BILINGUALISM AS A FIRST LANGUAGE AND ITS EFFECTS ON CULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATION

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BILINGUALISM AS A FIRST LANGUAGE AND ITS EFFECTS ON CULTURAL IDENTITY FORMATION

A Thesis

by

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Spring 2014

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DEDICATION

To my extraordinary family, who has sacrificed so much in order to give me everything.

There are no words exceptional enough to describe you! Thank you for your endless support and encouragement.

Muchas Gracias & Vielen Dank!
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This thesis examines research in the field of bilingualism, culture and identity. It focuses specifically on individuals who have two ‘first languages’ and cultures and their identity formation, and draws attention to this very specific group of individuals and the importance of future research of this growing group.

The review of the literature investigates current problems in defining the constructs of bilingualism, culture and identity, and the processes required to achieve bilingualism as a first language. It further explores the relationship between bilingualism as a first language and identity by analyzing crucial factors influencing identity formation.

A case study provides a more detailed account of individuals having grown up with two languages. Three participants answered a questionnaire about language, culture and identity. Using this case study, the thesis considers whether findings confirm or
question previous research. In conclusion, the researcher offers recommendations for future research as well as for parents and teachers dealing with bilingual individuals.

The thesis highlights the struggle bilinguals face in finding their identity, their general interest and openness to other languages and cultures, as well as their tendency to have one language and culture predominate. It illustrates that identity does not remain constant throughout a life, but rather changes according to surroundings and situations. Most importantly, the formation of cultural identity is a very individual process that needs to be treated accordingly.
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

The expression “bilingualism as a first language,” was coined by Swain (1972) and popularized through her thesis “Bilingualism as a First Language.” Although there are many ways to describe a situation in which children grow up with two languages, it remains difficult to find an adequate term or expression that encompasses all aspects of this particular type of bilingualism. Swain’s expression effectively distinguishes these bilinguals from others and ushers in a new area of research in this field.

Before Swain, the terms *bilingualism* and *first language* were treated as mutually exclusive. It was assumed that one language is always the first; just as the word implies, there cannot be two firsts. With a growing number of children who have bilingualism as a first language, and increased interest and research, the terms used to describe these individuals have also varied. However, as no term is perfectly describes this type of bilingualism, researchers often use varying descriptive terms. For example, terms such as “growing up with two languages” or “growing up bilingual” describe the linguistic situation, but fail to take into consideration the two cultures that invariably come with the languages.
Furthermore, most terms focus on “bilingualism.” Using this term for different types of bilinguals can be misleading, since bilingualism does not equal bilingualism as a first language and does not simply translate to speaking two languages. Having bilingualism as a first language brings with it several other challenges, such as the difference in cognitive processes between monolingual and bilingual children, and the number of vocabulary words children acquire in a language in a certain developmental phase. The phrase “bilingualism as a first language” at least hints at these underlying concerns that are tied not only to bilingualism, but to first language acquisition in general.

In addition, a distinction has to be made between language acquisition and the individual doing the acquiring. What ‘label’ should individuals be given if bilingualism is a first language? They cannot simply be called bilingual, as this term is too broad, and there needs to be a distinction between the various types and degrees of bilingualism. A term is needed that includes more specific aspects of this group of people. One of the most common terms used in research is “children growing up with two languages,” but again, this term seems limiting. For instance, it does not even consider the culture that is inevitably intertwined with each language, nor the culture that is individual to each bilingual family’s situation, given the languages and individuals involved. At the very least, these individuals should be called “children growing up with two languages and language cultures.” Recently, the term native bilinguals has become popular as it is shorter and gives the reader a good, general understanding of the form of bilingualism under discussion.

It rapidly becomes apparent that this entire area of language is not easily confined and defined. Rather, it is an area that crosses, includes, and seeps into many
related areas of research. This is the first challenge in talking about bilingualism as a first language and its influence on cultural identity formation. The formation of an individual’s cultural identity is a complex area of study. Language not only influences cultural identity, but many other factors as well. These factors are discussed in more detail later in this study.

Statement of the Problem

The field of language research is vast and impossible to contain within imaginary boundaries. It draws upon such fields as sociology, psychology, and anthropology, among others. Language research is most often interdisciplinary, especially when studying bilingual and/or bicultural individuals. This is yet another challenge that researchers must address in order to attain new insights on identity traits and their relation to language in bilingual individuals.

In general, these problems encompass language and culture research. The more specific problems examined in this study operate on a much more individual level. As the number of children who grow up with two languages and two cultures increases, it becomes more and more obvious that educators and others in the lives of these children are ill prepared to take full advantage of the child’s situation. Parents, as well as teachers, too often fail to recognize the children’s needs in time. As a result, children may feel isolated, less capable and frequently lose or greatly neglect one of the languages. Not only do children lose the opportunity to develop two languages, they may feel discouraged and unable to succeed in academic environments.
Just as there are problems tied to language, there are also problems tied to identity. Children growing up with two languages are also confronted by two cultures. Therefore, they often struggle when searching for their own identity. Similarly, as in language acquisition, the number of parents and educators prepared to deal with these challenges is limited as is the information available.

One of the underlying problems is the reluctance of researchers to study this particular group of individuals. Individuals growing up with two languages have only recently been considered a target group for research. Innumerable linguistic studies have been conducted on native speakers of various languages. However, a great majority of these studies have been based on monolingual informants. Only a limited number of studies have made advances into the perception of language and identity in bilingual individuals. According to Pavlenko and Dewaele (2004), this is no coincidence. Rather it is the result of a stigma that depicts bilingual and or bicultural individuals as ‘inappropriate’ or ‘imperfect’ subjects for language research:

Western scholars in social sciences and humanities, and in particular in linguistics and psychology, have been traditionally apprehensive about working with bi- and multilingual participants and informants, concerned that their perceptions, intuitions, and performances may exhibit ‘impure’ knowledge or ‘incomplete competence’ in the language in question, and convinced that languages are better studied in an ‘idealized’ case of monolingual competence. (Pavlenko & Dewaele, 2004, pp. i-ii)

It is time that researchers see these individuals for what they are: incredibly interesting individuals. The study of their acquisition of language and culture will most definitely benefit generations to come, as the trend toward intercultural marriages and families steadily increases.
Statement of Need

Researchers are just beginning to recognize and grasp the value that lies in bilingual language and culture informants. They are gradually making headway in diverse areas of language research. Specialists in the field argue for continued effort in the area of bilingual and bicultural expression of identity. As Pavlenko and Dewaele puts it, “[t]he monolingual focus seems rather narrow considering that currently more than a half of the world’s population is bi- or multilingual (Romaine, 1995)” (as cited in Pavlenko & Dewaele, 2004, i).

Numerous studies have been conducted, including research on the identity formation of immigrant youths (Doris Warriner, 2007; Jason Rothman, 2005; Helen Marrow, 2003; Seth Schwartz, Marilyn J. Montgomery, and Ervin Briones, 2006) as well as the relationship between bilingualism and identity (Jim Cummins, 2000; Adrian Blackledge & Aneta Pavlenko, 2001). Significantly, less research has investigated the cultural identity of native bilinguals and their struggles to accommodate ‘all their culture’ in their identity (Rich & Davis, 2007; Lanza & Svendsen, 2007).

There is an immediate and real need for further research in the general field of language and identity in native bilinguals. More specifically, there is a pressing need for educators and others involved in these children’s lives to be made aware of the real challenges they face. It is imperative that researchers understand the processes involved in and implications of growing up with two languages and cultures. Parents and educators need to understand their roles in the upbringing of bilingual children and have access to materials adequate for each child and situation.
There is a serious lack of research. As Panayiotou (2004a) observes: “In an expanding Europe with an increasing number of multilingual states, the necessity of intercultural knowledge and cross-cultural communication is greater than ever (p. 14). This applies not only to Europe, but to the whole world. As Panayiotou further explains, studies on this topic not only contribute to the understanding of “what it means to be a bilingual or multilingual person, but also to the current discussions on language policy where language is tied both to politics and identity” (p. 14).

Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study is to first analyze existing research on the topic of bilingualism as a first language and identity formation, and synthesize findings based on the studies available. A second purpose is to conduct three case studies that examine the relationship of individuals’ experience with previous research. The third is to offer recommendations for individuals, parents, and educators. Furthermore, the study hopes to clarify specific questions that should be investigated. It is hoped that the relevance of this research will be recognized.

Research Questions

The research questions addressed in the review of the literature include:

1. What are the differences between the various types of bilingualism? What distinguishes bilingualism as a first language from other types of bilingualism?

2. What are the requirements for attaining bilingualism as a first language? What are the factors that impede attainment?

3. What models of bilingualism as a first language have been successful?
4. What is the relationship between bilingualism as a first language and identity formation? Is the relationship linear, that is, does one affect the other? If so, how?

5. What factors influence cultural identity formation in individuals with bilingualism as a first language? What factors, circumstances or traits lead individuals to feel emotionally closer to one of the cultures or to a combination of the cultures?

6. How do individuals commonly form their cultural identity? Do they seem to prefer a mixed-culture identity? If so, what leads to this outcome as opposed to a preference for one culture over another?

7. How does the process of identity formation shape contact with third/additional cultures?

The research questions considered in the three case studies mirror some of the questions posed in the literature review and focus mainly on upbringing. These factors include:

- Social relationships: What social relationships have influenced the bilingual? How have social relationships influenced language development and identity formation?
- Exposure to each language and language culture: How has exposure affected the degree of bilingualism/degree of biculturalism?
- Resistance to language and related reasons: What are some of the reasons for resisting one of the languages or cultures? What factors influence resistance to speak a language or identify with the culture?
- How do individuals form their cultural identity: What factors influence the formation of cultural identity?
- General disposition towards language and culture as well as other/third languages and cultures: Does bilingual/bicultural upbringing influence individuals’ disposition towards acquisition of additional languages and cultures? What are the participants’ feelings toward language and culture in general?

Limitations

One of the primary limitations of this study is the availability of information on this particular population of bilinguals. As mentioned previously, research is only in its beginning phase, leaving many areas unexplored. More importantly perhaps, this paper is limited due to the complexity of this area.

In addition to the limited availability of research, the case studies themselves only provide a brief view into the lives of three individuals. For a more in depth analysis, interviews, questionnaires, observations, etc., would need to be conducted with more individuals as well as their parents and educators.

Finally, one crucial shortcoming inherent in any qualitative study is the acknowledgement of the author’s experiences and beliefs, particularly those that may affect subjectivity and possibly taint the outcomes. In other words, the author can only examine others’ language and identity in terms of his/her own understanding and ideology. Kramsch (1998/2000) describes the dilemma of studying language and culture very fittingly:

Ultimately, taking culture seriously means questioning the very base of one’s own intellectual inquiry, and accepting the fact that knowledge itself is colored by the social and historical context in which it is acquired and disseminated. In this respect, language study is an eminently cultural activity. (p. 9)
This not only affects the outcome of this thesis; it underlines the problem that all previous studies on which current research is based have been conducted by researchers who themselves are part of one or several cultures. Consequently, “there is as much cultural variation in ideas about language and about how communication works as a social process as there is in the very form of language” (Woolard, 1998, p. 3).

Definition of Terms

Cultural identity

A person’s identification with a cultural group, including the culture’s belief and value system.

Culture

“A historically transmitted system of symbols, meanings, practices, customs, beliefs, values etc., that differentiate a community of individuals from ‘the others’” (Corbu, 2010, p. 123).

Ideology

“A system of ideas and ideals, especially one which forms the basis of economical or political theory and policy”; “the set of beliefs characteristic of a social group or individual” (“Ideology,” 2014).

Native Bilingual

A person who is native (or native-like) in two languages due to growing up in surroundings where two languages occur ‘naturally’ (e.g., parents who have different first languages).
Native Speaker

A person who has learned a language since birth (or very early in life) and is identified by others and self as having this language as a first language.

Sequential Bilingualism

Learning a language chronologically after already knowing another language.

Simultaneous Bilingualism

Learning two languages at the same time.

Social Network

A ‘network’ or group of people who share certain values and beliefs. Due to social networking sites, such as Facebook, My Space, Twitter etc., social networks are no longer limited to proximity or a physical space. For example, members of a social network can be on different continents and share only a virtual space.
Language and culture research utilizing bilingual and bicultural informants is increasing essential as multilingualism and multiculturalism are “becoming a global reality, and require attention from researchers” (Aronin, 2004, p. 60). While several studies have been conducted on language acquisition in bilinguals (Grosjean, 1998; Kessler, 1984, Marx, 2002) and bilingualism as a first language (Cook, 2002; Swain, 1972; Volterra & Taeschner, 1978), much less attention has been given to individuals who from birth acquire two languages, one from each parent, and the effect this has had on cultural identity formation. Studies are just beginning to shed light on the relationship between bilingualism as a first language and cultural identity formation (Diebold, 1966; Rich & Davis, 2007). Although the linguistic background described appears to be fairly narrow, it is a reality for an increasing number of individuals all over the world. Therefore, it deserves to be the focus of research, especially as it is projected that this population will increase in the future.

Bilingualism

In this section, the primary goals are (1) to define various types of bilingualism, (2) to clearly describe the differences between bilingualism as a first language and other forms of bilingualism, and (3) to highlight the most important aspects
of acquiring bilingualism as a first language. The first section addresses the questions: What are the differences between the various types of bilingualism? What distinguishes bilingualism as a first language from other types of bilingualism? What are the essential characteristics of bilingualism as a first language? What factors impede its development? What are some successful models of bilingualism as a first language?

Defining Bilingualism

Before delving into the discussion of bilingualism, it is important to recognize the complexity of the general term ‘bilingualism’. Bilingualism has been defined in many different ways by different researchers. Many researchers agree that bilingualism can be presented along a continuum ranging from language A to language B, with each bilingual individual somewhere on that continuum. In this case, a balanced bilingual is right in the middle between A and B, equally strong in both languages. Those who prefer one language over another, but have some knowledge or ability in the other language fall towards the ends of this continuum.

In Figure 1, the combined length of the arrows represents the individual’s overall language proficiency.

This is, of course, only one of many ways to visualize bilingualism, that is, the bilingual’s ability in each language. Although the second and third set of arrows do not depict an individual who has equal or near equal capabilities in each language, the majority of research includes these individuals in the pool of bilinguals. In The Handbook of Bilingualism, researchers generally use the terms limited bilinguals or unbalanced bilinguals. Depending on the definition of bilingualism used, some researchers include only balanced bilinguals, while others include individuals who have had some lessons in
The first set of arrows depicts balanced bilingualism.

The second set of arrows shows bilingualism in which the individual prefers or is more proficient in language B.

The third set of arrows shows bilingualism in which Language A is prevalent.

*Figure 1. Individual’s overall language proficiency.*

Researchers divide bilinguals in various ways. They are categorized according to *when* they have acquired or learned a second language, called early bilinguals, or whether two languages were learned at the same time or one after the other, namely simultaneous bilinguals or sequential bilinguals. Additional terms refer to the reason for
learning the language, such as circumstantial bilinguals. Yet another way to divide bilinguals is into the categories of compound, coordinate, and sub-coordinate.

According to Weinreich (1953) . . . the coordinate bilingual functions as two monolinguals, and the compound bilingual merges the two languages at the conceptual level. In the subordinate type of bilingualism . . . one language is dominant, and the words in the non-dominant language are interpreted through the words in the dominant language. (Appel & Muysken, 2005, p. 75)

Clearly, the types and degree of bilingualism can vary across individuals.

There is considerable variation among bilinguals; one bilingual is not necessarily equal to another. As an example, two bilinguals who both speak English and Spanish may be very different. One may speak Spanish at home, and consider Spanish the stronger language, while the other may have studied abroad in Spain, but still consider English his or her stronger language. Nonetheless, both are Spanish-English bilinguals. To further complicate matters, individuals may be stronger in language A than language B, but unable to perform the same tasks in both languages. For instance, it may be easier to take a test in language B, even if this is the weaker language, simply because the classroom language is language B. An individual may have learned vocabulary in one domain only in language A, and vocabulary in another domain only in language B. Academic vocabulary is frequently stronger in the language of the school system the bilingual attended. Therefore, even if the language used at home is the dominant language, the individual may be weak in academic language.

Because of challenges in defining bilingualism, some scholars are hesitant to use the term bilingual. For example, in their guide for families with more than one language, Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (2004) state,
We avoid the use of the term *bilingual* to describe people in this book. A person can have a bilingual upbringing, or childhood, and a family can be bilingual or have a bilingual home. That means that two languages are involved. To talk about individuals as bilinguals is difficult. (p. xii)

They raise questions that should be considered when writing about bilingualism, such as: “What are the criteria for describing people as bilingual? Would they have to speak their two languages equally well? Would they have to be monolingual-like in both languages?” (p. xii). Rather than using the term bilingual, they opt for the expression “to live with two languages.” Whether one is satisfied with this somewhat vague definition with its blurry borders is up to the individual.

For the purpose of this thesis, the term bilingual will be used narrowly to refer only to simultaneous bilinguals who have acquired both languages since birth, one from each parent. In other words, children growing up in a home with one language and one culture from their mother, and another language and culture from their father. The language of the country they are living in will be one of these two languages.

**Bilinguals vs. Monolinguals**

Having established the complexity of bilingualism and various forms of bilingualism, this section highlights some general differences between bilinguals and monolinguals. One of the most notable distinctions lies in the area of language acquisition. Language acquisition differentiates monolinguals and bilinguals in many ways. The most obvious is that a monolingual is only learning to name his world and describe his feelings in one language, whereas a bilingual child is learning to do all of this in two languages. However, just as a monolingual child who lives in a household with highly educated parents will most likely not have the same vocabulary as a child
who lives in a household with working class parents, a bilingual child with a mother who speaks one language and a father who speaks another will not have the same language domains in both. The mother will most likely use certain kinds of language with the child, a more home-oriented language perhaps. The father, on the other hand, may talk to his children more about other things – his work, school, fixing things around the house.

“A feature of all kinds of language learning of this kind, where languages are used only in certain circumstances or to certain people . . . is that vocabulary in the two languages is learned unevenly” (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. 55). The children have different ‘vocabularies’ (words) in each language. They may know names for cooking utensils in the mother’s language and parts of the car in the father’s language, for example. As specific as this may sound, it most accurately describes the way languages are learned by children:

Children are individuals even if they grow up with two languages. What is true for one child may not be for another. No two children have the same combination of strengths and weaknesses even if they are brought up in the same family. (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. 55)

Although it may appear that children who have been speaking two languages since birth should be highly proficient in both languages, this often is not the case. “[I]t is much more common, even among those who have learnt two languages from infancy, that one language becomes dominant and the other is less than native-like” (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. 56).

Simultaneous Bilingualism vs. Sequential Bilingualism

Just as there are differences between monolinguals and bilinguals, there are also differences between the types of bilingualism. When comparing different types of
bilinguals, it is particularly interesting to examine language crossing or mixing. A number of studies have been conducted on language choices or patterns in mixing languages (e.g., Lindholm & Padilla, 1977; Lanza, 1997; Mishina-Mori, 2011). Researchers have found that language switch occurs in some immigrants because certain words have a more fitting meaning or convey a slightly different nuance that the speaker wants to transmit to his audience. Many communities or social networks also use language mixing as a means of demonstrating unity. Other groups, predominantly those whose speakers are unbalanced bilinguals, use language mixing simply because they may not know certain words in the language they are using and insert words from another language. Of course, language mixing also occurs with simultaneous bilinguals. As fewer studies have been conducted analyzing the language choices of this group, the question remains as to whether simultaneous bilinguals choose to mix languages because of a lack of knowledge, a desire to display unity or belonging to a certain group, or a difference in connotations or feelings the word carries in another language.

In examining differences between simultaneous bilinguals and sequential bilinguals, age as well as reason for learning the second language are decisive determining factors. They affect not only the outcome of bilingualism, but also the cultural identity of the speakers. According to Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson, an adult who comes to a new country and learns the language spoken in that country as an adult will not usually approach native standard. A motivated and/or talented learner may achieve near-native proficiency in the grammar, vocabulary and semantics of the target language, but only exceptional learners will ever come to sound native as well. Small children are able to learn to speak a second language without any trace of foreign accent. (2004, pp. 56-57)
On the other hand, Flege (1987) suggests, “that differences between child and adult learning patterns may be due to a number of uncontrollable social and cultural factors” (as cited in Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, pp. 56-57). Scovel (1988) observes that the critical theory hypothesis may be applicable for pronunciation, but not other language areas:

there may be sociobiological reasons why accents solidify at puberty. It is at that time that other aspects of the individual’s perception of his or her own identity surface, and that it is, therefore, appropriate that individuals are marked as belonging to a particular group just then. (as cited in Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. 57)

Bilingualism as a First Language

The descriptive subcategories of bilingualism, such as simultaneous- or unbalanced-bilingualism, convey the diversity of bilinguals and allow more accurate research on particular types of bilinguals. This final part of section 1 addresses the study of bilinguals who have learned two languages at the same time, since birth, one from each parent. These individuals are identified as, simultaneous, early-onset, compound bilinguals, and are also referred to as individuals with bilingualism as a first language or native bilinguals.

According to Noguchi (1996), research in the area of bilingualism as a first language “has matured and attracted more attention in the last few decades and has moved through several stages (p. 3). Ronjat (as cited in Döepke, 1998) introduced the ‘one person-one language’ system as early as 1913. More recently, Romaine (1989) observed that, “the field has been dominated by linguists who have studied their own children’s acquisition of two languages. As a result, the focus has been on linguistic
development, particularly on the separation of the two language systems, with most studies finishing well before the subject entered school” (Noguchi, 1996, p. 3).

Case study research and parent linguists observing and reporting on their own children dominate this particular area of research (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004; Kamada, 1997; Noguchi, 1996). Although there appears to be increasing interest on the part of linguists not directly involved in this community, a significant number of the early studies were published by parents who observed their children’s language use. Since studying bilingualism as a first language requires that the researcher spend considerable time with the subject, it is clearly an advantage to live under the same roof with the subject, and this gives the parent of a bilingual child a clear head start. On the other hand, the result is a number of studies that are very personal, focused on one particular family or sometimes even a particular child. Reports often rely on a great deal of interpretation.

Although there has been increasing attention to bilingualism as a first language,

[Little attention has been given to the emotional considerations involved in maintaining strategies such as the one person – one language approach or the home/community language system after children begin formal schooling, nor has much research been devoted to subjects learning two languages with roots in very different cultures. (Noguchi, 1996, p. 3)]

Since Noguchi’s research in 1996, some advances have been made into what she identified as “emotional considerations” in growing up with two languages and the effects of cultural differences between the two languages. There is a need for more research, as the literature is still limited and inconclusive. One of the predominant problems is the factor of time. These studies rely on linguists’ observations over an
extended period of time. Several studies follow children from birth until they enter school. However, to evaluate the different strategies for raising children with bilingualism as a first language, the children would have to be studied over the course of their lives, at least well into adulthood.

Some of the most common language systems for those growing up with bilingualism as a first language are the one-parent one-language approach and the home versus community language approach. Although both have advantages, they also seem incompatible within certain contexts. Neither is an ideal model applicable to all individuals, as both appear to cause ‘emotional stress’ in some cases. Noguchi proposes a more flexible model “based on parental use of knowledge of both of their children’s languages to promote parent-child communication and help their children deal with different social as well as linguistic systems” (1996, p. 3). Having parents model bilingualism and biculturalism is a grand idea. Unfortunately, not all parents have the ability to be successful models. Researchers, such as Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (2004), have suggested that each parent should serve as a model in what he/she knows best, namely their first language. Children may see them as less competent, not only in language but overall, when they make mistakes in the use of the non-native language.

According to Arnberg (1987), the ‘ideal situation’ is “one in which parents consistently follow the one-person / one-language strategy and where the minority language is used as the family language” (Noguchi, 1996, p. 4). However, the importance of consistency has not been proven, as “one of the strongest experimental cases for consistency to date is open to doubt” (4). In this study, Dopke (1992) questionably
interpreted her data to show a correlation between the children’s language development and their parents’ consistency in using the language. One of the children in her study refused to speak one of his languages, which Dopke attributed to a lack of consistency. Upon closer examination, it became apparent that although consistency may have been lower in one setting, the parents were actually inconsistent, using one language more often, resulting in a greater overall language use and exposure. As a result, a correlation was not satisfactorily proven. Noguchi (1996) argues that even though the role of consistency in a child’s language development has not been established, there is evidence that rigid consistency can cause stress in the child as well as the parents (p. 5). For example, one parent may feel left out and forced to use the non-native language.

Although generally in favor of consistency, The Bilingual Family Newsletter reports on problems that parents have encountered in using this strategy. One parent “questions the ‘ultimate social appropriateness of speaking a language to a child in front of other people who do not understand that language, and its repercussions on the child’s development as a social being’” and “whether it is ‘psychologically sound to exclude a child’s parent from the relationship by speaking a language the other does not understand in front of him [or her]’” (Noguchi, 1996, pp. 5-6). Other parents have expressed concerns such as the dilemma of putting consistency and language development before free expression of thought and communication.

There are other models besides the one person – one language and home/community. These include one language – one environment, mixing languages, or having one parent maintain consistency while the other adjusts to other factors. Some families have also attempted to mix strategies to fit their unique situation (for a more
complete list of advantages and disadvantages, see Noguchi [1996, p. 9]). Noguchi (1996) reports that over 70% of parents reported problems with both the one person – one language strategy and the home / community strategy, but question whether there is a strategy for bilingual child rearing that would not have problems. For example, how much of a benefit would there be in having the percentage of reported problems reduced from 70 to 40? Realistically, depending on what is considered a successful outcome, any language learning could be seen as ‘problematic’. Is too much focus being put on finding a solution to a problem that is simply part of growing up bilingually? The management of this so-called problem is in fact a learning experience and opportunity for growth in areas beyond language. The problem seems to lie in where to draw the line between the realities of growing up bilingually and the potentially negative experiences that affect individuals as they grow linguistically and as individuals. Noguchi’s (1996) study also suggests that language learning may need to be adjusted, based on a child’s age and consistency does not need to be strictly maintained throughout the child’s upbringing.

Rather than seeing themselves as models of a single language, parents are probably more effective if they regard themselves as models of bilingualism and biculturalism, constantly adapting to their children’s changing linguistic and social needs. (p. 18)

Noguchi concludes that this emphasis on “Flexibility, ingenuity and sensitivity [is] far more important in raising well-adjusted bilingual children than absolute linguistic consistency could ever be” (1996, p. 18).

According to research conducted in the field of bilingualism as a first language, it is crucial that the minority language be emphasized in the home. Yamamoto’s 1991 survey (as cited in Noguchi, 1996) gives an example of a family with
a Japanese and a native English speaker living in Japan. For their child to become a bilingual, the English speaker has to use English as much as possible. Even when using the non-local/minority language predominantly in the home, it still does not guarantee the child’s use of the language. According to Noguchi (1996), in these cases, the amount of input seems to correlate with the English language development of the children. This includes the use of English between parents in the home. Noguchi proposes bilingual and bicultural modeling by the parents. Bilingual and bicultural parents who are “highly supportive of these traits in their children,” helped them to create “positive self identities” (Arnberg as cited in Noguchi, 1996, p. 12). In this model, parents should be more flexible with language and help children by (1) modeling, (2) recasting, expanding, filling in the blanks, (3) debriefing, and (4) temporary intensive training (Noguchi, 1996, pp. 13-18).

Kamada (1997) tested an interesting, less mainstream hypothesis in her research on differences between non-native language mothers versus non-native language fathers. Kamada hypothesized that:

> Perhaps it is a deep mother instinct in women which helps them overcome even the most challenging difficulties of language and communication, often with much self-sacrifice made in ways that men are often either financially or socially unable to make. And perhaps it can also be said that the innate paternal drive to instill a father tongue in offspring is not nearly as strong as is the maternal desire to pass on the language of the mother tongue. (p. 11).

A majority of Kamada’s (1997) case studies supported the belief that there should be some sort of plan concerning language. Parents have to make a conscious effort and actively work to create and maintain their children’s bilingualism. Just as Yamamoto’s survey suggests, a father in one of Kamada’s case studies advised that only the minority language be used at home, insisting that language use be firm, consistent and
uncompromising. Although this may sound somewhat extreme, according to research, there appears to be some truth in being consistent in language learning with children growing up bilingually. An interesting long-term result of bilingual upbringing presents itself in the second generation of bilingual children. Kamada found that bilingual parents married to majority language speakers struggled more in supporting bilingual development in their children than parents who spoke only the minority language.

The circumstances analyzed in this paper correspond to Kamada’s (1997) first scenario, ‘children of bi-cultural families’. These parents had more difficulty in ‘nurturing bilinguality’, which Kamada rightly described as ‘contrary to expectation’. However, after closer scrutiny, it makes sense that children whose parents only speak the minority language at home will most likely hear and speak this language in the home with parents, while children whose parents are bilingual and do not exclusively use the minority language at home, will find it easier to just switch into the majority language if this proves to be simpler. On the other hand, the advantage bilingual parents have is that they will always be able to successfully communicate with their children, even if their children favor the majority language. This is not equally true for parents who only speak the minority language, as there may come a time when their children will no longer feel comfortable expressing themselves in the minority language, and communication can suffer. Even the relationship can be strained under these circumstances, as “bilingualism [. . .] is sacrificed or delayed” (Kamada, 1997, p. 59).
Making Connections

In this section, the link between language, culture, and identity is explored. Attention is focused on language and its ties to ideology, culture, and identity. The following questions are considered: What is the relationship between bilingualism as a first language and identity formation? Is the relationship linear, in that one affects the other?

Language and Ideology

Language is a means of representing culture that reflects various aspects of culture and ideology. It is an important communicative tool that consciously and subconsciously reveals one’s beliefs, customs, social-/geographical-background, age, etc. Thus, language is linked to many aspects of human life and interactions in society. Individuals, thus express ideologies through language. However, as Lanza points out, “[i]deologies about language are of course not about language alone, rather they reflect issues of social and personal identity” (as cited in Auer & Wei, 2007, p. 51). On the one hand, through the use of language, ideology is expressed and made apparent. Language use *implicitly* conveys ideology. “Moreover, these ideologies are expressed in explicit talk about language, that is, metalinguistic or metapragmatic discourse” (Auer & Wei, 2007, p. 51).

Various researchers (Rumsey, 1990; Irvine, 1989 & Gal, 1989 as cited in Woolard, 1989) on language ideology have offered their definitions of the term. Rumsey (1990) generally defines language ideology as “shared beliefs of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world” (1990, p. 346), while Irvine (1989) defines it as: “the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with
their loading of moral and political interests” (as cited in Woolard, 1989, p. 255).

Woolard (1989) offers her understanding of language ideology as “Representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (p. 3). According to Lanza and Svendsen’s (2007) current research on language ideology “all includes a view towards understanding language in a broader social, cultural or/and political frame” (2007, p. 292). Conceptually, language ideology is tied to a group. Therefore, language ideologies “may be recoverable in what [a person] says about language, both explicitly and implicitly, and in the language choices he or she makes” (Auer & Wei, 2007, p. 51). Woolard (1989) refers to this notion as “implicit metapragmatics”: “linguistic signaling that is part of the stream of language use in process and that simultaneously indicates how to interpret language-in-use” (p. 9).

In learning a language, the ideology, the culture, beliefs, and customs are transmitted and internalized along with the actual words of the language. However, when confronted with two language systems, individuals have to learn aspects of more than one language, creating one or several ideologies and identities compatible with these language systems. For instance, a person can have shifting or incompatible ideologies, just as a person can have changing and conflicting identities.

The concepts of language ideology and language identity are comparable in certain aspects, and closely related. “What we think about language will be related to how we perceive ourselves and eventually how others perceive us” (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 292). Language cannot be analyzed in a vacuum separate from concepts such as culture, identity, and ideology. Rather it is important to analyze the relationships between these concepts, since ideologies of language “envision and enact ties of language to
identity, to aesthetics, to morality, and to epistemology” (Woolard, 1989, p. 3). This is the challenge that researchers face when conducting studies in the areas of language and identity. This literature review will not delve further into language ideology, as this area is too vast for the scope of this paper. The examination will only marginally touch on the ideology of those who grow up with two languages.

Language and Culture

Similar to the connection between language and ideology discussed in the previous section, language and culture are inseparably intertwined. Some have observed that there is no language without culture, just as there is no culture without language. Hence, it is imperative that the culture in language be acknowledged. This same assumption could also lead to the conclusion that any mixing or ‘personalizing’ of language within a family, for example, brings with it a certain culture – the culture of that particular family, which may be a mix of various more general cultures. It is within this culture that the bilingual child grows up and forms his/her cultural identity. Although the connection between language, culture and identity is complex, a definite link has been established between the three concepts. According to researchers such as Lanza and Svendsen (2007), the maintenance of language is critical in successful communication across generations, as well as in the maintenance of culture overall and the cultural identities of individuals. They are among the researchers to posit that “language is an integral part of collective identities, such as cultural, national, and ethnic identities, and that the maintenance of language across generations is a key factor to the maintenance of such identities” (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 276). This further implies that language maintenance across generations is also a key factor in maintenance of the culture.
Research on the interconnectedness of language and culture is growing. However, additional research is needed to determine “how adults and children are affected by living with two languages and cultures, and how language and culture are related to each other in such a situation” (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. xii). The number of people living with two cultures is growing, due to increased movement across borders. In the section that follows, a number of long-term studies are evaluated.

Culture and Identity: Social Networks

As previously stated, Social Network Analysis (SNA) shows that language plays a significant role in cultural identity. Cultural identity implies a culture or a group of people with shared norms, beliefs, language, etc. On a smaller scale, researchers often talk about social networks. Social networks are no longer limited to physical contact and/or interaction with a group of people, namely a network. With the explosion of social networking sites, the meaning of a social network is shifting. An individual’s social network may very well include someone thousands of miles away s/he has never met in person. What is crucial is that the individuals share commonalities that make them part of the same cultural group or network. “An integral part of the notion of social networks and its application to the study of language behavior is that the members of the network share norms or ideologies concerning language and language use” (Lanza & Svendson, 2007, p. 294).

There are two paradigms in the study of language and identity: the essentialist and the constructivist. “Essentialist approaches view identity in terms of given categories of who individuals or groups are, whereas constructivist approaches recognize the fluidity
of identities as they are performed and constructed in social interaction” (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 277). Lanza and Svendson argue that the constructivist approach, which takes into account the adaptability of identity, is more applicable than reducing identity to essentials. They further advise that further exploration is necessary to fully understand “how social identities are negotiated and constructed in interaction through linguistic means (cf. Auer, 2007)” (p. 295).

In general, Lanza and Svendson (2007) agree with previous studies that assign language an important role in the transmission of cultural identity. However, their recent study suggests that this may not always be the case. They found that the Filipino participants assigned less of a value to language than expected. They suspected that Filipinos’ multilingualism caused them to put less emphasis on one particular language. Rather, “their language socialization and transmission of cultural identity and [. . .] their sense of belonging including a Filipino identity was accomplished through other areas [. . .], for example, through religion” (p. 295). This study reveals the influence that social networks have on language and culture maintenance. Even if the relationship between language and culture is not consistently equal, there is no refuting the underlying connection that exists between the two. This strengthens the argument that each social network, maybe each individual, needs to be studied in detail to form conclusive ideas about language and cultural identity, and the tie that connects them.

Within the context of this thesis, individuals and their social networks are analyzed and compared to the general community. These individuals are dealing with two languages, one a majority language, the other a minority language, and the majority language is that of the community in which they live. The minority language generally
falls into one of two categories: a minority language, such as that of the Filipinos in Norway (see Lanza and Svendson’s 2007 study), or a minority language comparable to that of Mexican immigrants in the U.S. or Turkish immigrants in Germany. Within this framework, the study of simultaneous bilingualism is likely to be extremely difficult, since individuals are in different circumstances, with different languages, and cultures. All they have in common is that they grew up with two languages. However, there ought to be at least some common ground between these individuals. Highlighting and understanding these commonalities may aid future generations growing up with two languages in their struggle to find themselves, define their identities, and grow to their fullest potential.

Language and Identity

Each social network has its own language use. Members use commonly accepted words, formulations, expressions, etc., that set their social network apart from others. This common language reflects group identity, as well as aspects of the individuals’ identities, forming an important link between language and identity. Since identity is so closely tied to language, it is frequently included in studies involving language. In fact, interest in the study of identity has been growing. As Cerulo (1997) states, “The study of identity forms a critical cornerstone within modern sociological thought” (p. 385). With increasing migration, cultural contact and mixing, “language might become important for identity when a group feels it is losing its identity due to political or social reasons” (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 293). This scenario affects immigrants or expatriates in particular. On a smaller scale, in a bilingual household, the parent with the minority language might fear the loss of cultural identity. The same
parent may also fear that the bilingual child’s identification with the minority culture will be weakened or lost. When exploring simultaneous bilingualism, it is essential to take both languages into consideration as well as their influence on identity.

Two aspects of identity play a role in simultaneous bilingualism: the individual identities of the speakers and the collective identity of the group. Attention has focused on the latter only recently: “there has been a shift from the mere focus on the self to a group or collective identity as illustrated through studies of, for example, national, ethnic/cultural, class and gender identities, and identities of communities of practice” (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 277).

When talking about identity, researchers often differentiate between essentialist and constructivist approaches. The constructivist approach, which depicts identity as flexible and dependent on situation and interaction, is predominant. In an analysis of Silverstein (2003) and Blommaert (2007), Llamas and Watt go so far as to suggest that identity is created and only truly exists when a person is among other people, when he is not at home because “it is only then that his identity exists” (2010, p. 17).

As they grow up with two languages and two cultures, simultaneous bilinguals are creating and forming their identity/identities based on social networks and feelings associated with each language, society’s attitude towards the languages, and many other factors. As Lanza and Svendsen (2007) put it, such bilinguals construct and re-construct their identities according to “various factors such as symbolic value on the linguistic ‘market place’” (p. 278). Each language is said to have a certain value that influences the speaker to construct his/her identity.
Forming one’s identity is a complex process. It poses a challenge for monolinguals dealing with one language and culture. “Multilingualism”, on the other hand, “provides a much more complicated reality for identity” (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 296). Combining different language ideologies and cultures in one’s identity requires flexibility, creativity, and acceptance.

Cultural Identity Formation

This section focuses on identity formation and the factors that influence and shape it. The questions addressed include: What factors influence cultural identity formation in individuals with bilingualism as a first language? What factors, circumstances or characteristic traits lead these individuals to feel emotionally closer to one of the cultures or to a combination of the cultures? How do these individuals commonly form their cultural identity? Do they seem to prefer a mixed-culture identity? If so, what leads to this outcome as opposed to a preference for one culture over another? How does this process of identity formation shape contact with third/additional cultures?

Identity Formation

“Harre and van Lagenhove argue that the process of identity positioning reflects the negotiated outcome of who others perceive us to be and who we believe ourselves to be and imagine we can be” (Rich & Davis, 2007, p. 37). Individuals form their identity based on ‘interactive positioning’ and ‘reflective positioning’, the way others perceive the person’s identity, and the way the individual perceives his or her own identity. Identity formation happens in two ways: internally, within the individual, and externally between the individual and his or her surroundings. Although, identity is
negotiated, formed and adapted with every interaction, to a certain extent, there is also a base or underlying identity tied to a set of values and beliefs, which does not change much based on daily interactions.

Rich and Davis (2007) focus on children who experience different ‘identity positions’ due to different home and school languages and cultures. To a certain extent, their analysis may be applied to children growing up with two different languages in the home. In both situations, children have to learn to negotiate an identity that satisfactorily includes both cultures or at the very least allows them to function within both cultures.

For those children who experience a considerable discontinuity between home and school practices, however, it is more likely that attempting to create a sense of seamless subjectivity across the world of the home and school may be a particularly demanding and challenging experience. How they seek to address this is likely to have important consequences for their ongoing learning. (Rich & Davis, 2007, p. 37)

Questions arise as to why some children are able to successfully deal with this situation while others have problems? To what extent do these early experiences and their outcomes influence an individual’s ongoing learning? As individuals are negotiating their identities, are they doing so through the respective language?

Cultural Identity

Having examined identity and the relationship between language, culture, and identity, the focus will narrow to cultural identity and its connection to language. Kramsch (1998/2000) refers to this as: “the association of language with a person’s sense of self” (p. 65). Cultural identity is only one part of an individual’s identity, sometimes referred to as one of many identities. Other identities – national, local, personal, and social – differ from cultural identity. However, parts of cultural identity may have an
effect on or be affected by these other identities. When doing research in the area of cultural identity, the challenge lies in isolating the factors directly related to this part of a person’s identity.

Cultural identity has to do with the group one belongs to: “in modern, historically complex, open societies it is much more difficult to define the boundaries of any particular social group and the linguistic and cultural identities of its members” (Kramsch, 1998/2000, p. 66). With ever-increasing contact between cultures, once distinct cultures lose their contours, overlap and merge, no longer bound to one particular area or group. People moving, intercultural marriages, and cultural expansion through worldwide trends are factors that help to blur the boundaries between cultures.

Even national identities are becoming increasingly difficult to define. “One would think that national identity is a clear-cut either/or affair (either you are or you are not a citizen), but it is one thing, for example, to have a Turkish passport, another thing to ascribe to yourself a Turkish national identity if you were born, raised and educated, say, in Germany, are a native speaker of German, and happen to have Turkish parents” (Kramsch, 1998/2000, p. 67). For a growing number of individuals this seems to be the reality, as families migrate for various reasons and raise their children in a foreign culture. “Cultural identity as opposed to national identity for instance, although linked to the country or rather area, is not defined by the political boundaries of a country and cannot be taken away or denied” (Llamas & Watt, 2010, p. 227).

Children with a migratory background are not the only ones prone to adopt several identities. Even within cultures, there are several subcultures, and participation may lead to more than one identity. “Despite the entrenched belief in the one language =
one culture equation, individuals assume several collective identities that are likely not only to change over time in dialogue with others, but are liable to be in conflict with one another” (Kramsch, 1998/2000, p. 67). Mastering this conflict and successfully accommodating all aspects of identity is the process of forming cultural identity.

Just as the study of language and culture can only be seen through the lens of the researcher’s culture, “our perception of someone’s social identity is very much culturally determined. What we perceive about a person’s culture and language is what we have been conditioned by our own culture to see” (Kramsch, 1998/2000, p. 67). It is important to keep this in mind when researching and analyzing culture and cultural identity.

Cultural Identity Formation

This section takes a closer look at cultural identity formation and related issues in various groups. It identifies some of the groups most affected by the problems that arise when more than one language and culture are involved. The questions addressed are: What groups struggle with Cultural Identity Formation (CIF)? What kinds of problems arise during CIF? How do individuals/groups cope with these problems? How does the CIF in bilinguals differ from that in other groups?

The terms ‘identity’ and ‘culture’ are both very broad, abstract terms that can be interpreted differently. This makes researching this area particularly challenging. According to Schwartz, Montgomery, and Briones (2006), “identity is a synthesis of personal, social, and cultural self-conceptions” (p. 6). Schwarz et al. also state that “[c]onsistent with Erikson (1950), we regard identity as the organization of self-understandings that define one’s ‘place in the world’ [. . .].” (p. 5). Furthermore,
identity, according to Adams and Marshall (1996), functions to provide ‘(a) the structure for understanding who one is; (b) meaning and direction through commitments, values, and goals, (c) a sense of personal control, (d) consistency, coherence, and harmony between values, beliefs and commitments, and (e) the ability to recognize potential in future possibilities and choices.’ (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 6)

As mentioned above, there are varying ways in which to interpret identity.

Meyer, for instance defines it as

the whole sum of characteristics given by place, gender, age, race, history, nationality, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, religious orientation, ethnicity and above all the gaps (blanks) between all these, allowing people to be part of one and another at the same time. (Meyer, 2008, Introduction)

Just as there are many definitions for the term ‘identity’, there also exist a plethora of definitions for ‘culture’. Researchers as well as professionals in the field have not agreed on one common definition for the concept of culture.

Bhatia and Ram (2001) argue that culture is difficult to define, given that it is not clear (a) what constitutes a ‘culture’ and (b) where one culture ends and another begins. Gjerde (2004) goes even further, arguing that the very notion of culture as a fixed entity that characterizes groups of people is errant and promotes stereotyping. (Schwartz et al., 2006, pp. 3-4)

Putting these two concepts, which do not yet have a commonly accepted definition together as ‘cultural identity’, results in a highly complex term, which has been defined in numerous ways. Jensen (2003) offers one possible definition of cultural identity: “cultural identity refers to specific values, ideals, and beliefs (e.g., individualism, collectivism, familism, filial piety) adopted from a given cultural group, as well as one’s feelings about belonging to that group” (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 7). Cultural identity is formed over time and influenced by many factors. In order to delve further into cultural identity, it is necessary to examine cultural identity formation.
Current Views on Cultural Identity Formation. Two main positions on cultural identity formation exist among researchers. On one side, researchers with a modernist viewpoint believe that identities are “fixed entities that similarly describe or affect all individuals, groups, and nations” (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 3). On the opposing side, researchers who represent postmodernist viewpoints hold the position “that all human experience is variable, malleable, local and particular, difficult to define in any general terms, and in constant flux” (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 3). The prevalent definition seems to be that cultural identity is not a fixed concept but rather one that changes.

Groups with Particular Problems in Cultural Identity Formation. When discussing cultural identity and cultural identity formation, certain groups have been identified as having a particularly difficult time. These include adolescents, immigrants, and the children of immigrants, as well as children born into a household with more than one culture. The majority of studies on cultural identity formation focus on individuals whose home culture is different from the surrounding culture, in other words, immigrants and the children of immigrants. Significantly, fewer studies in this field focus on the cultural identity formation of individuals with parents from different cultural backgrounds. The first group is different from the other three groups in that adolescence is a developmental period in which all people, immigrant or not, confront the challenge of cultural identity formation. As adolescents, individuals with parents from different cultural backgrounds deal with these issues in addition to those attributed to their bicultural homes.

Adolescence is a period during which individuals seek to define themselves within their surroundings; therefore, “identity issues are most salient to adolescents and
emerging adults” (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 3). As people are increasingly exposed to other cultures, the contact and mixing of cultures is becoming impossible to avoid. This is one of the reasons why finding ones identity is becoming more complicated even within one particular culture. Only very few societies remain isolated enough to be culturally ‘pure’, meaning that they are not exposed to or affected by any other culture/s. One of the arguments among researchers is that cultural identity was more straightforward when there was less contact between cultures. Through the media, Western culture influences almost all cultures throughout the world. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is making physical distances insignificant. Adolescents and young adults use ICT most heavily. They also have the greatest exposure to outside cultural influences. Media culture in and of itself exerts “cultural influences” on identity formation. In addition, teenagers are impressionable and easily influenced at this age as they are searching for their identity and their place in society. Individuals growing up bicultural do not see and experience a single, coherent home culture. Rather, they see fragmented pieces of two different home cultures in addition to “outside” cultures, such as media. They see and experience two different, possibly incomplete, cultures. They manage these differences and try to blend them into a cultural identity. As Mann (2004) argues, “[s]uch individuals may experience difficulty or distress in identifying exactly ‘what they are’ in terms of who the ingroup is” (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 15). In the case of individuals with parents from different cultural backgrounds, one culture will probably be more dominant (e.g., the culture the person actually lives in), while the other exerts a weaker influence.
It should be noted that additional issues arise when more than two cultures are involved. When parents have different cultural heritages and children grow up in a third culture, these individuals are referred to as ‘third culture kids’. This review will not go into further detail on cultural identity formation in this area as it encompasses a different set of research studies.

**Problems in Cultural Identity Formation.** Researchers have found evidence that forming a cultural identity from two or more cultures, which are vastly different, is more problematic than from cultures that are similar. For example, it “tends to be more difficult for immigrants who come from ‘religious-based cultural backgrounds’ to adapt to the receiving society when the latter has western values (Alkhazraji, Gardner, Martin, & Paolillo, 1997)” (as cited in Schwartz et al., 2006). Although Schwartz et al. mentions immigrants in particular, a similar problem may exist when individuals grow up bicultural in cultures with different religious traditions.

Researchers such as Mann (2004) and Schwartz et al. (2006) assert that the nature of the differences between the parents’ cultures also influences cultural identity formation. When the aspects of one culture, such as its values, beliefs and perspectives, are very different from the other, it becomes more difficult to fuse both cultures to a cultural identity. If one parent is from a collectivist culture and the other from a more individualistic culture, for example, this will create more distress in cultural identity formation than having parents from cultures that both have individualistic or collectivist values.

**Coping with Problems in Cultural Identity Formation.** Individuals have three basic options as far as cultural identity formation: they may more strongly prefer their
father’s culture, their mother’s culture, or some sort of middle ground. Individuals will also tend to prefer a parent’s culture when it is the local culture. In some cases, however, the local culture is not the predominant culture in the home, in which case the home culture may be preferred over the local culture. Which language and culture bilinguals tend to prefer, assuming they have a preference, depends on a number of factors, including the degree of similarity between the two cultures (Rudmin, 2003), the extent of prejudice and discrimination that one experiences (Brown, 2000), the support for heritage culture beliefs in the new [local] society (Portes & Rumbaut, 2001), and the degree to which the cultural identity is flexible enough to accommodate seemingly incompatible belief systems (Jensen, 2003). (Schwartz et al., 2006, p. 10)

It may also be the case that bicultural individuals are not accepted by their father’s culture or their mother’s culture, even though they may be able to fully function in both. On the other hand, they may be accepted by one or both cultures.

Cultural Identity Formation in Bilinguals vs. Other Groups. As language and identity are tied to social relationships, it is important to take a closer look at the social relationships bilinguals have and the value they attribute to these. Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson (2004) make several seemingly common sense but important points about the circumstances and added difficulties multicultural families face. For one, couples or families comprised of two adults with different first languages and different cultures are often “fraught with potential misunderstandings and unspoken expectations and assumptions which need to be made explicit given the couple’s lack of common background” (Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson, 2004, p. 2). Second, language choice affects “how the languages are used, depending on where they live and how well the parents each speak the other’s language” (Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson,
2004, p. 2). What is important is that the language choices made by adults influence the
cchildren. “When children come along, they will need to be accommodated in the couple’s
linguistic arrangements” (Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson, 2004, p. 2). As
Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson point out, when the couple communicates, one
parent will always be using a language that is not their first language. This, in turn, may
have consequences. The children may start correcting the parent who is not speaking in
his/her first language or be embarrassed by the non-native language of their parents.

Another possible problem mentioned by Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson is that
the non-native speaker is not motivated to improve the second language when it is
adequate for daily communication. There are cases in which one of the parents does not
speak the other language at all and starts to feel left out when the fluent parent uses
his/her first language with the child. All of these can cause problems in the
multilingual/multicultural family. Since one of the parents is generally living away from
his/her first language and culture, there may also be issues of forgetting words or aspects
of the culture and shifting to a more internationalized version of both language and
culture.

Conclusion

This chapter reviews previous literature in three main areas. The first part
focuses on bilingualism and provides a brief summary of different types of bilingualism
based on when and why the languages are learned and the degree of bilingualism
achieved. It also clarifies differences between bilinguals and speakers of bilingualism as a
first language. The second section examines the significance of the connection between
language, culture, and identity. Defining these terms, how they are interconnected and affect each other is crucial in investigating the relationship between bilingualism as a first language and identity formation. In the final section, the factors influencing cultural identity formation are explored in more detail. Previous research found that crucial factors include the social group and compatibility of beliefs, values, and perspectives of the different cultures. Problems in cultural identity formation are discussed as well as how the process differs in bilinguals as opposed to other groups.

The review of literature provides the foundation for discussing and comparing existing research with newly collected data from the case studies. It also facilitates the analysis and interpretation of data and supports recommendations for future research in the area of bilingualism as a first language.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study focuses on individuals who grew up with bilingualism as a first language in an environment in which the parents have different languages and cultures. The aim is to provide a more holistic picture of these bilinguals by comparing findings from the review of literature with the case studies.

The research reported here is qualitative in nature, as the intent is to “study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln as cited in Sanz, 2005, p. 70). The extended literature review and accompanying case studies contain elements commonly found in ethnographic, psychological, and sociological case study research. The approach relies on psychological concepts or theories to explain or draw conclusions related to the individual’s actions. Research about the social relations of a group delves into the area of sociology. According to Hancock and Algozzine (2006), this study cuts across all three case study research designs. It contains an ‘exploratory’ component, since it “seek[s] to define research questions of a subsequent study or [. . .] determine the feasibility of research procedures” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 33). It represents an initial attempt at the kind of data collection that will eventually provide a more adequate background for further research and enable researchers to pose better questions in their
efforts to understand people who grow up bilingually and their identity formation.

Explanatory case study design “seek[s] to establish cause-and-effect relationships” (Hancock & Algozzine, 2006, p. 33), positing preliminary cause-and-effect relationships between the factors influencing bilingual children’s language use and their cultural identity. Finally, this thesis includes aspects of descriptive case study design in that it provides accurate descriptions of three individuals’ language use and cultural identity formation: it “attempt[s] to present a complete description of a phenomenon within its context,” the definition of a descriptive case study according to Hancock and Algozzine (2006, 0. 33).

Participants

At the time of data collection, the volunteers for this study were all young adult bilinguals between the ages of 23 and 33. All had completed at least a Bachelor’s degree. One participant was currently enrolled in classes for a Master’s degree, and another was planning to start a Master’s degree program abroad in the near future.

The participants were selected in accordance with criteria defining individuals who have bilingualism as a first language: (1) they have learned two languages since birth (2) from parents who speak different first languages. All three were brought up bilingually; each has a parent from one language and culture and a parent from another language and culture. All three participants have lived in both of the two language cultures or have at least had some schooling in both. Additional criteria included: parents who spoke their native language fairly consistently to the participants since birth with native or native-like proficiency in both languages.
Since the questionnaire and interviews were in English, it was also essential that the participants’ English to be good enough to accurately answer the questions.

Instruments

A questionnaire was developed that included questions ranging from background to language and culture. It contained 37 questions, divided into the four sections: warm-up, language, culture, and general language learning. A questionnaire is often employed to facilitate collecting information from a number of individuals in written form. However, in this case it also served as a guide to accompany an interview. One of the participants chose to answer the questionnaire in writing with only a brief interview as a follow up, while the other two participants answered the questionnaire orally in a face-to-face interview.

The first section served as a warm-up and included only three questions addressing the participants’ background. These initial questions were intended to lead the participants into the subject area and/or encourage them to begin talking. (e.g., Question 2 “Where were you born?”) Participants did not have to think about these questions; they were easy to answer and establish very basic facts about each participant. The second section of the questionnaire was the longest, with 19 questions dealing with language. These questions were loosely arranged by increasing complexity, beginning with questions such as: “What is/are your first language(s)?” As participants were selected based on criteria that they have two first languages, this question served to confirm which two languages they grew up with. By question 10, the participants would need more time to answer, since questions required increased reflection: “What language
is dominant in your home? When? Why?” Towards the end of this section on language, the interviewee was expected to take more time to reflect before answering and to provide a longer explanation. Question 21 is illustrative: “Have you ever felt as though you were at a disadvantage growing up with two languages? (Struggles with language in school, etc.?)”

The third section of the questionnaire concentrated on culture and included 10 questions. The questions all led to the culminating question: “How would you describe your personal, cultural identity?” The questions were challenging. Although there were only 10 questions, completing the culture section was expected to take at least as much time as the language section, as participants needed to reflect, explain, correct, and expand upon their responses.

After the culture questions, the questionnaire asked equally thought provoking, but more general questions. This final section included 5 “general language learning questions” aimed at facilitating an understanding of the participants’ language learning. These served the purpose of highlighting differences in language learning between those who grew up bilingually and those who grew up as monolinguals. This section also demonstrated the individuals’ general feelings towards languages and cultures. Questions included: (No. 33) “Have you learned any other languages besides the two you grew up with? Explain”; (No. 34): “How did you learn these languages? In school? By living abroad?”; and (No. 36): “Tell me how you feel about different languages and cultures in general?”
The questionnaire ends with an opportunity for participants to add anything that may not have been addressed in the interview and to ask questions or make comments.

Procedure

The data was collected during the summer of 2011, either through email or face-to-face interviews. Participants answered questions prepared ahead of time, either orally or in writing. The written answers were followed by an interview or phone conversation. There was no follow up to the face-to-face interviews, as participants’ responses were clarified during the interviews themselves, which lasted 45 minutes to a little over an hour. All questions were in English, although in one case English was not one of the first languages of the participant. This was taken into consideration by clarifying questions and following up on answers that were unclear.

Participants were informed of the nature of the study and agreed to participate freely. The questions elicited information used to describe the history of the individual’s language use, the relationships affecting language, their feelings toward language, as well as their feelings towards each culture and their own interpretations of their cultural identity. The interviews and questionnaires were complemented by personal experience, observations, and interaction with the participants, their families and other individuals growing up with two languages.

Data Analysis

Most of the relevant research on language and identity formation is ethnographic research. Subjects are observed, their language and actions recorded and
analyzed. For the most part, this type of research requires data collection over an extended period of time. This was simply not possible within the limitations of this thesis. Ethnographic research also has a disadvantage in that it is subjective by nature. Observations are done through the eyes of the observer with all the baggage this person brings with him/her. In data analysis, the researchers conducting these studies may introduce their own world-view and expectations. It is an inherent limitation that language and culture can only be studied through the lens of one’s own language and culture. As a native bilingual, I realize that I cannot completely avoid the possibility that my own preconceptions or beliefs may taint the results or interpretations.

Conclusion

The following chapter presents the data collected during the interviews. These case studies facilitate the comparison of theories and findings from the literature on bilingualism and identity to the experiences of specific individuals. In addition to my own experiences, the three case studies offer an emic perspective from those who have grown up with two languages and cultures. This is only the gateway to more in depth studies in the future.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

My interest in doing research in the area of bilingualism as a first language and cultural identity is primarily personal. Understanding my own feelings and thoughts may help others to overcome challenges similar to those I have experienced. I am proud to say that I grew up speaking two languages and am, at the very least, native-like in both languages. I can’t say that I remember initially learning Spanish and German, my two first-languages. On the other hand, I have heard stories about my language learning from parents and other family members throughout my entire life. Since learning a language never really stops, I can relate numerous accounts about my continuous efforts to improve my language abilities as an adolescent and as an adult. While this is hardly scientific research, it serves to explain my interest in this topic and to acknowledge that these experiences have enhanced my understanding of research conducted by professionals in bilingualism and cultural identity.

My language learning narrative begins with my dad, who hitchhiked to the US from Peru in his early twenties. Once in the US, he was drafted during the Vietnam War, after which he was stationed in Germany, where he met my mother. My mother has always been interested in Latin America. She had been to Mexico and already spoke Spanish when she met my dad. Even before I was born, they decided that each would speak ONLY his/her native language to me (the one person – one language system). The
first three years of my life, I received input in German from my mother, my maternal grandparents, whom we lived with at the time, and people in public places outside the home. I received input in Spanish from my father, my uncle and aunt who visited regularly, and other Spanish-speaking friends and family who frequented our house. Although my parents strongly encouraged development of both languages, the reality was that I had more input and opportunities for output in German (probably 60%-70%). During this time, I had no trouble holding conversations with my father and other adults in Spanish. I already understood how to form various grammatical forms in Spanish, such as the past. However, I sometimes couldn’t remember certain words, so I formed my own words mixing Spanish and German. For example, instead of using the reflexive verb “romperse” (to break) in its past tense - which is “se rompió” (it broke) - I said “se kaputtió,” exchanging the Spanish root with the German word for broken (“kaputt”). In this case I applied the correct Spanish grammar by preceding the word with the reflexive form “se” and adding the third person past tense form “-ió” as a suffix. Examples such as this one show that I knew intuitively how the general rule of grammar needed to be applied. I just did not remember the right Spanish root and simply substituted it by a German one. Perhaps a synonym in my mind, it was a solution to the problem that allowed me to express what I wanted.

Once I started preschool, the use of German was even more prevalent, since I went to a German preschool and later a German school. In an attempt to balance language use, one of my paternal aunts and my paternal grandmother took turns taking care of me after school, which meant that at least after school, I spoke Spanish at home.
According to my mom, I never went through a phase in which I was reluctant to speak either language. The environment I grew up in always encouraged bilingualism and multilingualism, and made it very clear that it was an advantage to speak more than one language. In many situations, I did not even have a choice, as my maternal grandparents and other German friends and family did not speak Spanish, and my paternal grandparents and their friends and family did not speak German. I was forced to use both languages in order to communicate.

When I was seven, we moved to Belgium, where we spent six years before moving to the United States. The contact with additional languages, such as French and Dutch in Belgium and later English in the United States, undoubtedly had an impact on my language development as well as my cultural identity formation. Situations such as these often increase the difficulty of identifying factors and their effects in identity formation. I am just now beginning to realize and contemplate how each person and situation influenced the individual I have become, and how I am still changing and will continue to change, based on the decisions I make now and in the future.

In this section, I investigate the stories of three young adults who also grew up bilingually. I will take a closer look at the life stories of individuals who grew up with two different languages and cultures, how it has affected them, and what we can learn about language, culture, identity, and language learning from these accounts.
Interview #1

The first person interviewed is a young adult woman (22) who is living and studying in Germany. Her father is Peruvian, her mother German. She was born and raised in Germany and went through the German school system. Since birth, communication with her father has been in Spanish and with her mother in German. Although she recalls that there was a period in her early childhood when she refused to speak Spanish, she does not remember exactly when or why. The parents’ communication occurs mainly in Spanish, although both parents speak their partner’s language in addition to at least one other language, English. She has had 14 years of schooling in German as well as academic language instruction for 8 years in English, 6 in French, and 4 in Spanish. While Spanish language instruction comprises the least in terms of time, it is at the most advanced level.

Even though she has spoken both languages since birth, she admits that people can distinguish a German accent when she speaks Spanish. She also states that she is more comfortable speaking German, “because [her] vocabulary is better and it’s easier for [her] to explain things” (interview). When asked what language she thinks in, she said that although she was not sure, she would probably say it is German.

In the interview, she reported that she thinks about grammar “in all languages when [she’s] speaking or writing.” It is important to consider her understanding of “thinking about grammar” in the traditional sense. Most native speakers do not think about grammar when they are speaking, and her statement is, therefore, at odds with previous findings. One possible explanation is that she interprets the question more
broadly as in thinking about how to formulate thoughts when you are talking. This is not because an individual is unsure of the correct structure, but simply trying to adequately monitor and coherently express thoughts using academic language.

When asked about expressions or idioms, the participant commented that she tends to literally translate idioms from German into other languages. She is not native in this area. At the same time, she is confident that she is native or near native in the language domains of home, family, and academic vocabulary.

The second part of the interview has to do with culture. The interviewee starts out by saying that she does not have a preference for either culture, as both have good and bad features. Without a doubt, however, she feels more at home in Germany, as she has never lived in Peru. Nonetheless, she has a strong interest in getting to know the Peruvian culture better and was hoping to study abroad in Peru in 2012. Interestingly, she says that she “considers [herself] more a part of Peruvian culture when [she’s] in Germany, and [she] considers [herself] more a part of German culture when [she’s] in Peru. When [she] travel[s] to other countries, except Peru and Germany . . . [she] considers [herself] as a German.” Generally, when someone asks her where she is from, she will answer that she is from Germany, but that she is also Peruvian.

Growing up in Germany, German culture dominated her home life. Some of the reasons for this are that she went to German kindergarten and school, and had German friends – all factors based on the reality that she lived in Germany.

The participant does not feel that she has an identity tied to each language. She does say that her identity might change “a bit” when she switches languages, but she asserts that this is simply due to the fact that “[her] Spanish vocabulary isn’t as good as
[her] German vocabulary, so [she] can’t express [herself] good in some situations and say the things [she] would like to say” (see interview). Overall, she describes herself as someone who grew up with two languages and two cultures. She feels that this makes her different and, in a way, special when compared to her friends. In the future, she hopes to raise her children with at least two languages and cultures, just as she was raised.

The third and last area of the interview focused on general language learning. Apart from the two languages she has been exposed to since birth, she has learned English and French in school as well as through visits abroad. She is now able to have conversations and write essays in both languages. According to her, the most important practice in developing languages is talking to native speakers. Overall, she is “very interested in other cultures and languages.” The reason for this is that she’s “also a person who grew up with two cultures and languages [and that she] love[s] to travel and meet new people and [she] think[s] there are so many things in the world to discover and to learn.”

Interview #2

The second interviewee is a male, 23 years old, who grew up bilingual with a German mother and American father. As is typical with children growing up with bilingualism as a first language, when asked what his first language is, he replies “English and German.” He thinks about his answer and adds, “it’s complicated.” He has been exposed to English and German since birth, and started speaking both languages simultaneously. At the age of 6, he became exposed to Swahili, as his family lived in Tanzania for two years.
His mother has always spoken to him in German and has only recently, when the participant was already an adult, “loosened up” and started using some English, depending on surroundings, people, and situations. His father has always used English when communicating, except for the two years in Africa, when he sometimes switched to Swahili. The first years of his life were spent in the United States. Due to his young age, he spent most of the time with his mother and received constant input in German. Although his father knows German, his parents communicated in English during the limited time both parents were home. (His father was gone most of the day, and only saw his son for short periods of time before he went to bed or on weekends.) As he grew older, English became more and more dominant in the home, because it was spoken when friends were over and when the family was together. In addition, English was the only language spoken outside the home. What helped him maintain his German during this time were yearly two to three month vacations in Germany. In addition to the vacation time abroad, and perhaps more crucial, were years of schooling in German. He spent his Kindergarten year in Germany. While in Africa, during 1st and 2nd grade, he was homeschooled in English and German. He spent 4th to 6th grade in Germany, 10th grade in an international school where English, German, and Swahili were used, and 12th grade in the German speaking part of Switzerland. In between, he attended school in the USA.

Another important factor in the participant’s language learning was his younger sister and his language choices when interacting with her. In contrast, his sister was resistant to learning or speaking German as a small child. This changed during the family’s stay in Germany, and German became a good “secret language” between the siblings once back in the U.S. However, English was from the beginning and remains to
this day the preferred language for communication between the two siblings. Overall, the individual asserts that he prefers English for writing, but otherwise has no preference. He explains that sometimes he just thinks of a word that fits better in another language. In his family, they even had specific terms for this mixing of language. One example is Kiswadenglish, which means mixing all languages, whatever comes to mind first – Kiswahili, Deutsch (German), and English. While he was growing up, his parents did not discourage mixing languages. Rather, they emphasized understanding one another.

The interviewee points out that he feels more competent writing in English, but he adds that his technical German reading skills have improved recently, as he has been working in Germany for the past year. He feels comfortable translating from German to English, but cannot do the same from English to German.

Like a majority of individuals, he cannot remember learning his two first languages, but he does remember learning to read and write. He remembers that the difficulty level of learning to read and write was much higher in the German school. In Germany, he was “writing essays and [using] cursive while writing ‘the cat jumped over the box in English.”

In contrast to his younger sister, he never resisted speaking either language growing up. At least, he does not remember doing so, although he did resist the schooling. (His mother remembers that as a small child, while living in the USA, he would answer her in English, but later in the international community in Africa, he would actually initiate speaking German.) He had German schooling for one year of kindergarten and four years before college as well as two semesters in college. The remainder was primarily in English. After finishing his Bachelor’s degree, he worked in
Germany, where he remained until October 2011, when he began his Masters studies in England.

During the time he has been living and working in Germany as an adult, he says that people only sometimes notice an accent when he speaks German. When they do, “they can’t place it.” In his spoken language, he does not think about grammar in either language. In written language, however, he thinks about grammar in both languages, although rarely and not actively.

Even though his spoken language can be considered native like or near native, he does report having some trouble with idioms and expressions. As far as recognizing and understanding idioms, there are some that he has never heard. When using idioms, he admits that he sometimes tries to translate them literally.

His choice of the language he thinks in is also interesting. While it seems to be accepted that one thinks in the language that is stronger, he reveals that he thinks in both, depending on the situation. He goes on to explain that “if [he’s] trying to concentrate in a loud area, [he tries] to switch to the language that is not being used.” In addition, it depends on the country he is in. For example, in Germany he thinks in the predominant language – German. He states that his proficiency level in both languages is “fairly close”; he may have had more formal academic exposure in English, but German is not that far behind. He tries to read a lot in German and continues working on his German. Thinking about his bilingual upbringing, he is quick to add that he never felt as if he were at a disadvantage in comparison to monolingual children.

When asked about his preferred culture, he quickly explains that he considers himself international. He does not identify as being German or American, since he has
lived in a lot of different countries. Similarly, he does not feel part of either culture. He repeats that “I don’t consider myself particularly American or particularly German or anything else,” then stops and searches for the right word “International, Cosmopolitan?” When asked where he feels more at home, he shares “wherever I am, I am at home.” Even growing up, he cannot recall a time when he wanted to be more a part of culture 1 or culture 2. He justifies this, explaining that “I adapt really quickly. I take what I like and discard what I don’t like and craft my own personality. It’s a balancing act, knowing what you can say in one place and not in another. It doesn’t bother me. It bothered me once; in sixth grade a guy kept calling me German Nazi. I’ve never not identified myself as German or American.” When someone asks him where he is from, he simply answers that, “it’s complicated.” If he were to answer the question, he would explain that he has lived in various places in Germany, the U.S. as well as Africa. In his home, there has always been a more international culture that includes “no Flecken,” [no stains]; objects from Africa, the Philippines, Thailand as well as others from the family’s extensive travels make up a “culturally cobbled together environment.”

In response to the question of whether he has an identity tied to each language, he explains that he is a lot quieter when speaking German and makes fun of the ‘Americans’ in Germany who talk too loudly. Most Germans think they are boasting, self absorbed Americans that just want to draw attention to themselves. In Germany, he also stands closer to people and shakes hands, whereas in America he gives hugs. When he switches languages, the most noticeable change is his volume of speech. Finally, when prompted to describe his cultural identity, he again emphasizes that “I don’t identify with
a specific culture at all, or I try to avoid it. When people say you’re American, I say ‘no
I’m not.’”

The third and final part of the interview deals with general language learning
questions. Here he discloses that in addition to English and German, he also learned
Swahili and Swiss German. He learned Swahili living in Africa as well as through formal
instruction during 10th grade and one semester in college. He learned Swiss German out
of necessity, as he lived in Switzerland one year as part of an exchange program. In
general, this is how he learns languages. More specifically, he ‘acquires’ language by
living in different countries and immersing himself in the language. He finishes the
interview by asserting that he enjoys different languages and cultures, and travels
whenever he can.

Interview #3

The third interviewee is a male of 33 years who grew up bilingual, speaking
Spanish and English. His mother was born and raised in Argentina, his father in the U.S.
He was born in California, but when he was three months old, his mother and father
separated, and his mother moved back to Argentina for a year. During this period, he was
almost exclusively exposed to Spanish. After a year abroad, his mother brought him back
to the United States, where he has lived ever since. After their return from Argentina, he
spent weekends with his father, who only speaks English, and weekdays with his mother
and other Spanish-speaking family and friends. Although he only spent a couple of days a
week with his father, he had other input in English through TV (cartoons) and his
mother’s acquaintances and their children. By the time he started preschool, he was
bilingual.
The interviewee went through all his schooling, preschool to university, in the US. In high school, he studied Spanish for three years, and also Italian. He continued studying languages in college, where he took two semesters of Spanish, and three semesters of Portuguese. After college, he continued to study Croatian on his own, since his mother is of Croatian descent, and he still has family in Croatia.

Growing up, the interviewee’s mother spoke Spanish almost exclusively. The only time she would use English was when she addressed him in situations where a third, monolingual English speaker was part of the conversation. His father, who does not speak any other languages, spoke to the participant only in English. He cannot remember ever having refused to speak either language, always answering his mother in Spanish and his father in English. Although the participant spent the whole week with his mother and only weekends with his father, the actual time he had with his mother was limited, due to the fact that she worked two or three jobs while he was growing up. During the time his mother was at work, he stayed with various Central- and South-American families, where he heard Spanish as well as English. Because of the heavy influence of Spanish in his early years and the predominance of the language in his home, he admits that he prefers Spanish over English. He adds, however, that he does not prefer Spanish for language reasons, but rather because of cultural affinity. He tries to explain that Spanish is what connects him with family. He also feels that he can express himself better in Spanish, and is better able to say what he wants to say.

Even though he learned both English and Spanish as a toddler, he says he can remember learning certain aspects of the languages. He further explains that he got “the ear” for Spanish from his mother, but he still had to learn Spanish grammar on his own.
when he was about 15-16 years of age. Even at that age, he had a passion for language and a desire to understand the differences between languages and cultures. He also states that he has to think about grammar when speaking and writing in both languages. He explains that he does not have to think about it too hard, but sometimes he reflects on what he just said and whether it was correct. Occasionally, he has trouble with English expressions, but he has never tried to translate idioms literally. Interestingly, he thinks in English, except when he gets mad. Then he thinks or says profanities in Spanish. When asked whether people notice an accent in either language when he speaks, he replied yes, but only if they are monolingual in that language. He adds that he also has a distinctive urban accent from growing up in Richmond, CA.

During the interview, the question arose as to whether he ever felt at a disadvantage growing up with two languages. The interviewee thought about this and explained that, “it’s kind of a cultural thing; most people when they see me they would favor me,” meaning that they would favor him over monolinguals, but also over his bilingual friends. (Because of his mother’s Croatian descent, he looks completely Caucasian as opposed to many bilinguals who speak Spanish and English.) At the same time, he adds that his English is probably better than his friends,’ but still not as good as a monolingual’s. For example, he sometimes pauses a little too long before responding to people, and is not as fast to respond when arguing. He thinks that this has affected him academically. This delay in responding is one of his weaknesses, whereas his strength lies in interpreting and translating. He has translated songs and commercials for friends, and has become known in his circle of acquaintances for these abilities. (Interestingly,
he got a D on the interpreter exam in both English and Spanish. The reasons are unclear, but may be due in part to inadequate standardized testing.)

The interviewee stated that he has a preference for the Latin American culture, just as he has a slight preference for the Spanish language. He explained that, since most of his family influence (he clarifies: what I’ve known to be a family) has been in Spanish, he feels a stronger tie to this language and culture. His American family meets about once or twice a year, and he does not feel the same connection that he feels with his Spanish-speaking family. The way he describes family gatherings with his American side of the family, people meet, they make small talk, eat, and then go home. They don’t really care about a cousin’s baseball game the next day or the problems someone is experiencing. He makes an important distinction. Socially, he identifies with Argentine culture, but the liberal social part of him is definitely Californian, since he does not identify with the social conservatism of Argentina.

Although the volunteer has a preference for the Latin American culture, he does not consider himself more a part of this culture than of American culture. He says: “I’m not either or, Californian is what best describes me.” Growing up, he went through phases in which he studied Argentine culture and phases in which he studied American culture, but he is resolute, “I’m never going to be either or.” He adds that he always has something lingering in his head, some interest in another culture. Right now, for instance, he wants to be a Mexican cowboy. He is already saving to buy the hat and boots.

When someone asks him where he is from, he simply answers from California, but that his mother is from Argentina and his father American. However, he has not always felt at home in California. He hesitates before answering where he feels
most at home and explains that things have changed recently. “Argentina was it [his
home] most of the time, now I’m confused. If I’m with friends drinking mate under a
tree, I felt at home. For a long time the soccer field in Berkeley was my home. Croatia
could never be my home. I want to make Chico my home.”

After answering questions about language and culture, he also answers some
questions about identity. He confirmed, for example, that he has an identity tied to each
language. He uses a different voice when speaking Spanish versus speaking English. He
surmises that, it depends largely on the surroundings. For instance, when he travels, he
takes on yet another identity. When he switches languages, it is not his whole identity
that changes, but rather a part of it. “It depends on the people around me too,” he adds.
“At a table in a Latin house, they want to know everything about you. Here at the table,
they just want to know certain things and I can’t relate to that anymore.”

He describes his cultural identity as somewhat variable, depending on context.
In general, it is cosmopolitan, as he has been influenced by a lot of different places. In the
past, he has also identified with heavy metal and jazz culture.

Throughout his life, the interviewee has learned several other (second)
languages besides his two first languages, English and Spanish. He has learned these
languages in academic settings as well as by traveling to the countries where the
languages are spoken. His personal interest in languages and cultures has helped him to
develop conversational proficiency in Italian and Portuguese, but he admits that he still
needs more practice in Croatian, since he can only practice online when he talks to his
cousins in Croatia. Without hesitation, he proclaims his feelings towards languages and
cultures in general: “I love ’em, I love learning everything I can.”
At the end of the formal part of the interview, he was asked whether he had anything else to add. He thought for a while and revealed something that I have long sought to put in words. “One of the advantages I have gained is my ability to step aside and observe what is going on because your [the bilinguals’] train of thought is not one dimensional because you have to be able to see things from two perspectives, getting past the superficial-ness and getting to know the person for who they are. When I meet someone, I don’t judge them on certain traits if they are gay or straight; I look right past those things.” Reflecting on growing up bilingual, he sees it as more of an advantage than a disadvantage. It has given him the ability to show empathy and identity with people, even if he does not understand their language. He has learned to find other forms of communication.

Conclusion

This chapter presented data collected from the three interviewees who grew up with bilingualism as a first language. The first interviewee was a young woman; the other two interviewees were young men. The participants were between the ages of 22 and 33 at the time of the interviews. All three answered a questionnaire about language, culture identity, and language learning. The first participant answered the questionnaire in writing with only a brief follow up interview, while the other two participants answered the questions orally in a face-to-face interview. In Chapter V, the data from the questionnaires reported in this chapter are analyzed in light of findings from the literature reviewed in Chapter II. Similarities and differences between the research and findings from the case studies are further discussed in Chapter V.
CHAPTER V

RESULTS, DISCUSSION, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

Author’s Note

During the process of interviewing, I was reminded how different everyone’s experiences are, yet at the same time, how many similarities are present within this specific group of bilingual individuals. In spite of the differing experiences (for example, one interviewee grew up in Germany, another in South America and the United States, and a third spent time in various countries including Tanzania), certain views and feelings are similar across the board. Without having heard or read each other’s interviews, the answers to some questions were fairly close. I listened intently to their very unique life stories, so different from mine. At the same time, I recognized some of my own experiences and views in their responses.

This final chapter summarizes findings and draws conclusions based on the previous literature as well as the three case studies. It also provides recommendations for parents and educators of bilingual children and suggests future research on bilingualism as a first language and identity formation.
Literature Review: Findings and Discussion

The focus of this section is to discuss and summarize the research, and present results based on the previous literature as well as the case studies. The research questions posed in Chapter I are addressed in the following summary and conclusion.

1. What are the requirements to reach native bilingualism as a first language? And what are the factors inhibiting it?

As with any skill, individuals with bilingualism as a first language need exposure to each language and culture, an opportunity to practice each language, and the motivation to do so. Therefore, to attain native-like language ability in both of the first languages, individuals primarily require (1) input and output in the languages, and (2) motivation to further develop language ability and knowledge.

Exposure to a language provides the speaker with input. It is essential that bilingual individuals have sufficient exposure to both languages and variety in the input they receive. Aside from input, bilinguals require opportunities for output. They need opportunities to mimic and produce both languages in a culturally appropriately manner. The quality and quantity of input and output are key in developing bilingualism as a first language at a native-like level. The research mentioned previously posits that extended periods of time are required in both language cultures to successfully attain bilingualism as a first language. Kamada’s findings suggest that “[m]issionary wisdom has taught that furloughs of one year duration at five year intervals is sufficient for acquiring bilinguality and maintaining a hold on one’s native cultural identity” (1997, p. 57). Although this relates to families where both parents are of a different nationality than the country in which they are living and raising their children, it also has relevance for children growing...
up in one language culture and visiting the other parents’ language culture. In general, studies such as Kamada’s suggest that bilinguals who have spent time in both language cultures are more native-like in both languages. This can be attributed to the increased time and variety of input and output. While spending time in the language culture, an individual is constantly hearing and speaking the language. For example, the learner is exposed to a language’s nuances, based on geographic location or social class, as well as to a greater range of vocabulary, such as slang or nomenclature for native plants. Only by living in a country is a child completely immersed in the language and culture. Immersion leads to opportunities for input and output, which in turn, promote increased proficiency in the language.

In addition to the quantity and quality of input and output, there are numerous other factors influencing the outcome of native-like bilingualism as a first language. Some of the factors related to motivation include the individual’s language ability, reasons for learning the languages (internal or external motivation), perceived advantages in becoming a native-like bilingual, parents’ method and support for learning and maintaining the languages, and the dominant/local culture’s view of and value attributed to the other language and culture.

After years of research on language learning in general, it has become commonly accepted that some people are simply more talented in learning languages than others. Even within families, abilities and interest in languages can vary (see Kamada for example), possibly leading to siblings with different levels of bilingualism. It has also been shown that internal motivation tends to promote language learning better than external motivation. These two types of motivation are also closely tied to the perceived
advantages the individual hopes to attain, whether s/he wants to be able to understand his/her roots, communicate with family, or get a better job. Motivational factors are controlled by and largely dependent upon the individual.

Another group of factors are, for the most part, not under the control of the speaker. These include the parents’ role in language acquisition. Some researchers (e.g., Kamada) suggest that parents’ consistency in language use is essential for a child to be native-like in both first languages. Clearly, the parents’ role in their children’s language acquisition is not limited to being consistent in using language. Especially during childhood, parents’ attitudes towards each language and culture as well as their own bilingualism can have a significant influence on children’s bilingualism and biculturalism. On another level, the societal context and attitudes towards each language and culture as well as the value accorded bilingualism and biculturalism, affect the bilingual child. Children growing up in an environment in which their additional first language is not valued and even stigmatized, are much more likely to resist speaking this language. As a result, they may lack the practice needed to achieve native-like proficiency in the language. Children growing up in an environment where the other first language has higher standing or where bilingualism and biculturalism are highly valued are more likely to use the language and, therefore, more likely to reach a native-like language level. Kamada (1997) illustrates this situation with the example of a small child, who learns the advantage of speaking two languages early on because of the positive reinforcement in her surroundings.

Feeling like the ‘queen of her castle’ on her own turf at the church, whose many guests constantly shower her with praise for her ability to speak two languages and affection for her cuteness, Naomi has taken on the role of a self-assured little
hostess, expressing herself in whichever language suits the situation. (Kamada, 1997, p. 41)

2. **What are some successful models of bilingualism as a first language?**

The most common and researched models of bilingualism as a first language are the one-parent-one-language and one-place-one-language approaches (e.g., Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004). However, in practice, it is nearly impossible to strictly observe either of these approaches. More commonly, “[a] family with two languages may in time develop their own hotchpotch of the two languages” (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. 5). This does not have to be a disadvantage. Advantages as well as disadvantages have been identified for mixing languages. On the one hand, researchers like Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson argue that children allowed to mix languages will not work as hard to advance their language ability, since they can communicate what they want without having to search for the right word in the language. This may not be advantageous when individuals reach a point at which they have difficulty communicating with a monolingual in either language. Parents, therefore, ought to be prudent when mixing languages, since they are the primary role models for their children’s language use. “Of course, if parents mix their languages in this way in the children’s hearing, they should not be surprised if the children learn to do so too!” (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, p. 5). On the other hand, insisting on the complete separation of the two languages can limit communication and inhibit expression. Not permitting the mixing of languages may also complicate the integration of both cultures, during the child’s cultural identity formation.
3. What is the relationship between bilingualism as a first language and identity formation? Is the relationship linear in that one affects the other? How so?

Erling (2007) found that “contact with the language is being accompanied by a development in [the] students’ identities” (p. 128). Her study is just one of many studies that have shown a correlation between language and identity. According to the findings in this and other studies (e.g., Llamas & Watt, 2010; Niño-Murcia & Rothman, 2008), contact between two languages at the same time will most definitely affect and alter the individual’s identity as compared to a monolingual’s identity. The addition of a second language neither leads to first language loss nor to the loss of first language identity; “another layer of identity” is added on. Although Erling’s (2007) research focuses on sequential bilingualism and identity, some aspects are also applicable to bilingualism as a first language. Erling provides evidence that, “just as students do not seem to be losing their national language, they do not appear to be losing their sense of national identity. Rather, they are adding other layers of identity related to their affinities with other places and communities” (p. 128).

Similarly, individuals growing up with two languages and cultures add several layers of identity to create a cultural identity compatible with their affinities. Lanza and Svendson (2007) describe the creation of identity in slightly different terms. They argue that individuals have several layers of identity based on affinities, and several identities that are dependent on situation. “Multilinguals have multiple identities whereby ethnic identity as well as newer and other identities can find expression in a contact situation” (Lanza & Svendson, 2007, p. 295). Identities are more closely tied to a situation than to a language, because language and conversation partners (e.g. participants) are part of each situation.
4. What are the factors influencing cultural identity formation in individuals with bilingualism as a first language? What factors, circumstances, or traits lead these individuals to feel emotionally closer to one of the cultures or to a combination of the cultures?

Many factors influence cultural identity formation. They can be grouped into eight primary categories as shown in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Factors influencing cultural identity.

Each of the eight categories addresses a different element that influences cultural identity formation. For example, the first category, early experiences, is age related, and relevant because experiences during early childhood have an important and lasting
impact on future decisions and character traits. In his research, Obied (2009) found that siblings are a key factor in language as well as identity formation, as they “shape the language environment in bilingual families and affect the language balance in the home” (p. 14). Aside from the influence of siblings and parents, another key factor in children’s language development and cultural identity formation is their own personality and experiences. One of Kamada’s participants “attributes her ability to her early influence in being around many foreigners . . . and her diligence and enthusiasm to soak up American culture” (p. 23). In general, age has a significant influence on cultural identity formation. At an early age, internal motivation tends to be high. With the right support, language acquisition will occur playfully, laying the groundwork for successful language learning and bilingualism. However, children’s control of the external factors that influence cultural identity formation is very limited. Children normally have little say in the quality and quantity of input and output in each language. With increasing age, the bilingual individual has increasing influence on language exposure and use, especially within his/her social network.

The second category, social network, is important as the habits and opinions of people who are close to an individual also have an influence on the individual. The individual’s social network has an even greater impact on language choice than age or gender. Li Wei (1994) found that the composition of an individual’s social network, and especially the ethnic composition of a network, had a greater explanatory value for language choice than variables such as age and gender. (Lanza & Svendsen, 2007, p. 276)
Social network is directly related to exposure. Being part of a particular social network exposes the individual to the network’s language and culture, and increased exposure to the network’s language and culture provides an increased opportunity for input and output. Overall, researchers seem to agree that the language of the country in which the children grow up or spend most of their time (e.g., go to school) will most likely be predominant. A broad generalization can be made that the more time the children spend involved in a language and its culture, the stronger this language will be.

Since it is one of the most instantaneous markers tying an individual to a certain group, physical appearance affects cultural identity formation. It can greatly influence first impressions and, therefore, shape the individual’s interactions with his/her surroundings. When an individual becomes aware of expectations tied to physical appearance, such as belonging to a certain group, this affects his cultural identity formation is affected.

Social and historical context refers to how the languages and their related cultures are viewed socially and historically by others. This refers to the manner in which a bilingual views the culture. It refers to the culture’s perceived value, whether it is a desirable language and culture or one the individual associates with lower ‘status’. This may then lead to the desire to feel closer to the culture or to distance oneself. Especially in adulthood, it appears to be essential that individuals see the “minority language as intrinsically important” (Kamada, 1997, p. 28), and make a conscious effort to improve and/or maintain the language. The social and historical context also encompasses the attitude each parent displays toward the languages and support parents provide in both languages. An interesting, though not surprising, finding is that “[i]f the other parent does
not support the minority language it will be almost impossible to make it an active part of family life (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 1999, p. 3)” (as cited in Obied, 2009, p. 14).

The fifth category, spirituality and other social identities, has to do with the cultures’ compatibility with the bilingual’s other identities. For example, the individual has a strong religious identity and identifies as being Catholic, it may prove difficult for him/her to embrace a culture that is not compatible with Catholic beliefs. Social identities also encompass gender. Along with age, gender plays a fundamental role in cultural identity formation, beginning with the parents. As Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson point out, “Men and women use language differently,” therefore “[i]f the mother and father speak different languages, they have no opportunity to balance each other’s input to the children” (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004, pp. 55-56).

As a result, studies suggest that children speak the mother’s language with a more feminine component, which may sound ‘sissified’ when used by boys. The father’s language, on the other hand, will be spoken with a more masculine tone, which may come across as ‘tomboyish’ in girls.

Language ability also has an effect on cultural identity formation. Limited language ability will undoubtedly make identification with the culture less probable, simply because the individual will not have the same feelings for and memories tied to the words, and may not be able to properly express ideas and feelings in the language.

Cultural attachment may seem superordinate and redundant, yet it can vary independent of factors such as language ability, social network, and social or historical context. This is the case, for example, when changes in the life of the bilingual occur. For
instance, a bilingual who has spent a significant amount of time in a third culture, may in fact become more culturally attached to this third culture. The third culture’s views may further complicate the individual’s cultural identity formation.

Other influences on cultural identity formation may vary from individual to individual. While the first seven categories encompass nearly all individuals with bilingualism as a first language, the eighth acknowledges individual variations. Furthermore, research on the influences of identity formation is not comprehensive. Hence, this final category allows for some yet unidentified influences.

The eight categories influencing cultural identity formation identified above can be used to explain and analyze most events and situations in a bilingual’s life. As the history of the whole person is analyzed, details pertaining to language are recorded and attributed to one or more of the eight categories. As an example, the country individuals live in might affect (1) early experience, (2) social network, (5) spirituality and other social identities, (6) language ability, and (7) cultural attachment.

There are other ways to categorize individual factors influencing cultural identity formation. One possibility is to examine external influences and internal influences. For instance, early experience, social network, social and historical context, and physical appearance would fall into the category of external factors. Cultural attachment, spirituality and other social identities, and language ability would be considered internal factors. More specifically, this means that the language used in the home and at school, the language preferences of family and friends, the political views about each country, and the status of each country could all be categorized as external factors. Factors influencing cultural identity formation internally might include the closeness to each
parent, the perceived advantages and disadvantages of each language, identification with each culture, and language ability. The weight of each factor can vary from person to person, according to age, gender, and exposure.

In order to attain native bilingualism, input and output as well as motivation are required. The factors influencing cultural identity formation overlap with those influencing achievement in both languages. As with other skills, high achievement in a language is consistently tied to increasing internal motivation to use and improve that language. However, the lack of success in a language may lead to decreased output, fossilization or even refusal to speak the language and eventual loss of the language.

Summing up, Kamada and others have suggested several factors that influence cultural identity formation. Some predominant factors include: time spent in both language countries, minority language input in the form of books, videos, etc., which parent is the NNL speaker, as well as the parents’ (and later the children’s) goal for bilingualism.

5. How do these individuals commonly form their cultural identity? Do they seem to prefer a mixed-culture identity? If so, what leads to this outcome as opposed to the preference of one culture over another? How does the cultural identity reflect the ties to each language and culture?

The dichotomy of one identity versus several identities is a common way of distinguishing a bilinguals’ process of cultural identity formation. One identity refers to an identity created out of the mix of the two cultures, while several identities encompass at least two separate identities, one for each language. The problem with this simplistic view of one identity versus several identities is that “Neither our identities nor our
language are static [. . .]. Both are constantly shifting and being re-negotiated in response to the ever-changing contexts of our interactions” (Llamas & Watt, 2010, p. 1). This means that at any given time, in any given circumstance or environment, an individual could display a predominantly mixed identity, while the same individual in a different circumstance could display various identities.

Llamas and Watt (2010) further observe that identity has several subordinate specifications. These include individual identity, social identity and cultural identity, which manifest themselves in physical characteristics, speech patterns, or dress and behavior. By changing or highlighting different factors, an individual can signal membership in certain social groups. Cultural inclusion is rooted in our identities as social beings. “We can be members of a potentially infinite number of intersecting social groups, be they local . . . or global . . ., whose membership is reflected in our shared linguistic behaviour” as well as our shared cultural behavior (Llamas & Watt, 2010, p. 1). The cultures of these “potentially infinite number” of social groups influence the individual cultural identities of group members.

The fact that identity is dynamic makes it difficult to define an individual’s cultural identity as well as its formation. In general, identity is 1) formed internally and externally, and 2) only partially subject to shifting, as it always has components anchored in the individual’s values and beliefs.

Based on the findings, it can be argued that the majority of native bilinguals have a mixed-culture identity, although one culture will likely be stronger than the other. Cultural identity reflects the ties an individual has to each of his/her languages and cultures, especially the culture the individual spends more time in.
More relevant than language development in children growing up bilingually are feelings of ‘rootedness’ or ‘home country’ and culture, if such attachments exist. How does the native bilingual’s cultural identity reflect the ties to each language and culture? The findings indicate that a majority of children who have grown up with two languages and cultures are more ‘native’ (according to monolingual standards) in the language that predominates throughout their life. The ties to one language and culture are often stronger than the other, and these are reflected in the individual’s cultural identity, e.g., through underlying beliefs and values aligned with the predominant culture.

6. How do the experiences of native bilinguals shape/affect their contact with third/additional languages and cultures?

Native bilinguals’ contact with third or additional languages and cultures is shaped and affected by experiences growing up with two languages and cultures. With exposure to more than one language and culture since birth, native bilinguals often display empathy, curiosity, and acceptance of people from other languages and cultures. At the same time, biases or preconceptions that are an integral part of one of their cultures may be passed on to children, resulting in an unwarranted dislike towards certain people.

Parents in an intercultural marriage are more likely to be open to other languages and cultures. They have often traveled (at least between the two countries) and been immersed in cultures foreign to them. In each foreign country and culture, they have encountered different views, habits, beliefs, etc., as well as people who may be physically different from themselves. In general, extended travel or time spent living abroad is believed to further acceptance of difference and empathy for others. These experiences
are passed on to children through opportunities to travel and live abroad while growing up.

Case Study: Findings and Discussion

After analyzing the interviews, it became apparent that some of the responses to questions were similar, while others diverged. In this section, I examine similarities and differences in responses from the three interviewees. I also compare and contrast the interviewees’ responses with previous research.

Similarities and Differences Between Interviewees

The interview questions were divided into three main sections: language, culture, and language learning. This discussion examines similarities and differences in responses for each section.

The language section reveals a general awareness of grammar and reflections on the use of language. In some cases, this process happens subconsciously and, in certain situations, more actively than in others. In the interviews, it became apparent that participants are able to speak the language without having to think. However, they have a tendency to review what they say and how they say it, and to analyze grammatical correctness and cultural appropriateness. This does not suggest that the individuals are less ‘native’ or fluent. To the contrary, the fact that they do not think about grammar or translate before speaking clearly indicates that the language is spoken fluently. The ability to speak a language fluently without having to translate thoughts or think about sentence structure is characteristic of a native speaker. One of the interviewees referred to this ability as having “the ear.” Although it is not a scientific expression, “the ear”
effectively describes the ability to determine whether something sounds right without knowing why (having a grammatical explanation). It remains a question as to whether “the ear” is equally strong and accurate in both of a native bilingual’s languages.

Differences in Culture

One of the salient ideas that emerged was an awareness of the positives and negatives for each culture. Although two of the three interviewees had a slight preference for one culture, none saw a culture as all good or all bad. Another commonality was that all three participants stated that they felt different than monolinguals within each country. They often claimed to feel ‘different’ in both cultures. Their non-local culture always stands out. This may also explain why they all agree that they will never consider themselves as part of only one culture.

Even though each interviewee describes his/her cultural identity slightly differently, they all state that something about their identity changes, depending on the circumstances. While interviewee 3 sees a fairly clear distinction between identities tied to English and Spanish, interviewee 1 maintains that her identity changes only slightly due to possibilities for language use. At the very least, the interviewees agree that identity changes, because each language and culture demands a different way of speaking.

The interviewees demonstrated differences in identifying with a home country, depending on the amount of time spent living in a country. Those who spent most of their lives in one country, like interviewee number 1, develop strong roots. If they have lived in both countries or moved often, they display a weaker sense of home country and rootedness. Interviewees 2 and 3 have lived in various places throughout their lives and are not as tied to the concept of ‘home’. They feel at home in different
places. The feeling of ‘home’ is tied to factors other than a particular country, as, for example, family or friends.

**Language Learning**

All interviewees demonstrate a generally positive view of native bilingualism and biculturalism. However, the pool of interviewees is very limited and not random. Therefore, the interviewees may not provide an accurate sample of individuals who have grown up with bilingualism as a first language. Apart from their views on native bilingualism, the participants also report high interest in additional languages and cultures. They all love to travel, hope to acquire more languages, and learn about additional cultures. The general feeling of curiosity and openness towards different languages and cultures permeated the interviews. The small size of the pool of participants who share similar social networks and academic levels make further research essential.

An important difference between the interviewees is their educational and economic background. One interviewee has two university-educated parents, one has one university-educated parent, and one does not have university-educated parents. This seems to have very limited impact in the areas of language and culture addressed in this thesis. The question remains as to whether this is due to the interviewees’ own university education, or whether educational and economic background does not have as great an impact on this group.

**Comparing Case Studies to Previous Research**

Interviews confirmed or challenged previous research, and defined areas that require further research. The interviews confirmed research findings that time spent in
both language cultures increases language ability and cultural nativeness in each of the languages. The interviews also confirmed that the more time the individual is exposed to a language, the more proficient s/he becomes, and the more likely the individual is to identify with the culture. The interviews revealed that other factors play an important role in cultural identity formation. For example, being closer to the parent with language A might cause the child to feel closer to this language and culture. This also aligns with the eight categories identified, particularly early experiences and social network. The participants’ responses confirmed the ever-changing nature of identity, as they reported variations due to people and surroundings. The case studies also revealed that many native bilinguals demonstrate a desire to keep working on the weaker language as well as reluctance to be considered of only one culture (discussed in more detail in Kamada’s studies below).

Findings that were not explicitly discussed in the previous research, but very evident in this study were the interviewees’ preference for a language learning style that consists of immersion in the language and culture as opposed to learning in a classroom setting. Research on the language learning strategies of native bilinguals is embedded in the studies on second language acquisition, but not prevalent in research on identity formation.

**Recommendations for Individuals, Parents, and Educators**

This section focuses on recommendations that can be drawn from research on native bilingualism. First, it is essential to treat each bilingual as an individual. For research purposes, bilinguals are often treated as a group. However, parents and
educators should not forget that this research yields general findings that will apply more or less to most bilinguals. Individuals confront different situations and react differently to the challenges they face. In her study of four adopted siblings, Kamada (1997) found, for example, that children do not react the same to being ‘different’. “Except for Bethany, who doesn’t want to be seen as being different, the other three children enjoy their status and take great pride in being constantly praised for their ability to speak two languages” (p. 41). These findings underline the fact that each child is different, and that individuals react differently to growing up bilingual. Therefore, it is imperative that each person be treated as a unique individual. It follows that difficulties need to be treated in a manner appropriate to the individual.

Children growing up bilingually and biculturally face a lifelong process of learning to navigate both languages and cultures. One of the mothers interviewed by Kamada (1997) sums it up nicely:

The important thing . . . is not to give up and not to be satisfied with staying at the same level. Basic to the process . . . [of] growing up and learning languages and about one’s world involves also developing as a person and understanding other people and the differences between them. (p. 42)

On the one hand, it is clear that these bilinguals are fortunate to develop more than one language, culture, and worldview. On the other hand, they face challenges in harmonizing their languages, cultures, and worldviews, and finding a place for themselves within modern societies.

Suggestions for Further Research

This thesis offers a glimpse into native bilingualism, synthesizes existing research, and identifies areas for further research. Expanding upon this study would
require interviews with parents and a greater number of case studies. Perhaps language and/or culture specific case studies (i.e., including only individuals growing up with Spanish and English) should be conducted. Groups may be divided according to outside factors, such as individuals who grew up in a country where the other language is recognized and valued as compared to a country where it is a lower status language. It would be interesting to investigate the influence that outside factors have on individuals’ becoming bilingual and multilingual.

There is also a need to clarify some of the categories and terms used in talking about bilingualism. For instance, what is the difference between a balanced bilingual and one who is a native speaker of two languages? Is there such a thing as a balanced bilingual or a balanced native bilingual? At what point can someone be considered a native bilingual? Is an individual bilingual when he or she grows up with two completely different dialects that have their own cultures?

In the area of identity formation in native bilinguals, many questions remain. It would be interesting to investigate whether bilinguals who are more native-like in both languages and cultures feel a greater personality change when switching between languages/cultures or whether they tend to incorporate both into their personality, regardless of the language they are currently using. In regards to identity changes tied to language use, is there a significant difference between balanced, native bilinguals and those who are more native in one language/culture than the other?

In research on bilingualism and cultural identity, further studies need to be done on language crossing, using more than one language to communicate mainly as a means of showing identification with a certain group, and language mixing, mainly
referring to children or language learners who use more than one language to communicate because they do not know a word in the other language. For example, what factors influence the use and frequency of language crossing and/or mixing in native bilinguals? Is there a notable difference between native bilinguals and other types of bilinguals (e.g., immigrants)? Are language crossing and language mixing more closely tied to language ability or to cultural identification? How does language crossing and/or mixing in certain subcultures serve as a means of showing affiliation?

With increasing contact and mobility between cultures and the increasing number of different types of bilinguals, research on language fossilization and loss, and the effects this has on identity is essential. Another question that should be asked is: How much does a language used during childhood but subsequently lost impact cultural identity?

Native bilingualism and identity in academic settings also needs to be examined in greater detail. Bilingual children often display problems in academic settings, and this has attracted the attention of researchers, educators, and parents alike. Learning activities and testing are in need of restructuring in order to provide an environment that effectively uses and builds on bilinguals’ abilities. Future research can provide new frameworks conducive to bilinguals’ learning in academic settings. In general, the increasing number of bilinguals has led to an increasing number of studies dealing with “issues of identity construction for these learners and the impact of this on their learning” (Rich & Davis, 2007, p. 35). This area was beyond the purview of this study, as it deals mainly with learning difficulties and only secondarily with cultural identity formation.
Finally, the manner in which the interviews were conducted must be considered. Due to time constraints, time differences, and scheduling problems, one of the interviews was conducted in writing with only limited follow up. The other two were conducted in person. This may have affected some of the answers given by the participants. Answering questions orally may have allowed for greater depth of expression and the freedom to expand on information based on the course of the conversation.

After researching the connection between bilingualism as a first language and cultural identity formation, it can be said that language and identity affect each other. In most native bilinguals, languages affect cultural identity. In turn, cultural identity affects the languages. Both are influenced by the individuals’ surroundings and situations. This has implications, as bilinguals may either move towards continued native bilingualism or towards the weakening of one language and culture. In other words, good experiences and positive reinforcement tend to strengthen languages and make it easier for bilinguals to form a cultural identity that is all encompassing.

Whether considered an advantage, a disadvantage or both, children growing up with two languages are presented with the possibility of learning to view their surroundings through two lenses. They are offered admission into two worlds. As bilinguals themselves stated so eloquently: “Knowing two languages gives us two worlds” (interview quote in Kamada, 1997, p. 46).
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A
Interview Questions

Warm-up questions

(Note gender)
1. How old are you?
2. Where were you born?
3. Where are your parents from?

Questions about language

4. What is/are your first language(s)?
5. At what age did you learn your second language? Third? Fourth?
6. What is your mother’s native language? Is this the language she uses to communicate with you?
7. What is your father’s native language? Is this the language he uses to communicate with you?
8. Which parent did you spend more time with? Which parent were you closer to?
9. What language do your parents speak between each other? (Do they both speak their partner’s language?)
10. What language is dominant in your home? When? Why?
11. Do you have any siblings? If so, what language do you use to communicate with them? (If the language depends on topic, surroundings or other factors ask interviewee to expand)
12. Which is your preferred language? Why?
13. What are your strengths in both/all of your languages?
15. Have you ever resisted speaking either language? Describe.
16. How many years of schooling have you had in language 1/language 2/language 3…?)
17. Do people notice an accent in either language when you speak?
18. Do you ever have to think about grammar when you are speaking or writing?
19. Do you ever have problems with idioms? Do you sometimes use expressions from another language and translate them literally?
20. What language(s) do you think in?
21. Have you ever felt as though you were at a disadvantage growing up with two languages? (Struggles with language in school, etc.?)
22. What language areas are you native (or near native)/proficient in? (E.g. idioms, house and family vocabulary, school vocabulary, etc.) Explain.

Questions about culture

23. Do you have a preference for either culture? Explain.
24. Where do you feel most at home?
25. Do you consider yourself more a part of culture 1 or culture 2? Explain.
26. Did you ever go through a period when you wanted to be more a part of culture 1/culture 2? When and why?
27. When someone asks you where you are from, what do you answer?
28. Have you lived in both language cultures? Explain.
29. Would you say that one of the cultures dominated when you were growing up? If so, which one and why? If not, explain?
30. Do you feel you have an identity tied to each language? Explain.
31. Do you feel your identity changes when you switch languages? If so, describe how.
32. How would you describe your personal, cultural identity?

General language learning questions

33. Have you learned any other languages besides the two you grew up with? Explain.
34. How did you learn these languages? In school? By living abroad?
35. What are the language learning strategies that you use?
36. Tell me how you feel about different languages and cultures in general?
37. Is there anything else you would like to add?
Questions about language

What is your first language(s)?

*German and Spanish at the same time.*

At what age did you learn your second language? Third? Fourth?

*English with 10, French with 13.*

What is your mother’s native language? Is this the language she uses to communicate with you?

*My mother’s native language is German. I only talk to her in German.*

What is your father’s native language? Is this the language he uses to communicate with you?

*My father’s native language is Spanish. I only communicate with him in Spanish.*

Which parent did you spend more time with? Were you closer to?

*I think I spent more time in my life with my mother.*

What language do your parents speak between each other? (Do they both speak their partner’s language?)

*My parents speak with each other in Spanish.*

What language is dominant in your home? When? Why?

*Both languages are dominant in my home, because when I talk to my mum I communicate with her in German and when I talk to my father, I speak with him in Spanish.*

Do you have any siblings? If so, what language do you use to communicate with them? (If the language depends on topic, surroundings or other factors ask interviewee to expand)

*No, I haven’t any siblings.*

Which is your preferred language? Why?
My preferred language is German because my vocabulary is better and it’s easier for me to explain things.

What are your strengths in both/all of your languages?

Do you remember learning either language? Explain.

Have you ever resisted speaking either language? Describe.

Yes, when I was a little child, I didn’t want to speak Spanish. But I can’t remember when and why.

How many years of schooling have you had in language 1/language 2/language 3…?

Eight years in English, six years in French, four years in Spanish.

Do people notice an accent in either language when you speak?

Yes, people notice a German accent when I’m speaking Spanish.

Do you ever have to think about grammar when you are speaking or writing?

Of course, I have think about grammar in all languages when I’m speaking or writing.

Do you ever have problems with idioms? Do you sometimes use expressions from another language and translate them literally?

Yes, I often translate literally from German to other languages.

What language(s) do you think in?

I’m not sure, but I would answer that it’s German.

Have you ever felt as though you were at a disadvantage growing up with two languages?

(Stuggles with language in school, etc.?)

No, in my opinion it’s a advantage growing up with two languages.

What language areas are you native (or near native)/proficient in (e.g. idioms, house and family vocabulary, school vocabulary, etc.)? Explain.

House and family vocabulary, school vocabulary

Questions about culture

Do you have a preference for either culture? Explain.

No, both cultures have their bad and good things.

Where do you feel most at home?

Of course, I feel at home in Germany.
Do you consider yourself more a part of culture 1 or culture 2? Explain.

*I consider myself more a part of the Peruvian culture when I’m in Germany, and I consider myself more a part of the German culture when I’m in Peru. When I travel to other countries except Peru and Germany, I would say that I consider myself as a German.*

Did you ever go through a period when you wanted to be more part of culture 1/culture 2? When and why?

*Yes. But I wouldn’t say that I want to be more part of the Peruvian culture, I just would like to get to know better the Peruvian culture.*

When someone asks you where you are from what do you answer?

*When people ask me where I’m from, I answer: “I’m from Germany, but I’m also Peruvian.”*

Have you lived in both language cultures? Explain.

*No, until now I just lived in Germany, but I’m looking forward to live for some months in Peru next year to study abroad.*

Would you say that one of the cultures dominated when you were growing up? If so, which one and why? If not, explain?

*Of course, the German culture dominated when I grew up because I went to a German kindergarten, to a German school, I had German friends etc.*

Do you feel you have an identity tied to each language? Explain.

*No.*

Do you feel your identity changes when you switch languages? If so, describe how.

*Maybe a bit, but the only reason is that my Spanish vocabulary isn’t as good as my German, so I can’t express myself good in some situations and say the things I would like to say.*

How would you describe your personal, cultural identity?

*I would describe myself as a person who grew up bilingual and who grew up with two cultures, which, I think, makes me in some part a bit special compared to other people and my friends. And someday I would like that my kids will grow up with two (or maybe more) languages and cultures like me.*
General language learning questions

Have you learned any other languages besides the two you grew up with? Explain.

I learned English and French.

How did you learn these languages? In school? By living abroad?

I learned English and French in school and by travelling to English-spoken (direct quote) and French-spoken countries.

What are the language learning strategies that you use?

I think the best strategy to learn a language is speaking with native speakers.

Tell me how you feel about different languages and cultures in general?

I’m very interested in other cultures and languages. I think the reason why I’m interested in other cultures is because I’m also a person who grew up with two cultures and languages. Another reason is because I love to travel and meet new people and I think there are so many things in the world to discover and to learn.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

No.
Questions about language

What is your first language(s)?

*English and German (it’s complicated)*

At what age did you learn your second language? Third? Fourth?

*German and English since birth, Swahili since 6*

What is your mother’s native language? Is this the language she uses to communicate with you?

*Mother always spoke German; is now a little more loose in using English. Depends on surroundings, people, situations*

What is your father’s native language? Is this the language he uses to communicate with you?

*Always speaks English with exception of two years in Africa when he used some Swahili. Picked it up quickly, then lost it. Picked up more formally afterward. Some formal classes around 15, summer plus semester as junior in college 20*

Which parent did you spend more time with? Were you closer to? Mom

What language do your parents speak between each other? (Do they both speak their partner’s language?)

*Most of the time English but dad knows German*

What language is dominant in your home? When? Why? When friends were over, when family was together, only with mother dominantly German, in Germany, (2-3 months in Germany a year).

*Kindergarten in Germany, first and second grade homeschooled in Africa both Engl. Germ, 4-6 German school, 12 Swiss school, 10 international school (Swahili, German, and main: English)*

Do you have any siblings? Is so, what language do you use to communicate with them? (If the language depends on topic, surroundings or other factors, ask interviewee to expand). Sister resistant to learning or speaking German, since she spent time in Germany its become good “secret language”, most of the time speak in English
Which is your preferred language? Why?

In writing, English, otherwise no preference. Sometimes just think of a word that fits better in other language. Kiswadenglish, mixing all languages, whatever comes to mind first. Parents did not discourage mixing languages – about understanding one another.

What are your strengths in both/all of your languages?

Better writing in English, technical German reading got better recently, can translate German to English but not yet English to German.

Do you remember learning either language? Explain.

Remembers learning to read and write. Much more difficulty level in German school, writing essays and cursive in German while writing the cat jumped over the box in English.

Have you ever resisted speaking either language? Describe.

I don’t remember any time. Resisted on the schooling. WHY DO PEOPLE RESIST, PARENTS?

How many years of schooling have you had in language 1/language 2/language 3…)?

German kindergarten, 4 years before college, two semesters in college, rest primary English.

Do people notice an accent in either language when you speak?

Sometimes in German, but they can’t place it.

Do you ever have to think about grammar when you are speaking or writing?

When I’m writing in both languages (still rare), not actively.

Do you ever have problems with idioms? Do you sometimes use expressions from another language and translate them literally?

Some idioms in German I’ve never heard, sometimes translate literally.

What language(s) do you think in?

English and German, if I’m trying to concentrate in a loud area, I try to switch to the language that is not being used. Depends on the surroundings, in Germany – German, predominant language.

Have you ever felt as though you were at a disadvantage growing up with two languages? (Struggles with language in school, etc?)
No
What language areas are you native (or near native)/proficient in? (e.g. idioms, house and family vocabulary, school vocabulary, etc.)? Explain.

Fairly close in both languages. More formal academic exposure in English. But German is not that far. Try to read a lot in German, working on it.

Questions about culture
Do you have a preference for either culture? Explain.

I consider myself international, don’t identify with being German or American, moved a lot to different countries
Where do you feel most at home?
Wherever I am, I am at home
Do you consider yourself more a part of culture 1 or culture 2? Explain.

I don’t consider myself particularly American or particularly German or anything else, International, - cosmopolitan?
Did you ever go through a period when you wanted to be more part of culture 1/culture 2? When and why?

Not really. I adapt really quickly. I take what I like and discard what I don’t like, and craft my own personality. It’s a balancing act, knowing what you can say in one place and not in another. It doesn’t bother me. It bothered me once. In sixth grade a guy kept calling me a German Nazi. I’ve never not identified myself as German or American.
When someone asks you where you are from what do you answer?
“It’s complicated”
Have you lived in both language cultures? Explain.
Would you say that one of the cultures dominated when you were growing up? If so, which one and why? If not, explain?

More international, “no flecken” trinkets from Africa, Philippines, Thailand – culturally cobbled together environment. Family has all traveled extensively
Do you feel you have an identity tied to each language? Explain.
A lot quieter when speaking German, in Germany stand closer to people, in America give hugs in Germany shake hands

Do you feel your identity changes when you switch languages? If so, describe how.

Not noticeably, maybe volume

How would you describe your personal, cultural identity?

Don’t identify with a specific culture at all, or I try to avoid it. When people say you’re an American, I say no I’m not

**General language learning questions**

Have you learned any other languages besides the two you grew up with? Explain.

**Swahili, Swiss German**

How did you learn these languages? In school? By living abroad?

Swiss German out of necessity, was there for a year, Swahili one year in 10th grade and one semester in college

What are the language learning strategies that you use?

More acquiring the language from being in the surroundings

Tell me how you feel about different languages and cultures in general?

In enjoy them. My college years I traveled quite a bit.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

In Africa in the international community he would initiate speaking German while before when living in the US he would only answer in English
Interviewee #3

Warm-up questions
(Note gender)
How old are you?
33
Where were you born?
*In California*
Where are your parents from?
*Mom from Argentina came to US at 24; family migrated to Argentina in 1930s from Croatia, still has accent when speaking English, Spanish always been first language*  dad Californian

Questions about language
What is your first language(s)? Spanish and English (Spanish was first language for first year and three months/toddler.  
*After a year came to US and spent every other weekend with father. TV and cartoons helped with English as well. When started preschool was bilingual.  
At what age did you learn your second language? Third? Fourth?  
Studied Croatian on his own after college, Portuguese in College three semesters still looks at newspapers in Portuguese and chats with Portuguese friends in ‘portugnol’ (mix between Portuguese and Spanish), and Italian in High School  
What is your mother’s native language? Is this the language she uses to communicate with you?  
Ninety percent of time spoke Spanish to him (ordering coffee and talking to sales person – turn around and ask “what kind of coffee do you want”?)*  
What is your father’s native language? Is this the language he uses to communicate with you?  
*English*  
Which parent did you spend more time with? Were you closer to?
Spent more time with his mom, mom had two or three jobs, so spent a lot of time with central and South American families, spoke English to their kids

What language do your parents speak between each other? (Do they both speak their partner’s language?)

English didn’t influence him since parents did not live together

What language is dominant in your home? When? Why?

Spanish

Do you have any siblings? Is so, what language do you use to communicate with them? (If the language depends on topic, surroundings or other factors, ask interviewee to expand)

No

Which is your preferred language? Why?

Prefers Spanish, not for language reasons, but for cultural affinity

What are your strengths in both/all of your languages?

Got D in interpreter exam for both languages. Vocabulary in English is not that good, feels that he can express himself better in Spanish, say better what he wants to say

Do you remember learning either language? Explain.

Yes, got the “ear” for Spanish from mother, but had to learn grammar at about 15-16 on his own. Not only passion of language, but also passion of understanding differences

Have you ever resisted speaking either language? Describe.

No

How many years of schooling have you had in language 1/language 2/language 3…?

Spanish - three years in High School, two semesters in College

Do people notice an accent in either language when you speak?

Yes, but only if they are monolingual in either language, “also I’m from the Ghetto” have a slight urban accent

Do you ever have to think about grammar when you are speaking or writing?

All the time, in both languages, not too hard, but sometimes reflects on what he just said whether it was right or not
Do you ever have problems with idioms? Do you sometimes use expressions from another language and translate them literally?

Does not translate idioms literally, pauses a little too long before responding to people and he thinks it has affected him in his academics, also anxiety that he will say something wrong, profanity more in Spanish. Has problems with some English expressions

What language(s) do you think in?

Think in English more

Have you ever felt as though you were at a disadvantage growing up with two languages? (Struggles with language in school, etc.?)

It's kind of a cultural thing. Most people, when they see me, they would favor me, give an advantage, but bilingual friends weren't treated the same way – racism because I'm white, my level of English is maybe better than that of my friends, but not that good

What language areas are you native (or near native)/proficient in (e.g. idioms, house and family vocabulary, school vocabulary, etc.)? Explain.

Not as fast to respond when arguing, for example, very good in social sciences, great interpreter translated songs and commercials

Does not feel comfortable, does not identify with med-high/high social class.

“I'm not comfortable in certain households, and I feel the other teachers are from those households.”

Questions about culture

Do you have a preference for either culture? Explain.

Latin American culture. More family influence in Spanish, or what I've known to be a family. American family see each other once or twice

Where do you feel most at home?

Things changed recently. Argentina was it most of the time, now I'm confused. If I'm with friends drinking mate under a tree, I felt at home. For a long time, the soccer field in Berkeley was my home. Croatia could never be my home. I want to make Chico my home.

Do you consider yourself more a part of culture 1 or culture 2? Explain.
I don’t consider myself – I put the question back as far as I can; I’m not either/or, Californian is what best describes me

Did you ever go through a period when you wanted to be more a part of culture 1/culture 2? When and why?

I’m always lingering something in my head. Right now I want to be a Mexican cowboy. Studied Argentine and American culture for an extended period of time. I’m never going to be either/or.

When someone asks you where you are from, what do you answer?

I’m from CA just my parents are this and that.

Have you lived in both language cultures? Explain.

Yes

Would you say that one of the cultures dominated when you were growing up? If so, which one and why? If not, explain?

Yes, socially identify with Argentine culture, but liberal social part of me is definitely CA. [Does not identify with the social conservative aspect of Argentine culture] “I’m very critical of pop culture, and some modern ways of viewing the world. I may be considered close-minded in those aspects.”

Do you feel you have an identity tied to each language? Explain.

Yes, use different voice, when I travel, I take on a different identity. Depends on surroundings.

Do you feel your identity changes when you switch languages? If so, describe how.

Something changes not the whole identity but something changes. Depends on the people around me too. At a table in a Latin house they want to know everything about you; here at the table, they just want to know certain things and I can’t relate to that anymore.

How would you describe your personal, cultural identity?

Depend on context, cosmopolitan, have identified with heavy metal culture and jazz culture; influences from a lot of places
General language learning questions

Have you learned any other languages besides the two you grew up with? Explain.

Has family in Italy and Brazil and Croatia and has interest in the languages. Italian and Portuguese are easy for me. In High School mother had Italian friends and familiarity of Italian and Argentine culture. (Had problems with Serbians because of war with Croatia.)

How did you learn these languages? In school? By living abroad?

What are the language learning strategies that you use?

Italian and Portuguese was easy for me to remember because of similarity to Spanish, study some grammar /conjugation, a mix. Learn whatever the people around me were using.

Tell me how you feel about different languages and cultures in general?

I love them. I love learning everything I can.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

One of the advantages I have gained is my ability to step aside and observe what is going on because your train of thought is not one-dimensional because you have to be able to see things from two perspectives. Getting past the superficial-ness and getting to know the person for who they are. When I meet someone, I don’t judge them on certain traits, if they are gay or straight I look right past those things. If he doesn’t understand someone’s language, he can still show empathy and identify with the person. Got accustomed to other forms of communication.