

“But what about the other kids?”:
Linguistic and religious minority youth in a Newcomer high school

by

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Abstract

“BUT WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER KIDS?” LINGUISTIC AND RELIGIOUS MINORITY YOUTH IN A NEWCOMER HIGH SCHOOL

By

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To meet the academic and social-emotional needs of recently-arrived immigrant youth, Newcomer high schools have been created in many urban areas. In New York City, these schools are often comprised mostly of Spanish-speaking students (ranging from 80-95%) with a small, yet diverse and growing minority of speakers of lesser-used languages who are also a religious minority. While schools often have Spanish-bilingual staff and resources for the dominant Latino population, educators are often left asking, “But what about the other kids?” the Muslim speakers of Bengali, Arabic, Fulani, Wolof, Kotokoli, and even more languages, who share no home languages with school adults.

In order to help schools and teachers meet the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional needs of these “other kids,” this study explores the school experiences and meaning-making of recently-arrived Muslim immigrant youth in a majority-Spanish-speaking Newcomer high school in the Bronx. Using arts-based pedagogical research, data is drawn from one year of after-school sessions where youth took photography, created social maps, collages, books, and graphic arts pieces to shape and expand on interviews, whole-group discussions, peer interviews, and participant observation.

Major findings reveal how youth translanguage (García, 2009) throughout the school day, using self-regulated, and self-initiated learning, while also expressing value in multilingual learning, but acknowledging that bilingual education is not a privilege afforded to them. While

allowed the space for home language learning, these youth are simultaneously experiencing multiple racisms – personal and pedagogical oppression based on differences in language, homeland, and religion. This duality, and ways of making meaning of it, shape youth’s complex educational linguistic identities, or their perceptions of how languages should be used in learning.

The voices of these youth speak to the needs of educators and schools working with diverse linguistic and religious populations. The ways in which these youth translanguage in their learning, and conceptualize messages articulated by the school, provide new understandings of effective strategies, school structures, and pedagogical practices for teaching emergent bilinguals, recently-arrived immigrants, and religious minority youth. Lessons are also learned from the methodology of this study itself, as an empowering tool for representation, and a way to expand youth’s linguistic repertoires and sharing of ideas through art and creative expressions.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Two years prior to the start of this study, I found myself in Global High School¹ as a university researcher exploring successful schools (high graduation rates) for Latino students. As I visited classes and spoke with students and teachers, I noticed a group of youth, daily after-school, setting up camp in the hallways. These students did not speak Spanish, as did 90% of the student population, but it was with them that I was able to communicate in Arabic and French. This ability to communicate with them enabled me to form a congenial relationship with this group of youth.

I asked them why they were in the hallways after school. They explained to me that they attend after-school classes, but not until 4:30 pm and that their last class of the day ended at 3:00pm. These students found themselves with an hour to wait, so they sat in the hallway together, moving between English, French, Arabic, Fulani, Kotokoli, and Bengali, chatting and discussing school work or social lives. It was this community, created in the hallways that led to the group that formed the basis for this research and learning experience

The experiences and voices of language minority youth in Global High School echo sentiment in teacher's lounges, professional development sessions, and teacher education courses throughout New York City. Strategies to teach emergent bilinguals are being explored to meet their needs. Teachers are bringing Spanish-English bilingual dictionaries, cognate lists, and bilingual learning materials into classrooms, and engaging bilingual staff members and students to build a multilingual ecology in rooms and schools. With school staff, classmates, and learning materials as bilingual resources for Spanish-speaking youth, there is a small, yet diverse minority

¹ School name has been changed

of speakers of lesser-used languages. It is with these students in mind that the question is so often asked, “But what about the other kids?”

These “other kids” are the language minority youth of a school, the ones who rarely share a common home language with adults in the school, or even with their many classmates. This is seen in small ESL programs in largely monolingual schools, as well as in Newcomer schools. Newcomer schools, mostly high schools, are designed to meet the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional needs of recently-arrived immigrant youth. Newcomer schools are unique educational settings that have grown in numbers in New York City, and other urban areas. Targeted services for youth at a Newcomer school may include intensive English language instruction, enhanced support for immigrant families, and curriculum focused on both students’ diverse cultures, and an introduction to U.S. schooling and cultures. The majority of Newcomer schools admit students who have immigrated to the U.S. within a one to three years of registration (depending on the school). In the Bronx, Newcomer high schools are comprised mostly of Spanish-speaking students, and have a small population of youth who speak Bengali, Arabic, French, Urdu, Fulani, Kotokoli and other languages. These youth vary in ethnic and national backgrounds, but all share an experience of minority language speakers, and identify as Muslim.

It was the purpose of this research to explore how immigrant youth who have different linguistic, cultural and religious identities from the Spanish-speaking majority of a Newcomer school make meaning of their school experiences. For one school year, a small group of language- and religious-minority high school students in Global High School were engaged in a twice-a-week after-school group study to explore their school experiences. The group used arts, interviews, and group discussion to understand their perspectives and meaning-making of their

schooling experiences. Another purpose of this study was to provide youth an opportunity for reflection and expression of their personal experiences and meaning-making in their lives. The central question explored in this study was:

How do recently arrived immigrant youth who speak languages-other-than-Spanish make meaning of their school experiences in a Newcomer high school that is predominantly Latino?

Three sub-questions related to this overarching question:

1. How do the youth understand messages about themselves that are constructed and articulated in school?
2. How do the youth language throughout the school day?
3. What meanings do youth assign to their school language practices and what language ideologies do youth express?

Building a community with the research group of 14 youth participants (14 who consistently attended, but as many as 20 on a given day) and myself was as much part of the data as were interview transcripts and the exploration of student art and photography. The youth's words, interactions, and art, over the course of the school year, uncovered shared experiences and a diversity in meaning-making of school. Through this dissertation research, valuable insight was gained into students' languaging, language ideologies, and perceptions of teachers, classmates and schools. These voices of the youth can inform teacher education and in-school policies, curriculum, and pedagogy in meeting the needs of a more diverse population of emergent bilinguals.

Chapter 2

Frameworks and Foundations: A Review of the Literature

In order to carry out this study, it was important to review research within the fields of immigration, immigrant youth identity, bilingualism in education, and the context of Newcomer schools. All of the students in the study are recently-arrived immigrants and live in the Bronx; all are emergent bilinguals; all are performing their emerging identities; and all attend a Newcomer high school. These four topics correspond to the general sections of this literature review.

Immigration

Immigration legislation

Looking at immigration legislation throughout the past 60 years can shed light onto the make-up and experiences of current immigrant populations. Prior to 1965, the Immigration Act of 1924 placed heavy restrictions on immigrants from East and South Asia, Africa, and Latin America, according to the National Origins Formula, which restricted immigration on the basis of existing proportions of the population already within the United States. The Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 lifted these quotas. It introduced a labor certificate clause allowing individuals with professional skills to enter the country under work visas, with another clause enabling students graduating from U.S. colleges to be integrated into the job market, creating a status of permanent residency that could be used as a springboard to naturalized citizenships. Based on this legislation, from 1965 to 1980, the majority of immigrants to the U.S. were either students or professionals (Njue & Retish, 2010). Another part of the Hart-Cellar Act, known as the Family Reunion Clause, allowed family members of both permanent residents and naturalized citizens to join them in the U.S. This has enabled large numbers of immigrants to receive visas in order to

reunite with family already in the U.S. In 1965, about 14% of immigrants were admitted to the U.S. under this clause, growing in 1980 to 70% (Njue & Retish, 2010). By the late 1980s, this policy resulted in two-thirds of all immigration visas going to relatives of U.S. citizens and permanent residents (Gibson, 1988). The face of immigration began to change after the 1980s, as professionals or former-students began to apply for visas for their relatives back home.

Another piece of legislation that greatly impacted the face of immigration was the Refugee Act of 1980, which provided a way for potential immigrants from new parts of the world (mostly Asia and Africa) to come to the United States. This law redefined the term *refugee*, which prior to 1980, pertained only to individuals seeking asylum from Communist countries. The new law and redefinition recognized the social and political oppression and persecution from non-Communist countries as a legitimate cause for asylum, which put U.S. policy in line with the United Nation's definition of refugees (Njue & Retish, 2010).

The events of September 11th have impacted immigration legislation in new, restrictive ways. From 2001-2003, the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS) required all men trying to enter the United States from countries with suspected ties to Al-Qaeda (including many Arab countries, as well as some South Asian countries) to register with the government. That program came under criticism from many Civil Rights groups and has now been replaced by a broader system that monitors visitors of all backgrounds, regardless of a country's suspected connections. However, many suggest that U.S. government oversight and restriction is much stronger for those wishing to emigrate from Muslim countries, especially from the Middle East and South Asia (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009). Immigration legislation that has impacted communities of the youth involved in the study helped to contextualize the experiences faced by these young people and their families. Gaps in the literature exist,

however, relating to what immigration legislation often means for youth once they are a part of a new community and school environment. Therefore, this study has contributed to a greater understanding of the immigrant youth communities within the United States of which they become part.

The Bronx context

Based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2009 American Community Survey, 32% of the 1.4 million residents of the Bronx are foreign-born, up from 29% in 2000. In 2009, 55.7% of Bronx residents speak a language other than English at home. Looking closer at this multilingualism, 45.2% of the total population of the borough speaks Spanish at home (about 82% of those who speak a language other than English at home), another 5.6% of people speak "other Indo-European languages" (Hindi, Portuguese, Bengali, Russian, German, Marathi, French, Italian, Punjabi, or Urdu), and 1.7% speaks "Asian and Pacific Islander" languages including Chinese (Mandarin and Cantonese), Hmong, Japanese, Khmer, Korean, Laotian, Tagalong, Thai, and Vietnamese. A remaining 3.3% speak "Other Languages" such as Arabic, Soninke, Fulani, and Albanian. In 2009, a little under half of those who spoke languages other than English in the Bronx reported to speak English "very well" (U.S. Census Bureau, 2009).

This multilingualism, and predominance of Spanish, is reflected in Bronx public schools. Table 1 and Table 2 below illustrate the home language of K-12 emergent bilinguals in each school district in the Bronx in 2008-09 (Table 1) and 2010-11 (Table 2), focusing on the most popular languages per school district.

Table 1: Predominant Languages Among Emergent Bilinguals (ELLs) in Bronx public schools, 2008-09

District	Total number of ELLs (K-12)	Home language Spanish	Home language Bengali	Home language Arabic	Home language French	Home language Soninke	Home language Fulani	Home language Mandinka
7	3585	91.7%	----	1.2%	1.8%	----	1.3%	0.4%
8	3904	89.4%	3.1%	1.2%	----	----	----	----
9	8488	88.8%	----	----	2.3%	1.3%	----	1.1%
10	13055	90.1%	1.9%	0.8	1.1%	----	----	----
11	4099	71.9%	4.3%	4.6	2.7%	----	----	----
12	4357	93%	0.9%	0.7	1.5%	----	0.8	----

Source: BESIS (ATS), 2010-11 (NYC Department of Education)

Table 2: Predominant Languages Among Emergent Bilinguals (ELLs) in Bronx public schools, 2010-11

District	Total number of ELLs (K-12)	Home language Spanish	Home language Bengali	Home language Arabic	Home language French	Home language Soninke	Home language Fulani	Home language Mandinka
7	3696	90.2%	----	1.9%	2.2%	1.0%	0.8%	----
8	3816	86.4%	4.9%	1.9%	1.3%	----	----	----
9	9061	89%	0.9%	----	2.5%	1.6%	----	1.2%
10	12603	89.6%	2.5%	1.1%	1.0%	----	----	----
11	4140	71.7%	5.2%	5.8%	2.2%	----	----	----
12	4666	91.7%	1.5%	1.0%	1.6%	----	1.0%	----

Source: BESIS (ATS), 2010-11 (NYC Department of Education)

What is notable between the 2008-09 and 2010-11 data is the growth of emergent bilinguals who are speakers of lesser-used minority languages, including Bengali, Arabic, French, Soninke, Fulani, and Mandinka. Increases in these languages represent several different countries throughout the Middle East, North and West Africa, and South Asia. This growth reflects the home languages of the youth participants in this study, and the changing population of students in Global High School mirrors emergent bilingual populations throughout the borough.

In a 2009 *NY Daily News* article, Joseph Salvo, population director of the city Planning Department, said about the Bronx that “immigrants provide the energy and skills needed to boost the borough’s horrid education and poverty levels, consistently the worst in the city” (p.2). The

Bronx in particular had the lowest number of college-educated residents (17%) in 2007, the highest rate of single-parenthood (60%), and the highest rate of poverty (27%) of any borough (Block, 2009). The words of Salvo represent both a negative image of communities and schools within the borough, as well as complex and often contested role of immigrants in the area. The Bangladeshi population has undergone great growth in the Bronx in the past decade. In 2000, there were 2,442 Bangladeshi residents in the Bronx, representing only 9% of the total Bangladeshi population in New York City. However, by 2007, 15% of all Bangladeshis in New York City resided in the Bronx, out of a total city population of Bangladeshis that is 74% foreign born. Between 1990 and 2000, the Bangladeshi population in the Bronx grew by 320%, and this population has the highest growth rates among Asian groups in the Bronx (Asian American Federation, 2007).

An example of the new diversity in the Bronx is its West African population which has ballooned from 12,063 in 1990, to 36,361 in 2000, to 54,932 in 2007, comprising large concentrations of people especially from Guinea and Nigeria (Block, 2009). By 2009, Census data shows that there were 43,000 foreign-born residents in the Bronx born in West Africa. In fact, it can be said that the West African population is the largest growing immigrant population in the city (with South Asian and Arab closely behind), and yet little is known about their education in New York. Because of the Bronx's unique and changing demographics, it is important to consider how the majority Spanish speaking communities interact with those other immigrant communities who now make the Bronx their home. And yet, the Bronx remains neglected in research studies.

The ethnolinguistic complexity of the Bronx made it an important research context to explore the relationships among and between minorities and immigrants. The next section

explores several theoretical lenses that have been used in other studies to look at the relationships within these groups.

Minorities within the minority

Educational anthropology's Cultural Ecological Theory (CET) provides a useful framework for exploring how students of different cultural and linguistic backgrounds experience school. CET seeks to explore how culture, identity, and societal structures influence the educational experiences and outcomes of minority students. A groundbreaking aspect of this framework is that it was the first to argue against traditional theories of cultural difference that came about only when a minority group was compared to a White counterpart (Ogbu 1978). Acknowledging complex interactions between cultural, social, and political forces, and the differences of "voluntary" versus "involuntary" immigrant groups, CET provides insight into how several factors impact educational experiences of minority youth. African-Americans are grouped as "involuntary" immigrants based on historical context of slavery, whereas "voluntary" immigrants are those who immigrated to the United States for various reasons including economic, educational, escape from persecution, or to reunite with family (Ogbu, 1978). Some of the factors impacting schooling that Ogbu mentions are: the initial incorporation of the group into American culture, treatment of minorities by White Americans, interactions between minority groups, perspectives of opportunity in the U.S., and the development of minority identity for both individuals and groups (Ogbu, 1978, 1983, 1991). CET's framework puts forth the idea that "individuals' actions and thoughts are guided by their understandings of the societies in which they reside and their roles in these societies" (Awokoya & Clark, 2008, p. 50), as these understandings are deeply connected to the way in which "minority groups have been incorporated into their various societies" (Ogbu, 1991, p. 8).

However, there is a limitation to CET when considering my study; CET focuses on the experiences of immigrant students in relation to dominant White students, without specifically taking into consideration that immigrant youth may be arriving into schools where the school populations are predominantly students of color and other immigrants. Awokoya and Clark (2008) acknowledge that CET does not pay attention to interracial and intraracial interactions since it “does not address the fettering discord that is occurring within and among the latter groups independent of their individual and collective relationship to the former group” (p. 54). The authors propose an expansion of CET to consider interaction among and between minority groups.

The general concept of a school “ecology” was considerably useful in looking at school experiences, especially of language minority students. Within the concept of a school ecology, language ecology is the “study of diversity within specific socio-political settings where the processes of language use create, reflect and challenge particular hierarchies and hegemonies, however transient they may be” (Blackledge & Creese, 2010a, p. 202). While focusing on speakers of lesser-used languages, my study considered the role and status of their languages within the school, the educational system at large, and the community, and also considered experiences of Latino students and the role and status of Spanish in relation to languages other than English within a school. Based on this, it was important to consider the strong connections between the construction of Latino identity and the Spanish language (García, 2009a; Nieto & Bode, 2008) when looking at the perspective of immigrants who speak languages other than Spanish in this context. Therefore, the concept of a language ecology was useful for exploring the interactions of language ideologies and practices and how they are created and implemented in a multilingual setting.

Blackledge and Creese (2010a) recognize that “the study of language often gives us a window into the exercise of power” (p. 221). This concept of power is central in Critical Race Theory (CRT), especially in considering the way in which immigrant students from West Africa, South Asia, and the Arab world are racialized in the U.S. context, and, thus, subjected to similar race-based discrimination as native-born African American youth (Awokoya & Clark, 2008; Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009). The injustice perpetrated on Amadou Diallo, a Guinean immigrant in New York City shot 51 times by police when reaching for his wallet, remind us that African immigrants experience similar victimization and negative assumptions in the eyes of the dominant society. Muslims from both Arab and South Asian communities have been particularly subjected to race-based prejudices and inequities since 9/11 (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009). Blackledge and Creese (2010a) argue that “the social construction of distinction based on ‘ethnicity’, ‘race’, and ‘class’, goes hand-in-hand with the social construction of distinction based on linguistic practice ideology” (p. 5), thus enabling the experiences of language minority immigrant youth to be further examined through a lens of Critical Race Theory.

CRT puts forth four basic tenets that are integral in research with students of color, school environments, and society. The first is that it rejects claims of color-blindness, meritocracy, and neutrality in schooling. Secondly, it recognizes that racism is embedded and institutionalized in U.S. society, in its political, economic, and social structures, and thus, in schools. Third, it puts forth the argument that previous acts of liberalism have been, and will continue to be, a band-aid approach to fix a deep wound, often citing the decision of *Brown v. Board of Education* as one such approach. Fourth, CRT utilizes narrative, voice, and autobiography by people of color and values this personal and diverse experience to further explore and discuss larger issues (Ladson-Billings, 1998; Awokoya & Clark, 2008). In this

study, student voices, narratives, and artwork were collected and analyzed as meaningful and valid empirical data providing insight into youth's school experiences. These are examples of counter-storytelling (Delgado, 2000) or counter-story (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002), defined as:

a method of telling stories of those people whose experiences are not often told (e.g., those on the margins of society). The counter-story is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege. (Solorzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 32)

Experiences of immigrant youth create an area of inquiry within CRT based on issues of language oppression and racialization of different minority groups within the United States (Kubota & Lin, 2007). Cummins (1994) acknowledges that immigrant youth, specifically emergent bilinguals, experience similar oppression based on structural inequalities within U.S. society that seep into school environments. He writes that linguistic minority students are “disabled educationally and rendered voiceless or silenced in very much the same way that their communities have been disempowered (often for centuries) through their interactions with societal institutions” (1994, p. 46). Valenzuela (1999) also argues a notion of “subtractive” education for emergent bilinguals, pointing to policies within schools that detract from students’ linguistic and cultural practices and identities. Based on the linguistic and cultural make-up of the Newcomer school of my study, it was important to consider these theories that address experiences and interactions of minorities within minority communities when conceptualizing a theoretical framework.

While the literature focuses on categories of immigration or languages, there were several gaps to address. One, addressed in my study, was looking at experiences of religious minorities within ethnic, linguistic, or racial minorities. The literature was also sparse when considering linguistic minorities within larger minority language groups, such as non-Spanish-speakers. This gap is widened by an absence of research that explores interactions between and

among minority groups of these various identities. Therefore, my study considered the context of these different minority interactions as integral parts of experiences. In the sections that follow, three groups of recent immigrants who speak lesser-used minority languages are described. These reflect the research participant's regions of immigration, including West Africa, the Arab Middle East and North Africa, and South Asia, specifically Bangladesh.

Immigration from Africa, and especially West Africa

The Refugee Act of 1980 provided a way for many potential immigrants from Africa to come to the U.S. as the term *refugee* was redefined and expanded. The new law went beyond the designation of *refugee* solely for immigrants from communist countries and recognized social and political oppression and persecution from noncommunist countries as a legitimate cause for asylum. For the first time, families and individuals from countries undergoing political turmoil could be resettled in the United States as refugees. This resulted in quickly growing populations in the mid-west and mid-Atlantic of Somali and Ethiopian immigrant students (Njue & Retish, 2010). Abusharaf's (1997) work with Sudanese immigrants in New York provides a local look at evolving immigration patterns.

In the past, African male youths had often immigrated often to the U.S. temporarily for economic purposes. Recent civil war and political unrest has led to an increase in immigration of youth from West Africa, especially to the Bronx. More recently, families, rather than just young men seeking work, are making the move (Abusharaf, 1997). Recent conflicts in Sierra Leone, Ivory Coast, and Liberia have led to the presence of more refugee students from West Africa in U.S. schools. These conflicts impact the schooling of students in their home countries, as well as their lives, journeys, and experiences in the United States (Traore, 2006). Although other cities have highly concentrated immigration of African refugees from a singular country or

region, New York has a greater diversity in African immigration, and the Bronx, in particular, has a greater concentration of immigration from West Africa.

Within the Bronx, 67.9% of immigrants from Africa have non-citizen status, and about 50% arrived in the United States after 2000, whereas only 6.8% arrived before 1990, according to the U.S. Census American Community Survey (2008). This highlights the more recent growth of immigration from Africa within the borough. About 6% of the total African-born population was between the ages of 5 and 17 in 2009, while the majority are working-age adults (U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2009). Of the total population of African-born immigrants in the Bronx, 87% speak a language other than English in the home, and 35% self-report that they speak English “less than ‘very well’” (U.S. Census, American Community Survey, 2008). Within this population, 22% of African families live below the poverty line and the median household-income of African-born immigrant households in the Bronx is \$42,000/year (U.S. Census, 2008).

The research on immigration from West Africa connects to some of the personal journeys and experiences of the youth in my study. The immigration is reflected in school populations, and leaders and teachers are met with new languages in the classroom. However, in reviewing the research, language was rarely addressed in vast discussions on immigration and challenges met by students, whereas this study considers the role of language and education in the immigration experience of these West African youth from Togo, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast. Acknowledging the diversity within this geographically-defined group also includes a further review of national, linguistic, cultural, and religious identities of youth.

Immigration from Bangladesh

The 2000 Census reports 2,442 Bangladesh-born residents living in the Bronx, with an additional 18,000 in Queens, and 6,000 in Brooklyn. By 2007, the Bangladeshi population in the Bronx grew from 9% of the total NYC Bangladeshi population to 15%, and 74% of this population is foreign-born (Asian American Federation, 2007). Bangladeshis in New York City have “lower English skills, lower incomes, higher poverty rates, devote larger portions of their income to housing costs and live in more crowded housing conditions, compared to all New York City residents” (Asian American Federation, 2007). This sheds light on some of the challenges faced by Bangladeshi students.

Within the United States, the majority of Bangladeshi immigrants are Bengali speakers, although there are also sizable populations of Sylheti and Chittagong speakers from the northeast and southeast regions of Bangladesh, respectively (Harris, 1997). Recent immigrants from Bangladesh have included these ethno-linguistic minorities, specifically the Hill Peoples of Chittagong, who have a distinct culture from the majority Bengalis, and who have immigrated in order to escape repression by the government (Jones, 2010).

The vast majority of Bangladeshi immigrants are Muslim, and Islam is the state religion. Actual records of Bangladeshi immigration data are only available after 1971, as that is when the independent nation-state of Bangladesh came into existence, and immigrants began to be counted based on this national origin. By 1980, there was still a small number of Bangladeshi in the United States (estimated at 3,500), about one-third highly educated and professional, contributing to the “brain drain” from South Asia. Others, mostly male, came to the U.S. for economic opportunity as Bangladesh experienced economic difficulties (Harris, 1997).

More recent immigration has brought much larger numbers of both documented and undocumented Bangladeshi immigrants. Between 1982 and 1992, the U.S. INS legally admitted 28,850 immigrants from Bangladesh through both application and lottery. There are also a large number of undocumented Bangladeshis living in the United States, with some estimates as high as 150,000, and more than 50,000 living in the metropolitan New York area alone.

Most of the literature on Bangladeshi immigrant youth focuses on experiences in the United Kingdom (Blackledge & Creese, 2008, 2010; Walters, 2007; Warner, 1992) because of the higher numbers and the longer history of South Asian immigration to the UK as a result of British colonialism. In the U.S. context, research on South Asian immigrants and youth is most often bundled together with research on Muslim students or immigrants. This is especially so in the context of post-9/11 society, and the heightened marginalization and racialization of South Asians because of their perceived identity as Muslim (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009; Chaudhury & Miller, 2008; Cole & Ahmadi 2003; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Mir, 2009; Shamma, 2009; Sirin & Fine, 2008; McMurthie, 2010).

There is a dearth of research focusing on Bangladeshi immigrant experiences in the United States, especially focusing on youth. Looking at the literature from the United Kingdom could help to inform this study, but there is a limitation considering the demographic make-up of the larger societal contexts. There is a great difference in numbers and size of communities between the U.S. and UK's Bangladeshi immigrants, and overall South Asian communities.

Immigration from the Arab Middle East and North Africa

Early immigration from the Arab world to the U.S. came mostly from the Levant, present-day Syria and Lebanon. Many of these immigrants were Arab Christians (Gualtieri, 2009), and many of the young men came for employment and economic opportunities, later

followed by families and community members. From 1880 to 1924, 95,000 Arabs came from Greater Syria, and by 1924, there were about 200,000 Arabs living in the United States (Gualtieri, 2009).

Arab immigration has been greatly shaped by events of history. Independence movements resulted in the immigration of many Arab Muslims, Christians, and Jews to the United States, as post-revolution regimes in several countries became more conservative than the ones ousted. Wars and conflict throughout the 20th century also brought about waves of immigration, as has the recent war in Iraq with a new influx of refugees (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009; Haddad, 2004). While earlier immigrants from the Arab world tended to be urban and educated, in the past decades, Arab immigrants are coming more frequently from rural and less-educated communities within the Middle East and North Africa (Haddad, 2004). In New York specifically, this is reflected in the large increase in immigration from Yemen. Although diverse in experience and national origin, immigrants from the Arab Middle East and North Africa have unique historical, cultural, and religious factors that have shaped their immigration experiences. Immigration from this part of the world has changed recently based on international events, relationships and perceptions between the U.S. and Arab countries, as well as a changing make-up of the immigrant population from the Middle East and North Africa. And yet, the youth of this population remains understudied, if at all.

Religion and immigration: Muslim immigrants

Although religion is not a linguistic identifier, it is important to recognize it as an additional difference between the youth in my study and their majority-Spanish-speaking classmates. Religion has been an important factor in immigration for many youth and families, especially in a post 9/11 United States context. Prior to 9/11, religion was not mentioned in

immigration legislation, however, the subsequent War on Terror has placed restrictions on immigration from both the Arab world and South Asia. There are greater restrictions on immigration based on family reunification policies for Muslim populations. South Asians, and Arabs (and to a lesser extent, Muslim African immigrants) are popularly assumed to be Muslims, and are recipients of restrictive U.S. policy and legislation.

U.S. schools are not immune to these socio-political realities and interactions (Abu El-Haj, 2005; Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Haddad, 2004; McMurthie, 2010; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Mir, 2009; Sabry & Bruna, 2007; Samhan, 1999; Shamma 2009; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Suleiman, 2004; Tehranian, 2008). The socio-political climate of post-9/11 U.S. has played a critical role in the experiences of Muslim students within the United States. Power dynamics noted as “disturbing,” acknowledge the complex relationship between the West and the Arab and Islamic worlds (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008).

The restrictive U.S. policies since 9/11 have specifically targeted Muslim immigrants who have experienced a negative backlash since the terror attacks, defined as “an excessive and adverse societal and governmental reaction to a political/ideological crisis against a group or groups” (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009, p. 15). Government actions include detention, deportation, the USA PATRIOT Act, “voluntary” interviews, absconder initiatives, and the National Security Entry-Exit Registration System (NSEERS). While Muslim U.S. citizens have often been able to fight against restrictive government actions and claim protection under civil rights law, non-citizens have often fallen victims to harsh immigration laws, deportation, and detention policies (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009). Looking at immigration of Muslims and focusing on a religiously identified group within immigration was valuable for my study. Youth expressed their religious identity in art, words, and interactions, describing it most often as

something setting them apart from the majority teachers and students. Because the youth were all of a religious minority, as well as linguistic, it was important to consider these intersections in immigration, schooling, and even youth's languaging.

Recently-arrived immigrant youth

Rethinking assimilation and acculturation

The terms *assimilation* and *acculturation* have been contested and reconstructed through various models since the 1920s. Beginning with the work of the Chicago School, Robert E. Park and E.W. Burgess presented one of the earliest definitions of assimilation as, “a process of interpenetration and fusion in which personas and groups acquire the memories, sentiments, and attitudes of other persons and groups and, by sharing their experience and history, are incorporated with them in a common cultural life” (Alba & Nee, 2005, p. 236). Through the work of Milton Gordon in the 1960s, a different sociological framework of assimilation evolved, linked to the concept of acculturation and “structural assimilation”, which involved the entrance of minority groups into the social groups, clubs, and institutions of the dominant society, to the definition. However, assimilation was seen as being one-way into the dominant culture, without taking into consideration relationships between ethnic or minority groups. It also did not include aspects of minority culture being integrated into the mainstream. Both Alba and Nee (2005) and Portes and Rumbaut (2001) challenge the concept of Anglo-Saxon Protestant as still the dominant, mainstream U.S. culture, and seek to reconstruct the assimilation paradigm taking into account evolving immigrant populations, as well as an evolving reality for immigrant youth in the U.S.

Connecting back to Critical Race Theory, the straight-line model of assimilation and the relationship between the generational time frame and rise in acculturation has been challenged

(Ladson-Billings, 1998). Immigrant parents and families (and subsequent generations) may pass on languages, traditions, and values from their home country to their children, rather than these being brought in with each new wave of immigrants within a community. My study addressed how youth in particular language and build on their immigration experiences as tools and bridges in their learning, rather than shed cultural practices and languages.

Other challenges to the generational inevitability of assimilation come from theories of “segmented assimilation.” Segmented assimilation (Rumbaut & Portes, 2001) acknowledges that the paths of assimilation are diverse for various immigrant groups and individuals. Here, there is consideration of immigration within different strata of society (middle class, underclass), and within all, the abilities to remain closely tied with co-ethnics and create a sense of biculturalism while experiencing upward mobility (2001). Taking into account the key factors of various societal context, conditions, and sectors that are a diverse reality in the lives of immigrant youth and second-generation Americans, this theory acknowledges factors including human capital, social capital, family structure, and modes of incorporation in the immigrant experiences, and how these interact to create different patterns of assimilation for children of immigrants.

From the perspective of segmented assimilation, losing ethnic identification, practices, and ties to an ethnic community does not go hand-in-hand with upward assimilation for immigrants, but rather, social networks and social capital are often a positive resource that help to enable upward mobility. Gibson’s (1988) work with South Asian Sikh high school students found that students maintained home cultures, values, and strong relationships with co-ethnics, while simultaneously succeeding in mainstream schools. Abusharaf (1997) also found that

Sudanese immigrants experienced school success while maintaining close affiliation with members of their ethnic group.

Bhatia and Ram (2001) put forth a way of rethinking acculturation, specifically in the context of non-Western, non-European immigrants living in the United States. Here, the authors take into consideration the unique historical and political events that shape immigration into the U.S. for various groups and individuals. The attention to a particular socio-political context creates new experiences for immigrants that cannot necessarily be analyzed in the same framework as immigrants in the past, especially considering these immigrants may have been from different countries of origins, specifically Western or European. Bhatia and Ram (2001) also delve into reconceptualizing concepts of ‘bicultural competency’ and ‘integration strategy’ as ideals in immigrant experiences. Rather, they advocate for an understanding of a process-oriented approach, focusing on understanding how immigrants’ experiences are ones of hybrid cultures within diasporic locations. These individuals and groups are constantly negotiating their multiple, and even conflicting identities, histories, and subjectivities.

The framework of challenging traditional acculturation models reflects the experiences of immigrant youth in the research group. Their experiences also challenge an assumption in earlier models of assimilation that maintaining a strong ethnolinguistic identity and networks with co-ethnics is mutually exclusive with mobility and academic success; but this has been refuted in segmented assimilation theory (Portes, 1996). Ethnic or faith-based community can be seen as a “privileged sanctuary” (Bozorgmehr et. al. 2010) that contributes to strong ethnic and class resources in order to provide the immigrant youth with education, emotional, and social support (Ajrouch, 2004). Building community with other youth who share immigration experiences can create and preserve a sense of “self-esteem grounded on strong family and

community bonds” (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001, p. 316). The bicultural (and multicultural) experiences of students in this study provide a picture of immigrant community support.

Within the U.S. context of multiculturalism and diversity, Muslim emergent bilingual youth might be selectively assimilated into some aspects of mainstream culture, while also maintaining close religious ties and practices (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). It has been shown that despite a diversity of national origin or ethnicity, young Muslims in the U.S. have been found to have a strong religious identity and often close friendships with Muslims of different national origins (Haddad, 2004; Min, 2010), while simultaneously identifying as American. This multiethnic Muslim community reflects the community of youth participants in this study, who are from three major regions, hundreds of miles apart, and share a religious identity. Within the literature on immigration, it is integral to consider the youth side of the story, a perspective that is rarely included. Furthermore, it is also important to recognize the impact of diverse national origin groups, language, race, religions, and genders on theories of assimilation and acculturation. In this study I rethink acculturation and assimilation as youth participants built knowledge and success through their home languages, cultures, and communities.

Theories of transnationalism

Transnationalism is a product of human movement, connections, and continued practices that is a reality in the lives of many immigrant students, families, and communities.

Transnationalism traditionally refers to the actions of immigrants as they maintain both physical and social connections with their home country and maintain “dual loyalties and ongoing home country connections” (Waldinger, 2010, p. 4). Transnationalism is something to be engaged in; it is a series of activities, ranging from calling relatives in a home country, to sending financial support, to watching satellite television from channels back home, to actually making trips and

visits back. It is these actions that are “located in a space that encompasses two or more national-states, a situation made possible by the time-space compression”, something both “new and familiar”, a “bricolage constructed of cultural elements from both the homeland and the receiving nation” (Kivisto 2001, p. 568). Blackledge and Creese (2010a) connect transnationalism to the multilingualism of individuals and communities and recognize that it is both expressed and supported by linguistic practices.

Transnationalism goes beyond the state of consciousness when it comes to homeland-orientation and is more than just nostalgia or home language maintenance. In order to be engaged in transnationalism, one must be actively engaged in social, economic, or political activities between a home and new country, as it is more than a sentiment or collective memory, and goes beyond emotional attachment into actual cross-border activity. Kivisto (2001 p. 552) notes Glick Schillers’ definition of transnationalism as “the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement.” This idea was helpful in considering how the lives of immigrant youth are still connected to their home countries, including social media, communications, practices, and travel.

Different types of transnationalism established by Portes (1996) and colleagues include (1) economic, (2) political, and (3) socio-cultural, and each of these involves actual practices and actions that go beyond a sentiment or level of consciousness (Kivisto 2001, p. 561). Members of a diaspora may take part in transnational activities, such as “exchange of resources or information, or marriages or visits” (Vertotec, 2005, p. 2). New technologies have opened up new opportunities for transnationalism, including increased communication, ease of travel, and access to international media. Blackledge and Creese (2010a) acknowledge how “the global movement of people and the development and availability of digital communication” (p. 215)

play into understandings of multilingual practices and ideologies that are created and implemented in schools, communities, and within the lives and experiences of individuals.

What is significant in transnationalism are the bonds or connections *between* countries or boundaries, not *within* them. Waldinger (2010) supports this point by acknowledging that “connectivity does *not* imply collectivity” and while transnationalism involves “two way ties, linking place of origin with place of destination,” it may also leave “the scattered populations abroad unconnected” (p. 10). Therefore, one may be a transnational connected and engaged with a home country, but feel alone in one’s ethnolinguistic or transnational identity in the new country. Interactions and practices of transnationalism are dependent on other individuals or groups in the home country, not necessarily on a community or group in this new country, and are thus dependent on the actions of individuals, or especially in the case of youth, families. What is integral is the connection, interactions, and practices in relation to a home country, not these connections or interactions with other co-ethnics living in the United States. Ties or connections to a community within the new home country are not a criteria of transnationalism, as it is with a diaspora.

Portes and Rumbaut (2001) acknowledge that transnationalism and identifying as “American” are not mutually exclusive. Their research presents an argument that transnationalism is “less an alternative to assimilation” and more an “antidote to the tendency towards downward assimilation” (Kivisto, 2001, p. 563). The notion of the bricolage or multiple subjectivities (Weedon, 1987) is relevant here, as the transnational individual has the ability to split loyalties, identities, and even cultural affiliations, thus not being necessarily destined for, or opposed to, assimilation. Kivisto (2001) notes, “at the moment that transnational immigrants are working to maintain homeland connections, they are also engaged in the process of acculturating

to the host society” (p. 571). For many immigrant youth, transnationalism enables them to maintain their home culture, while becoming part of U.S. society, and also enables them to feel connected to both cultures while creating a new biculturalism, or multiculturalism, of their own.

There was an integral connection between the questions in my study and the literature on immigration. The youth participating in the study have all experienced the process of immigration fairly recently, and as adolescents. They live and study with other immigrant students as well. And yet, the literature on immigration does not address this particular population of recently-arrived Muslim immigrant youth. Nor does it address the experiences of minority immigrant communities and individual experiences within larger immigrant communities dominated by a particular language or country of origin. My study specifically addressed these gaps in the literature, and contributes a youth voice to the body of educational research with immigrant students.

Identity

Exploring identity as part of the school experience was an important step for my study, considering the multiple ways students identify themselves, are identified by others, and how these impact, and interact with, school experiences. Bourdieu’s (1984, p. 6) concept of “habitus,” or “a system of dispositions” refers to socially constructed concepts (such as race, ethnicity, and language) that are a central part of identity and that shape the ways individuals think and act. These then impact the way in which individuals and groups perceive the world and themselves. For the youth in this study, this framework extends to how they identify themselves in relation to other teachers and students within school.

From a theoretical framework of feminist poststructuralism, Weedon’s (1987) conception

of social identity or subjectivity explores how power relations between individuals, groups, and communities affect individuals at a given time and place. Norton (1995) acknowledges how Weedon's work stands out from that of other postmodern theorists in the comprehensive way in which it links individual experience and social power in a theory of subjectivity. Weedon (1987) defines subjectivity as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (p. 32), and does not neglect the integral role of language in interactions in a variety of social sites. Within her conceptualization of subjectivity, Weedon (1987), as further explored by Norton (1995), acknowledges "the multiple nature of the subject; subjectivity as a site of struggle; and subjectivity as changing over time" (p. 15). Like youth in school, identities are emerging, forming, and experienced through different interactions with others and themselves. The subjectivities of youth in the study, framed by feminist poststructuralism, create the space for youth's multiple perspectives of schooling to be analyzed side by side, rather than found contradictory to each other. Within the feminist post-structural framework, the individual is conceptualized as diverse, dynamic, and even contradictory, rather than a fixed, static being (Norton, 1995).

Nasir's (2004) conception of "identity constellations" builds on this concept of fluidity as she conceptualizes how Muslim youth, in particular, embody multiple, sometimes even conflicting identities, based on varying contexts and interactions. Acknowledging the multiple social sites where subjectivities are produced (different contexts within school, home, the community, and social settings for youth), Weedon (1987) recognizes the individual as being active in the production of these subjectivities, which may conflict with each other. These subjectivities are also subject to power structures within a given site. Both Sirin and Fine (2008)

and Norton (1995) connect the multiple subjectivities and identities to learning opportunities and value the changing qualities of an individual's identity as opening up great possibilities for education and teachable moments.

Language, religion, national origin, race and gender interact in the ways in which students perform their identities. Because these factors play such an important role in the multiple emerging identities of immigrant youth, some of these aspects will be explored separately, while others explored as intersecting.

Identity and language

Language is acknowledged to be socially constructed (Bourdieu, 1991; García, 2009a, 2010; Heller, 2006, 2007). García (2010) recognizes that languaging, or the language practices, which we perform, are “a most important way of signifying” (p. 520). From within a feminist post-structural framework, Weedon (1987) acknowledges that “language is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed” (p. 21). For young people, as seen here, language plays an integral role in social interactions, identity formation, and identity expression. Blackledge and Creese (2008; 2010a; 2010b) also draw a strong connection between language and identity, as they acknowledge the important reality that some individuals may “hold passionate beliefs about the importance and significance of a particular language to their sense of ‘identity’” (2010, p. 30). During their research on multilingualism in British schools, Blackledge and Creese (2010a) found that for some of their participants, the idea of a “language” held very powerful meaning for a sense of belonging, community, and self, and that language was a strong factor in both the individual and collective identities of participants.

Heller (2006) echoes this strong connection between language and identity in her sociolinguistic ethnography, as she explores the ways in which language is a powerful instrument of identity formation and negotiation, while also creating and limiting access to social networks. Thus, for many participants within Heller's study, language may be considered an integral factor in identity formation and expression, since language may hold powerful meaning for individuals' sense of self and belonging (Blackledge & Creese, 2007; Bourdieu, 1991; García & Zakharia, 2010; Heller, 2006; Norton, 1995). Language practices as performing identities is continuously important to individuals and communities (García & Zakharia, 2010) and, for the purpose of this study, to youth in a school community.

It is interesting to consider how the learning of English may impact student identity as many youth assume the role of language broker within their families. For many recently arrived immigrant youth, the learning of English in school is often more accessible than opportunities for their parents to learn English. Thus, as they learn English before their parents, they may take on typically adult roles, or roles as language brokers, or mediators, as they interpret and negotiate for family business including health, finances, and social services (Chu, 1999; Dorner et. al., 2007; Kugler & Price, 2009; Norton, 1995, 2000; Orellana et. al., 2003). In their study of immigrant households, Orellana, Reynolds, Dorner, and Meza (2003) investigated how youth "paraphrase", or translate for their families as language brokers for household or family tasks specifically focused on multiple literacy practices. The authors connect these findings to youth's educational experiences and argue that the multilingual skills and paraphrasing of youth at home can be a valuable learning tool within the classroom. Dorner, Orellana, and Li-Grining (2007) also explored the English language use of immigrant youth to assist in family activities. They describe how youth act as language broker for their parents when they become translators for

household tasks ranging from shopping to filing out government forms. These studies found a positive relationship between these language brokering experiences and both attitudes and performances in educational environments that utilized these English language skills.

The status of students as linguistic minorities within the research site of the Newcomer school can be explored as an integral factor contributing to their identity. The concept of a linguistic minority assumes the existence of a whole, of which the group is a minor part, and it assumes that the difference between the group and the majority has to do with language (Heller, 2006). Building on the work of Benedict Anderson's "imagined communities," Heller (2006) points out that the concept of a linguistic minority makes sense today "within an ideological framework of *nationalism* in which language is central to the construction of the nation" (p. 7). Here, language plays an important role in the construction of unity and also in legitimizing the existence of the nation. Newly arrived immigrants are faced with an educational system that strives to make them part of the English-speaking majority. However, this concept of a linguistic majority and minority are based on the majority being that of the larger, national population. This does not take into account what happens when the "minority" becomes the majority (as is the case with Spanish-speakers in some Bronx communities), and thus, what happens when this social reality creates a new, separated minority speakers of languages other than English or Spanish. The literature on identity and language is helpful to consider the intersection between youth's home language and their perceptions and senses of self, as well as their relations and interactions with others. However, the literature has not considered how language identities of students impact meaning-making, and contribute to language ideologies, as explored in the next section. My study precisely sheds light on this important topic.

Expanding on youth's linguistic identities is the consideration of their language ideologies

– how they view their languages, and the use of others. Adding the context of a school, this study builds on Alan Rumsey's (1990) definition, linguistic ideologies are "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world " (p. 346). This definition can be extended to multilingual classrooms, and in the Newcomer high school in this study, as sites where “shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language” is shaped and enacted. For students, the nature of language in the world becomes the nature of language in the classroom, as language ideologies are shaped by languaging in the school.

Literature on language ideology explores how it is formed, and then enacted or performed (Gal, 1992; Woolard, 1992). This extends to the impacts of language ideologies on how individuals act or interact. Woolard and Schiefelin (1994) explain how language ideology is not isolated from performances and connections to identity and knowledge production:

Ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language. Rather, such ideologies envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology (p. 55-56)

This connection between language ideology and identity and meaning-making is important to consider in work with immigrant youth. Their language ideologies are not divorced from their educational experiences, especially considering the ways in which language is stratified in their educational setting.

Taking these enactments of language ideology to a more micro-level, Gal (1992) explains:

Ideology is conceptualized - implicitly or explicitly - not only as systematic ideas, cultural constructions, commonsense notions, and representations, but also as the everyday practices in which such notions are enacted (p. 446).

This work creates a useful framework for considering language ideologies in an educational setting. Here, the everyday language and social practices of youth enact language ideologies.

This is helpful when looking at everyday practices such as translanguaging, as well as everyday

microaggressions experienced by youth based on linguistic differences. These can be conceptualized as factors contributing to the formation of youth's language ideologies, as well as areas in which these ideologies may be manifested.

Identity and religion

The youth in my study have many things in common – their school, relative age, recent immigration, and status as linguistic minorities within a Newcomer high school. Another characteristic of these students that differentiates them from the Latino majority of the school is their religion and identity as Muslim. Most of the students are from West Africa (Togo, Guinea, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Senegal) and are Muslim, along with Arabic-speaking students from Morocco, Jordan, and Yemen, and students from Bangladesh who are Muslim as well. Most of the girls perform their religious identity by wearing the hijab (traditional Islamic headscarf) and are easily identifiable by their peers and teachers.

Muslim communities in the United States often create local communities that support the establishment of an Islamic community without national or ethnic divisions (Haddad, 2004; Sirin & Fine, 2008). Unlike other immigrant groups in which religious institutions have sought to preserve a single ethnicity taken directly from a singular homeland (i.e. Korean churches), the growth of Islamic organizations preserves a multi-ethnicity under the bond of Islam, regardless of individuals' homelands, language, or ethnic backgrounds (Min, 2010). This unification is not a foreign concept in Islam, as many Muslims attest to the “universal vision of Islam, and in America this has become a lived reality” (Eck, 2007, p. 217). The diversity of the Muslim population in the U.S. is reflected within religious-based organizations, which often provide ethnically mixed services (Min, 2010). It has also been found that Muslims from different ethnic

and national backgrounds (Pakistani, Egyptian, Nigerian, etc.) positively express forming close friendships and dating one another (Min, 2010; Sirin & Fine, 2008).

It is also interesting to note how post 9/11 society has impacted the identification process for many in the Muslim community. As Sirin and Fine (2008) point out, “immigrants from Muslim countries who previously [before 9/11] were identified by their ethnicity and home culture have now come to be identified by their religion” (p. 4). Thus, as individuals within the religious community may identify on religious terms, this formation is also guided by outside labels, pressures, and perceptions.

For many Muslim students, “religion serves as an ethnic-like identity marker” and Muslim student organizations often become vastly multiethnic, bringing together Muslims from diverse backgrounds (Shammas, 2009, p. 291). However, conceptions of identity are not fixed or static, and perceptions of one’s ethnicity and identity are flexible based on context and interactions with various individuals. Building on this concept of individual’s multiple identities, or “identity constellations” (Nasir, 2004), my research explored how various, and often conflicting, identities based on various contexts and interactions are shaped within schools. For many students, “Islamic identity interacts with other identities to color both how a student is perceived by others and how s/he responds to such perceptions” (Nasir & Al-Amin 2006, p. 26), thus creating a variety of experiences for Muslim students. Muslim students experience a new climate of both increased Islamophobia and increased multiculturalism in diverse ways in schools (Abu El-Haj, 2005; Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Haddad, 2004; McMurthie, 2010; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Mir, 2009; Sabry & Bruna, 2007; Samhan, 1999; Shammas 2009; Sirin & Fine, 2008; Suleiman, 2004; Tehranian, 2008).

A study by Sirin and Fine (2008) situates Muslim-American youth specifically in a post

9/11 U.S. context as the “designated Other,” and focus on the “marking off” of youth (p. 5). Religion “marks off” the youth in my study, as does language. However, participants of Sirin and Fine’s 2008 study are a variety of first- and second-generation Muslim youth, and “most have grown up comfortably in working-, middle-, or upper-middle-class-families” (p. 4). While this may be true when looking at the larger Muslim youth population of the United States, this description does not fit the Muslim youth of Global High School who participated in my study. For one, the youth in this study are all recently-arrived immigrants, and secondly, they are living in poor and working-class communities within the Bronx, similar to those of other immigrant groups within the borough and their school.

A study on identity formation of Bangladeshi Muslim adolescents in the U.S. was conducted by Chaudhury and Miller (2008). This qualitative study explored two distinct groups of youth in terms of their religious identity formation – “internal seekers” and “external seekers” (Chaudhury & Miller, 2008). External seekers looked outside of their religion for answers and explored other faiths or abandoned religion altogether. The internal seekers, on the other hand, looked within their religion to resolve conflicts or questions they have about their faith or their lives in general. They read the Qur’an and other Islamic texts, sought the advice of religious leaders for counsel, and held halaqas, or religious study groups, with their peers (Chaudhury & Miller, 2008). The process of religious identity formation was facilitated by open communication with family, a support network of peers, a recognition of safe havens within school and the community, and participation in ritualized prayers. This phenomenon is based on the difference found between students who are “concerned about how their daily actions affect their future happiness, both as they grow older and in the afterlife,” while others “have come to the conclusion that while Islam has some basic tenets that need to be followed, it is all right to ignore

these principles now as long as they adhered these principles when they are older” (Chaudhury & Miller, 2008, p. 403).

Much of the research on Muslims identity and schooling reads as a sort of How-to guide for educators, youth, and administration (Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Abu El-Haj, 2005; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Sabry & Bruna, 2007). Some of the suggestions given include having a strong and supportive Muslim student group, knowledgeable and accepting professors or teachers who are aware of Islam, an accepting student body, access to physical space for private prayer and washing, access to *halal* meal, and Ramadan-friendly meal times. It is also helpful to incorporate Muslim holidays into the academic calendar, to have faculty and administrators explicitly show support for Muslim students, provide alcohol-free social events, and organize educational opportunities and panels that open up discussions of Islamic culture to address and correct misconceptions and misinformation. Also stressed is the importance of inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue between students and faculty, to explore commonalities between Muslim students and their non-Muslim classmates (Abu El-Haj, 2005; Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Sabry & Bruna, 2007).

A handful of studies have addressed the experiences of Muslim students in schools, (Ajrouch, 2004; Chaudhury & Miller, 2008; Abu El Haj, 2006; Sabry & Bruna, 2007; Sarroub, 2005; Sirin & Fine, 2008, Suleiman, 2004). The majority of the literature focuses on second-generation youth (children of immigrant parents) or a combination of first and second generation Muslim youth, and not on immigrant youth exclusively. Additional literature on Muslim students takes place within the context of college campuses (Ali & Bagheri 2009, Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Mir, 2009; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Shamma, 2009). Very few, if any, have

bridged the experiences of both immigration and Islam exclusively (Karp, 2007) which points to the newness of this population in U.S. schools.

When exploring the experiences of Muslim immigrant students, it is important to consider the context of a Bronx high school where the vast majority of the school community identify as Christian, or more specifically, Catholic. William Blumenfeld (2006) explores a concept of “Christian hegemony” as existing in U.S. society and within U.S. schools. Christian privilege can be understood as constituting a seemingly invisible, unearned, and largely unacknowledged array of benefits afforded to Christians in U.S. society and other contexts, thus subordinating other faith communities. These systemic inequities are pervasive and woven into the fabric and structures of social institutions, including many public schools. One might consider, for example, curriculum or activities during winter holiday time, and also the seemingly simple, although powerful and meaningful, school calendar, which holds school all day on Friday (a Muslim holy day) as well as throughout the month of Ramadan, in which it is religious practice to fast. There is an integral connection between religious identity and my study, as the participants involved were all part of a religious minority within the school and the larger community. It is important to examine the intersections between Muslim youth as minorities within Bronx schools and the meaning making of their educational experiences.

While gender was not a criterion for sampling in my study, it is important to consider gender in relation to youth’s cultural practices. The history of the Muslim religion illustrates a gendered discourse that has been shaped by moments and movements throughout centuries (Ahmed, 1992). These discourses are important to discuss and unpack. Debates and issues involving women in Islam are “encoded with political meanings and references that on the face of it at least seem to have little to do with women” (Ahmed, 1992, p. 2), but are deeply tied to the

gendered nature of religious traditions and thoughts. Thus, it is necessary to specifically investigate history and the present socio-political climate of Islam from a gendered lens, to examine the diverse roles of women, what has shaped them, and how women throughout history have embodied the dominant discourse and challenged it. It has also been found that construction of both religious and ethnic identity and the boundaries of in-group membership are often “lodged in the women’s body and behavior” (Ajrouch, 2004, p. 386). This puts Muslim girls and young women in a unique and complex position, as gendered discourses often bare cultural norms, which are directly informed by religious norms within the Islamic community. Because of the interest in gendered discourses and experiences of women in Islam, there has been little research of male Muslim students. This absence provides a push to consider experiences through the lens of gender, both male and female.

Prior to 9/11, there was barely any research on Muslim girls in the U.S. However, much attention has been paid to Muslim women in education internationally. Ahmed (1992) found that women in Egyptian schools were more likely to adopt Islamic dress based on higher levels of education and family’s integration into professional and middle class. Women’s Islamic dress in school and in public spheres (such as in public transportation, and business) was recognized as “in no way a challenge to or a violation of the Islamic sociocultural ethic” (Ahmed, 1992, p. 224). Seeing the connection between wearing the veil and participation in the public sphere helped to frame some of the female experiences and understandings in this study, many of whom wear the hijab in their schooling.

Due to the visibility and recognizability of hijabi women as clearly Muslim, much of the research concerning Muslim girls in schools focuses on performance of Islam through veil wearing (Cole & Ahmadi 2003; Mir 2009, Sarroub, 2005). The literature identifies several

common threads in the perspectives and experiences of these hijabi students: being a good Muslim, a Muslim identity, stereotypes and misconceptions, social reinforcement, modesty without the veil, and religious obligation (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003). The concept of being a “good Muslim” was a common theme throughout the literature, as expressed by female Muslim students (Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Mir, 2009; McMurthie, 2010; Sarroub, 2005). Female Muslim students find that a tight-knit community and Muslim organizations as a source of stress because of the pressures to conform to the ideals and expectations of a “good Muslim” (Cole and Ahmadi 2003, Ajrouch 2004; Mir 2009; McMurthie 2010). The social pressures of marriage and the difficulty of being friendly with members of the opposite sex and not being perceived as immodest is another topic addressed in this literature (Ajroud 2004; Bozorgmehr, Miller, and Hannasab 2010; McMurthie 2010).

While male students might experience pressures of stereotypes and parental expectations of lucrative fields, female students often express being under pressure based on dating, potential relationships, and family expectations, as well as struggling with gender-based double-standards (Ajrouch 2004; Bozorgmehr et. al. 2010). Female students express tensions over having to be a “good Muslim” from members of their faith (Cole & Ahmadi 2003, Ajrouch 2004; Mir 2009; McMurthie 2010; Sarroub, 2005), and on the other hand, discrimination based on stereotypes and misconceptions from non-Muslims (Abu El Haj, 2005; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Ali & Bagheri 2009; Mir 2009; Cole & Ahmadi 2003; Shammass 2009; McMurthie 2010; Sabry & Bruna, 2007; Suleiman, 2004). Mir (2009) refers to this tension as being “observed from twin towers of surveillance” (p. 250). Through both mainstream U.S. and Islamic discourse, a “double panopticon” (Mir, 2009, p. 250) of both Muslims (parents, families, community members, friends, potential spouses), and non-Muslims (authorities, neighbors, classmates) exists for many

Muslim women on campuses, making it a complex environment and experience of identity negotiation. Young Muslim women must often “negotiate between two worlds and two sets of cultural values that often seem incompatible” (Ajrouch, 2004, p. 388). Female voices often express this “balancing act” (McMurthie, 2010) or complex duality of straddling two worlds (Chaudhury & Miller, 2008; Mir, 2009). Research has found that many Muslim women in schools perform their faith while simultaneously enacting counter-narratives to stereotypes of Muslim women (that they are backward or lack agency) by performances of normality, modernity, and liberation (Ajrouch, 2004; Mir, 2009). It is important to note that these studies have taken place on college campuses, while only a few students have looked at the school experiences of Muslim girls prior to college. My study fills a gap in looking particularly at this high school age of immigrant youth.

Sarroub’s (2005) groundbreaking study of Yemeni American Muslim girls born in the U.S. revealed complex tensions in the lives of girls, and is the major work on Muslim girls’ experiences in middle school and high school. Each of the girls in this study were seeking to negotiate meaning and identities between a U.S. school and a Yemeni home while fearing that they would become less than “good Muslim women” through feelings of failure at being both American and Yemeni (Sarroub, 2005). Focusing on notions of success, Sarroub explored how her participants negotiate home and school worlds, and how the concept of success becomes complex as it interacts with cultural, linguistic, religious, familial, and personal factors. She notes that, “folk and personal theories of success are as important in the construction of individual and communal identities within traditional boundaries” (2005, p. 3). Sarroub acknowledges that traditional notions of culture are static and reexamines them as a framework in which to address the role of the individual and identity formation in various contexts for her

participants. Based on theoretical foundations of Ogbu's concept of Cultural Ecology Theory (1978, 1983, 1991) as well as Bourdieu's (1984) concept of habitus, Sarroub argues that "culture is both historical action and the present enactment of that history, and the habitus enables the cultural process as Ogbu has defined it," while these enactments are "mediated by both behavior and discourse" within the Yemeni American girls' experiences and voices (2005, p. 4).

What is unique about Sarroub's (2005) work and that of Ajrouch (2004) is that both focus on experiences of gender and Islam within the context of Dearborn, Michigan, a heavily Muslim and Arab community in the U.S. While this is important in understanding their findings, specifically community pressures experienced by the participants, it is also important to understand how these experiences might be different, or similar, when Muslims are a minority in one's community and school. Due to strong community values based on religious and ethnic tradition, the girls in both studies found liberation in the classroom, as well as anxiety due to pressures from other Muslim students to maintain behavior of a "good Muslim girl" or pressure from teachers to act "more American" (Ajrouch, 2004; Sarroub, 2005). However, my study focused on Muslim youth within a community that is predominately Christian and Latino, and it was interesting to note how gender and religion took different shape when Islam is the minority religion, and the larger community is diverse in its own ways.

A teacher-narrative written by Karp (2007) was the only literature found, in an extensive search, which bridged the intersections of gender, religion, and immigration for recent immigrant Muslim high school girls. This work discusses a particular experience between a teacher and a Bangladeshi Muslim female high school student who faced the possibility of an arranged marriage graduation. Karp's experiences of concern and a reaction of intervention demonstrate many educators' desire to "save" Muslim girls from cultural tradition. He acknowledges that his

reactions represented a “superior” and “advanced” set of “progressive Western culture” and he denounced what he, “as an outsider, saw as ‘deficient’ in his student’s culture, even encouraging her to turn her back on it, her family, and community” (Karp, 2007, p. 195). Karp’s story brings to light a struggle of many educators to both be respectful of students’ cultures while trying to help them as only they know how, which is often based on their own beliefs of dominant U.S. cultural values. It also connects to some students’ struggle with maintaining cultural values within a U.S. context (Ajrouch, 2004; Chaudhury & Miller, 2008; Mir 2009).

Youth “perform gender” in their experiences, and in their meaning-making. In ethnographic works, Thorne (1993), Brown (1998), and Ferguson (2001) explore how youth “take up” what they experience in terms of performative gendered acts. In other words, how they “do” gender. This positions the school as a site of cultural production, as youth make meaning of experiences through gendered lenses. This does not consider a “boy culture” and “girl culture,” but rather, how individuals “do gender” and their processes of feminine and masculine identification. Therefore, the literature shaped this study as performance of gender was considered in the religious and cultural practices of youth.

Identity and national origin

Although often-labeled in pan-ethnic or religious terms, the national origins of newly arrived immigrant youth do play a significant part in their identity formation and expression. Blackledge and Creese (2010a) found that a salient theme emerging from the words and experiences of participants was the concept of “nationalism” based on ancestral homes or countries of origin. Teaching, learning, and voicing a national collective memory, use of national symbols such as flags and national anthems, and connecting the importance of maintaining one’s language to maintaining national loyalties are ways in which the national

identity of individuals and communities is manifested within a new homeland (Blackledge & Creese, 2010a)

Recently arrived immigrants maintain memories and connections to their home countries and use their frames of reference to make sense of their new experiences. Awokoya and Clark (2008) found that many African immigrant youth employ a “dual frame of reference” in making sense of their school experiences. Specifically, immigrants of color are able to view social and academic obstacles within their new U.S. school experiences through the lens of their home country experiences (Awokoya & Clark, 2008). This can lead to students’ conceptualization of barriers within U.S. schooling as difficult, but still comparatively better off than challenges faced in their home countries (Gibson, 1988; Valenzuela, 1999).

In my research study, nationalism is an important part of the students of Bangladeshi background in particular. As fairly recent arrivals to the United States, Bangladeshis tend to maintain ethnic enclaves based on nationality in the areas where they settle. Considering the still-new national identity of Bangladesh (having received independence in 1971 on the grounds of their linguistic differences), many new immigrants, especially those escaping poverty, attempt to preserve their newfound Bangladeshi identity in the United States (Gardner, 1995).

Although Bangladeshi Americans are often lumped together into the larger Muslim community of Arabs because most Bangladeshis are Muslims, or within Indian or Pakistani communities based on their geographies, Bangladeshi immigrants have a distinct identity (Warner, 1992). Bengali concepts of *desh* (country or home) and *bidesh* (foreign country) are fluid ideas, rather than rigidly bound locales, and are also dynamically connected and related. *Desh* is where the social group is located, and it can be recreated in *bidesh*, which means that home culture and community can exist within the United States for Bangladeshi immigrants.

Blackledge and Creese (2010a) and Warner (1992) found a strong connection between Bengali speakers and the notion of Bangladesh as a “homeland,” regardless of where one currently lives or was born.

The literature is quite thin on the intersection of identity and national origin for immigrant youth; it focuses more on pan-ethnic identities (Arab, West African, etc.). However, it is still important to consider the youth’s sense of national origin, and the importance of place and home country for immigrant youth, as this may inform meaning-making experiences, interactions and groupings with others, and understandings of oneself. My study also considered national origin as means of identification for these youth.

Literature on national identity of Muslim immigrants makes connections to racial identity that shaped how different groups experienced immigration. By being legally classified as “white,” the early Syrian-American community was ultimately allowed to maintain strong connections with their homeland and sponsor others for immigration, and connect with the larger Syrian diasporic community (Gualtieri, 2009). This early classification as white came with a clear and specific purpose: to be considered for U.S. citizenship in the midst of anti-Asian laws, quotas, and nativism.

The classification of whiteness for early Middle Eastern immigrants was a legal distinction and not necessarily one that played out in a social reality. The KKK, built on a foundation of white supremacy employed tactics of intimidation and violence similar to the violence against African Americans during this early period of immigration (Gualtieri, 2009). While the U.S. Census clearly designates Middle Easterners under the check-box of “white”, Tehranian (2008) points out that “reality does not mesh with this bureaucratic position” (p. 8) and Middle Easterners do not enjoy the benefits of white privilege (Shyrock, 2008; Tehranian,

2008). Muslims from both the Middle East and South Asia are continuously discriminated against based on prevalent stereotypes of extremism or anti-Americanism (Abu El-Haj, 2005; Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Haddad, 2004; McMurthie, 2010; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Mir, 2009; Sabry & Bruna, 2007; Samhan, 1999; Shammass 2009; Suleiman, 2004; Tehranian, 2008). They experience discrimination in contexts ranging from individual acts of prejudice to restrictive government policies targeting this specific group. Within the current era of increased multiculturalism, discrimination against many minority groups is in decline, while Muslim Americans have faced rising, rather than diminishing, degrees of discrimination (Bakalian & Bozorgmehr, 2009; Tehranian, 2008).

Abu El-Haj (2005) acknowledges the racial subordination of Arabs in a U.S. context, including violence against individuals of Arab, Muslim, South Asian, or Middle Eastern descent. Tehranian emphasizes the “role of performance in the race-making process” (2008, p. 7) and how for Middle Easterners to benefit from white privilege, they must give up their Middle Eastern-ness. Middle Easterners enjoy the rights of white privilege only through “assimilatory behavior” as “white privilege became a quid pro quo for white performance” (Tehranian, 2008, p. 8). This includes such performances as the Anglifying of last names, not wearing the hijab or long beards, praying in private, and intermarrying.

Although Muslims belong to a myriad of national, ancestral, religious, and linguistic origins, “the dominant ideology of Euro-American epistemology has forced them into an essentialized and totalized unit that is perceived to have little or no internal variation” (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2008, p. 378). Since 9/11, U.S. policy moves such as the Special Registration immigration regulation, the USA PATRIOT Act, the widespread use of racial profiling in airports and government actions, as well as hate crime perpetrated by individuals, point to the

racialization of Muslims and Middle Easterners as “an other” (Tehrani, 2008). Rich and Troudi (2006) also point to how religion, as part of culture, has led to racialization of Saudi Arabian emergent bilinguals in the United Kingdom, and created an atmosphere of Islamophobia. My study pays attention to the racialized identities of Arab, South Asian, West African and Muslim youth, and how youth themselves conceptualize race in diverse ways.

As recent Muslim immigrant youth identify with race in multiple ways, Critical Race Theory can open dialogue, conversation, and understanding for both the researcher and participants about the ways in which the construction and structures of race in the United States have influenced identity construction and school experience. Youth in my study explored their own “calls” to their Muslimness, South Asianness, Arabness, or Africanness, an experience that reflects the racial groupings, structures, and one’s place in a larger society (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2008). This created a focus for research and meaning-making of student experiences. Looking at the intersections of race and identity was helpful in approaching questions that focused on other aspects of youth identity, specifically homeland, or national origin.

The intersections between language, national origin and religion for immigrant youth creates a unique experience that is central to understanding individuals’ interactions, understandings of self, and meaning making of their school experience. In order to examine how youth in my study make meaning of their educations, it was integral to get a sense of how they see themselves, how they identify, and how their identities interact and intersect to shape unique individuals and understandings. Race and gender were also considered in this study. However, as race and gender were not used in isolation in the analysis of data, and in youth’s conceptualization of their own identities, it was more useful to look at these in relation to, and in part of, other aspects of youth identity. It was also important to understand how these youth are

being educated in the United States, the subject of the next section.

Education of emergent bilinguals

Every school year, students in New York, and throughout the United States, born in other countries and speaking languages other than English, enter public schools. These youth are most often referred to as English Language Learners (ELLs) by educators or as Limited English proficient (LEPs) by governments and policy-makers. These two labels focus on what students *do not* have, their limitations or lacking of English, rather than focusing on students' developing bilingualism and linguistic strength. Using the term *emergent bilinguals* for these students is important for the youth themselves, their education and sense of self, for families and communities, and for the larger educational and policy environments (García 2009b).

People of all ages, and throughout the world, use language for many different purposes, ranging from the social to the sacred. Linguaging and language practices can act as “symbol systems” (Fishman, 1996; García, 2009a) and they become representative of the speakers, communities, or sacredness of a language itself. Therefore, the way in which individuals language and engage in language practices has an impact on their understandings of their contexts, themselves and others. Scholars have argued that language is a social construct rather than a natural structured system, and is thus embedded with symbolic meaning and power in various contexts (Bourdieu, 1991; Blackledge & Creese, 2010a; García, 2009a, 2010; Heller, 2006, 2007). Considering factors of globalization, transnationalism, and immigration, “the fact that education takes place in the *de jure* or *de facto* official language means that most children in the world are educated in a language other than that of home” (García, 2009a, p. 26). As youth

engage in education, they are interacting with new languaging, at times (and especially in the context of my study) different than that of their home and social languaging.

In social languaging or personal communication, language is often accompanied by paralinguistic cues and meaningful interpersonal and situation cues, and is thus considered “contextualized language” (Cummins, 1994; García, 2009a). Academic language, on the other hand, is often devoid of this. García (2009a) argues that, language is a social practice that cannot be defined without consideration of the individuals speaking it and the context in which it is used. Blackledge and Creese (2010) situate languaging practices in a social context as well and see “new multilingualism emerge, as young people create meanings with their diverse linguistic repertoires” (p. 25). Therefore, while academic-based English language within a school may carry with it a particular status of power, students make meaning using their own languagings, and also may negotiate different statuses of languages. Spanish, for example, may hold social power within a Newcomer school environment.

Spoken and written languaging is diverse and complex, and especially in some of the communities of the students within my study. There is a complexity of language choice for students coming from former European colonies throughout Africa and Asia (Njue & Retish, 2010), as many may speak multiple languages prior to their arrival in the United States. Many of the emergent bilinguals in this study (and from similar regions or countries) were schooled in a language other than that of their home in their native countries. For example, in Togo, students are schooled in French, a language different from that of the children. Students from Morocco who speaks Darija (Moroccan Arabic influenced by French and Berber) at home are educated through Modern Standard Arabic or French. A student from Mali may have used French for schooling, Bambara with French in the home, and may have learned Arabic through religious

studies and prayer. In the United States often these African, Asian and Middle Eastern students may communicate in a colonial language they share, which is not their home language. For example, a student from Togo and a student from Mali speak French together as they work on writing in English for class. Understanding the intersection between language and education for immigrant youth was valuable for my study. Within this space lies issues of power, identity, and languaging practices that impact (and are impacted by) youth languaging and meaning making.

English language acquisition and development

It is important to look at the current political landscape of English language learning in the United States and bilingual education, when considering research focusing on teaching and learning of additional languages. National debate over English and language diversity in the United States extends into classrooms. As Blackledge and Creese (2010a) note, “the discourse of politicians and media commentators has frequently characterized the use and visibility of minority languages other than English as problematic” (p. 5), as the education of emergent bilinguals gets wrapped up in debates of immigration, diversity, and multiculturalism. Crawford (2007) argues that misunderstandings about the nature of bilingual education, as well as racism towards minority population and xenophobic sentiment, contribute to a lack of support for bilingualism within schools.

Research on additional-language acquisition has shown that it takes five to seven years for emergent bilinguals to develop academic literacy abilities in an additional language (Collier, 1995). However, school accountability measures require recent immigrant students to take high-stakes, standardized tests in English after one year of their arrival, and require these tests as benchmarks for passing to the next grade and for graduation. Recent research shows that issues such as these high-stakes tests, are more consequential to emergent bilinguals at the secondary

level and contribute to inequitable opportunities for them (Abedi, 2007; Menken, 2008). In her work with emergent bilinguals preparing for the New York State Regents, Menken (2008) found that an unintended consequences of the tests included negatively impacting students' engagement in school and their self-esteem. These high stakes tests often pushed students to drop out of school or to seek alternative diplomas.

Research (Cummins, 1994; García, 2009a) has shown that students acquire additional languages easier and better based on the stronger foundation of linguistic awareness and literacy in their home language. Considering this, it is important to look at the education that students may have received in their home countries, and the home language support they continue to receive (or not receive) in their new, U.S. school. Some students arrive in the U.S. with low levels of literacy in their home language. In New York State, these students are labeled SIFE, or Students with Interrupted Formal Education.

Norton (1995) posits a theory of additional language acquisition that integrates the language learner and the context of the learning while questioning how power relations within the social world impact social interactions between learners and target language speakers. Rather than conceptualizing emergent bilinguals' "motivation," Norton (1995, 2000) reconceptualizes what is commonly thought of as "motivation" in learning to be the "investment" of emergent bilinguals in learning English. Therefore, students' investment in an additional language is "also an investment in their own social identity" (García & Zakharia, 2010, p. 527). This connection between language learning and identity was useful to frame findings in this study focused on youth participants' translanguaging and educational linguistic ideologies.

Bilingual education in the twentieth century reflected the ways in which society defined bilingualism at the time, from a monolingual perspective (García, 2009a). That is, since monolingualism was considered the norm, languages were seen as separate, discrete entities. Thus “legitimate linguistic practices are only those enacted by monolinguals” (García, 2009a, p. 115) within this framework. From this perspective, bilingual education programs are considered either within the frameworks of “subtractive” bilingualism, as a students’ home language is devalued, or “additive” bilingualism, in which a students’ home language is maintained and developed while a new language is learned (Cummins, 1994). Subtractive bilingualism often resulted in a child’s language shift to the dominant language (García, 2009a), and transitional bilingual education programs were implemented to do so. Additive bilingualism frameworks resulted in maintenance and enrichment models of bilingual education (Fishman, 1976; Hornberger, 1991, as cited in García, 2009a), but languages are still compartmentalized, or treated as separate entities within the same person. Within the United States, most of these types of bilingual programs are only offered for Spanish-speaking students, as they require a certain concentration of same-language speaking children. However, some communities offer bilingual programs in other languages such as the Somali bilingual support at Cedar High School in the Midwest which uses a transitional model, with Amharic and Oromo being offered in another school within the district (Njue & Retish, 2010). However, this is a rarity, and even in predominately Arab communities, such as Dearborn, Michigan, recent arrivals are educated in English-only programs (Ajrouch, 2004; Sarroub, 2005).

Because the populations within this study have small concentrations of same-home-language classmates and schoolmates, bilingual education programs are not an option within the school, or even within the city. Although the students who participated in my study are not in

educational programs officially designated as bilingual, there is still a presence of bilingualism, and even multilingualism, in education, through communication, materials, and students' own meaning-making. That is, Latino students often speak Spanish among themselves in classrooms, and teachers often use Spanish orally, and even in handouts. As linguistic minority students, the youth in my study are engaging in language education in a unique way, different from that of their Spanish-speaking classmates. Although there is much literature on how language minority immigrants are acquiring English in schools, there is no available literature on what happens to students who are from very small language groups and who may be "singletons" in a classroom.

Dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging

García's (2009a) notion of dynamic bilingualism is based on the "realization of multiple co-existing norms which characterize bilingual speech" and on a heteroglossia which supports multimodal use of language interactions. Programs within this framework help students to develop the ability to communicate fluidly across linguistic planes and to use various languages for various tasks (Blackledge & Creese, 2010b; Cummins, 2007, García et. al. 2012). This linguistic flexibility acknowledges that languages are not compartmentalized within an individual, nor can they be within the classroom.

Translanguaging refers to the "multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds" (García, 2009a, p. 45). The reformulation of translanguaging, from the work of Welsh educator, Cen Williams, was used in describing the use of multiple languages for learning input and output. García (2009a) extends this framework to the classroom in exploring multilingual interactions between and among teachers and students. Translanguaging also acknowledges Cummins' (2000) theory of a "common underlying proficiency," which acknowledges that the languages of a bilingual are not separate, but interact

within cognitive processes. Translanguaging is important in classrooms where multilingual students are making sense of their learning, and use the home language in reading, speaking, listening, or writing. Throughout my study, translanguaging pedagogies were seen and heard in English and Spanish, with teaching and learning materials (posters, books, lessons). The translanguaging of language minority youth here took on a unique dimension, as there was rarely, if ever, an adult who shared students' common home languages.

Content learning

High-stakes tests, such as the New York State Regents, are used to ensure students meet specific academic standards based on skills and content knowledge. Although, in theory, these assessments are testing content knowledge, such as math, science, and history, the use of such tests are often conceived as tests of language, especially when emergent bilinguals are required to pass tests in the dominant language of the schools before they can graduate (Menken, 2008). Math classes, in particular, often provide a contradictory space of learning for emergent bilinguals. While many educators attest to the “universal language” of math (and thus greater ease for emergent bilinguals), math is increasingly involving more academic language. Often teachers will focus on math work requiring lower language abilities, relying more on numbers and symbols, which can be helpful and attainable for emergent bilinguals in the short run, but that does not adequately prepare them for language-intensive standardized math assessments (Wright & Li, 2008).

Research stresses that in all areas of learning, in each content area class, students' cultures and languages should be valued and validated through pedagogical practices (Dong, 2007; García, 2009a; Moll, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Walqui, 2007). Walqui (2007) explores the social nature of learning, emphasizing the need for interaction within content learning, and in

her work, builds on Bruner's theory of scaffolding by extending it as a valuable pedagogical tool for emergent bilinguals. Scaffolding is an approach that includes the following collaborative and interactive teaching strategies in the education of emergent bilinguals: (1) modeling, (2) bridging, (3) contextualizing, (4) schema building, (5) re-presenting text, and (6) developing metacognition (Walqui, 2007). These strategies are seen as a valuable way to approach content learning for emergent bilinguals in high school. Also important is explaining to students how they themselves learn, thus making the educational process explicit and transparent while investing students in their own meta-cognition.

Using a "funds of knowledge" framework (Moll, 2007) positions students' communities', and families as "the essential cultural practices and bodies of knowledge and information that households use to survive, to get ahead, or to thrive" (p. 274). From this perspective, emergent bilinguals, families, and communities represent a wealth of knowledge and resources that can have an enormous impact on positive educational change (García, 2009a; Moll, 2007; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999; Walqui, 2007). However, this is a challenge for many schools, engaged in culturally-subtractive educational practices (Nieto & Bode, 2008; Valenzuela, 1999). Moll's (2007) framework, however, focuses on sociocultural dynamics of students' households and communities as providing valuable educational insight and connections to the larger, changing economy. For example, in a science class, teachers seek the input and knowledge of families and children for content knowledge on health care (herbal or non-Western), agriculture, or animal husbandry to support traditional education. In an economics class, family and student experience in business, consumer knowledge, accounting, household management, or international import/export are tapped into, while in a math class, knowledge and skill in construction, or tailoring would be employed in various geometry lessons. What is integral here

is that parents, families, and members of students' communities are contributing intellectually to students' academic experiences and content learning (Moll, 2007).

In a comparative study of three biology teachers working with emergent bilinguals, Yu Ren Dong (2007) explored beneficial practices when working with newly arrived immigrant students who do not speak English. His findings suggest the following results that provided effective and meaningful science content instruction for emergent bilinguals:

- Providing comprehensible input and integrating language and biology instruction;
- Promoting language use and scientific thinking through group work;
- Explicitly teaching learning skills;
- Acknowledging cultural differences and using a modified classroom talk;
- Appreciating diversity and using students' prior knowledge in biology instruction;
- Enriching the curriculum and providing a rich language use environment.

(Dong, 2007; p 260)

The teachers of emergent bilinguals here combined their understandings of language development, content teaching, and cultural respect in order to create a positive, supportive, and rigorous learning environment for emergent bilinguals. Content learning for emergent bilinguals is an important area to consider when looking into the meaning making of school experiences for these youth. Within content area instruction, youth are often faced with opportunities to connect with their own lives and learn about new and diverse concepts, people, and views. A more vivid picture of emergent bilinguals' educational experiences can be gained by looking at how content is taught in conjunction with English language development and social emotional learning, as they each seek to address different needs, skills, and knowledge of students.

Social-emotional learning

Social emotional learning is an important aspect of education for all students, regardless of age, language, background, or school context (CASEL, 2008; Greenberg, et. al., 2003; Kugler & Price, 2009; Zins, et. al, 2004). The Center for Social Emotional Education has recently

renamed itself the National School Climate Center. This change in title sheds light on the importance of social emotional learning integrated into the curriculum and everyday school structures in order to create a positive school environment within and beyond classroom walls.

Emergent bilinguals with refugee status often experience post-traumatic stress and emotional trauma after escaping war and violence, and many have lived in refugee camps with unhealthy conditions and interrupted educations (Kugler & Price, 2009). Students experiencing difficult journeys of immigration may also face anxiety and stress, considering the trauma of leaving a home country, a familiar way of life, family, and language, and now faced with a new country, school system, community, language, and way of life. It is therefore, the role and responsibility of schools to address the social and emotional development and needs of students, and to consider the unique experiences of emergent bilinguals as they engage in education beyond language acquisition and content learning.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional and Learning (2010) has identified five core groups of social emotional competencies to be implemented and taught throughout the content areas within K-12 schools:

- Self-awareness
- Self-management
- Social awareness
- Relationship skills
- Responsible decision-making (2010, p. 1)

Through these core competencies, students are able to recognize and manage emotions, develop care and empathy for others, create and maintain positive relationships, evaluate and make responsible decisions, and approach difficult situations with constructive and ethical reflection.

CASEL (2008) suggests many different ways to integrate social and emotional learning into content area classes. Some of their suggestions include: empathy skills based on characters in

literature or actors in history, problem-solving frameworks in science, and fiscal responsibility in math. Ideally in Social and Emotional Learning (SEL), the core competencies become a part of routine classroom practice throughout the day, embedded in curriculum and overall school structures (CASEL, 2008).

Research from the fields of psychology and education reflect the importance of social emotional learning in schools for students of diverse backgrounds, ages, experiences, and school contexts, resulting in both social and academic benefits (Greenberg, et. al., 2003; Zins, et. al., 2004). The Collaborative for Social, Emotional, and Academic Learning (2008) engaged in a large-scale meta-analysis of 207 studies of SEL programs. They found that SEL programs decreased student emotional distress (anxiety, depression), decreased behavioral problems and student aggression. In addition, students made noticeable improvements in the five core SEL competencies (CASEL, 2008). Another major finding was the increased academic achievement and social interaction of students, as well as greater collaboration between teachers and staff to better support students, since all participated in the SEL program (Marulanda, 2010).

SEL has also been seen to create positive school learning environments, increased academic performance, and better long-term life outcomes (Marulanda, 2010). According to CASEL's research (2008), these elements are mutually reinforcing because students learn, and are influenced by, their socially and emotionally skilled classmates who engage in more caring and safe practices. Therefore, these positive learning environments provide real-world, authentic contexts and opportunities for students to apply and further develop their social and emotional competencies.

Within the context of a Newcomer school, as was the site of my study, SEL is often a foundation of the school mission or the goal of educators. This is in response to the unique

needs of emergent bilinguals and recently arrived immigrants who may be facing new environments, relationships, interactions, and languages. This also has to do with adolescence, which, in itself, is often seen by educators as a time to develop social-emotional skills and understandings.

A gap in this research of the education of emergent bilinguals, from the academic to the social-emotional, lies in the specific context of Newcomer schools. One question my study sought to address learning, languaging, and social-emotional understandings within the context of a multilingual Newcomer school. This unique context is explored in the following section.

Newcomer schools

Newcomer schools within the United States are established for a very specific purpose: to meet the needs of recently-arrived immigrant youth. The vast majority of the literature on emergent bilinguals and their school experiences is focused on comprehensive high school environments. For example, interactions explored are often based on a dichotomy of immigrant versus native-born students (Awokoya & Clark, 2008; Traoré, 2006; Traoré & Lukens, 2006; Njue & Retish, 2010; Valenzuela, 1999), and academic learning for emergent bilinguals is often viewed in contrast to a general education program for monolinguals. Research involving African immigrant students in particular has focused mostly on the tensions or conflicts between African immigrant students and African American students (Awokoya & Clark, 2008; Traoré, 2006; Traoré & Lukens, 2006; Njue & Retish, 2010) in the context of comprehensive schools. These are all contexts that may share moment or perspectives, but the interactions within an all-immigrant youth school are unique to explore. Therefore, for the purposes of my study, it was important to look at the special context of Newcomer schools in which the student population is

ethnically, religiously, and linguistically diverse, but all students can be identified as emergent bilinguals.

Models of learning and support

Programs offered by Newcomer schools provide students with the academic and language tools to succeed in schooling (Lieberman, Nadelstern, & Berman, 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999; García & Sylvan, 2011). Newcomer schools, or international schools as they are sometimes referred to, are often described as having a “family-like” environment with small classes and teachers who understand the unique issues faced by immigrant youth, as well as peers coming from similar backgrounds who provide an alternative school experience to the isolation and rejection often experienced by emergent bilinguals in mainstream schools (Feinberg, 2000).

Most of these Newcomer schools are located in neighborhoods of high, concentrated poverty, and according to critics (Feinberg, 2000), they help to reproduce social inequalities that many new immigrant students and communities face and contribute to segregation. Another criticism of Newcomer schools is that students within these schools are limited in opportunities for cross-cultural interactions with peers from other cultures (Feinberg, 2000).

The majority of the research, however, overwhelmingly points to the positive impact of Newcomer schools on newly arrived immigrant adolescent students. One of the first programs of this kind was San Francisco’s Newcomer High School, established in 1979, which offered both English language instruction and bilingual classes, but students only remained at the school for a maximum of one year (Feinberg, 2000). The goal of this school, like some Newcomer schools to follow, was to facilitate and accelerate students’ English language acquisition and the integration of newly arrived immigrant students into comprehensive schools and mainstream society. The

temporary nature of many Newcomer high schools is not unique to the San Francisco model, and can also be seen at a Newcomer high school in lower Manhattan (Schnur, 1999) where newly arrived immigrants participated in a one-year transitional program for English acquisition, as well as bilingual instruction in Spanish, Chinese, and Polish. This model, however, differed from the site of this study and from many other Newcomer high schools in NYC.

While serving similar populations of newly arrived immigrants, the research site, Global High School, served emergent bilinguals throughout their high school experience, as the majority of students spend at least four years in the school (less if they enter after 9th grade, or more if they take up to six years to graduate).

In meeting the needs of newly arrived immigrants, many Newcomer schools also address issues of physical health (immunizations, eye and dental exams), mental health (especially for refugee students), cross-cultural understanding, and what they consider to be lessons and learning of “American culture”, and acculturation to U.S. schools (Lieberman et. al., 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999). Because the Newcomer schools are so unique, it is important to understand how these schools bridge public school education for an immigrant student population. My study brought to light social, academic, and cultural goals of these Newcomers schools which can provides insight into the larger structural and instructional forces that shape a student’s experience and how they made meaning of such a school experience.

Critical pedagogy

Working within Bourdieu’s theory of habitus, within a particular “field,” a certain habitus can gain power, thus becoming a valuable resource or “cultural capital” which refers to “knowledge and skills that constitute resources or power that one is endowed with by virtue of

socialization and education in one's family and community" (Kubota & Lin, 2007, p.11). Focusing on language, García (2009a) acknowledges how Bourdieu's (1991) theory also acknowledges "linguistic capital," which values students' ability to use and appropriate various ways of using language. Bourdieu (1984, 1991) contends that inequities in cultural capital can seep into the educational environment, causing some students to experience struggle. This connects to what Sabry and Bruna's (2007) "cultural mismatch theory" which conceptualizes academic failure as a result of the gap, the differences, between students' home and school cultures. While most of the research using cultural mismatch theory focuses on racial/ethnic minorities, this can also be experienced by religious minorities, especially Muslim students within a Christian-dominant school and society (Abu El-Haj, 2005; Sabry and Bruna, 2007).

Within U.S. schools, learning about Arab, African, South Asian, and Muslim cultures has been mostly absent, stereotypical, or misinformed, as a result, these students often feel alienated or misrepresented within their schools and classrooms (Suleiman, 2004). Heller (2007) found similar experiences of cultural mismatch based on language in her work in a Canadian school as she explored tensions between the monolingual ideology of the school in contrast to the multilingual reality of some of the students. García (2009b) notes that there is a need for "practices firmly rooted in the multilingual and multimodal language and literacy practices of children in schools of the twenty-first century" (p. 8), and if schools and classrooms are to be sites of critical pedagogy, language is a central factor to be considered.

Despite the dearth of culturally relevant pedagogy in practice within U.S. schools, some levels of diversity and culturally relevant curriculum do make their way into the literature on Newcomer schools. For example, some Newcomer schools offer bilingual education (for some languages). The Internationals network in New York City is comprised of several Newcomer

high schools that seek to meet the cultural, linguistic, and academic needs of recently-arrived immigrant youth. At such schools, cultural relevance lies in academic content and the use of plurilingual pedagogies, empowering the linguistic cultures of students. In describing this pedagogy, García et. al. (2011) explore how:

the pedagogy is a plurilingual one, dynamically centered on the individual students' language practices—that is, on the singularity of the plurality in the classroom. . . . The Internationals approach was developed based on the understanding that individuals are incredibly diverse and that immigrant adolescents, who are emergent bilinguals and arriving with limited knowledge of English, still have a large array of abilities, knowledge, and experiences— linguistic, cognitive, artistic, social, in many other spheres. (p. 392)

Here in the Internationals network, teaching and learning starts with the diverse strengths of recently-arrived immigrant youth. This includes teachers encouraging and incorporating students' home language use, or translanguaging (García, 2009a) in the classroom. This approach to emergent bilinguals' learning was important to consider when looking at how the youth in this study experienced classrooms. Plurilingual pedagogy was a useful framework to use when considering how some students of a home language majority were educated, while others did not experience the same type of learning.

However, most Newcomer schools do not go so far as to incorporate plurilingual pedagogy, or a culturally relevant pedagogy, in the classroom. They may simply offer cultural fairs or culinary events where students bring in food of their home countries or communities (Hertzberg, 1998; Lieberman, et. al., 1992; Shnur, 1999; Short & Boyson, 2004). This can be considered what Nieto and Bode (2008) refer to as the “tour and detour” approach to multicultural education, as cultures and diversity are included only through surface-level celebrations of food, dress, and holidays, rather than through a more comprehensive and pervasive approach to affirming diversity within the school.

The curriculum within Newcomer schools can best reflect the importance of these linguistic and cultural practices by fostering home language practices and connections to home culture and community. Strengthening students' home language practices provides an integral foundation for English language acquisition (Crawford, 1998; Cummins, 1994; Feinberg, 2000; García, 2009a; Hertzberg, 1998; Krashen, 1981; Lieberman, et. al., 1992; Nieto & Bode, 2008; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999). García (2009a) also acknowledges that “bilingual education has the potential to give access to languages of power” (p. 12), thus providing students with greater cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984, 1991) in order to compete and succeed in mainstream U.S. society and gain access to institutions and opportunities.

A culturally relevant curriculum is best delivered through a critical pedagogy, engaging in dialogue and analysis of the world, while the school community as a whole draws on students' strengths, experiences, lives, and perspectives (Freire, 1970; Pennycook, 1990, 1999). Cummins (1994) notes that for emergent bilinguals, students can find success to the extent to which school practices and interactions “actively challenge societal power relations” (p. 46). Pennycook calls for “a pedagogy of engagement” and an approach to English-language learning for emergent bilinguals that “sees such issues as gender, race, class, sexuality, and post- colonialism as so fundamental to identity and language that they need to form the basis of curricular organization and pedagogy” (1999, p. 340). Critical pedagogy is grounded on a vision of both social and educational justice and equity, as it acknowledges the inherently political nature of education. It is committed to social change beyond the school walls, while pursuing equality and alleviating human suffering, including the prevention of harm to students themselves. Critical pedagogy also acknowledges the way power operates in society and within a school and the different knowledge and ways of learning for students (Kincheloe, 2008).

Considering the explicit care that many Newcomer schools, teachers, and staff, give recently arrived immigrants (Noddings, 1984; Lieberman, et. al., 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999), school communities can be considered sites of critical pedagogy. Kincheloe (2008) draws on the work of Freire (1970) in putting forth a concept of critical pedagogy as being injected with “radical love” which seeks to “bring the power of love to our everyday lives and social institutions” (p. 3). School achievement improves when instructional practices address students’ culture, experiences and learning styles (Gay, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 2001; Nieto and Bode, 2008). Culturally relevant pedagogy is validating and affirming, comprehensive, multidimensional, empowering and transformative (Gay, 1994, Ladson-Billings, 1995) and Newcomer schools in particular, in mission statements and websites, point to the recognition of students’ cultures and specific needs as what makes them particularly successful (Lieberman et. al., 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999).

Culture-centered theory (CCT) within education, (Awokoya & Clark, 2008) along with critical pedagogy (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008) and bilingualism in education, can be used in imagining ideal goals of newcomer education based on culturally relevant teaching. Minority students, including immigrants, face structural, institutional, and pedagogical obstacles that impede their opportunities for academic success in schools (Ladson-Billings, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2008). CCT seeks to challenge institutionalized racism and norms of Eurocentric cultural dominance that contribute to educational barriers for minority students. Theory within this field acknowledges the disconnect between dominant school culture, and the cultural diversity of ethnic and linguistic minorities has a negative impact on academic development and school engagement (Gay, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995). Newcomer schools often pride

themselves in incorporating students' cultures within school and note that their populations of 100% recently arrived immigrants help to break down many inequities that emergent bilinguals often face in comprehensive high schools (Lieberman et. al., 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999).

It is also important to acknowledge the limitations of a CCT framework and concepts of culturally relevant pedagogy. Scholars suggest that culture can be perceived and experienced in diverse ways depending on different academic fields, generations, and geographical contexts (Yon, 2000). Considering this fluid and dynamic nature of culture it is important to consider the following questions of culturally relevant pedagogy: (1) How is culture defined? (2) Who is defining culture? (3) Which cultures are integrated into the classroom? (Awokoya & Clark, 2008). How these questions are answered, and who has the power to answer them, greatly influences which students' cultures are affirmed in the classroom, and to what degree (Banks, 1999; Gay, 1994; Ladson-Billings, 1994, 1995; Nieto & Bode, 2008). In the context of Newcomer schools, it is valuable to explore the research on critical pedagogy. This is often a pedagogical goal and social mission of these schools as they strive for culturally-relevant learning and a caring context.

Collaborative structures for social interactions

For newly arrived immigrant students, school success is often associated with the strength and prestige of their home community, including their identification and anchored membership within that community, which provides access to its cultural social capital (Bourdieu, 1984; Feinberg, 2000; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001). Within the context of schooling, research shows a strong connection between a sense of belonging and student success, retention and general educational satisfaction (Osterman 2000; Shammass, 2009). The literature reveals

that students who experience acceptance from peers, teachers, and the school community are generally highly motivated and more engaged in the learning (Osterman, 2000). Many Newcomer schools pride themselves on providing a sense of belonging for their newly arrived immigrant students (Lieberman et. al., 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999), while not exposing them to the often harsh realities of a comprehensive schools, its cliques, monolingualism, and ostracizing of those who do not fit into mainstream cultural norms.

Although Newcomer schools seek to be supportive environments, they are not immune to inequities among students (Feinberg, 2000). Students may also experience what Bourdieu calls “symbolic violence” (1984), which can greatly impact and influence further educational inequities and negative schooling. This symbolic violence may come from educators or peers, and is often in the form of prejudicial “microaggressions” (Solorzano, Yosso, & Ceia, 2000, Sue et. al. 2008). Racial microaggressions are defined as “brief and commonplace daily verbal, behavioral, or environmental indignities, whether intentional or unintentional, that communicate hostile, derogatory, or negative racial slights and insults” (Sue et. al. 2008, p. 271). The perpetrators are often unaware or ignorant of their damaging words or actions. Based on the racialization of Arabs, South Asians, and African emergent bilinguals, as well as the minority status of the Muslim religion, the experiences of youth participants in this study can be the subject of microaggressions based on various factors of their identity including race, ethnicity, religion or language (Abu El-Haj, 2005; Ali & Bagheri, 2009; Cole & Ahmadi, 2003; Haddad, 2004; McMurthie, 2010; Nasir & Al-Amin, 2006; Mir, 2009; Sabry & Bruna, 2007; Samhan, 1999; Shammass 2009; Suleiman, 2004; Tehranian, 2008; Traore, 2006; Traore and Lukens, 2006). The research literature, however, is silent on the ways in which diverse emergent

bilinguals in Newcomer high schools interact with each other when there is a linguistic majority and a diverse minority. This is one of the areas that this study seeks to explore in the unique context of a Newcomer high school with Spanish as a dominant immigrant language. It is hoped that the exploration of these interactions can now result in ways to support these students.

While demographics of the student population is the most unique aspect of Newcomer schools, they also differ from comprehensive, or mainstream, schools with regards to programming, staff, and school climates that address the population served. The literature on Newcomer schools often focuses on programmatic, structural, and pedagogical issues. Therefore, it does not focus on the stories of the students themselves. This is the major gap that my research study seeks to address within the context of a Newcomer school.

The Newcomer school in my study is similar to many ESL programs throughout New York City and the U.S. With a large, Spanish-speaking majority, the diverse smaller linguistic and religious minority youth as communities are often overlooked. This is the focus of this study.

Chapter 3

Meaningful Methodology: A pedagogical approach to arts-based research

Research Design

In conducting this study I focused on student perspectives. I specifically sought to provide opportunities for youth to engage in meaningful activities that could be useful for their own learning as well. It was also important to consider students' multiple ways of expressing themselves when considering how to collect and represent data. This was so, especially, because these youth were developing their English.

I engaged the youth in creating various artifacts: taking photography, map-making, book-making, and creating graphic arts pieces and collages. Also used in my study were opportunities for participants to use their home language with co-participants, as they worked on producing images. The participants also conducted and responded to peer interview using their home languages.

The primary purpose of the student-produced artifacts was to enhance and deepen the whole-group discussions, and the peer and one-on-one interviews with students. In these cases, the visuals aided the youth's narratives and helped to illustrate and prompt other stories. While youth's English is developing and emerging, these student-produced products were used to elicit information in interviews and discussions, providing additional representation of ideas, and building on more of the youth's communicative repertoires. The narratives about experiences and perspectives were supplemented by observations of these students in different school spaces.

The Reflective Model of Research Design (Luttrell, 2010a) is valuable to represent and explore my understanding of the importance of research relationships within the design. This

How I heard the voices of the boys whom I interviewed and how I listened to what they were saying changed qualitatively over the course of my research. I assumed at the start that I would learn *about* kids; but it was long before I was obliged to question this premise and begin to learn *from* children. This enabled me to tell their story from a fresh viewpoint. (p. 333)

Learning *from* students is an important framework of this research, considering youth the experts in their lives and purposefully using only youth as participants in the study. Ferguson's inclusion of youth as a research assistant opens the possibilities for youth participation in questioning, data collection and analysis. In her ethnographic work, *Bad Boys* (2010), Ferguson connects themes in students' experiences to songs that would be on their playlists. This data analysis takes on a representation that is real for the participants themselves — the music they listen to. I kept in mind this sense of accessibility to the project as I designed the research methodology, with youth taking a central role in question asking, creating, and answering through language and art.

To facilitate and make space for this engagement with art, group decision-making, whole-group discussions, peer-interviews, and youth input in the process, the majority of the data collection was elicited, created, and exchanged in after-school sessions. The story of how these sessions came about capture the position of these youth within the larger context of Global High School. I found myself in Global High School two years prior to this study working with their small Spanish-English bilingual program. As I visited classes and spoke with students and teachers, I noticed, as I discussed in the introduction, a group of students constantly setting up camp in the hallways after school. These students did not speak Spanish, as did 90% of the student population. I was able to communicate with them in Arabic and French, and so we formed a congenial relationship. I asked them why they were in the hallways for so long after school. They explained to me that they attended after-school classes, but not until 4:30 pm, and that their last class of the day ended at 3:00pm. The only class offered from 3:00-4:30 pm were

in the Spanish-English dual language bilingual program, so these students, the “other kids,” found themselves with an hour and a half of, basically, waiting around until their next class started. It was this gap that provided the time and space for our group to be formed, and for research to be conducted within a pedagogical setting.

The images on the following page were taken by Froudaous, one of the youth participants in this study. She asked her peers to recreate the hallway scene one afternoon, to document how many hours were spent before they had a place to be. She referred to this group as “The Hallway Community”:

Image 2: The Hallway Community by Froudaous (1), 11/9/11



Image 3: The Hallway Community by Froudaous (2), 11/9/11



Image 4: The Hallway Community by Froudaous (3), 11/9/11



Froudaous instructed her peers to “Do what we used to do,” and so they all played along, taking out their homework, notebooks. They began joking around and conversing in multiple languages. Froudaous added a note to me directly, gesturing to the youth sitting on the floor, “Miss, if you ask where I’m from, I’m from here too” (Field notes, 11/9/11).

The principal of the school agreed to provide in-school classroom space for my after-school sessions, to be held twice a week, for 90 minutes, for nine months (September through May). This after-school elective was entitled “Language Through Art.” Within these sessions (outlined in detail below), youth created visual responses to prompts, engaged in whole-group discussions on various topics, and shaped, conducted, and responded to interviews with myself and with peers using their artifacts as additional communication.

I considered specific ways to address power dynamics within this research project, taking into account age and language differences between myself and the youth participants. Barrie Thorne (2010) describes her desire to overcome barriers between herself and the youth in her research, as she describes her approach to research:

to approach their [youth’s] social worlds as ethnographers approach the worlds of adults: with open-ended curiosity, and with an assumption that kids are competent social actors who take an active role in shaping their daily experiences. I wanted to sustain an attitude of respectful discovery, to uncover and document kids’ point of view and meaning. To adopt that basic stance means breaking with an array of common adult assumptions: that children’s daily actions are mostly trivial, worthy of notice only when they seem cute or irritating; that children need to be actively managed or controlled; that children are relatively passive recipients of adult training and socialization. (p. 408)

This approach echoes some of the assumptions at the foundation of my approach to this research project. I sought to explore youth’s experiences and meaning-making as valuable in its daily sense, within the framework that youth themselves are active in shaping what they experience and how they come to make meaning of it. Thorne’s approach also helped to shape methodology for my data collection to be focused on youth’s perspectives only, rather than conducting

interviews with adults. This “respectful discovery” is what I hoped, and worked to establish in these after-school sessions. Youth were given a clear, explicit picture of the purpose of this project, my role, and their role in the study. Agreements and compromises were discussed with youth at various points in the research process. The youth and myself explored how their stories and images would be shared, and how their ideas would impact future teachers and students.

Research site

Global High School is a Newcomer High School serving about 300 recently-arrived immigrant youth in the southeast Bronx. In New York City schools, *newcomer* is used to describe youth who emigrate from other countries, anywhere from one day to two years prior to entering school in the U.S. In schools they are referred to as “recent-arrivals” or “over the counter” students, and come with a variety of languages, and uses of English. All of the students entering Global High School are newcomers. Upon registration, all of them are also emergent bilinguals, or ELLs (English Language Learners) as characterized by the school based on the NYSESLAT (New York State English as a Second Language Achievement Test). Emergent bilinguals are entitled to additional support, accommodations, and school funding based on their test performance. Global High School emergent bilingual youth graduate at much higher rates than the New York City average, although it may take longer for them. Based on 2011 NYC Department of Education data, 62% of emergent bilinguals at Global High School graduate in four years, while 91% graduate in six years (www.insideschools.org, 12/6/11).

As students pass the reading, writing, speaking, and listening sections of the NYSESLAT, they are no longer counted as ELLs in school data. This “passed out” population comprises 14% of the student population of Global High School. However, this is not to say that

these youth are not still emerging in their bilingualism, or plurilingualism. They still require, and deserve, explicit linguistic support in the classroom. These students, mostly 11th and 12th graders, remain in classes with emergent bilinguals. There are also no self-contained classes for students with disabilities. Any student with an IEP is integrated into mainstream classrooms with push-in or pull-out services.

The school occupies the half of the 4th floor and half of the 5th floor in a 5-story brick school building. There are four individual high schools in this building, which, up until eight years ago, was a comprehensive public school. It was broken down into smaller, specialized high schools as part of the Small Schools Movement in New York City. Each high school has a mission with a focus, including serving newcomers, visual arts, and science, and some are supported by school improvement organizations such as New Visions.

Metal detectors and anywhere from five to ten security guards are on duty at any given point throughout the day. Upon entering the school, all students and visitors put their bags through a scanner, and walk through one as well. Teachers walk through the front doors and beyond the scanners, showing their IDs to security guards who wave them on. During dismissal in the afternoon, security guards are posted outside on the street corners.

Global High School itself has some strict policies, including no cell phones allowed at any point throughout the school day. Students are encouraged to simply leave their phones at home, or keep them safely stowed away in their school locker. Students at Global High School also have a dress code, although it is followed to varying degrees. The dress-code is “black bottoms, white tops.” Pants can be in the form of denim, slacks or skirts, and students have a variety of choices for their white tops, including Polo shirts with the school insignia.

According to the school's website, 90% of students are Spanish-speaking, mostly from the Dominican Republic. The remaining one third of Spanish-speakers are from a variety of countries, including Puerto Rico, Mexico, Guatemala, Ecuador, Honduras, and El Salvador. The remaining 10% of the student population who does not speak Spanish, the "other kids," are from a variety of countries as well. Over half of this group is from Bangladesh or Guinea. As for the additional "other kids," according to the youth participants, four students are from Togo, two from the Ivory Coast, two from Morocco, two from Yemen, one from Senegal, one from Burkina Faso, one from Mali, one from China and one from Haiti (Field notes, 11/9/11). These two youth from China and Haiti were the only non-Muslim "other kids" in the school. Participants did not want to make them feel left out of this experience as language minority youth who were not Muslim. However, the youth reported back that both young men were "busy" and could not participate. It is interesting, though, that mention of these two individuals came up often in after-school discussions and art about friends and community.

The vast majority of adults in Global High School are bilingual. Twenty-three out of twenty-five teachers are bilingual in English and Spanish. The principal, two assistant principals, all front office staff, the guidance counselor, the parent coordinator and support staff including class aides, custodians, and cafeteria staff, are all bilingual in English and Spanish. Spanish is the home language for most of the Spanish-speaking staff, and only a few of the teachers learned Spanish as an additional language in school or travel.

There was, however, a new addition to the staff half-way through the school year in which this study took place. A new teacher arrived who was of Haitian descent. He spoke Haitian-Creole and French, and began speaking with youth (specifically, the youth participants of this study) about the possibility of starting French classes. This was exciting for these youth,

and this opportunity to have a class instructed in student home language was brought up in our after-school session conversations as an alternative to the often-bleak bilingual education opportunities for the youth in this study.

Programming options for students in Global High School include a small Spanish-English bilingual program called “dual language.” This serves about 40 students in the school who have been chosen for participation based on strong academics, Spanish literacy skills, and family interest. The remaining students, including the majority of Spanish-speakers, and also the language minority speakers in this study, are educated through ESL programming, or English instruction. This is not to say, however, that *bilingualism in education* (García et. al., 2010) is not present. In the majority of ESL classes and content-area classes, bilingualism in education is quite a reality, specifically in the form of Spanish-English translanguaging of teachers and students. Spanish is utilized in classroom interactions and learning, as well as in the multilingual ecology, or landscape of the school. Other languages are present in more subtle ways, as was explored in this study.

As noted before, 90% of the student population is Spanish-speaking, as are the vast majority of teachers. Although teachers do not speak the other home languages – including Fulani, Kotokoli, Mòoré, French, Arabic, Darija, Bengali, and other languages – students in Global High School are not prevented from speaking their home languages. Teachers do not demand “English-only” in the classroom. The school is a safe space for multilingual interactions and classrooms, without necessarily representing, or explicitly promoting, all students’ languages in school-wide policies and linguistic landscape.

Participants

Youth participating in this study represented various grades, genders, languages, ethnic and national backgrounds. They shared common characteristics as Muslim students and non-Spanish speakers. It has been said that the term ‘sampling’ is “problematic for qualitative research because it implies the purpose of ‘representing the population sampled’” (Maxwell, 2005: p. 88). Therefore, I deliberately used here a “purposeful selection” (Maxwell, 2005), which includes:

selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can provide you with the information that you need in order to answer your research questions is the most important consideration in qualitative selection decisions (p. 88).

With this in mind, it only made sense to conduct this research in the site that sparked the questions originally. With a cooperative principal, eager students, available space and resources, Global High School served as the research site.

For this group of participants, I aimed for a representation of various gender, age, linguistic, and ethnic participation, based on the total population of students in the school who did not speak Spanish. The logic of my purposeful selection was the criteria set forth in the research question: a linguistic minority in the school, which happens to also be a religious minority. I focused on 10th, 11th, and 12th graders, and purposefully did not include first-year students in the group. Since data collection started in September, new 9th grade students did not have sufficient experiences to reflect upon. Other criteria for participant selection was students’ ability to consistently attend after-school sessions (twice a week) for two semesters, and having parental permission to participate (if under 18).

Participants were chosen through relationships formed during the previous two years of classroom observations this site. I explained to some of the youth, as they sat in the hallways

after school, that our after-school sessions would include “taking pictures, talking about your life and what you think about school.” Upon returning to the school in September, I held an information for students who fit the criteria of language-minority youth in the school, and 20 students attended. This original group of 20 youth became a group of 14 who consistently attended the sessions and participated in all research and class activities, and an additional six who attended periodically based on scheduling conflicts or interest. For the purpose of consistency, the 14 students who engaged in all artifact-making, interviews, and discussions were the main focus of this study. Below is a table of the characteristics of the youth in this study. It is important to note that the youth unanimously decided that this study should retain all their real first names of the participants involved. As Jamilatou explained, “You got to keep my name. How will the people who read this know where I am from? Or who I am? My name, it’s me.” (Field notes, 10/20/11):

Table 3: Youth participant data (as of October 2011)

Name	Gender	Age	Grade	Home country (city)	Languages before learning English	Languages spoken at home	Moved to the U.S. (NYC)	Started at Global High School
Abdoul	M	17	10	Burkina Faso (Ouagadougou)	Mòoré, Dioula, Chameo, French	Mòoré, French	2010	9 th grade (2010)
Abdulrahman	M	16	11	Guinea (Conakry)	Fulani, French,	Fulani	2008	2008 (9 th grade)
Arietou	F	15	10	Togo (Lome)	French, Kotokoli, Ewe	Kotolkoi, French	September, 2011	September, 2011 (10 th grade)
Ananna	F	18	11	Bangladesh (Dhaka)	Bengali, Hindi	Bengali	January 17, 2011	April 8, 2011
Ayi	M	16	10	Togo (Lome)	French, Mina	French, Mina	June, 2010	Fall, 2010 (9 th grade)
Bintouya	F		10	Guinea (Conakry)	Fulani, French	Fulani	June, 2010	Fall, 2010 (9 ^h grade)
Boubacar	M	19	12	Guinea (Conakry)	Fulani, Mandinka, Sousou, French	Fulani	June, 2010	Fall, 2010 (11 th grade)
Chaimae	F	17	11	Morocco (Fez)	Arabic Darija	Arabic/Darija	Spring, 2009	September, 2009 (9 th grade)
Fatou	F	20	12	Ivory Coast (Abidjan)	French, Bambara, Djola	Bambara, Djola	March 4, 2008	2008 (9 th grade)
Fatoumata	F	16	10	Guinea (Conakry)	Fulani, French	Fulani	Fall 2010	2010 (9 th grade)
Froudaous	F		12	Togo (Lome)	Kotokoli, French	Kotokoli	April 12, 2010	May 2010 (11 th grade)
Jahed	M	15	10	Bangladesh (Sylhet)	Bengali	Bengali	August 2010	2010 (9 th grade)
Jamilatou	F	17	11	Guinea (Conakry)	Fulani, French	Fulani	June 26, 2009	2009 (9 th grade)
Koudiratou	F	16	11	Togo (Lome)	Kotokoli, French	Kotokoli	April 12, 2010	May 2010 (10 th grade)

Data collection

Data for this study was collected throughout the school day and in after-school sessions with youth participants. During the school day, participants were shadowed by the researcher as they followed their regular school day program, for one full day each. Field notes were kept throughout the day, and focused on languaging and interactions in classes, lunch, offices, and hallways.

In after-school sessions, field notes were kept as students organized and discussed their photographs, created maps, graphic arts, books, and also created their own questions and prompts for further data collection. Youth also used their images and products when talking to their peers in English and home languages, in response to a weekly focus or prompt. These peer-to-peer interviews were audio recorded, while notes of the peer interviews were also collected. These interviews were shared out to the larger group in English.

The table below outlines weekly topics and tasks during after-school sessions with youth.

Table 4: After-school session topics and tasks

	Sessions with researcher and youth	Youth on own
September-October 2011	Discussion: me, you, the project Discussion: ethics of photography	
	Student art making #1: Where am I from? collage	Take photography #1: “Where am I from?”
	Student art making #2: Where am I from? Graphic art using photography Share & Discussion: Where am I from?” graphic art	
November 2011	Brainstorm: inquiry prompts for “Where am I from?” interview, critical instances (a time when...) Discussion: What makes a good interview?	
	Interview partners #1: “Where am I from?” (with collage, photography and graphic art) Share & Discussion: Interviews, collages, photography, and graphic art	Take photography #2: “What is school like for me?”

	Sessions with researcher and youth	Youth on own
November-December 2011	Discussion: Photography of “What is school like for me?” Brainstorm discussion: Emotions felt in school – choose one for next photography prompt	
December 2011–January 2012	Brainstorm discussion: inquiry prompts for “When do I feel _____ in school?” (build on/edit original list from last session) Student art making #3: My school day map	Take photography #3: “Where, and when, do I feel _____ in school?”
January 2012	Interview partners #2: “When do I feel _____ in school” (with photography and school day map) Share: Interviews and maps	
February 2012	Brainstorm: Inquiry prompts for “How is school now the same and different from school in my home country?”	Take photography #4: “How is school now the same and different from school in my home country?”
	Interview partners #3: “How is school now the same and different from school in my home country?” (with photography) Share: Interviews and photography	Take photography #5: “What is success in school?” and “When/where do you feel successful?”
March 2012	Interview partners #4: “What is success in school?” and “When/where do you feel successful?” (with photography and map) Share: Interviews, maps, and photography	
	Student art making #4: My Future graphic art using photography	Take photography #6: “What do I want my future to be?”
	Interview partners #5: “What do I want my future to be?” (with graphic art) Share: Interviews and graphic art	
April 2012	Student art making #4: planning, designing, and creating “My Ideal School” (electronic or physical)	
	Student art making #4 (cont.): creating “My Ideal School” (electronic or physical)	
May 2012	Share: “My Ideal School” with friends, family, and school	
	Discussion: collaborative analysis of emerging themes in peer interviews; follow-up questioning if needed	

Student-produced artifacts

As teachers, we constantly tell our students to draw from what they know, and to express themselves using their linguistic and communicative repertoires. The same was asked of participants in this research project. Thus, forms of data collection included taking photographs, making social maps, and creating graphic art and books incorporating photography taken. This image production, as arts-based research, offered ways to “stretch a researcher’s capacities for creativity and knowing, creating a healthy synthesis of approaches to collect, analyze, and represent data” (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; p. 4). By opening epistemological possibilities, art provided opportunities for expression in various forms and modalities for participants, as well as for the researcher and audience.

These student-created artifacts were all made during our after-school sessions of “Language Through Art.” Photography was taken outside of sessions, based on researcher- and participant-facilitated prompts using student’s own cameras or disposable cameras provided by the researcher. The youth’s art was used as elicitation for richer description and deeper details during interviews and group session discussions, as a catalyst for stories.

Photography

It is important to note that the form of arts-based research employed in this study was for the purpose of eliciting students’ experiences and perceptions, with similar prompts and goals as open-ended interview questions. This was not a class for students on *how* to take photography or a “right way” to take pictures. Rather, like Luttrell’s “Worcester project” (2010b), youth were not encouraged “to produce a particular kind of image,” but rather to approach the photography portion of this project with the understanding that “there is merit in projects that seek to preserve and understand whatever meanings children might give to their images if we listen carefully and

systematically” (p. 226). Youth were actively engaged in conversations preceding the taking of photography, including working through the ethics of photography and picture taking. These photographs were then used by students in interviews and whole-group discussions, as visual support of ideas.

The questions and prompts guiding students’ photography were connected to each of interview topics. Although the overarching questions were planned by the researcher, students expanded on these questions during group discussions. For example, youth filled-in-the-blank for the photography prompts of: “Describe a time you felt _____ in school.” Emotions they mentioned included happy, safe, angry, proud, confused, unsafe, successful, and more (Field notes, 11/17/11). These were open-ended and invited narratives to emerge. Other prompts were more structured, including taking photography based on: 1) Where am I from? (2) What is school like for me? (3) How is school now the same and different from school in my home country? (4) What is success in school? (5) What do I want my future to be?

The following examples of youth photography were images that elicited specific conversations. Had it not been for these images captured by the youth, perhaps these topics of conversation would have been discussed differently. For example, the following was image taken by Ananna in response to the prompt “Where I’m From” from a computer screne showing the website of her former school in Bangladesh.

Image 5: “Where I’m From” photograph by Ananna



This image, featuring both English and Bengali writing, then sparked conversation among the whole group about the power and prestige of various languages in one's home country as well as in New York City and Global High School (Field notes 11/17/11). Here, as was the purpose of all of the youth-created art, the photograph served as a visual springboard for deeper narratives and expansion of youth's ideas. Ananna used this visual to show, beyond telling, how English and Bengali hold different statuses in Bangladesh, and her explanation was a catalyst for others to think about the role and power of different languages in their own experiences.

Visual arts: mapping, collage, graphic arts, and book-making

Through the creation of social maps, youth were able to “locate places that play a significant role for youth, both positively and negatively, and to provide a common point for discussion” among a group of youth while also providing the researcher with a visual of “young people's spatial experiences with regard to the dialectics of inclusion and exclusion from the public space” (Travlou, et. al, 2008; p. 310). Student-created social maps gave participants an opportunity to explore their feelings, perceptions, and experiences in the public space of school, followed by an opportunity to discuss and explain their creations. These social maps also provided the researcher with the opportunity to engage with the participants' experiences and perceptions combining visual and verbal modalities. The social map was created as a visual, and then verbally expanded upon by the creator. The experiences and corresponding symbols for the social maps were facilitated and decided upon by the group of research participants. Several days of conversation resulted in a list of emotions and perspectives to be symbolized on students' school day maps, and the group also decided that two “free-choice” symbols should be available for unique emotions experienced by individuals (Field notes 12/5/11). This map key (see Appendix A) was then typed up and distributed by myself for youth's use and reference during

the creation of their maps. Examples of youth created social maps illustrate the variety of emotions and experiences throughout a school day:

Image 6: School day social map by Abdulrahman (12/15/11)

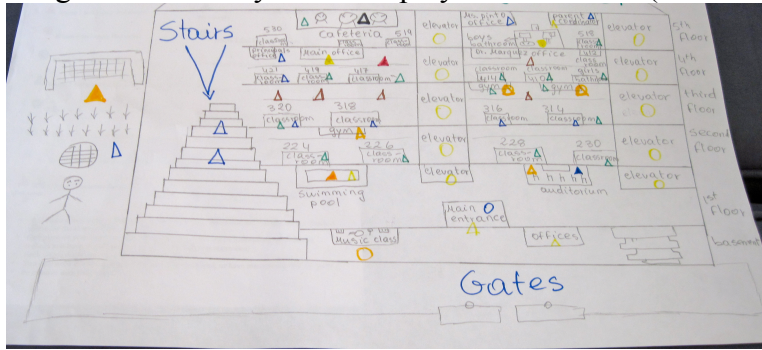


Image 7: School day social map by Jamilatou (12/15/11)

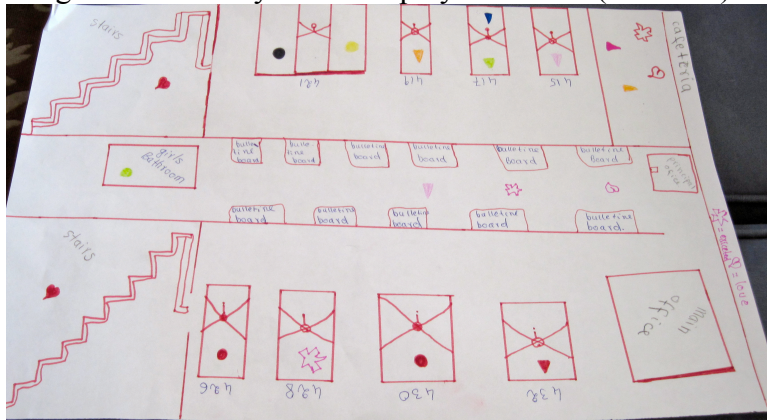


Image 8: School day social map by Boubacar (12/15/11)



Travlou et. al (2008) acknowledge that maps are very useful in research with youth and children, but also pose some challenges. Specifically, in working with older children the authors note that youth, as they grow older, become more self-conscious of their artistic skills and “some young people may feel intimidated by a map making group activity, feeling that they would have to prove their drawing skills in front of the entire class” (p. 312). I took this point seriously, and therefore, employed other forms of image-creation, specifically collage, graphic arts, and book-making which helped to ease the stress of proving one’s artistic skills. I provided students with additional opportunities to engage in visual arts creation to ease the pressure of artistic stress, including collage, graphic arts, and book-making, which spoke to their engagement with media and technology.

Youth used their photographs and maps to create larger pieces of art, specifically graphic arts pieces (PowerPoint), collages, or books, both physical and electronic books. An example of one of these graphic pieces, below, was in response to the prompt “Where I’m From:”

Image 9: "Where I'm From" graphic arts by Abdoul (12/1/11)

Story about my life by KADER KABORE ABDOL



MY MOTHER

I love my mother so much

She the one that has doing everything for me since my childhood. I love her. I can not forget her every where I am.



Who I am

- ▣ My name is **ABDOUL KADER KABORE**
- ▣ I born in west **AFRICA**
- ▣ I have 17 years old.
- ▣ smart
- ▣ Crazy
- ▣ Funny
- ▣ Friendly
- ▣ Simple



WHEN I WAS BABY

I born in west Africa Burkina Faso. I grow up in Africa my father left me when I was ten years old to come in America. I was with my mother and my grand father two years later my mother join my father in United State. The day my mother left me with my brothers and sisters. I didn't know that she was going to stay here for long times. I just thought that she going to stay there about a month but it wasn't.



My favor sport

- ▣ I love soccer
- ▣ I am a soccer player
- ▣ I use to play soccer
- ▣ My favor team is Chelsea



MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS



My lovely sisters and brothers.

My family

I present this picture because my family is very important to me and my all life. I love my family. I'm happy when I am with my family.



My religion



Those symbol represent my religion my religion is the most important in my life. I believe religion and I love to be a Muslim. We have many religion but the one I choose to be is Islam because in Islam I will be good. I always respect my religion.

My country

I am from BURKINA FASO the capital is OUGADOUGOU. This image represent my country. I love my country because everyone have a country where that the live I like my country because in my country I feel better I really miss my country and my friends. I hope one day to go visit my country and have fun with my friends. Live in your country it very comfortable. I am in America but I still thinking about my country.



One of the purposes of these art products was to enable the youth to have an opportunity to create a more complex representation of their experiences and meaning-making, with their own interpretation and voice. These products were shared with the research group, and also used to facilitate language and ideas during peer- and one-on-one interviews. A purpose of these products is echoed in the following words:

Hope for a politically vital arts-based research, the kind that challenges the comfortable, familiar, dominant master narrative, not by proffering a new totalizing counter-narrative, but by luring an audience into an appreciation of an array of diverse, complex, nuanced images and partial, local portraits of human growth and possibility. (Barone, 2008, p. 38)

Through these visual arts, youth had the opportunity to engage audiences (the researcher, peers, and the larger school community) with their experiences, and their interpretations and meaning-making of these experiences. It is important to provide “local portraits,” individual voices, which, in the long run, may enable educators and schools to make connections between their own student populations and the experiences of the youth participants. What the creation of these visual arts products provides is “an opportunity for them to represent their point of view and experiences to adults in charge of teaching children like themselves and making decisions in schools” (Luttrell, 2010b; p. 226). By creating collages, graphic arts, and books to be shared with an audience, meaningful action takes place. It was vital throughout these processes that youth participants had a clear understanding of the larger goals and aims of this project, and their roles as experts, participants, and agents of change. Thus, their art reflected their own personal needs and experiences in school and were framed as a sharing of perspective for the purpose of making positive change for both themselves, and future students.

It is important to note that for about half of the youth participants, this was their first experience using PowerPoint, or any computer-based presentation program. Therefore, our after-school sessions creating graphic arts pieces became an opportunity for them to learn a new

medium of expression and representation. For some other youth participants, their knowledge and creativity with such tools was expanded, as they took creative risks in their artistic work, from manipulating photography, to using animation and video embedded in presentations. The space, as well, was created as welcoming of questions in order to explore new tools or design methods within the art media used. This created instances of youth engaging with art tools in new ways, and sharing their findings with the group or leading them in using them what they found.

Interviews

The research question for this study focused on youth's meaning making of their school experiences. As Seidman (2006) states, "Interviews examine concrete experience and the meaning experience had for them" (p. 15). Interviews are known as a beneficial form of data collection. Interviews in this study provided a meaningful and purposeful method for collecting the data of participants' stories.

Throughout the school year of data collection and after-school sessions, students interviewed each other and shared each other's stories with the group within after-school sessions. There were five peer interviews on the following topics:

1. Where are you from?
2. When do I feel _____ in school?
3. How is school now the same and different from school in my home country?
4. What is success? When/where do you feel successful in school?
5. What do I want my future to be?

The specific questions within each interview were discussed and decided on by the members of the group (see Appendix B). As Luttrell (2010c) has noted, it is important to

consider “the extent to which respondents actively shape the research process” (p. 261). With this in mind, youth participants were actively engaged for their ideas of specific prompts and questions throughout the research process. Together, we created interview protocols that are open-ended (Maxwell, 2005; Reissman, 2008; Seidman 2006) and allowed for stories, or narratives, to emerge. As a whole group, we discussed how to create questions that asked for stories. We also created questions of critical instances, such as “a time when....” or, “a place where....” or, “a person who...”

Youth responded to interview prompts with both oral narratives and visual narratives, able to speak to his/her audience while using visual artifacts for explanation, expansion, as well as elicitation of interview questions. As youth facilitated and answered questions in pairs or small groups, they used their art as starting points for conversation, or to illustrate or supplement their perspectives or point of view. The sharing out of peer interviews took the form of group discussion in a circle, and youth were able to ask additional follow-up questions of each other as stories were shared. It is important to note that these peer interviews provided space and opportunities for youth to engage in translanguaging (García, 2009a), using their home languages to make sense of their learning. To do this, youth formed small groups based on home languages – Bengali, Arabic, Fulani, Kotokoli, and French. They then worked together to translate, facilitate, and answer the questions in the peer-interview protocol. As a final step in the process, they shared their findings in English with the larger group. This process of peer interviewing and sharing with the larger group provided data as the youth engaged in translanguaging (for more on youth’s translanguaging, see Chapter 6).

For inquiries into meaning-making of experiences, Seidman (2006) suggests a series of three interviews: narrative of life history, narrative of present experience, and narrative of

meaning-making of experiences. The youth's first peer interview with each other addressed the prompt "Where am I from?" with the group's suggestions of critical instances to prompt for narrative stories. This provided the narrative life history of each youth, while giving them an opportunity to get to know each other and use their various languaging and artifacts to deepen and expand on their responses.

The following interviews focused on narratives of youth's present experiences. To bridge the past and present, youth expanded on both their home country by considering the relationship with their current educations. Through peer interviews, youth asked and responded to the prompts, "How is school now the same and different from school in my home country?", and "When do I feel _____ in school?"

To gain insight into students' meaning making, the final two peer interviews focused on "What is success?" and "What do I want my future to be?" Again, youth responded to these prompts using their photography, maps, collages, and books to illustrate and expand on ideas.

After each peer interview, youth shared their ideas (personal and those they learned from partners or group members) with the larger group through English. These responses to interview questions and sharing as a whole group sparked deeper conversations on the original topics.

These whole-group discussions were audio-recorded, while students kept detailed notes during their peer-interviews that were shared with me.

To expand on youth's present experiences, each student participated in a one-on-one in-depth interview with me (see Appendix C for interview protocol) addressing the prompt "What is school like for me?" Each student was interviewed for roughly one hour. During the interview with the researcher, participants referenced their photography and artifacts (map, collage, graphic

arts), and responded in English (with home language support whenever possible). One-on-one interviews were audio recorded and transcribed.

I was reminded during the interview process to consider the power dynamic in interviewing (Reissman, 2008). The series of three interviews recommended by Seidman (2006) of a narrative of life history, narrative of present experience, and narrative of meaning-making experiences addressed this issue by learning about each youth personally first, and allowing for longer, more free expressions of ideas, rather than strict questions with a correct/incorrect feel. The series of interviews, some with peers, and then with the researcher, can be seen as a stepping-stone for establishing relationship and breaking down walls of difference or power, both between the researcher and youth, and between the students as a group.

Telling stories also enhanced the meaning making process. In narrating their lives and experiences (and in this case, creating art in response to prompts as well), “people must reflect on experience, select constitutive details, put them in order and make sense of them” (Seidman, 2006). As participants narrated or made art, they engaged in reflecting back and choosing what and how to represent the meaning they wished to get across.

The combination of both one-on-one interviews with the researcher, as well as peer interviews in group space, created opportunities for youth to be interviewed by, and respond to, different audiences. Seidman (2006) acknowledges that interviewing “affirms the importance of the individual without denigrating the possibility of community and collaboration” (p. 14). In the case of this project, interviewing sought to bring about the possibility of community and collaboration between both the adult researcher and youth participants, and amongst the youth participants themselves. Reissman (2008) explores how both “individuals and groups construct identities through storytelling” (p. 8), and these various identities on both individual and group

levels were explored through the variation of group, partner, and one-on-one opportunities for interviews and dialogue.

Participant Observations

Eliot Mishler (1979) asked, “Meaning in context: is there any other kind?” This question prompts one to consider the context of experiences, interactions, and stories heard from individuals. How do we attempt to understand someone without understanding where they are? Combining interviews with participant observations of students during the school day provided an opportunity to understand the context of students’ lives in school. It also provided a general contextual knowledge for the interviews and whole-group discussions, helping to clarify who and what the youth participants were referring to in their stories.

Participant observations of students in class times were recorded as field notes. I followed a student program for each student for one full day including lunch, transition time within school. I did this in addition to observing youth participants in after-school sessions twice a week.

In after-school sessions, field notes were supplemented by audio recording of group sessions. The first few meetings were deliberately planned to establish a sense of trust, positive rapport, and community within the group. Youth engaged in creating and agreeing to a group contract of conduct, after discussing ways to engage in respectful questioning, conversation, and feedback.

Participant observations were also vital in the process of triangulation. When considering reliability of emerging patterns, themes, and meaning, “triangulation of observations and interviews can provide a more complete and accurate account than either could alone” (Maxwell,

2005, p. 94). The combination of data collection methods, with the addition of student-produced artifacts, can be analyzed in relation to each other for validity.

Data Analysis

My data collection tools included participant observations and interviews supplemented with student-created artifacts. The combination of participant observation and interviews was a powerful combination bringing youth voice and experience to the forefront.

Data analysis of field notes created during participant observations took place in two parts – in-process analytic writing and analytic coding of field notes. The use of in-process analytic writing acknowledges that “as the field researcher participates in the field, she inevitably begins to reflect and interpret what she has experienced and observed” (Emerson et. al., 1995, p. 100). Thus, as field notes were kept within classrooms and after-school sessions with youth, interpretative and analytic forms of writing accompanied field notes in a separate “notes-on-notes” section, set apart from the more descriptive writing of the field notes. Emerson et. al. (1995) suggest using both asides and commentaries in order to capture “ruminations, reflections, and insights and make them available for further thought and analysis” (p. 100). These writings came in the form of further questions or suggestions to follow-up with participants about, personal reactions, and preliminary connections between current and previous observations or other data.

Once field notes were collected, analysis began as I stepped back from the field and read through field notes. Based on Emerson et. al. (1995) process of analytic coding of ethnographic field notes, phases of open coding followed by memo writing enabled me to make connections to themes found in the narrative analysis of the interviews. The first phase of open coding involved

close readings of field notes in order to pull out and name emerging themes or patterns. Asking questions as I read through field notes was a useful start to the coding process. By asking questions, I was able to draw on:

a wide variety of resources, including direct experience of life and events in the setting; sensitivity toward the concerns and orientations of members; memory of other specific incidents described elsewhere in one's notes; one's own prior experience and insights gained in other settings; and the concepts and orientation provided by one's own profession or discipline. Nothing is out of bounds! (Emerson, et. al, 1995, p. 146)

For example, I asked, "What assumptions are being made in students' learning?" or "What are youth doing to make sense of how they are learning?" Turning the answers to these questions into codes involved creating a short word or phrase that captured what was happening. It was important to consider both what youth take on, and what they avoid or act in opposition of – for example, to be bad is to *not* be good, and to be good is to *not* be bad (Ferguson, 2001). Once these codes were established, a second phase of memo writing allowed for rich, analytical writing, while also exploring possible links to theoretical frameworks and relationships between initial codes, interpretations and preliminary themes.

With interviews, the student-products artifacts were used as a tool to elicit stories. Narrative analysis presented itself as a meaningful way to organize emerging patterns and themes that appeared in the data of the student interviews, as well as the peer-student interviews and student-created books. Reissman (2008) considers how narrative analysis is useful to "focus on particular actors, in particular social places, at particular social times" (p. 11). Looking at the actors, the youth, in this particular context of a Newcomer high school, at a time of recent immigration and new educational experience provided diverse opportunities for stories. Specifically, I analyzed and interpreted the data for emerging themes that focused on youth's experiences within school, how they articulated messages about themselves, and their languaging

and language ideologies. By pulling out these schooling narratives from the wealth of data created and produced by students, I used additional stories to build and enhance the context of youth's experiences and meaning making. For example, stories of life histories and visions of one's future helped to create the personal context in which each youth languaged in school and made meaning of his or her home language within this context.

The youth themselves helped to shape the data analysis in this study as well. Following the school year of data collected, I engaged in collaborative thematic analysis with the youth participants based on preliminary findings. This process began in May, and continued for an additional month the following September, when our group met again and I shared with the youth what I interpreted as emerging themes in the data. We engaged in discussion and collaborative analysis focusing on common and diverse findings. It was important that my eyes were not the only ones seeing and interpreting the youth's stories and artifacts. Rose (2001) notes, "the particular audience of an image will bring their own interpretations to bear on its meaning and effect" (p. 11). Youth had opportunities to identify their own emerging themes, share interpretations, and see their data in relation to that of their peers. By including a step for collaborative analysis with the youth, followed by my own thematic narrative analysis of both the peer and individual interviews, deepened and extended my interpretation of data collected.

Looking back at use of maps in Sirin and Fine's (2008) work with Muslim youth, one can see a similarity in the method of data collection, but a divergence in methods of data analysis. In the methodology of Sirin and Fine, the researchers used coding for the youth-produced maps, as "rater 1" and "rater 2" (neither the creator of the map) both looked for various evidence of identity markers, symbols, emotions, and struggles with the maps (p. 219). While the creation of social maps here was similar to my process, there was a difference in the data analysis process.

In Sirin and Fine, two adult raters did the analysis of the student artifacts. In my study, maps and photography were not analyzed in isolation. Rather, interviews and field notes, which have been enhanced through artifact sharing, were unpacked for youth's schooling narratives. In the larger group, youth were asked to explore emerging themes and patterns about schooling in the peer interviews, which were supported by the student-created artifacts. These insights then informed and shaped the patterns and themes I chose to draw upon within the continued narrative analysis of both peer and one-on-one interviews. Therefore, my narrative analysis was of the interviews in which youth used artifacts to aid in their representation and responses. These products were not analyzed on their own.

While the collaborative analysis of data sought to consider various viewpoints and interpretations of the peer interviews from youth participants, other coding (of one-on-one interviews and field notes) and ultimately, the writing, was done by me. As described by Luttrell (2010c), the process of developing codes of narratives included reading through each transcribed interview for overall points, taking note of recurring images, words, phrases, and metaphors, and listening for "what sort of person" I thought the youth participants "wished to present, not just in school, but also at work, in the community, in her[/his] family, and to me" (p. 262). Keeping these ideas in mind guided the coding not just for what I saw on the surface, but for how the youth represented themselves and their experiences.

Brown's concept of "ventriloquation" was also interesting to consider in narrative analysis of youth participant interviews, and while developing codes. As Luttrell (2010b) notes, this process "recognizes that we speak with the words and intentions of others in an effort to make our own meaning" (p. 225). The youth in this study, like those in Brown's, were involved through verbal discussions and interviews with extended communication of visual artifacts and

home language use. As youth's narratives are analyzed, it was useful to look at their expressions in relation to the community and actors around them, specifically the emergent theme that addressed the subquestion of how they articulated school messages about themselves. Analysis through this lens of ventriloquation created questions of: Whose words do students' speak, and visually represent, as they engage in processes of schooling? How do youth echo messages of those in power? This framework of analysis led to some meaningful findings.

The acts of coding and writing created an additional layer of interpretation in this study. This relates to what Luttrell (2010b) calls the "persistent conundrum" of "finding the line between children's voice and those of adult researchers who seek to represent them" (p. 225). In wanting to give voice to the youth through their own stories, it was important to consider the filter, or layers of interpretation that participants' voices go through between expression of ideas, data collection, analysis, and presentation of findings. I did my best to be fair in representation, to seek feedback from youth throughout the data collection, analysis, and writing stages. This final product is ultimately an interpretation of youth voice, and a representation of how these youth make meaning. In sharing these findings with educational and professional audiences, I invite the youth participants to share their voices in conjunction with an academic piece.

Reliability and Validity

Throughout the processes of data collection and data analysis, it was important to keep issues of validity and reliability in mind for both design and implementation. Seidman (2006) reminds us to recognize and affirm the role of the human interviewer and how "meaning made is a function of participant's interaction with the interviewer" (p. 23). As I engaged in both one-on-one interviews and facilitation of after-school sessions, it was important to focus on how my

rapport with students was allowing for stories to emerge and data to be collected that could be relied upon. It was also important to provide opportunities for participants to express their experiences and meaning-making so that each individual voice was heard.

As data was collected, I consistently looked back to my original questions in making sure that the data collected would help to provide insight into these questions, while also looking forward to data analysis and noticing emerging patterns or themes (Luttrell, 2010a). Just as parts of the research design were woven together, so were the different parts of the data collection itself. This connectedness of data collection lent itself to the act of triangulation to aid in both reliability and validity of data. As patterns and themes emerged in narrative analysis of interviews, it was important to interpret these in relation to patterns and themes in both participant observation field notes and student-created artifacts and visuals.

When considering issues of reliability and validity, we often asks ourselves, “How do we know if the participant’s story is ‘true’?” This can be a question to struggle with, as we can only take participants words for face value while seeking to support findings with additional data from observations, artifacts, and other interviews. However, it was helpful to consider what we hear as true and valid, but valid for “that point in life” (Seidman, 2008; p. 26). In other words, what matters is not that the participant was “telling the truth,” but that what was said is valid for the participant in that point in time in his/her life.

In the interest of increasing validity and reliability of data collected, as well as data analysis, it was important throughout the process to check back with participants and gain their feedback. Guba and Lincoln (1989) refer to this process as “member checking.” In this study, member checking included meeting with youth participants during the data analysis phase to both present them with preliminary findings (creation of themes and coding of data based on

themes), and to follow up on previous discussions in asking youth for their input as to what themes or patterns they saw emerging in the data, and their interpretations of the youth-created artifacts. The sessions of collaborative analysis with youth can be seen as a type of member-checking in this way. Before finalizing themes for data analysis of the emerging schooling narratives, it was valuable to gain insight and interpretations of the youth participants and put their ideas side-by-side with mine.

Limitations

The methodology of this study is meaningful in the way that it was deliberately designed taking into consideration the unique context of after-school sessions with youth and the study's goal of empowering and respecting youth in the research process. There are still limitations to this study that must be acknowledged, and also addressed in the process. The first limitation is the language differences between myself, the researcher, and youth participants. There were common languages between us: English, French, Arabic. However, my lack of communication ability in Bengali, Fulani, Mòoré, and Kotokoli, as well as my own limits as an emergent speaker of Arabic and French, impacted opportunities for more complete lines of linguistic communication. This challenge was addressed by open spaces for more creative forms of communication beyond spoken language, including art production such as photography, social map making, and visual arts creation. Language gaps were also addressed by utilizing the strengths of youth participants as language experts and experts in technological resources. The data collection tool of peer interviews provided the space for youth to engage in home language conversation to collect narratives and stories as data. Youth were more informally engaged in home language use translating or paraphrasing for one another in whole-group discussions, small

group conversations amongst each other, or when approaching me with a question that was difficult to express in one of our common languages. I also asked youth to translate for me at times to help get my messages across better to members of the group.

While the consistent use of translating in our after-school sessions helped to overcome language barrier amongst various members of the group, it is also important to consider its limitation. For example, as youth translated for one another, they added their own interpretation of meaning and language choice to the translation. This is also true in the peer interviews. While youth conducted their interviews in home languages, they then went through the act of summarizing and reporting what they learned in English for the whole group and for myself. This process includes a variety of choices being made by the youth as they negotiate which words to use in translation, and which information from the interviews to focus on for sharing.

An additional limitation in this study focuses on the personal nature of this work. The use of interviews, whole-group discussion, and youth art creation is asking the youth for their personal perspectives. In responding to this request, youth have the opportunities to show and share what they choose. These then may result in some youth feeling pressured to show a certain positive side, or conform to the sentiments of peers. In an attempt to alleviate such pressures and create an open space for honest dialogue and sharing, community-building was a focus in this research process. As a group, we created and agreed upon a group contract (see page 67) which youth would refer back to upon feeling it was being breached. Activities within the after-school sessions were deliberately planned to address this limitation as well, including semi-structured conversations on research ethics, listening and responding with respect, and maintaining a community of trust.

The chapters that follow explore what was found through the stories and experiences of youth participants. Mostly through the after-school sessions described in this chapter, and supplemented with participant observation, interviews, and youth-created art, rich data was collected. This data shed light upon how recently-arrived Muslim immigrant youth who speak languages other than Spanish in a predominately Latino Newcomer high school made meaning of their school experiences. This meaning-making extends to how they understand the role of school, as well as place, actions, interactions, and ideologies in their learning. Analyzed collaboratively with the youth participants, and through a process of narrative coding, the data speaks volumes about how these youth make meaning of their school experiences. Specific findings explored in the following chapters focus on the othering of these youth as language and religious minorities in Global High School, their home language use in learning, and how their school experiences intersect in the formation of youth's educational linguistic ideologies.

Chapter 4

To me school is: Snapshots of meaning-making

Each photograph, graphic arts piece, and interview provided a glimpse into the experiences of individuals, connecting and intersecting with other pieces of their identity and experience, and with others in the group. Each participant is a complex person, who chose to show me, the researcher, and to show our group, specific attributes of him or herself. From these interactions in our sessions, observations during school days, interviews and youth-created art, I came to know each participant in a unique way and also connected to the group. Their voices contribute to a vivid picture of school life and meaning for language minority youth. Before their voices are heard in support of research findings, and before one can understand the shared experiences of the group, it is important to know them first as individuals.

Getting to know 14 individual youth from a reader's perspective may seem like an impossible task. In order to organize such introductions, I engaged the youth in the process of thinking about how they would be represented to the reader. In a whole group session, desks in a circle, youth were each asked to complete the following sentence on their own: "To me school is" After each youth completed the phrase, they were given the following instructions: "Based on your responses to 'To me school is....', talk to each other and organize yourself into groups of common ideas." The organization of the youth snapshots below, an introduction of the participants to the readers of this study, is a result of the youth's groupings in this exercise.

The group was not given any examples or exemplars while they completed the sentence one at a time. This was an exercise in which all group members were engaged, speaking in turn. Therefore, they were able to build on each other's ideas. For example, the first one to take a turn

in the circle was Fatoumata. She responded, excitedly, and a little weary of her answer, “To me school is a place where I shine.” This response was used by another youth, Abdoul, later in the circle. Abdoul felt that school was, for him as well, a place where he felt successful and special, so he borrowed Fatoumata’s original wording of “a place to shine” to capture his perspective as well (Field notes, 4/25/12).

Once each completed the sentence in a circle, the youth discussed amongst themselves how to organize themselves into smaller groups of 2 to 4 each, based on shared sentiments in their responses. Some individuals joined together in their meaning-making, and combined their different words to capture a shared meaning. For example, Abdulrahman had completed his statement with “community,” while Koudiratou and Bintouya used the word “friends.” When given the opportunity to organize themselves into groups, Abdulrahman, Koudiratou, and Bintouya decided that they all essentially meant the same thing. They grouped together, but maintained both distinct words. Other participants adjusted their responses during this discussion time. Originally, Ayi finished his phrase with, “how I will get to a good future” and Chaimae responded, “a way to a brighter future” later in the circle. When given time to form groups of shared meaning, Ayi and Chaimae found each other and decided to use Chaimae’s wording of “way to a brighter future” to capture what they both meant, along with Fatou and Froudaous who, repeated Chaimae’s wording of “way to a brighter future” (Field notes, 4/25/12).

As the reader “meets” each of the youth participants in this section, there is a picture of the youth chosen by himself or herself for these snapshots. The audience of this study was explored in our group, as was the format and organization of this section, and others. Youth were given the opportunity to use a picture from their own photography, ones I had taken during our year together, or another photograph that was taken any time for the length of our sessions.

School is new things: Arietou & Jahed

For Arietou and Jahed, school is an introduction to newness. It is a gateway to an understanding for a new life in a new country. In completing their “To me school is” sentence, both Jahed and Arietou expressed how school was an entry point to a new life, and new understandings. Arietou expressed that to her, “school is new language,” and Jahed expressed “school is new people.” They decided to join together because of this sense of “new things” (Field notes, 4/25/12).

Arietou



Image 10

Not long after her plane landed at John F. Kennedy International Airport, Arietou started a new school in a new country at the age of 14. Arietou and her family moved to New York from Lome, Togo, and she started 9th grade a few weeks later, just weeks before this project began. She was the one exception to the “10th grade and above” criteria for this project. It was clear that she was the only 9th grader in the hallway, part of Froudaous’ “Hallway Community,” and wanted to join. How could we leave her out? Growing up as a Kotokoli speaker at home and in her community, Arietou learned French in elementary school and continued her schooling in this additional language. Upon moving to the Bronx, Arietou found herself surrounded by few who speak Kotokoli, and a small community of French-as-an-additional language speakers from other West African countries, including Guinea and Senegal. She felt forced to learn English very quickly in her new neighborhood and school. In one of our first conversations, mostly in French, she shared how school was one of the only places outside of her home where she spoke Kotokoli, as in her neighborhood she spoke mostly English, and some French with other African

immigrants (Field notes, 10/5/11). In our after-school sessions, Arietou sat every day next to Koudiratou, often whispering in Kotokoli or French, or writing down questions or comments. The first thing she did every day on her laptop was to find a song to play for the group. Often dancing and singing along to her choices, she joked in French that she would end up speaking English like Rihanna.

Jahed



Image 11

Jahed and his family came to the Bronx from the city of Sylhet in Bangladesh, in the beginning of the last school year as he entered 9th grade. Although they had their own business in Sylhet, according to Jahed, “They came to the United States to give me a good education” (Field notes, 5/2/12). Jahed takes his education very seriously and constantly asks questions of what certain words mean, and how he can improve his writing. When describing the most important things in his life, Jahed said without hesitation, “Islam and my family” and went on to explain, “When I go to do something, first I pray to God, then I do something” (Field notes, 1/4/12).

Upon entering Global High School, Jahed expressed surprise at the languages he heard. “I didn’t know so much Spanish here.” He noted and went on to explain that he thought more students would speak a variety of languages in the Bronx. Jahed seemed to find the positive side of everything. Jahed expressed a valuable learning opportunity in attending school with mostly non-Bengali speakers, and how it gives him chances to both practice his English and to learn about new cultures, places, and people. Since moving to the U.S. a year ago, Jahed has developed a love of football and has a new goal. He dreams of being a doctor one day,

specifically for economically disadvantaged patients. As Jahed explained, “If they say to me they cannot pay, I will give them a low cost. I will try to make them stay for help and not make them leave if they cannot pay or don’t have money. This is a new idea I have since I have been in New York” (Field notes, 4/26/12). Jahed made just as many positive connections and references to his culture, religion, and home country, as he did to his new learning and new interests in the United States.

School is where I shine: Abdoul, Ananna, & Fatoumata

Abdoul, Ananna, and Fatoumata each expressed how school is place to shine. It is in school where they succeed, feel proud, smart, and successful. They told stories of working very hard in school, hours of homework, studying, and staying after school for extra help. They also told stories of receiving awards, scholarships, and positive feedback from parents and teachers, with great smiles and pride. Gaining knowledge and preparing for the future were noted by each of them as a benefit of school. But they chose to focus on how they felt in school because, as Fatoumata explained, “what makes me want to come to school is that I do good, so I picked ‘where I shine’ to show that I think school is where I am successful and shine, you know, like a star” (Field notes, 4/25/12).

Abdoul



Image 12

Singing in French, pop-locking moves, and Karate poses, Abdoul had a way of making an entrance into the room. When it came time to work, Abdoul was silent, diligently working. His actions were reflected in his words, as he expressed his outlook on school, “I think that school is not a playground, it’s where you get education to learn stuff” (Interview, 3/14/12).

Although playful, Abdoul did not play in school. Taking his classes, work, religion, pride in heritage and culture, and learning seriously, Abdoul knew when not to play. But when Abdoul played, he played hard, causing an entire room to erupt with laughter.

Abdoul and his family immigrated to the Bronx from Burkina Faso almost two years prior to this study. He shared with a smile, “I can’t believe I learn English so fast,” and then added, “probably cause I’m the only one from my country.” He contributed this to one of the ways he “shined” in school, as well as in after-school activities, gym class, math, and “making friends” and “getting on well with teachers” (Field notes, 4/26/12).

Ananna



Image 13

On the first day she walked into our after-school sessions, Chaimae introduced Ananna to me as, “the smartest girl in school” (Field notes, 10/5/11). Other youth participants in our group often referred to Ananna’s intelligence, suggesting others go to her when help was needed, or a word to be defined, or when everyone else was stuck. She would smile shyly as others reminded her of how smart she was, quick to catch on, and helpful to others. Ananna pointed to this as she explained her choice of how to complete her “To me school is” sentence. She said, “I help a lot of the others here in class, like when I know an answer first. Even you all ask me things,” as she gestured to others in the circle (Field notes, 4/25/12).

Ananna would often bring up how, if she were still in Bangladesh, she would be graduating with her friends and going to the college she was already accepted into before she left. Ananna often brought up stories about life in Bangladesh with sadness, adding how much she missed her friends, her school, and her life there. She found laughter in these comparisons,

“School here is much easier. I hope I don’t get lazy because it is” (Interview 3/15/12). She reflected back on this as she shared how she shined in school; “I feel so proud in school here,” then with laughter, “it’s easier to be smart here, more than in Bangladesh.” (Field notes, 4/26/12). In the circle, as Ananna completed her “To me school is” sentence, she added a caveat by what she meant; “School is where I shine because I am smart, but I am still lonely here a lot.” The room was quiet, others smiled at Ananna reassuringly, and several youth participants told her how they were here for her (Field notes, 4/25/12). Feeling lonely was expressed often by Ananna, as she experienced great highs of academic success and the sadness of missing friends and community.

Fatoumata



Image 14

Fatoumata had perfect attendance and knew the words to every song by the British boy-band, One Direction. In school, she was constantly using her flashdrive full of work-in-progress and music on various laptops and classroom computers. Fatoumata shared with a laugh, “I like to come to school. It’s better than staying at home.” She continued, all jokes aside; “I feel most proud in school. I work hard and I do good, and then I feel good” (Field notes, 4/26/12). She echoed this sentiment in her “Where I’m From” graphic art, giving attention to academic awards earned as a student in Conakry, Guinea.

Each day she left our sessions, Fatoumata smiled, said good-bye, and see you next time, *Insha’Allah* (God-willing). She spoke of her religion, country, and languages with great pride. Fatoumata often expressed her dreams of the future, to be a fashion designer and/or a pilot. No

matter the giggles from the group, Fatoumata stood by her dreams – a fashion designer and and/or a pilot – and let it all shine.

School is a way to a brighter future: Ayi, Chaimae, Fatou & Froudaous

For Ayi, Chaimae, Fatou, and Froudaous, school was a necessary stop on a journey towards a bright future. Each of these youth expressed how school, for them, was a way to get the career, or life, they wanted. They spoke of college goals, traveling, being successful in various careers, and earning money. These goals and dreams were only possible, according to these youth, upon graduation, and therefore, school was about getting to this bright future that awaits them (Field notes, 4/25/12).

Ayi



Image 15

Starting in December, Ayi began talking about his summer plans. Ayi often referred to cousins or relatives from Togo who now lived across Europe. He had plans to go to Germany, France, and the Netherlands with his father to see them. Looking forward to something seemed to keep Ayi going. His eyes would light up planning his travels, or planning trips to visit colleges. Ayi came to our sessions after school often visibly worn from the day. He shared stories about teachers or classmates who were “stressing me out” (Field notes 3/5/12). On these days, Ayi would walk to the desks, move one away from the group, although still facing them, and seat himself there, somewhat removed as if to decompress, but still involved. In the fall, an argument with a classmate escalated into a physical altercation, and Ayi was nearly suspended. The incident was worked out with the support of staff and parents, but Ayi continued to have

some issues with classmates during the school day, here and there. “They don’t respect me,” he would often say (Field notes, 3/5/12), and then move his desk and take his time before joining the group.

Ayi came in often excited to share a new movie he had seen, or new music with the class, and especially liked to discuss classic films “from back in the 80s” with me (Field notes 3/15/12). He referenced this when completing his “To me school is” sentence: “That’s why I like to always see a new movie. It makes me think about what I can be and the future. So school is for me to get there” (Field notes, 4/25/12). He spoke often about dreams of being a lawyer: “I’m thinking about being a lawyer because everyone says I have an excuse for everything,” he shared laughing. This was followed with a description of how his languages would be useful in his future career. He noted, “Sometimes you have some places and workplaces where the more languages you speak, the more chances you have of being in that place; they pay you well.” (Interview, 5/9/12)

Chaimae



Image 16

During our year together, Chaimae watched as her sister, one year older, dropped out of high school. Chaimae repeatedly told us, “not me” and “I’m going to graduate.” She was very adamant about this and worked hard to prove it. Between biting sarcasm, and a wicked sense of humor, Chaimae was constantly working and putting in extra hours to succeed. She spoke about her desire to stay in school and graduate as a stepping-stone to her career in teaching. However, this dream was not necessarily supported at home. As she explained:

My family wants me to be in the medical field. Sometimes I think I have to do what they want, even though I don't want to at all. It's different when you say 'my daughter is a doctor than when you say teacher.' I am going to break the rules, break the culture, and do something that I really want. It's like I learn from my favorite teacher. We talk about our dreams, life outside school, the real life, and to make life what you want. (Interview, 2/16/12)

Of all the youth participants, Chaimae was perhaps the most vocal about her experiences with multiple racisms and discrimination from adults. These experiences were so salient, that she shaped her future plans around teaching for the explicit purpose of creating "a school where students are really respected" and in order to reach this goal, school now meant the path to this future (Field notes, 4/25/13). Chaimae was also the most expressive about her performance of religion as a hijabi. As you will see in subsequent chapters, this was her personal choice to wear the hijab upon immigrating from Morocco, and she took great pride in wearing it, as a woman, as a Muslim, and as a representative for her community. In our group, and throughout the school, other young women from West Africa, Bangladesh, and North Africa wore the hijab, or headscarf, in various forms and to various extents.

Fatou



Image 17

Fatou was the peacemaker in the group. When voices were raised, or the slightest shred of an argument began, Fatou would calm down the group, remind them of our contract, and move the conversation along. As a senior, Fatou was busy filling out college and scholarship applications, eager to start the next chapter in her journey to be a nurse. In completing her "To me school is" sentence, she drew on this career desire and connected schooling to gaining the knowledge and skills to be a nurse. Nursing seemed to fit Fatou perfectly. A caring individual,

Fatou often comforted others in the group who came to sessions looking stressed out or with worries. She gave friendly reminders about what snacks other youth should be eating, what to do when someone had a cold, and how to handle a conflict with a teacher.

Fatou took an active role in expanding her educational opportunities as well. While in her senior year, Fatou was taking two courses at a local community college. She saw this as “great for my resume. If I want to get into a good school for nursing I need to have this, and it gives me the math I need.” Fatou saw this as a twofold benefit for her brighter future – it gave her the required course she would need in nursing school, plus it was a strength on her resume to be taking college courses while still in high school. Fatou made an explicit point to connect her career goal to her community. “When I’m a nurse,” she explained, “it will be so good for my community. I will speak their language, understand them, and bring them pride” (Field notes, 4/25/12). Identifying the Ivory Coast as her home country, Fatou often expressed her ties to Mali and Guinea as homelands of her parents, and connections to these local communities.

Froudaous



Image 18

With the nickname of “Mama” amongst the group, she coined the phrase “Hallway Community” to describe our group prior to forming our sessions. Froudaous found a real community amongst language minority students, the “other kids,” and took on the role of the caring, older, and sometimes authoritative individual. She was heard constantly reminding group members to get their homework done, or stay out of trouble, or not to converse with certain other students, lest a conflict ensued. Froudaous would often speak about her many responsibilities at home, including “cooking, cleaning, help my sister with homework, it’s too much!” (Field notes

4/26/12). She connected this to her meaning making of school when thinking about how school was a way to a brighter future for her. She explained drawing on the experiences of her mother:

I help so much because my mother works so hard, so much. If you can get a good job, after a good education, you don't have to work as much [other laugh]. Don't laugh! It's true. Think about it. If I work for \$5 an hour, I have to work many more hours to make ok. But if I study hard and get a job for \$20 an hour, I don't have to work as much. That's what I need to do. (Field notes, 4/25/13)

Froudaous took pride in her role as Mama in the group. When participants showed stress or struggle, Froudaous would stretch out her arms and offer, "Venez à mama" (Come to mama), and the group would laugh. But between the laughter was the comfort in knowing that Froudaous cared.

School is friends and community: Abdulrahman, Bintouya & Koudiratou

For Abdulrahman, Bintouya, and Koudiratou, school was a meaningful place because of the friends to share it with. These three youth focused on their relationships with peers, forming friendships and a sense of community, as the most salient part of the educational experiences. As Koudiratou noted, "The work is better when you can do it with a friend" (Field notes, 4/25/12). Even the academic aspects of school are framed in a way that connects to the value of interacting with friends during the school day. For all three youth here, in their explanations of their social maps, the cafeteria for lunch stood out as a time when youth felt safe, or happy, or had other positive emotions. Lunchtime was not for the delicious food, but rather, for the extended opportunity to interact with friends. This was also one of the few, if only times, youth had the chance to interact with those across grade levels,

Abdulrahman



Image 19

Quoting Tupac Shakur and giving himself the email LLAbdul@ (Ladies Love Abdul), Abdulrahman often harkened back to old school hip-hop in his references to others and his relationships. He even used specific phrases when referring to the most important people in his life, his friends, or as he would say, “my crew” and often greeted peers with “what’s up homie?” When he originally completed his “To me school is” sentence, he chose one word – community. He explained that this community was his friends at Global High School. Abdulrahman took it further, “Not just friends, my family, my community of friends” (Field notes, 4/25/12). He explained how friends, and his community of mostly other language minority students, was what brought him to school daily.

Bintouya



Image 20

Bintouya seemed to be in a constant state of smiling. A fellow participant asked her one why she smiled so much. At first she shrugged, then answered, “Why not? My friends are here, school’s not too bad” (Field notes, 2/8/12). For Bintouya, these friends were students from her home country, Guinea, and others from Senegal, Togo, Morocco, and the Dominican Republic. Her positive attitude connects with her meaning making of school. Without hesitation, she completed her “To me school is” sentence with “friends.” At least once a week, Bintouya had a visitor at the door, another student to deliver a message, ask a question, or tell her some news.

Bintouya prided herself on being friendly and explained that “friends mean everything but I’m not the friend that doesn’t like new people” (Field notes, 4/25/12). It was important to her to get the point across that while she was loyal to her friends, she was not exclusive, or one to leave out others in maintaining tight friendships.

Koudiratou



Image 21

On any given day in our sessions, Koudiratou could be seen doing one of three activities – dancing, helping, and hugging. She was constantly dancing. Hip-hop, traditional West African, belly dancing, she was always on the move in the room, shaking her body in rhythm to whatever the group DJ chose to play that day. Koudiratou would often teach others her dances, help them with their own moves and catching on to hers. This was her other activity – helping. Most of the time, she was helping Arietou navigate her way through English language work and reading. As one of her only classmates from Togo, who spoke Kotokoli, Koudiratou was a natural guide through the new terrain of school. She was also helping me with materials, and other participants with their work, expressing ideas, or social struggles. When it came time for Koudiratou to finish her “To me school is,” she struggled between “friends” and “where I shine.”

The following was her rationale:

I want to say friends. That’s why I come to school to be with my friends. But I like what Fatoumata say, where I shine. I think school is where I shine at being a good friend, where I help people and they like me. But both are about friends, so I’ll say friends. (Field notes, 4/25/12)

Even with all the dancing and helping, Koudiratou’s hugging was her trademark move. Upon entering our room, she would make her rounds. Hugging hello every member of the group, some with kisses cheek to cheek. Saying goodbye, even for one evening, was a process for

Koudiratou, as hugs again were required, and sometimes even popped up midway through sessions when a participant recalled a difficult member, or shared a struggle.

School is not for me: Boubacar & Jamilatou

The four previous subsections of student meaning-making had generally positive tones. For the 12 youth described previously, school brought new possibilities, pathways to futures, and space for self-confidence development and growth of community. However, the fifth and final way youth completed their “To me school is” sentences shows a disconnected relationship with school. Boubacar and Jamilatou shared stories of school success and friendships, and yet, completed their sentences with “To me school is *not a place for me.*” The snapshots below show that each of the youth did find belonging and meaning in places other than school. For these two, community organizations served as spaces for learning and social belonging. School did not serve these purposes, as it did for other youth participants.

Boubacar



Image 22

Boubacar wore his large headphones, and his A.U.P. t-shirt with great pride. He was a member of Africans United for Progress, a community based organization of young African immigrant men, mostly from Guinea, like Boubacar. Others were from Togo, Senegal, Ghana, and Nigeria. They engaged in social activities, volunteer work, academic and religious support, and maintained friendships with each other beyond the formal organization. In completing his “To me school is,” Boubacar referenced his close ties to this group as to why he chose to say,

“To me school is not for me.” Boubacar followed this declaration with stories of camaraderie and community in A.U.P. He spoke of “the guys, they get me, where I’m from, how I think.”

This was in stark contrast to how he described school interactions:

Mostly, they don’t get me here. You do [gestures to youth in circle] and that’s cool but it’s too much from the others. So I say school is not for me because I don’t think I really belong here. Like I’m ok here, but it’s not home, not like I’m a party of A.U.P, like I add to the group, I add to it, give it something. Here, I don’t give anything. (Field notes, 4/25/12)

Although he felt disconnected from school and his larger school community, Boubacar expressed a constant desire to succeed academically (which he did) and how this success would be “pride for my community, my family, for A.U.P.” (Field notes 4/26/12). Often reserved, and quite protective over his younger sister, Bintouya, and her friends whom he considered to be his “sisters” as well, Boubacar would speak with great passion and emotion on rare, yet powerful occasions. He was most passionate about justice in the community, making change “for my people,” and helping those with whom he felt a cultural connection (Field notes, 4/26/12).

Jamilatou



Image 23

In mid-September, Jamilatou requested to leave our session early one afternoon in order to get her hair done, preparing for the annual Miss Guinea pageant in New York City. Every day to school she wore jeans, often tight-fitting and sometimes with a shirt that exposed her midriff. As the months went on, Jamilatou gradually dressed more modestly, covering her hair, and began attending after-school programs at the Islamic community center. She would often discuss her newfound connection to her religion in our sessions. “I like it there [at the center]. I feel welcome and people are nice, and I learn so much, more than in school that I can use,” she

explained. This was her reasoning behind her way of finishing “To me school is.” She compared what she was learning in school to what she was learning through her religious education, pointing to the religious education as “better for how to live life every day.” With this, Jamilatou described lessons of ethics, relationships, self-respect, conflict resolution, and honoring history and traditions. “This is why,” she concluded, “I say that school is not for me because I learn a lot, facts and history, but not learning for my life now” (Field notes, 4/25/12).

There is more to Jamilatou than just this personal journey she experienced the year of this study. A self-proclaimed “drama queen”, Jamilatou prided herself on her sense of humor, ability to make everyone, and anyone, laugh, and her flair for the dramatic. A running joke in our sessions was, after I would give directions for a task, Jamilatou would heave a heavy sigh, frown her eyebrows and call out, “Aye, Miss,” stretching the words out in an exaggerated whine. She never seemed to really have a problem with any request, but enjoyed the back and forth and drama of pretending to find a problem. Jamilatou found family in those around her, referring to Abdulrahman and Abdoul as her “little brothers,” Bintouya as her “little sister,” and Boubacar as her “big brother.” She took her friendships very seriously, and made it clear that she would defend them, and fight for them. A few afternoons she came to our sessions having had an argument with another student during the school day. Whenever she was asked about what happened, her response was always that the argument was not about her, but that she was sticking up for, or helping, a friend.

School is diversity in community

The methodology of this study, specifically the activities of the after-school sessions, allowed for youth meaning-making of school to emerge. Youth went through the acts of completing the sentence, “To me school is..”, building off one another’s ideas, sharing their

reasons behind their perspectives, and ultimately forming groups through shared experience and consensus. This enabled youth to actively engage in the process of meaning-making and work collaboratively to explore both connections and differences amongst each other.

What this exercise ultimately revealed was the diversity present in this community of youth. In other words, school meant different things to this group of youth. Youth focused on different aspects of school life and evaluated their school experience differently. This diversity of meaning-making of school existed within a community of youth bonded together based on their status as religious and language minorities in a school where the majority are Christian Spanish speakers.

Our after-school sessions were not the only time in which they were together during the school day. Although they spanned different grade levels and course schedules, at lunchtime these youth all sat together, along with other non-Spanish-speaking students, comprising the linguistic and religious minorities of Global High School. Choice of lunchtime seating speaks volumes about the communities created by youth. This is the only time throughout the entire day when students have free choice about who to spend time with. Who the youth chose to sit with at lunchtime reflects the communities they have created for themselves, rather than the communities created for them by the school based on schedules and grade levels.

And yet, the existence of community was not synonymous with conformity or homogeneity of experiences among these students. Interacting as friends and classmates, non-Spanish-speaking youth in Global High School created a space for themselves based on their common differences, apart from the Spanish-speaking majority. Yet, they acknowledged and accepted the differences amongst themselves. These differences had to do with their home

languages, national origins and religion, but also with the ways in which they made meaning of their school experiences.

The diverse ways in which youth participants made meaning of their school experiences reflect the diverse goals of Newcomer schools. Curriculum, structures, and programming offered by Newcomer schools seek to provide students with the academic, linguistic, and social-emotional supports to succeed in schooling and in a new country (Lieberman, Nadelstern, & Berman, 1992; Hertzberg, 1998; Feinberg, 2000; Short & Boyson, 2004; Shnur, 1999; García & Sylvan, 2011). These academic and linguistic supports are reflected in how several youth made meaning of school as a “way to a brighter future” and “introduction to new things” including language, as focused on by Arietou. This conceptualization of school as an “introduction to new things” also overlaps with Newcomer schools’ goal in providing recently-arrived immigrant youth with a safe space and sense of belonging in a new country.

The attention to the social-emotional needs of youth can be seen in how Abdoul, Ananna, and Fatoumata make meaning of school as a “a place to shine.” For these youth, school is building on their strengths and fostering feelings of confidence and success in their learning. Newcomer schools are often described as having a “family-like” environment, and here, as youth make meaning of school as a place of community and friends, school for them becomes a family away from home, albeit a diverse family.

The first four ways of youth meaning-making of school fit into the framework of Newcomer schools’ goals of academic, linguistic, and social-emotional support of recently-arrived immigrant youth. However, the fifth and final way youth made meaning of school as “not for me” does not. It is interesting to note that the literature on the drawbacks of Newcomer schools was virtually non-existent. Few critics explore how Newcomer schools may lead some

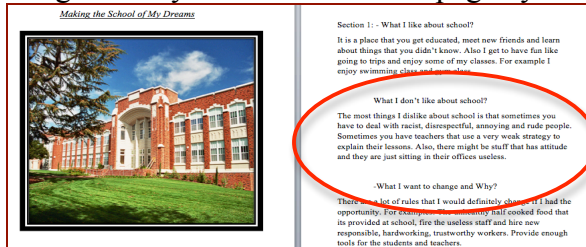
youth, like Boubacar and Jamilatou, to feel segregated and disconnected from students who are US-born (Feinberg, 2000).

And yet, within a Newcomer school, one can also feel segregated and disconnected. The next section focuses on shared experiences of discrimination conceptualized as “racist” by youth participants. It is precisely the fact that these are linguistic and religious minorities within a Newcomer School that becomes the root of interactions perceived as unfair or unjust by youth.

Chapter 5

Multiple Racisms: Power and identity in the classroom

Image 24: My Ideal School book page by Abdoul (5/9/12)



What I don't like about school? The most things I dislike about school is that sometimes you have to deal with racist, disrespectful, annoying and rude people.

The label of “other kids” was used to describe a diverse group of youth, not only by teachers, staff, and language majority youth in Global High School, but also by the youth who this term seeks to identify. In the hallways, classrooms, and main office, constant references were made to two distinct groups of students in the school: “Spanish kids” and the “other kids.” Although this “othering” of non-Spanish-speakers is based on a linguistic difference, from the perspective of the youth, this othering goes beyond language. Exploring their experiences through a lens of Critical Race theory, youth in this study experience “the call” over and over again in school – the moment when one is reminded of one’s minority standing, and of the groupings, structures, and their own personal place in their school reality based on power (Ladson-Billings & Donner, 2008). Blackledge and Creese (2010a) argue that “the social construction of distinction based on ‘ethnicity,’ ‘race,’ and ‘class,’ goes hand-in-hand with the social construction of distinction based on linguistic practice ideology” (p. 5), thus enabling the experiences of language minority immigrant youth to be further examined through a lens of Critical Race Theory. Although the youth did not express experiences of discrimination based on traditional definitions of race (skin color), they identified experiences of discrimination based

on their language, home countries, and religion, and used the word “racism” in their writing and speech to define and describe these moments. The word “racism” was conceptualized, and used, by youth in this study as experiences of oppression based on how they are othered in the school, and the power structures that exist with dominant language, religious and ethnic groups that they do not belong to.

Due to the repeated use of the words “racism” and “racist,” and the varied nature of the roots of these experiences from the youth’s perspective (language, homeland², religion), the concept of *multiple racisms* is used to capture both the nature and frequency of these experiences. *Multiple racisms* refers to ways in which youth participants conceptualized diverse interactions as racist, whether rooted in their differences in language, homeland, or religion. These multiple racisms were expressed in stories of unfair treatment by school adults and classmates, as well as the content and pedagogy experienced in classrooms. As we focus at these stories, it is important for the audience of this work to know, as a direct instruction from the youth participants, that although there are difficult words and memories to get through, overall, these youth were, and are, happy individuals. They have good days, and they have bad days, but they are positive, smiling, and learning in their schooling and young lives. They are safe on a daily basis, and express pride in what makes them different, and their multi-faceted identities. They have, generally, positive relationships with teachers and classmates of various language backgrounds

This is not to say that these youth do not feel moments of discrimination or racism. It is these moments that are the focus of stories in which youth specifically expressed connections between their experiences and what teachers, schools, and classmates should know, and,

² *Homelands* is used to acknowledge the diverse ways youth in this research study express where they are from. Expressed by different individuals was home city, country, region, continent. *Homeland* is used to captures this variety.

therefore, change. “This is what we want to change,” explained Chaimae, “but don’t make it sound like we are complaining” (Field notes, 2/16/12). “Don’t make the teachers feel bad,” added Ananna. It is my intention that their opinions be applied to this work.

These questions and conversation of racisms could not be discussed without consideration for youth’s real-world reaction to the issues and surrounding feelings. Therefore, in our after-school sessions, we discussed as a group different reactions to experiences of unfair treatment. This included how to talk it out with someone who they felt was being discriminatory, and then who to talk to and how to report an incident if need be. This section concludes by looking at youth’s diverse reactions to those in power, or those they identified as “racist.”

The multiple racisms expressed by youth participants are rooted in their differences in language, homeland, and religion. When analyzing youth’s experiences, the most salient themes that emerged from their stories were:

- (1) perceptions of racism based on language differences (“I don’t speak Spanish”);
- (2) racism rooted in national origin and homelands that are not reflected in the curriculum (“I don’t see myself in what they teach”); and
- (3) racism toward Muslims, based on school structures and interactions that are perceived as disrespectful.

I don’t speak Spanish: Language

Within Global High School, there is a ladder of linguistic power, with English at the top, Spanish secondly, then down other languages. The visible multilingual ecology of the school reflects this. It includes English and Spanish throughout classrooms, the main office, and

hallways. It includes posters, class charts, bulletin boards, and displayed student work. The following images illustrate this:

Image 25: English-Spanish school vision & mission poster, hallway, 3/1/12

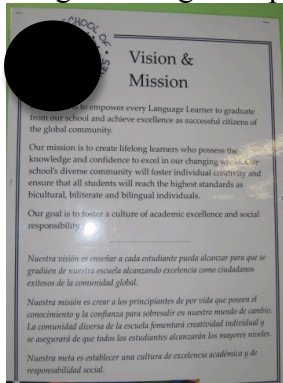


Image 26: Student created graphic organizer in Spanish displayed in classroom, 11/10/11

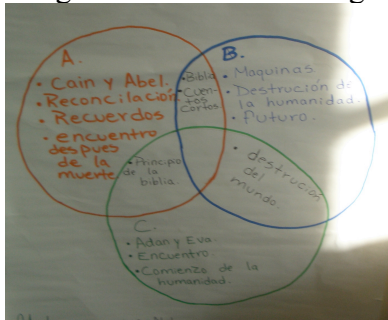


Image 27: Posters and class notes in Spanish displayed in classroom, 12/7/11

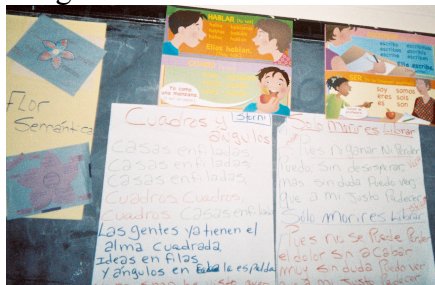
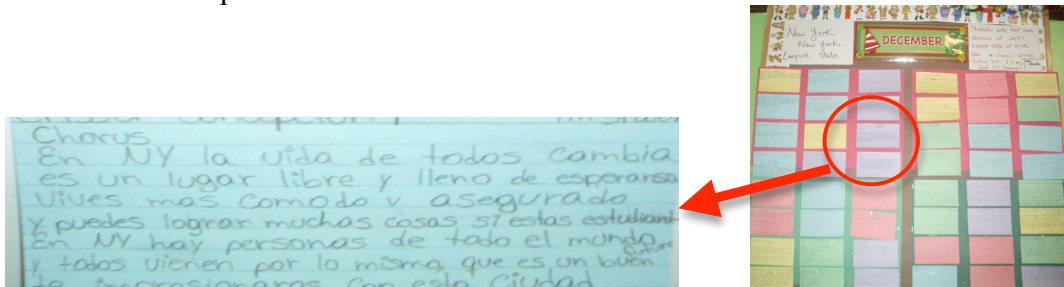


Image 28 & 29: Hallway display of student work in ELA class in English and Spanish, and zoomed-in example 12/7/11



languages in the school, and how those hierarchies are enacted, performed and perceived by youth and teachers, impacts the young speakers of all languages within the school. These are then reflected in classroom practices and interaction, and language minority youth make specific meaning of their own experiences.

In this study, we are given, what Blackledge and Creese (2010a) describe as, “a window into the exercise of power” (p. 221). Youth in this study expressed a common experience of linguistic racism, what Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) calls *linguicism*. She defines this as “ideologies and structures that are used to legitimate, effectuate and reproduce an unequal division of power and resources between groups which are defined on the basis of language” (p. 13). What is poignant about this finding is that this particular experience with linguicism, expressed as racism, was framed by the youth not as treatment based on languages *spoken* by the youth, but rather, based on languages *not* spoken by the youth, namely Spanish. Youth shared over and over again stories focused on their personal experiences with inequity or unfair treatment rooted in, what they felt, was their status as non-Spanish speakers in Global High School. As Abdulrahman put it bluntly, “There is racism and discrimination here if you don’t speak Spanish.” This was supported by his and others’ stories of negative interactions with teachers “because I don’t speak Spanish” (Interview 3/15/12).

This sentiment was echoed by Ananna. In an interview after our group session one afternoon, she shared stories about her experiences as a language minority youth. These stories were difficult at times for Ananna to express as she choked back frustration and tears, and shared them with an adult for the first time. She began with a story about her classmate, Jamilatou, and continued with a story about herself:

If there is anything that everyone is doing, they don’t give it to you because you’re not Spanish. Today, Jamilatou was arguing with a Spanish boy, and the teacher told them to

keep quiet. The teacher said, "I won't help you for the essay." Jamilatou didn't say anything. But then the guy [other student] asked her [the teacher] a question and she helped him, but when Jamilatou asked for help, she said no. Then like, today in gym, the students were jumping rope, and I asked if I could use it after. Then a boy asked for it, and I wanted to just try it one time and he wouldn't give me one try. And they speak in Spanish every word, and they see I don't, and I am sad about this, but they don't care. (Interview 3/15/12)

Here, Ananna equates what she experienced as unfair treatment by a teacher due to her lack of Spanish language, or her position as a language minority student. She continued on to explain how this impacts her daily, and once she has left school:

The students always speaking in Spanish, every day this frustrates me. At home I always think about this at home, why I don't understand them, why I'm being discriminated against. (Interview 3/15/12)

As she told her stories, Ananna's voice and face filled with sadness, and frustration. She expressed frustration in not understanding another language that was so constantly used for communication around her. This frustration was extended to others' use of a language she didn't understand, and their continued languaging, knowing she didn't understand, was conceptualized as discrimination.

Similar stories were shared by other youth participants during interviews and whole-group discussions. Ayi's story also spoke about a particular time he felt inequity from school staff as a language minority student in Global High School:

Racism is present here, you feel it from teachers. The AP, once she took my hat. I was coming from gym, and I didn't say nothing. And she said, "I have to take yours." I started to observe her and I saw that she was with this boy, a Spanish kid, and she asked him, "Do you want me to take your hat? I don't really want to," and the boy didn't say nothing so she left him alone. But with me, she didn't say, "Do you want me to take your hat?" And I know it's cause he's Spanish and she's Spanish, cause we're both boys and we boy had hats, so that's the only difference. (Interview 5/9/12)

Here, Ayi hones in on the linguistic difference between he and the other student as the root of the assistant principal's difference in treatment. He considers language, and his lack of Spanish, to

be the first and foremost reason behind why this particular teacher may have given the other student, a Spanish-speaker, the opportunity to keep his hat, whereas Ayi's was taken away. Ayi does not recognize any other difference between he and the other student in this incident. He notes, "we're both boys and we boy had hats, so that's [language] the only difference," and this language being shared with the teacher, is the root of the unfair treatment experienced by Ayi.

Stories along this theme continued as each youth participant had their own version of a similar experience that was conceptualized in a similar way. Fatou's story again captures the sentiment of discrimination from adults based on not speaking Spanish in Global High School:

Some teachers they are racist. Sometimes we have a trip and they will say, "If you don't have an 85 [grade in class] you can't go." But some went without 85 because they are Spanish. They don't have a good excuse, Spanish kids did not even have a 75. They don't let African or other race go, it's like, other race goes to back of the line. They never ask our excuse. When we want to go out of cafeteria during lunch, they don't let us, but they let Spanish students go out, they always accept their excuse, and they say their excuse in Spanish, the teacher understands and respect that and take it. I say what I say in English, I know they understand me, but they don't respect it unless you say it in Spanish. (Interview, 3/8/12)

Fatou's story adds an additional layer of looking at the reality of a common language and common understanding between many adults and Spanish-speaking students in Global High School that language minority students do not experience. Fatou conceptualizes the root of her experiences of unfairness as her inability to communicate in Spanish:

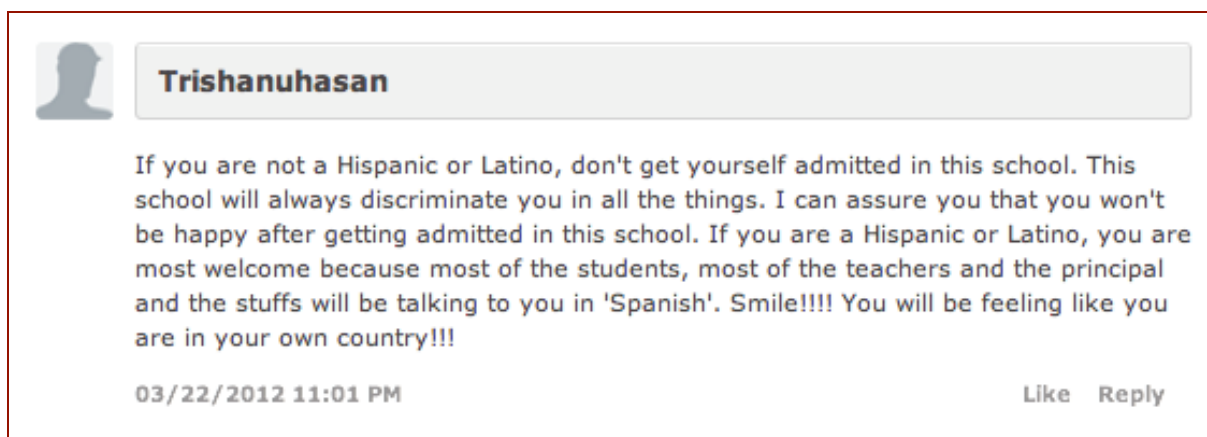
They [teachers] always accept their [Spanish-speaking students'] excuse, and they say their excuse in Spanish, the teacher understands and respect that and take it. I say what I say in English, I know they understand me, but they don't respect it unless you say it in Spanish. (Interview, 3/8/12)

Here, Fatou felt as though her needs are not respected because she cannot express them in Spanish, which is the home language of her teacher. She also perceives her teacher to have respect for a particular language (Spanish), rather than considering the teacher to have respect for the content of what the Spanish-speaking student said, or the student herself. Fatou

differentiated between what it meant to have a teacher “understand” a student, meaning they hear and comprehend the language spoken, and to have teachers “respect” a student, meaning they take their needs into consideration and grant them what they ask for. For Fatou, she is understood, her words make sense to the teacher, and she is able to comfortably communicate in English with all adults in the school. However, she does not feel respected, because she cannot share in the use of Spanish with some teachers who share this home language with the majority of other students in the school. What Fatou is expressing here is her feelings about the privilege of Spanish-speakers and the lack of privilege she is experiencing. Here at Global High School, it is a privilege to speak Spanish. This leads to enhanced communication with teachers, and from Fatou and other youth’s points of view, greater respect and acceptance from the larger school community as well.

While stories of teachers, classmates, and the school’s visual use of language were being shared, Ananna shared with us a reflection of these stories online. On the classroom computer, she went to InsideSchools.org. There was the following comment about Global High School on its profile page:

Image 33: Insideschools.org school profile comment



This sparked even more stories and agreement of the hierarchies within Global High School. Like the language of the youth, this online comment focuses on discrimination based on what youth are *not*, specifically here, *not* Latino. However, this entry was not without its critics in the group. Abdulrahman brought up his own stories of friendship with Spanish-speaking youth, and learning Spanish to communicate with them as well. However, the general tone of this comment was confirmed by the youth participants, and they could easily empathize with the writer. The writer of this comment was not recognized by any of the youth. The youth tried to decipher the name and link it to a language minority student they knew at Global High School. After failed attempts, it was decided by the group that this comment must have been posted by an alumni or former student (Field notes, 4/5/12).

What is seen later, however, is that the youth in this study did not allow negative sentiment to deter their learning with, or utilization of, the unique languages that made them the target of discrimination from their perspective. Rather, home languages of the youth, however their status was minoritized in school, were utilized and valued as positive learning tools by the youth themselves.

I don't see myself in what they teach: Homelands

The multiple racisms experienced by language minority youth in this study at Global High School were also illustrated in stories of pedagogical practices, specifically in the ways students' home countries (or regions) were spoken of, or taught about, within classrooms. When discussing school experiences of discrimination with the group of youth participants, the question was asked "How do you know people are racist?" This was met with many responses, ranging from observing actions of teachers, to students' interactions within class and lunch, to the words used by individuals.

Ayi focused on teachers in Global High School with his response of, “You see it in what they teach. Like I don’t see myself in what they teach, even when they talk about Africa.” When asked to be more specific, Jamilatou jumped in, “It’s like, Miss, you can see they are racist because how they talk about Africa.” She then pointed to one of her photographs that she had taken based on the prompt “Where I am happy in school”:

Image 34: “Where do I feel happy in school” photograph by Jamilatou (1/12/12)



“You see, Miss,” she explained, “I’m happy when Africa is talked about nice, like how it really is, all different and good things, not just bad” (Field notes, 2/29/12). This photograph became a constant reference points for youth as they explored their feelings and experiences with how their homelands were represented in lessons and learning materials. All participants agreed with Jamilatou, that positive portrayals of their homelands in classes were sources of happiness and pride. However, these instances were limited, if experienced at all.

“They don’t even talk about where I’m from. Good or bad,” Ananna to the conversation. Both Bengali youth in this study, Jahed and Ananna, reported that Bangladesh is “never” talked about in class by teachers. I probed for at least one time their home country was discussed, or brought up, by a teacher in class, “What about when explaining something in a lesson? In what you read? Does she ask you for examples from Bangladesh?” This was met with headshakes

and “No, miss, nothing, I told you, never,” from Jahed, as if fed up with both my asking, and the absence he was forced to acknowledge (Field notes, 2/29/12).

Ananna added, “I write about, like in my journal or for an essay once, but never, never from the teacher or in a book or like that.” This absence of one’s home country from course material and content was noticeable for both these youth. As Ananna asked the group, “Leaving us out is racist, yes?” The group answered her question with a circle full of head-nods, “yes”s and “mmm-hmmm”s (Field notes, 2/29/12).

Youth in the group from Guinea, Togo, Burkina Faso and the Ivory Coast shared their own stories of how Africa was discussed by teachers and other students within their classes. Fatoumata first shared a frustration that was corroborated by the rest of the youth from various African countries; “The teachers, the students, everyone, they talk in class like Africa is one place, one country, one people all the same. That’s not fair to us! We are so different, even in Guinea people and lives is different” (Field notes, 3/1/12). This practice of generalizing Africa, or Africans, was a common occurrence experienced by youth in Global High School, and was internalized as an act of discrimination, something not fair.

More specific pedagogical treatment of Africa was described by Fatou in her story from social studies class:

The teacher talks about Africa, but said they in the jungle, don’t wear clothes, or have a disease or AIDS. Then they [students] start making fun of me. I was mad and try to defend myself. Why they don’t do the good part? She have to respect me, the teacher and the student are racist, both, it’s not fair.” (Field notes, 3/1/12)

At this moment, Fatou expressed what she experienced as “not fair” from both teacher and students. The teacher, in this case and from her perspective, is responsible for conveying only negative messages about Africa in teaching content. Fatou reported content about Africa as only focusing on vast generalizations of primitive lifestyles and disease. These blanket statements,

and focusing only on the negative, are internalized as a racist act by Fatou, and as disrespecting her as an individual.

Froudaous also describes the racism she experiences as an African:

When we say something is wrong here, they [teachers] tell us what we get here, we are lucky because what do you get in Africa? Whatever you get here you don't get in Africa, so be happy, that's it. They don't tell Spanish kids that. I think they don't get all that stuff in their country too, so why they just tell us to be happy and don't say nothing? I think that's racist too, to think we come from nothing. (Interview, 3/7/12)

The teacher's way of interacting with Froudaous has caused a rift between them. This experience was represented in her school day map, which was drawn on during this conversation. In the room where this class met, Froudaous marked her map with a red circle (place where I feel angry). She recalled this moment with frustration and a sigh, making sure to note that she still "did good in that class. I got like a 90" (Interview, 3/7/12). Her final words here show an interesting link, or lack of a link actually, between experienced racisms and school achievement. The experience of Froudaous, and other youth, illustrate academic success in the face of multiple racisms experienced with both teachers and other students. This is in contrast to much of the literature on immigrant youth experiences (Valenzuela, 1999) that characterized a subtractive process of devaluing student culture, leading to academic failure. This is not to say that language minority youth's experiences with multiple racism aids in their academic success. The reality is far from that. Rather, these experiences impact their social-emotional learning and ideology formation.

Chaimae expressed similar experiences of misrepresentation of her home country. "They [teachers] don't talk about small places like Morocco, only the Middle East when it's the conflict in Palestine, the wars, the bad. And always like it's one people, and everyone is the same, very

religious and crazy and fighting” (Field notes, 3/14/12). She continued on to frame these classroom experiences as racism:

If you tell the class, the kids who don’t know Muslim people, that people from the Middle East are terrorists or only have wars in their life, then you are spreading bad information about them and making the kids not like them. When you teach kids only the bad about people, that is racist, like talking bad about people.” (Field notes 3/14/12)

Chaimae makes a direct link here between racist acts, and the way she has experienced the teaching of her home region and her religion. When she hears, or reads, about individuals from the Middle East or North Africa in a classroom context, Chaimae is consistently met with negative images. This focus on wars, conflicts, and terrorism of the region extends to a Muslim identity as discussed in the next section.

Disrespecting the Muslim religion

Religion was an aspect of identity shared by all youth participants, and also one considered a root of racism experienced. As seen in the previous section, Chaimae felt that the way in which teachers discussed Islam and Muslim people were instances of racism.

Specifically, school policies and interactions with adults about their religion were the focus of stories that illustrated their perceptions of how their religion was respected, or disrespected. This lack of respect for religion was conceptualized as racist by the youth participants. This racism came in the form of teachers’ and students’ words, as well as school policies and structures that students perceived as disrespecting Muslims.

One of the most salient issues categorized as “racist” by the youth participants was Global High School’s lack of consideration for students’ needs during Ramadan, the holiest of months in Islam. As Fatoumata shared with the group: “All we ask is a place to pray in the midday for Ramadan. One room, that’s all we need. Why can’t we get that? It’s not fair, it’s not

right to say no” (Field notes, 1/26/12). Jamilatou responded to her rhetorical question. “You can’t get that because this place is racist,” she answered, rather matter-of-factly (Field notes 1/26/12). The other youth nodded in agreement, added a few sighs and shrugs as if to say, that is just the way it is here. For Fatoumata, Jamilatou, and others, the lack of accommodation for their religious needs is framed as a racist act by the school, specifically the school leadership.

Both young women shared stories about the lengths they had gone to during Ramadan to make school more responsive to their needs. Fatoumata started a petition of all Muslim students in order to get a room for afternoon prayer. Jamilatou requested several times to administration to have access to the school elevator, as walking up and down four flights of stairs during fasting time was no easy task. She also spoke with teachers about allowing her, and other Muslim youth, a space to congregate outside of the cafeteria during the lunch period, so not to be surrounded by food and eaters while fasting. All of these requests were denied. However, during the last week of Ramadan, a teacher advocate finally got through to administration and volunteered her time and room to have Muslim youth gather there during lunch outside of the cafeteria (Field notes 1/26/12).

Conflicts between observing religion, or taking part in religious practices, and school schedules and policies was brought up again and again in interviews and whole-group discussions. Abdulrahman shared his own experience with this conflict in a story:

The school, the principal, do not really respect our religion. In Ramadan, for the Eid, we had school and we asked the principal to give us a pass to be out of school and go to the majid and pray, but he told us no. He told us, if you are absent, you are absent and you are responsible for a test or work if you miss it, just like any other day. No excused absence. That’s it. But this principal, he’s racist, we ask, but don’t expect anything. (Interview, 3/15/12)

Here, Abdulrahman expresses his frustration, but also complacency, with what he perceives to be racism from the administration. This racism he experiences plays out in a lack of consideration

for student requests to be excused from classes for the Eid, or the final day Ramadan which includes prayer, celebration, and honored traditions. His complacency, or “don’t expect anything” attitude is very telling. This is not his first experience with having religious requests disrespected. Rather, this is more the norm. His perception is that the principal is “racist,” and that policies for language minority youth, specifically Muslim youth, are unfair and inequitable. Furthermore, this is just the way it is going to be.

Chaimae’s story highlighted a different, although equally troubling experience with anti-Muslim racism from an adult in school. She shared a teacher’s perceptions of Islam, connecting the teacher’s curriculum to her personal treatment of Chaimae, a hijabi (women who wears a hijab):

I had a problem with a teacher here, in U.S. government. She related all terrorists to Islam, and asked me for a private conversation after class. She asked me if my rights were taken away because I was wearing the headscarf. I didn’t care, but then she went crazy, and she told me Islam, is whatever, is bad for me, and won’t let me do things. She was racist to the Muslim students, definitely. (Interview 2/16/12)

Here, Chaimae’s teacher is clearly trying to “help” her, to “save” her from, what she believed to be, an oppressive culture and cultural practice. However, from Chaimae’s point of view, this is nothing more than racism rooted in the complete lack of respect for an individual’s choice and right to wear the hijab. This teacher’s attempt to help was interpreted by Chaimae as racist because it represent an attach on the religious practices and tradition that Chaimae personally chose. Chaimae shared with our group, time and time again, how the hijab was a source of pride for her, and a choice she made upon immigrating to the U.S. She described how she did not wear the hijab in Morocco. Upon moving to the U.S., however, she made the personal decision to wear it. As she explained:

No one forces me to wear this [hijab]. Not my father, my brother, no one. I chose this for me when I came to New York. In Morocco, everyone is Muslim, you just know they are.

So why show it there? People already respect you like you are a Muslim. But here, like no one is, so I want people to know I am Muslim. They know what kind of girl I am, that I'm a good girl, from a good family, and when I show them how good I am, they know I am Muslim too. (Field notes, 1/26/12)

When Chaimae's teacher vocalized her opposition to the hijab and negative views of Islam, Chaimae internalized this as both a personal attack and a racist one. Especially considering Chaimae made a personal decision to wear the hijab, this interaction with the teacher is considered racist by Chaimae. Chaimae sees her wearing of the hijab to be a very positive way of performing her religion as a Muslim, and her identity, as a "good girl, from a good family." To have this questioned by a teacher, and ultimately to insult Chaimae has a very negative impact. This is compounded by what Chaimae observed and shared about this teacher's curriculum as well. The stereotyping connection of Islam to terrorism provided a foundation for Chaimae's characterization of this teacher as Muslim. The private conversation about the hijab was not an isolated incident. Rather, this was an extension of misrepresentation of Islam that Chaimae was already experiencing in this teacher's class.

Conversations between youth participants generated many stories of experiences with multiple racisms. However, it is interesting to note that racisms rooted in religion brought up the most stories of interactions with other students in Global High Schools. Racisms rooted in language difference or home country were supported vastly by stories of interactions with school adults. Religious difference, however, was a space in which youth participants found themselves sharing more about negative interactions with their classmates (although, still, the majority of stories shared focused on interactions with adults). Abdoul's story captured the nature of these interactions with classmates:

Other students don't respect my religion. When you say to them don't say that about Muslims, or you tell them that you do something like how you eat, they ask you a question but then they laugh, or make a face, or be racist against Islam. When I'm going

to eat I say, “Bismillah” [In God’s name]. They make fun and I tell them you don’t have to agree, but don’t be racist. I tell them you can leave me, this is not your problem (Interview, 3/14/12)

Here, Abdoul brings up several incidents in which he performs his religion and this results in insults from other, non-Muslim, classmates. Whether it is religious affirmation before eating, or sharing information about his dietary practices, Abdoul has been met with mockery and disrespect. He internalizes these actions as racism towards his religion and to him as an individual.

Summary & Reacting to racisms

Language minority youth in our research group not only shared experiences of multiple racisms, but they each expressed a similar way of reacting to these negative interactions. What made them different, or a target, was nothing to be ashamed of. Linguistic, national, ethnic, and religious difference were all approached with pride, as youth sought to move on with their learning and lives. Fatou shared an interaction with a classmate that captures this way of thinking:

You have to ignore everything. I’ve heard a lot - I’m covered, I stink. But I have to ignore what I hear that I’m covered or Muslim and that’s a bad thing. One Spanish student asked me why I’m covered, don’t I want to be free? I say please, I’m proud of who I am! I just have to forget about it. (Interview, 3/8/12)

Through her words, Fatou’s shows pride in who she is and her cultural practices. In referring to the headscarf she wears, she ignores negative comments from classmates, scoffs at their insinuations that it is a sign of oppression, and vocalizes her pride. She then makes an explicit point about how it’s most important to ignore these types of comments, to “forget about it” and just “ignore everything.”

In thinking back to her interaction with her U.S. government teacher, Chaimae brought up further details about the pride she felt in the performance of her religious identity through the hijab. She explained:

I am so proud to be in the hijab. I know I am a good person, a good Muslim. When I help someone out on the street, or help someone in school, or I am good to the teachers, they know I am Muslim because of my hijab and they think, “Wow, Muslims are good people.” I want them to know it was a Muslim who helped them. Nothing a teacher says will change that. (Interview, 2/16/12)

Chaimae expresses distinct reasons for feeling proud and making the personal choice to wear the hijab. Although the hijab was the source of her experience with racism, she maintains a great sense of personal pride, and moves on from the situation, affirming that “no teacher will change” this strong conviction of hers.

Discussions amongst the group about experiences with multiple racisms often focused on teachers. Youth made it clear that they did not have such experiences with every teacher, and there were some supportive ones. However, this treatment, they felt, was fairly common. Therefore, students chose to ignore it, maintain strength and pride, and move on. However, when other students, specifically Spanish-speaking students, were the topic of conversation, the reactions to incidents took a more positive tone and youth were more likely to speak up that this did not characterize the whole population of Spanish-speaking students. Abdulrahman described:

Most the Spanish kids are ok, we cool, you know. It’s the teachers that treat you different or don’t help. The other kids, don’t care who you are. I have friends who speak Spanish and that’s ok. Only some of the Spanish kids are racist anyway. (Field notes, 4/5/12)

Unlike teachers who were described in more of a singular sense, as “the teachers” do this, or say that, youth participants were more likely to speak about Spanish-speaking students as individuals, and acts of racism as the exception. The few incidents reported that involved other classmates were met with a sense of pride in difference and moving on. As Abdoul mentioned in

his story about another student questioning his religious practices, “I tell them you can leave me, this is not your problem” (Interview, 3/14/12). He followed up on this with more details about his reaction:

I’m not starting a fight or nothing with them. That’s just stupid. And how does that look. I say to them to respect my religion, when I say *Bismillah*, then I fight? How can I call to God and then fight them? I have the pride to be calm and just tell them to leave me.
(Interview, 3/14/12)

Abdoul not only expresses pride in who he is, but connects this pride to the motivation for his staying calm and not turning to violence when experiencing racism. The root of his experienced discrimination is his religion and this is precisely his reason for not engaging in conflict.

Abdoul’s approach to multiple racisms was shared again and again by youth participants.

Experiencing racism based on language, homeland, or religion did not shake the convictions of any youth. Rather, they stood strong with pride and resilience and simply moved on.

This ability to react with strength and resilience can be connected to the sense of community created amongst the “other kids.” As explored in the previous section, there is diversity in this community of language and minority youth, but common characteristics of being non-Spanish-speakers and a Muslim religious identity bond this small group of youth as they support each other academically, linguistically, and socially. Interactions with each other produce a “community of practice” (Lave and Wenger, 1991) Communities of practice are groups of individuals who come together based on a concern for something they do and a desire to collaborate as they interact regularly. These youth are engaged in a community of practice in the way they collaboratively support each other as learners (academically, linguistically, and socially). The community of language and religious minority youth, the “other kids” or the “the hallway community” provides the space for youth who experience similar multiple racisms to

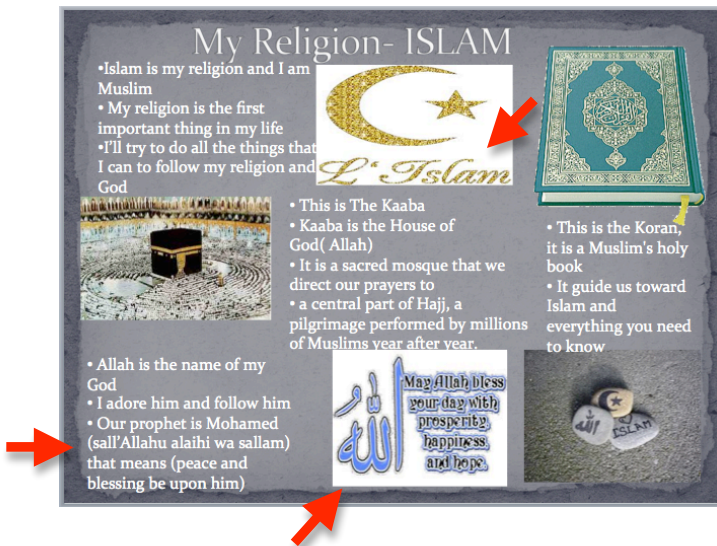
find peer support and understanding. Together, these youth learn how to deal with racism, to move on and away from the conflict, and build a community of acceptance and belonging.

While reactions to these experiences of multiple racisms varied within the group of youth participants, each individual reported a type of interaction in which they felt negatively targeted because of their language (or language they did *not* speak), homeland or religion. These came in the form of interactions with teachers, conflicts over school policy, and misrepresentation in curriculum. Under a framework of subtractive schooling (Valenzuela, 1999; Kasinitz et. al., 2010), it may have been assumed that these youth would in turn, suffer academic failure. However, their use of home languages, and their academic and social support of each other, their own communities of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) contributed to their resilience and success in light of experiencing multiple racisms. These experiences did, however, negatively impact other aspects of schooling, namely their educational linguistic ideologies, which will be explored in a later chapter. Before I turn to ideologies, however, I look at how youth used their home languages as a way to act against the multiple racisms they experienced. Within the community of practice created by these language and religious minority youth, these “other kids” engaged in ongoing and developing social support of each other, as well as academic and linguistic support, which will be explored in the next chapter through the lens of translanguaging.

Chapter 6

Taking It Upon Myself: Student-initiated translanguaging in the classroom

Image 35: “Where I’m From” graphic art slide by Fatoumata (12/1/11)



Red arrows inserted by researcher to highlight multilingualism

For Global High School students, multiple languages are used throughout the day in the processes of learning and socializing. The languaging amongst groups of youth and through multigenerational interactions can be examined through a lens of translanguaging. First used by Cen Williams (1996), translanguaging was used to describe pedagogy in bilingual classrooms where the receptive learning (listening or reading) would be in one language and the productive learning (speaking or writing) in a different language. Reconceptualizing translanguaging to capture more complex languaging and interactions, García redefines translanguaging as “a process of the student and/or teacher using bilingual/multiple discursive practices as sense-making of learning or teaching in multilingual classrooms” (García, 2009). This captures the multilingual and multimodal natures of classrooms, including reading, writing, speaking, and listening between and among youth and teachers.

Building on a framework of teachers as language policymakers (Menken & García, 2010), students too are language policymakers. García and Menken (2010) acknowledge how “language education policies are socially constructed and dynamically negotiated on a moment-by-moment basis” (p. 256). Most times, these language education policies are negotiated between teacher and students together. Bilingualism flourishes most in classes where home languages are shared among teachers and students, and both parties can engage in translanguaging using various modalities. However, this dynamic language construction takes a different form when home languages are not shared between students and teachers. Students have unique home languages with which they may make choices to utilize in learning by themselves or with classmates. Here, they too are language policymakers, building off the precedent of bilingualism set by the teacher, and adding additional layers of multilingualism and student-initiated translanguaging in minority languages.

Translanguaging is used in unique ways in Global High School when the students speak languages in their learning that are unknown to the teacher. For the youth participants in this study, translanguaging was a constant learning tool facilitated by themselves, or their classmates, rather than by the teacher, as it is most often seen or heard. The youth’s self-regulation, or self-regulated learning (Paris & Paris, 2011) through home language support adds vivid examples to a field often lacking representation of learning in minority languages. In other words, these youth are taking it upon themselves to translanguage as a pedagogical strategy for their own linguistic and academic growth, as well as that of their classmates. This self-regulated use of translanguaging for learning can be seen in three distinct forms:

1. Speaking with same-home-language peers
2. Engaging with home language texts

3. Going online for home language support.

While each of these ways of translinguaging employs a different modality in learning, each one is initiated by the youth themselves. They are not discouraged, per se, by teachers, nor are students ever told to “stop” or use “English-only.” Nor are they encouraged to do so. The youth participants take it upon themselves to translanguage as they show autonomy in their learning.

Speaking our languages

Throughout a given school day, Abdulrahaman speaks five languages. To his teachers and most classmates, he speaks English. To other youth from his home country of Guinea, he speaks Fulani and French, and with youth from various West African countries, he speaks French. His language is peppered with Arabic, *Insha'Allah* (God willing), *Bismillah* (in the name of God), and other words and phrases of faith or good will. In the past year, Abdulrahaman has learned Spanish as well from classmates and teachers, using it throughout the day in socializing or talking about class topics. Even within these interactions, Abdulrahaman languages in various ways, moving seamlessly between languages to make meaning of his learning, get a particular point across, or form a connection with his speaking partner. Although he uses his home language to aid in his own classroom learning, he does not use it with a teacher. He describes his home language use in school as such:

In class, we speak our own languages in class, just come up to each other and say it in our language. If we know the English, we tell them the English. You know, you help the people who speak your language, and they help you. The teachers let us speak in own language in class, but they don't use it or nothing (Interview, 4/18/12).

Translinguaging in the form of speaking a home language with classmates as a bridge to learning English was something experienced by all youth participants. In addition, all youth experienced speaking home languages with classmates to aid in their English or content learning

as an action not facilitated or suggested by the teacher, but rather an idea or step that came from the youth themselves. Abdoul, who learned French as an additional language in school in Burkina Faso, describes his use of French as the only opportunities he had to speak a home language in school, and one that was originally facilitated through the help of a fellow student:

I would speak French more when I was freshman, when I didn't speak English, and still do sometimes. When I don't get something, I ask in French, to a student, or ask Boubacar in French. No teacher said to me, "Ask in French," I just did, or Boubacar told me, "Ask me in French, that's ok." No one else is from Burkina Faso like me, but French is ok for me to help me because I learned French in school in my country. (Interview, 3/8/12)

Through Abdoul's translanguaging, he is using a home language, French, to help in his learning of English or content area knowledge. He specifically notes in his description of this that no teacher told him to speak a home language with a classmate or, "Ask in French," but rather, another student who shares a home language offered help. Here, Boubacar, who is from Guinea, speaks both Fulani and French. Boubacar offered his help in French to Abdoul and facilitated the translanguaging as a way to assist a new student in sense-making of new language and information.

Fatoumata echoes these experiences of using a home language with a classmate. She explains:

When I was freshman, I talked more in my language. I liked to sit with someone to explain like the Spanish sit with Spanish or Bengali with Bengali. If the teacher moves me, I ask to sit back with someone to help me in Fulani or French if they from a different place in Africa (Field notes, 3/15/12).

These experiences illustrate how not only are these youth translanguaging orally in class, but they are taking it upon themselves to create the conditions to do so. Fatoumata, for example, deliberately moves her seat in class in order to be next to a classmate with whom she can translanguage. She has taken the initiative to both use her home language as a tool for sense-making in class, and the initiative to make the teacher aware of her needs to do so.

Engaging with home language texts

In the classrooms, supply closets, and libraries of Global High School, no books or learning materials can be found in the home languages of the youth participants in this study, except for a handful of French-English dictionaries. However, this does not mean that the youth are not taking it upon themselves to implement translanguaging strategies in their learning, pertaining to reading and reference materials in their home languages.

Student photography sparked conversation about translanguaging in the classroom initiated by the youth themselves. Focused on the question, “Where am I from?” youth took and shared photography in response. Arietou shared the following photographs:

Image 36: *Planète-jeunes* by Arietou (1), 10/11/13



Image 37: *Planète-jeunes* by Arietou (2), 10/11/13



She explained to the group that these are pictures of *Planète-jeunes*, an African French-language magazine for teenagers with comics, stories about celebrities, puzzles, advice and letters. Arietou Googled the magazine’s site on the Smartboard’s computer and showed the group a French language website with the logo of the African continent and contact information in over 10

countries throughout West Africa, as well as France. Arietou also shared how she reads her magazines from Togo at home, and even uses them as homework. “In ESL,” she explained, “we have to read for homework, and write. But you can write about anything, so I read this and then I write in English, and it’s ok” (Field notes, 10/26/11). A series of questions from myself and others in the group followed this: “Does your teacher get mad?” “Does your teacher suggest this?” “What does she say about it?” “Does she tell others to try this?” Each question was met with a “not really” or “not that much” or shrug, as if Arietou’s teacher has very little to say about her translanguaging for homework. However, Arietou’s excitement grew only in talking about what how she actually goes about translanguaging to help her learning and respond to questions and writing prompts in English. This implementation of translanguaging to fulfill a reading assignment was initiated by Arietou without suggestion from her teacher, or anyone for that matter. Here, she took it upon herself to utilize home language material in order to fulfill expectations for literacy assignments.

As with Arietou, home language texts provide a gateway to English writing and understanding for other youth in this study. One afternoon, when discussing a film we watched (*Camp*), Ananna pulled out from her backpack her Bengali-English dictionary to look up a word she did not understand (*spontaneous*). When asked where she got the dictionary from, she responded, “They gave this to me.”

I asked, “Who? The school?”

Her response, “No, my parents, we got it ourselves.” (Field notes, 2/9/12).

For Ananna, her family facilitated the obtaining of the bilingual dictionary, while she initiated its use in conversation. Adults in school had nothing to do with either acts. No teacher handed her one in class, or told her where to get one. When she does not understand a word, teachers rarely,

if ever, suggest that Ananna use a bilingual dictionary. “However,” she explains smiling and shrugging, “maybe they don’t tell me to because I do it already” (Field notes, 2/9/12). Good point. She just beats the teachers to it.

In discussions with youth, bilingual dictionaries were a sore spot. There is much talk about comparisons between dictionaries in their home languages and the plethora of Spanish-English dictionaries they see throughout the school. Froudaous described with a sigh, pointing to the bookcases lining the classroom, “So many shelves, piled high with the dictionaries that have Spanish. That’s it though” (Field notes, 11/16/11). Echoes of “Not fair,” are heard for the next several months as bilingual dictionaries in additional languages are scrounged up in the school and from homes. As reported by the students, this year, for the first time, teachers gave students “dictionaries in French, because they don’t have Fulani” (Abdulrahaman, Interview, 4/18/12) and in Arabic. In the subsequent weeks, dictionaries were left in lockers, under desks, and on shelves, and were not being used as often as possible. However, several were collected following our conversations. The youth reported that they were using them “as much as we can,” as Ayi put it, “but the work is so fast, and you want to say something too fast to look in the dictionary.” He brings up a valid point the others agree with. Jamilatou continued, “So you have to, like, when you have the time to look up every word you don’t know, like when you write or write in groups” (Field notes 2/29/12). The initiative taken here in translanguaging, to use the bilingual dictionaries in writing and speaking when time permits, was not noticed by the students’ teachers. Based on over 30 full school days of classroom observation with the youth, their uses of their bilingual dictionaries was mostly during independent reading or writing, if at all. Although teachers rotated around the room during this part of the lesson, absent were any comments or interactions with the students’ dictionaries. There were no words of encouragement

or positive support for using the dictionary, nor anything negative or repressive. Other things were discussed between the teacher and student – the English writing itself, what a question was asking, the ideas in a reading – but nothing about the bilingual dictionary. And certainly there were no reminders or suggestions to use the dictionary in the first place.

Going online

Through online language tools, youth participants are using what they know in their home languages. Sitting side-by-side in desks pushed together, Arietou and Koudiratou worked on, and chatted about their ideal schools in Kotokoli and French. Arietou continuously utilized Google Translate on her laptop when she did not know what to write in English. However, upon typing “tujor se souvenir moi” in the French box, she expressed that it just was not working. When she typed in her word, the same word “tujor remember me” appeared as English. Koudiratou, sitting next to her, saw and heard her frustration, looked over to her laptop and noticed the misspelling of “toujours.” She then reached to the keyboard, deleting and re-typing in the correct spelling, pressed enter, and a translation appeared. Arietou gave her a thankful shrug and a smile, and they went back to their work (Field notes, 4/18/12).

Arietou and Koudiratou use online language tools such as Google Translate (translate.google.com) and Reverso (reverso.net) every chance they get, and throughout their school day. These chances mostly come when provided with time or assignments on the school computers from the laptop carts. When typing in English, they each keep an Internet window open in the corner of their computer screen on either the Google Translate or Reverso webpages. Constantly clicking back and forth, and sometimes speaking to each other in French or Kotokoli, they produce academic writing, presentations, and art projects in English. This translanguaging

captures the girls' initiative in taking it upon themselves to utilize online language tools, and support each other in their home languages.

These online language tools have an added component of providing a space for students to write in their home languages. As seen in Arietou's misspelling of "toujours," through her use of Google Translate she was able correct the spelling of a home language word, and learn from it for future use. There are few, if any, opportunities for youth in this study to write, or type, in their home languages. The online language tools provide one such space for translanguaging and for home language writing. Students wrote full paragraphs in French or Bengali and click enter. They quickly learned that a misspelled word in the original language would not result in a translation. As Koudiratou offered her knowledge, other students asked classmates for assistance in typing in French. These are multilingual interactions about language. As students translanguage online for the purpose of writing in English, they are engaged in learning more about their home language as well.

Summary & Challenges

The translanguaging used by non-Spanish speaking students in Global High School is initiated by the youth themselves. Their oral use of home language, engagement with home language texts, and use of home languages through technology are examples of self-regulation in learning. Self-regulated learning is described by Paris and Paris (2011) as emphasizing "autonomy and control by the individual who monitors, directs, and regulates actions towards goals of information acquisition, expanding expertise, and self-improvement" (p. 89). Like self-regulated learning, youth participants' take it upon themselves to translanguage based on their learning needs. Non-Spanish-speaking youth do not wait to be directed or encouraged by a

teacher to speak, read, write, or use technology in ways that engage their home languages. Rather, they seek self-improvement, specifically academic and English-language development, and thus they find ways to utilize their linguistic strengths as a bridge to enhanced learning.

The use of translanguaging, and taking it upon themselves to translanguage, is a result of youth participants' goals to succeed academically. As noted by Zimmerman (2000), self-regulated learning, such as translanguaging includes "self-generated thoughts, feelings and actions that are planning and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (p. 14). These personal goals are reflected in youth participants' meaning-making, as explored in Chapter 4. As youth made meaning of school as a place to learn new language, find a way to brighter future, succeed and shine, and bond with community and friends, translanguaging became a natural approach to engage in home language use. Non-Spanish-speaking language minority youth take it upon themselves to translanguage as they seek to succeed academically, linguistically, and socially in Global High School.

Translanguaging for language minority students does not come without its challenges. For some youth participants, at times, there is no one in a class who shares their home languages. Other times there is another student who shares a home language, but the teacher has grouped students in a way that separates them. When thinking through his school day map, Abdoul shared about a place where he felt angry – math class. He described why he felt this way:

In math, me and Ayi are together, but he [the teacher] don't let us sit together. There's a lot of Spanish, just us three who don't speak Spanish, and he don't let me and Ayi sit together? Then they can ask any question in Spanish because someone is next to them, but I can't ask in French to Ayi. (Field notes, 3/15/12)

Whether or not the teacher in this situation knows about Abdoul's desire to sit with Ayi in order to use French to learn was a matter discussed. Abdoul shrugged it off at first, as if the teacher

wouldn't go for it. Ayi chimed into the conversation that he should talk to the teacher, and that he would, if Abdoul wanted. After a few weeks, the group revisited this issue. Abdoul informed us that the teacher did not always allow him to sit with Ayi. However, if he had a question about how to say or write something in English when they are separated, the teacher now allows him to get up and ask his classmate. Abdoul did not seem particularly happy with this situation, but "it's better, a little," said with a shrug and a smirk (Field notes, 3/28/13).

Abdoul then shared what he understood to be the teacher's rationale for the grouping -- that "me and Ayi talk too much when we sit next to each other" even though, Abdoul insisted, "We talking about what we doing!" (Field notes, 3/28/13). This conflict between what students were saying, and what they were perceived to be saying, when they spoke their home language added a challenging layer to utilizing translanguaging to its fullest in the classroom. As teachers assumed the worst about students' intentions, they were separated, or told to be quiet, or speak in English, and thus lost valuable learning opportunities to use translanguaging to make sense of language and content.

In sharing her school day map with the group, Bintouya described a place where "here I feel helpful." She explained:

I got one friend there who don't understand so I talk in French, so maybe the teacher think I talk a lot. He still ask me a question. He is teaching good, but the way he behave to me and my friend (shakes her head). He say we talk a lot in the class, but it's about the subject, about the class. And this is the same guy speaking Spanish to help the Spanish kids. (Field notes, 3/15/12)

Bintouya expresses that the teacher perceives this speaking other languages as "misbehavior."

Youth discussed with each other what the teacher might be thinking in connection to how they feel when they do not know the language being spoken. Fatoumata put it this way:

Like when they always speak Spanish and you think they're talking about you? That's like how the teacher feels. He don't know what you're saying and he just thinks it's

always something bad. I just tell him, “We’re talking about the work,” and it’s ok. (Field notes, 3/15/12)

While translanguaging is used by all the youth in their classes, these students’ experience different levels of support from their teachers. Abdoul and Ayi trying to help each other in math class, Arietou and Koudiratou typing side by side in English class, and bilingual dictionaries used independently by students - translanguaging is initiated and facilitated by the students themselves with various reactions from their teachers. When languages are not shared by teachers, students teach each other, and themselves, using translanguaging. Using a variety of resources in speaking, learning tools, and reference materials, the youth participants in this study take it upon themselves to incorporate their home languages into their learning of English and content material.

Self-regulation of home language use in learning creates connections and community with linguistic-peers in school. In order to build on valuable tools of translanguaging and shared home languages, youth form communities of friendship and trust that transfer into classroom interactions of translanguaging. As is explored in subsequent chapters, this shaping of a community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) enables youth, these “other kids,” to share in language for their own learning and social identity. Translanguaging is not only used to attain personal, academic goals; but engaged in as a collective in learning.

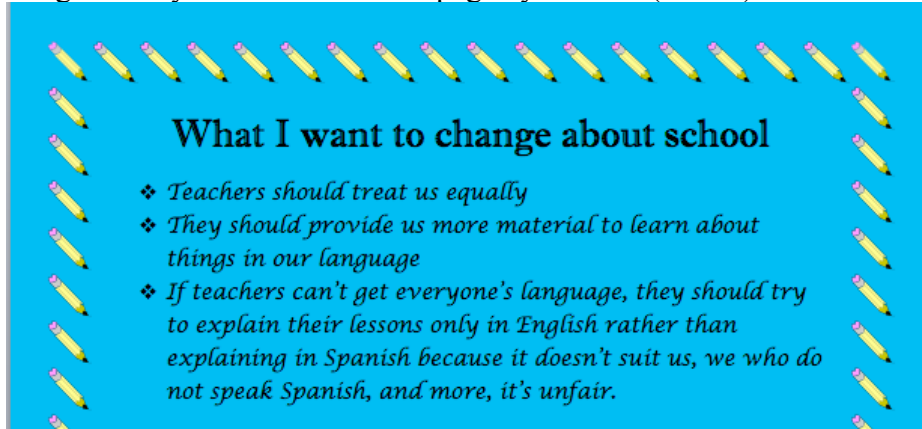
The self-regulated learning of non-Spanish-speaking language minority youth through translanguaging allows these youth to engage and participate in the classroom. That is, these youth use their own bilingualism as a resource in their education. However, as seen in the next chapter, this use of home languages for academic and social benefit does not necessarily promote language ideologies supporting bilingualism in education. Rather, the way in which these youth’s conceptualize multiple racisms interacts with their translanguaging and acknowledgment

of the benefits of bilingualism in education to create complex language ideologies in educational contexts. These complexities are explored in the next chapter, specifically looking at language and religious minority youth's educational linguistic ideologies, or their perspectives of the value of using different languages in education.

Chapter 7

Either all or none: Students' complex educational language ideologies

Image 38: My Ideal School book page by Arietou (5/9/12)



Educational linguistic ideologies

Youth participants in this study expressed their opinions on many topics and issues – from their favorite music to be played during our group sessions, to their solutions to problems of gender violence in their community. When questions were posed about what advice youth participants would give to teachers, or characteristics of their ideal schools, they constantly vocalized, or wrote about, language education policy. This concern with educational language policy was evident in the suggestions for different school procedures, climate, and structures by the youth. The way in which youth expressed their ideas about the value of bilingualism in education, and their ideal uses of language in the learning process reflect their *educational linguistic ideologies*. This builds on frameworks of language ideologies that “envision and enact links of language to group and personal identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology” (Woolard & Schiefelin, 1994, p. 55-56). Therefore, as non-Spanish-speaking youth in Global High School made connections between language use and their own identities as linguistic and religious minorities, their understandings of fairness and equity all come together to shape their

educational linguistic ideologies.

Youth's own language ideologies were reflected in how they spoke about, and wrote about, language policy and how it was enacted in the classrooms and social areas. In the context of schooling, youth's perspectives of how languaging should be utilized in learning are described as *educational linguistic ideologies*. This contextualizes youth's attitudes about languaging, including what languages teachers and students should use in learning, when, and why.

In framing the notion of educational linguistic ideologies, it is important to acknowledge that language attitudes and language beliefs are not static, nor neutral. Rather, they are fluid, and evolving, based on deliberate points of view and personal experiences. As Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) propose:

Language choice and attitudes are inseparable from political arrangements, relations of power, language ideologies, and interlocutors' views of their own and others' identities. Ongoing social, economic, and political changes affect these constellations, modifying identity options offered to individuals at a given moment in history and ideologies that legitimize and value particular identities more than others. (pp. 1-2)

Language ideology development is something intertwined with the linguistic power structures in a given context. Therefore, as we consider the power of languages in Global High School, and the social changes of the school community, we can further examine how language minority youth's educational linguistic ideologies are tied to their understandings of these power structures, and their experiences within them.

Thinking about languaging in multilingual classrooms as dynamic and flowing, the policies that norm these language practices are also dynamic. As García and Menken (2010) acknowledge, "language education policies are socially constructed and dynamically negotiated on a moment-by-moment basis" (p. 256). In Global High School, this was reflected in ESL classrooms where the official designation was English instruction, but classes functioned with

much translanguaging (García, 2009a). Spanish was used by the majority of teachers and students. There was also the presence of other minority languages, including the language of the youth participants, depending on the make-up of a particular class. Both teachers and students negotiated this multilingual, and often bilingual classroom language policy.

Such is the linguistic reality for the youth participants in this study – a school system designed for monolinguals, then redesigned for Spanish-English bilinguals, and now faced with meeting the needs of other bilinguals and plurilinguals. Aspects of this multilingual, yet highly stratified, linguistic landscape are reflected in the two previous chapters. The youth participants experienced racism that was languaging-based. They also had to initiate translanguaging to learn and were not supported in this endeavor. These two experiences converge as youth consider their language ideologies. How do I use my own language in my learning? How is my language treated or understood by others in school?

The excerpt from the book on her ideal school created by Arietou that opens this chapter captures her educational linguistic ideologies from the youth's perspective. Arietou outlines in her book the changes she would like to see in school including:

- 1) Teachers should treat us equally
- 2) They [teachers] should provide more material to learn about things in our language
- 3) If teachers can't get everyone's language, they should try to explain their lessons only in English rather than explaining in Spanish because it doesn't suit us, we who do not speak Spanish, and more, it's unfair.

Arietou expresses the major points of view that make up the educational linguistic ideologies of the youth participants in this study.

Firstly, the youth believe that the use of home language needs to be recognized and valued as an asset to learning. This is captured in the section below focused on youth's understanding that "There is value in multilingual learning." Secondly, because not all students' home languages are represented in Global High School, teachers' translanguaging pedagogy in English-Spanish is met with sentiments of "It's not fair," the subject of the subsection that follows. Finally, the intersection of these two perspectives results in the view that the language of instruction should be English-only in order to keep things fair and equal. This is the subject of the next subsection. As we will see, students have an "either all or none" perspective when it comes to the teachers' use of students' home languages, or verbal translanguaging, in the classroom. Youth participants' educational linguistic ideologies are based on the notion that language use of teachers in instruction should be based on the goal of treating students' fairly; therefore, either all students' home languages are utilized in teaching, or it should be English-only.

There is value in multilingual learning

There was general confirmation and recognition amongst youth participants as to the value of home language use in learning. In our group sessions, youth were excited and eager to engage in peer interviews in their home languages. They reported back to the whole group how they expressed more, given the space to translanguage. Youth connected this to their own translanguaging in classes, whether it be speaking with classmates, using technology, or engaging with home language texts. Boubacar explained, "I know that I understand more when I have someone to speak Fulani or French with in my class. It helped me so much especially at the beginning" (Field notes, 2/2/12). Here, Boubacar clearly acknowledges that having a person in class to translanguage with, or to engage in multilingual learning with, was beneficial to his

learning experience. He notes that this was particularly true as a newcomer, when his English was limited.

Boubacar continued this story to describe how there were no books for him in French when he first entered school, so one teacher or a few students who shared his home language were his only multilingual resources. Boubacar expressed feeling scared and nervous when he “didn’t understand nothing” except for times, “when they translate or write it down for me in French, or Fulani from a few kids. And lunch was always the best. It still is. That’s where I use my language the most, and we have the most fun” (Field notes, 2/2/12). Home language use, or translanguaging, is not only valued academically, but also as a bridge to building community, forming relationships, and feeling comfortable in a new school environment.

Jamilatou echoed this sentiment as she shared feeling scared on her first days of school, but “more comfortable because I can speak with others from my country or who speak French. That’s what made it ok when I came here first. They help me in class, and they were my friends because we can talk” (Interview, 3/17/12). Jamilatou, like Boubacar, recognized both the academic benefit and the social benefit of using her home language in a classroom setting.

Although having a classmate to engage in home language use was seen as a valuable learning tool by youth participants, they acknowledged a shared language with a teacher as even more valuable. This ability to communicate with teachers in a home language was vocalized, actually, as the *most* useful bilingual tool in learning. Bintouya explained, “If the teacher speaks the same language, that makes the most difference. That’s how you would learn best” (Field notes, 1/11/12). Because sharing a home language with a teacher was so infrequent for youth participants, yet still recognized as something that ideally would be the most supportive, youth participants discussed this issue in the context of *not* having teachers who spoke their home

languages. The opportunity to have a bilingual or multilingual teacher who spoke one's language was noted in every youth's *Ideal School Book*, and mentioned by most when asked what they would change about their school. However, this was approached by youth as simply a wish, not a realistic change the school would, or could, make. As Bintouya noted, "It would be best to have teachers to speak all our languages, but be real, Miss, it won't happen" (Field notes, 1/11/12). This complexity of acknowledging the value of engaging in bilingual learning with a teacher, yet not having the access or opportunity for this, is explored further in the following section.

Frequently mentioned by youth participants was the advantage they personally had in being bilingual or multilingual. Fatou connected her multilingualism to her career goals, "I will be a great nurse, look at how many people I can talk to? They will like that I speak their languages." Other youth in the group that day agreed and nodded along, bringing up their own career goals and how they planned to utilize their multilingualism, from Fatoumata who would use her languages in each country she visited as a pilot, to Chaimae, who planned to speak to parents in Arabic when she was a teacher (Field notes 1/12/12).

The idea of a "language advantage" was specifically mentioned by Ayi, as he focused on the benefits of being able to communicate and use multiple languages. He explained both the potential for utilizing multilingualism and translanguaging, but also the dearth of it. He described:

In this school, they don't really learn from what we know. Most of the students don't learn in French, but we would learn in Spanish if we were Spanish. We learn in English and Spanish here, that's it. We have the language advantage here, so why not use it? It's a language advantage that we could use so much more in every class. (Interview, 5/9/12)

Here, Ayi clearly vocalized that coming into school with additional languages is an advantage.

He recognizes that utilizing these languages, or learning "from what we know" in class would be

advantageous to students. However, he also takes into account the reality of language policy in the school, and how English and Spanish are the main languages of instruction. Therefore, language minority students are missing opportunities to benefit from multilingual learning.

Jamilatou explicitly describes the advantages of learning multilingually and engaging in home language use and translanguaging in her learning. She extends this to also acknowledge the benefits that her Spanish-speaking classmates experience in their bilingual learning.

However, Jamilatou's words take her educational linguistic ideology a step further, by adding a layer of emotional response. She shared, "I feel happy sometimes when they explain in Spanish because they want to make our school the best, like if all the students understand, but sometimes I feel discriminated against" (Field notes, 3/17/12). Here, Jamilatou understands the pedagogical motivation behind teachers' translanguaging in Spanish – to aid Spanish-speaking students in their learning, and ultimately, impact the success of the school. However, the added layer of emotion is Jamilatou's reaction to not being part of this valuable learning experience. Teachers translanguaging with Spanish and English, connects back to Jamilatou's perceptions of multiple racisms experienced. This sentiment is echoed by several other youth, as educational linguistic ideologies are made all the more complex by youth acknowledging the benefits of bilingual, or multilingual, education, while simultaneously recognizing that this is a not often a benefit afforded to them in school. This is the topic of the next section.

It's not fair

In acknowledging the value of translanguaging pedagogies, language minority youth also acknowledge that they do not benefit from bilingualism in school in the same ways as other students. Unfair. Not fair. Discrimination. These words were used over and over again by youth participants in describing the Spanish-English bilingualism in their classes, mostly in the

form of teachers using Spanish in class instruction, thus providing these students with the privilege of bilingual education. Abdoul specifically mentioned this, and linked it to an academic advantage for Spanish-speaking students. He stated, “It’s not fair, when the teachers explain in Spanish those kids get it better” (Interview, 3/14/12). Understanding bilingualism in education as a valuable tool, and then noticing that only certain students in his class are able to engage in bilingual instruction, this linguistic reality of the classroom is deemed unfair by Abdoul. He takes his idea of fairness a step further and describes how, “to be fair they [teachers] should speak in all English” (Interview, 3/14/12). The concept of fairness, or equity amongst students of different home languages is salient here, and even contributes to an advocacy for English-only instruction, which will be explored in the following section.

Youth acknowledged that this valuable bilingualism in learning and teaching was not something they personally experienced. It was described as something “missed” or that “we don’t get” (Field notes 1/12/12). When the youth-initiated translanguaging was brought up as a valuable tool, it was shrugged off as “nothing compared to what the Spanish kids get” (Bintouya, Field notes, 1/11/12). Others brought up the vast amount of Spanish-English dictionaries, or Spanish books in classes, and the lack of these in their home language, or even French, their additional home language.

Boubacar specifically focused on how Spanish bilingualism in the school may be helpful for some students. Furthermore, he shares his negative reaction to how it is used outside of the classroom:

Adults don't all treat students fairly. Like explaining things in Spanish more than they do in English. Yeah, it's good for the Spanish kids, but I can't take it. Especially me, I get mad. Like when I go into the office, they speak Spanish only and the Spanish kid's question is answered so fast. Then I don't know what they're talking about and I don't get help I need. (Interview, 3/29/12)

Through his words, Boubacar expresses two sides of his educational linguistic ideology – his belief that bilingualism in education is valuable for learning, and his perspective that bilingualism in education (specifically the use of Spanish by adults) is unfair to him as a non-Spanish speaker. This duality was echoed by other youth participants in the group. Their understanding of the value of home language use in learning connected to their own youth-initiated translanguaging. They understood how translanguaging aided in their learning, and thus was a valuable pedagogical tool. However, they also connected the translanguaging of teachers and language majority students to their experiences with multiple racisms. Thus, they felt oppressed based on their language differences and their status as minority language speakers who did not share languages with teachers. They acknowledged an unfair quality to bilingualism in education at Global High School. This was most commonly related to the use of Spanish in the school by teachers and students. These two aspects of the educational linguistic ideologies of the youth – that is, their belief in the value of bilingualism and their negative perception of how bilingualism was performed in their school - resulted in a third piece of the youth’s linguistic ideologies, which will be explored in the following section.

Either all or none

The final piece of language minority youth’s educational linguistic ideologies to be explored is the language policy they advocated for within the classroom. Because youth recognized the value of bilingualism, but also that this was something not afforded to them in the form of teacher languaging or materials, the consensus was “either all or none” when it came to which languages to utilize. In other words, as Koudiratou put it, “I think we need rules to speak one language, English. Either everyone’s language, or just English” (Field notes, 1/26/12). Here, Koudiratou extends the idea of English-only to all individuals in the class. This is interesting

considering that in other conversations, she acknowledged the value of using home languages in a class. Yet, her experiences with multiple racisms, specifically feeling oppressed as a language minority, seem to overpower whatever benefit she saw in her own translanguaging. She would rather advocate for English-only rather than have teachers and students engage in Spanish-English translanguaging.

In expressing her educational linguistic ideologies, Ananna demonstrates how she can see both sides of the argument, yet still settles, in the end, for an English-only approach. She describes:

My math teacher, the first ten minutes, he is talking with the Spanish girls and boys about something, I don't know. Then he tells the task, then explains in 10 minutes in English, then Spanish the whole class. This works for the Spanish kids and they get it better. But if I was a teacher, I won't talk in any other language but English, that's what I think is the most fair to all. That's what he should do. (Field notes, 3/15/12)

Here Ananna makes the connection between the math teacher's use of translanguaging in Spanish and the Spanish-speaking students' benefit in this learning. However, she describes a context where English and Spanish both have immense instructional power, thus leaving her out of the learning. Therefore, she advocates for an English-only approach to instruction on account of fairness. This notion of equity in the classroom supersedes the value Ananna sees in bilingual learning and contributes to an outlook that advocates for English-only instruction for a diverse class of emergent bilinguals.

Fatou expressed this educational linguistic ideology of English-only instruction, while also referencing both the value of a bilingual education, and the opportunities she is missing out on as a student who does not speak Spanish, and is developing her English:

We are here to learn English. Not all students speak Spanish, teachers forget that If you have students don't speak same language, it's not fair to speak Spanish. We're all here to learn English. If they speak in Spanish, they cannot explain to us in French so why is it

ok to stop with just one? Then the Spanish kids understand better, and it's not fair. (Field notes, 3/8/12)

Fatou, like her language minority peers, illustrates her understanding that there is value in bilingual learning. She acknowledges that in teachers using students' home languages, "the Spanish kids understand better;" however, this is seen as "unfair" as this bilingual option is not offered to other home language speakers. Fatou mentions French as a possible road to bilingual education, but notes that no teachers at Global High School have the ability to teach in French.

A different side to the same argument in support of this educational linguistic ideology came from Boubacar. In considering what languages should be utilized in the classroom, he considered the languages that were offered in Global High School. As he explained:

If I could change school, I would want to make all feel welcomed. So for classes, you have to give classes in other languages - not only Spanish as a language class. We want classes in other languages too. We have French credit and language from our country that we can't use, and we can keep learning it here. If you can't do that, then just have the English. (Interview, 3/29/12)

Here, Boubacar makes connections between the value of bilingualism in education to both continuing learning one's home language, as well as the value of learning in that language. However, he understands this as a benefit not afforded to him, or to other speakers of minority languages. An additional point he makes is the idea that including more languages in education would make "all feel welcomed." Boubacar makes this explicit link between languages in the classroom and the impact of this on youth's sense of belonging in the school community. Although adding French classes, and multiple languages for instruction is ideal in Boubacar's perspective, he acknowledges that if this cannot be done, then an English-only approach is the only fair way. Therefore, like others in the research group, his concern for equity or fairness takes priority over his value of bilingualism in education.

Summary

For language minority youth in this study, issues of language and power in the classroom directly impact their educational linguistic ideologies. Their experience of multiple racisms, specifically those based on linguicism, and the absence of teachers who speak their home language (in contrast with many who speak Spanish) contributes to an educational linguistic ideology of *what exists is not fair, so either all or none*. That is, either all languages are represented in instruction, or English-only.

The educational linguistic ideologies of the “other kids” builds on Alan Rumsey's (1990) definition of linguistic ideologies as "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world " (p. 346). For this group of youth, home languages should be used in learning. They have formed ideas about the nature of language, and the educational value of bilingualism. While simultaneously acknowledging the value of bilingualism in education, they harken back to their own experiences as language minority youth and their experience of multiple racisms. The stratified nature of language in their school space, with English on top and Spanish second, results in an ultimate belief of English-only as the only fair approach to teaching in Global High School, perhaps thinking that they will never get the teachers with the linguistic, cultural and religious understandings that they would need..

The educational linguistic ideologies of these “other” youth have both pedagogical and program implications, for recently-arrived language and religious minority immigrant youth. Before moving to these practical implications and suggestions for applications, it is important to look at how exploring the meaning-making of language and religious minority youth leads to an expansion of theories of translanguaging, and a rethinking of concepts in educational research focused on immigrant youth including subtractive education, assimilation. The next section

focuses on these expansions and revisioning of theory, while also delving deeper into the connections between the individual findings in this study.

Chapter 8

Discussion of the Findings

Relationship of findings

The language and religious minority youth participating in this study make meaning of school in a variety of ways, yet share experience of languaging and identity in school. One such shared experience is the understanding of messages about themselves at school that are constructed and articulated in negative or pejorative ways. At the same time that these youth experience *multiple racisms* (based on homelands, language, or religion) they are building communities of language, homeland, and religion. In these communities, *youth initiate translanguaging* in multiple home languages as tools for learning. In discussions and artistic responses, the youth express the academic and personal benefits of translanguaging, of using one's bilingualism in learning. However, when faced with the overwhelming presence of Spanish-English bilingualism, these youth acknowledge the benefits of bilingualism in education, while advocating for an *all or nothing* approach to the language of instruction. Either every student's language is used, or use English-only.

Looking back at the original questions (Q) in which this study was rooted, the connections are clear between questions and the findings (F).

Q: How do youth understand messages about themselves that are constructed and articulated in school?

F: They experience *multiple racisms* (based on language, religion, or homeland) and understand messages of discrimination or otherness coming mostly from adults in the school, including teachers, and some from the Spanish-speaking majority in the school.

Q: How do these youth language throughout the school day?

F: Language minority youth *take it upon themselves* to translanguage and use their home languages as valuable learning tools, without either encouragement or prohibition from teachers.

Q: What meanings do youth assign to their school language practices and what language ideologies do youth express?

F: Youth express educational linguistic ideologies – their perspectives of languaging in classrooms - as acknowledging the academic and social benefits of bilingualism in education, but recognizing that this is not a benefit they receive. Thus if teachers cannot incorporate translanguaging with all student's languages, instruction should be English-only. That is, an *either all or none* approach.

We can also see connectedness between these findings. Mathematically speaking, responses to the research sub-questions posed in the beginning of this study *added up* to each other, as follows:

Youth understand messages about themselves as multiple racisms
+Youth take it upon themselves to translanguate
=Youth's educational linguistic ideologies of valuing bilingualism in education, yet since they don't have the opportunity to engage with teachers bilingually, they advocate for an English-only approach to instruction.

This group of youth is using their home languages to flourish academically and socially in high school, in a new school thousands of miles from their home country. Yet, they are advocating for English-only instruction. The need for *equality and fairness* trumps all in their educational linguistic ideologies, or how they believe languages should be used in school.

This complexity can be seen in the duality of youth's school experiences and meaning-making of such experiences. Ananna articulates this duality in the writing and expression of *My Ideal School* book. Below are two excerpts from the introduction to her book in which she explains to her audience her current personal learning context and current perspectives about her school before sharing ideas and suggestions for her ideal learning environment.

Image 39: My Ideal School book page by Ananna (1), 5/9/12

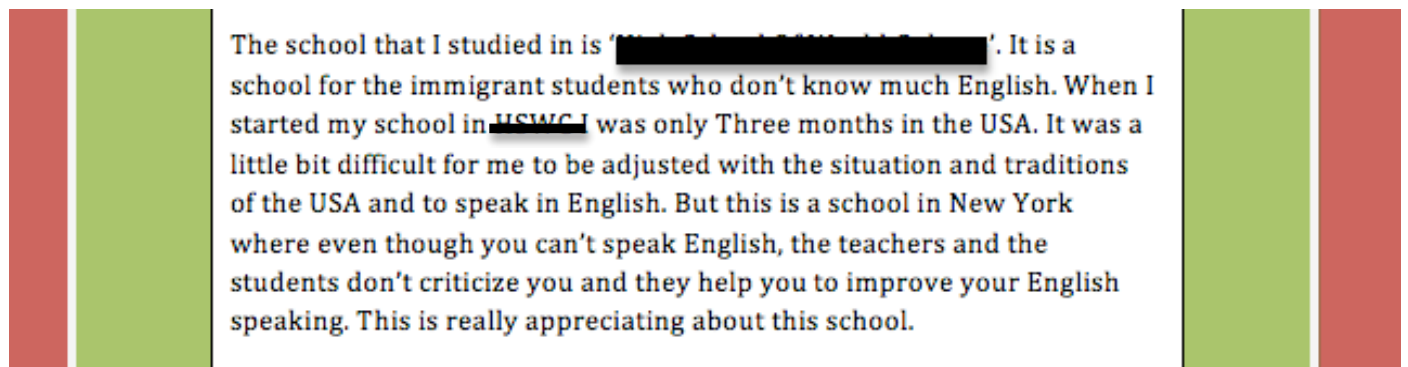
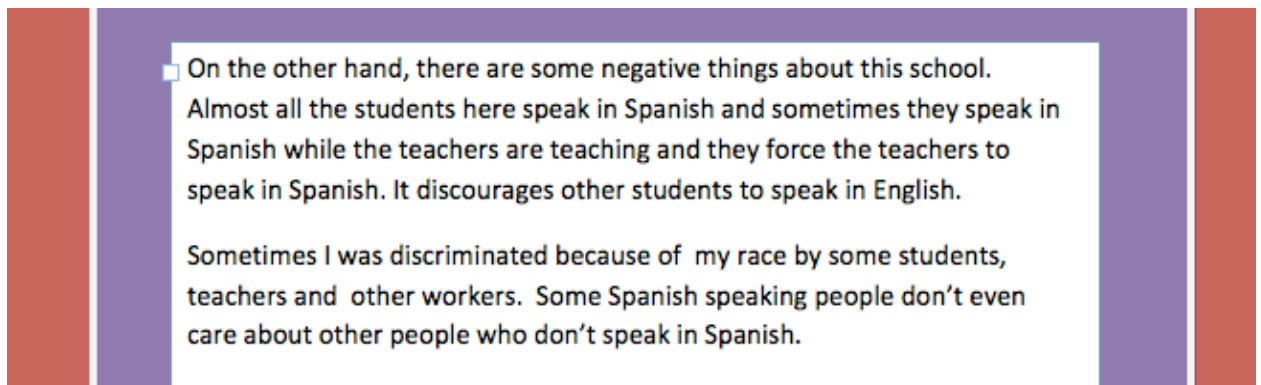


Image 40: My Ideal School book page by Ananna (2), 5/9/12



As seen in Ananna's words above, she feels at the same time both appreciative and safe to make mistakes in her learning (Image 39) and also discriminated against as a non-Spanish speaker (Image 40). This paradox was a common theme that ties together major findings in this study, and how the findings both intersect and interconnect. Ananna, like other participants, expresses here how the school provides space for her to learn English. She is not criticized for mispronouncing words, and she noted often in group discussions how she was allowed to use her bilingual dictionary and was not prevented from speaking Bengali with classmates for learning purposes. However, this positive outlook at the school's welcoming environment is overshadowed when considering the lack of privilege experienced by non-Spanish speakers.

Ananna specifically points to the way in which teachers use Spanish in their instruction, and internalizes this as racism towards her, a non-Spanish speaker, one of the “other kids.” This racism felt, and the lack of care felt from both teachers and Spanish-speaking classmates, eclipses the inclusive and welcome mission of this Newcomer high school. The result is then a complex language ideology expressed by non-Spanish-speaking youth in Global High School. This ideology formation and expression, and seemingly paradoxical school experiences speaks to the ability now to expand and rethink theory and frameworks for research and teaching of emergent bilinguals.

Expanding translanguaging

The ways in which youth participants in this study engaged in translanguaging and using their home languages as valuable learning tools expands theories of dynamic bilingualism and translanguaging. Translanguaging refers to the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds” (García, 2009a, p. 45). In the literature (Blackledge & Creese, 2010b; Cummins, 2007, García, 2009a, García et. al. 2012) much attention is given to the role of the teacher in translanguaging, especially considering a context where teachers and students share home languages. The translanguaging of language minority youth in this study took on a unique dimension, as there was rarely, if ever, an adult who shared students’ common home languages, and teachers, in general did not suggest or encourage the use of translanguaging. Thus, youth initiated their own home language use as an academic and linguistic support in learning.

Under a framework of feminist poststructuralism, Norton (1995) posits a theory of additional language acquisition that integrates the language learner and the context of the learning while questioning how power relations within the social world impact interactions in the

classroom. Rather than conceptualizing emergent bilinguals' "motivation," Norton (1995, 2000), reconceptualizes what is commonly thought of as "motivation" in learning to be the "investment" of emergent bilinguals in learning. In taking it upon themselves to use translanguaging, without the encouragement of a teacher, youth in this study are enacting their investment in learning. Through this self-regulated learning (Paris & Paris, 2011), youth are following personal goals they have set for themselves, including linguistic and academic improvement. They are engaging in autonomous acts and self-monitoring as they translanguage to meet these goals, and are then able to see firsthand the values of bilingualism in education, or multilingual learning. Youth are also enacting investment in the education of their language minority classmates. They are beyond motivated in their translanguaging, and actually invested by being, themselves, the initiators of home language uses, the finders of online resources, the translators and language brokers (Orellana et. al., 2003; Dorner et. al., 2007) for teachers and classmates, and the owners or buyers of their own bilingual or home language texts.

Looking deeper into youth's taking it upon themselves to translanguage, and their performance of identities, we can see that students' investment in an additional language is "also an investment in their own social identity" (García & Zakharia, 2010, p. 527). This connection between language learning and identity is useful to frame findings in this study focused on youth participants' translanguaging and educational linguistic ideologies that consider the value and use of translanguaging. As youth became the language experts of their home languages in learning, they also expressed continued notions of pride in their multilingualism. Explicit connections were made between what made them different, specifically their languaging, and great pride in these differences. It was the particular investment in their learning, the use of home language and translanguaging as an academic and social youth-initiated tool that enabled

investment in learning to expand into an investment in social identity. This then manifested in pride and resilience – cultural and linguistic pride, pride in academic ability and strength, and resilience to move beyond multiple racisms to continued success.

Rethinking subtractive education

These experiences and perspectives of youth in this study challenge the literature on immigrant youth schooling. When examined through a lens of subtractive education or subtractive bilingualism (Cummins, 1994; Valenzuela, 1999; Kasinitz et. al., 2010), Global High School has created a subtractive environment for language minority youth in the sense that these students are not experiencing culturally relevant curriculum or culturally responsive teaching. Youth felt marginalized, and referred to their experiences as “racist.” This representation of racism was based on language discrimination, misrepresentation or absence of their cultural practices, or disrespect of the Muslim religion. The school clearly, as Valenzuela (1999) states, “divests these youth of important social and cultural resources” (p. 3). Youth’s homelands, cultural practices, Muslim religion, and multiple languages other than Spanish are not utilized by teachers in any way. Youth reported little, or no mention by teachers of culturally relevant materials or teaching references, and when there was, youth mostly described them as misrepresentation, or racism in the curriculum.

And yet, the second part of the definition of Valenzuela’s “subtractive process” is not a reality for these youth student, as they are not, for the most part, left “progressively vulnerable to academic failure” (p. 3). This is not to say that these language minority youth did not struggle academically. Academic struggle was a regular focus of conversation in the group, especially considering the lack of bilingual and multilingual resources, materials, and teachers available to support these students in their learning. They each had individual struggles as well in their

academic and social schooling. Jahed would constantly come to class looking for support in his essay writing. Ananna was a nervous wreck over taking the SATs. However, she *was* taking them. And Jahed *was* working to get better in his writing. These are steps that illustrate the continued academic effort of the language minority youth in this study. Resilience, their own sense of community and helping each other (especially linguistically) within a language minority population of youth, and pride in what made them different seem to counteract the negativity, and multiple racisms, experienced by the youth in this study. Here, the community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) provides academic and linguistic support for members to experience success and achievement in school. At the time of our group sessions, the youth regularly shared stories of proud grades on assignments and in classes, their progress in the college application process, and other signs of academic achievement. As seen in the next chapter, home language use played a large role in language minority youth's learning, and support of one another.

So if multiple racisms are not found to negatively impact the academic success of language minority students, then what is their impact? Why bother to pay serious consideration to such experiences that seem disconnected to youth's school achievement? The youth's experiences with multiple racisms may not have contributed to academic failure, but they clearly impacted other aspects of their education. As we saw in previous chapters, youth's educational linguistic ideologies, were greatly impacted by their experiences with multiple racisms, as well as their notions of teacher care and belonging to a larger school community.

The youth experiences with multiple racisms, and conceptualization of Spanish-English bilingualism in education as unfair contributed to their advocacy for an English-only instructional approach in their classes. Each youth did acknowledge that *all* students language's used in teaching would be ideal, but since that was far from a reality, the next best option,

according to the youth, was English-only. In this way, the Spanish-speaking students would not be given an unfair advantage. What is being subtracted here is the valuable cultural resources, specifically languages, that are not being utilized fully by schools and teachers. What is also being subtracted from these youth's education is the opportunity to recognize their own home languages as important teaching and learning tool. Therefore, these youth are experiencing a subtraction of opportunity for enhanced translanguaging and a subtraction of recognition of their own home languages and cultural practices. This extends to a subtraction of feelings of belonging as well, as explored in youth's experiences with disrespecting religion. As they express feeling religiously oppression, the religious freedoms of the "other kids" are subtracted from their educational experiences.

Subtracted from the educational experiences of the "other kids" are also meaningful connections with culturally relevant pedagogy. Looking at the stories of multiple racisms through a lens of culturally relevant pedagogy (Ladson-Billings, 1999; Nieto & Bode, 2008), language minority youth are experiencing subtractive schooling based on curriculum devoid of culturally connections or drawing on cultural resources. While Ananna and Jahed hear nothing in their classes about Bangladesh, Fatou and Froudaous share stories of a negatively stereotyped Africa, and Chaimae reported education about the Middle East or Islam only focusing on conflict or terrorism. At best, this illustrates a "tour and detour" approach to students' cultures in the classroom (Nieto & Bode, 2008). This consists of, for example, the presence of a multicultural fair, hanging of flags in the hallway, and sharing or ethnic food. However, a culturally relevant pedagogy does not stop there. The educational experiences of youth in the study are continuously subtractive of language and cultural resources.

Rethinking assimilation

The language and religious minority youth in this study, their perspectives and experiences, challenge assumptions of earlier models of assimilation that claim maintaining a strong ethnolinguistic identity and networks with co-ethnics is mutually exclusive with mobility and academic success. This has been refuted in segmented assimilation theory (Portes, 1996) as well as Bhatia and Ram's (2001) revisioning of assimilation considering how individuals are constantly negotiating their multiple, and even conflicting identities, histories, and subjectivities. This is also confirmed in this study. Each youth participant expressed specific comfort and belonging to the group of the "other kids," or non-Spanish speakers in Global High School. They attributed their social and academic success in school to these ties and community. As in the literature, ethnic or faith-based communities here were seen as a "privileged sanctuary" (Bozorgmehr et. al. 2010) that contributed to educational, emotional, and social support. In translanguaging, specifically taking it upon themselves to use home language supports in classrooms, youth found themselves helping each other constantly by providing one another with linguistic and academic supports.

The overall multilingual quality of Global High School supported this for the "other kids." While focused mostly on Spanish-English bilingualism in education, the multicultural character of the school did open up the space for the "other kids" to create their own "community of practice" (Lave & Wenger, 1991) and to engage in self-regulated learning (Paris & Paris, 2011) using translanguaging. Because the vast majority of Global High School teachers explicitly encouraged and initiated translanguaging in Spanish, the space for translanguaging in other languages was introduced, albeit, only through the initiation of youth themselves. The teachers never said, "English-only," or did anything to stop any youth from engaging in home

languages or translanguaging for academic or social benefits. An atmosphere of linguistic tolerance in learning existed in Global High School as students were allowed to translanguage. This is in stark contrast to what was often conceptualized by the “other kids” as an environment steeped in racism based on stratified languages in the school. This seemingly contradictory finding is due to the way in which non-Spanish-speaking language and religious minority youth conceptualized not only their translanguaging as beneficial, but also how they perceived the consistent translanguaging of teachers in Spanish-English as unfair for them.

Other frameworks of examining recently-arrived immigrant youth experience was confirmed in this study. As noted in the literature, Muslim emergent bilingual youth may selectively assimilate into some aspects of mainstream culture, while also maintaining close religious ties and practices (Ebaugh & Chafetz, 2000). Youth in this study exhibited this as they delved into selective aspects of mainstream U.S. culture, including music, dress, and media. However, they all maintained religious ties as well, including vocalizing religious loyalty and being an active part of the masjid or mosque. It has been shown that despite a diversity of national origin or ethnicity, young Muslims in the U.S. most often have a strong religious identity and form close friendships with Muslims of different national origins (Haddad, 2004; Min, 2010). This was confirmed throughout this study as youth shared experiences of their school community based not on a shared language or ethnicity, but on a shared religion and shared status as language minority youth. Each youth expressed a specific pride in where they were from, whether pertaining to a country, region, or city. A reference to “my country” was always meant to signify one’s home country, not the U.S. This combination of both a pan-Muslim sense of community in Global High School, and maintenance of pride in individual’s homelands may seem contradictory. However, it was this combination that made it possible for

this peer-group to support each other as they navigate a new school in a new country. This reality for newcomers in Global High Schools shows that assimilation is not a binary; one is not either assimilated into mainstream culture or unassimilated. Considering the context of the Bronx, and the high immigrant population of neighborhoods in which these students are moving into, their identities and practices are fluid and evolving, intertwining home country traditions and new American life.

This study extends and rethinks theories commonly used as frameworks and foundations in research focusing on recently-arrived immigrant youth and emergent bilinguals. This work also has quite tangible implications for classrooms, schools, and the field of educational research. These implications are explored in the next section, as the stories and voices of youth seek to impact real educational change and advocate for plans of action that will empower language and religious minority youth in multicultural contexts.

Chapter 9

School and classroom implications

Why does understanding the languaging, social experiences, and educational linguistic ideologies of youth matter for teaching? Why, as teachers, classmates, administrators, and policy makers, do we care what language and religious minority think about languaging and treatment of their differences in the classroom? How youth understand language and place in school impacts how they language and how they learn. If students can tap into all their language practices to learn, then attitudes and experiences matter. What we have seen through this study is youth-initiated translanguaging in these youth's learning. However, their conceptualizations of unfairness, or the *multiple racisms* explored in the findings, impact their visions of languaging in the classroom as an all or nothing approach, either everyone's language or all-English. Thus, teachers and schools are left to wonder: How could youth's home languages and cultures be utilized even more, as valuable learning tools?

The purpose of this research study was two-fold. In one respect, this study sought to find practical insights into the school experiences of recently-arrived language and religious minority youth in order to create inclusive learning environments, and provide teachers with practical strategies to address their linguistic, academic, and social-emotional needs. Secondly, this study sought to empower the youth participants through a process of self-expression and sharing of stories for the purpose of positive educational change. From the first day, they were aware that their words, art, and experiences were going to be "written to help teachers." They were active in the processes of creating data collection tools, of collecting the data, and shaping the analysis and presentation of findings. I summarize below some of the lessons learned through this study.

Explicit use of translanguaging

The findings in this study are most relevant for teachers. First and foremost, the youth's translanguaging in the classroom provides practical strategies for teachers of emergent bilinguals to engage youth's home languages in learning, regardless of a teacher's language background. Youth provided practical ways they are translanguaging every day – in oral communication, with online tools, in reading and using reference books. These strategies can be encouraged and supported by teachers, used at a more deliberate level, and with greater support from home language materials and more access to technology. Also, same home language peer collaboration should be encouraged, as students are given the space and opportunities to translanguage in collaborative learning situations. It was not enough for the youth in this study to simply be allowed to translanguage. What is needed is explicit encouragement from teachers in translanguaging, as well as the space, resources, and curriculum to support translanguaging use and pedagogies in the classroom.

Although classes might be designated as English-only or ESL, framing teachers as language policymakers (García & Menken, 2010) provides the space for teachers to make significant change in how students language. Teachers of emergent bilinguals can negotiate dynamic language policies in their classrooms “rather than just blind followers who implement policies mandated from above” (García & Menken, 2010, p. 250). Using the metaphor of the onion, García and Menken (2010) explain:

It is educators who “cook” and stir the onion. The ingredients might be given at times, and even a recipe might be provided, but all good cooks know, it is the educators themselves who make policies – each distinct and according to the conditions in which they are cooked, and thus always evolving in the process. (p. 250)

This is important to consider in classrooms throughout Global High School, as teachers do hold great power in establishing more inclusive linguistic landscapes, multilingual ecologies, and translanguaging in learning.

This idea of teachers as policymakers can also be extended to students as language policymakers. Specifically the “other kids” take it upon themselves to translanguage in diverse ways. In this way, they are negotiating and creating language policies in their own classrooms. García and Sylvan (2011) explore the teachers’ negotiation of language policies in high school in the International network, public schools also designed to meet the needs of emergent bilinguals:

The direction between the educator and the educated goes both ways. Both are learners and teachers. The pedagogical practices negotiate the dynamic bilingualism of students’ individual experiences while actively working against existing forms of domination and exploitation of groups of people. (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 391)

This approach to teaching emergent bilinguals advocates for tapping into student strengths and using student knowledge and languages as a resource. What is important here is the reality that teachers do not know everything. Sometimes the teacher is the student, and the student is the teacher, and this in itself is a meaningful experiences for both parties. When students do not share a home language with their teacher, as was the case of the “other kids” in Global High School, the ability for teachers to “negotiate the dynamic bilingualism of students’ individual experiences while actively working against existing forms of domination and exploitation of groups of people” is all the more important (García & Sylvan, 2011, pg. 391). Teachers must work to break down the power structures so deeply embedded in the school community and the larger society, and provide space for all languages to be valued and used in authentic and meaningful ways. In challenging the power structures surrounding languaging and the oppression of minority speakers, teachers are able to show critical care (Noddings, 1995) for students while

also helping the youth themselves become empowered and able to become liberated (Freire, 1970).

Translanguaging in the classroom also carries with it implications for students' social emotional learning, as well as enhanced academic and linguistic growth. Through translanguaging, youth are given a message that their languages and cultural resources are indeed valuable and education-worthy. Their own funds of knowledge (Moll, 2007) are utilized as they become the language experts and find a safe and welcoming space to pull from all their linguistic repertoires in learning.

Moving towards dynamic plurilingualism and pluriculturalism

The educational linguistic ideologies expressed by language minority students support the need for change in the power structures towards linguistic, homeland, and religious differences in Global High School. Looking first at the issue of language, as the study found, these youth, while conceptualizing bilingualism in education as valuable, also advocate for English-only instruction based on their experiences as marginalized language speakers. Rethinking school and classroom structures through the lens of dynamic plurilingualism (García et. al., 2011), implications are clear for how to enhance pedagogy and classroom experiences to better affirm all youth's languages. This would, ideally, in turn impact educational linguistic ideologies and youth's own understandings of themselves and their languages as valuable, and their multilingual schools as welcoming and inclusive. As García and Sylvan (2011) advocate:

Teacher–student relationships and interactions have to be simultaneously rooted in the singularity of the child's experience and the plurality of experiences and languages that make up the bilingual or multilingual classroom....Regardless of whether classrooms are monolingual (with students of one language group), or bilingual (with students of two language groups), or multilingual (with students of many language groups), instruction is plurilingual, in the sense that each students' languaging is recognized and the pedagogy is dynamically centered on the singularity of the individual experiences that make up a

plurality. (p. 391)

This focus on the singularities in the plurality is at the heart of dynamic plurilingualism. Under this framework of education, teachers would both recognize and utilize the varying language practice of youth. Therefore, translanguaging for language minority youth would not need to be self-initiated or peer-initiated only, but rather encouraged and supported by the teacher and school. It would also engage students in meaningful ways, bringing cultural value to their learning, and adding more than just motivation, but also investment in their learning (Norton, 1995). This approach also has implications for the social-emotional education of students. Engaged in their own struggle for liberation (Freire, 1970), youth from marginalized minority groups would be engaged as experts and holders of valuable funds of knowledge (Moll, 2007). It would also impact students' perceptions of teacher caring. As Noddings (1994) noted, the way in which teachers integrate and utilize students' cultures and background knowledge greatly impacts youth's perceptions of teacher caring and belonging to school.

What is also noticeable in an approach of dynamic plurilingualism is the way in which power is renegotiated in the multilingual classroom. In such a context:

the locus of control for language practices lies with the students. Teachers, who may or may not speak the home language(s) of any particular student or group of students, encourage individual students to use their home languages to make sense of their learning. The students' language practices are flexible and dynamic, responding to their need for sense-making in order to learn. . . . However, teachers also encourage groups to practice language in nonexclusionary ways and will do so themselves whenever possible. (García & Sylvan, 2011, p. 397)

This framework challenges two major issues found in this study. One, it challenges the way in which the "other kids" found no support for their translanguaging from teachers. In dynamic plurilingualism, the youth themselves are supported in using home languages in the classroom for meaning making, regardless of a teachers' language background. Translanguaging is an

every-day approach to learning, and students are provided with the space and resources to utilize their whole linguistic repertoires in learning.

The youth participants in this study reported feeling excluded and left out, especially in the context of classroom languaging. These youth conceptualized as racism the teachers' consistent use of Spanish instruction. However, in an approach of dynamic plurilingualism, pedagogy would be deliberately structured to be inclusive of all students' languages and learning. This would include cultural practices beyond language, including diverse representation of homelands and religion. It would also utilize students as experts about their Muslim religion, cultural practices, and language practices. Dynamic plurilingualism can be extended to consider dynamic pluriculturalism, extending attention to singularities in plurality (García & Sylvan, 2010) to encompass other aspects of youth's evolving and intersecting identities, including religion, homeland, and culture.

Global High School, and other schools with language and religious minority youth, need to move beyond tolerance of language, homelands and religion, and to affirmation (Nieto & Bode, 2008). This means that instead of simply mentioning youth's homelands in curriculum, there needs to be deliberate integration of their languages, homelands and religion as positive, valuable contributors to history, science, literature, and other academic subjects. In order for curriculum to be culturally-relevant, it must reflect the strengths of youth's linguistic and cultural practices, homelands, and prior experiences (Ladson-Billings, 1995). As seen in the stories of Global High School curriculum, the incorporation of Africa into the curriculum must go well beyond AIDS, animals, and damaging stereotypes. Teachers need to be well versed in Bangladeshi history, and to draw from those experiences in the curriculum. And the Arab Middle East and North Africa must be incorporated into curriculum beyond the mention of terrorism or conflict. In order to do

this, teachers need to draw upon the expertise and funds of knowledge (Moll, 2007) of youth, families, and communities.

Structurally speaking, cultural relevance should be reflected in the school's response to the religious needs of the "other kids." Specifically, attention to youth's needs during Ramadan, and their ability to engage in prayer must be respected. Whether it is space or time, the extent to which the school makes an effort to accommodate youth's religious freedoms speaks volumes to the youth themselves about how they are respected and valued in their school. Therefore, for language and religious minority youth to be truly "invested" (Noddings, 1995) in their education, they must feel as if they belong and that the school is also invested in them. One way in which this investment from the school might be shown is through respect of student needs and freedoms, including religious ones which are of specific concern to the "other kids."

The incorporation of a conscious language/homeland/religion culturally-relevant pedagogy for all would build, an environment of dynamic pluriculturalism. This would benefit not only the non-Spanish speakers, but also the Spanish-speaking Latino newcomers in the school. Expanding curriculum to reflect the diversity of the student population sends a message of affirmation, value and respect to students both in, and out, of the marginalized group.

Arts-based research as classroom practice

Widening the definition of research, one can see a connection between data collection and assessing students in a classroom context. As students are assessed, the teacher is indeed collecting data on what each youth knows, or is able to do. For youth in this study, data was collected in new ways using arts-based research and youth-created art pieces to supplement narratives. This added step of arts creation created a scaffold to language production (Walqui, 2007). By providing the space to engage with arts production, youth in this project were both

personally engaged. The use of art widened their communication repertoires, opening the space for more language to be expressed in a variety of ways. Visuals were drawn upon during interviews and whole group discussions to add depth to stories, and provide a starting point for a message that an individual wanted to get across. The use of art also contributed to creating a safe space for sharing delicate and sensitive topics by giving youth space to explore these issues through artistic visuals prior to vocalizing them. The use of art and visuals also provided the space for youth to express themselves in a complete way, even if a word in English was not known. In research voices of emergent bilinguals are often lost in translation, or are never heard because of language barriers. The use of art as data collection opened up the space to hear more voices of emergent bilinguals in diverse ways and tones.

Arts-based research in this study provided concrete examples of effective classroom practice to strengthen youth's language development and investment in learning. One example of this can be seen in Abdulrahman's experience in making a film about his "Where I'm From" collage. Youth participants were told in advance that they would be sharing their artwork with the larger group in discussion. Apprehensive about his English speaking skills, Abdulrahman asked if he could make a video to share his work and show it to the group. As an additional artform, video was welcomed as a form of sharing and expression. Abdulrahman took this task seriously and proceeded to spend hours creating his video. With my computer on his lap, seated in the hallway, Abdulrahman created video after video explaining his art. The image below is a still from his final video:

Image 41: Snapshot of Abdulrahman's video (10/27/11)



After each filming, he would lay back the video, taking notes of what he pronounced “correctly” or left out or needed to edit. He asked others in the group to watch his videos and provide feedback as well. By the end of the second day, Abdulrahman approached me about showing his film to the group, “Miss, I don’t want to show it.” I could not believe it! After all the work he put into revising and refilming, how could he not want to share it? Then he looked at me and smiled, “I know it so good now, I give them the real show” (Field notes, 10/26/11 & 10/27/11). What Abdulrahman had experienced here was the writing process, through film. He drafted, revised, edit, reread, revised and edited even more, until he was ready to publish his work. His interaction and engagement with art, both the collage and film, gave him the opportunity to critically look at his work and language, collaboratively revise with other youth, and ultimately get such a great amount of practice and confidence, that by the end, he wanted to share his work live. Through the use of video, Abdulrahman was able to talk back to himself, to be both presenter and audience, and to engage in a series of reflections and revisions focused on language and content development. This process and use of art has clear value and implications for classroom practices, enabling emergent bilinguals to engage in self-reflection, development of language and speaking skills, and the writing process through creation of art.

Looking at arts-based research can provide meaningful and multiple entry points for students into learning. Just as youth expressed their school day experiences through visual maps, map making can be a tool used by teachers to explore a story plot, setting, or historical event. As youth created graphic arts to express identity, classrooms can employ this media as a way for youth to produce knowledge creatively, engaging with technology, and access to visuals to express ideas beyond English language. By engaging with art as a form of literacy production, teachers can build student investment through authentic learning and language (Norton, 1994; Nieto & Bode, 2008).

Moving forward

So what now? What of the youth and their stories? What of their experiences and joy, their tears and frustrations? An initial step is that of awareness, while maintaining voice. It is integral that as this research is shared, the voices and perspectives of the youth remain as true to them as possible when filtered through a researcher's writing. This includes continued communication, follow-up data collection as youth enter college, and the continued process of collaborative analysis.

It is also important to consider these findings in this study as valuable first steps to making positive educational change. In order to help improve education for a particular group of students, here the "other kids," a necessary first step is to know where they are coming from, and how they conceptualize and make meaning of themselves, their languaging, their interactions, and their education. That is what this study sought to do – listen to and find meaning in the stories and experience of youth, and to take from these as lessons for teachers, schools, and even their classmates. It is important to create inclusive school environments that empower all youth and draw on their rich cultural resources as learners, and peer-teachers.

This study speaks to the need for research focusing on emergent bilinguals who speak languages other than Spanish and English, coming from contexts other than the Americas, and with religions other than Christianity. Through this study, and the voices of the youth participants, teachers and schools can learn firsthand how adults in the school articulate messages that may work against student learning. The inability of schools, even schools that have been set up to receive immigrants, to incorporate language, cultural and religious differences means that students are not being educated to their potential and may be alienated from American society. Students perceive the absence of affirmation of their languages, homelands and Muslim religion as multiple racisms. All schools must find ways to create more inclusive, supportive, and culturally responsive learning environments. Although many (although by no means all) U.S. schools have had to adjust to language differences and how to build on students' home language use, space for religious accommodation eludes schools. The tradition of separation of church and state in the US means that schools have not paid any attention to how to accommodate religious differences. This study convincingly shows that if we're going to educate the vast number of Muslim youth for a future of peace, we have to do more than simply ignore religious differences. Schools must provide Muslim youth with a space to perform their religious rituals, and the curriculum must include well-balanced information about Muslim religion.

The youth in this study self-regulate their learning by being allowed to translanguage, even though informally. Teachers and schools can deliberately encourage, support, and make space and time for translanguaging strategies in languages other than Spanish and English to be used in learning.. Knowledge and application of translanguaging strategies for language minority youth should be required within all programs for teacher education, professional developments, and teacher inquiry groups. Bilingualism *in* education does not need to be facilitated by a bilingual

teacher. Teachers of all language backgrounds have the ability to support and affirm the translanguaging of all youth in purposeful ways that use youth as language experts and engage their multiple linguistic repertoires in learning.

A pedagogical approach that includes the arts is effective in understanding other ways of performing language, national, and religious identities. As teachers and schools look for ways to engage students, the Arts can be utilized for academic and linguistic development. Providing the space for youth to engage in Arts positively impacts student investment (Noddings, 1995) and their ability to internalize new concepts through enhanced scaffolding (Walqui, 2007). It also builds on youth's multiple linguistic repertoires by making available multiple entry points for youth to both receive new information, and produce information as they show what they know.

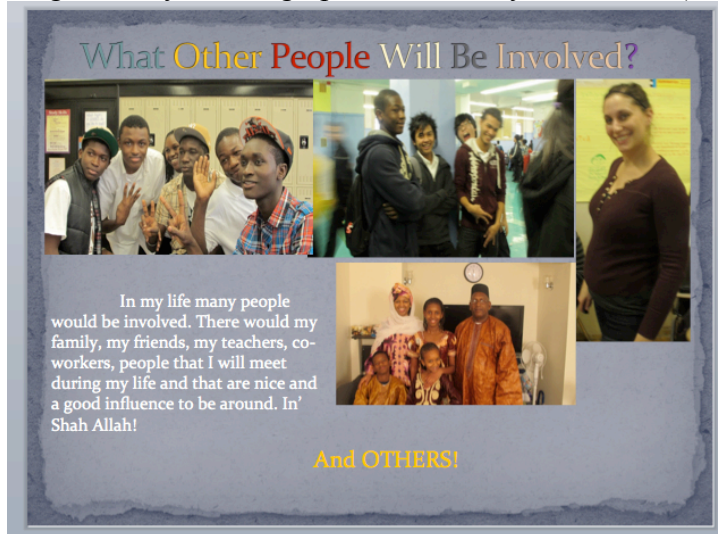
In this study, arts-based research also proved of value. Together with more traditional forms of qualitative research, such as interviewing, the arts proved to be an invaluable resource in allowing students' voices to emerge.

One of the most significant findings of this study has to do with the power of a collaborative peer-group to overcome obstacles in school. Beyond the peer group, the youth find support in their families, families that are often viewed with suspicion by the school community. If schools were to work well for these students, these families would be more welcomed as part of the school family.

I leave you now with the voice of one of the youth participants. In exploring her future, Fatoumata paid particular attention to the "other kids" in the study and their connection to her future. Looking ahead, she sees the presence and support of the "other kids", or as Froudaous would say, "the hallway community," as leading toward her future success along with her

family, and myself, the only teacher she includes in the graphic art (I am the person on the right side of the page).

Image 42: My Future graphic art slide by Fatoumata (4/4/12)



In the image above, Fatoumata draws on the strengths of the group, the support found in the methods and community of our after-school sessions, and the encouragement of her family – a symbol of her cultural pride. Although faced with multiple racisms and a marginalized status based on language, homeland and religion in school, she is supported by her friends and her family. It is significant that she includes me in the support since I was able to create a space in our after-school group, where language, cultural and religious experiences were drawn upon as rich, valuable learning tools.

While teachers and schools are still learning ways to meet the needs of these “other kids,” these students are helping themselves within their own linguistic and religious community. School adults need to open their eyes and ears to the strategies and stories of these youth, for they are finding unique ways on their own to meet challenges and address academic and social struggles seemingly ignored by their school. Through their strength, support, and communities of practice, these youth are succeeding academically, socially, and linguistically, while

















simultaneously feeling marginalized and discriminated against. It is our job as educators and policy makers to create school environments that positively use the linguistic, cultural and religious experiences of these youth. Until all schools broaden their perspectives to include all students, these “other kids” continue to learn through the strength of their community of practice, and in spite of the school. Filling the gaps created by an unsupportive school environment, these youth are left on their own devices to create a support community among themselves. It is this peer community that for now provides them with the strength, support, and visions of successful futures beyond the school walls, *Insha’Allah*. But we cannot leave the schooling future of these children to a simple *Insha’Allah*. Instead, we must ensure that we actively fill their *Insha’Allah* with actual resources and positive practices. And so, it is my vision that in the near future all US schools will act on incorporating the languages, homelands and religions of non-Spanish speaking Muslim immigrant youth, *Insha’Allah*

Appendix A: School day map key

Language Through Art

My School Map

There is a new student coming to your school, and you want to help him/her. You will create a map of the school to help them find their way, and also to help them understand some feelings and opinions you have about the school, or memories you have about things that happened in school. On your map, include a key of what different colors and shapes mean:

	Where I feel happy (Red triangle)		Where I have someone to help me (Black triangle)
	Where I feel angry (Red circle)		Where I feel lonely (Black circle)
	Where I feel frustrated (Blue circle)		Where I feel safe (Yellow triangle)
	Where I feel proud (Blue triangle)		Where I feel unsafe (Yellow circle)
	Where I feel confused (Green circle)		Where I have fun (Orange triangle)
	Where I feel smart (Green triangle)		Where I am bored (Orange circle)
	Where I feel successful (Purple triangle)		Where I feel _____ (Brown circle)
	Where I have someone I trust (Pink triangle)		Where I feel _____ (Brown triangle)

- One place on your map can have more than one color/shape (depending on different feelings you have, or different times of day, or different memories)
- Each color/shape can be in more than one place

Ideas of experiences and symbols generated and decided on by youth participants (11/23/11, 11/30/11); Handout created by researcher and distributed to group (12/7/11)

Appendix B: Interview protocols for peer interviews

Questions generated and decided on by youth participants
Interviews facilitated and shared in home languages and English

Peer Interview #1: *Where are you from?*

1. When someone asks you “where are you from?” what is the first answer you give them? Why?
2. What is one of your best memories of where you are from?
3. Tell a story about something you miss about where you are from?
4. Tell a story about something you do not miss about where you are from?
5. Tell a story about someone who influenced your past.
6. What are you proud about where you are from?

Peer Interview #2: *When do I feel _____ in school?*

1. When do you feel happy in school? Why?
2. When do you feel angry in school? Why?
3. When do you feel safe in school? Why?
4. When do you feel unsafe in school? Why?
5. When do you feel smart in school? Why?
6. When do you feel confused in school? Why?

Peer Interview #3: *How is school now the same and different from school in my home country?*

1. How is the school day similar/different?
2. How are the school rules similar/different?
3. How are the school subjects (what you learn) similar different?
4. How are the teachers similar/different?
5. How are the students similar/different?
6. How are the learning materials similar/different?
7. How are parents involved in school in similar/different ways?
8. How is the way you use different languages in school similar/different?

Peer Interview #4: *What is school success?*

1. What does “success” in school include?
2. What does a successful student do?
3. Tell a story about a time you felt successful in school.
4. What do you do to be successful in school?
5. Tell a story about a time you did not feel successful in school/
6. What advice would you give to a new student who wanted to feel successful in this school?
7. What advice would you give to teachers to help students feel more successful in school?

Peer Interview #5: *What do I want my future to be?*

1. Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?
 - a. What will you be doing and where?
 - b. What did you do to get there?
2. Where do you see yourself 10 years from now?
 - a. What will you be doing and where?
 - b. What did you do to get there?
3. Where do you see yourself 20 years from now?
 - a. What will you be doing and where?
 - b. What did you do to get there?
4. What do you do now to help you get to your future?

Appendix C: Interview protocol for one-on-one researcher-youth interview

Interview Focus: “What is school like for me?”

1. Why did you come here to Global High School?
 - How did you (or your family) hear about this school?
2. Let’s take a look at your school day map that you made
 - Talk me through your map
 - Why did you chose these feelings in these places?
 - Tell me a story that shows your feeling in each place
3. Let’s take a look at the pictures you took in response to “What is school like for me?”
 - Why did you take these pictures?
 - Choose two of your favorite pictures, and tell me a story about these pictures
4. If there were a new student from ____ (student’s home country), what advice would you give him/her about school here? Why?
5. If you were a teacher here, what would you teach your students? How would you teach this?
6. If you were the principal here, what rules or structures would you make for the school? Why?

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