

TRANSNATIONAL PROCESSES, COMMUNICATION, AND INTERPERSONAL
RELATIONSHIPS OF INTERNATIONAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS
IN AN ENGLISH FOR SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES PROGRAM

By

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To my wife, Tricia

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The purpose of this ethnographic study is to identify specific areas that may be problematic for international elementary students who are entering the United States school system for the first time and learning English as an additional language. Studies have been conducted on successes and failures in second language acquisition in mainstream-Caucasian settings using homogeneous ethnic groups. Other studies have examined issues concerning ethnic identity, translation, housing, and socialization of Latin American groups in the United States.

The unique focus of this study is to evaluate how elementary school students from different ethnic backgrounds relate to one another and to their new United States classmates and culture. Children in grades 3 through 5 who were enrolled in a local elementary school's English as a Second Language (ESOL) program in Florida were interviewed. Personal interviews and observations were employed in the school setting to gather the data. Three areas of focus were used in this evaluation of the students' adjustment to a United States school system and their new classmates: 1) Transnational Processes, 2) Communication, and 3) Use of Interpersonal Skills.

This study confirmed that transnational children employ language, modern technology and personal relationships as avenues of continuity with their family and country of origin. They also employ language and new relationships as means to interpret and adjust to a new culture and

school. This study concluded that programs such as ESOL provide a significant space and time in U. S. schools for international children in their efforts to acquire English skills, establish interpersonal relationships, and learn how to navigate their new school and community.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The following study is an ethnographic assessment of international children's experiences and their adjustment to a U. S. elementary school and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program. The term ethnography may be applied as a noun, detailing that it is a description of a culture, or a small part of a particular culture. Ethnography can also be used as a verb to describe the act of collecting data that describes or portrays a portion of a culture. Some of the means of building ethnographic records or data of a given culture include watching, others might involve listening. The resulting data may be expressed in many forms, such as words, numbers, or signs (Bernard 1995). Most ethnographic anthropological studies are undertaken by a researcher in a different culture seeking to assess the impact of a specific set of issues on a given population. Having lived abroad teaching children for more than three years, I was intrigued by the adjustments that transnational children undergo in the process of moving from another culture to the U. S. culture. I therefore proposed to undertake a study of international elementary students in an ESOL program in the U. S., in hopes of identifying specific issues in interpersonal relationships and personal adjustments.

A sample population consisting of international children was available at a local elementary school, and I chose to concentrate my study on a representative small group of third, fourth, and fifth graders who could potentially respond to interviews, personal observations, and specific questions in the study.

Obtaining Permission

This research project was conducted in a city with a university in Florida. All the names of the students, parents, teachers and other informants are fictitious in order to maintain their anonymity. In February of 2005, I met with the principal of a local elementary school to discuss

my goals and purposes concerning a research project, and to discover if she would permit such a project to be conducted in her school. The principal explained that she would be interested in such an endeavor and that she herself had some areas of interest that she would like explored. One area that she identified involved ESOL students' parents' proficiency in English and how that lent itself to the students' proficiency, school involvement and adjustments to school life. The principal hoped to establish what kinds of community support systems were available and utilized by the students and their parents in their local communities. In addition, she wanted to know what kinds of networks the parents employed as they adjust to their new United States' community, and if there were there any established enclaves that facilitated this transition. Ms. James, the principal, also encouraged observations of the ESOL students in all aspects of their daily routines at the school, including homerooms, specials—PE, art, library, and music, along with their lunch and free play times. I chose to focus on the school community and indicated that there were limitations on what this study could accomplish.

The principal explained that I would be required to contact the Director of Research and Testing Evaluation at the county's school board. After obtaining approval from the local school board's Department of Research and Evaluation and the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), I began my observations in August of 2005 in the 4th-grade ESOL classroom.

The School and Participants

The research was originally supposed to have encompassed all of the ESOL students from grades 1–5 in the elementary school study. However, after doing some initial observations with the classes, I decided to narrow the focus to only the higher grades with older students in 3rd–5th grade and ages 8–11.

This research was accomplished using an ESOL program located at a center-school, in which a specific-needs program for a county is placed. There is one ESOL-designated school for

each academic level in the county: elementary, middle, and high school. The parents of the international elementary school students have an option to send their students to a school zoned for their housing, or send their students to the ESOL-service school.

The study was conducted in an elementary school that has about 450 students. According to the “racial categories” that the local school district uses, the elementary school in which this study was accomplished has approximately: 45% White students; 25% Black students; 11% Hispanic students; 13% Asian students; 6% Multi-racial students; and .2% Native American students. In addition, approximately ninety (20%) of the students at this elementary school are limited English proficient (LEP), or are learning English as additional language (Schools 2007).

The school was selected because of a specific program, English for Speakers of Other Languages, or ESOL. The students who are limited in their English proficiency are placed in the ESOL program by grade level, not by English proficiency. The ESOL program uses a pullout system, in which students receive instruction in reading and language arts/writing, during the same period that their homeroom classmates are receiving instruction in the same subjects. These students attend their ESOL class for approximately two hours each day. The ESOL students attend their homeroom classes for approximately two and one-half hours each day for mathematics, science, and social studies, in addition to other resource classes, such as PE, art, music and library for about forty-five minutes each day.

This school has three ESOL teachers who are each responsible for instructing two grades: kindergarten and 1st grade; 2nd and 3rd grades; and 4th and 5th grades. In addition to these three ESOL teachers, the school is assigned two teachers’ aides; the school administrators attempt to match the aides’ language-background with the two languages that are most represented by the students in the ESOL program. For the year of this research, one teacher’s aid was from China

and the other was from Argentina. Each of the homeroom teachers at this school has received at least 60 hours of ESOL training, required by the Department of Education in Florida. The ESOL students in this study represent 20 different countries and 16 different languages (Table 1-1). The following sections provide specific information on each of the ESOL classes, divided by grade level: 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade.

The third grade had sixteen students assigned to the ESOL program from eleven different countries. Eleven of the students agreed to participate in the interview process and their parents signed the consent forms allowing them to participate (Table 1-2). The five remaining students were not included in the interview process either because they declined to participate (3) or they moved during the school year (2). These students were still considered part of the observations, even though they were not a primary focus. Six of the participants shared a common-language of Spanish: two from Ecuador, two from Puerto Rico, and two from Mexico. Two of the participants were from China; one of the participants was from Brazil (he did have a Brazilian friend in class who declined to participate in the study); and two of the participants did not share a common nationality or language with anyone: Kenya (Swahili) and Israel (Hebrew). The sample of eleven third-grade participants consisted of six girls and five boys (Table 1-3).

The fourth grade had the greatest variation in the country of origin and languages, since there were eleven different countries and languages represented by only twelve students. Nine students agreed to participate with parental approval and completed the first and second interviews during the school year (Table 1-2). The only two students who had a common language and country of origin were from Mexico. The other seven participants were from Botswana, Brazil, Jordan, Malaysia, Nigeria, Palestine, and the Ukraine. Three did not complete the interview process: one declined to participate in the interviews, one moved into the school

system around mid-semester and soon moved again due to a parent's job, and the other student arrived too late in the school year. Observations were conducted with the two students who moved into the school and ESOL program, while they were not a focus. The sample of fourth-grade students was comprised of seven girls and two boys (Table 1-3).

The fifth grade had thirteen students assigned to the ESOL program and nine of them completed the interviews (Table 1-2). The fifth-grade class had a greater language affinity as a group than the two preceding groups in regards to Spanish-speaking students. Three of them were from Mexico and four of them were from Puerto Rico, so they shared a common language and country of origin. The six other ESOL students did not have a common language or country of origin and are grouped accordingly: Asia: Korea, Japan, and China; Other: Egypt, Pakistan and Jordan. Of these six ESOL students, the girl from Egypt and the girl from Jordan, who also shared the same language of Arabic, were the other two participants in this study. The four students who did not participate in the interview process declined to be in the voluntary study. The sample of fifth-grade informants included five girls and four boys (Table 1-3).

Open House

My plan was to meet with the parents of third, fourth, and fifth-grade students to explain my study and solicit their support and permission to work with their children. Prior to these meetings, I elected to begin my observations, earning rapport with the students and teachers prior to the Open House that would be held on September 1st during the third week of school. The ESOL teachers conduct a meeting directly before Open House for the international parents to attend, explaining the program, opportunities for school involvement, and classroom procedures. This meeting would be the first opportunity to meet with these children's parents and talk with them informally. The fourth and fifth-grade ESOL teacher agreed to give me a few minutes during their meeting to introduce myself to the parents, explain what I would be doing in the

research project, and allow them to ask questions. During this meeting time I also obtained parental permission that would allow me to conduct initial interviews with their children.

The diversity of the international ESOL students was represented in this initial meeting by the attendance of ten students representing eight different countries: Botswana, Nigeria, Korea, Japan, Malaysia, Palestine, Brazil, and Puerto Rico (3 students). Seven of these ten students were accompanied by one of their parents at the meeting before Open House and three of the ten students were with both their mother and father. The majority of the parents responded positively about the research project, allowing their children to participate in the interview process. Eight of the parents signed the permission forms allowing the research interviews to be conducted. One of the two parents who did not sign the permission forms had a child leaving by mid-semester. However, the mother agreed to allow me to observe her daughter throughout the course of the daily school activities along with the other ESOL students. The second student was very shy and did not want to have to participate in the interview process.

The only negative response from a parent was due to his own reluctance to be questioned for an interview. A majority of the other parents echoed this parents' sentiment that they did want to be interviewed, while encouraging the process for their children. However, four of these parents later responded to informal conversations I initiated about their children. For example, after the meeting was adjourned, I had a chance to have a couple of informal conversations with some of the parents. One of the mothers spoke of her son's "many changes that he has had to go through recently: a new school, new friends, new place to live, new everything." She explained that she supported the research very much and would like for me to tell her if I discovered anything that she thinks might be of interest to her or how she might help him.

The meeting before Open House proved to be a good introduction to the ESOL parents and students. Nineteen remaining parents (eleven parents of third graders meeting at the same time I met with the 4th and 5th-grade parents and nine parents absent in the pre-Open House meeting) were sent a parental permission form with their student's homework folders. To execute this, the ESOL teachers allowed me to send a parental permission form home with the students in their homework folders, which is designed by the teachers to maintain weekly contact with the parents to check homework and sign other school news letters. This method proved to be a convenient and useful means of obtaining the desired permission forms from the parents, even though the forms often returned a week or two later than they were actually sent home. Sometimes, an additional form had to be re-sent home for the parents to sign their approval, especially once their student became interested in doing the project, due to the enthusiasm of their classmates who had already participated.

The principal invited me to the next monthly teachers' meeting in mid-September. This was a good opportunity for all of the teachers in the school to understand who I was, what I was doing in their school, and why I would be on the school's campus for so many days in the school year to observe and interview the ESOL students. The meeting with the teachers was also a very positive experience. One of the male fifth grade teachers who had a number of ESOL students in his classes invited me to come to his classroom to observe throughout the day. This enthusiasm helped the other teachers to feel more comfortable about having an outsider coming into their classrooms on a regular basis to observe the class and the students involved.

Table 1-1. Total number of students by geographic region and country of origin in ESOL.

Geographic Region	Asia (10)	Latin America (19)	Other (12)
Country of Origin	China (4) Korean (2) Japan (2) Malaysia (1) Philippines(1)	Brazil (3) Ecuador (2) Mexico (7) Panama (1) Puerto Rico (6)	Botswana (1) Egypt (1) Iran (1) Israel (1) Jordan (2) Nigeria (1) Kenya (1) Pakistan (1) Palestine (1) Ukraine (2)

Number of students is noted by (#).

Table 1-2. Total number of students by geographic region and grade level in ESOL.

Grade Level	Asia	Latin America	Other	Number of ESOL students	Number of ESOL students who participated
3 rd grade	4 (2)	9 (7)	3 (2)	16	(11)
4 th grade	3 (1)	3 (3)	6 (5)	12	(9)
5 th grade	3 (2)	7 (5)	3 (2)	13	(9)
				41 students	(29) participated

Table 1-3. Number of participants by geographic region, grade level, and gender.

Grade Level	Asia		Latin America		Other		Number of ESOL Students Interviewed	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
3 rd grade	2	0	3	4	1	1	6	5
4 th grade	1	0	3	0	3	2	7	2
5 th grade	1	1	2	3	2	0	5	4
Total by Geographical Background	4	1	8	7	6	3	18 girls	11 boys

Total number of ESOL students by geographic region by each grade level who participated.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Education as Cultural Transmission

From an anthropological perspective, education is central to cultural transmission.

Cultural transmission includes not only the transmission of knowledge from one generation to the next, but also the transmission of new traditions from those who “know” to those who do not. Families of origin are responsible for the transmission of cultural norms from one generation to the next. The new environment and society with its institutions are influential in the transmission of the new culture. Programs in elementary schools, such as the English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program, provide one of the initial social interactions for international children upon arriving to the United States (Singleton 1974). On the basis of these assertions, the current study underscores that public elementary ESOL programs in the U. S. provide an essential space and time for learning another language and aspects of a new culture for elementary school age children.

To appreciate some aspects of the context in which these immigrant children are entering a United States school system, a brief overview is provided of recent immigration trends in the U. S. Related to these trends, some theoretical perspectives are examined that have been applied in earlier studies, examining the immigrants’ experiences in connection with cultural adaptation, language and communication, moving transnationally, and identity formation. In addition, some earlier studies are offered as background information that have evaluated similar issues regarding international students’ experiences and language use in U. S. schools.

A Recent History of U. S. Immigration

Recent immigrants continue to change the ethnic landscape of the United States. In 2003, the percentages of foreign-born immigrants in the United States were: 53.3% Latin American;

25% Asian; 13.7% European; and 8% other regions in the world (U. S. Census 2004). The U. S. Census (2004) provided additional information concerning the geographic-breakdown of the 53.3% Latin American immigrants: 36.9% Central American (including Mexico); 6.3 South American; and 10.1% Caribbean. The Center for Immigrant Studies (2002) found that the number of foreign-born immigrants in the 2000 Census (31.1 million) had more than doubled since 1980 (14.1 million). By March of 2003, the U. S. Census Bureau estimated that the number of foreign-born immigrants had increased to 33.5 million, representing 11.7 percent of the U. S. population (U. S. Census 2004). This percentage of the population is close to the all-time high percentage (14.8%) of foreign-born people in the U. S. population, dating back to 1890. The Center for Immigration Studies (2002) projects that if current immigration trends continue, at least 13 million documented and undocumented immigrants will probably settle in the United States during this first decade of the 21st century.

Immigration has often been associated in the minds of many Americans with the massive influx of southern and eastern Europeans at the turn of the 20th century. Since the late 1960s, however, large-scale immigration from other regions has occurred in the United States (Lessinger 1995). In 2000, the majority (52%) of foreign-born people in the U. S. consisted of people from Latin America, an increase from 31% in 1980 and 42% in 1990 (Center 2002).

The newer immigrants who have come to the United States since 1965 share some similarities with, and are also different from, the other ethnic groups that made their way here around the turn of the 20th century. The majority of all ethnic groups come for economic reasons, because of the greater opportunities to earn better wages than in their home countries. Some of the recent immigrants, similar to those who came a century before them, are fleeing political persecution. The primary difference between the recent waves of immigrants and those

of a century ago is that today's immigrants are, overall, better educated and more highly skilled than their 20th-century predecessors (Lessinger 1995; Margolis 1994).

A significant portion of today's immigrants are middle class professionals and entrepreneurs, coming from primarily urban backgrounds in their home countries. The fact that many of these immigrants come from middle class, educated backgrounds might shape their views of identity. On a personal identity level, the immigrant might struggle with not being able to find a similar kind of job or job-status as in the country of origin. This often forces many men and women into service industry positions in which their skills are minimally required, as in the case study of Brazilians living in New York City (Margolis 1994). Employment situations and opportunities might also affect some collective immigrants group's identities, since they may be forced to work certain jobs based on ethnic background or gender (Levitt 2001; Margolis 1994).

The processes of racial and ethnic categorization are a few of the other major differences between the earlier and more recent waves of U. S. migration (Lessinger 1996). The first major wave of immigrants was comprised primarily of Whites from European backgrounds. The post-1965 infusion of people of color from Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean has challenged mainstream Americans' views on race and ethnicity. Many of the mainstream Caucasian-Americans viewed the U. S. population as a polarized set of two racially distinct groups, an inferior group of African-Americans dominated by a superior group of White Americans (Lessinger 1996).

The less numerous ethnic minority groups in the 1960s and 1970s, such as Asians, Latin Americans, and Native Americans, were often placed into an intermediate ethnically-ranked hierarchical position by the mainstream White-American society. These intermediate ethnic groups were still viewed as minority groups, socially labeling these racial and ethnic minority

groups as below, or in opposition to, the superior-white American majority. The idea that some of the recent immigrants are ranked might force them into viewing their ethnic group identity in a negative manner. This group-identity can also affect the individuals within a group, sometimes causing them to disassociate from their ethnic group. Additionally, there is often conflict within one ethnic group that is classified together for having a common language, yet possessing different cultural backgrounds by the Caucasian-majority society (Lessinger 1996).

During the past few decades, the ethnic group composition and stratification of the U. S. population, as well as the socially constructed meanings of ethnicity and identity have been changing. In this process, the newest immigrants and their children have been redefining the ethnic landscape in the United States and are being transformed by the social construction of American identities. The U. S. Census Bureau continues to divide Americans into distinct racial groups, as it has done since the first census of 1790; but for the first time in 2000, the census allowed multiple choices of racial descriptions to choose from, abandoning its binary notion of race for the first time (Rumbaut and Portes 2001). Some concepts on socially-constructed terms about identity, along with a few trends in U. S. immigration, have been discussed to develop a background in how immigrants might belong to two ethnic communities at once. The immigrants also adapt and are given different identities in both their host and home countries as their transnational experiences occur. For the immigrants, they often do not perceive or think about some of these identity-adaptations until they encounter other people who initiate an identity-forming contact (Basch et al. 1994).

As the preceding summary reflects, very little research has focused on elementary school aged children and their dual culture assimilation; however, one-fifth of all school-age children in the United States are first-generation immigrant children (Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco

2001). Immigration studies have largely described families as a whole, or adult immigrants and their transition into the U. S. culture and society. My hope is to observe and record the process of acculturation by international elementary school children in a specific sub-culture: a public elementary school ESOL program.

In order to understand the context of my observations, the issues of acculturation, transnationalism, language and communication, and identity theories are explained.

Assimilation Theory

The assimilation model assumes that as different ethnic and cultural groups come into contact with one another, the dominant-majority group's cultural practices would prevail. The assimilation model emerged as a construct to explain the way European immigrants of the early 20th-century conducted their lives in their new residential space, the United States (Cornell and Harmann 1998). Some critics of this assimilation model argue that this does not represent the experiences of the non-Caucasian immigrants who arrived primarily during the second part of the 20th-century (Castles & Miller 1998). Other scholars have recognized the existence of transnational social spaces within which immigrants interact with each other, arguing that recent non-white immigrants present more complex patterns of social interaction than traditional assimilation theory assumes (Basch et al. 1994). Portes (1996) argues that immigrants no longer adhere to the traditional assimilation model and how they cut all ties with their home country.

The previous authors advocate that this narrow assimilation model must be expanded to incorporate how immigrants define new transnational social spaces, where everyday activities are continually linked to the immigrants' personal local spaces, their sending and receiving communities. In addition, other scholars (Foner 2000; Wymann 1993) advocate that earlier immigrants did not, in fact, adhere to the assimilation model, often returning to live in their countries of origin.

Acculturation Theory

Acculturation is the process of change when groups of individuals that have different cultures come into continuous firsthand contact with each other, subsequently altering the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (Redfield et al. 1936). Acculturation often assumes an acceptance of both an individual's own group and another group. The acculturation process usually involves three different stages: contact, conflict, and adaptation. During these stages some elements of each ethnic group involved are included in the culture (Phinney and Rotheram 1987). In this process, on an individual level, numerous psychological and behavioral changes take place; on a group level, physical, political, cultural, and social relationships are often transformed (Berry 1980). Because of the complexity of acculturation, assessments typically focus on a specific component of acculturation, such as behavior, ethnic affiliation, cultural awareness, relationships, and communication (Serrano and Anderson 2003). These components are utilized for the purpose of evaluating some of the acculturation processes of the international elementary school students in this study.

Because this study is conducted in a U. S. elementary school, acculturation must also be considered in this institutional context. A school system, therefore, represents structures of relationships that entail cliques, patterns and norms of behaviors developed by students and teachers as they attempt to adjust to their school environment (Siegel 1987). The school, in general, is a social institution that generates one culture; other cultures are created in the daily relations of student-teachers interactions, student-student interactions, teacher-teacher interactions, and so forth of the multiple interactions of people at a school.

The focus of this dissertation relies on the interpersonal relationships between international students and other international students, in addition to their relationships with their U. S. national classmates in their homeroom classes. Since children are required to attend school they

spend extensive lengths of time in this cultural institution and with their fellow classmates. In these formal (homeroom classes) and informal (lunch, recess) class times at school, students cultivate their own patterns of values, interests, beliefs and attitudes (Siegel 1987).

In addition to evaluating the international students' acculturation processes, another focus of this study is to determine whether these international children participate in transnational processes in similar ways as transnational adults.

Transnationalism Theory

Transnationalism is the processes by which immigrants forge and sustain multi-stranded social relations that link together their societies of origin and place of residence. The transnational processes emphasize that many immigrants today develop social constructions across geographic, cultural, and political borders. The people who build and maintain these multiple relations that cross national and cultural borders are often called transnationals (Basch et al. 1994). The idea that a nation can exist across different nation-states is not based in the physical state of a person being within a national boundary, but rather how a person or group of people from a nation might exist in a cultural or social sense of solidarity as a nation (Brittain 2002).

Transnational migration is not a new phenomenon, as immigrants in the past also actively participated in the economic, political, and social lives of their sending communities and nation-states. During the period of the first major wave of immigration to the United States, from 1880-1930, an estimated one-quarter to one-third of all immigrants returned to their country of origin to live (Wymann 1993). Similar to today's immigrants, earlier immigrants sent back remittances to their communities, supplementing the family's income to buy land, build homes, and purchase goods. Home communities often organized relief efforts in times of war or famine, distributing

funds for improvement projects. The continual contact with people in one's country of origin facilitates the transnational connections in home and host countries (Foner 2000).

Since many immigrants in the earlier years and today intend to return to their country of origin at some point to either live or stay for a brief time, they know that they must maintain connections to their home-communities and home-nations (Levitt 2001). Each of these transnational practices encourages the individuals and collective communities to maintain personal and business contacts both in the United States and the home country. The previous example demonstrated some of the similarities that immigrants today share with their predecessors a century ago.

Significant differences between contemporary immigration experiences and those in the past directly affect how people maintain their identity and connections between two cultures and nations. For example, after the first major wave of immigration to the United States towards the turn of the 20th century, Ireland had the largest percent (23.6%) of its population living in the U. S.; other countries that were known to have sent large numbers of immigrants, Germany, Italy and Poland, had less than 4% of their populations living in the United States. Based on the U. S. Census seventy years later in 1990, three sending countries had roughly 9% of their population living in the U. S.: Barbados (9.2%) Dominican Republic (8.5%), Mexico (9.4%); three other sending countries had more than one-tenth of their populations living in the United States: Cuba (11.3%), El Salvador (16.8%), and Jamaica (23.0%) (Levitt 2001). According to Levitt (2001), these percentages were probably low, because they do not include immigrants who are in the United States illegally.

The implications of these trends in transnational migration begin with the large numbers of people who are coming to the United States. This number of immigrants creates the

opportunities for them to often stay together and form alliances in cities that eventually become ethnic enclaves, such as Cubans have in south Florida. This practice enables the immigrants to maintain a certain portion of their individual and collective identity, culture, and ethnicity.

U. S. immigrants' processes and contacts are not the only factors that determine the transnational ties and identities. The people who remain behind must make sacrifices in many emotional, financial, and psychological ways in order for their family members or friends to live abroad (Levitt 2001). These sacrifices shape the people's and their communities' identities in how they view themselves and their transnational-connections. The families and friends of the immigrants are often the sole source of information to the immigrants on what the political climate is at home. Another means by which people's identity is maintained transnationally is through political activity. For example, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador, Brazil, and Portugal have all amended their constitutions to allow immigrants the opportunity to use different political rights (Levitt 2001). Another reason why many immigrants remain active politically and socially at home is that they perceive that they will never really have full-citizenship and social privileges here in the U.S (Levitt 2001).

In many ways, immigrant children are similar to immigrant adults because they also have a limited amount of social and political power in the United States. Children's transnational experiences shape their identities in similar ways as adults. And yet, I believe that children process the realities and challenges of multiple cultures with more facility than adults because of the social and cultural opportunities provided them in schools and specific programs, such as ESOL.

A transnational theoretical perspective may be applied to evaluate immigrant children's collaboration with their co-nationals inside and outside of school. The theory states that through

relationships with their peers, the immigrant children will form instrumental collectivities that could become transnational. A transnational alliance is formed when the children locate their other co-nationals within the school, linking them with their country of origin based on a nationalistic collective identity within the social life of a U. S. public school. The mere experience of migration could change the way in which the children live their national identity within the United States; understanding immigrant children in American schools requires more than just attempting to understand how the children's school experiences differed in their native countries versus now (Brittain 2002).

One of the ways that children attempt to retain a sense of their home country is to maintain meaningful interpersonal relationships with family and friends in that country. These relationships might serve as an initial buffer to their new experiences, since they may not have too many friends that share a common language or heritage. Additionally, children usually maintain contact with kin in their home country, who often promote an emotional and moral support system. Co-nationals also may send cultural reminders that reflect the home country and culture for the children, reinforcing a sense of cultural continuity and a sense of home (Brittain 2002).

Language and Communication Theory

The idea that people are affected by the different languages they use is the position of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis. The previous hypothesis states that different languages lead their speakers to view their world differently and think about their everyday life in language-specific ways (Joseph 2004). For example, the Western concepts of dividing time into past, present and future divisions do not register any meanings for the Hopi Native Americans, who view time as events or cycles (Bonvillain 2003). Echoing the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis, Bernstein (1971:43)

states, “Language is one of the most important means of initiating, synthesizing, and reinforcing ways of thinking, feeling and behavior which are functionally related to the social group.”

The classroom is a space where children negotiate language on a daily basis, introducing them to different worldviews and perspectives. Children in classroom settings often accomplish activities not just by listening to someone talk and interpreting the directions, but by means of a process of negotiations and talking each other through a project. Girls were found to use this form of communication-building more often than boys. In a Weisskirch and Alva 2002 study, they often constructed a conversation to perform a task where one girl used a series of different words to describe the word that she was attempting to learn or use in English for the first time. This word-learning process is common in learning an additional language, and is called circumlocution by language researchers (Parker and Riley 2000).

Public spaces often serve as communication devices for schools, demonstrating the expected behaviors and values. These public spaces often include the many walls that are often decorated in primary schools, such as those of the hallways, cafeteria, gymnasium, classrooms, and the main offices. Since the students’ work is often displayed on the walls outside of their classrooms, these public displays reflect what some of the students believe about certain topics and groups. By observing and reading the students’ work, one may gain insight into some of the course content that the teachers are emphasizing as well (Brint et al. 2001).

Language is a significant component in the examples involving the major issues that immigrants experience on identity, family relations, children’s stress, and employment opportunities. Because of its significance, language use often becomes the social and identity marker in cross-cultural relations.

Identity Theory

The concept of identity was coined around the mid-point of the 20th-century by an immigrant, Erik Erikson (Rumbaut 1994). The terms identity and identity crisis used by Erikson (1963) were inspired by his own experiences of emigration, immigration, and Americanization that he witnessed in the U. S., which attempts to make a super-identity of all the ethnic identities imported by immigrants. Erikson applied his concepts of identity and identity crisis to adolescence, a period marked by major physical, emotional, and social changes; these rich concepts may be also applied to children of immigrants. Erikson (1968) cites the first recollections he has of people discussing concepts of identity crises occurred shortly after WWII, when doctors and psychiatric workers felt compelled to label the personal situations of veterans experiencing a sense of loss of personal sameness and historical continuity. These correlating circumstances for veterans, a loss of personal sameness and historical continuity, might be used to describe some of the similar feelings of loss that immigrants experience upon leaving their homes, families, and communities. Since Erikson was an immigrant and he defined the initial ideas concerning identity and identity crisis, this term is ideal when discussing immigrants' sense of personal, social, and group identity transformations and crises.

Some concepts concerning identity still assume that individuals have a master-identity, one that is the overarching identity that is fixed in a single place. In reality, transnational people develop several fluid, and sometime conflicting identities (Levitt 2001; Sokefield 2001). There is also a personal and collective identity. The idea of personal identity refers to one's sense of self as an individual. A collective identity primarily involves how one might view oneself in commune with others. Individuals and collective ethnic groups that immigrate to the United States encounter different people and situations that cause them to redefine how they view themselves as individuals and as a group. Similar kinds of identity transformations and crises

might be found in the immigrants' home countries as well. For example, if a child were to move to the United States, get married, and have children, this would significantly alter the parents' sense of continuity and sameness (Sokefield 2001). The individual identities of the people involved would be transformed by these experiences, in addition to each of their host and home-communities' collective identity.

Ethnic Identity

Ethnic identity is an individual's sense of belonging to an ethnic group and the thought processes, feelings, and behaviors that come with being in a specific ethnic group. Ethnic identity refers to how an individual acquires a group's behaviors, whereas ethnicity is distinguished as the actual behavioral patterns of a specific group (Phinney and Rotheram 1987). Ethnic identity, in general, encompasses many factors: ethnic awareness (the interpretation of a person's own and others' groups), ethnic self-identification (the label applied for a person's group), ethnic attitudes (feelings and beliefs concerning one's own and other groups) and ethnic behaviors (acceptable behaviors associated with an ethnic group) (Phinney and Rotheram 1987).

Children initially learn from family and significant family-relationships about the group that they belong; as children become older, however, their awareness increases of the options in how they behave and define themselves as a member of a specific ethnic group (Phinney and Rotheram 1987). Cross (1971, 1991) designed an identity model to interpret changes beyond childhood of the Black experience as a minority in the United States. The Cross model consists of five stages: pre-encounter, encounter, immersion, internalization, and internalization-commitment. The first two stages of this identity model address some of the unique transitions that these international students are encountering and interpreting as they enter a new school community in the United States, often becoming a minority person for the first time.

The pre-encounter stage is characterized by individuals who consciously or unconsciously place a higher value on White-mainstream behaviors and norms, while devaluing their own group's behaviors and ways of living (Cross 1991). While the children in this study may not have viewed the U. S. White cultural behaviors as better prior to moving to the United States, they have recently entered a U. S. school system that utilizes these mainstream norms as the foundation for its hidden and written curriculum. Upon entering a U. S. school, these students are asked, or required, to set aside and devalue their national language and cultural norms, replacing some of them with the mainstream-defined appropriate language (English) and cultural norms for a U. S. school. These international children, therefore, are thrust into the next stage of identity development, encounter.

The encounter stage may be the one that is more salient in the international elementary school children's identity development in this research. This stage typically occurs in a two-fold process: 1) an individual encounters a serious event or crisis, challenging his or her previous beliefs or behaviors; 2) the individual involved in this process begins to reinterpret his or her worldviews, usually resulting in some dynamic changes this person's thoughts and actions (Cross 1991). The international children in this study are experiencing this process as they traverse a new school community and learn a new culture and language in the United States.

The meaning and significance of ethnic identity is defined within the specific context and the current social or political situations in the U. S. and abroad (Phinney and Rotheram 1987). Children's experiences in which they become more aware of their ethnicity, as well as others', will be influenced based on their status as a majority or minority in the specific context (Table 2-1). In addition, awareness of their ethnic identity is also impacted by their daily activities and the frequency in which they come in contact with other people from different cultural

backgrounds and ethnicities. For example, ethnicity is usually going to be more significant for one Latin-American student in a class of twenty-five Caucasian students, than for the same student in a class of predominantly Latin Americans (Phinney and Rotheram 1987).

Literature Review

In anticipation of the current study, a brief review of recent studies and literature on the issues of children and transnational process, the role of language, and interpersonal communication is in order. The majority of transnational studies (Bash et al. 1994; Lessinger 1995; Levitt 2001; Margolis 1994; Stepick 1997) are directed to adult activities, economic exchange, social and cultural capital, and political processes. Not much research has been done on education and immigrant children's experiences (Brittain 2002).

I believe that it is imperative that we view children as whole persons. Too often, children are repeatedly discussed as the object of study not yet capable of reason, not yet educated, and not yet developed emotionally, physically, culturally, or psychologically. Casteñeda (2002) argues that children in their own right have an existence, occupy space and place, use a different language, and have their own identities.

Transnational Processes

The term "immigrant" usually carries the idea of people who are no longer going to live in their homeland. The popular next assumption about them is that they are going to reject all of their former ways of living and acquire entirely new patterns, learning a new culture and language (Castles and Miller 1998). According to Basch et al. (1994) these assumptions and their meanings no longer completely portray their original significance, offering only information about a person's or group of people's status and identity. Today's immigrants use networks, learn new cultures, and develop ideologies that cross national, cultural, and political boundaries (Basch et al. 1994).

Because of their transnational processes, immigrants re-position themselves in regards to their means to function successfully in their sending- and receiving-community context. The construction of one's identity is a complex, ongoing process. The same individual might be required to take on multiple roles and serve different social functions for that individual, a family, or community. At different times an immigrant might select to be either or both of some of the following roles in a transnational process towards finding, shaping and maintaining different identities. One individual might be a follower or leader, rebel or politician, exploiter or exploited, American or Cuban. Perhaps the more accurate description of an identity concept for a transnational person is that the individual is belonging to and making a future in two different places (Levitt 2001).

Research on transnational migration, adaptation and identity found that for many Latino groups, a shift in their economic status became associated with which ethnic groups they were identified (Santiago-Rivera and Santiago 1999). Identity issues, individually and collectively, are transformed, as immigrants change their economic status; the shift or changes in status create circumstances in which the immigrant must decide to which ethnic groups they were now identified with by others and by their own selection.

Language and Interpersonal Communication

Immigrant students in other studies oftentimes reported that part of their difficulty adjusting to U. S. education had more to do with cultural styles of education than understanding the content (Ogbu 1992). Some of the culturally-laden educational styles that were given by the students were generally interpreted as a different interpersonal interaction style (Erikson and Mohatt 1982), communication style (Gumperz 1981; Kockman 1982; Philips 1972, 1983), cognitive style (Ramirez and Castenada 1974; Shade 1982), and learning style (Au 1981; Boykin 1980; Philips 1976).

A general consensus, based on the previous studies, is that immigrant students perceived utilizing these different cultural styles, which often do not relate to learning the course content, as threatening to change their country of origin's core cultural values and norms (Ogbu 1992). For example, certain dialects and communication styles that are viewed as appropriate for school are usually determined by mainstream-Caucasians' norms; these mainstream dialects and communication styles, however, are often defined as inappropriate means of communication by other ethnic groups. Eye contact has also been determined as another cultural learning feature. The differential interpretation of eye contacts by mainstream Caucasian teachers of Puerto Rican students in New York has been identified as an explanation for their learning difficulties (Byers and Byers 1972).

These interpretations by the students to U. S. educational norms and their reactions to these situations often develop into a form of conflict either with their teacher or peers; Ogbu (1992) argues that the students who come to the United States involuntarily often develop defensive positions towards mainstream U. S. education. Furthermore, Ogbu believes that the voluntary immigrant students, who make their journey to the U.S. by choice, do not develop the same kind of opposition to learning the U. S. education's cultural ways and lessons. Instead, the voluntary immigrants perceive learning a new language and value system as an additive, enabling them to be more versatile and appropriate in different cultural contexts. An example of this additive component of cultural learning styles is when immigrant students enter a mathematics class in the U. S. and are often able to use the familiar numbers, signs, and applications to accomplish their assignments (Ogbu 1992).

According to the research by Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez (2003) the immigrant family directly influences its children's success in schools. The choice of language used in the home

has been found to be directly correlated with school success. The parents' educational background also influences the children's academic motivation and educational aspirations for future schooling (Plunkett and Bámaca-Gómez 2003). Another study (Portes and MacLeod 1996) on second-generation high school students in Florida and California acknowledged that parents' socioeconomic status (SES), length of residence in the U. S., and time spent on homework affected students' academic performance.

Portes and MacLeod (1996) found, however, that the factors that accounted for significant differences in the four immigrant groups compared in their study were “the human capital that immigrants bring with them from their countries of origin and the social context that receives them and shapes their adaptation in the United States.” The previous research concluded that positive or negative experiences of first-generation immigrants in the U. S. are directly related to their ability to locate and integrate into a common-ethnic community. The parents' perceptions of their immigrant group's accomplishments or failures, provide either positive or negative perceptions that are conveyed to their children; the results demonstrated that the subjective viewpoints of the parents converged with their students' academic performance, “revealing that SES and ethnic privilege are transmitted from one generation to the next (Portes and MacLeod 1996).”

The ties that the students maintain with family and friends in their country of origin provide additional emotional, cultural, and often economic support to the students and their families living in the U. S. (Brittain 2002). Kinship ties are deemed important for children to adjust to their new lives here in the United States and transition into a new school. The most important factors that are apparent in those children who have an easier transition are a strong ethnic identification, and maintaining a positive outlook towards mainstream-U. S. orientations.

The ability to maintain or integrate two cultures was found to positively correlate with higher self-esteem for nearly all ethnicities (Phinney et al. 1992).

Maybin (1998) advocates that informal conversations of children are an important area of study for interpreting their construction of knowledge and worldview. These findings relate closely to children's developing identities. The meaning and significance of language and communication have different layers of context within any particular social setting. The meaning for any utterance or sentence is constructed by the speaker and listeners given the words that are chosen, the social setting, the content of the overall conversation, cultural understandings, and perceived appropriateness based on the entire contextual situation (Maybin 1998).

Weisskirch and Alva (2002) surveyed bilingual Latino fifth graders to evaluate their experiences and comfort levels in language use and self-concepts. Their research found that female students appear to be less stressed, reporting lower-levels of acculturative experiences (being more Spanish dominant and interacting more with Mexican-Americans). Conversely, the male students reported higher-levels of being stressed due to their acculturation processes (being more English dominant). The more the participants spoke in English with their friends, the more stress was reported by them. Furthermore, the more the children viewed themselves as popular or accepted by their mainstream-Caucasian peers, the more acculturative stress they experienced.

By evaluating the effects of language brokering, the authors contend we can see how children acculturate and move into a bicultural existence. By acting as a language broker, children may feel caught between two cultures and be forced to translate difficult situations causing them stress (Weisskirch and Alva 2002). The same study found that the Latino fifth graders did not find the experiences of translating for a parent helpful or enjoyable. These fifth

graders also indicated that they did not feel positively about themselves while serving as a language broker, did not like translating, and did not find translating helpful to be more proficient in Spanish (Weisskirch and Alva 2002).

These findings by Weisskirch and Alva (2002) were the primary reasons that this dissertation intends to evaluate 1) whether the international ESOL students in this study like to translate on behalf of a parent and 2) whether the students in this study report or exhibit any stress or negative reactions related to serving as a language broker.

A relationship between English-language proficiency for adults and its impact on their identity has been established in other studies (Oboler 1995; Santiago-Rivera and Santiago 1999). For example, many of the informants in Oboler's study stated that their primary perceived struggle in adjusting to life in the U. S. stemmed from the prejudice and racism they experience due to limited English-speaking skills. These pervasive negative experiences contributed to their present sense of self-identity and self-worth. Whereas in the past, economic forces were the greater influences on place-to-place migration, today, language proficiency and educational attainment are increasingly important in the context of transnational migration (Santiago-Rivera and Santiago 1999).

Children's Identity and Ethnic Awareness

Children's identity formation and ethnic awareness appears to become salient around the ages of three and four (Table 2-1). This age proves to be an important time in a child's life, since they usually enter school during these years for the first time (Phinney and Rotheram 1987). The experiences that the immigrant children have in their school, home, and community greatly influence their identity development. These children often experience intense adaptation, intergenerational, and inter-ethnic struggles as they attempt to adjust to social identity situations that may be racially and culturally dissonant. Some of the transnational identity changes that

were previously discussed for adult migrants also relate to children (Phinney and Rotherman 1987).

Based on the earlier studies concerning the ages in which ethnic awareness appears to become salient, I focused this study on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th grade ESOL students. In addition to the ages that correspond to initial ethnic awareness and racial attitudes, these international children are also being forced into an “encounter stage” in their ethnic identity development. As these international students enter a U. S. school with its new language, culture and values, they are continually having to interpret others’ behaviors, while at the same time adjust their own behaviors, if they intend to integrate into their new school community.

Suppositions

This research has been undertaken as an ethnographic study with several assumptions and limitations. I propose that international elementary aged students need to be understood as transnational persons, whether they view themselves as such or not. One of the primary intentions of this research is to discover whether children engage in transnational processes in similar ways as adults, even though the young students come to the United States involuntarily—subject to their parents’ decisions. I advocate that

- 1 ESOL students will maintain relationships with friends and family in their country of origin;
- 2 international elementary students will form relationships with other nationals in the United States.

A second contention of this study is that the length of time in the United States has a direct bearing on the degree to which an international child assumes an identity of ‘American,’ or begins to define themselves as connected to their host-country as their primary country of identity.

I was convinced, if given an option that the international students would prefer to speak in their first language with friends. I advocated that they would prefer to use their first language for ease in communication and continuity with language as culture.

Interpersonal relations with classmates and friends for international ESOL students at school are also a focus of this study. In this regard, I assumed that the ESOL students would establish friendships primarily with other English language learners in the ESOL program and that an ESOL students' length of time in the U. S. will be correlated to more American friendships.

Several limitations in this study require clarification. The interview procedure is obviously employed with a small sample population, and any assertions or conclusions reached are offered in the context of the small sample of elementary students with whom the researcher interacted. The particular stratified sample of international elementary school participants all were interviewed at one elementary school site in one city in a southeastern geographic region of the United States. Inferences and opinions about international students' responses need to account for those delimitations. This research document is intended to be a description of some of the international elementary students' experiences in an elementary school ESOL program, and not intended to be a universal comment on all international children.

Finally, the personality, ethnic background, and gender of the researcher inevitably contain a certain number of uncontrollable variables that can affect the responses of the subjects being interviewed, and these biases are acknowledged by the researcher.

Table 2-1. Stages in the development of ethnic or racial concepts and attitudes

Author (date)	Awareness (ages)	Ethnic Affiliation (ages)	Attitude Formation (ages)
Goodman (1964)	Ethnic Awareness (3–4)	Ethnic Orientation (4–8)	Attitude Crystallization (8–10)
Porter (1971)	Awareness of Color (3) & Incipient Racial Attitudes (4)	Strong Social Preferences with Reason (5)	(No Information)
Katz (1976)	Formation of Rudimentary Concepts (1–4)	Consolidation of Group Concepts (5–7)	Attitude Crystallization (8–10)
Aboud (1977)	Unawareness of Ethnic Affiliation	Awareness of Group Affiliation	Curiosity of Other Groups

Note: Ages are in parentheses after developmental stages.

CHAPTER 3 ORGANIZATION OF THE RESEARCH

Methodology

Interview Instruments

The research methods that were applied for the purposes of this study are designed to be easily understood by children. A structured interview process was used to expose every informant in the sample to the same stimuli (Bernard 1995). In this study, two questionnaires spaced seven months apart were administered by the researcher to the students so that the information provided by the student-informants could be compared and analyzed. The initial interview was conducted during the first semester of the school year to acquire the students' initial reactions to the new school year. This initial interview has thirty-five questions, ranging from what the student likes to do to some specific questions concerning their views on different daily interactions with other students (Appendix A). The end of school interview is conducted during the final months of the second semester, or end of the school year, to capture the students' responses based on a scholastic school year's progression. The second interview contains thirty-three questions, based on the first interview with a few changes to make these questions appropriate for the end of the second semester (Appendix B).

The majority of the participants' interviews were conducted in a small resource classroom that was only utilized two days a week. When this classroom was occupied, the school library or the ESOL classroom was used as an alternative space to conduct the interviews; however, approximately five interviews were accomplished in these alternative school sites. A majority of the interviews were administered before school hours.

Each interview required about thirty to forty minutes to administer, varying in duration due to the participant's responses or extra time for translation. Approximately one-third of the

interviews were translated on behalf of the participants. I was able to communicate in Spanish with the Spanish-speakers, while a student or parent was solicited to assist in the translation of a few other languages, such as Chinese, Hebrew or Arabic. I also initiated informal conversations with the parents, as I encountered them on the school grounds; however, based on their responses during the meeting at Open House, they themselves did not want to be formally interviewed for this study.

A self-placement game was designed for the students to place themselves in various settings throughout the school day (Guillette 1994). This game was a modification of Guillette's felt board game (1994) and was based on initial observations of their school day endeavors, interactions with the students, and availability of technology and photography. A three-photograph, panoramic board of the school's playground, multi-purpose field, and kickball diamond was used to provide the participants with a real-life visual aid, assisting the students in describing their perceptions on free play (recess) and P. E. A two-photograph portrayal of the school's lunchroom tables and seats was also administered to assist the students with their discussions of their lunch time routines and peer interactions. These self-placement games were primarily administered as we discussed the last six questions during their interviews (Appendix A)

A smiley-face scale that portrays faces ranging from happy to sad was also utilized for the students to point to how they feel or perceive different situations in their school life (Bernard 1995). The smiley-face scale was utilized primarily during the last six questions of their second interviews (Appendix B). Participant observations were also conducted by the researcher to observe the students' daily interactions in various school settings. These settings included the ESOL and homeroom classrooms, cafeteria, playground, and special-classes areas.

Participant Observation

Participant observation, a fundamental principle of practicing cultural anthropology, is a research method used to gather information about the people in a study in their every day environments. The research method involves building rapport with the people involved in the study so they are comfortable with the researcher in their presence. Participant observation includes a variety of data collection methods. Some examples of these methods are natural conversations, observations, various kinds of interviews, checklists, and questionnaires (Bernard 1995). Participant observations were conducted during a traditional school year, from August 2005 through May 2006, in an elementary school in Florida. While the focus of the participant observations was on the participants' interactions and daily activities, other international students in the ESOL program, who did not participate in the interviews, were also observed during their class' routines.

The initial stages of participant observation relied on the research method of informal interviews, characterized by a flexible structure during the interviews or observations. The informal interview often enabled the researcher to build rapport with the participants and understand more about their interests (Bernard 1995). The informal interview method was utilized in this study to discover different topics of discussion and likes and dislikes of the international students. Rapport was further established with the students by linking back to previously observed situations or overheard discussions in various daily school settings in which the students are involved. In addition to building rapport with the students and understanding their views, the informal interviews served as an excellent precursor to the next stages of the research process in this study, the structured interviews.

The validity of the data may come into question at some point of the research process. For this reason, some explanations are offered to interpret how and why participant observation

reduces to a minimum many of the possible risks that might invalidate the research data. There are at least five reasons for insisting on participant observation in the pursuit of scientific research about cultural groups (Bernard 1995):

- 1 Participant observation provides opportunities for different kinds of data to be collected because of the rapport that has been established between the researcher and the informants.
- 2 Participant observation reduces the problem of the Hawthorne effect, or a change in the behavior of the informants because they are aware that they are being studied.
- 3 Participant observation will enable the researcher to construct sensible and culturally relevant questions in the survey instrument.
- 4 Participant observation provides the researcher with an intuitive understanding of what's going on in a community, giving credibility to the researcher's background information and confidence in interpreting the meaning of the data.
- 5 Participant observation provides the researcher the opportunity to become like any other local person who might be in the community.

Participant observations were conducted throughout the school year in the ESOL and homeroom classes, in addition to less restrictive times during the school day, such as PE, art, free time, and lunch. The observations were primarily focused on

- where and with whom the ESOL students sat during lunch.
- where and with whom the ESOL students played on the playground during free times.
- whether the ESOL students were included in games and activities.
- where and with whom the ESOL students sat during art class.
- which language were the students using while they were in less restrictive class times.
- whether any actions or verbal accusations were exhibited by either the ESOL students or their other homeroom classmates concerning any problematic situations in class.

Sampling Methods

A purposive sampling method was used in conjunction with participant observation due to the class size and population samples to generate information and identify relevant informants. Purposive samples emerged from the experiences in ethnographic research in the field, providing the structure for the researcher to select the units of analysis that will provide additional data

(Bernard 1995). Once the international students were recruited voluntarily, a stratified sampling technique was applied by grouping their names into three different geographical clusters: Latin American, Asian, and Other.

Multiple-Worlds Model

The conceptual framework of the Multiple-Worlds Model (Phelan et al. 1991) is applied in this study to discover the major factors that affect immigrant children's experiences in- and out-of-school in Florida. The model is designed to discover the interrelationships between a student's family, school, and peer worlds, and in particular, how meanings and understandings derived from these different worlds combine to shape the student's overall school and home life. The model is holistic and intended to gather information on a wide variety of topics, rather than only focus on single-educational criteria such as school achievement scores or second language acquisition.

Time in the U. S.

Twenty-nine ESOL students participated in this study. About one-half of them (15) had recently arrived to the United States and entered school in August, while the others (14) had been in the United States for at least one semester of the previous school year. To accomplish assessment concerning the length of time these international students have been in the United States, the participants were divided into two groups:

- 1 "newer" ESOL students (15), who began school in August;
- 2 "veteran" ESOL students (14), who entered school the previous school year, or earlier.

Time in the United States was also presumed to influence some of the students' responses in their interviews. The students' selection of a national identity was believed to be influenced by time, therefore, the students' length of time in the United States was used to evaluate their responses. Time in the U. S. was also presumed to be a factor in the ESOL students locating

American friendships at school. Time, therefore, is applied to establish whether this was an influence in their interpersonal relationships.

The data generated from the students' interviews were grouped into three sections consisting of eight to ten questions using the three areas of study: transnational processes, communication, and friendships. A spreadsheet was designed in which the responses were entered, placing the information from their first and second year interviews side-by-side. Each of the responses was coded according to the type of question and response that was provided. For each area of study, the students' information was initially analyzed as an entire sample group of twenty-nine; as mentioned earlier, the students were later subdivided by time in the United States to determine how this factor shaped their experiences in school. The remaining questions in the interviews were to gather additional information from the students, but these were primarily served as "icebreakers" to relax the participants.

Observations were organized into the three same categories of study: transnational processes, communication, and friendships. The two primary areas that were observed and recorded were communication and interpersonal relationships, since these were more readily observable at school. These observations were further divided in chronological order, using the first semester and second semester as two major subdivisions, followed by monthly and weekly divisions. Another section of special events or unusual occurrences was also utilized to easily access some of the observations that did not occur during a usual school day routine (holiday parties).

CHAPTER 4 TRANSNATIONAL PROCESSES

This research intended to discover whether the 3rd, 4th, and 5th-grade international elementary students participate in transnational processes. I assumed that I would find that ESOL students maintain relationships with friends and family in their country of origin as a means of remaining connected to their original culture and that they would form relationships with other nationals in the school for the same reason. The term “nationals” for the purpose of this study refers to other students who were from the same country, or nationality. I also believed that the longer an ESOL student was in the United States, the more likely he or she would identify as an “American.” In addition to the transnational questions, the interview instruments had a question designed to establish how the international students perceived themselves in relation to their ethnic or national identity (Appendices A and B).

Informal interviews with the participants’ teachers in addition to their writing samples were utilized to supplement the students’ interview information, focusing on the issue of each international student’s perception of his or her ethnic or national identity in order to assess their self-perception as a national.

Background Information on ESOL Students

About one-half (15) of the students had been in the United States since the beginning of the current academic school year, or less than three months. Seven of the participants indicated that they were in the U. S. for the previous academic year, and two of these students came in January for only the spring semester. Other participants (7) had been in the U. S. for more than one academic year. The researcher, therefore, inferred from this information that about one-half (15) of the students were new; and about one-half (14) of the students in the study had been in the U.S. for at least the previous school year.

A majority (23) of the international students claimed that they wanted to come to the United States.

Gustavo, from Brazil, cited the job prospects that his parents had waiting for them, once in the U. S., “my dad has a job making cement, and my mom is an aid [for the elderly].” Yardin, from Israel, explained how his parents persuaded him to come to the U. S., promising him certain items that he valued, “I was excited about the video games that my dad had promised me, since they are much cheaper here.” Laura, from Mexico, explained how she was curious about the life in the United States before coming, “because I wanted to know how it was here.” This response was similar to Koko’s, who explained how she remembers wanting to see something new, “yes, I’ve never been outside of Japan.” Finally, some parents had spoken of different aspects of the beautiful scenery that is here in the U. S., in comparison to their homelands. For example, Leanna from Jordan said, “yes, my dad always told us about green gardens in Florida, specifically.”

Three of the students declared that they did not wish to move to the U. S.; these same students explained in their interviews how their views changed, eventually.

Eduardo, from Puerto Rico, explained, “I wanted to come to the U. S., but I was ‘scared,’ because not much English” [he did not know much English]. Lexi, from Kenya, responded, “At first, no, I did not want to come, but then, I missed my friends and cousins . . . but, I like it now because we go swimming in the pool. I asked, who she likes to go swimming with and she replied, “My mom and me, and sometimes, Cecile, she’s my friend, but she goes to another school.” Yenyi, from China, said that she did not want to come to the United States, “no, not [at first], but now, I like it, because I’m friends with Wujie.”

Three of the students’ responses regarding their views on coming to the U. S. were not included in this data set, because they were too young to remember the move.

After six to seven months, the students were interviewed to determine whether they liked being in the United States. All of the international students in this study (28), except one, declared that they liked being in the United States. The only student who did not like being in the United States gave a negative reaction, “because we have a lot of homework and at home [in Jordan], we have a lot of trees with fruit, like apples and grapes.” Positive responses were based on multiple factors.

Alonzo, from Mexico, said, “I like being in the United States, because I make new friends.” Koko, from Japan, also commented on her friendships that she has been able to

form here in the U. S., or more specifically her ESOL international friendships, “I like being here, because I have friends from other countries.” Gustavo, from Brazil, provided another great reason for his fondness of being in Florida, “yes, I like it here, because of Disney.” Alicia, from Puerto Rico, explained, “I like being here because I like the school.”

Chu also discussed some amenities, “yes, well, I like it...because it’s really wide [open] with fields for sports with lots of trees. In Korea, we didn’t have places to play with so much grass, because it’s better to fall on, like in soccer.” Other opportunities to learn new and exciting things were also given by the students when asked about their experiences in the U. S. Leanna from Jordan said she likes being here, “because I speak another language [English] and have learned to skate, basketball, and swimming in July [when she came to the Florida last summer].”

Relationships Back Home

A majority of the participants (27) continued to maintain contact with their family or friends back home. The remaining participants in the study (2) claimed they did not maintain communications with people back home. A representative sample of the affirmative responses from the ESOL students is in the following section.

Special family events were often a reason that some participants spoke to family or friends back home. Pria said, “I talk sometimes, by phone, like on birthdays to my family in Malaysia.” Another student explained that she maintains contact with a girlfriend in her old neighborhood, “I mailed a letter back to a friend last week.” Chu said, “I talk to grandma on the phone and internet ‘MSN’ once a week in Korea.” Leanna explained, “I talk every week, by internet phone.” Alicia, from Puerto Rico, said, “I talk with my grandfather and uncle back in Puerto Rico on the cell phone.”

Today, a variety of media outlets often serve as links for transnationals with their home-countries through access to the internet, radio, television, and newspapers. The media serve as a means to stay current with a home-country’s latest news on politics, economics, entertainment, and other cultural events. Gustavo, from Brazil, said “my family has a cable channel, so we can still watch ‘Brazilian’ T.V. in Portuguese.”

Relationships in U. S.

The students' responses indicated that a majority of the students (26) have at least one sibling, in their nuclear families. Of these same students, twenty-three of them had at least one sibling currently living with them in Florida. Many of the siblings were young children and some of them also attended the ESOL elementary school. A few of the students explained how at least one of their older siblings was still living in their home countries.

Gustavo said, "one of my brothers lives here [19 years old], the other one lives in Brazil [he is in his 20s]. Tulu explained, "My sister [17 years old] still goes to school in Botswana." Tulu's older sister lives with their grandmother in Botswana, similar to how Tulu lived before she came to the U.S. at the beginning of this school year. Tulu continued, explaining that she lived with her grandmother, while her parents came to the local university to work on their degrees. Juan Carlos has two sisters, one of whom lives with him here, "Carla is in the fourth grade at this school, and the other one still lives in Durango, [Mexico]."

The question asking the participants whether or not they already had family members living in the United States did not ask for that information directly; however, many of the ESOL students' responses provided information concerning this important transnational connection for their families. Many of these students' families were not the first members of their extended family system to come to the United States. The data collected from the students' responses indicated that they had family connections, or transnational connections, in Florida previous to their arrival.

Jorge, from Mexico, said in Spanish, "[I have] an uncle that lives in Tampa, but no one from Mexico has come to visit." Another boy from Mexico, Juan Carlos, described in Spanish his kinship connection here in the United States, "my uncles [came here] to work, four here [in Florida] and one in Georgia." Pria, from Malaysia, explained that her family members do not

have to travel far to visit, “my grandparents live in Tallahassee.” Lydia, from Palestine [sic], also has some family connections in the U. S., “my mom’s aunt lives in Texas, in Houston, I think.”

Establishing Contacts

The participants expressed their perceptions of whether they had established any friendships at school in response to another interview question. The students’ initial interview information demonstrated that twenty-five of the students claimed their friendships were primarily with other international students in the ESOL program. Many of these students indicated that these friendships were with other nationals (12) in their grade, while only four of the ESOL students had formed a friendship with an American classmate in homeroom. In addition, some of the ESOL students (4) explained in their first semester interviews that they had not established any friendships at school. None of the ESOL students had formed friendships exclusively with American students.

By their second interviews the participants’ responses revealed similar findings in that twenty-six of the students claimed their friendships were primarily with other international students. This was another indication that the international students primarily established and maintained friendships with other international students in the ESOL program as I had anticipated.

Two of the ESOL students claimed that their friends were American students in their homeroom classes. The fact that two of the international students claimed that their good friends were exclusively American students by the end of the year was a small indication that these students were integrating their friendships into their homeroom classes. Only one student responded that he did not have any friends in his initial interview, maintaining that he still had not made any friends in the school.

The ability to return home and maintain fundamental alliances with family and friends back in their country of origin is an important factor in transnational migration. In the initial interview, the responses varied and were not representative of how long the students would remain in the U. S. Many of the students replied that they did not know when they were going to return to their home country. Others responded with a seemingly simple, generic answer, saying that they would go back in one or two years.

By the spring interview, the students' responses were more realistic in discussing when, or if, they would return to their country of origin. Four themes emerged from the students' responses to the question concerning when they would return. Some of the students would return soon, either: 1. to visit family and friends (5), 2. to stay for an indefinite period of time (8). Some of the students stated they would not be returning to their home-country for at least a year: 3. returning in one to five years (13), 4. not returning, ever (3).

Eight 'expression faces' were provided, demonstrating the following feelings with labels underneath, to assist the students in selecting how they feel: happy, sad, hopeful, lonely, nervous, shy, angry, and bored. Sixteen of the twenty-nine students said that they felt 'happy' about the idea of returning to their country of origin.

The following sections are representative responses from the students' interviews, based on these four response themes:

Gustavo, from Brazil, responded, "I am happy to go back to Brazil this summer, because I have money and can buy candy and see my grandma." The girl from Kenya, Lexi, had apparently been listening to her parents' discussions regarding their future financial status, after living and working in the United States, "I will be happy to go home, because we'll be rich." Other students were happy about the idea of returning home because they would be reunited with

various significant family members. For example, Sara said, “I’ll be happy to go to Ecuador during the summer school vacation, because I get to visit my family—grandparents, uncles, and cousins.” Tulu, from Botswana, responded with a similar answer about the prospect of going home to see family, “I’ll be happy, because I get to see my grandmas and cousins.”

Six of the students responded that their return home would cause them to be “sad.” For example, Yenyi, from China, said, “Moving makes me ‘sad,’ because I might move to someplace else in America, or to Asia, but I have many good friends here.” Antonio, simply stated, “Going [back] to Puerto Rico makes him feel ‘sad,’ I don’t want to go back.” Pria said, “Moving to Malaysia makes me ‘sad,’ because when I go back, then I’ll never come back here.”

The students’ responses also indicated some apprehension about the idea of returning to their country of origin. One of the boys from Mexico, Alonzo, said, “I’m a little nervous, because I’ve forgotten my Spanish.” Chu discussed his feelings in relation to his own ethnic identity. He said, “I’m nervous, because I don’t feel like I’m Korean anymore.” Chu continued his thought process, “I’m also angry, because I lose all my friends and free time.”

The responses also demonstrated how one student was “hopeful” about the return, and another participant (1) stated simply, “it will be ok to go back,” but did not reveal any emotion.

Transnational Identities

The participants were asked a question concerning identity to discover how they view themselves. I presumed that the longer an ESOL student was in the United States, the more likely he or she would identify as an “American.” The initial sections reveal the results of the ESOL students’ responses, based on how they reported their ethnic or national identity. The information in the latter sections divided the ESOL students into two groups, “newer” students, and “veteran” students who had been in the U.S. for at least one prior school semester. The first and second interviews utilized identity terms, which were designed to allow the participants’ to

self-report a sense of being an “American” or a “national” citizen of their home country, or “both.”

In their first interviews, fifteen of the participants said that they feel as if they are “both,” American and their home-nationality. The reports also revealed that twelve of the international students identified solely with their home-nationality. The remaining two students (one male, one female) in the study claimed to view themselves exclusively as “American.”

The responses in the second interviews demonstrated that a majority of students (21) claimed to feel that they identify as “both,” American and a home-nationality. Six of the ESOL students reported that they still perceived themselves as their “national” identity, and two students mentioned that they viewed themselves as “American,” according to the second ethnographic interviews.

The following information is based on the first interviews, focusing on the newer ESOL students (15), who have been in the U. S. for three months, or less. The data from the first interviews indicated that about one-half (8) of the newer participants expressed being their “home-nationality.” Six of the newer students claimed “both,” American and a home-nationality. Finally, one new student, who was briefly mentioned above, claimed that he was an “American” in his first interview. The fact that one-half of the newer students identified themselves by their home-nationality was an initial indication that these students were continuing to maintain their home-identity.

Three of the newer international students (15) in their second interview responses claimed their “home-nationality” identity. The students’ responses demonstrated that more than one-half (12) of the newer international students explained their identity as “both,” American and a home-nationality. Yardin claimed, “I think I’m ‘both,’ more American than Israeli, because I’ve spent

more time here, now.” Yardin’s father had to translate his son’s views in his interviews stating, “Yardin considers himself ‘both,’ because he was born in California, while I (father) was doing post-doc work there, so he uses both, but he was only there for three months though.” Lastly, none of the newer international students, who had been in the U. S. for one complete school semester, said that he or she was an “American.” The fact that five of the newer students altered their responses over the school year, from a “national” identity to “both,” was an initial indication that time in the U. S. was a factor in the students’ identity-selection, as I suspected.

The following data is based on the first semester interviews, focusing on the veteran international students (14), who had been in the United States for at least one semester of the previous school year. Four of the international students identified themselves by their “home-nationality.” Lydia, who is an ESOL girl from the Middle East, demonstrated through her explanation how much influence a parent can have over a child’s self-perception and identity. She said, “I’m a Palestinian, but I’ve really only lived in Saudi Arabia and the United States, but my mom is from Palestine and told me about being happy as a child there growing-up.” Lydia continued by explaining that she would like to go there someday. [I actually asked if she thought of herself as ‘American’ or ‘Saudi Arabian,’ and she responded, ‘Palestinian.’]

The interview responses indicated that more than one-half (10) of these students, claimed to be “both,” American and a home-nationality. Antonio, from Puerto Rico, said, “I am ‘both,’ because I know English and Spanish.” Gustavo, from Brazil, explained, “Well, I’m ‘both,’ because I don’t know much English and I’m forgetting Portuguese, so it’s pretty much the same thing.” One of the students, who is from Puerto Rico, said she views herself as “American.” The fact that nine of the students, who had been in the U. S. for at least a year, selected “both,” points to the idea that time was a factor in the students’ identity selection.

During the spring semester interviews, two of the fourteen (14) ESOL students continued to claim their “home-nationality.” The second semester interviews revealed that more than one-half (10) of the international students, responded as “both,” American and their home-nationality. Finally, two of the international students claimed that they were “American,” during their second semester interviews. I believe that these two students claimed to be American because they knew that they were going to live in the United States, permanently.

In addition to the ESOL students’ length of time in the United States and its impact on their self-perceptions of identity, this study also intended to determine if returning to one’s country of origin had any impact on the students’ identity responses. Eleven of the students said in their first interviews that they would be returning to live in their countries of origin or moving within the United States by the summer. Eight of these students said that they would be moving back to their home-countries, and the three other students said that they would be moving within the U. S. Seven of the eleven students reported that they were “both” American and their home-nationality in their first interviews; four of the eleven students claimed that they identified as their home-nationality.

By their second interviews, five of the eleven students stated that they identified as “both,” and four of these five students had repeated their responses. Four of the eleven students, however, claimed that they identified with their home-nationality; two of these students had repeated their responses, while the other two had altered their answers from “both” to only their “national identity.” In addition, one informant changed his response from “both” to “American,” and the other had altered his response from only “national” to “American.” I interpreted these two previous “American” identity-selections as responses to the idea that their families were only going to move within the United States. The other significance of these responses is found

in the inference that those students who knew that they would be moving back to their home-countries by the summer, identified with their home-nationality by their second interviews. The idea of moving back to one's country of origin or remaining in the United States appeared to be directly related to the students' identity selection.

Identical Backgrounds: Different Identities

The information concerning identity from two participants, demonstrated how two people from very similar backgrounds and circumstances defined themselves differently. Two of the student participants were twins, Sara and Silvia, and their responses, or the differences in their responses, represented some of the shifts in students' perceptions regarding identity.

Sara responded in both interviews with similar answers, "I think I'm 'both,' American and Ecuadorian, because I know both languages, English and Spanish." Sara also explained in both of her interviews regarding her language-choice, "I want to talk in English, because I like it more."

Silvia responded differently than her twin sister in her first interview, saying that she thinks of herself as only, "Ecuadorian." In accordance with this answer, Silvia also responded, "I like to talk in Spanish," to her language-use question in her first interview. By the second semester interview, Silvia explained, "I think I'm 'both,' American and Ecuadorian, because I can speak two languages," she said proudly.

The differences between the twins' responses revealed two significant findings:

- 1 Two students, who have had as similar as possible family relationships, language exposure and learning opportunities, and school and community experiences, viewed themselves differently in terms of ethnic or national identity;
- 2 Language use and preference was the determining factor, not only for the twins' reasoning on their identity selection, but also for the other ESOL students' reasoning in the previous sections.

In addition to language use and ability, along with time spent in the United States, another theme emerged from the data concerning the students' identity and their self-perceptions and definitions, and that was how their American peers view them. One student explained that his identity is shaped by some of his classmates' perceptions of him. Chu, a Korean boy, offered profound insight into his personal identity responding, "I think I'm half and half, well 60%–40%, until someone reminds me strongly that I'm Korean at school, because I feel that I am American, because I'm in America and I speak English." Chu's self-awareness based on other's perceptions relates to the "encounter" stage of ethnic identity and obviously has an influence on his self-perception.

Based on the ESOL students' responses to the identity question and their time in the United States, the identity presupposition was found to be confirmed. I acknowledge, however, that language use, language preference, and other's perceptions, must also be viewed as factors for self-identification. The research responses point to time in the U. S. and the command of the English language as important factors in ESOL students' perceptions of their national identity. I project that the longer elementary students live in the U. S. and learn its primary language, English, they will adopt an "American" identity.

ESOL Class Writing Samples

In addition to ethnographic interviews, writing samples that related directly to the students' identity were utilized to understand how they perceived current situations in their transnational processes. During the 5th-grade ESOL class the students were assigned to write sentences using spelling words that end in 'en,' 'an,' or 'er.' While some of the students' sentences varied in English-proficiency, the focus of this study was to evaluate some of the meanings of the students' sentences. The three following examples of the students' sentences were directly related to the area of identity, revealing how they viewed themselves:

- 1 Eduardo, from Puerto Rico, wrote, “American: I am an American.”
- 2 Marcela, also from Puerto Rico, wrote, “American: I am not American!”
- 3 Chu, from Korea, wrote, “American: whoever bornes in America is American.”

A conversation that was overheard one afternoon while two of the ESOL students, Chu and Eduardo, were finishing some work in their ESOL classroom. Eduardo, from Puerto Rico, explained to Chu that he is now “American” like him, because he lives here in the United States; Chu replied that he is not necessarily “American,” so they turned and asked Ms. Lucas, their ESOL teacher, what she thought about this situation. Ms. Lucas replied, “You could be American, Korean, or both.” Chu returned to his conversation with Eduardo, saying “I think I’m both, Korean and American.” He seemed happy to apply the options that Ms. Lucas had helped him to discover.

A couple of writing samples also provided a means to understand how the students perceived themselves functioning in their home countries and in the United States. The writing prompt was “What are you thankful for?” given by the ESOL teacher the week of Thanksgiving. One is written by a girl from Japan, who was struggling in school assignments and looking forward to returning to Japan to see family and friends. The other sample portrayed how pleased a boy from Mexico was about the opportunities he has here in the United States.

Riki’s writing sample:

I’m thankful for Japan.

Japan has nice place like mountain and rivers and more! And place that fantastic. So I can live on that we can see a beautiful mountain or river and you can play fantastic things! The next thing I’m thankful for Japan is Family and Friends! They are very nice and my friends are enjoyable. They gona ring a bell to my home even holliday. And my family is really nice. The last thing I’m thankful for Japan is specially my home. It is my home that I came from. And speak Japanese. Japanese is easy to me than English. And easy to make friends! That is why I like Japan!

Riki exhibited behaviors that demonstrated lack of attention in her ESOL class, not being actively involved in lessons, as she had been earlier in August and September. For example, she

usually utilized a dictionary to accomplish her assignments, looking up the words that she did not understand; then in October, she ceased to utilize a dictionary and did not pursue words' meanings or her assignments with enthusiasm. I noticed that Riki had written an entire page in what appeared to be a story in Japanese. I also overheard the ESOL teachers talking about their concern for her, since she had missed almost everything on her homework, which was not her typical performance in ESOL class.

Observations were also undertaken in Ms. Lilly's 4th-grade class with Riki throughout the school year. As Riki's time in the United States grew to a close, so did her attention to homework and following classroom activities in her homeroom class. In December, I noted "Riki appears disengaged and alone in a group with three other classmates; she seems not to be involved in the class' lessons, either." Later that week, "Riki sits by herself the entire class and writes and draws a Japanese conversation in kanji, it appears. She has totally, "checked out" and is apparently ready for her return to Japan, which is about a week away, from what I understand." Even during free times after lunch, Riki would sit alone on a bench and watch her classmates play games. The fact that Riki knows that she will return to Japan soon appeared to be a factor in her lack of participation and enthusiasm at school. In addition, she also did not have a Japanese friend with whom she could interact at school, which might have also contributed to her difficulty in adjusting to her school.

Jorge's writing sample:

I am thankful for live in the United State this contry is nice and why? like United State is Good work for my parents in the school is Good and nice and this state is florida is nice and my parent like here and me like here.

Jorge was a pleasant 5th grader who had a positive perspective on his opportunities in his new school in the United States. He was also a helpful person who attempted to assist others in any way that he could, even though he was not very proficient in English. An example of his

willingness to help another ESOL student, even though they had difficulty communicating, is provided in a later chapter.

Transnational Children

Although the students in this study are young, this may not be their first time to the United States. As mentioned earlier, Yardin, whose parents are from Israel, was born in California while his father was working on his post-doctoral work. After moving back to Israel for about seven years, Yardin returned to the U. S. with his parents, so that his mother might complete a one year post-doctoral assignment. Rene, whose parents are from Egypt, was born in Florida and lived here until she was four years old while her father was earning his Ph. D. After moving back to Egypt for five years, Rene returned with her family, so that her father may continue his studies in the local university. The two students' previous stories represent some of the ways in which the foundations for transnational migration are established at an early age, as these elementary students are continuing to learn how to navigate various languages, cultures, and interpersonal relationships.

Gustavo, from Brazil, explained how excited he was to go to Jacksonville to obtain his green card, finally. He said that his father, who works with cement, plans on continuing his job here in the United States, until he retires. Upon retirement, the father will move back to Brazil, where he will have "enough money to live, ok." I asked Gustavo whether he planned on staying in the U. S. when his family returns to Brazil, or going back with them; he replied with a shrug of his shoulders that he did not know. Gustavo's story represents another means in which these young students participate in transnational practices, establishing a recognizable means to live in the U. S.

Conclusions

I inferred that ESOL students would maintain relationships with friends and family in their home country. The fact that twenty-seven of the twenty-nine ESOL students were actively involved in connections with people back home was a strong indication of their continued home country involvement. Such ongoing contact suggested that these children find it important to maintain ties with their “home country,” for a familiarity of customs and language, for maintaining family ties, and for a sense of stability in the midst of many foundational changes in their young lives.

This information points to several implications for the international students, who may be traversing multiple cultures and languages for the first time in their lives. This “bridge” between two nations and cultures provided an opportunity for the students to continue to utilize their first language, which is a means of maintaining their linguistic and cultural connection with their family and friends. Interpersonal relationships were also sustained through their ability to communicate with people in the international students’ country of origin. In addition, family and cultural traditions were continued as another means to replicate a cultural or family system. All of these support mechanisms allow the students to sustain and facilitate transnational processes, while living abroad.

As stated earlier, today there are multiple means of technology that enable people to communicate with others all over the world, and even these young, international ESOL students participate in the global communication markets. These elementary-aged students talk to family or friends back in their home countries via phone, internet, or internet phones on a regular basis. For these young students, this recurring activity of maintaining contact is fundamental to maintaining transnational processes.

When a sibling also moves to the United States with the family, this person is often an asset for the elementary student in the adjustment process to living in the U. S. A majority of the students (26) had at least one sibling in their nuclear families. Of these same students who have a sibling, a majority of the ESOL students (23) had one sibling currently living with them in Florida. The majority of their siblings were young children and some of them also attended the ESOL elementary school. The students' siblings provided an outlet to express familiar struggles with each other, or to avoid some of the new obstacles by having a peer-confidant to share experiences within a new environment. The siblings also provided a person with whom the ESOL students might relate, not only in their new school, but also in their home neighborhoods.

Transnational people often locate other people from the same nationality, or ethnic background upon arriving to a new culture and its institutions. The ability to utilize the knowledge of another national person provides some potential resources that they may view as comforting: a common language and shared culture.

The second assertion I made about transnational processes is that the international students would form relationships with other nationals in the school. The fact that more than one-half (18) of the participants in this study located friendships initially with other national students clearly demonstrates that these ESOL students apply some transnational techniques, finding people with common backgrounds. In addition, the second semester interviews indicated that the number of students who maintained friendships with other national students, decreased by five to thirteen students. While this decrease did indicate that five of the ESOL had formed friendships with other students, the fact that the other students in this group continued to maintain their national-background friendships was a clear indication that they had formed a transnational alliance. I

argue that these friendship connections provide an initial support mechanism, allowing national-background students to maintain their sense of nation-state while in a U. S. school community.

The ESOL students' responses clearly indicated, I believe, that these international students first prefer to form friendships with other children with whom they have most in common. This preference also suggests that these young children seek out children who are also struggling with adjustments to another culture and language. I found impressive the number of transnationals who obviously preferred to initiate friendships with children with whom they held a common background.

The transnational movements that young students go through often alter their perceptions of who they are, affecting their sense of ethnic or national identity. Because of this possibility, I proposed that the longer an ESOL student was in the United States, the more likely he or she would identify as "American." The fact that the newer ESOL students shifted their identity responses to "both," and that the students, who had been in the U. S. longer, labeled themselves as "both," clearly indicates that time in the U. S. did influence their identity selections. Time in the United States, however, was not the only factor in the students' responses to their identity selection. Language use and ability were also given by the students as a primary indicator of their identity. Other people's perceptions, either from a parent or a classmate, were also provided as reasons by the students for how they view themselves.

The information from the students' suggest that my assumption was confirmed, since a vast majority of these newer ESOL students had adjusted their ethnic identities over the duration of the school year. While the "both" response is not the same as defining oneself as "American," these international students had adopted an alternative, or second, ethnic-identification, by their second semester of school.

In addition to time in the United States, a small sample of these international students' responses indicated that a return trip home, soon, also is a factor in their identity-selection. For those students who were going back to their country of origin to live, they altered their original responses and claimed to be their national identity. Of those students who were going to remain in the United States, even though they were going to move to another state, they reported being an American.

These international students established and maintained relationships with other national and international students, but not often with American students. This pointed to the idea that common experiences, being in a new school and using a new language, serve as a bond to building friendships at school among international students.

CHAPTER 5 COMMUNICATION

Communication is a human activity in which everyone participates, yet it is also an activity with many possible definitions for which few would agree upon a similar definition. A definition of communication for the purpose of this study is: a social interaction through messages (Fiske 1990). One aim of this study was to understand how elementary ESOL students view their use of English and other “social interactions through messages” with family and friends. A study by Weisskirch and Alva (2002) reported that bilingual elementary school students were found to be stressed by having to speak in English. The same previous study also concluded that elementary-aged students reported stress when they served as a translator for their parents (Weisskirch and Alva 2002). Based on the previous information and preliminary observations at the elementary school site, three central questions were the focus of this section on language and communication:

- 1 In what language would the ESOL students prefer to speak with their friends, if they were given a choice between English and their national language?
- 2 Based on the students’ parents’ primary reason for being in the U. S., studying at a university or working at an occupation, were there differences in language usage at home?
- 3 Do these ESOL students like translating for their parents?

The initial sections investigated the students’ language preferences in interactions with peers at school and in their neighborhoods. In addition to their language use with friends, interviews inquired about language use with family members at home and the participants’ feelings on serving as translators on behalf of their parents. Questions were asked in both interviews to discover if there were any changes in their responses on language and communication from their fall and spring interviews (Appendix A and B).

Observations were undertaken to supplement the data from their interviews on the ESOL students' language use and communication processes at school. School spaces in which the students interact throughout their school day were selected to investigate the international students' language practices and discover how they related to one another in different school environments. The school areas included: homeroom and resource classrooms, the cafeteria, and playgrounds. Representative examples of observations are in the latter sections of this chapter, providing additional data on the participants' language patterns and communication practices.

Language Use with Friends

In their first interviews, twelve of the twenty-nine ESOL students reported that they speak only in English with their friends. Seven of these twelve students did not have another peer in their grade with whom they could communicate in their first language. The following students' responses are representative of those who did not have any options to communicate in their first language.

Lexi, who is from Kenya, explained, "I actually prefer to talk in English, because none of them know Swahili." Pria, from Malaysia, said, "I have to speak in English with my friends, because I have no Indian friends that can speak with me in Tamil." Yardin, a boy from Israel, shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, I have to talk in English, because they're not going to understand me in Hebrew." Bayo, from Nigeria, also did not have a peer at school with which he has the opportunity to communicate in his first language, Yoruba.

Eleven of the twenty-nine students said that they communicate exclusively in their "national" language with their peers. The remaining participants in the study (6) claimed to use "both" English and a national language while conversing with their friends. For example, Gustavo, from Brazil, explained in his first interview, "I like to talk with friends in Portuguese, it's much easier to speak in." While Gustavo had opportunities on a daily basis at school to speak with another 3rd grade Brazilian girl, Gisele, in his ESOL and homeroom classes, he was not overheard or observed talking with her at school in Portuguese.

By the second semester, about one-half (15) of the participants claimed that they only speak in “English” with their friends. Three of the ESOL students continued to use only their “national” language with their peers at school. Eleven of the participants explained that they communicate in “both” English and a national language with friends.

Observations were conducted throughout the school to investigate how the ESOL students’ daily communications support what they reported in their ethnographic interviews regarding language use with friends. The examples provided are representative of patterns in daily interactions that were observed during the research project.

A teaching strategy in which teachers paired newer ESOL students with other ESOL students who share a common language was observed throughout the school year in both the homeroom and resource classrooms. This strategy was implemented to assist the newer students in learning the classroom procedures and course lessons, while adjusting to a new school. In addition, a more English proficient student often served as a translator for a newer student, explaining the teachers’ instructions and class’ activities throughout the day. I observed several of these “pairings” to assess language use by the children.

October 3rd was the first day of school for Juan Carlos, a Spanish-speaker from Mexico, and he was not very proficient in English. Mr. Feliciano, his homeroom teacher, explained in Spanish the classroom procedures to Juan Carlos, while the other students worked their mathematics problems. Mr. Feliciano explained to Juan Carlos where to locate blank paper, extra scissors, a stapler for assignments, and where to find his homework assignments, pointing to a folder on a desk. Mr. Feliciano also placed him next to another boy from Mexico, Jorge, so that he might assist Juan Carlos in understanding the initial lessons and classroom routines. Juan Carlos and Jorge both seemed to find it mutually enjoyable and useful to have another friend that

spoke the same language and was from the same country, as they proceeded to sit together and talk in Spanish. Eventually, the boys returned to working the mathematics assignments.

The strategy of pairing students with a common first language was used in each grade and in various classes throughout the school year. In Mr. Brooks' 4th-grade homeroom classes, the two girls from Mexico were assigned desks that faced each other; the two other ESOL students, a Malaysian girl and a boy from India, sat on either side of the two girls. During mathematics period in Mr. Brook's class, Pria, from Malaysia, who was fairly proficient in English, attempted to help the two Spanish-speaking ESOL classmates by gesturing to them where they should be in their mathematics-computer project. The two Spanish-speakers, Carla and Maria, made a brief attempt to follow the lesson, but soon the two girls returned to talking to one another in Spanish. Pria, however, continued to work on her computer-math project, enjoying the interactive learning methods. The two girls from Mexico continued using Spanish as a bond throughout the school day, as observations of them during physical education class (P. E.) revealed that they continue talking to each other in Spanish. They apparently understood the class' game, but only half-heartedly participated, instead choosing to talk with each other. In the same P. E. class, Pria played and interacted with her other classmates in the activities, the boy from India also played along with his classmates.

The use of student pairs based on a common language was also applied in the ESOL classes. During the spring semester, Shani, a new girl from Panama, arrived to the 3rd-grade ESOL class and was paired with Alicia, another Spanish-speaker from Puerto Rico. Shani happily placed stickers on her new name card for her desk, decorating her name tag by coloring it with different colors of her choice. She appeared fairly content, conversing with Alicia in Spanish, preparing her new name tag. As they progressed through their daily school routine,

Shani continued to stay with her new translator and friend, Alicia. Later, the two girls were observed talking with each other in Spanish, so that Shani understood the P. E. coach's instructions.

The length of time the students had been in the United States was used to evaluate the participants' language use with friends. About one-half (15) of the students were new to the U. S. at the beginning of the school year. Nine of the fifteen newer students explained that they continued to use their "national" language with friends. The newer students' responses indicated that five of the fifteen newer students claimed to speak only "English" with their friends in their first interviews. Four off these fifteen newer students did not have another peer in their grade with whom they could speak their national language. Three of these four students were included earlier with those students that use only English with their friends; the other participant who did not share a common language with a classmate said that she used both English and her national language in her first interview.

By their second interviews, the number of newer students who used only "English" with friends had increased by two, to seven students. A greater change occurred in the responses in the number of newer students who spoke "both" English and a national language with friends, increasing from one to six students. Lastly, only two newer students claimed in their end of school interviews to continue to use their "national" language with friends. Observations of these two students during this research revealed that both of these students had a common-language friend with whom they could use their national language, not only in their ESOL class, but also in their homeroom class. Both of these students were the newer students in the student pairings and were also less proficient in English than their friends.

The fact that the number of newer students who use their national language decreased from nine to two students revealed that these newer students were utilizing both English and a national language with friends. This change also signified that time in the U. S. influenced the newer students' use of English, whether they were using English exclusively or speaking in both languages.

Seven of the fourteen veteran students explained in their first interviews that they speak only "English" with friends. Five of the veteran students claimed to use "both" English and their national language with friends. Furthermore, three of these fourteen veteran students did not have another classmate with whom they could communicate in their "national" language, and two of these students said that they speak in "English" with friends, while the other remaining student used "both." The interview responses indicated that students, who often had opportunities to speak with others in their first language, did not choose to exercise this option. The idea of how some students might view being able to utilize both English and their national language, was perhaps summed in Lydia's response to the question, "Well, talking in Arabic is 'normal,' and talking in English is 'new' and 'fun'." More than one student said that he or she preferred to speak in English, because of forgetting some words already in their national language. Eduardo, from Puerto Rico, said, "I like [to speak in] English, because you get confused with changing back and forth." Daniel, from Mexico, explained, "I use English more, because sometimes I forget words in Spanish." These students' responses, therefore, indicated that twelve of the fourteen veteran students utilize English with friends. This information suggested that time in the U. S. did influence the amount of English the students speak with friends.

Lastly, only two of the veteran students said that they speak their “national” language with friends. Observations provided supplemental information on these two veteran students who utilized their national language with friends at school. These two veteran students had a common-language friend in their homeroom class, as well as in the ESOL program; having a peer who spoke their first language in classes appeared to facilitate these students’ continued use of their national language. Both of these students were also generally shy and soft spoken individuals; each of them, however, appeared to have formed friendships with their ESOL classmates, who shared a common language with these two students. These findings were similar to the two newer students mentioned earlier who also continued to use their first language with common-nationality friends in class.

By their second semester interviews, eight of the fourteen veteran students said that they spoke exclusively in “English” with friends. Five of the students claimed to use “both” English and a national language. The same student repeated his answer, explaining that he talks in his “national” language with friends. There were only a few small changes in the veteran students’ responses. The two participants who said that they use their “national” language in their initial interviews changed their second interview responses to “both” (1) and only “English” (1). These minor changes were another small indication that as the students spent time in the United States, they spoke English more with friends.

Changes in the previously mentioned categories of student responses point to some preliminary language use implications. The responses suggested that as the ESOL students progressed through the school year, learning more English, they increased their English-use with friends. The fact that about one-half (15) of the twenty-nine ESOL students used only English and an additional eleven students communicated in both English and a national language

indicated that a majority (26) spoke in English by their second interviews. Conversely, as the ESOL students became more proficient and confident in English during the school year, they had a tendency to utilize their national languages with less frequency, than earlier in the year.

The ESOL students also often volunteered to assist other ESOL students who might not share a common language. While as many as six Spanish-speaking students were in Mr. Feliciano's class, some of the other ESOL students did not share a common language with anyone else in the class. Jorge, the boy from Mexico, who had only been in school for less than a full year, attempted to assist a new ESOL classmate from Egypt, Rene, with what the teacher was requesting of the girl. Jorge pulled Rene aside, spread out her papers, and used hand gestures to ask her to look for her three papers that Mr. Feliciano had requested from the class. Rene, who apparently did not understand, turned in a blank page to the teacher, which he accepted, temporarily.

Mr. Feliciano and Rene later rummaged through all of her papers, locating the required three papers that she must turn in for her homework assignments. While they had managed to find the homework papers, they were all blank, so Mr. Feliciano asked Rene to merely put her name and date at the top of each page. Mr. Feliciano attempted, again, to communicate his instructions to Rene, requesting that she take the same three papers home and do them as homework. Rene appeared to be bewildered by her new school routines and language barriers that presented great difficulties in communicating with her peers and the teachers. With Mr. Feliciano's assistance, Rene placed the three papers into her book, while the teacher wrote a note to her parents, requesting their assistance with this matter; he instructed her through hand gestures and talking slowly to take the assignments home, so that her father might assist her with her work.

The fact that two ESOL students, who did not speak a common language, helped each other with the teacher's instructions, suggested that other bonds form between ESOL students in their shared experiences at a new school. The previous situations, point to how the circumstances of a new school and language, centering around the ESOL program, create a place in which these new international students form unique alliances with other students, assisting each other through a new cultural system, or school. The researcher had observed earlier in the month, noting that Jorge had also been an assistant to Rene and another boy from Pakistan in the ESOL class. Perhaps these shared experiences in the ESOL program enable the international students to learn how to be a leader, helper, translator, and student in their new U. S. school.

While the comradery between these two ESOL students was admirable, this situation made the researcher consider some of the following implications of the events. The teacher, might have been asking too much of the new ESOL girl to locate a homework assignment, or even to do the homework assignment. Since she was obviously struggling to even understand simple instructions with gestures from the teacher and her peer, these requests might have been too much to ask of a new student. The relationship between the two ESOL students may have many different outcomes affecting them both. The new relationship might be based on mutual assistance and learning, or the situation might become awkward, as the boy and girl attempted to communicate unsuccessfully in the classroom. Rene was joined by another Arabic speaker in Mr. Feliciano's homeroom class. The first week of October, a girl from Jordan, Leanna, enrolled in Mr. Feliciano's 5th- grade class about two weeks after Rene, and the teacher seated them next to each other in class.

From the beginning of their friendship, Rene and Leanna enjoyed one another's company and speaking in Arabic together throughout the day; this pairing system, however, would also

lead to some occasional problems in class. Observations in their science class provided insights into their interactions, where I noted, “Rene and Leanna appear to hang out and talk, but I’m not sure that they are ‘on task’ with their science lessons.” Additional observations were conducted on the two girls’ in P. E. class, where it was noted that the newer girl, Leanna, “seems to fit in, trying to be involved with the class games (jump rope, dodge ball),” while Rene “still seems lost.” The other ESOL students in the same P. E. class were observed as being “involved” and “ok with the class participation.” In another observation of their P. E. class, Rene and Leanna talked in Arabic with each other in the back of the class, as the class was beginning and the students stretched.

Observations conducted in Mr. Feliciano’s science class in November revealed that Rene and Leanna still required assistance with the English language and translation of class assignments; Juan Carlos, who arrived to school about the same time as these two girls, worked primarily alone on the class assignments.

I perceived that these two girls utilized their national language often as a means to socialize with a new friend in a new school and country. Juan Carlos, who also had the opportunity to speak to his teacher and some classmates in Spanish, generally used his Spanish as a means to understand better the class assignments and procedures. Later in November, Mr. Feliciano had to request that both of the girls get their books out on their desks and open them to the correct page, in order to follow the lesson. They two girls complied with their teacher’s request, locating their books and the proper pages, eventually.

I met Rene’s father early in November outside of Mr. Feliciano’s classroom. Her father had come to the school to inform her teachers and school officials that she would not be in classes later that week, because she would be celebrating Ramadan. After conversing with Mr.

Feliciano, Rene's father wanted to meet and talk with her ESOL teacher, Ms. Lucas; since Mr. Feliciano needed to begin his class instructions, I volunteered to escort Mr. Addah down the hallway to be introduced to Ms. Lucas.

Mr. Addah and Ms. Lucas made their introductions, and after an initial conversation, he stated some of his concerns, "I am worried that Rene is talking too much in Arabic at school with Leanna. I understand that they are friends and that's, 'ok,' but my concern is that they sit next to each other and talk in the classes, not talking in English." Ms. Lucas tried to reassure Rene's father, "Well, I know that she speaks in English in here [ESOL class], because they have to; We usually divide the students by proficiency levels for their reading groups, so the two of them [Rene and Leanna] are in the same reading group, but they rarely can talk in Arabic, then, because Ms. Chang, the ESOL assistant, won't let them." The ESOL teacher continued, "For writing and language arts, we have two groups formed by students of mixed English proficiency levels. Rene and Leanna are not in the same group, so they must use English during these times." Rene's father appreciated the conversation and clarification of the ESOL classroom procedures; he added, "Well, I'm trying to help her at home with the homework, but we have two small twins, too, so it is difficult, we're very busy at home and I don't want Rene to get 'lost.'" He concluded by saying that he would be happy to help in any way that he could, thanking Ms. Lucas for her time.

The conversation with Rene's father caused me to pause and evaluate the concerns of the ESOL parent. He made it very clear that he wanted Rene to learn English, because she had this opportunity, while he was studying at the local university. Mr. Addah also stated that he did not want Rene and Leanna to sit next to each other in class. This request might have been more effective with Rene's homeroom teacher [Mr. Feliciano], since she is in that class throughout the

day. I also reviewed Rene's responses from her interviews, and she indicated, "We talk in both languages [at home], Arabic is easier, but we sometimes talk in English." I inferred from this information that Mr. Addah is consistent in his aspirations to have Rene use, or at least practice English, since they use it at home, "sometimes." Based on observations in Mr. Feliciano's classroom throughout the year, the two girls continued to sit next to each other, so Mr. Addah's concerns were not conveyed to Mr. Feliciano.

The ESOL students' parents, sometimes, did not have enough confidence in their proficiency in English, or a means of transportation, or work schedules that permitted them to easily check on their students' school situations; however, they did make efforts to meet with the teachers and other school officials, often through the assistance of an advocate, or interpreter.

Observations were also conducted at a parent-teacher meeting in October where some decisions were made concerning which grade-levels would be appropriate for two new students from Mexico. The students' father was accompanied by a case worker who served as his translator and advocate in different situations such as business transactions, transportation, and other family-related endeavors. The team of teachers met with the case worker and parent to discuss the decisions that the school officials perceived to be the better options academically and developmentally for his children. The school teachers and officials advocated placing his daughter in the fourth grade, even though she was a little older than most fourth graders, as an eleven year-old. The school officials also explained why they believed his son, who is starting to attend school for the first time in his life, would be better served in the second grade, due to his age and developmental progress. The meeting participants also confirmed that both students would attend the ESOL class for each of their respective grade levels. The case worker explained each of the school representatives' ideas and requests to the father, and he agreed with

the reasons that were mentioned on his children's behalf. The father signed the papers that made these decisions official and appeared to be pleased with the meeting and the results. As the meeting approached its conclusion, the father said in Spanish, "I am mainly concerned with how they behave in class and that they learn English quickly." He continued, "Thank you for your time and your work with my children."

The father's concerns about his two students learning English reiterate the earlier findings regarding the international parents' beliefs on language use. First, the two previous fathers represent two different backgrounds, a university-family and a working-family; however, both of them were primarily concerned about their children learning English at school. I inferred from these parents' conversations that some ESOL parents might not be confident or proficient enough with their English abilities, while learning English and becoming proficient was a high priority for their children.

Language Preferences

While the initial sections of this chapter revealed which languages the students use with their friends, this research also intended to discover whether the ESOL students would choose to speak in their national language with friends, in English, or both. The ESOL students were asked, therefore, if given an option to talk in English or their national language, which language they prefer using with friends.

In their first semester interviews, twelve of the students responded that they would prefer to speak only in "English" with friends. An equal number of participants (12) explained that they would prefer to communicate exclusively in their "national" language with friends, if they had a choice in their language selection. During this initial interview, a smaller number of students (5) wanted to communicate in "both" English and a national language, with friends.

The second semester interviews revealed that a majority (22) of the ESOL students preferred to communicate only in “English” with their friends. Five of the ESOL students indicated that they only want to speak in their “national” language. Two of the participants reported that they wish to talk in “both” English and their national language while speaking with friends.

The fact that, by their second interviews, about two-thirds of the ESOL students (22), said they would prefer to speak exclusively in English was a clear indication of their language choice with friends. In addition, the fact that only five of the students reported that they would prefer to use their national language, if given a choice, suggested that the students did not want to use their national language with friends at school. These findings reinforce the findings based on the language-use that these international students would prefer to speak in English with their friends at school.

The length of time the students had been in the United States was used to evaluate the participants’ language preferences with friends, when they were given options. As mentioned earlier, about one-half (15) of the students were new to the United States. In their first interviews, eight of these fifteen newer students said that they would prefer to speak in their “national” language, if they had an option. Four of the newer students said that they would choose to speak in only “English” with their friends, and three of the newer students stated that they would like to communicate in “both” English and a national language. These responses from the newer students who had not spent much time in the U. S. were an indication that they preferred to speak in their national language. These findings were similar to the newer students’ earlier language-use responses; I inferred from these language preferences that time in the United States did influence the students’ language choice.

By their second semester interviews, four of the eight students who originally preferred to use their “national” language, later said that they would like to speak exclusively in “English” with friends. In addition, two of the newer students who said initially that they preferred “both” language, changed their responses to exclusively English by the end of school. These changes in the newer students’ responses were another indication that as the students spent time in the United States, they also wanted to utilize more English. This information points to the patterns that as students’ time in the U. S. increases, so does their willingness to use English.

As mentioned earlier, about one-half (14) of the students had been in the United States for at least one prior school semester. In their initial interviews, eight of the fourteen veteran students said that they would prefer to use only “English” while speaking with friends. The fact that this was similar to their language preferences was another indication that as time in the U. S. increased, so did the students’ English use with friends. Four of the fourteen veteran students said that they would like to communicate with friends exclusively in their “national” language; and two of the veteran students explained that they would rather use “both” English and a national language with friends.

By their end of school interviews, twelve of the fourteen veteran students said that they would prefer using “English” exclusively with friends, when provided an option. Four of these veteran students who said initially that they would prefer to use their “national” language, changed their responses in their second interviews to an “English” only preference. These previous responses suggested that time had an influence on the ESOL students’ language preferences, even when they were given an option of speaking in their national language.

Observations were undertaken in less restrictive classes at school to determine in what language the students opted to speak. The art class provided a school space where the students

had more freedom to choose with whom they would like to sit. The students were also free to decide what language they preferred to use, while casually conversing with their friends as they did art projects. The researcher observed how some of the international students grouped themselves together, according to their nationality or common language, which often happened in these less confining environments. The groups often consisted of former ESOL students, who mixed together with current ESOL students. A representative observation of this occurred during a 5th grade art class, where three Asian boys worked together on their art projects and talked to one another in Korean. Jorge and Eduardo, who were current ESOL students formed another group with Miguel, a former ESOL student, and the three of them spoke with each other in Spanish.

The way in which the students voluntarily grouped themselves by friendship with a common language was also consistent with observations during other art classes. During their 3rd grade art class, Wujie and Yenyi, sat together at the end of the table, talking to each other in Chinese. Yardin, the boy from Israel, who explained to me in his interview that he has no other classmates with whom he might talk in Hebrew, sat with some other students at a table, talking with them in English.

In addition to their responses to the question about which language the students prefer to use with their friends at school, I assessed how their friendships after school or on the weekends shaped their first and second-language use. For the purpose of this study, the terms “after school” or “on the weekends” were used interchangeably, representing times outside of school when the students play with friends in their neighborhoods or apartment complexes.

The responses from the first interviews revealed that a majority of the students (21) use their first language, while playing with friends after school or on the weekends. For example,

Wujie, from China, explained, “I speak in English...at school, but sometimes, I talk in Chinese for Yenyi, because she doesn’t know much English.” She continued, “And on the weekends, I talk in Chinese with Wenai, another Chinese girl, who is in kindergarten at this school, she’s the daughter of my parents’ friends. The information also indicated that seven of the participants talk only in English, while communicating with friends outside of school. Only one student, Chu, declared that he does not have anyone to play with in his apartment complex after school.

The students’ second semester interviews indicated that eleven international students continued to talk with friends in their national language while playing with friends on the weekends. Some of the ESOL students had opportunities to talk with peers that live nearby in their national language, even though their tendency to use their first language decreases by the second semester interviews. For example, Gustavo, Gisele and Lucia, three ESOL students from Brazil, live in the same apartment complex and attend this school; Gustavo and Gisele, as mentioned earlier, are in the same 3rd grade class, while Lucia is a 4th grader. Lucia explained in her interview, “We speak in Portuguese, unless the American boy plays with us, then we use English, so that he can understand us and play too.”

A majority of the ESOL students (17) said that they use only English with friends outside of school. The participant who declared in his first interview that he did not have any friends his age to play with in his apartment complex, explained in his second semester interview, “well, sometimes, I get to play with a few different classmates on the weekends, like Joe, Gene, or Chong, even though it does not happen often, we don’t live close [to each other], or have the time, you know?” “I speak in English with Joe and Gene, but Korean with Chong.” The findings in the preceding sections clearly demonstrate that as time in the United States increases, so does the ESOL students’ English usage. In addition, the international students’ responses

revealed that they claim to prefer using English with friends, not only at school, but also after school and on the weekends. Observations and conversations with the students, however, revealed that they often speak in their first language with other common-language friends, unless other friends make it necessary to use English as a common-language.

In addition to the relationship between the length of time in the United States and language preference, the students' responses were also evaluated to determine whether a move to their country of origin would influence their language preferences. As mentioned in the previous chapter, eleven of the students were going to move by the end of the summer. Eight of these students were going back to their home-countries, and the three other students were moving within the United States. Four of these eleven students claimed that they would prefer to speak in their "national" language; five of them stated that they would prefer to speak in "English"; two of the students claimed that they preferred to use "both" their national language and English.

By their second interviews, four of the eleven students said that they would prefer to use their "national" language. Two of these students repeated their previous language responses, while two students had altered their answers from only "English" to "national" and "both" to "national." Six of the students claimed to prefer using "English;" three of these students repeated their first response. The other three of these six students altered their language preferences from (2) "national" to "English" and (1) "both" to "English." The remaining participant of these eleven altered her response from "English" to "both."

The many changes in these students language preferences demonstrate that a student's language preference does not necessarily depend on his or her pending return trip to a home-country. I inferred from the students' proficiency-levels in English, from our interviews and observations, that their language preferences were primarily based on their perceived or actual

proficiency in English. Furthermore, the four students who selected their “national” language-preference were limited in their English proficiency. The five students who said that they would prefer to use “English” or “both” in one or both of their responses were fairly proficient in English.

In addition to time in the United States and the idea of moving back to one’s country of origin, gender was also utilized to determine if this variable influenced the students’ language use. In their first interviews, seven of the eighteen girls responded that they use their “national” language with friends; seven other girls indicated that they use “English” with friends. Four of the eighteen girls claimed that they use “both” of their languages while conversing with friends. By their second interviews, only two of the girls said that they only use their “national” language with friends; nine of the girls indicated that they use “English” with friends. Seven of the eighteen girls stated that they utilized “both” language while talking with friends.

Some of the girls altered their responses from their first to second interviews. Three of the girls changed their answers from “national” to “both;” and two other girls switched their responses from “national” to “English.” One girl changed her response from “both” to “English;” and, another girl switched from “English” to “both” languages with friends.

In their first interviews, four of the eleven boys responded that they use their “national” language with friends; five of the other boys said that they speak in “English” with their friends. Two of the boys indicated that they utilize “both” languages when talking with their friends. By their second interviews, only one boy said that he used his “national” language; six of the boys responded that they use “English” with their friends. Four of the eleven boys stated that they use “both” of their languages while talking with friends. As in the analyses of the girls’ language use, the boys had many changes in their language-use responses. Two boys altered their answers

from “national” to “both;” two other boys changed their responses from “national” to “English.” One boy switched his response from “both” to “national,” and another boy altered his answers from “English” to “both.”

The many changes in the boys’ language-use responses, which were similar to the patterns found with the girls’ answers, indicated that as the ESOL students became more proficient in English, they used it more with friends. Based on the students’ first and second interviews, however, gender did not have a significant impact on the students’ language preferences. A student’s proficiency and confidence in English and access to another first-language speaker in a homeroom class appeared to be the variables that had a greater influence on a student’s language selection.

Observations throughout the year revealed the primary way in which gender played a role in language preference: ESOL students of the same gender, who often shared a common first-language, tended to be “paired” in homeroom classes by teachers (Rene and Leanna). This pairing technique, in addition to the students’ tendency to locate other co-nationals, appeared to facilitate their friendships in the ESOL program at school, which will be evaluated in the following chapter. Gender, therefore, appeared to be one of the factors that facilitated language use with other same-gender ESOL students; However, gender was not a factor based on the students’ interview responses concerning their language preferences.

Language Use with Family

The language use and communication practices by the participants’ families at home are an indication of what the parents believe about English usage. The participants were asked about their family’s language use to determine what language influences are being applied in their homes. As mentioned earlier, a language supposition stated that parents attending the university,

are more likely to use English at home than working parents, who are in the U. S. for employment opportunities.

About one-half (16) of the international students had at least one parent attending the local university; the other participants in this study (13) had parents that are here for employment. Because each of the participants stated that their families do not speak only in English at home, the language-use analysis was accomplished using the students' families that speak both English and their first language at home.

During their first interviews, twenty-four of the participants declared that only their "national" language is spoken in the home. Five other respondents indicated that their families use "both" English and their national language at home. None of the ESOL students claimed to speak only "English" with their families at home. The first semester responses demonstrated that four of the participants come from working-family homes; only one student comes from a university-family home. The previous information initially suggests that working-families place a greater emphasis on using English at home than university-families, based on the small number of families that speak in English.

By their second interviews, more than two-thirds (21) of the students responded that their families speak in their "national" language at home. The number of ESOL students who reported using "both" English and a national language in their homes increased by three students to eight participants. Of these eight participants, their second interviews revealed that one-half (4) of these international students come from working-family homes, and one-half (4) of the participants are in university-attending families. While the number of university-families that use English at home increased, the information, again, implies that university families did not utilize English with a greater frequency at home, than working-families. Eight of the families

utilized both English and a national language while in the house. Each of the ESOL students stated, again, that they do not speak exclusively in English with their families at home. From these findings, I inferred that home was viewed as a “national” language zone, while the school and community was seen as an “English” zone for these international families.

I discovered through conversations with the students, who use both languages at home that they were often speaking in English with specific family members, instead of the entire family participating in the conversation. For example, Daniela from Mexico, explained in Spanish, “I practice English with my brother and sister, but speak Spanish with my parents.” Juan Carlos from Mexico said, “My Dad speaks, sometimes, to me in English.” Lydia, who is from Palestine, said that she and her family, “speak both, we switch back and forth.”

A couple of students mentioned that one parent knows English, while the other one does not, so it becomes a logical language-choice to use the common language spoken by everyone in the house, as Alicia said, “We just speak in Spanish.” Alonzo, from Mexico, explained, “Well, I’m supposed to speak in Spanish at home, because my Mom wants me to.” While this reasoning initially might appear as a typical request by a parent for a child to perform a task, it is very telling of how a parent wishes and persists in having a son or daughter practice and maintain their family’s national language. Alonzo continued, “My mom told me that she would buy me a Playstation game, if I use Spanish for a month.” This example, again, demonstrated the emphasis that international parents place on maintaining their family’s first language at home. The maintenance of the international children’s first language at home was probably due to the idea that this family would be returning to Mexico in about one year.

Remembering that certain studies found that elementary-aged students report stress when they must act as a translator for their parents (Weisskirch and Alva 2002), I proposed that the

ESOL students would not like translating on behalf of their parents. The interview instrument asked a question concerning translation

- 1 to discover whether ESOL students must serve as a translator on behalf of a parent;
- 2 to allow the ESOL students to express how they feel about translating for a parent.

The students indicated in their responses that about one-half (15) of them are requested to translate on behalf of their parents. Twelve of these fifteen students who must serve as language brokers for their parents reported feeling positively about translating on behalf of a parent. Sara, from Ecuador, explained, “well, I talk in English for my Mom, because I like to help.” A boy from Mexico, Juan Carlos, seemed to use the issue of translation as part of his own English learning process, replying, “I like to learn more words.” Eduardo, from Puerto Rico, simply said, “I translate because it makes me feel proud.” Laura, from Puerto Rico, expressed similar views on translation for her parents by saying, “I like it, because it’s good to speak two languages and help the family.” Bayo, from Nigeria, said, “I do not have to translate for my Mom, but I do for my Dad, sometimes; I like it because I get to speak for my parents in English and help.”

Three of the fifteen students who translate expressed negative reactions about serving as a language broker for a parent. Lexi simply replied in her initial interview, “I don’t like it, but my mom confuses her English so I have to tell her, ‘that’s not right’.” Lexi showed how some students are embarrassed by their parents’ English language proficiency, actually correcting their parents’ English. Silvia also expressed concern about her mother’s English use, “sometimes I like it, sometimes I don’t like it when my mom is talking to someone and she messes up the words.” The information based on the first semester interviews, demonstrated that about one-half (14) of the ESOL students do not translate on behalf of a parent.

By their second interviews, however, two-thirds (21) of the students indicated that they are requested to translate by a parent. Eight of the participants, therefore, are not requested to translate on behalf of either parent. Fifteen of these twenty-one students who are requested to translate responded affirmatively about translating for at least one parent. Alonzo, from Mexico, said he translates, “a little bit, and I feel good about it.” Gustavo, from Brazil, said that translating for his family makes him “feel good by helping my mom and dad.” Lucia, from Brazil, said, “I translate for my Mom, because it makes me feel good, since I’m helping somebody.” The previous responses by the participants concerning translation for their parents indicate that they view this act of service as a means to “help” or assist their families in “social interactions through messages.” The increase in the number of students requested to translate by parents is an indication that, as the students learn more English, their parents rely on their children more for translation.

Six of the twenty-one students who translate expressed negative reactions about being a language broker for a parent. Eduardo explained how he has created a situation in which he is now required to translate, “my mom makes me talk now, because I made fun of her one time for pronunciation.” Yardin, from Israel, said, “I do [translate] sometimes for Mom, but I hate it because she asks me a lot of things, when I’m playing with my friends.” Laura, from Puerto Rico, also likes to be able to help on her parents’ behalf because, “sometimes when we’re in the hospital or school, I like it, but sometimes I can’t remember some words in English and Spanish.” Daniella, who has not been in the United States for even one year explains in Spanish that translating for her family, “sometimes makes me ashamed, because I can’t pronounce it well.”

The students' negative responses concerning translation identified feelings of embarrassment of a parents' pronunciation, shame about their own English proficiency, or being inconvenienced by a parent's request, as the reasons for their negative responses to translation. Based on the previous responses, however, I am concluding that the supposition that the ESOL students would not like translating on behalf of a parent was not confirmed. I acknowledge that in each interview, a small number of participants who translate indicated some form of negative reaction to translation; but, many of the informants who translate (12 of 15; 15 of 21) indicated positive reactions to translating on behalf of a parent. Furthermore, I affirm that because a student claimed to feel "helpful" "pleased to assist" serving as a translator, he or she probably still experienced some form of stress related to having to speak in English.

A Story of Struggle: Unable to Speak of Home

One of the ways in which this school celebrates different traditions is to have a holiday party on the final day of class before the two week December break, often referred to as winter break, or Christmas vacation, in the United States. Observations were undertaken during the 3rd-grades' holiday parties in which the three different classes represented: Hanukkah, Chinese New Year's, and Christmas. Each of the classes rotated through the three classrooms to listen to traditions and stories, participating in activities or games that the parents and teachers applied to the lessons. I decided to remain in Ms. Abbey's classroom, representing Hanukkah, to observe all of the 3rd grade students as they passed through one room.

During the learning portion of the Hanukkah celebration class, Yardin, from Israel, desperately wanted to participate in the class' discussion on the different Hebrew vocabulary words and their meanings. The boy obviously recognized the Hebrew words, since that is his first language, but he struggled and was openly frustrated by not having the English-proficiency to explain to his peers his own experiences and knowledge about the words and places in Israel.

Yardin would shift in his place, raise his hand, and wait to be called on by the teacher. Ms. Abbey recognized his enthusiasm, and said, “Boys and girls, Do we know anyone in here from Israel? The class responded, “yes, he is,” pointing to Yardin. Ms. Abbey continued the lesson, “In what language do they speak in Israel?” [Yardin, and others, raise their hands excitedly, muttering ‘Hebrew.’] The teacher continued, “What does this symbol or word mean, boys and girls?” Only Yardin knows the answer, so the teacher calls on him, but he was unable to describe what it meant in English, from Hebrew. This situation became excruciatingly difficult on the young student, as he believed he had much to offer on this exercise and discussion. Another word was discussed, and Yardin made a confused look on his face, trying to put together the English meanings with what he knew in his first language. He was not able to discuss or disclose the words that he would like to use to explain to the class about his home country, its traditions, or his national language.

This opportunity should have been an ideal time for Yardin to be proud of his country, religion, and language, but he was unable to communicate his thoughts and feelings effectively. This situation is representative of many similar occurrences for ESOL students with limited English proficiency. The example portrayed only some of the frustrations that an ESOL student encounters when he or she was unable to communicate ideas and personal information with the class or a teacher. The following passage is an example of how one student, who used to be extremely shy and frustrated with his communication abilities, was able to express ideas—in front of the entire 5th grade.

A Story of Success: Citizen of the Month

Chu is a 5th-grade boy from Korea who shared in his interviews how he had moved to the U.S. at the beginning of 4th grade. He described how this was a difficult transition for him, because he had only completed one semester of 3rd grade in Korea, in addition to adjusting to a

new school and language. He initially attended the school near his family's apartment, but had many troubling experiences in his first six weeks. Chu said that his other school did not have an ESOL program to help him with English, he did not feel that he had any friends, and he would "hide in his shirt" during class. Due to Chu's apparent struggles accomplishing his 4th-grade assignments, the school officials proposed to Chu's parents that he be placed back into 3rd grade. His parents disagreed with this grade-level change and decided that Chu should attend this elementary school that has the ESOL program. Chu explained in our conversations how he excelled in reading in the ESOL program in 4th grade, progressing from "being able to read 1st-grade books to reading 4th-grade books, by the beginning of 5th grade." He was very proud of these accomplishments, had also formed some friendships with other classmates, and had overcome "hiding in his shirt" to become a very confident, proficient English-speaker.

The following example further demonstrates Chu's rapid progress in his English-proficiency and confidence as a young student. In the fall, all three 5th-grade classes met outside near the baseball diamond to hear the student-of-the-month candidates' speeches. There were a total of five students in this month's election for Citizen of the Month, Chu from Korea, Miguel a former ESOL student, and three American students. This was the very first time that Chu delivered a speech publicly, so he was a little nervous. His speech's format was also slightly different from the others,' because he spoke on his own behalf, whereas the others had a friend stand up beside him and tell about his great attributes to earn the award. Chu spoke on his own behalf because this was the original citizen-of-the-month speech format and the way the previous months' speeches had been conducted; the 5th-grade teachers had altered the format of the speeches for this month, forgetting to explain this to Chu. Chu did an excellent job promoting his attributes and personal causes, without sounding too conceited. He mentioned his respect for

others' turn to speak, that he would continue to be a hard worker, and he would not run in the hallways, attempting to slow others down when he saw them doing this action. This line of thinking and speaking on his own behalf proved to be a recipe for success, as Chu won the Citizen of the Month Award for November. Later, I passed him in the classroom and congratulated him, acknowledging his outstanding speech; Chu smiled and said proudly, "Thanks, I was a little nervous, but it was OK." Chu would also be selected by the school's administrators as one of four students to speak at the 5th-grade graduation.

Conclusions

I proposed that ESOL students would prefer to speak in their national language, if given the option to use English or their national language. The ESOL students' interviews indicated that a majority (22) of the international students preferred using English with their friends when given an option of language choice. The number of students that preferred to speak in English increased by ten, from the first to the second interviews. These shifts in the international students' responses implied that as the school year progresses, so did their confidence and proficiency in English. Furthermore, the number of students who wish to use their first language decreased by seven participants during the school year to five ESOL students. This was a clear indication that the students did not prefer to speak in their first language when given a choice.

In addition, the students' language preference was utilized in connection to the students who knew that they would be returning to their country of origin to determine if this notion influenced their language selection. Based on the small sample of students who knew that they would be returning home or moving within the U. S. and the variations in their language preferences, there did not appear to be a correlation between these two variables. I inferred, furthermore, from my interviews and observations with the students that they selected their language preferences primarily based on their actual or perceived proficiency in English.

I concluded, therefore, that the ESOL students in this study do not have significant negative reactions from speaking in English with friends. And, since the number of students who wanted to speak in both English and their first languages also decreased from five to two students there is clear evidence that the ESOL students prefer to communicate in English, instead of their national language, if given a choice. A majority of the ESOL students claimed they would want to speak in English, when they were provided an option of using English or their national language in the interviews. I acknowledge, however, that these students might have found talking in English, especially with other U. S. nationals, stressful.

Participant observations of the ESOL students' social interactions suggested some specific findings on their language use with friends. I discovered that ESOL students were often coupled throughout their school routines with other common language speakers. Three themes emerged from observations on the student-pairs, noting that the students were together

- 1 by the request of a teacher;
- 2 by a student's willingness to help another classmate;
- 3 by the students' mutual desire to talk in their first language.

Each of these factors suggest that some of the ESOL students regularly talk in their first language at school with other friends, even though they claimed in their interviews that they preferred to speak in English.

The researcher believes that the students switch to their first languages, for some of the following reasons:

- 1 They are not aware of how often they revert back to using their first language, because this sounds "natural" to them, especially with another common-nationality friend;
- 2 Some students perceived talking with another student in a common first language, especially one who is less proficient in English as an act of assistance;
- 3 The students may have also responded that they preferred to use English, instead of their national language, because they have been told to use English at school by their parents.

While this research did not focus on academic performance of the elementary students, this study evaluated whether there were any differences in the parents' approaches to language-use at home, based on their occupational or educational backgrounds.

Since both interviews revealed that none of the participants speak only in English at home, a language-use analysis was accomplished by using the international ESOL students that indicated that their families speak in "both" English and their first language, at home. The fact that none of the international students' families use only English in their homes was an indication that all of the international parents primarily utilized their first languages with family at home. I deduced from this information that regardless of background, the international parents wanted their students to maintain their first language in the house. I also believe that home was viewed as a first language space, while school was seen as an English space, on the basis of the participants' responses to my questions.

The information on the participants' families indicated that about one-half (16) were university-families and about one-half (13) were working-families. The initial interviews revealed that four of the five students who claimed to speak in both a national language and English, came from working-families. By their second interviews, of the eight participants who spoke both languages at home, one-half (4) of these international students came from working-family homes, and one-half (4) of the participants were from university-attending families. Therefore, based on the sample of international ESOL students in this study, I was not able to declare that university-families place more emphasis on English use at home, compared to working-families.

In addition, inferences were drawn from the participants' conversations that they were practicing English, rather than speaking in English for lengthy conversations. A couple of

students mentioned that one parent knows English, while the other one does not, so it becomes a logical language-choice to use the common language spoken by everyone in the house, as cited earlier by Alicia. International parents sometimes wanted their children to speak their first language at home, providing incentives to encourage this behavior as noted earlier in Alonzo's comments.

This research also intended to discover whether these students like translating on behalf of their parents. By the second semester interviews, the number of ESOL students that were requested by their parents to translate increased by six participants (15 to 21), from the first semester results. This was a clear indication that the international parents' requests for translation increased, as the parents of an ESOL student perceived that their student had become more confident in English.

The participants' responses revealed that, as the number of parents requesting language assistance increased, so did the number of students that reported feeling positively about translating for a parent. In both interviews a majority of the students who translated felt positively about communicating on behalf of their parents. I noted that three different motives emerged from the students' interviews, viewing translation positively and as a means of

- 1 helping their families;
- 2 learning more vocabulary;
- 3 being proud of their English proficiency.

The fact that these ESOL students in both interviews had positive feelings about translating, did not entirely negate the notion that they might have experienced stress while serving as a translator. I affirm the notion that, while these students might have perceived the act of translating as positive or helpful to a parent, at the same time they might have been experiencing some level of stress from being placed in this situation.

I also acknowledge that there was a small increase in the number of ESOL students who reported negative feelings concerning translating on behalf of a parent. Based on the ESOL students' negative responses, a few general themes emerged concerning their negative reactions to translating:

- 1 they felt inconvenienced by their parents' requests to translate.
- 2 they felt embarrassed by their parents' limited English proficiency.
- 3 they felt embarrassed by their own limited English proficiency.

I contend, therefore, that a majority of these international students who were requested to translate did not claim to be stressed by acting as a translator for their parents, even though some may not have appreciated being inconvenienced by serving as a language broker. The previous negative responses concerning translation were also markers of some form of stress that is a part of being “embarrassed.”

Many of the ESOL students claimed to prefer using English with friends, even when they were given an option of speaking in English or their national language. I discovered through participant observations, however, that these same students, sometimes switch to using their first language, when they had the opportunity to speak it at school. While these findings do not negate their language preferences, they did indicate that the ESOL students had tendencies to utilize their first language at school.

These international students struggle with a tension between using a new language—to fit in—and the familiarity of their first language, providing some sense of cultural continuity. Given all the changes they already have experienced, I'm sure that some of the attraction to locating friends who speak their first language is a means of finding a sense of connection, while they learn a new environment, or school.

The background of the students' parents was not a significant factor in their household use of English. The interviews, with the two fathers from entirely different educational backgrounds, revealed that both wished for their students to learn English. I concluded from these interviews and other conversations with parents and teachers that the international parents view the elementary school as a place to learn and use English, while home is a place to maintain their first language.

CHAPTER 6 INTERPERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS AND FRIENDSHIPS

This chapter presents findings on interpersonal relationships between the ESOL students and other international and U. S. national students at school. I anticipated that ESOL students would establish friendships primarily with other English language learners. The initial sections of this chapter provide information from the students' first and second interviews, focusing on the ESOL students' interpersonal relationships at school. The questions were designed to establish who the ESOL students viewed as their friends at school and how they interacted with them throughout the school day (Appendix A and B).

I also supposed that, as the length of time in the U. S. increased for the ESOL students, so would their American friendships. The length of time that the ESOL students have been in the U. S. was used to evaluate any changes in their relationships over the course of a school year. Observations in various school environments, such as the cafeteria, art and physical education (P. E.) classes, as well as in the ESOL and homeroom classrooms, shed light on how the ESOL students interact with their international or American classmates. The observations served as supplemental findings to discover whether the students' interpersonal relationship patterns changed during the school year.

Friendships at School

The participants expressed their perceptions of whether they had established any friendships at school. The students' initial interview information demonstrated that twenty-five of the twenty-nine students claimed that their friendships were primarily with other international students in the ESOL program. Twelve of these students indicated that these friendships were with other nationals in their grade; four of these twelve students had also formed a friendship with another American classmate in homeroom. Four of the twenty-nine ESOL students

explained in their first semester interviews that they had not established any friendships at school. None of the ESOL students had formed friendships exclusively with American students.

By their second interviews, the participants' responses revealed similar findings in that twenty-six of them claimed their friendships were primarily with other international students. This was an indication that the international students primarily established and maintained friendships with other international students in the ESOL program. Two of the ESOL students, Bayo and Eduardo, claimed that their friends were American students in their homeroom classes, a small indication that these students were locating U. S. national friendships. Only one student, Omar, maintained that he had not made any friends in the school.

Friendships over Time

I assumed, once more, that as the length of time in the U. S. increased for the ESOL students, so would their American friendships. To accomplish this assessment about time in the United States, the ESOL students in this study were divided into two groups:

- 1 "newer" ESOL students (15), who began school in August;
- 2 "veteran" ESOL students (14), who entered school the previous year, or earlier.

About one-half (7) of these fifteen newer students reported that their friendships were exclusively with other international students. Of the remaining newer students (8), four of them reported having formed friendships with "both" international and American students; and four declared in their first interviews that they had not formed any friendships in the school, as mentioned earlier. The fact that four of the newer students, Omar, Elaina, Bayo, and Yardin, had not located a friendship at school indicated that establishing friendships with anyone, especially in a different school and culture, was probably difficult for some international students. I believe that a major factor in these ESOL students not being able to locate other friends at school was the

fact that three of these four students did not share a common language or cultural heritage with any of their grade-level peers.

By their second semester interviews, nine of the newer international students stated that they shared friendships exclusively with other international students. Five of these nine students repeated their first interview responses of having only “international” friendships. The remaining four students, however, altered their responses from “both” backgrounds of friendships, to exclusively “international” friendships. This information suggested that this small sample of newer students had not been able to form lasting friendships with their American classmates.

Five of the newer international students, however, had formed friendships with other American students over the course of the school year. For example, two of the three international students who had not found any friends earlier, Elaina and Yardin, reported in their second interviews that they had made friendships with “both” American and international students. Elaina and Yardin could easily be considered Caucasian by their peers, passing phenotypically for an “American,” allowing them to establish “both” background friendships more easily. Elaina also had the added incentive to learn and adapt to her new school and life as quickly as possible, since she knew that she would not be returning to her country of origin. The other participant, Bayo, from Nigeria, stated in his second interview that his best friend was an American boy in his homeroom class. The fact that these three ESOL students did not have another friend in their grade with whom to speak in their national languages suggested that language was a motivational factor for them to practice their English and attempt to adjust to their new U. S. school and classmates.

A Puerto Rican boy, Eduardo, also altered his friendship response, changing from exclusively “ESOL” friends to only “American” friendships. Inferences were made from daily observations and Eduardo’s interviews that his friendships were currently found through sports and common interests, since he and his American classmates played baseball together on a local team. The remaining participant in this newer group of students, Laura, who formed friendships with other U. S. national students, changed her response from only “ESOL” friends to “both” by the spring semester.

Each of the five newer students’ responses implied that time in a U. S. school had provided them an opportunity to establish friendships with other American students. Time in the U. S., therefore, was a factor in these five newer students locating friendships with American classmates. Language use, however, also appeared to be a contributing factor in the ESOL students establishing and maintaining friendships. ESOL students with common languages and backgrounds tended to maintain friendships with their international peers. The few students who did not share a first language or a similar cultural background with a classmate sometimes appeared to befriend U. S. national students. Because only five of the newer students formed friendships with American classmates, unique bonds appear to exist between these international students, as they form friendships through their shared experiences.

Six of the fourteen veteran participants reported in their first interviews having friendships exclusively with other “international” students in the ESOL class. About one-half (8) of the veteran ESOL students indicated that they had “both” American and international friendships. By their second semester interviews, the number of veteran ESOL students was evenly divided between those who had friendships exclusively with other “international” students (7), and those who were friends with “both” American and international students (7). Four of these students,

however, changed their responses in their second interviews to exclusively having “international” friendships. These responses pointed to the dynamic that this particular sample of ESOL students was not able to maintain lasting friendships with American students in their homeroom classes. Because these students have been in the U. S. for at least a prior semester, these findings were an indication that time in the U. S. was not the only factor that contributed to more American friendships. Three of these veteran ESOL students, however, switched their responses, from having only international friends to “both.” The fact that these three students altered their responses over time demonstrated that time was one of the many components of forming interpersonal relationships with other homeroom, or American, classmates. I suggest that language use, cultural backgrounds, and personality also influenced ESOL students’ interpersonal interactions and friendships.

In addition to time in the United States and its influence on the students’ friendships, the students’ gender was applied to determine if this influenced whether the students would find friendships with internationals, Americans, or both.

During their first interviews, nine of the eighteen girls claimed that their friendships were exclusively with other “internationals.” Eight other girls stated that they had friendships from “both” backgrounds; one girl said that she had not made any friends at school. Four of the eleven boys indicated that they were friends with “internationals.” Four other boys said that they had friendships from “both” backgrounds; the three remaining boys responded that they had not found any friends at school.

By their second interviews, fourteen of the eighteen girls said that their friendships were with other “international” students; the other four girls claimed to be friends with students from “both” backgrounds. Seven of these girls altered their responses from “both” to “international,”

while six of the girls had repeated their same “international” friendship-response. In addition, three of the girls changed their answers from “international” to “both;” the remaining female participant who had not found a friend by her first interview, said that she has friends from “both” backgrounds.

The boys’ responses indicated greater variations in who their friendships were with over the course of a school year. Three of the eleven boys indicated that their friendships were exclusively with other “internationals.” Two of these three boys repeated this response, while one of them altered his response from “both” to “international.” Five other boys said that their friendships were with students from “both” backgrounds; three of these boys repeated their first responses. The two other boys altered their responses from (1) “international” to “both,” and (1) from “no friendships” to “both.” Two of the eleven boys indicated that their friendships were exclusively “American;” one of these boys altering his response from “no friends” and the other boy from “international.” The remaining boy in the group was Omar, who consistently declared that he had not formed any friendships at school.

The students’ gender did appear to influence who these international students formed friendships with at school. The fact that, by their second interviews, fourteen of the eighteen girls claimed to be friends exclusively with other internationals is a strong indication of the influence that gender entails in these friendships. The girls’ friendship selection was probably also influenced by these girls having another common-language girl in homeroom class, such as the case of Rene and Leanna. This also supplements the participant observations during less restrictive times in which the ESOL girls often played and talked exclusively with each other.

The boys’ friendship selections appeared to be more varied with which backgrounds they claimed to be friends. This information was also in accordance with observations in various

classes throughout the day. The boys seemed to locate friendships based on common experiences and shared interests, where sports or physical activities during and after school tended to bring some of them together with other American boys from their homeroom classes. There were some exceptions, however, to this friendship selection by the boys. For example, Omar continued not to have any friends at school, and Bayo only had one friend, who was an American boy who would be considered an “outsider” in homeroom.

Observations in other grades revealed similar findings concerning how gender might influence interpersonal relationships. Late in the spring semester in Ms. Adam’s 3rd-grade class, a few changes occurred in the interactions of the ESOL students, especially with the boys. It was noted, the ESOL boys have begun to play with some American boys, recently; so, Alonzo now plays with John, Gustavo plays with another American boy, with whom it is difficult for the rest of his classmates to get along. This observation, however, also reinforced other interactions of ESOL students with their American peers—they were usually the “outsiders” or “loners” of a homeroom class. The ESOL girls, furthermore, tended to stay together in homeroom Ms. Adam’s class and during free play times.

Additional observations with Ms. Adam’s class during their art class revealed that the three ESOL girls, Sara, Gisele and Anila had grouped themselves at one work table. Since the girls were from different countries, Ecuador, Brazil, and the Philippines, respectively, a common first-language was not the reason for their voluntary seating arrangement. The ESOL boys, however, continued to intermingle with other classmates from their homeroom on a regular basis towards the end of the school year. For example, Alonzo sat and talked in English with his new American friend from class, John; Gustavo sat at the same table as Alonzo and John, along with

a group of boys from class. Daniel, one of the more proficient ESOL boys, sat at the other table with a group of boys and girls, none of whom were other international students.

Interpersonal Interactions

Lunch time

Lunch time in the cafeteria was a time and space in which the students were less restricted by classroom rules and procedures of assigned seats, allowing them to select where and with whom they sat. The only lunchroom procedures bestowed upon the students, as far as seating, was that they must sit with their homeroom class. The lunch tables were standard school lunch tables with six permanent seats on each side of the tables, so the students faced each other while they ate. A two-picture panoramic view of the students' lunch tables in the cafeteria was provided during the interviews as a visual prompt to assist the students in their responses. The participants often pointed to and touched the picture as they were explaining their seating position.

More than one-half (17) of the students explained that they usually sit at the end of the lunch table. Some of the other participants (7) described that they typically sit in the middle seats at their lunch tables. Four of the ESOL students responded that they sit in many places, pointing to different seats all over the lunch table pictures. Of all of the participants, only Yardin did not eat with his class on a daily basis in the cafeteria, because he ate with his father outside at a picnic table. His father explained, as he translated for his son in Hebrew, that his son did not care for the many smells of the cafeteria food, and that they made him nauseated. The father's solution to this situation was to bring his son a bought lunch everyday to school and eat with him.

Based on observations and interviews, Yardin had problems adjusting to his new school and classmates throughout the year, as discussed later in this chapter and in the previous chapter

concerning his struggles of expressing himself in his homeroom class. I believe that his father's daily routine, withdrawing Yardin from his classmates, only perpetuated the situation where he could not form relationships during this less-structured time with his classmates. This time also deprived Yardin of valuable English practice with his classmates where he would have been able to learn age-appropriate English terms outside of the classroom curriculum and structure.

Almost two-thirds (18) of the students reported that they sit with other ESOL students during lunch in the cafeteria. Three of the students claimed that they usually sit with both their ESOL and American friends at lunch. The students' interview responses revealed that six of them regularly sit with American friends at the lunch table. There were also two students who claimed not to sit with any friends while eating lunch. One of these students, Yardin, was mentioned earlier, who ate lunch with his father everyday; the other student, Omar, said in both interviews that he did not have any friendships at school.

Observations were conducted throughout the school year during lunch times to establish patterns of the ESOL students' interactions with their classmates. Patterns were identified early in the school year related to seating-arrangements and interpersonal interactions that tended to be consistent in the daily lunch routine: the ESOL students usually eat together, sitting at the ends of their lunch tables.

Mr. Feliciano's 5th-grade class was a representation of what was observed many times in the cafeteria during lunch time. Students who did not have another common-language classmate, often sat with other ESOL students at the end of the lunch tables. For example, Koko, from Japan, sat at the end of the table across from Marcela from Puerto Rico. The three ESOL girls from Latin America, Laura, Lora, and Daniela, sat together in the middle seats at the same table, so that they could face each other to talk. Hassam, a boy from Pakistan, ate with a shy Spanish-

speaker, Juan Carlos, at the end of another table, neither interacting with neither each other nor their classmates. Rene and her friend, Leanna, spoke to each other in Arabic and sat together at the same table as Hassam and Juan Carlos.

Similar patterns were observed during lunch time for Ms. Long's 5th-grade class. Three boys from Latin America, Eduardo, Jorge, and Miguel, all sat together at one end of the lunch table; the other African-American boys in the class sat together at the other end of the same table. Chu would sit with Chong and Joon, his two Korean friends in Ms. Long's homeroom class. Ms. Long did not have any ESOL girls in her homeroom class.

Observations were conducted on the three 4th-grade classes, Mr. Brooks', Ms. Lilly's, and Ms. Jackson's throughout the school year during lunch time to discover whether the 4th-grade students participated in any seating patterns. The ESOL students in Mr. Brooks' class often grouped together, where gender was the factor that determined with whom they sat. For example, the three Spanish-speaking girls, Carla, Maria, and Andrea, sat at the same table with Pria, from Malaysia, and Riba, a former ESOL student from Russia. They all appeared to enjoy each other's company for lunch, interacting as friends with common experiences. The lone male ESOL student in this class, a boy from India, usually sat at the end of another table with an American boy that he played soccer with at recess. His limited English proficiency deterred him from talking much with his friend.

In Ms. Lilly's class, Tulu, the girl from Botswana, and Rola, a new ESOL student from Iran typically sat together at the end of the table. Omar, the boy who claimed not to have found any friends at school, sat at the end of the "boys' table," but he was often "alone." He was neither engaged, nor participated in the other boys' conversations. This information supported what he claimed in his interviews, that he did not have any friendships at school. Omar may

have contributed to his isolation by his aggressive behaviors that he exhibited the first six weeks of school. For example, when the time came for his class to form a line to go to another class (art, PE), he would often physically try to gain position in line with his body and elbows. If Ms. Lilly saw these aggressive actions or the other students called them to her attention, Omar was reprimanded by having to move to the end of the line. Exhibiting culturally-appropriate classroom behaviors appeared to have an influence on whether ESOL students were more easily accepted into their homeroom classes' activities by their classmates. I believe these non-verbal gestures were a means to "survive and establish his place" in his homeroom class.

In Ms. Jackson's class, Bayo sat with his best friend, Harry, and they were often seated at the end of a table; this confirmed Bayo's responses, that the American boy was his best and only friend at school. Both of these boys appeared to be the "loners" of this homeroom class, and were not included by the other boys in their interpersonal communications. Elaina sat in the middle seat of a table, but rarely talked anyone as she ate her lunch. Lucia, an outgoing Brazilian girl, sat with other African-American girls in her class and played various games while they ate their lunch. For example, one of their favorite games was "radio," which was their version of "name that tune." Lucia's ability to participate in this form of game, not only demonstrated her engaging personality and acceptance by her American peers, but also portrayed her cultural competence of popular music.

Free time

Free times are defined as brief periods of time in which the students are free to play games or do activities together; the terms free times and recess will be used interchangeably in this study. Free times typically took place outside, unless it was raining, then it was held in the homeroom class. One of the primary times set aside by each grade to allow the students to play and interact freely was towards the end of their lunch period. This was one of the few times that

the three classes in each grade-level were in area at the same time due to schedules and space. Free time, or recess, was less restrictive than other traditional class times, allowing the students to interact freely with their peers. Observations of recess times were conducted numerous times throughout the school year, focusing on the students' interpersonal interactions and where and with whom they played. These observations were used to supplement the students' interview responses as a means to cross-reference their perceptions and interactions concerning interpersonal relationships.

Based on their first interviews, about two-thirds of the ESOL students (18) said that they spend their free time exclusively with international friends from their ESOL class. Five of the students spend their free time with both international and American students when they had opportunities to play games or do other activities. The fact that twenty-three of the ESOL students primarily spend their free times other international students was another indication that they were not interacting with their homeroom classmates during recess. The students' responses also demonstrated that some participants (5) claimed to spend their free time exclusively with U. S. national students. Omar reported that he neither passes his free time with any of the international students from the ESOL program, nor the American students in his other classes. Observations revealed that Omar's claims were accurate, because only on seldom occasions would he participate in free time activities with other classmates.

A few changes occurred over time with whom the international students spent their free time. About one-half of the ESOL students (16) continued to spend their free time exclusively with other international students at school. Six of the students indicated that they spend their free time with both international and American students. By the end of the school year, therefore, a similar number of students (22) primarily chose to spend their free times with other

ESOL students; this information supported the idea that a majority of the international students were not forming and maintaining many friendships at school with American students.

The previous information points to the trend that the ESOL and American students do not voluntarily play with each other. This lack of interaction during free times continues the marginalization of ESOL students in their homeroom classes. A similar number of respondents (6) reported spending their free time exclusively with American students. The fact that there was only one student increase in the number of students who had exclusively American friendships, in addition to the fact that there was only one student increase for students who interacted with both, was an indication that time in the United States was not the primary factor in locating American friendships. Omar, again, stated that he spends his free time alone.

Eleven of the fifteen newer students reported spending free time exclusively with other international students during their first semester interviews. This was another indication that the newer students, with less time in the U. S., primarily played with other ESOL students. Lexi, from Kenya, claimed to interact with both international and American students, while two other newer participants, Elaina and Bayo, said that they played only with other American students. Omar maintained that he did not play with any of the other students during free times.

Observations conducted during Omar's recess time verified that he usually played by himself and did not appear to have any friends. For example, his homeroom class usually played kickball during recess, which would become a class' tradition by the end of the school year. Omar, however, did not want to participate in the kickball game, so he swung on the swing sets and played on the gym bars by himself. His lack of involvement in class activities perpetuated the lack of friendships and interactions with his classmates. His homeroom teacher, however, did not want to force Omar to participate in a recreational activity that was supposed to bring

enjoyment. Riki, the Japanese girl who struggled with adjusting to her classes, also chose to sit on the bench and watch her classmates play, instead of participating in the kickball game. The fact that both of these students chose not to participate in their class' activities appeared to reflect their "outsider position" in their class. In addition, their behaviors seemed to perpetuate their isolation, greatly limiting opportunities for these students to learn some age-appropriate behaviors and knowledge outside of a classroom.

By the second semester, eight of the fifteen newer students repeated their responses, claiming to only play with other internationals. Four of the fifteen newer students altered their responses. Alicia changed her response from "American" to "both;" Yardin and Eduardo switched their answers from exclusively "international" to only "American;" and Lexi altered her response from "both" to "international." Of the two newer students, who did spend their free times with American students, Elaina changed her answer to "both," and Bayo repeated his American friendship responses. Omar had not formed any friendships.

Observations throughout the school year confirmed similar patterns of interactions between the ESOL students and their American classmates. A few times, however, the students would interact, briefly, on the playgrounds. For example, during the spring semester, two 4th-grade girls from Mexico, Carla and Maria, who usually stay together throughout the day, played with a couple of American girls at the swing sets. This cross-cultural interaction was unique for the two Mexican girls, as this was one of the few times that the two Spanish-speakers had played, or interacted, with other American classmates inside or outside of the classroom for any length of time. While this brief interaction demonstrated an initiative from both pairs of girls, observations revealed that these interpersonal interactions did not cultivate friendships for the girls with each other in homeroom.

A couple of other 4th-grade ESOL girls, Lydia and Tulu, played games of tag with one another, often returning to talk with the teachers. Another pair of ESOL students, Elaina and Lucia, played together in the central field, walking and talking with sticker books and other belongings of importance. Omar, the only ESOL student in the study who claimed in both of his interviews not to have made a friend, played jump rope with five other African-American girls. Two of the five students took turns holding the ends of the rope, swinging it, so the other three could jump, when it was their turn. Bayo, who also struggles with relationships with peers at school, sat alone on the bench and watched others run and play; his one American friend was not at school on this day.

In their first and second interviews, one-half (7) of the fourteen veteran participants reported playing only with other international classmates during free times. The fact that one-half of these students, who had been in the U. S. longer, continued to pass their free times exclusively with other international students, suggested that time in the U. S. was not the primary factor in whether the ESOL students would interact with U. S. national students during recess. Instead, common experiences of learning a new language and culture appeared to provide some bonds that helped to cultivate friendships in the ESOL program. The information from both interviews also revealed that four of these veteran students interacted with both American students and international students during free time. Three of the veteran ESOL students reported in both interviews that they primarily spent their free times with American students. These three students' proficiency in spoken English appeared to be a greater factor in their ability to create interpersonal interactions. These veteran participants' responses reconfirmed earlier findings concerning time in the U. S. and friendships: while time in the U. S. was a required component to provide opportunities for the students to interact, time did not directly

cultivate more American friendships at school. I suggest that language use, shared experiences and background, and personality were also central components to determining who formed friendships with whom.

During the last interview questions, the participants were asked to explain where they play during recess (Appendix A). A three-photograph panoramic view taken of the schools' grounds was provided during the interviews, assisting the students in their recess responses. The students' responses were divided into four categories: 1) swing sets, 2) field [soccer or football], 3) kickball diamond, 4) more than one selection by student.

Initially, about one-third (10) of the ESOL students explained that they primarily play on the swing sets with their friends during recess. About one-third of international students (9), responded that they play on the swing sets and either in the open field or kickball diamond. Of the remaining participants (10), seven of the ESOL students played games, such as soccer, football, or tag, in the central open field. One participant said that he regularly plays kickball with his classmates. The remaining two respondents, Pria and Lydia, stated that they did not like to play or participate in physical activities in any of the three exercise areas. These same two international students said that they preferred to talk with friends or teachers at the benches; these students had the English proficiency to interact with teachers and initiate conversations. This social interaction with teachers, however, was also indicative of their limited interactions with other U. S. national classmates, especially during free times. The interpersonal interaction patterns of these two international girls, who were proficient in spoken English, demonstrated that the ESOL students appear to form unique bonds and friendships through their similar transnational experiences and ESOL program at this school.

Based on the students' free time responses and observations undertaken throughout the school year, some patterns were noted about where and with whom they played and interacted at school. Newer ESOL students who had limited English proficiency, often played at the swing sets or jungle gym bars. The swing sets and gym bar areas might be viewed as "marginalized zones," where English proficiency is not required to play and rules of games are not necessary. The kickball diamond often had an informal game of kickball being played in which some of the ESOL students played; this area of play required more English proficiency, an understanding of the game, and some form of acceptance by their peers on a team. The open central-field was often used by many different small groups to play tag, soccer, or football. These games also required some knowledge and skill of the chosen game in order to participate in the small-group activities. These small-group games were often segregated by both gender and ethnicity; females usually played tag, American boys played football, international boys played soccer. On few occasions, females would play soccer with each other, because they knew each other from local teams.

During the interviews the ESOL students were given the opportunity to share whether they feel included in activities at recess. More than one-half (18) of the participants answered the inclusion question affirmatively, indicating that they felt included. Seven of the students explained, however, that they do not feel included in their peers' games during recess. The remaining four participants said that they are sometimes included in the games, but other times they are not invited to play, or that their requests to play a specific game are ignored by their classmates. Therefore, about one-third (11) of the ESOL students claimed feeling either excluded or ignored by their classmates at recess. These were the same students who either played exclusively with other ESOL students or talked with the teachers during free times.

Observations of Mr. Feliciano's 5th-grade class were conducted during recess throughout the school year. One international boy from Pakistan, Hassam, did not play football with the other boys in his class. This boy had not developed the cultural knowledge and skills to throw and catch an American football, because he had not been exposed to these actions prior to this year. The boy, therefore, decided to join two other ESOL girls from his class at the swing sets. They all swung on the swings, but did not interact with each other, besides being on the same swing sets. The only other classmate that joined them was a new girl from the state of Georgia, who had not made any friendships in the class. Laura, from Puerto Rico, sat on the bench and talked with a former ESOL girlfriend, Lora, who was also from Latin America. The other American girls either talked with each other at the picnic tables, or played a game of tag.

Additional observations were conducted during Mr. Feliciano's 5th-grade class' recess on the playgrounds. Another representation of free time found five of the ESOL girls in the class on the bench talking to each other. Later, they all moved to the swing sets, and began to play and swing, continuing their conversations. Juan Carlos, an ESOL student in their homeroom class, joined his ESOL classmates at the swings, enjoying their company and playing on the swing sets. These interpersonal interactions reinforced the findings that the international students appear to form bonds of friendship, based on their shared experiences in a new school and country.

Two of the 4th-grade classes sometimes had recess together, Ms. Jackson's and Mr. Brooks' classes. Three Spanish-speaking girls in Mr. Brooks' class exclusively played and sat together on a bench talking in Spanish the entire recess time. Bayo sat on a bench with his best friend, Harry, because the two of them were being disciplined for not passing their multiplication tables. Pria and Riba, a former ESOL girl, played together at the picnic tables; later, they demonstrated some card tricks for the teachers and a few other classmates. Lucia, from Brazil,

played with many other 4th-grade students in a game of dodgeball. Lucia's use of English and outgoing personality appeared to provide her the resources to interact with her homeroom classmates easily and participate in their games.

Feelings about non-ESOL students

The international students are in the ESOL class during the same class periods that their homeroom classmates are in language arts and reading, which is about two hours each day. The ESOL students, therefore, are in the same classes with all of their homeroom classmates throughout the remainder of the school day, or about four hours. The question concerning how the ESOL students feel about their non-ESOL classmates was designed to allow them to share their feelings about their homeroom classmates who do not attend the ESOL program.

Eight "expression faces" with labels underneath, were used as prompts to discuss the students' feelings about their non-ESOL classmates in the last six questions of their second interviews (Appendix B). The eight faces represented: happy, sad, hopeful, lonely, nervous, shy, angry, and bored. Many of the students in the study were already familiar with these faces, as the ESOL classrooms had similar facial expressions and labels on posters in the classroom.

About one-third (13) of the participants selected the "happy" facial expression to describe their feelings about their non-ESOL, or American, classmates.

Gustavo, from Brazil, said, "I feel happy because they [non-ESOL students] can teach me English." he added, "Terry, my friend, helps me with my English." Lucia, from Brazil, said, "I feel happy, because they're Americans and they know English and they don't need to worry about their homework, or if they get in trouble, or anything." Silvia said, "I feel happy, because when I started to be in Ms. Abbey's class, they were nice to me and they would help me understand." Pria, from Malaysia, also based her answer on the Americans' English proficiency, "they make me happy...they're smart because they understand more English than me." Rene said, "[they] make me happy, because they can help, like when I'm reading, [they] help me with words, encouraging me." Jorge, from Mexico, said, "I feel happy, because I play with my friends in other classes."

An “OK” response was recorded for five of the participants, because they reported two different answers, which often contrasted, in their interviews about their non-ESOL classmates.

Chu stated, “Well, I think one-half [of the non-ESOL students] are really nice, and one-half are not [nice].” Some of the other participants (4) said that they feel “sad” when thinking about their other classmates. For example, Alicia, from Puerto Rico, said, “I feel sad, because they [non-ESOLs] are not my friends.” Daniella, from Mexico, simply said, “I don’t have any [non-ESOL friends].”

Three of the ESOL students reported that they feel “angry” when thinking about their other classmates.

Wujie said, “Some make me feel ‘angry,’ like when I see them teasing [Yenyi, her friend], saying disgusting things sometimes, about Yenyi, like Karl called her a ‘stupid Chinese girl.’” Yenyi explained, “I understand that other students are making fun of me, even though I don’t know [what they are saying], “I feel ok, because some people are nice and some are mean [to me], some say to me and Wujie for speaking in Chinese by ‘talking in Chinese’ [some students make fun of them by ‘imitating’ their Chinese sounds], we tell them that’s not Chinese.” Bayo, from Nigeria, said, “They make me angry, because they talk to me in different ways, like saying my name wrong.” Juan Carlos stated, “They make me a little angry, they’re always bugging me, making fun of me.”

Two of the respondents explained that they feel “lonely,” For example, Antonio, from Puerto Rico, explained, “I feel lonely because I don’t have my friends in my ESOL class, like John is not in ESOL.” Of the two remaining participants in the study, one of them reported feeling “bored” and the other responded that she was “hopeful” about her non-ESOL classmates.

Tensions between students

Tensions between students, often between minority and ESOL students, were drawn to my attention through discussions and observations. Though dynamics in regard to minority perceptions were potentially an issue, they were not the focus of this study. I must also cite that throughout the school year, observations in homeroom and specials classes revealed how minority students often assisted their ESOL classmates with an assignment or class participation. The following incidents were noted as isolated and specific to a few students; the situations occurred, however, and are therefore used as brief references for this study.

Observations were conducted in the 3rd-grade homeroom classes during the school year. In January during Ms. Chandler's 3rd-grade class, Yardin had invited his father to come and assist his small-group of classmates (Yardin, an African-American girl, an African-American boy, and a Caucasian girl) to make a "travel brochure" to learn more about his country, Israel. Remembering that Yardin had a troubling experience attempting to express himself during the Hannukah party in December, I hoped that this could be a positive sharing experience for him, and his father.

Yardin's father, who was fairly proficient in English, explained different pictures that would be used for the group of four students to make their brochure on Israel. Later, the African-American students in the group requested that Yardin "make a face" and do his "jig" (wiggling his hips and body); I understood that he had performed this sequence of actions before for them, based on the request. Yardin was reluctant, at first, then he smiled and performed his "face and jig" for his peers; they laughed and wanted him to do the actions, again. This time, Yardin, began to show signs of frustration, as tears began to come into his eyes; the students in his group repeated their request, still giggling at his previous gyrations, but Yardin started to cry and his face turned red. About this time, his father returned from collecting more paper and supplies, noticing that his son was visibly upset and his peers were still laughing, a little. He questioned the students in the group about what had happened, turning to Yardin and asking him in Hebrew what had happened. Yardin continued to cry, and the father became noticeably upset with the situation and the group's students. He collected his items, briefly told Ms. Chandler what had happened, and left the classroom; the class period was almost completed and the class was transitioning to art.

I continued to observe the class, as they cleaned their groups' areas and prepared to walk to art class. Ms. Chandler pulled Yardin aside as the class approached the doors of the art class, trying to communicate that she understood what had happened, but that the students probably did not intend to hurt his feelings. He appeared to understand what she was saying, although communicating with Yardin in English was often very difficult, as he had limited English proficiency to express his thoughts. Ms. Chandler finally asked if Yardin was going to be "okay," and he seemed ready to join his classmates in the art class. This incident demonstrated, again, how some cross-cultural ideas of humor and communication may lead to someone feeling demoralized; the situation points to the idea that some of the homeroom classmates of the ESOL students take advantage of the situation.

One day in the spring semester, I was walking and talking with some of the ESOL students as they lined up for their buses at the end of the day. As we stood in line, a former ESOL student, Riba, leaned over and asked me a question, "Why are Black people so mean?" This question was not a topic that we had been discussing, since we had been discussing one of her favorite topics, dogs. The teachers called for the students to load the buses, so our conversation on this matter was abruptly shortened. Later in the month, Riba completed an interview, even though she was a former ESOL student. She responded, "I don't like the African Americans at this school." I asked, "Why?" Riba continued, "because they're mean, [listing the three African American girls in her homeroom class]."

Observations were undertaken during P. E. classes throughout the school year, providing supplemental information concerning the students' interactions in less-restrictive environments. For example, in Mr. Feliciano's P. E. class an ESOL girl was being "bullied" by a boy in her class. Leanna startled me by pulling on my arm to get my attention to see something: Rene was

being “guarded” on the basketball court by the large, African-American boy. He had positioned his body so that she could not pass on the designated path which the students walk after running for exercise. Finally, Rene shuffled her feet quickly past the boy and she and her friend, Leanna, embraced each other by the arms and stayed close together for the remainder of the class. Later, I walked over to them and asked if they were okay, and they both smiled a little and nodded their heads, indicating that they were fine.

Later in the spring, observations of the same class revealed tensions between the same ESOL students and their classmates. After class in March, Rene and Leanna were upset because an African-American girl in Mr. Feliciano’s class accused Rene of taking a dollar bill from her purse. The girl said that she knew that Rene did it, because she could see it from where she sat in the classroom. Leanna was apparently upset, on behalf of her friend, because of this accusation and the entire situation. Upon hearing this information, Ms. Lucas, the ESOL teacher said that last week, an African-American girl had “pushed Leanna around,” while they were boarding their bus to go home.

Observations were conducted in Mr. Feliciano’s classroom during science class. While the students were working at their desks, two African-American girls engaged in a heated conversation and series of interactions with a few of the ESOL students. Initially, they asked Daniela, from Mexico, how to say “ugly” in Spanish. Lora, a former ESOL student, intervened and told Daniela some things in Spanish to deter her from obliging their question. The two African-American girls proceeded to go to the Mr. Feliciano’s desk at the front of the room and told him that Lora had given them “much attitude” and said things in Spanish to Daniela about them. Mr. Feliciano then called Lora and Juan Carlos to his desk to determine if anything had been said in Spanish about the African-American girls that is not appropriate in a classroom.

Juan Carlos described in Spanish to Mr. Feliciano how the two African-American girls had said something to him [an “ugly” comment, or similar, but he did not understand it]. Juan Carlos shrugged his shoulders and said “no importa” in Spanish to his teacher, indicating that he was not really bothered by the comments. Mr. Feliciano next re-called the African-American girls to his desk to discuss their intentions with negative comments towards Juan Carlos, or any other classmates. The teacher asked them to apologize to Juan Carlos for their negative comments, as a means of resolving some of the classroom tensions. The two African-American girls returned to their desks and asked Lora and Daniela how to say, “I’m sorry,” in Spanish; they explained to them, “perdon.” They called Juan Carlos’ name, gaining his attention, and said nicely, “perdon, perdon”...”we’re sorry for what we said.” He shyly nodded his head, and said, “ok,” returning to his science work.

In Ms. Long’s 5th-grade class a troubling situation occurred between Eduardo, a 5th-grade boy, and two of his classmates during social studies. Eduardo was sitting in his seat, when an African American boy, who was seated next to him, moved to another desk, so he did not have to sit next to Eduardo. Eduardo recognized the situation and decided to change his seat, so he moved to a desk that was available next to another ESOL classmate, Jorge. While Eduardo was in the other seat, the African American boy moved back to his original desk, next to Eduardo’s desk; the boy proceeded to take Eduardo’s pencil, breaking off the lead tip and scraping it against his desk, ruining the pencil. Later in the class, Eduardo returned to his desk to get his pencil to write, and he could not find it. He asked in the direction of the African American boys about his pencil, but they did not say anything and continued to work. Eduardo became more and more frustrated almost to the point of crying over the entire situation, repeatedly looking and asking for his pencil. The class period came to an end, and the next period was lunch, so all the

students exited the classroom to walk to the cafeteria. Eduardo mentioned his pencil to Ms. Long, and she said that they would look for it after lunch. Later, I asked Eduardo about this situation with the African American boys, and he shrugged his shoulders and said, “everything’s fine.” Eduardo did not appear to want to discuss the situation anymore.

The next day Eduardo sat alone at the very back of the classroom. I asked him why he was sitting back there, and he said, “I’m here, because I’m left-handed and I need more space to write.” While this response appeared on the surface to be very logical, Eduardo had been frustrated and bullied by the seating arrangements and pencil situation that had occurred the previous day. Eduardo would continue to sit in an isolated seat during this class for the remainder of the school year.

As mentioned earlier, these situations were probably isolated events that were not entirely representative of the interpersonal relationships of many African-American students and ESOL students. However, I believe that the students involved in some of these issues were attempting to “establish themselves” in the student body’s “hierarchy.” For some of these African-American students, they might have perceived that they were the ones who were previously “pushed around” or placed in a lesser-position in the student body. Now, they have an opportunity to be the ones with power, knowledge and authority, as they are knowledgeable of the school’s written and unwritten codes of conduct and proficient in the spoken language, English. I must, again, recognize that many African-American students assisted their fellow ESOL students throughout the school year in many different classroom and extracurricular activities. They, as we all do, have the ability to use their knowledge and position for the better of their society, or to the detriment of their community.

Conclusions

The ESOL students' length of time in the United States was found to be one factor in their ability to locate friendships with U. S. national students in their homeroom classes; however, these students' time in the U. S. was not the primary factor in determining whether their American friendships increased, as I had assumed. Proficiency in English, common interests, and personality traits appeared to be important foundations on which international students form friendships with other American classmates.

The perception that ESOL students would locate friendships with other English language learners was found to be confirmed based on their interview information and observations. While changes in their friendships were identified in the participants' responses from their first to second interviews, these small shifts in the responses of a small sample often indicated that these ESOL students were not maintaining their friendships with American classmates. Some of the participants did locate American friendships by the spring semester, but the friendships that continued from one semester to the next were primarily with students from international backgrounds in the ESOL program.

The ability to establish and maintain friendships with other ESOL and American classmates was found to be different for each individual involved in this study; the ESOL students who formed friendships with U. S. national classmates often did not have another first-language speaker in class. In addition, in a few of the ESOL American friendships, the U. S. students would be considered the "outsider" or "loner" by their other homeroom classmates. These relationships, therefore, appeared to be formed on the basis of being "marginalized" in their homeroom class. The shared experiences of being an ESOL student in a different culture and school provided a means for the ESOL students to bond as friends. The friendships that the

students formed with their other international peers in the ESOL program appear to continue throughout the school year.

The students' responses were a distinct indication that the ESOL students were not establishing and maintaining relationships with other American students in their homeroom classes. Since these changes in their responses occurred towards the end of the school year, they suggested that time in the U. S. was not the only factor in these newer international students forming friendships with U. S. national students. Since the number of ESOL students who are friends exclusively with other international students increased over the duration of the school year, this increase also suggested that the ESOL students were not locating friendships with other American students.

Patterns during less-restricted spaces and times, such as lunch and free play, were observed throughout the school year and were consistent in each of classes in this study. Two themes emerged from the interviews and observations concerning the students' interpersonal interactions: 1) A majority of the ESOL students usually sat and interacted with other ESOL students during lunch; 2) a majority of the ESOL students generally sat at the ends of the lunch tables. The significance of the ESOL students being at the table ends was that these seating-positions represented their "marginalized status" in homeroom classes. In addition, being continually excluded from conversations with other English speakers also continued to hinder their English practice and American-peer interactions. This seating-position appeared to perpetuate the internationals' friendships primarily with other ESOL students. There also seemed to be a direct correlation with the ESOL students who interacted and sat with other American students at lunch—they tended to sit towards the middle of their lunch tables.

Although Omar was an exception, the fact that a solid majority of the newer ESOL students claimed to play exclusively with other international students at free time, reinforces the assertion that these students were not interacting with other U. S.-mainstream classmates in less-restrictive spaces at school. The participants' responses and observations throughout the year revealed the international students' difficulty in forming lasting friendships with other American students in their homeroom classes. About one-third of the ESOL students also expressed their awareness of being excluded from free time games and activities, reinforcing some form of division between American students and their international peers.

Trends were found in each grade level in which the ESOL students, often newer and less-proficient in English, played on the "margins" of the playground. Patterns in each of the classes during recess revealed that the ESOL students were often playing in the "outsider zones," the swing sets or gym bars. Because a limited knowledge of English and game regulations were required to play in such areas, the international students often played in those areas.

The ESOL students claimed, overall, to have positive feelings towards their American classmates. The international students' pointed to their U. S. nationals' English-use and assistance with them as their primary reasons for perceiving them as "nice, helpful and smart with English." I inferred from this information that the ESOL students appreciate any English practice and interaction they receive from their American peers. I, therefore, believe that proper encouragement in homeroom classes and free times of interpersonal interactions between ESOL students and their American homeroom classmates would facilitate some lasting friendship bonds through language. Ideas on how to accomplish this are discussed in the following chapter.

I did not observe or perceive any tensions among or between the ESOL students, and this observation was different than I had anticipated; I had assumed that there would be some

tensions between different ethnic backgrounds (Chinese and Latin American), or even among those from similar ethnic backgrounds (Mexican and Puerto Rican). The ESOL program creates an environment of trust where the students can be uninhibited in learning from one another and asking questions of the teachers. The ESOL students also appear to form bonds based on their shared experiences of learning a new language and culture, while attempting to locate friendships in a new school.

Some tensions between a few students were noted as isolated events and were not germane to this study. These tensions, however, should be considered as valid attempts by a few individuals to make fun of or intimidate a few of the ESOL students. I believe that some of these situations were the African-American students attempting to “establish their place” in the student body’s hierarchy. For these few students, I believe that they found themselves in a position to “push somebody else around,” instead of possibly being the ones pushed around by others. Many other African-American students were observed throughout the school year as being helpful by assisting their fellow ESOL classmates in classroom activities.

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

Transnational processes, communication, and interpersonal relationships for the international elementary school students in this study are all interconnected. Each of the previous areas of study intersect with common factors in the ESOL students' lives: language use, time in the United States, identity formation, friendships, and multicultural backgrounds. The international students' experiences in a new school and community in the United States were significantly influenced by the local elementary school's English for Speakers of Other Languages program. Through this program, these students were able to locate other co-national and international students, serving as excellent resources for these international students in their adjustments to a new school and language.

This research identified some specific ways in which these international elementary school students participate in transnational processes. ESOL students are actively involved in connections with people back home as a strong indication of their continued home country involvement. Such ongoing contact suggests that these children find it important to maintain ties with their country of origin for a sense of familiarity of customs and language and stability in the midst of many foundational changes in their young lives.

This bridge between two nations and cultures provides an opportunity for the students to utilize their first language and maintain their linguistic and cultural connection with their family and friends. Relationships are also sustained with current technological advances, such as the internet and phone, providing a means to communicate with significant people in their country of origin. In addition, family and cultural traditions of their first home are continued, as another means to replicate a cultural or family system. All of these support mechanisms allow the students to sustain and facilitate transnational processes, while living abroad.

These children regularly prefer to form friendships with other children with whom they have most in common. About one-third of the students had another co-national either in the ESOL program or in their grade and regularly located these students as friends at school. This transnational endeavor was obviously facilitated and encouraged by the school officials and teachers, who utilized a teaching strategy of “pairing” the students with a common first-language in the same homeroom class. Students who did not have a similar-ethnicity classmate consistently primarily established friendships with other English language learners in the ESOL program. This preference also suggests that these young children seek out peers who are also adjusting to another culture and language, forming common bonds with other international friends.

I found impressive the number of participants who obviously preferred to initiate friendships with international children with whom they shared similar experiences of traversing a new school system. For those students who did find American friendships, these relationships were perceived as temporary, since many of these friendships did not survive the entire school year. This observation underscores the importance of placing international children in a diverse environment, such as ESOL, in which other children are adjusting to a new culture. Some of these friendships provide a useful support system for ESOL children transitioning from one culture to another, serving as a “bridge” from their home culture to a new culture. For those ESOL students who located American friendships at school, these U. S. nationals tended to be either students who had also traveled abroad, or were observed as “outsiders” in their homerooms.

Time in the United States was determined not to be the only factor in securing and maintaining U. S. national friendships at school. Although time in the U. S. is a necessary

component of locating American friendships, language use and shared experiences of moving to a new school and community were found to be factors that influenced the ESOL students' interpersonal relationships. Personality traits, such as "outgoing" or "shy," also influenced the international students' ability to locate friendships with others at school.

The length of time lived in the United States did appear to be a component in the students' perceptions of their national-identity. In addition, language use, language preference, and significant other's perceptions must also be viewed as possible reasons for self-identification. I project that the longer transnational students live in the U. S., and learn its primary language, the greater their efforts will be to adopt an "American" identity.

Discovering that English was the language of choice when ESOL children were provided an option was a surprise. I believe this language preference is associated with an easier adjustment process to their new school activities, in addition to acceptance by their homeroom classmates. Obviously homework and other classroom assignments were often discussed as part of the necessity to learn English by the students.

Language use was closely related to self-identity for these students. I inferred that becoming proficient in English was also viewed as becoming more "American." I believe the response of "American" was perceived by some of the students to demonstrate that they "fit in," or were adjusting to their new school—making them included as part of their homeroom class. English proficiency and competence was also the required foundation for these international students to succeed in their new community of school in which they spent the majority of their day. Major accomplishments in English-use, such as Chu's citizen of the month speech, along with many other small successes were a great sense of pride for these students.

Although a majority of the ESOL students said they preferred to use English, I found their limited English proficiency to be one of the primary reasons for these students not being involved in playground activities, conversations at lunch, and other classroom times. The international students' limited English proficiency and continual placement on the "edges" of homeroom class time represented their "marginalized" status in homeroom classes.

The requests for assistance in translation by the ESOL parents of their student increased as they perceived that their student had become more proficient, or confident, in English. With a few exceptions, the students tended to like their role as a "helper" for at least one of their parents. While these students claimed positive responses about translating, this did not negate the notion that they also probably experience some form of stress by serving as a language broker. The reason for the international students' families being in the United States, attending a university or working at a job, did not influence the amount of English use at home. Both types of families primarily used their national language in the house, speaking English on a limited basis as "practice," instead of conversing in extended conversations.

I believe that the international families and their children viewed outside of their homes, in this case, a U. S. elementary school, as an "English zone." The importance of this school's ESOL program, therefore, was recognized and embraced by both the international parents and their children as an excellent resource to acquire English as an additional language and learn more about United States' culture. The ESOL program at this school was a safe haven for these international students to feel comfortable when trying to process all of the changes that are involved in moving transnationally. The program provides a secure environment where these students can inquire not only about how to use English correctly, but also about the school's written and hidden curriculum. The ESOL students rely on each other as resources to discover

ways in which they can be successful in their new school academically and socially. The ESOL program also promotes these students' sense of self-esteem by allowing them to be and feel successful in their language accomplishments, using appropriate English proficiency-level discussions, lessons, and exams. Bilingualism and biculturalism are assets to a child in his or her identity and personal development, and these attributes should be encouraged at school and in the community.

Recommendations for School Systems

- 1 A "buddy-system" should be established in the homeroom classes in which a U. S. national student may volunteer to be a "buddy" to his or her new international friend. I recommend that these students be paired for at least one semester, providing sufficient time for the students to become comfortable with each other and learn from one another through shared classroom experiences.
- 2 Teachers and school officials who supervise free times could provide activities that encourage homeroom classmates to include those classmates who are "left out." The international students' participation might also be increased by having a selected "free-play buddy" who teaches the games and rules to the newer students.
- 3 A United States "Family-Friend" should also be utilized in addition to the students' buddy-system mentioned above. The Family-Friend system would pair a volunteer United States-Family with an international family from the same homeroom classroom as their children. This family could be the same one as the buddy-system's partner, if the school opted to promote this relationship. The Family-Friends would be introduced at the beginning of school and would be readily available to answer any of the international family's questions concerning their new school and its "back-to-school" requirements. The purpose of this Family-Friend relationship is to assist the international families in their adjustments to their new local school and community. The following suggestions are areas in which a U. S. family can assist their Family-Friend:
 - explaining school letters and homeroom procedures;
 - interpreting homework assignments;
 - facilitating involvement, such as with sports teams, music groups, or extracurricular activities for their children at school and in the local community.
- 4 A visual introduction, such as a photo album, should be placed in the school office as a useful tool in assisting the international families with their introduction to their students' new school. Photos of the school's physical spaces in which their students will be involved the most, along with the ESOL teachers and the school officials, would provide these new families with visual prompts to show the school.

- 5 Pamphlets with information on the ESOL program should be provided to the other schools and county offices to assist the international families with information about the ESOL center school and the ESOL program.

Future Research

This study was an initial investigation on whether elementary-aged students participate in some transnational processes in their school community. The students clearly utilized a few of the transnational tactics: locating co-nationals, maintaining contacts with people back home, and learning how to interact in a U. S. social institution. I strongly recommend additional studies on how children utilize transnational practices, becoming transnational people at an early age.

This study only utilized information that was collected over the duration of one school year. A longitudinal study that follows the participants over the course of two years, or more, would provide a more accurate picture of their ability to adjust to their U. S. school, their continued learning of English, and their location of friendships. In addition, a longitudinal study would provide the opportunity to evaluate better how language-use and proficiency impact their friendships, identity-selection, and family relations.

Future research may also be undertaken focusing more extensively on gender as a variable to determine how gender might shape international students' language proficiency and interpersonal relationships. In addition to gender, personal characteristics, or personality, could also be studied to establish how various personality traits alter children's language acquisition and transnational negotiations. A comparison of how people of different ages participate in transnational endeavors might also be accomplished in future research to understand better how age determines participants' practices.

The legal status of the international students and their families may also be a focus of research to understand better how this status affects students' interpersonal interactions. The interactions between the international students who have legal-documentation and those who do

not have proper-documentation could be studied to identify how they relate to one another; in addition, the interpersonal relationships of the undocumented and documented international students may be observed in relation to their homeroom U. S. classmates. The international students' legal status could also be utilized to discover how this status shapes the students' ethnic or national identity.

The parents' educational background or their primary reasons for being in the United States might be used to evaluate how these factors influence their students' academic success. The parents' ideas on academic achievement, acquiring English skills, and school involvement might be another way in which to gain insight into how an international family emphasizes different aspects of the U. S. culture.

This was a descriptive study of some of the experiences of ESOL students in a specific center-school program. Additional research should be undertaken to understand better how the American students view their international classmates. Why do they initiate friendships with a certain friend? How does an international friendship alter the American students' perspective on learning another language and culture? A study of the U. S. national students' reactions to their international peers could also focus on how the students' views on international classmates were altered over the course of a school year, in comparison to those American students who continued to have limited contact with ESOL students. The interpersonal relationships between U. S. minority students and the international students might also be an area of study that could be further investigated.

Future research should also examine at what developmental stages are these international children entering the United States? Greater insight into their identity and personal development would be accomplished by assessing these stages that each individual is progressing through as

he or she “encounters” another ethnic identity and cultural context. When these students have siblings, they could also provide another comparative point of view on the stages of development, providing additional information regarding how transnational processes shape children at different ages and stages of development.

Teachers and supervisors in ESOL programs probably understand the vital role that they and their classroom and school play in the development of interpersonal relationships among international students. The first friendships and the initial friendly environment many transnational children experience is crucial to their sense of comfort, confidence, and personal identity in a “new world.” One of the primary functions that ESOL programs play in the acculturation and identification of transnational students with their new country needs to be underscored. ESOL programs are not a “bonus” project in their communities; they provide an important function in young students’ processes of transitioning from their first culture to that of the United States. They are probably the first measure of a transnational’s impression of the new country, and can sow the seeds for acceptance into a new society and culture, and also make integration and identification with that society an attractive option.

The ESOL program, in addition to the teaching strategy of “pairing” international students with a common-language in homeroom classes, serves to assist the newer students in many ways of adapting to a new school. Oftentimes, the student-pair also form a friendship that remains throughout the school year. I was initially concerned about such “pairings” or an ESOL program, believing that these systems would perpetuate isolation of the international students from their homeroom classmates.

After this study, I am a strong advocate of programs such as ESOL, in which the students form unique bonds and lasting friendships that are critical to their adjustment to a new school

and culture. My reservations about the students' transnational practice of locating another common-language student and the teaching strategy of "pairing" in homeroom classes, was based on a fear that these systems might deter the international students from learning and utilizing English. A popular belief of co-nationals, particularly with adults, is that they only use their first-language when they are together. English proficiency for the elementary students was found to contribute to their self-identification, participation in classes, and adjustment to their U.S. school community. I found that these students were eager to learn and use English with friends at school and that the ESOL program facilitated their English language proficiency and confidence in a unique, friendly space.

APPENDIX A
INITIAL INTERVIEW

Initial Interview with _____, _____ / _____ / _____.

Hi, my name is Doug Bagby, I would like to talk with you about living in the U. S.

1. Where did you live before you came here?
2. What did you like doing in _____?
3. How long have you been in the United States?
4. How long have you been in the ESOL class?
5. Do you have any brothers and sisters?...Where are they now?
6. Did you want to come to the United States?
7. Have you had any family members come to visit you here, or do you think they will?
8. Do you like this school, is it good or bad?
9. Do you like your ESOL class?...Do you like or dislike it?
10. Do you feel when you are in your other classes?
12. Have you made any friends yet?
13. Who do you spend the most time with at school during free time?...Where are they from?
14. Who do you play with after school or on the weekends?
15. Which language do you speak with your friends?
16. Would you rather speak in English or _____?
17. What language does your family speak in at home?
18. Do you ever have to translate for your Mom or Dad? How does this make you feel?
19. Have you ever been made fun of for being in ESOL classes?
20. Have you ever been made fun of for the way you speak or being from another country?
21. Which school do you like more?...this one or your school in _____. Why?
22. Is your school here or back home more difficult? Why?
23. What is the best thing about this school?
24. What is the thing that you do not like about this school?
25. What do you think that you do well/good at? Why?
26. What is something that you do NOT do well/good at? Why?
27. When do you think you will go back to _____?
28. Do you think of yourself as American or _____? (or both?)

Picture Questions:

29. Where do you usually play during recess?
30. With whom do you usually play?
31. Are you usually included in the games/play?
32. Where do you usually sit during lunch?
33. With whom do you usually sit at lunch?
34. Where do you want to sit during lunch?
35. Open question here: (do you like saying the pledge of allegiance to the flag?)

APPENDIX B
END OF SCHOOL INTERVIEW

End of School Interview with _____, _____ / _____ / _____.
Hi! My name is Doug Bagby. I would like to talk with you about living in the U. S.

1. What do you like doing after school?
2. Do you like being in the United States?
3. Do you still talk with or email your family or friends back home?
4. Have you had any family members come to visit you?
5. Do you like this school, is it good or bad?
6. *Is it difficult to be an ESOL student? Why?
7. *When do you feel happiest/most comfortable at school? Why?
8. Do you like your ESOL class? Why?
9. Do you have any good friends?
10. Who do you spend the most time with at school during free time? (*where*)
11. Is there anyone that you do not like at this school? Why?
12. Who do you play with after school or on the weekends?
13. Which language do you speak with your friends?
14. When you're with your friends, would you rather speak in English or _____?
15. What language does your family speak in at home?
16. Do you ever have to translate for your Mom or Dad? How does this make you feel?
17. Do kids make fun of each other here at JJ Finley? How?
18. Have you ever been made fun of for being in ESOL classes?
19. Have you ever been made fun of for the way you speak or being from another country?
20. Which school do you like more?...this one or your school in _____. Why?
21. Is your school here or back home more difficult? Why?
22. What is the best thing about this school?
23. Is there something that you do not like about this school?
24. What do you like best about yourself? Why?
25. What do you like least about yourself? Why?
26. When do you think you will go back to _____?
27. Do you think of yourself as American or _____? (or both?)

How do you feel about ESOL? Why?

How do you feel when you are in your other classes? Why?

How do you feel about going back home? Why?

How do you feel when you come to school at J.J. Finley? Why?

How do you feel about the non-ESOL students? Why?

*How could your teachers/friends help you more?

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Douglas Bagby was born in Alexandria, Virginia, on March 6, 1971. He is the son of Daniel and Janet Bagby, and he has a younger sister, Bryn Bagby Taylor, and a brother-in-law, Nathan Taylor. Douglas Bagby attended Baylor University in Waco, Texas, where he completed a Bachelor of Arts degree in sociology and English in 1994. Upon graduating, he worked as the director of volunteers at an emergency assistance agency, Caritas of Waco. While at Baylor, Bagby met his wife, Patricia McCall, and they were married in her hometown of Memphis, Tennessee on July 12, 1997. Shortly after being married, the Bagbys moved to Costa Rica, where he taught English as a foreign language in a bilingual elementary school. In 1999, the Bagbys moved to Austin, Texas, where Douglas taught English as a second language to adults. In 2000, the Bagbys moved to Concepción, Chile, where Douglas was English as a foreign language teaching assistant at San Sebastián University and Medical School. Bagby completed a Master of Arts degree in Latin American Studies with a concentration in anthropology from the University of Florida in 2003. Upon graduating, Douglas began his doctoral studies, focusing on cultural anthropology, in the Department of Anthropology's Ph.D. program at the University of Florida. In 2007, Bagby completed a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology, focusing on international elementary students' experiences in a local U.S. school. Douglas plans to continue to practice, learn, and teach cultural anthropology, and work in humanitarian efforts locally, nationally, or internationally.