds because you can't get them here; they are things to eat like almonds. We also get hazelnuts, because they are hard to find here. We also have stuffed grape leaves—many people think that they are from Greece or something, but we say they are ours! (Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

Food not only served as a marker of their identity in the United States, but also allowed generations to pass down important aspects of their culture and cuisine. In the following exchange, Mr. Gusarov told me about the Russian foods that Mikhail likes to eat,

SG: Baba makes you a special snack, no? It is a Russian treat made with sugar and cheese.

DR: Like a blintz?

SG: Yes, like a blini, in Russian. Mikhail also likes shishliki, a...a... shish kabob, with lamb, and he also likes Caviar, there are a lot of Russian foods that my mother makes that he likes! (Mr. Gusarov).

The analysis focused on the situated nature between narratives and artifacts within the home (Gee & Green, 1998). The discussion and presentation of food within the homes provided insight into the valued artifacts and customs of these families. Foods and other artifacts provided each family with a unique story—a story of their home, their diverse culture, and their unique values. Without visiting the homes and observing the careful display of these artifacts, I would not fully understand the importance these items play in the ideologies of these families (Genishi & Dyson, 2009).

All of the families' homes contained special items. Although several of these artifacts

were used for display purposes, others still were stored away for preservation. Out of sight, but not out of mind, as Mazhar Rashid explained during our interview,

Well, we have this, papyrus paper, you know what this is? And we have pictures of our family, but they are mainly in the photo albums, I mean, we don't have a lot of room in the house to put things, so they usually get stored away. (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 13, 2010)

Artifacts had a unique quality of situating these families in a comfort zone of time and space, where memory prevailed. Whether still in use or simply for decoration, all of these artifacts had a story to tell (Pahl & Rowsell, 2010). The participants were eager to show their valuable possessions and explain their importance in relation to their home, their culture, and their lives. The stories of their artifacts offered a unique literacy practice that was highly valued. The relationship between narrative and artifacts was strengthened as the families explained how artifacts carried powerful family memories and pieces of their identity.

Issues of Time and Space. The emerging dataset contained many patterns across time and space. The focus on the unfolding narratives was that a distance between two worlds could be felt: the families all alluded to the fact that they could not move back to their home country, because over the course of time, so much had changed. However, even in an effort to create a new space in the United States, their new “home” wasn’t quite home, either. They were caught in a “middle space” where nothing seemed right.

For these immigrants, traveling across geographical places shaped their personal destiny. The physical geography of a place was used to provide the primary context for the culture of the people who lived in that place. Time and place may have also helped in the

formation of individual or group identity within a geographical location. For some, the dimensions of time, space, and place collaborate to create a unique cultural competence and linguistic awareness. As Mr. Gusarov explained,

Yes, well, I came to New Jersey in 1990. 20 years ago exactly. I came here when I was 30. I finished my master's education in Russia, and came here. I started working at a gas station until I could find work in my field. I didn't know any English, I only learned it when I got here. It took about the first 3 years before I think I could really speak in English, you know, before I was thinking in Russian and translating, but after a few years I could actually think in English, and that's when I knew things had clicked. (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, December 3, 2010)

Furthermore, a focus on time and space was shown to influence the development of relationships. There was an implicit understanding among each family that they were interconnected to each other and to their surroundings. Mrs. Eckor pointed out the difficulties of living in this country,

It is so hard. In Turkey, we are never lonely. We can call our friends and neighbors and say can we come over or ask if they want to come over and they always welcome. Everybody welcomes you into their home. The children play in the streets together in the streets and everybody knows everybody else, so if there is someone new we always know. It is not the same here, everybody shuts their doors and no one is playing outside—there are lots of kids in the

neighborhood but we never see them just playing. (Mrs. Ekor, personal communication, November 14, 2010)

Aside from personal home spaces, the older son also described some of the differences between the spaces they occupied in Egypt and the United States. Mazhar explained, Egypt is more of a city, like New York city, and the streets are really crowded, but it is also near the pyramids, so there is desert land close by, and also because of that, there is more of a Bedouin community on the outskirts of the city. (Mazhar Rashid, personal communication, December 4, 2010)

It was interesting to learn about the comparison between these two countries. In navigating their surroundings—the community and the people—they realized that the differences in their native life, language, and culture separated them from that of the United States. As Mrs. Ekor stated, “We are like aliens, we don’t fit in there and not here either” (Mrs. Ekor, personal communication, December 5, 2010). Mrs. Feigen seconded this remark, Russia, on one hand, was my home, but I feel so far removed from it, and America, on the other hand, is not yet a place that I am fully comfortable. Instead, I’m somewhere in the middle, in a place that was neither here nor there. (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 29, 2010)

I interpreted that it was somewhat uncomfortable, being in this middle space, but since they were going to stay in the United States, they were determined to maintain the ideals of their culture. These families were located somewhere between their desire of the future and the memories of the past (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Zhou, 1997).

On a more personal level, parents are reminded of the symbolic representation and social practices of a time and space prior to emigration. In time, the situation became more manageable as the families began to create their own niche. As Mrs. Ekor explained,

It was hard being here in the beginning, the first three years I only just wanted to go back. I didn't have anything to do and I didn't know anyone, but once I had Ayben it got better. We lived in another town at first but moved to Mallorca for the good school. (Mrs. Ekor, personal communication, December 5, 2010)

All of the parents saw themselves as successful in the United States, as symbolized by their ability to live in Mallorca Township and provide a good life and a good education for their children. However, this was not the permanent home for some of the families, as they described their purposes for moving back or moving on. As Mr. Gusarov explained,

I would be interested in going somewhere else. You know, my brother in law—my wife's brother—moved to Belgium for his work and traveled everywhere in Europe. I would really like Mikhail to have that experience. I have really felt good about my experience moving overseas, and think Mikhail would benefit, when he is older, of course, to be so worldly. (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, December 3, 2010)

As the parents shared their personal stories of immigration, a common thread seemed to be that they were open to the possibilities of a new world, a better education, and a unique sense of self accomplishment. However, they were careful not to neglect or dismiss the place from which they came. They held onto practices that they valued as they assimilated to life in

the United States. Furthermore, they made sure that an appreciation of home, including the beliefs and values of their culture, were instilled within their children (Buttimer, 1968).

Parents as Catalysts in Culture and Learning. A child's learning development is affected by learning and maintaining a certain culture—including the culture of family environment—in which he or she is intertwined (Vygotsky, 1978). Since much of what children learned came from the culture around them, it was understandable that parents looked for ways to promote their child's cultural and learning experiences. All of the parents in this study were viewed as the primary cultural mediators in their child's life and prompted cultural exchanges in order to contribute to their child's intellectual and individual development.

Parents maintained important aspects of cultural heritage by replicating or recreating important family rituals or religious traditions (Dyson, 1993; Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Even if the families were not very religious, the community in their home country encouraged their participation in religious practices and beliefs purely by having a large religious populace. Mrs. Ecker explained during our interview how she tried to maintain religious practices even though the surrounding community in Mallorca Township wasn't religiously similar,

For Ramadan it is for one month, we fast during the day, in the winter it is easy because the sun sets sooner and then we can eat, but the holiday is 10 days earlier each year, and when it is in the summer and it doesn't get dark until 8:30 or 9 it is very hard. We do it—as children, they don't have to, but they try because they want to and it is important to them. We celebrate for one month, and the last three days is Eid. Then, like the Christian people on Christmas who dress in their nicest clothes, I try to do the same for the children, but it is for one

day, not three, and then we are back to normal. (Mrs. Ecker, personal communication, December 3, 2010)

Alternatively, some parents came from a place where certain traditions or religious practices were not permitted. As a result, they have decided to carry over this tradition rather than following the mainstream traditions in the United States. For example, Mr. Gusarov explained during our interview, “Well, when I was still in Russia, religion was not allowed, and it wasn’t until I left that they let religion back in, so I didn’t really celebrate anything, and even here, we do very little, like for Christmas” (Mr. Gusarov, personal communication, December 14, 2010).

Parents felt their role was to ensure that their children maintained pieces of their home culture and didn’t “lose” the practices of their homeland. Children of immigrants often become Americanized so quickly that their parents cannot keep up with them. There is a fear in the older generation that their children will leave them, become like other American youth, and forget about their roots (Zhou, 1994). In their home country, the parents were surrounded by examples of culture, tradition, and religion. Here, however, it was necessary for parents to supplement certain cultural, traditional, or religious situations. The participants based their familial and community behavior upon the traditions of their heritage. Their conversations were rooted in family and community life and reflected specific knowledge of their home language and cultural communication (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). Just like in Turkey, Mrs. Ecker explained her inclination to continue certain habits,

We have for dinner—early, like when my husband comes home—some soup and maybe noodles or rice. Later, we have a snack, this is Borek, and stuffed

cabbage leaves, and maybe something sweet. And it is very traditional, my husband and I drink so much tea—maybe four cups—at the night, but any more than that and I can't fall asleep! (Mrs. Eckor, personal communication, December 1, 2010)

By maintaining the traditional or valued aspects of their culture, these families seem to be encouraging and supporting the beliefs associated with teaching and learning for future generations. Learning within the family and as a family is often the catalyst to many wide-ranging experiences, not just in relation to individual skills and qualifications but also to cultural norms and expectations (e.g., Gadsden, 1994; Dyson, 2001; Padak et al., 2008).

Children learn about themselves and the world around them within the context of culture. This was one of the most important reasons for instilling the beliefs and customs of her country, as Mrs. Feigen claimed, “I think the children will be fully Americanized, which is why I think it is so important to maintain the language and the culture” (Mrs. Feigen, personal communication, November 28, 2010).

Language, literacy, customs, values, and beliefs can survive only if they are passed on to the next generation, who in turn practice and pass on these traditions to their children. In order for these diverse families to maintain certain traditions, they must take an active role in providing experiences and setting expectations from their set of cultural norms. While there were many cultural variations between and within these immigrant families, all of the families aspired to maintain their roots in the United States.

Summary of Theme II

In these times, a bicultural family has two choices: to identify primarily with United

States institutions, while upholding the customs of their home, or to identify primarily with their home, while assimilating to the customs of the United States. Throughout the home observations and interviews, I gained the true sense of their decision to act out the latter approach. It seemed that the children clearly understood the values imparted from their parents. In the context of their homes, they offered to show and tell me about the books, foods, artifacts, pictures, and stories that made up the core of their being and that situated them within their unique cultural group. During the student focus group interview, they were quick to describe some aspects of their culture and heritage that made them special.

For each of these families, their diverse cultural systems provided them with the values and beliefs essential to maintaining their traditions far from home. Cultural attitudes and ways of living easily and fluidly transfer into ideologies about language, literacy, and learning (Neito, 2009). Furthermore, they have the ability to shape identities, especially during a period where immigrant parents are not only adjusting to their own transition, but also attempting to usher their children into a new society.

As these children of immigrants were socialized into two cultures, the parents look to their cultural values and expectations to assist in raising their children. I determined that multicultural and multilingual literacy practices were highly valued by members of diverse cultural systems, especially if the practices were reminders of “home.” Using their culturally based knowledge, the parents made decisions on how to raise their children in this new country, including what values should be taught, what traditions could be preserved, and what should be done differently. In addition, they looked to family members to help them explore and resolve certain cultural conflicts that may arise and to guide them as they took new risks.

Through this analysis, I was able to ascertain that cultural ideologies about literacy are largely promoted among immigrant communities.

Throughout the study, the theme of “Personal Cultural Spaces” emerged as a vehicle for understanding how families are guided through this cross-cultural passage so that the traditional is not abandoned for the sake of assimilation (Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001).

Summary of Findings

Families’ Perceptions of Learning Language and Literacy. The findings from this research indicate that parents and children who have recently immigrated to the United States engage in literacy practices at home and outside of school that emanated from strong family ideologies related to language use and communication. The four families had a unique ability of reflecting the characteristics of “best practices” (Morrow et al., 2007) for literacy learning within the home in both English and their native language. These best practices include creating routines for literacy instruction, offering appropriate and varied resources, and building optimal learning environments. I was able to identify the cultural ideologies and models that members bring to, inscribe in, and construct through the text of their life history by examining the process and practices in which these members engage (Gee & Gumperz, 1998).

All of the families created daily routines within the home to provide structure and support in their child’s learning. Of these routines, the most prominent across the four households was sharing texts in both English and their native language. The parents perceived this to be an important part of their at-home literacy practices, as it allowed for them to maintain a close connection with their children, to demonstrate their personal preference for

language use, and to instruct their children in becoming proficient readers of their native language. The children perceived these routines as a chance to gain mastery over certain skills that would set them apart from their peers, to spend time with their parents, and to become responsible for establishing their own pathways for learning. Routines involving language and literacy provided key forms of interaction as children progressed toward sociolinguistic aptitude.

Parents and adults assumed the important role of guiding their children in language and literacy. They understood their responsibilities to include offering their children appropriate and varied resources, and to establish a supportive network of family and community members to assist in their child's success. Successful language instruction and integration were gained through several modes, including cultural artifacts, storytelling, and other mixed media. I found that most families encouraged storytelling, a culturally accepted custom for intergenerational sharing, and relied upon family photo albums to remember their history.

Building optimal learning environments was also perceived to be of great importance to these families. The parents expressed that their reason for coming to the United States was in search of a new life and new opportunities. They chose to live in an upper middle-class community, which offered to provide their children the best education available. Within this community, the families all lived by modest means but were grateful for what they had. Within their homes, the families designated a special place for learning to occur, typically in the form of tables, desks, chairs, or sofas, but more importantly, they provided the foundation for a risk-free environment for their children to learn.

Participants' Perceptions of Cultural Identity. The findings from this research also lead to the understanding that parents who have immigrated to the United States wished to maintain as much of their cultural identity as possible. In looking across all of the cases, the families adapted to life in this country; however, their first priority was to stay true to their roots and transmit the values of their cultural system to their children. Parents and children chose to identify primarily with their home, and this played out in the way that they maintained family interactions, valued cultural artifacts, and recreated important traditions within their new home.

The families in this study maintained close ties with those left behind and continued to keep the lines of communication open. In some cases, families sent for their loved ones and introduced them to their lives in the United States. Some of the families made the effort to call their family on a weekly basis, or use other means of communication such as internet or email to connect with their family. Most often, though, these families had the luxury of returning home to visit their loved ones for an extended period of time. Parents and children perceived this to be the ultimate means of preserving their identity. By spending time in their home country, these families were able to participate in the local community as if they never left. It seemed to be of dual importance for parents to maintain identity and to maintain connections with relatives and their home country.

Families also maintained their cultural identity through the display and discussion of artifacts within their home. The families that took part in this study believed these artifacts to be a visual key in maintaining their identity. By displaying items of importance throughout their home, it seemed like the families were saying, "This is a representation of who I am," or "This is

where I come from.” These artifacts possibly assisted in shaping or preserving their identity while far from home. Furthermore, the cultural implications of these artifacts acted as reminders of their belief system and helped to guide their daily routines.

The parents also played an active role in recreating customs and traditions within their new home. The families in this study believed that maintaining their cultural identity was an important factor in their successful adaptation to the new country (e.g., Gadsden, 2000; Suárez-Orozco & Suárez-Orozco, 2001). They often sought out places or people that helped to restore these practices or events to their daily lives.

This chapter described the cross-case analysis of the independent case studies. The strategy that best fit this research was to create categories within the cases that could be analyzed outside of the independent case studies. This strategy allowed the cross-case analysis to be conducted systematically and forced me to go beyond my initial interpretations. Finally, an effort was made within the cross-case analysis to identify practices that were important to immigrant families.

The two themes establish from this research: “Children as Sociolinguistic Acrobats,” and “Personal Cultural Spaces,” described how children of immigrants engaged in literacy practices to foster learning. Families and parents participated in literacy practices outside of school to contribute to their child’s literacy development across multiple contexts and multiple generations (Heath, 2010). It is my belief that this research has contributed to work of previous studies (e.g., Hicks, 2002; Heath, 1983; Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 1989/1993) which described the diverse literacy practices and social lives of children and families in urban,

economically disadvantaged communities by including immigrant families and their children who come from a multiethnic/multicultural suburban setting.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

"Reading makes immigrants of us all. It takes us away from home, but more important, it finds homes for us everywhere." — Jean Rhys

The purpose of this study was to explore the kinds of literacy practices in which children of immigrants participate at home and outside of school to foster learning. I used a comparative case study methodology (Creswell, 1998) to answer my research question, as it enabled me to gain a deeper understanding of the interactions between language, literacy, and culture.

This study detailed the literacy events and practices of four families from a suburban, middle class community in New Jersey. In selecting participants for this study, I applied four criteria: country of origin, immigration status, age of child, and language(s) spoken at home. Therefore, this research explored the lives of families who emigrated from Eastern European (e.g., Russia, Turkey, Slovakia) or Middle Eastern (e.g., Israel, Egypt, and Jordan) countries; the parents were all first generation immigrants to the United States; at least one child was a 2nd grade student in the local elementary school; and a language other than English was spoken at home.

The primary sources of data for this study were observational field notes, audiotapes, interviews, home visits, photographic evidence, artifacts, and journals, in order to get an in-depth look into the realm of literacy and culture in the at-home environment. The data were collected and reviewed on a case-by-case basis to detail the cultural backgrounds and literacy events that had the possibility of contributing to learning.

When I initiated this study, I expected to find a wide array of practices to suggest that these children come from a literacy-rich home environment. I also anticipated finding unique or different practices within these homes; however, as described in Chapter Five, I found more similarities than differences. What became clear was that in the homes of these immigrant families, common literacy practices were infused with language and culture. In addition, these practices stemmed from the values and beliefs of the family and country from where they came.

The findings in Chapter Five generated characteristics that were consistent with the themes “Children as Sociolinguistic Acrobats” and “Personal Cultural Spaces.” The remainder of this chapter summarizes these characteristics in relation to the literacy practices of children of immigrant families. Each of the subheadings will provide a discussion related to the research questions posed. Following an explanation of how these findings relate to current research and theory, I conclude the chapter with implications in the area of literacy development for teachers, parents, and researchers.

Experiences with Language and Literacy. When answering the question, “What kinds of literacy practices do children of immigrant families participate at home and outside of school to foster learning?” I found that these children engaged in practices that dealt with literacy in their native language. It seemed important for the parents to offer many and varied experiences through multiple modes (e.g., books, movies/television, written homework) to make sure that their children would become

fluent readers and writers in the native language. I inferred that in most of the cases, communication in the family’s native language was preferred over English. Tabyanian (2005)

suggests that immigrant parents and their children recreate instructional patterns at home and outside of school to protect their cultural and linguistic backgrounds and culturally specific ways of making meaning to acknowledge the important role of culture in language and literacy learning. The experiences (e.g., bedtime reading, homework) primarily took place within the home, and many of these were part of the family's everyday routine. Current research and policy statements agree that children gain experience from being engaged in a variety of learning contexts, from continuing to explore diverse language, literacy, and cultural practices, and for making these practices part of their daily routines (NAEYC, 2009b).

Children of Immigrants, Children of the World. When answering the sub-question, "What are participants' perceptions of the role that language and identity play in these culturally based literacy practices?" I was specifically looking for the nation and culture with which these families identified. Were they Russian (or Egyptian or Turkish)? Were they American? Were they both? Did their identification with one nation and culture determine the types of literacy practices that occurred in their home? The answer was quite startling: The parents identified with their home nation, but realized that their children were being brought up in a much different time and place. Gans (1992) agrees that pressures of both formal acculturation (through schooling) and informal acculturation (through peers and the media) may impact the second generation in the way they form their identities. The parents understood (but didn't always appreciate) that their children would become "Americanized" to the point of forgetting the native language unless something was done to preserve it. Therefore, the lives of these four children were infused with materials, text, traditions, and culture of the parents' homeland. By participating in diverse practices related to culture and

literacy, children of immigrants became more aware of the world around them (Lam, 2006).

Exposure to Multiple Languages. When answering the sub-question, “What types of literacy practices are valued by members of diverse cultural systems?” I was specifically interested in learning if literacy practices performed in another language were more important than literacy practices done in English. From the interviews, I determined that the parents valued the time and effort they spent engaging their children with literacy in their native language. They preferred their children to read, write, and speak in the native language as often as possible at home. It seemed like the only time English language exercises were performed was when the children completed homework assignments for school. Evidence suggests that well-developed bilingualism actually enhances one's cognitive and linguistic flexibility, and bilingual individuals (including children) are better able to see things from two or more perspectives and to understand how other people think (Hakuta, 1986a). I find it astonishing when I hear young children conduct conversations with different people in different languages. Therefore, I feel that an important aspect of this research was to encourage others to view children who communicate in more than one language as astute and perceptive. Most young children are eager to learn language and literacy when they discover that language and literacy are useful for exploring the environment and for communicating with others (NAEYC, 1998; Neuman, 1998).

Exposure to Family and Social Interactions. When answering the sub-question, “What kinds of ideologies about literacy do immigrant communities promote among parents and students?” I was looking for ways in which the family, home, and community directed a child's social and cultural learning. I learned that through interactions with their family and members

of immigrant communities, children of immigrants have learned how to build and maintain relationships with a wide range of people. All of the participants thought that maintaining connections with family both near and far was extremely important. It was also important that their children be able to communicate with family both near and far. The children and families had regular contact (either in person or over social media) with extended family members, and it was from those people that they learn the values and traditions of their culture. Because of their diverse interactions with family and other members of the community, these children may be able to empathize with those with unique backgrounds, those who are also recent immigrants or children of immigrants, or simply those who also engage in different patterns for learning (Moore, 2012). Furthermore, family members ensure that the cycle of language, literacy, and learning are passed from generation to generation. It is unclear whether these children will have the desire to pass down their heritage to their offspring, as their parents did for them, so it will be interesting to learn if the succession of heritage and tradition continues.

Outcomes of the Study

I believe that this study has contributed to a broader understanding of language, literacy, and cultural learning among children of immigrants and their families. Although many researchers have studied home literacy practices, this study goes into the homes of immigrant families to identify several of the literacy practices in which they participate. It also engages children of immigrants in parts of the data collection, which helps to give the youngest members of our society a voice. The information gained from this research also extends the work of previous studies (e.g., Hicks, 2002; Heath, 1983; Delpit, 1995; Dyson, 1989/1993) which described the diverse literacy practices and social lives of children and families in urban,

economically disadvantaged communities by including children and families from a multiethnic, middle class setting.

The results of this study can be used to inform and enlighten teachers who believe that children of immigrants come to school with limited or deficient literacy experiences. It can also be used to generate a new curriculum in Mallorca Township that looks at the variety of languages and cultures represented throughout the district. The results may also help to address the concerns and issues faced by a diverse population of literacy learners.

It is necessary for schools and educators to recognize and respect individual differences, and provide an environment that supports diverse cultures, languages, and ethnicities. That said, educators should approach curriculum in such a way that makes it developmentally and linguistically appropriate, recognizing that children have individual rates of development as well as individual interests, languages, cultural backgrounds, and learning styles (NAEYC, 2009b).

Implications for Teachers. Tomlinson (1993) believes that “there is evidence that teachers are still not well-informed about the lives, backgrounds, expectations and desires of ethnic minority parents” (p. 144). Indeed, the literacy skills of children of immigrants vary widely at school. At-home factors contribute to literacy gaps, but this does not relieve schools of the responsibility to try to close such gaps. Rather, research on the at-home sources of literacy practices can help educators and policy makers better understand which children are likely to encounter difficulty in literacy and why (Waldfoegel, 2012).

Teachers can benefit their classroom practice by drawing from the various skills, abilities, and other types of knowledge that students acquire and bring with them into the classroom from their immediate and extended families, neighborhoods, and the community in

which they live. Teachers should encourage learning by integrating their students' cultural and linguistic resources into the instructional program (Gonzalez et al., 1993; Gutierrez, 2001).

I found that by learning what types of culturally based literacy practices were important to parents, I was better able to decide what language and literacy skills should be taught in the classroom. Teachers can enrich their classroom practice by drawing from the various skills, abilities, and other types of knowledge that students acquire and bring with them into the classroom from their immediate and extended families, neighborhoods, and the community in which they live.

Schools must be reconceptualized as places where families can be understood, and where families feel welcomed. It is the goal to make schools more home-like, rather than make homes more school like (Frey, 2010). It is important that educators understand that school based literacy practices are cultural homes to some individuals and often not to others. Outside of school, young people are often instilled with values that reflect their own cultures, and they bring this cultural information with them into the classroom. Therefore, it becomes important for practitioners to understand that school based literacy practices are cultural homes to some and often not to others.

I found that by going into the homes of these families, I became more sensitive to the needs of culturally diverse children. Although it is not feasible for teachers to visit the homes of all of their students, it is necessary for teachers who work with students of immigrant families to become culturally responsive: to recognize that culture is present in all learning, and to understand the sociocultural and historical contexts that influence their interactions with reading and writing (Edwards & Pleasants, 1998; Klingner & Edwards, 2006). Culturally

responsive education has been found to benefit the development and socialization among immigrant children, ease the transition from home to school, help children adapt to a new culture and language, provide parents with educational opportunities, and link parents to the communities in which they live (Leseman, 2007).

In order to reach all students, teachers can allow for participation in literacy activities that are culturally appropriate and incorporate modifications to enhance the social relationship during instruction. What emerges from this natural literacy tradition is a showing of diverse practices and attitudes by children from various ethnic backgrounds. Furthermore, in order to meet the needs of children from immigrant families, it becomes increasingly important to understand their complex and unique experiences, and to provide them with genuine educational opportunities. With greater numbers of children of immigrants entering U.S. classrooms, it is important to acknowledge and value the diverse cultures and language interactions while still teaching the school curriculum (Mays, 2008). Effective instruction acknowledges and reaffirms their cultural, ethnic, and linguistic heritages.

Implications for Family Literacy. The link between supportive parental involvement and children's early literacy development is well established. Several researchers (e.g., Snow et al., 1998) have shown that children from homes where parents model the uses of literacy and engage children in activities that promote basic understandings about literacy and its uses are better prepared for school. This study showed that parents impart their own personal perceptions, values, and beliefs about literacy to their children. Therefore, it is important for parents to encourage their child's daily literacy routines. In literacy learning, particularly, demonstrating personal interest in books, reading, and writing, modeling storytelling, and

showing interest in other literacy related activities in both native language and in English have all been linked to children's development of skills, values and motivations important for success (Dunsmore & Fisher, 2010). By working closely with the families in this study, I learned that nuclear families and extended families play a large role in supporting childhood literacy. Families are likely to experience greater outcomes in literacy development if they support a child's development of beliefs, behaviors, and attitudes towards learning.

Suggestions for Future Research. Demographic patterns of immigrants entering the United States in recent years have implications for both education practice and policy. The proportion of children from ethnic and linguistic minority families is increasing dramatically. It is predicted that within the next two decades, over half of the US school population will be members of linguistic, ethnic, and socioeconomic minority groups (George, Raphael & Florio-Ruane, 2003). Future research might look at a broader assortment of minority families to compare practices across cultural groups (rather than across families).

The use of language to construct identity has been explored in education (Adger, 1998; Bucholtz, 1999; Toohey, 2000), specifically among bilingual Spanish-English speaking students (Garcia, 2001; Zavala, 2000), but little research has focused on bilingual Russian-English or Arabic-English speaking students. As indicated by this research, recognizing the diverse literacy patterns in which these families engage is a critical component of being able to teach the new majority. Future research might look at a broader assortment of immigrant families to compare practices across cultural groups (rather than across families). This could contribute to the understanding of various communities comprised of culturally similar families.

It is evident how diverse our society is and how it will continue to diversify. I hope that

as educators we can reflect on the children and families we serve and learn about the richness of their cultural and literacy practices.

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Appendix A

Parent Questionnaire

Mallorca Township Schools Second Grade Parent Questionnaire

Child's Name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone Number : _____

Birthday: _____

Siblings (names and ages): _____

Mom's Full Name: _____

Dad's Full Name: _____

When did you (and your family) come to America? _____

What languages are spoken at home? _____

What activities does your child enjoy? _____

What are your child's strengths? _____

Are you a first or second generation American? _____

What else would you like me to know about your child? _____

Parent Observation	Usually	Sometimes	Rarely
1. Does your child enjoy reading?			
2. Does your child enjoy being read to?			
3. Does your child read to you?			
4. Does your child participate in any after school activities?			
5. Does your child check out books from the library?			

Appendix B

Semi-structured Literacy Interview

- Tell me about a typical day in your house.
 - What do you do for reading and writing?
 - What do your children, or you and your husband, do for reading?
- Can you tell me about the languages or dialects spoken by your family?
 - What language(s) do you speak?
 - What language(s) have you passed down to your children?
 - What techniques do you use to teach your native language to your children?
- Can you tell me about any special artifacts (or things) in your home?
 - Can you tell me about some of the pieces that you've brought with you?
 - Can you tell me about the pictures you have?
 - Is there anything that is very special to you or your family that you have brought with you?
 - Do you have any items in your house that have a story attached to them?
- Can you tell me about education, in general, in your home country?
- Tell me about *your* education when you were growing up.
- Can you tell me about your reading history?
 - When and how did you learn to read?
 - What books do you read?
 - How do you feel about your children's literacy?
- What do you envision for your children?
- Can you tell me about how you incorporate family stories into your daily lives?
 - Do you read stories together?
 - Do you tell stories together?

Appendix C

Semi-structured Cultural Interview

- Tell me about what your life was like in your native country.
 - Were you close to your extended family?
 - What was your local community like?
- Can you tell me why you decided to live in the United States?
- What, in your opinion, are some of the similarities or differences between your native country and the United States?
- Tell me about your life in a new country, and a new community.
 - Are there any activities that you and your family enjoy now that you're here?
 - Are there places that you visit frequently in the community?
 - Are there any places that are still relatively unfamiliar to you?
- Can you tell me about any traditions that you've continued in this country?
 - Are there certain fashions or clothes that you wear?
 - Are there any national holidays that you regularly celebrate?
 - Are there any traditional foods that you still prepare?
- Can you tell me about your home?
 - Is there anything on display that holds meaning or importance to you?
 - Did you arrange your space in a particular way?

Is there anything you would like others to know that we have not included here about you or your culture?

Thank you- is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix D
Artifact Catalog

MATERIAL TYPE	DESCRIPTION	SIGNIFICANCE/USES
<p>Who made it?</p> <p>When was it made?</p> <p>Where was it made?</p> <p>What is it made of?</p> <p>How was it made?</p>	<p>What size is it?</p> <p>How much does it weigh?</p> <p>What is the style/ type/pattern?</p>	<p>What is it used for?</p>
MATERIAL TYPE	DESCRIPTION	SIGNIFICANCE/USES
<p>Who made it?</p> <p>When was it made?</p> <p>Where was it made?</p> <p>What is it made of?</p> <p>How was it made?</p>	<p>What size is it?</p> <p>How much does it weigh?</p> <p>What is the style/ type/pattern?</p>	<p>What is it used for?</p>

Appendix E

Home Observation Log

Family Visited: _____

Date of Visit: _____

Goal: _____

Who was present in the home during the visit? (List Names)

Briefly recap what you did while there.

Where did the interaction/observation take place?

Do you feel the visit went well?

If this is a second visit (or more), did you observe any new learning or parenting behaviors?

Appendix F

Student Instructions

Dear Friends,

Thank you for helping me with my work! I would like to know what kinds of reading and writing that you do outside of school to help you become better readers.

In your folder, you have a writer's journal, plus pencils and crayons, to write down anything that you'd like for me to know about your reading and writing, with books, the computer, games, and more. at home. This includes things like what you read inside and outside of school, such as stories or non-fiction texts, the places where you like to read, who you read with, and more.

I will be giving you a disposable camera so that you can take pictures of places you like to read at home, who you read with at home, and anything else that you do during reading and writing time outside of school. If you celebrate any holidays or have your family come for a visit, you can take pictures of that, too.

Have fun! I'll collect your cameras and journals in two weeks, and I will develop the pictures for you. Please let me know if you have any questions!

Love,
Ms. R

Appendix G**Student Focus Group Interview**

1. Bring your memory back to the time that you were doing this and taking pictures.
2. Can you tell more me about this picture, like what were you reading?
3. Where are some of your favorite places to read in your house?
4. Can you tell me about the times when you go with your family to book stores or the library?
5. Can you tell me if mommy and daddy like to read? Like, if you ever see them reading, and the kind of things they read?
6. When you're at home, do you mainly do reading or do you sometimes do writing, or a little of both?
7. Can you tell me about a special place to do your writing or homework in your house?
8. Talk to me about your reading or writing on the computer. Do you type, read websites, or play games?
9. Tell me about the kinds of toys or games you play with.
10. Can you tell me if you read things, play games, or watch shows in different languages?
11. And how about if you talk with your family in a different language than you talk with your friends?
12. Can you tell me about any special holidays that you celebrate? Can you tell me about some of the special of different foods you eat at home?
13. Can you tell me what you like best about school?
14. Can you tell me what your favorite thing to do with your family?

Well, I've mainly seen pictures of your comfy places and your family and even some other places that you are reading and writing everyday. Thank you for helping me with this. Is there anything else that you want to tell me about?

Appendix H

Interaction Report

Parent's Perception of Literacy Activities: Expressive and Receptive Language

- _____ begins to encourage child
- _____ begins to ask child for particular behavior without getting upset
- _____ consistently responds to child's verbal cues
- _____ consistently responds to child's behavioral cues
- _____ has constant verbal communication with child
- _____ verbal interactions with child are consistently positive
- _____ talks to child in an appropriate manner
- _____ encourages child to elaborate on topic
- _____ adjusts use of language to support child
- _____ adjusts listening behavior to support child
- _____ creates strategies for fostering child's language development
- _____ consistently and actively engages child in discussion

Parent's Perception of Literacy Activities: Reading with Children

- _____ frequently tells stories, sings, or reads to child
- _____ is comfortable telling stories or reading
- _____ actively engages child in storytelling or reading
- _____ is beginning to use a variety of strategies to support and reinforce reading and language
- _____ actively uses different strategies to engage child in reading, storytelling, and singing
- _____ begins to match strategy to situation
- _____ connects child's experiences to stories
- _____ encourages child to make connections between real life and stories

Parent's Perception of Literacy Activities: Supporting Book/ Print Concepts

- _____ is aware of his/her role as a model in reading
- _____ is aware of his/her role as model in writing
- _____ provides opportunities for child to select, purchase, or borrow reading material
- _____ consistently tries to help child understand how print works
- _____ uses everyday activities to make connections between sounds, oral language, and print

Appendix I

Parent Consent

Dear Parents:

Hello, name is Ms. Rosen, and I am a 2nd grade teacher at Orchard Hill Elementary School. I am also a student at Rutgers University in the Graduate School of Education. I am beginning my research study, and would like to invite you to participate.

I am interested in learning about the kinds of reading and writing that children do at home and outside of school. Therefore, I will be asking questions about the kinds of things that they read, the places in which they read, and the materials that they like to read. I will also be asking your child to take pictures of their reading experiences with the camera that I have provided. I will interview your child about their reading and writing experiences once the photographs are developed.

I would also like to interview you and your family about the language and literacy practices at your home, including how you incorporate your native language into daily routines and family discussions, and how you feel about living in the United States. Your total participation would merely be two 40-60 minutes sessions during which I will:

- Ask you to **tell me** about, and if possible **show me**, evidence of literacy practices in your home, such as books, magazines, photocopies, newspapers, games, etc.
- Ask you what you think of these items and how you use them in your everyday life and in your child's literacy learning.

I would like to visit your house to conduct the interviews, and to observe your home environment. The meetings can take place at a time convenient to you, and I will only visit when invited.

Your participation and your child's participation in this study is voluntary, and they can choose to not participate at all. If you and your child participate in any interviews, you may refuse to answer any question at any time or withdraw any comments or statements once they have been made. At any time during the study, you and your child may refuse to provide information or discontinue their participation without giving reason and with no negative consequences.

All data that is collected or shared will be treated with strict confidence. Your name will not be used in any reports or discussions about this project; I will disguise any identifying characteristics. I will use a pseudonym for your name and other identifying material. Information might be used in reports about the study, in published articles, and/or in educational presentations. When I report findings, I will only use information that was collected for research or teaching purposes and will include in those reports only limited examples of interviews or work samples.

Even if you agree to participate, you are free to change your mind at any time with no adverse effects. By agreeing to participate in this project, your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law. There is a chance, however, that after the study is complete and after I share the findings, those familiar with the study might be able to identify participants. Once the study is complete, participants can have access to the final report. No specific benefits can be guaranteed from students' participation in the study; it is possible, however, that individuals will benefit from the reflections that interviews and participation in the study might generate. Since I will be working with students to investigate ways in which at-home literacy practices support their learning, there is the possibility that participation will enhance both teaching and learning in the classroom. At the end of the study, all participants will receive a letter on Rutgers University letterhead that describes their involvement and contribution to the study.

If you have questions or want to talk further about this project, please give me a call at your convenience. If you have questions about this study before or after it has begun, please contact me at Orchard Hill Elementary School, 244 Orchard Road, Skillman, NJ 08558. Tel: (609) 466-7605, ext. 1152. If you have questions about students' rights as a research subject, you may contact the Sponsored Programs Administrator at Rutgers University at: Rutgers University Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, 3 Rutgers Plaza, New Brunswick, NJ 08901-8559. Tel: 732-932-0150 ext. 2104. Email: humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu.

In order to participate in the study, I will need your signature.

PARENTAL/GUARDIAN CONSENT:

_____ (Child's name) has my permission to participate in the research study described above.

_____ (Parent or Guardian Signature)

Please return this consent form to your teacher in the envelope provided.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ms. Rosen

Appendix J**Student Assent Form**

Dear Students:

I am a student at Rutgers University. I would like you to help me with a project that I am doing. For my project, I would like to know what kinds of reading and writing that you do at home and outside of school to help you become a better reader and writer. I would like you to tell me and show me things like what you read inside and outside of school, where you like to read, and who you read with.

I will be giving you a disposable camera so that you can take pictures of places you like to read at home, who you read with at home, and anything else that you do during reading time outside of school. You will also have a writer's journal, plus pencils and crayons, to write down anything that you'd like for me to know about your reading at home.

Another important part of my project is to interview you about your reading outside of school, and to use this to help me become a better teacher. When we talk during the interviews, you don't have to answer any question if you don't want to.

If you have questions or want to talk about my project, please let me know.

If you would like to help me with the study, I will need your signature.

STUDENT CONSENT:

Your signature shows that you **agree to participate** in my study as described above.

Name of Student: _____

Signature of Student: _____

Please return this consent form to your teacher.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ms. Rosen

Appendix K

Photography Parent Consent

To (Name of the child's parent or guardian)

This letter explains why I must ask you for your consent to use photographs of your child while working on this research project. When you have read the letter, you should fill in and return the form attached to let us know your wishes.

Generally, photographs for family use are a source of pleasure and pride, which I believe can enhance self-esteem for children and young people, and their families, and so are to be welcomed.

However, we live in an age in which digital technology has vastly increased the use, and potential misuse, of photography, and there has been publicity surrounding concern about the risk of a child or young person being identified by a photograph in the local press, and as a result being targeted for abuse.

Although I believe that the risk of a child being identified by a stranger is small, providing reasonable steps are in place in terms of the appropriateness of the photography and to protect the full name and contact details of children, photography is still necessary.

I am mindful of the fact that for some families, there may be reasons why a child's identification is a matter of particular anxiety. If you have special circumstances, either now or at any time in the future, that would affect or change your consent on this issue, please don't hesitate to let me know.

You should discuss the matter of photographs with your child, and agree with them about the categories of consent. We invite you to use this letter to explore their feelings about being photographed while taking part in the research.

Please complete the form attached. If you wish to discuss the matter, please feel free to contact me.

To (Name of the child's parent or guardian):

Name of child:

1. May I use your child's photograph (unidentified) printed publications? Yes / No

Unidentified above means we will use a pseudonym.

Please note that the conditions for use of these photographs are listed below.
I have read and understood the conditions of use on the back of this form.

Parent's or guardian's Name: _____

Parent's or guardian's signature: _____

Date: _____

Conditions of Use

1. This form is valid for five years from the date you sign it. The consent will automatically expire after this time. It is your responsibility to let us know if you want to withdraw or change your agreement at any time.
2. I will not use the personal details or full names (which means first name and surname) of any child or young person in a photographic image.
3. I will not include personal e-mail or postal addresses, or telephone or fax numbers on printed publications.
4. When using photographs of individuals, the name of that child or young person will not appear in the accompanying text or photo caption, unless I have your agreement.
5. If I name a child or young person in the text, we will not use a photograph of that child to accompany the article.
6. Only images of children or young people who are suitably dressed will be used, to reduce the risk of such images being used inappropriately.
7. As the child's parents/guardian, you agree that if you take photographs or video recordings of your child/ren that include other children or young people, you will use these for personal and family use only.

Appendix L

Photography Student Assent

Name: _____

I will be asking you to take photographs that I would like to use for my research. I need your permission before I can use any photograph or make any recordings. Please answer questions 1 to 3 below, then sign and date the form where shown.

Please circle your answer

1. May I use your photograph (unidentified)?

Yes / No

2. May I use your image (unidentified) in a publication or presentation?

Yes / No

3. May I record your image (unidentified)?

Yes / No

Signature: _____

Date: _____