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Life experiences that influence language acquisition in generation 1.5 students

Ellen Sook Hyang Howell

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LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INFLUENCE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN GENERATION 1.5 STUDENTS

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
English Composition:
Teaching English as a Second Language

by
Ellen Sook Hyang Howell

September 2006
LIFE EXPERIENCES THAT INFLUENCE LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN GENERATION 1.5 STUDENTS

A Thesis

Presented to the Faculty of California State University, San Bernardino

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September 2006

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the life experiences that influence language acquisition in Generation 1.5 students in relation to the hegemonic power structure of institutions. Case studies were conducted of five students from first-year writing classes at California State University, San Bernardino.

Three methodologies were used for each student: 1) survey questionnaire, 2) participant-observation, and 3) one-on-one interview. The findings from all three methods were triangulated to produce a thick description of data of Generation 1.5 students’ life experiences.

The findings indicate that for all five students, having knowledge of academic vocabulary plays a key role in these students’ gaining access as members of academic communities. Words contain ideologies of a community; therefore, if students have difficulties in understanding the words, then understanding the ideologies will also be difficult. Having difficulties in understanding the community’s ideologies leads to Generation 1.5 students functioning not as equal members of the academic community but being powerless under someone else’s parameters.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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My deepest gratitude goes to the five Generation 1.5 students, Siska, Emmanuel, Amanda, Nguyen and Soledad, who have willingly volunteered their time to share their life experiences with me. I hope their stories will help other instructors to gain some insight on the knowledge that Generation 1.5 students bring to classrooms.

I would also like to thank Angela Asbell, Dr. Anna Guthrie and Joel Harris for allowing me to meet the five Generation 1.5 students named above and letting me be a member of their classroom community.

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I dedicate this thesis to all English learners and teachers. You have been an enormous strength for me throughout my graduate studies program.
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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

This thesis was developed because of a long-time personal interest in Generation 1.5 students. As a Generation 1.5 student in my middle and high school years, I went through many difficult experiences of learning academic English not only because of my first language and culture but also because of the ways I was socialized and educated. My difficulties in learning academic English also made it difficult for me to be a member of the academic community.

My experience led me to wonder whether other Generation 1.5 students go through similar life and English learning experiences. In order to find out, I asked five Generation 1.5 students, Siska, Emmanuel, Amanda, Nguyen, and Soledad (all pseudonyms), to share their life and educational experiences with me. My thesis aims to take a closer look not only at the life and educational experiences of these Generation 1.5 students but also how their first cultural socialization affects their English academic language learning. In doing so, I will also look at how culture, language, identity, and power are
intertwined in the experiences of Generation 1.5 students as they try to become member(s) of the academic community in an American higher education context.

In doing my research, I had found that all five students had two important similarities. First, all five students were "uprooted" from their familiar surroundings and had to learn new cultural norms. Second, all five students had to learn academic language to become a member of the academic community. The five students came with various life experiences and educational backgrounds. These variations led to different language usage at home and at work/school, as well as different motivations for learning the academic language. Because each student came with her or his own experiences, each also faced different challenges as s/he learned academic English. Furthermore, because each student’s experiences were unique, they faced issues of power dynamic at different levels, both at personal and at societal levels.

The five participants involved in my study in many ways echoed my own experience as a Generation 1.5 student. It is my own experience as a Generation 1.5 student that drives my interest in this important topic. Therefore, I will first briefly share my own experience. Then I will
enter the broader discussion of Generation 1.5 students by reviewing case studies that describe life and education experiences as well as the language and cultural connection of Generation 1.5 students. I will finally analyze the lexical, structural and interactional differences of spoken and written mode of the English language.

As a ten year old Korean immigrant child being adopted into an American home, I came to the United States with only a short list of English words. To help improve my English skills, my mother always encouraged me to read. One of my favorite books was about a monkey named Curious George. Although I liked the stories, I could not understand why a monkey would do activities that humans did. In Korea, stories always involved people and usually had cultural or social lessons, including what people do in certain situations and how people should relate to each other.

A similar pattern of cultural differences in reading materials followed when I entered school and continued throughout my high school years; I could not relate to my readings. In addition, I usually kept quiet during many class discussions on reading assignments because I knew that my opinions differed from others.
When I was in school, I liked to write, especially in my English classes. Every time we got a writing assignment, I worked hard and felt good about the paper I submitted. However, when I got my paper back from the teacher, I was always disappointed in the grades that I got. Most of my papers came back with comments such as "Explain this," "Clarify this," "Expand on this," "Why?" or "What do you mean?" I did not understand these comments because I thought I had explained my points well. These situations happened so frequently that I got to the point where I thought "maybe writing was not for me after all." I was very disappointed by this thought. This thought led me to write and read less. This thought also made me even more disappointed because I could not write in Korean either; in Korea, I had only written two book reports. So, I felt stuck; I could not write in either language.

However, when I entered college, I finally received the instruction that helped me. The instructor gave many assignments that allowed us, the students, to write in different genres. We also had opportunities to improve our grammar and other mechanical issues. Furthermore, we also had opportunities to work in groups. Working in groups helped me to see how other people wrote. I used this
opportunity to improve my own writing skills. For example, I learned that some people used transition words better than I did. It also helped to be in a class with people who were in the same situation as I was in; everyone in the class was learning how to write just as I was. This made me feel not as someone who is different but as a member of a group who was going through the same experience as others. This was also the time when I started enjoying reading again, not only for the content but also to see how other people wrote.

As an adult looking back on my English learning experience, I see that many of my difficulties came from the way I was socialized as a child. As a child growing up in Korea for ten years, I learned many Korean ideologies through songs, art projects, stories, history lessons, and other lessons as well as through teachers’ lectures.

This socialization, however, also occurred outside of the classroom. Korea is heavily influenced by ideologies of Confucianism. Under Confucius teachings, everyone had a place in their society depending on their age, profession, or their place in the family. People of lower status had to show reverence and respect to higher status people. In turn, people of higher status needed to take care and
protect their lower status people. This idea was emphasized in everyday culture as well as in the language. As a young girl, I used one term to address an older girl within my generation. I used another term to address an adult woman and yet a different term for an elderly woman. Similarly, I used a term to address an older boy within my generation, a different term to address an adult man and yet a different term to address an elderly man. I never addressed anyone older than me by their first name; I only used first names with people who were the same age as I was or people who were younger than I.

Furthermore, when I spoke to anyone older than me, I always ended my sentences with the polite form "yo" but spoke casually with people who were the same age as I was or people who were younger than I without the "yo" ending. These ways of addressing and speaking to people were so ingrained in me that I did not even think about it, or ask anyone about it; to do so would have been very rude on my part.

Another reason that I had difficulties in learning my second language (English) was related to cultural differences and how I identified myself. Being an ethnic minority, compounded by the fact that I actually grew up in
a different country had made me aware of who I was and who I was not. I was always proud of my Korean heritage. Yet at the same time, I was very proud to be an American. I always identified myself as a Korean-American.

This dual identity, however, was not always an equal 50/50. In many situations, I identified first as a Korean, then as an American. Because of this categorical identification, it has sometimes put me in powerless situations. I knew a little of both cultures and identified with both cultures but not enough to have full power, or access to the full range of linguistic diversity, in either culture.

Generation 1.5 Students

The term "Generation 1.5" was originated by Rumbaut and Ima (1988) to describe "immigrants who arrive in the United States as school-age children or adolescents, and share characteristics of both first and second generation" (Harklau, Losey, & Siegal, 1999, p. 4). Today, this term is used to describe a group of students who enter college through the American K-12 school system while still in the process of learning the English academic language. One characteristic of Generation 1.5 students is that these
students' life and educational experiences vary greatly, which leads to tremendous variations in their English language abilities.

Due to these variations, it is difficult to define who these students are. Therefore, I would like to conceptualize Generation 1.5 students by analyzing case studies of Generation 1.5 students. These case studies focus on different aspects of Generation 1.5 students; however, all have important and useful information to help better understand Generation 1.5 students. The case study of Jan by Leki (1999) describes his educational experience in American schools. The case study of Horatio and Kaying by Rodby (1999) analyzes motivational factors during their essay drafting process. The case study of Alex and Min by Frodesen & Sterna (1999) describes written English language abilities. The study of Cham by Fu (1995) reviews English learning experiences in two different English classes. The study by Chiang & Schmida (1999) describes Generation 1.5 students' concepts of language and cultural identities. And the study by Goen et al. (2002) describes Generation 1.5 students' perceptions of language fluency and ownership. Through these case studies, I hope to
conceptualize the complex nature of Generation 1.5 students.

The Complex Nature of Generation 1.5 Students

The case study of Jan was conducted by Leki (1999) to look at the “literacy experiences...of [Generation 1.5] students at a U.S. university” (p.19). This study was conducted by using multiple research methods including one-on-one interviews with Jan, observations of Jan’s interactions before, during and after classes, reviews of Jan’s class notes, coursework and course handouts as well as interviews with Jan’s professors and/or teaching assistants.

Jan entered a U.S. high school as a junior with no English training. However, Jan found that ESL and mainstream classes did not challenge him enough. He also felt that native English speaking students were unfriendly to him because of his poor English (Leki, 1999, p. 23). But he enjoyed the “friendliness of...other ‘foreign people’” (Leki, 1999, p. 23). He did not learn English at school but at his full time job.

In college, Jan attended his classes everyday but had difficulties in understanding the academic language, both
spoken and written. He did not like his composition classes because they focused too much on grammar and discussed "boring topics" (Leki, 1999, p. 29). Throughout the first three years of college, he focused more on his GPA and how much each assignment was worth rather than working to build on his literacy skills. He came to view education as a "bureaucratic system" and he was only doing "busywork" to survive in that system (Leki, 1999, p. 30-33).

Furthermore, Jan started college with missed opportunities, to no fault of his own, and was unprepared to be a member of the academic community from the start. He then found non-standard ways to be a member of the academic community such as doing homework as a group where each student completed a part of the assignment (Leki, 1999, p. 30).

Jan’s case study is important because it illustrates the role of academic institutions in many Generation 1.5 students’ lives as they try to become members of the academic community. All the students in this thesis research had experiences of frustrations with the academic institution at some level, some had experienced frustration with the institution trying to do class assignments while
others have experienced it trying to get into or get out of certain classes because of their English proficiency. Many times, my students were in powerless positions, just going along with the system and doing what the institutions required of them.

The study of Horatio and Kaying was conducted by Rodby (1999) to examine social aspects that influence a student’s writing process. The research methodologies used in this study included observations of freshman composition classes and adjunct workshops, interviews of students and faculty, analysis of course evaluations and student writing.

Findings based on data from Horatio indicate that at the beginning of the term, he had many resources that helped him to revise his papers. He was in a fraternity. Some of his fraternity brothers took the same English classes, therefore, after classes, his fraternity brothers, who were also his roommates, helped him with his papers. This assistance allowed him to improve his English language skills and more easily become a member of the classroom community.

However, in the middle of the term, Horatio became active in a political event which led him to be more aware of the differences between “his” and the American culture
(Rodby, 1999, p. 55). With this realization, Horatio “separated himself from U.S. culture, severed his affiliations with Americans and...the university, its courses, and its uses of language” (Rodby, 1999, pp. 55-56). Horatio was absent from classes and although he attempted to revise class papers, he did not complete all the required revisions. Therefore, his realization and separation from the university and the American culture had led him to discontinue with his revisions. This led to Horatio not passing his class.

The findings based on data from Kaying indicate that she also had many resources that supported her ability to write and revise papers. For example, she came from a family who supported her going to college. She also had a strong ethnic identity that helped her to see that she is a member of her ethnic culture. Therefore, her ethnic identity allowed her to see who she is in relation to others especially those who have negative misconceptions of her culture. She wanted to correct these misconceptions. These factors helped her to write papers even if these papers asked her to write on an issue that she did not agree with. In doing so, she also gained valuable academic literacy skills.
The experience of Horatio and Kayang is relevant to my thesis in that the students in my thesis study have varying resources that motivate them to write and revise their papers. Such resources include family situations, their past life and education experiences, and their language skills. In addition, the students have varying feelings about the writing assignment(s) and the services on campus. Generation 1.5 students in my thesis have expressed varying feelings about writing in general. These feelings will be explored in chapter three.

The study of Alex and Min examines their written English proficiency. The researchers, Frodesen and Starna (1999), wanted to find different types of bilingual writers by analyzing their English writing samples and by looking at factors such as education, life experiences and other social factors that are involved in learning the English language. The methods included one-on-one interviews with each student and with their tutors, audiotapes of tutorial sessions (for Min only), as well as analysis of written texts from high school writing classes, college entrance exams, and college composition papers.

Alex received both Spanish and English instructions in Mexico until he was in the ninth grade. He finished his
formal education in the U.S. in the tenth grade. He received two years of ESL instruction where he learned to read and respond to his reading assignments. He stated that he really enjoyed learning English in his ESL class.

At home, Alex spoke Spanish with his family. He also read books and newspapers in Spanish, listened to Spanish music and watched Spanish television shows. Alex spoke Spanish with his peers during his first year in an American school but changed to English as he and his peers became more fluent with the English language.

Alex’s college writing entrance exam showed his general understanding of the reading and familiarity of academic essay. However, it also included linguistic problems such as “errors in verb tense and forms, word forms, idiomatic usage, and function words” (Frodesen & Starna, 1999, p. 67).

Throughout his college years, he was motivated to learn the English language and went to tutoring sessions and conferences to get help with some of the language errors. His grades for various writing courses improved as he progressed to higher level writing courses. However, in general, although his writing improved in rhetorical
patterns and he made fewer linguistic errors, his writing continued to include stigmatized linguistic errors.

Min came from The People’s Republic of China. His knowledge of the English language consisted of the alphabet and a few vocabulary words. His formal education continued after a year he had been in the U.S. He entered the eighth grade and took ESL for three years. Although he excelled in his ESL classes, he did not enjoy learning English because he was in an unfamiliar environment. “The culture was strange to him; he ‘got lost’” (Frodesen & Starna, 1999, p. 70). Therefore, he did not study English and mostly interacted with circle of familiar Chinese friends by playing basketball.

Min was more motivated to learn English when he found out that he could not get into a biology class because of his low English proficiency level. He put more effort into his English learning, enjoyed reading more and felt good about the papers he had written. This improvement helped him to move from ESL to mainstream English classes where he received positive comments on his papers. However, little attention was given to his grammatical errors. And although he had a few native English speaking friends, his circle of friends mainly consisted of Chinese students.
Min’s entrance writing exam showed that Min understood the main points of the reading and that he followed the prompt. He argued his points well and supported his arguments with background information. However, his response was short and consisted of many variety of linguistic errors such as “word forms, verb forms and tense, subject-verb agreement, article usage, noun number, word choice and sentence structure” (Frodesen & Starna, 1999, p. 71).

Min was placed in an ESL class in his first quarter of college. He completed all his assignments; however, he showed little interest in improving his linguistic abilities. Although he had improved his writing abilities and passed the class, he was not allowed to enroll in mainstream composition classes because of the “frequency and nature of language problems” (Frodesen & Starna, 1999, p. 74).

Not being able to enroll in mainstream composition classes motivated Min to work on improving his language skills. He repeated the ESL class and received tutoring. This helped him to improve his English so that he could enroll in the mainstream composition class where he further developed his “rhetorical skills,...syntactic complexity
and reduced frequencies of sentence structure errors” (Frodesen & Starna, 1999, p. 75).

This study demonstrates the importance of considering a student’s cultural identities as well as life and education experiences rather than just the surface factors of “language spoken at home or age of arrival” (Frodesen & Starna, 1999, p. 64). These factors include the student’s first and second language abilities as well as their experiences of using the languages, literacy skills, kind(s) of English language instructions and their experiences of the instructions, and how the student feels about her or his English language usage. These factors play a key role in the student being able to build on their English language abilities. Alex had some English instruction in Mexico and had positive experiences of receiving ESL instructions in the U.S. His experiences also included him receiving support from his family. Alex had a strong “integrative” motivation for wanting to learn English for personal growth and sought out help from tutors and instructors (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Dornyei, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 1999). Min, on the other hand, received little English instruction, received little support from his family, waited a year before finishing his
formal education, received little linguistic instructions from his teachers and sought out help only when "instrumental[ly]" motivated by external factors of not being able to get into the classes he wanted (Diaz-Rico, 2004; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002; Dornyei, 2003; Lightbown & Spada, 1999). In this thesis, some students were motivated to learn because of their history yet others had more difficulties. These histories will be examined further in relation to power dynamics in chapter three.

The case study of Cham is one of four case studies in a multiple case study conducted by Fu (1995) to examine English education experiences. The methods included class observations, one-on-one interviews with Cham as well as his family and with his ESL tutors.

Cham entered his U.S. high school as a junior. He was tracked into the lowest English class where the teacher mainly focused on vocabulary and reading assignments that did not relate to students' lives. She also focused on grammar and sentence structures in Cham's writing assignments rather than on his ideas. Cham studied hard for the weekly vocabulary tests and worked hard on his writing assignments based on the teacher's prompts. However, he still could not pass the vocabulary tests and
the writing assignments that came back with teacher's comments on sentence structure errors and how he could re-write his papers.

Cham received help from his ESL tutors who met with Cham’s English teacher and tried to ask the teacher to focus more on Cham’s strengths such as his ideas rather than on his linguistic skills such as vocabulary, grammar and sentence structure. This meeting, however, led to each holding onto their views stronger and Cham moving down to the tenth grade English class.

The tenth grade English class was a positive experience for Cham. The teacher focused on reading discussions that permitted students, including Cham, to interact with each other and gave writing assignments that allowed students to express their ideas. Furthermore, the teacher wrote encouraging comments by asking Cham to clarify and expand on his ideas. These kinds of instructions helped Cham to feel more comfortable about using the English language in and outside of the class. This positive experience motivated Cham to learn English on his own. He felt good about his writing abilities and edited his own papers. He also followed through on his
dream of writing a book about his life before coming to the U.S.

Cham’s story illustrates the fact that teachers have tremendous power in implementing the kinds of instructions that allow students to use their own voice to express themselves so that they can build on their skills. This study is relevant to my research in that students come with wide range of knowledge but have difficulty expressing them because of their language skills. This study is also relevant to my study in that teachers are in powerful positions to choose the curricula and areas s/he wants the students to focus on.

The above case studies are indication of how cultural identity, education background, and motivation play important roles in learning academic language for individual Generation 1.5 students. However, “Generation 1.5” is also a term to describe a collective group of students who are learning the English language in the academic community. It is important to recognize Generation 1.5 students as a collective group because recognition brings awareness of these students’ presence in the classrooms. To understand the language issues that are common to Generation 1.5 students as a group, I would like
to discuss two more studies. These studies focus on
Generation 1.5 students' cultural and language identities
as they learn the English language.

Language and Cultural Identity

Chiang and Schmida (1999) analyzed language identity
and ownership of a group of Asian students, more
specifically, the boundaries, impact and implications of
using and identifying with a certain language and culture.
This study was limited to Asian student population because
of the large Asian population in the college where this
study was conducted. The methods in this research included
one-on-one interviews with 20 students as well as analysis
of their writing samples that included students' relationship to literacy and language.

The results indicate very complex relationships among
language usage, identity and ownership. For this group of
students, English was their primary language both at home
and school; therefore, they were more fluent in English,
both spoken and written. Their home language was used only
occasionally to communicate important information, usually
to their parents. English, then, was the language that
they were more comfortable in and used to think more abstract thoughts.

However, students in this group either do not refer to English as their native language or are not sure whether English is their native language. This sentiment is expressed in the following interview with one student:

Researcher: Are you a native or a nonnative speaker of Vietnamese?
Nguyen: I’m not sure. I don’t know. [pause] I think I’m a nonnative ‘cause my Vietnamese isn’t that great.
Researcher: And what about English?
Nguyen: I think I’m native. (Chiang & Schmida, 1999, p. 89)

The results also indicate that all the students in this group reported that they were bilingual even though they did not know how to read and write in their first language (Chiang & Schmida, 1999, p. 85). This bilingualism, however, does not stem from actually being able to speak, read and write in both languages but because “language is being used as a synonym for culture” (Chiang & Schmida, 1999, p. 85). Therefore, their bilingualism comes from their cultural identity. As one of the participants
stated, "I am a Chinese American. So, I guess I'm bilingual" (Chiang & Schmida, 1999, p. 87).

This cultural identification, however, does not have the same meaning as being members of that culture. "[T]hey are not fully comfortable with speaking, reading, or writing their heritage language, [yet at the same time,] they are not fully integrated into the culture of mainstream, academic English" (Chiang & Schmida, 1999, p. 86). Partial integration makes "owning" a language difficult, especially if cultural identity is equated with language identity. English, then, becomes a tool to carry out certain activities or express certain needs. One student stated, "English is a great tool, a tool you know, tool for me that I use as a language, and you know, to write my papers and stuff like that, useful things" (Chiang & Schmida, 1999, p. 91).

This study pertains to my research in that many of the students in this thesis have identified themselves with their first culture. And for some students, certain aspects of their first culture, such as the school system, is more positive. This identification has significant implications as Generation 1.5 students learn the English language.
Goen, Porter, Swanson and Vandommelen (2002) also focuses on language identity and usage of Generation 1.5 students as a collective group. The methods included survey questionnaire regarding students' language profiles and education history, interviews, and writing samples of students' perceptions of themselves as language users.

The results from the survey questionnaires divided students into three categories. Students in Group (A) considered English their best language (42%); students in Group (B) considered their home language their best language (42%); and students in Group (C) considered both languages as their best languages (16%). In group A, the majority, 68% use both English and another language at home. In group B, 82% use their first language at home. In group C, 45% use their first language at home. Generally, then, only 3% of the total use only English at home.

These results indicate the complex linguistic backgrounds Generation 1.5 students bring to classrooms. Typically, Generation 1.5 students' language usage differs depending on the relationships they have with their siblings, parents, friends, instructors, bosses, etc. However, Generation 1.5 students' language usage also
depends on type of language they use with certain people. For example, two of the students in the study had stated that "the version of English that they and their teenage friends use is filled with slang and their own 'short cuts' in terms of vocabulary and forms" (Goen et al., 2002, p. 136). In other words, the version of English used at school to do exercises and write papers for their teachers differs from the version they use with their family and friends. These different versions make "owning" the version to do school work difficult because Generation 1.5 students essentially use school version of English in a certain time and place to carry out a certain activity.

This study is important in that it demonstrates that language identity corresponds with language ownership. There is a time and a place where students use a language. For most of the students in this thesis, English seems to be used only in school for educational purposes.

It is then important to discuss the different versions of English. Generation 1.5 students use the spoken version with their family, friends and with others when they are interacting with them in face-to-face situations but use the written version for school work. Therefore, for Generation 1.5 students, there is typically a disparity
between their spoken English proficiency and their written English proficiency.

Spoken and Written Language

In order to have a deeper understanding of Generation 1.5 students' English language abilities, it is important to analyze English in two modes, spoken and written. Spoken and written language consists of different elements. The spoken mode includes communicative elements that explain Generation 1.5 students' language strengths and the written mode includes elements that Generation 1.5 students often have difficulties with.

There are lexical, structural, and interactional differences in spoken and written modes of the English language (Chafe, 2002; Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Furthermore, knowledge of the written mode of a language, or academic language, is built on existing knowledge of the spoken language (Horowitz & Samuels, 1987). Many Generation 1.5 students have learned the spoken mode by listening and speaking to others in the society. Therefore, their writing represents their "ear-based" learning (Reid, 1997, p. 18; Roberge, 2003, p. 10). This has significant language usage and academic literacy
implications as Generation 1.5 students try to become members of the academic community in American schools.

As children, we learn to communicate our needs and desires by speaking to others in natural settings. Through speech, we learn the meanings of certain words, phrases, and general structures of a language by speaking to others in our lives. We all grow up with the spoken mode as the most natural form of communication (Horowitz and Samuels, 1987).

Spoken language also involves two or more people exchanging ideas in a social or a face-to-face situation. As we learn to speak, we learn that language is used to communicate with others. There is a mutual understanding among people who communicate orally because the speakers and listeners are present at the moment in the same environment. Written language, on the other hand, involves an audience who is not present at the moment. The language is words and phrases on paper and the ideas are passed from one person to another without any kind of acknowledgement. In other words, spoken language is referred to as “context dependent” because the message in the spoken language is received and responded to immediately (Kramsch, 1998, p. 40). Written language, however, is referred to as “context
reduced" because the message is being produced in one environment and received in another (Kramsch, 1998, p. 40).

In the spoken mode, we receive immediate feedback from the people around us. This builds connections with people. By using the spoken language, Generation 1.5 students typically build connections with people in their environment. Writing, on the other hand, typically detaches Generation 1.5 students from their audience. Therefore, it is more difficult for Generation 1.5 students to have a connection with their audience.

The topics in spoken language are usually spontaneous and depend on the people in the interaction. The topic may change several times during an interaction. "[O]ral discourse...is fairly chaotic, 'random,' or unstructured" (Johnstone, 2002, p. 66). The topic in written language, however, stays the same throughout the text. Western academic written texts usually start with a thesis at the beginning and this thesis is supported with examples and details.

All of us use both modes to communicate with others. However, the written mode is learned by reading and/or writing texts; in other words, the written mode is learned visually. Because Generation 1.5 students are typically
described as "aural" learners, their writing patterns also typically reflect their spoken language abilities (Reid, 1997, p. 18; Roberge, 2003, p. 10).

The lexical and grammatical elements differ in spoken and written languages as well. Speakers and writers choose their words from different lists (Chafe, 2002; Chafe and Danielewicz, 1987). For example, speakers in colloquial situations may choose words such as "cool," "awesome," and "swell" (Chafe, 2002). However, these kinds of words are often not used in the written language. Spoken language also uses more contractions and hedging whereas the written language often does not use these elements. Furthermore, spoken language consists of fragments and slang whereas the written mode usually consists of complete sentences.

With the above differences, language is used differently by people in different context to gain and add on to existing knowledge as well as to express one's knowledge. Using a language creates language; meaning, language users create and re-create language by interacting with people, repeating what they see, hear and/or do, noticing things and people in their worlds. And by using a language, one builds on one’s existing language skills.
Language is then looked on “not [as] an object but [as] a process” (Johnstone, 2002, p. 235).

Since Generation 1.5 students are aural learners, they have often developed better English language skills for the spoken language (Reid, 1997). Because spoken language rules differ from written language rules, Generation 1.5 students’ knowledge of the language rules “limits” their ability to express themselves in the written mode (Reid, 1997).

Writing is a mode we learn in school to produce papers. It often contains unnatural words and phrases to convey ideas for our teachers (Horowitz and Samuels, 1987). This mode is used in a certain time and place for a certain purpose. This is especially true for Generation 1.5 students because as stated in case study by Chiang & Schmida (1999), the written language is a “tool to write...papers” (p. 91).

Generation 1.5 students have lived in two communities and have knowledge of both languages. And because of this knowledge, they are able to apply their skills in both languages in different contexts. However, this knowledge is often overlooked by others because of Generation 1.5 students’ written language skills. This is especially true
in academia where written language is used to communicate with others. The written language is used to express and gain further knowledge. Therefore, there is an assumption that if a student is not able to use the language, then that student is not able to express or gain academic knowledge.

Moreover, the academic community, or institutions, with commonly shared ideologies expressed through language, have been and continue to be the holders of power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990). This power allows the institutions to set standards that guide and regulate what is "real, normal, natural, good and true" (Bizzell, 2002, p. 1). Based on the institution’s standards, they have been the gatekeepers who permit access to those who will continue to "reproduce" the ideologies so that the institutions can maintain their power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990, p. 152).

Generation 1.5 students often come to the American academic institutions with knowledge and language that differ from the academia. This means that all students must "work within" the existing power structure of the academic community (Vickers, 2004, p. 292). Working within someone else’s, or the institution’s set structure leaves Generation 1.5 students in powerless positions and may lead
these students to use other means of gaining power. Vickers (2004) states that "dominance can also be achieved by manipulating or refusing to work within that paradigm" (p. 299). This was evidenced by Leki's (1999) study of Jan. Generation 1.5 students are in inherently powerless positions in academia because of their written language skills. It is important to gain an understanding of ways to empower these students so that they can ultimately become full members of the academic community.

In this chapter, I have conceptualized the life and educational experiences of Generation 1.5 students both as individuals and as a group. I have also described the difference between modes of language the Generation 1.5 students are familiar with using, the spoken language, and the mode of language the institutions require of them, the written language. Furthermore, I have discussed the hegemony of power as Generation 1.5 students try to gain access as members of the academic community. This power relation will be discussed further in chapter three as I analyze personal experiences of five Generation 1.5 students. In chapter two, I will describe the research setting and the ethnographic methodologies I have used to collect my data of Generation 1.5 students. Chapter three
will include my analysis of personal stories of Generation 1.5 students. Chapter four will discuss the implications and possible solutions when working with Generation 1.5 students.
CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

Theoretical Framework

Learning a second language occurs slowly over time with different people at different places; in other words, learning a second language is a "social, cultural, and temporal activity" (Morita, 2004, p. 575). Learning a second language is influenced by many factors such as the learner’s background knowledge, experience and identity. However, it is also influenced by the community’s norms and standards.

The learner’s ability to learn may be complicated by the community with its existing power structure. The power structure may permit or limit the learner’s ability to gain the necessary skills to be a member of the community. If the community permits access, the learner can build on the existing knowledge. However, if the community limits or denies access, the learner looks for other ways to gain this access. This thesis describes language learning experiences of five Generation 1.5 students by analyzing their life and learning experiences in relation to the hegemonic power structures of national and educational
institutions. The study involves analysis of multiple case studies using various methods such as participant-observations, interviews and survey questionnaires of five Generation 1.5 students' life experiences that influence language acquisition in relation to institutions' hegemonic power structure.

Multiple case studies allow the researcher to understand social phenomena. Multiple case studies, a form of qualitative research, do two things. One, they present results of individual participants and two, among the differences, the case studies may present a common theme that binds the participants as one group (Forcese & Richer, 1973; Yin, 1989). Both types of results are important. The individual results provide a wide range of understanding of participants for the reader. The common theme from all the case studies provides an understanding of participants as a group. Forcese & Richer (1973) state that although it is important to look at the individual student, it is also important to point out "that we are interested in the manner in which these individual responses cluster in the sense of being representative of subgroup categories within the population" (p. 83). The
A combination of both of these results provides a fuller understanding of the participants and their situations.

Furthermore, multiple case studies allow the researcher to use various methods such as participant-observations, interviews, surveys, etc. (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Forcese & Richer, 1973; Yin, 1989). Using various methods is important for studies that require analyzing social phenomena because the combination of these methods provides a deep understanding for the reader. The results from these methods are then triangulated to provide validity as well as common themes across multiple data sources that strengthen the findings (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Forcese & Richer, 1973; Yin, 1989, p. 97).

Therefore, this study utilizes a multiple case study approach involving a variety of data collection methods to gain information concerning Generation 1.5 students' integration into the American academic community.

Research Setting

I conducted my research in first year writing courses at California State University, San Bernardino (CSUSB): English 85A and 85B (Introductory Composition), English 86A and 86B (Introductory Composition for Multilingual
Students), English 95 (Intensive Composition), and English 101 (Freshman Composition).

All students entering CSUSB must take the university’s English Placement Test (EPT). This test can only be taken once and consists of two parts: critical thinking essay as well as reading comprehension and composing skills. The critical thinking essay writing is forty-five minutes long and each of the reading comprehension and composing skills sections is thirty minutes. The total duration of the test is one hour and forty-five minutes. The essay writing part includes students reading a text and responding critically to a prompt. Each of the reading comprehension and writing skills consists of forty-five multiple choice questions. The essay writing is scored holistically by two faculty at CSUSB. Students are placed into English 85A or 86A class if their score is 141 or lower, English 95 if their score ranges between 142-150, and English 101 if their score is 151 or above.

English 85 and 86 classes are two-quarter classes that prepare students for English 101. Although English 86 is titled “Introductory Composition for Multilingual Students,” multilingual students have the option of taking either English 85A and B or English 86A and B. These two
classes focus on forming student’s academic critical reading skills and diverse rhetorical styles. Both classes are non-credit classes and students need to receive a grade of an “RP” (report in progress) in “A” classes before they can take the “B” classes. The “B” classes need to be “passed” with a “CR” (credit) before students can enter English 101.

English 95 is a one-quarter class that prepares students for English 101 by strengthening students’ critical writing, thinking, and reading skills. Students are either placed into this class from their EPT score or moved into this class if they receive an “RP” rather than a “CR” for the English 85B or 86B.

The English 101 class is designed to help students build on their reading and writing skills. It is also designed to help students build the connection between reading and writing. Furthermore, this class is designed to help students write papers for other undergraduate courses.

I chose the above classes because Generation 1.5 students are in the process of learning the academic language. That is, the above four classes, albeit at different levels, prepare students for the language of the
academic community so that they can be successful members of academia. I wanted to choose students from all levels because Generation 1.5 students’ language skills vary tremendously. These proficiency variations stem from their various life and educational experiences. For example, some students have had English training before coming to the U.S. while others have not. Some students have lived in the U.S. longer and, therefore, are more fluent in their spoken skills and have deeper understanding of the American culture than those who have been in the U.S. for only a short time. Some Generation 1.5 students are more motivated than others to learn the language depending on their experiences. These differences are reflected in each student’s language abilities, and affect their placement in composition courses. Therefore, it was important to include Generation 1.5 students from various levels of composition courses.

Participant Selection

After getting approval from the CSUSB Institutional Review Board (IRB), I asked instructors from the above classes if I could elicit participants from their classes. The criteria used to select the students for this thesis
were whether they spoke a language(s) other than English as their first language, the duration of English language education they received both in the U.S. and abroad, the language they used at home, school and work as well as their assessment of their abilities of understanding, speaking, reading and writing all of their languages.

Taking the above three criteria into consideration, I have selected Emmanuel from English 85A, Nguyen from English 86B, Amanda from English 86B, Siska from English 95 and Soledad from English 101. These pseudonyms were chosen to protect the confidentiality of the students.

Data Collection

The methods used for this research are adaptations from two other studies conducted on English language learners. Goen et al. (2002) used a survey questionnaire and writing samples to focus on Generation 1.5 students' language usage and identity. Muniz-Cornejo (2002) used test scores and interviews to focus on Mexican immigrant students' social distance in relation to learning the English language and having academic success in general. Since my research focuses on Generation 1.5 students' life and education experiences, I wanted to use three methods.
The first method is a cross-sectional survey questionnaire that includes students’ English education history and students’ perceptions of their language fluency (see Appendix A). This questionnaire was adapted from that developed by Goen et al. (2002). The second method is participant-observation in students’ classrooms to observe their interactions and behaviors. For each student, I conducted three classroom observations. The third method is an audio-recorded one-on-one interview to verify responses to the survey as well as to clarify questions raised during my observations but mostly to hear students’ life experiences (see Appendix B).

The survey questionnaire was divided into four parts: student’s age of arrival in the U.S. and the grade s/he entered American schools, the length of English language instruction, student’s language usage at home, school, and/or at work, and student’s self-reported fluency in “understanding,” “speaking,” “reading,” and “writing” in English and other languages. Their fluency was selected from “well,” “some,” and “not well.”

I used the information on the survey in two ways: to help me understand each student’s educational background as
well as her/his language fluency profile and to analyze the commonalities among all five students.

Surveys are "written" source of information "for some specific purpose and some specific audience" (Yin, 1989, p. 87). It is important to point out that surveys are not intended for the participants but for other audiences. Surveys allow the researcher to make inferences that may need further investigation and "systematic searchers" for relevant information (Yin, 1989, p. 87). Surveys are important to "corroborate or augment" information from other sources such as interviews or observations (Yin, 1989, p. 86).

Each student's three participant-observations allowed me to take field notes on her/his interactions and behaviors in classes. In addition to observing their interactions, I was also able to walk around and help with small group discussions and answer any questions. Furthermore, I was also able to hear the language used by each student before, during and after class.

Participant-observation is mainly used in ethnographic studies to allow the researcher to observe face-to-face interaction of the participants while at the same time, participate in certain situations that do not affect the
interactions and behaviors of the participants (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Philips, 1983; Yin, 1989). Participant observers can participate at different levels. For example, during class discussions, I was an observer who took field notes on the student’s interactions and behaviors while during small group activities, I participated in the student’s group and saw her/his interactions as a group member. Both of these observations gave me a fuller understanding of each student’s interactions. Participant-observation allow the researcher to be a member of the same community as the participant (Philips, 2000; Yin, 1989).

In doing participant observations, it is also important that the researcher take field notes because these notes serve as a reminder to the researcher of the interactions and behaviors of the participant for later reference (Forcese & Richer, 1973).

One-on-one interviews were conducted in empty classrooms and lasted about an hour each. These audio-recorded interviews were conducted in a “reflexive” manner where the student and I both exchanged ideas freely in a conversational manner. (Bamberger & Schon, 1991; Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000; Jorgenson, 1991). Conducting the interviews
in this reflexive manner also allowed the topic to evolve freely rather than following a planned structure. These interviews also gave me opportunities to verify and/or clarify responses from the questionnaires.

Interviews serve multiple functions. They allow the participant to talk in “open-ended...conversational manner” (Jorgenson, 1991; Yin, 1989, p. 89). By talking in this manner, the interviews allow the participant to express “opinions about events” (Yin, 1989, p. 89). Participants’ opinions are important because they may lead to related topics and/or other critical information that the researcher needs to provide a thick description of the participant. Interviews also allow the researcher to “corroborate [or clarify] certain facts” found in other methods (Yin, 1989, p. 89). This is also important because interviews, as other methods used in case studies, are interpretive (Jorgenson, 1991). In other words, verifying and clarifying information from other methods helps provide validity to the research findings.

The data collected from the above methods is important when analyzing factors that influence Generation 1.5 students’ language acquisition. However, In order for me to produce a thick description, I triangulated the
information in two ways. First, I triangulated the information for each method. For example, for the survey questionnaire, I looked at the number of years of English instruction a student had (both inside and outside of the U.S.) and compared that to which language they use at home or at work and/or school. This information helped me to understand which language is more comfortable for them. Second, the information from each source was compared to other sources. For example, I looked at the fluency scale from the survey and compared this to the language the student used during my observations of her/him. I then asked the student during the interview which language s/he felt most comfortable using. The triangulated information from all three sources helped me to analyze the reason(s) why the student may feel a certain way.

Triangulation of multiple methods requires the researcher to analyze, interpret, and make inferences about the information collected from all the methods (Yin, 1989, p. 65). This means that the researcher must look for information that either confirms or contradicts information from other sources. If the information contradicts each other, the researcher must either find further information
or analyze reasons why this information contradicts each other (Yin, 1989).

Data Analysis

To evaluate the life experiences of Generation 1.5 students, I first looked at each student's survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire allowed me to have a general understanding of the level of English language instruction they had received. Also, the background information allowed me to understand whether they received the English instruction in their home countries or in the U.S. and for how long (in terms of number of years before entering college). This information is important because the number of years of English instruction may correlate with the amount and/or kinds of language issues they may face as college students.

In addition, the survey questionnaire also gave me a general understanding of their language usage at home, school or work. This information allowed me to make inferences about what language they feel more comfortable using, which in turn, helped me to understand their written fluency. As stated in chapter one, written language skills are built on spoken skills. Therefore, if students are not
using English at home, outside of class, or at work, then
written English is harder for them to learn (Reid, 1997).
In addition, I also compared the language fluency for
English, especially the written and spoken fluency. This
gave me a general understanding of whether there was any
correlation between oral and written fluency.

This survey was formed so that I could have some
general information about education history and language
usage of a sample of Generation 1.5 students. Furthermore,
this survey helped me to see if there were commonalities
among the group as well as which information is unique for
that student. For example, the survey helped me to see how
many of the students in this study speak their native
language at home. This process also helped me to see which
information needs to be corroborated or augmented through
other methods to produce a thick description that validated
other information gained from other methods.

To supplement the findings revealed from the survey, I
wanted to conduct ethnographic “observation[s] through
immersion” (Cates, 1985). In other words, I wanted to
observe Generation 1.5 students in their natural
environment as an “insider” of their classroom community.
The classroom observations permitted me to see three
factors: the student’s interaction with her or his classmates, how the student interacted with the instructor and how s/he followed along during class time.

By observing the student’s interactions, I saw whether the student interacted with native English speakers, students who spoke the same language or students who spoke other languages but were also learning English. I also saw whether the student interacted with these students outside of class or only during class. Observing their interactions with others could give me insight into which language and/or cultural background they feel most comfortable in.

In addition, the classroom observation allowed me to see the student’s interaction with the instructor. I saw whether the student approached the instructor on her or his own. If so, whether the student approached her or his instructor only before and after class to answer questions about assignments or whether the student interacted freely with the instructor during class discussions. Observations of the student’s interactions with her or his instructor could help me to understand whether the student feels comfortable with the instructor to ask questions about assignments or with the class in general.
Moreover, these observations helped me to observe classroom behaviors such as in what manner they followed along with the class, by reading the text, passively listening and following along with the discussions or by actively participating in the class discussions. This observation can help me to understand whether the student understands the topic and/or the material or whether the student is interested in the topic and with the class in general.

Furthermore, the classroom observations helped me to see and analyze behaviors that sometimes the student is not aware of or takes for granted. For example, in some of my observations, I noticed that students were speaking Spanish. When I asked students at the interview, they responded causally by saying, "Well, yeah, if I know that they speak Spanish, then I speak Spanish with them."

In addition, as a participant observer, I also walked around and asked students if they wanted some help with assignments or with their drafts. By walking around, I was able to hear the language they used with other students.

After the observations, I reviewed the field notes and categorized the findings in the following areas: students' participation and how this participation occurred in class.
discussions and activities, students' participation in small group activities, where the students sat in relation to the classroom as well as other students, what languages were used, and how the student interacted with the instructor.

After the observations, I emailed the students for a one-on-one interview to talk about their experiences of learning English and living in their home country in comparison to living in the U.S. The interviews allowed me to hear their stories. Hearing stories is different than reading the stories in that I could see the communication elements, such as facial expressions and body language that add meaning to the words. This helped me to conceptualize their stories. Hearing Generation 1.5 students' stories is also important because they have been described as "ear" learners (Reid, 1997; Roberge, 2003). By telling their stories rather than writing them, Generation 1.5 students can focus on telling their experiences rather than worrying about their English abilities.

Information from the interview is important because the interviews allowed me to hear each student's story. The questions I asked were "tailored to the student" based on the responses from the survey questions and my
observations of their interactions (Cates, 1985, p. 97). However, the questions were open-ended so that students did not merely respond to them but were engaged in a conversation with me in telling their stories. This interaction led to both of us making the interview “flow” (Brayboy, 2000, p. 147). And through this reflexive interview, I was able to hear each student’s life experiences and “[take] information from what was said” (Brayboy & Deyhle, 2000, p. 167).

Adding to the findings in the survey and class observations, I selectively transcribed their responses according to the following taxonomic outline.

(A) Experiences before coming to the U.S.
   Life experiences
   Education experiences
(B) Adjustment issues in the U.S.
   American culture
   American education
(C) English difficulties
   Reading
   Writing
(D) Language usage
   In school
Outside of school

With this taxonomy, I was able to see that all five students had different life experiences before coming to the U.S., three students came directly from their countries while two lived in another country before coming to the U.S. Furthermore, two of the students expressed that they were affected by their country's governments while the other three did not express this sentiment. Four students entered the U.S. schools around middle school while one started American schools as an adult. Some students expressed directly that they had difficulties in adjusting to the American culture and the American education system. I was able to see that for all five students, English academic vocabulary was a key factor in them being a member of the academic community. And I was able to see that all five spoke English at school, but four used their first language at home and/or at work. I will further discuss these and other findings from my study in the next chapter.

In order to provide thick description of the five Generation 1.5 students' life experiences, I triangulated the results from the three methods. For example, I compared the results from the survey about their English instruction and language use to the language I heard them
speak in class, which was further compared to the language difficulties they expressed during the interview.

Similarly, I triangulated results from my field notes by comparing where the student sat, the student s/he interacted with, and the language I heard her/him speak to the results from the survey, which were compared further to the information during the interview. In addition to providing a thick description of each student and all five students as a group, triangulating results in these multiple ways also provide validity to the analysis. In other words, the information from different methods connects to each other.
CHAPTER THREE

FINDINGS

This chapter discusses the triangulated data collected from the five students' biographic questionnaires, three classroom observations for each student, and one-on-one interviews. Although most of the data represented are from the interviews, this information will be supplemented with data from the survey and observations. These data will then be further discussed in terms of hegemonic power relations as these five students try to learn the English language.

All five students went through the experience of learning English as their second (or third) language. However, the experiences are unique to each student. In telling their stories, I will use pseudonyms to protect the students' confidentiality. Table 1 contains information about the five students.
Table 1. Description of Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Yr(s) of English instruction before college</th>
<th>Grade entered U.S. school</th>
<th>Number of languages known</th>
<th>Language(s) used at home/ work and/or school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Siska</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7th</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Indonesian &amp; English/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emmanuel</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spanish &amp; English/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amanda</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Twi &amp; English/ English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nguyen</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Adult school</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>English/English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soledad</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spanish/English &amp; Spanish</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Siska

Siska, an English 95 student, was born in Indonesia. She entered American schools in seventh grade after living in the Philippines for a year. In her background questionnaire, Siska indicated that she speaks both Indonesian and English at home but only English at work and school. Table 2 indicates Siska’s self-reported fluency scale of the languages she knows.

Table 2. Siska’s Self-reported Language Fluency Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Speak</th>
<th>Read</th>
<th>Write</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesian</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>1 X 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tagalog</td>
<td>1 2 X</td>
<td>1 2 X</td>
<td>1 2 X</td>
<td>1 2 X</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fluency scale: 1=well  2=some  3=not much
Siska indicated that her fluency is "well" in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in English. Siska also indicated that her fluency is "well" in understanding, speaking, and reading abilities but "not much" in her writing abilities in the Indonesian language. Furthermore, Siska indicated her fluency is "not much" in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in Tagalog.

Her responses to the fluency table correlates with other information revealed in the survey as well as during the interview and observations. For example, her assessment of "well" for English was also evidenced during the interview when she stated that she studied English vocabulary to "waive" herself out of ESL classes in her eighth grade. This was also evidenced by her being surrounded by both native and non-native English speaking classmates using English to communicate with others during my observations of her.

Siska's responses to her Indonesian language abilities can be a result of her living in Indonesia until she was in the fifth grade. Although she used the Indonesian language to communicate and learn orally, her formal education was limited to the fifth grade. Therefore, her assessment of her writing skills is "not much." Siska's fluency
assessment of "not much" for the Tagalog language can be explained by the fact that she was in the Philippines for only one year. Furthermore, her fluency correlates with results from studies of Generation 1.5 students in current literature. That is, because Generation 1.5 students had limited formal education before coming to the U.S., they feel more comfortable using the written mode in English than their home language (Goen et al., 2003).

In addition to the various language abilities expressed above, Siska’s life experiences also consist of much diversity. During the interview, Siska told me many personal experiences both at the personal level and at the national and societal level that motivated her to learn the English language. Many of her childhood experiences had placed her as a powerless child who had to follow the rules and regulations of her family, school, and her country.

Siska remembers her country of birth as a country in turmoil. Growing up in the capital city, she recalls incidences of civil wars. These wars had led her family to move a lot. In excerpts 1 and 2, Siska states,

(1) There were a lot of civil wars.
(2) I moved a lot too during that time.
Even as a young child, the memories expressed in excerpts 1 and 2 had formed an image of her country as an unstable place where she and her family were powerless and were forced to move so that she could be in a safer environment.

Furthermore, Siska’s childhood experiences were compounded by her memories of going to school in Indonesia. As an elementary student in a K-12 school, she was one of the youngest member of her school community.

Typically, members of a community have power because of common language and knowledge. However, communities also have other factors, such as one’s “position” (sometimes due to age) in the community, that helps form both personal and collective identities. Although the members speak the same language and have the same common knowledge, their position in the community can place them in a powerless situations. Siska was situated in a powerless position in two of the communities, her country and school. Below is an explanation of Siska’s powerless position as a young student in her school community in Indonesia.

Siska recalls many rock fights from the middle and high school students at her school with the middle and high school students of her rival school. Although elementary
students did not initiate the fights, they were forced to participate in them by the older students. The rock fights happened by having students line up at opposite side of the street and throw stones at each other. The line up occurred by age: elementary students in the front row, middle school students behind them and high school students in the back row. Excerpt 3 explains the fights and excerpt 4 explains the line up of these fights.

(3) Middle school and high school like to fight each other and they would throw rocks at each other...It's a common sight.

(4) So, when the high school and middle school fight, elementary school was there and our section was at the front 'cause it goes elementary, middle school, and high school.

Excerpt 3 explains the dangerous and common occurrences of the students' fights. Each time the older students fought, Siska was involved not because she wanted to be but because she was forced to because of her young age. Excerpt 4 explains that she was at the front row because she was in the elementary grade.

The fights as described in excerpt 3 made walking home difficult because she did not want to get hit by the rocks.
Sometimes, her mother had to come and pick her up. However, some of these fights were so dangerous that she and her mother could not even go home. Siska recalls the difficulties in going home in excerpt 5 and what happened when the fights got too dangerous in excerpt 6.

(5) I remember going home was hard...you don't want any rocks kinda falling on you.

(6) Sometimes we have to stay at the school until night, until sundown.

At the same time, the common language that she spoke as an Indonesian had helped her to form an Indonesian identity. This identity is expressed by Siska using the word “my” to state Indonesia as her country and “they” to refer to the U.S. Siska’s identity and ownership of her country are expressed in excerpts 7-9.

(7) My country’s always under turmoil.

(8) That they change classes...

(9) ‘Cause if you’re, if you’re in my country,

In excerpts 7 and 9, Siska refers to Indonesia as “her country” and in excerpt 8, she refers to American school as “they.” This has implications as she tries to be a member of the academic community and American culture as a whole. Members of a community are able to express themselves
freely based on a common knowledge of language. If Siska feels that she is not a member, she is limited on what to say, how to say and with whom she can interact.

A sense of belonging as a member of a community is important for Siska. In excerpt 10, Siska expresses her sentiment of school community in Indonesia and in the Philippines.

(10) When I was in Indonesia and in the Philippines, we stayed in one class and teacher is the one who travels. I like that. I like that much better. So, um if there was a new student and everyone would know.

Siska’s membership in her school community in Indonesia and in the Philippines expressed in excerpt 10 put her in a powerful position. Because the teacher was the one who traveled, s/he is the one who is in a new environment not the students. Therefore, the classroom community belonged to the students not the teacher. By being a member of her classroom community, she had knowledge of who is already a member and who is a new member. This knowledge gave her opportunities to reach out to new members and show her/him the community’s ways. Her membership in a community was further displayed when I was
observing her during class; she always sat amongst a familiar group of students. Moreover, during the interview, Siska continually stated that she had friends.

However, when Siska came to the U.S., she was in a new environment and school system that she did not understand; in other words, she was not a member of her classroom community. This is explained in excerpts 11 and 12.

(11) But here, we go to different classes, so it’s like, I don’t know, confused.

(12) I guess different class every single time, people just do whatever they do.

In excerpts 11 and 12, Siska is expressing that her classes in the U.S. middle school changed for every subject and this change made her confused of different classroom environments as well as who were in the class and how they behaved towards each other. She suggests in excerpts 11 and 12 that she is not a member of her classroom community because everyone “just [did] whatever.” In other words, there was no common knowledge that bound the students together as members. This new system left her confused.

This observant behavior is common for people who are in a new culture, which is the case for immigrant Generation 1.5 students. “Before [the newcomer take]
action, [s/he observes] carefully” (Fu, 1995, p. 34). The reason for this observation is because the newcomer is in an unfamiliar environment; the newcomer does not know the community’s norms. Therefore, s/he learns by looking around, seeing how things work, seeing the people and how they interact with others, so that s/he knows how s/he fits into that environment. Siska’s confusion of the new school system in the U.S. is explained by immigrant students’ "newcomer" status (Igoa, 1995, p. 39). Her middle school’s “new system” of changing classes was not familiar to her because Siska came from a different learning environment of her elementary schools where the teacher travels. The new system had put her as a “newcomer” where she became an observer to gain knowledge of that community.

This uncertainty was compounded by her limited spoken English skills which placed her in a powerless position during her first two years of school in the U.S. Although Siska indicated on the survey that she did receive English instruction before coming to the U.S., during the interview, she stated that this instruction was in written mode. Therefore, she was not prepared to converse with her peers or teachers. This situation led her to be dependent on others to help her fit in.
Siska's middle school classmates, however, did not reach out to her. Instead, they had "made fun of her" because she was different. In excerpts 13-15, Siska explains how she was treated by others.

(13) No, no one actually approached me.

(14) there was a lot of people that made fun of me.

(15) People would kinda ostracize me.

Siska's non-membership expressed in excerpts 13-15 led her to feel isolated from her school community. In excerpts 16 and 17, Siska further states,

(16) It was hard...

(17) I feel like a reject [laugh].

Siska's isolation expressed in excerpts 16 and 17 was compounded by her limited language abilities which made her even more "different" from her middle school peers. Siska stated that she was placed in an ESL class. However, most of the students in the ESL class were Spanish speakers. To accommodate the majority of the students' academic needs, the school had assigned a Spanish-speaking teacher who explained the lessons in Spanish. This, of course, left Siska out again as a "non-member."
This experience was profound for Siska. She really wanted to be a member of her school community. She wanted to belong; she wanted to be one of the "normal teenagers." But her spoken language skills limited her abilities. Not being able to communicate and belong was so frustrating for Siska that she motivated herself to improve her English and "waive" herself out of the ESL class and be in regular English for eighth grade. In excerpt 18, Siska states,

(18) I really wanted to get out of the ESL classes so much that I literally, literally read the whole Long, Longman's Dictionary to get me going with my spelling words and added vocabulary.

Excerpt 18 implies that Siska had enough knowledge of her new cultural norms to change her social reality; she knew that she wanted to get out of ESL so she motivated herself and studied hard to get out of ESL. One's identity never stays the same; it changes over time and in different space (Friese, 2002). Changing one's identity involves one knowing the norms of the environment and being an agent acting on the norms.

Getting out of ESL, however, meant two things: that she was able to speak the English language and she was a member of her larger school community. And as a member of
a community speaking the same language, she understood the worldviews that gave her power.

This motivation continued to Siska’s high school years. In high school, Siska knew the American high school culture and had command of the English language well enough to be an active member. In other words, she had power to “create [her own] social reality” (Philips, 2000, p. 194). Siska’s knowledge expressed through her involvement in high school grades in the U.S. is stated in excerpts 19 and 20.

(19) I was a jock by the time I was in high school.

(20) I was very involved.

Siska’s involvement, as stated in excerpt 20, as a member of her peer community is very important to Siska even today. This was evidenced by listening to her stories of involvement in schools in Indonesia, the Philippines and in her high school in the U.S. This was also evidenced by her sitting next to her friends in class as well as her emphasizing “I have friends” throughout the interview.

Siska’s identity had changed often. And each change was influenced by the hegemonic power structure of the institutions. Yet at each change, being a member of her community was important to her. She displayed her desires to be a member throughout the interview by stating “I have
friends," on the survey by learning the English language so that she could be a "normal teenage" member of her middle school community and in my observations of her during class where she sat amongst a group of her friends.

Emmanuel

Emmanuel, an English 85A student, came straight from Mexico and entered American schools in the sixth grade. On the background questionnaire, Emmanuel indicated his self reported fluency scale as follows in Table 3:

Table 3. Emmanuel’s Self-reported Fluency Scale.

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<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Speak</th>
<th>Read</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>1 X 3</td>
<td>1 X 3</td>
<td>1 2 X</td>
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Fluency scale: 1=well   2=some   3=not much

Emmanuel further explained his fluency by indicating that he mostly uses the Spanish language to communicate at home (Spanish 75%, English 25%) and at work (Spanish 90%, and English 10%). From his percentage estimates, it may be that Emmanuel is more comfortable in Spanish; however, he did not fill out the part of the questionnaire on his Spanish fluency, just the part on his English fluency. For his English fluency, he had indicated that his fluency
level is "some" in his understanding and speaking abilities, "not much" in his reading abilities and "some" in his writing abilities.

Emmanuel's above responses for understanding and speaking fluency correlates to what I saw during my class observations. During all my observations of Emmanuel in class, he sat next to Spanish speaking students and communicated in Spanish before, during and after class with them. This is a good indication that he is more comfortable using Spanish for the spoken mode of communication.

Emmanuel's low fluency response to reading was expressed during the interview. Emmanuel had told me that he was very frustrated with his English class because of the reading material. He stated that he could not understand the reading mainly because of the words in the text. In excerpts 20-23, Emmanuel states,

(20) when it comes to reading, that's when it's the hard part.

(21) I'm kinda lost, the words, the workbook, I don't know, it's all messed up.

(22) There's some words that I don't understand, like big words. I was like what are these, what are
(23) this reading, just, it took me like what, 3, 3-4 hours to read that piece...It's only one page but...it doesn't make any sense.

Emmanuel's experiences of having difficulties in reading the academic language, as stated in excerpts 20-23, might be explained by descriptions of Generation 1.5 students as "aural" learners (Reid, 1997; Roberge, 2003). Meaning, Generation 1.5 students learn by listening to the language rather than by reading it. Spoken language, however, uses different words, expressions, discourse than the written language. Therefore, if a student had difficulties with the written mode, it is very likely that s/he learned the language by listening to it rather than by reading it.

Academic language is a written mode of language that is acquired by reading rather than by listening. Therefore, Emmanuel's difficulties can also be explained by the difference between the written and spoken language discussed in chapter one. Written language contains different words, discourse patterns, and interactional settings than the spoken language. Having knowledge of this language (or mode of language) is crucial to be a
member of the academic community. Members of a community carry out activities in certain ways; they have a certain set(s) of knowledge that dictate how things should be done. In other words, members with this common knowledge create what is "normal, natural, good and true" (Bizzell, 2002, p. 1). Having the knowledge of the language sets members apart from non-members.

Becoming a member of a community, though, may be a difficult process, regardless of the person's motivation level. This is especially true when there are no explicit instructions given. It was clear during my observations of him that he was motivated to learn. Emmanuel showed his interest by participating in class discussions by volunteering answers to the instructor's questions related to the reading. In addition, during one of the classes, the class watched two videos that students were to analyze the rhetorical styles used by the speaker and musicians. I saw that Emmanuel showed interest in the text because he followed along by reading the text while at the same time, listening to the speech and the song. Furthermore, during the interview, Emmanuel showed interest in getting a master's degree in either teaching English to Spanish-speaking students or in criminal justice; and after the
interview, he stated that he was the first person in his family to go to college.

His initiation as a member of the academic community, however, started rough. Emmanuel expresses his frustrations in excerpt 24.

(24) I was telling my Mom this morning, “Man, I feel like quitting; man, I can’t handle anymore”

Emmanuel’s frustration in excerpt 24 can have a lasting impact as he continues with his academic career especially if academic community does not recognize and build on the knowledge he brings to the community.

For his writing fluency response, Emmanuel expressed his feelings and knowledge about writing in excerpts 25-27,

(25) Last year, I was feeling that I made a big improvement of my writing last year.

(26) Like, like starting and um order. Like the order. The starting is easier. And the conclusion. Like having the thesis. My paragraph are separate.

(27) I have to give examples, explanations, and the conclusion.

Emmanuel’s knowledge expressed in excerpts 25-27 can be looked at in two ways: he is limited in his knowledge or
his knowledge is something that the academic community can build on. The academic community has the hegemonic power to decide whether his skills are limited and therefore, limit his access or whether he could build on his existing skills and therefore, permit him access.

Emmanuel further demonstrated his knowledge in excerpt 28 by stating,

(28) I just freewrite then I just go back and check for uh, mistakes.

He understands that writing is a process that starts with freewriting and ends with checking sentence mechanics. Emmanuel’s language skills not only include some knowledge of the academic community’s language but also his own knowledge of the world. For example, in excerpt 29, Emmanuel states,

(29) I know what I’m saying. And if it doesn’t make sense, if the professors doesn’t or anybody (unclear) but I know it make sense. I know what I’m doing...I know what I’m writing...I know the story.

Excerpt 29 illustrates that Emmanuel has knowledge of what he wants to write; however, it also implies that he has
difficulties in expressing his ideas for the academic community.

Using a language or a mode of a language affects the way(s) members of that community “think” (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987). Thinking in certain ways allows members to be “insiders” who have knowledge of the community as opposed to non-members or “outsiders” who do not have the community’s knowledge. For Emmanuel, his difficulties in reading and writing can contribute to him having difficulties in becoming a knowledgeable member of the academic community.

Knowledge of the written language is built on knowledge of the spoken language. In the questionnaire, Emmanuel stated that he speaks Spanish at home and work, and with friends. As stated above, I also noticed that he was speaking Spanish with his classmates before and after class as well as during group work.

Furthermore, his difficulty in learning the written language is compounded by the fact that Emmanuel also does not read regularly in Spanish language. This is expressed in our conversation in excerpt 30.

(30) Ellen: Do you read in Spanish?

Emmanuel: (shakes head).
Ellen: You don’t? You don’t read in Spanish?

How come?

Emmanuel: I don’t know. We don’t have books in Spanish.

If Emmanuel does not read in the language that he uses to speak, then it is also difficult to read in a language that he seldom uses outside of the class.

However, it seems that Emmanuel is motivated to be in college. As stated above, he is the first person in his family to go to college and he would like to pursue his master’s degree either in criminal justice or in education so that he can teach English to Spanish-speaking students. At the same time, it seems that Emmanuel is in a difficult situation to learn the English academic language if he is mostly speaking Spanish.

In triangulating data for Emmanuel’s story, it is clear that his difficulties in reading academic English stem from him not owning the English language but only using it as a “tool” to do school work for academic purposes as described by Chiang and Schmida (1999) as well as by Goen et al. (2002). Emmanuel’s ownership of Spanish and English was apparent from the questionnaire where he indicated that at home, he uses Spanish “75%” and English
"25%" of the time. Moreover, at work and/or at school, he uses Spanish "90%" of the time and English only "10%" of the time. This was also evidenced by my observations of him speaking Spanish with his classmates and further evidenced during the interview when he stated that he mainly associates himself with other Spanish speaking friends using Spanish to communicate with them.

Additionally, as indicated in chapter one, owning the English language is difficult if a student is not integrated into the American culture. For example, during my observations, Emmanuel participated in the class by volunteering answers and comments based on the reading; however, he sat in the back with his Spanish-speaking friends and only associated with them before and after class. Additionally, during group work, he only worked with Spanish-speaking students using Spanish to communicate with them. Also, during the interview, Emmanuel further explained that since high school, he mainly only has time to go to school and work (mainly using Spanish to communicate). He is too tired to watch TV or do other activities that allow him to be familiar with the American mainstream culture. However, Emmanuel stated that once in
a while he will go to places like Disneyland with his family or Spanish-speaking friends.

I later discovered that Emmanuel had changed the second half of his Introductory Composition (English 85A and B) to Introductory Composition for Multilingual Students (English 86A and B). The curriculum is the same for both classes; however, English 86A and B place more emphasis on building students' English language abilities, mainly written but spoken as well. Students have the option of enrolling in English 85A and B or 86A and B. However, when a student chooses one class, they usually stay in that class for both terms.

Amanda

Amanda, an English 86B student, came from Ghana and entered the American schools in her fifth grade. She learned two languages, Twi and English. Table 4 indicates Amanda's self-reported fluency scale.

Table 4. Amanda's self-reported fluency scale.

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<td>X 2 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Twi</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>1 X 3</td>
<td>1 2 X</td>
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Fluency scale: 1=well  2=some  3=not much
On her background questionnaire, Amanda indicated that she speaks both of her native Ghanaian language, Twi, and English at home but only English at school and at work. She indicated that her fluency level is “well” in understanding, speaking, reading and writing in English. However, she indicated that her fluency was “well” in understanding the Twi language, “some” in speaking, “not much” in her reading and writing skills. Amanda’s assessment of her fluency corresponds with descriptions of Generation 1.5 students in current literature. That is, Generation 1.5 students are typically described as having stronger oral language skills in both languages, their home language and English as well as stronger written abilities in English than in their home language (Goen et al., 2002; Harklau et al., 1999; Reid, 1997; Roberge, 2003).

However, during the interview, I had learned that she strongly identified herself with the Ghanaian culture. Her identity was expressed in various aspects of her life including her education and personal life. Excerpt 31 clearly states her identity:

(31) I’m a Ghanaian.

Her identity in excerpt 31 shapes her view(s) of the American culture, education system, and the people. As
Ogbu (1991) states, "minorities differ in the types of cultural model that guides them" (p. 8). Amanda came from a specific tribe in Ghana. As a member of her tribe, Amanda was raised with certain cultural norms and beliefs.

When she came to the U.S., however, she saw that there was so much diversity here; and although she likes the diversity of this country, in excerpt 32 she states,

(32) I don't think America has a culture...It's like um melting pot... It not like a specific culture. In my country, whatever tribe you're in, you have a culture.

So much diversity expressed in excerpt 32 can be difficult to process for a person(s) coming from a place where common behaviors and ways of thinking are so ubiquitously dictated. This uncertainty had led Amanda to realize that she is in a new environment where her ways are different.

Furthermore, Amanda stated that when she was in middle school, other students had made negative comments about where she was from. This further made Amanda to "maintain" her Ghanaian identity (Ogbu, 1991, p. 15). As she states in excerpts 33 and 34,

(33) I listen to Ghanaian song; I like Ghanaian song.

(34) Ellen: which would you prefer, American food or
Ghanaian food?

Amanda: Uh, I would say Ghanaian food.

Excerpts 33 and 34 are clear statements that she continues to hold onto her Ghanaian identity. In excerpt 35, Amanda continues to say,

(35) I would want to go to Ghana.

In addition to excerpts 33-35, Amanda continues in excerpt 36,

(36) After being here, back home, we have the best education system.

Excerpt 36 demonstrates her preference clearly.

Furthermore, Amanda thinks of her Ghanaian identity and her life experiences so uniquely that she separates herself from African-Americans. For example, in excerpt 37, Amanda states,

(37) I just couldn’t hang around with African-American people.

(38) I think in high school, it’s like if you put me in a classroom...I’d go like sit next to a probably like a different race from mine.

Amanda indicated that her reasons for separating herself from African-Americans as stated in excerpts 37 and 38 is because she is not familiar with the “ghetto”
language that they use which includes slang and swear words.

Amanda’s identification as a Ghanaian places her as an outsider in two groups: the mainstream American culture and the larger African-American culture.

However, she is also motivated to learn the English language to prove to others (Americans) that she is capable of learning the English language. Although she had only three years of English instruction before coming to the U.S. and English only instruction in her middle school, she states in excerpt 39 that she enrolled herself in the advanced placement English class in high school.

(39) they just put me in...regular English class and I wanted to take honors...so I just changed my schedule.

Excerpt 39 shows Amanda’s motivation to learn the English language. Her motivation to learn the English language was also apparent during my observations of her. For example, in my observations, I saw that she was an active participant during class discussions and during small group activities. She asked me the meanings of some words as I walked around and observed her.
Amanda’s motivation to continue to learn the English language was also indicated in her questionnaire. For example, Amanda indicated that her fluency for English is “well” for understanding, speaking, reading and writing. Her responses suggest that she has been able to learn English well, which suggests that she could continue to build on her skills.

Amanda’s motivation to learn the English language can also include her membership in her class. As stated above, she was an active participant during class discussions as well as during small group work. Furthermore, her willingness to ask questions about her assignments to the instructor also indicates that she is comfortable in approaching her instructor.

However, sometimes Amanda’s motivation can be challenged. Amanda’s expresses her difficulty in learning the academic English in excerpt 40 and 41.

(40) Sometimes it’s kinda like hard ‘cause I’m not like, I wouldn’t say I’m not like fluent like somebody’s who’s born here ‘cause there still some words that I don’t know.

(41) Ellen: Is it only in school or is it when you’re talking to your friends, or...
Amanda: Oh like, I think mostly in school...but like in school like if you have to read a book, yeah, there are certain words that I always have to look up in dictionary for.

The reading and vocabulary difficulties expressed in excerpts 40 and 41 also makes being a member of the academic community difficult for Amanda. Amanda views herself as an outsider in two groups: the dominant white culture and the larger African-American culture. Her Ghanaian cultural and language differences from these groups motivate her to maintain her Ghanaian identity.

Many class lessons are based on the larger society’s views expressed in the language. And since the academic language, or the written language is based on the ideas expressed in the spoken language of the wider society, this has enormous hegemonic power implications. The student is then the one who brings different knowledge to the classroom and hence, the mainstream culture. This can lead the student to maintain her or his cultural identity and resist the class instruction, mainstream culture and even the language.

However, her fluency of “well” in English as indicated by her above questionnaire responses, her active
participation during class, and changing to honors English, which she stated during the interview, Amanda was motivated to succeed in mainstream American culture even though she identified herself with Ghanaian culture. Rather than resisting instruction, mainstream culture, and mainstream language, she was motivated to succeed within the mainstream American context while also maintaining her Ghanaian identity.

I found out that during the interview, Amanda had also changed from English 85 to English 86. When I asked her why, she said that she just picked the next class in the schedule and since it was with the same instructor, she just picked the class.

Nguyen

Nguyen, an English 86B student, is a returning student who finished her high school grades in Vietnam. Nguyen is not a typical Generation 1.5 student in that she did finish her formal education before coming to the U.S. However, I would like to include her story because her experiences will help in understanding other Generation 1.5 students' life and educational experiences.
Nguyen had spent a year in a refugee camp where she learned spoken English before coming to the U.S. During the interview, Nguyen indicated that she had learned French in Vietnam as a school foreign language requirement. However, on the part of her language fluency in the questionnaire, she only completed her fluency for Vietnamese and English. Her self-reported fluency scale is displayed in table 5.

Table 5. Nguyen’s Self-reported Fluency Scale.

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<tr>
<th>Language</th>
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<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>1 X 3</td>
<td>1 X 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
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Fluency scale: 1=well  2=some  3=not much

On her background questionnaire, Nguyen had indicated that she speaks English at home and at school as well as at work. She feels that her fluency level is “well” in understanding, speaking, reading, and writing in Vietnamese. However, at the same time, she feels that her fluency level is “well” in understanding and speaking but “some” in reading and writing in English.

Her responses to her Vietnamese fluency resemble more with international students than those of Generation 1.5
students. Reid (1997) and Roberge (2003) explain that international students’ written home language skills differ from Generation 1.5 students in that international students have completed their formal education in their home countries and therefore, are more fluent in their home language than do in English. Generation 1.5 students, on the other hand, have not completed their formal education and therefore, their home language fluency may be weaker than their English skills especially in written fluency.

However, Nguyen’s response to her spoken English fluency is explained during the interview when she told me that she had picked up the spoken English language quickly at the refugee camp because she had experiences with learning French as a child in school. For example, in excerpt 42, Nguyen states,

(42) And like I said, I studied French...I think that’s why I pick it up so fast because I have a background in French experience.

In excerpt 42, Nguyen states that the reason why she “picked up” the English language so quickly is because she has experience in learning a second language already. In sixth grade, she had to learn a second language and she
chose French over English because it was more popular at the time. Excerpt 43 explains why she chose French.

(43) It was more popular at that time...you know it’s like um, because Vietnam is under French for so long. That’s, that’s the way we think French is very good and that’s how we choose French.

However, her ability to learn English so quickly can also be explained by my observations of her during class. Nguyen was a very active participant during class; she listened to other people’s comments and responded to them. She was also active in small group discussions. Furthermore, she interacted with her instructor often. She freely asked questions to clarify answers for her assignments and frequently engaged in conversations with her instructor before and after class.

Nguyen’s fluency can also be attributed to her motivation to continue with her English skills. When she arrived in the U.S., she enrolled in an adult school. However, the classroom environment was so different from her previous learning environment that she “never like[d] it.” The adult school had open enrollment classes where students can enroll at any time during the term. The frequent interruptions to repeat lessons so that new
students could “catch up” with the rest of the class had disrupted her learning so much that she got bored and lost interest in learning at the school. However, she continued to pursue her education by enrolling at the Valley College then finally transferring to CSUSB. She changed her major from chemistry at Valley College to biochemistry at CSUSB.

When she came to CSUSB, however, she realized that her English writing skills were not strong enough. In excerpts 44 to 46, Nguyen states that to this day, she fears being in English classes.

(44) All my time in this school, for some reason, I’m just afraid of English...

(45) It’s just a fear. It’s just something, that fear in my head, in my head that I don’t understand.

(46) I really honestly, even now, I get really nervous in class writing...

Nguyen explains that the fear and anxiety in excerpts 44-46 are due to the fact that she did not have the background knowledge to express what she wanted to write; she did not have the American historical and political knowledge that she needed to write confidently about a subject.
However, later in the interview, Nguyen had also stated that the difficulty is not because of what she wants to say when writing a paper. Nguyen explains in our conversation in excerpt 47,

(47) Ellen: Is it because you don’t know what to say or you don’t know how to say something?
Nguyen: Not that I don’t have anything to say, I have a lot of thing to say...Like in the introduction, I have so many things I want to cover and then I argument with myself, talk to the people, you know?

Excerpt 47 explains that Nguyen’s difficulty in writing does not come from knowing what to say, but not knowing how to say it with the English language. Nguyen explains further how her difficulties with the written English had affected her in excerpt 48.

(48) I have very difficult time so I quit school and then I went to professional training like intensive courses for like eight, nine months...

In excerpt 48, Nguyen’s frustration led her to quit school but she used this time to gain more knowledge in the English language and the American culture.
Nguyen explains her difficulties in writing by stating that she never learned to write as a child because her teachers did not encourage her. In excerpt 49, Nguyen states,

(49) In Vietnamese, I think that was all throughout my life. In Vietnam, you have a grade system from 1 to 10. Above 5 mean you pass, 50%. Above 6, you’re OK, you pass. And I write my paper up to 6, 6.5. And I was pleased with it and I think that it was because all my school grade, my language teacher never really...encouraged you to write, always put you down.

Excerpt 49 explains only a part of why she feels that her writing skills are not strong. Nguyen’s difficulties of writing can also be applied to the larger educational context. When Nguyen was in the fourth or fifth grade, she was forced to attend school and be educated in the new curricula by the new government. In excerpt 50, Nguyen explains how the curricula had changed.

(50) They teach politics, they don’t care for the language arts; they don’t care for the math, they don’t pretty much care for the science. They
care more like history, politics about them, about their system.

As stated above, Nguyen's language fluency is more similar to international students than with Generation 1.5 students. However, her life experiences, including education experiences are typical of Generation 1.5 students. For example, typically, Generation 1.5 students' formal education includes gaps, limitations, interruptions, inconsistencies and sometimes even repetitions from change in school and/or in curricula (Fu, 1995; Harklau et al., 1999; Igoa 1995; Reid, 1997; Roberge, 2003). This change can have tremendous implications on students being able gain content knowledge of a subject. In addition to Nguyen's newcomer immigrant status, this lack of background knowledge can explain Nguyen's fear of writing that was expressed in excerpts 44-46.

The change in the curricula expressed in excerpt 50 placed Nguyen in an unfamiliar system that she did not like because it focused on history and politics of the government rather than the subjects she was used to studying. The new system also forced her to join clubs she did not want to be in; however, she was forced by her parents to join so that she could have more opportunities.
This experience of being in this system made her unhappy. In excerpt 51, Nguyen recalls,

(51) I remember I was more happier at school...before.

The sentiment expressed in excerpt 51 was due to the new curricula expressed in excerpt 50, however, it was also because the government had treated her family badly. This led her to personally feel negatively towards the new government who not only mandated the new education system but also because of the way they had treated her family. This situation also led Nguyen’s parents not to support her education. In excerpt 52, Nguyen states that

(52) And my parents don’t like them. So when I go to school, I studied at school and when I go home, I don’t have a support from...the parent.

The lack of support from her parents in excerpt 52 had led Nguyen to be less motivated to learn. Yet another element that added to her negative education experiences was how she was taught. Nguyen had stated that when she was in school, the lessons were taught in a very “teacher-centered” environment. Nguyen explains in excerpts 53 and 54.

(53) In Vietnam, teacher stands at the front of class and you ready to listen.
at my time, everyone is facing the blackboard and listen to the teacher. And I grown up that way.

The strict instructional manner expressed in excerpts 53 and 54 did not give her a chance to ask questions, volunteer comments, or listen to other students’ views. School is a place where many students learn to socialize and interact with others. Therefore, this kind of learning environment had not taught Nguyen how to socialize with others. In other words, Nguyen was a member of her class, but there was no opportunity for social interaction within the class.

Nguyen states in our conversation in excerpt 55 that she likes the American schools.

Ellen: When you said that in American schools, that you can raise your hand and give your answers and...ask questions, how do you feel about that?

Nguyen: I like that...I like student feedback...

Honestly, I really like the student feedback because it’s really funny or it’s very interesting when you hear somebody have a
different opinion...or something that you
disagree with and I like that.

In excerpt 55 Nguyen explains that she likes the American education system that allowed her to hear other people's opinions and allowed her to be a member of the classroom community. As stated earlier, her above statements correlate with her behaviors in class during my observations of her. She listened to others and responded actively to their comments.

Despite her difficult educational experiences, however, Nguyen knows that continuing with her education is important. During the interview, she stated that she would like to be a CPA. However, she understands that in order for her to continue with her education, she needs background knowledge. Nguyen had stated that people in her life such as her husband, friends, and co-workers are helping her build this background knowledge. In excerpt 56 and 57, Nguyen states,

(56) I have more social activity with the different people, different customer. They tell me their story.

(57) my husband...he tell me about you know, American history, politics, you know, and voting and you
name it.

In addition to gaining knowledge by talking to people, Nguyen also stated that using a computer to write her papers is helping her to improve her writing skills. For example, in excerpt 58, Nguyen states,

(58) Another thing that I had helped was Microsoft Word that check your grammar. That helped with the spelling, grammar and (unclear).

Nguyen is motivated to learn the English language both on the social level expressed in excerpts 56 and 57 and on the language level expressed in excerpt 58.

In triangulating Nguyen’s data, it is clear that although she completed her formal education before coming to the U.S., her life experiences, especially her education experiences, resemble current literature descriptions of Generation 1.5 students. Nguyen had gone through many changes in emphasis in instructional methods as well as curricula that had made her unprepared for her classes in the U.S. Yet, by observing her participation and interaction with her classmates and instructor as well as hearing her story of learning from her family, friends and co-workers, going to the adult school and Valley College, she continues to be motivated to learn.
I had also learned during the interview that Nguyen, as with Emmanuel and Amanda, had also changed her class from English 85A to English 86B. Nguyen stated that although her English 85A instructor was very nice, she talked “a lot” and she ended up dropping the class.

Soledad

Soledad, an English 101 student, came from Mexico and entered the American schools in sixth grade. Table 6 indicates Soledad’s self-reported fluency levels.

Table 6. Soledad’s Self-reported Fluency Scale

<table>
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<th>Read</th>
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<td>X 2 3</td>
<td>X 2 3</td>
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</table>

Fluency scale: 1=well  2=some  3=not much

Soledad indicated that she speaks only Spanish at home and both English and Spanish at work and/or at school. She also indicated that her fluency in understanding, speaking, reading and writing in Spanish is “well.” However, she also indicated that her fluency is “well” in understanding, reading and writing but “some” in speaking English.

95
Soledad’s fluency for understanding and speaking for Spanish and English corresponds with what I saw during my observations of her. She sat next to two classmates communicating mostly in Spanish before, during and after class. Furthermore, from my observations of her during the interview, Soledad was nervous throughout the interview and kept looking at the recorder as I taped the interview.

Soledad’s understanding of spoken language fluency was further revealed during the interview. For example, Soledad told me that it was difficult for her to express herself when she is talking to someone in face-to-face situation especially in English. For example, in excerpt 59, Soledad states,

(59) I feel more cautious when I speak...I’m afraid like make a mistake...I don’t feel comfortable speaking English fluently.

Soledad’s feeling expressed in excerpt 59 can be explained by the interactional differences between spoken and written language. In spoken mode, people involved in the conversation do not have time to think about the correct words to use. In other words, the spoken language is context dependent, that is, the speaker and listener must respond to each other immediately using the correct
words and structure. In the written mode, however, is context reduced the writer has time to choose a word and even change it later on if s/he chooses.

However, Soledad's feeling can also be explained by the fact that she is an English learner and therefore, she is still in the process of learning the English language at the vocabulary level. Her lack of confidence in her spoken abilities affected her interactions with her classmates and teachers when she was in middle and high school. In excerpts 60 and 61, Soledad explains

(60) In class, like, I would always like never, like participate anything.

(61) I was afraid of asking cuz of my accent or my, I don't know...cuz of my English, I think.

Soledad's language frustrations were compounded by her lack of understanding of the American culture. In excerpt 62, Soledad explains,

(62) It was really hard for me to get along with them and like know what they're used to do.

In excerpt 62, Soledad explains that she had difficult times getting along with her peers at school because her Mexican culture was different from the American culture of her peers. However, Soledad states that being in bilingual
education during her middle and high school years had helped her. For example, in excerpt 63, Soledad states,

(63) Well, I had a good teacher for my ESL...but...I learned more in my bilingual classes.

Excerpt 63 emphasizes the important role of bilingual education for Soledad as she tried to build on her language and cultural skills to be a member of the academic community. Bilingual teacher is someone who can act as a bridge between the student’s home language and English as well as student’s home culture and the American culture.

In other words, bilingual teacher can clear up communication problems that can arise due to the differences between the two cultures by explaining the norms of the new culture. In Soledad’s case, she was able to learn and understand her bilingual teacher more than her mainstream American teachers who only spoke English. Hence, the bilingual teacher is someone who can explicitly tell Generation 1.5 students the rules for participating in the “culture of power” (Delpit, 1995, p. 24).

When talking to Soledad about her reading and writing skills, however, Soledad stated that she feels confident in both Spanish and English skills. On the questionnaire, Soledad indicated that her fluency for Spanish and English
is "well." Furthermore, during the interview, Soledad expressed that she had no problems with writing except for some mechanical problems. For example, in excerpt 64, Soledad states,

(64) Writing, I have no problem, maybe like some mistakes. Reading, I have no problem.

Soledad's sentiments in excerpt 64 may not be because she understands and uses the English language as a native speaker but may be because there are interactional differences between spoken and written language. That is, when reading and writing, there is no immediate response from an audience. In other words, reading and writing is context reduced. As Soledad reads and writes, she is able to look up the words and understand the meaning of the words on paper.

Soledad further stated in excerpt 65 that she likes to read in both Spanish and English. However, she did state that reading in English is difficult.

(65) Well, up to now, I like to read Spanish books, too...Just to read them because I think they're interesting. And English, well, I have problem
well, I have to be like really concentrated everything has to be quiet order for me to understand like what they’re trying to say.

In excerpt 65, Soledad’s feelings about reading in Spanish and in English could explain her difficulty in the academic language. Academic texts consist of vocabulary and genre that is more difficult than texts that are read for enjoyment.

However, Soledad’s responses to her English writing abilities seem somewhat complex. For example, in our conversation in excerpt 66, Soledad states,

(66) Ellen: How do you feel about writing?
    Soledad: Well, I hate essays.

Soledad’s response in excerpt 66 does not mean that she hates all writing, just essays. In our conversation expressed in excerpts 67-69, Soledad explains her reasons why she hates essays.

(67) Me: How come you don’t like essays?
    Soledad: Cuz they’re telling you what to write.

(68) Ellen: How about the structure, you know how essays have some kind of structure when you write? What do you think about that?
    Soledad: Chore.
I have to follow certain patterns...introduction decide the next paragraph and the next paragraph when you start.

In excerpt 68, Soledad states that following a structure for essays is a chore, something that you must do. Therefore, she does not have the freedom to choose. Yet another reason that Soledad has a difficult time with essays is stated in excerpt 70.

I have trouble expressing myself.

Unlike Soledad’s response in excerpts 66-69 where she states that she hates essays because of the structure and the topic is chosen for her, the difficulty expressed in excerpt 70 is due to her limited English abilities.

Yet another complexity in her language is expressed in excerpt 71.

And then like I have an idea and it’s in Spanish. I have to translate that idea I think that’s the most difficult part.

In excerpt 71, Soledad is expressing that she knows what to say. But she has to translate her ideas into a language that is common to people in the academic community. As stated in chapter one, Generation 1.5 students come to the academic community with wide range of experiences and
knowledge; however, they have a difficult time expressing their knowledge because of their limited language abilities.

In our conversation in excerpts 72-73, Soledad continued to express herself.

(72) Ellen: translating ideas or translating language? 
Soledad: Translating ideas.

(73) one word in Spanish can convey my opinion. In excerpts 72 and 73, Soledad clarified herself by stating that the difficulty is not translating the language but the idea. Each language consists of ideas that often times cannot be completely translated into another language. When we do try to translate it, the meaning is altered. Therefore, in order for Soledad to feel comfortable in expressing what she wants to convey, she must “make a fundamental” change in her way(s) of thinking and knowing about her second culture (Shen, 1989, p. 461). This is important because writing occurs in “social and cultural” contexts (Shen, 1989, p. 460).

This analysis of Soledad’s case also seems to convey the results of student “owning” the language, which was discussed in a case studies by Chiang and Schmida (1999) and by Goen et al. (2002) reviewed in chapter one. For
example, one student stated that "I am best speaking in Cantonese...but I feel more comfortable using English in reading and writing" (Goen et al., 2002, p. 138). Soledad stated that she thinks in Spanish and she must translate her thoughts into English. In other words, English is a translated version of her thoughts to produce assignments for her instructors.

In excerpt 74, Soledad states that she likes to write by stating that she likes to write poetry.

(74) I'd rather write like poems or lyrics.

In excerpt 75, Soledad explains that this is because she is able to choose the topic and the structure of her poems.

(75) Ellen: when you write poetry, you feel more comfortable?

Soledad: Well, yeah. 'Cause it's my poem. I make the rules.

Although Soledad expressed that it was more difficult to translate ideas, she also said that vocabulary seems to be difficult for her in all forms of communication. For example, in excerpt 59 Soledad feels cautious when talking to a group of native English speakers. Also, she expresses her sentiment about reading difficulties in excerpt 65.
Furthermore, when writing, she states that she had difficulties “expressing what [she wants] to say using the vocabulary not the feeling, but the vocabulary.”

In triangulating Soledad’s case, Soledad brings a complex language profile to the classroom. She spoke Spanish most of the time with her classmates before, during and after class. This correlates with what she said during the interview when she said that she feels “cautious” when speaking English. This further correlates with her response of “some” for her spoken English but “well” for her written English abilities. Soledad’s responses correlate with results from Goen et al’s (2002) study in that the majority or “69% [of the students in the study indicated that] they speak and understand English well, yet a fifth of the students, 21%, feel that their oral proficiency in English is weak” (p. 136). For written proficiency, the results indicate that “67% [of the students reported] feeling most comfortable reading and writing in English” (p. 138).

Soledad, as others in this study, has had to deal with hegemony of institutional power. She wants to express her knowledge in a way that is familiar to her but is not able to because she needs to follow the institution’s guidelines
on what to write and how to write them. This does not allow her to express herself nor does it build on her existing knowledge. As with other students in this study, she was placed in an unfamiliar surrounding where she was in a powerless position because she lacked the community’s knowledge.

The stories of these students indicate that all five students came with various backgrounds and experiences. Yet they all have been influenced by the hegemonic power of the institutions. These results will be synthesized in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

The Generation 1.5 students in this research came with various life experiences and educational backgrounds. Some, such as Siska and Nguyen, had lived in various countries before coming to the U.S. while others, such as Emmanuel, Amanda and Soledad had come directly to the U.S. from their birth countries. Some, such as Siska, Amanda and Nguyen, had received English instruction before coming to the U.S., while others, such as Emmanuel and Soledad, had not received any English instruction before coming to the U.S. For those who had received English instruction, different modes of English were emphasized. For Siska, the written mode was taught while Amanda and Nguyen had learned the spoken mode. One student, Nguyen, had finished her formal education in her home country, but the other four had continued their formal education in the U.S.

Yet a common theme among all five students is that learning the vocabulary of the written language was a key factor in being a member of the academic community. Siska studied the words in the dictionary so that she could be a "normal teenager" in her school. Emmanuel, Amanda, Nguyen, and Soledad all had stated that understanding the
vocabulary was difficult in their class reading. This may also explain that Siska was the only one out of the five who had been placed into English 95 from the EPT score while the other four were placed into English 85.

As stated in chapter one, the vocabulary of written language differs from the spoken language. Written and spoken words have "different effects" on the ways people think (Chafe & Danielewicz, 1987, p. 84). So, if the words are difficult to understand, then the knowledge behind the words will also be difficult to understand.

Generation 1.5 students in this study came to the U.S. educational system with language and knowledge that differ from the ones of the academic community. This does not mean that they do not want to be members of the academic community. Their desires to be members of the academic community are strong and they work hard to learn. Siska, for example, wanted to be a member of the community so strongly that she "literally read the whole...Longman's Dictionary." Emmanuel's hard work is explained by him spending hours on a reading material.

However, these students' wishes to become members of the academic community are difficult for them to achieve because of the community's need to uphold its normal ways
of expressing its knowledge. The academic community, with the written form of language, has standards that dictate what is "real, normal, natural, good, and true" (Bizzell, 2002, p. 1). With these standards, academia has enormous power. It has the power to decide who can have access as a member of the community. At the same time, it also has the power to decide what information is worthy of teaching and how this information can be presented.

The five Generation 1.5 students' desires to become members of the community, however, are just as important to them as their desires to have their knowledge be acknowledged and accepted by the community. Many Generation 1.5 students come with "specific national identity" (Roberge, 2003, p. 8). Along with this identity, they also bring their knowledge.

In doing this research, I have learned that the class instructions and assignments relate little to the personal lives of the five Generation 1.5 students. This was evidenced during the interviews as well as during my class observations. For example, Soledad stated that she prefers to write poems and lyrics rather than essays. Emmanuel had difficulties understanding his reading texts because it did not relate to his personal life. Siska stated that the
reading topics were boring. In other words, for the students I interviewed and observed, the classroom is a separate place where they occupy a space to gain academic knowledge rather than have their knowledge be recognized.

Similarly, the class reading and assignments constitute work that needs to be done to pass the class so that they can "fit in" to the community rather than the community acknowledging their knowledge. Furthermore, from their survey questionnaires, it appears that they feel the same way about the English language; it is a language that they use to present information for their teachers and instructors but their (students') language is not accepted. For example, Soledad stated that she needs to translate her ideas into English so that her instructor can understand, whereas if she wrote her thoughts in Spanish, it would not be accepted. In other words, in order for Generation 1.5 students to be members, they need to "fit in" to the academic community.

Their ability to learn and change under this structure can be very difficult for some; this is evidenced by three of the students changing their class from English 85A to 86B regardless of whether they moved because of their instructor's recommendations or whether they moved on their
own. Learning a language or a mode of a language is a long and arduous process. This is because in addition to learning new words and structure of the language, a learner is also learning a "new culture, new way of thinking, feeling, and acting" (Brown, 1994, p. 1). In other words, when learning a language, the whole person is "affected" (Brown, 1994, p. 1). This is especially true for Generation 1.5 students. As these students' "acculturation, adaptation, arrival experiences are really complex psychological things that last a very long time" (Roberge, 2003, p. 6). Furthermore, Goen et al. (1997) and Roberge (2003) state that Generation 1.5 students stay as Generation 1.5 for ten to twenty years.

In order for Generation 1.5 students to feel that their literacy skills are recognized, their knowledge needs to be represented in their class instruction and allowed in their assignments. Soledad stated that she was told what to write for her essays. For example, one of her assignments was for her to support a position on a given topic. She did not have the freedom to choose her own topic nor her stance on that topic. This did not allow her to express her knowledge.
Furthermore, in order for these students to feel that the academic community is theirs, they need to be allowed to learn by expressing themselves in ways that are comfortable for them (Fox, 1999; Fu, 1995). For example, Siska learns by conversing as a "normal teenager" in her school. Emmanuel “know[s] what [he] want[s] to say.” Amanda wants to tell people what “Africa is really like.” Nguyen learns by hearing “other people’s opinions.” And Soledad wants to “write essays about her personal experiences or facts about her life.”

By taking a stance to allow students to express themselves in ways that are comfortable for them, I am not suggesting that the academic community change or lower its standards for Generation 1.5 students. What I am arguing is that by allowing students to express themselves using their knowledge, the members of the academic community can encourage them to build on their skills by encouraging them through their skills. This was evidenced in Fu’s (1995) case study of Cham. [By expressing themselves], Generation 1.5 students can learn the language and the norms of the academic community, but they need to be allowed (Fu, 1995).

Another aspect of learning that would help Generation 1.5 students to be members of the academic community is by
presenting information in ways that foster learning. For example, during my class observations, one of the instructors wrote the assignments, the main points of the reading and class discussion on the board as he conducted his class. It is important for Generation 1.5 students to receive information in multiple ways because presenting information in written as well in spoken form allows Generation 1.5 students to build on their language skills.

Language skills consist of four modes. Each mode has its own qualities. However, knowledge of one mode can help build knowledge of others. For example, as stated in chapter one, written language skills are built on spoken language skills. Therefore, if students are presented with various instructional methods that include various language modes, students are building on their language skills.

Information presented in various ways allows Generation 1.5 students to build their different communication skills. Building on their reading skills is important because as stated in chapter one, their spoken language skills are stronger than their reading skills. As stated in chapter one, Generation 1.5 students have been described as “aural” learners in recent literature (Reid, 1997; Roberge, 2003). Therefore, information presented in
both modes allows them to build on their reading skills by not only allowing them to "hear" the language but also "see" it. Furthermore, supplementing information in written form enhances Generation 1.5 students' abilities to enrich written language skills and usage.

A key way for Generation 1.5 students to learn the written mode of English, however, is for schools to provide bilingual education before they enter college. Bilingual education helps build on their subject knowledge and allows the students to further develop their cognitive skills (Crawford, 1989). Furthermore, the bilingual teacher can also help the students become members of the academic community by explaining the ideologies that are expressed in the written mode. Soledad stated that she learned more from her bilingual classes than she did from her ESL classes. Bilingual education is an important part of learning a second language because students can learn the language as well as the culture from someone who has already gone through the experience. Therefore, students are able to ask questions and clarify any misunderstandings. Having language skills is a powerful way of gaining knowledge of the community. With language skills, Generation 1.5 students are able to participate as
equal members in the "culture of power" (Delpit, 1995, p. 24).

Members of a culture know the rules of the community; they know the norms and how to behave according to these norms. This knowledge gives them power. An example of this is of Siska and Maria. Both stated that they were not aware of having to move from class to class every period. And Nguyen stated that she was happier before the change in curricula by the new government. Nguyen further stated that she never liked the learning environment at the adult school because she was in a new learning environment where the teacher repeated the lessons too often to let the new students catch up. This unfamiliarity led them to be in an environment where they did not have knowledge of their new environments; they did not know the rules of their new environment. These students' lack of their community's rules led them to be in powerless positions which made them "outsiders" who were functioning in someone else's parameters (Vickers, 2004).

Generation 1.5 students, possessing common knowledge of their usual surroundings, have been "uprooted" and are in new environments with new "signs and symbols" (Igoa, 1995, p. 39). In order to be members of the academic
community, they need someone to "explicit[ly]" tell them the rules (Delpit, 1986, p. 24). Siska stated that she had a few "assigned friends" who helped her gain the knowledge of her new community. Although this may not have been an ideal situation for her, these friends played an important role in helping her participate as a member of her high school community's "culture of power" (Delpit, 1995, p. 24). However, the rules should be "told" to help students express themselves rather than to have the rules restrict students' expressions which was the case for Soledad who had difficulties in expressing herself because of the essay format.

Yet for Generation 1.5 students to continue to build on their language abilities, there needs to be some continuity between schools and the different levels of institutions. Roberge (2003) states that there is a "big break...from elementary school to middle school... Then they move on to high school and they're treated differently yet again" (12). This is further compounded by the teachers having different philosophies and using different materials (Roberge, 2003, p. 12). These kinds of inconsistencies do not foster cognitive or academic language growth because Generation 1.5 students are more
focused on adjusting to their new environment rather than on learning.

Institutions, therefore, need to not only communicate with each other but also allow their members to learn and share their knowledge with other members. Fu (1995) for example, suggests that teachers “need time to read, to visit their colleagues’ classrooms, to observe different levels of teaching, and to simply chat with people in their building and in the neighborhood” (pp. 209-210).

This research has helped me to see that Generation 1.5 students want to be recognized as valuable contributing members of the academic community.

I have conducted this research from the perspective of how Generation 1.5 students’ life experiences influence language acquisition in relation to the hegemonic power structure of the institutions. However, there are other aspects of Generation 1.5 students’ language issues that need further study. For example, this study only reviews life experiences of immigrant Generation 1.5 students. However, another group of Generation 1.5 students are those who were born in the U.S. but have grown up speaking a language other than English as their first language. This is an important group of students that need further
research. Their life and educational experience differ in that they had lived all their lives and had received all their formal education in the U.S. However, as with the immigrant Generation 1.5 students, they are also in the process of learning the academic language.

I have conducted this study to analyze factors influencing language acquisition in relation to the hegemonic power of the institution. I hope that future researchers can use any and/or all elements of this research or adaptations of this research to conduct further studies in relation to other aspects of Generation 1.5 students' lives so that Generation 1.5 student can be recognized as knowledgeable and contributing members of their communities.
BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

Name and e-mail address

1) What country were you born in?

2a) If you were born in another country besides the U.S., how old were you when you came to the U.S?
   5 years old or under
   6-12 years
   13-18

b) Where did you go to school?

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3) What was the first language you learned to speak?

4) What language do you speak at home?

5) What language do you speak at work and/or at school?
6) How fluently do you speak:

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APPENDIX B

TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
TYPICAL INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1) When you’re with your friends, what language do you speak and why?

2) Do you want to take English writing classes? Why or why not?

3) Do you listen to radio in English or in another language?

4) Do you watch TV in English or in another language?

5) How did you feel about dances or other activities during high school?

6) What did you think about your high school teachers in general?

7) Did you understand their instructions during classes? Why or why not?

8) How did you feel about most assignments in high school?

9) What was school like for you when you first came to the U.S.?

10) Do you understand your professors’ instructions now?

11) How did you feel about your English 85 class(es)?

12) How did you feel about the class reading for your English 85 class(es)?
13) How did you feel about the assignments for English 85 class(es)?

14) Would you like to say anything more about your education or language experiences?
APPENDIX C

TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS
TRANSCRIPTION CONVENTIONS

... deleted speech

(unclear) unclear speech

(sha kes head) non verbal communication
REFERENCES


Losey & M. Siegal (Eds.), Generation 1.5 meets college composition: Issues in the teaching of writing to U.S.-educated learners of ESL (pp. 61-80). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.


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