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# Language of Instruction and Puerto Rican First Graders' Ethnic Categorizations

Margarita Marichal  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Education

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Margarita Marichal

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Review Committee

Dr. Sallie Jenkins, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Amie Beckett, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Paula Dawidowicz, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University

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Abstract

Language of Instruction and Puerto Rican First Graders' Ethnic Categorization

by

Margarita Marichal

MEd, University of Houston, 1990

BA, University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus, 1988

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Early Childhood Education

Walden University

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## Abstract

The use of subtractive bilingual models in Puerto Rico may influence children's construction of social categorizations. There is a gap in the literature related to linguistics, ethnicity, and systems of education and acculturation of a majority group. The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools on first graders' ethnic identity construction in the municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. The conceptual framework of the study was based on Markus's unified theory of race and ethnicity, Berry's bidimensional model of acculturation, Tajfel and Turner's social identity theory, and Wimmer's ethnic boundaries multilevel process theory. The research questions concerned how teachers' communicative practices reflected and promoted children's construction of social categorizations, what roles teachers played in ethnic education, and the influences that shaped their cultural knowledge. Purposeful sampling was used to select 2 Spanish speaking and 2 English speaking classrooms from the municipality that could provide information to answer the research questions. Data were collected from classroom observations, structured interviews with teachers, analysis of classroom artifacts, and the use of Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, and Buki's Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale. Data were coded and then categorized by theme. The findings of the study demonstrated that teachers' hybridized ethnicity is reflected in communicative practices that influenced children's construction of social categorizations. This study could serve to develop strong cultural awareness policies for education systems and for other countries at risk of losing their language and traditions.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this work to my husband, Wilfredo, and my children, Gabriel and Adriana, for their support and unconditional love. Another important person, to whom I will be eternally grateful, is my mother, Flavia. She taught me that life is worth living.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

The world is a conglomerate of nations and each one has a history and cultural markers that define its citizens. Ethnic identity represents a person's sense of belonging to a cultural group as well as his or her ancestry, language, traditions, values, and geographical origin (Phinney & Ong, 2007). Ethnic identity develops in early childhood and is transmitted by the usage of heritage language (Fisherman, as cited in Lee, 2012). Identity is an essential element of language. Once children are born, they undergo a language immersion process that parallels the process of cultural immersion (Lee, 2013). This phenomenon illustrates the importance of heritage language as the medium by which individuals access cultural knowledge and socialization processes ("Informe Final Sobre el Idioma en Puerto Rico", 2001). The political status of Puerto Rico as an unincorporated territory of the United States, the politicized system of education on the island, and the use of English as one of the official languages has caused complex issues of cultural identity among islanders (Arce de Vázquez, 2001; Dike, 2014; Font-Guzmán, 2013; Negrón de Montilla, 1977). In this matter, teachers are crucial promoting cultural knowledge and children's ethnic development.

In this study, I examined the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools on first graders' ethnic identity formation in the municipality of San Juan. Donohoe Luscombe and Kazdal (2014) found that schools are institutions where identity is formed through socialization processes and that language of instruction is a determining factor in identity formation. The language

of instruction and teachers' communicative practices are fundamental factors that can contribute to ethnic identity formation and to the ethnic boundaries that may influence Puerto Rican children's perceptions of who they are based on language (Barron, 2014; Ivanova, 2013). Furthermore, Barron (2014) determined that children's ethnic identity formation is the result of developmental processes that prompt individuals to make distinctions between themselves and others. Moreover, teachers contribute to children's social construction of identity as they negotiate racial and ethnic relations within their classrooms (Bustos-Flores, Riojas-Clark, Guerra, & Sánchez, 2008). Schwartz, Wee Koh, Xi Chen, Sinke, and Geva (2016) argued that teachers are active and powerful language policy makers in their classrooms. This role is critical in the development of cultural and linguistic identities in children (Schwartz et al., 2016).

English language immersion programs in Puerto Rico promote subtractive bilingualism or the development of English monolinguals in an island where only 15% of the population reports speaking English well (Puerto Rican Census, 2014). Torres González (as cited in Rodríguez-Arroyo, 2013) asserted that, while both languages, Spanish and English, are important to Puerto Ricans, Spanish should always be respected as the native language (p. 94). Additive bilingualism promotes the use of the native language as a foundation for English learning without contesting ethnicity or language loss (Raskauskas, Behrends, & Nuñez, 2015). The aforementioned model of bilingualism is more attuned with Puerto Rico's language and cultural idiosyncrasy.

The Puerto Rican ethnicity and language dilemma is unique. Contemporary and classical authors have documented the relationship between ethnic identity and heritage



language in voluntary and subjugated immigrant groups from other Spanish speaking countries (Agirdag, , 2014; Bartlett & Garcia, 2011; Brown & Chu, 2012; Danzal & Wilkinson, 2017), and from non Spanish speaking countries (Choi, Lee, & Oh, 2016; Donghui & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009s), and from Puerto Ricans living in the United States (Butler, 2001; Gazzardo, Todorova, Adams, & Falcón, 2016). However, the ways in these concepts are manifested for individuals living on the island of Puerto Rico are not comparable. Puerto Rico's situation represents the acculturation process of a majority group, speaking the majority language. The potential social implications of this study may be applicable to all cultural groups whose members are striving to maintain their heritage language and cultural and ethnic identity. Study findings may help educational policy makers to understand the benefits of bilingualism, multilingualism, and biculturalism in a globalized world.

This chapter is organized in sections that connect the reader to the topic and to the coherent development of the case study design I used. In the first section, I synthesize the background information needed to understand the complexity of the study. The section includes the historical accounts that have contributed to the ethnicity-language dichotomy that is being debated in the island of Puerto Rico. The problem statement section highlights the gap in the literature that was the focus of this study. The purpose of the study is described and supported by classical and contemporary literature. The chapter follows with the research questions that were used to guide the study; the conceptual framework that supported the investigation; the nature of the study; definitions of important terms; and discussion of assumptions, the scope and

delimitations, and the limitations of the study. Following is a section on the study's significance and necessity. The chapter is then summarized and a transition is provided as a brief introduction to Chapter 2.

### **Background**

Puerto Ricans have developed a national identity based on multicultural influences. During Puerto Rico's Spanish rule, other Europeans established communities in the island and brought their language, traditions and values. In addition, Spanish conquistadores brought African slaves to work on mining and the sugarcane fields (Font-Guzman, 2013). Nevertheless, Puerto Rican identity developed within Spanish language (Cunningham, as cited in Arce, 2001). Therefore, Spanish has been the language by which Puerto Ricans have communicated words and feelings for centuries.

In 1898, as a result of the Spanish-American War and the Treaty of Paris, Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States government, and the island became a U.S. military territory (Negrón de Montilla, 1977). This historical event initiated the "Americanization" process that has led to the deterioration of Puerto Rico's heritage language, traditions, values, and loss of cultural identity (Vientos as cited in Dike, 2014).

In April 1900, the United States Congress passed the Foraker Act, which resulted in the establishment of the first Joint Committee on Education (Osuna cited in Negrón de Montilla, 1977). The President of the Joint Committee suggested the implementation of an Americanization process through school instruction (George W. Davis Report of the Military Governor of Porto Rico on Civil Affairs, 1900, p.180). Moreover, he urged the use of English as the language of instruction in schools (Negrón de Montilla, 1977). This

language policy propitiated the American colonialism that had serve to break Puerto Ricans sense of identity (Fanon cited in Dike, 2014)

In March 1917, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Jones Act. The Jones Act restructured Puerto Rican central government in three branches and granted U.S. citizenship to the inhabitants with limited civil and government rights (Acta Jones, Carta Orgánica de 1917 de Puerto Rico). Osuna (as cited in Negrón de Montilla, 1977) argued that, from 1900 to 1930 under the Foraker and Jones Acts, the main objectives of the different commissioners on education were the following:

- Americanization of school-age children.
- Expansion of the public educational system.
- Implementation of English language for school instruction.

Motha (as cited in Schultz, 2016) argued that the United States government used linguicism, or the intentional destruction of language through educational measures, with other minorities like Native Americans and immigrants as an enculturation technique (p. 103). English language instruction was implemented on the island of Puerto Rico until 1950. In that year, the U.S. Congress approved Public Law 600 granting Puerto Ricans the right to organize a local government and a Constitution under their supervision (Font-Guzmán & Alemán, as cited in Font-Guzmán, 2013). The local government reinstated Spanish as the language of instruction but maintained English as a mandatory second language course from kindergarten to 12th grade. DuBord (2007) hypothesized that local resistance to English as a language of instruction led to the popular point of view that made Spanish an essential component of Puerto Rican national identity (p. 242).

In 1993, the Partido Nuevo Progresista de Puerto Rico, which favors statehood for Puerto Rico (González, 2011), passed a bill reinstating English as one of the official languages of Puerto Rico (Ley Núm. 1 de 28 de enero de 1993). The island's governor reestablished the Official Language Act of 1902 and revoked the Spanish only law of 1991 that recognized Spanish as the official language and English as Puerto Rico's second language (Ley Núm. 4 de 5 de abril de 1991). Currently, Puerto Rico has two official languages, Spanish and English. Although a few private schools had offered instruction using English language for decades, reestablishing the Language Act of 1902 transformed private and public education providers' offerings and gave rise to bilingual and English immersion programs throughout the island (Rodríguez-Arroyo, 2013).

Puerto Rico's colonial status has created profound confusion because residents belong to a nation (the United States) but are not part of it. Inda (as cited in Font-Guzmán, 2013) argued that it is through citizenship that people experience and internalize representations of who they are (p. 28). The current political status of Puerto Rico facilitates the cultural production of diasporic Puerto Rican communities that are hybrid and that present the possibility of new cultural and national formations (Rolón Dow, 2015). The diaspora has resulted in group categorization and exclusion of those perceived as belonging to other ethnic groups based on language usage, geographical location, and cultural practices, according to Lamboy (2011). Puerto Rico's case is unique in that, although the dominant speech community speaks Spanish, it is perceived as an inferior language based on the island's subordinate political relationship with the

United States (Irvine, 1998). This state of language and political subordination might create confusion regarding ethnic construction.

Lee (2012) explained that the loss of heritage language leads to children's inability to develop or maintain cultural identity. A shared language is part of the construction of a national and cultural identification. Furthermore, Hammer, Lawrence, Rodríguez, Davison, and Miccio (2011) found that the loss of heritage language is a key indicator of a person's level of acculturation. Acculturation is a process of cultural modification in which the minority cultural group adopts or borrows traits from the majority cultural group (Berry, 2005).

Children's ethnic identification is the result of social interpretations that are contingent on social interactions in different contexts (Quiros, 2012). One of the most influential social contexts where ethnic identity development can occur is the classroom setting. Once in schools, children are introduced to the cultural values of the predominant society and to the usage of the preferred language (Hammer et al., 2011). Although the main language of Puerto Rico is Spanish, English immersion programs emphasize the use of English as the first and only language spoken at school (Sostre Rodriguez, 2008).

Paat and Pallebon (2012) stated that heritage language proficiency is a critical element for ethnic identity development. Shin (2013) explained that children who attend immersion programs go from being monolingual in Spanish to being monolingual in English instead of becoming bilingual (p. 12). Additionally, Portes and Rumbaut (as cited in Shin, 2013) posited that the process of becoming monolingual in English has led

entire communities to abandon their native language (p. 10). There is a significant connection between language loss or endangerment and self-esteem and cultural heritage loss, according to Grenoble, Rice, & Richards (as cited in Herbert, McConnell-Ginet, Muller, & Whitman, 2009). Language abandonment is often paired to the belief that the native language is holding back socio economic advancement (Herbert et al., 2009). This belief is more prevalent among Puerto Rican marginalized individuals that are raised to believe that their social condition is related to Spanish monolingualism.

Parents and teachers play an important role in reinforcing children's heritage language and in the development of ethnic identification (Brown, 2011; Lee, 2012). Brown (2011) argued that schools should promote a learning environment that values the culture and language of children. Moreover, Tse (as cited in Brown, 2011) suggested that the process of learning a new language must be built upon a child's first language and culture. In addition, the literature supports that parents' and teachers' levels of acculturation are significant in children's ethnic identification (Brown, 2011; Hammer et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Pajunar, 2012; Quintana & Skull, 2009; Woods, Barksdale, Triplett, & Potts, 2014).

There are numerous studies on heritage language maintenance and loss and its relationship to ethnic identity among immigrants and indigenous people (Agirdag, 2014; Brown & Chu, 2012; Danzak & Wilkinson, 2017; Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014). Immigrants and indigenous people represent minority groups that have adapted to the dominant society's language and way of life. Nonetheless, in conducting my review of the literature, I found no studies where the majority group, speaking the majority

language, goes through a process of assimilation facilitated by school language of instruction. I also found no literature concerning how teachers' practices in schools might endanger cultural identity development and promote ethnic distinctions within the same ethnic group. This study of the influence of Puerto Rican teachers' communicative practices on children's ethnic identification may address a gap in the literature related to linguistics, ethnicity, and systems of education and acculturation of a majority group. Based on what I found on the literature, there is a need for examination of language use and teachers' communicative practices that could lead to ethno genesis.

### **Problem Statement**

A trend toward English immersion early childhood programs in Puerto Rico has resulted in the use of English as the language of instruction in the island's private and public schools. The *Proyecto para el Desarrollo del Ciudadano Bilingüe* (Project for the Development of Bilingual Citizens) has been one of the Puerto Rican government initiatives to promote English immersion public school programs in the island (Fajardo, 1997). In addition, the passage of Law 11, 2005 resulted in the creation of the "*Instituto de Enseñanza y Desarrollo del Ciudadano Bilingüe de la Ciudad Capital de Puerto Rico*" (Institute of Learning and Development of the Bilingual Citizen of the Capital City of Puerto Rico), which has reorganized San Juan school's curriculum to facilitate English teaching and learning and promote citizen advancement in society. The "*Escuela de Idiomas de Puerto Rico*" (School of Languages of Puerto Rico) (P. del S. 274 del 18 de enero de 2013) is another effort to develop bilingual schools emphasizing the subtractive dimension of bilingualism, and the Municipal Law 12, 2003-2004 also known as "*Código*

*del Sistema de Educación del Municipio de San Juan*” (San Juan Educational System Code) that created the first public early childhood education school with a full English immersion approach (P. de O. Núm. 47, 2015). Although Puerto Rican private schools are autonomous from Puerto Rican Department of Education mandates, they still have to comply with Puerto Rico Core Standards.

English language teaching in the Puerto Rican educational systems uses a subtractive model approach that may jeopardize children’s heritage language learning and usage. The loss of heritage language is significantly related to the inability to develop ethnic identity, according to researchers (Brown, 2011; Brown & Chu, 2012; Hammer et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Leeman et al., 2011; Pajunar, 2012). In this regard, the school environment is a factor in supporting ethnic identity through language and culturally sensitive pedagogy (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2012; Choi, Lee, & Oh, 2016; Dan, 2014; Donghui & Slaughter-Defoe, 2009; Donohoe Luscombe & Kazdal, 2014; Khan, 2016; Lee, 2012). English immersion programs promote acculturation processes, as children are exposed to language and cultural practices from the Anglo cultural group (Bondy, 2016; Quintana & Skull, 2009; Shin, 2013). In addition, parents’ and teachers’ level of acculturation influence children’s ethnic identification (Brown, 2011; Hammer et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Pajunar, 2012; Quintana & Skull, 2009; Shin, 2013; Woods et al., 2014). The social environment influences children’s ethnic construction.

Previous researchers studying immigrants have documented how children make social categorizations, to include or exclude others, based on language (Aukrust & Ryland, 2009; Bondy, 2016; Cousik, 2015; Rodriguez, Rodriguez, & Mojica, 2012;



Pretlet, 2016). Social categorizations are ethnic distinctions that define the level of a person's sense of belongingness (Aukrust & Ryland, 2009; Bakersville et al., 2014). Individuals use language to establish comparisons with out-group, becoming a salient marker of identity (Giles & Johnson, 1987; Pretlet, 2016; Riley, 2007). Moreover, identities are socially constructed and language is the medium by which individuals socialize (Bakersville et al., 2014; Pretlet, 2016; Riley, 2007). Language may unify or divide a community.

There are no current or similar studies examining the influence that language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices have on ethnic identity formation of non-immigrants groups. Even studies of Puerto Rican Diaspora, who are United States citizens, are treated in the literature as Latino immigrants. The study of the language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices and its influence on children's ethnic identity formation in Puerto Rico represents a gap in the literature related to linguistics, ethnic identity development and acculturation of a majority group. The present study examined the language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices that influenced first graders' construction of social categorizations of "us" and "others" within their ethnic group in the Municipality of San Juan.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Early childhood curriculum could facilitate the development of ethnic identity, a person's sense of belonging to a cultural group. The literature supports teaching ethnic identity in early childhood and recognizes the possible role of school and language of instruction mediating a hasty process of acculturation and the loss of ethnic identification

(Agirdag, 2014; Bondy, 2016; Choi, 2015; Oades-Sese, Kaliski, Esquivel, & Maniatis, 2011; Paat & Pallebon, 2012; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Pretlet, 2016; Schultz, 2016).

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine how language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools influenced children's categorizations of "us" and "others" within their ethnic group in the Municipality of San Juan. The study was conducted in two public schools and two private schools first grade classrooms in the same geographical area. One classroom of each school system, public and private, was taught primarily in English, and one classroom of each school system was taught primarily in Spanish language for a total of four first grade classrooms.

### **Research Questions**

In this study, I attempted to fill a gap in current research regarding how language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools might influence children's ethnic categorizations within the same ethnic group. I focused on public and private schools where either full Spanish or full English were used as languages of instruction in first-grade classrooms in the Municipality of San Juan. The research questions for this study were

1. How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?

2. How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" based on language usage in the Municipality of San Juan?

The research sub questions were

1. How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role in developing first graders' ethnic identification?
2. According to participants, what influences shaped their knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework of this multiple case study was used to guide the analysis of themes as they emerged from the data. The use of existing theories provided a framework for making sense of the findings (Maxwell, 2013). Nevertheless, I also considered the use of experiential knowledge to strengthen the research design. I used Markus's (2008) Unified Theory of Race and Ethnicity to understand the distinction between race and ethnicity and the possible differences in perceptions within participants in public and private school using primarily Spanish or English language for instruction. Markus contended that social contexts support the construction of abstract concepts like race and ethnicity. English immersion programs could turn into Anglo cultural microcosms, supporting children's incongruent ethnic identification. Other theories that guided the study's design were Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (1979), Tajfel and Turner Social Identity Theory (1979), and Wimmer's Ethnic Boundaries Multilevel Process Theory (2008).

Berry (1989, 2005) conceptualized acculturation as an adaptation process that results in psychological, behavioral, and sociocultural changes in immigrants following contact with the dominant culture. Puerto Rico has undergone an atypical process of acculturation. Although there are conceptual differences between voluntary and forced acculturation, Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation is useful in establishing and understanding acculturation strategies. Berry identified four strategies of acculturation: assimilation, separation, marginalization, and integration. In this study, teacher's acculturation strategies might influence the way they promoted children's ethnic identity development and social categorizations within the same ethnic group.

Tajfel and Turner's Social Identity Theory (1979) asserted that a person has several selves and that they correspond to different contexts. The proponents argued that there are cognitive processes concerning group membership and group discrimination that explained the contextualized selves. This theory could explain group membership and group categorization among Spanish and English immersion program participants as they acknowledge preferences for ethnic identification based on language usage.

Wimmer's Ethnic Boundaries Multilevel Process Theory (2008) contended that ethnicity is a dynamic process. Wimmer argued that boundaries allow individuals to maintain membership in several ethnic categories and to switch identities according to the social context (p. 976). Many Puerto Ricans have assimilated and/or integrated Anglo culture, values, attitudes, and even language into their ethnic identification. Wimmer's theory will help understand this phenomenon and to consider the development of a hybrid ethnicity or ethno genesis as a possible finding of this study.

The conceptual framework relates to the case study approach as it bounds the study of ethnic identity formation to a distinct group of individuals for in-depth investigation. The research questions and the theories that were used to guide the analysis of the data were contextually and theoretically aligned to support multiple findings. The theories were aligned and supported the notions that views on ethnicity are dynamic and fluid processes that are influenced by social and familial contexts. Moreover, the theories explained how boundaries are established between ethnic groups as symbolic representations of power. The theories supported the notion that social institutions like schools are influencing children's cultural identification and developing a sense of belonging to a social group that could be other than their family ethnicity. Acculturation processes that equally represented the dynamics of power between dominant and subjugated cultural groups also influenced ethnicity. Teachers' acculturation processes could influence children's ethnic identity formation. A more detailed analysis of the literature concerning the conceptual framework will be provided in Chapter 2.

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was a qualitative multiple case. The case study approach involves in-depth study of a real life problem in contemporary context (Yin as cited in Maxwell, 2013, p. 97). The key characteristics of a case study are: flexibility coping with the complex and dynamic characteristics of real world issues, conclusions based on data collected from multiple sources in a planned and consistent manner, and that it adds to

existing knowledge based on previously established theory or by building theory (Creswell, 2013).

I selected this qualitative approach because the focus of this study, examining the language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools that influence first grader's construction of ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan, was a dynamic real-life process that could be studied in context. In addition, there were multiple sources of information that I used to analyze and interpret the complexity of language of instruction and children's ethnic identity formation in a U.S. territory. Moreover, the multiple case study approach allowed for the comparison of cases (Johnson & Christensen, 2008). In this study, I compared languages of instruction, teaching communicative practices, and private and public schools regarding the influence that they exerted on children's ethnic identity construction.

Participants of the multiple case studies were first grade teachers from two public and two private schools in the Municipality of San Juan. There were two teachers using Spanish as language of instruction, one in a private and one in a public school, and two using English as language of instruction, one in a private and one in a public school. There were a total of four first-grade teachers.

The study was conducted in the Municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. In Puerto Rico, English immersion programs use a subtractive bilingualism model where all curricular content is taught in English and Spanish is taught as a second language course. In full Spanish language instruction, all content is taught in Spanish with the exception of

one course of English as a second language. The recommended sample size for case study approaches can range from one to five cases in a single study (Creswell, 2013). In this study, the sample size was four first grade classrooms.

Case studies are conducted to explore multiple sources of information and to develop in-depth understanding of the object of the study. For this case study, the sources of information were observations of teachers communicating with children during classroom instruction, first grade teachers' structured interviews, teachers' acculturation indexes, and classroom artifacts. Data were collected during class activities, and at teachers' free time, in and/or out of school.

Teachers' structured interviews helped me understand what they did to promote ethnic identification in the classroom and to understand teachers' perceptions of ethnicity and what had influenced the development of such perceptions (see Appendix A: Interview Questions). Teachers' acculturation indexes provided background on teachers' acculturation processes that helped me to understand their communicative practices and ethnic promotion strategies (see Appendix C: Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale). Observations of teachers provided information on how social categorizations were created and used based on language of instruction (see Appendix B: Observation Sheet). Observation and documentation of classroom artifacts (decorations, children's work, music, etc) helped to understand teachers' ethnic identity promotion strategies (see Appendix E: Classroom Artifacts Observation Sheet). To add dependability and credibility to the study, I used data sources triangulation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014; Patton, 2002).

Teacher interviews and observation notes were analyzed through pattern coding. The Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale results were used to connect the meanings teachers place on the acculturation process with their communicative practices. A complete description of data collection and analysis are provided in Chapter 3.

### **Definition of Terms**

The following conceptual definitions of important terms used in the study are provided so that readers have a basis for common understanding.

*Acculturation*: Changes that take place as a result of contact with culturally dissimilar people, groups, and social influences (Gibson, as cited in Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010).

*Additive bilingualism*: A situation in which a person has acquired two languages in a balanced manner (Shin, 2013).

*Bilingualism*: The use of at least two languages either by an individual or a group of speakers (Moradi, 2014).

*Cultural assimilation*: The process whereby a minority group gradually adapts to the customs and attitudes of the dominant group (Bartlett & Garcia, 2011).

*Cultural awareness*: The way in which culture-of-origin characteristics are maintained in the context of contact with another cultural group (Quintana & Skull, 2009).

*Cultural assimilation*: The process by which elements of a dominant culture are taken by members of a minority culture (Young, 2010).



*Cultural identity*: The identity of a group, culture, or an individual, which is influenced by one's belonging to a group or culture (Phinney, 1992).

*Cultural hybridization*: The existence of diverse cultures that shift cultural paradigms to address globalization (Monteiro, & Sharma, 2014).

*Cultural sensitivity*: The act of being aware of the cultural differences and similarities that exist between people without assessing them a value (Bennett, 2004).

*Diaspora*: The dispersal of people from its original homeland (Butler, 2001).

*English as a second language (ESL)*: An English language study program for nonnative speakers. In Puerto Rican Spanish immersion programs, English is taught as a second language (Puerto Rican Department of Education, 2015).

*English immersion programs*: School programs where all the classes are taught in the English language and are designed for English learners (Ray-Subramanian, 2011).

*Ethnicity*: A subjective sense of identification with a sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group (Yang, 2000).

*Ethnic identity*: A term used to understand or describe the level of commitment someone has to ethnic culture/heritage and the level of exploration into cultural values within his/her ethnicity (Phinney, 1992).

*Ethnic group*: A term used to designate a population, which shares fundamental cultural values, makes up a field of communication and interactions, and has a membership, which identifies itself and is identified by others (Barth, 1969).

*Heritage language:* The language acquired in the home and the one that is connected to one's ethnicity (Lee, 2013). Synonyms include community language, native language, and mother tongue (Shin, 2013).

*Language immersion:* A method of teaching a second language in which the learner's second language is the medium for classroom instruction (Pretlet, 2016).

*Monolingualism:* The act of speaking or using only one language (Singh, Poh, Fu, Graf-Estes, & Hay, 2016).

*Race:* A dynamic set of historically derived and institutionalized ideas and practices that sort people into groups according to perceived physical and behavioral human characteristics (Moya & Markus, 2008).

*Social categorization:* The means by which individuals are able to connect with those who share group membership; use of such categories is the most typical way to represent group differences (Shkurko, 2013).

*Social identity:* An individual's self-concept, which is derived from perceived membership in social groups (Hogg & Vaughan, 2002).

*Spanglish:* The verbal encounter of Spanish and the English language. It is defined as the adaptation of lexical elements or phrasal constituents from one language into another semantically (Rothman & Rell, 2005). It is characterized by the incorporation of "code-mixing" and "code-switching" (Pountain, as cited in Price, 2010; Zentella, 1997).

*Subtractive bilingualism:* The process of acquiring a language and simultaneously losing one's heritage language (Moradi, 2014).

### **Assumptions**

Assumptions are aspects of the study design that are not controllable by the researcher but must be true in order for the study to be valid. Correspondingly, I assumed that the teachers provided accurate information regarding their perceptions, teaching practices and experiences, cultural idiosyncrasy, and ethnic identification. These assumptions were critical for the attainment of data and to answer the research questions of the study.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This qualitative multiple case study examined the language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools that influenced first graders' ethnic identity formation in the Municipality of San Juan. Following Creswell's (2013) recommendations, I selected two English immersion first grade classrooms, one from private and one from public school, and two Spanish language classrooms, one from private and one from public school, with similar student demographics (four cases).

The scope of the study included two public schools and two private schools certified first grade teachers from the Municipality of San Juan. The study was delimited to first grade teachers from public and private programs where full instruction is taught in English with the exception of a Spanish as a second language course and where full instruction is taught in Spanish with the exception of an English as a second language course (two classrooms with each of the languages for instruction modalities).

The study was bounded to the Municipality of San Juan, a metropolitan and cosmopolitan city that shares commonalities with some U.S. states. The participants of

the study live in urban areas and, although there could be minor differences in socio-economic status, parent's educational level, and other demographic data, they have been exposed to Anglo cultural values, practices, and traditions. Moreover, participants are immersed in a process of colonial acculturation and many might already be assimilated. The population excluded was other first grade teachers living in other urban municipalities or in rural areas where English immersion programs are scarce. That population was excluded from the study because in the case study approach it is important to bound the population for in-depth understanding of the case (Creswell, 2013). Another delimitation was that bilingual (50/50) models were excluded from the study. Parents were excluded to study in-depth the language of instruction, and the influences of teacher's communicative practices and acculturation processes in the promotion of children's ethnic identity development.

This multiple case study has a potential to apply to other contexts. English immersion early childhood programs in private and public schools are found in various areas in the island of Puerto Rico. The island of Puerto Rico has a unified public system of education and a private system and, both, use the Puerto Rico Core Standards as guidelines. Methodological and instructional differences among the educational systems are attributed to curriculum approaches and language of instruction. Nevertheless, Cronbach (as cited in Patton, 2002) questioned the value of generalizations in qualitative studies where the emphasis should be on particularization. In this specific study, we were seeking not only the effect of language of instruction on ethnic identity formation, but also the teachers as a medium for that development in private and public schools.

Furthermore, teacher experiences are personal and individual and cannot be generalized. Erickson (as cited in Merriam, 2002) argued that in qualitative studies, the general lies in the particular. In addition, qualitative researchers argued that the reader is who determines the extent to which findings from a study could be apply to their situation (Eisner, 1991; Firestone, 1993; & Walker, as cited in Merriam, 2002).

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the study were related to methodological weaknesses. Although the study could be replicated in other parts of the island of Puerto Rico, it would be difficult to replicate methodologically in other parts of the world. This case study was particular to the colonial situation of Puerto Rico and the unique process of acculturation (where the majority group adapts to the minority) of its citizens that limited transferability of findings. Nevertheless, related to this issue Erickson (as cited in Miles et al., 2014) stated, “Any transfer of a study’s findings to other contexts is the responsibility of the reader, not the researcher” (p. 314).

In terms of objectivity, data collection procedures by a single researcher with personal biases could account for a limitation. Nevertheless, Peshkin (as cited in Maxwell, 2013) emphasized the importance of researcher critical subjectivity as part of the inquiry process (p. 45). Furthermore, Merriam (2002) argued that researchers should identify and monitor those biases through the processes of data collection and interpretation (p. 5). One of my biases had to do with recognizing Anglo cultural elements in Puerto Rican educational system. I discussed these biases with participants

and used their feedback through member checking. Moreover, in order to assure validity and reliability of the findings, I used data triangulation, and reflexivity.

### **Significance**

The study addressed the unique process of acculturation in which heritage language has been maintained for centuries as a function of resistance to the dominant culture and language and now is threatened by the proliferation of early childhood education English immersion programs. Loss of heritage language learning could jeopardize ethnic identity formation leading to complete assimilation of Puerto Rican youngsters. Complete assimilation means forgetting the richness of Puerto Rican culture, stories, language and identity.

We live in a globalized world, where multiculturalism is on the rise. Darobe (as cited in Quiros, 2012) explained, “The multicultural movement seeks to preserve difference without melting ethnicity into a common culture” (p. 519). Multiculturalism, and even biculturalism are beneficial to all in the globalized era in which people coexists and communicate through the use of different languages. In addition, bilingualism allows the use and comprehension of two languages enhancing communication between people of different ethnicities. Additive bilingualism enables individuals to learn the English language without losing their heritage language. In contrast, subtractive bilingualism promotes the development of monolingualism limiting the person’s opportunities and ethnic identification. In addition, limited language policies contribute to adaptation problems, feelings of worthlessness, higher school dropped out rates, perpetuates poverty, endanger heritage languages, and harms ethnic identification among those non-native

English speakers in and out of the mainland (Donohoe Luscombe & Kazdal, 2014; Herbert et al., 2009; Ivanova, 2013; Leeman, Rabin, & Román-Mendoza., 2011; Raskaukas et al., 2015; Shin, 2013; Way, Santos, Niva, & Kim-Gervey, 2008).

The findings of this study provided insights for developing policies for an early childhood culture and language revitalization curriculum that could serve as model for all other cultural groups at risk of being absorbed and lost by acculturation processes, and to help maintain the proud sense of belonging to an ethnic group in a globalized world (Phinney, 2003). The social contribution and value of this study is acknowledging that future generations should know and be proud of their ancestors' history, traditions, language, and realize that a pluralistic society appreciates and values all ethnic groups with their uniqueness and attributions.

Successful globalization embraces ethnic, racial, cultural, and language diversity. Future school and language policy efforts should be directed to inclusion and not exclusion of heritage language in the curriculum. Heritage language maintenance strengthens ethnic identification and sense of worth. In addition, Spanish-English bilingualism is an undeniable resource for everyone (Herbert et al., 2009). Additive bilingualism and heritage language learning and usage must coexist to enrich the lives and possibilities of future generations.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided an explanation and background to the multiple case study on the influence that language of instruction and teacher communicative practices in private and public schools could have on first graders' ethnic identity development in the

Municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Chapter 1 also included the introductory information describing the influence that language of instruction and school social context have in ethnic identity development. The background section described the sociopolitical history of the island of Puerto Rico and its influence on educational practices concerning language of instruction, and ethnic identification processes. It highlighted the process of ethnic development in an island influenced by colonial acculturation processes, the importance of heritage language maintenance for the development of Puerto Rican ethnic identity, and the influence of the school environment and teachers in promoting children's ethnic identity formation.

I described the qualitative multiple case study approach, the conceptual framework that guided the study and briefly stated its relation to the research questions and study design, assumptions concerning the possible findings of the study, scope and delimitations, and the possible limitations of the study. I defined conceptual terms that were used in the study for better understanding and explained that the findings of this investigation may promote positive social change for future generations and for other ethnic groups at risk of losing their heritage language in a globalized world.

Chapter 2 included an in-depth discussion of the conceptual framework and the review of recent literature and seminal works addressing the main concerns and issues related to ethnic development, language usage and maintenance in early childhood education, and to the process of acculturation and the strategies used by those subjected to it.



A detailed examination of the methodology and the research design were provided in Chapter 3. The description of the study, analysis of data, and summary of results were provided in Chapter 4. The discussion of Chapter 5 interpreted the findings of the study and offered recommendations and suggestions for further studies in the field of early childhood education and for policy making regarding cultural revitalization in nations at risk of losing their heritage language and ethnic identity.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

In this multiple case study, I focused on examining the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools on first graders' ethnic identity formation in the Municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. More specifically, the purpose of the study was to examine the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices on children's social categorization of "us" and "others" within their ethnic group. In this study, the cultural group addressed was Puerto Ricans.

Current research supports teaching ethnic identity in early childhood and recognizes the role of schools in the acculturation process and in the loss of ethnic identification in minority groups (Agirdag, 2014; Borden, 2014; Brown, 2011; Choi, 2015; Lee, 2012; Mu, 2015; Oades-Sese et al., 2011; Paat & Pallebon, 2012; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Schultz, 2016). Although Puerto Rican islanders are not considered a minority group, the political status of Puerto Rico has resulted in the assimilation of Anglo culture through a subjugated acculturation process (Negrón de Montilla, 1977). In addition, the literature illustrates that the level of acculturation of children's significant others and the social context are factors in their process of ethnic identification (Bakersville et al., 2014; Brown, 2011; Hammer et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Pajunar, 2012; Quintana & Skull, 2009; Rakic, Stefens, & Mummendey, 2011; Schultz, 2016). Ethnic identification does not happen as an isolated event. It is contingent to what the child

experiences and to the significance that is attributed to the modeling and approval of significant others.

I found scant information in the current literature regarding the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices on the ethnic identity development of children in cultural groups, which have been submitted to involuntary acculturation, especially when the group submitted to the acculturation process is the majority group. The literature review in this chapter provides the reader with a better understanding of what is known about how school and social structures influence children's ethnic identity formation. The chapter begins with an overview of my literature search strategy. This section is followed by a discussion of the conceptual framework of the study. The major topics of the literature review include ethnic identity formation, language learning and maintenance, and acculturation processes. The chapter concludes with a summary and an introduction to the next chapter.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

I performed the literature review using Walden University's online multidisciplinary databases and books from my personal library. The databases used were ProQuest, Academic Search Complete, EBSCOhost, Sage, and Thoreau Multi-Database Search. The following keywords were used to conduct my searches: *acculturation, assimilation, bilingualism, cultural identity, English immersion program, ethnic development, ethnic identity, loss of ethnic identity, heritage language, language maintenance, language shift, language usage, monolingual, native language, race, social categorization, and subjugated acculturation.* I also used compound terms to search

Walden University databases. The following terms were used to conduct searches: *early childhood education and identity formation, acculturation and ethnic identity formation, language development and early childhood education, acculturation and language shift, and subjugated acculturation and ethnic identity formation.*

The majority of the literature was less than 5 years old. However, I also included several seminal studies that are older than 5 years. I did not find studies related to language of instruction and ethnic identity development in first graders in a colony submitted to involuntary acculturation. I used, primarily, research studies that investigated the relationship between heritage language usage, maintenance, and loss in ethnic identity development in voluntary immigrants' groups inside and outside of the United States.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was based on multiple theories. Each theory addresses different aspects related to the complexity of ethnic development, group membership, culture and language maintenance in minority groups, and the process of acculturation. Maxwell (2013) argued about the need to use conceptual frameworks to support the studies. The conceptual framework I used was ontological in nature as it embraced multiple realities and was based on social constructivism. Social constructivism allows the researcher to be flexible and open for the complexity of meaning and to recognize how their experience shapes the interpretation of findings (Maxwell, 2013).

This study was conducted in Puerto Rico, a U.S. territory, and study participants were not a minority group. However, Puerto Rico's actual sociopolitical status indirectly qualifies islanders as a subjugated group. In this regard, I believe that the theories that constituted my conceptual framework are applicable for examining the influence that language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools had on first graders' ethnic identity formation.

### **Unified Theory of Race and Ethnicity**

Markus (2008) explained that ethnicity is a social construction of practices and ideas that allows people to be identified by language, history, nation of origin, customs, religion, and physical appearance. The author added that ethnicity confers a sense of belonging and is a source of meaning. Markus proposed that ethnicity is dynamic as it is affected by the feelings, values, thoughts, and actions of those who are socially related (Markus, Kitayama, & Heiman, 1996). Accordingly, social identities are in constant change depending on context and circumstances and can influence individual and group psychological functioning.

Schools are microcosmic communities where socialization occurs. Children are in school many hours each day, and the school community exerts great influential power over them as developing beings. Markus (2008) contended that the influence of race and ethnicity could be direct, explicit, and intentional, but it could also be indirect and unconscious and stated:

The way that race and ethnicity will influence behavior depends on how others in a given context regard and represent the racial or ethnic group with which a

person is associated. As people change contexts or encounter new ones, their experience and behavior will change. (p. 663)

First grade is the first formal school experience for most children. It involves learning behavioral rules, structured schedules, developing a sense of community and belonging, developing a sense of competence, and defining who one is (Puerto Rican Department of Education, 2015). School is, thus, a new social context for first graders.

Williams, Weerasinghe, and Hobbs (2015) highlighted the importance of schools in promoting a sense of belonging. The authors added that schools can have a psychological influence on how youngsters perceive ethnicity and socioeconomic status (Williams et al., 2015). Moreover, Markus (2008) contended that race and ethnicity are features of social systems that people create and maintain through direct participation and which have the capability to change as people interact or encounter different contexts. Markus (2008) stated, that people are social entities influenced by the environment. This peculiarity provides the opportunity to adopt identities as needed.

Children are raised sharing different environments including home, school, community, and others. Their ethnic identity, according to Markus (2008), is not bound to a context, but reflects the multiple contexts where the child interacts. Nevertheless, Markus argued that race and ethnicity will influence behavior based on what others in a given context value and emphasize. Markus supported the notion that teachers and other significant adults could strongly influence children's ethnic identity formation and the construction of social categorizations.

### **Ethnic Boundaries Multilevel Process Theory**

Wimmer's (2008) theory assumed that ethnic boundaries are the outcomes by which individuals classify and negotiate their perceived ethnicity. The author argued that ethnic boundaries are a multilevel process influenced by social closure, political salience, cultural distinctiveness, and historical stability. These influences determine types of boundaries: by social class, ethnicity, geographical distribution, by hierarchies of power that allow ethnic differentiation, and/or by political alliances that defined ethnic integration. Wimmer (2008) explained the term boundary as having a social or behavioral dimension. Correspondingly, the author stated, "one divides the social world into social groups- into "us" and "them"- and the other offers scripts of action- how to relate to individuals classified as "us" and "them" under given circumstances" (Wimmer, 2008, p. 975). The concept of boundary is a flexible one, allowing individuals to maintain membership in an ethnic group or to switch ethnic identities according to what the individual interprets necessary.

Wimmer (2008) contended that boundaries are created in the same ethnic groups. Differences in physical appearance, social structures, political ideologies, and language are characteristics that are easy to recognize and are used to draw boundaries. Wimmer (2008) argued that the degree of stability of a boundary is related to the diverse ways in which ethnic membership is transmitted. Consequently, a social system that has no defined boundaries related to ethnicity is more prone to shift boundaries through processes like: expansion, contraction, inversion, and repositioning (Wimmer, 2008). Expansion occurs when individuals are grouped into a new category. Ethno genesis, the conversion of smaller ethnic groups into a new one, is a possible outcome of shifting

boundaries through expansion. Boundary contraction narrows the ethnic group and separates it by municipality, language, political power, religion, and others (Wimmer, 2008).

In English immersion early childhood programs in Puerto Rico, children are encouraged to communicate using the English language all the time, while at school and at home. This practice could lead to both - ethno genesis and boundary contraction. The strategy of boundary inversion targets the hierarchical ordering of ethnic groups. Meanwhile, repositioning describes a strategy where individuals shift sides through assimilation to escape a minority stigma (Wimmer, 2008, p.988). Repositioning is a common strategy used by immigrant minorities to acquire a higher standing in the social hierarchy. In this multiple case study there is a peculiarity, Puerto Ricans are not a minority group but have a colonial status and have assimilated much of the Anglo culture group to reposition in the social and economic strata.

Wimmer (2008) explained that boundaries are not self-selected and are constrained by the institutional environment, the distribution of power, and by the network of political alliances. The author argued, that political institutions and power shape the strategies of boundary making that individuals would pursue, and stated:

Assimilation into the nation also increases the chance that their voice will be heard now that the government claims to rule in the name of “the people”, while beforehand political participation was limited by birth to certain clans, families, or ethno social strata. (Wimmer, as cited in Wimmer 2008, p. 999).



Wimmer's theory proposed the possibility of cultural differentiation, where people in the same group add boundaries to divide the superior from the subordinate. However, when members of an ethnic group share cultural repertoires of thinking and acting, their sense of belonging will be strong and capable of resisting situations that could force them to assimilate or lose their ethnic identity (Wimmer, 2008). Wimmer's theory supported the notion that ethnic identity development should be fostered in early childhood programs to strengthen cultural belonging and to prevent ethnic disparities within a cultural group.

### **Social Identity Theory**

Social identity theory attempts to explain how individuals think and behave through identification with a group. According to Tajfel and Turner (1979), the self-concept is defined by our belonging to social groups. They found that people tend to show solidarity within their groups and discrimination against out-groups as part of a social identity process. Moreover, these processes constitute the basis to achieve positive self-esteem and self-enhancement.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) defined social group as a number of individuals who feel and perceive themselves as belonging to the group and who are approved in the group by others (p. 40). Social identity theory has four underlying principles: social categorization, social comparison, social identity, and self-esteem. Social categorizations are cognitive tools that classify and order the social environment. Based on social categorization, interclass differences are accentuated and are prone to justify prejudicial behaviors (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Duszak (as cited in Pretlet, 2016) asserted that individuals that do not share categories are considered outsiders even among the same ethnic group and could generate feelings of hostility to those perceived as different. At the same time, the in-group member's discriminative behavior provokes feelings of superiority and self-esteem enhancement. The social comparison principle aimed at evaluating the social groups to which individuals belong. Social comparison refers to the composition of the group and usually takes place with groups that are similar to one's group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Through social comparison children establish distinctions between those in the same school that speak a language and those that do not. Tajfel and Turner (1979) noticed that intergroup competition enhances in-group cohesiveness and identification as members of a social group (p .9). Accordingly, children make comparisons between their social group and others and reject members of groups that are perceived to have lower status (Pretlet, 2016).

Tajfel (1978) defined the social identity principle as the emotional significance that the individual attach to the membership. It is the "positive distinctiveness" of a group when compared with another. In like manner, Trepte (2006) stated, "Positively discrepant comparisons produce positive social identity, and negatively discrepant comparisons produce negative social identity" (p.259). In other words, children reinforce their self-esteem as they identify with a group and differentiate from others. This group categorization leads to discrimination against what is perceived as "the others". Tajfel and Turner (1979) recognized the possibility of social mobility in those individuals that acknowledge their group's inferior status and aim to achieve a positive social identity.

Tajfel and Turner (1979) found that the self-esteem principle is the result of positive evaluation of one's own group. Positive self-esteem derives from social comparisons that lead to group distinctiveness. Nesdale (in press) posed that children's self-identification, as a member of a dominant group, is crucial for ethnic identity formation. The social identity theory addresses children's development of social structure awareness and could explain the rejection of groups considered inferior based on language usage. In the case of this study, the dominant group was conceived as the minority of children in English immersion programs

### **Bidimensional Model of Acculturation**

Berry (1995) defined acculturation as a dual process of cultural and psychological change that occurs when individuals from one culture come in contact with individuals from another culture. The process of acculturation takes time. Psychological and cultural adaptations could take years, generations, and even centuries. Acculturation could occur for a number of reasons: colonization, military invasion, migration, refuge, and sojourning (Berry, 2005).

Berry (1980) proposed a model of acculturation that describes four acculturation strategies. The strategies vary according to how the person copes with their culture and with the dominant culture. In the integration strategy the individual acculturates to the dominant culture and maintains his culture of origin. Meanwhile, in the assimilation strategy the individual prefers the dominant culture and dissociates from his culture of origin. Separation strategy involves low acculturation to the dominant culture and high

acculturation to the culture of origin, and in marginalization the individual does not adapt to either culture.

Berry, Kim, Power, Young, and Bujaki (1989) argued that individuals could be placed in the aforementioned categories based on their answer to these questions: “Is it considered to be of value to maintain cultural identity and characteristics?” and “Is it considered to be of value to maintain relationships with other groups?” (p.187). Findings of Berry (1980), indicated that there are three psychological variables that are important in the process of acculturation: contact experiences with the dominant group, cultural and social involvement with the dominant group, and cross-cultural skills which involves the use of the dominant culture language. Loss of native language has been related to acculturation and to the loss of ethnic identity (Ali, 2006; Berry, 1995; Brown, 2011; Lee, 2012; Pajunar, 2012).

In addition, Berry (2005) argued that cultural shedding and cultural learning could be selective, accidental, or deliberative to allow individuals to fit in the dominant culture. Berry’s contention supports school instruction as a medium for deliberative cultural shedding. Correspondingly, Duan and Vu (2000) found that age is significantly related to acculturation and that the younger the individual, the more acculturated to the dominant culture. Berry’s Bidimensional Model of Acculturation helped explain how the school curriculum and first-grade teacher’s acculturation strategies indirectly impacted children’s ethnic identity formation.

### **Literature Related to Key Variables and/or Concepts**

This literature review included the themes that were explored in the research questions of the study. These identified themes have overlapping features that cannot be fragmented because of their nature and complexity. The conceptual framework of the study supported the themes explored in this section.

### **Ethnic Identity Formation**

Olmedo (as cited in Jun, Ham, & Park, 2014) defined ethnic identity as “the extent to which individuals affiliate with their original culture and adhere to its traditional values” (p. 5). Furthermore, Tomela (2012) argued that identity is constructed as a product of the person’s culture. He posited that cultural transmission occurs from the collective to the internal level. Esteban- Guitart and Moll (2014) suggested that identity is also in things. Children attach cultural meaning to things or events. In this matter, the school serves as a cultural context where children are exposed to meaningful experiences that they internalize as part of their identity formation.

Ethnic identity development studies have focused on adolescents assuming that little ethnic identity development occurs in childhood (Phinney, as cited in Coreblum & Armstrong, 2012). Empirical investigations have shown that the development of ethnic identity cannot be attributed to changes in children’s cognitive ability (Ocampo, Knight, & Bernal, as cited in Pnevmatikos, Geka, & Divane, 2010; Park, 2011). In children, ethnic identity focused on their understanding about group membership. Moreover, at around 4 years of age, children are capable of distinguishing between the members of different racial groups and forming social categorizations (Park, 2011; Pnevmatikos et al., 2010; Tejel, 2015). Gullón-Rivera (2013) studied Puerto Rican kindergarteners’ self-

worth and found that they could express complex understanding about the self and relationships but could not describe it formally. On the other hand, Ocampo et al. (as cited in Pnevmatikos et al., 2010) and Park (2011) researcher found that children, 6 to 10 year-olds, had understanding of their race and ethnic identity.

Researchers have found that children's construction of identity develops in reference to others (Barron, 2014; Martiny & Kessler, 2016; Riley, 2007). This contention demonstrated that identity is a product of a constant comparison between "us" and "others". Barron (2014) contended that ethnic identity construction is the result of an internal developmental process that discriminates, intentionally or unintentionally, between sameness and others. Aukrust and Rydland (2009) studied the dynamics between Norwegian and Turkish immigrant children and found that ethnicity and language were used to exert control and to gain social status over others (p.1539).

Similarly, Rakic et al. (2011) found that children categorized others according to similarity or dissimilarity in language, independently of their race. The results of these investigations demonstrated that racial distinctions, ethnic identity, and self-worth are intertwined social constructs. The understanding of these constructs and their affective implications are influenced by perceived social inequalities and by establishing distinctions between the minority and the culturally valued predominant group (Coreblum & Armstrong, 2012; Nesdale, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Xu, Farver, & Parker, 2015). Paat and Pellebon (2012) argued that ethnic identity formation is a crucial development milestone of young children (p. 130). In accordance, Coreblum and Armstrong (2012) stated:

Ethnic identity reflects the attitudes and emotional reactions of significant others such as the importance that parents attach to ethnic identity, attitudes toward in-group members, parental ethnic socialization efforts, as well as broader acculturation processes present in school, neighborhood, and community. (p. 125)

Early childhood is a developmental stage where a child's knowledge and positive affect are influenced and molded by significant others. At first grade, most children acquire basic geographical knowledge of their country, know the national emblems, and develop a sense of belonging to their ethnic and language group (Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011). Furthermore, children as young as 5 years old develop national stereotypes using physical traits, clothing, habits, and other factors to create ethnic boundaries and to divide the social world into social groups (Markus, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1989; Wimmer, 2008).

Schoolteachers, via the formal and informal curriculum, explicitly provide and support this knowledge. Apple (as cited in Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011) argued that school curricula often present the child's nation in a highly positive view compared to other nations fomenting ethnic identity development. However, this is not the case in Puerto Rico. The Puerto Rican Department of Education uses the Puerto Rican Core Standards 2014 to guide content learning in public and private educational systems (Puerto Rican Department of Education, 2015). There are eight social studies content standards and, of those, only one is related to cultural identity. Moreover, the *Carta Circular Núm. 2-1015-2016*, which establishes public policy with regard to the Social Studies program from kindergarten through third grade, states:

The social studies program will study everything related to primary groups and social relations. Emphasizing love, respect and solidarity as humans and institutions basic values. This principle will constitute the foundation for self-appreciation and for the self as part of the family, the community, and the nation. Children will recognize the peculiarities of each town, including their symbolic emblems, history, and leaders. (Carta Circular Núm. 2-2015-2016, p. 10).

Surprisingly, in Puerto Rico, ethnic identity formation via school curriculum is not necessarily ethnocentric biased. Sykes (2014) noticed how the formal school curriculum often omitted the cultural experiences of the minority culture leading to a sense of cultural loss. In the Puerto Rican experience, the school curriculum includes a brief and distorted account of the history and cultural artifacts that contribute to ethnic identity formation. Martin (2012) called this a “cultural mismatch” (p. 5). He asserted that when significant and valuable portions of the culture are not passed to future generations, the individual is unable to connect with or internalize their ethnicity. This fact could result in children preferring other countries to their own national group (Middleton, Tajfel, & Johnson, 1970 cited in Barrett & Oppenheimer, 2011). In addition, Barrett (2008) explained that the use of language in the family home and the child’s language of schooling are related to national identification, which is related to positive distinctiveness attributed to their group (p. 8).

Early childhood English immersion programs encourage children and families to use English as communication language in school and in familial contexts. On the other hand, early childhood Spanish programs incorporate English as a core subject in a daily



thirty-minute period. In this context, language differentiation parallels social group categorization. Moreover, language attitudes develop and in some settings represent an upgrade from being a minority to being part of the dominant group (Dragojevic & Giles, 2014).

The development of language attitudes in Puerto Rico could be explained through a socio-political perspective. The colonial status of the island supports all kinds of dichotomies including ethnicity, social categorization, and language. Ethnic identity formation requires a strong affiliation between members, historical knowledge, language usage, and a sense of pride and respect toward the country of origin. Wimmer (2008) contended that ethnic boundaries are created as individuals develop their perceived ethnicity. In addition, boundaries are related to the promotion of ethnic membership. Wimmer (2008) suggested four processes that could affect ethnic boundaries: expansion, contraction, inversion, and repositioning. In this case, expansion, the conversion of ethnic groups into a new category, and contraction, that narrows the ethnic group by a peculiarity like language, could influence children's ethnic identity development (Wimmer, 2008).

Gazzardo, Todorova, Adam and Falcón (2016) studied ethnic identity perceptions among Puerto Ricans of the Diaspora and found that many have a sense of being cultural hybrids. The same perception could be manifested within the island as ethnic boundaries are formed between English and Spanish speaking children. Tajfel and Turner (1986 cited in Xu et al., 2015) suggested that children identify themselves by comparing their similarities to others. In addition, they posited that school contexts trigger changes in

ethnic identity that could be attributed to group membership (Tajfel & Turner, as cited in Martiny & Kessler, 2014).

Educational institutions are crucial in promoting ethnic identity formation and supporting positive inter-ethnic contact (Webber, McKinley & Hatie, 2013). Porter and Washington (as cited in Paat & Pellebon, 2012) believed in the possibility of children retaining their culture of origin and exhibiting cultural behavioral variations as they encounter different contexts. In accordance, Markus (2008) stressed that children's ethnic identity reflect the multiple contexts where the child interacts. Nevertheless, a strong ethnic identity confers a sense of belonging and a source of meaning and should be supported by the child's social environment.

Ethnic identity formation is dependent on how students identify as belonging to a social group, and in the educational setting it represents how teachers provide support to children's social and ethnic identity development as Puerto Ricans growing in a pluralistic society. School belonging gives that sense of group membership that is associated with ethnic identity (Gummadam, Pittman, & Ioffe, 2016). Gummadan et al. (2016) conducted a study with ethnic minority college students and concluded that they could experience a sense of belonging to a larger group through two ways: feelings connected to the school or feelings connected to their ethnic group. This investigation supported the findings about school influence in group categorization and identification. Furthermore, it affirmed that both strong ethnic identity and school belonging helped to build self-confidence, leadership, and promoted students' success (Gummadan et al., 2016; Kim & Diaz, 2013). Hulstijn et al. (as cited in Trofimovich & Turuseva, 2015)

suggested that ethnic identity construction is a social, cultural, and cognitive phenomenon.

The schools have the power to develop students' cultural identity, values, and experiences that are central to their holistic development because it is within the social system of schools that children negotiate who they are in relation to others (Trofimovich et al., 2015). Donohoe Luscombe and Kazdal (2014) argued that schools are institutions where identity is formed through socialization processes and that the language of instruction is determinant to it. They stated, "It is through language that we negotiate the world, our concepts of reality, and our beliefs and values, the chosen language in which instruction in school takes place affects both individual and collective identity" (Donohoe Luscombe and Kazdal, 2014, p. 1016). Furthermore, teachers contribute to children's social construction of identity as they negotiate racial and ethnic relations within their classrooms (Bustos-Flores, Riojas-Clark, Guerra, & Sanchez, 2008). Schwartz, Wee Koh, Xi Chen, Sinke, & Geva (2016) explained that teachers are active and powerful language policy makers in their classrooms. This role is critical in the development of cultural and linguistic identities in children (Schwartz et al., 2016).

Other researchers have found that teachers' backgrounds shaped the decisions that they made concerning academic goals and on how they think of their students (Ajayi, 2011). Ellis (as cited in Ajayi, 2011) examined teacher's language background and their conceptions of language learning and use. He found that teacher's pedagogical choices reflect their ethnicity, gender, class, attitudes, and experiences. In addition, Williams, Edwards, Kuhel, and Lim (2016) found that teacher education programs provide

information that either challenges or supports prospective teachers' assumptions, inclinations, and dispositions (p. 19). Baker (as cited in Fang, 2016) suggested that English language teaching should be approached holistically, considering the interaction among culture, identity, and language. He recommended a language teaching system that integrates "cultural competence" (p.649). Baker situated English language learning as a communicative practice in a globalized world that does not have to contest cultural identities (Baker as cited in Fang, 2016). Milner and Laughter (2015) agreed with Baker and added that teacher education programs do not support this position. They stated, "Teachers are learning something based on the absence of the material" (p. 349). Teacher education programs are not training prospective teachers to learn about the historical development of the country. Moreover, they contended that the teacher education curriculum excluded important topics like race and poverty.

In Puerto Rico, the situation is very similar. There is no formal education at teacher education programs concerning ethnicity, race, and poverty. Milner and Laughter (2015) recommended educational institutions' commitments to help prospective teachers learn and build consciousness regarding their identity and cultural practices. Similarly, Sanders, Haselden, and Moss (2014) argued that teacher education programs must direct faculty and students to examine their practices related to culturally competent pedagogy.

### **Language Learning and Maintenance**

Language and identity are inextricably linked (Shin, 2013). Riley (2007) stated, "You are what you know: identity is made of knowledge and language is both what we know and how we know it" (p.91). Gladstone (as cited in Khan, 2016) claimed that

language and culture are interwoven (p. 4). Children's identities are reflected in the ways they use language. In Puerto Rico, language usage has been submitted to political debates. English was imposed on the island when the United States gained possession in 1898 (Morales & Blau, 2009).

In 1949, after years of unsuccessful enforcement of English as language of instruction, the government re-established Spanish as the official medium for instruction. DuBord (2007) explained that local resistance to the public school language policy favoring English as part of a curriculum of Americanization confirmed that Spanish is a principal component of Puerto Rican national identity (p. 242). He stated, "Rejecting a colonially imposed language policy can establish language as a national symbol" (p. 243). Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a drastic increase in English immersion educational programs and schools. In addition, the political status of the island as a United States territory has favored the introduction and usage of Anglo culture values, music, clothing, food, television, social practices, and language.

English language learning, from the economic perspective, represents professional opportunities in and out of the island. In this regard, Barreto (as cited in Garcia, 2011) explained, "In this colonial situation, Spanish remains the language of social solidarity, and valued for its colloquial use. English, on the other hand, is the language of economic development and growth" (p. 138). Correspondingly, the desire for socioeconomic advancement is considered one of the underlying causes for language shift among marginalized groups (Makoe, 2014; Mufwene, as cited in Herbert, McConnell-Ginet, Miller, & Whitman, 2009). Torres (2010) studied Puerto Ricans in the United States and

noticed that they are adopting English more quickly than any other Latino group. The author argued that English-only adoption is part of the assimilation “as a route to success in the U.S.” (p. 49). Unfortunately, this phenomenon is accompanied by a loss of Spanish language (Torres, 2010).

Garza and Crawford (2005) studied the dynamics of language differences in school settings and discovered that immigrant students tend to favor the use of English over their heritage language even when their heritage language is encouraged. Yilmaz (2016) found that heritage language used in immigrant homes in the United States tend to disappear in two generations. Herbert et al. (2009) argued that association of one’s language with being of low prestige might lead children to reject it and to desire to speak the dominant language (p.187). In addition, they shift languages believing that English will help them to be successful at school (Yilmaz, 2016). Hunkin (2012) has analyzed the relationship between language and ethnic identity and stated:

The health of a language indicates to some degree the health of an ethnic group. That is, because language carries the values and history of people, it gives them an ethnic specificity that bestows them pride and defines them as people with particular cultural heritage. (p. 104).

Heritage language learning and maintenance is critical for the development of group membership. Lindfors (as cited in Genishi & Dyson 2009) explained that language is a cultural tool that enables people to connect, represent and communicate experiences, and declare their identity (p. 16). In this regard, language serves the role of a boundary marker that distinguishes between insiders and outsiders (Wimmer, 2008). Salomone (as

cited in Pretlet, 2016) explained the concept of language as “a channel through which individuals identify self and others and through which positions of power and subordination are displayed based on discourse and attributions bestowed upon language” (p. 17). In addition, Noels (2014) suggested that language practices constitute the self and identity of an individual (p. 89).

Children participating in English immersion programs become monolingual, losing not only the opportunity to learn and communicate in more than one language, but also the cultural knowledge and ethnic identity that only language can communicate. In addition, they create group membership based on cultural knowledge and language used (Markus, 2008; Riley, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Moreover, Agirdag (2014) found, in previous studies on immigrant students, that linguistic assimilation is related to family problems, personality adjustment, and a decline in educational success.

Lee (2012) argued that cultural identity deteriorates when children experience difficulties learning and maintaining the native language. Moreover, parents’ beliefs and attitudes towards English language could influence their child’s ethnic identity development and the loss of heritage language (Lee, 2012). Unfortunately, parents believe that learning the English language is children’s best hope for improving their life situation and reinforced it despite the communication barrier that it could represent for the family (Hawley & Nieto, 2010). Quintana and Skull (2009) argued that linguistic preferences and abilities are predictors of ethnic identity. In addition, Rivera Matos (as cited in DuBord, 2007) suggested that language is a functioning organ in cultural dynamics and stated, “To defend our language is to defend our spirit, because on the day

that this is corrupted or degenerated into a hybrid slang, our spiritual decline will begin, we will be stuttering individuals” (p. 248). Spanish language is, undoubtedly, an integral component in the construction of Puerto Rican identity.

Most immersion programs in Puerto Rico claim that early exposure to English language is highly recommended for the acquisition and proficiency of the language and for future economic advancement. The “*Proyecto para el Desarrollo del Ciudadano Bilingue*” (The project for the Biligual Citizen) emphasized the importance of English language instruction and access to promote socio economic opportunities to Puerto Rican residents (Fajardo, 1977). The “*Escuela de Idiomas de Puerto Rico*” (The School of Languages of Puerto Rico) (P. del S. 274 del 18 de enero de 2013) was created to enforce subtractive bilingualism in the island based on English monolingual ideologies. Furthermore, Municipal Law 12, 2003-2004 known as “*Código del Sistema de Educación del Municipio de San Juan*” (Municipality of San Juan System of Education Code) developed and implemented the first public early childhood education school with a full English immersion approach that belongs to the Municipality of San Juan Educational System. San Juan, which is the capital of Puerto Rico, is the only municipality with an autonomous educational system. All these official mandates were developed to promote bilingual citizens, but the literature suggested otherwise, that students in immersion programs, instead of becoming bilingual, go from being monolingual in Spanish to being monolingual in English (Agirdag, 2014; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; González-Carriedo, Bustos, & Ordoñez, 2016).



Correspondingly, Baker (as cited in Genishi & Dyson, 2009) had studied monolingualism and stated, “Subtractive bilingualism occurs when the socially dominant language replaces the weaker ethnic language” (p.12). In this particular case, English is seen as the dominant language of instruction and as the one with the attached significance for social advances. Moreover, in Puerto Rico English immersion programs are abundant in the private school system and now in the public system of education (PR Department of Education) with the emergence of “*Proyecto para el Desarrollo del Ciudadano Bilingue*” (Project for the Bilingual Citizen) and its twelve bilingual schools throughout the island. The School of San Juan is the only public early childhood education bilingual school that is part of the municipality of San Juan Educational System.

There are no mandates applicable to the private educational system, other than curricular compliance with Puerto Rico Core Standards. Many private institutions, regardless of their academic competitiveness, promote English immersion programs based on the virtues of bilingualism. Nonetheless, these institutions have become “linguistic markets” (Bourdieu as cited in Agirdag, 2015). Bourdieu (as cited in Agirdag, 2015) argued that a market involves power relations between the dominant and the dominated and it is applicable to languages (p. 452). In this regard, private English immersion programs have served as the driving force of language assimilation in the island.

Hakimzadeh and Cohn (as cited in Proctor, August, Carlo, & Barr, 2010) and Yilmaz (2016) found that English monolingualism increases as a function of generations. They suggested that second and third generation immigrants have completely absorbed

and assimilated English language. Although Puerto Ricans do not share immigrant status as other non-English speaking groups in the United States, the English language immersion program's trend is promoting monolingualism among participating children. In addition, previous generations of Puerto Ricans are not proficient in English language and English monolingual children are having a hard time communicating with parents due to language barriers.

Portes and Rumbaut (as cited in Nesteruk, 2010) argued that language barriers increase parent-child conflict and feelings of embarrassment about their culture in children not fluent in their parent's language (p. 273). In addition, parents teach children values, respect, traditions, social practices in their native language. Who is going to be teaching the new generation of English monolingual children, and what is going to be learned?

Ti0 (1992) in his book *Lengua mayor: Ensayos sobre el espa0ol de aqu0 y de all0* presented a chapter on language and identity. In it, he described the cultural composition and traditions of Puerto Ricans and its colonial history. He concluded and stated:

Over these four columns: history, culture, language, and race, our national identity is founded. We are diverse like a landscape: different racial composition, different political ideologies, but we have something that is like an unbreakable chain: our language, the maximum manifestation of our identity. (Ti0, 1992, p. 151).

Ti0 (1992) aesthetically described the use of Spanish language as a measure of ethnic identity affirmation. Comparatively, Collier (as cited in Oades-Sese et al., 2011) argued

that children's native language must be sufficiently developed in order to successfully transfer language skills to another language.

Research indicates that children who develop strong reading comprehension strategies in their native language are likely to use those same skills to reading in English (Jimenez, García, & Pearson as cited in Proctor et al., 2010). Moreover, there is a correlation between native language literacy development and English literacy development, especially among native Spanish speakers learning English (Proctor et al., 2010). On the other side, Clark (as cited in Oades-Sese et al., 2011) stated, "as English language learners develop new skills and knowledge in English, their first language becomes stagnant and does not keep pace with their new knowledge" (p. 749). Leeman (2015) studied second-generation Korean Americans and found that those that were not proficient in the heritage language did not consider themselves Korean. She explained that participants framed "Korean" and "American" as distinctive categories based on language proficiency. Similarly, Schiefflin and Ochs (as cited in Leeman, 2015) examined how language is used in the school context to socialize in accordance to community norms. In another study with Mexican heritage students, Showstack (as cited in Leeman, 2015) showed that students identified language with ethnic identity and culture and used social categorizations to distinguish the authentic Mexican from the cultural hybrids ones (p.112).

Language immersion programs are not a panacea for English language learning. In fact, additive bilingualism is supported by research to be beneficial for children in multicultural settings and for children in general (Argidag, 2014; Choi, 2015;

Dominguez-Rosado, 2015; Genishi & Dyson, 2009; González-Carriedo et al., 2016; Herbert et al., 2009; Oades-Sese et al., 2011; Proctor et al., 2010; Shin, 2013). Bilingual children have the ability to solve problems in two linguistic contexts and in a flexible manner, show a greater understanding of syntax and grammar and of other features of language (Oades-Sese et al., 2011).

Additive bilingualism promotes the possibility of communication in different contexts and environments without losing heritage language and ethnic identity. Nieto (2013) added that the linguistically additive approach affirmed students' language and culture and prepares them in a multicultural world. On the other hand, English-only education pretends to replace ethno linguistic identities and cultures with Americanization ideologies that neglect students the opportunity to be proficient in more than one language (Bondy, 2016). In addition, this type of education promotes the development of social categorization among children based on language proficiency. This social categorization takes the form of "us" and "them" to establish a binary opposition form of social cognition (Shkurko, 2013).

### **Acculturation and Language Maintenance**

According to Williams and Berry (as cited in Flynn, Olson, & Yellig, 2014), acculturation is a process of transformation that occurs when two or more cultures come into contact. This cultural transformation leads to the integration of behaviors, beliefs, traditions, and identities of the new culture. As mentioned in the previous sections, Puerto Rico has undergone an involuntary process of acculturation via colonialism.

Islanders have kept Spanish as their heritage language for centuries. Nevertheless, Puerto Ricans have assimilated Anglo cultural values, traditions, and mores.

With the advent of mass media communications and school English immersion programs, new generations of islanders are starting to think and communicate in the English language. Jun et al. (2014) argued that culture is learned and acquired in society. Moreover, Sodowsky, Lai, and Plake (as cited in Jun et al., 2014) added that acculturation could change a person's thinking patterns, values, identities, and social behaviors (p. 5). These statements imply that social environment including schools could be the medium for transmitting the Anglo culture, thus promoting children's identification with another ethnic group.

Schultz's (2016) research on acculturation of minority groups in the United States emphasized the role school plays in acculturation and stated, "schooling is framed as a formal process of acquiring new knowledge, whereby the student learns academic topics, social norms, and interpersonal behaviors that have been agreed upon by the dominant "American" culture" (P. 103). Accordingly, Way et al. (2008) argued that schools are contexts for identity development. In this regard, schools propitiated all kind of distinctions.

Cousik (2015) explored teachers' strategies of negotiating cultural diversity in elementary classrooms and found that teachers must become aware of the biases that affect their behaviors and attitudes about culture (p. 57). This awareness should be directed to analyze the factors that affect their instructional practices (Cousik, 2015). Haan and Leander (as cited in Rodriguez et al., 2012) argued that social spaces, like

schools, provide the context for children to move between individual and interpersonal processes and facilitate the dynamics of ethnic construction.

The majority of the investigations related to acculturation and language maintenance used immigrants and Native Americans in different sociopolitical contexts. However, Puerto Rican schooling and colonial language policies had similarities in the use of English instruction for the purpose of Americanization (Dike, 2014; Dominguez-Rosado, 2015; Font-Guzman, 2013; Negrón Montilla, 1977). Mirel (as cited in Schultz, 2016) summarized the purpose of immigrants' Americanization process and stated, "preparing adult immigrants and their children to be citizens of the United States committed to the democratic ideals of this country, mastering English, learning American history and civics, and understanding and embracing the democratic ideals of this country" (p. 104). This process was implemented in the island of Puerto Rico through educational policies from 1901 to 1952 and at present continues to be in force (Ley Orgánica Foraker del 12 de abril de 1900; Acta Jones, Carta Orgánica de 1917; P. del S. 1177 del 27 de agosto de 2014).

Puerto Rican legislation is similar to the English-only legislation used to teach non-native English learners in the United States (Arizona Proposition 203, 2000; California Proposition 227, 1998; Massachusetts Question 2, 2002). Studies conducted with adolescent Hispanics in Sydney, Australia, demonstrated that speaking Spanish and maintaining a sense of ethnic pride reduced assimilation to the English speaking community (Gibbons & Ramirez, as cited in Dan, 2014). These studies suggested that language is related to cultural orientation and ethnic identity (Dan, 2014). Moreover, in

early childhood when the language of instruction and socialization is other than the language heard at home children might initiate a process of acculturation.

Berry (1980) proposed a model of acculturation composed of four strategies:

- 1- Assimilation – the individual adopts the receiving culture and discards the heritage culture.
- 2- Separation – the individual rejects the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture.
- 3- Integration – the individual adopts the receiving culture and retains the heritage culture.
- 4- Marginalization – the individual rejects both the heritage and the receiving cultures.

Benet, Martínez and Haritatos (as cited in Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga & Szapocznik, 2010) have suggested that the integration category, often called biculturalism, is associated with the most favorable psychosocial outcomes for young immigrants. This premise also applies to involuntarily subjugated groups. Biculturalism is seen as an outcome of a globalized society. Biculturalism or integration could be successful if the non-dominant group freely chooses it and the receiving culture is open and inclusive. Nonetheless, biculturalism or integration means using additive bilingual strategies to propitiate the enrichment that more than one language brings to an individual. Unfortunately, Puerto Rican educational language policies favor subtractive bilingual models that could result in assimilation or “melting pot” (Berry, 2005; P. del S. 1177, 2014).

Berry (2005) argued that individuals use different acculturation strategies, and that strategy preference is influenced by a relative preference for maintaining one's heritage culture and identity and having contact with and participating in the larger society (p. 705). Young children are unable to discern on cultural, social, economic, and political issues that influence their future. Significant adults model, teach, and reinforce what they aspire children to become and learn. Moll (as cited in Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014) argued that what children learned at home and their lived experiences mold their identities. In accordance, Berry (1980) listed three psychological variables that impact the process of acculturation: contact experience (individual's perception of being accepted or rejected by the dominant culture), cultural involvement and social ties (cultural orientation of the individual), and cross-cultural skill (usage of dominant's culture language).

Early childhood English immersion programs promote the usage of English language in and out of school, which in turn influences children's perceptions of in- and out-group membership based on cultural categorizations (Berry, 2005; Markus, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Moreover, Berry (2005) stressed that individuals switch strategies depending on which group they are interacting with. According to Wimmer (2008), switching strategies allow children to maintain membership in several social categories and ethnic groups. The main concern is children's capability to communicate and identify with others as they move in their social environment. Wong Fillmore (as cited in Luchtel, 2011) found that the earlier a child begins learning English in an



education program, the more prejudicial it is for their linguistic interactions with family members (p. 22).

Language acculturation includes losing the ability to communicate with significant others, and experiencing difficulty identifying with a cultural background and developing ethnic identity (Luchtel, 2011). Research done by Kim, Newhill, and López (2013) found that when children are forced to give up their cultural practices and ethnic identity by the dominant society, they have a hard time conceptualizing themselves as members of their own ethnic group (p. 38). This confusion in ethnic identity development could lead to mental disturbances, classroom behavioral problems, and school maladjustment among other problems (Kim et al., 2013). In addition, first graders' thinking is limited, distorted, and inconsistent, and it is not until primary grades that they understand that a person could be part of several different groups (Derman-Sparks, 1989).

In the case of Puerto Ricans, ethnic identity formation has been hybridized through a long process of acculturation. Ethnic identity is essential in the study of acculturation. Hybridization or hyphenated identities are common within immigrant groups in the United States and even within Puerto Rican Diaspora. Nevertheless, Spanish language maintenance has served as a protective factor against complete assimilation to the Anglo culture in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rican children participating in English immersion programs are vulnerable to assimilation and to become the first generation of a new breed of Puerto Ricans that do not belong to either culture. Bicultural individuals perceive their two cultures as compatibles and share languages and

customs (Larrañaga, García, Azurm, & Bourh, 2016). In the case of English monolinguals in a Spanish-speaking island there is a sentiment of “otherness” that excludes, rather than integrate, the hybrid and assimilated Puerto Rican (Dominguez-Rosado, 2015; Rodriguez-Arroyo, 2013; Torres, 2010).

Feinaeur and Cutri (2012) had study the relationship between acculturation process, social contexts, and school instruction and found that teachers are crucial agents in the promotion and development of children’s sense of belonging to a cultural group. They argued that teachers’ cultural baggage impacts their teaching strategies. Teachers can promote a culturally relevant pedagogy that recognizes and values children’s ethnicity and group membership. Moreover, Nagel (1994 cited in Rydland & Aukrust, 2008) asserted that ethnic identity is influenced by how others perceived the individual and how the individual perceives his own identity. In this matter, school and teachers’ influences can serve as children’s parameters for social categorization within their own ethnic group (Feinaeur & Curti, 2012).

Ethnicity, language, and school instruction are intertwined. Riley (2007) argued that culture and language allow individuals to establish connections and to perceive the world framed within shared definitions of a situation. Misidentification with a cultural group results when connections and perceptions are not attuned. In addition, subtractive bilingualism and teachers’ beliefs can make a negative impact on children’s language choices that could result in assimilation and first language loss (Yilmaz, 2016).

For immigrant children and other subjugated groups, it is important to support and maintain their sense of cultural identity as they entered the educational system (Brown,

2011). In accordance, Lee (2012) argues that children's need to learn the majority language, as means of social integration, indirectly promotes the loss of heritage language and the inability to develop cultural identity. Moreover, children might perceive that the heritage language has a lower status and reject its use to communicate in familial settings (Brown, 2011; Hammer et al., 2011; Lee, 2012). As a result, families may face cultural mismatches and differences that may lead to distancing from ethnic participation and identification (Pajunar, 2012). Bhatia and Ritchie (2012) argued that subtractive bilingualism harms cultural identification and is reflected in the acculturation processes that promote cultural identity shaped by two cultures.

#### Summary and Conclusions

In conclusion, the evidence from research in ethnic identity formation, language maintenance, and acculturation supports the importance of developing a sense of belonging to a cultural group and the importance of heritage language as a medium to that identification in the early childhood years. Ethnic identity is a social construct influenced by multiple factors in the child's environment. Nevertheless, most of the research in this area has focused on immigrants facing school performance and behavioral problems that are outcomes of their acculturation process.

There are few studies exploring ethnic identity formation in individuals subjected to involuntary acculturation, much less to colonial acculturation, as is the case of Puerto Rico. Research studies also emphasized the effects of acculturation and ethnic identification in migrant adolescents and young adults. Children's ethnic identification and acculturation processes have not been studied in-depth. I found no studies

concerning the loss of heritage language in a context where heritage language is the dominant one in a colonial context. This investigation contributed to the understanding of the importance of heritage language usage as the foundation of ethnic identity formation for subjugated groups facing assimilation and cultural absorption.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology that was used in this multiple case study, including the purpose of the study, the research design and rationale, population and sampling procedures, instrumentation, data collection and analysis.

This chapter gave details as how the study was conducted and the trustworthiness of the methodology.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### Introduction

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools on first graders' ethnic identity construction in the Municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. For this study, I considered the fact that globalization has influenced the way individuals communicate and behave (Fang, 2016). Nevertheless, children need to know who they are and to which ethnic group they belong. This knowledge is necessary in order to establish meaningful relations and to share their uniqueness (Noels, 2014).

The findings of this study reflected teachers' ethnical blending. Nevertheless, ethnical blending does not have to equate to ethnical absorption or disappearance. Ethnical absorption promotes the loss of heritage language (Lee, 2012). Language symbolizes how a person feels and thinks and it is linked to ethnic identity (Riley, 2007; Shin, 2013). Mu (2015) asserted that throughout the literature, heritage language is referred to as the most important contributor to ethnic identity construction (p. 240).

This chapter is organized in four sections encompassing information on the research design, my role in the research process, the methodology, and issues of trustworthiness. The research design section includes the research questions, the central concepts of the study, and the research tradition and why it was chosen. In the role of the researcher section, I discuss my role in the study and state my biases and any other ethical issues that might be applicable and how I managed them. In the methodology

section, I describe the population, sampling strategy, criteria for participant selection, and data collection instruments that were used in the study. In the final section on issues of trustworthiness, I describe the different strategies I used to establish credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of data. In addition, ethical procedures concerning data access and collection are discussed in this chapter. The chapter ends with a summary emphasizing the main points discussed in each section.

### Research Design and Rationale

The design provided a coherent relationship between the research components. I used a qualitative research design. The rationale for selecting a qualitative research design instead of a quantitative design lay in the nature of qualitative research. A tenet of qualitative researchers is that individuals socially construct meaning as they interact in particular environments (Creswell, 2012). Furthermore, in qualitative research, the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection and analysis, and uses an inductive investigative strategy to compile richly descriptive end products (Merriam, 2002, p. 6). These characteristics of qualitative research design allowed me to understand this multiple case study from participants' perspectives. In addition, Maxwell (2013) argued that the research questions are the center of a design. The research questions influence all other components of the research design and are also affected by the other components (Maxwell, 2013, p. 4). Patton (2002) argued that research questions have to be aligned to the intended type of research. Accordingly, the research questions of this study seek participants point of view to answer the problem stated.

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools on first graders' ethnic identity construction. The purpose of the study responded to real social problems or to applied research typology. Accordingly, the research questions were written to help people understand how language and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools influenced ethnic identity formation and to look for possible ways to intervene and find solutions. The research questions were

- 1- How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?
- 2- How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" based on language usage in the Municipality of San Juan?

The research sub questions were:

- 1- How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role in developing first graders' ethnic identification?
- 2- According to participants, what influences shaped their knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity?

I examined how language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools influenced first graders' construction of social categorizations within their ethnic group. Furthermore, I explored if teachers perceptions of what they

did and said was related to their level of acculturation, language of instruction, and language of communication.

Researchers recognized the role of school in the acculturation process and in the loss of ethnic identity and heritage language of minority groups (Brown, 2011; Oades-Sese et al., 2011; Paat & Pallebon, 2012; Padilla & Perez, 2003). Nevertheless, based on the review of literature, there is a limited body of evidence for cases of involuntary or subjugated acculturation processes. The findings of this study may contribute to teachers rethinking of the ways in which ethnic identity and heritage language are taught and valued on the island and in other parts of the world. Cultural revitalization is complex and requires all societal institutions to compromise and support educational efforts toward it (Draper, 2017).

The research tradition selected for this study was the qualitative multiple case study approach. Use of a case study approach allows the investigator to explore multiple bounded systems through in-depth data collection and to report findings based on case themes (Creswell, 2012). Although qualitative research is directed to the peculiarities of each case, multiple case studies can be used to replicate procedures and to portray different perspectives on the object of study (Creswell, 2012). Merriam (2002) posited that qualitative case studies facilitate researcher search for meaning and understanding. Moreover, the researcher becomes the instrument of data collection and analysis. These strategies yield a richly descriptive end product (Merriam, 2002, p. 179).

A characteristic of a case study approach is the bounded unit of analysis or case. The unit of analysis could be a person, program, community, or other bounded system



that is of interest to the researcher (Merriam, 2002). In this investigation, there were four cases or units of analysis, which were defined as four first-grade classrooms. I selected a multiple case study approach rather than a single case study because it allows a replication strategy that adds confidence to the findings (Miles et al., 2014). In this particular study, I wanted to examine teachers' communicative practices, language use, and acculturation indexes in private and public school first grade classrooms in the municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico, and how these factors might relate to the promotion of ethnic identity formation. A multiple case study allows for comparison between cases. A multiple case study approach allows the researcher to complete an in-depth analysis of each case as well as a cross-case analysis based on common themes (Creswell, 2012).

I considered other qualitative approaches for this study. Because ethnic identity formation and language maintenance were central aspects of the study, I considered the auto ethnography approach. Ethnographic studies focus on a cultural group, and the unit of analysis is rather large (Patton, 2002). The researcher is an active participant in the process as he or she is immersed within the culture of the study (Patton, 2002). In auto ethnography, the researcher is not only immersed, but is part of the subjects of study (Patton, 2002). I considered an auto-ethnographical approach because I wanted to learn and relive my own ethnic identity process to free myself from cultural ignorance and denial. However, this approach requires the researcher to become part of the researched community; it is also preferable for investigations that occur over a considerable amount of time and involve a large sample (Patton, 2002). Moreover, ethnographers focus on

describing the culture of a group of people (Patton, 2002). In the present study, I was interested in examining a particular case in its real-life context with a small sample. Therefore, I opted against using an auto-ethnographic approach.

My second choice was grounded theory approach. I thought of grounded theory because there are no theories explaining how language of instruction influences ethnic identity development in groups forced to involuntary acculturation. On the other hand, there are only a few cultural groups that would fit in that category. I realized that grounded theory approach is recommended when there is a possibility to generate a theory or process shaped by a large number of participants and data collection and analysis that could provide an explanation of how and why something happens (Creswell, 2012; Johnson & Christensen, 2008). The grounded theory approach is complex and requires retesting what you investigated with new empirical data. For these reasons, this approach was not suitable for the investigation that I wanted to conduct.

In conclusion, the rationale for selecting a multiple case study approach was related to the purpose of the study, the conceptual framework, and the research questions that I explored as part of the design. I did an in-depth investigation using four units of analysis to examine the influence that language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools have in first graders' ethnic identity development. A multiple case study approach allowed me to deeply understand the bounded cases and to establish a comparison in a reasonable amount of time.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Qualitative studies are all about in-depth understanding and finding meaning about detailed aspects of life. To achieve it, I designed the study, collected and analyzed the data, and reported the findings. In addition, I scheduled and conducted interviews, intervened as a participant observer, took field notes, and administered the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale to teacher participants. In this regard, my role was that of a participant observer. I observed and took field notes of teachers' interactions in and out of the classroom. I discussed and negotiated the nature of my participation with the participants of the study to mitigate feelings of discomfort and doubts. In order to ensure trustworthiness, I discussed personal biases concerning Anglo cultural elements in the Puerto Rican educational system with participants of the study and used member checking. In addition, I used a reflective journal to analyze how my perceptions interacted with those of the participants in order to minimize subjectivity in the research process (Maxwell, 2013; Patton, 2002).

I also interviewed teachers, and recorded and transcribed the information. I administered the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale to teachers. I also observed and took notes on classroom artifacts that provided information about how teachers promoted ethnic identification and group membership. Conflict of interest was avoided since I had no work relation with the selected schools, nor do I supervise the participant teachers.

## **Methodology**

This section has to do with those decisions that are going to help the researcher answer the research questions of the study. Maxwell (2013, p. 90) argued that qualitative methods have four main components

- 1- The relationships that the researcher establishes with participants.
- 2- The selection of sources of information.
- 3- The data collection processes.
- 4- The data analysis.

Accordingly, this section is organized in participant selection processes and rationale, instrumentation and sources of data collection, and the data analysis plan. Each component is described in-depth to allow other researchers to replicate the methodology of the study.

### **Participant Selection Logic**

The participants of this study were public and private schools certified first grade teachers of English immersion programs and Spanish language programs in the municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. I used the purposive sampling strategy. Purposive sampling helps to establish the case boundaries as the researcher deliberately selects participants that can understand the research problem and provide critical information to answer the research questions (Creswell, 2012; Maxwell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2002). In addition, Weiss (as cited in Maxwell, 2013) stated, “Selecting those times, settings, and individuals that can provide you with the information that you need to answer your research questions is the most important consideration in qualitative

selection decisions” (p. 97). In this particular case, I used homogenous sampling technique because the research questions that were investigated are specific to the characteristics of a particular group: English immersion and Spanish language first grade teachers in private and public schools in the municipality of San Juan.

The advantages of purposive homogenous sampling are that they allow the researchers to make generalizations, reduce variation, and simplify the analysis of data. The disadvantages are that researchers are subjectively selecting the nature of the unit of analysis and that might result in researchers’ bias (Patton, 2001). The criteria on which participants were selected are based on the following requirements

- 1- Teacher participants must possess a Puerto Rican K-3 Teacher Certification License.
- 2- Teacher participants must be currently teaching first grade English immersion program and/or Spanish language program in a public or a private school in the municipality of San Juan.
- 3- Teacher participants must exhibit language proficiency in English and Spanish for both programs.
- 4- Teacher participants must have been raised in Puerto Rico.

The sampling parameters that I used to get the research questions answered are depicted in Table 2. Miles et al. (2014) argued that establishing sampling parameters that respond to the conceptual framework and research questions facilitates data collection processes. Sampling parameters are sampling choices that get the research questions

answered. For this study, I selected sampling parameters based on setting, participants, events, and processes.

Table 1

*Sampling Parameters*

Sampling parameters	Selected parameters for the study
Setting	Public and private school English immersion and Spanish language first grade classrooms.
Participants	Public and private school first grade English immersion and Spanish language program teachers.
Events	Public and private school English immersion and Spanish language program first grade classroom communicative practices.
Processes	Public and private school English immersion and Spanish language programs teachers' formal and informal communicative practices and interactions with students.

In this multiple case study there were four cases: two Spanish language instruction first grade classrooms and two English language instruction first grade classrooms. I selected teacher participants from San Juan District I and II to delimit the geographical area. I solicited participation through personal contact with school directors. Once school directors authorized, I personally contacted teachers to ask for

their voluntarily participation in the study. Since I used purposive homogenous sampling strategy, I selected participants having those characteristics that were of particular interest to the study. As I contacted school directors and teachers, I explained, in advance, the selection criteria to avoid miscommunications and to facilitate the recruitment of participants. I ceased looking for participants once I recruited the ones needed to conduct the study.

Although the literature suggests the use of five cases to establish robust comparisons, the most important consideration for sample size is if participants would be able to answer the research questions (Miles et al., 2014). Sample size should be large enough to achieve a deep case analysis but the quantity is relative to the quality and depth of the information available. In this particular study, the sample size was four cases.

A previous study by Petrakis (2015) used two cases for a multiple case study and conducted data analysis at two levels: single case analysis and cross case analysis. Similarly, Aso (2014), Crotwell (2011), Erber (2015), and Lovejoy (2014) used three cases to conduct their multiple case studies. In these investigations, with the exception of Erber (2015), the cases were school classrooms and the results demonstrated that two to four cases could provide meaningful data and avoid limitations in data analysis.

I selected four cases because an even number of cases will satisfy the criteria for in-depth analysis that will be necessary to answer the research questions and to compare among cases. In addition, participants included had rich experiences in the phenomenon of concern. Patton (2002) argued that sample size might be determined according to case objectives, and the availability of resources and time.

In Puerto Rico, there is a limited number of public school English immersion first grade programs in the municipality of San Juan and provisions has been made, through multiple data collection procedures, to add confidence through a richly research case even with a smaller sample. Miles et al. (2014) explained that small samples might represent a problem in terms of generalizability or transferability of the findings. To attend this problem of external validity, the findings were richly descriptive to allow other researchers to assess the potential transferability of the study. I used homogenous purposive sampling to provide a representative sample of first grade certified English immersion and Spanish language program teachers in private and public schools and to provide in-depth understanding of the case study that lead to the attainment of saturation (Creswell, 2012).

### **Instrumentation**

Instrumentation refers to the methods used for data collection in a study (Miles et al., 2014). It is recommended in a multiple case study to have a structured instrumentation plan to allow for comparison across cases, an objective of this study. Yin (as cited in Creswell 2012) suggested the use of multiple data to understand and validate case study findings (p. 100). In this case study, the sources of information were: Private and public first grade classroom teachers structured interviews, field observations of teachers' teaching and communicative practices, teachers' acculturation indexes, and observations of first grade classroom artifacts in private and public schools. Table 2, presents the matrix used to explain the relationship between the research questions and the design.



Table 2

*A Matrix for the Study the Language of Instruction and Teacher Practices in First Graders' Ethnic Identity Construction*

Research Questions	Why do I need to know this	Sampling decisions	Data Collection Methods	Whom do I contact for access	Data Analysis
1- How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?	To better understand how teachers in private and public schools use language to include or exclude others based on ethnic categorizations.	Classroom observations between teachers and children and other school settings (playground, cafeteria, etc.)	-Observation notes -Classroom Artifacts	-School Director - Classroom Teacher	Coding Re-reading
2- How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?	Teachers play a crucial role in children's ethnic identification. It is important to understand the strategies that teachers use to promote the process of first graders' ethnic identification.	First grade classroom teachers. Classroom artifacts.	-Observation notes -Interviews -Classroom Decorations and Children's Work.	-School Director - Classroom Teacher	Coding Audio-taping Transcribing Notes
2 (a)- How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role in developing first graders' Ethnic identification?	To understand how perceptions of their role developing children's ethnicity influences their teaching practices	Classroom teachers	-Observation notes -Interviews	School Director Classroom Teacher	Coding Audio-taping Transcribing Re-reading
2 (b)- According to participants, what influences shaped their knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity?	To understand how teachers rearing methods, and experiences are influenced by acculturation process and how this could impact their perception of Puerto Rican ethnicity.	Classroom teachers	-Interviews -Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale Index	School Director Classroom teachers	Audio-taping Transcribing Coding Descriptive Statistic Analysis Re-reading

I used structured face-to-face open-ended questions to interview teachers (see Appendix A). This interview approach contributed to gain understanding about the influence of language of instruction, teachers' communicative practices, teachers' perceptions of ethnicity, and perceptions of their role in children's ethnic construction in both, private and public schools (Miles et al., 2014). I was aware that teachers were not necessarily conscious of their acculturation process but the questions were worded to elicit answers that could be related to the research questions.

Rubin and Rubin (2005) argued that interviews should begin with broad questions to allow the researcher to learn more about the topic. The first questions were directed at exploring teachers' instructional strategies and perceptions of ethnicity. Narrower questions focus on language of instruction, student teacher and student-student interactions, and curriculum. The interview consisted of 14 open-ended questions that I wrote and that were identically worded and arranged to minimize variations in the process. I selected this approach because I worked a multiple case study and the standardized interview protocol provides for comparison across sites (Patton, 2002, p. 346).

Teachers were interviewed once. The interview was assigned 40 minutes and was conducted during teacher's free time in and/or out of the school. Two reviewers established the interview content's validity. Lincoln and Guba (as cited in Creswell, 2007) argued that peer reviewers provide an external check that serves as a validation strategy. The reviewers were Dr. Miguel Cubano, Director of the Music Department, and Dr. Yolanda Martínez, Associate Professor in the Graduate School of Education at the

Interamerican University of Puerto Rico. Both reviewers specialized in Curriculum and Instruction and have extensive experience as members of doctoral committees in the aforementioned university.

Bustos-Flores et al. (2008) recognized that teacher's instructional strategies are unconsciously influenced by their acculturation process and beliefs, and stated "acculturation issues related to self-conceptualization and ethnic identity influence the development of teacher instructional efficacy" (p. 289). I used the Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AMAS-ZABB; Zea, Asner Self, Birman, & Buki, 2003) instrument to measure teachers' acculturation indexes (see Appendix C). Acculturation indexes helped me understand how teachers' perception of ethnicity and personal ethnic identification influenced their teaching practices in Spanish and English immersion private and public first grade classrooms, and in children's social categorization processes.

Zea et al. (2003) developed the scale to evaluate acculturation in the Latino population in the United States. This scale is suitable to measure acculturation factors in the United States and in the country of origin. The authors contended that the scale is adaptable to other ethnic groups exposed to change. The scale was designed to assess three factors related to acculturation: identity, language competence, and cultural competence. The AMAS-ZABB is a 42-item scale with a 4-point self-report, Likert-type response options ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree) for the cultural identity subscales and from 1 (not at all) to 4 (extremely well) for the language and cultural competence subscales. The scale has been used previously with two samples:

150 Latino/Latina students from mid-Atlantic urban institutes of higher education and with 90 Central American immigrants living in Washington, DC. In both studies, reliability was established with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from .83 to .97. Content validity was established conducting focus groups and examining the relevance of each scale item (Davis & Engel, 2011).

The scale was appropriate for this study because it takes into consideration previous scales developed for Hispanics and assesses central concepts related to the purpose of my study. Other acculturation scales have been used to assess Latino's acculturation indexes in the United States (Felix-Ortiz et al., 1994; Marin et al., 1987; Marin & Gamba, 1996; Norris et al., 1996; Szapocznik et al., 1980) but did not explore the relationship between identity and language competence. In addition, Cortés, Rogler, and Malgady (1994) developed the Bicultural Acculturation Scale for Puerto Rican Americans but it has limited evidence of validity and reliability and it is addressed to first and second-generation adults in the United States.

Although the instrument is published and accessible for use through the Web, I contacted Dr. Maria Cecilia Zea through email and asked authorization to use the scale as part of my data collection instruments. Dr. Zea replied on March 24, 2016 and consented, and even provided the Spanish version of the scale and the scoring sheet (see Appendices D and G).

Another source of data were classroom artifacts. Artifacts are objects that are used by a group of people and reflect much of their idiosyncrasy (Creswell, 2007). Classroom artifacts, such as national foreign symbols, festivities, and music provide

information about the sense of belonging to a cultural group (see Appendix E: Classroom Artifacts Observation Sheet). These artifacts helped me to understand how teachers expressed their ethnic identification and how teachers promoted ethnic identification. This information was analyzed as cultural manifestations promoted by the teacher or school that served as cultural markers for the student's construction of ethnic identity.

### **Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection**

I accessed Spanish language public school teachers through the database of San Juan II Districts of Education. There are few, if any, public elementary English immersion schools in the Municipality of San Juan. In this case, I contacted the *Sistema Educativo de San Juan* director and explained the purpose of the study and asked for collaboration. On the other hand, there are many private Spanish language and English immersion schools in the municipality of San Juan. I visited three private schools with similar demographics and explained the study and asked for voluntary participants. I ceased to look for volunteers as soon as I found the four teachers that I needed to conduct the study.

Data collection procedures corresponded to the study's research questions. Maxwell (2013) argued that the methods used to collect data are "the means to answering your research questions" (p. 100). In this study, there were two research questions and two subquestions

- 1- How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?

2- How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" based on language usage in the Municipality of San Juan?

2(a) – How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role in developing first graders' ethnic identification?

2(b) – According to participants, what influences shaped their knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity?

In accordance, data collection responded to the research questions. In this study, I used four types of data: Private and public schools Spanish and English immersion teacher structured interviews, observation notes of Spanish and English immersion first grade classroom teacher's teaching and communicative practices in private and public schools, the AMAS-ZABB, and classroom artifacts. I collected all data. Researchers are considered instruments because they gather information. In this matter, Kvale and Brinkmann (as cited in Miles et al., 2014) added that the researcher role is not only to collect data but also to become coauthor of participant accounts. Data collection strategies varied according to the source.

Once I identified participants, they were cited twice: at the beginning of the study for the interview and after the second week of observations to clarify questions and observations made in the interview. The face-to-face structured interview protocol consisted of 14 open-ended questions that lasted approximately 40 minutes. I asked teachers availability to meet after school hours to have enough time to develop the interview in a relaxed and out of school environment. The interviews were recorded

using audio equipment and, additionally, I took pen and paper notes. I scheduled a follow-up meeting with the teachers to discuss findings and to get participants' feedback prior to the final analysis of the study. This participants meeting or member checking not only added credibility of the findings, it also allowed participants critical observations (Creswell, 2012).

I collected the second source of data through observations of teachers' interactions in Spanish and English immersion first grade classroom in private and public schools. I observed communicative practices in English and/or Spanish. My observations were documented in the observation sheet (see Appendix B). I was introduced to the children so I could fulfill my role of participant observer. Observation notes are descriptive and contain not only what the observer sees and hears, but also what the observer feels and experiences (Patton, 2002). I scheduled the observations for a whole instructional period for each classroom. Aso (2014), Crotwell (2011), Eber (2015), and Petrakis (2015) argued that observations should be long enough to capture participant's behaviors and practices. They recommended from 8 to 10 hours of observation or the equivalent of one instructional period for each participant. In this regard, Patton (2002) stated, "the length of time during which observations take place depends on the purpose of the study and the questions being asked" (p.275). The purpose of the study was accomplished in the observation period.

The third method that I used to collect data was the AMAS-ZABB (see Appendix C). I asked participant teachers their availability to answer the scale after school hours prior to the interview. This scale results helped me to understand teachers' acculturation

process and influences in their perception and knowledge of Puerto Rican ethnicity and indirectly, in the strategies that they used to promote ethnic identification. I discussed the results of the AMAS-ZABB with the participants before conducting the members check meeting.

The fourth method of data collection was classroom artifacts. I used the Artifacts observation sheet (see Appendix E) to document national foreign symbols, music, decorations, and festivities. The data collection schedule is depicted in Table 3.

Table 3

*Data Collection Timeline*

Data collection procedures	First Week	Second Week	Third Week	Fourth Week	Fifth Week
Teachers structured interviews		X		X	
Structured interviews follow-up meeting					X
Observations Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale	X	X	X		
Scale results discussion			X		
Observations (Classroom artifacts)		X	X		

### **Data Analysis Plan**

Data analysis is about finding meaning from the collected data that will help answer the research questions. Maxwell (2013) recommended researchers engage in a concurrent process of collecting and analyzing data. Furthermore, he advised novice



researchers to revise observational notes, interview transcripts, and documents prior to the analysis.

I analyzed the AMAS-ZABB results to connect teacher's acculturation processes to their communicative practices. In this particular case, I used a small and voluntary sample. Triola (2008) contended that small and voluntary samples should not be used to make generalizations, because from statistical point of view it could be flawed (p. 13). On the other hand, this analysis was used to support the qualitative design and to further describe participants. This analysis helped me to answer and understand research sub-question 2(b).

I recorded participants' interviews using audio recording equipment, paper and pen procedures and transcribed for analysis. I recorded observations through the use of field notes. For this data, I used inductive analysis as codes emerge during the collection process. I used In Vivo and Holistic coding strategies for the first cycle of coding. These two approaches are feasible for the analysis of participant's own language and for capturing what they want to express in a large unit of data (Miles et al., 2014). For the second cycle of coding, I used pattern coding or themes. This analysis helped me answer research questions one and two, and sub-question 2(a).

Discrepant cases present an opportunity for further learning and research. These cases provide an opportunity to reflect and to consider other possibilities (Patton, 2002). Miles et al. (2014) argued that discrepant cases or outliers offer important information about how a conclusion might need modifications (p. 302). Although discrepant cases are a highly unlikely finding for a study with a small and homogenous sample, I treated

them carefully, revising data collection and analysis until I began to see that the data and the emergent findings surfaces no new information (Merriam, 2002).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

Qualitative studies are often evaluated according to validity issues. The term validity or trustworthiness is compatible with research rigor, integrity, ethics, and accountability (Miles et al., 2014). In this section, I discussed measures taken to ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings.

#### **Credibility**

I managed the possible issues of credibility using content-rich descriptions of observations, triangulation of data sources, and analysis of discrepant cases. Maxwell (2013) argued that rich data is a detailed, descriptive account of specific events that the researcher has observed. These data restricts researchers from compiling his prejudices. Triangulation of data supports a finding by showing that three different measures agree with it (Miles et al., 2014). Creswell (2012) defined observations as the act of noting in the field setting through the five senses of the observer (p. 166). Observations are based on the research purposes and questions and can include interactions, physical settings, activities, and researcher behavior (Creswell, 2012).

I used different types of observations, from complete observer to complete participant and gathered field notes to document and for analysis of information (see Appendix B: Observation Sheet). Patton (2002) stated that field notes are the fundamental database for constructing case studies and thematic cross- analysis (p. 305). I observed each classroom for a whole instructional period or the equivalent to 8 hours.

I used the AMAS-ZABB analysis to rule out spurious relations between teachers' acculturation indexes and their communicative practices and ethnic identity promotion strategies (Miles et al., 2014). Discrepant findings served to assess if there was a need for conclusion modifications.

### **Transferability**

This multiple case study has the possibility to be transferable to other contexts. Although the sample was small, the case was sufficiently described to allow for comparisons with other cases. Erickson (as cited in Miles et al., 2014) stated, "Any transfer of a study's finding to other contexts is the responsibility of the reader, not the researcher" (p.314). Moreover, Noblit and Hare (as cited in Miles et al, 2014) argued that transferability is not a mechanical issue. Transferability depends on the interpretations of the findings by those interested in pursuing a similar study.

### **Dependability**

The methodology has been explicitly described. I waited to conduct the study to reevaluate reliability issues related to the consistency over time across the researcher and the methods. Nevertheless, the research design aligned conceptual framework, research questions, and data collection and analysis in a clear and coherent way. The researcher's role is described explicitly to evidence consistency. Data triangulation added transparency to the analysis.

### **Confirmability**

Objectivity issues are important in any kind of research. I acknowledged my personal bias in a study that concerned facing an emotional issue, as ethnic identity

formation in Puerto Rican youngsters. To avoid researcher bias, I recorded personal assumptions in a reflexive journal and shared them with an external professional. I communicated my personal biases with participants and confronted the data through member checking procedures.

### **Ethical Procedures**

To ensure ethical procedures in recruitment, I met with prospective participants to disclose information concerning the study in accordance with Walden University Institutional Review Board requirements. Participant's orientation included a conversation to discuss the study's process, the voluntary nature of their participation, privacy issues concerning data collection and findings, and possible risks and benefits. I informed participants that they could withdraw from the study at any time without penalty.

In the case of participants withdrawing from the study, I expected to search from the pool of possible first grade classrooms of the municipality of San Juan's other teachers that met participant criteria. I expected voluntary participants to sign a consent form and a confidentiality agreement written in familiar language to avoid misunderstandings. Data collection was strictly confidential and was stored using coded names to avoid exposition of participant's names.

I stored data electronically in my personal computer that has a protected password and in an external hard drive. No other person had access to the data, and I will store it for a period of five years before destroying it via paper shredding and documents deletion.

## Summary

The research design is the backbone of a qualitative study. In this chapter, research questions were restated and aligned with the research tradition and to the conceptual framework. Major sections of the chapter detailed the process of participant selection, including sample criteria, size, and recruitment strategies. I discussed thoroughly the instruments for data collection and the alignment of data collection instruments to answer research questions. In addition, I provided a possible schedule for data collection and recording procedures accompanied by an explanation.

For data collection and analysis, I discussed issues of trustworthiness and provided further explanations as how to add credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings of the study. The chapter ends discussing ethical procedures that I safeguarded in order to comply with Walden University Institutional Review Board provisions and to protect participants, the University, stakeholders, and myself.

In Chapter 4, I discussed important issues relevant to the setting of the study, participant's profiles, data collection procedures, data analysis, evidence of trustworthiness, and discussion of results. The chapter ended with a summary and a transition to Chapter 5.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this multiple case study was to examine how language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools influenced children's categorizations of "us" and "others" within their ethnic group in the municipality of San Juan, Puerto Rico. Social categorizations based on language usage within an ethnic group that does not hold an immigrant status have not been previously studied, based on my review of the literature. Researchers have recognized the possible role of school and language of instruction in promoting acculturation processes and the loss of ethnic identification in immigrants and minority groups in the United States and in other countries (see Agirdag, 2014; Bondy, 2016; Choi, 2015; Oades-Sese, Kaliski, Esquivel, & Maniatis, 2011; Paat & Pallebon, 2012; Padilla & Perez, 2003; Pretlet, 2016; Schultz, 2016). Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature related to linguistics, ethnicity, and systems of education and acculturation of a majority group. The findings of this study could provide insights on how to promote bilingualism without compromising children's ethnic identity development and heritage language loss for ethnic groups whose members are exposed to acculturation processes.

I developed the following research questions and subquestions to guide the study:

RQ1. How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the municipality of San Juan?

RQ2. How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" based on language usage in the municipality of San Juan?

RSQ2 (a). How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role in developing first graders' ethnic identification?

RSQ2 (b). According to participants, what influences shaped their knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity?

This chapter is organized in six sections to provide the reader a coherent overview of the data collection processes and analysis. The chapter includes a description of the research setting, participants' demographics, and an overview of the data collection and analysis processes. I also include information on the implementation of trustworthiness in the study and present the findings. The chapter includes with a summary of key points and a brief introduction to Chapter 5.

### **Setting**

I conducted this multiple case study in an urban setting within the municipality of San Juan. I conducted teacher observations and interviews at four elementary schools. Two of the schools belong to the Puerto Rican Public Department of Education while the other two schools belong to the Puerto Rico Private System of Education. One of the teachers from the public system of education was in a transitional status. Transitional status means that she has not been in a particular school for more than a year. She reported not feeling attached to the school because she knew she would be moved to

another school in the following year. This information could have an influence in the interpretation of the findings of the study.

### **Demographics**

I limited demographic information to age, gender, and ethnicity. Other characteristics relevant to the study were years of teaching experience, teaching program (Spanish/English immersion), school system (private/public), and being born and raised in Puerto Rico. The participants included four female first grade teachers. Their ages ranged from 24 to 58 years. All participants were born and raised in Puerto Rico. Nonetheless, one of the participants went to live to New York City as a baby and returned to Puerto Rico when she was 15 years old. A code was assigned to all participants to protect their identity and confidentiality. Table 4 shows participants' demographics and other characteristics.

Table 4

#### *Participant Demographics and Other Characteristics*

Teacher code	Gender	Age	Ethnicity	Years teaching	Teaching program	Teaching system of education
A001A	Female	33	Puerto Rican	3	Spanish	Public
A002A	Female	58	Puerto Rican	34	English immersion	Private
A003A	Female	42	Puerto Rican	15	Spanish	Private
A004A	Female	24	Puerto Rican	2	English immersion	Public

### **Data Collection**



The data collection process began after I received Walden University Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval to conduct the study. Walden University's approval number for this study is 03-02-17-0070323 (see Appendix F). I went to the Puerto Rico Department of Education, San Juan Districts I and II, to solicit authorization to visit elementary schools and to invite potential participants. The San Juan II district director authorized me to visit an elementary school enclave in a marginalized community. I visited the school director, and she signed the Letter of Cooperation and introduced me to the first grade classroom teacher. I scheduled a meeting with the teacher to explain the study and the voluntary nature of her participation. I visited two private schools, one with an English immersion program and the other with a Spanish program. Both directors signed the Letter of Cooperation and scheduled meetings with first grade teachers at the schools so that I could explain the purpose of the study and their voluntary participation.

For the public school with an English immersion program, I visited the municipality of San Juan Mayor's office. This school is the only public elementary school with an English immersion program in San Juan and belongs to the San Juan Educational System that operates independently from the Puerto Rico Department of Education. The mayor's representative signed the Letter of Cooperation, and scheduled a meeting to visit the school.

I instructed the four teachers of the voluntary nature of their participation and gave them information about the purpose of the study. The teachers signed the informed consent document in the language that they felt more comfortable reading

(English/Spanish). On the same day that they signed the informed consent form, they were given the AMAS-ZABB) to complete in their free time prior to the observation visits. I scheduled two more visits with each teacher to observe classroom interactions and to conduct the interview. A final visit was scheduled to discuss the AMAS-ZABB findings and follow up on the interview transcripts.

There were some data collection variations from the plan presented in Chapter 3. Instead of 5 weeks of data collection, I spent 4 weeks. Changes in data collection plans responded to participants' multiple responsibilities and activities and to the elimination of a second interview as was suggested by the IRB. I spent from 5 to 8 hours in each visit and collected data from multiple sources, which I believe was enough for a thorough data analysis. Table 5 shows the modifications made to the data collection plan.

Table 5

*Modified Data Collection Timeline*

Data collection process	First week	Second week	Third week	Fourth week
Teacher structured interviews		X		
Follow-up meeting				X
Classroom observations		X		
AMAS-ZABB	X			
AMAS-ZABB results discussion				X
Classroom artifacts observations		X		

I collected information from structured interviews, classroom observations, classroom artifacts, and from the AMAS-ZABB. Participants received information of the data collection instruments and processes, and were given my personal phone number and email address in case they had concerns or doubts about their participation. I informed participants of their right to withdraw at any time from the study and reminded of the nature of their voluntary participation.

**Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (AMAS-ZABB)**

The AMAS-ZABB instrument was available in Spanish and the English language. Teachers chose the language in which they preferred to complete the instrument. I gave participants the AMAS-ZABB instrument prior to the first observation visit. Teachers returned the completed instrument on the first observation visit.

**Teacher Structured Interviews**

The interviews were face-to-face, audio recorded using a Sony IC Recorder, and I took paper and notes. The interviews lasted from 30 to 40 minutes and were performed at teacher's free time. I used a structured interview protocol with 14 questions that I developed. The recordings were later transcribed by me and were shown to participants at a follow-up meeting.

**Teachers Observations**

I observed teachers' communicative practices with their first grade students. I went as a participant observer and recorded events, and classroom interactions using an Observation Sheet that I created (see Appendix B).

**Observation Classroom Artifacts**

I observed the use and type of classroom artifacts. I classified artifacts as music, decorations, festivities, books, children's work, material, and others. I used the Classroom Artifacts Observation Sheet (see Appendix E) that I created to record the type of artifact and its use.

### **Follow-up Meeting**

At the end of the data collection process, I met individually with all the participants for a follow-up meeting. In this meeting, I gave participants a copy of the interview transcripts so they could correct or clarify any misinterpretation that I had of their interview responses and discussed the AMAS-ZABB instrument results.

### **Data Analysis**

I used an inductive approach to analyze the data. Miles et al. (2014) referred to inductive approach as a discovery of recurrent phenomena that are related and have regularity and pattern (p. 238). After collecting the data from teacher's interviews, classroom and artifacts observations, and the AMAS-ZABB instrument, I started the process of organizing and sorting data into codes.

For the first cycle of coding, I used In Vivo and Holistic coding. I used In Vivo coding for classroom observations because I wanted to capture what the teacher said and not my interpretation of what she said. I used Holistic coding for the teacher's interviews and the classroom artifacts observations.

The AMAS-ZABB instrument was analyzed using a scoring sheet provided by the first author of the scale (see Appendix G). The initial cycle of coding produced multiple codes that were categorized by similarities in the second cycle of coding. Table 6 illustrates examples of the first cycle of coding using In Vivo coding for teacher observations in the Spanish program classrooms. Table 7 illustrates examples of the first cycle of coding using In Vivo coding for teacher observations in the English immersion classrooms. The codes are written in the language that was spoken.

Table 6

*In Vivo Coding Classroom Observations for Spanish Program Teachers*

Participant code	Field Observation Notes	In Vivo Coding
A001A	Children were asking questions simultaneously and the teacher lost control of the group. She told the children to give her a break so she could regain control and answer the questions.	“Dame un breakecito”
A003A	Children were at the large group meeting and were talkative and loud. The teacher gave a verbal command follow with a visual cue (hands in a circular motion by the ears).	“Switch”
	When the teacher wanted children to attend details she gave them the command “Hocus Pocus” referring to imaginary glasses that they could wear.	“Hocus Pocus”
	Children were listening at the large group meeting.	“You are making me so happy!”
	A child shared an experience with the group and the teacher replied.	“Cool”
	The teacher was waiting for the children to begin the lesson, she said:	“I am waiting!”
	Several children were asking questions at the same time and the teacher asked for a break.	“Dame un breakecito”
	The teacher asked the children to wait.	“Wait in your spot”
	The teacher was discussing the Planetary System and asked the children to look for a planet.	“Magic finger up”
	The teacher asked a particular child if she was listening.	“Do you hear me?”

Table 7

*In Vivo Coding Classroom Observations for English Immersion Program*

Teacher code	Field Observation Notes	In Vivo Coding
A002A	At the end of the first day of observations, one of the kids yelled, "I hate Spanish". The teacher addressed the situation. She gathered the children for a whole group meeting and discussed language, bilingualism, and what it means to be Puerto Rican.	<p>"We are Puerto Ricans and we have to honor our mother tongue"</p> <p>"The good thing about being a Puerto Rican is that you can speak two or more languages"</p> <p>"We are privileged people because we have two languages"</p> <p>"Spanish is the language that you use with your family"</p> <p>"Do it in the language that you enjoy but do not forget what is your language"</p> <p>"Now you are going to do a picture about how you feel being Puerto Rican"</p>
A004A	<p>The teacher gathered the children for a whole group meeting to discuss the barn.</p> <p>At one of the centers, the children were making a barn out of divergent materials and the teacher said:</p> <p>One of the kids was very excited about the barn construction and said: "Este rojo es el que voy a usar". The teacher replied:</p>	<p>"What animals were in the barn?"</p> <p>"Let's make a barn out of these materials!"</p> <p>"Do you remember how the barn looks?"</p> <p>"What about the barn colors?"</p> <p>"How do we say it in English?"</p> <p>"Remember, you have to try your best to say it in English!"</p>

For the second cycle of coding, I looked for frequency and repetition of codes to derived categories and patterns (Saldaña, 2009). Table 8 shows the categories and themes that emerged from pattern coding the teachers' observation field notes.

Table 8

*Themes and Categories from Pattern Coding Teachers' Observation Field Notes*

Themes	Categories
Teachers Discourse	"Spanglish"
Level of Cultural Assimilation	"Two languages"
	"Cultural content"
Classroom Rules for Language Use	"Use of English language"
	"Use of Spanish language"

I used Holistic coding for Classroom Artifact analysis. Holistic coding is useful when the researcher wants to capture a sense of the overall content (Miles et al., 2014). I grouped codes into categories and themes and patterns began to emerge. Table 9 summarized the categories and themes that emerged from the Classroom Artifacts observations in the Spanish and English immersion programs in public and private educational systems.



Table 9

*Themes and Categories for Classroom Artifacts Observations*

Themes	Categories
Level of Cultural Assimilation	Classroom decorations United States Festivities English Language Recreational Reading Books

I analyzed teacher interview responses using Holistic coding. I looked for similarities for each interview question answered by teachers of the same language program and did a cross-analysis between both language programs. Tallying the repetition frequency of codes for each interview question answered derived categories. The cross-analysis showed that teachers interview answers were very similar and were not affected by language program (Spanish and English immersion) or educational system (private and public). I grouped similarities into one sentence to capture the cross-analysis and categorized them by patterns for the second cycle of coding.

The themes that emerged described a more profound and implicit process of analysis (Saldaña, 2009). Table 10 illustrates answers to interview questions grouped and categorized for the Spanish program participants; Table 11 includes responses for participants in the English immersion program. Table 12 presents the themes that were derived from the teachers interview cross-analysis for language program and educational system.

Table 10

*Categories from Spanish Program Participants' Interview Answers*

Categories	Interview questions answers grouped by similarities
"Bilingualism"	2-Parents want their children to become bilingual.
"Opportunities"	4- English language learning is important in order to access a better education and future.
"Limited ethnic education"	5-Ethnic or culture education is limited to a unit of study. 6-The curriculum should include cultural knowledge in other units of study.
"Puerto Rican Week"	7- Cultural activities are limited to Puerto Rican Week in November.
"Challenge to Teachers"	
"Cultural pride"	8- Children enjoy cultural activities.
"Parents relived experiences"	9- Parents enjoy being engaged in cultural activities.
"Parents responsibility"	12- Parents should be responsible for ethnic development. School role has been minimized.
"Not a program priority"	13- The school has no expectations related to ethnic identification and development.

Table 11

*Categories from English Immersion Program Participants' Interview Answers*

Categories	Interview questions answers grouped by similarities
"Bilingualism"	2-Parents want their children to become bilingual but are afraid that they would not be able to communicate with them.
"Communication Gap"	
"Spanish language lost"	
"Opportunities"	10- Parents see the English immersion program as a way to improve their children opportunities in life.
"Limited ethnic education"	4-Ethnic identity must be developed at home. 5-There is very limited integration of ethnic development in the curriculum. The teacher is responsible.
"Puerto Rican Week"	6-We promote cultural knowledge in a natural way, as needs emerge.
"Cultural pride"	8-Children get excited as they participate in cultural activities. They seem to have background knowledge.
"Sense of belonging"	9-Parents engage in all school activities not only the cultural ones.
"Emergent cultural themes"	
"Parents responsibility"	12-Parents should be responsible for ethnic identity development.
"Cultural content"	
"Not a program priority"	13-Ethnic identity development is not a priority of the program.

Table 12

*Themes from English Immersion and Spanish Program Teacher Interviews*

Themes
Communication gaps between parents and children Bilingual citizens Children's future opportunities Parent's responsible for cultural education Teacher's level of cultural assimilation Children's sense of belonging Schools cultural disengagement

I scored the AMAS-ZABB using the scoring sheet provided by Zea (2003). The scale is divided into US Acculturation and Culture of Origin, in this case Puerto Rico. The scale measures cultural identity, English language, and cultural competence. Extremely high scores indicate biculturalism and low scores indicate marginalized or low involvement in Puerto Rican or American cultures. Scores in the middle could indicate a more diffused state of acculturation (Zea et al., 2003). The highest score for each category is 4. Table 13 illustrates participant scores by language of instruction program.

Table 13

*Participants' Acculturation Indexes*

Participant code	US Acculturation	Puerto Rican Culture	Program of Instruction	System of Education
A001A	2.9	3.3	Spanish	Public
A002A	3.1	3.7	English immersion	Private
A003A	1.6	3.5	Spanish	Private
A004A	3.1	3.4	English immersion	Public

Table 14 summarized participant's acculturation indexes for US acculturation and Puerto Rican culture by subscales. The subscales included are cultural identity, English language and cultural competent.

Table 14

*Participants' Acculturation Indexes by Subscales*

U.S. acculturation	Participant	Cultural identity	English language	Cultural competence
	A001A	4	2.2	2.6
	A002A	2.5	4	3
	A003A	1.3	2	1.6
	A004A	2	4	3.3
Puerto Rican Culture	A001A	4	4	2.1
	A002A	3.1	2	3
	A003A	4	4	2.6
	A004A	4	3.3	3.1

### **Discrepant Cases**

Patton (2002) suggested a revision of the data for negative or discrepant cases. Discrepant cases present an opportunity to revise hypothesis and conclusions. In this study there were no discrepant cases. The patterns were consistently repeated across cases. The only inconsistency that I found was between the AMAS-ZABB score of participant A003A (Spanish program) and the observations that I gathered from her communicative practices with children. This participant scored very low in US acculturation, which means very low involvement with the culture, and yet her communicative practices reflected a stronger U.S. mainland influence. I used the AMAS-ZABB for the purposes of ruling out spurious relations between teachers'

acculturation indexes and their communicative practices and ethnic identity formation strategies.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

In this section I described the implementation of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability that I used to ensure rigor and the accountability of the study.

#### **Credibility**

In order to ensure credibility, I used triangulation of data sources. The data sources were teacher interviews, observation notes, and classroom artifacts notes. Miles et al. (2014) argued that triangulation of data supports a finding by showing that three different measures agree with it. In this study, the three data sources reflected consistency of information increasing the confidence of findings (Patton, 2002). In addition, I used the AMAS-ZABB to rule out discrepant cases and to assess the need for conclusion modifications.

#### **Transferability**

Transferability in qualitative studies is concerned with how the reader interprets the findings and become interested in pursuing a similar study (Noblit & Hare, as cited in Miles et al., 2014). In order to ensure transferability, I included enough descriptions in the findings for readers to consider a similar study for their own social setting (Miles et al., 2014).

**Dependability**

As presented in Chapter 3, issues of consistency were carefully managed. The research questions were congruent to the study design and data triangulation added transparency and confirmed connectedness between data sources and research questions.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability has to do with ensuring neutrality during the research process. I acknowledged my personal biases with sensitive issues like ethnicity and language of instruction. I shared my personal biases with the participants prior to the interviews and met with them to check the interview transcripts prior to the analysis. This meeting gave participants the opportunity to clarify my interpretation of their answers. In addition, I used a reflective journal to analyze how my perceptions interacted with those of the participants in order to minimize subjectivity in the data collection and analysis processes. I wrote my reflections after every observation visit. This allowed me to record my thoughts and feelings and to share them with an external professional and participants.

**Results**

This section is organized by research questions and sub-questions. I will discuss findings for each question from the corresponding data sources.

RQ1. How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect their ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the municipality of San Juan?

**Spanish Program Teachers**

Both Spanish program teachers, A001A and A003A, regardless of the system of education (public/private) reflected ethnic categorizations of “us” and “others”. These teachers used “Spanglish” words to communicate with children. The use of Spanglish included code switching from one language to another and code-mixing both languages (Price, 2010). Code switching and code mixing were mostly used to reinforce children behaviors, to give specific instructions, to instill a sense of wonder and curiosity, and to convey different messages. Teachers used English and Spanish languages to emphasize what was good, appropriate or nice regarding children’s behavior, attitudes and performance. These communicative practices were used, implicitly, as an ethnic boundary (Wimmer, 2008) and reflected teachers’ beliefs and ethnic categorizations. Examples of the teacher’s use of Spanglish, specifically “code-mixing” that reflected ethnic categorizations were “*Esto está bien **nice***” (*This is very nice!*), “*Qué **cool!***” (*It is so cool!*), “*Dame un **break***” (*Give me a break!*), “*El **pledge** a la bandera*” (*Pledge to the flag!*), “*Busca tu snack*” (*Get your snack*), “*Saquen el workbook*” (*Get your workbooks*) among others.

Teacher A001A (Spanish program) invited me to a special school event held at the cafeteria. The event was “English Week”. In the cafeteria there was a wall poster displaying the message “English is the passport that leads toward successful career goals” that reflected English language bias. Although I was there to observe the Spanish program teacher, I could not miss the English teacher saying “English is going to help you fulfill your dreams and to communicate when you visit Disney World”. This school is enclaved in a project or marginalized neighborhood. Most of children’s parents are high

school dropouts living out of welfare. Most of these families have never been in an airplane or have a car.

Teacher A001A did not make direct comments that would suggest establishing differences among children because of language usage but, implicitly, because of language knowledge. She used Spanglish in some instances to ask children for a break but primarily used Spanish language to communicate with children. She did mention that learning the English language was important in more than one occasion but spoke in Spanish all the time.

Teacher A003A (Spanish program) not only used “Spanglish”, specifically “code-mixing”, to communicate with children, she also used English language terms and English sentences. Some of the “Spanglish” combinations she used were “*Dame un breakecito*” (Give me a break), “*Te ves bien cute*” (You look so cute), “*Que cool estuvo*” (It was cool), and the English language terms were “*switch*” to indicate that children must regain control, “*Hocus Pocus*” which is a Disney movie about witches and she used it as a sign to wear magical spectacles to observe details. She also used comments like, “*You are making me happy!*” to grab children’s attention and “*Use the magic finger*” when she wanted them to look for details. Teacher A003A used the English language in a natural and spontaneous way. She code switched consistently while interacting with and teaching the children.

### **English Immersion Program Teachers**

English immersion teachers, A002A and A004A, were more explicit reflecting ethnic categorizations of “us” and “others” through their communicative practices. Even



though children code switched and code mixed constantly, teacher A002A was diligent at enforcing the English only rule. She told the children, “In this classroom you speak only the English language”. One of the girls said, “*Ya mismo voy a cumplir años*” (*My birthday is coming soon!*) and the teacher told her how to say it in English and asked her to repeat it.

During the Social Studies class, the teacher mentioned that Puerto Rico is a United States territory. Before the end of the school day, one of the children shouted, “*I hate Spanish*” after he was given the Spanish class assignment. The next morning the teacher addressed the situation. She told the children that they have to honor their mother tongue and asked them questions like, “*In what language did your parents sing to you when you were a baby?*” “*If you have children and you live here, are you going to speak to them in English or in Spanish?*” and other related questions. She said, “*Spanish is the language that you use with your family!*” “*We are privileged because we have two languages*”.

Teacher A002A (English program) was trying to communicate the importance of heritage language to children. She told them that they were Puerto Ricans and that Spanish was their first language. She used the English language to communicate these thoughts.

Teacher A004A (English program) used the English language all the time but whenever a child was struggling to understand or to speak she would whisper in his ear what she was saying in Spanish. This practice is against school policy for language learning, which mandates instruction in English. The teacher translated to Spanish

because there were children new to the English immersion program that did not comprehend the language. Is like if not knowing the language has to be kept as a secret from the other children and from school officials. This practice showed categorizations in the form of language usage in the classroom.

Table 15 summarized Research Question 1 themes and findings for teachers in the Spanish and English immersion programs.

Table 15

*RQ1 Themes and Findings for Spanish and English Immersion Programs*

Research Question 1	Themes	Findings
How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers' communicative practices in private and public schools reflect ethnic categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?	<p>"Teachers discourse"</p> <p>"Classroom Rules for Language Use"</p>	Teachers communicate in Spanish, Spanglish and the English language. In Spanish programs, the English language is used to address group control, reinforced behaviors, and is incorporated spontaneously through code switching and code mixing between English and Spanish. In the English immersion programs, English is used all the time and rules are enforced to promote that children communicate using the English language.

RQ2. How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" in the municipality of San Juan?

**Teacher Interviews Spanish Program**

Teacher A001A (Spanish program) recognized that children should be able to learn the English language to have access to better future opportunities. She used instructional opportunities to emphasize the need to learn English to communicate with relatives living in the States and to have a brighter future. The teacher associated a

brighter future with speaking two languages, in this case Spanish and the English language. Worksheet exercises reflected experiences to which children did not have access. For example, the teacher was teaching a preposition and the sentences used on a worksheet referred to animals that children have never seen in Puerto Rico and to events that are not characteristic of Puerto Rican reality: “*Papá Foca hizo sopa (de/desde) salmón*” (*Father seal made salmon soup*), “*Hace mucho frío (en/durante) invierno*” (*It is very cold during the winter*). The use of curricular materials that were not culturally responsive prevailed in the classroom.

Teacher A001A’s (Spanish program) classroom was decorated with Saint Patrick’s and Easter motives. The books available for recreational reading were limited to a Walt Disney collection translated to Spanish language and encyclopedias. The availability of Spanish literature was very limited. The whole school was decorated with Marvel Super Heroes cutouts. There were no exhibits of children’s work in the classroom. This teacher holds a transitional status and she did not invest in classroom materials and decorations because she will be located in another school next year.

Teacher A003A (Spanish program) communicative practices intentionally promoted respect for diversity and for ideological differences. She promoted multiculturalism. Teacher A003A preferred to communicate the importance of being a citizen of the world than to address individual ethnicities. Citizens of the world are prone to accept and share other cultures after recognizing and feeling proud of their own. Teacher A003A communicates that she is not especially fond of Puerto Rican culture but is proud of being a citizen of the world. The teacher said that she promotes a space

where children create and develop their own ideas about culture based on a multicultural lens: *“Este espacio provee para integrar el currículo de cultura de paz. Te permite acercamientos al que piensa diferente”, “una escuela te prepara para la vida y el idioma debe responder”* (This space promotes the development of a Peaceful culture. It allows different points of view. The school prepares students for life and language learning should be responsive to student’s reality). The teacher said that in Puerto Rico English language learning was attached to political ideologies that she did not supported. Teacher A003A said that English is a universal language and everybody should have access to learn it. She added, that ethnic identification and language are separate issues.

Teacher A003A’s (Spanish classroom) classroom artifacts were more reflective of the Puerto Rican culture. She had Latin music, not necessarily Puerto Rican, available in the classroom, recreational reading books in Spanish and the English language, the room were decorated with children’s work, and the furniture was labeled in Spanish words.

### **English Immersion Program Teachers**

Teacher A002A (English program) integrated Puerto Rican cultural knowledge in a natural way and tried to discuss Puerto Rican news and issues on a daily basis. The teacher used any opportunity to remind children of their Puerto Rican roots, although she did it using the English language. The teacher affirmed that children should be taught to distinguish between languages in terms of functionality but to appreciate both languages, English and Spanish: *“Los niños tienen que ver la utilidad del idioma, pero no verlo como uno más importante que el otro”* (Children must learn the functionality of both languages without establishing preferences). The teacher used Puerto Rican week to

integrate concepts related to the culture and other academic areas like: the concept of an island, world maps, how to use a compass, Puerto Rican flag and other nations flags, and children participate in other school activities during the Puerto Rican week festivity.

In teacher A002A's (English program) classroom all recreational reading books, except for the Bible, were in the English language. There were two flags, United States and Puerto Rico. Classroom decorations included Dr. Seuss celebration, Saint Patrick's Day, Catholic images, and children's work. One of the salient classroom artifacts was a caterpillar made out of construction paper circles. Each circle represented one of the English language books that children had read during the school year. Other than the flag, there were no artifacts reflective of Puerto Rican culture.

Teacher A004A (English program) communicative practices reflected the school language policy. The teacher was concerned with the school curriculum because it has adopted the vision of an American school, "*la escuela quiere asimilar la visión de una escuela Americana*" (*The school wants to become an American school*). The teacher used concrete activities and a whole language approach to facilitate children's contextualization of information: "*Todo lo que hacen los niños va de la mano de lo que le decimos. De esa manera pueden integrar la información en un contexto*" (*The things that children do are related to what we say. We want to build knowledge in context*). In this matter, teacher A004A tried to integrate Puerto Rican reality to facilitate children's association and English language comprehension.

The teacher used technology to transmit academic content in the English language because the school is classified as a Microsoft Show Case School. The computer

software used depicted a US farm. The architectural design of the barn and the onomatopoeic sounds were different from the ones children found in Puerto Rico. In teacher A004A's (English program) classroom all recreational reading books were in the English language. The classroom was decorated with artifacts related to the theme of study: the barn. It is important to address that the traditional "red barn" does not exist in Puerto Rico so children would be less familiar with this type of structure than Puerto Rican "*fincas*". Puerto Rican "*fincas*" are characterized by one story buildings made mostly of wood and aluminum. All the computer programs are intended for US natives, there are no programs intended for ESL or bilingual students available for classroom use. There were no cultural artifacts related to Puerto Rican culture.

Table 16 illustrates the relationship between Research Question 2, themes and interview findings.

Table 16

*RQ2 Interview Themes and Findings*

Research Question 2	Themes	Findings
How do Spanish and English immersion first grade teachers in private and public schools promote children's categorizations of "us" and "others" in the Municipality of San Juan?	"School cultural disengagement"	Cultural knowledge is limited by the curriculum. Most of Puerto Rican history and traditions are taught during the Puerto Rican week festivity. Learning more than one language represents opportunities for a better future. The English language allows communication with family living in the States.
	"Children's future opportunities"	
	"Bilingual citizens"	Classroom artifacts, in both programs, are not reflective of Puerto Rican culture.
	"Levels of cultural assimilation"	

RSQ2 (a). How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role in developing first graders' ethnic identification?

### **Spanish Program Teachers**

Teacher A001A (Spanish program) tried to include Puerto Rican cultural facts and knowledge during the language acquisition period but acknowledged that her effort was not enough. The Department of Education curriculum includes at least 70 standards and only one deal with cultural identity. The teacher said that Social Studies were merged into the Spanish class. Since there is limited time to cover Spanish core standards, most of the cultural education and activities are taught during the Puerto Rican week. The teachers said: *“Antes se profundizaba más, pero al integrar Español y Estudios Sociales, hemos perdido la oportunidad de incluir temas culturales. Ahora, dependemos de la Semana de la Puertorriqueñidad para trabajar los temas”* (Before the merge of Spanish and Social Studies classes, we had the opportunity to address cultural content regularly. Now we rely on the Puerto Rican week to cover most of it).

Ethnic identification and cultural knowledge are treated like a festivity and celebrated in the month of November. Although teacher recognized ethnic identification as an important matter, the educational system does not support cultural education. The teacher said that she has an hour and forty minutes to teach Spanish language and Social Studies. Spanish is a core subject and children are tested nationally. Test scores are used for decision making at the Department of Education. Social Studies are not considered a core subject. The teacher said that most of the attention is given to academic subjects that are nationally tested. Moreover, she said that school instruction is important but

learning the English language is more important than having a High School diploma: “*Si sabe Inglés, no tiene que seguir estudiando ya que el idioma le facilita las oportunidades en la vida*” (If you learn the English language, you can drop from school. Speaking the English language is enough to get you a job even without a High school diploma).

Teacher A001A stressed the role of parents promoting ethnic identification. She said, “*Los padres tienen que enseñar en las casas lo que significa ser puertorriqueño*” (Parents are responsible to teach what means to be a Puerto Rican), “*Yo cubro los símbolos patrios, algo de historia, el concepto de isla, pero no es mucho lo que puedo integrar con tan poco tiempo de clase*” (I teach the national symbols, a little history, the concept of an island, but there is not much time to teach other things because Spanish and Social Studies classes have merged into a Spanish language acquisition course).

Teacher A001A said that she developed ethnic identification by promoting children and parent’s engagement in cultural activities. Ironically, specific cultural activities relating to Puerto Rico are relegated to Puerto Rican week during the month of November. During the Puerto Rican week, the teacher organized folkloric dances and traditional food with parents and children. Puerto Rican week presented an opportunity to incorporate cultural knowledge lessons through play: “*construimos un bohío como el de los indios Taínos*” (we build a Taino Indians hut), “*visto a los nenes con taparabos*” (I dressed children with Indian skirts), “*preparamos bacalaitos y alcapurrias*” (we prepare cod fish fried cakes and plantain turnovers). Teacher A001A said that parents enjoyed the cultural activities during Puerto Rican week because they had the opportunity to relived their school experience.



Teacher A003A (Spanish program) emphasized on teaching multicultural education. She developed activities that foster curiosity so children would want to learn more about other cultures and compare that knowledge with Puerto Rican culture. She said that many teachers are afraid to promote ethnic identity because they might be labeled as politically subversive by the system and their peers. She framed cultural identity as a socio political issue: *“Si quieres que los niños hablen en inglés te tildan de estadista y si quieres hablar de Puerto Rico te tildan de independentista. Yo prefiero mantenerme al margen y enseñar de las naciones del mundo, entendiendo que el Inglés es universal”* (If you want children to speak English, people will attack you and said that you promote statehood. If you talk about Puerto Rico, people will say that you promote the independence from the United States. I rather be neutral and teach about the nations of the world. Besides, I do believe that English is a universal language). She preferred to contextualize ethnicity within a multicultural frame. Participant A003A integrates cultural content whenever she can and use the opportunity to establish comparisons between Puerto Rico and other cultures. She said, *“Me gusta fomentar la curiosidad por otras culturas y compararlas con la nuestra”* (I like to promote curiosity for other cultures and compare that knowledge with Puerto Rican culture).

### **English Immersion Program Teachers**

Teacher A002A (English program) said, *“I use the English immersion program to promote cultural knowledge in a natural way”*. She described this process as informal teaching, as something that emerges out of children needs. The teacher integrates children’s inquiries about Puerto Rican culture or clarifies them in a fluid way as if there

were part of the subject matter being studied at the moment. Nonetheless, cultural knowledge is mostly discussed during the Puerto Rican week. Teacher A002A firmly believes that teacher efforts are not enough because the program does not have ethnic identification as a priority. Ethnic identity is responsibility of the parents. She recalled when she was growing up in New York City that her parents taught her the language, music, food, traditions, and pride of being Puerto Rican: *“I grew up with Puerto Rican music, food, values, and Spanish language was spoken at home”, “While at school in New York, I would never speak Spanish then we moved to Puerto Rico and I had a rough time adapting to the Spanish only classroom”*. Teacher A002A said that she believes the subtractive model is the best for the English language acquisition. However, she emphasized that children should not forget who they are and their heritage language. She said, *“Although this is an immersion program, English is children’s second language. They are Puerto Ricans and they must learn to love their language. I use any opportunity to remind them but it is up to the parents to teach cultural identification”*.

Teachers A004A (English program) incorporate ethnic identification as a casual festivity. Puerto Rican week is not celebrated every year in this school. Children’s cultural inquiries are answer as they emerged. The teacher insisted that cultural knowledge and ethnic identification should be taught at home. The teacher said: *“I went to a bilingual school and did not learn much about Puerto Rican history and culture but my parents taught me at home”*. The teacher added, *“I try to address children’s cultural content inquiries but we have limited resources at school. All our books are in the English language and there are just a few that have reliable information about Puerto*

*Rican culture and history. There is a need for Puerto Rican books and resources translated to the English language”.*

Table 17 shows Research Sub Question 2 (a) themes and findings for teachers in the Spanish and English immersion programs.

Table 17

*RSQ2 (a) Themes and Findings*

Research Sub-question 2(a)	Themes	Findings
How do Spanish and English immersion teachers in private and public schools describe their role developing first graders' ethnic identification?	<p>“Limited ethnic education”</p> <p>“School cultural disengagement”</p> <p>“Parents responsibility for cultural education”</p>	<p>Ethnic education is treated like a once a year festivity. Teachers promote ethnic identity as a casualty but not in formal ways because it is not supported by the educational system.</p> <p>Ethnic identity development is seen as parent's responsibilities.</p>

RSQ2 (b). According to participants, what influences shaped their knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity?

**Spanish Program Teachers**

Teacher A001A said, *“Yo pienso que tenemos nuestra identidad pero sin raíces”* (“I think that we do have ethnic identity as Puerto Ricans but is not rooted deeply”). The teacher acknowledged her identity as Puerto Rican but recognized that she did not really know much about the history and traditions of Puerto Rico because she did not formally study it. All she knows about Puerto Rico comes from parents and familial teachings, and from social interactions. She said *“Tenemos nuestra identidad pero no*

*está muy arraigada porque en las escuelas se ha perdido la importancia de enseñarla”* (We have our identity but it is not strong because it has never been formally taught in schools). The role of schools developing ethnic identity has been minimized over the years. Teacher A001A said that her grandparents told her that when they went to primary and secondary school, the curriculum emphasized on cultural knowledge in all the expressions: Puerto Rican literature, history, music, and art. Nowadays, teachers have no formal preparation in these subjects and neither time to teach it because Social Studies is not a core subject and it is not testing material.

Teacher A003A said, *“I was raised in Orocovis and my family promoted Puerto Rican culture”*. The teacher recalled events like *“Fiestas Patronales”* (Festivities honoring Catholic Saints), *“Fiesta de Reyes”* (The Three Wise Men Festivity) and *“Octavitas”* where family and friends gathered to celebrate Puerto Rican traditions that were developed as a fusion of Spaniard and African cultures. These traditions were crucial for her identity construction. She mentioned that her experiences as a university student and teaching in different social contexts gave her insights into Puerto Rican identity but also developed a notion of a globalized citizenship, *“Mis experiencias como estudiante universitaria, lejos de mi pueblo, me abrieron los ojos a otras realidades sociales. También, haber enseñado en diferentes escuelas y niveles socio económicos te hace cambiar los paradigmas”* (“My experiences as a college student, far from my hometown, opened my eyes to other social realities. Also, my teaching experiences in multiple social and economic settings helped me to change perspectives”). Teacher

A003A said that despite all that her parents taught her as a child, her working experiences strengthened her identity as a Puerto Rican.

### **English Immersion Teachers**

Teacher A002A (English program) said, *“My parents were my best models”. “I learned to be a Puerto Rican at home”*. The teacher recalled specific instances where her parents would promote the culture and the pride to be Puerto Rican while living in New York City. The teacher said: *“My parents preserved the Puerto Rican culture even when they became “outsiders”. We went to Catholic school in order to learn values traditionally reflected in Puerto Rican culture. We ate Puerto Rican food, we heard Puerto Rican music, and we kept using the language at home. When I was in the neighborhood, I was allowed to speak and behave like a US American but at home, I was always Puerto Rican”*. Teacher A002A said that being raised in this dichotomy of language and identity was tough but helped her appreciate who she was as a Puerto Rican.

Teacher A004A (English program) said *“experiences at home and in different social contexts molded me as a Puerto Rican”*. Although the teacher recognized that her family was crucial to her ethnic identity development, she said that other experiences changed her perspectives of Puerto Rican identity. She said, *“At the university level, I met students from all over Puerto Rico and from different socio economical contexts. It was through most of these exchanges that I learned to appreciate and to understand what it means to be a Puerto Rican”*. The teacher added, *“it was clear that I did not learn much about Puerto Rican history during my primary and secondary school years”*.

The teacher explained that she went to a Private Bilingual school and ethnic identity development was not formally inserted in the school curriculum. Moreover, the teacher recognized that her family belongs to a social upper class and her Puerto Rican reality differed significantly from that of her college peers. She said that she became aware of her true national identity when she began her college years.

### **Findings Research Sub Question 2 (b)**

Basically, all four teachers expressed that their cultural knowledge and perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnicity were developed at home and in social contexts other than the school. Their answers are congruent with their beliefs that ethnic education is primarily a responsibility of the parents. The salient theme of this RSQ2 (b) is “Parents responsible for cultural education”.

The AMAS-ZABB scores reflected that all teachers had the lowest scores in the cultural competence subscale. These findings could explain teacher’s beliefs that cultural education is a parental responsibility and the fact that ethnic identity is not a priority for either school system.

### **Summary**

The findings of this study reflected that teacher communicative practices in Spanish and English immersion programs, implicitly and explicitly, promoted categorizations between children based on language usage. Ethnic identity is not formally promoted or taught in schools and it is treated like a once a year festivity. Teacher's cultural knowledge has been built on parental teachings and is somehow superficial. Teacher acculturation indexes findings are suggestive of biculturalism.

I will discuss the findings more in-depth and analyzed the interpretations in the context of the conceptual framework in Chapter 5. In the next Chapter, I discussed the limitations of the study, recommendations, and the social change implications.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

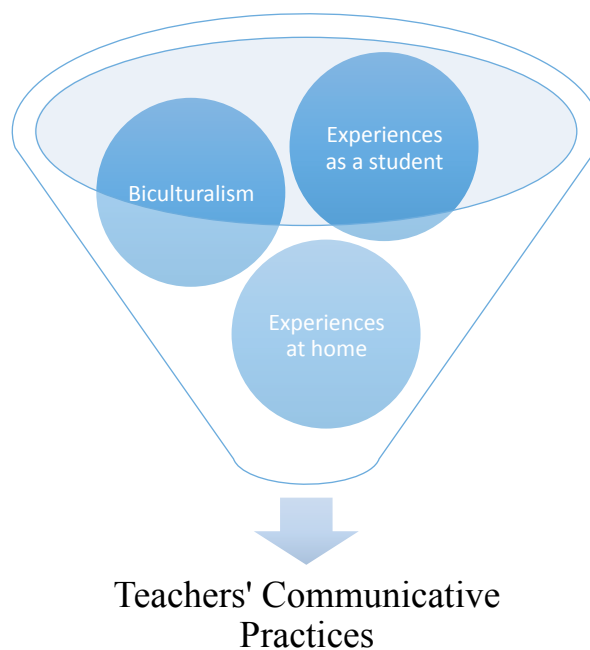
Puerto Rico is a United States territory. As such, its ethnicity and heritage language have been influenced by Anglo cultural values, traditions, and language (Dike, 2014; Font-Guzmán, 2013). Nonetheless, Puerto Ricans have maintained Spanish language as an ethnic marker. In recent years, school English immersion programs using subtractive bilingualism models have increased significantly across the island (Fajardo, 1997). According to Bondy (2016), this trend could jeopardize children's ethnic identity development. In addition, it could promote a hybridized generation of Puerto Rican as children who learn to categorize "us" and "others" by language usage within their ethnic group (Bondy, 2016; Danzak & Wilkinson, 2017; Pretlet, 2016).

The purpose of this study was to examine the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices on children's social categorizations of "us" and "others" within their ethnic group. The nature of the study was qualitative and involved use of a multiple case approach. I used a multiple case approach in order to perform a cross-analysis between language of instruction (Spanish/English) and system of education (private/public). This chapter is organized in four sections: summary and interpretation of findings, limitations of the study, recommendations, and social implications. The chapter ends with a conclusion that captures the essence of the study.



### **Interpretation of the Findings**

In this section, I summarize and discuss the interpretation of findings in the context of the literature and the study's conceptual framework. The findings for RQ1 suggested that teachers' communicative practices, in both language programs and systems of education, reflected ethnic categorizations between "us" (the ones who speak Spanish) and "others" (the ones who can speak the English language and vice versa). These findings illustrated teacher participants' level of assimilation and hybridization and are compatible with previous research findings on acculturation processes of immigrant groups (see Berry, 2005; Dominguez-Rosado, 2015; Luchtell, 2011). Moreover, Martin (2012) posited that this hybridized conceptualization of ethnicity represents cultural gaps between generations and could result in cultural disengagement. The findings supported a state of cultural mismatch, not only based on language usage but as a result of limited cultural knowledge. The findings for RQ1 are comparable to Ajayi's (2011), Williams et al.'s (2016) and Woods et al.'s (2014) studies that suggested that teachers' pedagogical choices and practices reflected their perceived ethnicity, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences. Figure 1 illustrates the factors that have been found to influence teachers' communicative practices in this multiple case study.



*Figure 1 Factors that influenced teachers' communicative practices*

The findings for RQ2 were similar for language program and school system. The findings demonstrated that teachers' cultural knowledge is limited and that the school curriculum does not promote ethnic identity. These findings are comparable to previous research that exposed how teacher education programs are not training prospective teachers to be culturally competent (Baker, as cited in Fang, 2016; Ellis, as cited in Ajayi, 2011; Milner & Laughter, 2015). In addition, teacher participants' uses of classroom artifacts were not reflective of Puerto Rican culture. Most of the classroom artifacts displayed images related to Anglo American characters or festivities. Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) concluded that artifacts have cultural meaning and facilitate identity construction thus supporting the need for culturally appropriate classroom artifacts.

All participants concurred that the Puerto Rico core standards are very limited in regards to ethnic identity construction. Teachers' communicative practices promoted the construction of subtle categorizations based on language usage. This fit the findings of Herbert et al. (2009) who indicated that children subjected to categorizations based on language could be receiving the message that their heritage language is less prestigious than other languages.

In this study, and consistent with Barreto's research (as cited in Garcia, 2011), teachers are influenced by their sociopolitical reality. Teachers believe that ethnicity and culture are independent from heritage language use. In accordance, classroom artifacts were not culturally appropriate. Teacher's use of artifacts and communicative practices reflected their own experiences as students of an educational system that does not support ethnic and cultural education (Puerto Rican Department of Education, 2015; Sykes, 2014). Williams et al. (2016) found that teacher education programs either challenge or support prospective teachers' assumptions, inclinations, or dispositions in ways that could perpetuate cultural ignorance.

In this study, the findings reflected teacher participants' beliefs that cultural education is a parent's responsibility. Although participants recognized that the school curriculum should include more units related to cultural content, they stated that cultural and ethnic knowledge must be provided at home. Participants' attitudes toward cultural education reflected their own experiences.

Participants' cultural competence mirrored their own process of education in Puerto Rican educational systems and was primarily what their parents had taught them.

All of the participants said that the “Puerto Rican Week” was the unit in which children danced “Bomba” and “Areytos,” dressed like Taíno Indians, and ate traditional Afro-Caribbean food. These findings are supported by King and Butler’s (2015) finding that teachers are not fully aware of the importance of cultural education and do not know how to integrate it in the curriculum. King and Butler found that most teachers incorporate native cuisine and traditional dresses and festivals to approach cultural education. Bartolomé (as cited in King & Butler, 2015) posited that higher education institutions should be responsible for developing a pedagogy that includes political and cultural awareness. In this regard, the Americanization Movement (Ray, 2013; United States Senate, 1919), proposed for immigrants and Native Americans in the United States and that started in Puerto Rican schools in the early twentieth century, has succeeded. Puerto Ricans have been Americanized in speech, in political ideas and principles, and in culture (Negrón de Montilla, 1977).

### **Cross Case Analyses**

Cross case analyses between languages of instruction and systems of education reflected a repetitive and confident pattern regarding participants’ answers to research questions and to the sub questions of the study. Participants’ communicative practices were very similar regardless of language program (Spanish, English immersion) and school system (private, public). The cross case analyses for RQ1 and RQ2 by language program showed that Spanish program teachers’ communicative practices included the use of the English language to reinforce children’s behavior, develop positive dispositions toward learning, and convey messages related to what or how to do things in

academic scenarios. These practices reflected categorizations of “us” and “others” based on language. Participant’s used the English language to emphasize what was good and desirable for children in the classroom.

English immersion program teachers’ communicative practices that reflected categorizations of “us” and “others” included telling the children that Spanish is the language to speak at home and English is the language that they should speak at school. These communicative practices promoted children’s categorizations by establishing what is allowed at school and desirable versus what is appropriate at home or other social environments. Teachers’ communicative practices made a distinction between the languages of “us” at school and the languages of “others” and on what is appropriate based on language spoken. This fit with Salomone’s (2014) concept of language as a channel to identify self from others in positions of power and subordination and it is comparable to Nieto’s (2008) findings on teachers’ practices toward immigrant’s use of their native language.

Private school teachers, in both language programs, implicitly and explicitly reflected and promoted categorizations of “us” and “others” based on language. There was a slight difference for the Spanish program and the English immersion public schools. The Spanish program served a marginalized community where children have not had the same opportunities and experiences as the other children in the other three classrooms that I used for the study. In this school, not only the first grade teacher reflected and promoted the construction of children’s categorizations, the school environment also contributed to create ethnic categorizations. As indicated by the

teacher, only those students who could learn the English language are going to be able to succeed and to escape the fate of poverty and marginalization. This belief is supported by previous investigations that established categorizations based on social inequalities that influenced the construction of ethnic identity and self-worth (see Coreblum & Armstrong, 2012; Nesdale, 2004; Tajfel & Turner, 1986; Xu, Farver, & Parker, 2015).

The findings of this multiple case study contradicted what the literature has suggested for immigrants and minority groups subjected to subtractive bilingual models of education. The literature suggested that subtractive bilingualism promoted the loss of heritage language and ethnic identification for minority groups (see Markus, 2008; Noels, 2014; Riley, 2007; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Wimmer, 2008). I found, that regardless of language program (Spanish/English immersion) or system of education (private/public), teachers' hybridization process, limited cultural knowledge, and distorted perceived ethnicity were the most influential aspects establishing categorizations of "us" and "others" based on language usage.

The conceptual framework of this study was built upon four theories that support the notion that ethnicity is a dynamic and fluid process and that it is influenced by social contexts. I used Markus's (2008) Unified Theory of Race and Ethnicity, Berry's Bidimensional Model of Acculturation (1979), Tajfel and Turner Social Identity Theory (1979), and Wimmer's Ethnic Boundaries Multilevel Process Theory (2008). This conceptual framework supported the findings of this study.

Markus (2008) contended that the influence of ethnicity could be direct, explicit, and intentional but it could also be indirect and unconscious. In this study, teachers'

communicative practices that reflected and promoted social categorizations based on language usage reflected a more indirect and unconscious process that might be related to teachers' biculturalism. Biculturalism explained teachers' dichotomies in terms of ethnic identification (American/Puerto Rican) and supported the notion of a dynamic identity that is not bounded to a single social context or to a single need (Berry, 1979; Markus, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1978; Wimmer, 2008).

### **Limitations of the Study**

The limitations of the study were related to issues of transferability and of observational data. Although the issues of transferability were addressed by providing thick descriptions of the findings, the colonial status of Puerto Rico and the degree of acculturation of its citizens is unique. The possibilities for replication of this study are limited.

Another limitation was observational data. Patton (2002) affirmed that observational data are constrained by the limited sample of activities that are observed (p. 563). Teacher's multiple responsibilities and agendas could account for a limited sample of activities. I addressed this issue using triangulation of data sources.

### **Recommendations**

The findings of this study provided insights related to teachers' communicative practices and its influence in the construction of social categorizations within an ethnic group. I identified three main recommendations for future research and practice that are grounded in the literature.

#### **Recommendation 1**

I recommend that Teacher Education Programs in Puerto Rico include courses on cultural education. The literature supported that schoolteachers, via the formal and informal curriculum, explicitly provide and support cultural knowledge and ethnic identity development (see Dan, 2014; Khan, 2016; Markus, 2008; Tajfel & Turner, 1978; Wimmer, 2008; Woods et al., 2014). The results of this study, confirmed Sykes's (2014) findings on the relationship between school curricula and cultural loss.

Webber, McKinley and Hatie (2013) affirmed the important role of educational institutions promoting ethnic identity formation and supporting inter-ethnic contact. In addition, Trofimovich et al., (2015) stated that schools have the power to develop student's cultural identity because it is within this social system that children negotiate who they are in relation to others. Teacher Education Programs must equip prospective teachers with the knowledge to become cultural transmitters and to acknowledge their responsibility as such.

Teacher education programs in Puerto Rico followed content and accreditation criteria similar to programs in the United States (Reglamento del Consejo General de Educación, 2012). Puerto Rico is a US territory and has to comply with the United States Department of Education and higher education dispositions (Reglamento Núm. 7217, 2006). King and Butler (2015) documented the general lack of emphasis on cultural competence in teacher education programs in the United States. This lack of emphasis on cultural competence is also present in the official curriculum of Puerto Rico (Puerto Rico Department of Education, 2015). Need for state educational policies that include ethnic and cultural education in teacher education programs and in schools in Puerto Rico are



urgent. Only through a comprehensive culturally enriched curriculum, Puerto Ricans will learn to appreciate their history, traditions, and language and will learn to appreciate other cultures and their contributions.

Moreover, Gordon-Burns and Campbell (2014) argued that prospective teachers should be trained on bicultural pedagogical practices. Bicultural pedagogical practices are more attuned with Puerto Rican reality and integrate both cultures: Puerto Rican and United States. Policy and related practice should be developed to ensure that every prospective teacher build robust Puerto Rican cultural knowledge and ethnic identification (see Puerto Rico Department of Education, 2015; Sanders et al., 2014; Wood et al., 2014).

### **Recommendation 2**

There are very limited investigations on ethnic groups subjected to a process of acculturation that are not immigrants. The case of Puerto Ricans ethnic identity construction has proven to be different from other groups. In this case, Spanish remained the majority language and it was considered a significant cultural marker (Wimmer, 2008). Nevertheless, the language spoken was not as critical as the context in which ethnic identity construction is reflected and promoted by teachers in the private and public school system.

I strongly recommend the development of future studies on the influence of the Americanization process of the educational system in the US territories where the English language is a minority language and its effect on ethnic identity development.

### **Recommendation 3**

I recommend the development of an early childhood culture and language revitalization curriculum in Puerto Rico. Puerto Rico's colonial status is unique. Nevertheless, Puerto Rico shares the loss of heritage language and cultural norms with other subjugated nations (see Flynn et al., 2012; Hunkin, 2012; Khan, 2016; Liu, 2011). There are a few culture revitalization models that have been implemented to preserve the language and traditions of indigenous groups (see Draper & Mitchel, 2017; Stikeman, 2001). Those efforts have taken many years and involved training teachers, developing new school curricula, recruiting municipal educators, university faculty and historians to direct the action line of the program.

I am proposing the development of an early childhood language and cultural revitalization school curricula called "Yo soy puertorriqueño y ciudadano del mundo" (I am Puerto Rican and citizen of the world). The curriculum should address language, race, and ethnicity with a sense of respect and pride teaching children their past, present, and future in a globalized world.

### **Implications**

This study addressed the influence of language of instruction and teachers' communicative practices on children's construction of ethnic categories in the municipality of San Juan. Puerto Rico's colonial status and its process of acculturation have been reflected in the loss of heritage language and ethnic identification. This outcome contradicts the globalized view that cultures coexist and communicate through different languages. Multiculturalism seeks to preserve different cultures and languages without melting ethnicity into a common culture (Darobe, as cited in Quiros, 2012).

In addition, Teacher Education Programs in Puerto Rico should require core courses on cultural knowledge and ethnic development. School and language policies should be directed to inclusion and not exclusion of the culture and heritage language (Khan, 2016; Lee, 2012).

The social contribution of this study is to make educational policy makers aware that cultural competence and ethnic identity development are not to be confused with socio political status. The richness of a culture and of its heritage language cannot disappear because of political power struggles. All nations have to embrace ethnic, racial, cultural, and language diversity (UNESCO, as cited in Khan, 2016). In addition, teacher education programs, in Puerto Rico and all other nations, should trained prospective teachers to deal with biculturalism, multiculturalism, race, ethnicity, and poverty to support children's development (Baskerville et al., 2014; Barron, 2014; Khan, 2016; Sanders et al., 2014).

## Conclusion

The literature supported the influence that language of instruction and the school social context have in ethnic identity development. Moreover, the findings of this study suggested that the teachers' communicative practices as bicultural individuals influenced children's construction of social categorizations of "us" and "others" within their ethnic group. I learned that teachers' communicative practices are the result of their own experiences as students in an educational system that do not prioritize teaching cultural knowledge and promotes subtractive bilingualism. Teachers communicate what they have learned as active participants in an acculturated country. We are living in the era of globalization and as citizens of the world we must envision culture, ethnicity, race, and language as valuable treasures and share them.

Puerto Ricans reality is summarized in an excerpt from Richard Wright's (1953), *The Outsider*. He used the term "negroes" and I am going to substitute it with the term "Puerto Ricans":

"Puerto Ricans are going to be gifted with a double vision, for, being Puerto Ricans, they are going to be both inside and outside of American culture at the same time..." (p. 129).

I hope that this study will provide insights to other ethnic groups in similar circumstances on how to approach educational policies that promote heritage language and cultural learning and sense of pride.

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## Appendix A: Teacher Interview Protocol

Teacher identification code: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Start Time: \_\_\_\_\_ End Time: \_\_\_\_\_

## Introduction:

The information gathered in this study is confidential and it will be used for research purposes only. This interview should take approximately 40 minutes and it will be tape-recorded and annotated. You are welcome to check the transcripts for accuracy.

Do you have any questions prior to the interview?

1. How long have you been teaching in this language program and in this system of education (public or private)?
2. Please, describe students' and parents' reactions toward language of instruction used in your program.
3. What are the weaknesses and strengths of the program?
4. What are your perceptions of ethnic identity development?
5. In what ways does the program respond to teaching cultural identity?
6. How would you describe your approach to teaching content and activities that require mastering cultural knowledge?
7. What activities have you developed that support first graders' cultural identity?
8. What have been the children's reactions when you develop these activities?
9. How do you get parents involved in cultural activities?

10. How would you describe any changes in students-parents, students-students attitudes related to language of instruction?
11. If you could change your first graders experiences related to teaching ethnic identity, what changes would you make?
12. What influences have shaped your perceptions of Puerto Rican ethnic identity?
13. Describe the program's expectations for the student's activities related to ethnic identity development.
14. What have you been waiting to ask me?

## Appendix B: Observation Sheet

School code and classroom code:	
Date:	_____start _____end
Events:	_____ Classroom interactions _____ Recess _____ Co-curricular Activities

--



## Appendix C: Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale

Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale (Zea, Asner-Self, Birman, & Buki, 2003)  
 AMAS-ZABB

The following section contains questions about your **culture of origin** and your **native language**. By **culture of origin** we are referring to the culture of the country either you or your parents came from (e.g., Puerto Rico, Cuba, China). By **native language** we refer to the language of that country, spoken by you or your parents in that country (e.g., Spanish, Quechua, Mandarin). If you come from a multicultural family, please choose the culture you relate to the most.

*Instructions: Please circle the response from the scale that best corresponds to your answer.*

	1	2	3	4
<b>1. I think of myself as being U.S.-American.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<b>2. I feel good about being U.S.-American.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<b>3. Being U.S.-American plays an important part in my life.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<b>4. I feel that I am part of U.S.-American culture.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<b>5. I have a strong sense of being U.S.-American.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree
<b>6. I am proud of being U.S.-American.</b>	Strongly Disagree	Disagree Somewhat	Agree Somewhat	Strongly Agree

## Appendix D: Authorization to Use Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation

*Scale*

**Margarita Marichal** Dr. Zea: My name is Margarita Marichal and I am a mar 24 a las 2:17 PM

**Margarita Marichal** Dr. Zea: My name is Margarita Marichal and I am a mar 24 a las 2:17 PM

---

**Maria-Cecilia Zea** <zea@gwu.edu> mar 24 a las 10:08 PM  
 Para Margarita Marichal

Dear Margarita,

Thanks for your interest in the AMAS. You have our permission to use. I am attaching Spanish and English versions as well as coding instructions. I would love to hear about your findings.




Sincerely,

Maria Cecilia Zea, Ph.D.  
 Professor  
 Department of Psychology  
 George Washington University  
 Washington DC 20052

Director,  
 Latino Health Research Center  
<http://research.columbian.gwu.edu/lhrc/>  
<http://lhrc.columbian.gwu.edu/maria-cecilia-zea-phd>  
 Co-Director, Social and Behavioral Sciences Core  
 DC Center for AIDS Research (DC CFAR)  
<http://dccfar.gwu.edu/>

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AMAS-Z....pdf AMAS-Z....pdf Scoring ....doc

Responder << Responder a todos >> Responder

## Appendix E: Classroom Artifacts Observation Sheet

School code and classroom code:
Date: _____ start _____ end
Type of classroom artifact:
_____ children books          _____ children's work _____ festivities _____ classroom decorations    _____ music          _____ materials _____ other (describe) _____
Uses of the classroom artifact:

Appendix F: Institutional Review Board Approval Number

On March 10, 2017, I received a Notification of Approval to Conduct Research from Walden University's Research Ethics Office. Walden University's approval number for this study is 03-02-17-0070323, and it expires on March 1, 2018.

## Appendix G: Abbreviated Multidimensional Acculturation Scale Scoring Sheet

I used the following scoring instructions to analyze data. The instructions were provided by the first author of the AMASS scale (Zea et al., 2003).

This scale was designed to assess three factors associated with acculturation in the United States and in the country of origin: identity (U.S. American and culture of origin), language competence (English and Spanish or other native language), and cultural competence (in the United States and in country of origin).

The AMAS–ZABB is a 42-item scale with 4-point self-report, Likert-type response options ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*) for the cultural identity subscales and from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*extremely well*) for the language and cultural competence subscales. **Item scores are averaged to form a total subscale score potentially ranging from 1 to 4.**

The U.S.-American dimension on the AMAS–ZABB is calculated by averaging the three U.S.-American subscales of cultural identity, language, and cultural competence. Similarly, the AMAS–ZABB culture-of-origin dimension is calculated by averaging the equivalent three Latino/Latina subscales.

When both dimensions' main effects significantly predict a variable, an index of biculturalism may be obtained by testing the interaction of the two variables in a regression model. Mathematically, the interaction term involves multiplying the U.S.-American and culture-of-origin acculturation subscales. In the score distribution resulting from this method, extremely high scores would indicate biculturalism, and extremely low scores would indicate marginalism (perhaps 1–2 would indicate low involvement in either culture). Scores in the middle require additional research to clarify indications of both types of unilinear involvement, either in U.S.-American culture or in the culture of origin or a more diffused state of acculturation.

### Scoring:

Enter the number endorsed (score) by each participant on all items. Obtain the average score of each subscale by adding scores and divided by the number of items. You will obtain a total of six scores, which measure Latino or U.S. American Identity, Language, and Cultural Competence. If you wish to obtain the score for the Latino Acculturation, add the three subscales and divide by three; follow the same procedure to obtain the U.S. American Acculturation.

U.S. acculturation  
 cultural identity #1-6  
 English language #13-21  
 cultural competence #31-36

Culture of origin  
cultural identity #7-12  
English language #22-30  
cultural competence #37-42.

Adding each of the three subsections and averaging it  
to get a scale score for each domain.