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Asian English Language Learners' Identity Construction in an After School Read, Talk, & Wiki Club

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ABSTRACT

ASIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION
IN AN AFTER SCHOOL READ, TALK, & WIKI CLUB
by
Jayoung Choi

For English language learners (ELLs) who traverse two different sociocultural

and linguistic worlds, identity construction is a particularly complicated process.

However, examining learners' identity construction is vital because language and literacy

learning is mediated by learners' identities (Gee, 2003). This investigation sought to

address the dearth of studies on Asian ELLs in second language acquisition and literacy

research which have been limited in part due to the model minority stereotype ascribed to

Asian students (Ogbu, 1987).

Within the frameworks of collective identity theories (Gee, 2003; Weedon, 1987;

2004) and sociocultural learning theories (Bakhtin, 1968; 1981; Vygotsky, 1986), the

purpose of the study, therefore, was to expand our understanding of Asian ELLs by

examining how they construct their identities in an after school literacy club through

reading and discussing multicultural literature. The research question was: How do Asian

adolescent English language learners construct their identities in an out-of-school Read,

Talk, & Wiki (RTW) club?

Participants included four Asian ELL high school boys: one Korean, one Uzbek,

and two Indians. Data sources included interviews, face to face club meetings, electronic

Wiki postings, member checking, peer debriefing sessions, and a researcher journal. Data

analyses followed the principles of the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1965), and individual case as well as cross case analyses were conducted (Yin, 2003). Trustworthiness, dependability, and credibility were established through triangulation of data sources and the transparent audit trail (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The results revealed that the participants lived in separate home and school worlds. Participants also identified respect as an important Asian value that distinguished them from their American peers. In addition, although the participants capitalized on the positive model minority stereotype, they stressed the fallacy of using it to generalize to all Asians. The findings suggest that providing a safe literacy site where multicultural literature is used could be beneficial to ELLs. They also suggest that it is necessary to broaden our common understandings of Asian students and that educators need to recognize learners' multiple identities through a variety of reading and writing activities.

ASIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS' IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION
IN AN AFTER SCHOOL READ, TALK, & WIKI CLUB
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Jayoung Choi

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ABBREVIATIONS

C	Choi (researcher)
H	Hulk
K	Kush
R	Ram
N	Null
INT_H1	1st Interview with H
INT_R2	2nd Interview with R
INT_N3	3rd Interview with N
INT_K1	1st Interview with K
1CM-9CM	1st Club Meeting through 9th Club Meeting
MC_10CM	Member Checking Session_10th Club Meeting
RJE	Researcher Journal Entry
1WP_K1	K's 1st Wiki Posting in Response to the 1st Wiki Prompt
13WP_N10	N's 10th Wiki Posting in Response to the 13th Wiki Prompt
14WP_R15	R's 15th Wiki Posting in Response to the 14th Wiki Prompt
10WP_H5	H's 5th Wiki Posting in Response to the 10th Wiki Prompt

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Learning other languages is about seeking out different experiences for the purposes of developing new ways of understanding ourselves and others and becoming involved in our worlds. (Hall, Vitanova, & Marchenkova, 2005, p. 4)

The quote above precisely illustrates the way in which I have approached learning other languages, including English. Learning other languages opens up wonderful possibilities to better myself and to expand my understanding of others and the world. I have been attracted to the inherent link between language learning/literacy practices and learner identities during my Ph.D. studies. It would not be an overstatement to say that my English learning has shaped part of who I am. English language, which is associated with power and prestige (Pennycook, 1998), has personally created different desires in me and in order to meet them, I have crafted different selves in various situations. When my multiple identities did not seem to be coherent, I struggled feeling divided and duplicitous.

Deriving from my personal experiences, I conducted a pilot study (Choi, 2006) that has informed the current dissertation study. In my pilot study, I explored how four second generation Korean American college students perceived their language learning experiences and their cultural identities. The findings suggested that while two of the participants revealed balanced bicultural identities, the other two preferred one cultural

1

identity over the other. What was common among all the participants was that during their adolescent years, they wanted to assimilate into mainstream American culture often by shunning their Korean identities. What struck me most, hence providing an impetus for this dissertation study, was that one participant, Vito, who came to the US at a young age after having been born and raised in Korea, showed more drastic identity changes compared to other participants who were born in the US. Interpretation of his data suggested that struggling to learn English played an important role in constructing his strong desires to fit in, which caused his identity changes. Although it was a case study that examined a small number of participants, I could not help thinking that his experiences could mirror many English language learners' experiences in the US.

Building on my personal experiences and on my pilot study, I conducted a dissertation study that examined how Asian English language learners (ELLs) constructed their multiple identities in an out-of-school multicultural literature Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW) club. In this chapter, I first situate the dissertation study within the fields of identity in language and literacy education. I then situate it within the studies of Asian immigrant students in the US. Furthermore, I discuss why I established an out of school RTW club to study learners' identities. Then, I discuss the purposes and the research question of the study. I will end this chapter with the theoretical framework that includes sociolinguistic and sociocultural theory and collective identity theories. This will be followed by definitions of key terms.

Understanding Identity in Language and Literacy Learning

Identity is no longer perceived as an essentialist construct that defines an unchanging and coherent self that remains the same across time and space. Instead, one's

identity is dynamic, constantly changing, and fluid. This point of view in turn allows us to understand that an individual can encompass multiple and shifting identities as a result of social interactions with others and multiple desires to change him/herself from the current situation (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Norton, 1995; Ricento, 2005). This topic of identity has attracted many second language scholars. It is apparent that identity no longer remains on the periphery in second language acquisition (SLA) (Block, 2003; Fujimoto, Canagarajah, Atkinson, Nelson, & Brown, 2007; Joseph, 2004). A considerable number of identity studies in the field attest to this trend (Kanno, 2003; Kramsch & Von Hoene, 2001, Lantolf & Pavelenko, 2001; Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, & Riazi, 2002; Lvovich, 1997; Marx, 2002; McKay & Wong, 1996; Norton, 1995, 1997, 2000; Skapoulli, 2004; Thompson, 2006). As Norton (1995) points out, interest in identity has resulted from the recognition that learning a second language does not entail merely obtaining linguistic knowledge.

Similar to SLA, many literacy scholars have paid increasing attention to learners' constructing identity during literacy practices (Broughton, 2002; Arnett Jensen, 2003; Athanases, 1998; Fecho, 2002; Heath, 1983; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Sutherland, 2005; Vyas, 2004). The growing number of linguistically and culturally diverse students in US schools has prompted scholars to incorporate students' cultures which are important aspects of their identities in the curriculum. 18% of the total US population in 2000 speak different languages and practice different cultures at home as opposed to 13.8% back in 1990 (Shin & Bruno, 2003). The number of ELLs has grown from 5.1% in 1993-1994 to 6.7% in 1999-2000 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2004).Validating their cultures and languages in school has been believed to lead to academic success (Au,

2001; Banks, 2001; Cummins, 1996; Delpit, 2006; Gay, 2000; Ladson-Billings, 1994;

Lopez, 2003; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004; Nieto, 2002; Olsen, 1997; Valenzuela, 1999).

Although literacy and SLA scholars do not appear to openly acknowledge the

similarities in their study of identities, since mid 1990s, they have similarly attempted to

explain the connections between students' identities and language learning (Menard-

Warwick, 2005). The ubiquitous interest in identity in both fields has resulted from the

recognition that teaching second language or literacy unavoidably involves helping

learners negotiate their identities and/or forge new identities (Gee, 2003). When learning

a second language which inevitably exposes the learner to different cultural practices

through reading, watching movies, and interacting with people in the target culture,

learners create meaning. Likewise, when a learner engages especially in reading, s/he

transacts with the print to construct meaning (Smith, 1997; 2004; Goodman & Goodman,

2004; Rosenblatt, 2004). According to Gee (2003), any activity that requires meaning

making is identity work. When a learner tries to interpret characters or phenomena in a

book or a movie, his/her pertinent and even personal experiences and value systems

which implicate identities are (re)constructed. That is, different ways of living enacted by

a protagonist might attract the learner to try out a different identity by questioning his/her

own values. In contrast, if the learner does not find the characters' behaviors favorable,

the activity might instead fortify the old identity.

What is at work to help learners decide what they endorse or dispute is *cultural*

models that are imbued with their beliefs, values, and principles (Gee, 1996; 2003; 2004;

2007; 2008). Gee (2008) posits that one's *cultural models* are indicative of his/her

identities. After all, *cultural models* are a prototypical understanding of the world which

reveals one's beliefs and values. Gee asserts:

> Our meaningful distinctions (our choices and guesses) are made on the basis of certain beliefs and values. This basis is a type of theory, in the case of many words a social theory. The theories that form the basis of such choices and assumptions have a particular character. They involve (usually unconscious) assumptions about models of simplified worlds. Such models are sometimes called cultural models, folk theories, scenes, schemas, frames, or figured worlds. I will call them "cultural models." (p. 103-104)

Gee's *cultural models* are fruitful to understand how learners make decisions

about where and with whom they want to affiliate academically, culturally, linguistically,

and socially. It should be noted that *cultural models* are not static social theories. Instead,

as one's identity is multifaceted, shifting, and fluid in different time and space (Joseph,

2004; Minami & Ovando, 2004; Ricento, 2005; Siebers, 2004; Weedon, 1987; 2004), one

has a multitude of *cultural models* that undergo changes as s/he interacts with the

members of various sociocultural groups and engages in many meaning-making activities.

Gee (2007) contends that *cultural models*, for many people, are unnoticeably and

unconsciously formed, altered, maintained, and/or reinforced on a phenomenon basis in

everyday life. Having a safe space in which cultural models are explicitly explored and

thus identities are constructed, however, is particularly important for English language

learners (immigrant students learning English in school settings) who traverse two

conspicuously conflicting cultural and linguistic worlds. Let alone going through

turbulent puberty in which they frequently question who they are, adolescent English

language learners struggle to construct meaning of their home and school worlds (McKay

& Wong, 1996; Olsen, 1997; Vyas, 2004).

Having explained identity studies in the fields of SLA and literacy studies and why studying identities of language learners is important, now I turn to situate my study within Asian immigrant students in education and contend that there is a need for studying Asian ELLs in the field.

<div style="text-align:center">Understanding Asian Immigrant Students</div>

Discussions of Asian immigrant students should be preceded by the consideration of Asian immigrant history. Asian immigration has lasted for 150 years in the US. The first Asian immigrants were Chinese laborers who moved to California from 1850 and 1882. However, due to the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882, Asian immigration had been banned until 1965 when the liberalized law was passed. The new law abolished discrimination in immigration based on nationalities (Min, 2006; Zhou, 2004). Min further explains the details of the act in 1965 that boosted the significant growth of Asian population in the US:

> The Immigration Act of 1965 put priority on family-based immigration by assigning 80% of the annual national quota to family preferences, as well as allowing for an unlimited number of nonquota immigrants for children, spouses, and parents of U.S. citizens. (p. 15)

In addition, according to the analysis of Min (2006), Immigration and Naturalization Service identifies Filipinos as the largest group of Asian immigrants from 1965 to 2002, who are in order followed by Chinese, Vietnamese, Indians, Koreans, Taiwanese, Pakistanis, Hong Kong nationals, and Japanese. With regard to the recent Asian immigration trends between 1990 and 2002, he explains each ethnic group differently based on the relations with and conditions of Asian countries and US immigration policy changes. That is to say the Immigration Act of 1990 issued a significant number of temporary worker visas to attract many professionals from different

nations. A vast number of Indians have taken advantage of the temporary worker visas to enter the US. A majority of Chinese immigration can be explained through the Chinese government's open-door policy since 1978 and through a growing number of Chinese graduate students who decide to stay in the US permanently (Min, 2006). The consideration of Asian immigrant history lends itself to discussions about Asian population and about pervasive perceptions of this population.

According to the analysis of Pew Hispanic Center (2007), the total Asian population rose from 2.8% in 1993 to 4.4% in 2005. Accordingly, public school enrollment of Asians rose from 3.6% to 4.6% in 2005. Furthermore, the Asian population is estimated to amount to 10.6 percent by 2050 (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1999). However, the (potential) growth of the Asian population in the US does not appear significant when compared to the total Hispanic population (Zhou, 2004) up from 8.9% to 14.4%, with public school enrollment up from 12.7% to 19.8% (Pew Hispanic Center, 2007). Due to a considerably large number of Hispanic students and their higher high school dropout rates (National Center for Education Statistics, n.d.), educational studies on minority students have extensively focused on Hispanic students, which has left other minority students, including Asians, to be underrepresented and peripheral in educational studies (Lei, 2006).

In addition to the smaller number of Asian students, this population has scarcely been studied because of somewhat positive stereotypes attached to this group. Some common perceptions of Asian students include unconditional familial support for education, academic success, submissiveness, passivity, complacency, and reticence (Cheng, 2000; Jones, 1999; Kennedy, 2002; Lee, 1994, 1996; Wong, Lai, Nagasawa, &

Lin, 1998). Furthermore, Asians in the US have been referred to as "honorary whites" in that they enjoy the status of Whites despite their biological differences (Haney Lopez, 2006). That is, Asian immigrants in the US have gained the status of Whites unlike other minorities due to the Asian cultural traits that emphasize hard work and education. Pertinent to Asians' conforming to White standards, Portes and Hao (1998) found that Asians lose their home language at a much greater rate than Hispanic students. What has received most attention among the stereotypes is their dedication to education which leads to academic success. Asians top the ranks with regard to rates of college education in statistical data (Noguera & Wing, 2006; Portes & Rumbaut, 2006). Due to the "positive stereotypes", many scholars have not necessarily recognized the challenges and problems that Asian students may face.

Standing in the center of Asian's academic success is Ogbu (1987, 1993) who has contributed to cementing the stereotype. He has delineated different minority groups into voluntary and involuntary minorities. According to him, Asian students' academic success and faster assimilation to the White majority culture can be explained by their voluntary immigration status. Though helpful in understanding different motivations for school work found in different minorities, Ogbu's theory has been contested by many Asian scholars who have taken a more critical lens to understand various Asian students. They similarly argue that his theory has silenced many Asian students who do not neatly fit into the category (Lee, 1994, 1996; Lei, 2006; Lew, 2006; Louie, 2004). Lei (2006) further stresses that the cultural difference framework is not sufficient to explain Asian students' cultures. He instead argues that Asian students need to be understood individually.

The Out-of-School Read, Talk, & Wiki (RTW) Club

To study students' identity, I established an out of school multicultural literature RTW club. First, I designed an out-of-school club because I projected that participants may feel more comfortable talking about books and their experiences and thoughts in this setting without the fear of grades. Furthermore, one aspect of the club that involves reading and responding to literature makes one reflect on where s/he stands in relation to the characters (McMahon & Raphael, 1997; Rosenblatt, 1938; 2004). Sumara (2000) succinctly demonstrates how reading fiction can be a stimulus for readers to define themselves from a past, present, and future perspective: "relationships with literary texts are important ongoing methods for the integration and symbolization of their senses of remembered, presently experienced, and projected identities" (p. 272-273). Recognizing the important role that literature plays in constructing learners' identities, I designed a small group talk format, instead of having them respond to literature individually. A literacy space where a small group of learners collaboratively construct meaning of literature by talking is believed to inspire them more to bring in relevant personal experiences (Gilles & Pierce, 2003). Listening to what other peers say in the group could inspire individuals to share their pertinent experiences which lead to identities (Raphael, 2001). Evans (2001) describes the importance of verbal interactions with peers in constructing meaning in a literature club:

> The springboard nature of discussion groups, where one person's question creates an opportunity for other people to share their interpretations and experience, is at the heart of what occurs in literature discussion groups and is the reason why they are so much more powerful than having students read and respond to literature individually. (p. 20-21)

In addition to the reading and talking in a group, I facilitated writing on a private Wiki site to provide another venue for the participants to express their identities (http://readtalkwikiclub.wetpaint.com). A wiki website is a type of an asynchronous computer mediated communication (CMC) context in which messages are retained for easy retrieval although they cannot be exchanged in real time like chatting (Jacobson, 1999). I established writing electronically in a wiki site for several reasons. First, writing in response to books has been effective to help students construct meaning along with group talk in a book club setting (Daniels, 2002; Gilles, 1989; Johnson, 2000). Second, I intended that this online space could attract youths whose life is intricately related to online space (Thomas, 2007). Third, the online site was also created to foster a sense of community among the participants which is one of the numerous benefits of online data (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003; Jacobson, 1999; Ruhleder, 2000). Acknowledging some perils of online data (Anderson & Kanuka, 2003), however, I established a private wiki website in which only invited persons could access the contents.

Problem Statement, Purpose of the Study, and Research Question

Adolescent English language learners face challenges to negotiate their identities in various linguistic and cultural worlds let alone having to learn English. Gee (2003; 2008) emphasizes that the nature of literacy practices in which learners construct meaning prompts learners to negotiate identities. However, only a few studies have investigated ELLs' active engagement with literacy sites where learners construct identities (Black, 2005; Lam, 2000; Vyas, 2004; Yi, 2005; detailed description of each scholar's work is discussed in the next chapter). There is also a scant body of literature on Asian ELLs' literacy learning and identity, particularly in book club studies (Dressman &

Webster, 2001). The pervasive model minority stereotype (Ogbu, 1987; 1993) that Asian students excel in academics has left this population, including Asian English language learners, less explored. Our assumed proximity to and familiarity with Asian learners, as academically strong students, prohibits us from understanding them as entities with varied experiences, personalities, proficiencies, and academic abilities. Recognizing the problems in the field, the primary purpose of the study was to explore how Asian adolescent English language learners construct their identities as they engage in an out-of-school literacy site. Another purpose was to unravel the common and stereotypical understanding of Asian students in the US. As such, the guiding question of the dissertation study was: How do Asian adolescent English language learners construct their identities in an out-of-school multicultural literature Read, Talk, & Wiki (RTW) club?

<div align="center">Overview of the Study</div>

To pursue the inquiry, I recruited participants by word of mouth and fliers distributed in front of Asian supermarkets. My four focal participants included Kush, Null, Ram, and Hulk (all pseudonyms). They were all high school ELL boys and came from Korea, Uzbekistan, and India respectively. As diverse as their ethnic background was, the length of stay in the US (ranging from four months to five years) and their immigration background varied (two immigrated voluntarily and the other two involuntarily). Data sources included two or three individual interviews with each participant; transcripts of face to face meeting audio recordings; online Wiki written responses; member checking; peer debriefing, and a researcher journal. Data collection

and analyses occurred from February 2008 to June 2008. Detailed data analyses and write-up followed during summer and fall of 2008.

The participants read multicultural literature that depicted experiences of various Asian American immigrant students. Overriding themes in the readings that I chose included but were not limited to conflicts with family members, feeling different from other peers, importance of education, and troubles in high school. They read the readings in advance and posed questions to one another in the face to face club meetings. What followed each club meeting was one or two writing prompts on the Wiki to help the participants elaborate on their ideas initiated in the face to face meetings. Questions posed in both face to face and on the Wiki prompted them to express their thoughts and experiences by placing themselves in the character's situation or by giving advice to the character. This out-of-school RTW club was voluntary, and the students did not receive a grade for their participation. The following sections describe the theoretical framework and the key terms for this study.

<div align="center">Theoretical Framework</div>

Various theories from different traditions have guided my inquiry into examining Asian adolescent English language learners' identity construction in an out-of-school multicultural literature RTW club. Two major theories that guided the dissertation study are sociolinguistic/sociocultural theory (Bakhtin, 1968; 1981; Rosenblatt, 1938; 2004; 2005a; 2005b; Vygotsky, 1986) and collective identity theories (Gee, 1996; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008; Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, & Cain, 1998; Vitanova, 2005; Weedon, 1987; 2004).

Sociolinguistic/Sociocultural Theory

The essential tenet of sociolinguistic/sociocultural theory is that learners use a medium, such as language, to construct meaning in social and cultural contexts, not in isolation (Marchenkova, 2005). Inherent in sociolinguistic and sociocultural theory is also the understanding that meaningful learning can occur when what students bring to the text and/or to the classroom is validated (Au, 2001; Gee, 2003; Heath, 1983; 2004; Moll & Gonzalez, 2004). In the following section, I describe each of Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Rosenblatt's constructs that informed my study. Due to the compatibility between the three theorists, several scholars have explicated how some of the theorists can be used in conjunction with one another. For example, Marchenkova (2005) explains that Vygotsky and Bakhtin's work can jointly be used when studying language and culture. Similarly, sociocultural theorist, Wertsch (1991), utilizes both Vygotsky and Bakhtin's work to illuminate "mediated action". In addition, Fecho and his colleagues (Fecho, 2002; Fecho & Botzakis, 2007; Fecho & Meacham, 2007) have framed their studies and contentions that focus on literacy and identity construction primarily by combining Bakhtin and Rosenblatt. The complexity inherent in each theory deserves further discussion which follows next.

Social-Constructivist Learning Theory

As a developmental psychologist, Vygotsky (1986) illustrated that social speech precedes inner speech. Put differently, he accentuated the importance of social language development prior to forming one's inner speech. As he viewed language as a medium to construct meaning, developing an individual self closely relates to one's socialization: "the individual self is formed through the internalization of its sociocultural

environment" (Marchenkova, 2005, p. 183). According to Vygotsky, children learn words' meanings that represent socially generalized concepts through interactions with adults in social settings. Pertinent to interactions with adults, zone of proximal development (ZPD) refers to a distance between what a learner can perform independently and what he/she can potentially achieve when accompanied by a peer or an adult whose language proficiency is a little higher (Vygotsky, 1978). It highlights that learners benefit from having peers or people around whose proficiency in the language is higher than the learner themselves. It also accentuates the importance of spoken communication to obtain meaning.

What is particularly relevant to this study is the Vygotskian perspective that knowledge and meaning are mutually and collaboratively constructed in a social and cultural setting instead of one knowledgeable figure imparting knowledge to students (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000). Peers in meaningful social and cultural settings play a pivotal role in shaping meaning together (Wink & Putney, 2002). The theoretical basis for a book club from which I adapted the RTW club in the dissertation study, is Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (McMahon & Raphael, 1997).

Transactional Theory

Louise Rosenblatt's (1938; 1982; 1985; 2004; 2005a; 2005b) views on language align well with Vygotsky's. Instead of viewing language as "a self-contained, ungrounded system", Rosenblatt (2005a) perceived language as being "socially generated and individually internalized" (p. 41). Her aspect of social language allows for viewing words as "aspects of sensed, felt, lived-through experiences" (p. 77). Her work on transactional theory, which was drawn from John Dewey's philosophy, acknowledges the

contributions of reader and text under particular environments in creating meaning during reading. It further denotes that text is nothing but black dots on paper unless the reader starts to transact with it. The emphasis of the reader in transacting with text enables readers to have different interpretations of a text, which resulted from having different linguistic and personal backgrounds, which she called *experiential and linguistic reservoir*. As Rosenblatt noticed the term, transaction, being misinterpreted, she explicitly cautioned against using *interaction* and *transaction* interchangeably. She noted that whereas *interaction* connotes a machine-like operation where separate entities act on one another and then go on their separate ways, *transaction* "designates an ongoing process in which the elements or parts are seen as aspects or phrases of a total situation" (Rosenblatt, 2005a, p. 40).

Her contention, when first published in the book, *Literature as Exploration* in 1938, was thought-provoking as she challenged the New Critics' beliefs about interpreting literature. The New Critics scholars contended that there is only one interpretation to a literature piece that the author had intended (Tracey & Morrow, 2006). The influences of the New Critics can be found in literature instruction in which students rely on the interpretation of the authority (author or teacher) in understanding literary work. Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading which involves three way interactions or rather transactions between the reader, the text, and the environment was faced with harsh criticisms from the opposing perspective. In sum, her transactional theory can be useful when readers interpret literature differently while making connections to their own experiences and identities. Fecho (2002) illuminates how transaction theory helps learners to express themselves:

through transactions with text, written or otherwise, we seek to ascribe
purpose to our lives and the choices we make within those lives. Through
the meaning-making process, we come to know more about ourselves and
the complexities that lie within and outside us. (p. 114)

Rosenblatt further distinguished *efferent* and *aesthetic* reading of literature that is

on a continuum. She stressed that depending on the purpose of the reader, one can read a

literature work through efferent or aesthetic perspectives or somewhere in between or

even both as they fall on a continuum rather than on opposite ends of a spectrum. When

the reader intends to read to achieve objective information about a text, s/he takes the

efferent perspective, and if intends to enjoy, reflect and feel the literature, s/he can take

the aesthetic perspective. The reason why reading literature is pivotal in identity work is

that through transacting with text, learners come to better understand themselves in

relation to the world around them.

Dialogism

Similar to Vygotsky and Rosenblatt, Bakhtin (1981), who was a Russian literacy

theorist and a philosopher, contended that "language is not a neutral medium" (p. 273).

Whereas Vygotsky focused on intimate interpersonal/dyadic interactions, thus not

extensively addressing an individual in social settings (Wertsch, 1991), Bakhtin's

dialogic understanding of language or utterance illustrates that one's utterance (language)

which is affected by other's utterances, transcends space and time. Holquist (1986)

succinctly demonstrates dialogic relations in utterances by pointing out that "relations

between utterances always presuppose the potential response to an *other*" (Holquist,

1986, italics in original work, p. 64). In other words, the participants' voices, utterances,

are not only affected by interactions with peers in the RTW club but also by interactions

with media (e.g., something that they saw from TV) or with something that they read a long time ago or something that somebody said in different times. What is worth noting here is that the utterances are a reflection of *my voice and others' voices*, but one decides to select others' voices and create his/her own voice. Therefore, distinctive use of language, utterance, is an indication of oneself (Danow, 1991).

Voice(s) is (are) not a mere auditory production but it encompasses broader concepts, such as one's opinions, values, and world views (Wertsch, 1991). In *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Art*, Bakhtin (1984) explored the relationship between the self and others, or other groups. According to him, every person is influenced by others in an inescapably intertwined way, and consequently no voice can be said to be isolated. Bakhtin's philosophy, which is called *dialogics*, greatly acknowledges the influences of others on the self, not merely in terms of how a person comes to be, but also in how a person thinks and how a person sees oneself truthfully.

Collective Identity Theories

In addition to sociolinguistic and sociocultural theories, what I call collective identity theories have guided my dissertation study. In the following section, I describe Bakhtinian poststructuralist theory, Gee's (1991; 1996: 2003: 2007: 2008) cultural models, and Holland et al.'s (1998) figured worlds.

Bakhtinian Poststructuralist Theory

The premises of Poststructural theory are that one's identity is subject to change and that one's identity cannot be defined in a firm and consistent way as one interacts with others in different environments which foster changes in oneself (Weedon, 1987; 2004). This construct sharply contrasts with the humanistic understanding of identities.

Identity from the humanistic perspective is seen as unitary, fixed, and coherent that is inherent in oneself. Chris Weedon (1987), who is a feminist poststructuralist asserts:

> Poststructuralism proposes a subjectivity which is precarious, contradictory and in process, constantly being reconstituted in discourse each time we think or speak. The political significance of decentering the subject and abandoning the belief in essential subjectivity is that it opens up subjectivity to change. (p. 33)

Like many studies which have adopted post structuralism (Broughton, 2002; Norton, 1995), I agree that understanding one's identity as changing and multiple in different situations is necessary in studying identities. However, the poststructuralist understanding of a subject who does not carry agency for his/her actions is with something I found hard to accept. The subject's (speaker) passivity in authoring his/her own voices is well expressed in Weedon's (2004) statement that "the speaker is never the author of the language within which s/he takes up a position" (p. 13). Opposing this view, Vitanova (2005) draws on Davies' (2000) work on agency. Vitanova purports that from a poststructuralist point of view, subjects do not have agency for what is happening. They are defined and fragmented by social and environmental forces that define the self. Therefore, the self is not an active agent in forming who s/he is. She then argues that Davies and Bakhtin identically suggest that subjects are active because in Bakhtinian perspective, we actively author our meaning making of the world and the self by creating our voice in the process of appropriating others' utterances.

Cultural Models/Figured Worlds

Identity has been studied extensively in various disciplines (Joseph, 2004). Holland, Skinner, Lachicotte, and Cain's work (1998) from anthropology and Gee's (1996; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008) work from semiotics which studies various signs to

extract meaning are prominent and very much related. Gee (2008) posits that one's cultural models reveal his/her identities. After all, cultural models are his/her prototypical understanding of the world which reveals one's beliefs and values. For example, an adolescent immigrant boy makes sense of behaviors of American peers based on his cultural models which directly informs the choices that he makes about his own behaviors in the future. Gee argues that cultural models can interchangeably be used with figured worlds which is proposed by Holland, et al. (1998). According to Holland et al., figured worlds are reflections of an individual's value system, provide significant meanings for certain actions, inform outlooks, and influence one's future behaviors. They define cultural models that Gee coined as "conceptualizations of figured worlds" (p. 55). They posit that although cultural models are likely to change, figured worlds have some durability, and add that "identities are formed in the process of participating in activities organized by figured worlds" (Holland et al., 1998, p. 57).

In addition to cultural models and figured worlds, Gee's (2003) accounts of three different identities are useful to expand our understanding of identities: *virtual identity, real world identity, and projective identity*. Making effective learning analogous to "good" video games, Gee postulates that *virtual identity* refers to identity pre-established by teachers or external forces that is a prerequisite for meaningful learning. A learner may not identify with *virtual identity* that has been set up by others, in which case, he/she will likely fail to succeed. The second, *real world identity* relates to the concept of who I am in the real world that is imbued with multiple and shifting values and characteristics. While *virtual and real world identities* could be separate entities when a learner does not find any commonalities in both, *projective identity* bridges these two and is most

important in understanding identities and helping learners obtain positive learning experiences. Drawing from one's real world identity and informed by the virtual identity, projective identity is the *identity in the making* and identity that one considers as a project. Going back to the example of an immigrant boy, he came to the US with his own familial values and beliefs that are essential to his real world identity, but as he interacts with American peer groups and observes cultural codes in various contexts, such as media and books, he might desire or dispute certain things in the US by making references to his more familiar cultural practices. This process illustrates *projective identity* in the making which will eventually forge his cultural models or figured worlds.

Taken together, each theory uniquely contributes to situating and analyzing the dissertation study. First, Vygotsky's socio-cognitive learning theory offers insights into how the participants learned from one another in creating meaning in the RTW club and the online space. Second, transactional theory by Rosenblatt provides the lens with which I could closely examine how the participants made connections to text and self, during which they constructed their identity. Third, Bakhtin's (1981) concept of dialogism enabled me to identify the participants' voices in their utterances. Fourth, Bakhtinian poststructural theory substantiated my understanding of the participants' identities as being fluid, dynamic, and changeable in different contexts but as having control (voices) over their identities. Lastly, Gee's cultural models and Holland et al.'s (1995) figured worlds are helpful to understand where and in what ways participants situate themselves in the US by altering and maintaining their cultural models or figured worlds.

Key Terms and Definitions

Asians

Placing racial, cultural, and ethnic groups into predetermined categories, such as Whites, Blacks, Latinos, and Asians, is inherently elusive. First of all, there does not seem be consensus on unifying definitions of each, so it is hard to neatly assign individuals into designated categories. Second, labeling and categorizing is precarious as it cements ascribed traits of an individual who supposedly displays similar attributes of his/her group. It in turn promotes racial and ethnic stereotypes imposed on an individual (Pollock, 2004). Despite the cautions of using the labels, I use a broad category, Asians, to refer to my participants in my study. To name Asians to all the people of Asian decent is misleading considering the vast regions in Asia (Vyas, 2004). In fact, Asians have been used to encompass many different Asian groups in different studies. For example, in Li's (2006) book, *Culturally Contested Pedagogy: Battles of Literacy and Schooling Between Mainstream Teachers and Asian Immigrant Parents*, she used a broader definition, Asian, to refer to only Chinese immigrants. In addition, in Lee's (1996) book, *Unravelling The "Model Minority" Stereotype: Listening to Asian American Youth*, she included immigrant students from Korea, China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam as Asians.

I do not adopt it to further essentialize this group, but to align my definition more with what is found in the literature in which this population has been studied. In other words, the term will be used for convenience reflecting the purpose of labeling in the first place. In my study, I rely on Min's (2006) definition of Asians that consist of immigrants

from India, China, the Philippines, Vietnam, Korea, Pakistan, Taiwan, Japan, and Hong

Kong. That is, I have situated my study around the discourses about the model minority

stereotype, which is often used to describe East Asians (Korean, Chinese, and Japanese).

Therefore, I tried to recruit East Asians. I include not only East Asians but also tried to

recruit South East Asians who have often been underrepresented in educational research

(Ngo, 2006). South East Asians refer to Vietnamese, Cambodians, Laotian, Indonesian,

Malaysian, and Thai (Wikipedia, n.d.). Although I define Asians in my study

accordingly, I narrow my definition of Asians specifically reflecting the ethnic groups

that participated in my study that are individuals from Korea, India, and Uzbekistan

which is located in Central Asia.

<p align="center">*Identity*</p>

Identity implies fixed images and coherent definitions of oneself that are not

affected and molded by social interactions within the poststructuralist perspective. As

such, *subjectivity*, which connotes fluidity and changeability in different interactions,

have been recommended and used by many scholars who espouse poststructuralist

theory. However, I use the term, identity, in my study to express its dynamic nature and

flexibility. In defining my use of identity, I adapt from Weedon's (1987) definition of

subjectivity. According to her, *subjectivity* is "the conscious and unconscious thoughts

and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding in

relation to the world" (p. 32).

<p align="center">*Multicultural Literature*</p>

Multicultural literature has been utilized in literacy classrooms as an effort to

comply with tenets of multicultural education (Banks, 2001). Multicultural literature aims

to present different points of view and various kinds of living into the mainstream curriculum. According to Cai and Bishop (1994), multicultural literature can be defined as "world literature", which encompasses an eclectic selection of literature. In the US, it relates to the inclusion of literature that portrays underrepresented people. The next definition relates to "cross cultural literature" which is about interrelations of people from different cultures, as well as books about people from specific cultural groups that are written by an individual who is not of that group. The last definition concerns "parallel cultural literature", books written by individuals from parallel cultural groups, such as African Americans and Korean Americans. Their work capitalizes on "experiences, consciousness, and self-image developed as a result of being acculturated and socialized within these groups" (p. 65-67). It should be pointed out that Bishop (1982) developed the concept of parallel culture literature that permits readers to see themselves in the characters. Since I provided participants with short stories and novels that display different Asian individuals' experiences in the US, I especially find the last definition, "parallel cultural literature" fruitful.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The primary purpose of the dissertation study was to examine how Asian English language learners construct their identities in an out of school Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW) club. I was particularly interested to find out how they would reveal their identities in the event of reading, writing, and talking about multicultural literature to which I presupposed they could make personal connections. Much work on the inherent link between identity and language/literacy learning (Norton, 1995; Sutherland, 2005; Vyas, 2004) substantiates the rationale for using literature read and talk club to explore students' identities.

The inquiry is based on the understanding that one's identities are socioculturally constructed, dynamic, nonunitary, multiple, and constantly shifting (Weedon, 1987; 2004). Bakhtin's (1984) notion of *unfinalizable self* is fruitful to explain that a person is constantly changing and is never fully revealed or fully known in the world. However, I also believe, contrary to poststructuralists' contentions, one is proactive and responsible for shaping or authoring the socioculturally constructed identities that are results of one's and others' utterances (Bakhtin, 1981; Vitanova, 2005). In addition, crucial in my understanding of one's identity is another of Bakhtin's concepts, *outsidedness*. *Outsidedeness*, in a more comprehensible term, refers to unique differences that two interlocutors bring to their dialogues. By maintaining *outsidedness* when two different

cultures and peoples meet, one's identity does not need to be threatened. Instead, it should be enriched, and understanding of others and human beings should increase.

In this chapter, I discuss studies that have informed the dissertation study. Since this study has drawn from various research areas, the number of studies and the depth of discussion of each can be overwhelming. Therefore, I will accentuate studies that have particularly attempted to address learners' identities. The five research areas that are pertinent to the dissertation study are Asian immigrant students' identity formation; literacy practices in and out of school; complex issues in multicultural literature; identity research in second language acquisition (SLA), and discussion of factors that shape multiple identities. First, I discuss how Asian immigrant students' identities have been explored. Next, I turn to discuss studies that explored students' literacy practices in book clubs and online spaces in which students' identities were examined. The next discussion addresses complex issues and considerations in using multicultural literature. Lastly, I point out trends and key researchers' work on identity in SLA and studies that describe factors that shape multiple identities. This chapter ends with an identification of gaps in the literature.

<div align="center">Asian Immigrant Students' Identity Formation</div>

One of the most influential scholars in Asian studies in education would be Stacey Lee (1996), whose dissertation study focused on exploring Asian high school students' academic achievement with a focus on their ethnic identities. During the school year 1989-1990, Lee, an Asian American doctoral student of Chinese decent, went to what she called Academic High, in New York, to examine Asian American students' academic achievement, their ethnic identity formation, their perceptions and other's perceptions

about Asian American students, and interracial relationships in the school. In the school, which required higher academic standards to get in, Lee identified four different Asian American students groups despite other non-Asian students' and faculty's failure to recognize them. Those groups were Korean-identified students, Asian-identified students, new wavers (who did not identify themselves with any of the Asian groups), and Asian American identified students. Some of the findings included that Korean-identified students looked down on other South East Asian students and did not want to associate themselves with other Asian students as they thought they were superior. Asian identified and Korean identified students alike liked the model minority stereotype and believed in education to move up on the social and economic ladder. They also closely followed what their parents told them with regard to ignoring racist remarks and just focusing on studying. On the other hand, the new wavers did not live up to the standards as they were low achievers, and they were rebellious. Asian American identified students believed in education to fight racism and did not approve of the model minority stereotype. Lee found that unlike Ogbu's theory about voluntary groups in the US, different Asian students in her study exhibited differing identities with relation to the model minority stereotypes, and their identity kept changing.

According to Lee (1996), the model minority stereotype has been used as a hegemonic device to presenting ways to behave and act to Asian Americans. The model minority stereotype was initially brought about to use against African Americans' protests and demands for equal rights during the Civil Rights era. Setting up examples of successful Chinese and Japanese Americans, the mainstream group tried to convey the ideas of individualism and meritocracy. Lee argues that although the model minority

stereotype is a much more favorable one than other stereotypes imposed on other minority groups, it is dangerous because it silences other minority groups who vocalize equal rights; it directs Asian Americans to behave certain ways; and it ignores many other low achieving Asian Americans.

Drawing on Lee's (1996) work on Asian students in a high school, Louie (2004) attempted to explore how second and 1.5 generation Chinese American college students from two different higher institutions made sense of their cultural identities in the contexts of their families, neighborhoods, and social worlds. Louie specifically paid attention to how the matters of race and class play an important role in guiding Chinese American students to their paths in their lives. She asserted that education was believed to be the number one motivation to climb up the social and economic ladder in both working class and upper middle class Chinese American students. However, as they moved up to higher education, issues about race and the realization that education could not eradicate their minority racial status in the US started to feel real. Whereas middle and upper class Chinese American students quickly assimilated into the mainstream, white culture, while losing their Chinese language, working class Chinese American students did not lose the language and formed their own world, a mix of Chinese and American languages as well as cultures. Through intensive interviews with the participants, some of whom attended a prestigious university and a two-year college, Louie found out that class played an important role on their ethnic identity formation.

Following in the footsteps of Lee (1996) and Louie (2004), Lew (2006) further delved into the role of class in Asian American, more specifically Korean American students' academic achievement. Lew explored two different groups of Korean American

high school students that come from disparate class backgrounds. That is, whereas one group of Korean Americans attended a high achieving high school in NYC that required good grades and scores on standard tests, another group was at the time of the study taking GED classes as high school dropouts in NYC. Over a three-year-period, Lew conducted an ethnographic study visiting two different schools recording field notes and observing and interviewing over 70 students in both groups. The significant findings were that the cultural model attached to Asian Americans could not be accounted for. That is to say, the model minority stereotype could not be adequate to explain the achievement gap between two different class groups. Some of the similarities of the groups were that their parents had limited English skills and lacked knowledge of the US school system, which hampered their support on their children's school work.

However, stark contrast was found in the resources and types of support that both groups received or lacked. Whereas the magnet high school students maintained good relationships with teachers and counselors who helped them advance academically and guided them through college exams and applications, the working class Korean American students did not find any support from school and actually attended poorly resourced schools. In addition, whereas the parents in the upper class group could afford bilingual tutors and counselors and private institutes as after-school activities that bridged the school and home differences, the other parents could not afford any support like this and solely relied on the school. Furthermore, while the charter high school students relied on other peer groups to find resources about college, studies, and their parents, the other group relied on similar peer groups to find information about applying for the army and finding jobs in the ethnic business. Importantly, the charter school group thought of

education and doing well in school as a way out of living like their parents, most of whom were ethnic business entrepreneurs, but the other group lived off the ethnic business. Another difference lay in that whereas education was considered by magnet high school students as a long term goal and investment which did not yield immediate results, education did not hold any value to the dropouts for whom short term income was more needed.

Taken together, the key researchers in Asian studies in education have contributed to unraveling the myth about the model minority stereotype imposed on Asian students in the US by demonstrating different ethnic groups' racial and pan-ethnic identities (Lee, 1996), by accentuating the role of class in cultivating Chinese American college students' cultural and ethnic identities (Louie, 2004), and by shedding light on the contrasting availability of resources that led to academic success of Korean American high school dropouts and high achieving high school students (Lew, 2006). In addition to these studies that dealt with Korean and Chinese students, it should be noted that different Asian ethnic groups, such as Vietnamese high school students (Centrie, 2004), have been studied. The inherent connection between language learning and identity formation, which the aforementioned studies did not address, can be found in other studies (Fu, 1995; Jo, 2001; J. Lee, 2002; S. K. Lee, 2002; Park, 1995). However, except for Fu and Jo's studies, other studies utilized survey questionnaires, which failed to provide rich description of each informant's experiences.

The review of literature about Asian immigrant students above supports my argument that Asian English language learners are often subsumed under the discussions of academically successful Asian students in the US. Even in studies that explore various

Asian groups, language learners and how they view literacy and themselves is scarcely studied. That is to say, Asian ESOL students seem to be invisible and to undergo alienation because they are often lumped into the Asian model minority stereotype, and they do not have a place to stand because even ethnically-similarly -identified students often isolate them by calling them names, such as FOBs (Fresh-off-the Boat), as found in my pilot study (Choi, 2006).

<div align="center">Literacy Practices in and out of School</div>

In addition to the research studies that explored Asian immigrant students' identity formation, literacy studies that were conducted in and out of school through various literacy activities are pertinent to my dissertation study. In the following sections, I first discuss influential book club/literature circle studies. Then, I describe the studies that illustrate how book clubs were utilized to explore minority students' ethnic, racial, bicultural identities. I also discuss studies that explored how English language learners employed out of school online sites to engage in literacy practices and to negotiate identities.

<div align="center">*Literature Circles and Book Clubs*</div>

Literature circles and book clubs build on sociocultural learning theory. They can be thought of as a safe space for a small group of readers to collaboratively construct meaning of text either in the classroom or outside the confines of it. It underlies the crucial role that literature plays in language and literacy learning (Rosenblatt, 1938). Instead of providing students with one interpretation of the text analyzed by literary critiques, it allows readers to create their own interpretation of text. Building on the Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (McMahon & Raphael, 1997), it also stresses the

importance of students' interactions with peers in interpreting text in a small group

setting with minimal supervision by the teacher. There have been several different names

used for this endeavor: literature study groups (Eeds & Wells, 1989; Gilles, 1989),

literature discussion groups (Evans, 2001), book clubs (Florio-Ruane, 2001; McMahon,

1996; Raphael, Goatley, Woodman, & McMahon, 1994), literature circles (Hanssen,

1990; Johnson, 2000; Short & Kauffman, 1995), and read and talk clubs (Alvermann,

Young, Green, & Wisenbaker, 2004). Despite the different names, all of them draw from

the idea that readers are likely to construct meaning which leads to learning while talking

about books in a small group.

One of the first literature study groups was formed and studied by Eeds and Wells

(1989). They examined how pre-service teachers and 5th and 6th graders constructed

meaning out of a book that they read together. Each of the fifteen pre-service teachers in

a university course worked as a literature circle leader with four to seven ten-year olds.

They met for two days per week, thirty minutes per day over a five week period. The

children picked a literature circle based on a choice of a book that they wanted to read.

The data sources included field notes, transcriptions of the group sessions, and teacher

journals. A close analysis of four of the literature circles, two of which were evaluated as

successful and the other two as less so by the researchers, suggested four categories of

talk, which included gaining basic understanding of meaning; making connections to self;

actively hypothesizing, and criticizing and evaluating what they read. Eeds and Wells

(1989) concluded that taking on the aesthetic approach as suggested by Rosenblatt when

reading and learning about literature could help students engage in a constructive process

of meaning making. They further suggested that grand conversations in which students collaboratively and actively engage in interpreting text could occur.

As book clubs have extensively been utilized in language arts and reading classes, some scholars have focused on ways to incorporate skills instruction to book clubs (Evans, 2001; Raphael, Goately, Woodman, & McMahon, 1994). For instance, Evans, as a classroom teacher and a researcher, explored three literature discussion groups in three different fifth grade classrooms: a class team-taught by two teachers that Evans researched, a fifth grade classroom taught by her, and another class taught by one of her students. After observing and tape recording multiple literature discussion groups in each of the classroom, Evans emphasized the importance of scaffolding needed in the sessions. Similarly, Raphael et al. (1994) studied how collaboration between university researchers and literacy classroom teachers helped fourth graders in one of the researchers' classrooms engage in a meaningful meaning-construction process in a project called book club. The classroom teacher, one of the co-researchers in the study, wanted to try out a non-traditional approach to teaching literature while meeting district-required standards. The research team visited the classroom every week and observed students' interactions in multiple book clubs. Later, they discussed suggestions and gave feedback to the classroom teacher to improve club sessions. They successfully executed book club sessions, which comprised of reading, writing, what they called community share (which is discussion), and instruction. This study supported how book clubs could be used for reading, writing, and teaching various reading skills by carefully incorporating instruction.

Along the same lines, Daniels (2002) has written extensively about practical guides for setting up effective literature circles in the classroom. He suggests that in each group, each student takes on an active and different role to collaboratively obtain meaning of the text and to practice their language skills. For example, in a group of four students, each participant takes the role of discussion director; literary luminary; illustrator; connector. Some other optional roles he suggests include vocabulary enricher; track tracer; and summarizer. Daniels (2006) points out that the structure of literature circles should be prepared with care because students do not just take off first time. They need guidance from the teacher in successfully executing the sessions.

Many scholars focus on the effectiveness of small group settings and how students collaboratively arrive at meaning making (McMahon, 1996; Patterson, 2000; Seidenstricker, 2000). For instance, Patterson (2000) studied the role of text in honor's class high school students' responses to a book in student-led literature circle in a high school literature course. Her findings included that students in groups returned to the text to fix their hypotheses, finding significant cues in order to comprehend the text, and consciously discussed the author's purpose and motif. The major findings were that student-led literature circles worked well to interpret and analyze the text (but remember this was with an honor's class). Also, some findings indicated some student-led groups displayed an analytical approach to the literature as they were taught in the classroom.

Similarly, Seidenstricker (2000) explored how student-led small group and teacher-led whole class sessions had a different effect on seventh grade students' engagement with text when talking about literature. Factors, such as students' ability, teacher control, and text requirements, affected students' engagement with the text and

discussions. An important finding revealed that in student-led literature circles, students seemed to use various strategies to get at meaning and have an ownership of their interpretation. Similar to Seidenstricker's study, McMahon (1996) illustrated how a small group of fifth grader's discussed a book. As opposed to what was found in teacher-led discussions, the students posed broad and open-ended questions so that anybody could bring up any topic for discussion. McMahon argued that in teacher-led discussions, topics for discussion tend to be confined to the curriculum and the teacher tends to point to certain students, instead of asking anybody. However, student-led discussions tend to be more open-ended and elicit meaningful discussions.

Whereas the studies above took place in the classroom focusing on students' engagement in small groups, Alvermann, Young, Green, and Wisenbaker (2004) studied how twenty-two adolescents perceived literacy practices in an after-school book club setting. The researchers recruited participants based on fliers and they were able to provide monetary compensation for their participation. To reflect the after-school format in which students take the active role in creating meaning without the teacher's supervision, participants did not read common books. Instead, they read magazines, short stories, and novels that were their own interest and talked about them in weekly meetings over a period of four months.

The researchers found out that only avid readers actively participated for the four-month period. These avid readers used peer gossip, as a social place, to solidify one's stance on reading. They also appreciated Read and Talk (R & T) clubs where peers with similar interests in reading could openly talk about books without worrying about being regarded as bookworms from other peers. Another important finding is that although the

participants were adamant about maintaining R &T clubs that did not resemble school activity, their discourse patterns resembled "recitations more than free-flowing give-and-take discussions" (p. 892). Although this study inspired the conception of the structure for my study, there are some shortcomings: first, although the after-school R&T clubs could not conform to a set structure, they did not have any structure, so that it might have made the sessions confusing and out of focus as different participants brought in different materials they were reading. Second, although avid readers would need support for their continued reading, it failed to include other non-avid students who might benefit most.

In addition to the effectiveness and meaningfulness of using this book club format to help increase students' literacy skills, many researchers and classroom teachers have utilized book clubs to achieve other purposes than improving literacy skills. First, Florio-Ruane (2001) explored how six white pre-service teachers could develop themselves as cultural beings and could prepare themselves to teach diverse students through reading six books in a literature circle. The six books included autobiographies written by teachers who work with diverse pupils, lives of immigrants, and autobiographies that deal with discrimination. They met in the researcher's home six times during a six-month-period. Florio-Ruane found that the talk in the book club helped the preservice teachers grow professionally in teaching. Some themes included "(a) increased confidence in and expression of their ideas; (b) a new tendency to envision alternative "possible selves" as they thought about their futures as teachers and as citizens; (c) increased desire to pursue learning" (p. 131). Most importantly they recognized themselves as cultural beings where White teachers they had believed do not have culture.

While Florio-Ruane employed a literature circle format to pre-service teacher professional development and awakening cultural awareness in them, Johnson (2000) utilized book clubs to empower middle school girls. Johnson was interested in how seventh and eighth grade girls respond to female representations in a novel and their verbal interactions in girls-only literature circles. This project began with her recognition that girls at the middle grades were often silenced in reading classes when boys were around. Therefore, Johnson became curious about how girls-only literature circles could help them speak their minds by reading four novels. The realistic novels included strong female protagonists who were not silent and who faced various social issues that these participants would have faced as well. Data sources included interviewing eleven girls, discussing books during their lunch break for forty five minutes. The girls-only literature circles suggested that girls could comfortably discuss social and racial issues and present "their authentic selves" (p. 384). In the literature circles format, girls were gentle with one another and building trust with one another took some time but the girls took the opportunity to talk to others in the group and were able to express their ideas and thoughts and discuss multicultural and racial issues and problems. Some of the girls broke their silence not only in the girls' only literature circles but in other classroom discussions later as observed by one of her teachers. This study suggested literature circles can be set up to provide a safer space for adolescent girls.

Identities Reflected in Book Club Studies

In addition to the effectiveness and meaningfulness of using this book club format to help increase students' literacy skills, the benefits of book clubs show that literature discussions tap into students' personal lives. This in turn is believed to help students

make sense of who they are and of their surroundings (Raphael, 2001). Literacy activities have been believed to offer insights into discussing students' identities. Literacy activities that tap into explorations of students' identity formations and processes include writing reflections/process writing upon reading literature or a text and getting involved in literature circles or book club discussions. Both of the literacy activities encourage students to make connections to the text, the world, and the characters. As students freely discuss their relevant experiences bounced off of reading a text, students inevitably reveal their identities.

Moller and Allan (2000) studied how four fifth-grade girls (three African American girls and one Latina), all struggling readers, responded to a novel while forming a response development zone, which draws on Vygotsky and Bakhtin's sociocultural learning theory. These readers negotiated meaning and deeply understood racism, which was a dominant theme in the book that they read, and were able to connect to their own stories about racism in book club meetings. These girls met outside of class to read a book with help from researchers.

Bean and Rigoni (2001) studied five high school boys who were identified as at risk readers. They were paired up with five adults from a college in talking about literature. The medium that they chose was to exchange response journals to record their connection making. While utilizing constant comparative analysis, Bean and Rigoni came up with fourteen categories, some of which included societal conditions, academic mode, ethical considerations, and character empathy. Some of the findings include whereas one or two pairs worked really well to address important issues and making meaningful

connections to their lives, another pair's conversations remained as superficial and further reflected school-like conversation patterns.

Broughton (2002) studied four six grade girls in a book club discussion group that was held in the classroom. She first stayed in a Language Arts class where she selected these girls, who were found to love to read and to do well in school in order to be separated from the major curriculum. Broughton recorded the discussion sessions over a few weeks, which was based on one book that they were reading together, and she also spent time with them in their classrooms, extracurricular activities, and homes. In addition, she interviewed their parents about their daughters. In data collection and analysis, she not only examined their subjectivities outside of the discussion groups, but also she gave a detailed explanation of how each girl situated characters in the book club sessions. The contribution of her study to the literature is that even though there have been a lot of scholars arguing and contending that in reading literature, readers' lives are closely interwoven, and connected, none of the studies closely looked at how each reader from different and unique backgrounds interact with the literature.

Smith (2005) examined how African American and White young adolescent girls negotiated their ethnic and racial identities through talking about young adult literature with diverse perspectives at an after-school setting. Books were chosen by the middle school girls and Smith analyzed data based on discourse patterns and conversational topics. Three discourses from her data included exploratory talk (which encompassed conversations about how to make sense of the text), storytelling (which included sharing their matched experiences), and testifying to one's beliefs (sharing her values). The middle school participants openly talked about their racial issues through talking about

literature. Through reading and talking about novels that highlight race issues and meeting an African American author who wrote one of the books helped the participants form their racial identities and build friendship between different races.

Sutherland (2005) explored how African American high school girls' experiences were related to literacy practices, identity, and literature through reading Toni Morrison's book in their English class. As a White educator, she recruited high school African American girls to give them the opportunity to explore their ethnic identities by reading literature written by an author with the same race. The students were from a high school honor's English class, and data sources were from students' written work and poems to express their identities, individual interviews and group interviews. Sutherland found out that the book provided an impetus for them to make connections to their ethnic and racial life, instead of talking directly about the literature. She utilized the constant comparison method and some components of critical discourse analysis. The reason why she included critical discourse analysis was because she wanted to zoom in on how the participants used language, especially pronouns, to situate themselves against their own race. Some of the common themes that she found include their talking about beauty as opposed to white person's beauty. Another important theme includes how others perceived of them and how that perception (how black young adolescents are supposed to behave) created a boundary.

Asian Students' Identities Reflected in Book Clubs

In order to explore how Asian high school students discuss their bicultural identities, Vyas (2004) organized an after-school book discussion group where she invited three focal high school girls, who were from Korea, Nepal, and Taiwan

respectively. She had recruited four other Asian boys who later dropped out. She recognized that students with immigrant background experience more difficulties trying to make sense of different worlds, home and school and peers. Bicultural students need safe places to talk about their environment and changes. In this sense, literature discussion groups were suitable for the study.

The focal students and Vyas met for an hour weekly for four months in a high school as an after school activity. The researcher selected materials that included short stories, poems, and films that are written by and on Asian Americans. During the meetings, the participants read, talked, and wrote about their reflections. The themes generated included literacy activities as an analytic window into bicultural students' interpretations, beliefs, personals choices, and decisions. That is, while reading and talking about various Asian experiences, the students were able to express their beliefs, values, and their projective identities in comparison to the literature characters. She also highlighted that one participant, Sook, was emotionally affected by an incident in a book that reminded her of sad memories. Vyas did not discuss further as to how she handled this particular situation, other than talking to the participant about her feelings, but I think it raises a significant consideration when studying students' identities.

Asian Students' Identities Reflected in Out-of-School Web Spaces

Whereas Asian students' literacy practices that occur in a small group discussion format have not been extensively studied with the exception of Vyas's (2004) study, L2 literacy scholars have predominantly studied Asian ELLs who engage in meaningful literacy practices particularly in out-of-school online literacy sites (Black, 2005; 2006; Lam, 2000; Yi, 2005a; 2005b; 2008). Black (2005; 2006) examined how an English

language learner who immigrated from China developed her literacy skills in English and reconstructed her Asian identity through active participation in a fanfiction website where she crafted novels drawing on her interest in Japanese comic books and pop culture. Similarly, Lam (2000) studied one adolescent boy, Almon, from Hong Kong, who first had felt negative about gaining full participation in the English speaking world. But the study showed that the online community he later joined by creating his own homepage about a Japanese pop star and by exchanging emails with pen pals in English granted him confidence as an English language user.

Whereas Black and Lam studied how ELLs developed English literacy skills and constructed identities in the online sites, Yi (2008) focused on how Korean adolescents used their first language in an online community. These students collectively wrote novels on the website in the form of relay writing. This study found that the online community permitted the learners to engage in rich literacy practices out of school and to navigate through their two linguistic and cultural worlds. Yi (2005a; 2005b)'s dissertation study also explored how five Korean 1.5 generation students (students who were born in Korea but moved to the US at a young age) meaningfully engaged in literacy practices out of school both in English and in Korean. Yi's dissertation study found that the students utilized the literacy practices out of school to (re)construct their Korean and English identities.

A review of the literature on literacy practices in and out of school with relation to identity explorations has shown that reading literature and talking about it in a book club session, whether it takes place in the classroom or outside of it, not only provides meaningful literacy experiences but also a venue to explore the students' shifting and

multiple identities. Despite the suitableness of conducting identity research through book clubs, it should be noted that many book club studies have failed to include or even to recognize students with diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds (Dressman & Webster, 2001). Dressman and Webster point out that many book club studies have worked with specific populations, mostly whites and girls, while leaving out minority students, who might display different literacy experiences. This is with a notable exception of the Young's (2000) study that explored how four middle and elementary school boys constructed and reconstructed masculinities in a homeschooling environment. The studies discussed above, however, do not reflect the majority of book club studies that recruited white girls. The purposeful inclusion of minority students, especially Spanish speaking and African American students, is a result of searching for selective studies that directly relate to my study. However, it should be noted that among the few studies that included minority students, only one study, Vyas's, dealt with students of Asian descent. This is a clear gap in the book club research which I intend to fill in my study. In addition, although Black (2005; 206), Lam (2000), and Yi (2005a; 2005b; 2008) together helped to contribute to the literature that English language learners actively engage in literacy activities unlike some perceptions that learners do not learn or write out of school, they did not focus extensively on how the learners negotiated their identities during the literacy practices. I recognize this as another gap that needs to be filled.

<div align="center">Complex Issues in Multicultural Literature</div>

Discussion of studies that have utilized book clubs leads to the consideration of multicultural literature as many studies adopted multicultural literature in their sessions

(Smith, 2005; Sutherland, 2005; Vyas, 2004) and as I used multicultural literature in my study. The term, multicultural literature, is fraught with non-unifying definitions. According to Cai (2003), there can be three prevailing definitions in the field. First, multicultural literature is drawn from the literal meaning of having multiple cultures. From this view, multicultural literature implies encompassing eclectic cultures in literature. However, this definition goes against what true multicultural education is about. That is to enhancing equity for all people and giving power to the underrepresented. The second definition refers to a cautious remark about multiculturalism focusing extensively on people of color.

Despite the divergent definitions of multicultural literature, many would agree that it has stemmed from multicultural education which became prevalent in the 1960s. Since then, multicultural literature has widely been utilized to meet the principles of multicultural education (Cai & Bishop, 1994; Taxel, 2003). Multicultural literature from a reader response perspective goes beyond allowing for readers' personal interpretations; instead it provides grounds for readers to explore the differences and similarities and to increase an overall understanding of human experiences (Banks, 1993). In arguing for using multicultural literature, or multicultural education, Banks does not overlook the importance of teaching students the canon. Instead, he asserts the true purposes of multicultural education are "to free students from their cultural and ethnic boundaries and enable them to cross cultural borders freely" (p. 8).

Benefits of Multicultural Literature

In this section, I demonstrate how different teachers and scholars who espouse multicultural literature discuss some of the complexities of implementing it. A number of

multicultural literature studies that have taken place in the classroom have similarly shown that students eagerly want to read stories that depict their intimate experiences to help them define and redefine their realities (Athanases, 1998; De Leon, 2002; Ferger, 2006). Classroom teachers who have successfully incorporated multicultural literature in their curriculum provide useful advice on specific ways to implement it (Dressel, 2005; Meixner, 2006; Landt, 2006; Louie, 2006). Benefits of using multicultural literature include not only permitting students to validate their cultural and ethnic identities but also providing scaffolding for their comprehension and thus yielding increased interest in reading (Ferger, 2006; Vandrick, 1996). Athanases (1998) similarly explains that using multicultural literature which is imbued with cultural cues with which participants can identify enhances reading comprehension. In addition, multicultural literature has been seen as an effective medium to discuss prejudice, discrimination, and racism that are prevalent in society but touchy subjects to talk about (Beach, 1997; Enciso, 1997; Vandrick, 1994).

For instance, Louie (2005; 2006) has studied extensively about the use of multicultural literature in generating empathetic responses. Louie (2005) studied a high school English class in which she collaborated with a teacher in developing empathetic responses in 25 students who read different versions of *Mulan*. Data sources included individual interviews and scripts of students' oral and written responses to the texts. Based on the data, she categorized empathies into emotional, historical, and cross cultural empathies. Her research findings indicated that students increased their understanding of texts by emphasizing with characters in them. In addition, the students in her study were

able to enhance their cross cultural understanding through reading and talking about multicultural literature.

Challenges in Using Multicultural Literature

The issues of authenticity of multicultural literature relates to the important consideration of "who gets to represent whose experience?"(Dudley-Marling, 2003, p. 314) when implementing multicultural literature with students. Contrary to the benefits of using multicultural literature that directly relates students' cultural and ethnic experiences and all the promising tales about students' making connections to their identities, many teachers and scholars have raised concerns regarding problems of its implementation (Beach, 1997; Dressel, 2005; Dudley-Marling, 2003; Fecho, 1998). In studying a number of responses of middle school students to multiple multicultural novels, Dressel (2005) found that students' responses stayed at mere personal and aesthetic responses. The students relied instead on what their family, media, and peer groups had invested in them in terms of understanding of others, by dismissing the text that dealt with racial and ethnic differences as not reflecting true realities. This study indicates that what we may try to achieve through introducing multicultural literature might not be absorbed into students in expanding their worldviews.

Beach (1997) studied various reasons why students resist engaging with multicultural literature. In written responses of students from two high schools (one with predominantly white suburban neighborhood and one with urban neighborhood) and from one college to a book, which addressed racial issues, power, and privilege written by an African American author, Beach identified that students contested white privilege; were reluctant to challenging the status quo; and denied racial differences in the discussions.

In addition to Dressel (2005) and Beach (1997), Dudley-Marling (2003) discussed challenges he encountered when incorporating multicultural literature in his class. Dudley-Marling introduced folktales that depicted what he had thought represented his diverse students' ethnic, religious, and cultural experiences in his third grade classroom. Contrary to his preconceived expectations, Muslim students and students from other Middle Eastern countries did not make connections to the stories and did not want to contribute their knowledge to discussions in light of reading folktales. In his critical reflection of what went wrong in his class, he stated that he made assumptions about students' cultural and ethnic identities based on skin color and their immigration background without taking into consideration of other complex issues, such as class, gender, race, socioeconomic issues, and so on. That is to say, taking an example of an Iranian student he had, he explained that this particular student may not have identified with folktales that centered on an Iranian girl who was from working class due to the student's upper class status. He also concluded that the students' less engaging behaviors while reading "their" folktales may indicate that they did not welcome their being pointed out as different when they tried to fit in.

Dudley-Marling (2003) went on to reflect that "using literature to *represent* students' cultural and religious heritages assumed an essential homogeneity in people's cultural heritage that clearly does not exist" (italics in the original work, p. 311). He raised an important issue as to how to define students' culture. Culture is a lived experience that resists being stable but is in a constant changing mode. As immigrant students and their families come to the US or Canada (as in his study), their cultural practices might change while keeping their original culture but trying to adapt to the new

country. Similar to Dudley-Marling, Athanases (1998) cautions that although most students are connected to literature characters that undergo similar experiences, the complex nature of human beings and one's membership to multiple communities do not permit us to easily and tidily categorize an individual into one group. He further asserts that while teaching multicultural literature, we should not make a mistake of "reducing them [readers] to mere members of particular identifying groups" (p 291).

A review of the literature about studies that have used multicultural literature has allowed me to reconsider the complex role multicultural literature played in my RTW club meetings. What was lacking in the studies is again how adolescents of Asian decent might be able to use multicultural literature to construct their identities. Not one single study in my search has mentioned using multicultural literature that relates to Asian students' experiences. Studying how Asian English language learners negotiate their identity when responding to multicultural literature is once again important because of our presumed and stereotypical understanding of Asian students. Within a broader area of multicultural literature, Asian literature encompasses cultural and historical experiences of Asian characters, including but not limited to Korean, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Pakistani. They often entail a running theme of an Asian person coming to the US where he/she experiences intercultural conflicts and compromises his/her beliefs and values (Norton, 2004).

Identity Research in SLA

In the sections above, I have described how literacy scholars have examined identities in literacy practices through establishing book clubs and through offering multicultural literature curriculum. As indicated in the introduction chapter, literacy

scholars and the scholars in second language acquisition (SLA) have pursued similar research interests about learners' identities in relation to learning, which they do not seem to recognize (Menard-Warwick, 2005). As such, a large body of literature is discussed only within realms of SLA separate from literacy research. Having discussed literacy research that capitalizes on students' identities, in this section of literature review, I illustrate key works of prominent identity scholars in SLA. At first, however, I will explain the background of identity research in earlier SLA studies.

Earlier SLA Studies on Language Learner and Its Social Aspect

In the midst of "scientific" studies of languages, in the 1970s in North America, many sociolinguists started to recognize the complexity of second language learning, deviating from the skill based approaches. Spearheaded by Tajfel, Gumperz, Gardner, Lambert, and Schumann, the intertwined relationship between language learning and identity has gained some recognition (Ricento, 2005). Tajfel has been most influential in the studies of social identity that highlight the importance of social grouping and membership to define who one is. Gumperz termed the word, "code-switching" by which an individual who is exposed to two languages and proficient in them can code switch depending on the nature of interactions and interlocutors. In addition, Schumann promoted the Acculturation Model to explain different proficiencies L2 learners achieve in the target language. Simply put, Schumann's model explains that when there is little social and cultural difference between L1 and L2 culture, the L2 learner can learn L2 most efficiently. Along the same lines, regarding individuals' effort and motivation to identify with the L2 culture, Lambert and Gardner also discussed two types of motivation, instrumental and integrative. They argued that persons with integrative

motivation, which is similar to Schumann's acculturated persons, can learn L2 successfully (Ricento, 2005).

The consideration of culture and social relations in L2 learning in SLA in the 1970s and 1980s was a good start considering how conservative linguists had avoided these intricate and complex but essential issues in language learning. However, the early endeavors to understanding language learning and its social and cultural aspects have faced criticisms from identity scholars more recently.

Influential Identity Researchers and Their Work in SLA

The first and most influential criticisms of traditional SLA identity research have been put forth by Bonny Norton (1995; 1997; 2000). Bonny Norton (1995; 1997; 2000; 2001) denounced the earlier SLA sociolinguistic research for lacking complex social, political, and individual factors influencing second language learning. Her essential contentions argue that the understanding of learner's motivation studied by Krashen, Gardner, and Lambert has been falsified. According to Norton, these researchers treated a L2 learner's motivation as something never changing and an essentialistic entity. Explaining Krashen's (1985) concepts, such as motivation and affective filters, Norton argued his theories place too much blame on the learners who have low motivation and high affective filters for halting their own language development. Norton went on to assert that this view stems from lack of consideration of social factors that influence second language learning and builds on the simplistic understanding of learner's motivation. Instead, Norton posited that a learner can have differing motivations depending on the nature of social settings, and even a learner with high motivation

sometimes chooses not to engage in conversation with a L2 target speaker for various reasons.

Therefore, Norton instead proposed *investment* replacing motivation. Investment has built on Bourdieu's *habitus*. Habitus refers to an individual's beliefs or dispositions on cultural values, artifacts, the way things are done, and discourse styles (Bourdieu, 1991) that have been inculcated in the individual from birth due to belonging to communities of practice (Lave &Wenger, 1991) With regard to investment that has been influenced by Bourdieu's concept, she noted that L2 language learners invest in economic advancements, family, better future in their lives, and also invest in themselves when learning a language. This investment in more superficial level of goods and economic advancement doubled with multiple desires also leads to investment in oneself, which influences one's identity.

Norton studied five recent immigrant women from different countries of origins living in Canada from 1991 to 1992. Her data collection included personal diaries that recorded interactions with English speaking people at work and in their communities. In addition, questionnaires before and after the study, personal, group interviews and home visits were utilized. One of her participants, Martina, showed that although she had high affective filter that might have hindered her language performance, because of her social roles as a primary caretaker in the household who needed to be responsible for various transactions which required English language skills, she had learned to speak out and engage in conversations with many English speakers at work. Another participant, Eva's data also suggested that due to her changing social identities, she developed multicultural identity and despite her limited English, she learned to speak for herself. As shown in the

two of the participants' data interpretation, Norton concluded that investment rather than motivation is more accurate to address factors to second language learning.

It would be safe to say that Norton's research in the 1990s has spearheaded identity research in second/foreign language education, and this argument can be validated by subsequent identity research that have adopted or modified her theories, such as investment and social identities in language learners (Kanno, 2003; McKay & Wong, 1996; Thomson, 2006). Norton has contributed to dispelling the old concept that only second language learners who are highly motivated and who can identify with the target culture can be successful language performers and learners. Instead, she has put forth that there are more intricate and subtle factors influencing the successful acquisition of a second language, such as multiple social identities the learner embraces in relation to interactions with target speakers, investment, and multiple desires. Mainly focusing on immigrant adult women in work settings, Norton has contributed to the field as to what immigrant women undergo.

One of the first identity studies following Norton's publication in 1995 is McKay and Wong's (1996) study which examined four new Chinese adolescent immigrants in California. Their study can be thought of as significant in identity and language studies in the sense that Norton's *investment* has been verified to be appropriate in identity and language learning research. In addition, they have expanded the scope of identity research in the field by employing participatory observations and Foucault's critical discourse analysis. Emerging from a bigger study examining second language writing from Spanish and Chinese speaking middle school students in California, McKay and Wong (1996) focused on four focal Chinese recent immigrant middle school students, including three

boys and one girl, three from Taiwan and one from mainland China. Their data sources included two years of school visits, including ESL classes and some content classes, three non-academic based language assessments conducted by the research team, and informal conversations with parents, the participants, and teachers, and peer interactions in the school.

In keeping with Norton's criticisms on traditional SLA research, McKay and Wong (1996) endorsed the contextualist perspective instead of code-based approach to second language learning. They noted that code-based approach does not allow second language acquisition researchers to capture intricacies of language learning and power relations. Based on school observations, McKay and Wong pointed out five salient discourse themes prevalent in school, parent, and peer discourses: colonist/racialized discourse on immigrants, model-minority discourse, Chinese cultural nationalist discourses, social and academic school discourses, and gender discourses.

Colonist/racialized discourses were depicted by differing and segregated seating arrangements and teachers' discourses on favoring Asian descent students over Spanish speaking students. Model-minority discourse was found in some of the parents' immense pressure for the participants to learn English and the parents' role as shepherding their children's education. Chinese cultural nationalist discourse was found in specific dialects that Chinese-descent students from different regions spoke, providing grounds for unification and at times divisions between their in-groups. Social and academic school discourses were found in Mr. Thomas, the ESL teacher's, consistent ignorance of and indifference toward the students' knowledge in another language and culture and behaviorist teaching style which exerted great impact on students' English writing.

Lastly, gender discourses were evidenced by gender specific activities and less expectation revealed toward girl's education in Chinese households. For example, the only girl among the participants was not pushed by her parents to learn English due to her gender considering girls are not as encouraged to study as boys in Chinese culture. These discourse patterns were utilized for understanding the participants' complex social identities and their differing investment in English language learning.

The study findings suggested that English language learners developed multiple social identities in the new environment. Whereas adult learners as in Norton's study had to deal with coworkers and household duties while learning English, adolescents' identity formations when learning a second language seemed more complicated by peer group, school life, parents' expectations, and their social identities. Also, depending on their social needs and desires, their investment in learning the language greatly differed. For example, as in Michael's case, one of the participants in the study, he invested greatly in the oral language development rather than writing, as his social identity as a popular athlete in school made him communicate better with his English as well as Chinese speaking peers.

Building on Norton's work, Yasuko Kanno (2003) explored how four Japanese adolescents who lived in Canada became bilingual and bicultural young adults as they moved back to Japan upon graduating from high school. Grounding her research on two theories, Natural Inquiry and Communities of Practice, Kanno wanted to find out when Japanese adolescents who lived in English speaking countries during their adolescence had to go back to Japan, how they would view themselves and their changing identities. She found that even though the participants started out thinking that they just needed to

choose one identity, over years, they found that they could have developed balanced bilingual and bicultural identity.

Yasuko Kanno's study shares many similarities as well as differences when compared with Norton and McKay and Wong's studies. As to similarities, all of the three studies are longitudinal studies, with Kanno's study being the longest, as she included more recent thinking changes of the informants before the publication of her book in 2003, which makes ten years of the study duration. After all, as Kanno set out exploring bilingual and bicultural identity development, the longitudinal study design was inevitable. The fact that all the important identity studies that I have selected are longitudinal is not coincidental. This study design once again ascertains that an endeavor to study a complex and ever changing, and social concept like identity requires a prolonged examination. Besides the methodological similarity, Kanno's more recent identity research is different from the other two studies.

The most important difference pertains to the population selection, which has contributed to the diversification of identity research in the field. Namely, while earlier studies had examined five immigrant female adults (Norton, 1995) and four recent immigrant middle school students (McKay & Wong, 1996), Kanno focused on four non-immigrant adolescents from their late adolescence to their young adulthood. By focusing on the returnees who have a transnational status, Kanno's study has opened up the possibility to study an increasing number of transnationals who move back and forth two different countries and enjoy their bilingual and bicultural experiences. In other words, whereas language and identity study has focused on immigrant children or immigrants in general who live in the target country for good, Kanno's study adds dynamics to the

study of language and identity as this population move to a different cultural and social setting.

Along similar lines, as Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) have employed the autobiographical method to display their own multilingual identity and promoted using first person narratives as future identity research, Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, and Riazi (2002) utilized collective first person narratives. These four researchers, from China, Hong Kong, Japan, and Iran, respectively, studied in North America during their twenties. After they finished their PhD. degrees, they went back to their countries. These bilingual scholars reflected on their English learning experiences and identity changes. Even though each of their stories was unique to their different situations, such as learning English as a colonial language in Hong Kong, the themes of their English learning experiences as young children and as adults in Canada centered on their identity transformation. The themes broadly center on learning English motivated instrumentally to expanding worldview and changing a sense of who they are. Especially, Lin talked about how her positive English language learning experience had enabled her to feel liberated and had generated a favorable identity when she studied in Canada. Drawing on their analysis, they propose TEGCOM (Teaching English for Globalized Communication). This reflexive approach to identity and language learning studies has verified Pavlenko and Lantolf's (2000) endorsement to studying identity through autobiographic and collective narratives and ethnographies.

Factors that Shape Multiple Identities

Having delineated key identity scholars' work in SLA, I now turn to discuss studies that highlight various factors which shape multiple identities. This notion that

each individual manifests multiple identities in different sociocultural environments is based on two theoretical lenses that I have discussed, which are dialogism (Bakhtin, 1981), *unfinalizable self* (Bakhtin, 1984) and poststructural theory (Weedon, 1987; 2004). In this section, I first explain the process of identity formation, which will be followed by discussions of multiple factors, such as globalization, socially prescribed gender roles, undertaking different social and professional roles, and other multiple desires. Then, I end this section by discussing multiple factors manifested in immigrant students in the US which directly relates to the dissertation study.

Globalization that Includes Traveling and the Western Media

Reflecting on my personal experiences, now I turn to how the literature addresses learner's identity formation. First factor that shapes multiple shifting identities seems to be globalization that encompasses traveling and mostly western media all over the world (Kramsch & Von Hoene, 2001). Due to globalization, goods, commerce, information, and various customs of western culture through media are shared or sometimes coerced in remote parts of the world. The American TV programs, movies, international news through the Internet, and American fast food industries have been mushrooming in all over the countries. Known as Americanization of the world, people take on the "American living style", which can be a threat to national as well as cultural identity. Nowadays with global life which involves traveling abroad and an easy access to other cultures through technology and media, more people from all around the world are becoming bi/multi-culturals if not bilinguals. With respect to this globalization, Arnett Jensen (2003) expresses a concern that adolescents who are a mostly targeted group for material consumption through media across countries are at risk of embodying

inappropriate multicultural identities. Furthermore, she postulates that this can endanger their cultural and ethnic identity.

Along the same lines, Wang (2006) raises a concern regarding how Chinese young generation, mostly college students, experience rapid moral changes due to pervasive Western cultural influences in recent economical and social changes in China. She goes on to say that college-aged Chinese in the US seem to show two mentalities, one of which deserves some mention here. "National nihilism" (p. 236) concerns that some Chinese young generation show great prevalence toward the western cultural values that center on independence, better life conditions, and material success. As such, they do not appreciate anything Chinese and become individuals who prefer to be identified with Western cultural values denouncing their national and cultural identities.

Unlike Wang (2006), Trueba (2002) illustrates a positive aspect of globalization and the influence of westernization. He argues that the new generation, the American youths, will be able to cross cultural and linguistic boundaries which the old generations seemed to struggle to negotiate. The new generation may easily realize that their multilingual and multicultural abilities will be an asset not necessarily being seen as a handicap. Trueba further notes that the current generation is different from previous generations in that they have communication tools and technologies through which they can imagine living in two worlds. His arguments suggest that teachers should provide a platform to share their linguistic and cultural assets and to promote their ability to take advantage of the two languages and cultures. Trueba futher explains that Latino immigrants gain resilience due to trips to their home countries and to having a strong social and cultural network in the U.S.

Countering Wang's concern of becoming too Westernized and their Chinese
cultural identity being threatened, Siebers (2004) argues that globalization has made other
indigenous countries and minorities strengthen and cultivate their ethnic identities even
more. Along the same lines, Yim (2007) states that whereas globalization and
Americanization have been pervasive in education as well as in the political and every
day lives of Koreans, the nation has used globalization strategically to strengthen national
as well as cultural identity by incorporating Korean national cultural aspects in English
textbooks in public schools.

Drawing on the discussions about globalization that shapes multiple shifting
identities, it seems clear that these identity changes impact language learning. With
regard to Wang's (2006) arguments, some young Chinese individuals who regard western
cultural values as superior to their Chinese counterpart would be likely to develop
positive attitudes to learning English. Consequently, their English learning takes
precedence to further sophisticating their Chinese language and literacy. In contrast,
according to the arguments by Trueba (2002), Siebers (2004), and Yim (2007), the
desires to become globally competent will motivate learners not only to learn English for
the purposes of reaching out to the larger population but also to keep cultivating their first
languages.

Socially Prescribed Gender Roles

In addition to globalization, different gender roles prescribed to individuals can
affect identity formation and thus influence language learning. First, gender identity
research is regarded as an important area in the study of identity and language (Joseph,
2004). Joseph states that research that involves gender differences in language use has

paved a way to discourses about language and identity. Because of socially constructed gender roles imposed upon females, the notion that women and men use different language to display their gendered identity is widely known (Tannen, 1990). Different female identity expected in Islamic traditional home and in school where American peer culture has seeped through was well depicted in Skapoulli's (2004) study. Skapoulli (2004) investigated an Egyptian teenage girl living in Cyprus negotiating her female identities both at home and at school with peers. Her informant felt confident switching her female identities by switching languages while meeting the needs of what was expected in both worlds, one of which is conservative and the other youth culture. Furthermore, the informant's different language uses, mostly Arabic with parents at home and English thrown in the local language at school with peers indicate that differing gender roles impact the way she went about language learning and development.

In addition, women's desires to liberate themselves from culturally and socially prescribed gender roles in developing nations have been well documented. Often times, women's desires to escape traditional women's roles as a mother and a submissive daughter and a wife, have been expressed through learning English and identifying with Western women in the target culture who are considered as enjoying much more liberty and freedom and are often regarded as equal to men (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998; Lin et al., 2002).

Undertaking Different Social and Professional Roles

In addition to globalization and socially expected gender roles, entering into a different social and professional setting can impact identity formation. Zou (2000) reflected on her different and rather conflicting identities as a Chinese teacher and as a

student who was learning English when she first arrived in America. Since she felt that she was the authority in class in which she was competent about her cultural and linguistic knowledge in Chinese, she was confident and happy with the person she presented in class. However, as an English language learner, she felt a sense of self-inferiority due to her low fluency. That is, by taking a student's role in a new country while being a teacher in Chinese language at the same period of her life, Zou experienced multiple and shifting identities. These identities seemed to make her even more identify with the Chinese language and culture and perhaps motivate her to study English harder to overcome the self-inferiority.

Other Multiple Desires

In addition, multiple desires seem to propel one to develop multiple and shifting identities. Lambert (1972) described that persons with negative experiences in the first language (L1) culture might want to be identified with the new second language (L2) culture. Although this assertion was drawn from the acculturation model of his research that has been mentioned in the paper, this idea sufficiently explain multiple desires, such as wanting to evade the past in L1. Moreover, as in the Norton's study (1995), her participants had multiple desires, such as wanting to stand up for themselves when English speaking peers ridiculed them and having to be responsible for basic and necessary transactions in the household. Moreover, Marx's (2002) desire to pass being a German woman during her three-year stay as a Canadian made her dress differently and speak without a non-native accent. Her strong desire to be immersed in the target culture created consequences like developing a L2 accent in L1 upon returning. As seen in three

cases, multiple desires to belong to the L2 culture and to legitimize their multiple social roles in L2 culture, undoubtedly advance the second language development.

Multiple Factors Manifested in Immigrants in the US

Having discussed factors that shape multiple shifting identities, now I address multiple factors that shape identities in immigrants in the US. Factors like globalization, different gender roles, undertaking different social or professional roles, and multiple desires seem applicable to discuss language and identity in the immigrant population, but there also seem to be unique forces that shape immigrant students' multiple identities. First, the mismatches between home and school culture/language seem to be the most prominent factor in immigrant students' identity development. For example, second generation immigrants, given that the parents reinforce first language education, start out with their parents' language and culture before schooling in the US. In other words, the parent's language, which has been called as a heritage language, is actually a first language with which they can express themselves the best (Macedo, 2006). Besides the language, the parents' culture is what they are most familiar with. However, their language and culture as they socialize into the school culture where what they bring to school is not acknowledged, are often pushed behind (Baez, 2002; Fu, 1995). When the first language and culture is distinct from the target culture and language, there can be more confusion in the immigrant children and more pressure to become rapidly Americanized. This in turn makes it challenging for them to keep the first language and cultural practices. This pervasive phenomenon, referred to as *subtracted schooling* by Valenzuela (1999) is what I consider the most influential factor for immigrant students' identity changes.

Within the umbrella conception of the mismatches between home and school language and culture, there can be several sub-factors that foster multiple identity changes in immigrant students. First, the fact that their first or home language is not valued in school curricula can be illustrated in the pervasive English Only Movement that have been propelled by the passage of Proposition 227 in California in 1998 (Aparicio, 2000; Crawford, 2000; 2004). This unfortunate historical event was an indication that the level of tolerance of different languages spoken in the US tremendously diminished to a degree where bilingual parents were pressured to choose English only to their potential bilingual children. In fact, this English only movement is not a new conception in the US as debates about whether or not AAVE should be taught or be validated in schools (Delpit, 2002; 2006). Just as their culture is not validated, but when the immigrant students' languages are not validated and often coerced to learn Standard English in school, it can be said that their first language and culture identity fades away and they rapidly wanting to stop learning or even maintaining their first language.

Second, besides the language factors, peer pressure to become Americanized can exert a tremendous effect on an immigrant student' identity formation. What cannot be ignored is also many immigrant students' or sometimes their parents' desires to become Americanized. In explaining language learners' desires to belong to their peers' group in the US, Norton's (2000) concept of "imagined communities" is useful. Norton explained that language learners (adult learners in her case) imagine a group of people or a community of which they wish to be members and invest in their language learning. Due to the social pressures not to stick out in schools and school curriculum, many immigrant students experience identity changes, perhaps toward identifying more with American

self and the English language. When home language is only spoken at home, does not enjoy academic legitimacy, it negatively impacts first language literacy development bilingual education, heritage language learning, assimilation, Americanization the students' ethnic identity cannot be positively developed when their cultural values are not reflected in the mainstream and in the school curriculum. Children who are placed in American classrooms without any L1 support are especially subject to devaluing their home language (Tse, 2001; Wong Fillmore, 2000). Most immigrant children want to fit in (J. Lee, 2002), and as Olsen (1997) put it, they become "English preferers" (p. 99). Even though Cummins (1996) explicitly stresses that when students' home culture and language is denied in schools by teachers and curriculum, students fail to succeed in schooling, immigrant students' culture and language keeps being silenced.

It should not be overlooked though that despite this barren situation for bilingual and bicultural development, there are fortunate immigrant children who become balanced biculturals and bilinguals. Once again, it should be stressed that first language can be maintained or developed when there is a strong will and determination from parents, even in the absence of support from the school. When students' identities are accepted and appreciated, students are empowered, and they can experience successful schooling (Trudell, 2005). A second language learner might go through a denial about one's culture or language at one point, but it will come around with time. That is, although most immigrant children lose their first language in U.S. schools due to various factors aforementioned, they want to learn it again later in their life like in college (Aparicio, 2000; Tse, 2001).

Identity research in SLA from the 1980s up until now has shown many strengths and weaknesses. First, identity research has revealed the complex nature of second language learning, which is intertwined with identity formation. In other words, as Joseph (2004) put it, "the broader significance of research into language and identity is that it contributes to the *rehumanizing* of linguistics."(italics in the original work, p. 226) Joseph argues that traditionally and up until now studies of languages have abstracted out the complex human-related variables. As he argues, scientific research is not only through having methodological rigor, but also through having broad vision. Second, identity research is time appropriate as the world is becoming more connected and one's pure ethnic and cultural identity is in danger of being threatened.

Some weaknesses of identity research concern its practical applicability in educational setting. In addition, unlike Norton's (1997) argument, the relationship between language and identity still remains "abstract and theoretical" (Norton, 1997, p. 413). As mentioned in the beginning of the paper, identity is a complex concept and one cannot define identity separate from its social settings (Joseph, 2004). Reflecting its complexity, applying this concept to educational implications can be challenging. For example, Norton's suggestions to use classroom based ethnography project has not been utilized in classroom settings (1995). Also, Kanno suggests a better but *unclear* structure of ESL classes as all of her informants did not have positive experiences in separated ESL settings. Also, Pavlenko's endorsement of autobiographical method seems to fail to reach out to a broader population.

With regards to another weakness of identity research in second/foreign language learning, Block (2003) notes that whereas identity and culture are important in language

learning, identity research does not take consideration of learning language from a cognitive and skill based approach. He notes contributions of Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) as "Their work [Norton and Pavlenko's] is valuable precisely because it addresses the imbalance caused by so many SLA researchers who completely ignore the kinds of issues they explore" (p. 133). As such, Block calls for SLA research covering both cognitive and linguistic aspects as well as identity being considered.

Taken together, a review of the literature on identity research within the field of SLA has shown that identity research has primarily dealt with adult language learners with an exception of a few (McKay & Wong, 1996; Skapoulli, 2004). In addition, it has become evident that many SLA researchers have relied on the reflective autobiographic method to examine one's shifting and multiple identities (Lvovich, 1997; Lin et al., 2002; Marx, 2002; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2002; Zou, 2000). While these lens can be valid in capturing one's identity changes (Vitanova, 2005), they do not seem to make the link between language/literacy learning and identity explicit.

<div align="center">Identifying a Gap in the Literature</div>

In this chapter, I have reviewed studies on Asian immigrant students' identity formation, studies that explored in and out of school literacy practices, studies that have addressed complex issues in utilizing multicultural literature, identity research studies in SLA, and multiple factors that shape learners' multiple identities. As was evident at the end of each section, there are clear gaps in the areas of Asian immigrant English language adolescents and of their identity exploration in the event of language learning and literacy practices.

First, scholars who examine Asian immigrant students have not paid separate attention to Asian English language learners in the US. They underestimate this group's unique experiences that can stem from language barriers. That is, Asian English language adolescents' experiences are likely to be overshadowed by the model minority stereotype that is also applied to them due to the same racial status. Second, the review of book club studies has revealed that minority students, especially students of Asian decent, are scarcely studied in this area. Similar to the gap identified in the book club studies, multicultural literature studies did not include Asian-relevant multicultural literature. This is a clear indication that Asian immigrant adolescents' experiences in literacy learning in relation to identity are not well represented in the field. Lastly, the lack of collaboration between SLA and literacy identity researchers despite their similar interests is a clear gap in the identity literature. Identity research can further be advanced when the two parties acknowledge the similarities and are willing to learn from each other. Literacy researchers could adopt notions of multiple factors that shape shifting and multiple identities from SLA researchers. In turn, SLA researchers could adopt a different methodology, such as book clubs, to examine students' identities to diversify their lenses through which to examine identities. Reflecting these gaps, empirical studies that explore the connection between Asian English language adolescents' language/literacy learning and identity negotiation are in need.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The previous chapter has discussed relevant studies that have informed the dissertation study. In this chapter, I provide a detailed explanation of how this study unfolded. This is a case study that closely examined identities of Asian adolescent English language learners in an out of school multicultural literature Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW). There were several different data sources collected, including face to face club meetings, interviews, electronic wiki postings, member checking session, and researcher journal. The guiding research question for this study was: How do Asian adolescent English language learners construct their identities in an out-of-school multicultural literature Read, Talk, & Wiki (RTW) club?

In the following sections, I explain case study method, selection of participants, context, data collection methods, data management and analysis, position of the researcher, and rigor of the study. Names of the participants in the following sections are pseudonyms that the participants selected.

Case Study Method

The study examined how participant identities were constructed in out-of-school multicultural literature Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW) club sessions. My understanding of identities as being constantly changing, dynamic, and socioculturally constructed, even in the event of literacy learning, required a research methodology that permits an in-depth description of my participants' identity construction. Qualitative research methodology

(Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003) seemed to be a good fit for this inquiry. Among diverse traditions of qualitative research (Creswell, 1998), I found the case study approach the most suitable as it enabled me to extensively explore each participant's identity as it unfolded in different situations, such as club meetings, informal and casual conversations, wiki postings, and formal interviews. The feature of cross case analysis in particular allowed me to pinpoint unique themes found in each case and compare and contrast themes across cases (Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003).

Selection of Participants

For the multiple case studies, I sought to recruit Asian adolescent ELLs who were still navigating their diverse linguistic and cultural environments. As such, the criteria for participants included a) participants come from various Asian countries; b) they are relatively recent immigrants (between 0.5 to 5 years); c) they are currently enrolled in an ESOL program or have recently exited and d) they are late mid or high school adolescents.

With these criteria in mind, and upon the approval of IRB, I sought participants through various channels. The recruitment effort took place in a suburban area of a southeastern state in which a large number of Asians resides. On four weekends, I handed out recruitment fliers (see Appendix A) to potential participants and parents in front of two large Asian supermarkets. I also paid visits and made phone calls to various Asian ethnic churches and temples on several weekends to talk to youth pastors. In addition, I visited ESL adult classes in local libraries to talk to potential parents, placed a number of fliers in local libraries, and contacted refugee family services agencies and various Asian community services. Lastly, I sought them through personal contacts.

Six participants initially agreed to participate in the study, and parents' consent and minor assent forms were ensued. Among six, two girls (Aram and Farisa) dropped out after a few face to face club meetings, and David who sporadically attended meetings discontinued coming after a fourth club meeting. Therefore, I was left with three participants, Kush, Null, and Ram. However, since the fourth face to face club meeting, a new participant, Hulk, who was Ram's friend, had joined the study. In the following sections, I discuss only these four participants, excluding the other three who dropped out early. They were aware that this out-of-school Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW) club was voluntary, and they would not receive a grade for participation. They were all high school boys and represented Korea, Uzbekistan, and India. Demographic information of each participant and attendance to the club activities are included in Table 1.

<div align="center">Context</div>

This study took place in an out-of-school setting. The study was designed for an out of school setting because I believed that meeting out-of-school would provide a more relaxed environment, due in part to being detached from school. Although there were indications that some of the participants considered it as an extension of a school activity (particularly the aspect that they were asked to read books), they seemed to be open to share who they were in a more comfortable manner in this setting. Prior to recruiting participants, I had selected a university library located in the same area where I attempted to recruit potential participants as a central place for face to face club meetings. The participants agreed to meet on Saturdays at eleven o'clock in the suggested place. I provided transportation to the four participants. This issue related to transportation was strenuous to all of us, but it certainly enriched the data because it permitted us to get

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information and Attendance

Name/ Grade	Ethnicity/ Gender	# of years in the US	# of face-to-face meetings attended	# of wiki postings	# of Interviews conducted
Kush/ 10th	Korean/M	5 yrs	10/10	5/16	3/3
Null /10th	Uzbek/M	2.5 yrs	9/10	7/16	3/3
Ram/ 11th	Indian/M	8 months	10/10	17/16	3/3
Hulk/ 11th	Indian/M	4 months	7/10	7/16	2/3
David/8th	Korean/M	3 yrs	2/10	1/16	0/3
Aram/8th	Iranian/F	2 yrs	2/10	0/16	1/3
Farisa/8th	Turkish/F	2 yrs	1/10	1/16	1/3

Note. All names are pseudonyms. Ram completed one additional wiki posting when a specific prompt was not given.

to know each other and allowed me to observe their interactions with one another in the car. Most importantly, these arrangements helped to sustain attendance.

We had our first club meeting in the lounge area because I wanted to keep it simple and less formal and wanted to have pizza together at the end. After the first meeting, we met in one of the group study rooms at the library. The rooms had one rectangular or semi-circle table with four to six chairs. I always took my laptop with me to the meeting to refer to my prepared questions and to direct them to the wiki site at the beginning of earlier meetings. I brought snacks and soft drinks to every club meeting.

Data Sources and Data Collection Methods

Multiple data sources included two to three individual interviews, nine transcripts of audio recordings of face to face club meetings, one member checking session, participants' electronic written responses to sixteen wiki prompts, peer debriefing sessions, and the researcher's journal. In the next sections, I describe each data source in detail.

Individual Interviews

Before we met for the first face to face club meeting, I conducted initial interviews in each participant's home. The first interviews asked the participants about language learning experience, basic demographic information, portrait of themselves, and school (See Appendix B). Three interviews were conducted for each of three participants, Kush, Null, and Ram while Hulk was interviewed two times because he joined us later. Each interview was digitally recorded and was conducted with a two-month interval. It also lasted approximately one hour. Interviews were conducted either at their homes or at public places, such as at a public library or park (see Table 2).

The second and third interviews asked them about their hobbies, interests, friends, family, and literacy activities. In the last two interviews, I also asked them of their experiences in the club meetings and to elaborate on their comments in club meetings, previous interviews, and wiki postings (see Appendix C and D for second and third interview questions). As such, the questions for each participant in the last two interviews differed. Although I had prepared the interview questions in advance, I was not confined to the order, but rather I went with the flow of the conversation. In addition, the questions were open ended enough to invite their talk. During interviews, I probed for a detailed

explanation of their remarks, by asking, "tell me more about that" and "give me examples

of what you just said." While the interviews with Kush and Hulk were relatively short,

the interviews with Null and Ram tended to last longer.

Table 2

Individual Interviews

Participant /Interview session	Date	Duration (min.)	location
Kush 1st	02/15/08	30	Family room, his home
Null 1st	02/08/08	60	Living room, his home
Ram 1st	02/08/08	30	Living room, his home
Kush 2nd	04/09/08	45	Basement, his home
Null 2nd	04/15/08	60	Living room, his home
Ram 2nd	04/09/08	75	In playground, his apartment
Hulk 1st	04/19/08	45	Library next to his home
Kush 3rd	06/20/08	75	His room, home
Null 3rd	06/16/08	90	Living room, his home
Ram 3rd	06/28/08	80	In playground, his apartment
Hulk 2nd	06/28/08	60	Library next to his home

Conversations in the Face to Face Club Meetings

Second important data source was conversations in the face to face club meetings. Nine club meetings were held on Saturdays during a three month period. Each club meeting, which lasted approximately sixty five minutes, took place in a group study room, in a university library. I digitally recorded every club meeting and transcribed them immediately afterwards. After every meeting, I also kept my reflections and hunches in the researcher journal. The impetus for conversations in the club meetings was multicultural books that I provided. Thus, I first discuss how I selected readings for the club.

Before the study began, I had compiled a list of Asian and non-Asian multicultural literature, consisting of short stories, poems, and novels by consulting professors who have extensive background in multicultural literature and by referring to pertinent journal articles and websites (see Appendix E). I had planned for us to read one chapter book and several short stories and poems in the club. I also had chosen some short stories as I thought they would generate more relevant topics to discuss from that book, called, *Asian American literature,* recommended by a literature professor. In the first club meeting, I talked to them about brief summaries of each of the twenty one books and had them flip through the pages. Then, I had them write their first three choices of the books on a slip of paper. However, their choices were so dispersed that it was hard for me to decide on one unifying chapter book. Since the four participants were high school boys, I decided to read *Beacon Hill Boys* which was the only book on my list that depicted high school boys' experiences.

The list of short stories and book chapters utilized in the club are included in Appendix F along with summaries of each. The readings portrayed Asian and non-Asian immigrant students' experiences in the US and dealt with the theme of being different. In selecting these books, I took into consideration that my participants were English language learners. Therefore, they contained short chapters and relatively simple text. I decided the sequence of stories that were read. We first read short stories and poems in the first five club meetings because I believed that discussing different characters and topics every time we meet would motivate the participants to continue to come. Right before reading the chapter book, we read one non-Asian multicultural book chapter, from *An Island Like You*. For the rest of the club meetings, we read eight chapters from a book, *Beacon Hill Boys*. When I felt that data were saturated, we decided to stop reading it.

I provided a copy of the book and hard copies of short stories and poems in the previous week. Participants were expected to have read the literature before coming to the meeting. We decided to read one short story and one poem in every meeting for the first five meetings and two chapters from *Beacon Hill Boys* in every meeting for the rest of the meetings. The first club meeting was different from the rest of the meetings. In it, after first introductions to one another, I had them individually read one poem, *Hybrid*, and discussed it for ten minutes. The reason why I chose it was that I thought it has interesting intercultural topics. I asked questions about whether there were any vocabulary words that they did not know and what images and experiences they could think of in light of reading.

After the first meeting, we began to develop routines in the meetings, and the participants seemed to grow comfortable with one another. At the midpoint of the study,

we reached a point where some of them recognized each other's noticeable roles in the

club, such as Null being talkative and initiating questions to everyone. We usually

initiated every meeting with casual talk about happenings in their school and life. In the

first two or three meetings, I primarily led discussion by modeling the kinds of questions

that they could ask to each other, such as making connections to the self, to the text, and

to the world (Daniels, 2002). When I was facilitating discussion, the participants started

to pose questions to one another as meetings continued. When we started to read the

chapter book, *Beacon Hill Boys*, we took about five minutes to write down a discussion

question(s) on a slip of paper at the beginning of each meeting. The participants took

turns to raise their questions to the group. When their questions did not lead to richer

discussion, I injected and probed for a more elaborate explanation from each participant.

After the participants' questions were addressed, I proposed more questions that I had

prepared (see Appendix G for some questions that I posed in the club). We also discussed

meanings of some words and especially, one participant, Null, often asked vocabulary

questions, to which some of us helped to explain. In addition, to inspire their responses,

in the last three club meetings, we acted out some scenes from the book.

Discussion topics directly drawn from the readings included education vs. family,

behaviors in school, attitudes towards their L1 and English, and importance of their

name, perceptions of American peers and American education, religion, plagiarism,

complying with societal rules, and so on. Most reading materials yielded rich responses,

but some certainly generated more topics and interest than others. For example, the

readings in the fifth club meeting, *Arturo's Flight* and *My Rough Skinned Grandmother*

did not foster active discussion. The participants attributed this in part to not having much

to say about those characters as they do not have any similar experiences. Table 3 delineates what went on in each club meeting.

Electronic Wiki Written Responses

In addition to the face to face club meetings, I facilitated writing on a private wiki site to provide another venue for the participants to express their identities (http://readtalkwikiclub.wetpaint.com). Online discussions corresponded with the week's readings and memorable discussions that deserved more elaboration in a written format. Providing the online space allowed for some participants, particularly Ram and Hulk, to reconsider what they had said during the club meetings and ratify their thoughts by comparing and contrasting their opinions to others'. I transcribed the club meeting audio recordings and wrote reflections within a few days after the meeting. Based on those, I had to create wiki prompts and post them before our next meeting. For each club meeting, I identified one or two important themes that were turned into wiki prompts. Participants wrote reflections based on the discussion prompts posed by me and usually completed theirs before the next meeting. I was cautious about giving them too much work, thus I did not require them to comment on one another's postings, which actually did not happen. I was also concerned about making the wiki activity resemble school work, so I avoided giving them my comments. One time, however, I commented on Ram's posting, which prompted him to respond to mine again. The majority of prompts was brief and asked them to think about what they would do or to give advice to a friend in a particular situation. The hypothetical scenarios appeared to propel them to explore and reveal their value systems.

Table 3

Overview of Each Club Meeting

#CM	Date	Reading	Duration (min.)	Participants Present	Topics
1CM	020908	*Hybrid*	40	K/N/R/A/F/D	Introduction/First time in the US/Problems & traits of American peers/superficial relationship with them/valuing respect/freedom
2CM	021608	*Hybrid & Two kinds*	82	K/N/R/A	Cultural conflicts with parents/cocky Americans/dating/parents' expectations/what Korean, Indian, or Uzbek means/US curriculum/future plans/disrespect to teachers and parents
3CM	030108	*Bad luck woman & Assimilation*	80	K/N/R	Karma/mental power/ brining food to school/language constraints
4CM	031508	*Coming home again*	80	K/N/R/H/D	Gender roles/relationship with family/education in boarding school/coming to the US/plagiarism/smartness associated with money/practical education/historical knowledge/political and economic power of the US
5CM	032208	*Arturo's flight & My rough skinned grandmother*	50	K/R/H/D	Gendered subjects/being normal/hypothetical racial discrimination
6CM	032908	1 & 2 chs of *Beacon Hill Boys* (*BHB*)	90	K/N/R/H	Being compared to/getting a job/getting a haircut/respect/racial awareness/copying cultural practice/changes in the US/English language/religion
7CM	040508	3 & 4 chs of *BHB*	80	K/N/R/H	Shy Asians/complying with authority and rules/value of first languages/gendered identity/religion

8CM	041908	5 & 6 chs of *BHB*	60	K/N/R/H	Stereotypes about Asians/fights in school/complying with social rules/family history/religion/Hitler/white privilege
9CM	042608	7 & 8 chs of *BHB*	50	K/N/R/H	Conflicts with the same ethnic group/getting paid in training/easygoing attitude/ Stereotypes about Asians/ shyness and modesty/dating
MC_10CM	062808	Member checking	40	K/N/R/H	Club dynamics/multicultural awareness/Asian-ness/impact of Asian texts/short books vs. chapter book

Note. CM is an acronym for Club Meetings. Date is clustered by month, data, and year (For instance, 020908 means Feb. 09th, 08). Participants' initials are used instead of full names (For example, K for Kush, N for Null, R for Ram, and H for Hulk). MC_10CM is a code for Member Checking session which is considered as a 10th club meeting.

Establishing the routine in which participants were expected to post every week was met with challenges. The first two sessions were hard to set up as they did not volunteer to join except for Ram who started from the very beginning. As such, in the first two sessions, I took the first twenty minutes from the club meeting and took them to different computer stations in the library where we held club meetings. In fact, Kush only completed his postings when asked during club meetings. In contrast, Ram did not miss a single prompt on the Wiki; in fact, he posted one extra than what was expected. He was also the one who actively read what others posted to make his arguments strong. There were a total number of sixteen prompts posted throughout the study with the first one

asking them to write an introduction about them. The number of responses varied amongst participants. While Null and Hulk posted seven times and Kush five times, Ram posted seventeen times. The length of postings each time differed as well, ranging from a few sentences to a full paragraph. Later, when data collection concluded, online conversations were copied and pasted onto a Word document for analysis. The entire set of wiki prompts and dates are presented in Appendix H.

Member Checking

I attempted to verify my interpretations of the data with the participants in two different ways. First, I utilized the second and third individual interviews with each participant to check my understanding of data drawn from conversations in the club meetings and written responses in the wiki site. For example, in the interviews, I reminded them of certain comments they had made during club meetings or previous interviews and asked them to elaborate on them. In this process, they would sometimes dispute my interpretations and/or add more details to them. Second, a formal member checking session was held upon the completion of collecting other data sources. We met in a group study room in the library, and the forty-minute member checking session was digitally recorded. I had prepared a list of questions and statements that prompted the participants to talk about the overall impressions about the club. Some statements included questions of my role, group dynamics, online writing, the aspect of reading Asian multicultural books, reading short stories vs. book chapters, if they would like to continue to meet, and so on. I read out loud the statements one by one and asked them to elaborate on whether or not they agreed with it. A list of statements utilized in the member checking session is included in Appendix I.

Researcher Journal

The researcher journal entries were utilized to record informal talks in the car; hunches while interpreting the data; reflections after club meetings and interviews; and identifying emergent themes, and analysis of data. Journal entries were organized by date and began the first week of data collection and continued throughout the data analysis and the write up stage. Earlier hunches and interpretations of data were inserted and modified into the data analysis as recommended by Bogdan and Biklen (2003).

Peer Debriefing Sessions

Four peer debriefers who were knowledgeable about conducting qualitative studies and who were experienced language teachers helped me carry out the study and interpret the data throughout the process. I have given them initials, T., L., M., and A. Peer debriefer, L. was an experienced EFL teacher who worked in Central Asia. M. was an experienced ESOL and Spanish teacher in a high school. T. was an experienced ESOL teacher who worked extensively with adolescents. Lastly, A. was an experienced Japanese teacher who worked with elementary learners. I sent them coded and/or raw transcripts of club meetings electronically and multiple versions of the coding manuals for each of the participants. They then suggested different interpretations of the data and different approaches in the ensuing club meetings that drew from their diverse experiences.

Data Management and Analysis

In managing multiple data sources, Miles and Huberman (1994) recommend qualitative researchers to index different sources of data, such as raw data, annotations, coded data, and memos of the researcher and to display selected data in matrices and

graphic maps. In this investigation, different sources of data were stored in separate folders on my computer for easy retrieval. I also printed out the transcripts and organized them in different binders with tabs labeling the content. In addition, I created a number of matrices and charts to document and describe each data source and what occurred in each activity in the study chronologically.

Analyses of the data began as I initiated collecting them. Transcriptions that were immediately available upon completing digitally recorded sessions made this possible. In order to make sense of the data, I listened to the recordings and read the transcripts multiple times and kept hunches in the researcher journal. While reading the transcriptions, I coded a cluster of word(s), phrase(s), or sentence(s), depending on where a single idea appeared to make coding free flowing texts more manageable (Kurasaki, 2000). The initial codes emerged from a few transcripts of one participant were compiled as a preliminary coding manual (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Merriam, 1998). In the process, I let the research question guide my inquiry to determine how the emerging and recurring themes/codes addressed the question. I expanded, collapsed, and refined the themes in the initial coding manual by coding the entire transcripts of one participant. I created four different coding manuals for each of the four participants following the same procedures (Glaser & Strauss, 1965; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). Figure 1 illustrates how three considerably different coding manuals were tried out in different stages during the data analyses process. As I developed four separate coding manuals for each participant, the examples in each coding manual in the figure show a mixture of four coding manuals for each of the participants. Upon completing the last coding manuals for individual cases, I collapsed the themes for cross case synthesis by making word and sign

1st coding manual/061308-061808
Total #of 1st and 2nd level codes: 9/32

1. Perceptions about myself
    1-1.I skate
    1-2. I am social
2. Happenings in school
    2-1. I resist being controlled
    2-2. Poor teaching
3. My family
    3-1. I have been compared to others by my family

2nd coding manual/062708-072408
Total #of 1st and 2nd level codes: 3/10

1. Sediments
    1-1. Schools in Korea/Uzbekistan
2. Real world identity
    2-1. Unfavorable identification as learner
    2-2. Need to belong as identity marker
3. Projective identity
    3-1. Studies/work
    3-2. Harmony in the community

3rd coding manual/072008-072808
Total #of 1st and 2nd level codes: 3/7

1. Sense of self as Korean/Uzbek/Indian/Asian
    1-1. Connections to the country & customs
    1-2. Family
2. Sense of self as learner
    2-1. Negative attitudes towards schooling
    2-2. Valuing education
3. Sense of self as recent member in the US
    3-1. Identity negotiation

Figure 1. Evolution of coding manuals for individual cases.

charts and matrices (Yin, 2003).

In the following section, I describe the steps used to analyze individual cases and how the coding manuals evolved in different stages. Then, I explain procedures that I followed for cross case analysis. Figure 2 offers a visual presentation of each of the data analysis stages.

Stage 1: Holistic understanding of raw data

· Repeatedly read and identified emergent themes
· Entered annotations and hunches in the
  researcher journal
· Consulted peer debriefers

Stage 2 & 3: Thematic analysis

· Developed 1st & 2nd set of coding manuals
· Entered annotations and hunches in the researcher
  journal
· Consulted two committee members

Stage 4: Synthesis

· Developed 3rd set of coding manuals & created
  matrices
· Entered annotations and hunches in the researcher
  journal
· Consulted peer debriefers

Stage 5: Cross case analysis

· Synthesized the final four coding manuals
· Created symbol and word charts

Figure 2. Data analysis stages

Stage One: Holistic Understanding of Raw Data

At this stage, I constantly listened to the audio recordings, read and coded the transcripts of club meetings, first interviews, and wiki postings. While establishing the routines of the club meetings, I consulted one of the peer debriefers, M. I shared the transcriptions from the first to fourth club meetings with her, and she highlighted emergent themes in them and gave me suggestions of how to better pose questions in the club meetings as well as in 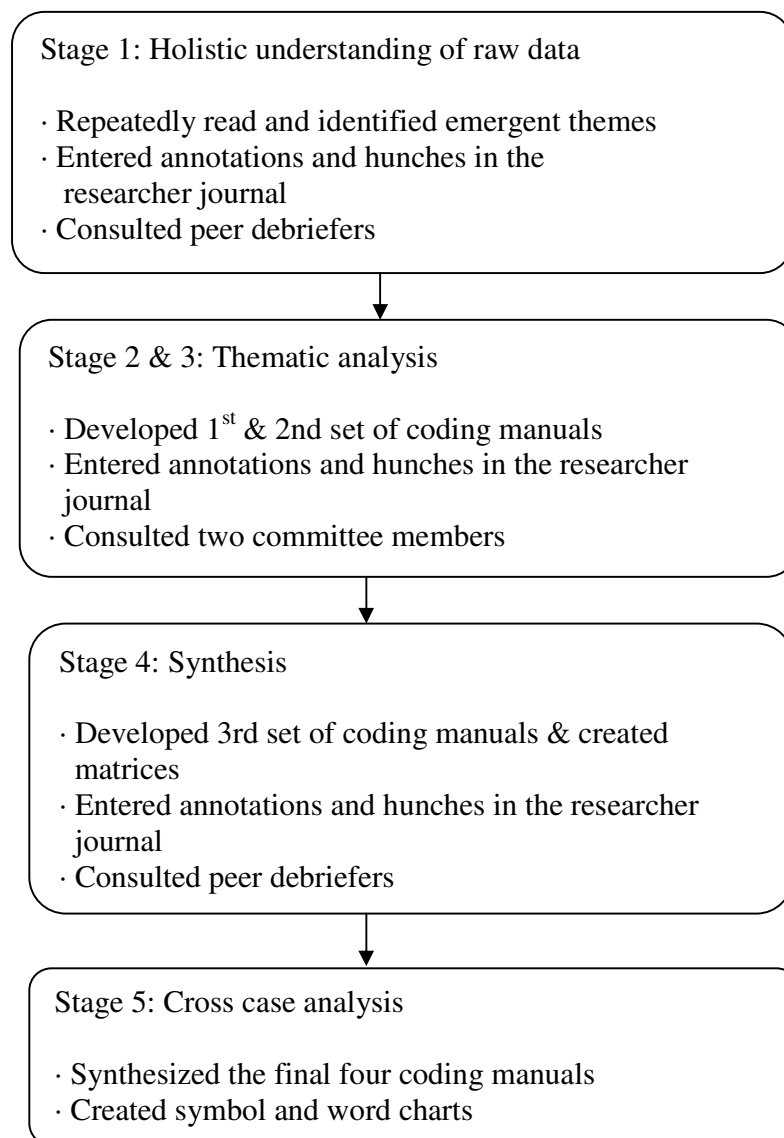the wiki as she was a seasoned teacher. Two peer debriefers, T. and L. also read the first club meeting transcript and identified emerging themes. After the 7th club meeting and before the 2nd round of individual interviews, I put together a matrix, detailing themes exclusively found in the group meetings, from the first club meetings to seventh club meetings, which informed my questions on the 2nd round of individual interviews. By this time, I started to see patterns and recurring themes in the club meetings. This identification helped me to probe more pertinent information in the ensuing data collection activities. After the completion of two more club meetings, 8CM and 9CM, and the 2nd round of individual interviews, we decided to take a break for a month due to their final exams. I did not attempt to conduct more analyses during this time. After we came back from a break, the third round of interviews and one member checking session were conducted.

Stage Two: Thematic Analysis of the 1st Set of Coding Manuals

While preparing for the last interviews and the member checking session, I began intensive data analyses by carefully rereading and coding only two interviews in each case. I started an intensive analysis with Kush's first interview. I coded the data in a way that categories closely reflected his own words. For example, the name of one category

was "I skate" directly taken from his words to describe him. This process was done on Word instead of on paper. I would read the transcript and insert categories (code) by using the comments function on Word. After the transcript was coded, I added topics, such as perceptions about self, high school, and family to encompass the codes in a new document. Then, under the pertinent topics, which served as the first level category, I typed in the categories accordingly, which served as the second level category. I copied and pasted quotes under pertinent categories from the coded transcript. The first coding manual with supporting quotes was modified and extended as the same procedure was taken in the second interview transcript of Kush and other participants, Null and Ram. The first coding manuals of Kush, Null, and Ram were sent out to some peer debriefers, L., T., and A. whose constructive feedback motivated me to create a set of second coding manuals and provided a holistic understanding of all the cases beyond individual cases.

Stage Three: Thematic Analysis of the 2nd Set of Coding Manuals

After I officially completed collecting data, including last interviews and member checking session, and more importantly in light of the peer debriefers' feedback, I attempted to analyze the individual data again under a different lens. Instead of having inconsistent first level categories that heavily relied on important topics found in the data in the first set of coding manuals, I desired to develop more consistent categories that directly reflect identities. In doing so, I found the theoretical framework, the identity theories, put forth by Gee (2003) and Holland et al. (1998), appropriate to use as first level categories, which included sediments, real world identity, and projective identity. Narratives related to past experiences were coded as sediments, as used in Holland et al. (1998), statements pertain to descriptions of self including things that they do at the

present time were coded as real world identity, and statements that revealed aspirations in the future and desires and disputes reflecting their value systems were coded as projective identity. Under each of the first level categories, I inserted second level categories.

Instead of adopting participants' direct words as second level categories, I named the categories as themes and patterns about each participant. For example, instead of naming narratives about Kush skating as "I skate" as in the first coding manual, I named it "Membership in skating sphere" with several sub-categories placed under it. The second coding manual for Kush was being constantly extended and revised as I coded the entire transcripts of all the three interviews, nine club meetings, member checking session, and wiki postings in the same manner. Based on Kush's second coding manual, I created three more second coding manuals for Null, Ram, and Hulk while following the same steps.

Stage Four: Synthesis and the Last Set of Coding Manuals

Applying the theoretical framework directly to the categories was met with challenges. As one's identity is replete with multiple aspects, separating statements, for example, related to one's real world identity at the present time from projective identity was difficult. This concern was clearly pointed out again in consulting two committee members. The attempt to have thematic patterns represented in the categories seemed to force some codes into the created categories. Therefore, a new set of coding manuals were needed. I first created three first level categories that could be used across cases, such as sense of self as Korean/Indian/Uzbek, sense of self as learner, and sense of self as recent member of the US. I recognized these three as central themes that occurred across cases. Drawing on the previous coding manuals, I created second level categories,

followed by third level categories. The pertinent quotes were copied and pasted to the third coding manuals for each case. In developing third coding manuals, instead of working first from the computer, I sat down with a big chart paper and started to draw diagrams for each case from memory. The diagrams for each case represented the hierarchical order of the categories, which later were transferred to Word on the computer.

Throughout this process, just like other times when I developed the previous coding manuals, I repeatedly reread the code transcripts, collapsed and added categories and hunches were recorded in the researcher journal. The last refinement of the categories in all the third coding manuals was conducted with the help of a peer debriefer, L (See appendixes J, K, L, M for final coding manuals of Kush, Null, Ram, and Hulk respectively). Shortly after, final coding manuals/matrices that delineated categories and quotes from the entire data sources were created for each participant. Another peer debriefer, T. read them in entirety and provided feedback, which pushed my thinking about implications of the study.

Stage Five: Cross-Case Analysis

Having established the final four coding manuals, I compiled all the second level categories from them into one piece of paper. This step was necessary because although the coding manuals had three unifying first level categories, the second level categories differed. Based on that compiled list, I collapsed some redundant ones across cases, which was transferred to big chart paper. On that paper, I created charts, and on the top row, I filled in themes from the compiled list, such as necessity of English, Asians are shy, and so on in separate columns. Under each column of the themes, I added pluses or

minuses for each of the participants on the far left column. The symbol chart was later transferred to a Word document on the computer (see Table 4). Having a chart like this accentuated the similarities and differences case by case. This, in turn, led me to compliment this symbol with a word chart. The word chart that included brief descriptions of each theme for each case permitted me to compare and contrast the cases more holistically (Yin, 2003).

<div align="center">Position of the Researcher</div>

As the founder of the Read, Talk, and Wiki club, I held multiple roles in the club. First, I was a participant observer. During the meetings, I would observe the participants' interactions with one another while carefully attending to their gestures and subtle changes in their tone and facial expressions which were immediately recorded in the research journal. I was also the researcher and a primary facilitator in club. I chose the books and the sequences in which they were read. Although I gave the participants choices to rank books that they would like to read among about fifteen books that I had prepared in the first club meeting, it was impossible to reflect their divided choices. In addition, although the participants generated their own questions, I went into the meeting with a list of questions to discuss to elicit conversations about identities. Particularly, when participants did not come up with discussion questions or when there were silences, I interjected and posed questions. As the person of "authority" in the study, some participants seemed to think of me as a teacher, but it did not appear to negatively affect the level of disclosure of their experiences.

In addition to my formal roles in the club, I now discuss positive effects my background might have had on the study. I have limited experience with ESOL

Table 4

Cross-Case Analysis Symbol Chart

	Kush	Null	Ram	Hulk
I like my name	±	+	+	+
It is good to speak language other than English	+	+	+	+
I will teach my first language to the next generation	-	+	-	+
I have strong religious affiliation	-	+	-	+
Parents' expectations are positive	-	+	-	+
Sharing past stories with family is important	-	+	-	+
I am deeply connected to my country	-	+	~	~
I have strong gender roles/identities	+	+	-	-
It's good to be called to be a smart Asian	+	+	+	+
I believe that Asians are shy and modest	-	+	+	?
Being labeled as Asian is nice	±	±	-	?
Aligning himself with Asians	-	~	+	+
As Asians, I should respecting others	+	+	+	+
Sense of self as learner				
Everyone should learn and speak English	+	+	+	+
I highly value education	-	+	+	+
I believe education in the US is low	-	~	+	~
I believe that to make money, one has to be smart and educated	-	+	+	+

I have struggled to learn English	+	+	-	~
I am a good reader	-	-	-	+
I am a good writer	+	±	~	+
Sense of self as recent member of the US				
I aspire to belong	+	+	+	+
I have superficial relationship with American peers	-	+	+	+
Copying other's cultural practices is good	+	-	~	-
I like the easygoing aspect of American culture	+	?	±	+
I like to be independence and do not desire to comply with authority	+	-	±	-
I have felt different when speaking English	?	+	-	+
I like freedom in American culture	+	±	-	?
I am aware of racial discrimination against other race	+	?	?	?
I keep having to defend my religion in the US	?	+	?	?

Note. Interpretation of the symbols:

+: Endorse, ~: less endorsement, -: does not endorse, ±: Ambivalent about

?: not enough information

adolescents in the classroom as I had only worked with elementary to high school ELLs

for several months as a student teacher right before the study began. This short

experience, however, allowed me to imagine how the participants would be like in school

and to connect with them when discussing happenings in school. My experiences as an

ESOL/reading teacher in college and Korean language instructor may have helped me

establish the RTW club and elicit the participants' responses as related to their identity. I

also believe that having conducted similar case studies about Korean American college

male students' bicultural and bilingual identities may have been beneficial to gain

insights into the intricacies of the participants' identities.

In addition, because of my background as Asian, participants may have identified

with me and facilitated rapport. In fact, the participants shared in the member checking

session that the fact that I was Asian permitted them to openly disclose some negative

perspectives about Americans. Null, who had some interest in Korean culture mainly due

to his older sister's interest in Korean dramas, expressed high interest in the fact that I am

Korean. It should be noted as well that my educational credentials as a Ph.D. student

might have attracted the parents and some of the participants. One participant, Ram,

particularly took a great interest in me pursuing higher education. In addition, as an

individual who grew up in Korea and came to the US seven years ago voluntarily, I

shared similar intercultural experiences and showed that I understood the difficulties of

learning English, which may have invited participants' candid discussions about their

own experiences. Importantly, I also have been reflective of my own identity changes as

an English language learner (Choi, 2005). Thus, I was able to be more attentive to any

evidence that might have pointed to identity negotiations in the participants. I should note

that despite some connections that the participants and I had, my experiences in the US did not necessarily resonate with the participants as my experience has been limited to higher education in the US.

Although my personal experiences and background seemed to contribute to strengthening the study, I may have brought some biases to the dissertation study, which is inherent in qualitative research (Merriam, 1998). First, I am a firm believer in building healthier bi/multicultural identities. That is, I believe that we educators should encourage learners to take pride in their own heritage but at the same time to accept diverse opinions and ways of doing things by which they can prudently adopt from and adapt to different cultural practices. My belief might have unintentionally been revealed in our conversations, which may have prevented some participants who thought otherwise from disclosing their experiences. Second, with regard to my belief system again, I may have revealed my beliefs which might have been at odds with some participants'. However, I tried to avoid expressing my opinions when there were strongly divided arguments, which could have only supported one participant over another. For example, discussing religion always created tensions as two participants were adamant about not believing in God and the other two were devout. As a person who does not practice any religion, I chose not to exacerbate the arguments by maintaining neutrality.

Third, I might have been unintentionally biased because I found myself solidifying pervasive stereotypes about Asians in the US. For instance, when reading a chapter that described a Japanese American's appearance and the character's agony over his Asian appearance, I had expected that my participants would make connections to this, assuming that this might be a common issue for Asians living in the US. But to my

relief, they did not. Another assumption about Asian culture concerned food. In responding to one poem that depicted a boy who was ashamed of his own food, the participants talked extensively about traits of Asian food, one of which focused on smell. Agreeing that some Korean food is smelly, I might have perpetuated that stereotype that Asian foods are unpleasant to them. Lastly, I came with the expectation and bias to the study that multicultural literature would elicit personal responses related to identity. Fortunately, the literature did seem to provoke many pertinent experiences in my study. Despite my biases, member checking and peer debriefing helped to reduce the chance of my biases negatively influencing the study.

<div align="center">Rigor of the Study</div>

Although I had some researcher biases, I believe that I have achieved strong credibility in the study. Data were collected for a five-month period, but I spent a lot of time not only in the RTW club meetings but also in informal settings, such as in the car while transporting them and sometimes in their homes with their family. Prolonged engagement (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) of interactions with the participants and persistent observations (Lincoln & Guba) of each of them for the course of the study allowed me to gain significant insights into how their identities were manifested. Additionally, I achieved triangulation of both the data using multiple data collection methods and the participants who represented diverse Asian cultures and backgrounds (Creswell, 1998; 2003). Triangulation of data sources was particularly important in my study because each participant revealed different aspects of their identities in different data sources. For example, while Ram was outspoken and articulate in individual interviews, he tended to

reserve his opinions in the club meetings. Having only one source of data, such as just club meetings, would not have provided richer information about his identity.

Member checking was also administered in the individual interviews and at the end of data collection to determine if my interpretations were supported by the participants. Moreover, I used negative case analysis to add credibility to my findings. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), "negative case analysis eliminates all "outliers" and all exceptions by continually revising the hypothesis at issue until the "fit" is perfect" (p. 312). In other words, as I developed preliminary hypothesis of a participant, I ensured whether or not the earlier hypothesis was consistent with my later findings of him supported by other data sources. For example, Kush had seemed to allocate less value to family in earlier interviews club meetings, but his wiki posting and a follow up interview later revealed the opposite. Therefore, I modified the initial hypothesis about him. Conducting negative case analysis was particularly important as it highlighted the participants' contradictions, and shifting and multiple identities throughout the course of the study. To obtain credibility lastly, I consulted peer debriefers to ensure my interpretations of the data could be enriched and confirmed (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998; Yin, 2003). I had four peer debriefers, who were all experienced teachers and researchers with different racial and linguistic backgrounds. Throughout different stages of data analysis, they offered new perspectives on the data.

In addition to credibility of the study, I now address transferability, confirmability, and dependability. I instead provided a thick description of the data through participants' own words in order for readers to judge themselves if the findings in this study could be transferred (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). To increase confirmability and

dependability, I provided the reader with a detailed chain of evidence by keeping a researcher journal chronically from the beginning of the study. Keeping the research journal also helped me reflect on consistent themes throughout different data sources in the study. The detailed accounts of the decision making process in every step of the study and a number of tables and matrices that I made available in the study will permit future researchers to replicate my study (Yin, 2003).

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

In this chapter, I describe the findings to help answer the research question: How are the identities of Asian adolescent English language learners mediated in an out-of-school multicultural literature Read, Talk, and Wiki club? In order to answer this question, I first describe each case with data excerpts by following closely the final coding manuals and matrices for each of the cases (see the final coding manuals in Appendixes J, K, L, M). Following the findings of the individual cases, I compare and contrast the cases by referring to the cross case analysis charts. The description of cross case analysis will allow in-depth understanding of each case by highlighting differences and similarities with other cases.

As the participants' literal words will be presented along with themes/categories throughout the chapter, it will be useful to keep in mind the following abbreviations: (1) initials of participant names and the researcher-K for Kush, N for Null, R for Ram, H for Hulk, and C for researcher, Choi; (2) individual interview-INT_initial/line #; (3) club meeting-#CM_initial/line#; (4) member checking-MC_10CM_initial/line#; (5) wiki postings-#WP_initial#; and (6) Researcher journal entries-RJE. The date of data collection will follow the data source [e.g., INT_K1/23-26/021508; 3CM_K/45-50/030108; 8WP_R17].

Understanding Individual Cases

As I explored each individual's complex identities in four case studies, there are particulars that need to be addressed separately. I introduce the cases in the following order: Kush, Null, Ram, and Hulk (pseudonyms). In describing each case, I first sketch each participant with respect to demographic information and the degree of involvement in the club activities. Data excerpts along with my explanations of them in each case will then be presented under the three consistent headings, sense of self as Korean/Uzbek/Indian/Asian; sense of self as learner, and sense of self as recent member of the US. I also gave each of the cases labels next to each of the headings that prominently characterize their identity. I conclude the detailed description of each participant with a summary.

Kush: Performing Rebel Identity

Kush was a 10th grade boy whose family emigrated from Korea about five years ago. His family, his father, mother, and a younger sister, lived in an affluent neighborhood in the northwest of the state. Coming to the US was not necessarily his choice although the family's decision was voluntary: "coming to the US. uh, me and my Dad disagreed about coming to the US. My Mom wanted, but we didn't want to come here" (4CM/267-268/031508). He attended a high school that was touted as one of the best academically performing high schools in the state, and about which he talked with a tone of pride, "It is the best academic high school in the state" (2CM/677/ 021608). He was supposed to be starting 11th grade, but he was repeating a year due to failing grades (RJE/021908). He was not taking ESL at the time of the study. In fact, he did not talk about having been in ESL classes and instead recalled learning English by watching TV

programs. In one club meeting, he said, "in my old school, there's like no Asians and anything. I kept communicating with people but I don't know how I learned English. Like all I did was watch TV" (6CM/706-707/032908). He was so fluent in speaking English that his younger sister and he communicated in English rather than in Korean, "me and my sister we talk in English" (2CM/61/021608). In fact, he would sound like an America-born student if one heard him speak in English. I first got to know him as my close friend's nephew. Although I had seen him occasionally over the years, I never got to know him until he joined the club. After all, he seemed to me a kind of a teenager who was immersed in his own world and disliked socializing with others. To my surprise, when I informally invited him to the club, he accepted the offer by saying he hoped to improve his writing in the club.

Kush usually wore purple or dark tight jeans, short sleeved T shirts, and bigger shoes sometimes with holes in them, some of which his father bought for him from a local skating store. He sometimes liked to wear different colored shoe laces for each shoe (RJE/021908). He was a talented amateur skater (skateboarder), who was once approached by a skate sponsor (RJE/032608). He often proudly showed me his bruises and injuries from skating and informed me of upcoming skating contests (RJE/040708). He also had a short video clip of him trying out skating tricks on *Youtube* (RJE/062008), and he frequently drank energy drinks claiming he needed extra energy when skating. On weekends and a few times during school days, he often spent time skating with his friends in his subdivision or in the back of some stores. He also liked to keep his hair long enough to cover his eyes. He occasionally shook his head sideways when trying to achieve a clear vision of an object before him. In addition, he also played the electric

guitar and listened to mostly classic rock and heavy metal. When I was listening to some Korean songs or rap on the radio in the car, he would stop my music and put on classic rock radio channel and would play his heavy metal CD or sometimes similar music from his laptop (RJE/040708). He used to belong to a band in middle school, but it did not sustain his interest like skating, "me and Jake, were just hanging out playing some songs. And he decided to make a band. Then we found a singer drummer. Then we were going to practice but we went skating, so we never got to practice" (INT_K1/27-29/021508).

Although he had initially expressed interest in improving his writing at the beginning of the study, he made few contributions to the wiki postings. In fact, he posted only when I gave the participants time to write in some club meetings. He also misplaced hard copies of the readings a couple of times, which I had handed out a week earlier and did not even start reading until he got into the car with me, which was about half an hour's ride to the library. During individual interviews, I found it challenging to help him to elaborate on his comments as he often said, "I don't know," "I don't care", and "I guess". As much as he may appear not interested in the club, he many times voluntarily posed questions to others and to me and led interesting debates due to his different perspectives about various issues from others. His stark differences in various topics contributed to interesting discussions. Recognizing Kush's nonconformity with authorities, Null classified Kush as Jerry, the trouble maker and fighter, from *Beacon Hill Boys*. Kush also shared with me informally that he liked coming to the club meetings on Saturdays just to get out of the house (RJE/031708). He also later told me that he was committed to coming to the club meetings just to keep his word as a man, which was

advised by his father, "Because my Dad was like if you promise something, you have to do it. Otherwise, you are not a man. I said ok." (INT_K3/303-304/062008).

Sense of Self as Korean/Asian: "I Don't Care"

Kush did not appear to have strong connections to Korea or a strong bond with his family. Indifferent attitude towards his Korean name, ambivalent attitudes towards his first language, his plans not to go back to Korea, and dissociation from Korean peers attest to this interpretation.

Kush had two names that he went by: one Korean called by his family members and one English name that he went by in school and between his peers (Kush is an English pseudonym that he chose for the study). In the following interview, Kush did not express any interest in talking about his names and declined to give more details about them:

> C: About yourself. Cool. So then, let's talk about your name. I was asking about your name.
>
> K: Kush.
>
> C: I know you have two different names you go by. Can you talk about that? Do you like them?
>
> K: I guess
>
> C: Can you talk about your Korean name? Do you like it?
>
> K: I guess
>
> C: Does it have a meaning? why do you like it?
>
> K: I guess. I'm not sure. I like never cared to ask…
>
> C: Would you prefer to be called as Kang?

K: I really wouldn't care. [if I am addressed by my Korean name] (INT_K1/61-75/021508)

His indifference toward his name was again revealed in another club meeting. In discussing *Beacon Hill Boys*, the club members talked enthusiastically about their names, but Kush did not engage in that conversation. When Null asked him about his name toward the end of discussion, Kush kept his answers brief and did not explain further in the excerpt:

N: Your name is real easy. It's like an American name, isn't it?

C: He's talking to you. (laughs)
N: Is it Korean?

K: No.

N: Do you have a real name? What is it?

K: yeah, Kang. (6CM/822-827/032908)

His apparent lack of strong attachment to Korea presented itself again in a club meeting where the group engaged in heated discussion regarding teaching first language to their children who will grow up in the US. The discussion topic arose from the first two chapters of *Beacon Hill Boys* where Dan could not speak the language of his parents, Japanese. In the excerpt below, Kush recognized only two languages, English and Spanish, as most important. Thus, he argued that teaching Korean to the next generation was not necessary. When Null opposed his contention, Kush attributed the reason to impracticality of the language in the US. He also added that his children and he will probably not go back to Korea, which is another indication that he was dissociated with Koreans. Furthermore, he substantiated his argument by siding with his understanding of

American students, who resist learning languages other than English. Excerpt below

illustrates how Kush defended his position on languages when Null questioned him:

K: You have to know English and Spanish in this country. So you
          don't have to like teach another language.

C: Even if that's the language that your parents and you speak?

K: It's like no one speaks it. You don't need it.

N: What if you go to your country?

K: Probably I am not going to go there.

N: You are not gonna go, but maybe your kid is going to go?

K: Probably not.
N: Maybe he gets old and he gets smart and then he is like why
          didn't you teach me? I need it. I am Japanese, and I don't speak
          Japanese.

K: Then, you can go to some school and pay for it….most likely,
          the people who grow up here in the US, "oh, Dude, I want to
          learn another language." They are not gonna say that.
          (7CM/577-595/040508)

I was so intrigued by Kush's adamant position on not teaching Korean in the club

meeting that I explored this topic again in the following interview. Contradicting what he

had said in the meeting, he appreciated being able to communicate in Korean. When

asked about what would be some Korean values he would like to hold on to, he

responded, "oh, the language. It's going to help me a lot" (INT_K2/214/040908).

Although he did not expand on his comments, he talked vaguely about merits of knowing

Korean in addition to English. One probable reason as to why he showed the

contradiction might be the fact that the interview was conducted only a few days after the

club meeting. He might have been influenced by conversations with other club members

who spoke positively about the values of knowing their first languages in addition to English. This contradiction also may reveal the nature of our identity being multiple and shifting, which explains that Kush positioned himself differently in various situations.

Kush's apparent lack of attachment to Korea was revealed again in the context of talking about Korean peers. He did not have any close Korean friends, and he showed negative attitudes towards them. Kush spelled out the reasons why he could not align himself with them. First, Kush said that they study too excessively, even after school, in which he was not involved, "they [Koreans] study like crazy in here. All the Koreans like they go to school, and after that, they go to some classes to study, like to get in college" (INT_K2/222-223/040908). He was relieved that he did not need to study that much, and when asked about what was bad about studying, he responded studying too much "is not good. I am not doing that, so that's a good thing" (INT_K2/225/040908). When asked to expand on his comments, he explained, "because it's not going to be fun. It's not fun at all. Studying every day gets kind of boring. You will have like major headaches every day." (INT_K2/227-228/040908).

In addition to the different attitudes towards studying, Kush pointed out that Korean peers and he were different due to the lack of common interests, "we [Korean kids and I] have like nothing in common. All they do is play video games and stuff, and I hate video games. They don't skate, so we have nothing to do" (INT_K3/565-566/062008). Particularly, he recognized that he stood out among Korean peers because he liked to skate, which he believed Korean students did not engage, "I don't hang out with them [other Koreans at school]. I think they hate me because like I skate" (INT_K2/122-123/040908). Another difference that he mentioned was their obsessive

interest in video games. While Kush was more into outdoor activities, his Korean peers were fascinated by the indoor activity, "uh, I don't play that much video game, but all the Asians that I know they are obsessed with video games. I don't think it's that much fun to play every day" (INT_K2/152-153/040908).

Besides their different interests, Kush did not associate with Korean peers at school because whereas he did not "speak Korean at school" (INT_K2/125/040908), Korean peers, who came to the US "later" (INT_K3/561/062008), do. When discussing disrespectful behaviors in one club meeting, Kush took an example of a group of Koreans who spoke Korean, "in my Lit. class, there's like 7 Koreans. The teacher was telling them to be quiet and stuff, and they wouldn't stop talking and they didn't like speak English. They spoke Korean at school" (3CM/526-528/030108). Kush furthermore reproached them for being disrespectful to the teachers by cursing in Korean, "they all like curse in Korean… Yeah, but they say all these mean stuff."(INT_K2/160-164/040908).

Although Kush did not show strong attachment to his Korean name, to the country, to the language, and to Korean peers, he showed pride in Korean food. Inspired by a poem, *Acculturation*, which portrayed a Filipino boy who felt ashamed to take his ethnic food to school, the group talked intensely about whether or not they would do the same in a club meeting. Kush proudly shared how his American friends are acquainted with Korean food in the excerpt. Kush also added that he took Korean food to school and still managed to make friends unlike the boy in the poem:

K:	Like all my friends know what we eat at home, and they don't bother me that much.

C:	In fact, they eat it with you, right? (laughs)

K: I know. Like Kevin, he, ate all the rice, so I got mad (3CM/619-621/030108)….because when I first came here, I had Korean food too. I think I took Korean food to school, I think. There were no Korean and I was the only Asian. I still made friends. (3CM/740-741/030108)

As Kush appeared lukewarm about his Korean name, Korean language, and Korean peers, he did not express strong connections to his family. Because of the parents' busy working schedule, the family could not afford much time together, "we [my family] like never go out" (INT_K3/465/062008). When asked about the meaning of his family, he could not articulate what it meant for him, "uh, (long pause) there are no things that I like or hate about it, so…. I don't know. Just family" (INT_K1/190-192/021508). Kush's relationship with his family was revealed again in a club meeting where we discussed family history in light of chapters in *Beacon Hill Boys*. In it, Kush shared that his family did not talk about the parents' life history, "we don't talk about it [family history] with family" (8CM/248/041908). However, when asked in an individual interview again about the same topic, he explained that his father does share happenings in the past, which Kush seems not to highly value:

K: The only family thing that he told me about was how him and his brother never fought. He was like always when he was a kid, he didn't study hard enough. That's about it.

C: You guys do talk about some family histories and stuff that happened in the past, right?

K: I guess.

C: Is it important to you that you know those stuff?

K: No.

C: No? Why not?

K: Cause I really don't care if my father fought with his brother or not. It doesn't matter now. (INT_K3/428-435/062008)

In addition to help establish family history, Kush's father played an important role on many levels of his life. First, recall how Kush cited his father's words as a motivation for coming to the club meetings. He showed that he took his father's advice on dating when the last club meeting revolved around the topic, "my Dad is like I don't care if you like date any racial person, but when you get married, marry like an Asian person. I said why, and he was like you don't get divorced" (9CM/353-354/042608). Most importantly, Kush credited his father as his primary source of knowledge as his father imparted various knowledge related to world history and science to him. In the club meetings, Kush often made references to historical events when debating, so I had assumed he read books about them. However, he admitted that he learned about them directly from his father, not from books. Even though Kush wanted me to believe he was not interested in learning by dismissing his lectures as annoying, it was apparent that Kush genuinely appreciated his father:

C: But then where did you get all that knowledge about the world history and the stuff that you shared with us?

K: Mostly from my Dad.

C: from your Dad?

K: Because most of time, me and my Dad have dinner whatever, driving a car, he always teaches me stuff like that and I would be like half listening and half looking away, just like not listening. That's where I get it from.

C: Um. Give me some examples? What are the things that he has taught you then?

> K: Like we were driving, and my Dad was like you know there was
> like why there is like 29th in February in every four year? I said
> no. And he was like because of the moon. Moon has like five
> and one quarter days of a year. So that was that. Like why the
> Roman Empire fall? Why did Hitler hate Jews, and so….Yeah,
> he is like my only source…yeah, it gets annoying sometimes. It's
> like he always talks and always tries to teach me and I am like I
> don't care. He is like never stops talking. But it's kind of cool
> cause like I learned stuff that I didn't know about. (INT_K3/183-
> 194, 199, 203-205/062008)

Although Kush showed deference to his father, he expressed that he was not respectful to his mother. His disrespectful behavior toward her, who held specific expectations of him to "go to college or become a lawyer or doctor" (2CM/305/021608) was due in part to his resistance to be controlled. Kush considered respect as an important Korean value, "I need to respect… you cannot be rude" (1CM/116-119/020908). However, he revealed that he was not respectful to his mother, "when like my mom compares me to someone, I like compare her to someone else. (everyone laughs)….my mom always tells me that I am not respectful….I am not unrespectful to others except for my mom" (6CM/221-259/032908). The topics of respect to parents and his wish not to be controlled were raised again when discussing *Two Kinds*, from which we talked a lot about parents' expectations:

> I would say no [to my parents when they ask me to become something]. I
> hate it when people tell me to be something that I wouldn't want to be.
> They say like I should try my best to be whatever. Then I will say I will
> try my best not to be it. (2CM/513-515/021608)

Sense of Self as Learner: "I Hate School with Burning Passion"

Kush hoped to enjoy his life in the future "by traveling to different countries, like Europe" (INT_K3/331/062008), but he did not have detailed plans for the future, particularly for college. When asked about what he would like to do, he said, "I don't know, engineering" (INT_K1/102/021508), and another time he reiterated, "I kind of thinking of mechanical stuff. I kind of want to do mechanic-cars and stuff." (INT_K2/265/040908). In one club meeting in which we discussed *Two Kinds*, Kush expressed the difficulty of deciding on what he wanted among plenty options, "there are so many things you can be. It's really hard to choose only one thing" (2CM/542/021608). In the same club meeting, the discussion about dreams and goals led us to talk about the degree of competition in the US. Kush explained that being admitted to college in the US was harder as he confined colleges only to most prestigious schools. This indicates that Kush failed to recognize realistic options for colleges, which prohibited him from planning to continue his education in college:

> ... There's like so many people living in the US than in any other countries
> except China. It is a lot harder to go to college….There are so many
> people trying to go to Harvard or all these good schools, so it's really hard
> to get in. (2CM/325-330/021608)

Reasons why Kush did not yet have specific plans for college seem to be deeply rooted in his understanding of schooling and education. Kush did not consider schooling as a preparation for college or as obtaining knowledge. Instead, Kush perceives the role of mandatory schooling as shaping students as social beings. This was revealed in a club meeting where we had an impassioned discussion about whether or not history education should be mandatory. In it, Kush said, "I think the main goal of being in school is to

teach students like how to act in society, not like teaching everything. Who cares about history, so? You don't have to know it." (4CM/774-775/031508).

One of Kush's wiki postings expanded on his views on education with regard to achieving wealth, which was a desirable trait for him as he said the best thing that could happen to him in the future was to "win a lottery" (INT_K1/106/021508). In the posting, Kush did not equate education with success and wealth. More importantly, he attributed the material success of a public figure like Bill Gates to luck instead of to hard work and education. It, in turn, suggests that education is not a secured path to lead to his understanding of success in life. As luck is a crucial factor for success according to him, he might not see the need to study hard to achieve the things that he wants:

> I believe that education is not necessarily mandatory trait to have to have successful life later on.…People could be well successful without being highly educated, people like Bill Gates, he did not attended College, but he is the most wealthy person in the world. this is why it is not necessary to be educated. becoming rich is all about luck. Bill gates was lucky to invent Microsoft. (6WP_K3/032208)

His belief that education is not necessary for success was again revealed in a club meeting where he described a Harvard graduate, whose dedication to education in a top university did not pay off:

> My mom knows this person who went to Harvard. You know, he didn't have experience working as a teenager. So he ended up with a wood craft job. So doesn't matter if you are educated or not. I mean you have to like be educated, and know something or whatever. But you don't have to be really smart to get a good job. (4CM/589-592/031508)

In the same club meeting, as other club members strongly opposed Kush's views on education and wealth, Kush proposed a question to everyone, "I have something for everyone. What's being smart?" (4CM/728/031508). When asked to first describe his

understanding of a smart person, Kush made it clear that he associated smart or educated

persons with having condescending and snobbish attitude, which he did not aspire to

develop:

> You know there are people who know a lot of stuff, but you are like you
> are not being like human being…. you know how like if you are smart,
> and you are not good, and you are acting like trash. And then no one wants
> to be around you…. If you are smart and you think you are better than
> everybody. (4CM/737-755/031508)

Kush's extreme example of the Harvard graduate was again brought up in the last

club meeting. In a similar way that Kush was not drawn to Korean peers who study

excessively, Kush did not find much value in education by generalizing that all educated

persons lack practical and interpersonal skills, "pretty much like he [the Harvard graduate

my mom knows] had no energy. Like he is like really weak and all he does is study. So

he can't go on work like 16 hours" (9CM/240-241/042608). The following excerpt

succinctly displays his aspiration to enjoy his life rather than wasting time on studying for

a longer period of time:

> If you tries to be a doctor and go to college and study like 10 years,
> doctors. They waste like 10 or 20 years of their time. You can't go back in
> time and change stuff.…I would rather instead of going to school longer, I
> would actually enjoy my life than studying like every day. (INT_K3/323-
> 325, 328-329/062008)

Recognizing that Kush placed low value on education and educated people might

hold a key to explain his disengagement with learning and his behaviors in school

described in the following sections. In one club meeting, when Null asked Kush if he

participates in an extracurricular activity like Tech Fair, Kush bluntly responded, "I am

not really interested in school things" (2CM/686/021608). His lack of interest in school

activities is an understatement. Kush in fact strongly voiced that "I hate school with the burning passion (INT_K1/2/021408)…. (long pause) [At this present time] nothing good is happening to me, and only bad thing happening is like school." (INT_K1/124-125/021408). Kush further explained, "school is boring, I don't seem to learn anything. Yeah… they [teachers] are not good at teaching" (INT_K1/34-36/021408). His apparent estrangement from school activities is not newly formed in US schools. Even before he immigrated to the US, Kush recalled having negative experiences in school in Korea, "[The worst thing that happened in the past is] the first day of school. It was like a beginning of a hell…. I hated it. I thought it was stupid." (INT_K1/150-159/021408).

He dissociated himself from school because schooling often involved being controlled by authorities. Comparing schools in Korea to American schools, he explained, "here [American school] is way better… teachers in Korea are more aggressive, they think they own the students. They are violent as well" (INT_K1/48-52/021408). Kush interpreted class rules in the US, such as asking for a teacher's permission for minor things, as controlling, "like getting up to like throw some papers away. Some teachers like yell at you" (INT_K1/41/021408). He also disliked the idea of doing school work dictated by teachers, "you have to pretty much do something what someone else told you to do, so I don't like that" (INT_K1/239-240/021408). Kush straightforwardly put, "when someone like tells me to do something, I feel like they are controlling me so they get annoying a lot" (INT_K1/242-243/021508). In another interview, Kush shared an incident where a teacher told Kush to get a haircut and said he would ignore him if not. When asked how he reacted to this, Kush said, "[I did] nothing. I was like ok, he [the teacher] never calls on me in class, so that's kind of a good thing."

(INT_K2/173/040908). This example illustrates that Kush resists being controlled by a teacher.

Kush actively engaged in the RTW club discussions and sometimes brought up names of books as a reference to support his argument, so I was curious whether he shows the same level of engagement in his classes. When asked, he explained that he always drifts away from it:

> I usually don't pay attention to that [discussion in class]…. No. I ALWAYS fall asleep in school…. I even fell asleep in math class too…. No. It's like whenever I am going to a class, it's like I start to get tired. Like I always fall asleep. (INT_K3/166, 171, 173, 181-182/062008)

With respect to the books that he had mentioned in the club meeting, it turned out that he had never read them, "I never read the book [that I mentioned]… we [our group] did a project on it and they [my group members] told me what to do." (INT_K3/109, 113/062008). When asked about reading in summer, Kush often did not find the need to read books because he has passed classes without having to read books required in classes:

> I am supposed to [read books required in the summer break] but uh I am not going to. I never read any books and I still passed the classes.…No. because teachers go over it and I got 88 on the last test. We were supposed to read a book (INT_K3/82-86/062008). … It's summer reading. Like the first day, she went over it and like a week later, there will be a test. She went over it like 10 minutes every day. (INT_K3/92-98/062008)

Whereas Kush did not perceive himself as a reader, "I don't like to read a book." (INT_K3/129/062008), he felt at ease with writing. In some club meetings, Kush bragged about how many pages he writes every day in school, "I wrote like 4 page essay today" (4CM/393/031508) and "I have to write a 5 page essay every day" (2CM/752/021608).

He also showed interest in writing conventions by initiating a question in a club meeting, "You know how you are not supposed write in second or third person? But why can't you use it?" (2CM/771-772/021608). His comfort with writing in the club was also apparent, "Uh, (pause) like uh, the writing [on the wiki in the club] is pretty easy actually. It took me like 5 minutes to write it" (INT_K2/60/040908). Nevertheless, he completed them only when I gave him time to write in the club meeting. In fact, he had suggested that we write only when we meet in the library. He added that he completed writing only at school and found writing at home distracting (RJE/030308). Failing to extend school work to outside of school presented itself again in the member checking session. In it, Kush showed a clear distinction between what gets talked about in school and outside of school, "I only like talk about school at school. I don't talk about it at any other place" (MC_10CM/line#/062808).

In addition to his disengagement with learning in school, Kush often acted silly and acted out in school. In light of discussing whether or not being an Asian in the US is an advantage, a topic drawn from two chapters in B*eacon Hill Boys*, Kush shared being Asian was a good thing but others did not necessarily see him as a smart Asian. He further accounted for his silly behaviors, such as what he called hard core dancing:

> That [having that positive stereotype about Asians in the US] feels good, but everyone thinks I am stupid. (N & C awkwardly laugh)…Like we just act stupid in front of people. We like laugh and stuff, so.…[hard core dancing is] just like sitting in the lunch room and kick and do this (swings his arms around). (8CM/104, 112, 126/041908)

When asked to elaborate on his behaviors in school in the last interview, he gave another example of his behavior, "we stay in a class, I would just get up and do random thing and they [my classmates] are like "wow, that kid is really weird." It's really funny

and stuff." (INT_K3/630-631/062008). He further explained that he engaged in silly behaviors to entertain himself not to impress others, "No. I just do it because I think it's funny [for myself]. I don't like to do it for other people."(INT_K3/641/062008). Beyond acting silly in school, Kush said, "I had a fight in school a couple of times" (INT_K2/84/040908), which led him to get in trouble. When discussing a chapter in *Beacon Hill Boys* that depicted a fight in school, Kush mentioned his personal experience of getting in a fight recently, which led to a five day suspension. He started out briefly saying, "I got into a fight a week ago" (7CM/246/040508). When Null and Ram bombarded him with questions about it, Kush seemed to be hesitant first but then later explained in detail as to how he got into the fight:

> In our Pack, I was trying to sit in my seat and he was like he stayed in my seat first, so I was like Dude, get out of it, and I was playing around. Then, he was having a bad day whatever, and he started to push me so I pushed him back. Then we were about to fight. I knew that he wanted to find that class, and I was like that you are freaking stupid, the teacher is right there. So we got finally went outside during lunch. (7CM/263-267/040508)

Sense of Self as Recent Member of the US: "I Am Like Kind of Cocky Too I Guess"

Kush strongly identified himself as a skater. In the first introduction to himself both in the first interview and in the first wiki posting, he shared, "I skate" (INT_K1/2/021508) and "I skate and play guitar" (1WP_K1/021708). Being a skater was a newly gained identity for Kush in the US as he treated time in Korea as a pre-skating phase in his life. When asked to talk about changes since he came to the US, Kush mentioned, "uh, I never like used to skating in Korea" (INT_K2/208/041908). Skating was such a big part of his life now that Kush stressed that he sacrificed his skating time to come to the club meetings when asked to reflect on the RTW club experience, "(pause) I

was supposed to go a skating tournament twice but I didn't go" (INT_K3/294-295/062008).

Unlike learning in school, Kush took great pleasure in learning new skating tricks and in being persistent with it. He described his favorite thing as is to "skate…. because it's fun. And uh, it feels really good when you learn a trick." (INT_K1/233-235/021508). He continued to show passion about skating and appreciation of learning through it, "(pause) uh, [A good thing that happened in the past is] when I got my first kick flip, I was really happy. It's a trick in skating…. Because it was like my first trick and it was really cool." (INT_K1/141-146/021508). Kush also made references to skating while discussing books at club meetings. When discussing the main character in *Arturo's Flight*, Kush related to him while other club members could not because of the character's unconventional behavior. Kush explained that he engaged in something crazy like him too by referring to skating, "I was trying to do this trick while skating, which I did on a seventh stair. I was scared but I tried 100 times and we were making a video" (5CM/99-100/032208).

Kush was exclusively befriended with peers who shared common interests with him, "they [my friends] are like all skate. And they play instruments. That's about it." (INT_K1/199/0215/08). All of his friends happened to be non-Koreans, "[My friends are all white Americans and] there's one black kid and one Mexican." (INT_K2/104/041908). His friends were from affluent families, so Kush envied their families' materialistic support for shoes and boards that frequently need to be replaced:

> All my friends are like rich. I don't know why. They get new boards and shoes like every month. And I am like what the crap, cause I get new boards like every six months, three or five. They get it like every month. So I am like what the crap. I want your Dad. (INT_K3/494-496/062008)

In the same manner that his school work was not extended to outside of school, his school world and skating world were clearly separated. It is evident that Kush did not share school work with his friends and despite attending the same school, Kush did not associate with them in school. That is, they were friends only outside of school when skating:

C: You don't talk about any school work with your friends?

K: No (laughs)

C: No? What do you guys talk about?

K: Skate, and when we play and stuff.

C: You said your friends are also school friends, right? They all go to the same school, right?

K: yeah.

C: What about when you guys hang out in school? Do you guys talk about some school stuff?

K: No, plus I never see them in school.

C: Why is that?

K: Cause we are in different classes. (INT_K3/537-546/062008).

Not only Kush did not discuss topics related to school with his friends, but he also did not bother to explain things to them. In the last interview, I asked Kush what he had told his friend, Kevin, who had wanted to come to the club meeting. Kush said he did not talk much about it and added that he differentiated talking from explaining. Giving Kevin more details would have been explaining, which his friends and he did not endorse. In other words, they played cool by not intervening in each other's business:

K: I told him [Kevin] I was going [to the club] but I didn't tell him what we were doing.…

C: Why didn't you share with him what you were doing?

K: Cause when people ask me and then I am like I have to go to a library, and then they would be like ok. Like they never ask what is going on.…No. Like whenever people call me or I call them, and say do you want to hang out? Then if I say I can't, and they would be like ok. So that's it.

C: Why is that? I am just curious.

K: Cause it's like I am not that kind of person that talks like for 10 minutes and explaining something.

C: Oh, you don't want to?

K: They don't either, so.

C: Then, how do you make friends?

K: Just talk. You know just talk and talk. We don't like explain. We just TALK.

C: What is the difference between talking and explaining?

K: Explaining is like one person talking. And talking is conversation I guess.…

C: But friends explain things to each other, to me my friends do.

K: We are like go to hell and stuff. (INT_K3/501, 510-512, 516-526, 535-536/062008)

In the same way that Kush behaved cool among his skating peers by learning the appropriate mode of communicating, his thought about guys' sharing feelings reflected the common stereotype in teenage boys in the US. Kush, in a club meeting, said, "guys don't talk about feelings. It's what gay people do" (7CM/634/040508). When asked to elaborate on this in an interview, Kush explained, "when a guy talks about feelings, it's

like a gay thing. One of my friends, he is kind of like gayish, so he talks about his feelings. I am like Dude, go away" (INT_K2/256-257/040908). As much as Kush sought a membership in the skating sphere, he did not appear to consider his peers genuine. Kush often talked negatively about them, "some of them [my friends] lie a lot and some of them act like they are really good at skating but they really suck. And some of them are like mean."(INT_K1/215-216/021508). In one club meeting where we discussed family and friends, Kush commented on his friends again negatively, "no [I would not choose friends over parents]. All my friends are dick (everyone laughs)" (4CM/524/031508). Although Kush criticized his friends for being pompous, he again aligned himself with them. In the following interview, I asked him to explain more about the word, cocky, that he used to describe his friends:

> I am like kind of cocky too I guess….Uh, when I do something, when people ask me if I can do something, I like dude, I can do it, I can do that even though I have never tried that before. Then, if do it, I totally screw up and whatever. (INT_K2/135-139/040908)

The topic of behaving cool reappeared in a club meeting where we discussed Dan's decision, turning down drugs his friends asked him to try, in B*eacon Hill Boys*. Kush commended Dan for his courage when he might have wanted to play cool around his peers, "he [Dan] was being brave for saying no cause you know in school it's like all about being cool" (8CM/216/041908). I revisited this topic in the last interview, in which Kush explained that teenagers like him desire to fit in with mainstream kids who tend to have many friends, "[people try to be cool by] doing what other popular people do. …people want to be popular cause I guess you can have more friends. (pause) I guess." (INT_K3/586, 588-589/062008). This indicates that to Kush, being cool equates to popularity that entails having a number of friends. Kush further explained that he

considered himself cool as he has many friends, " (pause) I guess [I am cool]. If you are not, you don't have that many friends" (INT_K3/595/062008).

It is apparent that Kush considered himself sociable, "I like to talk to everyone." (INT_K2/295/040908). When asked of how he felt about sharing his opinions with strangers in the first place in the RTW club, Kush replied that he was comfortable with it. He added that having moved many times has helped him cultivate interpersonal skills to easily break initial awkward moments with people, "…I am kind of used to it [being with strangers], because when you move, you don't know anybody, so you start to talk to people. …But I try to find stuff to talk about" (INT_K3/414-415, 417/062008). Being sociable is also a desirable trait for Kush. When discussing a Filipino boy, who felt ashamed to take his own food to school in *Assimilation*, Kush pointed out that the boy could have still taken his food to school and made friends if he had been more sociable, "I think he [the boy in the poem] is antisocial….You know how there are some people that you don't really want to talk to because of their expressions. Maybe his expressions were really bad" (3CM/734-785/030108). When Null gave an example of a kid who shuns contacts with others, Kush labeled such person as Emo, "we call them Emo….Emo, it's like anti-social like anti-everything" (3CM/799-801/030108). In the same club meeting, Kush criticized people who chat a lot online but who do not in face to face interactions, "I hate people who talk a lot on the internet or something but who don't talk at all to people." (3CM/814-815/030108).

The attribute of being sociable surfaced again in Kush's wiki posting. An intense discussion about parents' expectations in a club meeting in light of talking about Dan's family in *Beacon Hill Boys*, propelled us to write about it again on the Wiki site. The

wiki prompt asked the club members to give advice to Dan, who feels unhappy about being compared to his older brother, Brad, who excels in academics. In comparison to Brad, Dan is depicted in the book as being always accompanied by a group of friends and as lacking interest in academics. Kush wrote that he would advise Dan to recognize that he is actually a better person than Brad. One probable interpretation can be that Kush generally associated educated persons with inhumane qualities as discussed before. Also, Kush did not like to be controlled by authority figures. For example, he did not like to be dictated to by teachers. But more importantly, his writing also indicates that Kush thought that Dan is a better person because he has more friends, which is a more important quality for Kush:

> I would tell him to ignore when people compare him to his big brother Brad. Dan is better at everything it actually matter later in life. actually he should be happy that he is being compared to Brad, Dan is way better human individual. (10WP_K4/040508)

As an Asian living in the US, Kush generally believed that there are many smart Asians, "there's all these smart people-talented kids-are nowadays mostly Asians" (INT_K3/621/062008). Kush took an example of famous musicians who are Asians, "in orchestras and stuff, like half of people are Asians. And there is a band called, *Dragon force*. The lead guitar player is Asian. He is from Britain" (9CM/316-318/042608). At the same time, he recognized that this cannot be generalized to every Asian, "not like all the Asians are smart.…Like I agree because most of them are smarter, but not everyone is like studying" (MC_10CM/line#/062808). Kush also acknowledged that Asians are well represented in the US. In the member checking session, Kush expressed that the school curriculum included more Asian cultures and people than European culture, "So now it's

a little bit more than like Spanish or European culture….No, we read [about] Asians more [in school]" (MC_10CM/line#/062808). He also positively described a group of Asians in his school who bring their food from home and gather around to eat together neglecting stares from other peers:

> We have like multiracial people in my school, and there are lots of Indians, Asians people. All the Indians sit together and they would have Indian food and all the Asians sit together and they bring like Asian food to school. They like eat it there and all the people like stare at them. But they don't even care. (3CM/521-524/030108)

Kush added again that being Asian is not subject to bullying anymore because of the prevalence of the Asian population in the US. Moreover, due to the coexistence of diverse people with different racial backgrounds, attempting to make fun of people based on their differences would cause trouble:

> I had a fight in school a couple of times, and I never had to worry about racial stuff, so….You know in the, like Asians, people make fun of you because like you are Asians, orientals. But there's so many oriental people, Asian people and other race people. And like if one person makes fun of another person, you get into trouble bad. (INT_K2/84, 88-90/041508)

Although Kush did not recognize discrimination amongst peer group in high school, he sharply pointed out privileges awarded to certain people, "[liberty and freedom is only] for white, rich people" (8CM/496/041908). Kush furthermore took an example of a legal Mexican, his father's former coworker, who was discriminated against because of his race, which illustrates discrimination is prevalent in societal and structural levels outside of school, "Like they [Mexicans] go to work and they don't get paid as much….My Dad worked with Mexican, Jose. He was legal. He was working longer than my Dad did, but he made like less" (8CM/507-516/041908). When Hulk confronted him

with a question that if the Mexicans work harder, they can make more money, Kush

contested the elusive theory about hard working by asserting, "Mexicans work hard"

(8CM/522/041908). When asked to elaborate on selective privileges awarded to white

and rich people, Kush illustrated a case where he has witnessed white people received

preferential treatments from others in restaurants over Mexicans:

> Because like they [White people] think you have more power. They can
> get pretty much anything they want. Like in restaurants, you know stuff
> like if there is, really nice restaurant, If there's like a Mexican, or another
> Latin American or White people, the white people have always the better
> service because they are white.…I was at the, what's it called, Olive
> Garden or something. And my uncle, like he is White, my aunt and me
> and my sister were there. And there was like two White people that came
> in and there were like Mexican people behind them, and they served the
> white people first. (INT_K3/448-451, 455-457/062808)

Summary of Kush

Kush, who has been in the US much longer than anybody else in the club, has

exhibited complex and intriguing identities in the RTW club. It is apparent that Kush

displayed a rebel identity through resistance to being controlled by authorities, such as

teachers and his mother. This shaped his identities particularly as a Korean and as a

learner. Although Kush valued Korean food, language, and the relationship with his

father, who was more lenient with him, he did not showcase a strong connection to Korea

as evident in his lukewarm attitude towards his Korean name and teaching Korean

language to the next generation. The resistance to being controlled explained Kush's

strong disengagement with school activities and fights in school. His view that education

will not pay off and educated people are pompous and not likeable also seems to affect

his identity as a learner. Although Kush was resistant to authority figures, he showed a

strong desire to fit in with peers in the skating sphere in the US. Kush has acquired

appropriate discourse patterns with his peers and aspired to be sociable and to play cool with his peers. It is notable that his skating world and school world were separated. Nevertheless, Kush was also a critical thinker as he pointed out the subtleties of racial privileges and discrimination against certain races in the US.

Null: Performing Rule-Governed Identity

Null was a 10th grade boy whose family flew from Andijon, Uzbekistan, about two and half years ago. I was introduced to him through a friend of mine who worked with his older brother. His father was a former human rights activist who was falsely accused after witnessing and attempting to report the Andijon massacre in 2005. After what seemed to be an endless journey to the US, which Null vividly and painfully recollected in a club meeting, his family finally sought political asylum in the US and currently lived in a house located in a middle class neighborhood in the northeast region of the state:

> It was not our choice to coming here either (agreeing with Kush). We didn't think about coming here before one day either. In our country, we had some problem. My Dad was working for you know Human Rights Watch, it's like watching people like going to jail and why he went to the jail. And then, he writes and sent it to everywhere….yeah, reporting and stuff. And at that time, we had really problem. The government killed the people (referring to the Andijon massacre) and then we had to leave the country and then we went to other country. We didn't know where we were going.…we were there [Kazakhstan] four or five days, and then my Dad went to jail and police catched my Dad because of that. Because the [Uzbek] country sent the picture and said that we want this person. And then, they said that my Dad was a terrorist (laughs).…And they [the Kazakhstan government] put bodyguards, like 8 bodyguards. There were like guns in it. After like 2 days, my Dad came from jail and we went to the house and then we went to London. And then someone, they thought someone was following us. We went to Germany and then.…We stayed in Germany for 10 days. So it was some scary and funny. I was sick. I hate airplane. (4CM/271-301/031508)

It was certainly neither his nor the family's choice to come to the US, and as such, he experienced quite a culture shock during the first year. A sense of loss was apparently enormous, and the diverse religions and races in the US sharply contrasted with the homogenous environment he was from, "in my country, all the people are Moslems. I didn't know there were other religions than Muslim till I came here. Because all the people there have the same religion-same stuff and everything is the same." (INT_N1/87-90/020808). Especially, due to not knowing any English at the entry, Null felt as if he were disabled. In the wiki posting below, Null wrote:

> when i came up here i felt like a person who can't talk hear or see, because everything was different to me. i have never seen different people, religion, and it was completely new world to me. and i was sad i lost my friends i can't talk 2 anybody...so first year was hard and boring because i didn't speak English. (7WP_N4/032508)

Despite the catastrophic and abrupt transitions, Null was very cheerful and optimistic. Null often considered himself funny, "they [my family] think I am funny or something…because I make them laugh" (INT_N3/312-316/061608). He talked positively about his life in the US, including his school, teachers, and friends, "[At the present time] it's great. Everything is good. I like my school. I like friend and people and the people around me. There's no problem. Everything is going great" (INT_N1/174-175/020808). His negative school experience due to corruption right before he left his country may also explain Null's positive experience with US schools, "my country school? Yes, it was great. But last time, I didn't like it because of the changes....You know, teachers just work for money, and they don't care about students" (INT_N1/308-309, 311/020808).

Contradicting his description of himself as shy around people that he did not know well, "I am shy but when I get to know the person, I am not shy" (7CM/339/040508), Null did not shy away from proposing questions, especially related to cultural practices, to me and to other club members during our initial encounters. In the second club meeting, Null raised a question to Ram, "in India, each year you guys make 700 movies?" (2CM/855/021608). Null also asked me questions about Korean culture as he was already familiar with Korean pop culture because of her older sister who is fascinated with Korean dramas (RJE/021908).

Null often asked questions about the main idea of the reading, which Kush teasingly pointed out, "N: I have one question from all the chapters./C: Good./K: What's the main idea? (everyone laughs)" (8CM/226-228/041908). Besides main ideas, Null continued to actively initiate questions in the club meetings, thereby significantly enriching our discussions. Null's sizable contributions to the club meetings were recognized by Ram, who attributed a rather unexciting and quiet club meeting to Null's absence that day, "we are missing the main person (recognizing Null's absence)" (5CM/223/032208). Null also gave himself credit for making people talk in the club meetings, "when no one talks, you don't know what to say. But I do know what to say. I can make people talk (laughs)" (INT_N2/81-82/041508). Null indeed served as a humorous facilitator throughout the club meetings. He also was the only one who labeled the club members based on their characteristics and teased them. In one club meeting where we read two chapters in *Beacon Hill Boys*, I asked them to read aloud a section of the story by taking up a different character to inspire our discussion. In the excerpt below,

Null took a lead and assigned Kush Jerry who is a trouble maker in the book and assigned

Hulk and Ram Dan and Frank who Null thought of as quiet:

> C: And then Dan, who want to be Dan?
>
> N: There's two Dans, so (everyone laughs)
>
> C: Dan will be also be reading the narratives.
>
> N: Ok, Hulk is Dan, you will be Dan.
>
> C: And Jerry, who want to be Jerry?
>
> N: This one is Jerry (points to K). This one is the trouble maker
> here (everyone laughs).
>
> C: Who else, Frank.
>
> N: Frank, the quiet one? Here (points to R) there you go.
> (8CM/170-177/041908)

His positive attitude toward his life despite the turbulent journey to the US stems,

in part, from his close relationship with his family members, his parents, one older

brother and sister, and one younger brother. His family enjoyed one another's company

and told jokes. As he described it, the family worked together as a team to help one

another out financially and psychologically:

> We have like job with each other and it's pretty funny. My family is really
> fun and we talk about everything. Everybody works and we are together.
> Everyone works so like if I work, I share my money with everyone so we
> can buy one person one thing and one thing for me at some other time.
> And everyone is together.…yes, one team. It's better than being alone.
> (INT_N1/336-342/020808)

What also unites his family together was their religion, Islam, which Null spelled

out when introducing himself, "I am Muslim" (INT_N1/84/020808). His religious and

familial values, such as helping others, often overlap. As Null described his family members who help each other out under a positive light, he considered himself helpful to others, a value stressed in his faith, "best thing [in my future] is that when I think I want to be a rich person and help people a lot. In my faith, the best thing is to help people and make people happy" (INT_N1/152-153/020808). In fact, Null said, "when I was young, I thought I was going to be a president" (INT_N1/133/020808). What motivated him to want to become president was his heartfelt hope to help lay people by fixing the wrong, "I like to help people a lot. Yeah, that's why maybe I wanted to be a president because I thought president can help anyone and can change" (INT_N1/145-147/020808).

Null was supposed to be an 11th grader at the time of the study, but he repeated one year due to inadequate English proficiency, "after one year, I started 9th grade again, in T. high school. Because my English wasn't that good. I had to go to 9th grade twice" (INT_N1/6-8/020808). Null continued to take ESL class, "next year, I am taking fourth one [level in ESOL]" (INT_N3/849/061608), and often expressed frustrations due to language constraints, "you know I cannot still talk to people a lot because sometimes when I argue, if I cannot say what I want to say, it makes me feel bad because I cannot make them understand" (INT_N3/700-702/061608). Null attended a technical charter high school which housed a small student body. Null was satisfied with his current school in comparison to his previous school in which he did not receive any individual attention that he needed as an ESL student:

> First one [school in the US], I didn't like the first one. It was so, I don't know I didn't like the first one because there were a lot of people like thousand people there. But here I learned a lot of English. They teach me very well and I learn everything. My first school was really bad and I didn't learn anything. (INT_N1/271-274/020808)

Null particularly liked his technical school as its curriculum was tailored to his needs and interests. After all, Null says, "[my favorite thing is] computer" (INT_N3/371/061608), and his dream is "I want to be a computer programmer" (2CM/549/021608).

Sense of Self as Uzbek: "My Country Is Great for Me"

As Null left his country unexpectedly due to his father's political situation, he still yearned to go back and reunite with his friends, "I will go back. It's my birthplace. And I grew there you know. That's why. All my friends are there" (INT_N3/797-798/061608). Null strongly identified with his birth place in which he felt most comfortable around a homogenous environment, "I lived there and I was born in there and then I speak Uzbek language there. There were only our own country people like only Uzbek" (INT_N1/43-44/020808). His affection for his country was permeable in his narratives that often included a phrase, "in my country" (RJE/040408). Null straightforwardly said, "my country is great for me" (INT_N1/39/020808) and "I just feel free because it's my country. I just love my country" (INT_N2/421-422/041508). His strong connection to his country was evident in that Null still kept in touch with his friends, "sometimes I call them [friends back home] like three or four times a month or sometimes I don't call them like a year" (INT_N3/347-348/061608).

His profound and emotional connection to his country was also apparent in his attempts to engage in the chat with people about his country and to write poems about the distressing political situation as a catharsis:

> Um, I write poems sometimes….in my language, not in English….yeah, I
> write like three poems, and I didn't like it, so I threw them away.
> (laughs)…about my country and about my culture and stuff….I argue
> online and on the computer-my people that are from my country, and in
> my language and then sometimes I get really angry. Because some people
> in my country makes me angry and then I would be like you know and I

change a lot. I write poems and next time I would be like oh, I don't like it,
so I just threw it away (laughs). (INT_N2/152-166 /041508)

What his family and he experienced in the process of coming to the US and his
understanding of how courageous his father was has provided him with a sense a pride to
be part of his family. Also, consistent political concerns about his country, connection to
his country, and Null wished to work like his father, "[I would like to work as] like
human rights activist, like my Dad did" (INT_N2/310/041508) indicate a profound
deference for his father:

> He [my Dad] do the right thing all the time.…He was the one who saw
> everything in my country. And even the government was against him but
> he didn't get scared. He told the truth to others and he was in danger, and
> he didn't care. (INT_N3/266-269/061608)

Null's strong pride in his name that signified his religion unlike his understanding
of American names also accounts for his strong identity as Uzbek, "I like my name.…It
has a meaning of eye of God.…In my country, all the people's names-we don't choose
names. We choose one religious name. Americans choose like Brittany and stuff, and all
the people have their own names" (INT_N1/58, 60, 62-64/020808). Null's nicknames,
which he preferred when people could not pronounce his name correctly, reflect his
origin, which is an important indication of his strong Uzbek identity as well:

> I have nick names, which is Andy. It's my city name, you know from
> Andijon, I just chose Andy. My nickname online is Andyboy, which is
> Andijon boy, my country name. Some people call me Noll, which is hard
> to call Null, so they just call me Noll..…people can't call my names so
> they can just call my nicknames. That's better than hearing my different
> name [my name pronounced incorrectly] (laughs). (INT_N1/66-69, 77-
> 78/020808)

In addition to the positive association he had with his names, Null recognized that Uzbek language was integral to his Uzbek identity, thus, he would ensure that the next generation learns it:

> Yes, I would make sure that my kids speak my own language even if they don't want 2.…if they don't learn and if they want to learn when they grew up that will take while to them to learn their language its only wasting time, so its better to not miss chance to teach something very important to kids. (12WP_N7/041008)

In the follow up interview, Null also added a practical aspect of teaching more languages, and he even affirmed his belief by asking me if I have students who cannot speak the parents' language in my Korean classes in college:

> N: Even in your class, there are some Koreans who don't speak Korean?
>
> C: Oh, yeah.
>
> N: You see? Waste of time.
>
> C: Waste of time, waste of money.
>
> N: Yeah, more language like is good. You can help people with it and you can use it. (INT_N3/526-530/061608)

As his favorable association with his Uzbek name and language is indicative of his strong Uzbek identity, strong familial and religious values and principles, which to him are intertwined, signified his identity as Uzbek. In one club meeting, one chapter from *Beacon Hill Boys* motivated us to discuss if their families share family history, which Dan's family did not in the book. In the meeting, Null differentiated himself from others who did not place importance on sharing family history. When asked to elaborate

on his view, Null took examples of both religion and family to support his contention that

knowing about history of the things that he values even accentuates the meaning:

> It's like if you don't know your history, to know your own religion, let's
> say, you are Christian, you have to know Christian, you have to know the
> history. If you don't know the history, how can you believe in your
> religion? You have to know   the history. So something important to you
> is to believe in your religion. And this kind of thing to know your family
> and to know your mom, you have to know her history. Who was she, what
> did she do, so you can be proud of her and talk to other people.
> (INT_N3/751-756/061608)

As his view on sharing family history indicates, Null firmly believed that staying

with family and building a close relationship was a priority in life. Heated discussion

about boarding school and relationship with family drawn from *Coming Home Again* led

us to write about it again on the Wiki. In the posting, Null stressed that money and

education, which other club members had considered as more important than the

relationship with family, were not as important as family:

> I think education is important but living with family is important also at
> the young age, because life is not about money. Let's say your kid goes to
> boarding school and later on when he gets older he becomes rich gets very
> good job, but he may be changed during boarding school. maybe he start
> hates you, maybe he may not help you.…i think at this age children should
> be with their parents and go to regular school. (6WP_N3/031908)

When asked to think of something he did not like about American culture, Null

without hesitance pointed out, "like not being respectful to the parents"

(INT_N2/497/041508). Null furthermore contrasted Uzbeks who were respectful to

parents with Americans who were not and added how this value is emphasized in his

religion as well. Null contended that since parents sacrifice too much to raise children,

the least duty that children can do is to show respect:

> But I know about my country people that they cannot talk to parents like

[disrespectfully]. They cannot say no to their parents. They have to respect their parents. And that's what all the religious people do. Like I said, we have rules and stuff and we think that we have to respect parents because they grew us. And we cannot never pay them back by money or something, whatever they did to us. Like they don't sleep at night. Whenever we cry, they give us food so that's why you cannot pay them back never, so we have to at least respect them. Yeah, that's what we [Uzbeks] think. (INT_N2/460-467/041508)

In addition to respect, being truthful was an important familial and religious value to Null, "Lying is bad" (INT_N2/486/041508). Null talked about how he respected his family who does not lie, "He[my father] is like a person that he never lies….She [my mom] doesn't lie also.….my sister is the same thing. Like my brother, she works hard and she doesn't lie" (INT_N3/265, 277, 291/061608). Being boastful was also looked down upon in his religion and family, "[We, Uzbeks, like] shy, naturally shy for a religious person. Being shy is better than being like (inaudible)" (INT_N2/467/041508). Even though Null used the word, shy, to describe a good quality for religious Uzbeks, in the last interview, I confirmed that he meant modesty not shyness. He agreed with this term and then continued to condemn immigrants who turn like Americans who are not modest:

> …we like shy people. In my country, when you go to apply for a job, if you say that I am really hard worker, You can hire me and then I will do whatever you say and I am educated, if you say that, they would be like….Yeah. You are not shy. It's like a cultural stuff. In here, whoever comes here, like after five years, you see them, they are like Americans. I am smart. In my country no one says that. If they ask, are you smart? Yeah, a little bit. (INT_N2/468-471, 475-477/041508)

Many occasions, Null criticized his perceptions of Americans who are boastful and who are not modest and contrasted them with Asians and Uzbeks. He contended that Americans in the job interviews promote themselves too much, and American students in school also show off their grades, which Asians do not often do:

> In my country, when you go apply for a job, and in here they would be like I am really smart and I work real hard and I have this degree in this and this. And they ask are you good at this? and you are like I am really good. In my country, I am not really good. (N & R laugh) In here you have to say I am really smart and over there, no,, but I can do, but in here, even if they don't know how to do it, they are like yeah, I know (R & N laugh). (6CM/545-549/032908)

Trying to behave well and to be kind with people was another value that Null held on to. He believed in Karma, by which he firmly believed his actions in the past were the answers for happenings at the present time. When discussing an essay, *Bad luck woman*, Null connected to this story profoundly and believed that the bad luck person, Ms. Ghosh, whom other participants thought of as coincidentally unlucky, had done truly bad things in the past, so whatever happening with her was all her fault:

> Everything she [Ms. Ghosh] has is like her fault. Maybe she did something bad when she was young. Whatever you do, like you do bad things when you are young, and you don't care about anything, and when you get old, it happens to you. But you did bad things too. Like other people or something, you said something bad to other people. If you are nasty to everyone, if you are not good, when you get, like time by time, that's what it hear from you….I know some people like they are bad to their parents when they were young. They curse to everyone and when they get older, they have children, and their children doing the same thing. (3CM/176-185/030108)

In an individual interview, when asked what he could remember among the things that we had read by that point, Null pointed out *Bad Luck Woman* and explained that he tries to be responsible for his actions because he believed what he did in the past affects his present life, "Yeah, when I do bad stuff- I don't want to do it ,but I do it, and after that, when I get some bad luck, I would be like I did this one, so this is happening to me" (INT_N2/372-373/041508).

His religion was a big part of who he and of who his family was, but Null described it predominantly with respect to duties and rules by which he had to abide rather than spiritual connections, "I believe in my religion. I think it's true….And I am not that a religious person. But I have to do" (INT_N1/87, 92-93/020808). Null did not consider his family religious, but he made it clear that religious rules were utilized as principles and rules in his household:

> Yeah, my religion is important. We have a lot of rules. All the rules that we have to follow. We have to pray. We [my family] are not that religious person. We don't know everything in the religion. But we know a lot of rules and we think it's, we believe it's a true religion. (INT_N2/385-387/041508)

As following the rules of his religion was integral to his and his family's identity, living in harmony without breaking rules of the community presented itself multiple times as his important religious and familial value. In a discussion about whether looks matter posed by another club member, Null stressed that looks matter and should follow the rules of what's expected in a work place by getting a hair cut for work, "boss doesn't like people like with long hair and wearing" (6CM/62/032908). In a response to a character from a poem, *Assimilation*, who would feel shameful about bringing his own food to school, Null advised that he make his food presentable to other peers, "when you are eating a different thing, everyone will pay attention. Maybe he can make it smaller or make it cooler and make it nice." (3CM/769-770/030108). Furthermore, he added to live in harmony with others, she should probably change her food in the posting below:

> I think she have to change her food and the way she act. maybe she have to bring American foods. if she doesn't like food in US, if she really wants to eat her own food then she should think of something that won't take anyones attention. maybe like not smelly food with big foodbag. as her

parent I would tell her to change her food or do something that everyone likes. (5WP_N2/031508)

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In a wiki response, Null again advised Dan, a main character from *Beacon Hill Boys*, take the advice from others and get haircut and abide by the community rules:

> I would tell him that he must change his hair style cut his hair and get a job. because he can't have everything that he likes and he can't ignore other people round him, he also have to do things that everybody likes and he shouldn't do things everyone disagree. (10WP_N5/033108)

In the last interview with Null, Null reiterated his point of doing things that other people in the community ask him to do, "You cannot just ignore other people, and do your own. To do something you want, you also have to do something that other people want. You cannot just do your own and get whatever you want" (INT_N3/504-506/061608).

Breaking rules to him was something a bad person would do, "[Quality of Asians is] not breaking rules because a good person follows rules. That's what we do" (INT_N2/487-488/041508) and he seemed to live by principles. In another discussion about a scene where Jerry plays loud music in a study hall and later gets in fights with Brad, and subsequently got caught and suspended by an assistant principal in *Beacon Hill Boys*, Null insisted that Jerry should not have played the music that loudly in school, therefore he violated the rules of the school, so it was fair that he got punished:

> Before he listened to music, if he knew he was playing music loudly, maybe he can kick him out because he is playing music at school (7CM/212-213/040508) …So, there is a school law. There is law.…You cannot make a loud noise there.…There should be silence, and they shouldn't talk loud….(7CM/365-374/040508)

Sense of Self as Learner: "Do I Seem Like I Speak English Very Well?"

Null behaved well in school and tried to obtain good grades in school through college education:

> I am trying to get good grades at school. I like math. My computer and math classes are my hobby. And trying to go to a college, which is a computer college after I graduate from school. But for now getting good grades and behaving well at school [is my goal]. (INT_N1/160-163/020808)

Null talked proudly about not having to go to summer school due to passing all the classes in the last interview, "I passed all the classes, and I don't have to go to summer school" (INT_N3/23/061608). Null also positively regarded that participation in the club helped him improve reading, in which he does not engage often in school, "I have learned a lot of stuff. Like maybe like some words, I didn't know how to spell, asking questions, reading a little bit-I have improved a little bit….My reading was uh at school, we don't do a lot of readings" (INT_N3/64-67/061608). Throughout the club meetings, Null initiated questions about grades, "What you got? Math?... How about you?...I got the highest. I got 102" (6CM/296-303/032908). Interestingly, being boastful about his math grades seems to contradict his strong admonishment of Americans who he believed are not modest about their abilities.

Overall, Null had positive school experiences with his teachers, which in part shapes his positive identity as a learner, "my favorite teachers are math teacher, computer teacher, world history teacher….And the ESL teacher too. I think all the teachers are great teachers….They are teaching me very well and learning a lot" (INT_N1/319, 321, 323/020808). His involvement in two different extracurricular activities also substantiates his strong identification with learning in school. Null was an active member in a

technology club that focused on computer programming and in a Turkish club that

allowed Null to forge a bond with his Turkish teachers:

> I am in Tech Fair…. it's programming stuff. We have to use Visual Basic
> program….Yes. And I am in a Turkish club too. Because one teacher
> asked me and I didn't say no. We learn about some culture and we see
> videos about Turkish and we eat Turkish food. (INT_N1/280, 282, 286-
> 288/020808)

Some Turkish teachers, with whom Null identified due in part to the same

religion, helped Null create a positive sense of identity as learner. They understood Null's

problems as a recent immigrant ELL, and thus, Null found them accessible and caring,

"there are Turkish teachers that teach me a lot, like after school project that we have. If

we have any problems, we go to the teacher, and ask them so they can help us."

(INT_N1/276-278/020808). One Turkish teacher particularly encouraged him to study

harder and to be confident as an ELL. In fact, he invited Null to present his cultural and

religious beliefs in English at a competition that was held in a mosque on a Sunday. I

helped Null prepare for the presentation, which Null took seriously (RJE/042008). Later,

Null explained that he received second place in that competition, in a club meeting where

we discussed people that encourage us, in light of reading two chapters in *Beacon Hill

Boys*:

> My [Turkish] teacher is like that [encourages me]. At the competition, he
> came to the competition. I didn't know I was going to make it, but he said
> "No. you can do it", and he said at least third place, and I got the 2nd place
> (laughs), So. He is the one that always tells me. (9CM/274-276/042608)

As much as Null appreciated caring teachers, he disapproved of other teachers

who did not display his understanding of good teaching. Null believed that teachers in the

US had too low expectations of students and that they made work too easy for students.

In one club meeting where we discussed the quality of education in the US in light of

reading *Two Kinds*, Null was critical of an inadequate level of curriculum in the US and

teachers' tendency to spoon-feed students:

> The thing is when I was in my country, the third grade or second grade, I am learning here the same here….The thing is when I have a test, you gotta take a test, let's say tomorrow, and then they give you a study guide. This is the same thing as the test that I learned. Then I say, oh, ok. (laughs) like I use my study guide and then oh, it's right here. It's like nothing….(laughs) yeah. They always say "if you do this class work, who would do first? And if you all do this, we will have a pizza party"….Before giving the class work, they say "please do this." (2CM/603-621/021608)

When asked to elaborate on his disappointments by some teachers in a follow up

interview, Null openly reprimanded teachers who heavily rely on worksheets and who

fail to display authority by leveling themselves with students:

> Some of the teachers they don't really care about teaching and they don't really want to teach. They think they just think what we think. Like one day she [one teacher] said, "we don't do stupid book work, let's do fun stuff." I know that she hates to teach...She do give us worksheets.…I just don't learn anything. I just find things from the Internet. This is this and this is that. This teaching is different than just giving a worksheet and getting it back. So that's how a lot of teachers teach us….some students are smart and they can just learn. But other students are not smart. They can find answers, but it's not learning. (INT_N2/510-524/041508)

Null also did not identify with American students who do not show respect, a vital

familial and religious value to him, "but in here [US] if they [teachers] say something,

they [students] can say "shut up" (everyone laughs)." (2CM/624-625/021608), and "You

[American students] can sleep in class."(2CM/627/021608). Null often compared the

level of teachers' authority in his country to that of teachers in the US and attributed

American students' disrespectful behaviors to the teachers' lack of authority, "you don't

learn anything at school. In my country, in other countries, if you don't learn, teachers hit

you"(1CM/54-55/020908). Null also appreciated teachers' legitimate role to challenge

students academically and criticized American students who do not appreciate the

teachers' role:

> …when you at school, [some Americans say that] "I hate teachers, this teacher and this teacher". They are here to teach you. They are not here to hate you or fail you. If they try to teach you, they want you to work hard. You would like, "this teacher hates me, and they would be like this teacher hates me making me work hard." No, this teacher likes you making you work hard (laughs). They try to make you better. That's the part I don't like because they never understand that teachers are trying to help you .(INT_N2/501-506/041508)

Despite Null's positive association with school and his desire to receive good

grades, his being an ELL often made it difficult for him to stay positive about learning.

Null felt limited to express himself in English due to language constraints, "you know I

still have a lot of words that I don't know" (INT_N3/610/061608), and thus it made him

frustrated at times especially when he engages in arguments with people, "it's [speaking]

still difficult. You know I cannot still talk to people a lot because sometimes when I

argue, if I cannot say what I want to say, it makes me feel bad because I cannot make

them understand." (INT_N3/700-702/061608). Arguing was an important trait to describe

Null as he actively utilized it to consolidate his strong beliefs. When asked to explain

how he felt about hearing contrasting opinions expressed by other club members, Null

replied that he had the religious obligation to right their wrong thinking and doings. As

such, Null would argue with them, "I feel that they are completely wrong. I just tell them

that's wrong because it's my responsibility…In my religion, if somebody is doing wrong

stuff, you have to, you cannot ignore them" (INT_N2/392-394/041508).

Although Null confidently engaged in debates, Null continued to express his frustration with English. This prevented him from taking a full participation in academic activities in school:

> No. I don't argue at school. It depends on the topics….No. I don't talk a lot cause I feel like I don't. When I argue in my language, I can argue because I know my language 100 percent. I know what I want to say, I can say even hard words. But in English, when I argue, I hate one part. What I hate is when I argue if I can't say what I want to say….Like right word. If I don't know how to say it. That's why I don't argue a lot. (INT_N2/61-68/041508)

Null's exasperation with his unsophisticated English sometimes caused him to reveal bitterness. In one club meeting, when discussing chapters in *Beacon Hill Boys*, a word, spy, came up. Not understanding the word, Null asked about it. In the excerpt, Null responded bitterly when Kush was surprised to find out that Null did not know the word:

> N: What spy means?
>
> H: Detectives.
>
> K: You are not serious. You are on this one side and you have this enemy that sees what you do.
>
> H: And tell them.
>
> N: Do I seem like I speak English very well? (7CM/693-698/040508)

When asked to elaborate on what he meant in the club meeting, Null explained, "Because I think I still have accent and stuff" (INT_N2/403/041508). Null was also self conscious about his speaking abilities. In the excerpt below, Null asked Kush, who did not know English like him at the entry to the US, how long it would take him to master the language:

> N: Do you know like full, 100%? I mean you know everything?

How many percents do you know?

K: What?

N: How many percent, 70, or 80% (laughs)

C: He's a math person. He has to put number to everything (everyone laughs).

N: I mean like. I was thinking about how I learn 100%. How long it takes, yeah because I don't speak English very well, even now, still now. I don't know a lot of words, hard words. I was thinking about how long it takes to learn. (6CM/710-717/032908)

However, Null was content with a gradual progress in speaking, "I am getting a little bit better there [with speaking in English] (laughs) time by time." (INT_N2/74/041508). Moreover, in the last interview, when asked to rate his speaking, Null grew confident in speaking English. Although Null still recognized his limitations, he expressed an emergent ownership of English language, primarily by acknowledging American peers' inadequate knowledge of English language:

I think I am speaking like great. I know it's not (laughs). It sounds like for everybody you know when you speak other language. You can like you can talk like a little bit better and you speak really good and sounds like American you know. I think I mean when I talk, I sound like that at school. But I know it's not. I think like 60-70 percent. I am not sure….I mean Americans they don't speak 100 percent...I talk to my American friends, and they say "I don't speak 100 percent American" and they are like he said that "I am learning". The guy was like memorizing grammar, words, and I was like "you don't even know this one?" He was like "no, I have a literature class. I have to memorize this." I was like, "ok, then you don't speak English." (INT_N3/581-593/061608)

Although Null increasingly gained confidence in speaking English, he dismissed the possibility of becoming a confident English writer. When talking about writing activities in his ESOL class, Null said, "uh, I don't really enjoy writing.(laughs)" (INT_N2/128/041508). Null expressed that writing was too challenging for him and that

he tried to hire somebody to write his immigration stories, which he finds compelling to tell (RJE/031708; 042008). When asked to explain his writing practices, Null was negative about improving his writing in English, "I don't think I can improve [writing in English]. I can't. It's hard for me to do it that I don't really enjoy doing it. It's really hard" (INT_N2/144-145/041508).

Null employed various strategies to cope with the difficulties of being an ELL. Null frequently attributed online games and chatting on online messengers to help him learn English:

> Like I used to play games, online games. That's how I learned how to spell. ….Yeah, you can chat, and there is work inside the game. I was the merchant, which is inside people, hundreds of people. To do a merchant, you have to know how to speak English….buy stuff and sell stuff on people….So you have to know how to say things and when people talk, you see one word and you are interested in the game so you learn fast….I feel that I learned a lot of spelling in that game because my friends we got in to the same ESOL class. I do more than they do. I never learned in class how to spell and stuff. (INT_N2/280-294/041508)

Null also tended to explain himself in a lengthier manner by incorporating examples to substantiate his arguments. For example, in one club meeting where we discussed *Bad luck woman,* Null provided a lengthy description of a story that depicted a man who was almost abandoned by his son because he did the same to his own father in the past. This story illustrated his belief in karma and his reasons to do good deeds, "I heard something when I was young. One guy, he get really old and he lived with his son and his son has wife, and wife was really bad.…Yeah, "I abandoned my father before", and then the son cried" (3CM/205-213/030108). In another club meeting, Null shared a story of a family that personally witnessed a manifestation of God to augment his arguments that God does exist to other club members, "In Kyrgyzstan, in Asia, there is

one family. They have animals in the house, and he has like 4 chickens… The chicken started to say Allah, God, like a person" (6CM/879-883/032908). When asked about the use of examples in his talk, Null attributed it to his English, "I do it because I don't speak English very well. I just use whatever I know to explain" (INT_N3/762-763/061608).

Null also wrote lengthier sentences as a coping strategy for an ELL. When asked about his writing experience on the wiki, Null pointed out the limitations of the website that did not permit him to write more than three hundred words, within which he could not fully develop his ideas:

> When I pressed submit, it said you cannot put more than 300, so I try to make it shorter but in my, I am a new speaker, so I don't think I can make words in sentences really short. I express myself really long. (INT_N2/323-325/041508)

As an ELL, Null often resorted to plagiarizing school work which he failed to recognize as a violation of rules. In a club meeting, Null voluntarily shared that he received an A in an assignment after copying work from the web. When Kush explained its serious consequences to him, Null explained that plagiarizing is an inevitable solution for ELLs like him who face enormous academic challenges while trying to succeed at school work. Null, therefore, justified his actions to avoid receiving bad grades. Null also tried to justify copying work from the Internet by condemning teachers who adopt resources from the web, which Null regarded as copying:

> N: And then I didn't know how to do it, so I was searching and stuff. And then it was about revolution. I put revolution, and then an essay came up and I copied it. Copied and pasted it and then (C & N laugh) my teacher was like "wow, that's really good." I think I got like 100.…
>
> K: You can go to jail for that.
>
> N: For copying and paste?

K: Or you can get kicked out from high school….

N: It's really hard sometimes I can't really write stuff….And you got all the answers on Google. When you have answers, you don't want to do work (R laughs). You get homework and then there's questions like. You put the questions on Google to get answers like if you….But teacher is let to use that on the website. So why am I supposed to find it on the internet and copy (laughs)?...I mean when you are new here, you don't even know English, and you don't know what to do and you got a lot of work….yeah, but you don't want to get zero too. (4CM/380-459/031508)

Sense of Self as Recent Member of the US: "It's Not Going to Be One [Single World]"

As a newcomer to the US, Null often found himself negotiating his identities. Null shared that his friends in Uzbekistan would consider him funny, "they [friends back home] think I am funny too." (INT_N3/352/061608) as his family thinks of him, and he described himself as outspoken in his country, "I was the loudest person in my class and made fun of everyone in class" (7CM/339-340/040508). In the RTW club, Null also voiced his opinions freely and made people laugh, and he was not by far a quiet person. However, Null vividly recalled how he remained quiet and serious during his first year in the US. As he gained confidence in English, he started to reclaim his personality as being talkative and funny. When asked to describe himself in the first interview, Null showed contrasting views about himself, both serious and funny:

I am a serious person. I don't like talking much. Maybe I do. In my country, I used to talking much. Here maybe I have English problems. Sometimes, I can't say what I want to say exactly. That's why I don't like talking too much. Actually, I am like a funny person. (INT_N1/16-19/020808)

When asked to elaborate on this in the last interview, Null reflected on his identity changes during his first, second, and third year in the US. Null articulated that when he

lacked English skills, he considered himself quiet and serious. However, as he achieved

proficiency in English, he began to feel like himself again who were funny and talkative:

> First year, I was very quiet. I didn't say a word and people didn't even hear
> me saying a word all year. The second year, I did a little bit (laughs), and
> the third year, this year, I was really loud you know a little bit not that
> much.…But I was like no one thought I was funny. Everyone thought I
> was. I thought I was serious too because I didn't speak English and I
> wasn't talking to anyone. And I got used to it, for two years, and this year,
> I have lots of friends. I have changed. (INT_N3/687-690, 831-
> 834/061608)

In addition to having to negotiate identities as a recent immigrant to the US, Null

was troubled by being classified as an Asian in the US. During the initial phone

conversation with him, I told him that I was looking for Asian students for my study. Null

straightforwardly denied that he was Asian (RJE/021908). Null resisted to be broadly

defined as Asian as he strongly identified himself as Uzbek, his birth place, "[I am]

Uzbek. …It's about the country you are born in. If Korean, you are born in Korea"

(2CM/250-256/021608). But his identification was not consistent throughout the club

meetings, which induced laughter from other club members who noticed it. In the excerpt

below, Null defined himself as Central Asian, which he stressed different from other

Asians but sharing similar traits, such as shyness, with other Asians:

> C: Do you consider yourself Asian?
>
> N: No, I am central Asian (K,R, H, C laugh).
>
> C: So what about Central Asians?
>
> N: Central Asians are in the center of Asia. We are different than
>   Asians. I am just central Asian.…Central Asia and Asia are
>   different I think but I am not sure.…Central Asians are shy too
>   [like Asians]. (7CM/328-337/040508)

In the following club meeting, when the topic was brought up again, Null resisted being classified as Asian or Central Asian but persisted to be identified as Uzbek. Null continued to accentuate the fallacy that we forcefully classify people into boxes based on an elusive construct like Asian:

> N: No. I don't feel like Asian.
>
> C: Central Asian.
>
> N: No Central Asian. I just feel like Uzbek (everyone laughs)….When you say Asians, it's all different. It's not same as Chinese people, Vietnamese are not same as Koreans. (8CM/92-98/041908)

The topic of what it means to be an Asian ELL in the US was at the core of club discussions. As such, it is probable that by the second interview, Null had grown frustrated in constantly differentiating himself from other Asians. In the second interview, when I carefully addressed him as a Central Asian, Null corrected me by asking me to call him Asian:

> C: So then, what are the qualities or values that Central Asians-you defined yourself as Central Asian. (laughs)
>
> N: Just Asian. (laughs)
>
> C: What are the values or qualities that you think Central Asians have that are different from other people, non-Central Asians?
>
> N: No, they are not different. I mean. (INT_N2/478-483/041508)

In addition to having to negotiate his identities as a recent member of the US, Null found a web community comforting and more accessible. Null spent a considerable amount of time on the computer, "I am on a messenger a lot." (3CM/826/030108). When

asked about writing activities that Null engaged in, Null pointed to chatting, "I chat….[I talk to] English people." (INT_N2/278-280/041508). When asked to elaborate on with whom he chatted, Null explained that he mostly chatted with English speakers than people who speak his language:

> 90 percent [of the people I chat with] is only Americans….I chat on *MySpace* and *Facebook* and *Hifive* and I have all of that.…Yeah, [I made] a lot of friends.…If I don't have to do anything, I think [I spend] more than 10 hours [on the computer]. If there is no one at home, that's all I do. (INT_N3/613-615, 641-648/061608)

Beyond his pursuits to become a computer programmer, Null regarded the time on the computer as a way to connect to his peer groups in the US. Null frequently reminisced about his intimate relationships with his friends in Uzbekistan. Recognizing circumstantial and cultural restraints to establish the same kind of friendship with peers in the US, Null sought a dedicated membership in the web community:

> Yeah, because all my friends are in the computer and game is on the computer and everything is on the computer….In my country, I didn't have time to go inside the house. I was outside every day, playing with my friends and swimming and all this, playing soccer, and go out with my friend. But here, you go outside and there is no one. If you want to meet your friends, you have to make an appointment, and say ok, you are going to see him at this time and this time. (INT_N3/650-657/061608)

Being active on the chat also forged a new identity in him as a legitimate English speaker/writer. Null proudly shared that his spelling and writing required for informal and conversational chat is native like:

> Writing in English? Pretty good because I chat with people and they don't know I don't speak English….I can just say I am an American, and they believe me (laughs)…Like my writing is better. Like my spelling is better. (INT_N3/601-608/061608)

As a recent member of the US, Null also developed a more profound connection to his religion. When Null came to the US, he was shocked by various religions due to

having lived in a relatively homogenous society. The diversity in the US heightened his sense of religious identity, "I wasn't good at my religion when I was in my country. I didn't know like when I came here I saw a lot of different religions and I know it's important" (INT_N1/90-92/020808). Null also forged a defense mechanism against people's prejudices and criticisms about Islam. Null frequently found himself defending his religion in the club and in the US. In a club meeting, whose discussion primarily revolved around religion, Null condemned people's misconceptions about Muslims and indiscreet generalizations that all the Muslims are terrorists:

> if you don't pray, you are not Moslem. You are Moslem, but bad Moslem. You have to pray five times a day, starting at the age of 12...When people see Moslems, they think they are terrorists….You know, 911, they said that Moslems did it. But actually it wasn't Moslems. (6CM/956-969/032908)

In the excerpt below, Null fiercely defended his religion in response to Kush's claim that Muslims attacked African villages with violence to convert them into Muslims:

> K: You know Christians, they try to convert other people to become Christian. Like everyone knows that right? But like 100 years later, Moslems tried to convert African people.
>
> N: They never tried.
>
> K: yeah, they do.
>
> N: No, what they do is they just in Moslem, they don't say try to convert people. They just tell you to show how you act and show how you live. So one Christian person sees you, and then if he likes you and what you are doing and acting and everything, Moslems say let them decide themselves….There are thousands of different Moslems and there is maybe one, he was the bad one. All the people are bad and good. (8CM/298-334/041908)

Instead of engaging in arguments to defend his religion, Null sometimes resorted to disregarding people's prejudice. In one club meeting where there was a scene from the book, *Beacon Hill Boys*, in which an American boy called all the Japanese students in one class spies, Null made connections to this story by describing an anecdote in which he witnessed a fellow Muslim student being ridiculed because of his religion:

> There was an Afghan guy in my old school, and American black people called him Osama Bin Laden, and they said that Bin Laden is like uncle-in-law. They just made fun of him. And someone said in class all Muslims are terrorists, but we don't really care….I know I am not a terrorist, so I just ignore it….Yeah, they [Americans] are just crazy. (7CM/716-723/040508)

In addition to having to defend his religion, living in the US has made Null interpret changes that occur in people's lives as a result of being exposed to different cultures. Null disapproved of indiscreetly adopting cultural practices of others. He strongly contended that one should uphold his own traditions and values instead of adopting and learning from other cultures. Discussion of a Japanese American boy, Eddie, from *Beacon Hill Boys*, who acted like a black person, reminded Null of a Uzbek person who was assimilated to the American culture. Null strongly condemned him for discarding Uzbek identity by instead adopting black culture:

> Oh, one guy in my country, he lives here. He completely changed. He got like all this stuff and everything like black people. We call him stupid (everybody laughs) because like why do people try to be someone? Why don't they make their own you know. (6CM/409-414/032908)

Null continued to criticize copying cultural practices by referring to Uzbek rappers who carelessly adopt everything from black rappers, including the way they dress. Null espoused adopting rap music but suggested that they do so by creating their own style reflecting their own cultural codes:

In my country, there is now there are rappers in my country. Now there are rappers wearing black stuff. They are doing like hair stuff and copying from others. Why don't you make your own?…let's see, you are Korean and try to look like Korean and the way you guys dress that would be like better instead of copying from other people, other culture….Yeah. And he is the first rapper in my country and he came up with copying from others. It's like really stupid….I mean it's ok if a singer sings rap. It doesn't mean that copy your rap, copy how they dress, and then you are copying everything. (6CM/411-464/032908)

Inspired by the profound and lengthy discussion about copying from other cultures, I posed a prompt that pushed their thinking about American culture. Consistent with his position on the issue revealed in the club meeting, Null wrote in his posting that he would not adopt anything from it although he admitted inevitable changes due to living in a different place:

I don't think I would like to copy anything because i have not copied anything so far, and i don't want to copy. but i have changed little bit after i came to US and its not something I copied from others, its just automatically changes when you go to another country. (11WP_N6/033108)

Null's comments about holding onto one's traditions instead f indiscreetly copying from another culture, however, seem to be contradictory to what he had said about a boy in a poem, *Assimilation*. Recall that Null had suggested that the boy should try to fit in with American peers and to take American food to school. This contradiction may suggest his identity being multiple, shifting, and contradicting at times.

Although Null vehemently denied the influence of American culture on him, Null revealed that he cared for some aspects of freedom in the US. Null especially liked the fact that people can freely express their thinking without restraints, "good ones [American values] are (pauses), saying whatever you want to say, talk freely.…They show and they tell you what they want to say." (INT_N2/491-495/041508). Null revealed

that he liked the freedom given to American students with regard to their rights to speak up. Having been acquainted with American schooling where teachers do not exert an authoritarian role, Null expressed that he would not tolerate abuse and mistreatment by Uzbek teachers if he goes back. He added that he might ask for a document that legally permits them to abuse students in his country:

> Because it's a free country (laughs). I think at school, the teacher cannot touch you, and cannot say you "shut up". They can't say you shut up. In my country, the teacher can touch you and they beat you and curse and everything. I would be like "I let them curse me?" If I go there, if I go to college in my country, I would be like "if they curse, I would be like calling police (laughs)"….Yeah. Really. How do they hit me? I would be like thinking freely now because I go to school and whatever rules in school...When I go there, let's say, if they curse at me, I start getting in trouble. Because I will say "let me see the documents that say you can hit students and curse students." (INT_N2/442-452/041508)

Even though Null endorsed freedom given to students in that it allowed them to speak freely to teachers and to demand their needs without fears, Null did not espouse excessive freedom given to American students who exhibit unjustifiable behaviors. In the first club meeting where we discussed *Hybrid*, we discussed what it means to be corrupted by America, which was directly taken from a line in the poem. Null pointed out, "drugs at school…. There's this one girl. She is fifteen and she is pregnant at school" (1CM/21-39/020908). Null further agreed with Ram who believed that the majority of problems in America stem from excessive freedom:

> That's why there are some problems. Like in other countries, they do not have any problems. In school, there are no drugs. But here, you do drugs and you do bad stuff, and you don't learn anything at school….There's so much like freedom. (1CM/52-64/020908)

Null was also concerned with his younger brother who desires to gain more control of his life than being directed by his family. In a club meeting where the poem,

Hybrid, was discussed, I asked participants if they could relate to the conflicts between the daughter and the father in the poem. Null responded:

> My younger brother may be sometimes different. We have like our own cultural like when we eat and do something, he is little different and act like American and my mom and dad really don't like it and they get mad at him because of that (laughs)....Even when we tell him to do something, he said "no, I don't want to". He is like an American now (laughs). (2CM/67-73/021609)

As a recent member of the US, Null also believed that the worlds inside his house and outside of it would never be bridged as there are fundamental differences in the two. While reflecting on the shock of his first time in the US, Null explained the divided worlds, "at home, we only speak Uzbek. At school only English. Different world. When I come home, it's different. When I go to school, it's different" (INT_N1/229-231/020808) and called the world outside home "another planet" (INT_N3/443/061608). When asked to elaborate on the divided worlds, Null stressed that they will continue to run parallel to each other, and it is something inherent in immigrant family's life in the US:

> N: ...to make it one [world], you have to be like if you come here, like inside the house, outside one, you should be like Americans. or Americans should be like yours (laughs). So it's not going to be one.
>
> C: So you think it's never going to be one world.
>
> N: One world, yeah. Every day changing different outside and inside.
>
> C: How do you feel about having those two worlds?
>
> N: I feel not bad. It's ok.
>
> C: It's life? (laughs)
>
> N: Yeah. You can't change it so. (INT_N3/474-482/061608)

Summary of Null

Null, a 10th grade boy, whose family settled in the US as political refugees showed a strong connection to his country, Uzbekistan and its people. Due in part to his abrupt transitions to the US, Null still missed a lot of things about his country. His positive association with his names and his language and poems that he wrote to express his frustration and sadness over the political situation in his country attest to this. Null's life was also centered on familial and religious principles and rules, which included respect, modesty, altruism, honesty, harmony, and karma.

As a future computer programmer, Null tried his best to obtain good grades and maintained intimate relationship with some teachers who shared similar background, like religion. Null also participated in extracurricular activities. His strong value on education was also revealed through his criticisms of inadequate teaching and display of teachers' low expectations of students in the US. As much as Null tried to excel in school work, he often experienced frustrations due to language constraints as an ELL. As an ELL, Null utilized various strategies to improve proficiency in English through playing video games, chatting in English, and explaining in lengthier sentences with examples. As an ELL, Null also resorted to copying school work from sources from the Internet to pass classes. In addition, in the process of learning English, Null articulated identity changes. As a recent member of the US, Null found many ways to connect to his peers, such as by joining a web community. However, Null believed that his home world and school world still continue to be disconnected.

Ram: Performing Goal-Oriented Identity

Ram was an 11th grade boy whose family emigrated from New Delhi, India, about

eight months ago. Transition to the US was not impinged on him as, "coming to USA was 95% my decision" (7WP_R7/032108). Ram was the only one who responded to my flier given by his older brother and mother who were present at an Asian supermarket in which I attempted to recruit participants. After his initial contact, Ram had to wait for about three months until I finally gathered a group for the study. Ram attended a high school that performed well academically and that attracted many Asian students. In fact, Ram's uncle who helped his family come to the US recommended the school for its academic excellence. The medium of instruction in schools that Ram attended in India was English, and thus Ram was fluent in English, "I studied in a private school, so it was English medium" (INT_R3/290/062808). Due to having used English since an early age, Hindi and English felt the same to Ram, "English and Hindi are quite the same. There is the same, and it's the way they are written and pronounce. Like I am using Hindi and English from nursery" (INT_R2/354-356/040908). However, Ram was currently placed in ESL classes as he was new to the US and needed help with academic English.

Ram was a shy, serious boy with few words. Ram said, "my cousin sister, in India once told me that "you could laugh. It doesn't cost you money to laugh or to talk"" (INT_R3/505-506/062808). Ram said that he did not like to talk a lot and tended to talk when there was an absolute need for it, "I am very shy (INT_R1/10/020808) …I talk to the point. Nothing much and nothing less…. but I don't like to talk too much. I like being alone most of time." (INT_R1/13, 275-276/020808). When asked about his perceived contributions to the RTW club, Ram answered, "[I did not talk a lot in the club] because I only talked when there was a need of talking."(INT_R3/405/062808). Instead of interacting with people, Ram enjoyed being alone, and music and computer accompany

him, "[when I am home] I listen to the music only or play a game on the computer."
(INT_R1/8/020808). Music was more than a hobby but rather a big part of who he was.
Ram wrote in the introduction of himself on the Wiki, "i like to listen to music (soft)."
(1WP_R1/020908). To the club meetings, Ram would always bring his I-pod filled with
different Indian music, especially old music he was drawn to (RJE/030308), so we
listened to them in the car together. Ram also said that he listened to different kinds of
music depending on his mood (RJE/033108). Ram was goal driven thus knew what he
wanted to be in the future, "I want to be a computer engineer or do computer."
(2CM/546/021608).

Because Ram was introverted and tended to keep things to himself, "I just like to
be within myself, not interacting with anyone" (INT_R3/503-504/062808), Ram did not
easily provide personal opinions about things or himself in the club meetings. Instead,
Ram told stories factually, removed from his own emotions and feelings and sometimes
took on the facilitator's role in earlier meetings (RJE/030308). The traits about him may
explain why Ram did not talk about his family before I explicitly asked him in the last
interview. Ram said that he did not talk to his family members, his father, mother, and
older brother, a lot and he attributed that to his introverted personality, "we don't discuss
many things, but when it comes to sports and things like that, then we discuss a lot. But
it's mainly because of me." (INT_R3/502-503/062808).

Although Ram considered himself shy and reserved, he opened up a lot in the
club over time. As he put it, "It [the club] opened me a bit. Like I was shy, so it opened
me A LOT-A LOT of how to interact with people whom I don't know" (INT_R3/353-
354/062808). I have built a rapport with him to the extent that Ram once shared with me

that I was the first person with whom he was sharing specific information, which he did not even tell his family (RJE/033108). As much as I enjoyed talking to him one on one during the interviews, Ram seemed to enjoy our conversations. Ram's responses were detailed and well thought-out in the interviews. Ram was the only one who completed the entire wiki postings. First wiki postings resembled writing conventions practiced in school with full blown paragraphs delineating his ideas, but Ram gradually started to write freely. Compared to his significant contributions in interviews and wiki postings, Ram was a little bit reserved to voice his personal opinions especially in the first few meetings. Ram reserved his direct connections to his personal lives and for that reason, Null labeled him a quiet Asian boy. However, as stubborn as he claims he could be (RJE/042908), Ram vehemently expressed his opinions when they were met with opposing opinions in the club.

Sense of Self as Indian/Asian: "I Have Been Compared Many Times in Different Aspects"

Ram identified himself as Indian. His positive association with his name and languages and Indian mentality and Indian values that Ram explained in length attest to this. When asked to talk about his name in the first meeting, Ram explained the meaning of his name and nicknames matter-of-factly:

> It [my name] means silver….In Hindi, so when you translate it in English, it means silver….Yeah, my family calls me a different name. It's Rajji….My Indian friends call me Rajji and my friends here call me Ram or my last name because it's easier for them to call my last name. (INT_R1/73-86/020808)

Although Ram first displayed a somewhat lukewarm attitude toward his name, he

later revealed that he cared about his name. In a club meeting where we discussed Brad

who changed his last name to something simple for Americans to easily pronounce it in

Beacon Hill Boys, Ram did not endorse the idea of changing name, which is core of who

he is. Ram also felt offended when his name was mispronounced by many Americans, "I

feel really bad at the way my name was pronounced here by Americans…. I don't think

it's a good thing to change your name. It presents your personality. It's not a good thing to

change" (6CM/782-791/032908). In addition to his names, being a multilingual was a

vital aspect of who he was as Indian. As Ram wrote in the introduction to himself on

Wiki, he considered being multilingual as an integral part of who he is, "I speak 3-4

languages" (1WP_R1/020908). The languages Ram could speak include:

> English, Hindi, and Sanskrit, I can't speak but I can read it [Sanskrit] and
> get information from it and I can write it. And there is another language
> that I cannot speak but I can understand. That's what my grandparents
> used to speak, and my parents use it. That's something I like. I like this
> language, Punjabi. (INT_R2/329-332/040908)

Ram continued to enthusiastically narrate the versatility of knowing different

languages to express different emotions and to engage in different activities. Whereas

Ram exclusively used English and Hindi to engage in serious talk and academics, he and

his family used Punjabi when having a good time with each other. Ram particularly

highlighted the positive and easygoing nature of people who spoke Punjabi as reasons

why he favored that language:

> It's [Punjabi language] fun. Like the people from the area, they are
> colorful people. …but their behavior and they are not worried about
> anything. They speak really loud and laugh. They are not very serious
> thinking people, but there may be few, but their music is very different.
> That's what I like about it.…I also like it because my parents used to live
> there and we all have the same like we speak this while we are happy and
> when we are teasing someone. We use that because it's fun.…[for serious

talk, we use] English and Hindi. (INT_R2/334-338, 345-351/040908)

Ram was also acutely aware that being multilingual was advantageous when learning because he could use different languages to easily understand concepts. Ram explained having bilingual teachers in India helped him learn better, whose resources are not available in the US:

> We also had Indian teachers who can understand both Hindi and English. If there is something we don't understand, we can ask them something that you don't understand. Here if you don't understand one thing, you still have to ask in English in a different way. (INT_R2/364-367/040908)

Even though Ram spoke English, he firmly believed that Indians should speak Indian languages, not English between one another. Ram was adamant about speaking Hindi with his family and his Indian friends:

> Like me and my brother, our cousin, we all moved here and they moved here so we spoke in Hindi. We both have a full understanding of English, but still we like to talk in Hindi....When I am with Hulk, I don't think I should speak English, even with family. When I am with Hulk, my family or my brother, I should speak Hindi. (INT_R2/426-428, 447-448/040908)

Ram was also proud of the way he sounds when speaking English and criticized some Indians who compromise their accents to sound more like Americans. This is a clear indication that Ram had a strong Indian identity:

> If everybody is able to understand that [my accent], every educated person is able to understand that, then, there is no other thing there is no force I should change my accent. That's fine.…he [somebody] was telling me that the parents who like live here four or three years, they want their children to speak with an American accent. I don't know why they think like that. (INT_R2/319-324/040908)

In addition to the positive association with his name, languages, and accent, Ram showed a profound understanding of the plights and emotions of fellow Indians as he was

born and grew up in India. In a club meeting where we read *Hybrid*, we discussed what it means to be an Indian/Korean/Uzbek. Ram showed that he could profoundly connect to Indian people and practice its customs unlike Indians who were born outside of the country:

> I was born there. I know India better than people who are born here or who have been here for years. I understand the feelings of the people there and know better about them. And I follow the things that people used to do and do now-whether it's religion or. (2CM/271-274/021608)

In discussing *Bad luck woman*, which was an essay written by an Indian American lady named Lila, who made a pilgrimage visit to India, Ram made profound connections to it and talked extensively about having an Indian mentality. Ram explained that he understood why other Indians shunned Ms. Ghosh whose husband and son died accidentally. He added that Indians are superstitious and thus think that Ms. Ghosh would bring them misfortune as well. When I did not post a prompt about *Bad luck woman*, Ram voluntarily posted his opinion on it, "As a Indian I can better understand the situation of both Lila and Ms. Ghosh. This is a common thing in India. People are superstitious" (4WP_R4/030508). Ram also differentiated himself from Lila who failed to understand the local people after having lived in the US for a long time, therefore who lost the sensitivity of Indian mentality to understand its people:

> Things that happened with her [Ms. Ghosh] like her husband died and many people think what a superstition-I am from there, so I know that. People think that way. Like if you are just married and your husband died, you are blamed that you are a bad luck for him.....Some mentality, like if you are born in India, you have a different mentality. If you are born in here, you have a different mentality-the way you think and see what's going on….because she [Lila] is like an Indian American and she has learned the way people think and all these things in a different way than if you are in an Indian society, live in India. (3CM/78-94/030108)

In addition to talking about names, languages, and Indian mentality, Ram emphasized respect as an important trait of being Indian, "we [Indians] respect, I don't know about the parents here, but usually, it really depends on the way how the parents teach their children but I am taught to respect my elders."(INT_R2/387-389/040908). When we discussed *Hybrid* which described an Iranian American girl influenced by American culture, Ram denounced Americans who are disrespectful, "[an example of being corrupted by America is] disrespectful." (1CM/31/020908). Ram further criticized disrespectful behaviors displayed by American students, "people are using abusive languages with teachers. Students' fighting with teachers is not good." (INT_R1/56-57/020808).

Ram accentuated his duties as a child to show respect. When discussing *Two Kinds* that depicted a Chinese girl who was not happy with her mother's expectations, I asked the club members to consider if they had said something about stress under which they would be in the same situation. Ram responded that he would not have directly said no to the mother as it would be disrespectful, "no, like if she had said that, this will disrespect her parents, so she could have tried her best to learn the piano." (2CM/458-459/021608). Ram also showed filial piety especially with respect to the parents' religion. Although Ram does not believe in God, "I don't believe in any religion so it doesn't matter to me. You can call me atheist." (16WP_R17/042908), Ram sometimes went to the Hindu temple and practiced religion to show respect. In a club meeting where we discussed Dan who disliked some Japanese customs that his parents held on to in *Beacon Hill Boys*, Ram made a connection to it by saying that he engages in religious activities only to show respect to his parents:

N: No. Is your parents like religious?

R: Yeah. I do religious stuff because my parents want me to do. That's to show respect, I do that.

N: Do they know that you don't believe in anything?

R: Yeah. They know that. They just want me to do, so I do it because they still want me to do. If there is no one telling me, anyone except my parents. (6CM/918-923/032908)

In addition to respect, Ram regarded education as an important Indian value that he cherished. His paternal family members' hard work and determination to succeed through education served as a great inspiration for Ram who aspired to move up the ladder with the help of education:

> "[Good values I want to hold on to is] working hard and determination and maybe patience. My grandfather was from a village. And he wasn't that educated, but he moved to New Delhi, the capital city. Then my uncle, then my father worked hard and with determination, they reached a point where they were from a poor family to an upper middle class family. So that's something hard working and determination and the bridge for that was education. They all studied hard and reached a good point." (INT_R2/218-223/040908)

He seemed to use his family's past as inspiration for the future. Contrary to his value on the past, Ram did not believe in talking about family history, one of many things that bond family together, as he needs to focus on future plans instead of lingering in the past, "I don't think family history is that much important. It was past and we should leave it behind and think about our future and plan it well rather than thinking about past" (15WP_R16/042508). When asked to elaborate on the same topic, Ram reiterated that getting ahead with an education is more important to him. This indicates that Ram and his brother who were driven to succeed in the future might not have an intimate relationship with the parents who also valued sharing past events with the family:

My parents are more into history. They tell us they did that and he did that. But me and my brother are more into future, and what we are going to do in the next step and things like that. Like we are thinking what we will do next year, instead of thinking what happened last year. Everybody does that. Think about your future. Like we don't go that much into the past. (INT_R3/481-486/062808)

Ram also firmly believed that educated people are more mature, which he said is a pervasive quality for Asians. It was clear that Ram respected me and wanted to help me with the dissertation study because he valued my educational credentials (RJE/041109). Ram believed that Asians always plan for the future and value education, which makes them more mature than people who do otherwise:

I like to think that education is important. It's not that everybody thinks education is important. And that's mostly in this country. yeah. If you have education, then it makes you more mature and you know about life. And you think your future is with education. And you are more and you have beliefs and fundamentals in which you like to go by. If you are surrounded by educated people, then you have good thoughts in your mind and yeah….they [Asians] have brain (laughs) …. They [Asians] think before doing everything, they are more mature, and they are serious about their life and they know that education is more important than anything else. (INT_R2/303-308, 529-532/040908)

Ram also recognized that Asian children in general are under pressure due to an excessive emphasis on education in Asian countries which have fiercer competition. Because of Asian parents' expectations of their children, which the children might detest, Ram pointed out conflicts with parents inherent in Asians. In comparison, Ram explained his understanding of Americans as people who do not care as much about their future and who relatively maintain a smooth relationship with their parents:

But working at scores-that's fine with us [Asians]. But they [Americans] don't do that what's life ahead, and they never think about that. One thing is that's really good then you are happy with what you are doing right now, instead of worrying about and fighting with your family or friends about your future. (INT_R3/618-621/062808)

Ram explained that his parents also expect him to receive good grades like other Asian parents, "They [my parents] just want me to work hard. They just want to see I have good grades on my tests and that's all" (9CM/282-283/042608). Although Ram pointed out parents' overt expectations inherent in Asians matter-of-factly, this issue turned out to be a personal matter, "I have been compared to my older brother most of times. The way I behave, or the marks I get, I have been compared many times in different aspects. Sometimes it's good, but sometimes it's sad." (6CM/187-189/032908). Throughout club meetings, Ram's comments elucidated the stress of being compared to somebody else by parents. Ram strongly voiced that excessive expectations in the form of parents' comparing the child to somebody else devastates the child's self-confidence, which Ram aspired to gain. In response to things he wanted to change about himself, Ram replied "be more confident and not to be nervous." (INT_R1/21/020808). In a club meeting where we discussed *Two Kinds* that described a Chinese girl who had to live up to her mother's expectations, Ram denounced the mother for lowering her child's self-confidence:

> The thing is that the mother was comparing her with other girls of her age like her cousin. That was bad because it's affecting her confidence in herself. I think she was needy and genius and that was the problem. It just affects your confidence that you can do something. (2CM/526-529/021608)

The topic of self confidence presented itself again when Ram wrote a wiki entry about *Arturo's Flight*. Ram advised the boy who wanted to discard his love for literature due to peer pressure to be more confident and follow his heart, "…I will tell him that don't listen to any thing what others say and do what he wants to do.…Everyone can do

whatever he/she wants do if he has self confidence" (8WP_R8/032808). When I briefly

replied to his posting that it is hard to be confident all the time, he replied, "I can assure

that I lack that selfconfidence." (8WP_R9/032808). Furthermore, when Hulk raised his

point that being compared to somebody actually inspired him to study harder, Ram

strongly opposed it:

> I don't think comparing helps. It just lowers confidence. And it makes you feel bad because you cannot live up to the expectations. Or everybody has his own capabilities. And everybody is not the same. What one can do everybody can't do. So it's not good to compare anybody to anyone. (6CM/134-137/032908)

Sense of Self as Learner: "But If You Study, That Can Give You Much Much Much More

Money"

As Ram highlighted education as an Indian value, he was driven to study, to make

money, and to succeed in his life. Ram was a planner and goal driven. Ram became more

serious about his studies and laid out details for future plans, including a specific college

he hoped to go to:

> I am very serious about my studies…. In two years, I will be doing my computer engineering. After that, maybe I will be working for two or three years….So I plan everything and I hope that it goes well.…after I come here, I have become more serious about things. (INT_R1/2, 113-114, 128-131/020808)

The fact that Ram and his family came to the US for better education and better

opportunities clearly accounts for Ram's dedication to study at the entry of immigration,

"because the reason for us to come here was for the education and for better chances and

become something." (2CM/319-320/021608). Ram made it clear that his priority in his

life is to make money (RJE/033108). When asked about his plans and the best thing that

can happen to him in the future, Ram without hesitation responded, "trying to get a really good job and getting into a really good college, something like IBM or Intel or something like that….with a good salary." (INT_R1/172-177/020808).

Ram also considered that education was more important at the expense of relations with family and friends, "So it's important to be educated. Sometimes you have to lose things for that. With your family and friends. Education is more important." (4CM/586-588/031508). In a wiki posting about the same topic, Ram reiterated his point, "I believe education is that much important that you may have to leave your parents for it" (6WP_R6/032108). In one discussion where the topic revolved around family relationships versus getting education in a boarding school in light of reading *Coming home again*, Null proposed to Ram a scenario in which a son who was educated in a boarding school became rich but lost the bond with his parents. Ram responded in the excerpt that the family would understand the sacrifice that they made for his education and be happy for his success:

> N: What do you say? It's like he is smart and become really rich and he hates you. What would you do? He got a lot of money but he hates you.

> R: Then, if since they [the parents] love him, they will have to be happy for him. Like he's making good money and he is happy in his life. (4CM/621-625/031508)

As Ram perceived that the relationship with his parents can be sacrificed for education, Ram was not interested in making new friends in the US for the same reason. When asked of his relationship with his friends in the US, Ram expressed that he did not come to the US to make friends but to be successful. Therefore, building relationship with friends can wait until he achieves his goal to be successful:

I don't think I need to make friends or anything. I am just here to make money and be successful in life. That is my first goal instead of making friends.…people here work hard too, but just working hard, you also have to study, not only work because that can get you money. But if you study, that can give you much much much more money. (INT_R3/539-541, 561-563/062808)

In a club meeting which involved talking about being smart, educated, and rich, Ram took an example of his successful friend and attributed his wealth to education and smartness:

R: My friend has a billion dollar firm. However, he did not go to a boarding school. If you have a billion dollar firm, you have to be educated.

N: To know how to use.

R: To know how to. You can't be a high school graduate and then you are going to be something. You have to be educated for that. (4CM/601-605/031508)

As much as Ram was driven to make his way into accumulating wealth by studying hard, Ram was extrinsically motivated to study. Ram often talked about how he forced himself to study even though he did not genuinely want to, "least favorite thing to do, um, study.…I don't want to study but I do that (laughs)" (INT_R3/639-643/062808). Ram may come across as a good student to any teacher, but he expressed that he chose to complete only the minimum work required. When asked if he shared the RTW club experience with his friends, Ram responded that he talked to his friends in India, and they were all surprised that he was voluntarily taking part in something related to reading, which they had never considered him liking:

Yeah, my Indian friends, and maybe I talked to two or three friends in India too that I was doing this kind of thing. Because it was something related to reading and NOBODY expected me to do something related to reading.…I don't like to study but I have to do that.…because I have to do

that (laughs) I wasn't a very good student in India (laughs). I was an average student in India….Yeah. [I complete school work] not much more, just minimum. (INT_R3/363-376/062808)

When asked about the RTW club experience, Ram said his least favorite things were reading and writing, but Ram was the one who diligently completed all the prompts on the wiki. Ram thought of them as something required like school work for his grade:

[The least enjoyable thing about the group meetings is that] we have to read. (C laughs) and that's all…cause I don't like to read, but as time was going on, I started enjoying it, and I am thinking it as a thing I have to do. And I have been trying to enjoy it and I think I am getting good at that.…[the least enjoyable thing about the wiki is] writing….no. it's fine. I just think that this is something I have to do to help improve my English and writing and anything else. (INT_R2/22-26, 75-81/040908)

In another club meeting, Ram talked about how much he hated to take history classes. But Ram responded that even though he personally did not see the need for a history class, Ram infused himself with an awareness that it is beneficial to him to achieve his goals, "that's own my benefit. I don't want to study it, but it's part of something I have to do. It's part of my grade and it helps me." (8CM/423-424/041908).

Although Ram valued speaking multiple languages as an Indian, Ram strongly advocated for teaching and using only English in this global and competitive world to survive. When asked to explain more about what it entails to be a multilingual, Ram advocated for having English because a medium of instruction in all Indian schools as teaching in local languages would put the people at a disadvantage when they tried to enter a competitive job market where English is commonly used. That is, Ram believed that other local languages could be sacrificed at the expense of learning English, which will promise him a materialistically prosperous life:

In some areas, in village, people don't speak English because the schools are in the native language-if it's in Gujarati, it's Gujarati medium, not English medium. So that's something I would like to change that every school should use English medium itself not Gujarati or Punjabi or Hindi medium….No one speaks Hindi. If you are a rich person in India, you will not speak Hindi, not even with your family. And like if you work in an office, people use Hindi but if you are working there, and don't use English with clients, then sometimes it gets too (inaudible). You don't feel good about yourself that you are talking in Hindi when everybody else is talking in English.… if you think about your future, English is more important. (INT_R3/277-292/062808)

Along the same lines, Ram firmly believed that only certain subjects that directly relate to material success in the future should be required in school. In a club meeting, Ram strongly opposed taking the history class because Ram considers history as plainly repeating similar and old events, which does not directly inform practices at present or in the future, "the world is completely different from the past. People are different and things are different, so you will not get a lot of help after knowing what was in 1950 because we are living in 2000." (8CM/270-272/041908). When asked to elaborate on his opinions about having to take history class, Ram elucidated that history does not yield practical knowledge that he needs to succeed, and thus, only three subjects which directly relate to future success needs to be required, "Science and Math, and English, these are the 3 subjects that you need in today's world. Be successful, and to survive in any ways" (INT_R3/334-335/062808).

As Ram was driven to succeed in his life and would like to challenge himself more to do better, he often felt frustrated and disappointed by relatively low academic challenges in the US schools. Thus, Ram hoped to soon exit ESL and enter honors classes (RJE/033108). In the first interview, while making a reference to workload and important tests required in Indian schools, Ram talked about the need to challenge himself more in

the US. Even though Ram had described himself as a mediocre student in India, less

workload expected of the students motivated him to want to be a top student in the US:

> Because I have to like, I don't have much challenge here or competition
> with other students or things I need to meet but the thing is I have to be the
> best, and I have to be better than them [American peers]. Though they are
> not in the competition, I have to be well ahead of them….if I lived in
> India, I would have been studying until 3, but now I don't study for an
> hour after school. There is no homework, nothing more. (INT_R1/135-
> 137, 218-219/020808)

Ram added in a club meeting that American education was lower than education

in other countries in comparison, "American education is pretty low with regard to other

countries. England is better than here and Asian countries, European countries and Indian

are better than here" (2CM/610-611/021608). Nevertheless, Ram also acknowledged that

this situation might work better for him to move up in the US. In a club discussion where

Kush raised that going to colleges in the US is harder than other countries, Ram strongly

opposed that idea and asserted that it is actually easier for people like him to get in

college:

> And another thing is that the competition here is less than in India, so that
> will help getting in good college and something like that….like he was
> saying about Harvard. What I am studying right now is what I studied in
> the 5th or 6th grade in India. So it makes easier to come here and study and
> go to a good school. Like if you have the basic cleared, like in math, it is
> easier to come and to go to a good college….So it's easier if we don't
> have the language problem. Once you have been here two or three years
> and I learn the language better, then you can get into a good college, easily.
> (2CM/320-348/021608)

Sense of Self as Recent Member of the US: "I Don't Want to Change Myself in Order to

Fit With Them [American Peers]"

Ram distinctively distanced himself from American peers primarily because he

perceived them as immature. Comparing them to students in his country, Ram pointed

out that American high school students are still treated as children and are not challenged

to make important decisions about life:

> I believe that Americans are a bit immature for their age. Like students in
> my country are more mature regarding their age. That's the problem with
> them like doing immature stuff like second graders would do….They
> don't put pressure and they don't-like everything's really easy for them
> that they don't get the maturity that they should get and to make decisions
> in life. (2CM/596-613/021608)

Ram did not endorse that students engage in non-academic activities that distract

learning in the US. For example, Ram pointed out, "[American] students are more toward

extracurricular activities like, music." (1CM/56/020908). Ram also considered adolescent

dating immature as it diverts their attention from studying. Ram strongly disapproved of

adolescent dating and public display of affection pervasive in the US schools. In order to

make sense of that phenomenon, Ram made a sharp distinction between himself and

other American students within the dichotomous framework of the East versus the West,

"basically, in the West, more than in the East that they date." (2CM/166/021608). Ram

reiterated that "I don't think I will like to copy the public affection they show here."

(11WP_R12/line#/040308).

Perhaps due to his strong dissociation from American peers, Ram maintained a

superficial relationship with peers in the US, and he repeatedly expressed not having

common topics and interests to talk about with them. When asked to explain more about

differences that he felt from American peers, Ram stated that, "Yeah, different topics. It's

hard to relate to them [American peers]. To fit in with them. Finding common topics can

be difficult." (1CM/157-158/020908). In our first meeting, Ram explained that he tried to

open up to American peers, but he found topics repetitive and superficial. This contrasts with common topics, such as cricket, that Ram can share with Indian peers:

> And I decide to talk more, but the thing is I don't have a common topic to talk with someone.…[In India my friends and I] mainly cricket and music and nothing much. Here, after going to two or three conversations, it's coming back to like they ask me "what kinds of things did you do in India?" (INT_R1/249-250, 260-262/020808)

Even though Ram tried to talk to American peers more often, Ram adamantly maintained his position not to compromise himself to be friends with them, "I don't know if I want to fit in with them. The only thing is that I don't want to change myself in order to fit with them" (INT_R2/151-152/040908). When asked if Ram envisioned himself finding American friends to whom he can connect and with whom he share same interests, his answers were bleak. Ram highlighted inherent differences between them and him with respect to values and principles in life. Ram substantiated his contention by referring to the pervasive yet elusive division between the east and the west:

> Maybe not. 50-70 percents not.…because Americans think differently. They have the feeling that they want more freedom from their parents, and they don't spend much time with their parents, and they want to leave their home. I don't know whether it's their wish or their parents make them to do, still they have different things. It's not what I am saying, but it's the Eastern and Western culture, which people have greatly debated. Still I believe that principles and fundamentals in life are different. (INT_R2/285-292/040908)

As Ram maintained distance from American peers, he dissociated himself from America-born Indians who are seen as American peers in a similar manner to Ram. Ram was acutely aware of tensions, conflicts, and differences between US and Indian born Indians in the US, particularly with respect to perceptions about the use of Indian languages. In one club meeting, we discussed Dan from *Beacon Hill Boys* who did not

get paid from a store owned by a fellow Japanese American. Ram's interest in the topic made him raise a question about conflicts between the same ethnic group at a work place. When asked to talk about the impetus for the question, Ram pointed out his observation of Indians who mistreat other fellow Indians in the excerpt below:

R: On page 80, Dan says that "our own people are our own enemies" Is it true or false?

N: True.

C: First of all, why did you choose that part?

R: Because I think it's true. The way he [Dan] says that was really good. Like he explained a very truthful thing….For example, Indian people who own a gas station, or other things, they don't pay as much as they will pay to a American worker. For Indian worker, who can't speak English or who doesn't know the rules or things. (9CM/3-15/042608)

The tensions between America born and India born Indians were brought up again when Ram described his observation of Indian peers at school. Ram pointed out that Indian students are not friendly with each other and want to only make friends with Americans, "Like Indians in my school, they are not even friends with themselves….they don't want to make Indian friends, and they want to be between Americans" (INT_R2/256, 265-266/040908). Ram extended the observation to Indians outside of school. Ram described an unpleasant experience with an American born Indian employee at a store. Ram recalled that partly because he and his brother spoke Hindi at a public place, the Indian employee was rude to them and showed them a lot of attitude. This anecdote illustrates again that Ram is estranged from Americanized Indians who do not appear friendly with recently immigrated Indians:

R: Yeah, they [Indian Americans] have a lot of attitude. Like

> Indians who spent time here 15 to 20 years, they develop that attitude. Many of Indians in my school have that attitude.

C: What kind of attitude is that? Do they feel superior?

R: I don't know like we use Hindi. (INT_R2/442-445/040908)

Although Ram displayed negative attitudes towards American peers and Americanized Indian peers, Ram spoke positively about laid-back dispositions displayed by Americans. This character could have been an attraction to Ram because he often talked about changing short-temperedness found in him and males in his family, "[what I want to change about myself is to] control my anger….My father, my uncle, my cousin, and even my brother. We all get angry at just at second, within one second." (INT_R2/204, 227-228/040908). Compared to Indians, Ram considered Americans to be friendlier and upbeat about things in life, which he regarded as lacking in Indians:

> [American qualities that I like are] to be happy at every time like when I talk to these people, they are always happy. Maybe they are sad inside but they never show that. They are never angry when talking with anyone. They are always happy. They are like they have warm personality. They shake hands or say hi to anyone, you know him or not and say hi. They look happy whether you are sad or not. So that's a good thing. Indians who are even here or there, they never like they are not very warm. (INT_R2/249-254/040908)

As Ram particularly liked the Punjabi language, which he associated with easygoingness, Ram acknowledged that Americans tend to be content with their present life and are not anxious about what future holds for them. Ram attributed this attitude primarily to not having to study all the time to prepare for a better future. As much as Ram aspired to be laid back about his life, he perceived that quality as a trade-off for a quality life that education would bring:

> Americans don't have that feeling of studying a lot. They think that their

life is good and they don't want to move ahead. Not everyone, but they don't want to move ahead in life.…One thing is that's really good when you are happy with what you are doing right now, instead of worrying about and fighting with your family or friends about your future. You are happy with your current life. That's good, but still you have to think about what you will do next. (INT_R3/616-622/062608)

As a recent immigrant, Ram showed a positive prospect on discreetly mixing cultures. When asked in the final interview to describe what an American life is like to a newcomer and to give advice, Ram recommended that the newcomer mix good things from the two cultures. Even though Ram suggested it, he did not support his argument with examples of how he takes on good values from American culture, which shapes who he is:

These two [cultures]-you have to just make them and use both of those ways to help yourself. Instead of living one way of living and taking this way that you want to be modern or Americanized, you have to mix those two things to become a really good person. So good some more things about this culture and there are some good things about that culture, so you have to mix those things. You have that advantage of knowing two culture. So you should take out the best from these two. (INT_R3/397-402/062808)

Summary of Ram

Ram was an 11th grade Indian boy. He was shy and did not like to talk much. Instead, he liked to listen to songs on his I-pod as if he were isolating himself from others. He did not initiate talking but once he was talked to, he revealed that he was a thinker and planner and strongly opinionated. Ram was serious about his studies and, in fact, he was clearly aware of the reason why his family moved to the US. Ram hoped to be a computer engineer and has laid out detailed future plans. As an Indian, he valued multiple languages and insisted on keeping his accent to keep his Indian identity. As an Indian, he also valued respect to parents and to teachers and highly values education. His

primary goal in his life was to make money, and he firmly believed that education could bring him what he wants. Because of high expectations imposed upon him from his parents and from himself, Ram wished to be more confident.

Although Ram placed a high value on education, his motivation for studying was mostly extrinsic. Ram could make himself complete mandatory school work even though he did not want to for a bigger cause in his life. However, he would not complete beyond what is required. Ram believed only certain subjects, including English, that directly lead to future success in this modern world should be taught. Also, Ram was not happy with the level of American education that does not challenge his academic needs. As a recent immigrant to the US, Ram exclusively distanced himself from other American peers, including America born Indians, due to cultural differences. As much as Ram did not endorse many aspects of American culture, Ram somewhat wished to be more easygoing and friendly like Americans and thought that having experienced two cultures, one should embrace good things from both.

Hulk: Performing "Avoiding Conflicts" Identity

Hulk was an 11th grade boy whose family emigrated from Gujarat, India, four months ago. Ram introduced him to the club, so Hulk joined us from the fourth club meeting on. And for that reason, I ended up interviewing him two times instead of three. Hulk currently lived with his uncle's family as his parents lived in another state with one of his sisters. In the first wiki posting, Hulk introduced his family, "I live with my uncle in northeast. I have two sisters."(1WP_H1/031508). Hulk was similar to Ram in a lot of ways. Hulk attended the same high school as Ram, which was touted as one of the academically high achieving high schools in the state. Hulk also came to the US

voluntarily, thus he was happy when he came to the US, "I was excited before coming here. i was ready and eager to come here. I wanted to come here to fullfill my goals. This was my best place for my ambition." (7WP_H3/032208). Like Ram, Hulk was goal oriented as he already established a concrete goal and career to be a heart surgeon. Hulk was very much committed to his dreams as he said the best thing that could happen was to become a surgeon, "I would like to be a doctor-a heart surgeon.…[the best thing that can happen with me in the future is] that I will become a heart surgeon" (INT_H1/121, 132/041908).

Hulk considered himself smart as people describe him so, "[people describe me as] intelligent, smart" (INT_H1/56/041908). Just because Hulk joined us later, I did not get to know him as intimately as I did other participants (RJE/042008). Interviews with him were relatively shorter than other club members as I sensed that he did not feel comfortable. Perhaps the fact that I interviewed him in a public library, which he preferred, may explain why we could not engage in candid conversation. After all, we had to lower our voices. Knowing that I am an instructor in a college that Hulk desires to enter, Hulk along with Ram asked me questions about college (RJE/042708). Since I gave Hulk and Ram a ride to the library first (since they lived close by), Hulk finished his reading and wiki postings in the library. Therefore, Hulk contributed quite a bit to the wiki postings. During club meetings, he hesitated to voice his opinions and was soft spoken. And he remained on the periphery a lot in our discussions. Since Hulk was a friend of Ram, Hulk relied on Ram to explain for him when it came to cultural aspects.

Sense of Self as Gujarati/Indian/Asian: "They [Parents] Stay with You During Difficult
Times and Not Just Good Times"

Hulk showed a strong sense of Indian and Gujarati identity. Hulk liked his unique
name but did not mind some Americans pronouncing his name inaccurately. In a meeting
where the topic of names came up, Hulk said, "No one can except my family can
pronounce my real name…My friends tell me Hulk. At school, sometimes they call me
Max….Every people calls me different name, but I don't care" (6CM/797-809/032908).
When asked to elaborate on the meaning of his name, Hulk expressed that he liked the
uniqueness of his name. Hulk also appreciated that his grandfather gave him the name in
a religious ceremony:

> [I like my name] because it's different. No one has this name. And it's like
> different so….My grandparents [gave me my name]. It's like a religious
> custom that when we give the name, so he decided to give me the
> name….Meaning of my name is Cool Eyes. (INT_H1/66-75/041908)

Hulk also positively associated himself with Asians in the US. Hulk felt proud to
be an Asian in the US due to the positive stereotype and also he considered himself
intelligent. In a club discussion in light of two chapters in *Beacon Hill Boys* that involved
fights among Asian students, Kush raised a question of why the Asian character, Jerry,
kept getting in fights and trouble despite his race, Asian. Hulk opposed the stereotype that
all the Asian students are smart but partially agreed that most Asian students are smart,
"It's like out of 100 people, 80 are like that [nerds who are smart], but they [people] say
everyone is like that, but 20 people are who are not." (8CM/70-71/041908).

When asked to elaborate on why he considered most Asians smart in a follow up
interview, Hulk attributed it to their diligence and commitment to success. Understanding

that most Americans are Christians, he also believed most Asians are not Christians and

are mostly from developing countries where job opportunities for their education are

scare:

> H: Yeah. In some part, it's like Asian people are much more
>   talented than others. They didn't get enough opportunities in
>   their countries, so they move here.…They are intelligent.…They
>   are hard working and if they have opportunities, they always go
>   for it. They always work to fulfill that.
>
> C: So then, how do you feel about being Asian in this country?
>
> H: Proud. …but Asians have a small group of Christians.
>   (INT_H2/253-274/062808)

In addition to positive association with his name and being an Asian, Hulk held a

firm belief that he would teach his languages to his kids who will grow up in the US. In a

club discussion, Hulk showed a strong connection between one's ability to speak the

language and ethnic identity, "If you don't speak the language, you are not Korean."

(7CM/504/040508). When asked to further explain his position on teaching languages to

the next generation, Hulk strongly showed his intention to teach his languages. Hulk took

an example of his cousin who cannot speak the parents' language and explained the

likelihood that a communication breakdown would occur:

> I would teach [my languages]. It is about our culture and we have to
> continue our culture.…They [immigrant parents in the US] don't teach
> young ones their language. I can take my family, who's my mom's sister.
> Her kids they don't know our language. They can understand it but they
> can't speak.…It's not good. If they go somewhere, if someone needs them,
> and then the person doesn't know English, then they can't communicate.
> (INT_H2/459-465/062808)

As an Indian, Hulk also displayed strong ties with family members. When asked

about Indian values he cherishes, Hulk pointed out the close relationship with family

members, "um, the relationship we have between our parents and our family members." (INT_H2/430/062808). In contrast, Hulk stressed the lack of bond with family as a negative aspect of American culture, "[what I don't want to copy from Americans is] the relationships that they have with their family members….(pauses to think) I have heard that they are many conflicts between parents and children all the time. They don't understand each other." (INT_H2/423-424/062808). Consistent with his values about family, Hulk described his parents under a positive light, "They are very caring. And cooperative, and they can understand our problems." (INT_H1/230/041908). In a club meeting where we discussed whether they value family history, Hulk expressed that they share family history to a degree:

R: We also don't talk much about past. We are more into present and future.

N: Future family.

H: We sometimes talk but not always. (8CM/253-255/041908)

When asked to elaborate on the issue, Hulk displayed that he valued talking to his family members and discovering his parents' struggles and accomplishments, which inspires him, "My parents tell us what they did and when they did it. We had that kind of discussion….I can know how they struggled in their life and how they changed life according to their struggles." (INT_H2/452-455/062808). Hulk also believed that family was more important than friends. In a club meeting where we discussed *Coming Home Again* in which a boy was agitated about being sent to a boarding school, and as such chose friends over parents when they came to visit, Hulk reprimanded the character for favoring friends. Instead, Hulk asserted that parents are more trustable, "friends are not trustable. They can…Yeah. friends can leave you anytime, but parents they stay with you

during difficult times. and not just good times." (4CM/214-217/031508). In the same club meeting, when other participants expressed differing opinions on being sent off to a boarding school, Hulk contended that following decisions of and complying with parents is a wise thing to do as they know better for his future:

> No, it's good. Because the mom wants to make the career of the child. So she was making a good decision for the child....The parents made the decision only for the kid because they love the kids, so they make the decision so that they don't have any difficulties, and have a better life instead of having struggles. So if they send to a boarding school, it's good for us. (4CM/164, 234-236/031508)

Obeying family and complying with rules in the community presented itself again in another club meeting in light of reading chapters in *Beacon Hill Boys*. In it, we discussed Eddie's inclination to follow black culture as a Japanese American. Hulk criticized his behavior for not following parents' and his community's rules, "yeah, but he [Eddie] is opposing his parents. You should follow your own culture, not theirs [black culture]." (7CM/458/040508). In addition, when discussing Dan's decision to say no to his friends' suggestion to try drugs in *Beacon Hill Boys*, Hulk applauded Dan's determination by saying, "following the ideas of the parents and of the society [is good]" (8CM/215/041908). In the same club meeting, the topic was extended by Ram who strongly opposed complying with what others ask him to do. Opposing Ram, Hulk substantiated his argument that we have to comply with authorities in one's community by taking an example of a work setting where he would have to obey his boss, "so if you are going to work, and you don't work, then your boss will kick you out….you have to obey him." (8CM/431-433/041908).

Complying with the rules of the community and family again proved to be vital to

understand Hulk as he considered arranged marriage in the future. Discussing Brad who had a white girlfriend from *Beacon Hill Boys* inspired us to talk about whether or not we would marry or date someone from different culture. Hulk expressed that he is expected to marry only girls from Gujarat like one of his sisters did (RJE/042708). In the excerpt below, although Null teased Hulk for his parents' having already chosen a girl for him, and everyone was laughing with him, Hulk remained calm and serious and explained how important it is for him to follow his Gujarat traditions and expectations of his parents by marrying a girl his parents choose or by at least dating someone they would accept:

C: Why is it [dating only Gujarati girls] so important for you?

H: I don't know, but my family.

N: Maybe there is some girl that he already choose from Gujarati (everyone laughs). That's why. There is a girl waiting.

C: Let him talk. So you are saying it's important because of family.

H: Family and culture.

N: culture. What do you do? Parents choose a girl for you? Uh, that's what. I got it now (laughs). I would be like you choose this one and

H: No. It's not like that. If I date a white girl, they would be angry at me (R laughs hysterically). Why?

N: They can kill you then. (R and N laugh)

H: So like 95 percent in our community, they get like parents choose for them. But I am not sure. I am not sure if they will choose for me, but I will choose someone that they cannot deny. (9CM/385-398/042608)

The discussion about dating continued with other club members' strong interest in the topic. Hulk had to explain that the girl for him also has to be Hindu and vegetarian, to which Null and Kush asked about what would happen if Hulk changed his religion. In the

excerpt, Hulk strongly denied that he would ever change his religion, Hinduism, and was acutely aware of the consequences of violating rules of his community, such as marrying someone outside of the community and disgracing his religion:

> N: I mean what do they [people in the community] do if anyone [changes religion]?
>
> H: I won't. I haven't seen anyone changing religion.
>
> K: Let's say you do….
>
> H: They will isolate you….Because in my community, we don't eat meat and any other stuff. Just vegetarians. If I marry someone else who eats meat, that's hard. And in Gujarat, like 90 percent, they are vegetarians. (9CM/412-424/042608)

His strong identification with religion shown above was brought up in the first interview. When describing himself, Hulk pointed out his religion is important although he did not consider himself as a devout Hindu. Hulk added that he follows rules of his religion and emphasized that his religious faith became stronger as he immigrated to the US:

> It [my religion] means a lot to me. I believe in religion and other things. Not like 100 percent, but 60 percents I believe. Uh, I believe 100 percent but I follow 60 percent, not all of them….Yeah, Like we don't eat non-vegetarian, so I don't eat. Really we cannot eat eggs, but I eat. So….Like go to temple to pray. I go sometimes not regularly. We should go daily. But I go like once a month, so….No [I didn't go to temple often in India]. I just went like once a month. But I didn't pray at home. It's ok if you pray at home and don't go to temple. But after I came here, I started to pray because the temple here is so far away so I started to pray here two times [a day]. (INT_H1/84-98/041908)

When asked to elaborate on what his religion meant to him, Hulk explained that his religion served him as a practical guidance to work hard, to respect people, and to treat everyone equally:

There is some belief that do your work and don't wait what would be the result. Just continue to do your work. And don't worry about result. It's a good thing….if I study hard, I should not worry about the result. I should think that if I work hard, I will get good results. Not to worry about result. Just focus on your work and don't worry about those things. And we should respect everyone. Every man on the earth, we should consider equal. And there should be no violence and…if you consider everyone as one, so there will be no discrimination. Like I am from India and someone is from another country, if I consider them different, then that will be racism. But if you consider them as one of us, there will be no problem. (INT_H1/103-113/041908)

Hulk's strong identification with his religion made him feel uncomfortable about listening to and reading postings of other club members, Ram and Kush, who did not have a religion. When asked in an interview how he liked writing on the wiki, Hulk explained that he avoided writing about religion as he felt offended:

H: Sometimes [I liked to write my opinions on wiki but] I don't do complicated ones to write my opinions or to talk about certain topics.

C: Oh, really? Can you think of any examples?

H: (pause to think) uh, maybe religions.

C: That's interesting. I want to know more about it. Tell me why you feel uncomfortable.

H: Because like Ram doesn't believe in religion, so if I write something, he doesn't like it so. or sometimes, if he writes something, he doesn't uh he is not that religious, so he writes oppositely, but when I read, I feel bad about it (INT_H2/179-185/062808)

Sense of Self as Learner: "I Wanted to Come Here [US] to Fulfill My Goals"

Hulk's voluntary transition and excitement to come to the US, "yeah, I was excited [to come to the US]" (4CM/323/031508) explain his positive school experience in the US. Hulk was thrilled to come to the US for accessible and better education to

achieve his dreams to be a heart surgeon. Hulk explained that he would not be able to

accomplish his dreams due to an unsupportive educational situation in India. Hulk was

aggressive about finding financial support, such as scholarships, considering he has been

to the US only for a half a year (RJE/071908):

> It's [my life right now is] good. I just came here to become something. If I
> stayed in India, I wouldn't become a surgeon because it's really hard to get
> education there. It requires a lot of money, but here if you have good
> grades, then you can go and the government can help you to study, so I
> just came here to fulfill my ambition, so it's good. I am happy with
> everything.…um, the best thing? When we got the visa to come here
> (laughs). (INT_H1/137-140, 179/041908)

Hulk maintained positive attitudes toward school and school work. Hulk

expressed positive experience with friends, teachers and showed intrinsic and genuine

interest in learning a school subject, such as history. Hulk talked about having lots of

friends, favorite teachers, and favorite subjects:

> I have lots of friends, and teachers are nice and I like the school….um,
> right now, [my favorite teacher is]my language arts teacher, Ms. she is the
> favorite. She is funny and she teaches with interest.….uh, I just like math
> and biology because they are my only (inaudible). (INT_H1/185-191,
> 225/041908)

Hulk cherished education and being intelligent. The following quote was drawn

from a club meeting in which we discussed education and smartness and money. When

other club members raised the point that athletes who make lots of money are not smart,

Hulk opposed it by saying, "like in soccer, if you are not smart, you are dumb, you don't

know which techniques you need to use in the field so you can't do anything. You need to

be smart." (4CM/668-669/031508). The discussion continued with Null's endorsement of

practical education by taking an example of his older brother. With regard to this matter,

Hulk believed that real education that is more theory based than practice oriented can

take one further ahead in the future:

> N: Yeah, because like he never learned and he didn't go to college. He would go outside and spend time there. But in the third year, he worked by himself. He learned in 6 months. After 6 months, he became a dentist teacher or something. He was working alone.
>
> H: But there is a change that if he [your brother] had studied, he would have been even a more better than now….but he would have been on top if he had. (4CM/792-800/031508)

A belief that education is so important that Hulk believed that he could sometimes sacrifice his relationship with his family:

> I think to sacrifice relations with our family for few years is good then to stay illiterate for our whole life. If our parents send us to the boarding school then we should think that positively and we should understand they want us the career in future so they are sending us. Parent love their kids the most they never make bad decisions for their kid's future. I think if we sacrifice our relationship for few years is good because our parents are not there to feed forever so to fill your belly we need to be smart and earn in our own way. So i agree to sacrifice realtionships with parents for small amount of time to make a good future. (6WP_H2/032208)

Hulk would consider sending off to a boarding school or any kind of pressure he receives from his parents as positive and beneficial to his education as he is an autonomous and self-directed learner. He also searched for scholarships as he wishes to be independent and he voluntarily searches for it by himself, "Colleges have a lot of fees so scholarships may be helpful….if I get a scholarship, I wouldn't be enough burden on my parents." (INT_H2/288-290/062808). When asked about his favorite piece of reading that we did in the club, he selected *Coming home again*. It left a good impression on him because it related to education and relationship with family, both of which Hulk highly valued. And he said he would think of being sent away to a boarding school as positive as it would benefit his education, "The same thing about this that it makes us think and

challenges people face when they are away from their own family, what do they think

and what do the parents think" (INT_H2/77-78/062808).

Hulk considered being compared to somebody else by parents inspirational. In a

club meeting where we read the first two chapters of *Beacon Hill Boys*, he raised a

question about being compared. He further asserted that being compared was a positive

inspiration:

> When people compare them to each other, with other, their friends, does it
> help them or is it negative?...by comparing inspire him to work hard so
> that he can do something….but if you take positively, it will inspire
> you.…but if your parents tell me and you can work harder and go up to
> 80, but it affects you. It's a positive thing. (6CM/131-173/032908)

The topic was further explored in a wiki posting where he was asked to advise his

friend Dan from *Beacon Hill Boys*, who is concerned about being compared to his older

brother. Hulk again advised him to take the comparison in a positive light:

> If I was the close friend of Dan then i would surely tell him to obey his
> parents, and have a nice hair cut so that they might feel that their kid is
> listening his advice and not neglecting it. I would tell him to take the
> comparsion in positive way and inspire him to do hard work at school so
> he may be less criticized and at last it would benefit him only (studies) in
> future to get a good job and have a nice personality (10WP_H6/040308)

In a follow-up interview, Hulk further explored how he liked to compare himself

to somebody else to better himself. Hulk also revealed a level of trust and relationship

with his family who is aware of his limitations:

> I am not 100 percent right. Sometimes I may be wrong, so sometimes
> from other people, I can know what mistakes I am doing and think on
> certain topics, so we can know more about it….mainly with my friends. If
> they compare you with a certain person, it can be good. So I work hard to
> go there so it helps me….sometimes. They [my parents] sometimes
> compare, but they know how much I can do and how much can't.
> (INT_H2/303-313/062808)

In a discussion where the club members brought up an issue of the relationship between smartness and money, the following discussion related to the goal of schooling. When Kush showed disinterest in learning some subjects in school, Hulk showed strong intrinsic interest in and benefits of learning subjects, such as history:

> K: Who cares about history, so? You don't have to know it.
>
> H: But no. history only tells us a lot things that have happened. And we don't repeat it again.
>
> R: History repeats itself.
>
> H: yeah. But it prevents from repeating. (4CM/775-778/031508)

Hulk interpreted RTW club meetings as a way to improve his English and considered sharing opinions beneficial for his own learning:

> Yeah, it was beneficial because uh, due to this, you need to speak English. It helped me to improve my English speaking. So that was good….I need to know how other people think. They need to know how I think. So it's a good way to communicate and make new friends. (INT_H2/145-149/062808)

Hulk considered himself a confident writer and reader in English as he put, "It's[writing in English] good…. [reading in English is] maybe 90 percent." (INT_H2/128, 140/062808). In fact, when asked what he had been doing when school session ended, he responded, "Nothing. I just read books" (INT_H2/10/062808). Hulk liked fictions, "yeah. [I like] fiction (5CM/124/032208)", such as mysteries and crime novels as he thinks they engage him more in the stories. Hulk tried to read more books to improve his English:

> [I] read books sometimes….um, [I like to read] like adventurous, and scary, and crime stories….[I like these] because it creates uh we can think

what would happen. And it changes, so….(laughs) I just read four or five books. I started reading when I came. I didn't read books in India….[I read] to increase, to improve my English and to learn some new vocabulary….[I like fictions] because it creates more interest than the real ones. Sometimes the fiction can create more suspense than real ones. So I like fiction….[I have read]maybe five or six [books since I came to the US]. I just bought two books yesterday. (INT_H1/5, 14-40/041908)

When a club member, Null, expressed disinterest in reading in a club meeting,

Hulk advised him to find something that he would be interested in:

N: I don't like reading. (C laughs). I read this book this morning. I woke up like 9 o'clock and I was like sleeping and reading. I closed my eyes and oh, I was reading. I had to read it again (everybody laughs). because I lose my point, so I was just like read it again.

C: It's a good practice for you.

H: No, like if you read books which you are interested in. (6CM/732-736/032908)

Hulk wanted to exit ESOL, which he believed was dumbed down and to enter

normal classes to challenge him more. His situation, living away from his parents

concerned him, but he did not want to risk going to another state to live with his parents

as he was worried that he would not be able to take hard subjects that his current school

started to give him:

Maybe. I don't know really, but I don't think I will go there because next year here, they gave me good subjects, hard, because they know how I was. But if I go to North Carolina, they may not give me subjects and they may put me again in ESOL. So I don't think I will go there….yeah, I have one [honor's class], and another two that are equal to honor's, but not really honor's like Physiology and Anatomy. They give to who has 90 and above of grade….yeah, they [the school] will put me again in ESOL classes. (INT_H1/233-242/041908)

When asked if he benefited from ESOL, he was positive about it, but he thought

still he would have learned more if he had been placed in regular classes. And Hulk was

excited about exiting ESOL in next school year:

> It [being in an ESOL program] was - it helped with my English, but the
> Language development, I just think that one was a good class, but another
> all they are like normal classes. Because in Math and Health, they are my
> normal class, CP classes. It's not ESOL. But I think that if I was in normal
> class in each of them, I will have learned more….yeah, it's like they
> [ESOL teachers] teach us slowly….so like we have fewer students. Like
> 30 students in one class. They teach us more slowly and they make us
> understand properly. But I don't find any difficulty in normal classes. So I
> think that if they put me in normal classes, I will do better. But they kept
> me in ESOL. But there is one test we need to pass to exit ESOL. We didn't
> get results, but they tested me out of ESOL. (INT_H1/245-256/041908)

Hulk figured his worlds into professionals' which requires education. In one club

meeting where we read the first two chapters from *Beacon Hill Boys* that dealt with Dan

getting a job but resisting to get a haircut, discussion centered around the importance of

looks. Whereas other participants talked about having neat hair and how looks mattered

when getting a job, Hulk said the opposite because his career with a professional job,

might not require looks but skills and education:

> I don't think you need to have like, like if you are talented in a particular
> area, then it [appearance] doesn't matter. It matters, but not like 100%.
> Like 20% it matters and 80% depends on the skills….but if you work in a
> big company, who would see you if you work inside? (6CM/42-
> 59/032908)

Hulk understood that most Asians have professional jobs in the US, and he

attributed this phenomenon to the lack of opportunities in their developing countries. In

one club meeting where we read and talked about *Coming home again*, one discussion

topic centered around the second world war and the role of the US in world economy and

politics, which was relevant to the reading. During this discussion, Hulk raised that there

are more professional Asians in the US, "the funny thing is the immigrant people are

there to increase economy. Doctors, if you find doctors here no one is native American. You will not see any Native American doctor. In a few cases only, mainly immigrants like Korean" (4CM/894-896/031508).

When asked to explore more what he had said in an interview, Hulk added abundant professional opportunities available in the US is a great incentive for educated Asians, "mostly Asia is developing countries. They don't have like strong (inaudible) like United States. So companies in the United States are many, so there are more opportunities than other countries. So people try to move here and get some good jobs." (INT_H2/248-250/062808). In a member checking session, when a question of whether reading Asian texts provided them with more topics to talk about, Hulk positively associated with it by saying that Asians have commonalities of living in developing countries, "maybe we share similar experiences because normally Asia is developing countries and all the things happen same everyday so." (MC_10CM/line#/062808).

Sense of Self as Recent Member of the US: "So Here [US] I Have to Be Like General, Not So Much Exciting or Too Much Down."

Hulk liked to take things easy and wanted to avoid any possible conflicts with people. In an interview where he was asked if he would continue with the same club members, Hulk answered positively. His reasons for that related to having known the members' differing opinions, which would help him avoid topics that would cause conflicts between them:

> We can know how other people think and we can know how they think and what are their beliefs….knowing other people ['s opinions is beneficial because for example] -if R. doesn't like religion, so I won't talk about religious stuff in front of him so there won't be any conflicts between us, so knowing people you can prevent some consequences which

may occur. (INT_H2/237-242/062808)

In a club meeting where we discussed a scene in which Jerry was offended by the delayed service at a restaurant in *Beacon Hill Boys*, Hulk scolded his short-temperedness, "He [Jerry] should not get too much angry. It may be a mistake. He's just short tempered." (9CM/132/042608). The discussion about chapters six and seven in the book followed a scene in which Dan was quitting his job for not getting paid for his training period. When asked if he would quit for not getting paid like Dan, Hulk showed his easygoingness, "I will wait for two more…two more days. Then, I will quit."(9CM/160-162/042608).

Hulk also wanted to learn to be friendly and polite like his observation of some Americans:

> [What I like to copy from Americans is] (pauses to think) how to behave
> with other people….(pauses to think) uh, (long pause continues) here,
> when you go for a walk or something, everyone asks you how are you.
> Back in my country, no. It's a good thing to. (INT_H2/414-417/062808)

A conversation about learning things from other cultures in one club meeting led Ram to share that he believed that people have to change constantly. I asked the participants if they agreed with Ram and if they thought they changed since coming to the US. Hulk expressed that he had to be polite in the US, "in here [US], we have to be very polite. (R laughs)…to other people when talking to someone, you have to be too polite in here. In India, it's not like that. No one cares." (6CM/540-544/032908). The newly gained politeness was seen as a positive trait of Americans for Hulk. After all, intense discussion about copying cultural practices in a club meeting followed a writing prompt which asked them to consider whether copying is a good or bad thing. In the

written wiki response, Hulk wrote that he would copy things carefully, but he emphasized that he liked the aspect of Americans being polite to one another:

> According to my opinion to copy something or someone is a bad act. We can take their ideas and include something interesting from our mind and make something completely different is a good thing. So far i know that here people are polite so that thing can be adopted by us. I dont find any other thing that i could take from American Culture. (11WP_H7/040308)

In discussing personal changes he made in the US in one club meeting, Hulk raised a point that he has changed to be more polite when speaking English. When asked to elaborate on it, Hulk could not find the right words to explain more but instead relied on Ram's, his Indian friend, interpretation of what he had meant in the excerpt below:

C: Going back to Hulk, do you think you have become more polite?

H: Yeah.

C: But I don't quite understand how like you are not being polite to each other when you are speaking in India. And here you are more polite to people? You try to show respect?

H: Yeah.

C: But how would you talk to people? I don't know how that works.

N: He try to show that I think he's Indian. So he is trying to show how.

C: How polite Indian people are?

N: yeah. How Indian people act and then…

H: No, it's not like that. But uh, how can I say that?

R: The way he speaks with other people like his other friends who are like Vietnamese or anybody. He is more cautious towards speaking to them than he is to me. He can say more good things than bad to them.

H: Something really

R: Because they may think differently.

H: Yeah. (6CM/553-568/032908)

When asked to elaborate on this in an individual interview, Hulk explained that he

felt restrained to express his emotions when speaking English as he is not completely

comfortable speaking English. Therefore, Hulk might have felt that he had to be polite

when speaking English with people:

> Yeah, people don't like how maybe if I act like I act with my friends, somebody may not like how I behave, so here I have to be like general, not so much exciting or too much down….um, if I am excited about a certain topic and I go and tell some of my friends here, they may not like the topic but I would be excited about it. They may not much like it or they may ignore it because they are (inaudible) so.…Yeah. In English, I don't know completely, but I can't talk certain topics completely….if I need to explain something, I cannot explain it properly, which I would be able to do in my language….I sometimes don't feel comfortable speaking English, but in my language. Every person thinks like this. (INT_H2/333-357/062808)

Hulk did not form a meaningful relationship with non-Indian American peers.

Due to taking classes in the ESOL classes, Hulk did not get a chance to meet other

American peers, but mostly Asian peers, "Yeah, they [Asians] are easy to make friends

[with]….I don't know but my friends here mainly are Asians and no one is from other."

(INT_H2/258-260/062808). In the first interview, Hulk talked about his close friends are

just Asian students:

> um, so right now, I have ESOL classes, so I have students from different countries. Mainly friends are Vietnamese and some Koreans….One [of my close friends] is Marland, he is from Vietnam and he is funny and he tries to study, and he is helping in nature, so I like him. He is a good friend. Tai, he is from Vietnam. He is my first friend when I came here the first day, he helped me see classes and all that stuff, so we have been friends. (INT_H1/262-268/041908)

When club discussion centered around fundamental differences between American peers and their own peers back in their countries, Hulk stressed that he could not trust any friends in the US because of the differences and of the gap between them, "[here in the US] you can't trust anyone.…like I don't know whether he [this friend in the US] is trustable or not. He may tell others." (6CM/578-591/032908). In a follow-up interview, Hulk contrasted his meaningful relationship with Indian friends with his shallow relationship with friends in the US:

> In India? I have a lot of friends….yeah, [I still keep in touch with them] but for a month, I didn't talk to them. Because they had like exams, so they were busy. Their exams completed yesterday, so tomorrow I will talk to them….I have a lot of them [best friends](laughs)….[we talk about] a lot of things. Plays and different stuff….Um, [with my friends in the US] I don't talk a lot, like I do in India. I can talk about my personal things to my friends, like my family problems. So I can share with them, but in here I cannot tell them. They are just friends…. No, in normal classes, I have just two [American] friends. But they are my classmates and that's it. We never talk outside of the class. (INT_H1/274-288/041908)

Summary of Hulk

Hulk was an 11th grade Indian boy who immigrated from Gujarati, India a few months before joining the study. He was soft spoken and calm and often avoided conflicts with people. For that reason, during the club meetings, Hulk would stay quiet and often briefly agree or disagree with other club members. Hulk strongly identified himself with Indian and Asian values, such as valuing languages, respect, close relationship with family, arranged marriage, religion, and education. As a voluntary immigrant student, Hulk entered the US with an established goal of becoming a heart surgeon. To fulfill that dream, Hulk tried to do his best to attain good grades and to go to a good college. Unhappy with the ESOL curriculum, Hulk also wished to exit it and enter

regular classes. As a recent member of the US, Hulk felt like he had to take on the polite mode of speaking to non-Indians and values Americans' politeness and friendliness. Due to being placed in ESL, Hulk did not forge any meaningful relationship with American peers.

<center>Understanding Across Cases</center>

In the previous sections, I have described each case separately under each theme, "sense of self as Korean/Uzbek/Indian/Asian", "sense of self as learner", and "sense of self as recent member of the US". Having discussed four individual cases separately, I now turn to describe them by comparing and contrasting the findings to achieve an overall understanding of the study. The synthesis of the cross case analysis has yielded some of the commonalities and differences in the four participants. Despite different immigration histories, length of stay, and ethnic backgrounds, Kush, Null, Ram, and Hulk showed similarities in the following areas. First, all of them acknowledged the value of speaking their first languages; second, they welcomed the positive stereotype ascribed to Asians in the US as being smart; third, they highlighted respect as an important Asian value; fourth, they recognized English as a dominant language and agreed with the need to learn English in the US, and lastly, they aspired to belong to a club (although different clubs were desired).

Despite a few similarities, the participants differed in many aspects of their identities. First, due in part to having strong religious disciplines and values, Null and Hulk shared many similarities that were at odds with Kush and Ram. Both Null and Hulk exhibited strong familial and religious values. For example, Null and Hulk believed in teaching their first languages to the next generation to preserve familial and cultural

traditions while Kush and Ram did not see a practical need to do so. Null and Hulk also upheld complying with rules in the community and in their family whereas Kush resisted doing so. It should be noted that Ram revealed conflicting views on complying with the rules in the community. Although he tried to distinguish himself from Null and Hulk on this aspect, he was aware that following the rules of the community was necessary to be successful in his life. Null and Hulk were also critical of adopting cultural practices from a different culture whereas Kush has adopted many aspects of American culture and Ram was open about mixing cultures.

Second, Kush who did not see value in education often stood out from the rest of the participants who highly valued education in their lives. Ram, Null, and Hulk who received part of their secondary education in their countries often criticized the low level of American education compared to other countries. Third, Ram and Hulk who voluntarily immigrated to the US with specific goals in mind often placed more value on education than on family relations, which Null fiercely opposed. Fourth, all the participants except for Null pointed out an easygoing attitude as an American value that they aspired to embrace to different degrees. In addition, Null and Hulk expressed feeling different when speaking English as ELLs. Lastly, all except for Hulk resisted classifying people into a unified construct, Asians, although all of them enjoyed the positive model minority stereotype.

In the following section, I highlight some of the important findings of the study by presenting excerpts from the face to face club meetings. Longer excerpts from the meetings that have not been introduced in the individual cases will illustrate similarities and differences in the participants' interactions. First, I discuss what it meant for the

participants to be an Asian. Second, I discuss how the participants adopted or resisted

some of the American values, such as easygoingness and freedom. Third, I present the

participants' recognition of English language as a dominant language. I end the chapter

with a summary of the findings from the cross case analysis.

Being Asian

Being an Asian in the US to the Asian English language learners conveyed a

number of meanings. I first discuss the aspects of respect and compliance with rules in

the community. Then I discuss how the participants supported and at the same time

resisted the model minority stereotype and other stereotypes ascribed to Asians.

Respect and Compliance with Rules in the Community

All of the participants, Kush, Null, Ram, and Hulk, believed part of being Asian

means that they need to respect others. In the first face to face club meeting, I posed a

question of the traits of being Korean, Indian, or Uzbek as the poem, *Hybrid*, discussed

characteristics of being Iranian. Kush and Ram in the excerpt below shared that respect is

an Asian characteristic:

> C: It can be specific rules or customs or values in order to function
> as an Uzbek, or your case, as a Korean boy?
>
> K: I need to respect….you cannot be rude and I don't know.
>
> C: You guys have similar codes that you may have maybe in your
> own culture?
>
> R: Living this to learn about the culture and then be able to respect
> it. (1CM/114-121/020908)

While Kush regarded respect as a Korean trait that he appreciated, he did not

display respectful behaviors in school. It is probable that Kush did not consider saying

"shut up" to a teacher as impolite as he encountered his peers' engaging in that behavior.

In a club meeting, Null and Ram criticized disrespectful behaviors of American students in school, such as being rude and falling asleep in class. The phrase, "shut up" must have reminded Kush of a similar incident, so Kush shared how he got in trouble by saying it in his school. In the excerpt, Kush emphasized that he was just following what his peers were saying to the teacher:

> N: … But in here [the US] if they [teachers] say something, they [students] can say "shut up" (everyone laughs).
>
> R: That's what I am saying.
>
> N: Yeah. You can sleep in class.
>
> K: I went to ISS [in-school suspension] for saying shut up to a teacher.
>
> C: You said shut up to a teacher? (laughs) tell us about that. He is an American. (everyone laughs) Tell us about that.
>
> K: We were presenting a project or whatever and me and my friends we were presenting and the teacher was like talking. We went in like 5 minutes of the presentation and she was talking like 2 or 3 minutes. I said, no WE all said, "Ms.Taylor, shut up." She got mad. (2CM/624-634/021608)

The topic of respect presented itself again. In a club meeting where Dan was constantly compared to his older brother in the book, *Beacon Hill Boys*, Ram shared he has been compared to his older brother and a famous wealthy person who happens to have the same name as his. Kush interjected and blurted out that he would straightforwardly say to the parents that they need to stop comparing him to somebody else. Kush continued to explain that he would compare his mother to somebody else in return. To Kush's reactions, other members, particularly Null, strongly opposed him by saying that Asian children are supposed to be respectful and should not say such things:

> C: So you have that role model that happens to have the exact same

name?

R: Yeah (laughs)

K: Tell your parents screw you. You are not rich. (C & R laugh).

C: Do you say that sometimes "please don't compare me to others".
        Do you sometimes say that to your parents?

R: No.

C: No? You are just being polite (laughs)

R: Yeah.

N: I don't think like Asians say that whenever parents talk about
        children. Children just stay quiet. You can't say anything.

K: I don't.

N: I mean some of them like you, can say stuff like that to parents
        (everyone laughs except for K).

C: What would you tell your parents if I don't know if they tell you
        what you don't like to hear?

K: I like tell them to go away. Or like if my parents, like my mom
        does. When like my mom compares me to someone, I like
        compare her to someone else (everyone laughs).

N: That's going to be so mean, I guess. It's your parents. How do
        you do that? (6CM/207-223/032908)

The excerpt above clearly illustrates that Ram considered being polite and respectful to

his parents as an important Asian value. It also highlights how Null disapproved of

Kush's behaviors and comments that were disrespectful. As for Kush, it was ingrained in

him that being respectful was important. However, Kush who aligned himself with

American peers, displayed behaviors that other participants considered as too American

and disrespectful.

Although the participants pointed out being respectful as an important Asian value, not all of them shared that being Asian meant complying with rules of the society and of the community. Null and Hulk shared similar views about complying with authority. Perhaps due to their religious beliefs and strong bonds with family, they strongly believed in following rules and living in harmony with others. For example, Null valued living in harmony with people, and therefore rule breakers are not accepted in his world. Along the same lines, Hulk valued rules of the community, especially obeying parents. However, Kush showed the rebel identity and did not like to be controlled by authority figures. Kush would talk about fights that he got into in school. Similar to Null and Hulk, Ram conformed to authority and rules of the community to benefit his education, but like Kush, Ram also aspired to be independent and wished not to follow every rule of the society.

In a club meeting, we read a section of *Beacon Hill Boys* out loud, and I asked the club members what they thought about Jerry who did not care about the Japanese customs and rules that every Japanese person abided by. Ram first provided a concise summary of Jerry's characteristics. Then, Ram praised his confidence and independence from the community. Ram's comments that he would care less about what other people command him to do provoked Null, the rule follower, in the club:

R: He [Jerry] is confident, and he doesn't care much about what others say. There is no one to tell him what to do. He is more on his own and his parents don't tell him what to do. He doesn't care much about the society. He just likes to live the life the way it is.

C: What do you think about his attitude then?

N: Who? Jerry?

R: It's good to a certain point. I think he is right. You live a life only

once. Then every moment is special. You have to do what your mind tells you to do, not what is told by others. You don't do what is fine for them, instead of what is good for you.

N: So what you are saying is then.

R: I will do what I want to do. I will not do what you want me to do.

N: I know. I got it. What you are saying is you will not do what others say to you?

R: Do whatever I like to do.

N: If everybody hates what you are doing, so you don't change or you don't care? (8CM/349-361/041908)

When we moved onto another topic in the same club meeting, Null resurrected the question again to Ram who had previously said that he was not happy with taking the history class which is mandatory. In the excerpt below while Null kept emphasizing the importance of following community rules, Ram highlighted his desire to be independent by not following every rule of the society and school. However, Ram later stressed that as much as he did not like to follow rules, he compromised his desire for a bigger cause in his life which is to be successful. This discussion invited Hulk who remained rather quiet in club meetings. In fact, Hulk chimed in and supported Null's argument that one has to follow rules of the community and school:

N: I have one question (laughs)….You said you don't do whatever people like to do, and whatever people make you do? Why do you have a history class?

R: Because school wants me to do that.

N: So you are doing what schools wants you to do. So you are doing it.

R: But it's a part of life.

N: I know it's a part of life.

R: Because what I want to do involves education. I am doing it for my own benefit not theirs. So I have more interest in it than they are.

N: But you are still doing what they want you to do. It doesn't make sense. You are doing something that other people wants you to….

R: That's own my benefit. I don't want to study it, but it's part of something I have to do. It's part of my grade and it helps me….

H: So if you are going to work, and you don't' work, then your boss will kick you out.

N: yeah (laughs).

H: You have to obey him.

N: Yeah. If you want to do what everyone wants to do, you have to go like desert and do whatever you want to do. (8CM/408-435/041908)

The excerpt above highlights that while Hulk and Null highly valued compliance with authority and rules in the community, Ram resisted following every rule of the society. Nevertheless, since Ram's drive to succeed was strong, he complied with the school rules, such as taking classes and completing school work that he did not necessarily enjoy.

Resisting Stereotypes

Ram and Null believed that Asians were shy and they at some points defined themselves as shy. On the other hand, Kush did not consider himself shy and modest and rather considered himself as sociable and cocky. Kush did not quite identify himself as an Asian who fits the stereotypes. In a club meeting, the concept of Asians' shyness was raised again when talking about Dan from *Beacon Hill Boys.* The participants regarded Dan as too shy to talk to a girl on whom he had a crush. When I offered them the

interpretation that Dan just had a shy personality, Null strongly opposed it by saying it was not just an individual trait, but most Asians were shy. While Ram agreed with Null on this issue, Kush did not consider himself shy. Kush further criticized people who are shy around others:

N: It's [Dan's shyness is] not personality. It's like culture. Whole Asians, like 90%, they are shy.

C: Really?

N: See? Two Asians (points to R and H)

R: Yeah. Shy. I agree with it.

N: So that's interesting. They are shy.

C: Do you guys agree?

H: Um.

N: I agree 100%.

C: Do you agree?

K: No. You know like some people act like really hyper, and you act like in some way and in front of others, they are really quiet, that sucks.….

C: What about that Asians are shy? Do you agree with it?

N: Um. (agrees)

K: No, I am not shy. (7CM/305-327/040508)

In another club meeting where we discussed people who encouraged us like Eddie was encouraged by a friend's father, Null again raised the topic of Asians being shy and quiet as the Indian boys, Ram and Hulk, did not talk much. In the following excerpt, Kush and Null took examples of Indians who were not stereotypically shy. In response to

these two examples, however, Ram classified the Indians as American born, thus having

American traits, and further ratified that Asians, that are foreign born, are shy:

> N: …Wow, so all the Indian people are quiet? This is home, like I don't want to say (makes a firm and silent face imitating that they don't talk to each other home) (C laughs).

> K: I want to see *Harold and Kumar 2*, (refers to a movie). There is an Indian guy at a gas station. He is loud, so loud.

> N: Yeah, there is Indian people in my school. One is president of school. His name is Akil and other is big, other one is really loud. His name is. She is really loud.

> R: It really depends on the person. Maybe he was born here, or.

> N: Yeah, he was born here.

> R: Yeah. That's what it is.

> K: Not all Indian people are quiet.

> N: So you guys don't talk at home. You would be like (R laughs).

> K: I bet they talk like crazy. (9CM/288-300/042608)

As Kush in the excerpt above tried to contest stereotypes attached to

Asians who are viewed as shy and quiet, Kush was also aware of white privilege

and discrimination against other minorities, not against Asians though, in the US.

Discussing freedom and liberty given for some in *Beacon Hill Boys*, Kush pointed

out mistreatment toward Mexican workers due to their race in the US. Kush

explained that liberty and freedom are not for everyone but for certain people,

such as white and rich people. While Null believed in illusions of racial equality

and Hulk firmly believed in meritocracy, Kush, who has been in the US the

longest, was acutely aware of inequalities in the US:

> K: Like they [Mexicans] go to work and they don't get paid as

much.

N: Because they are illegal.

K: Like there are a lot of legal Mexicans.

N: There are a lot of illegal, and they still get paid for working.

C: He is saying even legal Mexicans get paid less.

N: I don't think so.

K: Yea, I am sure they do.

N: Mexican legal people. I don't know if they get less paid but.

K: My Dad worked with Mexican, Jose. He was legal. He was working longer than my Dad did, but he made like less….

H: If you work hard then you can make more money.

K: Mexicans work hard. (8CM/507-522/041908)

Although some of the participants disputed some stereotypes ascribed to Asians in the US, which include shyness and obedience, all of them were aware of and content with the positive stereotype about Asians being smart. Kush felt good about being an Asian who is viewed as smart in the US and believed that Asians are smart by referring to famous Asian musicians. Similarly, Null felt good about being an Asian who is viewed as smart in the US, and he attributed their smartness and success in school to the values of respecting teachers and of education unlike American peers. Similar to Null, Ram regarded Asians as smarter and as having brain because to him, Asians tend to pursue more things in life, which makes them mature. Hulk also felt good about being Asian and often associated Asians with professional jobs that interested him.

In one club meeting, Kush raised a question why Jerry from *Beacon Hill Boys* kept getting in trouble. To him, the fact that Jerry was an Asian who happens to get in trouble was not congruent with the nerd image that is ascribed to Asian students. When asked to elaborate on what he had said, Kush pointed out pervasive racial stereotypes, which led us to discuss whether being Asian in this light was a positive attribute. This is telling that Kush in fact subscribes to the model minority stereotype even though he, as an Asian, often got in trouble in school. Kush, Hulk, and Null responded that it felt good to be Asians who are regarded as smart, but in the excerpt below, Ram showed disinterest in the topic. The following excerpts show Kush's awareness of stereotypes ascribed to Asian students in the US, and Ram's resistance to the stereotypes:

K: I have a question. Why Jerry keeps getting in trouble?…

R: It's the image that he has in school. That he is a bad guy, not a good guy.…

K: He is Asian though.

R: But every Asian is not a good person (laughs).

C: Yeah, talk more about that. You said he is Asian though. What do you mean by that?

K: Like the stereotypes. Like all the blacks are bad and all the Asians are like nerds and so….

H No [I don't agree that all the Asians are nerds]. Suppose if there are 100 Asians and if 80 are nerds, then others think that 20 would not be nerds.

C: Do you think that kind of stereotypes are good?

K: Yeah. …

N: Feels good [to be an Asian in the US] (everybody laughs)…

K: That feels good, but everyone thinks I am stupid (N & C

awkwardly laugh)…

R: Fine. I don't care much about it. (8CM/44-144/041908)

The excerpts show that while Null and Ram agreed that Asians are shy, Kush resisted the stereotype. The participants expressed that they felt good about being Asian, but they also pointed out that they resisted the stereotypes about Asians and did not think that all the Asians are smart. It was intriguing that Kush was the only one who was sensitive to discrimination against Mexican workers in the US and voiced the inequalities in the US.

Considering American Values

Easygoingness was one of the American values toward which most participants felt favorable and felt lacking in Asian values. Kush and Hulk described themselves as sociable and easy to talk to people. Kush was critical of many Asian peers who study frantically for a better future. Kush rather wanted to enjoy his present life, echoing the lyrics of the song, "Don't worry and be happy" that he often put on in the car. Similar to Kush, Hulk longed for easygoingness, but his reasons were different from Kush's. Hulk did not like any conflicts, so he liked to take things easy, and he liked Americans' easygoing attitudes. Similar to Kush and Hulk, Ram at times aspired to the easygoing attitude. That is, Ram endorsed Americans' happiness and being content with present life and wished to control his anger. However, Ram did not see himself adopting that attitude as he believed it is a trade off to become more successful later in life. Null did not contribute to the discussion on this topic. After all, his family and he appeared to entertain each other and to be laid back.

In a club meeting where we discussed chapters in *Beacon Hill Boys*, there was a scene in which Jerry took an incident in a restaurant as related to racial discrimination and lost his temper while other friends including Dan did not get agitated. When asked about Jerry's behavior, Ram, Kush, and Hulk regarded him as having emotional problems instead of viewing it as racial discrimination. That is, they reprimanded him for losing his temper and for not taking the situation lightly:

> R: Other friends took it as a mistake (H agrees), and he it can be both-it can be a mistake or it can be something related to racism, but it's like he [Jerry] is short-tempered and he gets angry very easily. Maybe that's why.

> C: What would you have done if you were in the situation? You and a bunch of your friends or family went to a restaurant, the same thing happened….

> K: You know like people get emotion problems. They keep reacting about things angrier and angrier.

> H: He should not get too much angry. It may be a mistake. He's just short tempered. (9CM/123-132/042608)

Although this excerpt does not show that the participants associated the easygoing attitude with American traits, it shows that they all aspired to take things lightly. For example, recall how Ram liked to be relaxed and easygoing but found that it conflicted with Asian values of studying and working hard to achieve goals in life. Also, recall how Hulk really liked the aspect of people being polite in the US in the second interview with him.

In addition to easygoingness, the topic of freedom was discussed often on different occasions, but the participants took different approaches to it. While Kush did not particularly use the word, freedom in his talk, he appreciated more freedom in American schools and disliked a level of control administered by his mother and school

teachers. Null was rather ambivalent about freedom. That is, whereas Null liked the

aspect of freely speaking his mind in American culture, he attributed what he thought was

unique problems in the US, like drugs and teenage pregnancy, to freedom given to

adolescents. Null also at the same time voiced concerns about his younger brother who

desired more freedom from his parents. Similar to Null, Ram disliked the freedom

granted to American students, but Ram particularly utilized this word to describe

American problems that he did not want to adopt. While Kush, Null, and Ram

contributed to this topic, Hulk did not seem to have anything to say about it. In discussing

Hybrid, we talked about examples of being tainted by American culture as it closely

related to one theme in the poem. While Null and Ram provided their observations of

how too much freedom corrupted some American peers, Kush disputed it by asserting

that these are stereotypical observations steming from media manipulation:

> C: Do you have some examples of some people that you know who are corrupted maybe by America?

> N: yeah. There's this one girl. She is fifteen and she is pregnant at school.

> C: Umum. So that can be an example.

> N: That's something bad.…

> R: That's freedom. That sometimes makes it difficult. It's difficult to control.

> C: So what do you guys think about having all this freedom in this country, like doing whatever you want to?

> N: That's why there are some problems. Like in other countries, they do not have any problems. In school, there are no drugs. But here, you do drugs and you do bad stuff, and you don't learn anything at school. In my country, in other countries, if you don't learn, teachers hit you.

R: Students are more toward extra curricular activities like, music.

C: So the structure here allows students to have more freedom to work on other things, other than studying. So then that can make them corrupted?

K: I don't think America is corrupting people- it's just media. There are drugs and sex on TV. (1CM/37-60/020908)

The participants considered some American values, such as easygoing attitudes and freedom, as something they could adopt. Kush showed that he appreciated those values that seem to be scarce in his understanding of Korean culture. Null did not comment on the easygoingness, but he showed an ambivalent attitude toward freedom. Ram mostly negatively perceived freedom in the US. Hulk and Ram also liked to adopt easygoingness but in the case of Ram, he still negotiated between easygoingness that he found in Americans and hard work that he associated with rigidity in Asian culture.

Recognizing English as a Dominant Language

All of the participants, Kush, Null, Ram, and Hulk, valued knowing and being able to speak their first languages. Particularly, Ram appreciated speaking Indian languages with fellow Indians and wished to keep his Indian accent in English. However, when this topic was explored further, their positions on whether or not they will teach their first languages to the next generation differed. Null and Hulk maintained the same view about teaching languages. That is, they would teach Uzbek and Indian languages to the next generation. However, Kush and Ram did not see a need to teach ethnic languages for somewhat slightly different reasons. Kush considered learning other languages, including Korean, unnecessary as English and Spanish are the dominant

languages in the US. Although Ram appreciated other languages, he strongly believed that only English should be taught to prepare people to be globally competitive.

In the following excerpt, Null faced Kush who did not want to go back to Korea and therefore did not see a need to teach the language to his children. When Kush kept insisting that children who grow up in the US would not want to learn languages other than English, Null sprang back to his religion by which he believed teaching his language is important:

K: You have to know English and Spanish in this country. So you don't have to like teach another language.

C: Even if that's the language that your parents and you speak?

K: It's like no one speaks it. You don't need it.

N: What if you go to your country?

K: Probably I am not going to go there.

N: You are not gonna go, but maybe your kid is going to go?

K: Probably not.

N: Maybe he gets old and he gets smart and then he is like why didn't you teach me? I need it. I am Japanese, and I don't speak Japanese.

K: Then, you can go to some school and pay for it.

N: you don't say that. You never say that. When a child gets old, he says you didn't teach me that. What's what all the child say. The first thing that they say is you didn't teach me because that's what they say. And if you say like you didn't care, and they say why didn't you like hit me and make me, you know? That's what they say.

K: Yeah, they are not gonna say it here to hit a child.

N: To your child. if your child is saying it, it's illegal?

K: If you abuse your child. You can't say that here and most likely, the people who grow up here in the US, oh, Dude, I want to learn another language. they are not gonna say that.

N: It's really different. You know I have my own religion and different. We have different rules in my religion. (7CM/577-597/040508)

All the participants agreed with the necessity of learning and speaking English in the US. In one club meeting where the discussion centered on language learning experience, Null raised how he did not like to learn Spanish. And then, Null indicated that he did not like Spanish speaking persons in the US who, in his view, do not tend to learn English. Kush, Ram, and Hulk followed Null's with their observations of Spanish speaking persons in the US and criticized them for not speaking English. This may indicate that the participants were aware of the dominance and power of English language. Additionally, the excerpt suggests that the participants revealed stereotypical and narrow understanding of others, such as Spanish speaking persons in the US:

N: I don't like Spanish. I don't use it anyways. Either it came from Spain or Mexico they don't really learn English.

K: They don't.

N: Why? (laughs) They don't learn? I don't talk to them anyways.…

K: There are like so many Mexicans don't speak English.

R: Exactly.

H: Yeah.

C: Why do you think that is?

K: Because they just want to work.

N: They just come to work here.

H: Yeah, most of the people are Spanish so they speak their own

language and they never try to learn English.

R: It's the comfort level -they are different.

N: At school, there are people who came from Russia. And there's like 10-20 of them and they always speak Russian to each other and Turkish. They help each other do their homework….And they talk every day not in English, Russian or Turkish. And they don't learn anything. That's what they do.

R: They are not learning English.

N: Yeah, you are not learning English. I mean you are learning but really slowly. (6CM/662-685/032908)

The excerpts showed that even though the participants valued the ability to speak their first languages, due to their awareness of the English language as the dominant language with power, Kush and Ram did not predict that they would pass their language skills to the next generation.

Summary of Across Cases

The synthesis of the cross case analysis has identified some of the similarities and differences in the four cases. The results show that all the participants capitalized on the model minority stereotype, especially with regard to the stereotype that Asians are smart. Nevertheless, some of them tried to contest it. In addition, being respectful was an important Asian value that all of the participants pointed out. However, they differed on the perceptions that Asians are shy and complacent. The findings also have revealed that they were aware of the English language as a dominant language which prevented some of them from planning to pass down their first languages to the next generation. In addition, easygoing attitude and freedom were two American values that some of the participants favorably perceived. Each of the findings will be further explored in the

discussion chapter by aligning them with what has been found in the literature.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The dissertation study examined identities of Asian English language learners
(ELLs), adolescent boys, in an out of school multicultural literature Read, Talk, and Wiki
(RTW) club. The purpose of the study was to first explore how Asian ELLs construct
identities when they engage in literacy activities since Asian students' identities in a book
club format have not been extensively studied compared to other minority students (e.g.,
Arial Broughton, 2002; Smith, 2005; Sutherland, 2005). The second purpose was to
unravel our common and stereotypical understanding of Asian students in the US since
the pervasive model minority stereotype (Ogbu, 1987, 1993) silences divergent voices
and experiences of many Asian students (Lee, 1994, 1996; Lei, 2006; Lew, 2006; Louie,
2004).

But why study identity in literacy practices? Reading and discussing books
inevitably requires meaning making (Goodman & Goodman, 2004; Rosenblatt, 2004;
Smith, 1997; 2004). That is, when learners extract meaning from readings that portray
similar or different experiences to theirs, they tend inevitably to juxtapose their identities,
cultural models (Gee, 1996; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008), or figured worlds (Holland et al.,
1998) to understand the characters. Cultural models and figured worlds represent one's
typical understanding of his/her cultural and social surroundings and show his/her values,
disciplines, and beliefs that inform behaviors and thoughts about specific phenomena in
everyday life. One's cultural models or figured worlds can be altered or reinforced when

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s/he keeps encountering different cultural models through media, books, direct interactions with and indirect observations of participants of a certain group (Gee,1996; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008). For this reason, Gee (2003) asserted that all the domains that involve meaning making essentially require identity work. Although many people form, alter, and/or maintain various cultural models unconsciously (Gee, 2007), openly talking about cultural models that are likely to be in conflict with one another can be vital and beneficial for English language learners who move between two different cultural and linguistic worlds let alone facing the extra burden to acquire English language in a new environment.

To answer the research question, "how do Asian English language learners construct their identities in an out of school multicultural literature Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW) club?", I recruited four Asian ELL boys who were from Korea, Uzbekistan, and India. We met in the out of school RTW club for a five month period and read, discussed, and wrote about multicultural literature that depicted Asian immigrant students' experiences.

Findings of the study showed the ongoing process of Asian ELL boys' constructing multiple identities in the RTW club:

1. The Asian ELL boys' worlds were separated, and they developed a superficial relationship with American peers.
2. The participants capitalized on the model minority stereotype ascribed to Asians in the US, but pointed out the fallacy of using it to generalize to all Asians.

3. They stressed the importance of respect as a common Asian value, and many of them were critical of the educational standards in the US.

4. They strongly desired to belong to a club albeit different clubs.

5. They identified easygoingness and freedom found in American culture as desirable but at the same time as something that needed to be discreet.

6. Most of them did not consider themselves as good readers and writers.

7. They negotiated their linguistic identities.

In this chapter, I first explain the characteristics of the RTW club. I then explicate what the findings of the study mean in relation to other studies in the literature. Then, I discuss how the study can inform identity researchers as well as literacy and ESOL teachers who work with ELLs. I then discuss limitations of the study with respect to methodological issues, followed by suggestions for future research. Then, I end the chapter with concluding remarks.

Discussion of the Findings

The RTW Club: The Site for Identity Exploration

The characteristics of the Read, Talk & Wiki club that allowed the participants to open up their identities deserve attention prior to discussing the main findings. What contributed to the interesting findings seemed to be the carnivalesque features inherent in the RTW club. I have found Bakhtin's interpretation of carnival employed when critiquing the French author, François Rabelais, relevant to my study. Bakhtin (1968; 1984) illustrated that carnival was a second place and second life for ordinary people during carnival festivals in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. To him, carnival square

was a safe and alternative place for people to mock officials and to contest hierarchies inherent in their lives by using humor and sarcasm. This was a place for people who were not in power to feel equal, free, and empowered while in real life it could have been a nothing but a dream.

Bakhtin's explanation of carnival was employed in a literacy study in which Lensmire (1994) examined his writing workshop through the lens of these notions. Lensmire asserted that there were three major components in his writing workshop that resembled Bakhtin's carnival. Except for the use of profanation in Bakhtin's carnival, Lensmire emphasized that his writing workshop entailed three components: active participation (participation of all); common and familiar people and topic (free and familiar contact among people); and humor or sarcasm (playful and familiar relation to the world). In addition, based on the analysis of many book clubs in middle and high school classrooms, Faust, Cockrill, Hancock, and Isserstedt (2005) argued that students' book clubs contained the feature of Bakhtin's carnival consciousness. After all, the use of laughter, "the blending of official and unofficial discourses"(p. 181), and special types of communication between club members were found in the book clubs.

Similar to the Lensmire and Faust et al.'s analogy, I assert that the RTW club contained components of carnivalesque features that permitted participants to open up. First, due to the inherent social construction of meaning in a book club that consists of a small group, all the participants had the opportunity to share their personal interpretations of the texts. Second, the study took place in an unconventional out-of-school setting in which the participants did not worry about being graded and they were not situated hierarchically unlike most book club studies that have taken place in the classroom

(Broughton, 2002; Dudley-Marling, 2003; Louie, 2005; Moller & Allan, 2000). The

participants indicated in the member checking session that they felt empowered to openly

talk about their interpretations of American cultures, some of which were negative. In

addition, the use of multicultural literature that portrays familiar and common

experiences that are similar to the participants' as opposed to the literature that does not

hold any relevance to them resembles Lensmire's second feature of carnival. The role of

the multicultural literature in the RTW club in my study is congruent with how the

students positively responded to literature that depicted similar characters like them in

Vyas (2004) and Broughton's (2002) studies.

Establishing this safe environment did not go without challenges. Although many

participants enjoyed arguments, which contributed to richer data, Hulk felt uncomfortable

about reading and hearing atheist's perspectives about God due to his strong beliefs in his

religion. Conflicts and dissonance inherent in discussing literature in a small group

setting were pointed out by Johnson and Fox (1998) who studied two middle school girls'

thoughts about female protagonists in literature.

Feeling Different

As recent immigrants in the US, each one of the participants was participating

members albeit to differing degrees in various cultural and social groups. What all of the

participants had in common was that they felt estranged from one or more of their social

and cultural groups, and thus they considered that their worlds could not converge. While

Kush felt different from other Korean peers, Null, Ram, and Hulk felt different from

American peers. As such, Kush's skating world which was composed of non-Korean

peers differed from his non-skating world, such as school. In a similar way, Null, Ram,

and Hulk recognized that their home and out of home worlds could not meet due to fundamental differences between American culture and their home cultures. What was also intriguing was that Kush and Ram dissociated themselves from their co-ethnic peers. That is, Kush distanced himself from fellow Koreans who recently moved from Korea and Ram distanced himself from Indian American peers who were born in the US. Contrary to Kush, Ram strongly identified himself with India-born Indian peers. Even though they might share similar linguistic and cultural backgrounds, they chose to position themselves differently due to different cultural models. Similar to this finding, the tensions between Korean born and American born Korean high school students are well documented in Palmer (2007).

The participants' feeling different from one of their sociocultural groups illustrate the important workings of cultural models (Gee, 2003; 2007) or figured worlds (Holland et al., 1998) in their lives. To make sense of the behaviors of their sociocultural groups, the participants actively utilized their cultural models that they endorse. Furthermore, cultural models helped them decide with whom they would like to fit in. As Gee (1996; 2003; 2004; 2007; 2008) discussed, cultural models are typical social theories that are imbued with one's values and beliefs and influence one's decision making and behaviors in society. Thus, one's cultural models help him/her discern what is appropriate from what is not in our everyday lives. However, as Gee cautioned, only adhering to one's familiar cultural models can yield stereotypes of different sociocultural groups that subscribe to different cultural models as seen in all of the participants.

It was striking to me that Ram and Hulk felt isolated and different from other English speaking peers even though they entered the country with adequate knowledge

and proficiency of English. Ram had a hard time finding common topics with American peers. What put a wedge between Ram and American peers was also conflicting cultural models. Ram's cultural model that stressed students' duties to be studious and to be respectful made him view American students, some of whom did not operate within the same cultural model, negatively. Ram also took ESOL classes which limited the chance to directly interact with American peers. As the most recent immigrant to the US in the study and due to being placed in the ESOL program like Ram, Hulk did not have an ample chance to interact with American peers. Lack of multiple opportunities to interact with American peers made him also rely on the secondhand information about American culture, which was likely to bear stereotypes.

Ram and Hulk's cases accentuate the difficulties and immense challenges that ELLs must face when entering the US with a rudimentary level of English. It was striking how Null described that he felt handicapped in the US due to low proficiency in the English language. Although Null was content with the progress he was making with English, language proficiency played a critical role in drawing a clear line between American culture and his home culture. What was intriguing was the fact that Null did not foresee the possibility of having one connected world. Strongly adhering to his cultural models that emphasize obedience and compliance, Null vehemently resisted different cultural models that were espoused by many American peers outside of his home. Null's strong adherence to his religious values such as valuing a strong familial bond and respecting authority is commonly found in many South Asian Muslim children and families (Ross-Sheriff & Husain, 2004).

Although Kush entered the country with limited proficiency in English like Null, the path Kush took sharply contrasted with Null, let alone Ram and Hulk. Kush blended more with American peers than Korean peers. Instead of feeling different from American peers, he disengaged himself from Korean peers. Endorsing cultural models that emphasize being social and independent in American culture, Kush resisted the cultural models that most Koreans espouse that emphasize studying and obeying parents. Kush also dissociated himself from Korean peers partly because he did not have a religion and often was critical of Korean Christians. Studies have shown that Korean immigrants in the US tend to build a sense of belonging and stay connected with Korean culture through participating in Korean churches (Chong, 2003). Due in part to coming to the US at a young age when his own cultural models were not as strongly established as Ram or Null's, he might have been more subject to the cultural models presented by his American world without contemplating his own cultural models. It is also possible that the significant differences Kush must have felt in his earlier years in the US might have led him to want to fit in with American peers at the expense of Korean values. Alternatively, it is probable that Kush might have intentionally associated with American peers who do not place a priority in education as opposed to Korean peers because he was acutely aware of the pressures from Korean parents. This is echoed in Palmer's (2007) findings of Korea born Korean American high school students. Also, Kush's limited value placed on Korean language contradicts the findings of Yi's studies (2005a; 2005b; 2008) that depict rich bilingual literacy activities that Korean ELLs engage in that helps to build stronger ethnic identity.

It should be noted, however, that cultural models are fluid and dynamic. As much as Null, Ram, and Hulk found cultural models at odds with their own cultural models, and wished to adhere to their own cultural models, they spoke positively about easygoingness and freedom of speaking one's minds pervasive in American culture. In fact, these two traits were endorsed by Kush, who felt different from Koreans, which leads me to deduce that these are qualities that the participants saw lacking in their Asian cultural models.

Seeking Membership in a Club

Another finding was that all the participants sought to belong to a club albeit different ones. Human beings in general seek to identify themselves in relation to others and by seeking a membership in some group (Maslow, 1943). Adolescents who try to figure out a sense of being tend to seek a membership as well (Marcia, 1980). Kush's life revolved around a skating sphere. It is possible that because Kush felt so differently from others in the first years of immigration that he found the skating world a comforting sanctuary. Kush exclusively defined himself within the context of the skating club while aligning his interests, disposition, and discourses with those of fellow skaters. While Kush did not seek membership in academia, which he deemed as antisocial, Ram and Hulk strongly identified themselves within an academic world. Due to having been to the US for a relatively short amount of time, Ram and Hulk did not belong to a particular club at the time of the study. However, Ram strongly aspired to belong to a club of academically driven people, whom he regarded as more intellectual and mature. Also, Ram's aspiration to be more self-confident, which was pervasive in his data indicate that he was acutely aware of the dominant cultural models of the academe. Similar to Ram,

Hulk aspired to belong to academe, which will help accomplish his goals of becoming a surgeon. Ram and Hulk's strong aspirations to belong to a group of highly educated persons seem to reflect immigration background of most Indians that immigrate to the US (who are professionals and have highly developed English skills) (Ross-Sheriff & Chaudhuri, 2004).

Null's aspiration to belong to various clubs stood out among the other participants. As an individual who valued complying with rules in the community and living in harmony with others, Null revealed his active involvement in religious clubs, family gatherings, and technology related extracurricular activities. It was particularly striking that Null described the RTW club as something special that made him distinguish from his peers who did not participate in such a club. Null's newly found online community of which he was an active participant is another indication of his yearning to belong to his peer group.

Being Asian in the US

Another important set of findings relates to what it meant to be Asians in the US as ELLs who came from diverse Asian countries. First, the results of the study revealed that the model minority stereotype which is based on the contention that Asian students' voluntary status is the barometer for academic success is fraught with complications. While the stereotype could loosely define Null, Ram, and Hulk, who collectively valued education and who were obedient in the context of school, Kush's behaviors and perceptions about education were the opposite of the stereotype. I emphasize the word, loosely, to classify Null, Ram, and Hulk as such because I do not desire the stereotype to cloud unique experiences and life stories of each. This is congruent with the findings of

Lee (1996) and Lew's (2006) studies in which they showed a variety of Asian students who do not fit the stereotypes. What was also intriguing about Kush was that he was the only one who was sensitive to other stereotypes of Mexicans and American culture portrayed in the media. This perhaps indicates that living in the margins of the common understanding of Asians helped him gain critical perspectives about stereotypes pervasive in society. In addition, it is possible that the length of his stay in the US helped him open up to inequalities of different races in the US. Unlike Kush, however, Null exhibited a strong resistance to following black culture and a dislike for Spanish speaking persons, while Ram developed stereotypical understanding of American culture.

Second, as recent immigrants, all of the participants were aware of the positive stereotypes and capitalized on them. However, they did point out the fallacy of generalizing it to all the Asians in such a manner. It is striking that the model minority stereotype is so pervasive that even Asian ELLs who are recent members of the US were aware of it and capitalized on it, given that the stereotype has been predominantly employed to describe Asian American students who are born in the US (Lee, 1996; Lew, 2006). Considering that prominent Asian scholars have tried to contest the model minority stereotype because it has been utilized as a hegemonic tool to marginalize Asians in the US (Lee, 1996; Lew, 2006), it is interesting that the participants strongly identified themselves within the stereotype. Kush tried to contest it by saying he was not quiet, and Ram, Null, and Hulk said not all Asians are smart. Kush, however, accepted the stereotype to distinguish himself from other Asians. The findings were validated in Asher's (2008) study of ten Indian American high school students who reified the model minority stereotype even though they resisted it. The four participants recognized that

being Asian was a privilege in the US since they can easily get away with being smart and felt proud that their racial group was perceived as such by other groups. Most of them pointed out that hard work, parents' high expectations, and high regard for education contributed to the smartness of Asians. Asian parents' role to shepherd their children's education has also been pointed out to cement the model minority stereotype in Asian ELLs (McKay & Wong, 1996).

Third, another surprising finding is that Null gradually identified himself as Asian even though he strongly denied it in the beginning of the study. Having heartfelt connections to his country, Null insisted on being called as an Uzbek, instead of Central Asian or Asian throughout the study. His deliberate effort to be seen as just Uzbek contrasted with other participants' endorsement of the classification, Asian. Null's case is complicated as he does not fall into the typical criteria of Asians according to Min (2006), and his ethnicity is not relatively well represented in the US. It is possible that based on his appearance and similar values that he deemed Uzbeks share with other Asians, such as respect and modesty, Null might have grown to compromise his identity to be included into a bigger and closer racial group, Asians. In addition, I might have influenced Null's identification with Asians since I might have forced it upon him in the study by presenting materials and by guiding discussions around Asian experiences. Ngo (2008) similarly illustrated Lao high school students who were forcefully defined as for example, Chinese, who are relatively well represented in the US as Asian Americans.

The last intriguing finding pertinent to being Asians in the US relates to Asian values to respect others, especially teachers, and commonly sensed disappointment amongst participants with disrespect displayed by American peers and American

curriculum. All the participants pointed out being respectful to teachers as something important, and the three participants, except for Kush, voiced that the level of American education is disappointing compared to that of other countries. Educated in India and Uzbekistan until recently, Hulk, Ram, and Null felt that US schooling was lacking compared to other countries. However, Kush who came to the US at the age of eleven did not feel the same about it.

The participants' perceptions are supported by Valverde and Schmidt's (2000) findings that the standards in science and math education in the US do not meet the world standards. Lower levels of US schooling and curricula that most of my participants lamented are also explicitly spoken of by the ESOL college teachers in Harklau's study (2000) that favored internationally educated students over US high school graduates in the classroom because of the perceived higher educational standards in overseas schools. One of the three participants, Aeyfer, a Turkish student in Harklau's study also observed a higher level of education in Turkish education than in the US. Likewise, Palmer's (2007) Korean high school participants similarly associated the mainstream American schooling with less rigorous education. Moreover, the participants' disapproval of their American peers' disrespectful behaviors is also echoed in Harklau's (2000) study of three English language learners. The teachers in Harklau's (2000) study commended language minority students' politeness and respect exhibited in class unlike US born students.

Language and Identity

The study also revealed that the participants' identities and language use are closely related. For example, Ram, who capitalized on being multilingual, was flexible enough to diversify the use of different languages to reveal certain aspects of his

identities. That is, Ram exhibited a more serious and reserved side of himself through academic discourse in English and Hindi and used Punjabi to be relaxed with his family and to put on a more easygoing identity he aspired. Switching languages to carry out different sociocultural purposes in everyday life is also found in Skapoulli's (2004) study of an adolescent Egyptian girl who lived in Cyprus. Although Hulk was multilingual like Ram, Hulk lacked the sense of owning English. Thus, Hulk felt like he had to put on a different and more reserved mode of talking. Whereas Hulk felt safe and secure with Indian peers whose responses could be predictable, he felt unsure about how American peers would react. For fear of embarrassing himself by not picking up on others' cultural models, Hulk instead chose a safe path to be more reserved and say things in a more monotonous voice. This is a clear indication of negotiating his English speaking identity, and it is telling that acquiring another language involves negotiating different identities. When Hulk shared this in a club meeting, I was intrigued by it because I felt the opposite when learning to speak English. Therefore, I shared my experience with learning with them. Whereas I put on a more outgoing personality when speaking English, I felt more reserved when speaking Korean (Choi, 2005). Negotiation of identities because of language use was also illustrated by Zou (2000) who felt reserved and introverted when speaking English as opposed to feeling confident when speaking Chinese in her beginning years in the US. Lin in Lin, Wang, Akamatsu, and Riazi's (2002) study also expressed how learning English made her feel liberated similar to Choi (2005).

In addition, what all the participants showed was the dominance of English and its impact on their identity construction. Because of the dominance of the language in the US and peoples who speak it sometimes in the media (Pennycook, 1998), Kush became

an "English preferer" (Olsen, 1997, p. 99) and did not plan to teach Korean language to the next generation. Kush's thoughts about Korean language could change given that many students try to fit in with American peers in high school but later in college they try to reclaim their first language and culture (Aparicio, 2000; Tse, 2001; Valdes, 2005). Similarly, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) suggested that in second language learning, there are two overarching phases, the initial phase of loss and the later phase of recovery and (re)construction. In the phase of loss, a language learner may experience a loss of one's first language linguistic identity and inner voice. As he or she progresses in learning, the phase of recovery and (re)construction emerges. During this phase, as one finds his or her own voice emerging and reconstructing one's past, he/she grows into new positions and subjectivities. It is intriguing that although Ram valued moving between multiple languages, he asserted that English only should be administered in Indian schools and in exams. Null and Hulk also felt reserved or different from their own first languages at some point because of the dominance of English language. If they were learning another language other than the language of dominance, they are not likely to have felt the same way about learning and speaking the language.

Distinguished from Ram and Hulk, Null showed how he negotiated his linguistic identity due to lack of proficiency in English. Not knowing the language for the first two years in the US, Null started to consider himself as quiet and introverted. However, as he improved the language, he reclaimed his identity as a talkative and extroverted person. Null still felt restrained by his English, so he considered that he could not fully participate in the culture of American peers. Nevertheless, it is fascinating that Null has gained legitimate and full participation in the online community where he could be seen as

legitimate by English speakers after gaining the appropriate discourse of online communication. The process of how Null gained confidence in English is echoed in previous research that examined how ELLs begin to gain ownership of English language by participating in online spaces, out of school, either through writing on a homepage and emailing (Lam, 2000) or fanfiction writing (Black, 2005; 2006). Similarly, Williams (2008) studied how young adults take up various identities on online space. However, it should be noted that outside of the online space, Null did not regard himself as a good academic and essay writer. Recall how Null wanted to hire somebody to write his biography that focuses on his family's immigration stories due to lack of English writing skills. This may be explained by the fact that Null invested in developing informal writing but did not see the need to invest in formal writing. McKay and Wong (1996)'s study similarly reported a middle school Chinese boy, Michael who invested greatly in the oral language development rather than writing as his social identity as a popular athlete in school motivated him communicate better with his English.

<div align="center">Implications of the Study</div>

Based on the findings of the study, in this section, I suggest implications for ESOL/literacy teaching and identity research. The findings highlighted the importance of cultural models in shaping the ELL boys' identities. As Gee (2003) argued, literacy activities and learning a second language are essentially identity work. After all, learners are encouraged to make meaning of the readings by juxtaposing their identity with the characters or phenomena in the books. As Gee (2007) mentioned, many people alter and maintain their cultural models unconsciously. However, immigrant students like ELLs will greatly benefit from openly talking about conflicting cultural models due to the

differing home and school cultures. As one of the many roles of ESOL teachers is to bridge the ESOL classes to mainstream classes, ESOL and literacy teachers who work with ELLs should serve as a bridge to connect ELLs' home culture to the mainstream school culture. One way to accomplish that goal is to provide a safe literacy environment for ELLs to explore cultural models in the classroom by reading culturally relevant texts (Johnson & Fox, 1998; Noll, 1998). Gee argues that cultural models are important for literacy and language teachers who deal with students who do not have ready-made mainstream cultural models. Without ample opportunities to interact with American peers, they tend to develop stereotypes. As teachers of literacy and language, we should help students, who are marginalized, go beyond their own cultural models practiced at home and also be open to cultural models shared in the mainstream culture.

In addition, we as teachers want to promote diversity and provide instruction and support through which the students' linguistic and cultural background can be validated. ESOL teachers should be mindful that English is a dominant language in the world. Thus, ELLs could interpret that English is legitimate and the ways in which people behave and things operate in the target culture is normal by devaluing their first language and culture. Materials that validate the students' experiences and discourse in the classroom should promote their linguistic and cultural identities. However, some students may not like to linger on their past, and may want to move on with their American life and align themselves with American peers like Kush. Just because we have students like that, we do not want to discontinue our efforts to invite their linguistic and cultural experiences from their home country and from their culture. However, as Ortmeier-Hooper (2008) suggested, at the same time, we do not want to highlight only that ESL identity that ELLs

are different from American peers. This in turn would broaden the gap between ELLs and American peers. But we want to make sure that we do that balancing act – not limiting them into that difference mode as an ESL but at the same time, understanding them holistically instead of within that limited label.

Another important finding that was revealed in the out of school RTW club suggests that we need to get to know our students. The model minority stereotype is often used by teachers to assess Asian students in the classroom. For example, McKay and Wong's (1996) study found that teachers actually displayed favorable discourses toward Asian students over Spanish speaking students. When preparing for the dissertation study, I have heard confirmations from my colleagues that I would have no problem working with Asian students because they are such good students. As much as the model minority stereotype is construed as *positive*, it permits teachers to box students into the category and does not further encourage teachers to get to know the students who have multiple and multilayered identities (Asher, 2008). In order to resolve this issue, ESOL teachers could bring in diverse stories of minority students' experiences by introducing books and autobiographies written from diverse perspectives and try to dispel any stereotypes that marginalize students. Since I was able to get to know each of the participants on a personal level, I was able to find out different aspects of each participant. As for Kush, since he did not fit the stereotype, he could be easily categorized as the Asian kid who does not fit the picture and would have been seen as being detached from any class activities. But getting to know him allowed me to find an intelligent side of him. I think if I did not know who Null was and what kind of ethnic identity he had (especially, his attempts to write poems about his country and the corrupted government), I would have

no idea of his desire to hire a writer to write his story for him in English. That identity
that he had in his native language, as a writer and as a poet, was not transferred to another
language, English. Like Gee (2003) argued that ESOL/literacy teachers can help learners
to see the possibility of becoming confident English writers by developing their English
identities.

Fourth, what we need as literacy teachers working with ELLs is to provide many
outlets for them to express themselves in order to tap into their multiple intelligences.
The club provided both spoken and written outlets to convey their opinions about various
issues. As I intended, writing on the wiki was often a regurgitation of the spoken
discourse, and many found the writing component extra work. But Ram appreciated
writing online and being able to read others' writing on the wiki. He explained reading
about others' opinions on the wiki helped him predict patterns of the responses, which
eventually helped to promote a rapport in the club, and formulate and strengthen his own
thinking juxtaposed by others' differing opinions. Also, Ram's strong desire to be self
confident was revealed only in the wiki postings. As learners have different learning
styles, some learners like Ram would value expressing their ideas in a written format.
Also, teachers working with ELLs should be mindful of instructional methods that will
permit learners to express themselves in different modes. For example, Null felt limited
by the 300 word limit that was inherent on the wiki website.

Fifth, multicultural literature should be utilized in the ESOL classroom as a
"pedagogical term" (Short & Fox, 2003, p. 8). Deriving from Rosenblatt's (1938; 1995)
understanding of literature, Short and Fox (2003) suggest that literature should be used to
teach social reform and to teach students "to empathize with others, develop moral

attitudes, make sound choices, think critically about emotionally charged issues, and understand the consequences of their actions" (p. 9). Aligning well with their suggestions, the findings of the study lead to the need to incorporate multicultural education in the discussion groups. It was not my place as a researcher to sway the participants' thinking, but narrow understandings of some racial groups were revealed in the study. ELLs like many of us might bring in a baggage of stereotypes about different racial and ethnic groups from their own countries and/or from living through some of their family members' negative experiences with other groups in the US. Multicultural literature that invites conversations about different races and ways to contest stereotypes and prejudices can be effective in addressing the issue.

Sixth, pertinent to promoting multicultural education in ESOL/literacy classrooms, a careful selection of multicultural literature could inspire learners to engage in discussing books and to make connections to them. Choosing books that contain universal themes that matter to the learners and giving them choices would promote active participation in club meetings. For example, the books that we read contained themes relevant to the Asian immigrant students' lives. That is, relationship with parents, emphasis on education, parents' expectations, and complying with societal and familial rules. It should be noted that teachers should not assume that multicultural literature should reflect every student's experience from the same ethnic or cultural group. But instead, teachers should approach the multicultural literature in a way that it gives each student room and flexibility to express their diverse experiences within their own cultural and ethnic group which was pointed out by Dudley-Marling (2003). Similarly, Athanases (1998) cautioned that while teaching multicultural literature, we should not make a

mistake of "reducing them [readers] to mere members of particular identifying groups" (p 291). Drawing upon the findings of the study, the following criteria can be considered when selecting and using multicultural literature:

1. The stories must depict relevant life experiences of the readers. For example, high school Asian English language learners connected to the stories that described high school life, navigating through diverse linguistic and cultural worlds, complicated relationships with parents as these were directly related to their own life experiences.

2. The stories must be real and authentic. Authentic experiences that a real person like the readers undergoes in the form of first person essays can invite rich discussions.

3. The stories must represent diverse experiences of persons even within the same cultural and ethnic group as each person's experience can be different. Thus, as teachers choose the literature, they should discard the assumption that one particular person's experience in the story will be representative of the experiences of a student with the similar cultural and ethnic background.

4. Each student' cultural and ethnic group should be included in the selection. This is not to assume students' experiences within a particular group, but is intended to provide an anchor with which they can extend to talk about their own experiences. The inclusion of the student's social, linguistic, and cultural group in the selection can signify validation of the student's culture.

5. When preparing a list of literature, different genres, such as short stories, novels, and poems, should be included.

6. In addition to the inclusion of multicultural literature that depicts similar experiences of the students, multicultural literature that exposes the students to different ways of living and cultures should be considered.

Lastly, the dissertation study has yielded ideas about diversifying identity research in the field. From the perspective of SLA, many studies have focused on autobiographic narrations of usually adult learners (Lin et al., 2004; Marx, 2002). Moreover, Pavlenko and Lantolf (2000) promoted autobiographies as an appropriate way to study language learners' identity. Also, the relationship between language and identity still remains "abstract and theoretical" (Norton, 1997, p. 413). A heavy reliance on a social aspect of learning a language in identity research without considering cognitive aspects of learning a language has also been pointed out by Block (2003). Although adult learners face challenges to learn English which affects their identities, adolescents' identity formations when learning a second language seems more complicated by peer group, school life, parents' expectations, and their social identities (McKay & Wong, 1996). Gee's cultural models utilized to make sense of how ELLs negotiate and construct identities in a literacy site appears to be an alternative and valid method to studying identity construction of English language learners while helping them improve reading and writing in English.

Limitations of the Study

Having pointed out the implications of the study, I now outline the ways in which the data may have been adversely affected by the limitations of the design of the study. First, an apparent limitation of the dissertation study would be an inability to transfer the results to a larger population as it is a case study that examines only a few students. This is inherent in case study methodology (Yin, 2003). Recognizing this limitation of the methodology, I made the audit trail clear and transparent for future researchers and readers, triangulated data sources, and provided thick description of the data to gain credibility. Second, due to the nature of the naturalistic qualitative inquiry, the endeavor to highlight themes in the data was subjective. I might have unintentionally overlooked some important themes. The same data set that I interpreted could well yield different interpretations if examined by another researcher. To address this issue, however, I read the transcripts and coded data multiple times, particularly in the process of establishing several coding manuals. I also consulted four different peer debriefers in different stages of data analysis, each of whom provided me with alternative reading of the data.

In addition, not being able to speak the languages of all the participants could have negatively affected the study. I spoke only the language of Kush, thus, I was able to obtain richer data from him especially when I saw him interacting with his family in Korean. Ram and Hulk would often communicate with each other in Hindi in the car and in some club meetings. I knew what they were talking about by asking them but knowing their language could have enriched data about them. Also, I tended to stay longer to talk to Null's family after interviewing Null. Knowing Null's language could have again enriched data about him. Although I did not speak their languages, I developed a

sufficient level of familiarity with their cultural backgrounds. For example, one of the peer debriefers, L., had extensive knowledge about Central Asia, so she often provided me with political, educational, and economical settings of the countries, including Uzbekistan. Interestingly, however, speaking the language of Kush, at the beginning of the study rather made me overlook his data. Due to the cultural and linguistic proximity I felt to Kush, in the beginning stages of the analysis, I did not pay as much close attention to his data as I did to other participants'. I was able to overcome my bias only after one of my peer debriefers, T., pointed out the unique traits about Kush. My own bias is a revelation of how the model minority stereotype can cause some educators pay less attention to Asian students due to their presumed familiarity with Asian students.

Another limitation concerns the level of control that I executed in many aspects of the study. Instead of giving participants choices in the books that we read, I selected the books and the order in which they were read. I should have been more careful about short-listing the list of the books in the first place, so that the common book could have reflected their choices. Despite this, the participants seemed to positively identify with the readings, and the readings generated topics to which the participants related. In addition to the books, I facilitated the discussion questions and the wiki prompts that invited responses which were controlled by me. Letting the participants choose topics of their own and giving them more flexibility could have produced different findings. More importantly, I controlled the four focal participants' attendance by providing transportation to them. They unquestionably came to the club meetings voluntarily and truly needed a ride. However, the contrived aspect of the study cannot be compared to

similar studies conducted out of school. Inconsistent and low attendance seems common in many out of school studies like Sutherland's (2005).

Moreover, my attempt to elicit the participants' identities by having them respond to hypothetical scenarios might not have been the most accurate method to examine their identities. The responses indicated their value systems and small fragments of who they were, but the congruence between what they said they would do and what they actually do in a real situation cannot be guaranteed. However, I pursued the inquiry through various channels, such as individual interviews, club meetings, and informal conversations with them in the study, to complement the method. Also, explicitly guiding the participants in how to construct questions in the club meetings could have yielded richer data. This suggestion was voiced by Hulk who did not like to pose questions to others, "[the least enjoyable thing in the club was] um, asking questions….I don't know how to make up questions, and it's hard."(INT_H2/161/062808).

Despite these limitations, this dissertation study will shed light on how Asian immigrant ESOL adolescents go about literacy learning and how they form their identities around reading, talking, and writing about multicultural literature that is more aligned with their experiences.

Future Directions

Having discussed the limitations of the study, I now turn to suggest future directions of the research. This study attempted to examine identities of Asian ELL boys in an out of school Read, Talk, and Wiki (RTW) club. As much as the findings of the study are intriguing, a more enriched look at learners' identity deserves more attention through various methodological modifications. First, longitudinal studies could permit

future researchers to explore identity negotiations over time as learners' identities are bound to change. For example, although Kush did not have specific plans to go to college and detached himself from Korean culture, when I was talking to him informally after the conclusion of the study, he talked about thinking of going to college and of the possibility of going back to Korea later (RJE/062908). Prolonged engagement with the participants could document changes and negotiations over time, which my study failed to examine in depth. For instance, Harklau (2000)'s three year long ethnographic study that explored three ELLs' identity negotiations in high school and in the college ESOL classroom successfully documented how institutional settings which include curricula and teachers' perceptions of ELLs could play a role in the ELLs' constructing identities.

Second, future research might also employ similar research methods and replicate the study in another setting, perhaps in the classroom instead of out of school or with mixed racial groups or with the same ethnic group or having both girls and boys. Participants, like Ram, had wanted to include an American peer whom Kush attempted to invite but could not come. While talking about American culture as immigrants as outsiders, they wanted to exchange their thoughts with American peers in the club. In addition, talking about their relationship with other racial groups was not salient in the dissertation study, except for a few mentioning of Spanish speaking persons. Having diverse racial and cultural groups, than just Asian participants, could enrich the data.

Third, my study was rather contrived in a sense that I pre-established the RTW club in which we read certain types of books and I intentionally asked certain types of questions to elicit specific data on their identities both in club meetings and on the wiki. Studies that explore identities in naturally occurring settings, such as through

observations and through critical discourse analysis (Mckay & Wong, 1996) might yield

richer and more surreal data. Fourth, having to locate culturally relevant texts that relate

to Asian American students' experiences was challenging as books about Asian students

were scarce. More diverse portraits of various Asian students' experiences in the US

could be a valuable addition to any future studies. Also, a variety of books other than just

Asian literature will add to the diversity of the topics.

Fifth, how ELLs forge their identities in online spaces out of school is another

area that needs more attention. Null's active membership in the online sites played an

important role in helping him improve English proficiency and confidence in English

language. Above all, it helped him reclaim his persona as being talkative and funny.

Given that many ELLs engage in online activities out of school that eventually help them

improve literacy skills (Black, 2005; Lam, 2000; Yi, 2008), a closer examination at kinds

of reading and writing that a student like Null engages in could make contributions to the

literature. Sixth, it might be worthwhile to conduct a closer discourse analysis to examine

how the participants negotiated their multiple identities.

Lastly, this dissertation study revealed how English language learners who have

been in the US for a relatively short amount of time were familiar with common

representations of Asians in the US and capitalized on the model minority stereotype.

Access to Asian students who might not be representative of the model minority

stereotype was difficult in my study as students who voluntarily participated were likely

to intend to academically benefit from the club. This issue was similarly raised in Asher's

(2008) study. Future studies could investigate Asians who detest the stereotype and how

they become more sensitive to other stereotypes about different races in the US as found

in Kush. Representation of more diverse Asians other than East Asians should also be studied in this manner and how students whose countries are not well represented in the US like Null from Uzbekistan become included in a bigger racial, ethnic, or cultural group that is more represented in the US.

Concluding Remarks

The study has made significant contributions to the literature. First, the study provides a multiplicity of Asian cultures and students, especially with the inclusion of non-East Asians (who are not often studied) with detailed accounts of each who have taken different paths in their lives which is not found in many studies. Second, the findings of the study suggest how important it is for literacy and ESOL teachers to play a critical role in helping ELLs form healthier cultural models. As shown in Kush, we do not want to teach students to think less of their first language and culture. At the same like, as Ram and Null showed, we do not want to cultivate students to feel ease with their own cultures in their own boundaries and develop stereotypical perceptions of American culture, which is part of where they live and grow up. Third, inclusion of only an adolescent boys' club is unprecedented in a book club format. Talking about who they are as boys is rarely studied in the field. I have responded to book club study researchers' call for including minority students in book club studies. Dressman and Webster (2001) pointed out that marginalized students, such as Latino, African American students, non-avid readers, and boys, have not been included in book club studies that employed Rosenblatt's transactional theory as theoretical lens in the book club studies. By having four Asian high school boys, who are not often recruited in this kind of book club study, I believe I have contributed to bringing in diverse voices in the field (with the exception of

Young's (2000) study that explored how four boys reconstructed masculinities in a book club at home). Fourth, Asian students (ELLs)' engagement with culturally relevant literature have not been extensively studied in the field, except for Vyas's (2004) study which examined only girls. Topics that created most interest include education, family, and politics, and smartness, money, and parent expectations, and following the rules of the community. Fifth, the combination of data from club meetings and from online writing is not studied extensively in the literature, although the combination of meetings and conventional writing has been studied a lot. Sixth, Asian students' perspectives of the model minority stereotype have not been extensively explored in other studies. However, this study showed how the Asian ELLs wished to unravel the model minority stereotype yet still capitalized on the positive attributes.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

Recruitment Invitation

Welcome to the
Read, Talk, & Wiki (RTW) Club!!

Who are invited:
Asian 8-9th grade English language learners who've lived in the US for 2-5 years

When, Where, & How long to meet:
Once a week for one hour during March and May, 2008 at the Georgia State University (GSU) Alpharetta center Library

What will happen:
Get free books to read

Talk about books in face-to-face meetings and online

Be Interviewed for 3 times at your home or at the GSU library

Improve reading and writing in English

Contact:
Jayoung Choi (a Ph.D. candidate at GSU/an experienced ESOL teacher) to ask more questions about the club at: 404-935-8620 or jchoi8@student.gsu.edu

APPENDIX B

The First Individual Interview Questions

Self portrait

Let's talk about you.

Tell me about yourself. What do you want to tell me or what do you want me to know about you? Can you tell me more about that?

Tell me about yourself. What are you? What kind of person are you? How do you see yourself?

If there is anything you could change about yourself, what would that be? Please explain.

Let's talk about your name.

Do you like your name? Why/why not? Please explain that more.

Do you have a different name that you go by here in the US?

If yes, what is it? Do you like it? Why/Why not? What does your name mean?

Let's talk about religion.

Do you have a religious affiliation? If yes, can you talk about it? Please explain that more.

Self portrait-The future

Let's talk about the future.

What would you like to do in the future? Please elaborate on that.

The best thing about the future? The worst thing about the future?

Self portrait-The present

Let's talk about the present.

How do you feel about the present time of your life right now in the US? Please explain more about that.

The best thing? The worst thing?

Self portrait-The past

Let's talk about the past.

How do you feel about the past? Please explain.

The best thing? The worst thing?

School

Let's talk about school.

Tell me about your school now.

Tell me the schools that you went before this one. How were they? Explain them more.

Do you like schools here in the US? Why/why not? (Can you think of examples of what you just said?)

Did you like school before coming to the US? Why/Why not? (Can you think of examples of what you just said?)

Who is your favorite teacher? Why is she/he your favorite teacher?

Talk about classes you take. Talk more about that.

Tell me about ESL classes that you have taken. Explain that more.

What is your favorite subject in school? Why is it?

Family

Let's talk about family.

How many family members do you have?

Talk a little about each one.

What do you like/dislike about your family members? Can you explain more about that?

How do your family members see you? What do they think of you? Please elaborate on that.

Friends

Let's talk about friends.

Who are your friends now?

Talk a little about each one. What do you like/dislike about each one?

How do your friends see you? What do they think of you?

Who were your friends before coming to the US?

Talk a little about each one. What do you like/dislike about each one?

How did your friends see you? What did they think of you?

Leisure

What is your favorite thing to do? Why is it your favorite thing?

What is your least favorite thing to do? Why is it your least favorite thing?

APPENDIX C

The Second Individual Interview Questions

Language

Let's talk about languages.

How many language(s) do you speak?

Have you studied any of these languages? Which ones and for how long?

Of the language(s) that you speak, which do you like the most/more?

What do you like/enjoy most about the languages you speak?

What do you like least about the languages that you speak?

How do you feel when you speak different languages?

Reading and writing

Let's talk about reading and writing.

Which languages can you read in?

Do you like to read? Why or why not?

When you read, what do like to read? Why?

Which languages can you write in?

Do you like to write? Why or why not?

When you write, what do you write? Why?

How often do you read and write in English that is out of school?

How often do you read and write in your language?

Do you chat, blog, or wiki in your language and/or in English? Tell me more about it.

Do you have a My Space/Face book page? If yes, tell me about it.

If you chat online, who do you chat with and what do you talk about?

In light of the club meetings

Let's talk about the club meetings so far.

Tell me about your experiences in the face-to-face meetings so far.

What do you enjoy most about the face-to-face meetings?

What do you enjoy least about the face-to-face meetings?

Explain that more. Give me some examples of what you were saying.

Talk about your experiences in the wiki webpage so far.

What do you enjoy most about writing on the webpage?

What do you enjoy least about writing on the webpage?

Explain that more. Give me some examples of what you were saying.

Can you remember any memorable topic(s)/character(s)/scene(s) that we talked about in the group meetings so far? If yes, what are those? Why do you think it was memorable to you? Elaborate on that.

Have you come across any scene(s) or characters that expressed your feelings and experiences among what we have read (short stories and poems) during the club meetings? If yes, what are those? Please explain more of that.

Have you come across any scene(s) or characters that expressed your feelings and experiences among what we have read (the common book) during the club meetings? If yes, what are those? Please explain that.

You talked about this during the group meetings. What did you mean by this? Talk more about that.

You wrote about this topic on the Wiki page. Why did you choose to write this way? How was the topic personally important to you? Why/why not?

APPENDIX D

The Third Individual Interview Questions

In light of the club meetings

Among the stories that we've read, what is your favorite?
Why?

Among the stories that we've read, what is your least favorite?
Why?

Which stories would you recommend among what we've read? Why would you recommend it? Who would you recommend it to? Why?

Think of group discussions you thought were good. Why do you think they were good?

Think of group discussions you thought weren't good. Why do you think they were not good?

Can you remember any memorable topic(s)/character(s)/scene(s) that we talked about in the group meetings so far? If yes, what are those? Why do you think it was memorable to you? Elaborate on that.

Have you come across any scene(s) or characters that expressed your feelings and experiences among what we have read (short stories and poems) during the club meetings? If yes, what are those? Please explain more of that.

Have you come across any scene(s) or characters that expressed your feelings and experiences among what we have read (the common book) during the club meetings? If yes, what are those? Please explain that.

You talked about this during the group meetings. What did you mean by this? Talk more about that.

You wrote about this topic on the Wiki page. Why did you choose to write this way? How was the topic personally important to you? Why/why not?

APPENDIX E

Books that Had Originally Been Selected that Depict Different Ethnic Groups

Ethnic Groups Represented	Literature
Asian multicultural literature: Korean	Na, A. (2001). *A step from heaven*. New York: SPEAK. Yoo, P. (2005). *Sixteen years in sixteen seconds: The Sammy Lee story*. New York: Lee & Low Books. Park, L. S. (2005). *Project mulberry*. New York: Clarion Books.
Chinese	Lord, B. B. (1984). *In the year of the boar and Jackie Robinson*. New York: HarperCollins. Lin, G. (2006). *The year of the dog*. New York: Little, Brown and Company.
Indian	Desai Hidier, T. (2002). *Born confused*. New York: Scholastic. Staples, S. F. (2000). *Shiva's fire*. New York: Frances Foster Books.
Thai	Richardson, J. B. (1996). *First came the owl*. New York: Henry Hold and Company. Giles, G. (1997). *Breath of the dragon*. New York: Clarion Books.
Cambodian	Crew, L. (1989). *Children of the river*. New York: Bantam Doubleday Dell.
Japanese	Kadohata, C. (2004). *Kira-Kira.* New York: Atheneum. Mochizuki, K. (2002). *Beacon Hill boys.* New York: Scholastic Press. Uchida, Y. (1985). *The happiest ending*. New York: Atheneum. Uchida, Y. (1983). *The best bad thing*. New York: Atheneum.

Non-Asian multicultural literature	Spinelli, J. (2000). *Stargirl.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
	Cofer, J. O. (1996). *An island like you: Stories of the Barrio*. New York: Puffin Books.
	Hesse, K. (1998). *Just Juice*. Scholastic.
	Hudson, W. (2004). *Powerful words*. Scholastic.
	Jimenez, F. (1997). *The circuit*. Scholastic.
	Ryan, P. M. (2004). *Becoming Naomi Leon*. Scholastic.
	Ryan, P. M. (2000). *Esperanza rising*. Scholastic.

APPENDIX F

Summaries of the Selected Literature

Hybrid (poem)

An Iranian American girl talks about cultural conflicts that she experiences with her immigrant Iranian father, who expects her to be an Iranian girl. She feels confused about living in the boundaries, not fully fitting in with Iranians nor with Americans.

Karim, P. M. (2001). Hybrid. In Glencoe(ed.), *Asian American literature*(p. 246-247). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill: Author.

Two Kinds (Short story)

A Chinese American girl talks about conflicts with her immigrant mother who tried to raise her as a prodigy.

Tan, A. (2001). Two kinds. In Glencoe(ed.), *Asian American literature*(p. 267-276). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill: Author.

Bad Luck Woman (Short story)

An Indian woman, Lila, who was born and raised in India but later educated in the US visits India for a pilgrimage. With newly gained American mentality, Lila does not believe in isolating "an unlucky woman" that other Indian ladies shun. However, after an incident that almost killed her when Lila was staying with the unlucky woman, Lila grew to think that she should have listened to other local ladies and should have shunned the unlucky lady.

Divakaruni, C. (2001). Bad luck woman. In Glencoe(ed.), *Asian American literature*(p. 77-87). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill: Author.

Assimilation (poem)

A Filipino boy feels ashamed to have lunch packed from home in school as he fears to be more different from other American peers.

Gloria, E. (2001). Assimilation. In Glencoe(ed.), *Asian American literature*(p. 260-261). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill: Author.

Coming Home Again (Short story)

A Korean American guy comes back to a dying mother and tries to rekindle the relationship between them that was lost for years due to being sent away to a boarding school when he was fifteen.

Lee, C. (2001). Coming home again. In Glencoe(ed.), *Asian American literature*(p. 235-243). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill: Author

My Rough Skinned Grandmother (poem)

A Chinese American girl talks about the close relationship that she had with her grandmother who would sacrifice everything for her and who would not tolerate racial slurs.

Chang, T. (2001). My rough skinned grandmother. In Glencoe(ed.), *Asian American literature*(p. 135-136). New York: Glencoe McGraw-Hill: Author.

Arturo's Flight (Young adult novel)

A Puerto Rican boy, Hijo, unlike other boys, is talented in creating poetry, which is a target for mockery from his peers. He overcomes it and gains pride and confidence in his ability. (One chapter from the book was read)

Cofer, J. O. (1996). *An island like you: Stories of the Barrio*. New York: Puffin Books.

Beacon Hill boys (Young adult novel)

Set in 1970s, the story describes a group of four Japanese American high school boys, Dan, Jerry, Eddie, and Frank, who are outsiders of the Japanese community. The chapters describe tensions between Dan and his older brother, Brad, who is a straight A student, who fits more into the Asian model minority stereotype. It describes more tensions living as Asian American boys who get in fights and do not live up to their parents' expectations. (first eight chapters were read)

Mochizuki, K. (2002). _Beacon Hill boys._ New York: Scholastic Press.

APPENDIX G

Discussion Prompts in the Face-to-face Meetings

Opening the discussion

Are there any words, phrases, and/or sentences you want to talk about together?

What did you think about this poem/story/this part of a book?

Did you like it/dislike it? Why/why not?

Did it make you think of anything, any place, person, thing, image or idea?

Do you think what the speaker is trying to say can be real?

Have you ever felt like this?

Would you do the same thing if you were in the situation?

Referring to specific parts in the story

Let's talk about some specific parts of this poem/story/this part of a book.

On page XXX it reads... what did you think this meant?

Did it make you think of anything - any place, person, thing, image or idea?

Do you agree with what participant 1 has just said?

APPENDIX H

Wiki Prompts and Posted Dates

1WP/020308
I would like our club members to get to know one another before our first club meeting. So please reply to my message by writing about who you are, where you are from, what you like to do, what language(s) you speak, how long you have been to the US and anything about you.

2WP/021908
Responding to *Hybrid*:

Let's say that the character in the poem is a good friend of yours. She (he) just shared her/his issues/problems with you. What kind of advice would you give her? Write about it as if you were talking to her/him.

Do you think being hybrid like the speaker, in the poem, is a good thing or a bad thing? Why? Why not?

In the poem, the speaker talked about how she realized that she could not be a good Iranian girl. Do you think you are (or not) a good Uzbek, Korean, Indian, or Iranian girl/boy? Why? Why not?

How serious do you think is the speaker's disagreement with her father? Is her problem unique to the children of immigrants, or could any teenager experience it? Why? Why not?

Responding to *Hybrid* and *Two Kinds:*

I am experimenting with the writing prompts for you this week since it is the first try. If you have other things you want to talk about after reading and discussing those two pieces, "hybrid" and "two kinds", you can write anything about it (especially if you have any lingering thoughts from our discussion). I have uploaded two documents for you to see (if you have time). Basically, we have met for two times now as a group and I have recorded our talks and transcribed them. If you want to remind yourself of what we discussed, you can open up the documents and read them.

3WP/021908
Responding to *Two Kinds:*

Do you think parents should/could require their children to take music lessons, as Jing-Mei's mother did, or to play a sport, or participate in any particular activity? Should parents require their children to do something the children are not interested in/good at? Why or why not?

4WP/030308
Responding to *Hybrid*:

Let's give the girl in hybrid a name, Ira. Let's pretend that Ira is your good friend. She comes to you and she says: "Oh I am so worried. My parents do not seem to understand me. They think I am too American. I do not know what to do. I want my friends at school to like me but I also want my parents to be happy with me."

What would you say to her? Pretend you are talking to her and write what you are saying.

5WP/030308
Responding to *Assimilation*:

Let's say that you are a parent of a sixth grade girl, Anna. Your family moved to the US about 2 years ago. You speak your language, not English at home and everyday you pack lunch for Anna in the morning. Sometimes, Anna comes home sad and tells you that other kids made fun of her at school. One day, you noticed Anna did not even open the lunch box that you pack for her. After finding it out she does not eat her lunch at school, you scold her and ask her why she doesn't eat lunch. Anna then cries and tells you that "I don't want to have food that we eat home at school. Other kids stare at me and make fun of me"

As a parent, what would you tell her? Pretend that you are talking to Anna and write what you would say to her.

6WP/031708
Responding to *Coming home again*:

Last Saturday, we were talking about whether or not education is more important than staying with your family. In the story, "Coming home again", the boy went off to a boarding school for a better education when he was 15. The mother had thought it was a good decision at that time, but she later regretted that they sent him away. What do you think about this issue again? Do you think family relations/bond can be scarified for a better education?

7WP/031708
Some of us were also talking about how coming to the US was not your choice. Write more about your experiences coming to the US, and how you felt about it.

8WP/032808
Responding to *Arturo's flight*:

You have a friend, let's say T.J., who is really talented in appreciating literature and in creating poems and short stories. But he tries to hide his talent because he thinks and has been told that reading/writing is not a boy's thing. He wants to fit in with other boys. What would you tell him? What advice would you give him? Do you think there is such thing as a boy's thing and a girl's thing?

9WP/032808
Responding to *My rough skinned grandmother*:

Your parents and you walk down the street in downtown and a group of teenagers call you names and make fun of the sound of your language. This kind of thing has happened before to you and to your family. How would you handle this situation? Have you had any similar experience? If so, write about it. If not, imagine the situation and write about how you would react.

10WP/033108
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

Last Saturday, we talked a lot about being compared to somebody else. Let's revisit this quote from chapter 1:
"I had heard the rest of this lecture more than enough times: Big Brother Brad, the big bad senior, bronze-skinned, square-jawed, and shorthaired, had a lot of character because he was clean-cut, had straight A's, was a baseball star, football star, and already knew he was headed to medical school. And my dad wouldn't mind having five like him"(p. 3-4).

If Dan were your close friend, what would you tell him who is sick of being compared to?

11WP/033108
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

We talked about how you are not supposed to copy stuff that is not yours and how you should try to stick with your own things. Remember that we talked about some musicians in other countries who copy rap music and dress like Black rappers? So then, what are the things you think you would like to copy from your understanding of American culture and life here? Also, what are the things you would not want to copy from it?

12WP/040708
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

Language: We talked about whether or not you would teach your language, other than English, to your kid (that is when you have one). Would you make sure your kid speaks (knows) your language? Would you leave it up to your kid? Why or why not?

13WP/040708
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

Being Asian: Some of you talked about how Asians (and/or Central Asians) are shy. Some of you agreed with it, and others didn't. Other than being shy or not being shy, what are other perceptions you have about Asians (and/or Central Asians)?

14WP/042508
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

Let's say you have a friend like Jerry. Your friend does not follow the rules in the community and does whatever he likes. What kind of things would you say to him as a close friend?

"If he didn't follow the Japanese American community's self-policing rules, he wouldn't be crippled by them, either. Jerry wasn't hamstrung by the voices in the rest of our heads, the "eyes always watching you," the "what will other people think?"

15WP/042508
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

We talked about whether or not you share family history with your family members. And we know that from the reading that Dan's family does not want to share family history. What do you think about sharing family history? Is it important? Is it not necessary? Why/Why not?

16WP/042908
Responding to *Beacon hill boys*:

Would you date somebody else who is not from your own country? Why or Why not? Please explain. If so, would your parents approve that?

APPENDIX I

Questions in Member Checking Session

1. You guys are my research collaborators. Today, I asked all of us to meet up because I want to ask your help for the last time. First let me ask you some questions about the group sessions.

2. My role:

1) Do you think the fact that I am Korean/Asian as opposed to other race played any role in our discussions?

2) Do you think the fact that I have learned English as my second language like you guys played any role in our discussions/club meetings?

3. Group dynamics:

1) Would you like to continue to meet as a group to read other things and talk about them? Why or why not?

2) Even if we don't meet as a group to read something, do you see yourself keeping in touch with one another? Why or why not?

4. Online writing:

1) Does having the wiki writing help you in any way in addition to the face-to-face meetings to form your opinions and to know more/deeply about what others think? Have you read other's postings?

2) What did you think about sharing your writing with others in public, actually on a private wiki site as opposed to turning them in to me individually?

3) I had transcriptions available at the bottom of that web page. Have you read them ever? What did you think about having them there?

I want to share what I have been seeing in the data and group meetings. And I want you to tell me if what I am seeing is what you also see.

5. My observations of what has been happening in the group meetings:

1) You used this space to share your world knowledge and historical knowledge

2) It was a good opportunity for you to openly share your American experience (e.g., what you think about American peers and teachers and conflict with other co-ethnic group)

3) It was good that it made you think again about who you really are and what matters to you when you hear about different opinions and valued represented

4) You guys really liked to argue a lot and engage in debates in the group. It seems to me that each one of you has strong but different opinions about things and I believe that difference/diverse opinions made our arguments possible. Do you agree with my interpretation?

5) Even though at times, I felt like I was wasting a lot of time, it was nice to get out of my house/apartment every weekend.

6) I believe Asians are smarter. I am glad that I am an Asian in this country. It greatly influences the way I see education and the way I go about studying.

7) It was good to talk about happenings in my school with other kids (grades/hw/classes/tests/some trouble)

8) Can I say that you guys learned about different cultures and how other people do different things, such as the topics of Hindi, Hinduism, Moslems, vegetarians, dating and so on?

9) I have picked readings that are about Asian people experiencing American life on purpose. I believe topics in the readings gave us a lot of personally important issues for us as recent immigrants. (e.g., about the value of education, being compared to, expectations from parents, corrupted by America, respect, food) Do you believe these readings as opposed to other readings with non-Asian content help you make connections to your experience as an Asian person?

10) I remember some of you were saying reading the short stories and essays are better than reading a chapter book. Do you think you could have had more active discussions if we had read just short stories?

11) I have shared these with you. Is there anything missing among what you saw as happening in the club meetings?

APPENDIX J

Kush's Final Coding Manual

1. Sense of self as Korean/Asian

    1-1. Connections to Korea & Korean customs

        1-1-1. Indifference toward name

        1-1-2. Ambivalence about language

        1-1-3. Food

    1-2. Family

        1-2-1. Ambivalent relationship with family

        1-2-2. Ambivalence about Respect

        1-2-3. Expectations

        1-2-4. Leniency

        1-2-5. Influences

            1-2-5-1. Source of knowledge

            1-2-5-2. Asian partner

        1-2-6. Supports

            1-2-6-1. Slight guilt

            1-2-6-2. Dependence

    1-3. Dissociation from Korean peers

        1-3-1. Studying Frantically

        1-3-2. No common interests

        1-3-3. Speaking Korean in school

2. Sense of self as Learner

    2-1. Unfavorable identification as learner

        2-1-1. Disbelief in the promise of education

        2-1-2. Not identifying self as good learner/reader

        2-1-3. Not goal oriented

        2-1-4. Perceived self as lazy

        2-1-5. Claimed ease with writing

    2-2. Negative attitudes towards schooling

        2-2-1. Hating school

2-2-2. Resisting to be controlled

2-2-3. Behaviors in school

    2-2-3-1. Fights

    2-2-3-2. Disengagement

    2-2-3-3. Acting silly

2-2-4. Pride in high school

3. Sense of self as recent member of the US

3-1. Seeking membership in skating sphere

    3-1-1. Classification as Skater

    3-1-2. Friends

        3-1-2-1. Materialism

        3-1-2-2. Being cocky

        3-1-2-3. No explanation but talking

    3-1-3. Music & guitar

    3-1-4. Fashion

    3-1-5. Outdoor personality

3-2. Seeking membership in US culture & Aspired traits

    3-2-1. Dating

    3-2-2. Guys' not sharing feelings

    3-2-3. Media

        3-2-3-1. Disputing stereotypes about the US

        3-2-3-2. Peer pressure

    3-2-4. Fantasizing Europe

    3-2-5. Disputing "Emo antisocial" & being adaptive

    3-2-6. "Don't worry and be happy"

    3-2-7. Having mental power

    3-2-8. Being independent

3-3. Racial Awareness

    3-3-1. Asians

        3-3-1-1. Ambivalence about stereotypes

        3-3-1-2. No discrimination

    3-3-2. White privileges

Null's Final Coding Manual

<u>1. Sense of self as Uzbek/Asian</u>

    1-1. Connections to Uzbekistan & customs

        1-1-1. Names/Food

        1-1-2. Language

        1-1-3. Emotional attachment

        1-1-4. Writing for catharsis

    1-2. Religious and Familial values

        1-2-1. Importance of family

        1-2-2. Acknowledging roots

        1-2-3. Obeying religious rules

        1-2-4. Practical guidance

            1-2-4-1. Not lying

            1-2-4-2. Harmony

            1-2-4-3. Principle oriented

            1-2-4-4. Modesty/shy

            1-2-4-5. Helping

            1-2-4-6. Karma

            1-2-4-7. Gender roles

        1-2-5. Respect

            1-2-5-1. Parents

            1-2-5-2. Respect in return

            1-2-5-3. Teachers

<u>2. Sense of self as Learner</u>

    2-1. Positive learning experience in & out-of school

        2-1-1. Corruption in Uzbekistan

        2-1-2. Goal oriented/favorite subjects

        2-1-3. Extra curricular

        2-1-4. Caring teachers

        2-1-5. Good writer/speller

APPENDIX L

Ram's Final Coding Manual

1. Sense of self as Indian/Asian

    1-1. Positive association of being Indian

        1-1-1. Name

        1-1-2. Languages

        1-1-3. Indian Mentality

        1-1-4. Normal behaviors

        1-1-5. Respect

            1-1-5-1. Filial piety

            1-1-5-2. Religious independence

            1-1-5-3. Club members/teachers/others

    1-2. Shyness

        1-2-1. Asians/I/friends

        1-2-2. Music as way to solitude

        1-2-3. Talking to the point

        1-2-4. Seriousness/not showing emotions

        1-2-5. Modesty

    1-3. Education

        1-3-1. Inspirations from family members

        1-3-2. Future oriented

        1-3-3. Maturity & smartness associated with education

        1-3-4. Parents' expectations

            1-3-4-1. Grades

            1-3-4-2. Lowering confidence

            1-3-4-3. Conflicts with family

2. Sense of self as Learner

    2-1. Practical reasons for education

        2-1-1. Voluntary immigration

        2-1-2. Education associated with money/comfort

        2-1-3. Extrinsic motivation to learn certain subjects

2-1-4. English as key to success

2-1-5. Favored subjects as key to success

2-2. Valuing education

    2-2-1. Perceived self as student

        2-2-1-1. Goal oriented planner

        2-2-1-2. Reputation as good student

        2-2-1-3. Wanting to improve vocabulary

        2-2-1-4. Positive learning experience in the club

        2-2-1-5. High expectations

    2-2-2. Insufficient academic challenges/Less competition

    2-2-3. Friends with academic drive

    2-2-4. Education at the expense of relations with family

3. Sense of self as a recent member of the US

    3-1. Selective alienation from American peers

        3-1-1. Immaturity of American peers

            3-1-1-1. Adolescent dating

            3-1-1-2. Distractive non-academic activities

        3-1-2. Superficial relationships with peers

        3-1-3. Conflicts/differences between US and India born Indians

    3-2. Selective disciplines

        3-2-1. Disbelief in stereotypes

            3-2-1-1. Muslims

            3-2-1-2. Different racial groups

            3-2-1-3. Gender

        3-2-2. Discreet adoption

            3-2-2-1. Cultural exchanges

        3-2-3. Valuing diversity

        3-2-4. Easygoingness

            3-2-4-1. Being content with present life

            3-2-4-2. Controlling negative emotions

APPENDIX M

Hulk's Final Coding Manual

1. Sense of self as Gujarati/Indian/Asian

    1-1. Positive association of being Indian

        1-1-1. Name

        1-1-2. Understanding of being Asian

        1-1-3. Languages

    1-2. Solidarity with family/Respect for parents

        1-2-1. Bonding with family

        1-2-2. Significance of family over friends

        1-2-3. Obeying social/familial rules

        1-2-4. Arranged dating/marriage

    1-3. Religion

        1-3-1. Religion as rituals

        1-3-2. Practical guidelines

2. Sense of self as Learner

    2-1. Positive attitudes toward school/school work

        2-1-1. Friends/teachers/subjects

        2-1-2. Need to speak English

        2-1-3. Learning experience in the club

        2-1-4. Reader/Writer

        2-1-5. Exiting ESOL & entering Honor's

    2-2. Valuing education

        2-2-1. Voluntary immigration

        2-2-2. Importance of education/intelligence

        2-2-3. Self-directed attitude toward education

        2-2-4. Positive take on parents' expectations

        2-2-5. Professional arena

            2-2-5-1. Asians

            2-2-5-2. Surgeon

3. Sense of self as recent member of the US

      3-1. Aspired attitudes

            3-1-1. Avoidance of conflicts

            3-1-2. Friendliness & politeness

      3-2. Identity negotiations

            3-2-1. Different mode of talking

            3-2-2. Superficial relationships with peers in the US