Third Grade Emergent Bilinguals' Voices and Experiences Learning English
Literacies in School: A Post-Intentional Phenomenological Exploration

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Dedication

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Abstract

This study explored the lived experiences of three third grade emergent bilinguals learning English literacies such as speaking, reading, and writing in school using a post-intentional phenomenological approach (Vagle, 2014). Learning what is unfamiliar, especially academics can be challenging for emergent bilinguals. Young elementary children are influenced by a variety of factors in school and their experiences in elementary classrooms help shape who they are and how they learn daily and in the future. In turn, teachers do not always recognize the knowledge and language skills of linguistically diverse students (Zwiers, 2013). Non-native English speakers face many difficulties in mainstream classrooms such as navigating literacies in a new language academically and socially.

This phenomenological research study uses theories from González, Moll, & Amanti (2013), Alison Cook-Sather (2002, 2006), and Max van Manen (1982, 2014) who highlight key ideas such as funds of knowledge, student voice, and phenomenology. These theories guided and supported the findings from the study of the phenomenon of learning literacies of reading, speaking, and writing in school with third grade emergent bilinguals. Through the use of students' own voices, this study investigated: 1) How might literacies of reading, writing, and speaking English take shape for third grade emergent bilinguals in school? And 2) How might emergent bilinguals' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge be used at school? Data were collected through classroom visits, observations, and

conversations with participants were guided using the five-component process from Vagle's (2014) post-intentional phenomenological research design. The data were analyzed using the whole-parts-whole phenomenological approach (Vagle, 2014). The findings represent three tentative manifestations: *challenge, interaction,* and *native language.* The tentative manifestation *challenge* relates to the idea of a task being difficult, in which people are pushed to use skills to their full potential. The second tentative manifestation *interaction* refers to the sense of being, communicating, and collaborating with another person. The third tentative manifestation *native language* refers to the participants knowing and using their native language throughout engagement with learning literacies in school. Commonalities between participants were revealed through the tentative manifestations. The findings support the need to allow emergent bilinguals' voices, cultures, and linguistic backgrounds to be present in their classrooms for maximum learning success.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Amina, an emergent bilingual, knew very little English when she started third grade. Her classmates and mainstream teacher perceived Amina as different, which was apparent because of the interactions she had with them. Amina was often given a worksheet in English and worked with the educational assistant one-on-one in the back of the classroom rather than with the rest of her classmates and mainstream teacher. Her culture, language, and personality were being ignored in the learning environment. Throughout the year, Amina did acquire more English through writing, but still lacked the social, academic, and oral communication skills to navigate among her peers and teachers.

I was able to observe in Amina's classroom over the course of one school year. I wondered how and what Amina felt going through the process of learning English in the classroom; what was the experience of learning literacies for her in this new language? These questions inspired my interest to study third grade emergent bilinguals[1] and their experiences with literacies in English within a school context. I define and use literacies as an academic and social practice in which people use reading, writing in concepts of knowledge, identity, and being in various contexts (Street, 2003). I often witness emergent bilinguals being pushed aside in classrooms and wonder about their lived experiences learning English, specifically as third grade emergent bilinguals in school. In this dissertation, I used a phenomenological approach to explore how third grade

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[1] Emergent bilinguals are students who are learning English, another language other than their native tongue in schools (García, Kleifgen & Falchi, 2008).

emergent bilinguals' encounter literacies such as reading, writing, and speaking in a second language that may shape their experiences and perspectives in school.

Learning anything new can be difficult and with it comes many challenges, difficulties, and opportunities. Young elementary children are influenced in a variety of ways in school. Their experiences in elementary classrooms might shape who they are and how they learn. "I remember being sent to the corner of my classroom for 'talking back' to the Anglo teacher when all I was trying to do was tell her how to pronounce my name, " recounted Gloria Anzaldúa, Latina writer (1999, p. 75). When students are not native English speakers, their languages and accents might cause misunderstandings with language use in the classroom. Incidences such as Anzaldua's (1999) can influence learning experiences for students in elementary classrooms. Being an elementary student who does not bring standardized academic English to the classroom comes with daily cultural, language, and social difficulties. Often mainstream classroom teachers do not utilize linguistically diverse students' abilities in a positive way, as depicted in the elementary school experience from Anzaldúa (1999). Her story led me to think of my own background and what inspired me.

Even though I grew up as a native English speaker, I can relate to not being encouraged to share my opinions, thoughts, and interests as a student. My learning experiences centered on testing, teacher lecture, worksheets, and answering questions from texts. All of these learning tasks occurred individually,

not in a social group. It would take me longer to read and complete tasks because of the anxiety I felt from not wanting to produce the wrong answer in front of my teacher and peers. I would feel nervous because I wanted to have the correct answer in case the teacher called on me. I would read ahead to make sure I pronounced words correctly in a text before I spoke them in front of the class. I was worried about always being "correct" and pleasing teachers by providing the response they were looking for. I never raised my hand or volunteered to speak out. I was rarely asked to share an opinion or pick a text that interested me. I enjoyed reading, but not in school. I did not like going to school because of the fear and anxiety of my classroom and worry that came with the next test I would have to complete and pass. I would memorize words, phrases, or even ideas from books and number problems in order to be successful. I always received good grades, but somehow I went through the public school system not feeling confident about my learning or myself as a student.

"Challenge yourself" was the motto of Mrs. G, my second grade teacher. This was a daily phrase and the routine talk within her classroom. As a second grader, I thought about these words and what they really meant. Nothing was challenging for me in that class. Second grade was easy I could do everything; I knew I was smart, and I never got in trouble. As I moved on from second grade, the phrase had different meaning. In third grade, I found the increased memorizing, testing, written language performance and higher-level content skills difficult, and that pushed me and made me believe I was not smart and did not

belong with my other classmates. My own interests were not important in the classroom anymore and the culture and atmosphere of my learning environment changed. This was not a good feeling to me and I did not feel comfortable in school anymore. School was not fun; I felt more anxiety and pressure, and meaningless work that was not interesting came along. As I proceeded to upper elementary, middle and high school, I continued to go through the motions, although still succeeded.

"Challenge yourself" still resonates with me today. These words are my motivation and my reminder that life - not just school - is hard. Some things are easy for others and some things take longer for others to acquire. Mrs. G always told her students you do not learn or cannot be your best self if you are not being challenged with the things you do. I did not realize the meaning of this at the time, but now this makes sense to me. If I were to give up when things got difficult, I would not be where I am today. I had to come to grips with my personal feelings from my own experiences and these now are the inspiration for my research. As I see students' abilities in the classroom being set aside-especially, emergent bilinguals, it strikes me that since I am not a second language speaker, I do not know what it is like to learn in a classroom while simultaneously have my identity be ignored. Their abilities are often pushed aside as mine were, but they have another difficult task of learning another language. One way to learn about the experiences from emergent bilinguals is to observe, converse, and get to know them in their school classrooms. I do not have the experience of being an

emergent bilingual and need to know more about their experiences in the classroom to better understand their feelings and help them succeed.

While I was an elementary classroom teacher, I tried to stay in touch how I felt in school and strived to create a more positive, student-centered learning environment. Each year, I would be given a classroom of 20-25 emergent bilinguals at various language and academic levels. I did my best to create inquiry-based lessons that allowed students to use their identities and strengths in the classroom. I included student culture, language, and interests in the classroom on a daily basis. I wanted to be a positive role model for students in my classroom and encourage who they were as individuals. I did not want my students to feel afraid and unengaged the way I felt. I wanted them to feel supported and not have a teacher who ignored their diverse linguistic and cultural assets. I was determined not to be a "worksheet" teacher. The students in my classes were linguistically diverse and I did not want to push their backgrounds and capabilities aside. During my years as an elementary classroom teacher, I received positive feedback from students, teachers, administrators, and families about how they would feel welcome, and also how they felt the love of learning when they stepped into my classroom. My own experiences as a student inspired the way I taught in my classroom. I left the classroom with the hope of researching emergent bilinguals and how to help current and aspiring teachers to support the learning of all their students.

Currently, as a university instructor and supervisor of teacher candidates, many of my observations continue to demonstrate emergent bilinguals being overlooked by their mainstream classroom teachers. Teachers do not seem to value the knowledge and language skills that linguistically diverse students often bring to class (Zwiers, 2013). As a teacher, I know that meeting the needs of linguistically diverse students can be difficult, especially when many schools have a testing focus. When I observe, I hear more teacher talk and lecture than student voices, opinions, communication, and interactions with others in the classroom. I cannot help but think of my own experiences as a student and how I felt unvalued in the classroom. When students are not given opportunities to practice language and literacy skills, I have observed low confidence and hesitation from them toward learning and participating in the classroom. From my experience and observations in elementary classrooms, students do not appear to be comfortable using their native language or English when their mainstream teacher does not encourage their linguistic abilities. I see this as a problem in elementary classrooms and I feel for these students because of my own personal experiences as an elementary student in the classroom. I want to do what I can to change this common scenario.

To this day, I still have anxiety when asked to speak in front of people in class and when I take tests. It is a challenge of mine, but I continue to tackle the feeling in order to better myself. The only way to do this, I think, is to keep trying. I did not learn literacies in a way that helped develop and support my own

social practices and formations of reading and writing. Now, in graduate school, it is hard to believe that I am being asked my opinion and thoughts about a text or reading. I still have a fear of being wrong and anxiety about producing what the professor wants. I continue to sit quietly, observe my surroundings, and listen to others first rather than speak up right away in front of a whole group. My elementary learning experiences affected who I am as a learner and teacher.

When a child enters school with limited English proficiency, how can he or she be expected to learn the content taught in early grades while they are also learning English? (Slavin & Cheung 2005). Researching the phenomenon of third grade emergent bilinguals and their experiences learning literacies academically and socially can gain insight to this problem, which many policy makers, researchers, and educators continue to discuss. Typically, third grade is when standardized testing begins to take place. Researching the phenomenon of literacies taking shape as an emergent bilingual in third grade helped me gain additional insight into ways to help support emergent bilingual students before they reach the standardized tests to support their current and future learning in the classroom.

Through my dissertation, I examine the phenomenon of how literacies such as reading, writing, and speaking in a second language might take shape with third grade emergent bilinguals in their experiences in school from their own voices. There are many academic and social aspects that are part of literacies when learning in an elementary classroom such as reading, writing, and

interacting with peers. I investigate these aspects using the following research questions: 1) How might learning literacies of reading, writing, and speaking in English take shape for third grade emergent bilinguals in school? 2) How might emergent bilinguals' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge be used at school? I will be examining and identifying the phenomenon in upcoming chapters through a review of literature, a description of my theoretical framework, my research methodology, my findings, and discussion. In the next chapter, I review the academic literature on young emergent bilinguals' literacies and their experiences as they begin to read, write, and speak English and present my theoretical framework.

Chapter 2:

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

To set the stage for this chapter, I will review the research on young emergent bilinguals' literacies at the elementary level and their experiences as they begin to read, write, and speak English. To present the results of my review in an organized manner, I created categories to help organize the information and research. I established these categories by creating a table that outlines each author, methodology, the age of children in the study, and key findings (See Appendix A). I found the research articles and books through the University of Minnesota Online library and databases including Academic Search Premier, Google Scholar, EBSCO, and JSTOR. I will be discussing research under the following categories: 1) Learning Through Family 2) The Role of Classroom Environment 3) Teacher Guidance in the Classroom. Each of the themes contains subcategories to further organize the research as well.

Learning Through Family

As I reviewed the research in the area of young emergent bilinguals learning English literacies, the first key idea I recognized was that emergent bilinguals learn first and second languages from family members outside of the classroom. Understanding the influence of family and caregivers' influence in literacy development is important in order to know what emergent bilinguals bring with them to the classroom (Bauer & Gort, 2012). Many forms of learning happen outside of the classroom, especially with literacies. When the student is

out of the school classroom environment, the people who are interacting with the young emergent bilinguals have an effect on their literacy development, and that in return influences classroom learning (Bauer & Gort, 2012). I discuss several studies below that address emergent bilinguals' learning literacies in different ways with support from family members.

Resources at Home

Home learning takes place for young emergent bilinguals through books, spoken language, and people in the home (Sneddon, 2000). For example, Sneddon (2000) conducted a study to investigate the impact of home learning with emergent bilinguals from Urdu, Gujerati, and English speaking backgrounds. Home interviews were conducted with the families and school interviews were conducted with the children. Questions about literacies were given to the family members. These questions delved into who supports the child's learning at home, community center use, access to books, media, code-switching practices, attitude towards language and culture, how their child was taught to read, and so on (Sneddon, 2000). In school, the students were asked to retell a story and take a standardized test. The study was a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data from questionnaires and tests.

Literacies present in the home revealed a multifaceted pattern of experiences and practices (Sneddon, 2000). Families relied heavily on books from community centers and libraries to use at home to support their children's language and literacy learning. The books were a mixture of Urdu, Gujerati, and

English. In addition to books, oral storytelling took place in the home with families. Storytelling occurred beyond the context of books and was mainly in Gujerati (Sneddon, 2000). The adults told stories to the children in their native languages. It was notable that the children who were the most confident and told the most detailed and dramatic narratives in English also did in Gujerati (Sneddon, 2000). The students were able to perform well in school while learning both languages when their families provided them with access to books in both languages, support, and literacy practices at home.

Volk and De Acosta (2001) found similar results when families helped encourage literacies for emergent bilinguals. The qualitative study by Volk and De Acosta (2001) examined the literacy experiences in home, church, and school of three Puerto Rican kindergarteners in the same classroom. All children were emergent readers at the time data were collected. All students had older siblings and their families were members of the church. The school and the homes the researchers studied were located in two adjacent working class neighborhoods in a large Midwestern city on the U.S. mainland (Volk & De Acosta, 2001). Data from interviews, observations, and audio recordings with parents showed that many people outside of school had an effect on the children's literacies. For example, information collected about participants' literacy histories; their concepts of literacy development and how they support the children's developing literacy were noted (Volk & De Acosta, 2001). The family influence continued as the children participated in Sunday services every week at church. Families

discussed learning to read with the Cartilla Fonética (phonics primer; Volk, & De Acosta, 2001). The parents' knowledge about language assisted their children's literacy development because of the parents' experiences, language, and literacy beliefs.

Learning with Siblings

Older siblings impact younger siblings language learning at home as they interact in a variety of ways (Volk & De Acosta, 2001). For example, in Volk & De Acosta's study older siblings assisted their younger sibling with homework and reading, and write together consistently at home. Siblings played a key role in learning English for the emergent bilingual children in the study.

Similar to Volk and De Acosta (2001), Gregory (2001) studied the impact of siblings regarding literacy learning in English for young emergent bilinguals. Using the ethnographic methodology including observations and interviews, Gregory (2001), found that siblings have great significance on emergent bilinguals and literacies through interaction. She uses the term synergy to highlight that siblings are interacting with one another, "Interaction between children as synergy, a unique reciprocity whereby siblings act as adjuvants in each other's learning" (Gregory, 2001, p. 309). Older siblings can affect their younger siblings' learning at home through oral interaction. For example, an 8 year-old emergent bilingual, Farhana, and her 11-year-old sister, Farjana who are Bangladeshi, exchange this while reading together in English at home:

> Farjana: OK. Who enjoyed the story?
> Farhana: Me!

> Farjana: And what did you learn? OK, go on, what have you learnt
> from the story?
> Farhana: Um – that when your mum's not home you shouldn't
> worry and go on to look for her. She'd be back home soon.
> Farjana: Oh, are you trying to say that when your mother's not
> home you shouldn't go out of the house?
> Farhana: Yes, I've learnt new words from the . . .
> Farjana: Story
> (Gregory, 2001, p. 319).

In this interaction, "synergy" between the siblings shows how they use literacies and language together. Farjana acts as a guide for Farhana. The siblings engage in complex rephrasing and questioning. The older siblings act as cognitive enablers and younger siblings act as prompters as they interact and play together (Gregory, 2001). The attempt and practice of comprehension and reading is taking place with the two siblings.

Siblings share a common bond different from that of peers in school. Reinforcing literacy concepts and practicing language with a sibling who shares similar connections to school and experiences at home can help support learning for when the emergent bilingual is in a classroom (Gregory, 2001). "Older siblings often share a personal 'sense' of words, activities, and practices that are important in their everyday lives" (Gregory, 2001, p. 319). Unlike a peer in a classroom, a sibling has a similar lifestyle, family, and home routines outside of school.

Learning from Grandparents

Grandparents are a connection and influence learning literacies in the home for emergent bilinguals (Kenner, Ruby, Jessel, Gregory, & Arju, 2007).

Oftentimes parents are employed in order to support their families and when they cannot be present, grandparents may take the role as supporter and caregiver to the children in the home (Kenner et. al., 2007). A study by Kenner, Ruby, Jessel, Gregory, & Arju, (2007) showed the impact grandparents have on emergent bilinguals' literacies learning in the home. Sahil's grandmother, Razia, spent time narrating Bengali poetry with her grandchildren and reading them books in Bangladesh (Kenner et al., 2007). This showed development in memorizing, speaking with cadence, rhythm, and accurate pronunciation (Kenner, et. al., 2007). Similar to the oral language noted by Sneddon (2000), Volk, and De Acosta (2001), reciting poetry in the native language with grandparents in the home helped support literacies as well.

Reading and writing with grandparents using technology is another activity practiced in the home. Pam and her grandsons Oscar and Cosmo were participants of the study and the children's' computer skills were, "like learning to read and write with the three Rs, but the computer is the fourth R" (Kenner, et. al., 2007, p. 11). Using the computer as a tool to practice literacies with grandparents also supported skills to help emergent bilinguals in school. For example, typing a name in English on the computer using sound-symbol relationships, spelling, and word processing are skills students also encounter in school (Kenner et. al., 2007). Students experience similar skills in school and are getting extra practice with literacies at home with their grandparents as a guide.

The grandparent/grandchild relationship is an exchange from older to

younger that is comparable to relationships with older siblings like the studies

previously described. Not only did the emergent bilinguals learn, the grandparents

learned, too. For example, in Kenner's, et. al., (2007) study grandparent Hazel

was exposed to new literacies on the computer from her grandchild. "Lizzie was

ready with the keyboard to type in a search item on 'Google' before Hazel had

realised this was the next step" (Kenner, et. al., 2007, p.14). The combination of

participation from grandparent and emergent bilingual enabled both to benefit

from this learning tool. In this study, the emergent bilingual used their knowledge

of literacies and explained, showed, and conveyed to another person using

language and literacies. This uncovered skills that took place and were practiced

in the home.

Learning from Parents

Bauer & Mkhize (2012) conducted an ethnographic case study with

emergent bilingual Elena from 2-6 years of age, her parents, and caregiver. Her

father spoke German to her and her mother spoke English (Bauer & Mkhize,

2012). Elena's caregiver only spoke German to her at the request of her parents.

The data were collected at their home around daily routines so as not to interrupt

their home life (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). Videotapes and recordings were

analyzed by looking at the interactions of caregivers to better understand their role

in literacy development. The family used both English and German texts in the

home. With her father, Elena interacted in German and questioned about literacy

concepts that were unknown to her (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). The conversations

lead to two purposes for the child, 1) build background knowledge with vocabulary and 2) opportunity to question about the text (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). Elena discussed homonyms for unfamiliar words with her mother. For example, when reading an English text together, the word 'cross' can also mean angry and the meaning was discussed between Elena and her mother (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). In addition to vocabulary, all the adults in the home used gestures to help Elena understand words she did not know from the literature. This helped her visualize what was being discussed (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). Using stories and books in the home helped Elena learn words in two languages, but also helped her categorize her knowledge of words (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). The multimodal interactions of adults with Elena helped scaffold her learning with two languages (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). The authors concluded how parents and caregivers play important roles in developing literacies for emergent bilinguals when they are in their home environment (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012). Parents and caregivers can influence learning for emergent bilinguals in the home with multiple language texts and verbal and non-verbal interactions (Bauer & Mkhize, 2012).

Learning from family members outside of the classroom can influence emergent bilinguals' literacies as shown from the studies above. Family members such as siblings and grandparents interacting with the young emergent bilinguals inspire their literacy knowledge and experiences outside of school.

The Role of Classroom Environment

The physical aspects of the classroom move beyond what teaching

strategies are taking place. Children spend a lot of time in the academic classroom

with classroom objects, their teachers, and peers. Teachers use physical settings in

the classroom to influence their students' access to a variety of learning (Morrow,

1990). I identified the role of the classroom environment as a key theme being

noted in the research articles. When emergent bilinguals begin elementary school,

they are exposed to many programs and they begin the formal process of reading

and writing (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Each program and environment varies, and

emergent bilinguals are challenged and exposed to different social, cultural, and

academic learning experiences in the classroom. The physical aspects of a

classroom can impact emergent bilinguals' literacies by exposure to languages,

objects, and tools used on a daily basis (Olmedo 2003, Kenner 2000, Sneddon

2008).

Learning Tools

The physical classroom provides exposure to a variety of learning tools for

emergent bilinguals (Olmedo, 2003). Olmedo (2003) conducted a study with

emergent bilinguals in a dual language kindergarten classroom where students

spoke Spanish and English. The environment was set with a play corner in the

form of a house, a reading corner with books in English and Spanish, an art corner

with supplies, and a variety of other learning centers that changed based on the

curricular themes being covered, Olmedo (2003), used observation and interviews

to investigate how emergent bilinguals interacted in the environment using different languages. Specifically, the study used story retelling, picture identification, sentence repetition, and sentence completion tasks in the physical classroom environment. Through this study, Olmedo noted several language mediation strategies that students used to communicate and comprehend language and literacies. For example, students used translation, paraphrasing, scaffolding, provided verbal cues, modeled the behavior, interpreted contextual cues and gestures were demonstrated by the emergent bilinguals (Olmedo, 2003). The children developed their languages from the mediation strategies.

Using a peer and objects to help support students' literacy learning in the classroom was noted. The idea of "bilingual echo" from the kindergarten classroom was emphasized with the 5 and 6-year-old emergent bilinguals (Olmedo, 2003, p. 150). "The bilingual echo defines the practice whereby a child spontaneously tries to mediate the language comprehension or concept learning of a peer through a variety of linguistic and paralinguistic strategies" (Olmedo, 2003, p. 150). This is not a mimicking type of strategy, but where the emergent bilingual uses other forms of language, gestures, and objects in the physical classroom environment to initiate with a peer in order to comprehend and communicate. Olmedo concludes that peer interactions and objects from the classroom help support emergent bilinguals' literacies with one another (2003). The findings show that students used their classroom environment and resources other than the teacher or adult to engage in literacies. Peers played a key role for

the emergent bilinguals in the classroom. There were many opportunities using the classroom environment for children to serve as language mediators for the comprehension and learning (Olmedo, 2003). When a student did not understand the language or activity being described, a peer would initiate a mediation strategy such as pointing to an object or sign, gesturing, or using different language or words to help his or her classmate understand. Peers used one another as well as the physical objects in the classroom to learn the language, culture, and social aspects of interaction within the classroom environment physically, and mentally (Olmedo, 2003).

From the physical set up of the kindergarten classroom in Olmedo's study, the emergent bilingual students were able to use objects, pictures, and gestures to help their peers comprehend stories, directions, and common behavior appropriate for the classroom (Olmedo, 2003). The physical environment provided a variety of learning tools such as educational toys, books, and art (Olmedo, 2003). The classroom was set-up for peer learning and emergent bilinguals were able to use the concept "bilingual echo" to learn literacies from one another (Olmedo, 2003).

Native Language Support in the Classroom

Using students' native languages in the classroom can influence their confidence while learning (Kenner, 2000). Kenner (2000) studied emergent bilinguals starting at age 4 and until the age of 7 and the relationship with their native language in the classroom environment. In this study, families were

encouraged to bring in-home literacy pieces to their children's classroom such as written texts, pictures or cultural pieces that represented their native literacies.

Kenner (2000) found the emergent bilinguals ages 5-6, teachers provided newspapers in the students' native languages so they could create, write, and express their ideas in English and native language (Kenner, 2000). Parents were invited to come in and work with the students while speaking in multiple languages. At age 7, the emergent bilinguals were writing in both languages in school (Kenner, 2000). Bilingual dictionaries were accessible in the classroom as well as a physical display of animal names in different languages. These visual and physical objects allowed the students to take pride in their native language while learning English at the same time (Kenner, 2000). Kenner described 7-year-old Meera. Meera operated in her native language as well as English through the physical resources in her classroom. This is often referred to as code switching, when moving back and forth between languages through conversation. Meera's complex translanguaging demonstrated the sophistication of her thinking and her continuing desire to investigate both of her literacies at the same time (Kenner, 2000). As an emergent bilingual still developing abilities in beginning reading and writing, the physical environment of her academic classroom encouraged her literacy development in both languages. She linked her home and school literacy experiences of language together in the classroom. When Meera was asked about using her native language in school she responded, " 'I think I've done enough but I like it, I love doing it in Gujarati' " (Kenner, 2000, p. 25). She expressed a

great feeling for using and having physical and mental access to her native language and English simultaneously in the classroom. Meera was not given the opportunity to use her native language consistently throughout her schooling, even though it seems she may have preferred to (Kenner, 2000). Because her teacher encouraged the use of both languages, it helped Meera feel comfortable and confident learning literacies (Kenner, 2000).

Dual language texts are another aspect of the physical classroom that supported emergent bilinguals literacies (Sneddon, 2008). Reading materials available in multiple languages in the classroom assisted development of emergent bilinguals. Sneddon (2008) conducted a study to investigate how schools were supporting emergent bilinguals by incorporating dual language books in the classroom. The study included elementary emergent bilinguals with native languages of French, Urdu, Albanian, and Turkish. The study included interviews and observations with students. The following thoughts, experiences, and feelings are revealed from the emergent bilinguals using the dual language books in their classrooms:

The Turkish 8-year-old emergent bilingual Lek was learning well from dual language texts in the classroom, "Lek explained to me how the words were ordered in a different way" (Sneddon, 2008, p. 75). Using the dual language books to distinguish the differences between the written languages shows the cognitive development of literacies taking place in the classroom for this emergent bilingual. However, that is not the case for all students in the study since

the emergent bilinguals were at different levels. Magda a 6-year-old emergent bilingual, had a more difficult time with learning English than Lek did (Sneddon, 2008). "When she found words that were unfamiliar in both languages, she used the whole context in Albanian, then looked at the English, then used the illustrations to work out the meaning" (Sneddon, 2008, p. 76). The experiences from Lek and Magda show that dual language books can help support their literacies in the classroom. Sarah, age 9, noted, "When you're translating, some words might not have the same meaning" (Sneddon, 2008, p. 79). She is a native French speaker and showed that having access to dual language books in the classroom helped convey meaning and support comprehension for language learners. "Sarah was pleased to find how metaphors and similes were translated and immediately understood that a rat de bibliothèque (library rat) was a bookworm" (Sneddon, 2008, p. 79). Having the opportunity to read in her native language allowed for comprehension and further understanding of a text.

Physical space, objects, dual language texts, peer support, and routines are common ways to set up a classroom physically for encouraging literacy development for emergent bilinguals. Olmedo (2003), Kenner (2000), and Sneddon (2008), all reveal ways the physical classroom environment had a key role in literacies for emergent bilinguals. The emergent bilinguals have a better understanding of literacies when their physical classroom environment is supportive.

Teacher Guidance in the Classroom

The role of the teacher with emergent bilinguals was present through the studies below. The classroom should be a comfortable space where teachers have positive attitudes towards students' first languages and cultures (Yangguang, 2009). Classrooms that combine interactive approaches where teachers are engaging with learners using direct instruction ensure the content is designed appropriately and is meaningful for emergent bilinguals (Genesee et. al., in Helman, 2012, p. 12). The research regarding these concepts is discussed below.

Teacher Practices in the Classroom

Many teacher literacy practices such as circle reading, journal writing and phonics/handwriting can impact language and literacy development for emergent bilinguals (Araujo, 2002). A study by Araujo (2002) explored kindergarteners who were learning Portuguese and English in the Eastern United States. About 40% of the students in the study were Brazilian immigrants who spoke fluent Portuguese (Araujo, 2002). The full-day kindergarten class included 20 children and six of those were recent immigrants. The data were collected by Araujo (2002) in more than 65 classroom visits. During those visits, Araujo (2002) identified many teacher practices such as circle reading, journal writing and phonics/handwriting. According to her research, these three literacy practices were crucial for young emergent bilinguals (Araujo, 2002). The circle reading was done to establish student background knowledge and open the topic up for a discussion to practice oral language as a whole group. "Ms. B. would begin

storybook reading by activating children's background knowledge about the story to be read" (Araujo, 2002, p. 238). Araujo (2002) found that students could create their own sentences based on their knowledge of oral language. The children grew as readers, had a sense of themselves through the literacy experiences during circle reading, and were also encouraged to use background knowledge (Araujo, 2002). During this circle time the teacher was there as a guide for the students and continually modeled the language. The journal writing was done in response to the story during the circle time. The students were asked to write and draw a picture about their favorite part in the story. This was a way for students to find their own meaning in the story and a chance to choose a part about the story that interested them. Araujo (2002) noted that the teacher never checked for accuracy during writing time like she did during phonics/handwriting. The teacher used picture cards and asked children about vocabulary words in Portuguese. Also, she provided the English equivalent to the Portuguese words and emphasized the beginning sounds in English (Araujo, 2002). Modeling practices, encouraging native language use, and guiding students' literacies are effective for emergent bilinguals as observed in the study.

After Araujo (2002) completed her classroom visits, she concluded that emergent bilinguals' literacies are linked to a variety of classroom literacy instructions: circle reading, journal writing, and phonics. All three-teacher practices showed significant impact in the emergent bilinguals by the conclusion of the school year (Araujo, 2002). This study was revealed using several different

teacher strategies and guidance techniques are beneficial for young emergent bilinguals.

Students' Native Language in the Classroom

Allowing students to speak, write, converse, read, and share their knowledge in their native language can produce literacies for young emergent bilinguals (Park, Dury, Kenner, & Robertson, 2002). Park, et al. (2002) report from their study, "Put simply, it is that if teachers and others use, as the evidence by which they will place, teach and assess such children, only those children's performance in English, they are not likely to appreciate the full range of their capacities, and their linguistic capacity above all others" (p.195-196). The student examples mentioned above support this. A student may have developed a skill such as comprehension, but may have difficulty relaying the message in English. For example, "At the age of 7 Ikram uses a range of reading strategies (phonic, syntactic, semantic, contextual) and with different languages and scripts" (Robertson, 2002, p.121). Ikram takes pride in his learning and enjoys using his languages (Robertson, 2002). Ikram reads and writes in different languages and talks eagerly about his learning in each one of them (Robertson, 2002).

The opportunity to tell stories and create poetry for bilingual children in their native language generates ideas that can transfer over to writing in English (Kenner, Al-Azami, Gregory & Ruby, 2008). In relation to the use of dual languages, the use of bilingual poetry in the classroom by a teacher that Kenner et. al. (2008) present in a study parallels this. Resources such as bilingual poetry

in the classroom helped support the emergent bilingual in various ways. For example, students related to their cultural practices, familiarity of stories in their native tongue, and felt comfortable with whom they are through their literacies. Working with native language texts gives the opportunity to use cultural knowledge from student backgrounds (Kenner et. al., 2008). Emergent bilinguals are able to see themselves in texts and when the teacher welcomed their cultures with the use of bilingual literacies.

Student Perspectives in the Classroom

Learning with and from peers is another resource to help encourage and build the relationship between teaching and learning in the classroom (Yangguang, 2009). Giving students the time to speak, clarify, model, and use skills with other language learners in the classroom supported their literacies. "Reducing potential stress in the new learning environment, maximizing opportunities for participation, seeking ways of supporting social interaction, making rules and routines explicit and providing opportunities for language learning and teacher-led small group work are all possible means of assisting this process" (Parke et al., 2002). Teachers are there as a guide by letting students explore and use language with other learners (Yangguang, 2009).

Culture influenced both how children approach learning and how they are socialized into becoming users of languages (Espinosa, 2005). For children from culturally and linguistically diverse groups, their early socialization experiences and values acquired from home and community environments are often not

celebrated by the school and used in academic learning (Espinosa, 2005). Without

clarity of goals and purposes of language instruction, it is very easy to become

disorganized about teaching strategies and language instruction when a student is

learning English as a second language (Espinosa, 2005). Emergent bilinguals need

accelerated language development; the acceleration is promoted by experiences

that permit them to share their ideas, support them with evidence, and create new

knowledge with other students (Zwiers & Crawford, 2009). A supportive

environment through guidance and teacher practices can help support emergent

bilinguals (Yangguang, 2009). A supportive classroom should provide many

opportunities for frequent dialogue and communication between teachers and

students, with special attention to particular students that need extra help

(Yangguang, 2009).

Mainstream teachers need to provide similar supports as designated

language teachers (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Tabors and Snow (2001) shared the

experience of a teacher Ms. Logan, and emergent bilingual Pamela, who was

placed in a mainstream classroom. The scholars interviewed the teacher to

understand how she was guiding and organizing learning in her classroom. "She

had the children in homogeneous groups and that Pamela was in the top group,

despite the fact that she had only arrived in the classroom in January" (Tabors &

Snow, 2001, p. 172). The decision to keep Pamela in the mainstream classroom

away from her designated bilingual teacher was a mutual decision since she was

doing so well with learning. This often happens with emergent bilinguals and

should be considered carefully (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Pamela was enthusiastic about learning in the mainstream classroom (Tabors & Snow, 2001). However, Ms. Logan was still concerned for Pamela because she still had some difficulty with vocabulary and reading (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Pamela's first language literacy skills were being pushed aside and she was at risk for losing competence in her native language. There was no evidence in the classroom that supported multilingualism or student cultures (Tabors & Snow, 2001). Teacher guidance in the classroom is essential for emergent bilinguals and their literacies. Her teacher was guiding her and providing small group work to learn literacies (Tabors & Snow, 2001). However, her mainstream teacher did not support Pamela's native language use and culture in the classroom.

Taking a closer look at the student perspective of their teacher's guidance and practices helped know how emergent bilinguals experience literacies. Yangguang (2009) conducted an observational study with Chinese emergent bilinguals in their mainstream classrooms. These students ranged from 8-10 years old. Through observations and translation of journal entries from the students' native language, insights about their teacher's practices showed how their learning experiences were affected.

The students in the study were observed in their mainstream classrooms. Shan, a 10-year-old newcomer from China, was placed in a mainstream English classroom as soon as she entered elementary school (Yangguang, 2009). There was no support for her from a language teacher due to funding. Shan's experience

(translated from Chinese to English) from her journal is below,

> This afternoon in the history lesson, Mrs. White was talking about Henry VIII. We children were sitting around her on the carpet as usual. She was talking with expression on her face. Sometimes she wrote down a few words on the board, sometimes she raised some questions for us to answer. Many of my classmates, except me, put up their hands, eager to put forward their opinions. When Ms. White said something very interesting, the whole class burst out laughing, I just followed suit without knowing what they were laughing about and because I wanted to do the same. Maybe this was to cover up my ignorance by instinct. Actually I felt sad at heart. I wonder when I can be a real part of the class. After each lesson I would usually ask Mrs. White for materials so that my father can help me out at home (Yangguang, 2009, p.61).

Shan's teacher was not aware of her learning needs. Shan feels excluded and sad, and cannot relate to her classmates (Yangguang, 2009). She was not learning or understanding the ideas Ms. White was implementing in English. The talking and writing words on the board are not strategies that supported Shan's literacy needs in English. There was a disconnect felt by Shan between herself and classmates (Yangguang, 2009). Without an understanding of why and how children need to learn other languages, teachers will always be less effective (Yangguang, 2009). This is revealed through Shan's perspective of her learning in the classroom.

This leads to another emergent bilingual, Kapo's perspective as well. Although Kapo was physically in the class, she was withdrawn, unable to participate in the lesson even with the English as Additional Language (EAL) teacher sitting beside her (Yangguang, 2009). Kapo's feelings are expressed through journal writing,

> I like maths best, relatively speaking, just because I can read numbers and formulae without necessarily understanding English and sometimes I can guess between the lines. To be honest, I find it very difficult to follow the teacher in any other lessons. Crista, the language teacher, sometimes sits beside me in the Literacy Hour, but she can't be very helpful, at least no better than my English-Chinese dictionary (Yangguang, 2009, p.62).

Kapo, similar to Shan, is lost in the mainstream classroom. There was no sense of belonging or learning emerging from teacher guidance or practices. A vital factor in second-language learning is what the students bring with them to classrooms (Yangguang, 2009). The classroom teachers do not seem to be aware of the emergent bilinguals' linguistic abilities. All successful teaching depends upon learning (Yangguang, 2009).

Literacy Factors and Development

Instructional practices tailored to build on what students know and to support their oral and written language skills in English may be more effective than ignoring students' background experiences (Helman & Burns, 2008). Many emergent bilinguals, particularly recent immigrants, are less familiar with vocabulary, syntax, and phonology of English (Calderón et al., 2005). Educators should know how second-language literacy is similar or different from students' first languages as well as cultural and linguistic factors that influence learning to read and write in English (Helman, 2012). Helman and Burns (2008) conducted a study to look at oral and acquisitions rate among sight words for emergent bilinguals. The study focused on 43 emergent bilinguals in second grade with

Hmong speaking backgrounds (Helman & Burns, 2008). An assessment scale was used, the LAS-O which measures speaking and listening skills, including vocabulary, listening comprehension, and verbal proficiency for one score summary (Helman & Burns, 2008). In addition, students were taught unknown high-frequency words and if the student made three errors the lesson was over and the acquisition rate was calculated.

The data found there was a significant correlation between students' acquisition rates and their language proficiency scores (Helman & Burns, 2008). Suggestions for teachers based on the results include: differentiating instructional activities in reading to support student language levels, embed language activities within skill instruction, and allow students opportunities to read high-frequency words in connected texts (Helman & Burns, 2008). Effective reading teachers scaffold oral language and literacy skills (Helman & Burns, 2008). Also, as teachers plan their literacy instruction, they should be aware the role language development has for emergent bilinguals' oral and written languages (Helman & Burns, 2008).

Summary of Literature Reviewed

The growing number of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds presents educators with opportunities to learn and grow (Au, 2013). These studies help inform ways teachers can support emergent bilinguals language and literacy development in the classroom. Programs that are designed based on second language learners' needs, assets, and use of home languages have

proven to add to their achievements (Helman, 2012). This shows the importance

of instructional activities, visible written and oral languages, cultural practices,

and resources needed for classroom teachers to consider in their daily guidance

and practice to support emergent bilinguals' literacies in primary classrooms.

Through the research highlighted in this chapter, I reviewed how young

emergent bilinguals learn literacies in a variety of ways despite what their native

language and culture might be. Emergent bilinguals learn literacies through

family members, peers, classroom environment, and teacher practices. As

uncovered from the research above, emergent bilinguals speak and learn in a

variety of languages other than English. The categories and sub headings show an

impact on literacy knowledge and experiences for young emergent bilinguals in

elementary school. These categories include: family, classroom environment, and

teacher guidance. Many emergent bilinguals' experiences demonstrate how there

is a significant overlap between different literacies in their lives (Robertson,

2002). These factors and ideas should be taken into consideration to build upon

theories to support educators in the field and further research.

Using the University of Minnesota Databases allowed me to find research

regarding young emergent bilinguals and their literacies. However, there was not

much research in these databases that focused on feelings, experiences, and voices

from a young emergent bilingual from their perspectives of literacy learning.

Much of the research focused on preschool aged emergent bilinguals, not

elementary school aged children. More published research in this area with

children ages 5-10 and their own voices and perspectives will continue to help guide educators on how to support linguistically diverse students in elementary classrooms.

Discussed above, the research from scholars needs to continue to be shared with current teachers in the field who work with young emergent bilinguals. Further research needs to be conducted, specifically using more student voices, feelings, and experiences at the primary level. As indicated by the student responses from above, knowing how a student feels and their experiences can have value for their literacies in and out of the classroom. Young emergent bilinguals learn in a variety of ways, and they feel and experience different things while learning. This is crucial for learning literacies and is why I am focused on researching experiences of third grade emergent bilinguals and their literacies in school.

Theoretical Framework

I align my research to be a phenomenological study using the theorists González, Moll, & Amanti (2013), Alison Cook-Sather (2002, 2006), and Max van Manen (1982, 2014). I use these theorists to work from and through my findings from the study regarding the phenomenon of literacies in English with third grade emergent bilinguals. I will describe the relation of the framework for the foundation of the study. The phenomenon of the lived experiences of literacies with third grade emergent bilinguals can be discussed through philosophical

conversations with various theorists in order to think deeper about the

phenomenon that is taking shape.

Phenomenology

First, one needs to understand the idea of pedagogy from a

phenomenological standpoint. Reflecting on our pedagogic lives with children is

phenomenological; phenomenology requires a continuous return to the beginning

of the life world (van Manen, 1982). I align my work for the study using van

Manen's theory of pedagogy being an encounter, a relationship or a situation with

a child. The concept of pedagogy according to van Manen (1982) is not found in

philosophy, but found in the experience of its presence-that is, in concrete, real

life situations. The pedagogic being from adults is from speaking with children

(van Manen, 1982). Using the pedagogy of teaching, bringing out creative inquiry

and knowing what is best for your students will help them succeed (Garrison,

1997). Knowing a lived experience of a child comes from real life situations

through speaking and conversing with the child. "Phenomenological pedagogy

asks for a recollecting of the grounds of pedagogy as being" (van Manen, 1982, p.

288). Going beyond a testing structure and utilizing one another in the classroom

through social and academic interactions can help students succeed (Garrison,

1997). In doing so, "We also have to be able to help the child grow up and give

shape to life by learning what is worthwhile knowing and becoming" (van Manen,

1982, p.292).

Imaginatively engaging in shared creative inquiry helps the potential of others (Garrison, 1997). Allowing a student's desires, interests, and thoughts into the classroom can support student learning by giving them opportunities to inquire and share what they are thinking and learning about as supported by van Manen (1982) and Garrison (1997). Sharing creative inquiry in the classroom is an important aspect to consider with emergent bilinguals' literacies for this study. John Dewey (1997) would agree with van Manen and Garrison as well with his idea of learning by doing He suggests, "Thinking is not a case of spontaneous combustion; it does not occur just on 'general principles'. There is something specific which occasion evokes it. General appeals to a child to think, irrespective of the existence in his own experience of some difficulty that troubles him and disturbs his equilibrium" (Dewey, 1997, p. 12). Thinking and being able to share what is going on in the brain can allow emergent bilinguals to voice and deepen their understanding of their experiences. Knowing students' lived experiences of literacies can offer insights to researchers and educators about how students learn best and how to help encourage future learning.

Funds of Knowledge

I also use the funds of knowledge concept from González, Moll, & Amanti (2013). Learners have knowledge and their life experiences give them knowledge (González et. al., 2013). For example, students of a native language other than English might come to school in the United States with prior experiences using their native language and use what they know from their native cultural

experiences in the classroom to help support their English learning. Eve Gregory (2008) believes there is no universal method that works equally well with all children, but children learn in different ways according to their personalities, cultural background, their life, and literacy experiences of their families (p. 158). In addition to pedagogy, inquiry, and learning by doing, I align my research with this idea as well. I use the phrase 'funds of knowledge' within my research question to express the idea of students' cultural and linguistic background being used in school.

According to the funds of knowledge theory, the experiences of emergent bilinguals can affect their learning of language and literacies (Gregory, 2008). The language development aspect can be supported through Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory; individual cognitive development occurs when children partake in joint-problem solving with others more experienced than themselves who bring intellectual tasks within their range (Gregory, 2008). This requires students to engage in conversations, questioning, and social and academic interactions within the classroom. Children learn these practices alongside a more experienced member of the culture (Gregory, 2008). The ZPD permits us to outline the child's immediate future and active developmental state (Vygotsky, 1979). Learning from someone who has more experience and skills in an area brings opportunities for understanding and learning for students. Any child has a history of learning prior to attending school (Vygotsky, 1978).

Student Voice

I also align my work with the concept of student voice. Students' funds of knowledge, and their stories about them are under-utilized in academic settings (Genishi & Dyson, 2009). The purpose of research on student voice and experience is to inquire how students of diverse groups are influenced by what happens in classrooms and schools (Thiessen & Cook-Sather, 2007). Educators and educational researchers must sincerely question the assumption that we know more than the young people of today about how they learn or what they need in preparation for their future (Cook-Sather, 2002). "Unless we find out what children are capable of in their narrating we are in danger of grossly underestimating their capabilities-cognitive, linguistic and narrative" (Fox, 2003, p. 192). Using the term student voice asks us to connect the sound of students speaking not only with those students experiencing meaningful, acknowledged presence, but also with their having the power to influence analyses, decisions about, and practices in schools (Cook-Sather, 2006). Having a voice is having the ability to speak one's mind and there are relations of power that take shape with student voice (Cook-Sather, 2006). Power is at play, "Student voice," in its most profound and radical form, calls for a cultural shift that opens up spaces to the presence and power of students (Cook-Sather, 2006). Students present and involved in their learning with their voice in conversations and efforts that have most often been led by adults have the potential to affect a cultural shift in educational research (Cook-Sather, 2006). One aspect of this is the cultural shift

of power between teacher and student, adult and child. The clearest indicators of the beginning of a cultural shift is its insistence on altering dominant power imbalances between adults and young people (Cook-Sather, 2006). Allowing students to be involved in conversations about their learning links the missing perspective of those who experience daily the effects of existing educational policies-in-practice (Cook-Sather, 2002). Students have their own perspective on what happens in classrooms (Cook-Sather, 2002).

I also understand while using this framework I need to be aware of how students from diverse linguistic backgrounds are perceived. There are three lines to distinguish students of diverse backgrounds and cultural differences: 1) these students come from diverse ethnic backgrounds i.e. Latino/a, Native American, African American, Asian American 2) These students are from low-income families and living in poverty, working underclass 3) These students are speakers of home languages other than the language of power- English in the United States (Au, 2013, p. 5). Being aware of these factors and how they come to play while using this framework is crucial.

Summary of Framework

Using the theorists González, Moll, & Amanti (2013), Cook-Sather (2002, 2006) and van Manen (1982, 2014) with the support of others in the field as noted above coincide with my research. Knowing what students are being permitted to learn and how they interact within a classroom may affect their learning. Allowing students to be themselves, engage with one another, and voice thoughts,

questions, and opinions can gain a better understanding of how learning literacies may take shape for elementary emergent bilinguals. Allowing and encouraging teachers to implement different techniques and student interests for learning in the classroom may lead to better understandings of experiences for each student through their literacies within certain contexts. Being aware of diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds of students and funds of knowledge with the notion of power linguistically and systematically is vital. I will discuss the methodology for the study and the contexts it resides in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The purpose of this post-intentional phenomenological study was to get a better understanding of the lived-through experiences of third grade emergent bilinguals learning literacies in school. Phenomenology is about accessing the world as humans experience it (van Manen, 2014). Emergent bilinguals as a demographic group consistently lag behind their native English speaking peers in academic achievement and experience higher rates of negative occupational, economic, social, and physical outcomes (Albers, Kenyon & Boals, 2009). Getting to know young emergent bilinguals' voices and perspectives as they experience learning through literacies has the potential to suggest more positive implications for instruction to support linguistically diverse students. As I developed my research questions I was compelled to find out, through students' own perspectives and understandings of their own experiences within their world at school. I used Post-intentional phenomenology to pursue the phenomenon of third grade emergent bilinguals' experiences learning literacies in school. The research questions that guided my study were:

1. *How might literacies of reading, writing, and speaking English take shape for third grade emergent bilinguals in school?*

2. *How might emergent bilinguals' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge be used at school?*

Phenomenology

Using these research questions as a guide, I focused on various ways literacies are taking shape for the emergent bilinguals in school. I chose this method because it brings a researcher closer to a lived experience from different perspectives. Using post-intentional phenomenology as a direction for my research guided and focused the phenomenon for the participants and helped understand how some third grade emergent bilinguals experience literacies within their world at school. The findings are represented and referred to as tentative manifestations (Vagle, 2014). The goals of the tentative manifestations are to show various ways the phenomenon is revealed across participants through their lived experiences learning literacies at school. From a post-intentional standpoint the manifestations of the phenomenon are not a conclusion or final representation, but are tentative and partial because of how the phenomenon is expressed.

I used post- intentional phenomenological approach; I intended to show what the phenomenon might become (Vagle, 2014). I did this by using phenomenological philosophies with other theorists and ideas in order to explore the phenomenon. Phenomenological research happens when we "situate ourselves on the edges of things" (Vagle, 2014, p. 111). This means to use phenomenological ideas with other theories in order to see what might be produced (Vagle, 2015). I used the five-component process to guide and develop post-intentional phenomenology (Vagle, 2014). What became of this study are always tentative manifestations, which represent the "dynamic interrelationships

that tie participants, the researcher, the produced text, and their positionalities together" (Vagle, 2014, p. 30). With this in mind, I remained open to the ways in which the phenomenon would show itself (Dahlberg, Dahlberg & Nystrom 2008). To do this, I kept a post-reflexive journal that is described under component #2 (see p. 5). I did not investigate the phenomenon prior to this study or have a predetermined model or result in mind. The phenomenon of the study was manifested through the lived experiences of the participants using their voices and perspectives in school.

This phenomenological method cannot be put into a rulebook, set of steps, or systematic procedure (van Manen, 2014). Phenomenology, for van Manen (2014) is about accessing the world as humans experience it to find openings, understandings, and insights. Vagle (2014) aligns his work similarly to van Manen's. Writing is a component of the phenomenological method. Phenomenological writing is not just about writing up results of a research project, it goes beyond "writing is to reflect; to write is to research" (van Manen, 2014, p. 20). Writing is a way to deepen and change in a way that is not predictable (van Manen, 2014). This is what I attempted to do in my study. Sitting with and spending time with humans who experience the phenomenon allowed me as a researcher to understand student learning from their experiences and voices while writing and reflecting throughout the process.

The Research Design

The five components I used to guide the study come from Vagle's (2014) post-intentional phenomenological research and are listed below:

1. Identify a phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts.

2. Devise a clear, yet flexible process for gathering data appropriate to the phenomenon under investigation.

3. Make a post-reflexion plan.

4. Read and write my way through the data in a systematic, responsive manner.

5. Craft a text that captures tentative manifestations of the phenomenon in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts (Vagle, 2014, p.121).

The above list provided me with a systematic way to conduct my post-intentional phenomenological investigation; however, I wove my way through these components to keep the process open (Vagle, 2014). In the sections below, I address how I used and interwove each component of the post- intentional phenomenological approach and how it led me to the tentative manifestations presented in chapter four.

Component #1: Identify The Phenomenon In Its Multiple, Partial And Varied Contexts

This component consists of six parts that assist with the exploration of the phenomenon.

1. State the research problem.

2. Conduct a partial review of the literature.

3. State philosophical conversations relevant to the research problem.

4. Statement of the phenomenon and research questions.

5. Situate the phenomenon in its multiple, varied contexts.

6. Select participants who have experienced the phenomenon (Vagle, 2014, p. 122-128).

The research problem and questions are in Chapter One and earlier in the current chapter. The review of literature and philosophical conversations are located in Chapter Two. The phenomenon and participant selection for the study are described in the next section. Using component # 1 part 5, I explain the school context and share a post-reflexion moment as well.

Component #1 Part 5: Situate The Phenomenon In Its Multiple, Varied Contexts

The school is located in a large Midwestern city of the United States. The curriculum is based on the International Baccalaureate[2] (IB) primary years program. The inquiry based model and six week thematic units are known throughout the school classrooms and building due to visual displays in hallways and classroom bulletin boards. Below is an example of the classroom bulletin board from one thematic unit called where we are in place and time. A theme and central idea change with each new unit. Above the bulletin board are key

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[1] International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program: The PYP prepares students to become active, caring, lifelong learners who demonstrate respect for themselves and others and have the capacity to participate in the world around them. It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both within and beyond the classroom (www.ibo.org, 2016).

concepts. These concepts are designed to guide student thinking with words and questions. For example, the key concept function question is how does it work? The key concepts push student thinking and are consistent throughout each grade level and a requirement for each classroom to have visible on their walls.

Figure 1
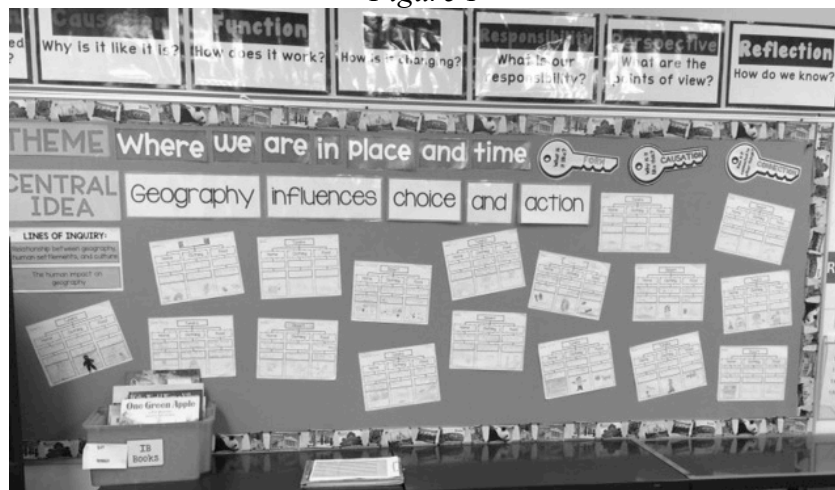
Another example is the IB learner profile words and attitudes. Each classroom is required to have a set of these on visible in their classrooms as well. The classroom photo below shows examples of IB attitudes displayed on the wall.

Figure 2
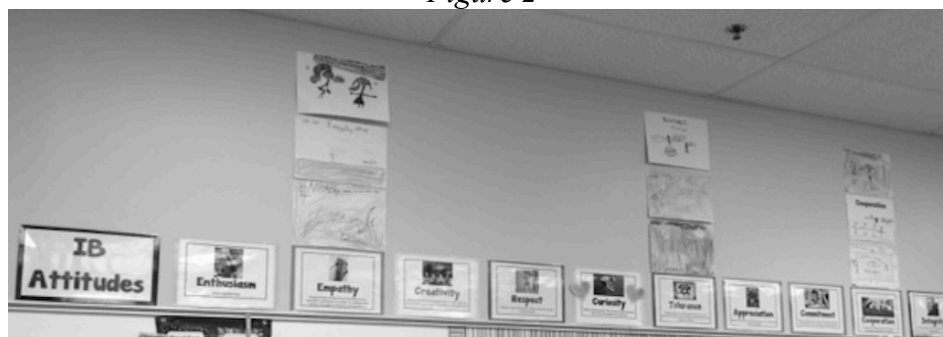
Student work is presented above each word that the students and teacher have been focusing on together. For example, empathy is stacked with student interpretations through drawings of what the attitude means to them. As you can

see the photo with the hearts next it is the current word the class is focusing on.

The attitudes and key concepts are incorporated into the classroom and school

language. The concepts and vocabulary come up in daily routing talk through

morning messages and interactions through learning. Students and their teacher

recognize and share when they have or feel a connection to the word. The

students have been using this vocabulary since kindergarten and it has become

part of their daily learning at school.

The one level school building contains two classrooms per each grade,

kindergarten through eighth grade, educating on average 430 students yearly

(Minnesota Department of Education, 2016). The class sizes range from 22-30

students with one mainstream teacher in the classroom at all times. The language

offered in the school is Arabic and all students participate in this specialist class

everyday for approximately 40 minutes. The school is a free, public charter school

with a 90% free and reduced lunch population and approximately 800-1,000

students waitlisted each year. The demographics are Black (76.2%), White

(22.5%), Hispanic (0.7%), Asian/Pacific Islander (0.7%) with an English as a

Second Language population of 38.7% (Minnesota Department of Education,

2016) During my time at the school I was able to participate in the 3rd grade

classroom daily activities and routines throughout the school day (See Appendix

A for daily schedule). My post reflexion-journal below captured a sense of the

school context.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 10-20-15

Each time I step into the school, there is a sense of calmness. The noise level is minimum and little to no students or staff roaming the hallways. The sense of calmness moves throughout the classroom as well. I feel welcome and valued as a member of the class. The students are very respectful, behavior is minimal, routines are on point and no students yell or shout at teachers or one another. Each student has their own space and iPad to use throughout the day, which are accessible in the middle of their tables. Technology is used as part of daily learning, individually and in small or large groups. All students wear a uniform and eat lunch and breakfast in their contained classrooms. I enjoy being in the classroom, there is little to no wasted learning time. Transitions flow and students know the expectations. This is the first time in a long time I have left a classroom/school without a headache or seeing a fight.

Component #1 Part 6: Select Participants Who Have Experienced The

Phenomenon

The study involved third grade emergent bilinguals in an IB mainstream

classroom. I presented my research proposal at the school board, and with

approval, they allowed my presence in the classroom to work with the students in

third grade for the purpose of my study. The emergent bilinguals needed to be at a

level 2 or higher according to their score from the World-class Instructional

Design and Assessment (WIDA). Due to data privacy, I was not allowed to look

at student records so I conversed with the mainstream classroom teacher to

confirm which students in the class would meet the requirement. Parents returned

the consent forms and then I gave the participants consent forms as well to get

their permission to be in the study. Three participants and their parents agreed to

participate in the study. All of the three participants were female. All WIDA

scores of these participants were level 2 or higher. These participants have been

students at the school since they were in kindergarten and have participated in the

international baccalaureate program for four years. The participants all speak the

same native language- Arabic. Careful considerations were made about choosing

participants and keeping anonymity within the study. I chose these participants

because they were the only students whose parents gave consent to participate in

the study. In the text box below are two excerpts from my post-reflexion journal

to show how I thought about and developed this decision.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 9-5-15:
I have been torn between my participant selection and process. I want it to be organic, however I know it is not an easy process. My doctoral committee advised me to stick with participants who speak the same native language (September 1, 2015) and I just wonder how organic that can be if I am already choosing and specifying. There needs to be some sort of direction, I know that! I have also been in contact with the classroom teacher about WIDA scores and she has a list of students who are above level 2 or higher. This awareness has allowed me to see the importance of narrowing and being clear about who is involved. I am anxious to start collecting data and working with the participants. I wonder how many students' parents will give consent?

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 10-13-15:
All parental consent forms were returned today. As I was going through the forms, I noticed of the qualified participants, only three gave permission to participate in the study. The three participants are female and speak the same native language- Arabic. I wonder if their experiences will reside differently, similar within school? I hope to gain a better understanding about the phenomenon from their experiences and voices.

Rio[3]. This student's country of origin is Egypt and native language Arabic.

The first three years of her life were spent in Egypt before moving to the United

States. Rio was 8 years old at the time of the study and had no prior schooling in

English before attending kindergarten in the United States. Unlike her peers, she

knew no written or oral English before beginning school in America. Rio received

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[3] All names of participants and teachers have been changed to pseudonyms.

individualized English Language services from the EL teacher in the past, but no longer is pulled out of class. She is outgoing, friendly, and enjoys school. "I like school, I want to come everyday" (Rio, December 8, 2015). She greeted her teachers every morning with a smile and a hug. Rio often volunteered, raised her hand, and spoke her mind.

Nia. This student's country of origin is Egypt and native language Arabic. Nia came to the United States prior to kindergarten. Her family travels back to their native land to visit relatives often. She was 8 years old at the time of the study and had no formal schooling prior to attending school in the United States. Nia received English Language services, but is no longer pulled out of class. She knew very little English when starting kindergarten, but orally in broken English could navigate her way through daily tasks. "I know more Arabic than English and Arabic helps me a little more than English" (Nia, October 20, 2015). Nia asked clarifying questions often and participated in class activities.

Aya. This student's country of origin is Somalia. Aya was 8 years old at the time of the study and her native language is Arabic. She moved to the United States when she was a toddler. Unlike the other participants, Aya participated in an early childhood program in the United States from ages 3-4 prior to attending kindergarten. Her written and oral English was more advanced than the other participants in kindergarten. She never received individualized English language services, but was pulled out in the past in a small group with the EL teacher. "I

choose to speak English more, I like to talk a lot" (Aya, November 24, 2015). Aya interacted with peers more often than adults and was very soft spoken.

Due to the large second language population within the school, peers who are also second language learners have surrounded the participants throughout their entire schooling in their mainstream classrooms. The school environment and curriculum is centered on language learning and demographics of the school are described below.

Component #2: Devise A Clear, Yet Flexible Process For Collecting Data Appropriate For The Phenomenon Under Investigation

I positioned myself in a mainstream third grade elementary classroom. I began participating in classroom activities at the beginning of the school year because I wanted to be included in classroom routines and not take away from any academic learning when I officially began collecting data. I was a former educator at the school and worked with some of the students in the past. Doing this allowed me to continue to build a relationship with the students before collecting my data. I went to the classroom ten times over nine weeks for four hours at a time. This allowed the process to be more conversational, organic, and put less pressure on the students. I was considered a member of their classroom.

Phenomenological research commonly uses face-to-face, unstructured conversations in order to dig deep into the phenomenon with participants (Vagle, 2014). I was able to collect data and explore tentative manifestations that I felt shaped the phenomenon, in this context, through a series of three unstructured

recorded conversational interviews and observations through field notes from each classroom visit.

I created a document for my field notes and observations with four columns to help me think about the class as a whole and each individual student and I share an example below.

Figure 3

Whole class	Rio	Nia	Aya
• Morning work- quiet- Bonjour! • Visual- board matches worksheet, clear, directions, on task students. • School uniforms • Voice levels 0-4 • Bus behavior- every adult involved, top down, behavior issues are minimum • How to make the world more awesome- thinking beyond self- school, going to community- world- visual thinking together on the board- team work emphasized, encouraged, table shares	• Writing notebook • Making the world a better place- writing- • Challenging thinking • Proud to share work- • Asks classmates to be partners • Talks to friends in Arabic to clarify • Kindergarten buddy class- Latifa • Raises hand for nouns- what is it • Ipad- leveled readers, math centers • "the animal's zoo is very big"- shared in front of whole group- not shy Art- sat in front	• Writing notebook- how to make the world a better place- shared whole group • raises hand for what a noun is, not plural or singular though • Ipad, leveled readers, math centers, independent • Lets a classmate borrow her ipad headphones • Goes to small group reading- working on reading aloud- country mouse, city mouse, comprehension, oral discussions about the story. Thinking aloud together. • Art Class- engaged	• Writing note book- sharing idea- clean up earth- Working on time- math center • Ask about kindergarten buddy • work/picture posted on the door • raises hand for what is a noun, singular, plural • ipad leveled readers, math centers, brain pop jr. • Independent- thinks and tries other strategies before getting help from a teacher • Art- class, chose to sit in front

I chose to set my field notes and observations this way to help guide my thinking and keep it organized throughout each visit. I would create a new document like the one above for each classroom visit. This was a space for me to type what was happening in the classroom along with what I observed each individual student doing at the time. These notes are more informal whereas my post-reflexion journal allowed me to think deeper about certain aspects of the students and classroom using full sentences.

I observed the participants in their school environment and participated in classroom routines throughout the day. As mentioned earlier, I kept a post-reflexion journal throughout and used this to wonder, think, and make sense of the

phenomenon. The goal was to go deep and understand the phenomenon through the experience of the participants and their perspectives. While doing this, I also wanted to keep van Manen's (1990) openness in mind to keep the experiences flowing in and through the tentative manifestations. Further details will be provided about how the data was organized and further looked at in component #4.

Component #3: Make A Post-Reflexion Plan

Post-reflexion through a study allows the researcher to document, wonder, question, connect, and discuss when they are shocked (Vagle, 2014). Doing *reflexivity* pushes the boundaries of qualitative practices (Daly, 2007). The post-reflexion plan acts as a guide for the researcher to push prior beliefs and assumptions and continue ongoing interpretations of the data in order to make sense of the phenomenon (Vagle, 2014).

Create a post-reflexion journal. I used my laptop computer for my post-reflexion journal and typed through a Microsoft Word document. When I spent time with my research, I documented through a Word document adding and making note of dates as I wrote. I would go back and add to the journal and relied on these typed notes. My thoughts and writing did not always happen when I would sit down at my computer. Writing does not always happen when we are sitting down; new insights can appear throughout or daily lives (van Manen, 2014). This is what van Manen (2014) refers to as active passivity (p. 346). Oftentimes I was not near my computer. I would be driving or running an errand

at the grocery store, but I would have my phone to audio record or type thoughts and ideas as they would float into my mind. When I had the next opportunity to sit at my computer I would add those ideas and thoughts to my journal.

Writing an initial post-reflexion statement. I was a former educator at the school and taught many of the students in the classroom. I was also familiar with the inquiry based school curriculum. As their former teacher, I was aware of their personalities and the curriculum programs offered there. I am an educator who believes strongly in individual identity, voice, and experiences. Through my research, I aimed to give voice to the participants and their learning experiences. Engaging in the post-reflexion process it guided the understanding of my role in shaping the research (Vagle, 2014).

Post-reflex as you gather and analyze data. I wrote in my journal after each day I was in the classroom. As I practiced post-reflexivity, it helped me think through moments when I felt connected or disconnected from the experiences I was observing. It was challenging to see the phenomenon separate from other students because I was immersed in the classroom routines involving all students. For example, during whole group, small groups, or individual center time I was sitting with conversing and learning with students. It really pushed me to focus more closely on the participants. Allowing each student's voice to be its own was important because it guided me to think about each student and their experience as their own. My post-reflexion journal gave me a space to articulate and share connections I was making and to realize the experience of the phenomenon can

also stand-alone. My post-reflexion notes are intertwined into the final three chapters to reveal the rest of the research process.

Component #4: Read And Write Your Way Through Your Data In A Systematic, Responsive Manner

The whole-parts-whole is used in phenomenological research data analysis method (Vagle, 2014). This process allows the researcher to move through each component as a spiraling process. It is deigned to be a flexible, weaving, and fluid process with the whole-parts-whole being outlined with six steps and not necessarily to be followed in numerical order (Vagle, 2014).

Step 1: Holistic reading of entire text. The first step is to take a look at the data as a whole and read through in its entirety. At this time, I did not take notes and add to my thoughts. I was able to read through the data. The point of this is to see the data as a whole before separating it into parts (Vagle, 2014). I started my analysis by doing just this, reading each of the participant's conversations one at a time. Then I proceeded by reading my field notes, observations, and journal. Each of the individuals stood out to me because it was clear that they each had many experiences learning English literacies in school.

Step 2: Line-by-line reading. After reading through as a whole, I then read each conversation line-by-line. I went through slowly this time as I read. I marked and highlighted phrases I thought related closely to the phenomenon. The line-by-line reading should include careful note taking and marking excerpts (Vagle, 2014). During this line-by-line reading, I could not help but feel amazed

by these students because of their willingness to share pieces of their lives with

me. I also would go back to my journal during the analysis to examine and

question my thoughts to what I was reading in the data.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 10-27-15

I am so amazed by this classroom environment and culture. It is a calm collective atmosphere; students are encouraged to think deep and are able to learn consistently with little interruptions. The classroom routines are known and clear by students and staff.
No behavior problems distract the whole class from daily learning activities. The students are confident and it shows through their engagement. Students take ownership in their classroom. I wonder if this has an impact on my participants learning? There is absolutely no wasted time in this classroom!!! Technology, visuals, reading materials are accessible to students and used as part of daily routines. The students do not seem to know any other way, this is their normal. What is it like for them to learn to navigate literacies in English?

Step 3: Follow up questions. I proceeded to read all the participants in

the same way and reviewed my notes from each. I was able to look at the data and

write more questions that came about that I potentially could ask the participants.

The purpose of this is to clarify if something was not clear or if something more is

needed to represent the phenomenon.

Step 4: Second Line-by-line reading. This second line-by-line reading is

to articulate the meanings based on the notes and follow up with the participants

(Vagle, 2014). I was fortunate enough to spend time wondering and glancing over

after each classroom visit. This was a way for me to read through and come back

to the participants the next visit to clarify.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 11-24-15

On my drive home today I was thinking about Rio. She was sharing about an experience and mentioned, "challenges". Wow- what was that like, did she enjoy being challenged? What did this mean for her? Go back to this. I think I could spend more time with this and go deeper. "I felt lonely sometimes, but, when I grew bigger each year I learned more words, and I learned how to communicate, and I got a lot more challenges than before" (Rio, 11-24-15).

Step 5: Third Line-by-line reading. This reading is when I expressed my thoughts about a participant and continued this process with each participant's conversations and observations. This process is meant for the researcher to articulate thoughts for each participant (Vagle, 2014).

Step 6: Subsequent readings. This process involves reading across the data, going back and forth through each participant looking for *tentative manifestations* (Vagle, 2014). This is related to the whole-part-whole concept. After reading over and going back and forth through the data, I gave the tentative manifestations a title. This was a difficult process for me because there were more individual manifestations that became apparent from the data. I was able to narrow, focus, and spend time with the most powerful ones. I will discuss these manifestations in the next chapter.

Component #5: Craft A Text That Captures Tentative Manifestation Of The Phenomenon In Its Multiple, Partial, And Varied Contexts

In phenomenological research, writing is considered a way to analyze (Vagle, 2014; van Manen, 2014). The final component and stage of Vagle's (2014) post-intentional research design is focused on crafting a text to capture the tentative manifestations in its multiple, partial, and varied contexts. In the next

chapter I share excerpts from my journal and my interpretations of the data. Therefore, the final phase of analysis is woven in the final component and apparent in the next chapter.

Summary

In this chapter, I shared two research questions that guided and framed the post-intentional investigation of the lived experiences of third grade emergent bilinguals and their experiences learning English literacies at school. This phenomenological is guided by Vagle's (2014) five research components of post-intentional phenomenology. Three participants are involved in this study and through data collection (component #2), post-reflexivity (component #3), and analysis (component #4), the process of whole-parts-whole allowed me to move with and through the data. Being able to read and write my way through the data resulted in two tentative manifestations of the phenomenon. In the next chapter, the phenomenon will be discussed in the multiple, partial, and varied contexts (component #5) (Vagle, 2014).

Chapter 4: Findings

In this chapter I share the findings of my post-intentional phenomenological study of three third grade emergent bilinguals and their experiences learning English literacies within an international baccalaureate school. I address the research questions through tentative manifestations as stated and shared from the participants' voices. The chapter is divided into three sections based on my tentative manifestations: *challenge*, *interaction,* and *native language.*

Discovering Tentative Manifestations

Below are tentative manifestations that I brought forth from the participants' voices. I shared the findings channeled by participants' voices through conversations about their lived experiences of learning literacies in English at school. Through my conversations and observations of the participants I was able to pull out these tentative manifestations based on their shared lived experiences in school. Three tentative manifestations relating to the concepts of *challenge, interaction, and native language,* emerged from student voices. The tentative manifestation *challenge* refers to the idea of a task being difficult, in which people are pushed to use skills to their full potential. The tentative manifestation *interaction* refers to a sense of being, communicating, and collaborating with another person. The tentative manifestation *native language* refers to knowing and using native language.

Before I introduce each tentative manifestation I would like to share a photo of the activboard in the classroom that is an example of a morning meeting message.

Figure 4
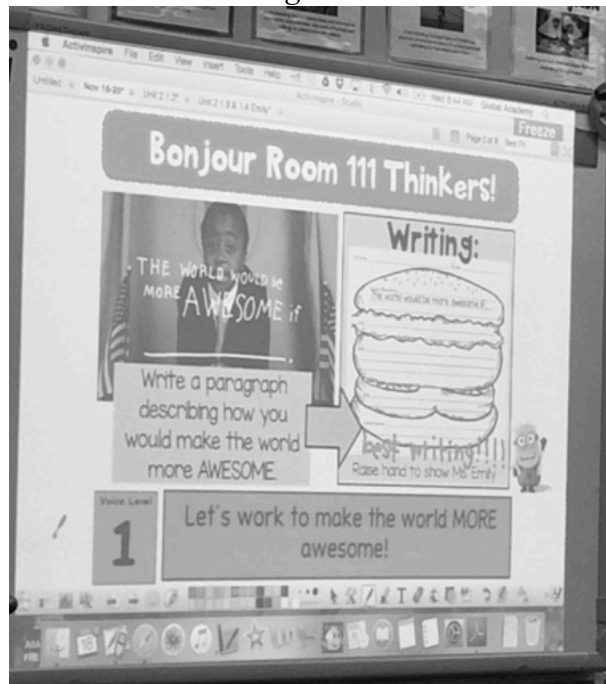
In this photo you can see Bonjour written. During this morning activity, the classroom teacher asked the students to push their brains to use another language other than English to greet their classmates. Some students chose to greet in Chinese, Japanese, Spanish, Hawaiian etc. The students were given a choice. At this time in the classroom several different languages were being spoken to greet and start the school day. Each student was given the space and practice to use another language through an interactive greeting. In addition, the students were encouraged to speak with their classmates and write about how they can make the world more awesome together. Language, working together, and speaking are

daily routines that students encounter in their classroom. By sharing this, it reveals the classroom environment and the tone of how learning is guided in their third grade classroom.

In my post-intentional phenomenological study, I chose one guiding question to situate myself closer to the phenomenon with the participants. The guiding question I asked to each of the participants during their regular classroom learning routines was: What is it like to learn English at school? As I was moving with and through the data, I uncovered a post-reflexion moment related to how I came to identify the tentative manifestations and it is shared below.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 12-23-15:

As, I read, re-read, listen to these student voices, and my own thoughts, I can't help but think of the word *challenge.* This sticks out in my mind each time I sit with and listen to these students. In a way everyday is a challenge not to give up, right? They show up to school, do the work, and that can be challenging for most people to just show up. Wow, this is very powerful to hear the students say they like to be pushed and challenged in school especially from an English learner standpoint and I want to share this with more people. I have never heard a student explicitly say they like when academics are challenging. Many observations I see in schools today show that students are not pushed as much as they should be in my opinion. This is new information to me especially in the realms of ELs. Is it because teachers don't spend enough time listening to their students' voices and thoughts? I wonder… I have not been sleeping, this has taken over my brain, thinking and wondering what to do with this. These challenges are part of their experiences. Most students are left alone to do their work individually, challenging, perhaps? The manifestation of challenge continues to come through and within the participants' voices and experiences, I need to share and write about this in my findings.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 1-08-16:

> It is a few weeks later and I'm still thinking about challenge and it's 3:00am. I can't sleep, these student experiences and voices have been and still are running through my mind. I woke up with interaction coming through as I revisit each participant, my own observations/notes and conversations replay in my head. As I continue to take parts of the students' voices, my observations, notes, and bring them back together as a whole, interaction comes to play throughout the data whether it be with a peer, adult, wanting to belong, it seems all participants had this idea coming through from their lived experiences of learning English literacies at school. I need to make this known; it is sticking out like a sore thumb. There are several times when students mention interaction in various ways with their native language, English, both etc. Native language is at play as well and coming through and within the data, voices, perspectives and experiences of these students. This could be powerful information.

I see this moment from my post-reflexion journal as important because there are lots of possibilities for educators to inform instruction based on who their students are and how they learn best in the classroom according to student voices. I advocate for being aware and knowing how students view themselves learning because it can influence and explore new learning experiences. I think it is important for educators to know and why I chose to share these specific parts of may data below.

I now describe each of the tentative manifestations as they emerged throughout conversations from the participants' voices. I organize the data by three sections based on each tentative manifestation. I provide examples from my observations and participants' voices relating to the phenomenon of third grade emergent bilinguals' lived experiences of learning English literacies in school.

Tentative Manifestation One: Challenge

I reveal examples of *challenge* below from conversations using additional guiding questions as noted below. I refer to *challenge* as the idea of a task being difficult, in which people are pushed to use skills to their full potential and is shared through the participants' voices below.

Rio

This conversation with Rio took place in the mainstream classroom during breakfast and morning work when she was working individually at her table spot.

Rebecca: "What is it like to learn English at school?"

Rio: "I came from Egypt so it was hard for me to learn a new language, not Arabic. I was mostly sad because I wanted to learn English to learn how to communicate and don't feel lonely. It got better by learning from my teachers, I learned a lot from them and now I can speak really, really good. My kindergarten teacher always challenged me by new things, I really liked when she challenged me, she didn't give me too many challenges because I was a beginner, but very small at first. She would like tell me to raise my hand to practice reading to read something I don't know how to read. Now this make me more brave. The activboard, like social objective she will make me read. Each day three kids read the objective, she picks me and challenges me to read it, but she helps me and other kids with the words and she makes it easy then hard" (Rio, November 17, 2015). (See Appendix C.)

This conversation showed *challenge* taking shape through reading aloud and using language orally in the classroom. The photo below shows the objective board Rio was describing. The content and language objectives are written by the

teacher each day and designed for each subject. This is a requirement in all classrooms throughout the school.

Figure 5
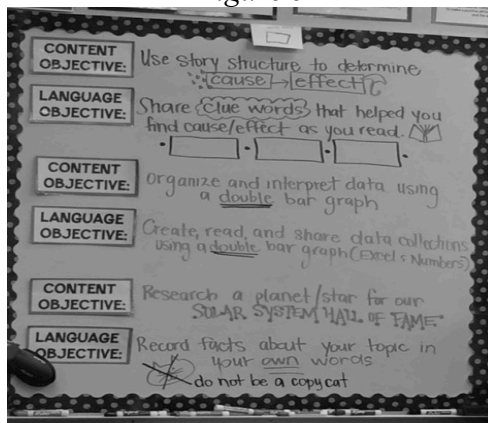
For example, the first content and language objectives refer to the subject reading and using story structure to determine cause and effect. Then it precedes to math then the IB unit of inquiry. These objectives are integrated throughout the beginning, middle and end of each lesson. Students are aware of what they will be learning each day through the objectives. Rio is describing her experience when she is asked to read aloud one of these objectives in front of the whole class and doing so makes her "more brave" when reading English aloud in front of her peers.

I investigated more and went over to Rio working on her iPad during center time and asked her to tell me more.

Rebecca: "Tell me more about learning."

Rio: "Math is easy because it is fun and I kinda knew numbers before English. Easy to add and stuff. Reading was hard because I didn't know the letters, but now I can and learned a lot the past few years. I read a lot and was challenged in school during the year, and I

read at home too. My mom challenged me to read and read English at home. It is really fun but at first I said, "I'll never learn English," but now English is so easy. It is easy because now I spend most of my life here, not Egypt" (Rio, November 17, 2015).

I continued to ask more about learning English in school to dig deeper into the phenomenon. Rio revealed *challenge* again through learning experiences of reading written English. Below, I present the tentative manifestation *challenge* through the conversation, which took place during a transition time inside the classroom following a bathroom break.

Rebecca: "Tell me more about what it is like to learn English in school."

Rio: "Like in kindergarten it was hard for me and I thought I was different and I could never know how to do it (English). Now, I'm like this is the easiest language on Earth! Cause Arabic now, I speak a little bit at home, but I know English. I was in America now five years and Egypt three years, but I know both languages, I feel like English is easier for me. Arabic is easy, I know how to speak it, but I feel good when I speak English. Because when I speak English, I feel like I can communicate, like if someone comes to the street and asks, "where is the store?" I can help him or her and not just say I don't know like this (puts hand up, shrug shoulders). Now if I see someone who is lost, I can help them and tell them where they can go. In school, I feel good because I run and play and communicate, but um like in kindergarten I didn't know how to do that. I felt lonely sometimes, but when I grew bigger each year, I learned how to communicate, was challenged more than before. I learned by in school homework, I read and read at home in English too. So like now, when I grew bigger I learned more stuff and more challenges. In kindergarten I had challenges everyday, now in third grade it's so easy, in kindergarten I would watch English characters and sometimes bottom titles in Arabic that I read and each word they say I understand it and the words get stuck in my mind. My sister had the same feeling when she came to America, we didn't know how to speak English" (Rio, November 24, 2015).

Rio was able to share many experiences through our conversations and the tentative manifestation *challenge* lived within these conversations. Similarly, Aya also shared an experience that appeared within this tentative manifestation below.

Aya

Next, I share Aya's voice and experience on learning English literacies in school in relation to *challenge.* Our conversation took place in the Arabic classroom before transitioning to gym class.

Rebecca: "What is it like to learn English at school?"

Aya: "English gets harder and harder. Because in kindergarten it's like trace a letter and now third grade writing is cursive and loopy (does hand motion in the air). I learn if it's hard. Arabic makes like cursive, but twisties, but cursive is easier in English. In Arabic class, we do not do so much writing, but talking about family and watching videos. It's hard- like challenge; I like it when it's hard- English. We say things in English and Arabic in both classes. I chose English writing and speaking at school more and at recess" (Aya, November 24, 2015).

Aya shared a view of *challenge* expressed as, "I learn if it's hard." Aya is sharing her experience of learning English and stating that she learns when it is challenging for her. I think this is important because often times students are not pushed to their pull potential and many learning opportunities can me missed especially for emergent bilinguals.

The tentative manifestation, *challenge* is taking shape and came through Rio and Aya's voices and experiences of learning English literacies in school. I think this is meaningful because the participants are stating from their own

experiences that they like to be challenged in school while learning English

literacies. It isn't often students express liking challenging academics in school.

This tentative manifestation of challenge is important to realize as an educator to

hold high standards for all students including emergent bilinguals. I was their

former teacher and had no idea about their views on when concepts were

challenging and meaningful to their learning. In the next section I continue to

describe the second tentative manifestation. I reveal the tentative manifestation

interaction below throughout conversations with participants.

Tentative Manifestation Two: Interaction

Examples of the tentative manifestation *interaction* from each participant

are shared below from conversations. I refer to *interaction* as a sense of being,

communicating, and collaborating with another person and is presented below

through participants' voices.

Rio

The conversation with Rio is a continuation from the previous

conversation during breakfast and morning work in the classroom.

Rebecca: **"**What was your experience like in school learning English?"

Rio: "In kindergarten I didn't know how to speak English, it was
my first year and difficult and I needed a lot and a lot of help with
my words, and I didn't know any English like now. I used to be
really sad when I hear my friends talking about stuff and I don't
understand, but now I can communicate with them."

Rebecca: "Tell me more."

> Rio: "I feel like I am surrounded by my country in Arabic class. The Arabic kids helped me a lot and we could communicate. I knew Arabic and the teacher could talk English and Arabic to me. With my friends at recess they always helped me and invited me to play. Like my friend, she spoke Arabic and helped me a lot and a lot. Like when our friends were saying tag and saying who is it and she would tell me so I understand. But now we help each other cause we know both (languages)" (Rio, November 17, 2015).

Rio mentioned the tentative manifestation *interaction* taking shape through her lived experience of learning English literacies socially at school. For example, Rio shared, "But now we help each other cause we know both (languages)." I understand this as a form of interaction and working together to learn with another person. Rio shared this as how a friend would help her communicate when she knew little English. Now that she is able to communicate in English, Rio can still use both languages through interaction with a peer. From her experience, learning is happening through interaction. In the following conversation, which was a continuation of the previous conversation during independent work time, I learned more about Rio's lived experiences in relation to the phenomenon.

> Rebecca: "Tell me more about your learning in school."

> Rio: "Me and my partner are doing a shoebox project together for our unit of inquiry. We are doing the desert because we chose to make that together. In past, most projects we are alone, but I like teamwork, so Ms. T gave us the option for a partner. She told us one super brain is good, but two super brains are super, super smart and I think that's right. When I work with my friend I get a lot of help, put our ideas together, like we agree to put sand on the bottom so we can do that and we can speak Arabic together as we work. It makes me feel like I am speaking to my country, like

Egypt- wake up- it's Arabic, sleep- it's Arabic. But like here it's a mix, school it's English and Arabic, I like it" (Rio, November 24, 2015).

Rio revealed through her voice about learning English literacies and interacting with others throughout learning experiences in school. For example, "I like teamwork" and "When I work with my friend I get a lot of help, put our ideas together, like we agree to put sand on the bottom so we can do that and we can speak Arabic together as we work." Rio is revealing that she learns through interaction. I think this is important because Rio is sharing what it is like to navigate and learn in English with a peer in the classroom. Knowing that she learns more working with others in her class can provide more opportunities for learning using interaction.

Nia

In the following excerpts from conversations with Nia, I share her experiences and voice relating to *interaction*. This conversation took place during reading center time. Students were working in their assigned center groups and doing assignments on their iPads.

Rebecca: "What is it like to learn English at school?"

Nia: **"**I speak all English, but sometimes I don't understand a lot. So I just figure out from someone else in Arabic. I used to go a little bit with my teachers, we used to teach me how to write it. But then I forgot a lot of it, so I only know how to write specifically things. And then, um, well I don't know a lot of like, when you say, like, you have to do this, and then you have to move on to this, and you have to do this, and kinda gets a lot, so I ask for help. Then when it's still too hard, I still try it. Sometimes I ask Ms. T, "are we supposed to do this again, or are we supposed to do that?" And she

helps me when she says, "you have to do this first, then you gotta go to that, then you gotta write these, then you gotta do the rocket math," and sometimes it's a lot. (Nia, November 17, 2015).

Nia showed *interaction* taking shape through her experience with a peer and adult while learning English literacies in school. I think this is important to note because Nia mentioned, "I speak all English, but sometimes I don't understand a lot. So I just figure out from someone else in Arabic." I see this as Nia navigating through a peer to understand learning tasks in the classroom. She also mentions asking the teacher for help as well as a peer. From her shared experience above, I see this as Nia using her peers and teacher to help learn English literacies in the classroom. I investigated more and through another conversation during Art class as the student was drawing and working on an art project.

Rebecca: "Tell me more about your experience learning English at school."

Nia: "It's fun."

Rebecca: "Why do you think it's fun?"

Nia: "Because I meet new friends. I speak to some of my friends in English all the time, because they don't understand Arabic and I don't want to make them mad or sad that they don't know Arabic, so I just speak to them in one language."

Rebecca. "Tell me more."

Nia. "Working by myself, no one corrects it. Cause if I did something wrong, I don't keep track of it. So then I did something wrong and then on my paper I forgot. So that someone sees and she

says that's wrong and then I can get help and correct it, then I learn when I'm with people working" (Nia, November 24, 2015).

Nia shared learning English literacies through working with peers and adults. I understand Nia as knowing when she works with another person she can gain a better understanding of literacies in school. For example, "Working by myself, no one corrects it", and "I learn when I'm with people working." Her voice explicitly states she learns when interacting with others in the classroom whether it is a peer or adult. The tentative manifestation, *interaction* exists within our conversations.

Aya

Aya shared the tentative manifestation *interaction* through her lived experiences. This conversation took place during reading center time on the iPad in the mainstream classroom.

> Rebecca: "Can you tell me about what you are learning, which one are you doing today?"
>
> Aya: "It matters what kind of assignment it is, but no, this is study island and I know this."
>
> Rebecca: "Tell me more about learning English at school."
>
> Aya: "That sometimes I don't know what to say, I would say it in Arabic to the teacher at Head Start. We would write, sing the alphabet, it gets harder"
>
> Rebecca: "Does it get harder in third grade?"
>
> Aya: "English, no, not really, it's not hard anymore."
>
> Rebecca: "Why?"

Aya: "Because I like to talk a lot with the girls at my table. Like we get to do our shoebox and I chose to work with Samantha."

Rebecca: "Tell me about that"

Aya: "I chose grassland. Um, we're going to have to try to make a hut with toilet paper rolls. We found information and then we have to draw how we would organize it in a box."

Rebecca: "Do you and Samantha talk Arabic together, how do you communicate?"

Aya: "Samantha knows Spanish, but I don't understand it. We speak English together because we get stuff done easier and it's funner."

Rebecca: "It's funner? What makes it fun?"

Aya: "Because you have someone to talk to and learn with not by yourself" (Aya, November 24, 2015).

Aya exposed through her experiences learning English literacies in school takes shape through working with peers. For example, Aya stated, "We speak English together because we get stuff done easier and it's funner" and "Because you have someone to talk to and learn with not by yourself." Her voice and shared experience of working with a peer reveal that Aya learns literacies alongside another classmate. Through my observations of seeing the participants interact as a daily learning tool with one another was really powerful as an educator and essential for their classroom learning. This is valuable because it shows from the voice of the learner and confirms that learning through others is meaningful when learning academics in school. Having another peer to initiate in conversations about learning is really beneficial for the participants. Learning is often times

individualized in the classroom and having the participants share their experiences

of interaction helps teachers and educators understand that learning English

literacies with one another enhances their learning in the classroom. All three

participants shared their experiences learning English literacies in school and I

reveal more through the last tentative manifestation below.

Tentative Manifestation Three: Native Language

The tentative manifestation *native language* is common throughout all the

participants learning experiences in school. The participants know and use their

native language throughout learning literacies in school. Below are examples that

led me to and demonstrated this tentative manifestation.

Rio

There were several occasions when *native language* emerged within our

conversations. For example, during a conversation Rio stated, "I would watch

English characters and sometimes bottom titles in Arabic that I read and each

word they say I understand it and the words get stuck in my mind" (Rio,

November 24, 2015). Another experience Rio shared through conversation using

her native language at school was, "Like my friend, she spoke Arabic and helped

me a lot and a lot. Like when our friends were saying tag and saying who is it and

she would tell me so I understand. But now we help each other cause we know

both (languages)" (Rio, November 17, 2015). When working with a peer Rio

stated, "When I work with my friend I get a lot of help, put our ideas together,

like we agree to put sand on the bottom so we can do that and we can speak

Arabic together as we work. It makes me feel like I am speaking to my country, like Egypt- wake up- it's Arabic, sleep- it's Arabic. But like here it's a mix, school it's English and Arabic, I like it" (Rio, November 24, 2015). Rio is sharing her lived experience of both languages. When she lived in Egypt, Arabic was the dominant language all the time. Now she is stating that both her languages are used Arabic and English because she lives in America. In school she is able to navigate her literacies in both languages. Her native language is used daily throughout her learning English literacies in school. I noticed this especially when Rio was reviewing ideas and concepts on notecards to study for a quiz in Arabic. I share a photo of the notecards below.

Figure 6
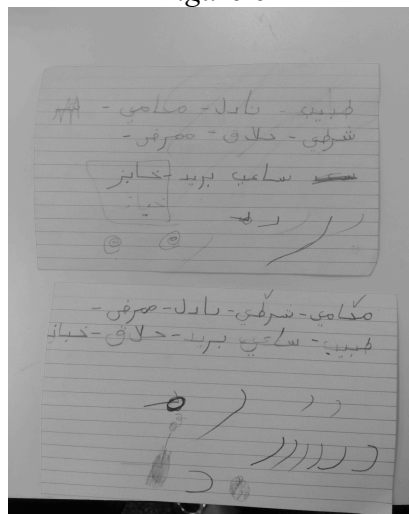
Rio was using the notecards to understand concepts in English, but using her native language to process and then think about what it means. Then she would translate it to English in her mind. This shows that Rio is using her native language to understand concepts more clearly before producing the meanings in English. This was intriguing to me. I think this is an important part of learning

English literacies in school for Rio because of the processing that takes place in her native language before producing the ideas in English. This seems to and might impact her understanding of concepts being taught in the classroom. Using this strategy and thinking about learning in her native language allowed Rio to be successful and learn because she was allowed to use her written native language in her classroom.

Nia

Nia also shared an experience of her native language through her experiences in school. **"**I speak all English, but sometimes I don't understand a lot. So I just figure out from someone else in Arabic" (Nia, November 17, 2015). In addition, the conversation below took place as Nia was working in a writing book independently at her table spot. It shows Nia describing pronunciation and writing in Arabic- *native language.*

> Nia: "I have to learn lot of things that you get that sometimes you
> need to get your or you have to put the letters with each other, and
> you can connect, and you have to learn a lot, but right now it's just
> so easy to connect the letters and"
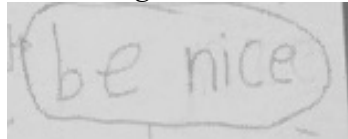>
> Rebecca: "What do you mean by that?
>
> Nia: "Like in Egyptian Arabic, I have to write my name like this ...
> it's so hard connecting letters, but in American English you just
> write like this. You don't have to connect them at all."

Figure 7
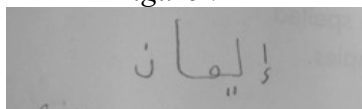
(Nia's example of Egyptian Arabic writing)

Figure 8

(Nia's example of American English)

Rebecca: "Why is that? Just cause they don't have to be connected, or tell me more about those"

Nia: "Cause when you, um, when you write, when you write elephant everything is usually a part like sounds, when you say it, cause, this is not supposed to be down, this needs to be up, and then this is not supposed to be connected, but it has to be. Sometimes big letters are kinda, like, it's so hard, like, you have to connect them. You have to connect them like, e-a, (ah), and sometimes you have to connect 2 e's, like (ee), makes the big e."

Rebecca: "So that's like the speaking, right? Tell me more".

Nia: "When you say, um, anything, like, if you say "Hello", salahm alakum- you don't, you can't say sa-ha -lem ha-le-kum you have to say it right fast together" (Nia, November 17, 2015).

Nia showed the tentative manifestation *native language* taking shape with writing and speaking experiences of learning English literacies in school through the conversation above. For example, Nia showed her knowledge of each language, "You have to put the letters with each other, and you can connect, and you have to learn a lot, but right now it's just so easy to connect the letters." She revealed the differences between her languages through connecting letters using writing and compares her native language with the written English letters. Nia stated, "American English you just write like this. You don't have to connect them at all." From her experience of both languages, Nia also shared connecting sounds

orally are different, Sometimes big letters are kinda, like, it's so hard, like, you have to connect them. You have to connect them like, e-a, (ah), and sometimes you have to connect 2 e's, like (ee), makes the big e." Unlike Arabic, Nia revealed speaking her native language is a more fluid, blending of sounds, "If you say "Hello", salahm alakum- you don't, you can't say sa-ha -lem ha-le-kum you have to say it right fast together." I see this as an importance because of her knowledge of her native language and English. She is aware of the differences of written and oral as well as distinguishing the sounds of both languages.

Aya

My conversations with Aya also revealed the tentative manifestation *native language*. When conversing with Aya, she mentioned a lived experience from her past learning English, "That sometimes I don't know what to say, I would say it in Arabic to the teacher at Head Start" (Aya, November 24, 2015). Aya also shared when she writes in her native language and compares with English. "Arabic makes like cursive, but twisties, but cursive is easier in English. In Arabic class, we do not do so much writing, but talking about family and watching videos" (Aya, November 24, 2015). Below is a photo example of Aya in a reading center that I observed in her classroom. The task was to create spelling words in English using the provided modeling clay.

Figure 9
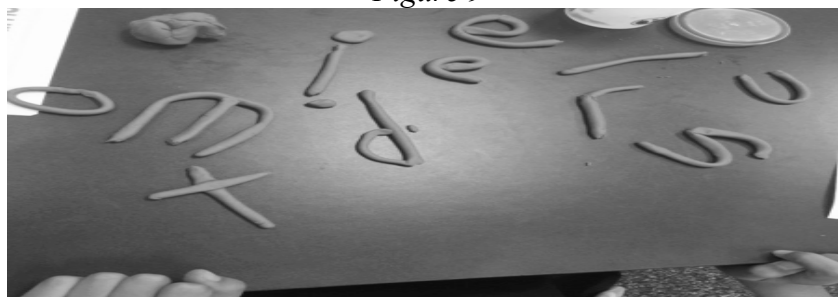
Through my observations I noticed that Aya was the only student to create all the letters first before constructing the word. I asked her what she was doing, "I am making the letters because we have to do spelling words." I paused for a moment and continued to observe. I noticed the other students at her table doing the same reading center were native English speakers. Aya continued to flip the letters using multiple ways to create the words. For example, she used the d for a p and an m for a w. This was interesting to me because no other student was doing this. The others were creating each individual letter at a time and recreating them after each word. Aya was able to visualize the letters in a different way. I think this is an important connection because of what she explained previous to me about the "twisties" and using her knowledge of her native language with learning English as well. All three participants use their native language to understand and learning English literacies in various ways. Their native language does not "shut off" when they come to school, but continues to engage with them to think, speak, and write as they learn in their classroom.

Summary

Through the tentative manifestations, *challenge*, *interaction,* and *native language,* the participants show how their experiences, voices, and perspectives

of English literacies in school take shape in various ways. Rio, Nia, and Aya

voiced how they each learn literacies and through their experiences in school. The

tentative manifestations are not exactly the same for all three of them, but similar

ideas are shared among them.

For example *challenge* was explored through Rio and Aya's lived

experiences. Rio referred to being challenged by a teacher. Aya mentioned

learning when schoolwork is hard. There were other similarities as well through

interaction. All three participants mentioned learning from another person. Rio,

Nia, and Aya all shared learning literacies with peers and working with someone

else to learn in school. Nia also mentioned learning through and with adults.

Another similarity was the use and knowledge of *native language.* All three

students are aware of and using their native language to enhance their literacies

and learning in school. The participants' knowledge of literacies at school differs

for each of them as revealed above through the three tentative manifestations,

their voices, and experiences. A further in-depth discussion about the findings

will be presented in the next chapter with the support and connections using

literature.

Chapter 5: Discussion

In this chapter I use the framework of my research questions to summarize my findings. Then, I provide implications of these research findings. I conclude by discussing limitations of the study and future routes for educators to explore and learn from students' voices, perspectives, and experiences.

I used phenomenological data analysis using the *whole-parts-whole* (Vagle, 2014) technique to highlight three tentative manifestations of how third grade emergent bilinguals experienced learning English literacies in school. I observed that the participants' experiences and perspectives manifested through three tentative manifestations. The first tentative manifestation is revealed through *challenge*. The second tentative manifestation is shared through *interaction,* and the third tentative manifestation is shown through *native language.* Each of these three tentative manifestations relate to and address the research questions: 1) *How might literacies of reading, writing, and speaking English take shape for third grade emergent bilinguals in school?* 2) *How might emergent bilinguals' cultural and linguistic funds of knowledge be used at school?*. It is important to keep in mind the post-structural concept of each tentative manifestation as a movement through each participants' experiences. This reflects Delueze and Guattari's (1987) notion of *lines of flight*, meaning all things that explode or take off travel in unpredictable *lines of flight* and are always fluid and changing. I make sense of my findings in relation to each research question below. I discuss the research questions in the form of three tentative manifestations through the experiences,

perspectives, and voices of three third grade emergent bilinguals. For the purpose of this chapter, I separate and organize by research question.

Research Question One

I address the first research question in relation to the tentative manifestations *challenge* and *interaction*. I describe each of them and support the findings through the students' voices, experiences, and the research literature.

How Might Literacies Of Reading, Writing, And Speaking English Take Shape For Third Grade Emergent Bilinguals Within School?

Pedagogy is not found in philosophy, but in real-life stiuations (van Manen, 1982). This idea is prevalent throughout my findings in relation to the research question and I share these connections next through the tentative manifestations *challenge* and *interaction*.

Challenge. The tentative manifestation *challenge* refers to the idea of a task being difficult, in which people are pushed to use skills to their full potential. Each participant shared her experiences and how the phenomenon resided in different ways. Rio, for example, expressed *challenge* through oral communication in the classroom when using English. For her, the tentative manifestation took shape reading English aloud in the classroom in front of peers and the teacher using the objective board mentioned in Chapter 4. Learning new pieces of the English language is considered a *challenge* and is expressed through her perspective. "My kindergarten teacher always challenged me by new things, I really liked when she challenged me, she didn't give me too many challenges

because I was a beginner, but very small at first" (Rio, November 17, 2015). This is powerful because often times teachers are hesitant to push emergent bilinguals to do tasks that they think are academically challenging. My student confirms from Rio's voice that the challenges from the teacher really did help her learn and because of that she was able to feel like a confident learner among her peers. The teacher used the objective board as a tool to help her oral English skills and made reading aloud part of classroom daily routines. She voiced having challenges in school early on in kindergarten in order to learn English. In third grade, it had become easier, yet she still liked to be challenged. I was her kindergarten teacher and had no idea about her own thoughts and experiences. At that time, I was unaware of her own thoughts and experience in reference to what it meant to be challenged. This is important for other teachers and educators to recognize. I understand this to mean that even though Rio is an emergent bilingual, she is not limited in her thinking abilities,which can be an assumption among many classroom teachers and educators. As her former teacher, I gave her the same tasks as her peers and she recognized that being challenged academically in the classroom was contributing to her learning English. Holding all students to high expectations is essential for continuous learning. As a former elementary classroom teacher I know there are many aspects to and dynamics of a classroom. However, Rio's voiced experience of being challenged is a reminder for educators that emergent bilinguals might be limited in their academic English, but not in their mind, "They need to be engaged in curriculum that challenges their

thinking" (Freeman & Freeman, 2001, p. 101). My study highlights that teachers need to be aware and think about who their students are and the abilities they bring to the classroom.

Similarily, Aya voiced her experience of learning English literacies in relation to the tentative manifestation *challenge.* She expressed learning English when it is hard, referring to being challenged and pushed academically. Specifially, Aya mentioned that she was challenged when she practiced writing and compared both her languages. The written language of English cursive seemed to be more challenging, but she enjoyed learning English when "it's hard." This reinforces and supports that educators should hold high expectations for all learners in their classrooms. At times curricula are adapted and scoffolded to be more accessible for students, but my study shows students like to be pushed academically despite their language abilites. Using students' language abilities as an assest in the classroom rather than a deficit is vital.

The lived through experience of the phenomenon took shape through *challenge* for these two participants in different ways. Rio and Aya's experiences connect and reinforce that students have their own perception and experience on what happens in classrooms (Cook-Sather, 2002). This tentative manifestation is important because it gives educators insight into a way student learning can take shape for emergent bilinguals in the classroom from their own views and experiences. Educators need to take the time to see what emergent bilinguals can bring to the classroom and how they learn. Preparing teachers to understand that

communicating and talking with their students about how they learn is important and can help encourage positive learning experiences. My study demonstrates that through the students' voices learning takes shape in English when they are challenged and pushed academically. I learned through the students' voices that teachers need to create opportunities for students to engage in meaningful activities that build on their life experiences, but also provide them access to challenging academics. From my own personal lived experiences this is true as well. I lived through a non-challenging atmosphere that hindered my abilities. My teachers did not know what I was capable of because they did not take the time to really get to know me as a learner. By challenging all students' academic abilities, they will learn and feel confident in school. This idea continues to be present throughout the next tentative manifestation.

Interaction. This tentative manifestation *interaction* relates to the sense of being, communicating, and collaborating with another person. I found this tentative manifestation throughout all of the participants' experiences and statements. This is prevelent in their everyday learning in the classroom as the example from the morning meeting greeting revealed in Chapter 4. I think a collaborative environment enhances student learning in positive ways and it shows through each participants' experiences in school. Interaction supports Eve Gregory's (2008) concept that children learn their literacy practices alongside a more experienced member of the culture. My study also supports and highlights interaction from another member and is supported with the previous research

reviewed in Chapter 2 through the studies from Olmedo (2003) and Zwiers & Crawford (2009) that used peer interaction to support student learning. Olmedo found that peer interactions and objects from the classroom help support emergent bilinguals' literacies with one another (2003). Zwiers & Crawford (2009) found that allowing students to share ideas, construct knowledge with peers encouraged literacy learning. The idea of interaction with peers connects to their research and my study adds to the knowledge because according to the students' voices they were learning English literacies when interacting with peers. However, in my study the differences in what the students' said confirmed and revealed that interaction takes shape through their English literacies. For example, Rio shared about how she interacted socially at recess and academically during a project in the classroom with peers to navigate school in multiple contexts. She also had feelings of sadness when she was not able to communicate and interact with peers at school. Teachers can alleviate these feelings by using peers as another resource and form of teaching and learning in the classroom (Yangguang, 2009).

Nia shared her experience learning through adults and peers showing interaction using literacies through questioning and conversation. "I learn when I am working with people" (Nia, November 24, 2015). Nia's statement and experience supports and adds to Zwiers & Crawford's (2009) research that emergent bilinguals need accelerated language development from experiences that let them share their ideas, support them with evidence, and create new knowledge with other students. Learning from other people in the classroom is powerful

because the information is coming from peer voices. Student voices in my study confirmed that learning with peers is very powerful. I understand this to mean that learning from a peer provides clarification at an understandable level, and also provides a push to think about the learning together. It is a way to discuss, inquire and process academic information.

My study shows and supports Garrison's (1997) concept that interacting in shared creative inquiry increases the potential of others. This appeared throughout the students' lived experiences of learning literacies together in their inquiry based school environment. My study supports this and reinforces the need for supportive classrooms that provide many opportunities for communication between teachers and students. Teachers need to interact with their students and converse about their learning together. The three student voices and experiences that emerged from my study confirm that interacting with others contributes to learning English literacies. The IB photo bulletin board and concepts shared in Chapter 4 relate closely to this. The key concepts and attitudes encouraged and helped promote higher-level communication and interactions with students, their peers, and teachers in their classroom. From my perspective and experiences in classroom and school contexts, having a curriculum that is supportive of interactions and working with others plays an essential role for successful learning. Educators need to be aware that providing classroom opportunities and time for students to interact with one another is important and can help to support learning for some students. Taking the time to ask students about their own

learning is vital for classroom teachers to become aware of the ways students learn best in their classrooms. Not all students learn exactly the same way and that is a factor for educators to consider.

Aya stated that learning literacies through working with a peer using oral communication in an academic context is more enjoyable. Learning is "funner" when interacting with a partner according to her experiences. From my own observation, I noticed that Aya interacted more freely with peers than adults. It was prevalent throughout her daily routines that I noticed this. In the classroom Aya would discuss classwork openly with peers, but limit her interactions and conversations with adults in the room. She was respectful to adults and responded and with them when asked, but would not seek out an adult over a peer. Teachers should know their students' personalities and be able to recognize how and when a student interacts with members of their classroom. This tentative manifestation strongly suggests that teachers should welcome opportunities for collaboration in the classroom among peers and adults. My study adds to the research and connects to Yangguang's (2009) idea that a supportive classroom should provide many opportunities for frequent dialogue and communication between teachers and students.

It is also critical to connect the idea of interaction to van Manen's (1982) concept of pedagogy that is not found in philosophy, but found in the experience of its presence - that is, in concrete, real-life situations. These real-life situations are important to acknowledge because they can impact students' learning in

school. My study shows that taking the time to sit and listen to students' voices can help mainstream teachers guide their instructional practices. The interactions that take shape within the classroom for students are important for educators to be aware and use to support and inform their instructional practices. The need for these practices is evident based on the students' voices in my study and supported again through the third tentative manifestation under research question two.

Research Question Two

I discuss the second research question below in relation to the tentative manifestation *native language*. This tentative manifestation relates closely to the previous question and was prevalent in all participants' experiences in school.

How Might Emergent Bilinguals' Cultural and Linguistic Funds Of Knowledge Be Used At School?

This tentative manifestation *native language* aligns with this research question. The participants' native language is present throughout learning literacies in school and is discussed within this tentative manifestation below.

Native language. Native language took shape through learning literacies in school for all three participants. It is important to note that this tentative manifestation worked through and across all participants on a routine basis. The idea of *native language* connects closely to the second research question referring to funds of knowledge. Learners have knowledge and their life experiences give them this knowledge (González et. al., 2013). For my participants, their native language is integral to their daily routines and not shunned out in their

mainstream classroom. This means the students' cultures and languages are embedded throughout their lives and take shape and support their learning of literacies while participating in school. Again, the morning meeting activity shared in Chapter 4 encouraged and allowed languages other than English to be expressed. Students were encouraged to use different languages and interact with one another and that led to positive language identites for these students. This is important because often times the "English only" mindset can be embedded in a learning environment in many public schools. Students might not be allowed or feel comfortable using their other languages if it is not encouraged and looked at positively in the classroom. My study supports multiple language use to complete tasks in a classroom and shows how it supports student learning, and should be incorporated into daily routines and activities. This tentative manifestation was evident for all participants. All three participants discussed using their native language, Arabic, in some way, shape or form throughout school in order to help them learn and navigate using English literacies.

Rio shared that using Arabic orally with her peers helped her to better understand English. She felt that using both languages in school helped enhance her learning. "But like here it's a mix, school it's English and Arabic, I like it" (Rio, November 24, 2015). She had experiences of being in her home country and brought her knowledge learned from her home country into her learning process of English literacies at school. When studying for a quiz, Rio was using Arabic to understand concepts in her native language and translate them to what she knew

in English. This was a natural process for her. It shows that some students might need to process ideas and meanings in their native language before understanding it in English. Educators should be aware that some students might benefit from doing this. Knowing about a student and their funds of knowledge as a classroom teacher is vital for educators working with emergent bilinguals. Encouraging the use of native language in the classroom connects to the work of Park, et. al. (2002), who found that allowing students to speak, write, converse, read, and share their knowledge in their native language can produce literacies for young emergent bilinguals. My study connects and reinforces this research. Again, in my study, the students themselves confirmed that native language use in the classroom supported their English literacies.

Children bring their history of learning prior to attending school when they come to formal education (Vygotsky, 1978). Nia pointed to her funds of knowledge from her native language to better understand schoolwork in English. She compared the two written languages, and doing this demonstrated how her funds of knowledge took shape and supported her learning. When Aya had difficulty understanding English, she shared the experience of using her native language to clarify with others. I also observed her creating letters and using another way of thinking and visualizing words, unlike her peers who were native English speakers. Aya created and reused English letters to create each spelling word by flipping and switching their positions, visualizing words differently than her peers. This is important to note because it shows how her funds of knowledge

emerged. Aya's linguistic background is, Arabic, which looks more logographic than the English writing system. Her behaviors demonstrated that her funds of knowledge were helping her English literacies take shape. It also reinforces that funds of knowledge can help support learning in the classroom.

By listening to the student voices, educators can discern students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds as they are learning English literacies in school. English is the dominant language for my participants when they come to school each day. In relation to Au's (2013) idea, the participants are speakers of a native language other than English- the language of power in this school context. My study supports and adds to this idea by showing that emergent bilinguals are often immersed in the language of power- English when they are at school. In Kenner's (2000) study, a student shared an experience that revealed she enjoyed the use of her native language in the classroom. Kenner's example connects well and reinforces the concept that when students use their funds of knowledge in the classroom they feel confident and comfortable (Kenner, 2000). In my study, I found it interesting that no student shared a negative experience relating to the use of her native language in the classroom, but rather positively expressed that they were learning English by using both languages. I think this is because of the school context. The school embraced the use of students' native languages, a practice that is unlike most traditional school programs. Students' languages are embedded and a part of them and, in turn, become part of daily learning routines.

The participants felt comfortable stating and sharing how they use their native language to help them learn English in school.

The students in my study were given many opportunities to use their native language at school, and that led to the next step for mainstream teachers who also need to provide similar supports as designated language teachers unlike much of the research I reviewed in Chapter 2. Programs that are designed based on emergent bilinguals' use of home languages have proven to add to their achievements (Helman, 2012). I think my research supports the foundational understanding that mainstream classroom teachers need to be conscious that they are also language teachers and can impact learning greatly in classrooms for students. In addition, my study reinforces the importance of native language in the classroom to support learning English literacies in school for emergent bilinguals.

Implications

My study brought to the surface ways that English literacies can potentially take shape through the lived experiences of three third grade emergent bilinguals in school and what educators can do to support students in their learning. I share the implications of the study below.

In my study, I found that students' voices and experiences influence their learning in school. Their experiences reside in different ways. Taking the time to know students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and use what they already know to support language learning is vital. In my study, I found that students' experiences impact their learning in multiple ways. Students felt and experienced

learning with a challenging curriculum, interactions with others, and using their native language to navigate literacies in school. Most often teachers have the power and control of the classrom, but allowing students to have a voice can make a shift to enhance student learning at school. Teachers can support student empowerment and give them a voice by asking questions that support getting to know who students are as learners. My study shows the importance of allowing students to converse and share their learning expierences. The clearest indicator of the beginning of a cultural shift in the classroom is to alter dominant power imbalances between adults and young people (Cook-Sather, 2006). By spending time and conversing with students, teachers can begin to shift their power and perspectives about how classroom learning can take shape. I have witnessed that and often times students and teachers do not have unstructured conversations in classrooms involving their learning experiences. "Instead of learners simply acquiring the new language the teachers and the classrooms *acquire the learners* (Faltis, 2000, p.116). Getting to know learners in their classrooms is an important ability for teacher educators to enact as they develop curriculum and teaching strategies in their classrooms.

Viewing second language learners as assets rather than deficits in the classroom can have a huge impact on learning English literacies in school as noted from the students' voices and experiences. In my study, students learned from one another using their native languages and English during academic learning times. A curriculum that allows for multiple languages to be welcomed

in classrooms with higher-level questioning can also impact student learning. My study shows and supports the idea that students' lived experiences, voices, and perspectives are key factors in how and what they learn in school. Learning with and through others in the classroom can impact learning and needs to continue to be part of daily routines in mainstream classrooms. Lev Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) theory comes alive when children partake in joint-problem solving with others who are more experienced than they are and bring intellectual tasks into their scope of action (Gregory, 2008). My study supports students working together to complete tasks and is confirmed from the student voices throughout the tentative manifestations. Teachers who know how students experience learning by listening to their voices and learning about their lived experiences can provide better instructional opportunites in their classrooms. However, this might look, feel, and be seen differently in classrooms because not all learners aquire identical skills at the same time or have similar lived experiences.

Limitations

My study and its findings helped me to get closer to the phenomenon of third grade emergent bilinguals and their experinces learning English literacies in school. However, there are also several elements that may have influenced the tentative manifestations and how they emerged. I discuss the limitations of the study below.

School Factors

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the International Baccalaureate program present in the school I worked with is inquiry based. Being a former teacher in the building, I knew that the teaching in the school involved daily inquiry and technology. This is a limitation because the participants have been taught using an active, inquiry-based curriculum; their learning is different than the traditional input-based school curriculum that is seen in most public schools in the surrounding areas. The students were used to being asked questions and articulating answers with peers and adults. Questioning was a natural form of learning as well as student individual iPad use for academic tasks on a daily basis. In addition, the school's second language program is Arabic. Students' native language was present in school on a daily basis, which again differs from most traditional public school programs.

Participants. The three participants happened to be female: the gender choice was out of my control. Also, the participants all had the same native language of Arabic.

Research positionality. I positioned myself as member of the classroom while doing daily routines with the students and teacher. Four years ago, I was the participants' kindergarten teacher. With that connection, it is possible that some students still felt the comfort level of speaking and dicussing their experiences with me. Having a previous relationship with these students made conversations more organic and easier becuase I already knew the students and their

personalities. However, my inability to understand codemeshing with Arabic puts a limitation on completely understanding the language they expressed. In addition, I might not have undersood exactly what was being communitated between students who were using their native language together. Being a female researcher with female participants is important to note as well. I chose to look at student voice because I am an educator who believes strongly in individual identity, voice, and experiences. This was reflected in my post-reflexion statement. I aimed to give voice to the students and their learning experiences. Engaging in the post-reflexion process helped guide my understandings of my role in shaping the research (Vagle, 2014).

Methodology

An important factor in my study was the use of Vagle's (2014) five component process of post-intentional phenomenology to guide this study. I specifically looked at the lived experiences of the participants through their voices and experiences. Therefore, what the teacher did and the actions of other students in the classroom were not a focus of the study. However, I know that other people in the classroom impact students' experiences and learning in school. Still, my intention was not to research teacher practices in this particular study. Using the *whole-parts-whole* analysis shows how and why these tentative manifestations came about. This method of research is qualitative focusing on quality not quantity or numerical results. There is no final conclusion or one result when

using this type of research method which reinforces the always fluid and changing

approach (Delueze & Guattari, 1987).

Future Directions

I provided evidence and findings of students' voices and lived experiences

that can help future research in the field by engaging in conversations with current

and future educators. Not only second language learners, but also all learners in

the classroom should be permitted to voice their perspectives about how and what

they are learning. The importance of recognizing and utilizing students' identities

in the classroom is necessary for all educators. Teachers need to be open to

change and adapting to students' identities each year due to the fact that not all

students have the same experiences. Teachers need to know whom their students

are in their classroom, where they come from, and their cultural and linguistic

abilities. Each year students' experiences manifest, change, and come about in

various ways for each individual. Further questions to consider are: How can

educators use their students' experiences and voices to further their own

professional development, instruction, and practices in the classroom? In what

ways can classroom teachers engage with students to open conversations to listen

to their voices and experiences? How and where do the resources come from to

support ever-evolving populations of diverse students from year to year? Where

and who are the experts to provide training and professional development for

educators about engaging in students' voices and identities in elementary

classrooms? There are many ways my research supports and may help lead other

professionals to research similar questions in a variety of ways in different school

contexts. I wrap up my thoughts with a final post-reflexion journal below

followed by a conclusion.

Post-reflexion Journal Entry 3-12-16

I continue to think about and revisit my original post reflexion statement: I am an educator who believes strongly in individual identity, voice, and experiences. This has new meaning to me now than it did before as a classroom teacher. I did acknowledge and assume a lot about my students based on my own views of them in the classroom and their work produced. However, now spending more time really hearing students' voices and conversing about their own views, voices, and experiences is really powerful to me. I've learned that you need to know yourself as a learner and see students for who they are as well. I feel my teaching can be even more powerful if I shift my thinking to students' perspectives. Through my research, I did give voice to the participants and their learning experiences in English at school. It seems so simple to ask a student about their learning; however, it always changes and evolves in various contexts. There is no one final result, which is difficult for some to grasp, but that was not the hope for my study. I wanted to get closer to the phenomenon as it was lived from the three third grade emergent bilinguals and I did.

Conclusion

There is no universal method that works equally well with all children

because children learn in different ways according to their personalities, cultural

background, their life, and literacy experiences of their families (Gregory, 2008).

This was evident throughout my research findings and an important insight for

educators to realize now and in the future. Teacher guidance and practices such as

peer interaction, native language use, cultural practices, and linguistic consistency

support emergent bilinguals' literacies in the mainstream classroom. My

participants did not have the same exact experience or learn English literacies in

the same way. Commonalities between participants were present as revealed

through my tentative manifestations. Allowing students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds to be present in their classrooms is a key to their learning successes. Teachers need to be aware of the young emergent bilinguals' backgrounds and experiences with literacies in home and in school. Teachers' support can enhance young emergent bilinguals' confidence and their success learning literacies in the classroom when getting to know who they are as a person and learner. Knowing who students are as learners, where they come from, and how they communicate is very important for educators to consider each year in their classrooms in order to implement effective instructional practices and learning experiences. More research focusing on student voice, experience, and perspectives at the elementary level are necessary in order to continue to find new and distinct ways learning can evolve for a variety of diverse students in classrooms. The research needs to take place everyday in elementary classrooms with emergent bilinguals where teachers can explore their students' identities, strengths, experiences, and perspectives to create more empowered learning environments for young learners.

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Appendix A

Chart of Literature Reviewed

Author/Year	Methodology Age group	Key Ideas/Findings
Araujo, L. (2002)	-Classroom Observations -5-6 Kindergarten	-Teacher practices and strategies: journal writing, circle reading, phonics, background knowledge, modeling, native language use, interactions with teacher, positive support affect literacies for emergent bilinguals, classroom environment, oral, written language
Bauer, E. B., & Mkhize, D. (2012).	-Qualitative -Ethnographic -2-6 years old	-Learned languages at home from family members in German/English -Dual language book were used
Gregory, E. (2001)	-Observations -5- 8 year olds	-Learning from siblings "synergy"- worked together using language -Home learning and resources impact learning -Family support outside of the classroom influenced emergent bilinguals
Gregory, E. (2004)	-Observations -Audio recordings -4-7 year olds	-Siblings affected learning at home through interaction -Teacher recognized and called upon home experiences in school
Helman, L. A., & Burns, M. K. (2008).	-Quantitative -Qualitative -7-8 year olds	-Assessment, development of oral and written language -Effective teachers scaffolds, used variety of learning activities through teacher guidance and practices
Kenner, C. (2000)	-Case study, observations -4-7 year olds	-Native language used in the classroom -Monolingual curriculum denies students of biliteracy -Visual signs in classrooms with native language and English supported literacies -Use of both languages in the classroom impacted literacy -Native language supported in school
Kenner, C., Ruby, M., Jessel, J., Gregory, E., & Arju, T. (2007)	-Observations, Survey to families -Qualitative, Quantitative -Interview,	-Sociocultural learning -Grandparent interactions with literacies affected emergent bilinguals, home learning, family was involved at home -Learned language and literacies from older member of culture to young and vice versa, this

	video recordings -6 year olds	impacted native and English literacies
Kenner, C., Al-Azami, S., Gregory, E., & Ruby, M. (2008)	-Observations -10 year olds	-Bilingual use of storytelling and poetry in the primary classroom supported language -Bilingual poetry used as a resource in the classroom -Cultural knowledge building from using bilingual poetry in the classroom -Build on cultural understanding from home in the classroom
Olmedo, I. M. (2003)	-Observations -Audio and video taped of students during lessons -Interviews -5-6 year olds	-Language mediation strategies used be students to gain understanding of language and literacies in the classroom -Peer and sociocultural learning was present in the classroom -Scaffold for collaborating with peers -Dual language model used -"Bilingual Echo"- strategy used among students to support learning
Parke, T., Drury, R., Kenner, C., & Robertson, L. H. (2002)	-Observations -Case study -5-7 year olds	-Allowed students to speak, write, converse, read, and share their knowledge in their native language can produce literacies for young emergent bilinguals -Strategies for teachers
Robertson, L .H. (2002)	-Ethnographic -5 year old	-Using multiple languages simultaneously in the classroom increased literacies -Teacher practices, guidance and support of multiple language use in school
Sneddon, R. (2000)	-Interviews, recordings, observations -5-7 year olds	-Learning from culture and community outside of school -Home learning and resources
Sneddon, R. (2008)	-Observations, video recordings - Primary aged children 5-10 year olds	-Dual language books provided in school enhanced literacies -Teacher and classroom are crucial for literacy development -Native language supported in school
Tabors & Snow (2001).	-Observations -Interviews -Primary aged	-Teacher pushed aside native language use and student views and perspectives of learning, impacted student experience and learning
Volk, D., & De Acosta,	-Ethnographic -5-6 year olds	-Network of people supported literacies and use of home resources

M. (2001)		-Collaborative interactions -Multiple resources in native languages used to support learning -Similarities between home and school literacies
Yangguang, C. (2009)	-Observations, -Analyzing student journals -10 year olds	-Emergent bilinguals' perspective of their teacher practices, experiences, and feelings in the mainstream classroom -Disconnect, sadness, no learning happening due to low knowledge of second language -More meaningful teaching supports for emergent bilinguals with little second language vocabulary -Teacher guidance and practices affect language learning
Zwiers, J., & Crawford, M. (2009)	-Observations -Qualitative -8-9 year olds, fourth grade	-Teacher practices, guidance to help support language -Peer interactions affect emergent bilinguals -Scaffolding literacies in the classroom is necessary -Allowing students to share ideas, construct knowledge with peers encourages literacy learning

Appendix B

Daily Classroom Schedule

8:35 - 9:15	Morning Work/Breakfast Morning Meeting
9:25 - 10:00	Math Centers
10:00 - 10:45	Math
10:45	Bathroom
11:00 - 11:30	Reading Centers
11:30 - 12:00	Lunch
12:00 - 12:40	Gym (A) Arabic (B)
12:40 - 1:20	Arabic (A) Gym (B)
1:20	Bathroom
1:30 - 2:15	Reading Art (Wednesdays)
2:15 - 3:30	Unit of Inquiry Recess (Tue/Fri @ 3:00)
3:30 - 3:40	End of Day