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# Nonreciprocal Language and Its Influence in Mother-child Relationships

Karen Kuemerle-Pinillos  
*Walden University*

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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Karen Kuemerle-Pinillos

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Dr. Mary Bold, Committee Member, Human Services Faculty

Dr. Andrew Carpenter, University Reviewer, Human Services Faculty

Chief Academic Officer

Eric Riedel, Ph.D.

Walden University  
2018

Abstract

Nonreciprocal Language and Its Influence in Mother–child Relationships

by

Karen Kuemerle-Pinillos

MSW, East Carolina University, 2010

BAS, Mount Olive University, 2006

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Human and Social Services

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## Abstract

Acculturation research has gained interest due to the increasing levels of immigration to the United States. The population of interest for this study was the Latino immigrant population in the United States, as they represent the largest and fastest growing minority in the country. One challenge Latino immigrants can face during the acculturation process is a phenomenon described as nonreciprocal language. This phenomenon is present when first generation parents speak in their native language of Spanish and their children, who are second-generation immigrants, speak in the host culture language of English. The purpose of this study was to focus on the role of nonreciprocal language in the mother–child relationship between first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children. A qualitative, ethnographic study was used to investigate 10 participants, including first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children in Charlotte, North Carolina. Findings from this content analysis study include mothers' and children's experiences with nonreciprocal language and their acculturation categories, which led to recommendations for new strategies for ESL education and the need to develop programs to help parents raise bilingual children. This information can benefit advocates, policymakers, and other stakeholders involved in programs that are focused on helping children be more proficient in their parents' language or helping parents become more proficient in English. Information from this study can also allow immigrant parents to make informed decisions about their language use and the possible impact on their relationships.

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## Table of Contents

List of Tables .....	v
List of Figures .....	vi
Chapter 1: Introduction .....	1
Background .....	1
Problem Statement .....	2
Purpose Statement .....	3
Nature of the Study .....	4
Research Question .....	5
Conceptual Framework .....	5
Operational Definitions .....	6
Assumptions .....	7
Scope and Limitations .....	8
Significance of the Study .....	9
Summary .....	10
Chapter 2: Literature Review .....	12
Introduction .....	12
Literature Search Strategy .....	13
Conceptual Framework .....	14
Definition of Berry's Seminal Theory .....	14
Past Research Using Berry's Seminal Theory .....	16
Immigration in the United States .....	18

Latino Immigration in the United States.....	20
Acculturation.....	21
Unidimensional Perspective.....	23
Bidimensional Perspective.....	24
Acculturative Stress .....	25
Language Usage in Latino Immigrants.....	28
Parent–Child Relationships.....	32
Parent–Child Relationships in the Latino Population.....	34
Summary.....	35
Chapter 3: Research Methods.....	37
Introduction.....	37
Research Design and Rationale .....	37
Research Question .....	38
Ethnographic Research .....	38
Role of the Researcher .....	40
Methodology.....	41
Participant Selection .....	41
Instrumentation .....	44
Data Analysis Plan.....	46
Issues of Trustworthiness.....	47
Ethical Procedures .....	48
Summary.....	48

Chapter 4: Results .....	50
Introduction.....	50
Setting .....	50
Demographics .....	52
Data Collection .....	54
Data Analysis .....	56
Evidence of Trustworthiness.....	57
Process of Credibility.....	57
Process for Confirmability .....	58
Process for Dependability.....	58
Process for Transferability .....	59
Results.....	59
Culture Significance.....	60
Communication Components.....	62
Mother-Child Relationship .....	65
Family’s Resiliency .....	67
Summary .....	72
Chapter 5: The Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations.....	73
Introduction.....	73
Interpretation of the Findings.....	73
Mother’s Experiences with Learning English.....	75
Children’s Experiences with Learning Spanish .....	76



Emotional and Painful Experiences .....	76
Mothers and Their Children in Different Acculturation Categories .....	77
Future Recommendations .....	79
Need to Invest in New Strategies for ESL Education.....	79
Need for Bilingual Programs in the Education System .....	80
Need to Develop Programs to Help Raise Bilingual Children .....	81
Limitations of the Study.....	82
Implications for Social Change.....	83
Researcher’s Experience.....	84
Summary.....	84
References.....	86
Appendix A: Adult Demographic Information Questionnaire .....	99
Appendix B: Adult Interview Questions.....	100
Appendix C: Child Interview Question .....	101

## List of Tables

Table 1. Demographics of Mothers .....	53
Table 2. Demographics of Children.....	53
Table 3. Emerged Themes, Categories, and Frequencies .....	60
Table 4. Culture Significance .....	61
Table 5. Communication Components .....	64
Table 6. Mother–Child Relationship.....	66
Table 7. Family’s Resiliency .....	68

## List of Figures

Figure 1. Berry's theory of acculturation categories and participants chosen category ....79

## Chapter 1: Introduction

### **Background**

International migration rates are at an all-time high in the United States and around the globe (Allen, Anderson, Van Hear, Sumption, Duvell, Hough, Walker, 2017; Kuo, 2014; Newman, 2013). Continued mobility and resettlement at regional, national, and continental level is, for some, part of their everyday life (Kuo, 2014). In 2013 an estimated 214 million people were considered international immigrants, thus understanding migrants' adaptation and their acculturation experience in a new culture is essential (Kuo, 2014). Even though acculturation has been previously studied as a topic in anthropology, over the last five decades studies have increased within cross-cultural and multicultural psychology fields (Ward & Geeraert, 2016), making acculturation a focus of scientific investigation (Kuo, 2014).

The diverse process immigrants undergo when they try to adapt to the cultural characteristics of their new environment is referred to as acculturation (Archuleta, 2012; Keskin, 2013; Lawton & Gerder, 2014). The population of interest for this study was the immigrant Latino population in the United States. The Latino population is considered to be the largest and fastest growing minority group in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Among the complex dynamics that are present during the acculturation process, language is one that presents a phenomenon known as nonreciprocal language. Nonreciprocal language is when first generation parents speak in their native language of Spanish, and their children who are second generation speak in the host culture language of English.

The goal of this study was to further understand nonreciprocal language as an acculturation phenomenon and its influence in mother–child relationships among first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children. Previous research on this topic has been focused on different populations, age groups, or parent–child relationships (Haye, Heer, Wilkinson, & Koehly, 2014; Leiser, Heffelfinger, & Kaugars, 2017; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). Thus, research from a Latino culture perspective was needed in the acculturation field, which will allow further knowledge and understanding of the fastest growing minority in the United States. Furthermore, the current anti-immigration sentiment that is being experienced in the United States is another reason to prompt tolerance for immigrants through further understanding of the acculturation process (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013).

### **Problem Statement**

Acculturation has become an important area of study due to the increased levels of immigration to the United States and around the world (Kuo, 2014). Within acculturation research, there are many challenges regarding operational definitions and the relation to psychosocial and health outcomes (Newman, 2013). Acculturation research includes the concept of acculturative stress. Acculturative stress has been defined as a stress consequence resulting from life events that compose the acculturation experience (Arbona, Olvera, Rodriguez, Hagan, Linares, & Wiesner, 2010; Hernandez, 2009; Sirin, Ryce, Gupta, & Rogers-Siring, 2013). Part of these acculturation stressors is the use of language in the family system. Some families choose to speak in their native language, others in the host country language, and a third group experiences the

phenomenon of nonreciprocal language (Ribot & Hoff, 2014; Schofield, Toro, Parke, Cookston, Fabricius, & Coltrane, 2017; Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). In the case of Latino immigrants, nonreciprocal language occurs when parents speak in their native language, or Spanish, and their children speak in the host culture language, or English.

Past researchers have identified the negative effects acculturative stress has on Latino immigrants in the United States, such as its strong association with parent–child conflicts (Smokowski, Bacallao, & Buchanan, 2009), negative health, and delinquent behaviors (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). A recent study related to nonreciprocal language use among Latino immigrants indicated that there is a relationship among increased self-control and decreased aggression, and positive discipline and warm parenting, but only among mother and adolescents who were proficient in a common language (Schofield, Conger, Robins, Coltrane, & Parke, 2016). Researchers in a separate study found that consistent discipline and monitoring decreased substance use among Latino adolescents, but only among parents and adolescents who preferred to use a common language (Schofield et al., 2017). Thus, this study is an extension on current research to understand how language used in the Latino immigrant family, specifically nonreciprocal language, has influenced parent–child relationships in the United States Latino immigrant population.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the role of nonreciprocal language use in the mother–child relationship between first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children. Recent investigations have been focused

on nonreciprocal language in the Latino community (Schofield et al., 2016; Schofield et al., 2017), but not as it relates to the mother–child relationship. The approach used in this study was ethnographic, where I attempted to learn about a culture-sharing behavior (Descartes, 2007). In this case, the culture-sharing behavior was the use of nonreciprocal language between parents and adolescents in Latino families in the United States. Interviews were used to obtain a greater understanding about this phenomenon.

### **Nature of the Study**

To address nonreciprocal language in the context on mother–child relationships in the Latino immigrant community, the qualitative approach used in this study was ethnography, where the concept of culture was the base on which the study developed (Hallett & Barber, 2014). Ethnographic research offered an opportunity to generate detailed and inclusive accounts of a social phenomenon (Reeves, Peller, Goldman & Kitto, 2013). These concepts were vital to the exploration of nonreciprocal language in the Latino population, it gave me an opportunity to have firsthand exploration of the research setting where parent–child relationships are experienced (Mannay & Morgan, 2015). The study was focused on the use of nonreciprocal language within mother–child Latino families in Charlotte, North Carolina. This area was chosen because it has been identified as having a large and fast influx of Latino immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015) with a 168% growth between 2000 to 2013 (Brown & Lopez, 2013).

Ethnography has been defined as a methodology used by researchers who have an interest in the ordinary family dynamics that people experience in their everyday life (Descartes, 2007). Thus, in an ethnographic approach the researcher assumes that

humans in a group who interact together will develop a culture. Ethnographers enter study participants' spaces and to understand their perceived experiences (Hallett & Barber, 2014). For this study, the identifiable groups of people included Latino immigrant families who live in Charlotte, North Carolina. My goal was to enter the participants' spaces to obtain more insight about how this population sees the world (see Reeves et al., 2013). There will be further discussion about ethnography as a research design for this study in chapter 3.

### **Research Question**

How did nonreciprocal language use influence mother–child relationships among first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children in Charlotte, North Carolina?

### **Conceptual Framework**

The theory that provided a framework for this study was Berry's bidimensional acculturation theory (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014; Stephens, 2016; Yoon, Langrehr, & Ong, 2011). From the 1980s, researchers in the cultural psychology field have recognized that the process of acculturation is a multidimensional process (Berry 1997; Kuo, 2014; Schwartz, Unger, Zamboanga, & Szapocznik, 2010; Stephens, 2016; Yoon et al., 2011). As a result, it is understood that accepting the values and beliefs of the host culture does not necessarily mean that the immigrant will be one dimensional (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014; Yoon et al., 2011). Based on the multidimensional perspective of acculturation, Berry created a model of acculturation where the receiving culture and the culture of origin are placed in different dimensions (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010).



Berry intersected these two dimensions to create four acculturation categories: assimilation, separation, integration, and marginalization (Berry, 1997). This theory offers guidance about how Latino immigrants can experience acculturation and possible reasons for their choice of language use.

### **Operational Definitions**

*Acculturation:* The cultural pattern changes, such as values and practices, that result from having direct contact with other cultures that affect individuals' functioning and well-being (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). This multidimensional construct explains the changes that groups of individuals undergo when exposed to cultures outside their own (Scarborough, Kulkarni, Lewis, Palen, Wade, & Pierce, 2011).

*Acculturative stress:* Related to the stress individuals experience as a result of undergoing the acculturation process and facing acculturation stressors such as discrimination and language barriers (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). Researchers have linked acculturation stress with risk behaviors in immigrants such as drug use and violence (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013).

*Assimilation:* The one-dimensional process where an individual loses his or her culture of origin in order to take the behaviors, beliefs, and values of the gaining culture (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). In the assimilation process, the gaining or dominant culture is perceived as more suitable, and the culture of origin is seen as less desirable for the individual (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013).

*Culture:* Refers to “shared meanings, understandings, or referents held by a group of people” (Schwartz et al., 2010, p. 5). Culture is often the determining factor in how much acculturation is needed from individuals (Schwartz et al., 2010, p. 5).

*Integration:* When the individual has an interest to maintain the integrity of his or her culture or origin while having a desire to participate and form part of the gaining culture (Berry, 1997). Adopting the receiving culture and maintaining the heritage culture are perceived as equally important (Schwartz et al., 2010).

*Marginalization:* The lack of interest in culture of origin maintenance, often related with cultural loss enforcement and the absence of a desire to have relationships with those in the main culture, usually due to discrimination (Berry, 1997). Rejecting both culture of origin and main culture is not considered to be very common (Schwartz et al., 2010).

*Separation:* The desire of an individual to hold onto his or her culture of origin and wishing to avoid contact with those who are part of the gaining culture (Berry, 1997). Rejecting the receiving culture and retaining the culture of origin can be common among those who arrive to the receiving culture at a later age (Schwartz et al., 2010).

### **Assumptions**

The following assumptions informed this study:

1. Some participants might have been unwilling to participate due to their immigration status and the current state of persecution they are experiencing in the United States (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). However, participants were reassured that their immigration status is not relevant to this study, and

as a result it will not be shared or discussed. The participants were also reassured that no contact will be made with any immigration authorities.

2. Interviewees were open and honest after establishing rapport with me as a bicultural individual. The interview began with a discussion of my own immigration experience and some self-disclosure.

### **Scope and Limitations**

The participants of this study were limited to Charlotte, North Carolina due to its position as the fastest growing Latino community in the United States. Participants of this study were mothers 18 years of age or older who are first-generation Latina immigrants and one of their children who are second generation and speak English. Participants were limited to the personal and professional relationships to be accomplished in the local area for the immersive part of the ethnographic study. Different research approaches can bring their own limitations, and the ethnographic approach is no different. An ethnographic approach can be challenging; some of the challenges include the time needed to have access to the study site, the time that it can take to collect data, and the impact the researcher can have on the content and analysis of the data (Gelling, 2014).

During this study it was important to be aware of my own bias as a bicultural and bilingual Latina immigrant and to remain as neutral as possible during the entire research process. My biases include my own experiences as a Latina immigrant in North Carolina and my value for a bilingual identity. I addressed matters related with my bias with my committee chair as well as with a retired social work professor who is familiar with the

Latino population in North Carolina; both offered an outside perspective as a non-Latino. Furthermore, I used reflexivity, which is a conversation with the readers about the implication bias can have on our own interpretations and explanations (Lichterman, 2015). Thus, my position as a researcher is best described as a fluid experience moving from an insider position to an outsider position during the study, also described as emic and etic perspectives (Berger, 2015). This skill served me to explore the ways in which my own experiences and beliefs as a Latina immigrant intersected with those who participated in this study. Because reflexivity is vital in all stages of the research process, I also used journaling as a further method of reflexivity to help me be self-reflective and adjust as I became aware of my own experiences, emotions, and triggers (see Berger, 2015).

### **Significance of the Study**

The study has the potential to add information to current research about the nonreciprocal language in the parent–child relationship in Latino immigrant families. This information can be particularly important to not only the Latino population, but also for those who serve them in their communities as the Latino population continues to grow in the United States to the point of becoming the largest minority in the country, with an estimated 57.5 million people or 17.8 of the country’s total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Between the years 2000 and 2014, the Latino population growth was over half or 54% of the U.S. population’s total growth (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). This growth was especially evident in Charlotte, North Carolina, which has been identified as

one of the areas in the country with a large and fast influx of Latino immigrants (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015).

The results of this study can be of interest for advocates, policymakers, and other stakeholders who might be involved in programs that can focus on helping children be more proficient in their parents' language or helping parents become more proficient in English. Information from this study can also allow immigrant parents to make informed decisions about their language use and the possible consequences, if any, of nonreciprocal language in their relationships with their children. Additionally, results from this study can assist in helping professionals who provide services and resources that can better serve Latino families who engage in nonreciprocal language by providing resources for effective communication, both in English and/or Spanish depending on the family's needs.

### **Summary**

Acculturation research has helped establish that the acculturation challenges that immigrants experience upon arrival to their new environment can lead to stress (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). This acculturative stressor includes factors such as discrimination and language barriers that can bring challenges as immigrants prepare to respond to their new environment (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Language barriers are believed to be an added stressor to the difficulty of the acculturation process (Lorenzo-Blanco, Schwartz, Unger, Romero, Cano, Baexconde-Garbanati, Pattarroyo, 2016).

Unique to the acculturative stressor of language is the nonreciprocal language phenomenon where first generation parents speak in their native language, or Spanish,

and their children who are second generation speak in the host culture language, or English. The capacity of understanding this phenomenon further and its influence in the parent–child relationship can help community members, leaders, and service providers to make informed decisions about language usage and possible services that can be useful to the Latino immigrant community.

Chapter 2 includes a review of the current literature that is relevant to this study and the importance of filling in the current gap in the research regarding nonreciprocal language in the Latino immigrant population in the United States. Chapter 3 includes an outline for research methodology for this study and a demonstration of why ethnographic research was the most appropriate approach for this study. It also includes data collection strategies, method for data analysis, participants, and their selection criteria.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the purpose of this ethnographic, qualitative study was to understand the role of nonreciprocal language in the parent–child relationship between first generation Latino immigrant parents and their American-born children. This chapter begins with the literature search strategy, where I explain the process and methods used to select relevant literature. What follows is the conceptual framework of the study, which includes a description of Berry’s seminal theory of acculturation and current research using his theory. I also present a brief history of the immigration in the United States to provide context for the section Latino Immigration in the United States, which relates to the population of interest in this study.

Furthermore, I explain the topic of acculturation from two different perspectives, the unidimensional and the bidimensional perspective, and connect them with current studies that also included acculturation as their main topic. Related to acculturation, this chapter includes a description acculturative stress as a possible effect for individuals who are undergoing the acculturation process. Language usage among immigrants has been recognized as a stressor as a part of acculturative stress, and has been connected with this research topic of nonreciprocal language. Lastly, research on parent–child relationships follows, which includes general information about the topic as well as specific information about parent–child relationships in the Latino population.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

This study has its foundations in my personal observations and interactions as a Latina immigrant and as a service provider for the Latino population in the United States. I observed the presence of nonreciprocal language use in my own extended family, as well as in the homes of many of the families I served who had U.S.-born children. I witnessed the lack of understanding about this phenomenon and the possible associated changes incurred in the parent–child relationships by those families.

My literature review started by seeking out the terminology researchers in the field used to describe this phenomenon. Nonreciprocal language was described in an article, and it served as the foundation to find further literature (Tseng & Fuligni, 2000). I also contacted colleagues and professors who are interested in the field of Latino studies to obtain their perspective and suggestions for resources. Furthermore, I made appointments with the library staff at Walden, both in person, at residencies, and over the phone, which helped me learn different strategies for the literature search.

I used the Walden library to access different databases including JSTOR, EBSCO Academic Research Complete, and Google Scholar. My keyword search included *acculturation, acculturative stress, Berry's theory of acculturation, acculturation strategies, acculturation and language use, Latino culture, Latino families in the United States, nonreciprocal language, code-switching theory, child-parent relationships, and parent-child relationship in the Latino culture*. My literature review was focused only on scholarly, peer-reviewed articles, and books whose authors are considered to be experts in the areas related to this study.



## **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study was Berry's seminal theory of acculturation. Berry's theory allows for a different acculturation process experienced by those who come in contact with cultures other than their own (Berry 1997; Kuo, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010; Stephens, 2016; Yoon et al., 2011). His bidimensional theory allowed the field to evolve from the unidimensional model that began in the field of acculturation (Berry 1997; Kuo, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010; Stephens, 2016; Yoon et al., 2011). This section starts with the definition of seminal theory of acculturation, and it also includes different examples of how seminal theory has been used in previous research.

### **Definition of Berry's Seminal Theory**

Berry's seminal theory of acculturation is considered one of the most influential works in the acculturation field (Kuo, 2014). Berry (1997) started his lead article in applied psychology with the assertion that literature in the field about migrant people, which includes refugees and immigrants, is focused on adaptation to Australia, North America, and Europe. Furthermore, he pointed out the lack of studies about South American, Asian, and African settings, even though these are the areas of the world where most acculturation has occurred (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014).

Berry's desire to move away from the unidimensional model of acculturation, which used acculturation and assimilation interchangeably, resulted in a model that addressed two issues people encounter in the acculturation process: cultural maintenance, and contact and participation (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014). When these two factors are

considered at the same time, his conceptual framework leads to four different strategies for acculturation (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014). From the point of view of nondominant groups, or minorities, one strategy is created by those people who do not wish to maintain characteristics of their heritage culture and desire to have interactions with other cultures; this strategy is also referred to as assimilation (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014). Opposite to assimilation is the strategy used by those individuals who place value on holding on to their heritage culture and do not wish to interact with those from other cultures, which is referred to as separation (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014).

The third strategy from Berry's model is called integration and is characterized by individuals who have an interest of maintaining the integrity of their heritage culture, and they also have an interest of actively participating in the large social network of their new culture. The last strategy, known as marginalization, is present when individuals express little to no desire of maintaining the heritage culture, and there is not much interest of having relationships with individuals from other cultures, for reasons that include discrimination or exclusion (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014).

Berry (1997) went further to clarify that his acculturation model was based on the assumption that most individuals would be free to choose their acculturation strategy and further explained that this is not always the case, like in the case of refugees or indigenous people who can be forced into an acculturation model. Berry proposed that for integration to happen as a choice for the nondominant group and to be successful, it is vital for the dominant group, or host culture, to have an open and inclusive perspective regarding cultural diversity (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014). He described these inclusive

societies as multicultural and with characteristics that include value of culturally diverse society, low levels of prejudice, positive and reciprocal attitudes toward different cultural groups, and a sense of identification with the society at large by all different cultural groups (Berry, 1997).

Finally, Berry (1997) described three factors that can influence an individual's decision on an acculturative strategy. First, Berry explained that even though individuals might prefer one strategy, there can also be variations depending on location. For example, an individual might express more cultural maintenance in private places than public places. Second, societal contexts might interfere with acculturation strategy decisions, where assimilationist societies can influence individuals to assimilate because their expectation is that immigrants need to become like or as close to those in the dominant society (Berry, 1997). Third, throughout human development and during the acculturation process, individuals can explore different strategies but end up choosing one that satisfies them the most (Berry, 1997).

### **Past Research Using Berry's Seminal Theory**

Numerous acculturative researchers have used Berry's theory to guide their research in different cultures and on different topics. Topics such as ethnic group resiliency, biculturalism, intercultural sensitivity, cognitive flexibility, and discrimination were related to Berry's acculturation strategies (Christmas & Barker, 2014; Han, Berry, & Zheng, 2016; Ramos, Cassidy, Reicher & Haslam, 2016). For example, Han et al. (2016) provided further understanding about the positive association between Berry's acculturation strategies and ethnic group resilience. Specifically, they examined the

mediating and moderating mechanisms of the association (Han et al., 2016). The study included 898 Qiang ethnicity participants with a mean age of 29.5, and the researchers explored the mediating and moderating effects of factors such as social support, personality, and spiritual beliefs on the established relationship between acculturation strategy and resilience (Han et al., 2016). The results of this study showed that both spiritual beliefs and personality had a mediating role in the relationship between resilience and cultural identity. The integration strategy in the acculturation model was the one with the best style to promote the growth of resiliency, whereas the least effective style was marginalization (Han et al., 2016).

Another study that included Berry's model was conducted by Christmas and Barker (2014), who used a quantitative method to survey 216 first- and second-generation Latino immigrants in the United States, with the focus on assessing differences in biculturalism, intercultural sensitivity, and cognitive flexibility. The researchers predicted higher scores of intercultural sensitivity in first-generation than second-generation immigrants because they had the opportunity to have direct exposure with both cultures (Christmas & Barker, 2014). However, this hypothesis was not supported, as the data included higher scores for second generation immigrants. Scoring high in biculturalism or integration can be an indication that second generation immigrants in this study had meaningful exposure to the Latin culture, possibly from their community and home (Christmas & Barker, 2014). Results from previous studies suggest that second-generation immigrants tend to choose the assimilation strategy over the others, which this study did not support (Christmas & Barker, 2014).

Recently, a longitudinal study was performed on the possible effects discrimination had on international students' choice of acculturation strategy (Ramos et al., 2016). One hundred and thirteen students were followed for a year to gain a deeper understanding about the relationship between perceived discrimination and acculturation strategies. The results of the study showed that students' perceived discrimination is associated with avoidance of host society and endorsement of the student's own culture (Ramos et al., 2016).

### **Immigration in the United States**

Having a basic understanding of immigration in the United States and the differences in acculturation patterns followed by ethnic groups can help further understanding of the acculturation process for Latino immigrants. The perceived slow assimilation from the Latino immigrant community exists in part because prior ethnic groups assimilated at a faster pace due to their characteristics (Schwartz et al., 2010). In other words, each ethnic group has had to overcome different challenges.

The United States was founded by English speaking Europeans from Great Britain who brought their cultural practices and values, which include individualism and interpersonal distance (Schwartz et al., 2010). The initial British colonies started to change in the 18th and 19th centuries when the country started attracting immigrants from other parts of the world. In the mid-18th century, Irish immigrants arrived in the country, and immigration waves continued with the Germans and the Scandinavians in the late 18th and 19th centuries (Schwartz et al., 2010). Southern and Eastern Europeans started to arrive to the country in the late 19th and 20th century (Schwartz et al., 2010).

After immigration restrictions were lifted in 1965, a new immigration wave started, mainly from Latin America and Asian countries. In many instances the U.S. population was not receptive or welcoming to immigrants and in some instances were hostile, which indicates that discrimination is not a new phenomenon in the United States (Schwartz et al., 2010).

Schwartz et al. (2010) points out that there are different actions that support difficulties faced by immigrants in the United States. For example, during the Irish immigration wave in the city of Boston, the British descent population marginalized immigrants coming into their city. Theodore Roosevelt also demanded that German-speaking immigrants learn to speak English and sent warnings to them as they adjusted to life in America. At the same time, widespread discrimination affected Polish, Italian, and Jewish immigrants during and after World War I, who were labeled as unassimilable to the American culture (Schwartz et al., 2010).

However, U.S.-born children from these waves of immigration whose appearance and use of language was like other Americans contributed to ethnicity disappearing after the first generation (Schwartz et al., 2010). Conversely, Schwartz et al. (2010) proposed that because Latin American and Asian immigrants have non-European physical characteristics, this pattern has changed and ethnicity continues to matter past the first generation of immigrants. As a result, non-European immigrants are faced with the task of understanding their own ethnicity and how it is shaped after their arrival to the United States (Schwartz et al., 2010).

An example of how immigrants have to learn to understand their ethnic role in the United States is the label *Hispanic*, which was created by the U.S. Census (Visser, 214). This term was created to describe immigrants who came from Latin American Spanish speaking countries (Visser, 2014). Although Hispanic is not a term used in Latin America, it is used to describe people from 21 different countries (Visser, 2014). The use of this term can lead individuals to assume that the label refers to a monolithic group. Consequently, Latin American immigrants in the United States have to make sense of what it means to them to be Hispanic (Schwartz et al., 2010).

### **Latino Immigration in the United States**

The United States has undergone different immigration waves throughout its history. The latest wave, which started in the 1960s, had a shift from European immigrants to Latin American and Asian immigrants (Bodvarsson & Van den Berg, 2009). Furthermore, Latino immigrants count for the largest number of new arrivals where nearly half of all of those who were born outside the United States come from South America, Central America, Mexico, and other Spanish-speaking Caribbean countries such as Cuba (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017).

The Latino population continues to grow in the United States to the point of becoming the largest minority in the country with an estimated 57.5 million people, or 17.8 of the country's total population (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). Furthermore, between the years 2000 and 2014, the Latino population growth was over half of the U.S. population's total growth (U.S. Census Bureau, 2017). The population consists of recognized large Latino communities that continue to grow in Latino states such as

California and Texas, and emerging Latino communities that are spreading across the country in places such as Dalton, Georgia; Salem, Oregon; and Charlotte, North Carolina (Steil & Vasi, 2014).

A large sample survey included an analysis of interstate migration by Latino subgroups, using the decennial census in 2000 and the American Community Survey for the years 2005 to 2010 (Ellis et al., 2016). The data helps to explain interstate migration before rising, through the process of passing, and after implementation of what some considered hostile state policies toward immigrants (Ellis et al., 2016). Results of the survey indicated a significant decline of Latinos to states where there is adoption of policies hostile to undocumented immigrants (Ellis et al., 2016). Latinos are moving to states and cities where the Latino population is low and dispersing to cities where immigration policies are perceived as more permissive. This suggests that recent Latino migration to places where there is a lower Latino community might lead to less community support.

### **Acculturation**

Acculturation is accepted as an important area of study in different professional fields such as anthropology, psychology, and sociology (Kuo, 2014; Lawton & Gerdes, 2014, Schwartz et al., 2010, Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Within the cross-cultural and multicultural psychology fields, research on acculturation is perceived as an important focus of scientific investigation (Kuo, 2014). In these fields, acculturation research is particularly concerned with cultural change and migration (Kuo, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010).



There are different reasons why acculturation research is of great interest for researchers. This interest comes as international migration is considered at an all-time high, not only in the United States but around the world (Kuo, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010). From a world-wide perspective, current immigrants, post 1960s which marks the time when nations were open to receive a more diverse population of immigrants, are largely from collectivist cultures such as Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa (Schwartz et al., 2010). The regions most of these immigrants are choosing to settle in are North America, Western Europe, and Oceania, where individualism is emphasized (Schwartz et al., 2010). As a result, these immigrants fall into cultural gaps between the cultures of origin and their receiving cultures that need to be addressed through acculturative research.

Even though researchers' definition of acculturation varies, the core of its meaning remains unchanged (Archuleta, 2012). This core definition describes acculturation as a phenomenon that "represents cultural changes in individuals' attitudes, behaviors, values, beliefs, and cultural practices that result from continued first-hand interaction with individuals from divergent cultural groups" (Archuleta, 2012, p. 299). These changes can happen from both individual and group processes that are dependent on a number of factors, to include the bounds of the dominant group (Archuleta, 2012). There are two opposing perspectives that attempt to explain how the acculturative process develops: the unidimensional approach, and the bidimensional or multidimensional perspective (Archuleta, 2012; Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010).

## **Unidimensional Perspective**

Originally, the acculturation process was perceived and conceptualized as a unidimensional process where culture of origin and the receiving culture were placed in opposite ends of a continuum (Archuleta, 2012; Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010). Unidimensional models assumed that the acculturation process intended to replace the culture of origin with the receiving culture's practices, beliefs, and values (Santiesteban, Coatsworth, Briones, Kurtines & Szapocznik, 2012). According to this unidimensional model of acculturation, as immigrants arrived to the host culture and acquired the behavior, values, and beliefs, the expectation was that they would disregard their culture of origin (Schwartz et al., 2010).

This one-dimensional perspective was believed to be taken by the earlier waves of immigrants to the United States who came from Europe. They were not only expected but praised when they followed this one-dimensional model, also referred to as assimilation (Schwartz et al., 2010). However, newer immigrants from places such as Asia and Latin America are often criticized by members of the host culture for not assimilating to the American Culture at a fast pace (Schwartz et al., 2010). Assimilation is considered the only outcome of the unidimensional model, and is widely criticized for failing to acknowledge the desire some individuals have to maintain aspects of their original culture (Archuleta, 2012; Guo, Suarez-Morales, Schwartz, & Szapocznik, 2009).

Specific to the Latino population in the United States, prior research has provided evidence that adolescent assimilation is associated with family dynamics (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Smokowski, Rose, & Bacallao, 2008). For example, researchers in a study

that included 732 Mexican American adolescents found that adolescents' assimilation was a predictor for family conflicts (Smokowski et al., 2008). Other researchers had similar findings where adolescent assimilation in Latino immigrants were positively related with lower parental monitoring and family conflict (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Smokowski et al., 2008).

### **Bidimensional Perspective**

Most acculturation researchers have concluded that the unidimensional conceptualization of acculturation is not capable of addressing the immense number of changes immigrants encounter, as well as the relationship between adaptation and their acculturation experience (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). The immigrant's position on both the culture of origin and host culture need to be considered (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

This bidimensional perspective recognizes that the acculturation process is composed by separate continuous motions in a multidirectional process that addresses the losing and gaining cultures (Archuleta, 2012; Guo et al., 2009; Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010). Under this perspective, acculturation is perceived as more than just the time and generational status in a new country, but the navigation individuals encounter in a variety of ways (Berry, 1997; Schwartz, Pantin, Sullivan, Prado, & Szapocznik, 2006).

A key point of the bidimensional perspective is that it allows for biculturalism, or integration, which allows for the study of immigrants who have integrated characteristics of both the culture of origin and the receiving culture (Berry, 1997; Guo et al., 2009;

Santiesteban et al., 2012; Schwartz et al., 2010). Biculturalism can manifest in different ways of behaviors, beliefs, and values that can involve mixing and integrating different aspects of both cultures in a unique way (Schwartz et al., 2010).

As a result of this bidimensional perspective, acculturative researchers have developed measures of acculturation that assess the individuals' involvement separately in both the culture of origin and the receiving culture (Guo et al., 2009). These separate measures allow researchers to obtain separate scores in different cultural domains when performing acculturative research (Archuleta, 2012; Guo et al., 2009). Representing different domains in the acculturation process has allowed the field to make significant progress into the broad and complex subject of acculturation (Guo et al., 2009). One of the main contributors of this bidimensional model, John W. Berry, developed an integrated model of acculturation (Berry, 1997).

### **Acculturative Stress**

During the acculturation process there are a number of potential challenges that immigrants might face when they try to balance the differences between their culture of origin and their host culture (Berry, 1997; Sirin et al., 2013; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). These challenges can result in acculturative stress, which has been defined as “a stress reaction in response to life events that are rooted in the experiences of acculturation, the psychological difficulties in adapting to a new culture, or psychological stressors resulting from unfamiliarity with new customs and social norms” (Hernandez, 2009, p. 716). For individuals undergoing acculturation, acculturative stress indicates their need

to cope with the presented challenges and serves them as preparation to learn and adapt to their new environment (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Acculturative researchers suggest that negative emotional responses can be constantly experienced by individuals who are undergoing the acculturation process (Ward & Geeraert, 2016). However, recent researchers propose that patterns of stress vary among individuals. People can perceive different experiences less or more stressful depending on their unique characteristics (Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

Specific challenges that immigrants can face upon entering a new culture include aspects of the acculturation process such as language difficulties, learning new expectations and cultural norms, coping with experiences of discrimination and prejudice from individuals in the host culture, and the conflict that comes from negotiating aspects of the old culture with the new one (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013; Berry, 1997; Sirin et al., 2013). Latino immigrants in the United States could face stressors such as loss of immigration status, and economic challenges such as poverty (Kuo, 2014).

Over the past decade, immigrants in the United States have had to face an increase in anti-immigrant sentiment. Thus, their everyday activities can be challenged by prejudice which can add to their acculturative stress (Sirin et al., 2013). Researchers who studied on adult immigrants provide evidence that acculturative stress can lead to anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, and higher somatic complaints (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Scarborough et al., 2011; Sirin et al., 2013). For instance, researchers have found that acculturative stress is related with higher levels of suicidality, especially for first and second generation adult immigrants (Sirin et al., 2013).

Examining the effects of acculturative stress on adolescents show evidence of the negative effects discrimination, both racial and ethnic, have on the physical and mental health of minority youth (Sirin et al., 2013). Acculturative stress in immigrant youth has also been associated with an increase in risk behavior such as smoking, drinking, drug use, and violence (Scarborough et al., 2011). Recent researchers have provided evidence that acculturative stressors have more influence than any other type of stressors in predicting Latino adolescents' symptomatology (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014).

Researchers interested in acculturative stress have found that individuals can possess preexisting factors that can contribute to having higher or lower levels of acculturative stress (Arbona et al., 2010; Hernandez, 2009; Sirin et al., 2013). These preexisting factors include but are not limited to: having prior knowledge of the receiving culture, levels of education, ability to speak the language of the dominant culture, and attitudes towards acculturation (Arbona et al., 2010, Hernandez, 2009; Sirin et al., 2013). It has been suggested that the type of contact individuals have with the host culture can influence acculturative stress, while positive contact can lead to a reduction of stress (Arbona et al., 2010; Hernandez, 2009; Sirin et al., 2013). On the other hand, when individuals find inconsistencies with their expectations and what they find in their host culture, their levels of stress can increase (Arbona et al., 2010, Hernandez, 2009; Sirin et al., 2013).

Individuals can engage in different coping strategies when responding to acculturative stress (Berry, 1997; Lawton & Gerdes, 2014). These three strategies include: emotion, problem, and avoidance focused coping (Berry, 1997; Hernandez,

2009; Lawton & Gerdes, 2014; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Problem-focused coping can be done when the individual concentrates on solving or changing the problem (Hernandez, 2009; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). This strategy can be particularly challenging if the problem comes from the society at large (Hernandez, 2009; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Emotion-focused coping can be used when the individual is interested in obtaining control over the emotions that arise when the problem occurs (Hernandez, 2009; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). Avoidance coping strategies, such as drug or alcohol use, are related with negative results such as anxiety and depression (Lawton & Gerdes, 2014).

When acculturative stressors surface and are coped with in a successful way acculturative stress can be low and it can have positive effects (Berry, 1997). On the other hand, when stressors arise and they are not dealt with in an effective coping strategy, acculturative stress can be high and the effects can be more negative to include personal crises, depression, and anxiety (Berry, 1997, Hernandez, 2009). Acculturative researchers have suggested that different factors can mitigate or reduce the negative effects acculturative stress can have on psychological symptoms experienced by immigrants (Hernandez, 2009; Ward & Geeraert, 2016). These factors include: social support from family, friends, and/or institutions, host culture willingness to accept cultural diversity, and socioeconomic status among others (Hernandez, 2009; Ward & Geeraert, 2016).

### **Language Usage in Latino Immigrants**

As mentioned prior in this chapter, language challenges are one of the stressors Latino immigrants might encounter when entering a host culture (Bacallao &

Smokowski, 2013; Berry, 1997; Sirin et al., 2013). Having a shared language forms part of the idea of national identity, and those who do not speak the language of the host culture are considered a threat to national unity (Schwartz et al., 2010). Language is particularly important for Latino immigrants in the United States, as most come from Spanish-speaking countries and have more acculturation to do than an English-speaking immigrant from Canada (Schwartz et al., 2010).

First generation immigrants and their U.S.-born children usually have different preferences on the language they speak, and they are not competent in a common language (Schofield et al., 2017; Schofield et al., 2016). Often times first generation Latino immigrant children master the host culture language at a faster pace than their parents (Schofield et al., 2017; Schofield et al., 2016). However, these immigrant children seldom become fluent in their heritage language, which is understood as limited bilingualism (Schofield et al., 2017; Schofield et al., 2016).

In a study with a sample of 674 families from Mexico, researchers found that positive discipline and affective parenting decreased aggressive behaviors, and increased self-control among mothers and adolescents who share proficiency in a common language (Schofield et al., 2016). On the other hand, strict parenting practices was a predictor for increased aggression and decreased self-control, but only among parents and adolescents who were not proficient in a common language (Schofield et al., 2016). A conceptual replication with a second sample of 167 adolescents from Mexican origin found similar results (Schofield et al., 2016).



In a different study by Schofield et al. (2016) that was extended focused on 194 Mexican origin families when a similar hypothesis was tested as it related to substance use in early adulthood, and parent-adolescent use of a common language (Schofield et al., 2017). The researchers suggested that effective parenting strategies, that usually predict a decrease in substance abuse, were not successful at doing so among families whose parents and adolescents did not use the same common language (Schofield et al., 2017). Both studies agreed with the assertion that for Latino immigrant parents and their children, preference in a common language facilitated effective communication which had an influence in the adolescent's behavior (Schofield et al., 2017; Schofield et al., 2016).

In relation to the specific interest of this study where nonreciprocal language is used among immigrant families as parents use their native language of Spanish and children use the host culture language of English, recent research interest has emerged. The interest was to further understand the term conversational code-switching, and its unique characteristics (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). Latino immigrant parents are often confused by their children's choice to respond only with one language in their everyday interaction, even though they understand two languages (De Houwer, 2007; Hurtado & Vega, 2004; Ribot & Hoff, 2014).

Researchers have offered different explanations for conversational code-switching. One of these explanations is that code-switching is a reflection of expressive language skills dominance (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). For example, when children have only receptive language abilities in a particular language they will respond in the language that

they have more expressive skills (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). Researchers in the field argue that understanding words requires only word meaning representation, while the process of producing words is done through a motoric representation (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). Motoric representation requires more experience in hearing and using the language (Ribot & Hoff, 2014).

In a study with 115 participants who were bilingual in Spanish and English, ages two and a half, researchers found that conversational code-switching was present more often when children were spoken to in Spanish rather than in English (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). These results are similar to other studies addressing this topic that found children code-switch more to English than to Spanish (Green & Abutalebi, 2013; Gutierrez-Clellen, Cereijido, & Leone, 2009). This study is one of the first to document receptive and expressive skills dual language learners have (Ribot & Hoff, 2014). The results of this study suggest that children can have similar levels of receptive skills in two languages, but have stronger expressive skills in only one language which is the only one they prefer to speak (Ribot & Hoff, 2014).

Latino immigrant parents' reaction to their children's conversational code-switching can vary, as they are also trying to adjust to their new life in the United States. A study about the assimilation process of Latino immigrants in the United States asked parents about their thoughts of their children's preference to speak English (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). This qualitative study included interviews with 10 Mexican families who migrated to North Carolina (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). When parents were asked about monolingualism as a mechanism for assimilation, a father answered,

“Without English, you cannot get ahead here [in the United States]. If you speak English well, you will get a better job than we were able to get. Speaking English is very hard for us because of our age. We can’t learn it as well, but they [adolescents] can. They learn very fast” (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013, p. 7).

Furthermore, all parents and adolescents who were part of this study reported feeling very challenged by monolingualism, or the pressure of only speaking English, and the discrimination they experienced as a result of their struggle with the language acquisition (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). These acculturative stressors related with language are suggested to be associated with poor school performance in adolescents, and feelings of isolation and depression (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013).

### **Parent–Child Relationships**

Numerous studies have suggested the importance parent-child interactions have in child development, specifically in the infant and toddler years (Leiser et al., 2017; O’Connor, Wang, Moynihan, Wyman, Carnahan, Lofthus, & Caserta, 2015). Decades of research in this field have documented links between the quality of parent-child relationships and a large number of long and short-term health outcomes in children such as psychiatric symptoms, educational and professional success, and quality of relationships with peers (O’Connor et al., 2015). Furthermore, parent-child relationships are believed to be associated with adolescent self-worth, and low self-worth during adolescence is believed to predict different emotional and behavioral problems (McAdams, Rijdsdijk, Narusyte, Ganiban, Reiss, Spotts, & Eley, 2017).

A recent study including 72 preschool children who had early disruption to normal neurological development and their caregivers. Researchers completed assessments of language and cognitive functioning, as well as an observation of a semi structure parent-child interaction (Leiser et al., 2017). The results of the study suggested that the quality of the parent-child relationship influenced and helped predict the children's language and cognitive functioning (Leiser et al., 2017). The researchers of this study concluded that parent-child interactions, which are described as harmonious and mutual, support cognitive and language development in children (Leiser et al., 2017). Findings of this study are consistent with previous research suggesting that family environments that are supportive and stimulating are linked with improved cognitive performance in children (Leiser et al., 2017).

In a different study, researchers investigated the connection between the quality of parent-child relationships and antibody response to a vaccine in a longitudinal study of 164 10 to 11 year old children (O'Connor et al., 2015). Researchers analyzed connections with cortisol reactivity, somatic illness, and body mass index. Results of this study suggest that observed negative behavior and conflict in the parent-child interaction was a predictor for less antibody response to the meningococcal serotype vaccine in children over a period of 6 months (O'Connor et al., 2015). Interaction conflict was also a predictor for increased cortisol reactivity and a higher body mass index (O'Connor et al., 2015). Researchers of this study concluded that parent-child relationships conflict is linked with immune system development in children, and can become a significant public health consideration (O'Connor et al., 2015).

### **Parent–Child Relationships in the Latino Population**

There are a variety of cultural influences that can affect the behavior and decisions by Latino individuals. One of these influences is the concept of familism, which has been used widely in research related with the significance family has in the Latino culture (Perez & Cruess, 2014). Familism has been defined as the strong commitment and connection Latinos have towards their relatives (Perez & Cruess, 2014). Researchers in the field understand that for most Latinos family does not only consist of their immediate and extended family members, but also can include respected friends, neighbors, and religious community members who form part of important rituals such as baptism and marriage (Perez & Cruess, 2014). The known concept of fictive kin in African American families is also true to most Latino families regardless of country of origin (Estrada-Martinez, Padilla, Caldwell, & Schulz, 2011).

Related with the concept of familism, different studies have suggested that parent-child communication is associated with the development of children's mental health and social development (McNaughton, Cowell, & Fogg, 2015). In a research study concerning the Latino population, researchers assessed the efficacy of a communication intervention with Latino immigrant mothers and their fourth to sixth grade children (McNaughton et al., 2015). The study had 106 participants, with 53 mother-child pairs who were divided in two groups, 25 pairs for the intervention group and 28 for the control group (McNaughton et al., 2015).

For this study, interventions were adapted to Spanish for the Latina mothers, and were facilitated by Latina bilingual nurses and social workers who had a minimum of a

bachelor's degree. The results of the study showed that children in the intervention group disclosed problem-solving communication and depressive symptoms improvements compared with the control group (McNaughton et al., 2015). Additionally, mothers in the intervention group reported substantial improvement in family conflict compared to those in the control group (McNaughton et al., 2015). These results highlight the impact child-parent communication can have for Latino families.

### **Summary**

This chapter provided detailed information about the literature search strategy, as well as the conceptual framework of the study which included a comprehensive description of Berry's seminal theory of acculturation and current research using his theory. A brief history of the immigration in the United States was presented to help set the stage for the Latino Immigration, which is the population of interest in this study. Moreover, the topic of acculturation was presented from two different perspectives, the unidimensional and the bidimensional perspective, and they were connected with current studies that have also explored acculturation as their main topic.

Related to acculturation, this chapter described acculturative stress as a possible effect for individuals who are undergoing the acculturation process. Language used among immigrants, as an acculturative stressor, was explored because it is connected with this research topic of nonreciprocal language. Research on parent-child relationships was described, which included general information about the topic as well as specific information about parent-child relationships in the Latino population. Chapter

3 includes descriptions of the research design and the rationale behind it, as well as my role as a researcher for the study.

## Chapter 3: Research Methods

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the role of nonreciprocal language use in the mother–child relationship between first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children. This chapter includes the rationale behind the research design, which was ethnography. In this chapter, I also describe my role as a researcher, including include my position as a bicultural and bilingual scholar. The chapter continues with the methodology, the criteria for selecting the study participants, the area where the study took place, the instruments, and the data analysis plan. Furthermore, the aspects of trustworthiness in the study are explored, as well as the ethical concerns that could have been presented during the process.

### **Research Design and Rationale**

The objective of this study was to explore nonreciprocal language as a phenomenon that can occur in the acculturation process of immigrants, and how this phenomenon has influenced mother–child relationships. Qualitative research contributes to the literature by helping to understand the experiences and perspectives of people, as individuals or in groups, and the characteristics of the environment when these experiences take place (O'Brien, Harris Beckman, Reed, & Cook, 2014). Qualitative researchers also choose to study the processes that take place and that end in a desired or undesired outcome (O'Brien et al., 2014). Moreover, qualitative researchers have an interest to answer what, how, and why questions that are associated with phenomena or social problems (Yilmaz, 2013). Answering such questions provides qualitative



researchers with the opportunity to explore or create theories that attempt to understand new or understood events or situations (O'Brien et al., 2014). Qualitative researchers proposes that every case, event, situation, and individual's behavior is distinctive, dependent of their context and as a result nongeneralizable (Yilmaz, 2013). Thus, what is needed is to understand such events, situations, and behaviors are thick descriptions of small samples (Yilmaz, 2013). As a result, and due to the nature of this study, qualitative research was the most appropriate design to answer the research question.

### **Research Question**

The following research question served as a guide for this study: How does nonreciprocal language use influence mother-child relationships among first-generation Latino immigrants and their second-generation children in Charlotte, North Carolina?

### **Ethnographic Research**

There are many approaches used by qualitative researchers that have their own traditions and postulations (O'Brien et al., 2014). One of these approaches is ethnography, which has been described as an understanding of the chosen group's worldview, and is perceived and experienced from within (Grossoehme, 2014). Thus, the goal of ethnographic studies is to understand a culture and to explain its nature to those who are not part of it (Grossoehme, 2014). Ethnographers believe that studies need to be conducted in people's natural habitat, because these spaces are essential for the development of identities and relationships (Hallett & Barber, 2014).

Ethnographic research was the best methodology for answering this study's research questions for different reasons. One of these reasons is the role the ethnographer

to document culture, the practices and viewpoints of people in specific settings, and the goal of getting an inside view of how people see the world (Reeves et al., 2013).

Mother–child relationships in the context of nonreciprocal language can be difficult to experience outside the participants’ natural environment. Much useful information about their relationship could be missed if the interviews take place in a neutral place. At the same time, participants might feel more comfortable sharing information in their natural environment and in their own language.

Moreover, ethnographers argue that relationships which develop between the researcher and participants are as integral to the study as the methodologies used (Hall, 2014). These relationships allow for the development of trust and rapport, which can lead to an enhanced experience for all involved in the research process (Hall, 2014). The hope is that this trusting relationship, central to ethnographic research, was facilitated by my own experiences as a Latina immigrant and a professional working with the Latino immigrant population.

Furthermore, related to the concept of ethnographic spaces where the researcher is immersed, the ethnographic process is not limited to an hour interview in isolation, but it includes observations of all the in-between spaces in the immersion process (Reeves et al., 2013). Examples of these in-between spaces for this study included interactions among parent and child participants, as well as with me. In ethnographic research, what people do becomes as important as what they say (Reeves et al., 2013), thus providing opportunities to observe the mother–child relationship beyond what might be said in the interview.

### **Role of the Researcher**

Ethnographers have suggested that when conducting research, they assume different roles in the process, which can have implications for their experiences and findings (Bucerius, 2013). Thus, three different roles have been identified: peripheral, active, and complete membership (Bucerius, 2013, p. 691). Each of these roles is related with the level of social interaction in the setting of the study and its influence when participating in activities, levels of group affiliation, and connection with the values and norms of the group (Bucerius, 2013).

Based on these identified roles, my role would be considered active, as I am not an outsider, nor am I a complete insider in my population of interest as I currently reside outside the Charlotte, North Carolina area. My active role is further explained by my status as a first-generation Latina immigrant and mother, who is also going through the acculturation process and has identified language as an acculturative stressor in the past. I had the opportunity to work as a service provider for the Latino immigrant population in North Carolina for 8 years, which provides me with an insider perspective about the unique circumstances and experiences that Latino immigrants can have in this area. Thus, my position as a researcher included a balance between emic and etic perspectives, where emic captures insider experiences and etic offers an outsider more objective perspective (Berger, 2015). Moreover, in qualitative studies researchers are encouraged to question whether they are in the emic or etic perspectives during the study, and to be aware of the possible ramifications it can have (Berger, 2015).

During this study it was important to be aware of my own bias as a bicultural and bilingual Latina immigrant and to remain as neutral as possible during the entire research process. I addressed matters related with my bias with my committee chair, as well as with a retired social work professor who is familiar with the Latino population in North Carolina but offered an outside perspective as a non-Latino. Furthermore, I used reflexivity, which is a conversation with the readers about the implication bias can have on our own interpretations and explanations (Lichterman, 2015). Reflexivity is considered a vital tool to ensure good quality in qualitative research, and it is explained under different examples of positions a researcher can discuss and illustrate (Berger, 2015). My ability to be moved from an emic and etic perspective has added to my journey of self-awareness during this process, and to acknowledge, through journaling, how my thoughts and experiences have shaped this study (see Berger, 2015).

## **Methodology**

### **Participant Selection**

Along with selecting a research topic and a suitable research design, obtaining an adequate sample is a fundamental step in generating credible research (Marshall, Cardon, Doddar, & Fontenot, 2013). Making sure there is enough data is vital to ensure reliable analysis and conclusions (Marshall et al., 2013). Purposeful sampling is commonly used in qualitative research to identify and select participants who can provide specific information and knowledge, or experiences related to the phenomenon of interest (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan, & Hoagwood, 2013). Even though researchers have refrained from setting a minimum and maximum number of participants

included in a synthesis (Suri, 2011), Dworkin (2012) proposed that researchers interview five to 50 participants in their natural setting, using open-ended questions, until saturation is accomplished.

Prior ethnographic studies have had samples ranging from six to 33 participants (Guetterman, 2015). Thus, the goal for this study was to have at least four pairs, or eight participants, which include four adult Latino immigrant mothers and at least one child each who use nonreciprocal language in their everyday interactions, where the mother speaks in Spanish and the children respond in English. Children who participated in this study ranged in age from 7 to 12 years old. The estimated sample size for this study was directly related with data saturation, which is applicable to studies that use interviews as the main data source, and it can be representative of the number of participants that bring new information and avoids redundancy (Marshall et al., 2013). Data saturation is believed to be reached when replication of the study is possible based on the information gathered, when no new information is likely to be attained, as well as when coding further is not viable (Fusch & Ness, 2015). In the case where data saturation was not reached with eight participants, I would have included additional families in the study until no new data was heard. This purposeful sampling strategy is important, as it aligns with the research question and the purpose of the study. The selection criteria for the adult study participants was:

- first-generation Latino immigrant mother, born in any Latino country;
- Spanish speaker and non-English speaker;

- have a least one second-generation child who is English speaker but non-Spanish speaker;
- reside in Charlotte, North Carolina area;
- have the ability and willingness to provide informed consent.

The selection criteria for the child study participants was:

- second-generation Latino immigrant, born in the United States to a Latino mother;
- English speaker, non-Spanish speaker;
- reside with the biological mother in Charlotte, North Carolina area;
- aged 7 to 12 years old;
- provide consent and parental consent to participate.

Participants resided in the Charlotte, North Carolina area, because this city was identified as having the fastest growing Latino population in the United States (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015), with a 168% growth between 2000 to 2013 (Brown & Lopez, 2013). Families who agreed to be part of the study were provided with two \$25 compensation Walmart gift cards, one for the adult and one for the child, as an incentive and a show of gratitude for their time. Moreover, parents who showed interest in participating in the study were provided detailed information from me.

A consent form for adults and a parental consent form for children were developed in English and Spanish and provided to individuals who were willing to participate in the study. A community member was contacted to review and provide feedback on the Spanish materials used in the study to make sure the materials were well-

received and understood by the Spanish speaking community. Feedback was also received and appropriate changes were made based on the member's input.

Once the consent forms were completed, they were provided to the selected participants and returned to me. Arrangements were made for the interview process and the interview site, which optimally would have been their home to allow for further observations, or a convenient location of their choice. Once these arrangements were made I travelled to the study site to meet with participants and develop rapport. I resided in Charlotte, North Carolina, during the data collection process. Participants were interviewed separately to allow each individual to express themselves freely.

Prior to starting the interview, the consent form and assent form were read to the participants, and an outline for the interview process was provided. Right after that process, participants were asked demographic questions (Appendix A) to obtain more detailed information about them. The in-depth interviews started with an introduction and were followed by the open ended semi-structured questions that can be found in Appendix B for parents and Appendix C for children. The goal for these interviews was to capture the experiences of nonreciprocal language use between mothers and their children, as well as their perception on the influence it has in their relationships.

### **Instrumentation**

Interviews and observations were the sources of data for this study. The interview process began once the consent form and introductions were completed. This process has ensured that the interview proceeded smoothly, and it helped all who were involved to know about the purpose of the interview while helping to set the pace for the interview. I

introduced myself to the participants, shared my background as a Latina immigrant and helping professional, and continued to establish rapport with the participants. I encouraged participants to allow me to interview them in their homes so that they would feel relaxed and in control of their own environment. These interviews were expected to last from 60 to 90 minutes, and included 6 open-ended questions as found in Appendix A.

Probes were also used during the interview process, as they allowed me to clarify participant's answers (Noonan, 2013). Probes included follow up questions such as: "Can you tell me more about that?" Probes allowed for additional understanding of key points during the interview process (Noonan, 2013). Towards the end of each interview I asked the participants if there was anything they would like to add.

As a bilingual researcher, I was able to conduct interviews without the need of a translator. I conducted the interviews with parents in Spanish, and with their children in English, separately.

With the consent of the participants I used a digital recorder to capture the entire interview. I took written research notes so that my observations could be added to the transcription process following the interview. All the physical data gathered during the interview process is kept secure and locked in a file box. Furthermore, electronic data is kept in an encrypted folder on my personal computer, and I am the only one who knows the password to the encrypted folder. The transcription of the interview was provided in a word document and imported to a qualitative research data software named Atlas.ti.



## **Data Analysis Plan**

The data for this research study was collected using ethnographic interviews and field observations. The questions to be used in these interviews were open ended to allow deep discussion during the data collection phase about the participants' lived experiences related to the research question in this study. After transcribing the interviews, I read the transcripts several times (Vaismoradi, Turunen, & Bondas, 2013). Data analysis provides me with an opportunity to make sense of the data gathered to allow the research question to be answered. Content analysis is the preferred method when the goal is to describe the conceptual form of the phenomenon being studied (Vaismoradi et al., 2013).

Content analysis includes latent contents or the ability to develop themes and organizing the data (Vaismoradi et al., 2013). Coding data is considered an important step in the role of content analysis, it involves data subdivision and category assignment. For this study I used descriptive coding, which has been described as a summary in a word or short phrase about the topic of a passage of data (Owen, 2014). This type of coding can provide important groundwork for further content analysis (Owen, 2014). After reading the transcripts and notes from my observations I started subdividing and categorizing data manually to assign meaning to the information gathered for this study.

For this process of coding, categorizing, and developing themes, the qualitative data analysis software Atlas.ti has also been used. Qualitative Data Analysis Software, or QDAS, can be used in three different stages of the research process: during data collection, data analysis, and data representation for findings (Woods, Paulus,

Atkins, & Macklin, 2016). Researchers use QDAS with the intent of making the analytical process in their research more transparent by showing their coding process using program outputs (Woods et al., 2016). The QDAS does not eliminate the researcher's need to observe the data, manually generate codes, or replace them when necessary, checking for consistency (Elo, Kääriäinen, Kanste, Pölkki, Utriainen, & Kyngäs, 2014). Acknowledging data coding as an intellectual process, and documenting all stages of this process can increase the trustworthiness criteria (Elo et al., 2014).

### **Issues of Trustworthiness**

The most commonly used standard for the evaluation of qualitative content analysis is explained by the term trustworthiness (Elo et al., 2014). This term, as it refers to qualitative research, has as a main goal to argue that the research findings are “worth paying attention to” (Elo et al., 2014, p. 2). There are five different alternative means to assess trustworthiness in a qualitative study: credibility, dependability, conformability, transferability, and authenticity (Elo et al., 2014).

To assess dependability and conformability I used triangulation as a strategy. Triangulation includes the use of different methods to “obtain corroborating evidence” (Anney, 2015, p. 277). This strategy is believed to help with researcher's bias, and it can be accomplished by obtaining data from multiple sources. In the case of this study the sources included interviews with Latino immigrant mothers, their children, and field notes from observations within the home. Member checking is another strategy that addresses dependability and conformability. For this study, member checking was

completed by asking interviewed participants and a community member to review the interview transcript to check for accuracy of the information. Adult participants had the opportunity to choose to receive the transcripts via email or hard copy.

### **Ethical Procedures**

During the study I paid close attention to my personal cultural bias as a Latina immigrant and addressed challenges to my committee chair regarding this matter, to avoid potential threats to the validity of the study. Also, due to the possible unique characteristics of Latino immigrants in the United States regarding their immigration status, it is of high importance to provide participants a high level of confidentiality and anonymity. This was ensured by not collecting any personal identifying data from participants. Each participant was assigned a letter and number after they gave consent to participate in the study and throughout the data collection process. For example, P1 was used for participant one, P2 for the second participant, and so on. Furthermore, all participants received the translated consent form before the interview process started to ensure their understanding of the purpose and procedures of the study. As stated earlier, the data collected is password protected and will not be disclosed outside the parameters of the study.

### **Summary**

The goal of this study was to use qualitative research through an ethnographic approach to understand further nonreciprocal language use between first generation Latino mothers and their U.S.-born children, and its influence in the mother-child relationship. Through the use of ethnographic interviews, this study can bring a greater

understanding about this phenomenon and add new information to the field. This chapter covered the methodology to be used, and it specified the criteria for selecting study participants. North Carolina was described as the area where the study will take place, the instruments to be used were presented, and the data analysis plan to be followed. Finally, the aspects of trustworthiness were explored, as well as the ethical concerns that could have occurred during the study.

## Chapter 4: Results

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the role of nonreciprocal language use in the mother–child relationship between first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children in Southeastern United States. The theory that provided a framework to understand this phenomenon was Berry’s bidimensional acculturation theory. The research question that guided this study was: How does nonreciprocal language use influence mother–child relationships among first-generation Latino immigrants and their second-generation children in Charlotte, North Carolina? This chapter includes a description of the field work, setting, and the participant demographics. Also included are the data collection process, data analysis, and the study results.

### **Setting**

Participants were approached about the study in two places of the Charlotte area: the local market, or mercado, and the local flea market. These two places were chosen because they are frequently visited by members of the Latino population. Some people were not interested to hear about the study, and others expressed hesitation due to the current political situation in the country. After two days of attempting to talk to different people in the market, and explaining the research, its purpose, and the compensation for time provided, one family who had the desired characteristics for the study agreed to participate.

The same approach was used in the local flea market. The first day no families were interested or did not qualify to be part of the study. However, on the second day two families qualified and agreed to participate. Furthermore, each one of these first two families knew more families who were experiencing the same phenomenon in their home and asked if they could put them in contact with me. I provided the families with my contact information and the additional two families contacted me in the next 2 following days. It took a total of 6 days to recruit participants who were willing and met the study criteria.

The interviews for this study were conducted in two different settings within the city of Charlotte, North Carolina. One setting was the local public library, which provided a private and quiet room to conduct the interviews; the other setting was the participants' home. The decisions regarding the settings were based on the participants' preferences. Participants expressed concerns about people knowing their address due to the current difficulties some of their family members and close friends had to encounter related to the changes to immigration policies.

Thus, participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and the measures to be taken to protect their identities such as not asking them for their full name, the use of one letter identifiers in the study for both adult and children, and the data protection I used, including password protected electronic files. Participants had the opportunity to review and sign the informed consent forms for both adults and children and the assent form just for children in their language of preference. Mothers read and signed the documents that were translated to Spanish, and children signed assent forms in English.

All participants expressed understanding prior to their interviews and were given the opportunity to ask any questions they could have. They were also reminded that they could stop the interview at any time for any reason without any type of negative outcome. I performed a total of 10 interviews: eight in the local library and two in the participant's house. With the participants' consent, I used a cellphone recording application to record the interviews; the recorded interviews lasted no longer than 60 minutes each. All interviews were conducted without many distractions, and within the expected timeline of 2 weeks.

### **Demographics**

Participants who agreed to participate in the study included five Latino mothers, and one of their sons or daughters, for a total of 10 participants. Among the children, there were a total of two boys and three girls, ages ranging from 9 to 12 years old. All mothers were born in Latin America; three mothers were born in Mexico and two were born in Colombia. All children in the study were born in the United States. Mothers in the study averaged 13 years living in the United States, mostly in the region where the study took place. With the exception of one, all of the mothers have other children living in the home; two of them had two children, one had four children, and one had five children. When asked about their English ability on a scale from 1 to 10, 1 being *no English* and 10 being *fluent*, mothers' self-ratings averaged a score of 2. When children were asked about their Spanish ability, their average self-rating score was also 2. Lastly, when asked about bilingual members in their homes, three of the five families did not have any bilingual members, and two families had one bilingual member. Tables 1 and 2

specify the demographics of participants. Table 1 shows country of origin, English ability, time in the United States, number of children, and number of family members who speak English and Spanish. Table 2 shows age, mother's country of origin, and Spanish ability.

Table 1

*Demographics of Mothers*

Participant	Country of origin	English ability from 1 to 10	Time in United States	Number of children	Number of house members who are bilingual
Ms. E	Mexico	1	15 years	5	0
Ms. F	Mexico	2	13 years	4	1
Ms. M	Mexico	1	13 years	2	0
Ms. Mh	Colombia	4	10 years	1	1
Ms. Y	Colombia	3	15 years	2	0

Table 2

*Demographics of Children*

Participant	Age	Mother's country of origin	Spanish ability from 1 to 10
Ms. E's Son	10	Mexico	2
Ms. F's Daughter	12	Mexico	2
Ms. M's Son	9	Mexico	1
Ms. Mh's Daughter	10	Colombia	2
Ms. Y's Daughter	12	Colombia	2



### **Data Collection**

There were many other families who did not wish to participate and did not want to hear about the study. There were some people who were hesitant, making the recruiting process of these families difficult due to their expressed lack of trust and current difficulties the Latino population face due to deportations. Some of the families expressed that in the past they would have agreed to be part of the study, but that during these times they did not want to take any risks that could impact their well-being and the well-being of their families. After many introductions with different people, three met the study criteria and agreed to participate after learning about their roles and the compensation they would receive. The other two families were invited to the study by the families who agreed to participate.

After overcoming the recruiting obstacles, I conducted this study by interviewing a total of 10 participants: five mothers, and one son or daughter from each of the mothers. Mothers who participated in the study followed the established criteria: (a) first generation Latino immigrant mother, born in any Latino country; (b) Spanish speaker; non-English speaker; (c) have a least one second-generation child who is an English speaker but a non-Spanish speaker; (d) reside in Charlotte, North Carolina area; (e) and have the ability and willingness to provide informed consent. Children who were part of the study met their required criteria: (a) second-generation Latino immigrant, born in the United States to a Latino mother; (b) English speaker, non-Spanish speaker; (c) reside with the biological mother in Charlotte, North Carolina area; (d) aged 7 to 12 years old;

(e) and provide consent and parental consent to participate. All the scheduled interviews were completed as arranged.

Participant interviews lasted less than 60 minutes and were recorded with the adult participants' consent. I wrote notes during all the interviews. Participant interviews with mothers in the study were conducted in Spanish, and the interviews were conducted in English with the children, both by me. Participants, mothers and children, had the opportunity to review all the consent forms and questions prior to agreeing to be part of the study. Adult participants had the opportunity to choose the location of the interview, such as the local public library or their home. Each family chose a time and day that was the most convenient for them based on their schedule.

Based on participants' requests, four interviews were conducted in the public local library, and one was conducted in the family's home. All interviews were recorded using the iPhone application "voice recorder." They were transcribed and translated manually by me. Lastly, each interview was saved as an MP3 with no identifying information. Both transcripts and audio for the interviews are saved on a password-protected and encrypted folder in my home computer.

The interview process could be described as an emotional experience, both for participants and for me as the researcher. During the interview process three out of the five mothers, and two of the children, became emotional while discussing their relationships with each other and the obstacles they face on a daily basis as a result of speaking two different languages. As the researcher, I offered empathetic responses and asked them if they would like to stop the interviews. All participants decided to continue

with the interview process and shared specifics about their feelings. It was difficult for me as the researcher to stay in the researcher line instead of my usual therapeutic role. There were several times I wanted to explore what they were saying further from the therapeutic perspective. However, I did my best to stay in the role of a researcher in interviews. Instead, I offered the participants a list of local support and encouraged them to contact one of the resources if necessary.

### **Data Analysis**

The data analysis plan discussed in Chapter 3 was applied to the study successfully. Ethnographic interviews and field observations were used during the data collection process. Opened-ended interview questions allowed for detailed discussion about participants' experiences and opinions related to the research question of the study. The transcripts were read and reviewed several times to allow me to make sense of the data collected and to answer the research question.

Content analysis was used, as it gave me the opportunity to organize the data to develop themes. Content analysis involved the review of the transcripts several times to identify several codes in the text. Descriptive coding was used involving data subdivision and category assignment, which derives from a word or a short phrase from the data about the topic of the study. The subdivision and categorization of the data was initially done manually using color coding as a strategy to identify data more efficiently. Several codes were identified and later integrated into categories. For the process of coding, categorizing, and the development of themes, I used the qualitative data analysis Atlas.ti with the intent of making the analytical process more transparent. I uploaded the

transcripts to the program and initially identified codes from the text. I assigned these codes to different categories, and this process allowed me to identify the themes that emerged from the data.

Thematic analysis was possible after a thorough review of the data, the generation of codes which then became categories, and the development of themes from these categories that attempt to explain the phenomenon in the research question of nonreciprocal language and its influence on the mother and child relationships of Latino immigrants. The four themes that emerged were culture significance, communication components, mother–child relationships, and family’s resiliency.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The overall goal of this study was to add to the existing knowledge and literature in the Latino studies field, particularly the mother–child relationship and the influence nonreciprocal language has on these relationships. The data collected, data analysis, and research findings all adhered to different procedures to ensure good quality. These procedures include the processes of credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability.

### **Process of Credibility**

Credibility resulted from different strategies during the length of the study. Examples include writing records of activities accomplished during the data gathering process. Participants were invited to participate in the study by me personally, allowing them to decline if they were not interested without any retaliation. I interviewed a total of 10 participants, or five families, who met the criteria for the study. Participants

received a copy of the interview questions before the scheduled interview and signed the informed consent forms.

Saturation was reached during the interview process, as participants provided similar answers to the interview questions. In this study participants shared similar feelings when they described their mother–child relationships, as well as the obstacles they have to overcome due to their use of nonreciprocal language. The audio recordings were transcribed, translated, and reviewed several times for accuracy. Themes were identified after categories were created based on key words/codes. Lastly, I used quotes and statements from participants’ responses to the interview questions to support the study’s findings.

#### **Process for Confirmability**

Personal experiences, beliefs, and bias were not included in this study. This was accomplished by maintaining reflexivity during the process, which included taking notes during the interviews. The answers to the interview questions are a direct reflection of the participants’ opinions and experiences. I did not have a pre-established outcome to the study. Direct quotes from participants’ answers were provided to add deep descriptions and to support the emerged themes.

#### **Process for Dependability**

Prior to each interview, a test was conducted to ensure that the audio and application were in working order and dependable during the interview process. As stated earlier, a bilingual community leader reviewed the interview questions, both in English and Spanish, to check for accuracy, content understanding, and age

appropriateness. I reviewed the codes and categories multiple times to ensure accuracy to the emerging themes.

### **Process for Transferability**

The setting, participants' identification, data collection methods, and interview process of this study can be replicated by other researchers, and it can include other immigrants other than the Latino population. The findings of this study can be used to help a further understanding of the challenges Latino families face. The themes that were identified in the study resulted from the categories that emerged after the coding process was conducted, both manually and with the Atlas.ti qualitative software.

### **Results**

The data collection process consisted of in-depth one-on-one interviews with 10 participants, five mothers, and one child from each mother. The focus of this study was the influence of nonreciprocal language on the mother and child relationship in Latino families. I asked each participant to respond to semistructured open-ended questions (Appendix B and Appendix C). Interviews were conducted in Spanish with the mothers and in English with their children to accommodate their preferred language. The study participants shared their experiences related with the interview questions. The interviews with participants were translated to English, transcribed, and reviewed multiple times with the intent of becoming familiar with the data and by becoming aware of patterns that emerged. The software Atlas.ti was used to support the identifying, coding, categorizing, and helping with the emerging of themes. Table 3 is a summary of the emerged themes, categories, and frequencies of times a word or similar word was present.

Table 3

*Emerged Themes, Categories, and Frequencies*

Culture significance (250)	Communication components (142)	Mother-child relationship (313)	Family's resiliency (76)
Family dynamics (59)	Obstacles (78)	Feelings (100)	Support (25)
Values (38)	Life situations (62)	Disconnection (76)	Coping Strategies (51)
Language use (92)	Improvements (2)	Obstacles (64)	
Latino Heritage (49)		Desire for connection (73)	
American Culture (12)			

**Culture Significance**

During the study, culture significance emerged as an important element during the data collection process. For example, mother participants mentioned their desire to continue to engage their children in cultural practices. Thus, the significance of culture evolved as a theme from the data. Participants in the study expressed in different ways aspects of the significance of cultures for them and their family members. Ms. Mh mentioned, "I have taught my daughter to stay in contact with my parents in Colombia." This statement is a description of the value Latino families place on their families of origin and continued communication with extended family members. The following cultural significance theme in Table 4 provides selected examples from participants' responses, including both mothers and children in the study.

Table 4

*Culture Significance*

Mothers	Children
<p>Ms. Mh: I have taught my daughter to stay in contact with my parents who are in Colombia. We try to call them every morning. I have tried not to let that get lost. I have tried to pass on cultural practices that are from Colombia, so she knows where we came from.</p> <p>Ms E: Then later on he was able to help me with my daughter because he is older, 10 years older than her. I asked him to help her, but he also has to go play with his friends so I had to try to help too. Then the same thing happened when my daughter could help her younger brother. I depend a lot on them to help each other</p> <p>Ms. M: My mother spoke Spanish, but in that time parents did not want you to learn the local dialect, they wanted us to learn Spanish. My mother told me that she did not wanted us to be confused in school, so Speaking only Spanish was better for us. But now that she is older, she does mention that she regrets that we did not learn our dialect, because we are losing our indigenous traditions and customs.</p>	<p>Ms. M's Son: Sometimes I do not feel like I am Mexican because I was born in the United States and we speak English here.</p> <p>Ms F's Daughter: I prefer to learn Spanish because I really do not like to bother my mom that much. She already has four girls to take care of so it would be more to have her learn another language. Also like learning English is hard because it has a lot of different meanings and is harder for her to learn how to do it. I am just lazy about learning Spanish.</p> <p>Ms. Y's Daughter: I feel like our relationship would be better if I spoke Spanish. Why is that? Because she says that English is for school and not for the house. And grandma has the same rule.</p>

*(table continues)*



Mothers	Children
<p>Ms. F: It has in effect because we are Latinos and she needs to know how to speak the language we speak. That should be a priority for her to speak both Spanish and English. I ask my other daughter to speak to her in Spanish so she can practice but they keep forgetting. They only do it in that moment when I ask them but then they stop doing it.</p>	

### **Communication Components**

Communication also emerged as an important aspect during the study, as it is directly related with the research question. Communication components evolved as a theme during the interviews and data analysis. Characteristics, obstacles, and life situations that are present in everyday life of the study participants were considered.

Ms. E described:

Like I mentioned before, we do not understand each other. I worry about emergencies. Like when we go to the doctor, as a mom I would like to talk directly to the doctor about what I see and the symptoms they have, but I have to tell them to talk to the doctor. And when I ask them what they said they do not repeat what I ask them to say. So it is very difficult and I feel desperate because I do not know what is being said, both the children to the doctor and the doctor to the children.

The communication components theme described in Table 5 provides selected responses from participants related to obstacles, and life situations they experience.

Table 5

*Communication Components*

Mothers	Children
<p>Ms. Ma: There are a few words that I understand when he speaks English to me, and he is the same way. Sometimes he figures out what it is that I am trying to say. I understand a few English words, but I get confused and do not understand full sentences.</p> <p>Ms E: There are a few times when he responds a little in Spanish, but most of the time he responds in English. Then there is my older daughter that I have to ask, what is he saying? And then she tells me.</p> <p>Ms. Mh: The communication now is better, because I feel like when I speak to her she mostly understands and acts like she does. When she doesn't respond I try to tell her in different ways to see if she understands it better, and I say it very slow.</p>	<p>Ms. F's Daughter: Sometimes it can be difficult, usually because I do not even try to learn how to speak Spanish because sometimes it can be difficult and sometimes my mom gets mad a little over it. But I do not see it as a mean way, I feel like she is worried about me and she wants me to learn a bit more. I know a little but when my mom throws like big words and I do not know them. Like sometimes she asks me where is a place and I do not know how to translate that. And also my mom would take me places so I can help her like do something, but then when she asks questions I do not know how to translate in Spanish.</p> <p>Ms. E's Son: There are times she tells me to do things and I do not understand, that happens and I feel frustrated. Because if she is in a hurry or something, and I do not know, and I am in a panic.</p> <p>Ms. Y's Daughter: It is sad to try to communicate with her, and not so good. I started staying more things to my grandma and it was a little better but it is still sad.</p>

### **Mother–Child Relationship**

The mother-child relationship was also considered an important theme as it relates directly with the study's research question. Participants in the study expressed their own feelings about their relationships with each other, to include their own experiences of connection and disconnection.

Ms. Mh mentioned:

My relationships with my daughter, it's close I think. She tries to find me when things happen, but she sometimes gets stressed out when I ask her questions and says that she does not want to talk about it. So I respect that, but I talk to her dad and her sister who speak English to her to see if it helps, but she does not have a trusting relationship with them. So I feel like with me she has the trust, but she cannot communicate.

The mother-child theme described in Table 6 provides selected responses from participants related to their own experiences as they relate to their relationships.

Table 6

*Mother–Child Relationship*

Mothers	Children
<p>Ms. E: Well, it is a little difficult because, for example, if I ask him to do something he does not know what it is, I have to go show him what is it that I am asking him to do.</p>	<p>Ms. M's son: My relationship with my mom is good, because she likes me.</p> <p>I know she does because, she lets me play and things like that</p>
<p>Ms Y: Sometimes not as good, because she can have a temper. But I try to have conversations with her so she can learn to trust in me. I speak to her in Spanish, but there are times when she does not understand me, but it is hard for her to express herself in Spanish so she mixes both English and Spanish. So I try to correct her and teach her the Spanish words for her to learn it.</p> <p>Ms. M: I feel like it is ok, but I think that he understands most of what I tell him, the one thing is that I do not know sometimes if he comprehends everything I say, because is like sometimes it feels like I am not talking to him.</p>	<p>Ms Y's daughter:..It is hard to talk to her, even if we try to be friends, I feel sad and I cry (participant became emotional). It is hard because my best friend is being rude to me and I want to talk about it. I feel distance with my mom, and not close to her. Especially now that we not always in the same house.</p> <p>Ms. F's Daughter: I guess, I cannot describe my relationship with my mom with words but I love her and she is very nice to me. I mean, she can also be mean and serious when she needs to but she is overall really nice to me. I prefer to be by myself but I can get close to her if I need to. I am an introvert so I prefer to be on my own most times.</p>

**Family's Resiliency**

Families' resiliency was another theme that emerged from participants during the data analysis process. Both mothers and their children shared the ways they cope with nonreciprocal language in their everyday life, and their perspectives about overcoming obstacles. Ms. F shared "my daughter is the one that knows how to use the phone to help translate, and when she finds out the translation she sends it to me in a text."

The family's resiliency theme described in Table 7 provides selected responses from participants related to their own experiences as they relate to their resiliency.

Table 7

*Family's Resiliency*

Mothers	Children
<p>Ms. F: My oldest daughter helps. She spends a lot of time in her room doing things like drawing. It only happens when she wants to come to me to tell me something but she cannot then she uses her phone.</p>	<p>Ms. E's son: I am not a fast learner. Like, when I was in kindergarten my teacher told me to read this book, and then, it was a small book, and then I tried to read it, and I got every word wrong. It took me until second grade to read my first book.</p>
<p>Ms Mh: I went to a psychologist and she helped me a lot, with things that were specific, like how she used drawings as a way to communicate with me. The psychologist really helped me, to get educated and try to understand our dynamics. I still do not know exactly how speaking the same language could influence more our relationship. For now, I am working on learning how to influence her emotionally and socially. I am doing it in Spanish, but it would be better if I could do it in English.</p>	<p>That is why I think I am not a fast learner, so if I try to learn Spanish I am not going to learn as fast.</p>
<p>Ms. E: In December, I received a paper from school letting me know that I was sent to court because of the absences. In court, the judge gave my husband a written permission to take my son to school. I also told the judge about all the waiting we did to get a bus assigned. He talked to the secretary about it and asked her not to do it again, and to be understanding about the needs the Hispanic population has.</p>	<p>Ms. M's son: I do not speak much Spanish because I practice my English a lot. I can only speak it a little bit but not write it.</p> <p>Ms. Mh's Daughter: In some cases, I just have to take a breath and think of things that are happy about us two.</p>

Both mothers and children responded in similar ways to the interview questions, but added experiences that are unique to them and their families. For example, most mothers shared their difficulties when trying to communicate with their children; such as question number one: How would you describe your relationship with your son/daughter?

Ms. Mh responded:

It's close I think. She tries to find me when things happen, but she sometimes gets stressed out when I ask her questions and says that she does not want to talk about it. So I respect that, but I talk to her dad and her sister who speak English to her to see if it helps, but she does not have a trusting relationship with them. So I feel like with me she has the trust, but she cannot communicate. And with them she can communicate, but she does not have the trust, and that has been my challenge. That is why I started school to learn English in College every day, so I can speak to her about important difficult topics, and happy ones as well. For example, when the teacher sends me an email in English and it is not good news. I try to talk to her, but she refuses to and says she does not want to and gets stressed out. I feel powerless, and I become emotional (participant became emotional). I feel stupid, because how is it possible that I can't learn the language. I feel frustrated, and even ignorant because I just feel like I can't learn the language. I have tried since I was a little girl to learn English, but it just seems almost impossible to me. I tried in different schools, and it is just very hard to speak it.



Ms. F responded, “Well it is good, but she does not understand everything I say. Sometimes I speak and she does not understand me, or she speaks and I do not know what she is saying.”

Similarly, children expressed some positives in their relationship with their mothers, as well as obstacles due to not being able to communicate in the same language; for example, Ms. E’s son responded:

Good, but when I get grounded and it is my fault sometimes I get mad at her, but then I think about it and that it’s my fault, then I am mad at myself. But then when I get bad at my mom I get more in trouble, so I feel like it is more my fault and not hers.

For the second question, which was specific about communication between mothers and their children, parents had an opportunity to answer: how would you describe your communication in general with your child? Ms. F responded:

Communication is very bad. Bad because when she wants to tell me something she has to use her phone to translate so I can understand. She is the one that knows how to use the phone to help translate. And when she finds out the translation she sends it to me in a text.

Ms. Y responded:

There are times when it is difficult, because I try to not come across as if I am arguing with her. But I want her to feel free to express her emotions. I do not want her to feel frustrated when communicating with me. I sometimes want to give her

advice to help her, I do not want her to have barriers. But she speaks to me mostly in English.

Children had the opportunity to answer the same question regarding their communication in general with their mothers. Ms. M's son responded:

It feels odd to try to communicate with her. It is odd because I do not know what she means all of the time. I ask her to give me more of a definition. And then I kind of understand what she is saying. My sister helps me sometimes.

Questions three and four allowed both parents and their children to specifically identify how they thought speaking different languages influences their relationship with each other. Ms. Mh responded:

Definitely, I say that learning how to speak a different language gives you a different mental capacity. So when there is not fluidity in the language there is something always in the relationship. It is like your relationship is laying on a thin thread. That is why I try to work too so hard in building an emotional bond with her, like taking naps together, doing things together, tell her my things. So we can get closer, I teach her things about God and how to trust him and ask him for what you need.

Ms. Mh's Daughter responded:

It makes me feel like she is not part of the family. Just because my sister speaks English and my dad does also, but not my mom. I do not know, she talks to other people as she can, but I do not feel like she can, and I help her with her homework and things in her class. It feels like she is different, and that she can speak her

best, and she tries. I like that about her. She tries and I help her with words that she does not know, but sometimes it gets a bit awkward, because whenever she is talking with someone you have to help her. I feel sad because I want her to speak like all of us, like a family, like me, my sister, and my dad. Because the only language that she knows is Spanish, so I wish she can speak in English better and be a better mom. Speaking better English talking to me and more things.

### **Summary**

Chapter 4 described again the purpose of the study, which was to understand the role of nonreciprocal language use in the mother-child relationship between first generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children in Southeastern United States. This results chapter also included the setting where the study took place, the demographics of the participants, specifics about the data collection procedures, and the data analysis process that allowed me to identify four different themes including: culture significance, communication components, mother-child relationships, and family's resiliency. I created tables for each theme to participant's specific responses that connected them to the theme. Furthermore, I included examples about participant's responses to specific interview questions were included to provide further insight about participants' experiences with nonreciprocal language use in their families.

## Chapter 5: The Discussion, Conclusions, and Recommendations

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative study was to understand the role of nonreciprocal language use in the mother–child relationship between first-generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children in Southeastern United States. This chapter includes a discussion about the subject, conclusions about the study, as well as recommendations related to the field work examining the mother–child relationship of Latino families who communicate through nonreciprocal language. I interviewed selected participants from the Latino community who experience this phenomenon by using qualitative, open-ended questions. I used ethnography as the study’s methodology and asked participants to describe their experiences regarding the research topic in detail. This approach allowed me to ask follow-up questions to have as much information as possible, and to capture what each participant felt was important regarding their experiences. The data from these interviews were vital to learn about mother–child experiences among Latino families and how nonreciprocal language influences their relationships.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

The interpretation of the findings is based on the data gathered from 10 participants of five Latino families in North Carolina. Mother participants described themselves as first-generation Latina immigrants; three were from Mexico and two from Colombia. Their time of residence in the United States ranged from 10 to 15 years. Children in the study were born in the United States and ranged from ages 9 to 12. All

participants responded to demographic questions such as country of origin, English ability for mothers, and Spanish ability for children, time in the United States, and number of house members who are bilingual (see Tables 1 and 2). All participants were residents of the Charlotte, NC area.

Thematic analysis was used when reviewing the interviews and observations of transcripts to find patterns related to the ways nonreciprocal language influences the mother–child relationships. The coding process was done both manually and using the software product Atlas.ti. The findings from this dissertation study suggest that the mother–child relationship can be difficult for Latino mothers and their children who use nonreciprocal language. This study adds to the knowledge about the difficulties Latino families encounter in their acculturation process and how nonreciprocal language use is a phenomenon that can have a negative influence on mother child–relationships.

Schofield et al. (2017) suggested that immigrant parents and their U.S.-born children prefer to speak different languages, as children often learn the host culture language faster than their parents. Language acquisition is part of the acculturation process families encounter when moving to a new culture; however, researchers have indicated that in large samples of immigrants and their children no first-generation parents met the requirements for English proficiency (Schofield et al., 2017). Almost no second-generation children were considered to be proficient in their parents' native language (Schofield et al., 2016). The results of the current study support the findings of Schofield et al. (2016), which suggested that when immigrant mothers and their children are not fluent in a common language there are communication difficulties that can

negatively affect parenting. In this study, I also identified four aspects of the nonreciprocal language phenomenon and the mother–child relationship based on the research question: How does nonreciprocal language use influence mother–child relationships among first-generation Latino immigrant mothers and their second-generation children in Charlotte, North Carolina?

### **Mother’s Experiences with Learning English**

Based on the analysis of the in-depth interviews with Latino immigrant mothers who are not fluent in English, mothers in this study expressed a desire to learn English but mentioned different difficulties that they encounter. Three mothers expressed that their long hours of work in low paying jobs, necessary to sustaining their families, left them with little to no time to invest in learning the language. Another mother mentioned her frustration regarding learning the language due to her ex-husband not allowing her to attend classes to learn English. She mentioned that he repeatedly denied her permission to leave the house to attend classes with the argument that she did not need to learn the language because her role was to be at home to take care of their family. This mother shared experiences such as doctors’ appointments and school situations where not knowing the language was problematic and a source of stress. Lastly, one mother expressed her frustration with learning English as a matter of her inability, regardless of trying for many years. This mother started her attempt to learn English in her country of origin, Colombia, before she had children, and she continued her attempts to learn after she became a mother. However, she finds it close to impossible to speak and to retain the information she learns even after trying and practicing continuously. Moreover, all

mothers expressed their frustration with their lack of language ability despite being in the United States for longer than a decade.

### **Children's Experiences with Learning Spanish**

All children who participated in the study expressed their difficulties or lack of desire to learn Spanish. One participant expressed his concern with learning the language because according to him he is a slow learner, which he stated that a teacher told him in the past. He compared learning Spanish with learning how to read a chapter book. This experience had a great impact on him because he believes learning new things takes too much time and effort, and he does not learn fast. Two other children participants expressed lack of interest in learning Spanish due to their belief that it was not necessary because they were in the United States. One participant mentioned "I am not Mexican" during the interview process as a reason for his lack of interest in Spanish. The other participant expressed a desire for her mother to learn English because the other family members, her sister and father, spoke English. She mentioned her desire for everyone in the house to speak English. The remaining two participants mentioned a lack of motivation as a reason for not knowing Spanish. One of them mentioned "I am just lazy" when it comes to learning Spanish, and it is too much work. Overall participants' reasoning for their lack of Spanish-speaking abilities ranged from believed lack of ability to believing it was possible but thinking it was too much work.

### **Emotional and Painful Experiences**

When describing nonreciprocal language and its influence on the mother-child relationship during the study, three of the five mothers who participated in the study

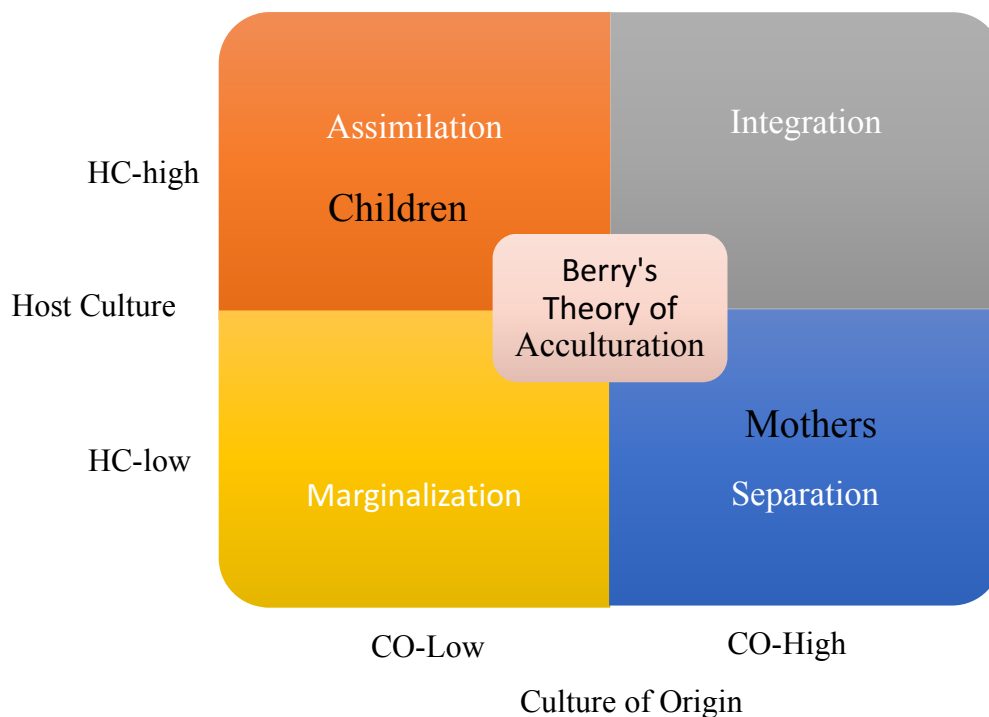
became emotional while discussing details about their experiences as Spanish-speaking mothers with children who communicate mostly in English. Even though the other two mothers did not become emotional, they expressed in detail their feelings of frustration and hopelessness when it came to every day interactions with their children. All mothers expressed frustration when attempting to be emotionally available for their children when they experience difficulties but being unable to due to the language barrier.

Similarly, two of the five children became emotional when describing their relationship with their mother, and the other three also expressed the obstacles they face when attempting to communicate with their mothers. One child expressed her feeling of frustration when describing living away from her mother, and her belief that their lack of communication is the reason why they are not close, and she is now living with her grandmother. Another child expressed how they feel like their mother is not part of the family, “like she is in heaven.”

### **Mothers and Their Children in Different Acculturation Categories**

According to Berry’s bidimensional acculturation theory, which provided a framework for this study (Berry, 1997; Kuo, 2014; Schwartz et al., 2010), the mothers and children who participated in this study are in different acculturation categories, which does not only explain their choice of language but also the way they respond to different aspects of their cultures such as values and family dynamics.





*Figure 1.* Berry’s theory of acculturation categories and participants chosen category.

Figure 1 provides a visual interpretation of Berry’s theory of acculturation that includes all four categories. The first category of assimilation was described previously as the one-dimensional process where an individual loses his or her culture of origin in order to take the behaviors, beliefs, and values of the gaining culture (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). In the assimilation process, the gaining or dominant culture is perceived as more suitable, and the culture of origin is seen as less desirable for the individual (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2013). This particular category is where the children in this study can be placed due to their disconnect from their mother’s culture. This was evident by their desire to speak the host culture language as well as their lack of desire to be identified with their mother’s culture. One child in the study mentioned “I do not need

to speak Spanish; I am not Mexican.” While another child mentioned that “I only need to speak English; that is what people speak in America.”

On the other hand, the mothers in this study can be placed in the separation category from Berry’s theory of acculturation, which was previously described as the desire to hold on to one’s culture of origin and wishing to avoid contact with those who are part of the gaining culture (Berry, 1997). Rejecting the receiving culture and retaining the culture of origin can be common among those who arrive to the receiving culture at a later age (Schwartz et al., 2010). Mothers in the study expressed their desire to retain their culture of origin, “I have tried to pass on my cultural practices, so they know where they came from.” While also expressing their difficulty when adjusting to the host culture, “I feel stupid, because it is possible that I cannot learn English.” Another mother mentioned, “I tried learning English, but it was so difficult for me. My kids made fun of me instead of helping me, so I stopped trying.”

### **Future Recommendations**

The findings of this study add to the existing knowledge of Latino immigrant mothers and their children, their use of nonreciprocal language, and its influence on their relationship.

### **Need to Invest in New Strategies for ESL Education**

Mothers in this study expressed a desire to learn the language, but also shared the difficulties they encounter such as lack of time due to long working hours. As a result, new strategies need to be developed to assess the needs of those immigrants who have a desire to learn English but have a hard time accessing available classes due to their work

hours. Volunteers and organizations who offer English as a Second Language, or ESL, classes to adults need to adjust to their specific needs. These adjustments can come by offering classes at unconventional times like early mornings, late nights, or weekends in readily available locations or community centers. Furthermore, classes can be offered directly in work settings to make it part of the work experience. A specific example can be by offering classes to farmworkers in their work location so they can take it during their lunch break, before or after their work day. These classes would allow adult parents to prioritize learning the language by removing obstacles of transportation and accessibility to resources.

### **Need for Bilingual Programs in the Education System**

Children in the study expressed feeling overwhelmed when trying to learn Spanish. When they spend all day in their school listening and talking in English it leaves them with little to no opportunity to practice their Spanish outside the home. Currently, some public schools offer Dual Language Immersion Programs that provide children with an opportunity to learn in Spanish in their schools. Researchers have shown that students who were randomly assigned to immersion programs outperform their peers in reading and learning in grades 5 through 8 (Steele, Slater, Zamarro, Miller, Li, Burkhauser, & Bacon, 2017). Furthermore, Latino parents who have children in Spanish dual immersion programs have expressed high satisfaction with bilingual models that encourage their native language and helps them communicate with their children (Olivos & Lucero, 2018). However, these programs are limited in the Charlotte, North Carolina area with only 7 of the 176 schools participating in immersion programs,

limiting families who would like to have their children participate in such programs (Charlotte-Mecklenburg, 2018).

### **Need to Develop Programs to Help Raise Bilingual Children**

The results revealed that parents did not anticipate the difficulty they would encounter when communicating with their children. Mothers in particular expressed regret for not investing more time in learning the language, as well as not having knowledge on how to deal with their children's resistance to learn Spanish. Researchers have shown different benefits bilingualism can have in children, such as enhanced cognitive functions, independence from socioeconomic backgrounds, and even delay the onset of diseases like dementia and Alzheimer (Conboy, Hennessy, Gomez, & Spenader, 2017; Thomas-Sunesson, Hakuta, & Bialystok, 2016). However, parents in the study expressed frustration about their children's lack of interest and/or inability to learn Spanish.

Existing programs that help parents in these situations include: Familias Unidas developed by Szapocznik and his colleagues, and Entre Dos Mundos developed by Bacallao and Smokowski (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2014). These programs show promising results but need to be widely disseminated by helping professionals in the community, and further tested to prove their effectiveness. Entre Dos Mundos, or Between Two Words, was created with the intent of helping families communicate better, decrease their acculturative stress, and increase their social support networks, by having six to eight families attend eight group sessions (Bacallao & Smokowski, 2014). This format has been shown to have more benefit than family or individual interventions

(Bacallao & Smokowski, 2014). Moreover, the Familias Unidas, or United Families, program includes goals such as empowerment when working with Latino immigrants (Coatsworth, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2002). Interventions are created with principles of empowerment, to include, but not limited to, the understanding that all human beings have strengths, and supportive social networks have the ability to be self-sustaining (Coatsworth et al., 2002).

### **Limitations of the Study**

Different limitations could be identified for this study. One in particular was the mothers' country of origin, which only included two countries in Latin America, Mexico and Colombia. As a result, the generalizability of the findings to other mothers from different countries might be limited. The small study sample of 10 participants, to include five mothers and five children, can also limit the ability to generalize the findings to the greater Latino population. Furthermore, all participant's responses reflect their opinions about their own experiences, which can differ from other families and other geographical location. Additionally, most interviews, 4 out of 5, were not held in the participants' home due to their shared concern about the current political state of the country and their inability to trust others with their home address. As a result, most participants were not in their natural habitat for their interviews. Finally, speaking with other family members in the family system could add important information to further understand nonreciprocal language and its influence in the mother-child relationship.

### **Implications for Social Change**

The findings of this study have the potential to help Latino families who use nonreciprocal language. This study contributes to the existing literature regarding the acculturation process and the unique circumstances and obstacles Latino families encounter in the United States. The knowledge that comes from this study can help inform local, state, and federal policy towards developing more comprehensive programs from Latino immigrants and their family that supports effective communication among parents and their children. By offering existing prevention programs created to help Latino Families during the acculturation process. Currently, Latino immigrants like the ones in this study are struggling with ways to learn the host culture language, or English, and to teach and motivate their children to learn their native language, or Spanish. By raising awareness to this particular phenomenon, Latino community leaders and advocates can develop specific strategies, like the ones proposed previously, to support Latino families and provide them with the tools they need to overcome communication barriers.

My intention is to disseminate the study's results at local and national professional conferences, with schools' administrators, community leaders, advocates, and well known peer-reviewed journals. The results of this study can also be shared at local universities, and with policy makers to encourage changes and improvements that can benefit the Latino community.

### **Researcher's Experience**

This topic is of great importance for me as a researcher, as I have worked with the Latino population for over 10 years and have witnessed the presence of nonreciprocal language in Latino families. As a result, to reduce my own bias and assumptions it was important to monitor my thoughts, perceptions, opinions, and feelings about this topic starting with the data collection process and finishing with the studies recommendations. I accomplished this by purposefully setting aside any preconceived ideas that could interfere with the responses participants provided, as well as discussing the challenges that were present with my committee chair, my colleagues, and peers. This experience has motivated me to continue to support immigrant families who are facing challenges related with their acculturation process, specifically with nonreciprocal language. This challenge in particular is a struggle some Latino families face mostly on their own, and do not realize how it has the potential to influence the mother-child relationship.

### **Summary**

Chapter 5 included an interpretation of the findings from 10 in-depth interviews with five Latino mothers, and one child from each mother who use nonreciprocal language as their main source of communication. The interpretation of the findings section is divided into four different subtitles which include mother's experiences with learning English, children's experiences with learning Spanish, emotional and painful experiences, and mother and their children in different acculturation categories. Each of this sections includes specific supportive information from the study. Furthermore, this chapter also includes three different recommendations such as the need to invest in new

strategies for ESL education, the need for bilingual programs in the education system, as well as the need to develop programs to help parents raise bilingual children.

Additionally, the limitations of the study are described in detail, as well as the possible implications for social change. Finally, I as the researcher, share details about my experiences during this study and my desire to continue to support Latino families through their acculturation process.



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Appendix A: Adult Demographic Information Questionnaire

1. How long have you lived in the United States?
2. How many children do you have that live in your home?
3. How would you describe your English speaking ability?
4. How many members of the household speak both English and Spanish?

## Appendix B: Adult Interview Questions

1. How would you describe your relationship with your child?
2. How would you describe your communication in general with your child?
3. How do you think speaking in different languages influences your relationship with your child?
4. How would your relationship with your child be different if you communicated in the same language? Why?
5. Describe your everyday experience as a Spanish speaking parent of an English speaking child.
6. What else would you like to add about this topic?

## Appendix C: Child Interview Question

1. What is your relationship with your mother like?
2. What is it like to communicate or speak with your mother?
3. How much does speaking a different language effect your relationship with your mother?
4. How would your relationship with your mother be different if you spoke the same language? Why?
5. What are your everyday activities like with your mother since you speak English and she Speaks Spanish?
6. What else would you like to add to this conversation?