"I WANTED MY KIDS TO SPEAK MORE AND SPEAK BETTER": ARTS-BASED AUTO/ETHNOGRAPHIC REFLECTIONS AND MEMOIR OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFROLATINX/É FAMILIES ON BILINGUALISM AND SPANISH DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION IN THE SOUTHEASTERN U.S.

by

SHARON M. NURUDDIN

(Under the Direction of Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor)

ABSTRACT

While research shows that African American students benefit from Dual Language Immersion (DLI) (Anberg-Espinosa, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2010), some educators "would rather see schools ensuring students are proficient in reading and writing in English before teaching those skills in another language" (Gross, 2016). This deficit perspective affects program offerings and public opinion on the language skills of minoritized students. This dissertation explores these issues through a creative autoethnographic memoir of my family's becoming bilingual, interviews with parents of elementary school dual language immersion students, and a critical discourse analysis (CDA) of DLI parent guidelines. Drawing from these methodologies, I seek to answer three questions: 1) To whom are DLI programs targeted?; 2) How do African American and AfroLatinx/é parents consider deficit perspectives toward African American language abilities?; and 3) How do I navigate my and my children's linguistic and racial identities in these challenging times?

INDEX WORDS: Bilingualism, African American, AfroLatinx, DLI, Arts-Based Inquiry

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by

SHARON M. NURUDDIN

BA, Villanova University, 1995

MA, La Universidad de Puerto Rico, 2005

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SHARON M. NURUDDIN

Major Professor:	Melisa Cahnmann-Taylor
Committee:	Kevin Burke
	Tisha Lewis Ellison

Electronic Version Approved:

Ron Walcott
Vice Provost for Graduate Education and Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
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DEDICATION

Con todo mi corazón, les dedico este trabajo a mis hijes: multilingües, creadores, cada une con su propia definición de ser afroestadounidense.

With all my heart, I dedicate this work to my children: multilinguals, creatives, each with their own definition of being Black in the U.S.

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I also thank the 2016 cohort of UGA LLED, as so many of you read chapters and encouraged me to keep going; to Dr. Peter Smagorinsky for his guidance as *Journal of Language & Literacy Education* (JoLLE) advisor and his brief but significant role on my dissertation committee; to Dr. Donna Alvermann for the teaching that led my first published article; and to Dr. Linda Harklau, who was instrumental in my being officially accepted in the department, I give my sincerest thanks. Thank you to my family, especially the mothers, who for months at a time, watched my kids while I raced back and forth from home to campus and back again. Finally, to Drs. Myrta Álvarez (QEPD) and Europa Piñero, for *pensamiento crítico* and mentorship during my MA program. I am also grateful for funding provided through the Phelps-Stokes graduate fellowship I received during the 2019-2020 academic year that helped fund this work. Gracias a todos. Àṣẹ.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

> Parents' biographies provide insight into their own experiences in school; the value they place on their children's education, particularly the purposes that literacy and learning serve; and the roles they construct for themselves.
> (Greene, 2013, p. 94)

Just before the 2014-2015 school year, as I was preparing to enroll my oldest son, Foré[1], in kindergarten at Bethanyville, a K-5 elementary school where my daughter Ife was a rising third grader, parents and guardians received information that the school was offering a new Spanish-English *dual language immersion* program (DLI) to rising kindergartners. DLI programs come in many forms: some employ one teacher who instructs through two languages guided by percentages. For example, a teacher might instruct in the target language for 90% of the class day and 10% in English, or 70% and 30%, respectively. Recruitment for each program also varies and caters to students of different grade levels and linguistic backgrounds. Bethanyville and the other schools offering DLI in Granite County, located in the southeastern U.S., follow a 50:50 model, where grade-level math, science, and literacy content is delivered in the target language for half the day with one teacher, while English language arts (ELA) and social studies are delivered in English by a different teacher. With limited space, DLI would be offered on a lottery basis as an alternative to traditional, English-only instruction. As someone

[1] all names related to locations and persons are pseudonyms

who worked for years to acquire Spanish language fluency through a more traditional foreign[2] language approach, I was excited for this opportunity and one of the first to register a child for the program. Foré, my second child and the oldest of my three boys, became a member of its first cohort. The DLI program began with pilot classes in three elementary schools, including Bethanyville, the focal school of this study. At the time of that first orientation in March of 2014, I was a Spanish instructor at a predominantly African American university in our capital city, and about to begin a PhD program. When I met the county's foreign language program coordinator and mentioned my research interests, he pointed to my son, who curiously stood between us, and said "Study him." It was that suggestion that sparked my interest in conducting research related to the DLI program. That initial spark shifted not only my dissertation focus, but my entire PhD trajectory, from the courses in which I enrolled and the professors I sought for mentoring to how I guide my own children through their bilingual education journeys. When I pondered the voluntary nature of our program and the school-family partnership that is essential for its success, Critical Race Theory (CRT)—recently the target of attacks by right-wing politicians, policymakers, and media personalities who abhor its empowerment of marginalized voices (López et al., 2021)—became a vital component of how I would analyze the stories of families who are often considered lacking school-defined involvement (Burns, 2017; Greene, 2013; Yosso, 2005). With its location near the foothills of a historic and controversial Southeastern landmark, Bethanyville was more than a research site from which to recruit

[2] I use the term "foreign" often in this work, especially within cited works, as it is still widely used in language departments and academic articles, though I acknowledge that "world" languages is often the more preferred, and less controversial term.

interviewees. Its ever-growing population of African American and Latinx/é[3] students reflects a new urban/suburban dynamic and the need to offer programs to families who have come to these areas with their own expectations of what quality education and involvement should look like. These expectations include bilingual education programs that will provide their children with better career opportunities and engage them in cultural awareness.

The three papers presented in this dissertation are the result of my interest in exploring the in-between space that African Americans fill in bilingual education research and practice, and how we construct our identities as we navigate those realities. Though research had been sparse on this topic (Davis, 1992), recent scholarship has brought the unique experiences of bilingualism in the African American community to light. C. Pratt (2012), for example, examined the under enrollment of African American students in Spanish language programs at the high school level. Lack of role models, support from parents, and career counseling were some of the concerns students had which led to a decline in interest in the program (C. Pratt, 2012). Similarly, Anya (2020) reflected on the waning enrollments of African American students in world languages at the university level, particularly the experiences of African Americans in study abroad programs. She argues that a lack of motivation does not fully rationalize the phenomenon. Instead, it is due to

> a history of systemic exclusion and marginalization in U.S. education, because black students at the K-12 level are more likely to attend schools or be tracked into programs where world languages are not available, and they complete the fewest number of high-school credits in this subject. (Anya, 2020, p. 98)

[3] There is much debate about which gender-neutral identity terms, "Latinx" or more recently, "Latiné" and "Latine," should be used to describe people of Spanish descent. One of the issues is pronunciation. "Latinx" might not be easily pronounceable for Spanish speakers unfamiliar with its pronunciation in English, while "Latiné" and "Latine" are easily pronounceable and similar to gender-neutral verb forms and nouns in Spanish like *estudié* and *estudiante*. Considering these three terms, I have chosen to use the inclusive term "Latinx/é" to acknowledge this movement (Colorado State University, n.d.).

In part because of the "growing recognition among educators of its promise for increasing achievement for English-learners" there has been widespread and "steady growth in dual-language immersion (DL/DLI) programs in public schools across the nation" (Maxwell, 2015, p. 20). As these programs grow, positive orientations and perspectives towards populations representing increasingly diverse linguistic and cultural heritages are necessary. This can lead to programs that promote academic achievement and produce a new generation of students more socioculturally aware and accepting of their peers, regardless of race, gender, socioeconomic class, and other identity constructs that often divide us. From the earliest forms of bilingual education to more recent public and private school models, two of the main tenets of DLI have included serving underprivileged communities and adopting a progressive, critical, asset perspective imperative to overcoming deficit perspectives of minoritized languages and cultures. With many models to choose from, bilingual education must meet the needs of students and their parents, with adequate teacher training and support as essential elements for program success (Lachance, 2017). Clark et al. (2002), for example, affirm that "[o]ne of the key elements involved in school change can be a bilingual education model that is either a dual-language or a two-way bilingual education program" (p. 126).

Critical Race Theory in Education

Critical Race Theory (CRT) applied to education saw its beginnings in the mid-1990s with the publishing of Ladson-Billings and Tate's (1995) "Towards a Critical Race Theory in Education." One use of CRT in education is to comprehend and analyze the unique experiences and obstacles of students and professors of color. Another seminal work is Taylor et al.'s (2009) *Foundations of Critical Race Theory in Education*, a collection of essays that broadens the research on racism, colorblindness, and microaggressions present in all aspects of the standards-

dominated, public education system of contemporary U.S. society. Among the authors published in this volume are founders and scholars of CRT, Derrick Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Gloria Ladson-Billings, David Gillborn, Richard Delgado, Daniel Solórzano, and Tara J. Yosso. CRT in education can prove an invaluable tool for collecting, analyzing, and validating the counterstories/counternarratives of marginalized professors, emerging scholars, and students, and for giving their voices a platform firmly tethered to research (Baez, 2007; DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Nishi & Montoya, 2018; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Teranishi, 2007). It has been used to address issues of inequity in literacy and language education, including bilingual and foreign/world language education programs and policy, which are growing in number and face numerous challenges (Burns, 2017; Kubota & Catlett, 2008).

In educational research, CRT explores hegemonic narratives and questions standardization and dominance within the areas of classroom expectations, pedagogy, student-teacher-parent relationships, and program/policy documents. CRT researchers often use qualitative methods to collect data, such as survey and interview protocols. The resulting data seek to uncover patterns of behavior, epistemologies, and lived experiences that are common and intersectional across groups of people. These counterstories/counternarratives serve as a means of changing the discourse from dominance and standardization to one of humanity and understanding, challenging established norms that hinder the growth of many educators and students of underprivileged family backgrounds.

At the university level, much research has been conducted on the motivations of African American students and foreign language learning. In 1992, James J. Davis, then a professor of Spanish and Foreign Language Education, published an article titled “African-American Students and Foreign Language Learning.” In it, he states that only in the last seventy years or so

has foreign language research turned its focus to “African American students’ perceived needs, performance, and attitudes toward foreign language study” (Davis, 1992, p. 3). He makes the connection between “Black English” (p. 3) and deficit theories as they relate to foreign language instruction; among these “foreign” languages, standard English was included. He states, however, that twenty years of sociolinguistic research has revealed the intricacies of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) and that it should not be viewed as an obstacle to academic success.

Studies conducted as far back as the 1940s used standardized testing to prove that African American university students did not fare as well as their counterparts of other ethnicities in foreign language education, despite taking the same number of classes at similar levels (Davis, 1992). These studies also revealed inadequate funding, teacher preparation, and program offerings. In addition, research has shown that negative attitudes toward foreign language learning among African American postsecondary students has given way to a more positive outlook on language study. For example, a study conducted by Davis & Markham (1991, as cited in Davis, 1992) revealed that “only 6% of the students felt that their own cultural identities were threatened by an intense commitment to the study of another language and culture” (p. 3). Contemporary research from Moore (2005) suggests that African American high school students often experience neutral (neither negative nor positive) foreign language experiences. This reflects the low numbers of African American students enrolled in preservice teacher education programs. Moore recommends that culturally relevant foreign language programs less focused on grammar should be implemented earlier on, even at the elementary school level.

CRT as Methodology

Expanding beyond theory, Solórzano and Yosso (2002) propose a critical race *methodology* in education: grounded research that acknowledges the social constructions of race and racism while "challeng[ing] the separate discourses on race, gender, and class by showing how these three elements intersect to affect the experiences of students of color" (p. 24). Racism is manifested in systemic, institutional power, and educational institutions function contradictorily. They possess the power to oppress and liberate as well as to marginalize and empower. For Solórzano and Yosso (2002), experiential knowledge is "legitimate, appropriate, and critical" (p. 26) to learning and teaching about the collective consciousness of minoritized people. Their histories are often grounded in oral traditions, and critical race scholars, which include scholars of color and those who are not (Burke, 2012), respectfully embrace this tradition in all their manifestations (poetry, film, *testimonios*, etc.), validating the counterstory and using it to invalidate and disempower master narratives (Lyotard, 1984) and so-called *minority majoritarian* narratives (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002, p. 28), where minoritized people (educators and scholars particularly) uphold the dominant perspective. Solórzano and Yosso argue against the notion that a successful student of color is one who culturally assimilates away from their own culture and into the dominant one, an ideal supported by institutions regardless of the cultural diversity of their classrooms.

Researcher Positionality

My positionality coming into this work is African American, Spanish-English bilingual through both informal and formal education; a *motherscholar* (Matias, 2010) of four emerging bilingual children; a new, but older, researcher; a poet; a teacher educator; and a world language instructor. My formal education took place in the suburbs of two major U.S. cities along the

Eastern seaboard, though I was raised by and around family members from both lower-income urban and rural areas along the north and southeastern coasts. Over time, the neighborhood in which I was raised became more urban though it was still overwhelmingly white and Black.

As I write, I am parenting during a global pandemic and at a time in educational history when bilingual and DLI options are on the rise and have made deep and influential impacts on my coursework and those from whom I have sought mentorship. In addition to learning from the experiences of fellow African American and AfroLatinx/é DLI parents, I look within my own experience to fill gaps in how we understand bilingual education where African American participation is sorely missing. As a parent, researcher, and language educator, I am passionate about seeing our DLI program continue, and for my daughter and sons to go beyond bilingual. I build each chapter on the other, moving from the authoritative discourse that mandates how parents are expected to engage their children in DLI, to the real experiences of parents in the program who represent historically marginalized voices that are not present in policy documents, to personal, poetic inquiry, detailing my journey as a language learner and how my experiences inform and fuse my academic and personal lives.

In Chapter 2, I employ critical, creative autoethnography and arts-based research methods (Baker, 2014; Boylorn & Orbe, 2014; Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegemund, 2018; Chang, 2008; Drummond, 2018; Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Méndez, 2013) to connect my experiences of language learning with my parenting in the face of a global pandemic and during a time when the senseless deaths of unarmed Black and Brown people feel like never-ending fodder for reality TV connoisseurs. Also, new, innovative bilingual education programs are multiplying all over the country, and the student populations that are enrolled in them are becoming increasingly diverse. Through poetry and prose, I narrate my journey as a language student, Spanish

instructor, and DLI mom. In Chapter 3, I present and analyze qualitative interviews of the experiences of African American parents of DLI students who—like myself—are raising bi- and multilingual Black children. They share their own experiences with world language education and the educational decisions they have made for their children. With CRT as the theoretical backdrop, these parents voice their expectations, concerns, and strong dedication to dual language as a way for their scholars to succeed in their future endeavors. Parental involvement in and with schools, often used as a biased metric to judge and criticize the way minoritized communities nurture their children and connect with faculty and staff (Burns, 2017; Greene, 2013; Yosso, 2005), are described by parents in their own words. In Chapter 4, I use Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 2010), looking through the lens of CRT to discuss the program guidelines and parent understandings within the suburban DLI program in which three of my children are enrolled. I explore who writes these guidelines and for whom, the implications of their definitioqan of the ideal DLI student, and underlying biases and colorblindness found within the discourse.

Note

In March of 2021, the world, and our entire school system, went into quarantine due to the COVID-19 health epidemic. During the 2020-2021 school year, all families could choose either in-person or synchronous, digital learning for their children. The research for this study began during the 2019-2020 school year, concluding just as we were going into quarantine.

Foré is now a middle school seventh grader and among the first to graduate from the elementary DLI program in our county. His cohort is still together in Spanish class. The middle school program provides two high school-level Spanish courses that, together, provide a "continuation model" focusing on cultural, linguistic, and writing competence instead of the

content-only instruction given at the elementary level (Dual Language Immersion (DLI) Middle School Continuation Model, 2020, p. 1). His two younger brothers are still enrolled in the elementary school DLI program. One is in fifth grade, the other, third. Their sister (now a sophomore in high school) studied Spanish and French at the middle school, currently studies French in her high school, and is a student of Korean language and popular dance both informally and through a Korean language and dance academy. She is currently a Korean language tutor for children and uses K-Pop music (What is K-Pop?, 2022) to engage her students

CHAPTER 2

REFUGIO:

AN ARTS-BASED AUTOETHNOGRAPHIC MEMOIR FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF A BILINGUAL AFRICAN AMERICAN MOTHERSCHOLAR

Today is my son's last day of PreK. He'll be participating in a Spanish dual language immersion program in the fall when he goes to K. My daughter had straight A's this quarter (only one B all year-cause she forgot Pluto isn't a planet...lol!). I'm so excited for my public, yeah public, school kids!!
(Facebook Post, 3/21/2014)

Authoethnography as critical reflection on personal experience can be an effective tool in relating the subjective narrative of a researcher to a population of study. It marries "storytelling with cultural and social phenomena" (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 13). Through it, the researcher becomes a storyteller, weaving her narrative with those of the larger community to bring awareness to a particularly pressing social issue. Autoethnography is a subfield of ethnography, with "*ethnos*" referring to the "people" being observed, and "*graphy*" denoting the science of "description." Anthropological in nature, it has been defined as the "integration of art, literature, and social sciences" (Patton, 2015, p. 103). The ethnographer and the participant are the same; however, in collecting "data," the author must "[focus] outward, on social and the cultural aspects of their personal experience; then…look inward, exposing a vulnerable self that is moved by and may move through, refract, and resist cultural interpretations" (Ellis & Bochner, 2000, p. 739). In the field of educational inquiry, autoethnography can be implemented to understand

schooling experiences from intersecting positionalities (Crenshaw, 1991) as researchers navigate multiple perspectives and participation in various communities and cultures.

Researchers who employ autoethnography close the gap between the insider and outsider, bringing their readers closer to authentic experience. Some autoethnographers use creative avenues to breathe life into their self/community studies. This paper acknowledges the many ways one can bring creativity to social science research, focusing on arts-based autoethnography. In tracing the history of autoethnography to modern implementations, one can see that it is among the many useful tools qualitative and ethnographic researchers use to understand membership or closeness to a particular experience or community of study.

Autoethnography holds a valuable place in the research of human subjects, and there are many benefits to employing it in social science research. Méndez (2013) offers some advantages of this method: it provides easier access to a population of study through the detailed account of one of its members; its personal, intimate descriptions can inspire understanding, empathy, and allyship; and its emancipatory nature affords the subject a voice ordinarily denied by more traditional ethnographic research methods. Deconstructing the formula of classic, traditional ethnography has led to new ways of conducting research on people and cultures. Patton (2015) writes that among the questions raised is "[w]hat if there is no *other* as the focus of study" (p. 102), and instead the researcher desires to study his own group, community, organization, etc.? Personal experience then becomes that missing voice.

This work, inspired by *critical* authoethnographers (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014), memoirists, poets, *motherscholars* (Matias, 2010), and second language researchers, chronicles my experience as a Black, bilingual woman, mother, and educator in the United States. Due to perceptions of Black Americans as speaking one nonstandard variety of English (Frieson, 2022,

Frieson & Presiado, 2022; Tyson et al., 2005), bilingualism is sometimes viewed as compromising Blackness as far as perceptions of African American identity in the U.S. (Frieson, 2022; Martínez, 2021). Partly because of my interest in the Spanish language, I have often been accused of acting white (Carbado & Gulati, 2013; Durkee, et al. 2022; Ogbu, 2004) by my Black counterparts. This is one of many reasons why I am intent on raising my Black children to be bilingual, and beyond[4], and strong in their unique identities. This is not a tale of marginalization as it relates to whiteness (Blanton et al., 2021). Indeed, Critical Race Theory (CRT) (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017), my theoretical framework, emphasizes that every aspect of our society is based on and embedded with whiteness and the *-isms* it has birthed. Instead, this work demonstrates the wide range of microaggressions that affect my, and my children's daily lives, and how we push back from them. These include being othered because of my desire to be bilingual and the suburban area in which I grew up.

Through the implementation of critical autoethnographic writing style and typologies as defined by Chang (2008) and Boylorn and Orbe (2014), through the influence of arts-based research as detailed and exemplified by Cahnmann-Taylor and Seigesmund (2018), and through the lens of CRT, I analyze this self-data. This included emails, Facebook posts, poems, journal entries, and class notes from my doctoral program, all connecting to the wider research on second language education, Blackness, and the *motherscholar* (Matias, 2010) as she guides her children through uncertain and uncommon times. As an educator of Spanish and teacher-educator of world language education, I am also inspired by the women who use autoethnography to chronicle their experiences as intellectually and physically marginalized professors and by those whose mothering is a form of activism and advocacy for their children

[4] I use this phrase with an understanding that being bilingual is not the end goal I have for my children, but being multilingual, multidialectal, and multicultural; that is, going "beyond" bilingual.

(DePouw & Matias, 2016). Through this autoethnographic work, I explore the question *How do the experiences of a Black bilingual researcher of multiple, intersecting identities inform her motherhood and help her navigate through the joy and concern she has for her Black children?*

From Anthropology to Autoethnographic Memoir – a Brief History

Long before computers, audio recorders, cameras, and other devices currently used for recording people, places, and events, anthropologists "attempt[ed] to represent the lives, practices, beliefs, values, and feelings of some person or group" (Bochner & Ellis, 2002, p. 12). This was in direct relation to the colonization of indigenous peoples throughout the world, who were considered "primitive" and "unindustrialized" (Ryan, 2017). These researchers—white, male, and European—would spend extended periods of time living among, though culturally detached from, the communities under study. Rife with Eurocentric biases, these cultural representations portrayed their subjects as inferior intellectually and physically.

The English explorer Captain James Cook, for example, during his voyages through modern day Tasmania, enlisted the participation of expedition artist, James Webber. Through illustrations, Webber recorded interactions with Cook and the indigenous people, capturing their dress and customs of the time, as well as their physical features (Cook et al., 1785a/1785b). One image, which "may be the earliest surviving visual record of exchange between Europeans and Aboriginal people" (Simmons, 2017, p. 413) shows aboriginal men meeting Cook for the first time. In both the journals and illustrations, the indigenous peoples are depicted as uncivilized, unchivalrous, and physically inferior. "[I]t is clear," Simmons writes, "that the European perceptions and representations of Aboriginal people were mediated by the explorers' own stereotypical preoccupations regarding other races" (p. 415). Bochner and Ellis (2002) affirm that "the traditional treatment of research 'subjects' was inclined to be alienating, demeaning,

and exploitative" (p. 13). With no interest in self-representation, early ethnographers perpetuated negative biases, thereby influencing reader perceptions of Eastern cultures.

Social Anthropology and the Ethnographic Turn

By the early 1800s and into the early 20th century, classic anthropological representations were often "seen…as relics from the colonial past" (Denzin, 2008, p. 3). Malinowski (1922) and others sought to produce more empathetic anthropological work. This kind of study was given the term "social anthropology," and eventually the word "ethnography" came to describe this evolution of cultural study:

> This was termed social anthropology and was characterised by the concept of the 'marginal native' or 'professional stranger' – the researcher becoming embedded in a culture and conducting extensive participant observation to develop a deeper understanding of that culture's social norms and structures. Malinowski emphasised 'holism' in obtaining natives' points of view and their visions of their world through a rigorous scientific approach that also incorporated a degree of reflexivity. Holism involves looking beneath the surface of what is observed, not simply measuring, but considering the wider issues and interactions that occur in a community and society. (Ryan, 2017, p. 3)

Though still problematic in its attempts to detach from the people under study, Malinowski (1922) was cognizant of the biases that informed his work, therefore allowing for more critical approaches to ethnographic research. This perspective, in many ways, led to some of the most well-known, ethnographic works of more recent times. Mead's (1980) study of the domestic and social expectations of adolescent girls in Samoa, Geertz's (1973) study of Balinese cockfighting as a battle over masculine prowess and social status, and Behar's (1987) work on spiritualty and power between the Christian religious elite and female practitioners of witchcraft in Mexico brought more humanistic and critical descriptions to ethnographic work on culture and subcultures. Still, the outsider-looking-in (etic) perspective of these studies prohibited the insider (emic) perspective to fully interact in the telling of their own story. A turn to forms of

ethnography in which the insider provides insider observations to produce works of authentic experience was needed to fill this wide gap in understanding and to eliminate the "othering" that exists in traditional ethnography. One of those forms is autoethnography, involving "the study of human experience data" (Boylorn & Orbe, 2014, p. 180), of which "the phenomenon of interest is your own experience" (Patton, 2015, p. 274).

Ethnography of the Self

Boylorn and Orbe (2014) explain that the collection of living data through autoethnographic research allows for the "[combining of] narratives that encourage us to better understand and learn from each other while showing the interconnectedness of the human experience" (p. 15). Adams and Ellis (2012) define it as "both process and product, a way of doing and representing research" (p. 189). This method forges authentic representations of the subject/object, where emic perspectives are of great value, and the etic view is challenged for the many inconsistencies that *-isms*, biases, or a desire to depict oneself as superior might produce.

One of the first references to the term, autoethnography, in academic literature is found in Hayano (1979), who developed criteria that include "some prior knowledge of the people, their culture and language, as well as the ability to be accepted to some degree, or to 'pass' as a native member'" (p. 100). In establishing said criteria, he began to formulate two categories of autoethnography, which include 1) that which is written by researchers with insider status, and 2) that which is written by researchers with outsider status who have acquired intimate connections with the population of study (through formal or informal indoctrination).

These criteria allow autoethnographies to take shape through many different viewpoints, with "no one necessary characteristic, such as birthplace or appearance" required, instead the only requirement is that the researcher possess "often permanent self-identification with a group and full internal membership, as recognized both by themselves and the people of whom they are

a part" (Hayano, 1979, p. 100). Hayano's definition and criteria have evolved and expanded beyond studies of one's native or near-native cultural experiences to encompass wider-reaching experiences and narrative styles (see Ellis & Bochner, 2000, pp. 739-740 for an extensive list of autoethnography-related genres). A quality authoethnography should be evaluated both as science and art, that is, analytic and creative. To accomplish this, one must reflect on what type of autoethnography they are crafting, and the genre they will use to achieve it. One of the many genres through which autoethnographies are crafted is memoir, which can be complicated by the fact that the two are genres of writing in themselves and can be seen as separate or melded together as autoethnographic memoir (McGregor, 2007).

Intersections of Autoethnography and Memoir

Some writers blur the lines between autoethnography and memoir by reaching into past accounts or remembered histories as part of the self-data included in their work. Watson (2021) relates the work of Malian educator, art historian, cultural theorist, and filmmaker Manthia Diawara to the literary memoirs of Annie Ernaux (2018) and Audre Lorde (1982). In doing so, Watson (2021) suggests that the addition of one's personal memory can push autoethnography beyond the set boundaries that some researchers have placed upon it:

> By discussing Diawara's methods in two exemplary films and a memoir, I probe conundrums of how the autoethnographic is defined and practiced. *Rouch in Reverse* [(1995)] is an explicitly counter-ethnographic film that rejects situating autoethnography as simply a reversal of investigator-informant positions. *In Search of Africa* [(1998)] offers a memoir and related short film that employ a 'strong' autoethnographic method to represent selves navigating between complex worlds. *An Opera of the World* ([2017]) is a recent, multi-vocal documentary film that arguably exceeds the contours and constraints of the autoethnographic to perform a new model of geographic and psychic/cultural migration between the historically polarised spheres of the global [African] South and North. (p. 318)

Autoethnographic memoir is then a space that lies somewhere between autobiography and ethnography, literary memoir and autoethnography, with a central research agenda weaved

throughout. Autoethnographic memoir is also the foundation of McGregor's (2007) self-reflective work on her life in the "middle": mid-career, middle-age, and in the middle of her PhD journey. McGregor (2007) uses teacher reflection (Schön, 1987; van Manen, 1977) as her theoretical framework and personal narrative and self-study to contribute to contemporary scholarship on memoir as research:

> Starting in the middle for me means centering myself in the midst of adult life, but also amid the act of teaching…I find myself both literally and figuratively in the middle: the middle of a long career in teaching and a self-imposed respite from public life…I am in the middle of what might be called a self-reflexive journey, one that seeks to explore past and present identities: mother, activist, feminist, teacher and now adult educator, each characterized by opposing tensions between resisting and embracing social norms. (p. 77)

This work reveals one woman's transformation into an adult educator as she navigates home and academic relationships, motherhood, and aging, and how these relationships shape educator understandings and pedagogical beliefs.

Harris (2017) provides another "self-reflexive journey" (McGregor, 2007, p. 77). Calling it an "adoptees' gift to autoethnography" (p. 25), the author presents an alternative to the manifesto, a "femifesta" (Hickey-Moody, 2016), that describes the experiences and understandings of adoptees, a group of people who, she argues, differ from the traditional autoethnographer who exists within a particular subgroup. Adoptees often find themselves disconnected from their environment instead of considering themselves an "I" within a greater "We:"

> Adoptees have been living this kind of autoethnography since the beginning. Because being adopted can mean quite the opposite of lost wandering individuals who strive to reconnect or rediscover some long-lost essentialising tribe from which they have been cast out, adoptee autoethnography is a way of seeing the world beyond individual lines, borders, affiliations. (Hickey-Moody, 2016, p. 26)

The analysis offered is in Harris' (2017) descriptions of her doctoral research on South Sudanese displaced, female refugees, and in the poetic representation she offers of her queer, white,

adopted, “lost” status. She concludes by articulating the realization that autoethnography is the doing, not the theorizing, and the narrative itself invites a call to action. This is what she considers an academically and politically successful femifesta: an autoethnography that produces a meaningful result.

Critical Autoethnography

Contributions to creative, critical, and intersectional (Crenshaw, 1991) autoethnographies are numerous, of which Boylorn’s (2014) “A Story & A Stereotype: An Angry and Strong Auto/Ethnography of Race, Class, and Gender,” is a noted example. Here, Boylorn (2014), an African American woman, combats the “angry Black woman” (p. 133) stereotype in the media and in daily life, noting that “[s]tereotypes are effective and pervasive because they are sometimes reinforced by our lived experience and not challenged in our everyday lives” (p. 141). She weaves her own story—from the “bluntness” of her grandmother to the “soft-spoken” nature of her mother and her place somewhere in the middle—linking stereotypical, and often misinterpreted, Black woman rage to the research on racial discrimination and microaggressions, the aftereffects of slavery, undiagnosed mental illness in minoritized communities, and many other salient issues in the African American community. Boylorn’s essay concludes with a poem that drives her feelings home:

> *I see you*
> *smiling to cover up fear*
> *doubt*
> *pain*
> *and anger so deep you worry it will swallow you whole*
> *if you let it*
> (Excerpt from “On Being Seen: An Angry & Strong Poem,” Boylorn, 2014, p. 142).

For Boylorn, all the ways of being and experiencing produce resilient women, and their personal narratives give them voice. She writes that

> [s]tories may not always successfully challenge the myths and stereotypes of black women, but personal narratives guarantee that black women have agency about how they are represented beyond stereotypes. Stories allow black women to show vulnerability alongside strength, and justification alongside anger. (p. 141)

Boylorn's work showcases the diverse and complex ways Black women position themselves in the world and how they navigate through a society that sees them in oppressive, one-dimensional ways.

A collection of autoethnographies representing multiple positionalities, *Tedious Journeys* (2010) presents the personal stories of minoritized women of color in predominantly white, male-dominated institutions of higher education. Co-editor Robinson (2010) draws connections between African American spiritual traditions and "getting over" the invisibility and racial microaggressions (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) she experienced as a new faculty member of color at a predominantly white institution (PWI). She reflects on the students' "puzzled looks" (p. 26) upon realizing that, indeed, she was going to be their professor, on being addressed as one would a student worker when attempting to use the copier, and on being complimented by an Asian American student on her use of Standard American English (SAE).

Co-editor Clardy (2010) poignantly writes about being an African American mother, spouse, and doctoral candidate, searching for her first tenure-track position. She recalls being offered a low salary, an office in a small building in the middle of a parking lot—"we were overwhelmed by a stench that seemed to emanate from a sewer" (p. 38)—and being told that she would be a good role model for Black and white students because she "represented a positive image of an African American woman in academia" (p. 38). Through self-narrative, Clardy (2010) reflects on and exposes themes of tokenism (A Note on Tokenism, 1997), the hiring experiences of Black, Latinx/é and other women of minoritized status in academia, but also notes a safe, inherently isolating existence in these spaces. When considering speaking up for a

colleague, a Colombian woman, she decides against it, stating that "I enjoyed my invisibility and space on the margin for so long that I felt uncomfortable relinquishing it even for a moment" (p. 46). Jay et al. (2010) echo the isolation of women of color in academia and the effects of this double oppression (Collins, 2000), citing their "wanting to hide and not be seen in the building," and "[their] increased lack of presence…because we work at home to feel safe" (p. 116).

Critical Race Parenting and the Motherscholar

An additional positionality that some researcher-mothers identify through their research is that of *motherscholar* (DePouw & Matias, 2016; Matias, 2010). DePouw and Matias (2016) acknowledge the importance of the stories and lived experiences of parents and their children of color. As critical race *motherscholars*, DePouw and Matias (2016) acknowledge the importance of the stories and lived experiences of parents and their children of color. In the article, the authors narrate experiences and interactions with their children that reflect the notion of racial realism (Bell, 1980), which perceives institutional racism to be so pervasive and inherent that the focus should not rely on achieving racial equality and equity, but to work towards real and tangible change, rather than idealized overcoming of racism in its entirety:

> The focus, then, is twofold: We must continue our struggle to affirm and maintain our humanity and that of our children under a racist state and its institutions, even as we work to avoid uncritical investment in solutions that rely on idealistic "changes of heart" or interpersonal colorblindness as the key to ending institutional racism and white supremacy. (DePouw & Matias, 2016, p. 247)

For these authors, critical race parenting engages a deeper understanding of racism, urging that parents and their children "be privy to racial vocabulary, concepts, and language for articulation and acknowledge the existing realities of race" (DePouw & Matias, 2016, p. 248).

As the white mother of a biracial (German/French American and Afro-Cuban) child, DePouw acknowledges that colorblindness is consistent with her public family experiences, especially when questions or underlying racist comments about her son's ethnic background are

concerned. In private, more intimate engagements with colorblindness are present, for example in her insistence to cut her son's hair to hide its curl pattern. She realized years later that her desire for "'clean' haircuts was very much tied to a denigration of Blackness" (DePouw & Matias, 2016, p. 252). Matias is a brown-skinned Pinay mother of twins who are often mistaken for being of Latinx/é or Asian descent. Her children exude a keen sense of racial realism, both in the home and school, as evidenced by her daughter inquiring "Mommy, did your colleagues exert whiteness on you today?" (p. 248). Through the authors' stories, they bridge a gap between the personal and the professional, further validating that lived experiences guide our understandings of race and racism and can expose the underlying effects of white supremacy and colorblindness. This work places significant value on the counterstories of parents and how their experiences influence their perspectives and the decisions they make about the education of their children. My creative, critical autoethnographic work centers on mothering as my Black children become multilingual and form their own identities, reflecting on my own journey in learning and teaching Spanish, and *counterstorying* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) my experiences with bilingual education programs.

Autoethnography in Bilingual Education

Giles's (2010) dissertation on the founding of Georgia's first two-way language immersion[5] (TWI) public elementary school exemplifies all of Chang's typologies in the forms of personal narrative, confession, data analysis, and imagined dialogue. In this way, she addresses research questions concerning the personal and professional challenges she faced throughout the process of founding the program, implications for the future of TWI, and the

[5] The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) calls two-way immersion "[a] dual language program in which both native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language are enrolled, with neither group making up more than two-thirds of the student population" (CAL Glossary, 2017).

debated validity of autoethnographic research as method. One of the many ways she infused creative writing is through an imagined dialogue with philosopher, psychologist, and educator John Dewey (1916), focusing on his pragmatic approach to the relationship between learning and doing. As if she is conducting an interview with the famed educator, Giles (2010) connects Dewey's philosophy to conversations and debates on dual language immersion programs. It is also a very emotional, descriptive work, as her dedication and raw emotion exude through her words:

> When I say that writing this dissertation was arduous, what I mean is that it was emotionally grueling. My journey during the years that it took to open the school was filled with moments when I felt like I had won the lottery, negotiated world peace, and eradicated poverty all in the same day; yet, there were many more days when I just wanted to walk away from the whole idea, curl up into a ball, and insulate myself from the ignorance and selfishness of our society. I did not predict that telling my story would be so hard to do. (p. 3)

Giles's (2010) work interacts with Cahnmann-Taylor's (2018) ABR principles of public good in many

ways. As the first TWI public elementary school in Georgia, her dissertation is a lesson for educators who might wish to establish their own TWI program. It contributes to social science research on U.S. bilingual education programs, and serves the public by revealing how bureaucracy and the court of public opinion greatly affect educational program offerings, both positively and negatively. Using ABR methods, Giles sheds light on the innerworkings of DLI programming, and crafts a foundation for future bilingual education schools and related research.

In her "autoethnographic investigation of [her] journey as a bilingual educator," Escamilla (2018) recalls how her profession coincided with the signing of the Bilingual Education Act (BEA) of 1968. She was a new teacher, hired to work in a first-grade classroom in rural Colorado. Though not specifying how programs would be implemented, the BEA "contain[ed] a special provision establishing bilingual education for children whose first

language [was] not English (Anderson & Boyer, 1970, p. 1). Escamilla was hopeful but cautious, as the mixed messages she received from administrators both downplayed the burden of creating a program that had not previously existed and showed a lack of understanding and empathy for the Spanish-speaking students in the classroom. When interviewed for the position, for example, the principal told her that the school needed "teachers…who can speak 'Mexican' to our 'Spanish' children," (p. 375) later noting that students were called 'Spanish' because "'Mexican' was an offensive term" (ibid.). Using autoethnography and historical chronology as research tools, Escamilla recounts navigating this historic time and her participation in founding bilingual education programs over the course of three decades. Her journey from a 22-year-old novice teacher to a professor of bilingual education at universities taught her that

> social justice must be at the heart of what we do and that critique and criticism is important to help to identify and rectify the institutional and societal racism that continues to be such an obstacle to the implementation of quality, comprehensive, and long-term bilingual/biliterate and cross-cultural programs. (p. 385)

Autoethnographies like Escamilla's (2018), that center on bilingual education, biculturalism, and the researcher's personal relationship and journey within these contexts, offer glimpses of the social and political dynamics at play when we consider the long history of racialization and ignorance toward bilingual programs and individuals.

Blurring the lines of autoethnography, memoir, and traditional qualitative research, Cahnmann-Taylor, Nuruddin, and Qiu (2020) reflect on our organization of and engagement in university- and community-sponsored Lunar New Year festivities that included book discussions, food tastings, and craft workshops. Each of the authors related our personal backgrounds to the work, one as an insider to the culture being celebrated and the others, myself included, as outsiders. Yet all three have had experiences of being othered, and through the activities, come to a newer sense of self and cultural awareness. I, for example, relate to

Taiwanese culture as I write about my experiences as a Black, emerging bilingual girl growing up and being educated in suburbia:

> It [the 1980s] was an era devoid of positivistic, standardized testing, but also when teachers were the sole purveyors of culture and knowledge. If a student's name and culture carried deep meaning for her and her family, teachers, administrators, and fellow students were not required to respond with understanding, knowledge, and care. In finding herself, I feel that Grace [the title character of the book *Year of the Dog* (Lin, 2006)] was much better prepared for that task than I. She had a history that could be mapped to a home language (Taiwanese) and to her parents' home. Not me. There were no celebrations of African American (AA) heritage in my home. No "AA" camp like the Taiwanese American, "TAC" camp that Grace and her friends attended during the summer. In fact, an elder in my family has said on many occasions that when she was growing up, "we thought white people knew everything". (pp. 56-57)

The authors' perspectives engage with translingual and transcultural practices (De Costa et al., 2017) in and outside of the classroom, moving through contact zones (M. L. Pratt, 1991) of personal and community experience, and ultimately finding a welcomed space of dis/comfort within those crossings.

With the seemingly limitless ways one can weave and experiment with autoethnography, there is skill and technique involved in bringing these human experiences to light in a way that contributes to foundational and contemporary research on life experiences as data. Here, a set of typologies from Chang (2008) are detailed that helped me define and refine my autoethnographic work. Following this are principles of arts-based research outlined by Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2018), to which I referred as guides to effectively bring creative writing into the research process—an arduous yet satisfying experience that I hope will be useful to emerging autoethnographic researchers.

Criteria and Typologies of Autoethnography

Chang (2008) notes that autoethnography allows the self to connect with those of the same or similar cultural group and helps the audience "function more effectively with others

from diverse cultural backgrounds" (p. 13). She also affirms that autoethnography can serve as an instructional tool for practitioners in a variety of fields, including social science research. In the book, she details four typologies of autoethnographic writings: Descriptive-Realistic, Analytical-Interpretive, Confessional-Emotive, and Imaginative-Creative. Each convention serves a particular purpose, and authors often mix different conventions within one text.

Descriptive-Realistic

The Descriptive-Realistic typology is often seen in literary memoirs. Chang offers as an example Maya Angelou's (1997) *I Know Why the Caged Birds Sings*, originally published in 1969, which chronicles the author's life and close family relationships that helped form her as an author, performer, activist, and public speaker. One of her most treasured relationships was with "Momma," her grandmother, a confident, inventive, and successful, African American businessowner who taught Angelou the true meaning of family and community. After years of preparing and selling lunches to local workers, Angelou's grandmother opened a store that became a cornerstone, uniting both sides of their town. Through vivid narration, this work is an affirmation of Angelou's identity, and helps paint a picture of the myriad life experiences of African American women during her lifetime and the values, beliefs, and family structures they maintained. In recounting her grandmother's move from the deep South of the U.S. to Los Angeles, California, Angelou (1997) marvels at Momma's adjustments to her new life:

> Since I was enchanted with the creation of my own world, years had to pass before I reflected on Momma's remarkable adjustment to that foreign life. An old Southern Negro woman who had lived her life under the left breast of her community learned to deal with white landlords, Mexican neighbors and Negro strangers. She shopped in supermarkets larger than the town she came from. She dealt with accents that must have struck jarringly on her ears. She, who had never been more than fifty miles from her birthplace, learned to traverse the maze of Spanish-named streets in that enigma that is Los Angeles. (p. 197)

Angelou also depicts the importance of intergenerational relationships and the oral storytelling tradition in African American culture. She serves as the griot[6] for her family, passing down its history to future generations and contributing to the rich landscape of the African American story.

Analytical-Interpretive

The second typology mentioned is Analytical-Interpretive, most often used in the social sciences. This is where the writer uses narrative as a spearhead to situate oneself within and analyze a particular issue. Smagorinsky (2011), for example, uses autoethnography to challenge and question preconceived, established notions of mental health. When he could not finish a conference talk for which he was well prepared, he asked a student to take over, which was "an absolutely ridiculous request given her utter lack of preparation" (p. 1703). He then left the room and collapsed on the floor, heart pounding, gasping for breath. He was eventually given a medical diagnosis of generalized anxiety disorder, Asperger's syndrome, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), and other conditions. His internal struggles helped him understand the behavior and subsequent diagnosis of his daughter, as well as the nature of genetically linked mental illness. Within academia, he questions how research studies can suggest that university teaching is "low stress," opening a dialogue on mental illness in the academy and a reconsideration of what it is to be "normal."

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[6] Amadi (2018) writes that "[b]y definition, a griot is a member of a hereditary caste among the peoples of West Africa whose function is to keep an oral history of the tribe or village and to entertain with stories, poems, songs, dances, etc." (para. 1). He also writes that "[a]ll of us writers who are obsessed with the history of our people today are griots in our own respects…" (para. 9).

Confessional-Emotive

Chang (2008) describes Confessional-Emotive autoethnography as a method in which the researcher is "free to expose confusion, problems, and dilemmas in life. Personal agonies, usually hidden from public view, are often [the] subjects [of this writing]" (p. 145). This typology is often criticized as self-indulgent, though it is the potential connection to readers that can validate the pouring out of one's personal experiences without the added connection to a wider research agenda. Exemplifying this typology, Adams (2014) shares four examples of relationship talk that "illustrate post-coming out complications" (p. 62) within his family after revealing his homosexuality. He then connects each story to the impact it had on his personal relationships. Adams (2014) provides rich description of each scene, detailing his reactions and reflections. The joy of release and the lingering pain of those conversations reflect the broader implications of the aftereffects of coming out.

Imaginative-Creative

For Chang (2008), the Imaginative-Creative typology is the "boldest" of the four typologies, whose only limit is the imagination of the researcher. Arts-based, creative techniques, such as fiction, drama, performance, and poetry are the driving forces to "breath creative energy into a portion or the entirety of their autoethnographies" (p. 148). Using poetry as a vehicle, and with titles such as "Breathing my PhD" and "Publish or Perish," Redman-MacLaren (2015) uses creative autoethnographic methods to "explore [her] fear of "non-production", [her] relationship with the Ph.D., transitions and relationships following fieldwork in Papua New Guinea, and [her] fear of being an academic imposter" (p. 207). She suggests that "qualitative researchers are…open to inhabiting spaces between the arts and social sciences, including the use of poetry, as an avenue for expressing research methods and findings" (p. 207) and that artistic expression

as data can have a profound effect on research and scholarship. Though at times chided as being self-centered or not engaging sufficiently in theory, methods, and analysis, this and other creative autoethnographies grab the reader's attention to social dilemmas and infuse new life into the process of academic research, offering innovative ways of contributing to the public and scientific good (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2018).

Criteria of Arts-Based Research

While Chang (2008) offers a foundation upon which to define and craft autoethnographic works, Cahnmann-Taylor and Siegesmund (2008; 2018) have steadily built and continue to frame the role of creative inquiry in the social sciences, specifically in the field of education, using the concept of *scholartistry* (Neilsen, 1998) to engage both emerging and established researchers in the practices and praxis of arts-based educational inquiry. The collections of works within each of these editions show the evolution of a field that has reshaped the way we report and analyze research data and offer scholars who identify and engage as artists a place to merge their research and creative pursuits.

Cahnmann-Taylor (2018) asserts that the postmodern turn in qualitative research "has left many arts-based researchers with great confusion regarding what, if any, method can be used to understand or serve any group of 'not me' individuals" (p. 248), and offers four principles to guide readers through the arts-based research (ABR) process, which are useful to becoming a *scholartist*:

- The Principle of Subjectivity and Public Good
- The Principle of Attribution and Ethical Good
- The Principle of Impact and Aesthetic Good
- The Principle of Translation to Scientific Good (p. 247)

Just as more traditional forms of ethnography led to a turn to scholars employing the self, adding their personal stories to the collective voice, artist-educators use their creative voice, employing

self-study and autoethnographic methods to explore their place in the larger community. For Cahnmann-Taylor, "[h]igh-quality ABR matters when a clear reference is made outside the self, even (and especially when) the subject of the research is, in fact, the self" (p. 249). The four principles allow researchers to explore their creativity in a way that is relevant and validating, carefully avoiding the potential pitfalls of self-indulgence for which the field has often faced criticism.

The Principle of Subjectivity and Public Good

Cahnmann-Taylor makes clear that the public good is paramount in ABR. The artist-educator must think beyond themselves when sharing their personal art, contributing thereby to an educational concern that is relevant to teachers, students, stakeholders, and the wider community. Included in this collection is the poetic autoethnography of Zhang (2018), a Chinese graduate student who became a mother during her PhD journey. Within her featured collection, "Pregnancy Stories of a Chinese PhD Student in the US," for example, her poetry bridges the personal to the public as she sees connections between the growth in her body and her studies:

> *Week 30: Antenatal Education*
>
> No music.
> No story.
> You use Bakhtinian dialogism
> to babble with Vygotsky.
> You make me feel less guilty
> to sleep too much.
> We catch up on the papers,
> and celebrate co-authorship.
> You kick a rhythm in class discussion,
> and draw a hill inside my belly.
> I know you love the professor's voice
> and art-based inquires.
>
> (p. 79)

As an "international" student carrying a child in Western society, paired with her cultural understandings of motherhood vs. career expectations in China, Zhang navigates her experiences through poetic self-data, successfully using creative autoethnography to contribute to the research and experiences of immigrant maternal experiences within the US healthcare system and academia. As a contribution to the public good, Zhang gives voice to international graduate student mothers who are marginalized for their ways of knowing about mothering and gives them the language to communicate with school administrators and professors, health care workers, and their own families.

The Principle of Attribution and Ethical Good

Scholartists juggle verifiable, ethically collected data with creativity in a way that can blur the lines between researcher and participant. Other scholars might question to whom the work belongs, and whom it concerns. Is it ethical, for example, to take the words of an interview participant and convert it into poetry, or lines in a screenplay? ABR must account for this through attributing the voices of contributors to their stories with "[written] descriptions of process, changing fonts for different voices, footnote citations, coauthorship and/or acknowledgement" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2018, p. 251). Some of the poems and prose in Cahnmann-Taylor's (2016) poetry collection *Imperfect Tense* lean towards autoethnography, with the poet-scholar reflecting on the trials of being a language teacher, learner, and mother. Others resulted from ethnographic field work: interviews with second-language learners of Spanish in Oaxaca, Mexico. For example, speaking to an African American man, Warner (all names are pseudonyms), living and learning in Oaxaca, his words of despair and release are recorded through prose poetry:

> One day I looked up and it was like: I'm broke, my Spanish is not advancing the way I would've thought, I'm hungry. You know, am I gonna spring for this little *tortilla*

> *española* or am I just gonna drink some water for dinner? That's how I ended up in Mexico. They just walk up to you all the time and have conversations with you. I felt rich! I could eat all the tacos I wanted! I ended up coming back to Oaxaca every summer for 19 years and then I moved here…I love this place. It's a great place for Black people to be. (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2018, p. 29)

The process of when and how to inject one's creative style into the words of this research participant is not taken lightly, and this section captures the fear and eventual freedom that one African American man experienced living outside of his home country. In each of these prose poems, the researcher takes a step back, allowing the voices of her participants to exercise their own agency within creative transcriptions (see Gottlieb, 2018 for an interview with Cahnmann-Taylor).

The Principle of Impact and Aesthetic Good

Cahnmann-Taylor (2018) notes that "[w]hat is considered as aesthetically and educationally 'good' and/or what will have 'impact' are fluid and subject to power dynamics and other aspects of social circumstance at any given time" (p. 252). Arts-based research must tend to both the craft as well as the research. It is up to the audience, however, to determine the quality of the craft used to bring research topics to life. The authors suggest that the art is research itself, and the researcher must charge herself with the task of immersing, studying, and collaborating in the chosen art with the data collected, the interviews recorded, and the voices delivered through poetry, prose, and performance. As ABR evolves, so does the work of those who engage its practice. Parker (Parker & Harman, 2017), a Hip Hop artist, activist, and scholar, focused their study on a fellow artist who uses his musicianship and African American Vernacular English (AAVE) to raise awareness of community issues in his native Athens, Georgia. Including their own story of growing up Black in a suburban area where they did not claim AAVE as a home variety, Parker discusses "how young Hip Hoppers negotiate

relationships linguistically [as] a powerful place to challenge deficit positioning of the art of African American youth" (p. 5). They identify linguistic resources used for self-appraisal and negotiating status in the community and among fellow artists. Parker and Harman's work exemplifies aesthetic good in ABR as lyrics are presented to showcase the artistry of Hip Hop musicians as they dialogue with the social world, resisting misrepresentation and pushing for recognition.

The Principle of Translation to Scientific Good

Bringing in and validating the arts in the social sciences is the fourth principle of ABR. How to synthesize what, from the outside, might seem an impossible feat is what arts-based researchers are determined to achieve. Among many poignant questions raised is "How does ABR matter to educators, social science colleagues, and policy makers if we discard the empirical" (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2018, p. 255)? Scholartists cannot discard the term nor the act of "research," but instead can bring the arts to the social sciences to introduce new perspectives and means of analyzing and presenting data that is accessible beyond the academic community. Just as a curator carefully considers how patrons and the community will benefit when bringing art to the masses, the public, ethical, aesthetic, and scientific good must be mutually considered and tended to as ABR practitioners do the work of scholartistry. The questions then become how can a scholar's own lived experiences abide by principles of participant and public good (the self & others) and how does the self's story become aesthetically good and scientifically relevant?

Because I am a poet in addition to a researcher (S. Benson, 2003; Cahnmann et al. 2019), creative writing inspired by arts-based inquiry (e.g., Cahnmann-Taylor & Siegesmund, 2018) is vital to the autoethnographic memoir that follows and connects my personal experience with the larger experience of language education in urban spaces. Also included are personal narrative,

prose, emails, and social media posts. Peshkin (1988) suggests that researchers actively seek out their subjectivities throughout the research process and appreciate the Subjective "I" as “virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers’ making a distinctive contribution” (p. 18) to their field. Here, I tell my story of becoming a bilingual Black woman and mother. Glimpses of my relationship with and the hopes and dreams I have for my children—expressed through journal entries and social media posts—are interspersed organically as I laid them out on paper. Three sections: *Refugio* (“Refuge”), *Intercambio* (“Exchange”), and “In Other[ed] News” begin with poems of the same name and forge through my family’s bilingual journeys and as I mother amid a global pandemic and a reckoning with racism and violence towards people of color. I am inspired by the works of Giles (2010), Zhang (2018), Boylorn (2016), Cahnmann-Taylor (2016), Matias (2010), Olivas (2009), and other scholars, mothers, motherscholars, researchers, poets, and bilingual educators, whose creations move me to birth, in my own way, autoethnographic memoir as arts-based inquiry.

***

Refugio

Encontré refugio en una lengua
extranjera—
mi media
mitad.

Sumergida e inmersa,
dominada por un autoinfligido y apasionado
miedo

Esperaba el sueño,
el de los bilingües.

I found refuge in a foreign language—
my better

half.

Submerged and immersed,
dominated by a self-inflicted, impassioned
fear

I held out hope for it,
the bilingual's dream.

(Nuruddin, n.d. unpublished poem)

My family both supported and deterred me from becoming fluent in Spanish. My father, for example, an African American man raised in the pre-Civil Rights era, became interested in languages after being drafted into the U.S. Army, and, later, through his travels as a businessman. He passed down to my sister and me a deep desire to become more aware of the diverse people and cultures around me. Growing up, "hello," "goodbye," "bless you," and "thank you" might be spoken in Japanese or German, and every night we were sent to bed after repeating "good night, *buenas noches*, *gute nacht*." Through him, we understood from a very young age that there was a vast world outside our suburban Baltimore reality, but there was little opportunity for us to connect with it until we were older. The parental support was there, but "foreign" language study did not begin until junior high/middle school.

La casa

I had to have been around eleven when he came home with a bilingual dictionary. He handed it to me, and I marveled, wondering what on earth I was supposed to do with it. He explained that since I had become obsessed with Spanish-language pop music, maybe it would be a good idea to use it to figure out the lyrics. I remember my eyes growing larger with the thought that I could finally decipher these songs that no one else I knew listened to. No one: not in my family, school, or anywhere else on the planet, as far as I was concerned. Once I had it in

my hands, it was like having the key to a treasure map. It opened a door, and I gladly walked through, crossing a contact zone (M. L. Pratt, 1991) of language and culture. I spent my days locked in my room, rifling through the pages of that yellow dictionary, all the while with an ear to the speakers of my record player. I savored and clung to every word, keeping notebooks in which I attempted to write the lyrics of songs I heard on the radio, and translated them from the liner notes of my albums. I collected the crinkled pages of *El Nuevo Día* and *El Vocero* that protected the pop group souvenirs I would order from a warehouse in Santurce, Puerto Rico, flattened them out and pieced them back together, reading the articles to decrypt every word. Over time I began to sing the songs, trying my best to conjugate verbs using the lists in my dictionary. I took notes in the margins, underlined important words, and folded over pages with phrases I needed to review.

El colegio

In high school I was a star language student, excelling in both languages, but after our stern, amazing French teacher left the school, I found myself disgruntled with the French program. Much to my present regret, I decided to focus only on Spanish. During this time, I further connected with music through Señora Cádiz who, to introduce me to the world beyond Spanish bubblegum pop, lent me folk music cassettes. I listened to the music of South American activists and *trovadores*, among them Mercedes Sosa and Violetta Parra, pondering with my naïve, Black suburban mind the transformative nature of protest music. With permission from my parents, Señora Cádiz and her husband took me and another star student from my class to a Spanish tapas restaurant, then we went to see Sosa perform live. Seeing *La Negra*, as she was called, her bold presence, deep, black hair, wide-bodied, barefoot, waving a white handkerchief of peace and

resistance, was life-altering. I never appreciated the power of music, and the power of second language education, more than in that moment.

Señora Cádiz's classroom in that small suburban town and the experiences she offered me miles away from home saved me from judgement directed toward me for my non-conformity to norms of blackness. It wasn't "normal" in my neighborhood to be my kind of Black girl. I played tennis, winning tournaments where I was one of usually two Black girls competing, the other being my older sister. Being Black and bilingual was not common or valued in my community at the time, so I was often accused of talking and acting white (Ogbu, 2004). I was different, and that difference made me a very independent, but lonesome teenager. My closest friends were pen pals who I wrote to as often as possible, sharing our similar interests and feelings of seclusion. It was an ingroup that was entirely based on these feelings rather than race.

These memories of my younger years, from eleven years of age until just before I graduated college, were the foundations of my becoming bilingual. Living in suburbia as one of only a handful of Black families, I was caught in an identity struggle between my Black and white schoolmate. For my white friends, I was just Black enough, but not enough for my Black friends, who insisted that I talked, dressed, and acted "white" (Ogbu, 2004). I recall a white friend of mine telling me how she liked me because I was "Black," but not "Black, Black." In a study of Black children growing up in suburban areas of the U.S., Jones (2018) argues that

> African American children who are being raised in predominantly White, middle-class, suburban environments, who have no other frame of reference to quantify that identity, face some special challenges presented by the school environments of those suburban areas. (p. 35)

Adding to the conundrum was my love of Spanish pop music, cultivated through the only Spanish-language resource I had: my television. This made my identity even more complicated,

as I felt very connected to the language and did not have to act white or Black in Señora Cádiz's classroom. I could just be me, whatever that was.

La universidad

Even with a clear interest in and passion for languages, my family did not encourage me to study languages in college. The only person who did was Mrs. Cádiz. I didn't listen. Instead, to please my parents, I majored in Sociology. However, I excelled in my Spanish courses and they occupied most of my academic attention. A last-minute decision during junior year to add Spanish as a second major kept my parents happy—they could continue to tell folks that their daughter was going to be a sociologist, instead of pursuing something my mother thought would not get me a job. That decision raised both my grade point average and my spirits. But my personal life was like high school. I didn't talk, act, or wear my hair the way my Black peers at college expected, and I was not well-liked by them because I hung with the Gen X (Coupland, 1991) kids, many of whom were white and wealthy. Some of the Black students murmured insults as I passed them on campus and in the dining halls. In addition to many other insults, I was called a "traitor" and a "wanna-be-white-girl." Some of the white students I encountered insisted that I "got in" to the university through Affirmative Action, and even a friend thought it was humorous to call me his "token Black friend."

It was an isolating experience, but I was comforted by my love of Spanish language and culture. I also was fortunate to have a supportive Spanish professor, Dr. Castellano, who fueled my love of short story and poetry, and I spent many nights reading Pablo Neruda and Gabriela Mistral and diving into the magical realism of Horacio Quiroga, Gabriel García Márquez, and Julio Cortázar. Anyone who knows me from back then remembers me doing my homework and snacking on ketchup-covered cheese fries in the smoking section of the Connelly Student Center.

However, I was terrified of speaking Spanish, and for that matter, had very little to say in my other courses. I participated enough so as not to fade into the background; though, when you are the only Black student in class, hiding is not an option.

Just before graduation, and having never boarded an airplane, Dr. Castellano convinced me to travel to his native Chile to study abroad. However, I had no money and no support from my family, financially or otherwise. In fact, my father told me "You don't need *to go*." It was as if he and the study abroad director had hatched a plan together. The director, an older, white gentleman, seemed to think I didn't deserve to go, and asked, "Why do you *need* to go to Chile." It took every hustle for credit cards, loans, and grants to get me there, but I went. There I found a beautiful host family who loved me like their own daughter and sister. The translingual and transcultural experience (De Costa et al., 2017) with my Chilean family was one that changed my life. With every day—from landing in Santiago, to being greeted by my Chilean family, then tearfully leaving them behind—I came into self. The music that filled my ears on the street, blaring from buses and floating out of smoky cantinas reminded me that I was no longer trapped in my bedroom in Baltimore. For the first time in my life—a hemisphere away—something outside of home felt like home.

Intercambio

I opened it.
Its white exterior revealed a brown soul,
almost empty.

Name and destination printed in dot matrix letters:
New York to Miami. Miami to Santiago.
I remembered the voices

"<u>You</u> need to go!"

"Why do you <u>need</u> to go?"

"You don't need <u>to go</u>."

Tears fell to wood needy of shine
having been drenched by
tiny creeks
weaving their way
from cracked ceiling to floorboards.

You must care for your home.

Crying hopefully
I prayed for the equator to reverse my course.

I exchanged myself for her.
She spoke, *she* sang, *she* danced.
She lived sheltered from the rain.

Santiago to Miami. Miami to New York.

I know now why you tried to keep me here,
trapped in your image.

You knew I would never return.

The woman I became after boarding that plane fuels the hopes I now have for my own Black children, and, perhaps to a fault, I encourage them to pursue Spanish and other languages, knowing what it did for me. I am reminded of McCullough (2010) and her husband, who enrolled her child in Spanish immersion. Some of the reactions from family and friends were

negative and unsupportive, but she still pursued this education for her daughter because she knew the benefits. My children are not insulted for the languages they speak, and I watch them blossom in their own identities without criticism from their friends. My daughter, for example, listens to boy bands from South Korea. She has found a community of "stans," as they call themselves, and she is comfortable in her Blackness. In many ways, I envy her freedom to be who she is, whereas I hid myself because of the ridicule I received in school.

Mis hijes

Dual language immersion as a natural way of learning for my children began with an email from our elementary school back in late 2013-early 2014. All incoming kindergartners would have the opportunity to participate in a Spanish-English, dual language immersion program. As a Spanish instructor at a predominantly African American university, I was floored that our predominantly AA elementary school would offer such a program, knowing what I have always known about the way "they" think about "us." Our principal, though, was a Spanish teacher himself and strongly advocated for the program to be introduced at our school. Though my daughter, Ife, who was already a second grader at the school, would not be able to benefit from the program, I made sure to apply for my oldest son Foré, who was entering kindergarten, to attend. Excited as I was, I sent a letter to Dr. Gregory, informing him that I was a university instructor of Spanish and interested not only in volunteering with the program, but possibly teaching:

> *Buenas tardes, Dr. Gregory:*
>
> *My daughter Ife is a student in Ms. Laney's 2nd grade class. During our conference yesterday evening, [she] told me that she mentioned to you that I am a Spanish instructor...I am excited that my son, who will be in Kindergarten this year, might be able to participate in the program, and I was also interested in helping with the program in some capacity… My son and I will be present at the information session next week. I will be sure to greet you then* (personal email correspondence, February 27, 2014)

The following week, I brought my then five-year-old to the orientation session to meet Dr. Gregory

and learn more about the program. In addition to greeting him, I met Mr. Springer, the foreign language coordinator for the county. I had just begun my graduate research studies; looking down at my son, he said "study him," as my son looked up wondering what that meant. Most of his studies have been smooth, and his teachers have been wonderful, caring, and respectful of students and their families.

It is comforting to know that Spanish is a normal part of my sons' education, and that my daughter has inherited a love for languages that mimics my own, but with many more opportunities to learn and grow than I could have ever imagined. They don't know another way to learn, and that makes me smile. I can attest that despite childish teasing, insults, and doubts cast upon me, I succeeded in becoming bilingual. The experiences and awareness I have gained as a result I can only hope to pass on to all four of my children, including my daughter, who cannot currently benefit from DLI, but instead from a parent who knows that the world, as oppressive to certain populations as it can be, can also open to you when you are bilingual.

Still, there will be instances when I must protect my children. I attended an orientation night with Foré as he was entering 4th grade. His Spanish teacher was also an L1 Spanish speaker. Excitedly, I spoke with him in Spanish, but when he noticed my accent and I told him that I studied in Puerto Rico, he turned to another parent and proceeded to tell her how Puerto Ricans don't pronounce all the letters in words. "We call that 'lazy tongue,'" he said. I was mortified by this microaggression (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Pierce, et al. 1977), but I buried my feelings inside, knowing that this was not the first, and certainly would not be the last time I would experience this. Most of the teachers, however, have been wonderful, caring, and respectful of students and their families. Foré is now a 7th-grade middle-schooler and as I conclude my studies in 2022, he attends the middle school DLI program, designed specifically for incoming DLI students. His

current teacher, who is incredibly caring and holds high expectations of the students and provides more than high-quality instruction, is Puerto Rican. His two younger brothers continue in the elementary DLI program.

So, here we are, 2022. We are two years into a global pandemic, during which many African Americans, Latinx/és, and Asians in the U.S. have been the targets of heinous violence (Anand & Hsu, 2020; Foster-Frau, 2021; Lebron, 2017). What is a mother to do when raising four Black children who, though still young, are old enough to be the targets of unarmed police violence? Foré just turned thirteen. He is one year older than Tamir Rice was when he was murdered for playing with a toy gun in a recreation center. Recently, I saw Foré playing with an orange water pistol in the house and my heart stopped. I felt as though a bullet was going to ripple through the house and into his body. But he was home and safe. I try to keep it that way.

Bryan (2021) discusses Rice and other Black boys who are policed for playing. Calling it *Black PlayCrit,* the author argues that "[i]n addition to their physical murders, Black boys are spiritually murdered during play. Spirit murdering [a term coined by Love (2016)] is the psychological trauma associated with being Black in a White supremacist society" (p. 745). Despite the sheer pride I feel when Ife speaks AAVE loud and proud, the alarming rate at which Foré is growing and maturing, and the pure joy in my younger boy's smiles, I worry about the murdering of their spirits and bodies. As a Black mother, you can feel the eyes on your children, that they are getting to the age where "cute" becomes "suspicious." I worry about the outside, and the outsider. I worry about the othering that becomes fatal.

***

In Other[ed] News

I do not click love,
like, sad, or angry

when I read that another
has been killed,

but scroll along and sigh,
afraid that too much time pondering

will somehow mark them
unsafe.

My young Black children,
who though safely

walk to the bus stop,
are never safe.

A moment of rage against Black skin
might forever take them from me.

Do you lie awake,
and imagine they are gone,

lying under a sheet,
or swinging in the Georgia breeze?

It was suicide,
or an accident.

They were running away,
or furnished what looked like a weapon.

I imagine we would have to prove that
“he was such a good boy,”

or “she was such a good girl,”
while they snigger and joke

“oh, yeah, dey ain’t do nuttin’”
with hahas that enrage my soul:

I want to think they are a slip of the wrist,
or a stuck key,

not a giggling troll who finds
Black death amusing.

It is not my goal to be inactive,
to lack emotion,

but I am not a keyboard activist.
My activism lies in loving

my babies, and
praying for them all.

But I do fear,
fear that the heartbroken mother

will someday be me
and

you will scroll along my sister mother and sigh,
afraid that too much time pondering

will somehow mark yours
unsafe.

Education is important to me, and I know how our Black boys are funneled from school playgrounds to prisons (Bryan, 2020). One way, perhaps superficially, that I combat this is by valuing grades. I do not value the grades themselves, but what they represent as far as achievement. During the "pandemic school year," 2020-2021, my children studied virtually. Foré and Bemi did not "pass" their core classes. The school promoted them and offered an optional summer enrichment program to help them get ready for the new school year. In a journal entry, I pondered what that meant for our family, and still, isolated in quarantine, I feared for my children:

> *Tunji got a 92 on his math test today. I'm pretty sure the tests are in English, but I was just happy he signed on time and actually finished it. But for me, I am tired of this year, this pandemic, and the constant murders of Black, Brown, and Asian people. It's made*

> *me not want to leave my house. I am worried for myself, my kids, and their dad.*
>
> *In other news, Foré and Bemi are going to summer school. The work they did produce was outstanding, but there was so little of it between the video games, Covid, and the dog. I'm not going to lie, having those distractions help me as well, as the pandemic has thrust me into single motherhood both physically and financially. It is all-consuming. Who cares about school? How to focus on regular work when the world feels it is collapsing all around us…*
>
> (journal entry, April, 30, 2021)

***

In a world where Black death is entertainment and fodder (Campbell & Valera, 2020; Moody-Ramirez et al., 2021), my household is a counternarrative to society's expectations, raising its relevance and strengthening connections to research on identity constructs and bilingual and second-language education (Anderson, 2015; Anya, 2011; Kubota et al., 2009; Malinen & Roberts-Jeffers, 2021). Most of all, my home is a refuge, *un refugio*, for the Black lives that matter within. As a Black, Spanish-English bilingual language educator and mother of four young, Black, emerging multilingual children, I consider how my journey affects the way I encourage and educate them, and marvel at the joy and healing that my children bring to me and each other.

My daughter is almost sixteen and listens to K-Pop just as I listened to Spanish pop music. She studies the lyrics, the dances, and has a group of friends who support her in her own brand of Black girl uniqueness. In a study of Black girl identities, Toliver's (2022) work reminds me of my daughter's unapologetic ways being:

> Through their talk, the girls challenged notions of acting white, or acting a color, because they know and embrace their Black identity while also embracing a love of pop music. They refused to reject music they like just because society has constructed pop music as a genre for white consumption. (p. 11)

This is also me: weird, Black, bilingual, mother, poet, unique. I have learned to live without apology, but I had to wade through murky waters to get there. Every now and then—much to my

children's chagrin—I dust off the old Spanish pop albums to remind them of the possibilities. My children's growth, both personally and linguistically, is a source of healing for me, and, as their mother, I try to provide them all the support I can muster considering the lessons I have learned. Concern for their future continues: as of this writing, we are still living during a global pandemic and Black lives are still being taken too soon. Within all our joy, I am still keenly aware of what is all around us:

> *Andrew Brown Jr. was buried today, live on all the news programs* [Li, 2021]. *I can't watch these. Why are our deaths entertainment? From the concrete to the casket, black lives are constantly under surveillance. But ever since my African ancestors were brought here that's been the case. So concerned that we would rebel, so worried that we were not praying to their god, so they planted spies in the Black church, let drugs ravage our communities to see what it would do to us. I don't let my kids watch this stuff. We rarely discuss it. I don't have "the talk" with them often, but I think they are aware of what is going on around them. I watched the George Floyd trial but refuse to see the recording. I saw the Eric Garner video, the one they don't show anymore. Cops pretending that he was not dead on the sidewalk before they loaded him in the ambulance. But what will our schools, or a DLI program, do to educate our children about this? We do live in the suburbs after all. Who comes here to remember?*
>
> (journal entry, May 3, 2021)

Hayano (1979) offers prospects and potential (p. 103) for the future of authoethnography. He saw the possibility for diverse concepts and epistemologies, thoughtful consideration of ethical and moral issues concerning human subjects as data, the opportunity for those from minoritized, neglected communities to have and raise their voices, and its potential for meaningful change. Reading and experiencing the autoethnographies of others can inspire self-reflection and analysis. Autoethnographic poetry, prose, performance, music, and dance give voice to intersecting positionalities and life experiences that inform research in unique ways. Autoethnography can be as rigorous as it can be transformative, while increasing awareness of diverse and critical issues.

And so, I return to the question: *How do the experiences of a Black bilingual researcher of multiple, intersecting identities, inform her motherhood and help her navigate through the joy*

and concern she has for her Black children? For me, I am informed by my journey of bilingualism, one that freed me from taking sides and allowed me to find myself in the in-between. The microaggressions I have lived through inform how I mother, as I want my children to create their own identities that are unique to their ways of being and knowing. Though I harbor real fears for my children, I choose joy as my refuge, and attempt to create a space for my children to grow fearless, strong in spirit, successful, bilingual, and beyond.

CHAPTER 3

"I WANTED MY KIDS TO SPEAK MORE AND SPEAK BETTER": AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFROLATINX/É FAMILY EXPERIENCES IN A SOUTHEASTERN U.S. SPANISH-ENGLISH DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM

Dual Language Immersion programs (DLI) have grown exponentially over the last several decades (Center for Applied Linguistics, 2016). During this time, researchers have explored program models, reported on the benefits of these programs for the students they serve, and voiced concern about what communities are given access to them (Bauer, et al., 2020; Burns, 2017; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Esposito, 2020; Gómez, et al., 2005). One of the fundamental factors of DLI program success, beyond test scores and other in-school factors, is continued interest on the part of parents and guardians (Bauer & Harrison, 2015; Saucedo, 1997).

In this paper, I present the *counterstories* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) of African American and AfroLatinx/é parents of DLI students in a suburban elementary school in the southeastern U.S. Counterstories are the experiences of Blacks, Indigenous, and all people of color (BIPOC) as told in their words and voices. The collective of experiences gathered in this work build a counternarrative (Aboshiha, 2015; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002) that pushes back against hegemonic, dominant ideologies in bilingual education to discover: 1) what kinds of support African American and AfroLatinx/é parents give their children to achieve success in a bilingual program; 2) how African American and AfroLatinx/é parents describe their interests, motivations, and concerns about their children's DLI enrollment;

and 3) what the opinions are of African American and AfroLatinx/é parents on the deficit perspectives of African Americans in bilingual education. I use Critical Race Theory (Bell, 1995, 2015; Crenshaw et. al, 1995; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017) to challenge the deficit-framing that suggests African Americans are less motivated or incapable compared to other groups to master a second language (Wiese, 2004), that they are not as involved as their white counterparts in their children's education (Greene, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002), and that non-standardized home language varieties impede their learning an additional language (Gross, 2016; Wiese, 2004). My research questions were as follows:

1. *What are the language experiences of African American (AA) DLI parents/guardians?*

2. *How do AA parents/guardians describe their decisions to enroll their AA elementary school child/children in a Spanish-English dual language immersion program?*

3. *How do AA parents perceive and respond to deficit institutional orientations toward African Americans' potential for second language acquisition?*

From the analysis of interview data, findings from this study expand our understanding of the African American and AfroLatinx/é experiences and presence within the U.S. bilingual education landscape and point toward how programs can continue to flourish in urban-suburban settings. I argue that African American- and Afrolatinx/é-serving bilingual education programs should be founded upon research and practice that center their rich histories and the cultural and linguistic capital they inherit from their home cultures and language varieties. To do this, an overview of socio-political movements that influence how racialized communities are viewed and formally educated is a critical starting point.

Theoretical Framework

Rising out of the civil rights movement of the 1960s and evolving from Critical Legal Studies (CLS), Critical Race Theory (CRT) was founded by "a collection of activists and scholars interested in studying and transforming the relationship between race, racism, and power" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 25). Prominent scholar and law professor Derrick Bell (1980; 1995), inspired by philosophies and theories from the Americas, Europe, and through Pan-Africanism, was also deeply influenced by Paulo Freire's (1970) progressive approach to pedagogy, which encourages teaching for social justice within a non-hierarchical, participatory classroom community (Lynn, et al., 2013; Radice, 2012). His framework established the concept of *racial realism* (1980), where beyond the social construction of race, educators and activists must look to the real, tangible effects of racism to push for change. Also established was *interest convergence* (1995) theory, which recognizes that for those who value and promote whiteness as supreme, policies and practices benefitting people of color are only worthy when they meet the interests of whites. Bell's work in turn inspired many of his colleagues and students, and he is often credited with being the founding father of CRT.

With a "deep dissatisfaction with traditional civil rights discourses" (Crenshaw, et al., 1995, p. xiv), and building on Critical Legal Studies (CLS), radical feminism, and the civil rights movement, CRT authors such as Bell, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Alan Freeman, and Richard Delgado met with other like-minded scholars in conferences, workshops, and on panels. With contributions from "a broad representation of students, activists, and scholars from a wide variety of disciplines" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 26), they developed five tenets that challenged the hegemonic practice of racism, while establishing that it is "a normal fact of daily life in U.S. society that is neither aberrant nor rare" (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 4). The tenets are as follows:

(1) *Ordinariness.* "[R]acism is ordinary, not aberrational…[and] difficult to address because it is not acknowledged…"
(2) *Interest Convergence.* "[R]acism advances the interest of both white elites…and working-class whites…large segments of society that have little incentive to eradicate it."
(3) *The Social Construction of Race*. "[R]ace and races are products of social thought and relations…they correspond to no biological or genetic reality…"
(4) *Intersectionality and Antiessentialism*. "No person has a single, easily stated, unitary identity."
(5) *Counterstories/Counternarratives.* "[B]ecause of their unique experiences with oppression, [minoritized] writers and thinkers may be able to communicate…matters that whites are unlikely to know."
(Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 8-11)

What is both unique and controversial about CRT is its foundation on the counterstories and testimonies of those who encounter racism and other forms of oppression, which can be filled with emotion and often not grounded in measurable proof. It is in the collective revealing of these counterstories, however, that marginalized perspectives are re-centered and hold dominant discourses to account for the subjugation and oppression they cause. In education, CRT has recently been hijacked by conservative politicians who favor fake news and half-truths, and by some so-called educators who want the status quo to return to curricula, all to whitewash and gloss over the oppressive practices that occur every day in our classrooms. Whitewashing can be defined as "a form of racial oppression in which those who create 'master narratives' construct them to affirm their own understanding of another's race, cultural practices, and experiences" (Lewis Ellison, 2022, p. 87). The "master narrative" is deconstructed, dismantled, and rebuilt into a counternarrative that invites the voices of the marginalized to be shared, celebrated, and valued.

Taylor et al. (2009) affirm that "CRT scholars often use storytelling, narrative, autobiography, and parable as a way to expose and challenge social constructions of race" (p. 7). Racism can be as blatant as it can be subtle, and no less damaging when manifested as the latter.

Counterstorytelling helps explain and bring awareness to modern *microaggressions* (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Pierce, et al. 1977) and *colorblindness* (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) that either replace or reside alongside overt forms of racism. *Microaggressions* are defined as "one of those many sudden, stunning, or dispiriting transactions that mar the days of women and folks of color" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, p. 24). Helping lay the foundation for the term, Pierce et al. (1977) provide a theory of racism as it is perpetuated in media language images, affirming that "TV is but one of a plethora of sources which spew out microaggressions through offensive mechanisms to blacks…such microaggressions are daily occurrences in newspapers, radio programs, films, billboards, subway posters, textbooks, statues, and so on" (p. 66). The authors found through studying television commercials that a disproportionate relationship is revealed between how women, men, whites, and African Americans are represented. African Americans and women in general were widely underrepresented, white men and white women were most often depicted in the most positive light, and Black men and Black women were often seen in subservient positions. The offensive mechanisms used by the media reflect and perpetuate how these groups are seen and treated in daily life, including in our classrooms.

An extension of microaggressions is *colorblindness* (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) a term grounded in the fundamental differences in positionality regarding racism. According to Bonilla-Silva, 2018), whites and people of color do not interpret the concept of racism in the same way, with the former generally equating racism with prejudice, and the latter tending to interpret it in ways that reflect its "systemic or institutionalized" nature (p. 8). As a result, where there is no outward, explicit act of racism, the tendency is to "rationalize minorities' contemporary status as the product of market dynamics, naturally occurring phenomena, and blacks' imputed cultural limitations" (p. 2). The effects of microaggressions and colorblindness are far-reaching, and CRT

researchers share counterstories and their analyses to bring these subtleties to light.

Lewis Ellison and Solomon (2019) note, "[f]or African American children and parents, counter-stories mean that their stories are no longer silenced by the assumptions of others; rather, their stories are used to examine other ways of knowing and understanding" (p. 224). After centuries of systemic and institutionalized discrimination inflicted upon racially, ethnically, and gender minoritized groups in the United States, and considering the current political and social climate here and on a global scale, a foundational theory that makes meaning of personal and community experiences with micro and macroaggressions had been much needed and long overdue. The following are examples that showcase the power of counterstorying the educational experiences of minoritized students and their families. With these stories, counternarratives are created, filling in the gaps made by historically racialized, cultural, and linguistic erasure. Counternarratives "reduce alienation for members of excluded groups, while offering opportunities for members of the majority group to meet them halfway" (Delgado & Stefancic, 2017, pp. 72-73). Collectively, counternarratives in education contribute to the whole truth of the U.S. experience, giving them their rightful place in the annals of history.

Counternarratives in Education

Counterstorytelling has been used effectively in research to pose questions about how minoritized people negotiate their identities within the U.S. educational system (Anberg-Espinoza, 2008; Boone, 2008; Lewis Ellison, 2017; McCullough & Reyes, 2018). Lewis Ellison (2017), for example, explored the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) through the stories of four "urban" African American mothers, within them "captur[ing] the diversity (dominance and marginalization) of their voices" (p. 10). The term "urban" is here defined as "geographical spaces that are not easily situated in larger cities, but also exist in suburban spaces" (p. 3).

Socioeconomic status alone does not define the term, and the mothers interviewed in this study are diverse in their marital statuses, job experiences, as well as incomes. Through this study, the author discovered a pattern, identifying four types of counterstories (status, creativity, validity/ethics, agreement with caution). She then analyzed each as they related to her participants' stories. Some of the concerns expressed by the mothers were how CCSS relate to students of color with learning disabilities; how CCSS promote expressions of creativity; how the political nature of CCSS affects students' overall success; and how CCSS affect teaching quality.

All the mothers—three of whom were also educators—expressed a deep desire for their children to succeed, which counters the deficit perspectives often found in the literature about urban African American parents and their level of involvement in their children's education (Greene, 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). The author concludes that the participants' counter-stories contribute to growing concerns about state standards and high-stakes testing, and "create a deeper dialogue about the educational outcomes and futures of [African American] children" (Lewis Ellison, 2017, p. 22). Counterstorying, then, is a powerful method to combat hegemonic narratives that minimize or erase the lived experiences of people of color. These dominant narratives plague many aspects of the U.S. education system, including world language and bilingual education programs.

In a powerful counternarrative of the experiences of families participating in bilingual education programs, McCullough (McCullough & Reyes, 2010) and her husband—who are both African American—enrolled their African American daughter Joyce Lynn (pseudonym) in a Spanish immersion Montessori pre-school program, with McCullough chronicling their experiences through journal entries. Their decision to enroll Joyce Lynn was met with "a mix of

reactions, from supportive and inquisitive to unquestionably negative" (p. 3). McCullough and her husband had "optimistically assumed that most people [they] knew would share [their] recognition of the social and academic advantages of being bilingual and the positive effects of an immersion program" (p. 3). However, McCullough found that she had to explain herself for choosing the program and the reasons this program might benefit Joyce Lynn, including the cultural awareness her daughter would gain from exposure to classmates whose first language was not English. She admits that she and her husband were concerned about their daughter being in the "linguistic minority" of the program, but reminded herself of the scholarship she had read (Collier & Thomas, 2000; Lindholm-Leary, 2005), which cited many positive outcomes of bilingual immersion programs. As a first language (L1) speaker of English, she felt limited because of a "lack of [Spanish] language proficiency" (p. 5), but also expressed bias toward the teacher, who spoke to the parents through a translator during one of the school's curriculum meetings:

> We went to Curriculum Night this evening. I was excited to learn more about their approach and the learning activities. Ms. Marta spoke Spanish throughout her entire presentation while the director translated. I am beginning to wonder if her English speaking skills are the reason she doesn't talk to me more during pick-up. There was no mention of their approach for the immersion classroom. I was quite disappointed. (p. 5)

The complexities of McCullough's identities as part of a traditionally minoritized community while also a member of the school's linguistic majority, paired with her daughter's experiences as an emerging bilingual, draw attention to the layered experiences of African American students in immersion classrooms and the African American parents who advocate for their children to participate in such programs.

Inspired by her experiences as an advanced student of Spanish in university classrooms where most students and teachers were white, and by research that shows low enrollments and

motivations among African American world language learners, Anya (2011) conducted an interview study of six African American university students, each of whom had mastered either French or Spanish. To define "mastery," the author states

> I defined [the] successful [second language] L2 learner as one who fulfilled at least two of the following criteria: (1) he or she had mastered a language other than his or her first, (2) he or she participated in a university language program at the advanced level of year 3 and above, and (3) he or she was enrolled in multiple college-level language courses with the intention of majoring/minoring in the field and/or spending an extended period of time abroad in a target language–speaking country to achieve fluency. (p. 451)

The study was framed by theories and research on learner diversity and identity in second language acquisition (P. Benson, 2004; Kubota, 2003; Kubota et al., 2009), and highlighted some of the few studies of African American students who pursue and continue world language study (Davis, 1992; Haj-Broussard, 2002; Talburt & Stewart, 1999). Home and school language experiences were analyzed to uncover what motivates African American students to continue language studies. Of the six students interviewed, five were planning to continue with more advanced studies. Anya found that the data collected was evidence of her initial hypothesis: "successful black college L2 learners have had positive formative experiences in which they felt a sense of investment, belonging, and engagement with others in a community of learners" (p. 457). Anya also pushes back against deficit theories that claim African American students are culturally and linguistically inferior and therefore unable to excel in language-based academic subjects (Dummett, 1984). This misguided notion of language ability continues to plague critical scholarship that seeks to center Black vernacular and experiences as assets, both generally and within the context of bilingual and multilingual education.

Deficit Perspectives in Education

The deficit perspective with regards to African American education and, more specifically, African Americans and bilingual education, influences systemic discrimination in

educational programs and policy. Hubbard (1980) discussed the exclusion of African Americans from high school "foreign" language programs, noting that "Black Americans" were "counseled out" of foreign language study (p. 76) as administrators believed that it would be a waste of time to educate Black students in a foreign language if they were not going to college or traveling abroad. Davis (1992) discusses a generations-long absence of sufficient research on African American performance and perspectives of university foreign language programs, reporting only six notable studies published between 1940 and 1991 (Clark & Harty, 1983; Clowney & Legee, 1979; Davis & Markham, 1991; LeBlanc, 1973; Miller, 1953; Nyabongo, 1946). While he also discusses long-standing deficit theories of African Americans' home language varieties, he observes a negative to positive shift in the attitudes of African American students toward foreign language study, spurred on by increased cultural awareness born from generations of parents who lived through the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s.

As for K-12 bilingual programs, the overwhelming absence of enrolled African American students is noted in Palmer's (2010) year-long ethnographic study of a second grade, urban elementary school dual-language "strand" program in northern California. Here, "strand" indicates that the school itself is not dual language, but that several dual language classes are offered, along with mainstream classes where instruction is given entirely in English. Drawing on Bell's (1980) theory of interest convergence in how members of dominant social groups value dual language programs that operate in minoritized communities, Palmer affirms that "[t]he student body [was] split almost evenly between African Americans, Latinos, and whites" (p. 95) at 30%, 38%, and 28%, respectively, but 45% of the population enrolled in the DLI program was white, middle-class students. Program administrators, therefore, artificially maintained an almost 50/50 classroom balance of Latinx/é L1 Spanish speakers and white, L1 speakers of English.

Only six students in the class were of African American descent, with one identifying as bi-racial. In addition to the active exclusion of African American L1 speakers of English, fourteen students representing a variety of non-Latinx/é, non-African American, and non-white American ethnicities, representing 4% of the schoolwide population, were excluded entirely from the program. Among them were Ethiopian, Sri Lankan, Japanese, and non-English-speaking European students. Thus, the dual language program did not reflect the true demographics of the school. Palmer calls the inclusion of African American children "controversial and challenging" (p. 95) as these students are trapped in a binary of which English-dominant white students and Spanish-dominant Latinx/é students represent the extremes. She states:

> When certain members of the school community bring up the possibility that racism, or a deficit orientation toward Black children, could be exacerbating the problem, teachers are unwilling to entertain these discomforting ideas. Yet, it is clear that at least some teachers maintain a belief that the African American children at the school are at the root of a serious problem of inequity, that their cultural and linguistic poverty renders them very challenging to teach and inappropriate for the dual-language program. (p. 109)

The study found that an underlying desire to recruit more white students to the school led to exclusionary tactics of faculty and administrators, who blocked African American students from reaping the benefits of the program. Palmer argues that deficit orientations towards the abilities of African Americans, too often labeled as "at-risk" (James, 2012), are among many reasons why dual language programs are not readily offered to them, regardless of their represented numbers in schools and communities. Faculty often used colorblind (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) phrases like "difficult to teach" to describe their interactions with African American students, contrasted with "easier to teach" students in the dual language classes. The interviews from the above study also focused on the attitudes of faculty and staff toward African American involvement. Some teachers criticized the level of parental support on the part of African American parents. On the administrative side, however, the principal of the school countered many of the deficit

perspectives of teachers, arguing against terms like “good, “strong,” and “elite,” used to describe the dual language students, their parents, and the program itself. Palmer (2010) reflects on this by stating

> Playing as they do on the mainstream stereotype of African American students as incompetent users and learners of language and in need of remedial, as opposed to enrichment, experiences, these attitudes among the staff also undermine black students’ academic efforts at the school in general. (p. 109)

The sole African American parent of a student in the DLI program spoke proudly of her child’s accomplishments and was happy overall with the program. However, community members and school personnel alike questioned her decision to enroll her son. Two of the questions posed to her were “‘Don’t you think it’s going to be hard?’,” and “‘Don’t you think you’ll put him at a disadvantage by putting him in a classroom where all the kids speak Spanish and he doesn’t?” (p. 109). Her child’s continued participation in the program reflects the resiliency that African American parents must possess. They must be both aware of the deficit orientations directed towards their children and of the need to advocate for their success.

Through this study and the stories within it, Palmer addresses the low enrollment of African American students in DLI and the need for equity. It is not parent interest, but deficit thinking on the part of administrators that often leaves African American students out of the dual language immersion discussion. When certain home vernaculars and socioeconomic backgrounds are seen as deficient by language planners, administrators, and teachers, it strongly affects program offerings and too often sidelines students who are not seen as good candidates for bilingual education. Palmer’s foci on dual language immersion in minoritized communities and the perspectives of parents demonstrate the need to broaden the discussion on colorblindness and deficit frameworks that exclude certain students from bilingual and dual language education programs.

In her study of a northern California, second grade, 90/10 two-way immersion program striving to achieve "'balanced diversity' among African-American, Latino, and European-American students," Wiese (2004) used open-ended ethnographic interviews, participant observations during classroom lessons and meetings, and content analysis of program documents to gain an understanding of dual language teaching practices and to better establish how the school defined DLI. Through the study, she learned that most of the African American students in the program were bussed in from surrounding neighborhoods to promote district desegregation efforts and that teachers and administrators tended to label these students as lacking in literacy readiness due to their socioeconomic backgrounds and home language varieties. She also reports that while teachers complemented students on their "rich oral language" (p. 75), they often did not see it as a contributing factor to literacy readiness.

Data analysis revealed that the needs of the African American students in the program were not met because those who spoke African American English Vernacular (AAVE) were not valued, and instead were placed in remedial literacy groups. Alejandra, a teacher and one of the central voices in Wiese's (2004) study, contended that the two African American students in the program "[were] so low there [was] no way to introduce a second language" (pp. 82-83) and that one "[did not] belong in a bilingual programme" because of her linguistic background (p. 81). The principal, pushing back against deficit framing, told the author: "it really angers me and upsets me that people say that African-American children or children of color other than Latino, can't handle a second language…because they…academically can't do it" (p. 75). Wiese concludes that African American students who speak AAVE have the right to participate in second language settings and their home varieties of English should be considered just as valuable as the target language and Standard American English (SAE). Wiese argues that dual

language programs are not “implemented,” but “socially constructed” (p. 86) and enrollment in such programs should reflect the student body they represent.

Though white students tend to be the target population of DLI programs, research has shown that African American students and language minority students (including AAVE speakers) benefit greatly from dual language education (Anberg-Espinosa, 2008; Thomas & Collier, 2010), but are too often left out of the narrative (Gross, 2016). In fact, in Thomas and Collier’s (2010) longitudinal study of over seven North Carolina school districts offering DLI, analysis of achievement data indicated that the “English learners and African American native English speakers [many of whom are of low socioeconomic status] show very large achievement gaps when compared to White native English speakers” (Thomas & Collier, 2010, p. 75). This supports dual language as a means to acquire a second language while achieving academic success, regardless of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic capital, or language status.

Vernaculars as Assets

Though this paper will organically discuss the manifestations of AAVE in DLI programs through the words of African American parents themselves and through poetry, it must be noted that U.S. history has not been kind to those whose language varieties and cultures were/are considered substandard. Language is “intrinsically tied to individual and group identity” (Reagan & Osborn, 2002, p. 124). Working-class Irish, Jewish, and other immigrants, for example, whose skin color might have been similar, but whose cultures and languages were different from the U.S.’s founding immigrants, were marginalized, and initially not considered “white:”

> With the end of Reconstruction in 1877, [however,] an effective program for limiting the emergent class struggles of the later nineteenth century was forged: the definition of the working class in racial terms—as "white." This was not accomplished by any legislative decree or capitalist maneuvering to divide the working class, but rather by white workers themselves. Many of them were recent immigrants, who organized on racial lines as much as on traditionally defined class lines. (Omi & Winant, 2014, p. 17)

African immigrants to the United States, many of whom were brought to the "New World" through the European slave trade, carried with them herbs, grains, seeds, nuts, religions, customs, and languages. In the United States and other parts of the African diaspora, the language varieties they created from English and their home languages were often languages of necessity; they confused slave owners and overseers and allowed them to communicate with each other. AAVE—also called African American Language (AAL), African American English (AAE), Ebonics, Black English, and Black Language—is deeply rooted in African oral traditions and developed over time into the varieties we hear now. Smitherman (2006) states that AAVE is a variety of English, spoken with "Black flava—with Africanized semantic, grammatical, pronunciation, and rhetorical patterns" (p. 3). Whether through contact with the vernacular of white indentured laborers or through a creolized process of second language acquisition (Sidnell, n.d.), West African languages mixed with English to form unique varieties passed down through generations. In the present U.S. African American community, even if one does not speak the vernacular—by nature or nurture—one usually understands it, as some family members (an aunt, an uncle, a grandmother or two) are almost sure to speak some form of AAVE (Smitherman, 2006).

African Americans have introduced many common English phrases that originate from African languages (like the English phrase "Dig it?" from the Wolof word *deg*, which means "to understand" or "pay attention"), as well as other common words derived from these languages (okra, banjo, and banana, as examples). Among one of the many distinct grammatical features is the *is*-deletion in noun, adjective, and locative phrases, such as *"He ø here"* (Labov, 1969; 2010). Beyond phonological and grammatical attributes, AAVE possesses a "verbal artistry," richly reflected in poetry, jazz, and hip-hop improvisation, as well as gospel music and church

sermons (Rickford, 2016). Mainstream media has caught on, and AAVE is heard in everything from fast food commercials to big budget films, from backyard barbecues to the presidential stage (The Daily Conversation, 2015). Labov (2010) called AAVE the African American people's "great resource" (p. 24).

In addition to AAVE, the Spanish language varieties of the Spanish-speaking African diaspora, including the large populations of Puerto Rican, Dominican, and Cuban Spanish speakers in U.S. states like New York and Florida, are also viewed as deficient when compared to more standardized Spanish varieties. This situation is not new. In defense of her Puerto Rican, New York, Spanish language variety, Ramírez de Arellano (1971) looks at the history of Spanish in the U.S. and how not only institutions, but families themselves believe that Puerto Rican Spanish is not real Spanish. She laments that "[Puerto Rican] students approach me to ask if I will teach them Spanish. They ask me using perfect Spanish [my translation and emphasis]" (p. 7.5). Discussing the attitudes of mainland Puerto Rican youth toward their language repertoire, including their use of code-switching practices (Toribio, 2004), Guzzardo Tamargo et al. (2018) note that Puerto Rican identity and language is "fluid, dynamic, and changing" (p. 306); however, attitudes towards their language variety range from negative to positive, depending on many factors including perceived ethnic affiliation and socioeconomic status. One concern participants had was the influence of English on the dialect of Puerto Rico (which has U.S. commonwealth status). The author determined that on the island, the use of Spanish and English is complex, layered, and steeped in historical, socioeconomic, and racial implications.

AfroLatinx/é Participation in Bilingual Education

Bilingual programs continue to expand, in part because of the growing need to serve English language learners and heritage learners of the target language. Included among these

learners are African American speakers of SAE and/or its varieties, but also of those with Afro-*Latinidad*[7] heritage who claim Spanish as a home or heritage language. As such, Spanish-English bilingual programs have become instrumental in educating students whose families are part of the "New Latino Diaspora" (Murillo & Villenas, 1997; Wortham, et al., 2002). The areas to which these families are migrating have not had large Latinx/é populations until the last two decades. Included are southeastern states like North Carolina and Georgia, the latter of which is where the present study takes place. Many of these families have had first-point U.S. destinations in the northeastern U.S., for example, in the large Latinx/é populations of New York City (Bromberg, 2020). Along with the increased need to serve language-minoritized students of Latinx/é backgrounds within this growing diaspora, African American families are moving from geographically urban areas to suburban areas and enrolling their children in DLI, taking advantage of program offerings that were originally designed to (and continue to) exclude them (J. A. Freire et. al, 2017; Palmer, 2010; Wall et al., 2022; Wiese, 2004). It is important to note that there is a wide gap in the research on AfroLatinx/é learners and their parents in the U.S. context, with Mizell (2022) being one of the few scholars in recent years to address this issue. His study explores the bilingual literacies of his son, a multicultural middle schooler and former dual language student of AfroLatinx/é and indigenous Ecuadoran descent. My study, which includes AfroHispanic mothers (self-identified) and their counterstories of dual language immersion, also contributes to the research on AfroLatinx/é identity which is too often erased from curricula (C.V. Rogers, 2006), textbooks (Padilla & Vana, 2022), and popular media

[7] "Latinidad" was first coined by sociologist Felix Padilla, describing the lived experiences of Mexicans and Puerto Ricans in Chicago, Illinois, USA (Padilla, 1985). Citing Roman & Flores (2010) and Seelke (2008), Sanchez (2021) states that "AfroLatinx" [those who claim AfroLatinidad as their heritage marker are often referred to in this way] refers to Black individuals with ancestry in Mexico, Central and South America, the Spanish-speaking Caribbean, and those in the U.S. whose origins are in Latin America and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean (p. 1).

(National Public Radio, 2021). Learning from African American students and their families will help language programs become stronger and more successful in educating scholars to be biliterate, bilingual, and more culturally aware.

Models for Success

Despite the wide gaps in research, there are studies that show the positive linguistic experiences, intercultural awareness, and academic achievement that can come from a well-designed and implemented DLI program. Freeman's (1996) study, for example, centers on Oyster Elementary, a school that successfully implemented a Spanish-English dual language immersion program with a maintenance component for L1 Spanish speakers. The author states that with this model, "the native Spanish speakers maintain and develop their Spanish to achieve academically in the Spanish content" (Freeman, 1996, p. 571) while at the same time achieving linguistically and academically in English:

> In practice, multicultural at Oyster means that Latino, African American, African, and Caribbean contributions are brought to the center in all of the content areas and are positively evaluated; these contributions reflect the majority of the student and teacher populations in the school. However, at Oyster multicultural means more than positive minority representation in the curriculum content and in the faculty and staff. It means that language minority and language majority children are encouraged to look critically at representations of different groups in the curriculum content and to relate their own lived experiences to the various constructions of history that they read about in school. (p. 573)

At Oyster, their success was determined by the diversity and multiculturalism that were key components in their curriculum content, pushing back from the Eurocentric, exclusionary curricula through which teachers often provide instruction.

In her ethnographic study of parents and students from a northern California middle school DLI program, Anberg-Espinoza (2008) focused on the perseverance of African Americans, some of whom self-identified as AAVE speakers, in these programs and the "linguistic and cultural experiences and perspectives of this population of students" (p. 11).

Some of the concerns she explores in her research study are 1) motivation for continuing in DLI programs; 2) success and retention in DLI programs, especially for students who speak AAVE; and 3) parent perspectives on the program. Through dialogue and data collection that included analysis of student records and work samples, Anberg-Espinosa found that the students were happy about studying two languages, had built positive relationships with their teachers and peers, and were enthusiastic about the prospect of continuing their Spanish education to become bilingual. Overall, the parents were satisfied with the program and overwhelmingly valued bilingualism for their children, believing it to be a possible advantage for future job opportunities.

The positive, family-like school climate was also a factor in keeping their children in the program. Some parents did express that they had doubts along the way, for example how their children's social skills would fare once leaving the predominantly Latinx/é school, whether their L2 was replacing their L1, and how their L2 might negatively affect testing results (standardized tests are given in English, not in the minoritized language, in this case, Spanish). In addition to showing that dual language immersion programs are beneficial to African American students and their families and communities, the framing of AAVE as a linguistic resource that can be cultivated in the classroom—instead of a deficit or problem—is a significant contribution to research on bilingual education program and a testament to African American endurance in bilingual education programs.

Through autoethnography, Giles (2010) chronicles the challenges and triumphs of launching Georgia's first dual language immersion school. Despite a successful opening, Giles's achievement was plagued with obstacles, including self-doubt and severe criticism from school board administrators and community members. However, she found inspiration in the words of

philosopher and educator John Dewey (1916): “It is the aim of progressive education to take part in correcting unfair privilege and unfair deprivation, not to perpetuate them” (p. 119). Indeed, current research on bilingual education programs in majority-minority schools reflects this proposed aim, and the schools themselves are evidence of changing demographics and an increased need to bring students together to share their funds of knowledge in a learning environment that unites languages and cultures, thereby achieving biliteracy and bicultural awareness. This work is, in part, inspired by Giles’s (2010) efforts.

Study Context

This study was conducted in a Title I, predominantly African American, Pre-K to 5, suburban school, Bethanyville Elementary[8], which lies about 30 miles outside of a major, Southeastern U.S. city. In 2014 the school became one of three to introduce a dual language immersion program. According to Publicschoolreview.com (2022), Bethanyville has a population of roughly 650 students, who are 59% “Black,” 29% “Hispanic,” 7% “White,” 2% “Asian,” and 3% “Two or more races”. Sixty seven percent of the student body is reported to be eligible for free lunch, with 9% eligible for reduced lunch (Public School Review, 2022). In the 2018-2019 school year, the school “placed in the top 50% of all schools in [the state] for overall test scores (math proficiency is top 50%, and reading proficiency is bottom 50%)” (Public School Review, 2022). The school placed in the top 50% of state schools in overall test scores for the same year” (Public School Review, 2022). Considering the overwhelming lack of African American participation in DLI programs cited herein, this school and the program itself are rarities, serving large numbers of African American and Latinx/é students, whereas most DLI programs serve mostly white and Latinx/é students (Gross, 2016).

[8] all names related to locations and persons are pseudonyms

Gaining access to parents did not pose a major issue as I mostly spoke with them outside of school hours. The former principal of the school, Dr. Gregory, was aware of my interest in conducting a research study and had already inquired on my behalf about the process through which I must gain access to the school through the county's Institutional Review Board (IRB). The IRB was approved in early February of 2019 just as a new principal, Ms. Anders-White, was hired, with Dr. Gregory moving to another position within the county. A few weeks later, my home institution approved the IRB. I introduced myself as a DLI mother and researcher to Ms. Anders-White and informed her that she might see me from time to time speaking with families about the program. She seemed affable and willing to help, if necessary, but ultimately, I did not need school access for the purposes of this study. During the 2019-2020 school year, there was extensive teacher turnover among the third-grade Spanish teachers, and the cohort did not receive a permanent teacher until January of 2020. In addition, the lead English teacher was absent for several months for personal reasons and the students found themselves learning under various substitutes until her permanent return, also in January of 2020. As a result, some of the third-grade parents mentioned these issues during the interviews.

In 2014, I enrolled my oldest son in the school's DLI kindergarten program. He formed part of the county's first DLI cohort. Four years later I began my inquiry from numerous positionalities including as 1) an African American parent with children enrolled in the program; 2) a qualitative research scholar of bilingual education; and 3) a poet and creative nonfiction writer who has used poetry as a means of transcribing and interpreting data and experiences (Cahnmann et al., 2019).

Each of these positionalities influences the research methods used in this study as well as my approach to analysis and the representation of findings. In addition to supporting bilingual

education programs as a bilingual mother who has invested time and energy so that my sons can learn Spanish in their school, I am also an insider to some of the intricacies of the program. For example, my knowledge of teacher turnaround in third grade did not come about through the interviews. Towards the end of 2019, I attended a parent information session with the lead English teacher to quell parent concerns. We were introduced to the new lead Spanish teacher, who is currently still on the faculty and is now my youngest son's Spanish teacher. Interviews with fellow parents allowed me, as a researcher, to understand the collective concerns they had about the turnaround and how they navigated the ripple effects. As a poet (S. Benson, 2003; Cahnmann-Taylor et al., 2019) and creative nonfiction writer (S.M. Benson, 2003), I saw the beauty and eloquence of the words of the families with which I conversed, as they spoke through their various language varieties. I used poetic methods (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2016) to interpret one participant's voice that particularly inspired me.

Research Methods

During the 2019-2020 school year, I spoke with Bethanyville parents about my research and distributed surveys (see Appendix A) based on the criteria I later used to secure interview participants. The 15-question survey, distributed on paper accompanied with a QR code so families could opt to download the Qualtrics version instead, gathered basic demographic and language background information. Using a Likert scale, it also collected data on parents' overall satisfaction with the program. I spoke to and/or distributed surveys to parents on the following occasions: our annual spring field day in May 2019, a Friday night PTA-sponsored roller-skating event in September 2019, the annual holiday luncheon in December 2019, and online through the third-grade DLI Facebook page in March of 2020. The majority of the 26 surveys I collected, a total of 22, were distributed and completed in September 2019 during the skate night. Before

handing them out, I first inquired if the parents had children enrolled in Bethanyville's DLI program. If they said yes, I gave them a survey and explained my research and the instructions. All the parents I spoke with agreed to complete the survey, most using the paper version, while others downloaded the accompanying QR code for the corresponding Qualtrics survey and completed it digitally. I collected four additional surveys, one at the May 2019 spring field day, another in January 2020 through a DLI Facebook page announcement, and two additional surveys were completed before two of the interviews I conducted. The latter two were from my children's classmates' parents, whom I reached out to directly for an interview. The interviews were conducted between August of 2019 and March 2020.

As an African American parent and emerging *motherscholar* (Matias, 2010) who is English-Spanish bilingual and values language and culture learning, I have a vested interest in the motivations of fellow African American parents/guardians for enrolling their children in DLI programs. To reiterate, my key research questions are:

> 1. *What are the language experiences of African American (AA) DLI parents/guardians?;*
>
> 2. *How do AA parents/guardians describe their decisions to enroll their AA elementary school child/children in a Spanish-English dual language immersion program?;* and,
>
> 3. *How do AA parents perceive and respond to deficit institutional orientations toward African Americans' potential for second language acquisition?*

What I hoped to discover from my first and second questions are the myriad experiences that could influence parents' and guardians' decisions to enroll their children in DLI. In addition, inquiring about parents' and guardians' personal experiences with world languages might uncover patterns of thinking about world language education that can be explained and analyzed

using CRT. For my third question, I sought to discover whether African American parents have experienced or harbor deficit thinking about their own ability to master an additional language.

My goal was to learn how African American parents' second language acquisition experiences contribute to their feelings on bilingual education generally and contribute to their reasons for enrolling their children in DLI. I wanted to speak with parents who, from the information reported on the survey, 1) identify as "Black," "African American (AA)," "Afro-Hispanic (AH)," "AfroLatinx/é (AL)," or of mixed ethnicity that includes of one of these identities; and 2) identify their children as one of these identities. Of the 26 surveys, 74% identified as Black/African American (Not Hispanic), with the second largest group (11%) identifying as Hispanic/Latino/Latinx/é/Spanish (Not Black). Additionally, 58% responded that they were biological/cisgender women, 38% responded that they were biological/cisgender men. and the majority (72%) of respondents fell in the 35-44 age range.

Interview Participants

Of the 26 survey respondents, fourteen (54%) agreed to a one-on-one interview. Of those, two did not meet the criteria. Some calls went unanswered and in one case, the parent signed the interview consent form, but did not respond to my follow-up to schedule an interview date. Despite these and other issues, I secured six (50% of available families who met the criteria) follow-up parent interviews. Considering the drastic changes that occurred during the year, it was helpful to the overall DLI picture that my interviews took place over various phases of a challenging school year, beginning with such promise, followed by a revolving door of teachers in one of the grades, and ending with a nationwide shift to digital learning due to a global pandemic. The interviews were analyzed, in part, using a CRT framework inspired by research in

the field that echoes the educational experiences of African American in U.S. school systems (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004).

The six families were interviewed between August of 2020 and March of 2021, three in person and three virtually, through Skype. The Skype interviews were conducted mostly for convenience; however, the last interview was conducted virtually because our school was closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Each interview was planned to last an average of one hour, and the participants were informed that they did not have to answer any questions with which they felt uncomfortable and could end the interview at any time. This information was also explained through a signed consent form. According to the survey data, four of the six families who moved on to the interview phase identified as African American (AA). One of the six identify as Afro-Latinx/é (AL). One family identified as African American but identified their child as AA-mixed ethnicity (See Table 1.1).

TABLE 1.1: DLI Interview Participants

Interview Respondent	Age	Gender	Parent Race/ Ethnicity	# children in DLI: Grade Levels	Home Language/s	Overall Satisfaction with the program
Malcolm	35-44	M	AA	1: 3rd grade	English	Very satisfied
D'Anna	35-44	F	AA	1: 2nd grade	English/ Spanish	Somewhat Satisfied
Jamila and Aaron	35-44	F and M	AA	3: 2nd,4th, 5th grades	English	Very satisfied
Aurore	35-44	F	AA	1: 3rd grade	English	Somewhat satisfied
Yazmín	35-44	F	AL	1: 3rd grade	English/ Spanish	Very satisfied
Noni	35-44	F	AA	1: 3rd grade	English	Somewhat satisfied

Participant Geographic Backgrounds

The participants represent U.S. states from the Midwest to the East Coast. Three of the six families: *Malcolm*, *D'Anna*, and *Noni*, are from Midwestern, urban areas. Two of the six: *Jamila*, *Aaron*, and *Aurore* are from urban and rural areas not far from Bethanyville Elementary. *Yazmín* is the only participant from the northeast. Though some of the parents grew up near the area of the school, none attended Bethanyille or the middle and high schools of the cluster. Through the interviews, I learned that Malcolm, Jamila, Aaron, and Noni, representing three of the six families, all identified as raised in lower-income, predominantly Black neighborhoods.

On August 26, 2019, I interviewed Malcolm face-to-face. He is an African American father and identified his 3rd-grade daughter Jewel as African American as well. Malcolm is originally from the midwestern U.S. The "westside" neighborhood in which he grew up is low-income and predominantly African American. He briefly lived in the suburbs where there were many white families, but he continued to attend school in the city. "I didn't go to school with other races than Black kids," he laughingly recalled. Moving to the Southeast was a way for him and his family to start a new life, to seek out new opportunities and diverse schools for their daughters, and to be closer to family.

Noni, Jamila, and Aaron described their neighborhoods as being tough places to live. Jamila was born in the Midwest, and Aaron in the city near where this study takes place. She and Aaron were born, raised, and educated locally, in an area that Jamila describes as "tough," and Aaron called "the hood [laughs]." They are parents to four children, three of whom are in DLI. Our conversation focused mostly on Ezekiel, 5th-grade classmate and friend of my son Foré. On the evening of Saturday, December 14, 2019, I spoke with them face-to-face as they were getting ready for a much-needed date night.

Mother to a 3rd grade DLI student, Noni was born and raised on the north side of a large, midwestern city. She says hers was one of its most racially segregated neighborhoods and considered "the most dangerous zip code in the area." Describing the area, she states "[It had] a lot of violence, a lot of poverty...when I've taken my husband and my child to visit [there], they're like gosh it looks like a war was here, 'cause everything's burned up and boarded up!" Noni and I met via Zoom on March 22, 2020, two weeks after our county's schools shut down due to Covid-19 and pivoted to 100% online instruction. Covid-19 was still a new phenomenon, and my only experience with it at that point was visiting a local middle school in the city for a pre-service teacher observation days before the news announcement that an area father and son were diagnosed with the virus. It was a scary time, and there are traces of concern from both Noni and I during the interview. For convenience and safety reasons, Noni and I decided to meet virtually.

Yazmín, D'Anna, and Aurore, representing three of the six families, describe the neighborhoods they grew up in as more of a hybrid when it comes to socioeconomics than what was described by the other participants. Former Bethanyville PTA president Yazmín, for example, is a heritage Spanish speaker from a northeastern U.S. neighborhood that boasts a large Latinx/é population. The only self-identified AfroHispanic among the participants, Yazmín's father is from Puerto Rico, and she grew up speaking the language at home and in her community. She describes her neighborhood as "not the ghetto, but not the suburbs… not necessarily great, but…not terrible." She grew up living in apartments, a very different landscape than what she experiences now, with more single homes and foliage. Yazmín attended both high school and college in this state. She and I met via Zoom on March 6, 2020, just before school closures due to Covid-19.

D'Anna, who is from the midwestern U.S., is the oldest of six children raised by a single mother. She describes the neighborhood in which she grew up—or rather, her "side of the tracks"—as a quiet, safe place for families. However, a crime-riddled area was just a few streets over. She stayed close to her friend group, enjoyed school, and stayed out of trouble. D'Anna attended high school in her hometown, then moved to our state's capital city in the early 2000s to attend a local HBCU. She is the mother of second-grader, Grayson. We met virtually through Skype on October 29, 2019.

The neighborhood in which Aurore was raised was "borderline rural" and "suburban": "We passed llamas and things like that on the school bus" in [rural] Ridgewood, and I lived about four miles from there when I lived in [suburban] Winston." Her family now lives in a subdivision outside of the school zone and was given permissive transfer for two of their three children, including 3rd grader Lucas—a classmate and friend of my son Bemi—to attend the DLI program. We met face-to-face on the evening of December 16, 2019. During our meeting, Aurore talks extensively about Lucas's special needs and her family's efforts to secure effective services for him.

It is noteworthy that when I asked the parents to describe where they grew up, most of the responses leaned towards socioeconomic status and class. This was not intentional on my part. None of the parents were apologetic or boastful about how or where they were raised, and the above descriptions show that Blackness is not monolithic. It does not require having lived in certain neighborhoods and having the exact same experiences. However, Black people as a whole experience forms of oppression no matter where they live (Sullivan et al., 2018). The most important takeaway is that irrespective of where the parents are from, their children are enrolled

in a suburban dual language program, raised in the surrounding areas, and learn from their teachers and from the rich experiences their parents have had.

Parent Bilingual Education Backgrounds

Four of the families claim English as their home language, while two claim Spanish and English, though none identified as fully fluent in Spanish. As their backgrounds vary, so do these parents' experiences with world language education. All of them—except for Aaron—have had some level of second language education, with most of them studying Spanish specifically. In fact, five of the six families: Malcolm, Jamila, Aurore, Yazmín, and Noni, reported having taken Spanish in high school, college, or both. Two of the participant families, Yazmín and D'Anna, also spoke Spanish growing up with their families as they claim Afro-*Latinidad* as part of their heritage and Spanish as one of their home languages. However, whether they enjoyed or retained their classroom world language experiences is quite another matter. In fact, only two of the parents, D'Anna and Aurore, reported positive language-learning experiences. Noni, Malcolm, Yazmín, and Jamila reported that they learned very little in their Spanish classes or did not have the best of experiences. Aaron was the only participant who never took a world language in school, adding that in the military school he attended it was not a requirement for graduation and therefore, he chose not to pursue it. If it had been, he would have liked to learn French or Spanish.

Data Analysis

To analyze the interview data, I created a codebook titled *AA* (African American) *and AL* (Afrolatinx/é) *Dual Language and Family Experiences* to develop recurring themes (see Table 1.2). These themes stemmed from the individual parent perspectives guided by the questions. In qualitative research, thematic analysis can help the researcher discover "meaning units," those

“words and sentences that convey… similar meanings” (Belotto, 2018, p. 2624). I was curious to see if my participants' voices echo one another and in what contexts. Critical analysis grounded in foundational research in Critical Race Theory in education (DeCuir & Dixson, 2004; Delgado & Stefancic, 2017; Ladson-Billings, 1998; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995; Lynn, et al., 2013; Solórzano & Yosso, 2002; Taylor et. al, 2009) guided my interview protocol (see Appendix B), data collection, observations, and analysis. I was especially interested in comments from my participants that reflect hegemonic forces that influence confidence in language ability and influence the educational decisions they make for their children. Guided by this interest and by my research questions, I created the following themes: negative and positive L2 experiences of the parents, awareness, advocacy, parent involvement, and counter-reflections on the deficit perspective. From the themes emerged rich cross-truths of the experiences of African American DLI parents, affirming self-definitions of parental involvement, and pushback from deficit perspectives. These themes also helped guide the analysis and the counternarratives created from the parent’s stories.

TABLE 1.2: AA and AL Dual Language and Family Experiences

Codes	Themes
NL2E	Negative L2 Experiences
PL2E	Positive L2 Experiences
AW	Awareness
AD	Advocacy
PIN	Parent Involvement
CRDP	Counter-Reflections on the Deficit Perspective

Negative L2 Experiences

Four of the six families expressed negative attitudes toward their world language learning experiences. Malcolm and Jamila, for example, stated that their Spanish language courses were not very effective or memorable. Malcolm took Spanish during his first two years of high school and Jamila took three years of Spanish. Neither remembers much of what was taught. Malcolm describes his experience as "okay." And after taking the required courses, he did not pursue it further:

> *S: Do you have any recollections of the teachers?*
>
> M: Uh-huh. The teacher was um, she was alright. She just taught us Spanish. I don't remember too much about it [laughs].

When asked the same question, Jamila revealed similar learning experiences. Though Jamila did learn some Spanish, she was disappointed by the quality of language education she received after studying it for three years:

> *S: Do you feel that you learned anything in the end? You said it was high school?*
>
> J: Um-hmm. I don't remember none of it.

Noni spent some of her childhood living outside of the U.S. Her father was in the military and when she was six years old, she spent a year in Germany and attended an "American" school. She learned some words and phrases in German, mostly retaining basic concepts like numbers, greetings, and goodbyes. That was her first time experiencing a second language and culture. In high school, she took Spanish. Her teacher was very "cool" in Noni's opinion, and one of her most memorable. However, she feels that the lack of immersion and too much focus on completing worksheets are why she did not retain the language well. Later in life, she became an English teacher of L1 Spanish speakers, which inspired a desire to connect with her students' families and cultures. She applied for a grant and was accepted to a study abroad program in the

Dominican Republic, staying with a host family. This was her first immersion language experience, but she stated that did not take advantage of it:

> The family spoke no English, and they were upset when I tried to speak English [laughs], like very frustrated that; it's like why are you speaking English, what's wrong wit'chu? So that was a learning experience. [laughs]

Noni later remarked that she regretted forfeiting the opportunity to practice with her host family and that the experience informed how she advocates for her child Shana's DLI education.

Yazmín also reported negative world language education experiences, but unlike most of the other participants, she is a heritage Spanish speaker, and grew up speaking the language with family and friends. In her younger years, she relocated to our state's capital city near where this study took place and attended high school and college there. In high school, the teachers were not strict, and, in her words, she was allowed to "get away with 'incorrect'" words and grammar. I place 'incorrect' in quotes as she uses the term to refer to her preferred use of her Puerto Rican influenced, northeastern US dialect, not the standardized, academically approved forms of Spanish often taught in schools. She goes on to describe her dialect as saying things "lazily, using the shortcut," something that made her college language study challenging. There, as a senior in high school taking college coursework, she studied Spanish, even pursuing it as a major. She recalled a white, male, non-Latinx/é professor who was critical of her Puerto Rican dialect and informal speech:

> I attempted to take Spanish in high school one semester, maybe two...I tried that. I spoke Spanish already [but] not super fluent. I thought I would take it and that would help...It helped some, but I guess not like it should've...I didn't stick to the vocabulary and stuff, and so that was my first experience. By the time I went to college, I found out there was a Spanish major...I'll graduate really easily, right?...I did one semester of that and almost flunked. The professor said that I shouldn't take another Spanish class. He said you speak Spanish, your accent is great, your words are good, but you're not learning *my* vocabulary, so don't take another Spanish class.

Yazmín's feelings of inadequacy echo this sentiment in her belief that some of the words he used were different from those she knew, and instead of adopting her teacher's words, she "stubbornly" continued to use the words she grew up with. Her comments support research that shows that in many cases, world language program administrators and teachers exclude students who speak target language varieties that are considered nonstandard. Resulting from her negative experiences, Yazmín is cautious when reading to her children in Spanish. She tries to immerse them in the language just as the teachers do in class, but fears that she will confuse them by offering the many Puerto Rican and Dominican regionalisms with which she is familiar. Therefore, she does not often give alternatives for the words they learn in class. She states "I try to say it as correctly as possible. I try to use the vocabulary from the school when they send the little handouts, because I don't want to taint them." She continues to say that when she and her children are just chatting at home or out in public, her Spanish "probably comes out however." These feelings of self-consciousness and "tainting" a child's language skills are similar to the "language contamination" that abounded in early research on language education and translation decades ago (Hervey et al., 1995).

These responses from the parents are cause for concern. In a study of African American high school students' motivations to continue language study beyond the requirements, C. Pratt (2012) found that although they were not initially less motivated than their peers to study a world language,

> their motivation wanes as they advance in the study of the language and experience a rapidly increasing loss of interest due to lack of a parental support system, adequate career counseling, role models, and opportunities to achieve communicative competence stemming from difficulties in the classroom environment and lack of exposure to target communities. (p. 130)

C. Pratt also mentions that low encouragement from teachers and ineffective teaching styles

contributed to the decline in enrollment in higher-level courses. She suggests schools reach out to parents and advise them on the "usefulness of the language" (p. 130), secure more African language teachers, and allow for more intercultural learning opportunities with the language community, if possible. When considering the parent connection in world language study in K-12 contexts, the involvement and dedication of these parents are fueled, to some degree, by their own experiences with language study.

Positive L2 Experiences

D'Anna and Aurore represent two of the six participant families who had overwhelmingly positive experiences with world language education. D'Anna, for example, recalled fondly of her Spanish language journey. She also represents the longest time studying one language, having taken Spanish from sixth grade through high school:

> We had to take it. I think it started off as an elective and then it became, I guess, part of the regular classes that we had to take, so I just stuck with Spanish. I have Spanish [-descended] people in my family. I wanted to instead of French; I wanted to do Spanish being that that's what you kind of needed to get job positions. You needed English and knowing Spanish would help you.

I asked where the 'Spanish' side of her family is from. "Puerto Rico," she answered. "And it's my uncle who's married into the family. My mom's sister's husband. His family is Spanish." I then listened as D'Anna recounted her language experiences:

> Um, I feel it was good. I feel that it gave me the edge or the nudge that I need to want to keep up with it, pursue it, um, I had fun with it. It was taught to us to where we could understand it. It was a lot of Black kids in the class. Um, the majority of the school was Black, and I think we had fun learning the language, and the teacher made it fun to want to learn. We would have projects where we would have to bring in a Spanish dish. And I would bring in *pastelitos* that my mom would make which she got from my uncle, and we still eat 'em today, so I really enjoyed it.

This was one of the few interviews I conducted where the participant commended her teachers for taking the time to create a positive learning environment for the students, and at the same time recognized that learning did take place.

Aurore reflected on her language experiences in a favorable light as well. Aurore had joyful memories of the world language education she received during her formative years. In her K-7 elementary school a teacher visited the school weekly, equipped with a supply cart, to teach the students Japanese. There were also Hebrew language and culture lessons during Hanukkah as the parents of her Jewish classmates visited and taught the students about the celebration. She also used her siblings' textbooks to teach herself Spanish before choosing to study it formally:

> I used my siblings' old textbooks and I called myself trying to teach myself Spanish and that was in about 7th grade, but my pronunciation was horrible 'cause I didn't hear people telling me that two Ls is [pronounced] 'y' so I was saying '*vajila*' [instead of '*vajilla*'[9]]...I'm from a big family so I took a poll on what languages they had studied, so I kind of went down the list, and decided on Spanish as the one I wanted to do.

In eighth grade, she began more formal language studies in French and German, as well as Spanish. Asking her to elaborate on her middle school language studies, Aurore explained that these courses were considered "specials" or "connections" classes, given during a semester for about two weeks per language. The goal was to expose them to several languages so they could then decide which they wanted to pursue in high school. I asked her if her family valued language study or if it was more her own passion:

> It was my own thing. You had to have two years of foreign language, so I [polled] them based on that, but it's not a big thing, we use some language [including American Sign Language (ASL)] in my family, so I think that contributed to my interest in language.

Aurore also studied Spanish in college. For her, that experience was also a positive one. She felt her high school studies gave her a firm foundation and reported her college was a more in-depth

[9] In Spanish, the letter *ll* is pronounced with an English "y" sound, whereas the *l* is pronounced like the English "l." Aurore refers to her mispronunciation of the word *vajilla*, which means "dishes" or "cookware."

review of that information. She had originally pursued a minor in Spanish but did not complete it. However, she was impressed by her teachers' love of languages. "It was a good experience," she says.

In line with C. Pratt's (2012) work, D'Anna and Aurore exude joy from their experiences because the attitude and style of the teachers were positive and inspiring, they were exposed to a variety of activities in which to engage with their classmates, and in Aurore's case, her "big family" was an inspiration for her to continue beyond the required courses and pursue languages in college. From the interviews, I learned that the experiences of these parents—positive, negative, and everything between—motivate their desire for their children to reap job and other benefits that dual language immersion might offer them (Bauer & Harrison, 2015), and as such, have high expectations for their children and of Bethanyville DLI teachers and staff. These expectations, though, pair with significant concerns about how the DLI program has shifted its focus over the years and is transforming into one that does not always serve their children's best interests.

Awareness and Advocacy

The families in this study have concerns that have led some to doubt whether keeping their children in Bethanyville's DLI program is worth the effort. Yazmín, for example, whose child is now a 3rd grade DLI student, indicated that her involvement in the school was once very strong. She even served for a time as PTA president. Now she feels that there is a lack of communication that she believes, first and foremost, stems from the current principal, who has been in the position for one year. She stated, "I believe her lack in the language was different than the other principal...I'm not saying that the new principal doesn't want the program, I'm just saying that the program isn't on the top of the list anymore." She is quick to point out that DLI

classes should not take precedence, but the lack of support is creating other issues, including rampant teacher turnover on both the Spanish and English sides. She adds that Class Dojo, an app that keeps parents informed on everything from upcoming assignments to behavior and includes a built-in messenger, was no longer being used. In her opinion, this also contributes to her communication and support concerns.

Building on Yazmín's critique, Aurore mentions "relationship building" during our meeting more than once. When she attempted to secure services for Lucas, the school did little to meet his needs. Instead of waiting for the school to act, she contacted school administrators, program directors, and county officials to inform them of her family's situation. As a result of these challenges, she feels that the DLI program is an experiment:

> All of our children are being [used as] academic guinea pigs. As the adults are sorting this out ["this" meaning the uncertainty about receiving special services for Lucas and whether the school would find skilled, permanent teachers], our children are the ones falling behind...we know children need all these different things to be successful, but they don't have any of that continuity...the relationship building and all that kind of stuff.

Aurore describes her relationship with teachers and staff as "non-existent." In this pivotal moment of our conversation, we began to reflect on the DLI support staff that had once been a powerful force in keeping the program going. One staff member, Ms. Dubois, is someone who Aurora misses greatly:

> I don't know if she's still there. I miss her, 'cause I would see her, and she was always very, just a great person. Kind-spirited, and I don't, honestly I don't know who the DLI people are anymore.

Even with a full-time job, Jamila finds time to attend PTA meetings in the evening and during the school day do what she calls "pop-ups": visits to eat lunch with her children and their friends without telling the kids that she is coming. She says that although she offers to volunteer in the classroom and gives her cellphone number to the teachers during every orientation, they

never call: “Because they don’t have a open policy to where we can go to the classes…I use the lunch time as my time to kind of talk to the teachers and the kids.” Appearing unannounced gives her a better picture of her children’s behavior and allows for her to speak to the teachers more candidly during a time when they are usually monitoring students in the cafeteria and not occupied in the classroom. Establishing those relationships is of utmost importance for Jamila.

Though there are signs that the program is not meeting their children’s needs as originally expected, and families have identified issues occurring within the school walls, all the parents support their DLI children outside of the school. They provide digital learning supplements for their children and encourage them to engage with L1 Spanish speakers. Involvement, as conceived by these parents, is not defined by how many hours a mother volunteers in the school’s Parent Center or whether a father has forged relationships with the teachers. It does not align with the research that favors standardized ideals of involvement (Greene, 2013). Instead, these parents define involvement on their own terms, without apology, and with an understanding of their children’s individual needs.

The takeaway is that the parents’ awareness of strained relationships with teachers and staff are creating a situation where the parents must strongly advocate for their children’s success in DLI. Forging partnerships between school and community is vital for student success (Campano et al., 2016). The school district, in a document titled Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings, encourages the “positive support and encouragement from home” which is “important to a child’s success in the program” (Guidelines, 2022, p. 3). However, the current relationships and lack of communication from the teachers and staff is not only concerning to the parents but creates a new level of involvement where parent advocacy is needed to ensure the students are continuing to thrive.

Parent Involvement

All the families in this study provide their children with supplementary Spanish-language materials and experiences outside of school. Malcolm, the only parent who mentioned not having met Jewel's current DLI teachers and school administrators at Bethanyville, has supported her in many ways, like enrolling her in a DLI summer camp led by one of the school staff, providing her with supplemental learning materials, and encouraging her to interact with Spanish speakers when they are in public. Jamila and Aaron encourage their children to speak to each other in Spanish outside of school, one of the benefits, they say, of having multiple children enrolled in the program. The children read Spanish books, are encouraged to speak to their Spanish-speaking friends, and are enlisted to help with translating for Aaron when he needs to communicate more effectively with his Spanish-speaking coworkers.

Aurore and her husband engage Lucas in many supplemental language and cultural learning experiences. They provide him with Spanish-language books and the language-learning app Duolingo over the summer, which is free through the county. They recently attended a local, college sponsored *Día de los muertos* (Day of the Dead) event. Lucas also participated in the now-defunct school Spanish Club, the same private Spanish summer camp to which Malcolm sent Jewel, and (pre-Covid) Thursday night dinners for students and their families. Both events were organized by one of the elementary school staff, Ms. Cardenas, known among the parents for her dedication to and support of the DLI program and the school in general.

For D'Anna, her desire to have gone further with her own language education fuels her motivation for keeping her children in DLI. She also believes that the younger you begin learning an additional language, the better:

> *S: And does that* (her schooling experiences) *also factor into your decision to enroll your child in DLI?*

> D: Yes, I wanted to give him that chance as well, being that it's probably the second-best language that he could learn, and knowing that he has a head start with it, he can get further with it than I did…You know, the younger you are, the easier it is for your brain to absorb information.

What D'Anna refers to here is Penfield and Roberts's (2014) Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH). Originally introduced in 1959 (Singleton, 2005), CPH suggests that after a certain age, anywhere from ten to the teenage years, a child's "language learning capacity disimproves gradually but subsequent to which there is an abrupt [*sic*] decline" (p. 272). This hypothesis has since been refuted, though the benefits of studying additional languages sooner than later continues to be discussed and debated (Singleton & Leśniewska, 2021). During my time with D'Anna, she stated that she wants Grayson to "exceed in everything that he does." She helps him in every way she can to achieve those goals, however, one thing she noticed is that her child had yet to receive homework:

> D: "She [teacher] sent out a Class Dojo [message] letting us know that they would have homework last week, I believe, but I haven't seen anything yet.
>
> *S: What are your feelings about that?*
>
> D: Some parents are okay with no homework. Yeah…it bothers me because if they have an assessment coming up, they're expected to know this or that, um, how can we as parents enforce that if we're not aware of what you're studying.

In the absence of homework, we shift the conversation to how D'Anna supports Grayson's learning at home. She uses school-provided reading programs like Raz-Kids, an online multilingual library which includes comprehension activities and quizzes. She has him read the recommended 20 minutes per night to help him "level up to the different book levels." He reads four books a night, and they are currently reading chapter books together. She also takes Grayson to the local library on Sundays. As far as helping him with Spanish, D'Anna downloaded a Spanish translator on her son's phone and computer.

D'Anna considers herself an "involved parent" [her words], regularly volunteering at the school, but not visiting the DLI classroom particularly during the semester in which our meeting took place (Spring 2020). She strives to be "that PTA-type mom that's involved," and relates that kind of involvement to her child's academic success. She reflects on her childhood, stating that with six children, her mother had a hard time staying involved. In past years, she has been able to help in the DLI classroom, assisting teachers with putting together homework packets. This combination of wanting Grayson to succeed, the lack of homework, and her childhood experiences with parental involvement, inspire D'Anna to find multiple ways to ensure Grayson stays on top of his assignments and engages in the target language.

Jamila identifies herself as the designated tutor for the children when they are completing their Spanish homework. During our time together, Jamila tells me an anecdote which further proves why homework help is her domain, and that Aaron's lack of Spanish skills does not make him the most effective tutor:

> J: ...Baby, what do you use, 'cause I get a kick out of him helping with homework [laughs heartily]
>
> A: Google Translation.
>
> *S: Why is that?*
> J: [still laughing] Lord, I don't want to embarrass him!
> *S: No, go 'head, tell me!*
> J: My baby did some homework problems. She had it right. My husband: "no it's wrong! So, when I came home, I think I was at work, and when I came home, she said, "Mommy [um] daddy said I got this wrong, but I almost know that the answer's 32, but daddy kept saying it was something else, and sho' nuff, she was right [laughs]. She was stressed out! I do most of the homework.

Both Jamila and Aaron use online translation software to check their children's work, but the fact that Jamila has a stronger background in Spanish and Aaron has proven himself not as effective with homework help means Jamila takes the greater responsibility of helping with homework.

When considering involvement within minoritized families, it is necessary to consider

what involvement looks like to them (Bauer & Harrison, 2015), not what the research suggests about their lacking or inadequate involvement (Greene, 2013). The families Bauer and Harrison (2015) interviewed—African American and mixed-race parents of elementary-aged dual language students learning Spanish—exude pride when their children speak Spanish with members of the language community or are able to teach them what they have learned. Similarly, the joy the parents of this study exude, their volunteerism, and the additional support they provide evidence involvement that cannot be quantified. These parents show strong levels of involvement that are reflective of their own experiences and the expectations they have for their children.

Counter-Reflections and Self-Perceptions of Racialization in Bilingual Programs

As the parents discussed how they support their children's DLI learning at home, two of the six families, Yazmín and Noni, expressed concern over their own ability to assist their children with their work due to their backgrounds in Spanish. Part of that feeling stems from comments made by the teachers they had in the past and the teachers in the DLI program.

Yazmín's college professor assured her that she would not fail her college Spanish course but insisted she not return. This reflects a dismissal of her heritage language and her racial background. She internalized this with feelings of culpability, saying that she "got away" without trying "harder" to make sure she was saying and learning Spanish correctly. "I probably brushed it off more than I should have," she says, but also states "I know a lot of people who took Spanish for four years, or more than I did, and they still don't speak Spanish. It's like a box that they check off."

That moment in Yazmín´s life was re-lived when I asked her to share memorable moments she has had during the DLI program She recalled one of the open house events after her enrollment request was accepted by Bethanyville:

> I fully supported [the program], but some of the cultural pieces...I have had different life experiences with different nationalities, even other Spanish-speaking people that are from different countries and I will never forget during open house [there was a teacher who] I already had certain biases [against] because of the country she was from, she described the program [by saying] 'Your kids will learn a *sophisticated* (italics for speaker emphasis) Spanish'. I looked at my husband and said '*sophisticated* Spanish?' [sarcastically] Here we go, right?

She goes on to say that this particular teacher was from "one of those countries" where, in her experience, people see her language variety as inferior. From her past experiences, she is keenly aware that her Puerto Rican dialect is one that is continuously seen as lesser. Considering that Yazmín is Afro-Latina, the teacher's comment is perceived as an attack on her heritage, her Afro-*Latinidad.* This incident left her doubtful about finalizing the enrollment of her children in DLI, but was not enough to push her away. She maintains that the overall benefits outweigh the negatives.

Yazmín's reflections expose a blistering truth: one language speaker can devalue and enact microaggressions against another speaker of their same language. Though she has internalized some degree of inadequacy related to her linguistic abilities, she is sensitive to the fact that the perception held by others is related to racism among Spanish speakers toward varieties that are considered unsophisticated.

Recognizing her own ignorance of how Spanish speakers should look and speak, Noni's experience in New York greatly influenced why she ultimately wanted to expose Shana to Spanish language and culture:

> I think it put me in a complicated [place]. I was so grateful for it because I had seen Black people in such a monolithic way because of the way I grew up. And then on top of that,

> when I lived in the Dominican Republic, and they don't consider themselves Black, at least the people that I lived with, the whole African thing, that was an insult to them. My whole concept of race and language, it was muddled by experiencing Black Latino people. I really feel like having my daughter growing up with these two languages now, she doesn't have the sort of mental barriers of 'that's not for me.' It's just normal to her now to speak two languages, and not be conflicted about [her identity].

That ability to reconcile with one's perceptions of others, the perceptions of oneself, and push past discriminatory comments and actions based on language and culture are everyday challenges for these parents. And these experiences influence a parent's opinion of education programs and how they engage with them. I am reminded of the translingual and transcultural work I engaged in with Cahnmann-Taylor and Qiu (Cahnmann-Taylor, Nuruddin, & Qiu, 2020) when we collaborated on academic and public events that highlighted Asian cultures and literature. Our identity affiliations were questioned by others as we reconciled our own cultural and linguistic "precarities" and "failures," navigating through spaces where we were both insiders and outsiders to various "societal norms in the locations where our work took place. Reflecting on our experiences as culturally, racially, linguistically and gender minoritized women, [we] prepared for [our] own and others' perceptions of "foreignness" as we traversed translingual spaces" (Cahnmann-Taylor, Nuruddin, & Qiu, 2018, p. 57). In Yazmín's and Noni's counterstories, there is an understanding of insider language use (Yazmín) and outsider perceptions (her teacher) of its validity; and there is precarity, or uncertainty, of another's culture and language (Black women on the subway) based on how they are perceived from the outside (Noni). These complex, intersecting perspectives can affect how we feel about ourselves and how we see and communicate with others. In Yazmín's case especially, they affect how she feels her language background and practices help or hinder her child's progress in DLI. This is explored further in the following section, as parents engaged in conversation with me about their

perspectives of African American English Vernacular (AAVE), or "Black language" (Baker-Bell, 2020) and the connections they have with it.

"English is my second language, Spanish is my third, vernacular is ma' first!"

The DLI program at Bethanyville is an anomaly. Most communities targeted for DLI are Spanish-speaking and white, middle-class (Bauer, et al., 2020; Burns, 2017; Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Esposito, 2020; J. A. Freire et al., 2017; Frieson, 2022; Gómez, et al., 2005; Gross, 2016; Palmer, 2010). This program, however, is offered in a Title I school where 67% of the student population is eligible for free lunch, with nine percent qualifying for reduced lunch; many of its classrooms are predominantly African American, Asian, and L1 or heritage Spanish speakers as well (Public School Review, 2022).

During the interviews, I asked the families their opinions of the racialization of African American language varieties. The responses from families varied. Although some initially expressed incredulity through looks of disbelief, the shaking of heads, the rolling of eyes, and at least one sigh, there were also embedded feelings that "Black Talk" (Smitherman, 2000) is acceptable only in certain environments, for example, in professional working environments. AAVE in the school context is recognizable "in the everyday talk of African Americans inside and outside of urban schools" (Alim et al., 2016, p. 244). Although all the families interviewed acknowledged the existence of AAVE in their own lives and understood that one can excel in life and be an AAVE speaker, they were aware of how AAVE can be negatively perceived, and some harbored subtle biases stemming from the experiences they have had. Malcolm, for example, when I asked him about the deficit perspective, looked away in disbelief:

> *S: I have heard some people argue that African Americans shouldn't study or aren't good at studying foreign languages because they don't know English well enough and English should come first. What do you think?*

> M: No, I don't think that at all. No, not at all. I think we can learn any language just like anyone else would be able to learn a language. I don't think it has anything to do with what language you speak. I mean, we speak English fairly well, speak it well enough to be able to go through our life and have jobs and things like that. I just think once you get around your peers you kind of have a language, so maybe that can trickle over into other places, but, I've never had a issue. I feel like I speak English pretty well. So, I don't think that's a issue at all.

In this interview, he pushes against the deficit perspective through comments like "fairly well" and "pretty well," which reflect an understanding that a standard does exist. At the same time, however, he describes himself as speaking it "well enough" to succeed in his work environment when it counts.

> After I posed the question to D'Anna, she let out a sigh:
>
> D: Wow, um, yeah, I don't agree with that at all. There are times where I mean, okay, there are times where I'm in a professional setting, and I talk professional. If I'm with my friends, my family, my whatever, I got my little Ebonics, my slang or whatever. We know how to turn it on and off…
>
> *S: So your feeling is that we are capable of learning?*
>
> D: I think we are. I believe we are capable of learning, and it also probably depends on your home life, or the area that you're in, I mean, you know, most Blacks from where I'm at, from where I grew up at, you know the Southside. We all went to college, we all graduated, we have good jobs. Across the tracks…but, it's just the train tracks that divides us. We all had that same opportunity. We all were going to the same school. So I just decided, hey, the drugs or whatever, selling drugs. I think it's all on the foundation of your home and the environment that you raise your children in. I think we are capable, but if you are a child in a house where your parents don't care what you do, they're not involved, then you're going to eventually not care either.

D'Anna creates a binary of "…Ebonics…slang…or whatever" and "professional" speech that invites a discussion of code-switching within language varieties. In the case of African Americans and AAVE, code-switching from the vernacular to Standard American English (SAE) can be exhausting, though pleasing to mainstream speakers of standardized English. Baker-Bell (2020) notes that code-switching can produce

> …cultural conflict, labor, and exhaustion…that is, many Black Language-speakers are continuously monitoring and policing their linguistic expressions and working through the linguistic double consciousness they experience as a result of having to alienate their cultural ways of being and knowing, their community, and their blackness in favor of a white middle class identity. (p. 102)

Code-switching, or "turning it on and off," as D'Anna describes it, is a double-edged sword in that it reflects an innate skill to maneuver between languages and varieties in ways that are "rule-governed and systematic" (Toribio, 2004, p. 137). But through her words, we see how "professional" is the language variety of whiteness (the "on"), and Ebonics is the language variety of Blackness, unprofessionalism, and existing on the wrong side of the tracks (the "off"). Recall, also, that she sighs after I ask her the question, which reflects the laboriousness of entering the discussion on AAVE and code-switching. The exhaustion that code-switching can create and the endurance with which African Americans and others who are linguistically minoritized must exhibit daily (Baker-Bell, 2020) were palpable even before she answered.

D'Anna's comments resonate because though she is clear in her dismay, she harbors negative ideas of Black language as it relates to class, education, home life, and parental involvement. Having those elements leads to college and good jobs. Lacking those elements leads us to "not care" about the way we speak and represent ourselves.

In response to the same question, Jamila says plainly "it's definitely racist. I think that every school should get the same opportunities whether it's white, Black, Spanish, every kid." Aaron goes on to say that

> every ethnic group has their own slang or own way of talking. Certain people say 'down yonder' and some say 'down the street' versus whether you're white, Black, Mexican, they all have they own different slang. That to me is pointless. Most of the time, Ezekiel be tryin' to tell me certain things in Spanish that's slang. Different languages, they still have slang. You can still say what you want to say in those languages.

Jamila continues, "and then a lot of ours comes from slavery, you know, our ancestors. A lot of it

just came over the years, we switched it up, but a lot of it is in us." It is in us: that passed-down through-the-generations oral tradition that Smitherman (2006) affirms should be valued and and not admonished. Jamila and Aaron, with three children enrolled in the DLI program, make no apologies for their own AAVE use and do not see it as any kind of deficit.

Aurore was very clear in her feelings on the subject. Her short answer: "Silly. That's my opinion. Somebody clearly didn't do their research making that sort of statement." However, a few minutes after I concluded the interview and turned off the recording, something seemed to jog her memory, and Aurore expanded upon her initial answer, suggesting that in addition to race, economic status plays into this situation. After agreeing to continue the recording, she recalled seeing the county's DLI program flyers in some places, but not others, voicing suspicions that higher SES neighborhoods were more coveted and targeted for the program and others not.

> I was reading somewhere that in lower SES neighborhoods the value in learning a second language isn't as apparent, but when you go to higher SES neighborhoods there's an understanding of the value of learning a second language, and some neighborhoods, and I will say...when I put Lucas on the [DLI waiting] list at [a school in a higher SES neighborhood] he was so far down they still haven't called, but when I put him on the list at Bethanyville he was able to get into the program. I think that says something like you mentioned. I just think it's a lack of awareness. I don't think it's necessarily ignorance that people feel like African Americans should learn one language versus another. I think it's also access…or whatever the demographics are that causes that disparity. I think access is a big thing.

Aurore has a critical understanding of what it means to have access to bilingual programs, while also recognizing her own privilege of being able to transport her child to Bethanyville. She sees and expresses succinctly and critically that both awareness and access are vital for these programs to thrive in lower SES and minoritized communities.

Noni is an English teacher aware of how vernaculars play into the learning environment. She also inserts AAVE into our conversation effortlessly, expressing both validation and

defiance. When I asked about the deficit perspective, she exclaimed "Who said that?! There are researchers that say that?!"

> *S: It's sort of an overarching idea, and I've seen this at the college level as well. That, well they don't speak English well enough. They speak AAVE, Ebonics, Black English, or whatever. How do you then study a foreign language? So that's one of the hesitations in implementing these kinds of programs in predominantly African American schools. So what you think of this idea of dialect getting in the way of someone's learning of a second language, and African Americans specifically.*
>
> N: So Imma try not to answer with my diatribe about dialects, 'cause I love African American vernacular, I write about it, and I'm in love with broken English...I think it's the most disruptive, beautiful thing, ever, so to act as if its inferior, as if it's not an asset is disturbing to me, so for people to even start to assume that. I have a problem with that part. I think it's a blessing, I'm excited when I see our brown kids speaking Spanish, I feel like it's gonna give them an asset, It's gonna shock people, just like I was shocked at 20 years old seeing brown people speak Spanish...Gurl, hush, [...] trippin'!

She remarks, however, that she might feel differently if her daughter spoke with a strong [Black] dialect, which hearkens back to the idea that there are acceptable and unacceptable forms of English, or even acceptable and unacceptable forms of Black English. This can be compared to D'Anna's comments on parental involvement. Although Noni is an advocate for AAVE, she exercises caution when it comes to her child. She grapples with what is or is not acceptable (Baker-Bell, 2020), but wholeheartedly feels Black dialect is an asset. She adds by saying that "people who believe that African American vernacular isn't an asset can go kick rocks!" To make her point even clearer, she says

> N: African American vernacular is an asset and speaking Spanish is an asset. Put that as a quote, honey!!
>
> *S: I got 'chu! I got 'chu!*
>
> N: Vernacular is not inferior. It has a grammatical
> structure. Er'ybody can't do it, and it is a language that I love! I should have started out with that. English is my second language, Spanish is my third, vernacular is ma' first!"

The more I spoke with these parents, the more connected I felt to them as the mother of their schoolmates. When speaking with Noni, for example, whose words spilled over with beautiful tones of Blackness, I was careful to preserve her expressions and love for AAVE, not only because she told me to, but because it is clearly an important piece of her being. In transcribing those words, I made use of *eye dialect* (Albakry & Siler, 2012; Dufresne, 2003; Walpole, 1974), non-standard spelling of non-standard language varieties, to highlight their pronunciation and patterns. This brief, though meaningful, moment of our conversation reflected a raw, unabashed expression of defiance. In addition, it showed AAVE in context and motion. As Noni states, "er'ybody can't do it." AAVE speakers know when and how to use it not only as a mode of communication, but a means for emphasis within a conversation using more standardized speech. This decision was Noni's to make, and I followed along as a fellow AAVE speaker.

Speaking with Jamila and Aaron filled me with warmth; I felt that I was sitting around the kitchen table at my grandmother's home, listening to her anecdotes, throwing SAE to the wind, and speaking how the ancestors intended. I felt inspired to create an ethnographic poem about my experience with them:

When Typing "none" and "um-hmmm" is Not Enough

for this researcher to transcribe the words of Black parents whose children are emerging bilinguals, because they are not just answering my questions, but their culture rises with inflections up to the ancestors and down to earth again.

How do you transcribe a *lewk*, rolled eyes and an um-hmmm, crashing like waves, settling like soft foam into rough sand?

I don't remember none of it, this mother said about her high school Spanish classes. I will not 'correct' anything. She said what she said. She did not say "I did not remember any of it" because she can't, but because she don't.

Discussion and Implications

Overall, the parents see Bethanyville's DLI program as beneficial to their children's education. However, they also perceive its drawbacks. Malcolm, for example, sees great benefit in learning the language from a young age and can see that Jewel is excelling in and enjoying her language learning experience. She has also used her language skills to help others, something that, as a parent, he was very proud of. Aaron and Jamila describe their satisfaction with the program, saying "I like it" and "highly satisfied." I asked more specifically what they like about it. Aaron responded that "they learn somethin' new that they can use when they get older. And by the time they get to high school, they'll be moving on to somethin' else."

Our county's website states that

> [c]ommunication and collaboration in the global marketplace will become increasingly valuable skills for our students as they prepare for college, careers, and citizenship after graduation…a new program promises to prepare students for this 21st century reality through Dual Language Immersion (DLI). (Website[10], 2022, n.p.)

African Americans and AfroLatinx/é students are part of the growing, changing demographics of dual language immersion, and forms of parental engagement and involvement are changing along with them. However, to date, the research on African American families and DLI experiences has not grown in the same way. What is known is that African American and Latinx children can and do benefit from bilingual education programs. When their language varieties and cultures are invited into the classroom, the translanguaging and transcultural interactions

[10] For confidentiality reasons, some information cited in this paper is not included in the references.

among students allow for richer engagement in the classroom and stronger community relationships (Bauer & Harrison, 2015; Bauer et al., 2020; García, 2009).

The present study sheds light on African American and AfroLatinx/é parents' L2 educational backgrounds and their self-perceptions regarding their own language and academic abilities as they parent bilingual children enrolled in a dual language immersion program. Parents have valid concerns about DLI as well as emerging senses of agency, and families are already skillful in many varieties of language and insistent on their own and their children's success in school. From the parents interviewed in this study, we learn that these African American and AfroLatinx/é have varying geographic and educational backgrounds that inform how they raise their children and how they want them to be educated.

As DLI parents, the experiences they have had influence the choices they make for their children and the expectations they have for teachers and administrators. They define parental involvement not in terms of socially constructed standards determined through hegemonic narratives, but by their own engagement practices with each other and within their community. Each is supportive of their children and dedicated to keeping their children in the program for the long-term. Jamila and Aaron's son Ezekiel, for example, is entering 8th grade with my son Foré. Both are students in the middle school optional DLI continuation program with many of their peers whom they have studied with since kindergarten.

Yazmín says that although she speaks Spanish and identifies as Afro-Latina, "it's not enough for me, like I wanted my kids to speak more and speak better, and know all of the words, right? In certain settings, I don't know certain things." The settings she refers to hearken back to her childhood, when she often fulfilled the role of family language broker (Peace-Hughes et al., 2022), translating for family members at the doctor's office and helping them navigate through

language and culture barriers. She says, “I don’t know all of the words that there could possibly be because there are certain words that I don’t use, and I wanted them to know more than me and speak better than me.” Knowing more and speaking better are directly connected to her experiences as a child and young adult, where her rich linguistic heritage was overlooked by teachers, leaving her feeling as if her culture, her language, were not enough. Her son’s education is how she reconciles and heals from those experiences.

As DLI programs continue to grow in areas with large African American student populations, the questions will shift from whether to offer these programs in predominantly African American communities to how they might be offered, by whom, and using which varieties of Spanish and English. From this inquiry, I predict increases in African American DLI access will lead to a necessary deficit to asset shift in perspective with regards to the contributions of African American and AfroLatinx/é families involved in bilingual education and language education in general.

As both a researcher and DLI parent, I look forward to seeing how foreign language education in our community continues to strengthen, recognizing that it is parental involvement, in all its forms, that keeps dual language immersion growing in the most unlikely of communities. However, these shifts will only occur if African American parental concerns are recognized and attended to, and our voices, with all their layers and complexities, are heard.

APPENDIX A

DUAL LANGUAGE PARENT SURVEY

https://ugeorgia.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a3FMcTkNdlfStwN

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

[Topics to be covered]

- Origin of birth
- Identifying qualities (Race, Gender, Marital Status, etc.) – Covered in Survey
- Language education experiences from childhood to most recent
- Decision about enrolling child/ren in DLI
- Expectations of children about dual language education
- DLI engagement with the child/ren and other stakeholders
- Deficit Perspective

1st Research Question: **What are the world/foreign language educational experiences of African American parents?**

QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION #1

1. Okay, so, where are you are from?
2. And where did you grow up?
3. What was the neighborhood like?
4. How would you describe the foreign/world language education you received if any, beginning from the earliest to the most current?
5. How do you feel about the language education you received?/How do you feel about not receiving language education?

6. I have heard some people argue that African Americans shouldn't study or aren't good at studying foreign languages because they don't know English well enough and English should come first. What do you think?

2nd Research Question: **Why do African American parents choose to enroll their African American children in dual language immersion (DLI)?**

QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION #2

1. So, you mention in the survey that you have (#) child/children in the DLI program. Why did you choose to enroll your child/ren in DLI?
2. What were your biggest concerns about enrolling your child in a DLI program?
3. How would you describe your expectations of your child/children academically?

3rd Research Question: **How do African American parents of African American DLI students engage with their child/ren, fellow parents, teachers, and administration?**

QUESTIONS FOR RESEARCH QUESTION #3

1. Does your child have homework in DLI?
2. (If yes) How does your child complete their DLI homework?
3. How would you describe your level of parental involvement in the DLI program inside and outside of school?
4. How would you describe your relationship with the DLI teachers and staff?
5. Tell me about a memorable interaction you've had with an [school name] teacher or staff person--something that was very good/positive or not--or both.
6. How would you describe your overall level of satisfaction with the program?

[Close interview, ask if participant would like to add anything and if I can follow up]

CHAPTER 4

CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN WORLD LANGUAGE EDUCATION: A DISCUSSION OF DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND PARENT UNDERSTANDINGS

When considering dual language immersion (DLI) program planning and the target families who enroll their children in these programs, discourse analysis methods can be useful tools to frame the positioning of parents and their children, teachers, administrators, curricula, and program and policy documents. Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), for example, is an approach to qualitative analysis that "rests on the notion that the way we use language is purposeful, regardless of whether discursive choices are conscious or unconscious" (Mullet, 2018, p. 116). CDA originates from various critical and theoretical perspectives, all of which recognize the power of language in social discourse.

Applying this method to DLI program-related documents distributed to families gives us a glimpse of the expectations administrators have for parental involvement and engagement with students and within the program. It also establishes who has the authority to decide what kind of child is the ideal DLI participant, and what kind of child would be better served in the traditional (read: English-only) program. In this paper, I present a CDA through the lens of Critical Race Theory (CRT) of a published 2022-2023 document titled "Dual Language Immersion Program: Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings" (see Appendix C). The DLI program is offered in in a suburban county in the southeastern U.S. The schools where the program was initially

offered educate majority African American and Latinx/é students. The guidelines were originally distributed to parents whose children became Granite County's[11] first DLI cohort in the fall of 2014. Historically, research has too often concluded that African Americans are unable to succeed in academics generally and in world language study specifically for a variety of questionable reasons—inferior intelligence (Herrnstein & Murray, 1994), impoverishment (Payne, 2005), inadequate physical attributes (see Harris et al., 2000), and inability to master their first language (see Gross, 2016) among them. I seek to uncover subtle, racialized ideologies in dual language programming as laid out by the authors of this document and to answer the following questions: *Who is the ideal DLI student participant in Granite County's DLI program?* and *What are the implied expectations of parents who are considering enrolling their children in the program?* I refer to Mullet's (2018) article on the tenets and processes of CDA to guide this analysis. To begin, however, it is important to provide a historical look at world language education, how racial and other biases have played out in bilingual programs, and some examples of critical research on such discourses.

Ethnicity and Racialized Discourses in Bilingual Education

For well over a century, the U.S. has experienced significant shifts in language policy and planning. From the dominance of Latin study in the late 1800s to the rise of German as a popular language of study leading up to World War II, public school language programs are influenced by political as well as demographic shifts in population (Watzke, 2003). "Bilingual education" applies to many forms of language education. It is a blanket term that encompasses many language models, with a distinction made between programs with a goal of monolingualism, and those with a goal of bilingualism and biliteracy. Baker and Wright (2017) cite "competition for

[11] All names related to locations and persons are pseudonyms.

students between public and private schools,…benevolent (or uninterested) school administrators, the isolation of schools in rural areas, and ethnic homogeneity within an area" (p. 185) as several factors that contributed to the establishment of these, and similar, programs implemented during the 19th and early 20th centuries. However, with more immigration came restrictions on language use. The 1906 Nationality Act, for example, required new immigrants to speak English, and in 1919, the U.S. Bureau of Education's Americanization Department adopted English as the sole language of instruction in private and public elementary schools. By 1923, this resolution was decreed in 34 states. Even with these restrictions, there were also triumphs. In 1923, Meyer v. Nebraska held that a Nebraska law banning foreign[12] language teaching to German-speaking students violated the Fourteenth Amendment. This reflected a movement toward protecting the rights and liberties of ethnic European groups that were not yet considered white (Baker & Wright, 2017).

Other historical events also affected language planning and implementation in the U.S. An increase in German-language instruction in public schools coincided with World War II, and the "Space Race" of the 1950s "led to debates about the quality of U.S. education" (Baker & Wright, 2017, p. 186) in science, but also in foreign language instruction. In the 1960s, many states experimented with different types of bilingual education models. The earliest bilingual education programs were established in German-English communities across the United States, with monolingual German education promoted in some. Also, during this time, as waves of immigrants arrived from Cuba to Florida, the first federally funded, public bilingual school was established, becoming a model of dual language education for years to come (Pellerano et al., 1998). Years later, Lau v. Nichols (1974) determined that denying supplemental language

[12] I use the term "foreign" here, recognizing that though problematic, it is still widely used in world language education programs and research (Agudo, 2021).

instruction to non-English-speaking Chinese children in San Francisco was in violation of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. Despite these strides, the politically conservative Reagan administration of the 1980s "raised anti-bilingualism sentiment even higher" (Silver, 2011, p. 13), and along with a push for English-only schooling, by the early 1990s, bilingual education funding was drastically reduced.

Coinciding with the Reagan administration's English-only policies, the mid-1990s saw the Spanish language becoming a popular second language of study, due in part to growing populations of Latinx/é families across the country (Schmid, 2008). As language educators became "witness [to] the failure of traditional foreign-language classes to cultivate functional bilingualism" (Reyes & Crawford, 2012, p. 11), many schools implemented bilingual education programs, including dual language immersion (DLI), that serve English learners, heritage Spanish speakers, and English-dominant speakers. Dual language education is defined as academic content taught through two languages, with time allotted for both. For example, teachers in an 80/20 French-English dual language program would instruct in French for 80% of the day, and English for 20% of the day. Ideally students represent each language equally, so that they are achieving academically in their first language as well as a second language (Reyes & Crawford, 2012). A Spanish-English dual language classroom in the United States, for example, might have equal numbers of L1 [first language] Spanish- and L1 English-speaking students, who, as they learn each other's languages, teach each other through every day, translingual (Cahnmann et al., 2020, Canagarajah, 2013) interactions and shared responsibilities.

Though U.S. school districts are charged with accommodating the needs of incoming students from diverse backgrounds, persistent and historically racialized discourses that favor the interests and education of middle-class whites (Bell, 1980; Flores, 2018; Valdez, et al., 2016) can

undermine the potential of bilingual education programs. In turn, critical analyses identify and resist dominant discourses that favor whiteness (Bell, 1980). Four of the discourses addressed in critical world language education research are gentrification of DLI programs, the exclusion of minoritized student populations in enrollment practices, biased value expectations of parental involvement, and race- and culture-neutral language in program and policy documents. Here I provide examples of critical studies of these discourses.

Gentrification

Through an analysis of policy texts, Juan A. Freire et al. (2017) address a "metaphorical *gentrification*" (p. 601) of DLI programs in a study of Utah's dual language initiatives. The authors discovered that the target population of the programs was white, wealthy, English-dominant families, and their children. The authors cite Flores (2018), who argues that

> the only time the Spanish language skills of Latinxs are typically valued at the institutional level is when they can be used to help white children learn Spanish in dual language programs so that they can perhaps… advance their own careers. (para. 8)

The authors argue that dual language program planners have used the linguistic capital of Latinx students to contribute to the economic capital of White students, with the latter benefitting more from DLI than minoritized populations. In order to serve all populations, however, bilingual program coordinators must effect diversity mandates in their dual-language program policies that consider how these programs are advertised and to whom.

Using a critical race analysis, Burns (2017) observes how white parents' voices are highly valued in contrast to other parents. The author frames her discussion through Harris's (1993) concept of **whiteness as property**, where society establishes a commodified whiteness that is used to gain access and opportunities; consequently, what benefits all others is seen as valuable only when it benefits whiteness. Burns' (2017) study takes place in a Pre-K through

fifth-grade dual language elementary school located in a historically Mexican American community within a large urban school district in the western United States. The author argues that "the tendency for white parents to take over DLI programs is evidence that civil rights and racial progress (in this case taking the form of bilingual education) are only established when they also serve the interest of whites" (p. 341).

In Burns' (2017) study, the participation of low-income immigrant families was vital for continued funding, but their enrollment in the school was on the decline. White families expressed deep concern for the low enrollment, and the author notes "the irony of white families working to increase low-income enrollment in the school of the community they themselves were gentrifying" (p. 345). Findings show that white parents expressed varying "white intellectual alibis" (p. 346) that included beliefs that DLI could serve as a means for social justice and superficial, individual benefits. For example, parents named travel, diversity, and "Latin culture" (p. 347) as things to be consumed. These expressions of privilege played a significant role in how some white parents saw their Latinx/é counterparts. For example, one parent accused Latinx/é families of selling drugs in their neighborhood. Another criticized them for their supposed lack of involvement when observations from the author showed that they were involved, but in ways that reflect "community cultural wealth" (Yosso, 2005,). For example:

> Ana [a Latina and the school's parent liaison] played a crucial role of being unapologetic about asserting the importance and value of parent participation on the Spanish-speaking side and was critical of the English-speaking parents' tendency to minimize or disregard these efforts. By positioning lunchtime attendance and holiday celebration planning as valuable contributions, she valued community cultural wealth as an alternative to the traditional notion of cultural capital... (Burns, 2017, p. 347)

The teachers and administrators in this study challenged the socioeconomic dominance of the white parents in the focal school, while encouraging their Latinx/é parents to voice their opinions and participate in familiar ways, thereby promoting equity. Implementing a critical race analysis

pushes against colorblindness (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) and encourages researchers of DLI to "[examine] the relationship between funding and other organizational structures and the enrollment and participation of families from different linguistic and cultural groups in DLI" (Burns, 2017, p. 349). Critical analyses bring to light how gentrification in dual language programs is maintained by exclusionary practices not only from administrators, but from privileged parents who are only interested in their own needs.

Exclusion

Though DLI programs are traditionally implemented in communities and schools where English-dominant students, English learners, and heritage target language learners are enrolled, some studies have questioned who the targeted population is for such programs. Beginning with a discussion of her positionality as a researcher and teacher educator, Cervantes-Soon (2014) analyzes public documents and websites within North Carolina's two-way immersion (TWI[13]) programs, which have seen a dramatic increase in recent years due to the "new Latin@ diaspora" (p. 65), that contributes to the changing cultural and linguistic landscape of many cities across the United States. As a result, the populations of public schools have reflected this change. Most Latinx/é students whose home language is Spanish and who are identified as English Language Learners (ELL) are frequently placed in mainstream classrooms with minimal ESL services. Cervantes-Soon argues that while TWI education offered a "promising" (p. 67) option for English learners, the silencing of their concerns and interests in favor of dominant (read: white)

[13] The Center for Applied Linguistics (CAL) defines two-way immersion as "[a] dual language program in which both native English speakers and native speakers of the partner language are enrolled, with neither group making up more than two-thirds of the student population" (CAL Glossary of Terms, 2016). It is often used interchangeably with DLI.

voices in public forums made clear that Latinx/é families were not valued, as evidenced by the program's marketing to interested, potential TWI families:

> If the voices of Latin@ parents are excluded from the planning, advocacy, and marketing processes, the same may happen in the classroom. Sure, Latin@ parents might become more involved in TWI programs than they are in regular mainstream classrooms, but we must also consider whether their roles replicate those found in society—such as volunteering to perform menial jobs—that while honorable, do not necessarily allow their knowledge, life experiences, or voices to play a role in the curriculum or policies. (p. 75)

The author calls for meaningful dialogue on program planning that considers the needs of all stakeholder families and their children, engaging in ways that reflect the assets and capital that recent "transnational global citizens" (p. 77) bring to communities and schools.

With a commitment to "disrupting anti-blackness and highlighting the marginalization of Black students in bilingual education and the larger systems that erase the rich linguistic resources of Black children and youth" (Martínez et al., 2022, para. 7), Martínez et al. set out to define "sound educational theory" (para. 23) as it is mentioned in the 1981 appeal of Castañeda v. Pickard. The original case, in 1978, questioned whether two Mexican-American children were denied their rights to a bilingual education program that would allow them to equally and fully participate in their classroom. Originally ruling in favor of the school district, the case was later won through appeal, with one of the criteria for bilingual programs being that they must be founded on sound educational theory. The authors set out to explore what should constitute such a definition and discuss the ways bilingual education programs persist in the erasure of Black students. The authors call for sociocultural perspectives of learning (Vygotsky, 1978) and translanguaging (García, 2009) to be valued. Translanguaging is a non-linear process of bilingualism where students draw upon the whole of their linguistic repertoires to engage in learning and communication with their peers. By answering this call, program planners can develop a sound theory of education that centers African American children in who they are: rich

in culture and linguistic abilities that are welcomed and included in all forms of bilingual education programs.

Bias

In a study of a controversial plan to carry out a Spanish-only initiative in a foreign[14] language elementary school program, Kubota and Catlett (2008) cite Hill's (2001) concept of "language panic" to describe negative reactions towards "increased bilingualism within individual communities" (p. 103). These negative reactions can lead to support of English-only language policies in schools that are resistant to bilingualism and implemented to maintain the linguistic status quo. One example of this is the Oakland Ebonics debate, where the school board proposed the use of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) as an instructional tool, inciting widespread outrage and misunderstanding from various communities (Rickford, 2016). AAVE is defined as English seasoned with "Black flava—with Africanized semantic, grammatical, pronunciation, and rhetorical patterns" (Smitherman, 2006, p. 3).

Though clarification was provided that AAVE was not intended for use as a language of instruction, but as an instructional tool to assist lower-income African American student speakers of this vernacular, the resolution was rescinded. Current discourse around AAVE builds on Smitherman (2006), her contemporaries, and those inspired by her work, and highlights the benefits of AAVE, making no excuses, apologies, or clarifications for its use within classrooms. For example, Baker-Bell's (2020) Antiracist Black Language Pedagogy intentionally empowers students whose home language variety is AAVE. Baker-Bell's (2020) pedagogy urges Black students to "name, investigate, and dismantle white linguistic hegemony and Anti-Black Linguistic Racism" (p. 86), and to unabashedly bring their whole selves to the schooling

environment. This runs counter to the expectations of traditional schooling and language policies in today's environment.

At the core of language policy debates like Oakland is often not the policy itself, but fundamental issues of race, as "they are part of the discourse system of racist culture" (Hill, 2001, as cited in Kubota & Catlett, 2008, p. 105). In the context of the Ebonics debate, the interests of whiteness were not served, and, therefore, programs that would value teaching through AAVE did not gain support. The language panic that ensued from the Ebonics debate reinforced standard American English (SAE) monolingualism, dismissing non-SAE home languages and varieties. Without equipping teachers with the tools to meet minoritized students' needs, low student participation in specialized programs, like bilingual education, are the result (Kubota & Catlett, 2008).

Using a mixed methods approach, which included a critical quantitative stance (Baez, 2007; Stage, 2007; Teranishi, 2007), Baggett (2016) conducted her dissertation research on the under enrollment of minoritized male students (African American and Latinx/é) in a North Carolina, "low-performing," public high school French program. Citing the overall lack of large-scale studies of enrollment patterns in World Language programs, Baggett sought to address questions concerning under enrollment patterns of marginalized students in WL courses at the middle and high school level and how their teachers contribute or deter from the inclusion of these students. Baggett (2016) analyzed these ideas and experiences through the lens of CRT.

One "critical hypothesis" (Baggett, 2016, p. 43) for this study was that access to World Language classes is a form of white privilege, "and that enrollment practices may be racialized and a manifestation of institutional racism" (p. 43). The author found that preconceived notions of teachers and the students themselves, in part, led to the under-enrollment pattern. Some of

these notions were students having "parents who 'don't care,' low socio-economic status, lack of prior achievement, and assumptions about students who did not want to learn" (p. 3). As a white, female teacher, the author recognizes her positionality as a teacher in a predominantly African American school, but unlike some of her colleagues, she held high expectations of her students and recognized their interest and potential in the subject matter. Using a CRT approach to her study afforded the opportunity to expose themes of racial and ethnic inequities in underprivileged schools and advocate for more effect teacher education programs.

Racial and Cultural Neutrality

Recognizing the wide demographic shift from middle to lower socioeconomic status (SES) and from white to Black and Brown in the suburban areas of California, Minnesota, and Texas, Diem, et al. (2016) used critical analysis of race-neutral language in programs and policies of their school systems. Using a critical discourse analysis approach (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997), they determined that the language used in interviews with administrators and policy and program documents did not reflect this shift, and that more inaction than action was offered with regards to making real change from within. The authors state,

> [p]olicymakers design policies with a race-neutral and largely dysconscious purview, an 'uncritical habit of mind' that accepts the existing racial and social order (King, 1991, 135), by assuming a policy as designed will be implemented in a rational fashion and meet the needs of all impacted by the policy (Gillborn, 2005). (Diem, et al., 2016, p. 734)

The authors suggest that deflecting open, honest conversations on race undermines the work that could be done to address demographic shifts in communities and schools. Indeed, the text analyzed in my article reflects similar race-neutral and colorblind (Bonilla-Silva, 2018) language that does not address the specific needs of growing African American, Latinx/é, Asian, and other minoritized populations that are changing the culture of Granite County schools.

Through a discussion of race talk and colorblindness among pre-service teachers who are assigned to majority-minoritized schools, Young (2016) analyzes interviews with pre-service special education teachers who serve these populations. The study highlights colorblindness towards these students, who tend to be over-represented in special education programs (SPED), regardless of school racial demographics. The multiple and intersecting oppressions of students who are given racial, language, and disability labels cause them to face a "high risk of receiving inadequate education, often in segregated environments" (p. 72). Exploring this inequity through questionnaires and an interview protocol with a framework of critical race analysis, the author discovered that while some SPED educators used descriptions that empower students, others used medicalization and deficit models in describing their students.

Young (2016) calls attention to the role of silence on the part of interviewees when race is clearly a major factor in how students are labeled and subsequently funneled into special education programs. The deficit and counter-deficit stories shared in this study reveal very few references to race, 26 explicit references in over 500 pages of text, reflecting the tendency to use implicit and veiled racial terminology to describe students. When teachers use this kind of colorblind language, it "reinforce[s] multiple oppressions through reinforcing white privilege, reinforce[s] medicalization as the primary lens for viewing students in special education, and conflate[s] culture with race" (p. 86). The author maintains the continued need to educate pre-service teachers on confronting issues of race, overcoming their own biases, and preparing educators who are true allies with special education students of color. Here I introduce the methods I employed to critically analyze a dual language immersion document aimed at parents interested in enrolling their children in DLI.

Methods

The term "discourse" is a key concept often used in literary criticism (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981; Bové, 1990). Discourse helps "set the limits of certain kinds of language use" (Bové, 1990, p. 50), establishes hierarchy, and identifies genres. Genres are the many ways discourse can be expressed (e.g. a novel, poem, media report, website advertising a new product, a pamphlet for a new education program, etc.). The style used to create the genre is the final piece of the puzzle. The style of a text contributes to the discourse being persuasive, authoritative, dialogic, etc. In education, discourse "disciplines the judgment, and thereby the response, of students and teachers, and in so doing, reveals its links to forms of power—such as teaching—that have effects upon the actions of others" (Bové, 1990, p. 51). The language used in the text, therefore, and the style with which it is created, evoke arguments that are not explicit but instead lie beneath the surface of a much larger discourse related to power structures that can influence a reader's thoughts and subsequent actions.

Critical Discourse Analysis, which transcends disciplines and theories, affords the researcher an opportunity to expose and discuss hegemonic narratives. CDA requires that one read generously, paying close attention to the social and historical background of the text as well as the entities by which it was produced. Every author is formed by their birthplace; gender, race or ethnicity; social and educational upbringing, and the political climate of the time in which they live(d). Knowing that all texts are created by an author, have an intended audience, and focus on a particular subject, the researcher must also position herself in the work, but move toward the goal of trustworthiness with respect to qualitative rigor (Mullet, 2018). Founded in the 1990s, CDA situates itself within social and political issues that are tied to the spoken, written, and performed discourses we create. Language and social discourse, therefore, are

intrinsically linked to power (Foucault, 1978; 1984). Fairclough (2010), a founding CDA scholar, insists that a successful CDA framework "looks to establish connections between properties of texts, features of discourse practice (text production, consumption and distribution), and wider sociocultural practice" (p. 89). CDA scholars seek to bring an interdisciplinary approach to analysis, recognizing that all discourses have at their core an interplay among social and political structures (Van Dijk, 2007). The act of being "critical" is the not the act of description, but the act of reading, observing, and analyzing a written, spoken, or performed text within the broader context of these structures.

Using Mullet's (2018) comprehensive work on CDA origins, framework, and processes, I analyze the document titled, Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings, which describes one dual language immersion program situated in a suburban county of a large metropolitan area of the southeastern U.S. that has seen surges in population due, in part, to its "average" cost of living and well-rated school system (County Website, 2022). Recently, Covid-19 migrations have also affected the housing market in a way that has increased the value of homes in the surrounding area of the school, changing its racial, cultural, political, and economic, and educational landscape (Why Americans are Rethinking Where They Want to Live, 2021).

Researcher positionality

I am an African American researcher and, currently, a doctoral candidate of language and literacy education, specializing in world language education. I am also a high school Spanish teacher and a former Spanish instructor at a predominantly African American university (HBCU) in the southeastern state in which my family and I live. For several years I served as a substitute teacher for Granite County, often taking jobs in world language education classrooms, including occasionally in my children's schools and classrooms. During my doctoral studies, I have

mentored pre-service language teachers, helping guide them through the certification process, and taught them through a course on infusing culture in lesson planning and instruction. I attended Granite County's yearly pre-service teacher recruitment events in representation of my university's certification program. All these experiences have brought me to, and inform, my research interests.

Most importantly, I am the mother of four African American children, three of whom have been enrolled since Kindergarten in the DLI elementary school program on which this work is centered. Of those three, the eldest is now in seventh grade, studying with his middle school DLI classmates in a continuation model established by our school district. The other two are in 3rd and 5th grades. My oldest child, my daughter, is a sophomore in high school, and has formally studied Spanish, French, and informally, Korean. I consider myself a critical, bilingual education scholar who understands the need for equitable language education, and my work moves toward this end. I was in attendance in March of 2014 when the document under analysis was first distributed to parents, and my interest in analyzing it grew from an educational theory and practice course I took during my doctoral coursework. Claiming a positionality as poet, *motherscholar* (Matias, 2010), researcher, mother, teacher, educator, critical researcher, and bilingual African American woman inform every aspect of my being and my investment in bilingual education.

Study Context

In Granite County Public Schools, the system where my children attend, African Americans represent almost 1/3 of the population (School Directory Information, n.d.). The DLI program began with pilot classes in three elementary schools. By the 2018-2019 school year**,** the program grew to eight schools, seven that offered Spanish, one that offered French. In the fall of

2019, the program expanded to include nine schools and three languages with the introduction of its first Korean DLI program (Williams, 2018). As of this writing, a tenth elementary school has been added to the program, offering Spanish as the target language. Of the ten schools, three are majority Black (two offer Spanish, one offers French), three are majority Hispanic (all offer Spanish), two are majority Asian (one offers Spanish, one offers Korean), and two are majority white (both offer Spanish) (School Directory Information, n.d.). For comparison, The National Center for Education Statistics (https://nces.ed.gov/) reports that the school district is 37% white, 27% Black or African American, 21% Hispanic or Latino, 12% Asian, with the remainder composed of students of indigenous, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander, "other," or of mixed ethnicities.

During the 2021-2022 school year, nine schools offered DLI, with French, Spanish, and Korean as the target languages. A tenth elementary school, offering Spanish as the target language, has been added for the upcoming, 2022-2023 school year. It is important to note that this document was not amended or modified for the 2021-2022 school year, the first full Covid-19 pandemic year for U.S. schools. During this time, in Granite County, parents were given the option of sending their children to school or keeping them online, studying synchronously with their classmates and DLI teachers. Teachers taught both groups of students concurrently. DLI parents, including myself, received orientation updates by email, but this program document was not altered in any way. For the 2021-2022 school year, parents had this same option, but online students had to enroll in the county-sponsored virtual school, with DLI excluded from the curriculum. My children returned to school in-person, as I wanted my sons to remain in the DLI program and wanted all my children to return to some sort of social and academic normalcy.

CDA Process

Mullet (2018) guides the CDA process through seven stages: "1) Select the discourse; 2) Locate and prepare data sources, 3) Explore the background of the text, 4) Code texts and identify overarching themes, 5) Analyze the external relations in the text (interdiscursivity), 6) Analyze the internal relations of the text; and 7) Interpret the data" (p. 122). Fairclough (2010) reminds us that CDA is not merely an analysis of, commentary related to, or description of a text. Instead, it is the "systematic transdisciplinary analysis of relations between discourse and other elements of the social process…[which] includes some form of systematic analysis of texts…[that] addresses social wrongs in their discursive aspects and possible ways of righting or mitigating them" (pp. 10-11).

Though there are many interpretations of CDA that are welcomed in the process, the salient principles, or tenets, are that it is applicable to any discourse one seeks to analyze (transdisciplinary); it focuses on social relations more than on individuals, groups, or official entities (relational) and recognizes that discourse is both one voice and many voices; and, it is multi-layered and connected to other discourses (dialectical). CDA is also inductive, evolving from the specific to the general. For example, in analyzing discourse on world language education, one cannot do so in isolation from the social, political, and cultural discourses that affect how, where, and why programs are implemented. The voices of stakeholders, administrators, teachers, school board personnel, and local and federal governments are all part of the decision-making processes that ultimately affect the lives and education of students

The following analysis employs Mullet's (2018) seven stages using the text I chose to analyze: Granite County, Georgia's Dual Language Immersion Program Guidelines and Parent

Understandings. In particular, I analyze the most current iteration of this document, the 2022-2023 version.

Select the Discourse

The discourse on which I center my analysis is embedded with themes of *gentrification*, *exclusion*, *biases*, and *race and cultural neutrality* that are often found in dual language immersion planning and programs, as well as in the classroom itself (Baggett, 2016; Burns, 2017; Diem et al., 2016; J. A. Freire, et al., 2017; Kubota & Catlett, 2008). Because research has consistently shown that minoritized populations are disfavored as target populations in DLI, evidence of these four issues in the document was cause for concern, both as a scholar and mother whose African American sons are enrolled in DLI.

Locate and Prepare Data Sources

The text offers registration reminders, information on the DLI model, and other important information for parents considering enrolling their child/ren in the program. The document is available in English, Spanish, and Korean on the schools' websites and distributed at parent orientation sessions. The document contains six sections: "Important Reminders," "Program Registration," "Instructional Model," "What to Expect," "Removing Students from the Program," and "Research." My analysis centers on the latter four sections. This was the only document provided to parents of the initial 2014-2015 DLI cohorts and was distributed to advertise the program and recruit prospective DLI families. Since then, there have been other materials offered, including video testimonials and official county and state DLI websites with links to a variety of world language-related information. However, I felt that focusing on this original document, which has not been significantly modified over the past seven years, is

important as it is evidence of consistent, steadfast, and unwavering discursive messages of intent and expectation.

Explore the Background of the Text

Bilingual education programs have grown exponentially in the U.S. in recent years. Dual language (DLI) or two-way immersion (TWI) teach target-language L1/heritage speakers and non-L1/heritage speakers through two languages. There are many dual language models. Some offer 90% of the teaching in the target language (Spanish, for example) and 10% in the dominant language spoken in the outside community (English). Others offer 70:30, 60:40, or 50:50. For the latter, there is a balance of content instruction in both languages. In addition, the populations of student language groups are important as well. Some programs, for instance, might seek to enroll half L1 and half L2 speakers of the target language. Schools that introduce these programs rely heavily on parent participation and are often lottery-based. Research shows that these programs target more privileged populations, with Valdez et al. (2016) using the term "gentrification" to describe the way U.S. bilingual education policy caters to socioeconomically dominant communities. As stated earlier, my focus of analysis is the latter four sections of the document, which exclude the Important Reminders for families with reference to deadlines, the lottery, registration, and enrollment processes.

Code Texts and Identify Overarching Themes

Coding the text and identifying themes was a process that began in 2014 before I began my doctoral studies. In 2014, however, I read through the document with a different lens than when I returned to it in 2016. In 2014, I was a Spanish-language university instructor who was eager to learn more about a new program that our county was offering to incoming kindergarteners. In 2016, those positionalities intersected (Crenshaw, 1991) with my becoming a

critical scholar of world language education. I was also preparing to enroll another of my children in DLI. Reading the document again, I noted various themes that were in line with much of the critical research I was reading on bilingual programming and policies. These themes include *Gentrification*, *Exclusion*, *Biases*, *and Race and Cultural Neutrality* (see Table 2.1). As a mother whose children have spent many years in the DLI program in Granite County, I recognize the dedication of scholars and families, and have interacted with teachers and administrators who work every day to teach and provide a new level of education to this generation of students. With that, I include *Promise* as a theme as well, as there are clear indications of intentional success for the program. Indeed, my children and I have had overwhelmingly good experiences In the program with very few exceptions (Nuruddin, 2022). In addition, fellow DLI parents I have interviewed—with valid concerns about the program—expressed wholehearted joy with the way their children are engaging with their classmates and teachers, and exuded pride in their progress (Nuruddin, 2022). Still, there is evidence of authoritative, biased rhetoric, language that pits "good" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 2) DLI student candidates against those one might consider "bad." Further, there is no significant reference to the majority-minoritized populations that are served through the program (African American, Latinx/é, and Asian), populations whose needs should be met by recognizing and cultivating the cultural and linguistic capital they contribute to classroom, school, and community dynamics.

Analyze the External and Internal Relations in the Text

Here I analyze the external and internal relations within the text. In analyzing external relations, one must address the "social relations that control the production of the text, for example, reciprocal relations: How do the texts affect social practices and structures, and how do

social practices in turn inform the arguments made in the texts?" (Mullet, 2018, p. 124). Alongside the external are internal relations to which the CDA researcher must also attend.

The internal relations of a text explain "how social practices inform the arguments" (Mullet, 2018, p. 122).

TABLE 2.1: Themes and External Relations in the Text: Words and Linguistic Devices

Themes	Examples in the Text
Gentrification	• native vs. non-native • ideal student – L1 English speakers • little research suggested on diverse populations
Exclusion	• ideal student – L1 English speakers; exclusion of students with learning/attention difficulties • very little research suggested on diverse populations
Bias	• language is "new" to whom? • "positive" support • "good" candidate vs. potentially bad candidate • "achievement gap," "high- and low-performing populations" – code for white vs. minoritized students • little research suggested on diverse populations
Race & Cultural Neutrality	• behavior, listening skills, disability labeling • Racially minoritized students are over-labeled in the above ways • no mention of diversity • little research suggested on diverse populations
Promise	• founded and backed by some DLI research • intentional recruitment and retention efforts • understanding that target language fluency is not immediate—in line with research • Thomas and Collier (2010) – widely cited research study

CDA reveals the social dynamics and power relations that exist in all forms of discourse through an examination of word choice and linguistic patterns and devices. We look at elements such as

> headlines and leading statements, highlighted phrases or images, structural organization or layout of the text, use of quoted material, high frequency or sensitizing words, grammar, voice, and linguistic devices such as turntaking, metaphor, or rule-of-three (e.g., "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness"). (Mullet, 2018, p. 124)

In addition to material that exists within the text, we look for omitted, implied, or generalized details, and comment on the overall structure of the text (section titles, for example). In Table 2.2, I include internal elements in Granite County's program guidelines that state or imply how dual language immersion fits within the sociopolitical and educational context of bilingual education and give an overview of how the document is structured to maintain the discourse.

To begin, it is necessary to establish the author and audience of this document. Listed at the top of each page are the names of the county, the program, and the document. The county, in conjunction with select expert individuals, has created this document representing multiple voices: those of the public school system offering the program and those involved in the research and development of K-12 world language education curriculum and standards. At the end of the document are acknowledgments to educator and researcher Myriam Met (1998), two school districts (one in South Carolina and one in New Jersey), and an educational consulting firm. These entities and experts are thanked "for their contributions in creating this document" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 2).

Above the names of the county, program, and title of the document, is a stock image of a tree with the multicolored flags of many nations extending from its branches (see Figure 1). The colorful, bright flags represent many of the countries represented by the four languages of the dual language program: Spanish, French, Korean, and English. The Spanish and U.S. flags are the most prevalent and can be seen at the top of the tree. The South Korean and French flags are represented as well, but the latter is barely visible and much lower than the others. A search for similar photos produced many others the creators of this document could have chosen. However, this stock photo subtly suggests that most of the students who will be enrolled in the DLI program are Spanish and English speakers. Though the first languages offered in the DLI

program were Spanish and French, the former rises to the top as it not only represents many of the students, but also the program offerings. Mexico, Argentina, and Chile are other Spanish-speaking countries represented in this image, however notably absent from this image are the flags of Spanish-speaking Caribbean nations. Again, this is a stock image, however, the choice to include one that favors Spain and South America, while excluding many others, is indicative of a favoring of dominant forms of Spanish.

FIGURE 1: Flag Clip Art from DLI Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings

External Relations

The title of the document, "Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings," immediately establishes a dual focus: the program and the parents. The association that is made between the program and parents is intriguing, as it emphasizes the foci that are most important: the guidelines and our understandings (I include myself). One can interpret these words to be of an authoritative nature, as guidelines are expected to be followed, and understandings are, from the word itself, expected to be understood. Perhaps pairing other terms, such as "Model" and "Information" would not have given the text the authoritative tone necessary to engage and recruit families with well-behaved students who will follow the rules and excel in the program.

Though the overall aim of this document is to advertise the DLI program to parents in a way that suggests its high quality, the authoritative and sometimes biased, exclusionary discourse

are cause for concern. Additionally, because the document has only been mildly modified in seven years, mostly in the Important Reminders section as registration and enrollment processes have been refined, it maintains language that attempts to persuade parents to reconsider enrolling their children if they have behavior, listening, or attention issues. Returning to the four themes of discourse generated from the literature review, I look to Granite County's program document to analyze the ways in which those themes are present in the text. Table 2.1 presents the themes as well as the external relations within the text.

Gentrification of DLI programs.

One indicator that the program leans toward gentrification is located on page 3 of the document. There is an indicator that a student who has learned how to speak their "native" language can learn an additional language. As a researcher of language education, I must ask what is considered the "native" language? Is it English? Spanish? French? Korean? Is it a standard version of one or a combination of languages? Also, there is no reference to the translanguaging model (García, 2009), an effective bilingual education model in which students share their experiences, languages, and cultures in the classroom. This is an inevitable, organic occurrence in any language classroom, yet no reference is made to how the students will engage with one another. The need to show prospective parents that the program is backed by scholarship seems to be more at the behest of the school district, providing the "sound" theory required for bilingual programs to be given the green light (Martínez et al., 2022). However, at least one of those exemplars is cause for concern (Haj Broussard, 2003), and it is the only one that centers African Americans. None center Latinx/é students, and yet with eight schools offering Spanish as the target language, there should be some direct acknowledgment in the research section of this population (Guidelines, 2022, pp. 3-4). Instead, what is evident is a

centering of whiteness, which, as Mullet (2018) suggests, could be unconscious. However, when whiteness is centered, all others are excluded.

Exclusion.

There is a clear attempt on the part of the program to discourage students with disabilities, behavior concerns, or listening difficulties from being enrolled in the program. Though the typical statement of non-discrimination appears at the end of the document on page 4, exclusionary language exists that urges parents to consider whether their child would be a "good" candidate if they are challenged because of disability, behavior, or focus. Phrases like "challenge," "good candidate," "easily frustrated," and "hard time staying focused" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 2) are veiled attempts to weed out students who would require more attention. assistance, or differentiated instruction.

Bias.

There are several examples of bias in this document. First, the idea that the target language is "new" to the student does not acknowledge all the ways we engage with the target languages in our everyday lives. In addition, some of the students might already have a background in the target language or languages that are not taught or acknowledged in the classroom setting. For example, a student might speak Arabic or Mandarin at home with their families, and meanwhile are learning through English and French at school. The home languages of these students are as important to cultivate as the target language instruction in the school. The binary of target language teacher vs. "other" also pits one educator against another. Whether this claim was conscious or unconscious (Mullet, 2018) is not evident here, still, this DLI program favors the target language teacher while the English teacher is othered.

Another concern is the expectation of parents to provide "positive support and encouragement" which is "important to a child's success in the program" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 3). No recommendations or definitions are provided as to what constitutes these expectations. Nevertheless, research shows that the involvement of parents from minoritized communities tends to be seen negatively (Burns, 2017; Greene, 2013), as it does not align with dominant expectations of parent involvement (Burns, 2017). However, their involvement is rich with "community cultural wealth," (Yosso, 2005) as they participate in ways that represent the cultural and family values that are particular to their ways of knowing.

Race and Cultural Neutrality.

I argue that the entire document, Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings, is neutral in terms of directly addressing race and culture. No mention of the populations served by dual language is made, and very little direct acknowledgment in the supporting research articles is offered. We may know what the target languages are; however, the target audience is unclear. The original five schools in Granite County's DLI program were all either majority African American or Latinx/é, yet no reference is made for the need for diversity and inclusion in language programs, and the document has not been modified to reflect other demographic shifts. The county defines educational equity as "providing access to ensure that all students have the knowledge and skills to succeed as contributing members of a global society, regardless of race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnic background, English proficiency, faith, socioeconomic status, or disability" (Granite County Public Schools Website, 2020, n.p.). This being the case, the program guidelines, a first point of contact for parents, should directly address the needs of all students, and ensure that they are valuing all forms of parental involvement that contribute to student success.

Internal Relations

In Table 2.2, I analyze the internal relations within the text, or the text's *interdiscursivity*. Interdiscursivity can be defined as the mixing and melding of discourse, genre, or style of the document, revealing linguistic devices and sensitizing words laced throughout that influence the audience's feelings and actions. No matter the combination, there are always embedded social and institutional messages within a text (Wu, 2011) that can be explored for the messages they communicate to the audience.

TABLE 2.2: Internal Relations in the Text: Interdiscursivity

Document Sections	Elements of the Discourse
Instructional Model	• School exerts power over who can gain "late" entry • No guarantee of continuation based on present model, yet parent dedication to program is key.
What to Expect	• "Research shows" – convinces parents of program legitimacy • Persuasive discourse • "Ideal" student is fluent in the L1 – does not account for heritage speakers or speakers of varieties. • Authoritative language
Removing Students from the Program	• School urges parents to reconsider enrolling students with learning disabilities, concentration, or behavior issues – suggests that services might not be provided • School has more power to remove student than parent – formal process of removal strongly suggested
Research	• Does little to engage diverse communities, who make up large populations of DLI program • Academic, authoritative discourse persuades parents that program is backed by "sound" theory (Martínez, et al., 2022)

Page 1 announces the schools that offer the DLI program and contains deadline reminders as well as the overall registration process, which includes a lottery to accommodate

for an overabundance of interested parents, who might live within or outside of the school zone, seeking program entry for their children. Page 2 includes sections titled “Instructional Model” and “What to Expect.” The document states that the program’s “50/50 Model calls for at least 50% of the school day to be spent learning [the county’s] Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum in the new language” (p. 2). This is explained as a concept in which two teachers work as a team. One of the teachers focuses on language arts and social studies in English, the other mathematics, science, and literacy in the target language. Interestingly, the word “other” is used to describe the English language team member:

> Students will have mathematics, science, and literacy (specific to the foreign language) with one teacher, using the new language. They will have language arts and social studies with the other teacher, using English. Through this collaboration, students will develop proficiency in both English and the new language (p. 2).

Though essentially a collaboration, “**one**”[15] is paired with the word “**other**,” introducing an underlying binary which implies that there is only one official teacher, the “**foreign**” language one. Another binary contained in this passage and in the citation above is the idea of the language being “**new**” to the student, and what might complete such a binary. The author’s implication here is that the ideal DLI student has no prior knowledge of the target language, therefore excluding L1 speakers and L1 heritage learners—those for whom the target is familiar and spoken in the home. The word “target” indicates French, Spanish, or Korean, though a strengthening of English-language and literacy skills is also a goal. In addition, by indicating that some curricula related to STEM, that is, mathematics, science, and technology, will be administered in Spanish, there is an implied reference to the benefits of this type of instruction, especially within minoritized populations that are heavily recruited for such programs (Castro, 2014).

[15] Bold type added for emphasis of quoted terms.

Emphasized in this section is the fact that the program is "**wholly**" voluntary and that it "is only one of many quality educational opportunities available" to students (p. 2). Suggested also is that the program prefers for students to complete the entire program, from K-5. For parents with students entering first grade or beyond, they will be considered "based on available space and additional factors, determined by the classroom teacher and the school principal" (p. 2). Therefore, school administrators have some leeway regarding who enters the program after the initial kindergarten year. One of the factors our school principal stated for the acceptance of "late" entry into the program is the student possessing foreign language skills that meet those of students who participated in DLI during their kindergarten year (DLI Parent Orientation Meeting, Spring 2016). Finally, the section makes clear that the program will continue to expand by grade level and that the school system "is currently collaborating with middle and high school principals to plan for opportunities at the middle and high school levels" (p. 2). The repetition of the word "opportunities," an earlier reference to programs outside of DLI, implies the school system is not guaranteeing the survival of this program over the long term, but that other programs, perhaps based on this model, might be available in the future.

The section titled "What to Expect," which continues to page 3 of the document, details the differences between the daily routines of the DLI and the traditional classrooms. Though no references have yet been named, the first bullet states that "Research shows that children who have learned to speak their native language are capable of learning another language" (p. 2). Again, the ideal of the capable student who is fluent in their L1, that is, English, will be most successful in the DLI classroom. What remains to be seen is how speakers of language variations, such as African American Vernacular English (AAVE), will fare in a classroom that might favor dominant forms of English as the barometer for what is considered "native." And

what of speakers whose L1 or heritage language is neither English nor Spanish? How they fit into the equation might require further inquiry and study.

The remainder of this section is laced with authoritative language, embedding a reference to students with disabilities between two bulleted points that both utilize the word "challenging." The document states that the DLI program is "challenging," suggesting that a good candidate for the program is a child who "is a good listener, flexible, and able to handle transitions" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 2). On the opposite end of the spectrum are students who have "a hard time staying focused may have difficulty with the demands of DLI" (p. 2). Reading generously and critically reveals that students diagnosed with attention difficulties are not ideal for this county's DLI program. Using authoritative phrases to create internally persuasive discourse, such as "research shows" and "research indicates," the document dissuades the parents of certain populations from registering for this "wholly voluntary" program. The unnamed authority of a researcher, an expert on subjects related to the education of another's child might resonate in the psyche of the reader. If "they" say it, it must be true. However, research argues otherwise. In a study on two-way immersion policy, de Jong (2016) supports the advantages of these programs for students with disabilities, stating that "TWI [two-way immersion] students, including students with disabilities and other minority groups, tend to perform as well as or better than similar peers in non-TWI programs in a wide range of contexts on academic achievement and language-proficiency tests" (p. 8). The author encourages pushback against deficit perspectives and moves to reconceptualize bilingual education offerings in ways that engage students and their parents in an equitable, multilingual, multicultural environment beneficial to all. This issue is also addressed in Nuruddin's (2022) interview study of African American parents whose children are enrolled in the DLI program that is the focus of this article. Aurore (pseudonym)

detailed the challenges she and her husband have faced in petitioning for services for their son, Lucas. Their story is a testament to the advocacy of African American parents whose children are diagnosed with learning disabilities, students who are underserved and overrepresented in special education programs (Atchison, 2021; Jordan, 2005). In Aurore's case, her family has had to make the difficult decision to keep Lucas in a program that overlooks his needs so that they can provide him with the Spanish-language instruction they also value and support.

For those students who have difficulty focusing, positive support from home is suggested for student success in the program. This section is followed by "Removing Students from the Program." For parents who seek to remove the child from the program, it is mentioned that "a request to enter the formal process for withdrawal from the DLI program will be addressed only after the student has received the support and help that would be offered any child experiencing difficulties" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 3). "Request," "formal," "only" are used as implicit but powerful retention strategies, intended to thwart parental attempts to remove the students from the program. As the "Instructional Model" section implies, retention is paramount for the continuance of the program, especially for those who have worked towards its implementation, from curriculum designers to classroom teachers. Parents are discouraged from withdrawing their children without good reason, therefore contributing to its overall success. Considering the tenets of CDA, it is the overarching, authoritative voice of the sponsors of this program—the public school system itself—that resounds. It seeks to manufacture consent by implicitly arguing that only formal withdrawal requests will be honored, giving the schools some control over student turnover rates. The positive retention data that results helps establish the DLI program in more schools. Parents, on the other hand, might feel guilty about pulling their children out of the

program, knowing that getting them back in would potentially prove even more difficult than the initial enrollment process.

The fact that the school will go to the necessary lengths to keep students in the program can be seen as encouraging. However, they are encouraged to do so "after enrolling, but before the start of the school year." The word "formal" is repeated with regard to the removal process, and ensures its handling on an "individual, case-by-case basis" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 3). With these utterances, one can string together a unit of meaning that points to the idea that removal is a challenging process. For parents, especially those who live outside the school zone but gained permissive transfer, the daunting task of removing and enrolling their child in a different school might not be worth the trouble. The former principal at my children's school alluded to the obstacles of removal during the information session and seemed careful to avoid offering it as a viable option should problems arise (DLI Parent Orientation Meeting, 2016). The principal supervises the program, serving as the link between program coordinators, the school, and the parents. He carries out the expectations of the program: to make clear the guidelines and expectations to prospective DLI families.

What parents should also expect is that learning and becoming comfortable with using a new language "may take many months (and, in some cases, years)" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 4). Parents, especially those unfamiliar with foreign language study, are encouraged in this section to be patient and not expect their child to become fluent right away. In fact, in the Spring 2014 DLI orientation meeting, the principal mentioned that parents should not expect their children to become engaged with the language until the third year of study (DLI Parent Orientation Meeting, 2014). His assurance to parents is in line with research on dual language programs that show that third grade is a pivotal moment for content learning, as it is "when the curriculum becomes

cognitively more complex" (Alanís & Rodríguez, 2008). However, it also aligns with the power structures in place that dictate student recruitment and retention, encouraging parents to keep their children enrolled to reap the proposed benefits later.

The final section of the document, "Research," suggests relevant bilingual education scholarship. The section is divided into three parts: "Enhanced Cognitive Skills," "Improved Academic Performance," and "Narrowing of the Achievement Gap." Each part begins with the citation of a particular research study, showcasing how DLI contributes to each. Keeping with the authoritative voice of the document, and to drive home the idea that the program is backed by expert research, this section begins by referencing some of those experts: "For further reading, we recommend the extensive work of Dr. Roy Lyster, Dr. Myriam Met, Dr. Wayne P. Thomas, and Dr. Virginia P. Collier" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 4).

Repetition of the title "Dr." and mentioning renowned scholars of bilingual education and curriculum show parents the program's validity in order to recruit and retain them. It also shows that the program is backed by "sound educational theory" (Martínez et al., 2022, para. 7) which is a required component of bilingual education program planning. Also notable is, outside of the title of the program, the only time the word "immersion" is used is in this last section. Why "immersion" is not used more often is a curious decision. One might infer that the program, at the time still in its infancy in Georgia, has not yet proven itself to be a successful immersion model.

In addition, I find it problematic that the only article cited that centers minoritized students in immersion programs does not support critical pedagogies. Haj-Broussard's (2002) comparison study of Louisiana French immersion and traditional education programs yielded promising results on the academic achievement of African American girls in immersion

classrooms, however, in the introduction, Haj-Broussard criticizes culturally relevant pedagogy, Ladson-Billing's (1994) groundbreaking method for teaching in minoritized schools and communities. The author believes that it only serves the purposes of the insider, or the teacher who is also of the same or similar background as her students:

> My core criticism of the culturally relevant perspective is that it is confined to the same fixed frames of reference as the cultural deficiency and the cultural capital perspectives. It has the minority culture on one side and the majority culture on the other. And while it critiques and contrasts the two cultures it sets them both up as stable and unchanging—-the problem of fixity. Anzaldúa (1987) discussed "[t]he coming together of two self-consistent but habitually incompatible frames of reference" saying that it is "not enough to stand on the opposite riverbank shouting questions, challenging patriarchal, white conventions. (Haj-Broussard, 2002, p. 78)

It is concerning to me as to why this work was cited, when there are many others that call for 1) equity in world language programs (Young, 2016); 2) the need to meet children where they are (Malinen & Roberts-Jeffers, 2021); 3) understanding and embracing student and family backgrounds and experiences (Cervantes-Soon, 2014; Nuruddin, 2022), and 4) tapping the resources minoritized families bring to the classroom to build lessons and strengthen teaching methods (Frieson, 2022; Yosso, 2005).

Conclusion and Implications

During the May 2014 information session when this document was first reviewed, which I attended, the principal's words, combined with the words of the school system that are transcribed therein, remind me of the words of Bakhtin (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981), whose method of discourse analysis has informed CDA scholars (Fairclough, 1995/2010; R. Rogers, 2011). He says that: "of all words uttered in everyday life, no less than half belong to someone else" (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981, p. 339). The principal serves as a messenger, representative of a system that dictates guidelines and establishes understandings. The underlying goal of Granite County's DLI program is to retain a certain kind of student—while possibly deterring others—

with the intention of establishing a successful dual language immersion program through the upholding of unsaid standards and biases toward people of color and those with diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities.

Critical Discourse Analysis reveals that Granite County's DLI program caters to L1 English speakers with little to no experience in the target language of study. L1 and heritage speakers of the target language are invited in a way that balances the classroom (recall that Spanish and Korean versions of the document along with registration documents are available), but the intonation of the document reveals that L1 and heritage speakers are not necessarily the ideal, nor the target. We also can infer from the "Research" section, that "narrowing the achievement gap," refers to bridging the gap "between high- and low performing populations" (Guidelines, 2022, p. 3). As these schools serve large minoritized populations with Title I funds, one could also infer that minoritized students, namely African Americans and those on the "low" end of the achievement gap, are the majority populations targeted by the program. However, we must also consider that gentrification and interest convergence have often been underlying goals of bilingual education programs (J. A. Freire et al., 2017; Valdez et al., 2016). Therefore, the potential goal of making schools more attractive to white parents to regentrify suburban neighborhoods (Markley & Sharma, 2016), bringing in higher incomes, rising property values, and increasing school funding, cannot be overlooked.

Interested parents are expected to be committed to keeping their children in the program from start to finish, removing them only in extreme circumstances. Parents in Granite County can send their child to any school in the district provided there are available slots and the parent can provide transportation, so the potential for regentrification is clear. With the neutral tone of the document, there is a subtle dismissal of the growing diversity within Granite County, making

it potentially an attractive option for white families looking to educate their children in world languages. For a county that thirty years ago was 90% white (Local Newspaper Website, 2017), the DLI program could re-shift the demographics of Granite County over time, and bilingual education program administrators might block African Americans and other underprivileged populations from enrollment, as many studies cited in this work have shown.

Omi and Winant (2014) understand race as an "unstable and 'decentered' complex of social meanings constantly being transformed by political struggle" (p. 55). This struggle continues in streets, neighborhood parks, and both university and K-12 classrooms. Critical Race Theory is an ever-expanding framework of research, and its application to education—specifically to bilingual and world/foreign language education—is growing. However, evidence of sheltered racism persists, from the types of student populations who tend to receive quality language instruction to dominant cultural norms that are upheld in classrooms in educational policy and procedure. Racism is evidenced in the ignorance of the histories of those who are minoritized by race, religion, ethnicity, and gender, both inside and outside of formal academic spaces. It is evidenced in race-neutral language that hides the intentions of program designers and administrators. Baggett (2016) suggests that "future research [in DL education] should include work specifically with students of color to explore perceptions about the position of language study as a site of inclusion" (p. 178).

This research seeks to promote inclusive bilingual education programming for scholars in the classroom and the boardroom. As a DLI parent, I would urge fellow parents to delve into the research that is mentioned in this document to gain a clearer picture of what populations policymakers value, and how their curricula, guidelines, and expectations are framed. This will help them more effectively advocate for their children and leverage their collective power, as

dual language immersion programs are fueled by parent support and involvement (Bauer & Harrison, 2015). Also, critically analyzing program policies and guidelines by reading deeply within them is crucial to uncovering veiled biases and centering equity in language education. My positionalities as a DLI mother, resident of Granite County, Spanish instructor, and a critical bilingual education scholar of African and African American descent allow me to read this document through many lenses. CDA, as a transdisciplinary method to analysis, allows me to use all my positionalities to counter the authoritative narrative woven throughout this document.

Granite County has as its slogan "The Promise of Granite." It can be seen inside of schools, on the county website, and on its social media platforms. On one of its websites, this "promise" is described as a campaign that "focuses attention on the importance of public education, the role it plays in our nation, and the outstanding schools, teachers, students and staff found right here in [Granite]" (online promotional materials, 2022). To maintain that promise in dual language immersion education, I urge program planners to take away the proverbial veil, invite parents' voices into the conversation on dual language guidelines and understandings, and embrace the changing dynamics of the surrounding community. I also call for more culturally relevant pedagogical approaches (Ladson-Billings, 2021) to be introduced into classrooms—especially when the teacher is not from the same or similar cultures as their students. By doing so, students' funds of knowledge and those of their teachers are activated, and the cultures of the people whose languages are the "targets" of instruction are embraced. Then, and only then, will the promise be fulfilled.

APPENDIX C

GRANITE COUNTY
DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION
PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND PARENT UNDERSTANDINGS
PAGE 1

County Public Schools
Dual Language Immersion Program
Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings

County Public Schools is excited to offer Dual Language Immersion (DLI) programs at 10 elementary schools; **(Spanish), (Spanish), (Spanish), (Spanish), (Spanish), (Spanish), (Spanish), (Spanish), (Korean), and (French).** Please read carefully the information below before registering your child for this program. The DLI program is intended for entering kindergarten students who plan to continue with the program through at least 5th grade. If you decide to register your student for this program, please complete the separate registration form found on the school's webpage.

IMPORTANT REMINDERS

- Dual Language Immersion registration does not register your child for kindergarten. Kindergarten registration is a separate process. You must register your student for kindergarten at the school for which your child is zoned. If you're not sure which school your child is zoned to attend, go to "Find My School" on the website Watch the website for details about online registration for kindergarten and the documents (immunization and health forms, proof of age and residence, etc.) required for registration.
- 's Dual Language Immersion program requires a long-term commitment on the part of both parents and students to ensure that students get the most benefit from the program. If you expect that your family will be unable to fulfill this commitment, due to a planned move or some other foreseeable reason, please consider whether this program is appropriate for your student.

PROGRAM REGISTRATION

1. Please complete all sections of the DLI registration form online.
2. You will receive confirmation of receipt of the registration form via the email address you provide on the registration form.
3. It is possible that every student registering for this program will not be accepted due to limited space. If more registrations are received than space is available, a lottery will be held of all students whose registration forms were received by the registration deadline.
4. If there are an insufficient number of registrants, the program may be cancelled for the upcoming school year.
5. If a lottery is necessary, you will be informed of your child's registration status upon completion of this process.
6. Students living in the school's attendance zone (on the date DLI registration closes) will receive registration priority. **If a student is accepted to the program from outside of the attendance zone, transportation will be the responsibility of the parent or guardian.** All rules of permissive transfer must be observed.
7. Kindergarten students who have a sibling enrolled in the program receive priority enrollment at the school where the eldest student is currently enrolled.
8. In the case of multiples (e.g. twins, triplets), if one student is selected by lottery to enroll in the program, the multiple sibling receives priority enrollment at the same school. All rules of permissive transfer must be observed.
9. Children of DLI teachers receive priority enrollment.
10. A waiting list will be maintained for both in-zone and out-of-zone students. Waiting lists expire at the end of the kindergarten year. After the kindergarten year, students wishing to enter a program must follow all rules of permissive transfer and demonstrate language skills equivalent to DLI targets.
11. Parents may register students for one DLI school. If multiple registrations for the same student are received, the most recent received will be used. Following lottery, if the student does not receive placement in the selected school, families may contact additional DLI schools to see where space might be available.

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DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION
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County Public Schools
Dual Language Immersion Program
Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings

INSTRUCTIONAL MODEL

1. ' 50/50 elementary school model calls for at least 50% of the school day to be spent learning Academic Knowledge and Skills (AKS) curriculum in the target language. In middle and high school, DLI students have the chance to continue improving their language proficiency following a different model of more focused instruction in spelling, grammar, sentence structure, and syntax in the target language. In middle and high school, students can continue to learn the target language in a culture-rich immersion environment with additional focus on refining these language skills.

- In elementary school, a team of two teachers will work together. Students will have mathematics, science, and literacy (specific to the target language) with one teacher, using the target language. They will have language arts and social studies with the other teacher, using English. Through this collaboration, students will develop proficiency in both English and the target language. At a determined point during the school day, the teachers will switch groups of students so that all students receive instruction in both English and the target language daily.
- , honors its commitment to DLI parents and students with a seamless K-12 language program. As students move into middle school and on to high school, the instruction pivots from 50/50 content-based instruction to more focused instruction in the target language needed to develop advanced language proficiency including strong reading, writing, and conversational skills.
- There is no additional cost to parents for this program.
- This program is wholly voluntary. Dual Language Immersion is only one of many quality educational opportunities available to your student.
- Students enter the program in the kindergarten year. On rare occasions, students may enter the program during 1st grade or later. Opportunities for late entry to the program in 1st grade will be based on available space and additional factors determined by the classroom teacher and the school principal. Program entry after 1st grade will be reserved for students transferring from another Dual Language Immersion school and/or students with a high level of native or heritage language proficiency in the targeted language. Determinations for enrollment will be solely at the discretion of the school administration.
- Each year, the program will expand to the next grade level as students move through elementary school—kindergarten through 5th grade. currently is collaborating with middle and high school principals to plan for opportunities at the middle and high school levels.

WHAT TO EXPECT

While most of the daily successes and challenges in Dual Language Immersion are very similar to those in traditional classrooms, there are a few instances when they may differ.

- Research shows that children who have learned to speak their native language are capable of learning another language.
- Dual Language Immersion is a very challenging program. A child who is a good listener, flexible, and able to handle transitions is a good candidate for the Dual Language Immersion program. A child who is easily frustrated or has a hard time staying focused may have difficulty with the demands of DLI.
- Most students with disabilities thrive in Dual Language Immersion programs. However, research indicates that those students with poor listening comprehension may not be good candidates for this program. Many of these students have significant difficulty processing sounds into language (including their native language).
- Even with the challenging nature of the program, most DLI students are performing at or above grade level in all areas by 5th grade.

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DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION
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- Students vary in the rate at which they learn and use a new language. It may take many months (and, in some cases, years) before a student will feel comfortable speaking his or her new language freely. Your student's teacher will be able to provide you with updates on your student's progress as well as guiding questions to help your child use the new language more at home.
- If a parent has concerns about his or her DLI student, the parent, teachers, and administrators will work to address concerns. However, a request to enter the formal process for withdrawal from the DLI program will be addressed only after the student has received the support and help that would be offered any child experiencing difficulties.

REMOVING STUDENTS FROM THE PROGRAM

- If parents decide not to participate in this program after enrolling, but before the start of the school year, it is their responsibility to contact the school offering the DLI program as soon as possible so that other students on the waiting list may be notified.
- If accepted into the program, the school reserves the right to recommend alternate placement if there is any concern about the child's ability to be successful in this model as documented by academic, behavioral, or attendance data. Positive support and encouragement from home are important to a child's success in this program.
- The formal process for withdrawal from the program for enrolled students is handled on an individual, case-by-case basis.

RESEARCH

Research supporting Dual Language Immersion is vast. For further reading, we recommend the extensive work of Dr. Roy Lyster, Dr. Myriam Met, Dr. Wayne P. Thomas, and Dr. Virginia P. Collier. In addition, please see below for a description of other benefits of Dual Language Immersion with recommendations of supporting research articles.

- ENHANCED COGNITIVE SKILLS

Immersion students, due to the demands, both conscious and unconscious, of processing two languages, typically develop greater cognitive flexibility and demonstrate increased attention control, better memory, and superior problem-solving skills while, at the same time, experiencing enhanced understanding of their primary language.

  - Bamford, K., & Mizokawa, D. (1991). Additive-bilingual immersion education: Cognitive and language development. *Language Learning, 41*(3), 413-429.
  - Maillat, D., & Serra, C. (2009). Immersion education and cognitive strategies: Can the obstacle be the advantage in a multilingual society? *International Journal of Multilingualism, 6*(2), 186-206.

- IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Immersion students perform as well as or better than non-immersion students on standardized tests of English and mathematics, even when these tests are administered in English.

  - Robinson, D. W. (1998). The cognitive, academic, and attitudinal benefits of early language learning. In M. Met (Ed.), *Critical issues in early second language learning: Building for our children's future* (pp. 37-56). Scottt Foresman – Addison Wesley.
  - Swain, M., & Lapkin, S. (1982). Academic outcomes of immersion education. In M. Swain & Lapkin, *Evaluating bilingual education: A Canadian case study* (pp. 56-69). Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters.

- NARROWING OF THE ACHIEVEMENT GAP

Partially as a result of the cognitive demands placed on students who learn content in two different languages, no other intervention model holds greater promise to narrow the achievement gap more effectively between high- and low performing populations than dual language immersion.

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DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION
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County Public Schools
Dual Language Immersion Program
Program Guidelines and Parent Understandings

- Collier, W. P., & Collier, V.P. (2012). *Dual language education for a transformed world* (pp. 44-46). Albuquerque: Fuente Press.
- Haj-Broussard, M.G. (2003). *Language, identity and achievement gap: Comparing experiences of African-American students in a French immersion and a regular education context (Doctoral Dissertation).* Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College.

- HIGHER SECOND LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY

Immersion students achieve higher levels of second language proficiency than through any other language development model. By the end of their K-12 program, students possess bilingualism and bi-literacy.

- Padilla, A., et. al., (2013). A Mandarin/English two-way immersion program: language proficiency and academic achievement. *Foreign Language Annals* 46(4), pp. 661-679.

- ENHANCED GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP

Immersion students are better prepared to collaborate and communicate across linguistic and political boundaries to solve problems as a result of the demands of their learning environments, and they evidence more positive attitudes toward other peoples and other cultures.

- Howard, E. (2002). Two-way Immersion: A Key to Global Awareness. *Educational Leadership, 60*(2), 62-64.
- Stewart, V. (2012). *A world-class education.* Alexandria: ASCD, pp. 136-141.

Thank you for considering the Dual Language Immersion program for your student. Communication and collaboration in the global marketplace will become increasingly valuable skills for our students as they prepare for college, careers, and citizenship after graduation. In , we are proud to offer these innovative programs for students. For further information, please contact the school directly:

Elementary School (Spanish)	**Elementary School** (Spanish)	**Elementary School** (Spanish)
Elementary School (Spanish)	**Elementary School** (Spanish)	**Elementary School** (Spanish)
Elementary School (Spanish)	**Elementary School** (Spanish)	**Elementary School** (French)
	Elementary School (Korean)	

No student shall be denied the opportunity to participate in any program or activity on the basis of gender, race, color, creed, religious belief, national origin, disability, or ethnic group.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

> It is the refusal to remain silent, in and of itself, that gives strength and empowerment in a society determined to cling to established habits of repression. If you remember this, you will understand critical race theory.
> (Taylor et al., 2009, p. 12)

Since its inception in 2014, the elementary school dual language immersion programs in Granite County have been collaborating with middle and high schools to prepare the students to transition into existing foreign language programs, or to potentially continue with the dual immersion model. Despite historically negative claims, current research continues to show that second language acquisition can support L1 literacy in addition to contributing to greater sociocultural awareness. Collier and Thomas (2000), Lindholm-Leary (2005), and others found many positive outcomes of bilingual immersion programs. In addition to presenting a first-hand look at dual language immersion through the eyes of parents, this study also draws attention to the need for further exploration of the experiences of students of color in immersion classrooms.

This study contributes in many ways to current, qualitative inquiry in DLI, and I also hope it will inspire future researcher-parents to connect their stories to the research. Research on the lived experiences of DLI parents and their children could benefit from a more longitudinal study, one that follows the participants and their children over many years, to discover how the students themselves feel about their past/present world languages experiences. Sitting down and recording the experiences and motivations of DLI parents gave an invaluable perspective on how

past language experience can inspire our children to study world languages, both of which may have greater impacts on their futures than we could imagine.

During our interview detailed in Chapter 3, I was curious as to what Jamila and Aaron expect the future of their children's language education to look to look like. Jamila said that her plans are "for them to take another language in high school," with Aaron adding that he also wants them to learn "at least one more language." The idea that being bilingual will be a thing of the past is exciting to me, as someone who grew up feeling uncomfortable with people knowing that I knew Spanish and, even today, is challenged by some to prove my level of knowledge. When it comes to the languages I speak, many people have expressed incredulity that I am an African American whose parents and grandparents were not Spanish speakers, yet I learned to become an English-Spanish bilingual. I have often been asked "How did *you* learn Spanish," or "but do you *really* know how to speak it?" These questions are usually posed to me by other African Americans. In addition, convincing potential employers that I am fluent and capable in the language, no matter what my CV and GACE scores reflect, has posed a constant challenge.

Juffermans and Van der Aa (2013), in discussing voice in educational discourse and over the span of one's life and career, state that

> [e]very actor in educational settings has her or his voice—the capacity to make oneself heard in different contexts—differently construed and constrained. Individual voice is not monolithic and stable across one's life course but changing over time and from context to context. (p. 116)

In other words, as we change and mature, so do our perspectives, which give us a chance to compare, contrast, and reflect on our former selves. In my role as observer, I wanted my participant's voices to reign as counternarratives against the deficit perspective of their world language abilities. Therefore, as a scholar, listening to the incredulity of these families and hearing them speak of the ease with which their children test their language skills on them, each

other, and in public—fearless and proud—reveals that being Black and bilingual is not an anomaly, but too many educators and policymakers believe that the target language is foreign and unattainable.

After my interview with Malcolm, I turned off the recorder. He hesitated and remarked that he had something else to say. I turned the recorder back on. At that point, Malcolm compares African American students of the diaspora to African Americans of the mainland, who are often multilingual. He shared that if *they* can know so many languages, and *we* are related to *them*, *we* should be able to do the same thing. This is certainly something that falls on deaf ears when it comes to formal bilingual education program designers and educators who seek to uphold deficit thinking. As a doting, involved, Black father, he is clear in his opposition, and only sees potential in his daughter, Grace, and in the possibility of all African Americans to pursue and succeed in world language studies.

In sharing my story and the stories of these families, I hope that readers and researchers see their own narratives before them and the value in methods of inquiry where the author actively seeks out their subjectivities, appreciating the "I" as “virtuous, for it is the basis of researchers’ making a distinctive contribution” (Peshkin, 1988, p. 18) to their field.

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