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EXPLORING CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS'

IDENTITIES IN AN AFTERSCHOOL BOOK CLUB

by

Yu-Chi Wang

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy
degree in Teaching and Learning in the
Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

May 2016

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Pamela M. Wesely

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CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

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has been approved by the Examining Committee for
the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree
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To my parents, my sisters, and the members in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club who helped me realize the beauty of diversity.

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Yu-Chi Wang

Exploring culturally and linguistically diverse students’ identities in an afterschool book club

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative research aims to investigate identity positions of elementary school students with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) background in an afterschool book club. The increasing population of CLD students and their learning needs have become a national focus in American schools. Scholars have highlighted that understanding students' identity positions and their interactions in social communities benefits teaching practices (Norton, 2013). Although the number of studies investigating identity in language and literacy education is increasing, most focus on English language learners (ELLs) who are currently enrolled in English as a Second Language (ESL) or ELL programs and few examine these students' learning trajectories once they exit elementary school ESL programs. Research has shown that although the ELLs exit ESL programs, their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds continue to impact their learning.

This study attempts to investigate (a) what social practices contribute to elementary school students' participation in the afterschool book club (b) how CLD students position their identities, (c) what discourses about CLD students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds emerge and shape their identities, and in an elementary school afterschool book club. The data sources of this study include audio and video recordings, observation field notes from the book club, semistructured interviews, and students' written responses. I draw on Gee (2011) and Fairclough's (2001) critical discourse analysis concepts and guidance to interpret responses during the data analysis process.

The findings show that the afterschool book club provides multiple social functions that allows CLD students assume multiple identities, utilize their agency to

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negotiate, and create possible identities. For instance, this space allows the members of this book club to share their personal stories, challenge the conventions of a book club, maintain and expand their friendship circles, and share and listen to their peers' diverse backgrounds. In addition, the discourses that emerge in the book club illustrate that the CLD students are keenly aware of their identities. However, power relations at different social levels also challenge these multiple identities.

The findings of this study offer nuanced perspectives into the fields of foreign and second language education and literacy education. This study will contribute to teachers' understanding of CLD students' identity positions and to respond to Norton and Toohey's (2011) call for a better understanding of how students learn in globalized sociocultural worlds. Implications for educators, teacher education programs, and researchers are also discussed in this study.

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PUBLIC ABSTRACT

As an educator and international student in the United States, I understand the importance of being aware of and valuing students' diverse backgrounds in the classroom. I understand that paying attention to students' cognitive development and sociocultural factors can positively influence their learning development and trajectories. Language is powerful, but we often take it for granted. It can encourage and hinder students' participation in schools. Therefore, I have become sensitive to the languages that we use to shape who we are and who we want to be.

As the population of immigrant students has continued to grow, scholars and educators are paying increased attention to this population's unique needs in the United States. Although many researchers and educators have worked hard to provide equal learning opportunities for students with diverse backgrounds, they often do not have enough experiences working with students from diverse cultural and linguistic background. As a results, researchers and teachers often focus on students' learning in formal school settings, and how learning takes place outside of school settings, especially for students with culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, is often ignored by researchers and educators.

The purpose of this study is to understand elementary school girls' participation in an afterschool book club. I afford systematic attention to how three CLD elementary school girls talk about their stories related to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. In addition, I wonder how their multiple backgrounds and people's perceptions of them affect their understanding of who they are and what their relationships to U.S. society.

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From my observations and interactions with the girls in the afterschool book club, I find that the three CLD elementary school girls perform multiple identities during the reading and writing activities. They also share stories of their heritage cultures when opportunities are offered. Additionally, I find that although the three girls are willing to talk about their diverse backgrounds, they are sometimes challenged by people who carry stereotypes of who they are and where they are from. I hope the findings of my study can draw more educators' attention to students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and use this information to encourage and help students' learning.

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

> *Anita: I don't talk about my parents a lot because I don't want other people to judge me.*
>
> ...
>
> *Me: So do you think that if you tell them about your parents, your friends or other people will feel something weird?*
>
> *Anita: Not my friends, because they trust me and I trust them about everything. But people who don't know me or they are dumb, they don't understand me that well, (I) probably won't tell them because they would get the wrong thing.*

This conversation took place in an informal interview with Anita, a 6th grade elementary school girl who identified herself as Hispanic American. Her language revealed a sense of discomfort; she chose to avoid talking about the Honduran part of herself in front of people whom she was not familiar with. I had mixed feelings after our conversation. Although I was not born and raised in the United States, I sympathized with Anita's discomfort at being seen as different because of how she looks and speaks. I understand that Anita's perspective was not the product of a single incident; it was the product of discursive practices formed over time (Weedon, 1997). During the three years that I participated in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, some girls with *culturally and linguistically diverse* (CLD) backgrounds shared similar struggles to reconcile their heritage cultures with the cultures they currently participate in. The population of students with CLD backgrounds has increased dramatically in the past decades. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCTE) reported that the population of students who had culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and who attended English Language Learner (ELL) program in public school increased dramatically between 2002-03 and 2012-13. As an educator, I wonder how many students, like Anita, are forced to choose one social identity and perhaps hide the others in order to avoid misleading judgments about them based on their physical or linguistic markers or their heritage backgrounds. I wonder about the

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similarities and differences these students with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds encounter with their native-English speaking peers. I wonder how these conversations whether their multiple social identities affect their participation in various social settings and their constructions of themselves.

In the following sections, I provide the rationale for my study that introduces the increasing population of ELLs and their learning in the United States. Then I will provide an overview of my research study, including research background, theoretical frameworks, research questions and methods. Finally, I will discuss the significance of this study and provide a brief summary of each chapter.

English Language Learner (ELL) students in the US

ELLs and their learning development have attracted researchers' and educators' attention in the past two decades. This fast-growing student population has increased 60% over the past two decades, as compared with 7% growth of the general student population (Grantmakers for Education, 2013). The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) reported that in the school year of 2012-2013 that 9.2 percent (4.4 million) of students in public school in the United States were English Language Learners, and this figure did not consider the students who had already exited their ELL programs. In addition, a report from the National Education Association (NEA) (2008) projected that the population of ELLs would keep increasing, and they estimated that nearly 25% of public school students will be ELLs by 2025. That is to say, a lot of ELLs are and will be born and raised in the United States and will have shared the same educational systems with their native-English-speaking peers. However, research about ELLs' learning development demonstrates that an achievement gap still exists between these native-born ELLs and non-ELLs.

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Researchers have called for educators and the US government to be aware of unequal educational support for students with diverse backgrounds (NEA, 2011). Researchers have found that the lack of teacher recognition of students' linguistic and cultural backgrounds might affect students' cultural identity and their academic learning (Blackledge, 2000; Moll, 2000). Thus, it is crucial to expand educators' understanding of the fast-growing ELL population and its diverse academic needs.

Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Students (CLD)

Multiple terms have been used to categorize students whose heritage language is not English, such as English as a Second Language (ESL) student, Limited English Proficient (LEP) Student, Language Minority Student, English Learner (EL), and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) students. Webster and Lu (2012) analyzed how ELL-related terms were used and how frequently they were used. They found that several terms related to ELL students (ELLs) were prevalently used in the literature from 2010-11. In addition, they pointed out that these students were often loosely defined and portrayed as a homogenous group. In addition, previous literature commonly viewed ELLs from a deficit perspective and defined them as students who came from homes where their first language is not English, and who needed extra assistance to improve their language proficiency (Webster & Lu, 2012). This deficit view of English language learners highlights only the English language and the category of mainstream language learners and ignores ELL students' first language and their cultural affiliations (English, 2009; Webster & Lu, 2012). Suarez-Orozco and Suarez-Orozco (2001) argued that even after linguistic minority students exit their ELL/ESL programs, they could still feel stigmatized because of both their past experiences and perceptions of their heritage language backgrounds. This sense of stigmatization is shaped in part by problematic socially constructed views that disenfranchise ELLs and creates

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inaccurate stereotypes (Cummins, 1986), creating a boundary between native English-speaking students and students who acquire English as another language (English, 2009).

Webster and Lu (2012) found that the term CLD has recently become the preferred term because it focused on diversity, rather than on a deficit view of English learners. They claimed that CLD "is the most affirmative and holistic term" which stresses students' "assets, the totality of linguistic and lived experiences" (Webster & Lu, 2012, p.89). The population of CLD students includes those students who emigrated from other countries and students who were born in the United States and came from homes where English was not spoken, or where multiple languages were spoken among their family members. I used CLD to refer to students who learn English as another language or grow up in a bilingual environment and have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to highlight factors that influence CLD students' learning and their identity construction from a sociocultural perspective while avoiding the deficit definition of ELLs. Since the CLD students in this study were former ELLs who had passed their ELL programs, I also use this term to distinguish between current ELLs and students who have exited their ELL program,

Identity and Learning

Many scholars have highlighted the importance of deepening the understanding of students' learning, not only from cognitive perspectives, but also considering sociocultural factors that influence their learning development. Learning takes place in social practices and these social practices influence learners' constructions of their identities and their learning results inside and outside of school settings. (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Cumming, 2013; Day, 2002; Gee, 2001; Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007; Luke & Freebody, 1997; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Vygotsky, 1978; Wenger, 1998). In a study of students with diverse cultural and

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linguistic backgrounds, sociocultural scholar D'Amico (2001) found that the achievement gap was strongly related to two factors; a) sociocultural factors: such as poverty, ethnicity, low level of parental education, weak family support, and students' reactions to discrimination and stereotyping and b) school-related factor: such as teachers' expectations and educators' deficit perspectives of students with diverse backgrounds. Moje and Lewis (2007) argued, "learning can be conceptualized as shifts in identity" (p. 19). That is, individuals assume different identities while they are learning new forms of knowledge and participating in different social contexts. Following from this assertion, students who are often underrepresented or lack sociocultural support might not have enough learning opportunities to construct and reconstruct their learner identities.

Many sociocultural scholars who examined youths' identities have found that identity position is complex and interweaves with multiple sociocultural factors, such as popular culture, social media, and peer culture (Yon, 2000; Lewis, Enciso & Moje, 2007; Mojo, 2000; Nieto, 2010). Nieto (2010) stated that youths are strongly influenced by their peer culture and the cultures they currently participate in. In addition, Alvermann, Young, Green, and Wisenbaker (1999) stressed that adolescents' experiences both with their peers and experiences with their family and adult members of their communities contribute to their identity construction and peer culture. Scholars also found the multiple identities that students assume when they participate in different social communities influence their identity constructions and their learning trajectories (Au, 1998; Blackledge, 2000; Dagenais, Day, & Toohey, 2008; Lam, 2004; Orellana, 2007; Stritikus, & Nguyen, 2007; Yon, 2000).

Some scholars who have studied CLD students specifically interviewed high school students or adult learners who have diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. They found that

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many CLD students had experienced a sense of ambivalence while they were at school, and these experiences had influenced their understanding about themselves and their learner identities and trajectories (Au El-Haj, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Nieto, 2010; Yon, 2000). In addition, researchers found that their identities were more complicated and constantly shifting due to the different literacy practices at home and at school. Critical multicultural scholars suggested educators and researchers examine the relationship between CLD students' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds in order to understand how these markers affect students' identity positions (McCarthey & Moje, 2002; Nieto, 2010; Yon, 2000). These studies indicate that it is crucial to examine sociocultural factors that related to identity constructions in order to provide equal learning opportunities to ELLs and their non-ELL peers.

An increasing number of scholars have paid more attention to investigating the relationships between ELL's identity positions and their learning. Nevertheless, most identity studies have focused on adolescents or college level ELLs, and there has not been enough research exploring the relationship between pre-adolescent elementary students' identities and learning. Additionally, most researchers examining student identities emphasized students within their ELL or ESL program, and little has been focused on tracing ELLs' learning trajectories after exiting their language program at the elementary school level. Applying these theories to study younger students' identities would help researchers to better understand the complexity of identity construction and the ways that it shifts over time.

As mentioned earlier, scholars call for the need for researchers to break down the dichotomized definition of space between school and home and move toward investigating how students and researchers participate in a social context, such as homes, community organizations and after-school programs. (Orellana, 2007; Hull & Schult, 2001). Orellana (2007) pointed out

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that people sometimes have stereotypes and misleading assumptions about students' identities that cause tension and discontent, and that students from non-dominant groups often have to experience betweenness and "negotiate the discontinuities and tensions between their home and school lives" (p.124). The mismatch and the tension might impact CLD students' perceptions about their learner identities and cause CLD students to devalue their diverse backgrounds (Au El-Haj, 2000; Nguyen, 2008; Yon, 2000). Moll (2013) stated that if teachers can deepen their understanding of students' families, literacy practices, and cultural meanings, it might benefit teaching and learning in the mainstream classrooms. Therefore, in order to meet the multicultural and multilingual trend in US classrooms, it is essential for researchers and educators to examine not only students' literacy practices but also the similarities and differences among home literacy practices.

Some scholars who studied CLD students suggested that instead of focusing on equal learning opportunities for every student, it is crucial to recognize the social and economic inequality and critically examine it in order to understand "how inequality and injustice are produced and perpetuated in relation to power and privilege" (Kubota, 2004, p. 37). It is especially essential if we believe that learning takes place in social contexts and is strongly influenced by the social, cultural, and political power relations that are beyond individuals' control (Nieto, 2010). This will require researchers to investigate how unequal power relations are created and recreated both inside and outside of school settings (Blackledge, 2000; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Moll & Diaz, 1987; Stritikus &Nguyen; 2007) and how the power relations influence students' self-positions and academic achievement (Finders, 1996). These studies indicate that studying CLD students' participation in out-of-school literacy activity might

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benefit educators' understanding the sociocultural factors that affect students' learning and identity positions.

The Current Study

Since July 2012, I have participated in a research project called Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, led by two university professors. The research project is an afterschool program and aims to provide a comfortable reading environment for 4th to 6th grade girls to read books with strong female protagonists, discuss topics about being a "strong" girl, and help increase their awareness of their gender and reader roles. In this book club, I took on the role of a book discussion leader who took responsibility for a group of girls. I led the book discussion with my group of girls and designed activities that encouraged them to take a critical stance when responding to the literature. I have worked with an ethnically diverse group since September 2013. While I was working with them, I noticed that the CLD girls often made connections to their diverse ethnic backgrounds and cultures during our book discussion. I was surprised to hear their multicultural stories and fascinated by how the discussion topics varied from personal stories to multicultural stories that were far away from the United States. Also, the CLD girls' voices were louder and their eyes sparkled when they were sharing their stories of their heritage cultures or languages, and other girls leaned forward to listen. I found that the CLD girls consistently negotiated their multiple identities by using multiple ways in order to let other members recognize their social identities. The changes in the CLD girls' performance and interactions in the book discussion group made me question the relationship between students' identity positions and their literacy practices in the book club, especially CLD students. I wondered how this group of CLD students, who were born in the U.S., who speak their heritage

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languages outside of the school setting, and who were once ELLs, position themselves in different literacy practices.

Statement of Purpose

My study investigates the identities and discourses that emerged in the practice of the Strong Girls Read Strong Books community. To address this my topic of inquiry, I adopt an ethnographic research approach to look across the perspective of a three racially heterogeneous elementary school girls to explore their identity positions, the emergence of their discourses, and the way their different identities affected their learning in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

Research Inquiry

The specific questions that guided this study were:

1. What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
2. What kinds of identities do CLD students perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
3. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

Theoretical Framework

In this study, I employ a poststructuralist lens to explore the dynamic nature of identity. Weedon (1997) stated that poststructuralism is not single; it is plural and originated from multiple theories. This characteristic echoes many language and literacy scholars' definitions of identity as not fixed; it is multiple, and changes in different social contexts (Norton, 2000). In

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other words, identity is not determined by biological and environmental factors; it is an ongoing social process, and it is socially constructed (Hall, 2000). In addition, poststructuralists believed that individuals do not position their identity passively but instead participate in the process of negotiating their multiple identities by exercising their agency (Davies & Harré, 1990; Lewis, Enciso, & Moje, 2007). Scholars in recent decades have advocated the need to examine literacy practices outside of school settings in order to understand how these literacy practices shape and reshape identities. Last but not the least, poststructuralist scholars have highlighted the importance of questioning power relations in and behind discourses that influence learners' identity positions and learners' participation in literacy practices in order to provide equal learning opportunities for all students (Blackledge, 2000; Fairclough, 2001; Hall, 2002; Norton, 2000). Drawing from a poststructuralist lens, I adopt two major theoretical frameworks to ground my understanding of CLD students' identity positions in this study: identity theories and literacy as a social practice.

Identity Theories

The concept of identity varies in meaning and is hard to define. A poststructuralist view of identity is never fixed: it is multiple and constantly changing. The definition of identity is often a vague term and there are no clear-cut definitions in the literature (Block, 2007; Moje, Luke, Davies & Street, 2009). In this study, I pay attention to literature and previous studies that have focused on addressing identities as constructed in social practices. In my framework of identity theory, I categorize the characteristics of identity into five major themes based on the previous literature: (a) identity as fluid, situational, and multiple (b), identity as relational, (c), identity as hybrid, (d) identity as a site of struggle, and (e) identity as imagined.

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Many identity scholars have stated that identity is not fixed (Gee, 2001; Hall, 2000; Holland et al., 1998; Norton, 2000; Yon, 2000). These scholars believed that individuals have multiple identities and that these identities are emergent, ongoing, and socially constructed, shifting from context to context. In addition, identities are relational, and they require individuals' conscious and unconscious understanding of their relations to the world (Weedon, 1998). Moreover, individuals' identities will not be recognized unless both the speaker and hearer agree and participate in the same story line (Davies and Harré, 1990). In other words, identity is related to individuals' understanding of themselves and their roles in the social contexts. Because individuals have multiple identities, they sometimes conflict with each other and create a site of struggle (Weedon, 1997); active participation in the negotiation of these conflicted and overlapped identities might lead to hybrid identities, a space that is a result of individuals' complicated mixture of their multiple identities (Bhabha, 1994).

The process of identity construction is not limited to face-to-face interaction: it travels between different time, space, and imaged worlds. The imagined community is "developed and continued through common participation in activities that figure for people their identification with others who also, elsewhere or nearby, perform acts" (Holland, Lachicotte Jr. Skinner, & Cain, 2001, p. 247). The concept of imagined identity has been adopted in educational research, and an increasing number of scholars have paid attention to the imagined communities that students participate in in order to empower their leaner identity (Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton & Kamal, 2003; Norton, 2001; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Pavlenko, & Norton, 2007; Wenger, 1998). The five characteristics of identity that I drew from the aforementioned scholars were prominent to the understanding of CLD students' identity positions in this study.

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Literacy as a Social Practice

The notion of literacy as a social practice is closely related to the formation of identity. Literacy researchers encourage researchers and educators to rethink the meanings of literacy and learning, reading, and writing from a sociocultural perspective; they stated that literacy is part of social practice. This view of literacy as a social practice emphasizes not only learners' reading and writing skills but also how literacy is used in learners' everyday life (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Lewis, Encicso and Moje, 2007; Lewis, 2001; Luke & Freebody, 1997). Cumming (2013) pointed out the increasing need to investigate the relationship between language, culture, and literacy in language research to better understand how CLD students learn within a local and global social structure.

Recent scholars who share the concept of literacy as a social practice have highlighted the importance of students' literacy practices both inside and outside of school settings (Au, 1998; Au & Raphael, 2000; Blackledge, 2000; Moje, 2000; Nieto, 1999). These scholars have underlined that student's identity constructions do not stop outside of their classroom settings, such as home, community, and outside school activities. In addition, Nieto (1999) designated that "power and privilege rather than intelligence or ability are the heart of [educational] inequality" (Nieto, 1999, p. 46). Therefore, examining how different power relations within various social contexts influence identity positions is crucial to the understanding of students' learning (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Blackledge, 2000; Norton, 2010).

Significance of the Study

This study can provide insights into both language and literacy education research fields. First, it can contribute important implications for elementary school teachers to better understand CLD students' literacy practices in both inside and outside of school settings to improve CLD

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students' learning. Moreover, the literacy practices that benefited CLD students and their peers in the afterschool book club can be transferred into classroom settings to benefit reading and learning. The female-only nature of this book club can shed some light into finding more space for the literacy practices for female CLD students, especially for those students whose socioeconomic status and culture are often marginalized in the mainstream classroom. This research can shed light into how power was enacted and how language learners with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds shaped and reshaped their identities in multicultural classrooms in elementary school setting, responding to, Norton's (2000) assertion that investigation of the relationship of power impact on language learning has become crucial in the field of SLA research. The findings of this study also benefit educators' understanding of identity construction of early adolescent CLD students by offering a detailed picture of some CLD students' learning trajectories. Lastly, the findings of the CLD students' identity positions and how different social factors intersect with each other and influence learning can add nuance to scholarly constructions of identity theories in the multicultural world.

Overview of Research Study

In chapter two, I review and discuss literature related to this ethnographic study. I first discuss important elements of and reasons for adopting a poststructuralist lens to build upon the existing knowledge of identity theory and literacy. Then I summarize theories and literature related to identity and literacy practices that share a poststructuralist premise. I discuss theories and previous identity studies into the five characteristics of identity mentioned above. The second part of my literature review focuses on previous literacy studies, which view literacy as a social practice both outside and inside of school settings.

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Chapter three offers a detailed summary of my research methodology. I first start with an overview of the ethnographic research approach including an introduction and discussion of qualitative methods. Then I provide a detailed description and background of the research setting, participants, the research project and my role in this research study. Next, detailed descriptions of the data sources and data analysis process are presented. In the data analysis section, I introduce analytical tools adopted from Gee (2001) and Fairclough's (2001) concepts of critical discourse analysis as well as tools suggested by other qualitative researchers. In addition, I discuss the strategies I used to increase the credibility of my study.

Chapter four details the findings of the first research question, focusing on the social practices in the afterschool book club. I begin with a short introduction of each girl in my group to provide a portrait of their performance and their relationships with their peers both at school and book club. Then I discuss findings that were salient to the construction of the Strong Girls Read Strong Books community. For instance, the social supports that encourage the elementary school girls to participate in the book discussion, strategies that invite the CLD girls to share their personal stories, and opportunities to challenge boundaries of different social practices.

Chapter five focuses on the examination of the social identities and discourses that emerged for each CLD girl in the book club. I discuss the discourses related to CLD students' culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and explore how these discourses emerged from discursive practices at the local and larger social levels. Additionally, I provide explanations of how the discourses that emerged empowered and hindered CLD girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

The last chapter includes the conclusion and discussion of the implications of my study. I first start with a review of the research purpose and a summary of the findings. I connect these

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research findings with previous literature that helps continue the conversation about CLD students' identities and learning. In addition, I discuss the findings regarding students' identity position in both formal and informal school settings in ESL/FL and literacy education fields. I argue the importance of professional development regarding CLD students in teacher education. Lastly, I suggest implications for researchers and future research directions to shed light on scholars' understanding of identity theories.

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CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The dual purpose of this chapter is 1) to introduce my rationale and the significance of taking a poststructuralist perspective and 2) to review related identity literature from both the language and literacy fields. This chapter is divided into three major parts. In the first part of this chapter, I discuss how poststructuralist approaches enabled me to conceptualize CLD students' identity construction in the afterschool book club. Then I discuss five key characteristics of identity shared across the literature. Lastly, I review research that adopted a framework of literacy as a social practice to benefit my understanding of the relationships between identity positions and literacy learning in various social settings.

Theoretical Framework

A Poststructuralist View of Identity

For decades, identity has been studied and defined from different perspectives in various educational fields, and the definitions vary as widely as the fields of discipline themselves. For much of that time, most researchers adopted an essentialist position to explain that identities are determined by either biological or environmental factors. The essentialist view of identity originated from anthropology, which focused on viewing identity as correlated with an individual's race, ethnicity, and language. Bucholtz and Hall (2004) argued that this essentialist view of identity emphasized the homogeneity and dichotomy of identity and ignored the differences of individuals' unique life experiences and their participation in multicultural social communities. Researchers who are interested in language, literacy, or multilingual education have questioned this essentialist viewpoint and suggested that educators and scholars approach the complexity of identity construction from a poststructuralist perspective and attend closely to

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individuals' own understandings of their identity positions (Block, 2007; Davies & Harré, 1990; Lewis et al. 2007; Moje, 2000; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2000; Rogers & Mosley, 2005; Weedon, 1987). These scholars believe that taking a poststructuralist view to understanding the "more nuanced, multileveled and ultimately, complicated framings of the world around us" (Block, 2007, p. 15) contributes to educators and scholars' understanding of identity and its intersections with multiple social perspectives.

Poststructuralism has been influential to scholars' understanding of identity in recent language and literacy research (Block, 2007; Morgan, 2007; Norton, 2013). Block (2007) reviewed poststructuralist language research and found that identity is not easy to define. Weedon (1997) stated that the term "poststructuralist" is plural, it is not a fixed meaning, and it is developed from a range of theoretical frameworks, such as Derrida (1973) and Foucault (1981). These different theoretical frameworks vary depending on the fields they are applied to. Block (2007) stated that poststructuralism can be seen as "the suppressing of structuralism," which focuses on "moving beyond the search of 'universal and invariant laws of humanity' to more nuanced, multileveled, and ultimately, complicated framing of the world around us" (Block, 2007, p. 15). In addition, Smart (1999) stated that poststructuralists have aimed at a multitude of issues, such as examining the "crisis of representation and associated instability of meaning and the analytic centrality of language, discourses and text" (p. 38). Smart's (1999) poststructuralist perspective helps scholars to frame identity as situated, not fixed, fragmented, and contested in nature (Block, 2007). The second part of Smart's (1999) statement emphasized analyzing language, discourses, and text in order to arrive at a better understanding of how individuals use language to construct situated meanings. These explanations of poststructuralism allowed me to move beyond a fixed, unidirectional, and homogenous lens to multiple situational

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and contextual perspectives in order to explore, interpret, and explain the CLD girls' identities in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

Although different forms of poststructuralism are applied in different educational fields, they all share certain assumptions about the role of language (Morgan, 2007; Norton, 2010; Weedon, 1997). Instead of defining language as grammatical patterns, Weedon (1997) pointed out that language is "the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequence are defined and contested…. language is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivities, is constructed" (Weedon, 1997, p. 21). Weedon's (1997) view of language corresponds with Fairclough's (2001) idea that "language is a form of social practice" and it is a part of a society (p. 16). Fairclough (2001) explained that language is not only our reflection of what happens in society; it is also a part of the social process. The meanings that we construct through language do not result from a single incident; instead, they are discursive practices of individuals' everyday life experiences. That is to say, the languages we use and the meanings that we negotiate through language are part of a complex social practice. For instance, our understanding of CLD students and their backgrounds, or our definitions of gender roles, all result from the meanings constructed through our everyday life experiences. This assumption of language is crucial for me to examine critically how language is used in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club to reflect social phenomena and create learning opportunities.

According to poststructuralism, we also use language to make sense of who we are and our relations to the world (Luke, 1997; Weedon, 1997). Weedon (1997) used the term *subjectivity* to explain what I will refer to as *identity*. She defined subjectivity as the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of

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understanding her relation in the world (Weedon, 1997, p. 32). In other words, individuals' identities are determined by not only how people perceive their identity but also how they perceive their positions in relation to the social world. This view of identity reminds researchers to take individuals' own understanding of their identity positions and their emotions into consideration when analyzing identities. When the girls were sharing their personal stories, I noticed that they frequently revealed emotions in their narratives. Thus, adopting Weedon's (1997) poststructuralist view of identity has allowed me to value the girls' personal stories and understand the role these stories play in their identity positions.

Poststructuralists believe that individuals do not passively accept predetermined identity markers; they partake in the discourses to create possibilities for autonomy and resistance by using different sign systems. That is to say, poststructuralists believe that learners consciously or unconsciously participate in the negotiation process. In the case of students' learning, Nieto (2010) stated that not only does learning take place through teachers' transmission of knowledge; it also requires students' active participation to reflect, theorize, and create knowledge. That is, individuals have the agency to participate in discourses by using words or sign systems to create learning opportunities. These opportunities are essential to constructing and reconstructing students' identities (Lewis et al, 2007). The definition of agency here refers to individuals who are conscious of the discourses they participate in and in their exercise of power or authority to execute their agency (Davies & Harré, 1990; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; McCarthey, 1998; Norton & Toohey, 2001; Pavlenko, 2001). In addition, Lewis et al. (2007) stated that agency can also be seen "as the strategic making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within the relations of power" (p. 18). Weedon

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(1997) noted that although meaning is constituted through language, not every person who uses language is guaranteed recognition.

Scholars who adopt a poststructuralist lens emphasize not only how identities are constructed from individuals' discursive discourses but also how power relationships privilege and inhibit discourses that influence people's participation in the social communities. Weedon (2007) pointed out that subjectivities are the results of continuously discursive practices from multiple power relationships, such as economic, social, and political relationships. However, it was not until recent decades that more language and literacy scholars have started examining the power relations that exercise in social communities and their impact on learning (Blackledge, 2000; Block, 2007; Gee, 2000; Fairclough, 2001; Lewis, Enciso, Moje, 2007; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004; Street, 2003). Weedon (1997) stated that identity is not constructed from an independent event; it is constructed through discursive practices that reside in complex power dynamics in different social worlds. In addition, power takes place in various discourses, and it controls and structures relations between different individuals. Along with Weedon's notion of power, Fairclough (2001) noted that "power is exercised and enacted in discourse" and "there are relations of power behind discourse" (p. 61). Power in discourse refers to a more visible and face-to-face power relationship in which a powerful individual controls and constrains the less powerful ones by using words or different sign systems (Fairclough, 2001). In other words, individuals who belong to the dominant culture are likely to have more power and play the role of gatekeepers to constrain individuals who have less power. For instance, many teachers in traditional classrooms are positioned as the authority who has the power to decide and control the discourses of ways of being good students or good readers. Fairclough's (2001) conception of *power behind discourse* refers to power that is hidden within the whole social

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order of discourse. This type of power is often invisible and exercised in people's everyday discourses. For instance, the image of gender roles that is within people's discourses and social media is one example of power behind discourse. Women are often portrayed as less powerful than men and there are often unequal gender role expectations hiding in the texts in social media. Fairclough's (2001) idea of *power in discourse* and *power behind discourse* suggested that discourses need to be understood from local and social levels in order to uncover unequal power relationships enacted in different discourses (p. 36).

To sum up, while I was defining my own understanding of identity and the girls' own definitions of who they are, I found that the meaning is never fixed and simple; it is always shifting from context to context. In addition, a certain identity in one context sometimes shows conflicts in other ones. This dynamic and contradictory feature had driven me to take a poststructuralist lens, which views identity as unstated, situated, dynamic, subject to change, and contradictory, and that helps me interpret and build upon my understanding of identity (Block, 2007; Norton, 2000; Kouhpaeenejad & Gholaminejad, 2014). Also, this specific lens has enabled me to view the Strong girls as individuals who take agentive moves to negotiate their multiple identities and examine the complicated power relations within different social structures in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

History of Identity

Lewis and Del Valle (2009) summarized how identity has been understood and has evolved in the past 35 years. He categorizes these understandings into three waves. In the 1970s and 1980s, the researchers focused on the notion that identities were stable and unified; learners' identities were often seen to be affiliated with stable characteristics, such as ethnicity and gender. Studies related to the first wave assumed that identity was fixed and determined by biological

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factors, such as race, gender, and so on. However, in the 1990s, researchers challenged the biologically determined view of identity and criticized the ignorance of not taking sociocultural factors into consideration. They suggested that identities are socially constructed, negotiated, and performed through literacy practices. This view of identity is similar to Delanty's (2003) definition of self; he stated that "the contemporary understanding of the self is that of a social self in relations of difference rather than of unity and coherence" (p. 135). That is to say, learners' identity construction is influenced by how they interact with peers, family, and larger social institutions. The second wave of identity conceptualization has impacted and influenced research related to literacy and identity since the 1990s. This wave emphasizes that identities are negotiated and performative, and they are shaped and reshaped according to multiple social practices and individuals' positioning in relation to peers, family, community, or schools (Lewis & Del Valle, 2009).

The third wave of identity conceptualization focuses on identity as hybrid, meta-discursive, and spatial, and literacy practices are understood in local and global levels (Lewis & Del Valle, 2009). Theorists of identity have proposed the third-wave theory because of the development of technology and changes in the resources of our social networks and students' literacy practices. In addition, the scholars related to third wave identity conception believe that identities are evident in networks within a global and local context; they are shaped by participating in certain communities; they do not have to be shaped at a certain time; and they have temporary and spatial trajectories (Jenkins, 2006; Gee, 2002).

The three waves of identity mentioned in this section contextualize how identity has been understood and defined in history and how they have influenced and were influenced by literacy practices in the society. In the next section, I focus on reviewing literature from both the second

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and the third wave of identity research to help me interpret how identity is socially constructed in the Strong Girl Read Strong Books book club and how different power relations from local and global levels influence identity construction.

The Characteristics of Identity

The review of the identity history illustrates that the definition of identity is never easily contained. Both language and literacy scholars examining identity in recent years have shown an increasing trend of taking a poststructuralist lens to understand identity. A poststructuralist view of identity is never fixed and it is multiple and constantly changing; it is often vague and there are never clear-cut definitions in the literature (Block, 2007; Moje, Luke, Davies & Street, 2009). Although the definitions of identity vary from the literature, there have been overlapping findings across previous studies. Therefore, this section aims to review characteristics of identity that were found in previous studies. For my literature review, I located literature in both language and literacy studies on identity that shared similar a perspective of poststructuralism. I reviewed the literature and studies and categorized the characteristics of identity into five themes. It is worth noting that it is impossible to have a clear boundary between the five themes because they sometimes overlap with each other. Thus, some findings of the studies shown in one theme might be mentioned repeatedly in the other themes. In the following section, I discuss the five identity themes: 1) identity as fluid, situated, and multiple, 2) identity as relational, 3) identity as hybrid, 4) identity as a site a struggle, 5) identity as imagined.

Identity as Fluid, Situated, and Multiple

Hall (2000) stated that identity is not already "there"; rather, it is a production, emergent, and in process. It is situational— it shifts from context to context'" (p. xi). Hall's definition of

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identity indicated that identity is not fixed; it is fluid and changes in different social contexts. Scholars who adopted a poststructuralist view believed that everyone has multiple identities and these identities are fluid and shift from context to context. Identity is also situated. An individual has multiple social identities, and a particular social identity is assumed when they recognize the specific social practice and activities that are situated in “historically contingent, socially enacted, culturally constructed ‘worlds’: recognized fields of frames of social life” (Holland et al, 1998, p. 7). Gee (2001) used *socially situated identities* to represent that people have multiple social identities, and they enact a particular social identity when they want a certain social group to recognize their particular social identities. In addition, these social identities are recognized by the linguistic choice, sign systems, and systems of artifacts that we use to perform ourselves (Gee, 2010; Holland et al., 1998), such as dressing style, presentation of knowledge, the places we go, the ways we talk, or expressions of emotion. Both linguistic and other sign systems and systems of artifacts that we use in a socially accepted context are essential to the construction to our social identities when interacting with a certain social group in a particular place. These signs and linguistic systems are in line with Gee’s (2010) capital d “Discourses.” Gee (2010) pointed out that our Discourse can be treated as an identity kit to let other people recognize our social identities. Moreover, identity is fluid and it travels through different time and space. Capital “D” Discourse means that people use language to present their way of thinking, valuing, and believing in order to enact particular and recognizable social identities. Examples include the way a teacher talks to a student, the way a business person introduces a product, or the way a professor presents a paper in a conference (Gee, 2011). Marsh and Stolle (2006) argued that “we construct and reconstruct our identities as we attempt to make our way through varying

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environments and situations over time" (p. 49). That is to say, our different identities we assume, shape, and reshape themselves when we participate in various social contexts.

The characteristic of identity as fluid, situated, and multiple can be found in many language and literacy studies (Honan, Knobel, Baker, & Davies, 2000; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; McCarthey, 1998; Norton, 1999; Toohey, 2000). Norton (1999) studied five immigrant women's motivation of English learning in Canada. She argued for the notion of *investment* instead of motivation to explain the complicated relationship of language learners and English learning in both local and larger social levels. Norton (2000) differentiated the notion of motivation and used *investment* to refer to language learners' commitment to the target language which is related to their social identities as language learners. Her findings illustrated that the five immigrant women's identities were multiple; they shifted from context to context. For example, Norton found that a participant in her study, Martina, displayed an identity that was complicated and fluid across multiple sites of English speaking environments and that influenced Martina's investment of her English learning. Her multiple identities were found in different situated discourses, such as being an immigrant, a mother, a language learner, a worker, and a wife. These multiple identities shifted according to the situated contexts that Martina participated in. For instance, when Martina assumed a caregiver's role, her investment of English was to understand the society in Canada in order to offer a better life for her children. She assumed herself as a mother when sharing her working ethics that were different from young Canadian co-workers in the fast food restaurant. She positioned and situated herself in a mother's role which provided her the power to use her limited English ability in public.

McCarthey's (1998) study illustrated that students' identities shift in various learning contexts. In her ethnographic study, she applied personality theory, a social constructivist

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perspective, and Neo-Marxist/feminist lenses to interpret three elementary-aged students' classroom interactions. The findings showed that the students performed multiple identities, and they changed their identities and performances when the teachers created different learning situated contexts, and the students interacted with different peers, such as working in a big or small group, interacting with their friends, or discussing topics that they were not familiar with. In addition, their positions of their history of gender, race, social class, and ethnicity also impacted their participation in the group and their social identities. For instance, when analyzing data from a feminist lens to consider gender, the researcher observed a male student's performance and interactions within different social groups. McCarthey (1998) found that when the male student was assigned in a dominant female student discussion group, he became a more silent participant. However, when the teacher divided the same number of male and female students in the same group, male students often took the floor to lead and initiate the conversation. This study showed that changing dynamic of group interaction and learning context provides opportunities for teachers to understand students' multiple identities and group interactions. These studies support the characteristic that identity as fluid, situated, and multiple.

Identity as Relational

A poststructuralist view of identity is socially constructed, and we are consciously and unconsciously constructing our identities in relation to our understanding of the world and ourselves (Weedon, 1997). The finding of the different performances between the boys and the girls in McCarthey's study indicate that identity is relational, and we assume different identities when we interact with different people. Davies and Harré's (1990) conception of positioning is crucial to explain the characteristic that identity as relational. Davies and Harré's (1990) defined positioning from a feminist poststructuralist perspective as the discursive process whereby selves

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are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines. There can be interactive positioning in which what one person says positions another. And there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself (p.48).

Their definition indicates that how individuals employ their identities depends on how they position themselves and are positioned in different social communities. Also, this conception focuses on examining how "discursive practices constitute the speakers and hearers in a certain way and yet at the same time is a resource through which speakers and hearers can negotiate new positons" (Davies & Harré, 1990 p. 62). That is, the story line is constructed through both learners and speakers' discursive practice in their daily life. Thus, if an individual wants her/his social role to be recognized, then both the speaker and the hearer need to participate in the same story line in order to create opportunity for shaping or creating different identities. Positioning theory is crucial for understanding how identity is positioned through discursive practice and how negotiations of meanings happen in various power interactions in social structures. Norton (2000) pointed out that feminist poststructuralism seeks to explore "how prevailing power relations between individuals, groups, and communities impact on the life chances of individuals at a given time and place" (p. 124). For example, in my research I examine how Strong Girls interact with each other and how my group leader identity might be influenced by their discursive practice of knowledge of the conventions of book discussion learned at the school setting.

Studies related to classroom discourse found that ELL students' identity positioning was strongly influenced by their discursive practice at schools and their teachers' attitude toward their diverse backgrounds (Katz & DaSilva, 2009; Moje & Lewis, 2007; Toohey, 2000). Katz and DaSilva (2009) studied how linguistic minority students positioned themselves and were

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positioned in relationship to others in two classrooms. The findings illustrated that teachers' perceptions of the minority students and the design of classroom activities were significant to the students' legitimate participation in the classroom practices. Toohey (2000) pointed out that teachers are seen as mediators of classroom activities; when ELLs learn that their linguistic and cultural backgrounds are positioned from a deficit lens by their teachers, their learner identities might be restricted. Thus, teachers' positive attitudes toward students' home and school identities and incorporation of multiple literacy activities are imperative to invite students to share their stories, create opportunities for participation, and empower students' ownership of learning.

Moreover, another important aspect of positioning theory is that the process of identity construction is not passive; rather, it is dynamic and individuals are seen as active agents who are continually and intentionally seeking meanings and negotiating meanings to understand the worlds around them (Katz & DaSilva Iddings, 2009). That is to say, individuals position of themselves are not only forced on them by other people's perceptions about them or their understanding of themselves. It is the result of individuals' active negotiations of their understanding of the worlds and their interactions with people in different social contexts through the mediation of signs (Holland, Lachicotte Jr. Skinner, & Cain, 2001). In accordance with Davies and Harré's (1990) view of positioning, Moje and Lewis (2007) stated that "[A]gency might be thought of as the *strategic* making and remaking of selves, identities, activities, relationships, cultural tools and resources, and histories, as embedded within relations of power" (p.18, emphasis theirs). This view of identity and agency provides an important insight into how individuals can strategically enact their agency to shape and reshape their identities and create more participation opportunities in the social groups.

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When examining positioning and the relations of our identity in different social contexts, it is impossible to ignore power relations. Holland et al. (1998) stated that the choices of words, registers, pronouns, and genre are never neutral; these choices happen within power relations between the speaker's and hearer's social positions. The concept of identity as relational not only focuses on individuals' face-to-face interaction with others, but also relates to individuals' relation of power in different social structures. Both Fairclough's (2001) concepts of power in discourse and power behind discourse are crucial to understand CLD girls' identity positions and discourses related to their cultural and linguistic identities. Power in discourse can be considered as a type of "face-to-face" discourse where participants are unequal (Fairclough, 2001, p. 38). On the other hand, power behind discourse refers to "particular types as 'an effect of power'-as having conventions which embody particular power relations" (Fairclough, 2001, p.49). This hidden power relation is important for educators to understand how learners position their identities, shift, and destabilize their power both inside and outside of school settings. The Discourses that we enact and represent are also important indicators to identify power relationships among members in different social groups. For instance, the way CLD students present their diverse cultural knowledge and backgrounds, interact with their peers and the group leader, and their linguistic choices are all related to their understanding of the power relationships among the group members.

One example of different types of power can be found in Mojo and Lewis's (2007) study. They analyzed a brief classroom discussion focusing on the role of microrelations and macrorelations of power that created and inhibited learning opportunities in an eighth-grade English language art classroom. Their study showed that both teachers' and students' enactments of their identities simultaneously invited and constrained classroom participation. They used

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agencies to enact different positions to reproduce and resist certain social identities. The findings showed that although several agentic moves were found in the classroom discussion, both the teacher and students were constrained by power from social cultural worlds. For instance, although the teacher tried to open opportunities for students' participation in the literature discussion, when the topic was related to gang members, the teacher showed his hesitance and tried to change different topic. The teacher's agentic move indicated his awareness of the limitation of selecting appropriate topics in a formal classroom setting. Additionally, Moje and Lewis (2007) also pointed out that students' silence can be considered as an agentic move in which they strategically enacted a certain identity to avoid or strengthen people's perception about them.

This section discussed that identity as relational and it is influenced by individuals' perceptions about themselves and other people's perceptions about them in relation to their understanding of different power relationships in the social worlds. In addition, this characteristic emphasizes that the individuals actively participate in the identity negotiation process by using agencies. This characteristic is crucial to examining different positioning that takes place in Strong Girls book discussion groups. It also brings insight into how positioning creates opportunities for negotiating new identities.

Identity as Hybrid

Some identity scholars have stated that identity is not only multiple but also hybrid (Bhabha, 1994; Block, 2007; El-Haj, 2007; Lam, 2004; McCarthey & Moje, 2000; Nguyen, 2008; Yon, 2000). Block (2007) stated that the broader understanding of identities as "individual becomes half of what he/she was and half of what he/she has been exposed to" simplified the complexity of identity construction (p. 25). Hall (1996) stated that hybrid identities are

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fragmented and shaped and reshaped in discourses and social practices. Block (2007) stated that hybridity can be seen as "the mixing of languages which yields linguistic systems which clearly draws on different contributions but contains characteristics that would not have been predictable by simply summing up these contributions" (p. 25). In other words, hybridity is not simply a 50 percent of one identity and 50 percent of the other; it is from the "two-way borrowing and lending between cultures… [and] meaning is articulated both from within past and present cultural histories, languages, and trajectories" (Díaz, 2016, p. 42). In this study, this characteristic of identity as multiple refers to that individuals have various identities that are more stable and easily to be identified. The hybrid identities are produced from the complicated ongoing process of negotiating multiple identities.

The process of borrowing and lending multiple identities might create learner uncertainty and negotiation of new identities. Bhabha (1994) explained that identity is hybrid and there is a space between multiple fixed identity categorizations such as skin color, race, and gender; it is the in-between interstitial space that opens the opportunities for cultural hybridity. Lam (2004) stated that this perspective of identity is never a mixture of fixed identities. Rather, it is an elusive condition that meanings can be "appropriated, translated, and rehistorized" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 37). The term of hybridity is close to Yon's (2000) conception of "diaspora space," which refers to a space "where diasporic people converge and where multiple subject positions and identities are proclaimed, juxtaposed, contested, and disavowed" (p. 17). Moje, Luke, Davies and Street' s (2009) metaphor of identity as layers of positions or as laminations also helps explain the hybridity characteristic of identity. They propose that "laminations are constructed through the layering of identity position one over the other; just as layers of varnish might stick or congeal, so do laminated identities" (Moje, Luke, Davies & Street, 2009, p. 430).

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The conception of identity as position and laminations helps explain why identity can be stable, multiple and conflicted at the same time (Holland & Leander, 2004). The notion of identity as hybrid reminds educators that identity construction is influenced by sociocultural factors and power relations. Thus, it is imperative to explore and understand CLD students' hybrid identities in the increasing multicultural and multilingual contexts in American classrooms.

Scholars pointed out that identity construction is sophisticated, hybrid, and fluid, and it cannot be separated from the sociocultural contexts; however, they also highlighted that immigrant students' stabilized identity such as their race, gender, skin color, or ethnicity should not be dismissed in the conversation (Díaz, 2016; McCarthey & Moje, 2000; Nieto, 2010; Kubota, 2004; Yon, 2000). McCarthey and Moje's (2000) discussion in their *Identity Matters* paper noted that our histories, cultures, and languages serve as a gel that helps construct our identity and that they might diminish or facilitate our certain social identity in a particular time and space. Researchers who investigated immigrant students' identity have argued that the meaning of globalization has changed over time due to changes of capitalism, the impact of technology commodities, and visual images of the world (Yon, 2000). Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the meaning of globalization to the new generation and understand how it impacts immigrant students' hybrid identities. Researchers who studied 1.5 or second generations of immigrant students in the United States, Australia, and Canada illustrated that many immigrants experienced in-betweeness and ambivalence toward their ethnic and cultural identities (Bondy, 2015; Díaz, 2016; El-Haj, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Thai, 2001; Yon, 2000). These scholars have suggested adopting multiple perspectives, voices, and theoretical frameworks to understand the meanings of identity of immigrant students in this global context (Bondy, 2015; El-Haj, 2009; Yon, 2010).

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Yon's (2000) ethnographic study of a group of immigrant high school students in Canada has brought an important insight into understanding CLD students' hybrid identity in this study. His study aimed at investigating the complexity of identity construction and how immigrant high school students' race and gender intersected with how they perceived their identity and other people's perceptions about them. He analyzed high school students' discursive practices inside and outside of school settings and how they affected their identity positions. The findings showed that immigrant students' stabilized identity, such as their skin color, body, race, and gender, all played a crucial role on their identity positions. Moreover, Yon (2000) also found that the new generations of immigrant students were experiencing a *diaspora space* where they often questioned where they belonged despite that CLD students were strongly influenced by their peers, popular cultures, and the social media. His study suggested that scholars and educators need to take a critical perspective, and take into account both the stabilized and various sociocultural factors in order to gain a deeper understanding of immigrant students in a new era and global context.

In line with Yon's study, Au El-Haj (2007) and Nguyen (2008) studied immigrant high school students in the United States and also found that identity positions are complicated, situated, and hybrid. Both of their studies showed that the CLD students did not directly identify themselves as American when asking their national identity; they clearly distinguished their nationality and their citizenship when asking who they were. The findings illustrated that the immigrant youths believed that multiple identities could occur and an individual who resides in one place could also belong to other communities that are outside of the United States. Moreover, the youths in these studies were all aware of the privilege and power they had with their American citizenship. Nguyen (2008) noted that although the CLD students showed

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awareness of their American and heritage identity, they also experienced a sense of ambivalence of their heritage community and other people's perceptions of them as an outsider of the American community.

Evidence of recent CLD students' hybrid identity is also found in Bondy's (2015) study of adolescent Latino's formation of their transnational identities in the United States and Díaz's (2016) study of CLD students' and their parents' perception about their identities in Australia. Both Bondy (2015) and Díaz (2016) found that students' identity formation took place not only within their life experiences, but also beyond the boundaries of a nation. In addition, their identity formation was forged among the overlapping multiple identities. Both studies showed students of recent generations have gained more awareness of their hybrid identity and they have taken agentic moves to deal with other people's comments about their hybrid identities and to gain social control. Bondy (2015) found that the Latina youth used performances and languages to voice their citizenship identities and concerns about their belonging in public. Díaz (2016) found that the CLD children in the study used their first language capabilities to challenge other people's monolingual view of their identities.

Solano-Campos (2015) conducted comparative qualitative research to understand how 4th graders perceived and constructed their national identity in two multicultural classrooms in both Costa Rica and United States. She found that participants from two places included different elements and practices to describe their national identities. Most of them described national identity as fixed and determined by concrete factors, such as geographical, familial, linguistic, and legal elements. However, she also found that although the children's conception of their national identity was more stable and fixed, they positioned themselves as having the agency to decide, negotiate, and expand their national identity. Moreover, she also found that participants

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from two places applied different ways to narrate their national identity which were strongly influenced by the civic knowledge, attitude and behaviors toward different nationality. Although Solano-Campos (2015) participants were younger than those in other studies. Their responses tended to focus on the concrete and tangible of national identity, they all showed that students in both sites were aware of the diversity of identity and they were able to talk about, negotiate, and expand their multiple identities. The findings of the study might indicate that educators can start earlier to expose elementary students to opportunities to explore and construct and reconstruct their multiple identities.

The studies discussed in this section indicated that immigrant students' identities were complicated and their cultures, histories, languages, and discourses all contributed to their hybrid identity. In addition, the process of their identity formation is elusive and a mixture with many in-between experiences of their multiple identities. These studies support the hybrid characteristic of identity, and they remind researchers and scholars to examine the space that new generation of youths negotiate and create from their diverse cultural experiences. In addition, these studies all showed that CLD students in recent decades have been more aware of their multiple and hybrid identities but have also become more conscious of the power and the stabilized identity categories that they carried when they positioned themselves or were positioned in a certain identity. Thus, these studies suggest that scholars and researchers view youths as individuals who constantly enact their agency to construct their hybrid identity. Lastly, these studies highlight the importance of studying both the fluid and the stabilized identities of students with cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This characteristic is helpful to learn how the CLD girls enact and contest their diaspora identities and their multiple identities in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

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Identity as a Site of Struggle

Poststructuralists view identity as multiple, and these multiple identities are not consistent; they sometimes overlap and conflict with each other. Hall (2000) stated that "the identity passionately espoused in one public scenario is more ambiguously and ambivalently 'lived' in private. Its contradictions are negotiated, not 'resolved'" (p. xi). Weedon (1987) extended the notion that subjectivity is multiple and contradictory. She noted that we use language to construct subjectivities as well as to conflict our subjectivities. She stressed that we use language to construct our subjectivity that is precarious and contradictory, and constantly shaping and reshaping in our discourse. Weedon (1987) stated that "[L]anguage is the place where actual and possible forms of social organization and their likely social and political consequences are defined and contested. Yet, it is also the place where our sense of ourselves, our subjectivity, is constructed" (Weedon, 1987, p. 21). Norton Peirce (1995) explained that "an individual is both subject of and subject to relations of power within particular site, community, and society (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 14). In this respect, identity can be understood as a site of struggle between Discourses in which individuals play an active role to negotiate their identity within different power relationships. In other words, an individual has the agency to construct multiple forms of subjectivity in different social sites in which different power relationships are enacted within the social structure.

Many researchers have paid increasing attention to adolescents' identity positions regarding their race, ethnicity, gender, and culture (McKay & Wong, 1996; Pavlenko, 2004; Yon, 2000). McKay and Wong (1996) studied four adolescent Chinese immigrant ESL students in California in early the 1990s. They found that the students' identities were constantly contested among each other and they were involved in complex life tasks: relationships between

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peers, teachers, parents, ethnic identities, their English proficiency development, and expectations of gender roles and academic performance from their parents. Both Yon (2000) and McKay and Wong (1996) studied CLD adolescents and illustrated that immigrant students' experiences between their current home and home of their origin contributed to their awareness of their cultural, racial and ethnic identity, which were indeed a site of struggle. Although multiple identities overlap and conflict with each other, Weedon (1987) argued that the awareness of the struggle and the unequal power relationships within the discourses might open the avenues for adolescents to alternate their life stories which might later cause social and changeable causes. This view of identity as a site of struggle allows me to uncover CLD students' struggles of their multiple identities and the power relations in and behind the discourses regarding CLD girls' cultural, ethnic, gender, or other social factors.

The characteristic of identity as a site of struggle can also be found in Finders' (1996) study of high school girls. Finders (1996) investigated four early adolescent girls' social roles and allegiance and how their social roles affected the literate practices in a school setting. She found that the girls' performed multiples social identities and they shifted these roles in literate practices when they were consciously aware of expectations from others. Finders (1996) found that two systems of literacy practices were operated through the course of her study. The first system is "sanctioned literacies" which refers to literacy practices that are visible, "circulated, and sanctioned" by the authoritive figures. The other is "literate underlife" which refers to practices that show resistance to accept the official view and challenge the official expectations (Finders, 1996, p. 109). Some adolescent girls in Finders' (1996) study were regarded as good students, good girls from their school teachers in the sanctioned literacy practices. However, she found that the girls revealed their refusal to accept the official expectations when they were not

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monitored by adults. In addition, Finders (1996) argued that the literate underlife had a strong relationship with the girls' identity positions. Finders' study resonates Hall's (2000) notion of the ambiguity of identity in public and private scenario. Her study suggested that the high school girls' identity is a site of struggle and they should be understood from the relational power within a social-interactional and social-relational structure in a society (Holland et al., 1998).

Davies and Harré (1990) argued that the contradictions and tensions that an individual experience of his or her multiple selves provides opportunities to understand himself or herself. In other words, if we can create different literacy practices to help students experience alternative social and cultural identities, discover how individuals position themselves, and explore what discursive practices construct individuals' understanding of themselves and others, then they might be more aware of their social positioning within their social groups and the society. For instance, in the case of gender education, Jones (2004) encouraged researchers and educators to shift away from the disadvantaged focus of girls being dependent, passive and beautiful and to emphasize a wider range of discourse on femininity (Davies, 1989; Davies & Banks, 1992; Jones, 2004). A feminist poststructuralist view enables researchers and educators to not only explore how we position our gender identities but also gain a deeper understanding of gender resistant discourse in our everyday lives.

Identity as Imagined

Within the identity theory framework, I also drew on the notion of imagined community. This notion was first coined by Anderson (1991) who studied nationalism. He pointed out that people's understanding of nations is imagined communities. He argued that it is impossible for all the members to meet most of their fellow-members; however, their imagination of their community helps them connect and affiliate with the community. Thus, the power of imagination

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is across time and space, allowing us to feel a sense of community with people we have not yet met or people whom we may not ever have a direct relationship with (Norton, 2013). Wenger (1998) theorized the notion of *imagined community* and employed it in learning theory. Wenger (1998) noted that this conception of imagination is defined as “a process of expanding ourselves by transcending our time and space and creating new images of the world and ourselves” (p. 176). His view of imagination stressed the importance of “the creative process of producing ‘new’ images” and “generating new relations through time and space that becomes constitutive of the self” (Wenger, 1998, p. 177). According to this conception, learners actively participate in their identity construction and their imagined community becomes a model for them to create new identities and dynamics for interacting with other people. Moreover, Wenger (1998) stated that imagination creates opportunities for participation; however, it might also include stereotypes that mislead or constrain learners from participation. That is to say, if the CLD students’ imagined communities do not match with teachers or their peers’ imagined communities in different social groups, then resistance or exclusion might take place.

Some scholars also applied imagined community to build upon students’ imagined identity (Darvin & Norton, 2015; Kendrick & Jones, 2008; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Norton, 2013, 2014; Pavlenko & Norton, 2007). Norton (2000) stated that this is important in “how people understand their relationships to the world, that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how people understand their possibilities for the future” (p. 5). In this respect, learners’ imagined identities not only connect to their past experiences across time and space but also influence their imagination of who they want to be and what imagined community they want to participate in the future. Thus, the conceptions of imagined community and imagined identity

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help expand the understanding of CLD students' affiliation of multiple social communities and explore opportunities for teaching and learning.

The notion of imagined community has gained increasing attention in language and literacy research. Kendrick and Jones (2008) conducted a Uganda-based study examining the relationship between literacy, gender, and sustainable development with 44 girls from primary and secondary schools by using different visual modes of communication, such as drawing, writing, and photography. The researchers found that both drawing and photography reflected the girls' own life experiences. In addition, the multimodal literacy activities provided windows for the researchers to understand the girls' imagined community in a global setting. Moreover, the multimodal texts created by the girls were used as teaching materials in class to discuss girls' "freedom" (Stein, 1999 as quoted in Kendrick & Jones, 2008, p. 371). In their study, the girls in Uganda were not only able to use multimodal ways to express their understanding of the world but also became part of the meaning-making process.

Different imagined communities between teachers and students might lead to *non-participation* in learning (Norton, 2001). Norton (2001) stated that teachers' ignorance of students' imagined community might cause students' resistance to participation and inhibit the learning opportunities. By using this theoretical framework, Norton (2001) conducted qualitative research to explore two immigrant women's non-participation stories in an ESL classroom in Canada. She found out that the two ESL students' non-participation had a strong relationship with their histories and changing identities. For instance, one of the participants, Katarina, had been a teacher for many years in her native country and when she immigrated to Canada, she could only work as a part-time homemaker for the Community of Service. Norton (2001) found that Katarina's imagined identity as a teacher was crucial to her learner identity. She found that

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although Katarina wanted her professional identity as a teacher to be recognized by her ESL teacher, the teacher's lack of awareness of Katarina's imagined professional identity caused Katarina's frustration and she withdrew from participation in their ESL classroom. Norton's (2010) study indicated that if teachers' literacy practices are inconsistent with their students' imagined community, then learning might not happen. Although Norton's (2010) study focused on studying adult ESL learners, her theoretical framework of *non-participation* is helpful for teachers' pedagogies. The conceptions of *imagined community* and *imagined identities* can help add nuance in understanding CLD students' construction of identity construction and help to open a conversation to their imagined self.

To sum up, the five themes that are shared in previous literature discussed in this section are: 1) identity as fluid, situated, and multiple, 2) identity as relational, 3) identity as hybrid, 4) identity as a site struggle, 5) identity as imagined. These themes show that identity is not already there; it is constructed and reconstructed between interactions of people and social groups in literacy practices.

Literacy as a Social Practice

The theory of identity as a social practice has helped educators' and scholars' understanding of literacy. The framework of literacy as a social practice stresses that identity is socially constructed through our discursive practices in which multiple power relations are enacted in the social communities. A group of literacy scholars in the mid-1980s who studied relationships between identity and literacy believed that how students learn and use literacy cannot be isolated from social factors; they stated that literacy is not only learning a set of skills, it is also a social practice (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee,1996; Gutierrez & Gogoff, 2003; Luke, 2003; Street, 1995). This view of literacy as a social practice was inspired by New

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Literacy Studies (NLS) which focused on how literacy is used in our everyday life practices. Street (2003) explained literacy is a social practice, and it is not only about learning technical skills, "it is about knowledge: the ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity, and being" (p.78). In addition, these social practices are 'inextricably linked to cultural and power structures in society'" (Street, 1985, p. 433).

Scholars who recognize literacy as a social practice pointed out that individuals' identities mediate and are mediated by how and what we read, write, and talk about ourselves (Barton and Hamilton, 2000; Lewis & del Valle, 229; McCarthey, 2001; Moje, Luke, Davies, & Street, 2009). Barton and Hamilton (2000) proposed six principles for the theory of literacy as social practices. Among the six principles, four are related to this study:

(a) literacy is best understood as a set of social practices; these can be inferred from events which are mediated by written texts;

(b) there are different literacies associated with different domains of life;

(c) literacy practices are purposeful and embedded in broader social goals and cultural practices;

(d) literacy practices change and new ones are frequently acquired through processes of informal learning and sense making (Barton & Hamilton, 2000, p. 8).

The four principles indicate that the meaning of literacy depends on the purpose of the literacy practice, from an individual's cultural practices to a larger social level. In addition, the meaning of literacy is constantly changing through individuals' interactions in social practices and how they perceive the meanings.

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Scholars of NLS also closely examined how different power relationships are enacted and produced in different literacy practices. Gee (1992) stated that if we consider literacy as establishing reading and writing ability, then it "obscures the multiple ways in which literacy interrelates with the workings of power" (p. 22). Therefore, it is impossible to ignore the larger political, economic, and cultural influences in a society if we want to gain a deeper understanding of literacy activities in a social context (Blackledge, 2000). That is to say, if people's reading and writing is constructed through their knowledge, identity, and being, then literacy is always contested. Gee (1996) pointed out that our literacy is always constructed from a particular worldview, and this worldview is always ideology that empowers and marginalizes different groups of people. For instance, teachers' world view of what students should learn or perform in the classrooms is a form of ideology that might empower students who have access to similar cultural practices outside of school settings and marginalize students who are not familiar with the formal school literacy practices. The empowerment and marginalization resulting from teachers' ideological views of literacy practices and the enacted power relations, discourages students who have less power, and might lead to students' failure of learning (Street, 2005). Literacy, in this study, is understood not only from students' cognitive skills of reading and writing, but also from students' social interactions within global and local social contexts in order to benefit CLD students' learning and teaching (Cumming, 2013).

If literacy is viewed as a social practice in which a certain ideology is hidden in the social practice to produce and enact different power relations, then language plays an important role to create and reproduce power in literacy practice. The definition of language here does not refer to the grammatical resources. Instead, the meaning of language here refers to a broader way of using language to "enact, recognize, and negotiate different social identities and carry out

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different social activities,' which Gee defined as *social language* (Gee, 2000, p. 413). In addition, Gee (2000) stated that social language includes not only language but also specific ways of using words, thinking, talking, valuing, interacting, and behaving that help enact a certain social identity by incorporating different sign systems, other people, other tools, objects, or technologies. Gee's (2000) conception of social language is closely related to Weedon's (1997) view of language in that we use language to form possible social organizations and shape and reshape our identities. Gee (2000) further contended that when we are enacting a certain social identity in a particular social context, both our social language and Discourse are at play. His capital "D" Discourses are treated as an identity kit to reveal what we think, act, believe, wear, behave, talk, and value in order to let other people recognize the social identities that we enact, such as a teacher, a student, a daughter, or a mother. These different social identities require different Discourses to let other people recognize their multiple identities in different social contexts. Lewis (2007) pointed out that "the relationship between literacy and social identity was mutually constituted with literacy functioning as a resource for enhancing social identity and, at the same time, the performance of social identity enhanced the literacy practice" (Lewis, 2001, p.14). Gee's (2000) conception of social languages and Discourses are crucial inquiry tools to explore what social identities the CLD girls perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

Literacy Practices Inside of School Settings

Both school literacy and students' literacy practices outside of school (Blackledge, 2000; Block, 2007; Cumming, 1994; Gonzalez, Moll & Amanti, 2005; Moll & Diaz, 1987; Moje, 2000; Kanno, 2008) are critical of students' academic achievement and their identity positions. Stritikus and Nguyen (2007) pointed out that school, as the first and most formative institution,

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not only influences students' literacy achievement and social positions within a larger society, but also provides cultural and learning spaces for students to negotiate their social, cultural, and gender identities. Scholars who studied literacy within school settings found that although schools play dominant roles in providing learning opportunities, literacy practices in many school curricula failed to provide sufficient academic support for CLD students to negotiate their cultural, social, and gender identities (Au, 1998; Blackledge, 2000; Stritikus & Nguyen; 2007). Thus, many CLD students experienced dissociation when participating in literacy practices at school (Cummins et. al, 2005).

Scholars who view literacy as set of cultural or social practices believe that literacy should not be isolated from the social, political, and economic factors within a society (Blackledge, 2000; Day, 2000; DeBlase, 2003; Stritikus & Nguyen, 2007). Day (2000) studied an English learner' literacy practice and its effects on language learning in an elementary classroom in Canada. She found that there was a mismatch between English language learners' language development and teachers' expectations in the mainstream classroom practice which resulted from the direct power in discourse or hidden power behind discourse from the larger society. Blackledge's (2000) study of Bangladeshi students illustrated that although the curriculum at school helped improve students' language and literacy development, their heritage identity and literacy practice was devalued and weakened due to the dominant language of English. He found that minority students "must either adopt the perspective of the school (and therefore the majority society), at the risk of developing a negative component to their cultural identity, or resist the pressure to adopt the majority values and behaviors and risk becoming alienated from the school" (Blackledge, 2000, p. 13). In addition, even though parents of immigrant Bangladeshi students wanted to improve their children's literacy skills, their home

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literacy practices often conflicted with school literacy practices. Thus, immigrant students' literacy developments often lag behind their peers. That is to say, CLD students who came from homes where their literacy practices are different from school might encounter difficulties when they do not receive enough academic support from school learning. Blacklege's (2000) statement aligned with Norton's (2000) suggestion that second language learners need not only to learn the language skills but also to learn the complex social practice and that this has not received sufficient attention in language research. Norton (2000) further stated that if a second language learners' discourse is not legitimately accepted by the majority, then second language learners might feel disfranchised and lose their motivation to learn.

Dagenais, Day, and Toohey (2006) investigated the relationship between a multilingual elementary student's identities and literacy practices in a French Immersion classroom. They adopted the concept of figured world, suggested by Holland et al. (1998), to understand how the participants' multiple identities were constructed and reconstructed in different figured worlds. According to Holland et al. (1998), a figured world is a ''realm of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others'' (p. 52). A figured world is also a place "where people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understanding (identities)" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108). In other words, a figured world can be understood as the production of our everyday practices that are socially and culturally constructed through our interactions with other people and recognized by members of a social community. Dagenais, Day, and Toohey's (2006) findings showed that different teachers' figured worlds of "literate" students in classroom performance had a strong impact on the CLD student's identity positions. They pointed out that if teachers position CLD children's linguistic

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and cultural backgrounds as resources to help students build up their relationship with others and construct their learner identity, then students from multilingual backgrounds might have more opportunities to learn and participate in mainstream classroom settings. Their study supported Holland et al.'s (1998) and Urrieta's (2007) idea that teachers' figured worlds of a learner have an impact on students' opportunities to learn and invest their learner identity. That is to say, teachers' long-term day-to-day practices can be seen as social work that allow or exclude only certain group of students to position their multiple identities and maintain their social positions.

Michael, Andrade, and Barlett (2007) provided a different scenario to examine figured worlds of faculty, staff, and first-generation immigrant students in a bilingual (Spanish/ English) high school in New York and how their figured worlds influenced literacy practice and students' identity construction. Their findings illustrated that the members in the school co-constructed a figured world of success by valuing students' culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. The students were able to apply their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds in an academic setting. Additionally, the teachers encouraged the students to use cultural artifacts to narrate their stories and their emotions. This figured world and the literacy activities in the schools not only empowered CLD students' learner identity but also contributed to a positive student-teacher relationship and learning environment.

Embracing and integrating students' difficult stories and emotions into literacy classrooms help enhance students' engagement in the literacy practices (Dutro, 2008). Dutro (2008) conducted a study to examine how sharing difficult experiences in the public spaces of schools and classrooms affected students' engagement in literacy practices and learning. She highlighted the ideas of literacy testimony and witness to understand student's life experiences. She found that literacy witness and testimony in the classroom benefited students' participation

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in learning activities. She found that sharing students' own stories and listening to other people's stories enabled students to build up visceral connections and be aware of disconnections between their own life experiences and others. In addition, the process of literacy testimony and witness was "not a linear, unidimensional process, but rather was circular and cyclical" (Dutro, 2009, p. 9). She found that as long as teachers provided opportunities for sharing, the teachers' and students' difficult stories improved students' sympathy and benefited their participation in the classroom. However, acknowledging and discussing emotions were often not legitimate in the formal classroom setting. Therefore, Dutro (2008) suggested that as teachers, "we need to let our own hearts break in the face of some of the stories our students bring to us and let their hearts bleed a bit for us." (2009, p. 26). That is to say, acknowledging and embracing difficult stories into literacy classrooms creates opportunities for participation and legitimate students' personal stories.

An increasing number of scholars have suggested use multimodal literacy practices to enhance students' identity construction (Leland & Harste, 1994; Loerts, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Kendrick & Jones, 2008; Vasudevan, Schultz, & Bateman, 2010). For instance, digital texts, art, music, visual images, drama, written and spoken texts can be considered as multimodal texts. Leland and Harste (1994) stated that "a truly literate person is one who can mediate his or her world through multiple sign systems-not just language" (p. 344). One important goal for multimodal literacy is to encourage students to be active participants in their meaning-making process (Loerts, 2013). This process includes students' interests, and it "encourages imagination, vision, and problem solving" (Albers & Harste, 2007, p. 13). Loerts (2013) studied multimodal literacy practices in a six-grade classroom in Canada and found that although multimodal literacy practices have potential to improve students' literacy development, learning only took place

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when students' knowledge and multimodal interests took primacy. That is to say, teachers need to have a profound understanding of multiple ways of knowing and students' multimodal interests in order to create more learning opportunities for students with diverse learning needs in the 21st century.

Recognizing Literacy Practice Outside of School Settings

The perspective of New Literacy Studies was drawn from anthropological and ethnographic approaches to closely examine how people use their literacy skills in everyday contexts. Scholars in New Literacy Studies have focused not only on school-based literacy practices but also the importance of literacy practices outside of school settings. Hull and Schultz (2001) were the two important New Literacy Studies scholars who believed that students' literacy practices outside of school settings need to be examined and added to our understanding of students' literacy development. They suggested that outside-of-school literacy practices could happen in students' homes, community organizations, and after-school programs. If we presuppose that literacy is inseparable from culture and context, then the cultures and contexts we participate outside of classroom settings will indeed affect our understanding of literacy in school and identity positions (Moje, 2000). In other words, if we want to deepen our understanding of students' identity positions, then their literacy practices inside and outside of classroom settings are crucial to their identity construction. In this study, my goal was to investigate elementary school CLD girls' participation in the book club. Thus, the review of literature in the following section will emphasize studies outside of literacy practices in the afterschool programs or reading outside of school setting.

Scholars believe that afterschool literacy sites provide valuable opportunities for students' identity construction (Choi, 2009; DeBlase, 2002; Moje, 2000; Park, 2012). Thus,

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examining literacy practices outside of school settings might bring insight into educators' understanding of CLD students and benefit teaching (Moje, 2000). Choi (2009) studied four Asian American students' identity construction in an afterschool book club. She used multicultural literature as a mediated tool to help disclose ELLs' life experiences and their identity construction outside of school settings. She found that the literacy practices happened in the afterschool book club allowed the four Asian Americans to participate in the book discussion and the meaning-making process. For instance, when the teachers allowed students to lead a discussion and share stories related to their CLD backgrounds, students were more willing to share their cultural and linguistic affiliation as they assume their identity as immigrants living in the US. In addition, Choi (2009) also found that the Asian American ELL students revealed different identities when they engaged in different social groups in different social contexts. She concluded that although the process of exploring ELL students' identity is complicated, it is important to provide multiple meaningful literacy practices to enhance students' identity construction.

Lam (2004) conducted an ethnographic study to explore the relationship between identity and Discourse in a 16 year-old young Chinese immigrant. Lam found that the participant's identities were enacted in different time and space; the participant, Willis, created his third space through reading and translating Japanese comic books. Lam (2004) found out that reading and discussing cross-cultural comic books enabled Willis to travel between the Discourses of his home country, America, and the textual world created in the Japanese comics. The hybrid, meta-discursive, and spatial identities that Willis enacted in multiple Discourses were how Willis positioned himself in different social structures (Lam, 2004). The researcher also found the

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identities that Willis assumed in different social contexts allowed him to enact his agency in different social communities and that helped Willis negotiate and shape a possible new identity.

Marsh and Stolle (2006) selected one 7th grade Caucasian American in an afterschool literacy book club and one 9th grade Mexican immigrant in her English classroom. The literacy activities in both settings emphasized using critical literacy to discuss issues related to gender or race by using redressive texts. Marsh & Stolle (2006) defined redressive texts as "books, poems, television shows, movies, and other visual and aural readings that portray possible constructions of identity that question and resist dominant social ways of being and social structures," which help create opportunities to explore different aspects of gender and racial issues and challenge our social norms (Marsh & Stolle, 2006, p. 48). The researchers adopted Gee's (1999) socially situated identities and Discourse to investigate their multiple identities and opportunities that created space for constructing and reconstructing two adolescent girls' identities. The findings showed that the Caucasian American girl was able to create a space to construct and reconstruct her gender identity and make connections to her life experiences as she interacted with the redressive texts. However, the Mexican immigrant girl created space to confirm her previous belief that racism is an individuals' personal choice and ignored the discussion of the racial issues that were mentioned in the text. The examples from the two girls illustrated that identity construction and negotiation of meanings are influenced by many factors. Also, although the book discussion facilitators in both sites attempted to create opportunity for critical literacy, the girls' lack of awareness of the power of social contexts and structures hindered the opportunities to create space for constructing or reconstructing their gender or race identities.

Norton (2003) conducted a study to investigate CLD pre-adolescents reading Archie comics in Canada, and she found that the literacy practices among Archie comic readers were

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important to students' investment of their reading and language learning. She found that many students reported that their parents and teachers often considered Archie comics as illegitimate reading materials and prohibited reading the books in classroom settings. However, the findings showed that the students were interested and motivated to read Archie comics because they were engaged in reading a fun story and they could use the story to make sense of the meanings, construct their identities, make connections to their real life experience, and predict future development without the limitations from teachers' and parents' reading expectation. In addition, Norton (2003) found that the social interactions between Archie readers created a "literate underlife" (Finders, 1997, p. 25) for the pre-adolescent students. She found that the reading, lending, and borrowing of comics created a shared community between CLD students which helped strengthen students' relationships and improve their language learning development. The findings of CLD students' outside classroom activity underlined the importance of the social aspects of language and literacy learning.

Literacy practice outside of school settings creates a space to build up different relationships (Park, 2012; Rudd, 2012). Rudd (2012) conducted a one-year longitudinal study of the literacy and identity of a slam poetry team named *Slammin!* in an urban high school. The members of the slam poetry team consisted of students from different classrooms, and the poetry activity was a non-credited school activity. The researcher found that the high school students actively participated in the slam party community by constructing and reconstructing their identities as poets and artists. In addition, the team-based community created a stable, emotionally rich and rewarding peer community to encourage the members to contribute their creativity. Rudd (2012) pointed out that the positive group involvement was significantly important to individuals' identity-formation process. Moreover, the author stated that this

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nontraditional classroom activity benefited teachers' understanding of adolescents and enabled teachers to duplicate the literacy practices into their traditional classroom teaching. Rudd (2012) suggested that the team-based community and shared public experience of the slam party could introduce students to a safe literate learning environment and help construct their literate identities.

Park (2012) conducted a yearlong qualitative study to explore urban middle school girls' participation in an afterschool book club. She adopted the view that reading is a critical and communal practice to understand how the middle school girls respond to a student-selected young adult piece of literature, *Speak*, and their interaction with each other. The findings showed that the girls showed different performance in the afterschool book club than at school. They were more willing to share their opinions in the group and they relied on the text and conversations generated by their peers. These discussions of different issues and perspectives brought opportunities for them to explore the challenges and possibilities of their gender roles. In addition, the relationships between the adolescents and their peers and friends helped shape their social practices. For example, they relied on their friends' recommendation of books and co-constructed the environment for safe reading and talking about their beliefs, personal stories and gender issues. Park (2012) suggested that although students might perform differently due to the location, contexts, book choice, or their interaction related to their friends, the findings brought nuanced insight into teachers' exploration of adolescent girls' reading as a social practice. Moreover, Early (2011) studied 10th through 12th grade high school students' reading attitude in inside and outside of school settings. The findings indicated that different social factors influenced students' attitude toward reading. For instance, students' parents and their peers had a strong impact on their reading activity. The author noted that students' relationships with their

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peers and the peer culture played a dominant role in their construction of reader identity. The other findings illustrated that students showed positive an attitude toward reading if they were interested in the topics of the books they read. However, the students reported that they often lacked reading interest at school because the reading texts they had at school often connected to school-like learning and they did not have freedom for book selection. Early (2011) suggested educators take a close look at the difference between students' reading inside and outside of school settings and consider the sociocultural factors that influence students' literacy development.

These studies of students' literacy activities suggest that CLD students' learning take place in multiple social settings, literacy practice outside of school settings are also significant to their learning. Creating space for CLD students to share and discuss their multiple identities in informal classroom settings benefit teachers' understanding about them. Reading and responding to multicultural literature or literature related to CLD students' life experiences and their diverse backgrounds creates space for them to explore and assume different social identities. Galda & Beach (2001) argued that using literature helps readers apply language, genre, signs, images drama, art or discourses to share their responses in literacy practice and their identity construction (Choi, 2009). In addition, providing opportunities for students to talk about their struggles allows them to be more aware of the diversity in terms of people's culture, race, gender, or ethnicity. Lastly, teachers, book discussion facilitators, and parents all play influential roles to empower and hinder students' interests in reading and opportunities for positive learner identity outside of school settings.

In this study, literacy is seen a social practice which plays a robust role in CLD students' language, learning, and identity positioning. Research studies have shown that literacy practices

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inside school play a dominant role in students' identity construction. In addition, scholars found that unequal power relations might be created between the mainstream students and CLD students if the CLD students do not have equal access to participate in the classroom. Moreover, an increasing number of scholars have emphasized the significant role of literacy practices outside of school settings in order to arrive at a better understanding of CLD students' learning and identity constriction. Thus, it is essential for educators to avoid reproducing inequality at school and to value students' diverse backgrounds in their classrooms. In this research study, I apply the notion of literacy as a social practice to enable me to understand how the power relations and literacy practice in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club affect CLD students' identity positioning.

Conclusion

In this study, I adopted a poststructuralist framework to understand how identity and literacy practices are socially constructed in our discursive practices. I introduced the five key characteristics of identity that I observed from previous literature: identity as fluid, situated, and multiple; identity as hybrid; identity as relational; identity as site of struggle; identity imagined. Then I introduced the notion of literacy as social practice to gain a deeper understanding of the relationships between identity and literacy practice. I reviewed how literacy practices in both school and outside of school settings have impacts on students' identity positions. Additionally, how literacy practices in various social practices influenced CLD students' identity positions and learning trajectories in previous literature. Although the meaning of identity is never simple, a poststructuralist lens on both identity and literacy, and the review of previous literature have been important for me to investigate the complicated nature of identity and explore discourses that emerged in the Strong Girls Read Strong Girls Books book club.

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CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHOD

In this study, I applied an ethnographic research approach to investigate three elementary school CLD students' identity positions and discourses related to cultural and linguistic identities in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. In this chapter, I provide a detailed explanation of the methodology of this research in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
2. What kinds of identities do CLD students perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
3. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

In the following paragraphs, I first provide the rationale of employing a qualitative research method. Then, I describe the setting of this research. Next, I introduce the history of the Strong Girls Read Strong Book research project, which was divided into three phases. Then, I introduce the focal participants and explain my researcher's positionality in this study. Next, I discuss my data sources, data collection and data analysis procedure. Lastly, I discuss strategies that I used in the study to promote the credibility of this qualitative research.

Research Design

Merriam (2009) stated that the purpose of qualitative research is to gain an understanding of how people interpret their life experiences, define the meaning making process, describe how people delineate the process, and provide a deeper explanation of how people interpret what they

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experience (Merriam, 2009). In addition, qualitative research is defined as “a form of inquiry in which researchers make interpretations of what they see, hear and understand” (Creswell, 2007, p. 39). In other words, the researchers’ interpretations are strongly influenced by their background knowledge, experiences, and their understanding of the contexts. Moreover, the poststructuralist paradigm of qualitative research was used in this study to uncover and deconstruct the CLD girls’ discourses. This paradigm stresses the importance of deconstruction. Pierre (2000) stated that deconstruction “foregrounds the idea that language does not simply point to pre-existing things and ideas but rather helps to construct them and, by extension, the world as we know it” (p. 483). In other words, qualitative research allows researchers to not only closely examine the culture that they observe and participate in but also explore how meanings are socially constructed through language. Employing qualitative research allowed me see a more holistic picture of how the identities of the CLD girls positioned themselves and were positioned in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books community. In addition, it pushed me to think critically about the roles that gender and contexts play in educational settings. In this qualitative study, I especially adopted an ethnographic research approach to interpret how the elementary school girls constructed their reality and to identify unique patterns in their discourses. This approach helped me understand how language, literacy, and culture interwove with each other to the girls’ identity constructions in this afterschool book club.

Ethnographic Research

The definition of ethnographic research is to explore the cultural patterns and the members in the cultural community in a natural setting. The purpose of ethnographic research is to describe, analyze, and interpret the cultural patterns of a cultural group over time in order to understand the group’s shared repertoire, such as beliefs, values, behaviors, and language

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(Johnson, 1991). In addition, the researchers immerse themselves the cultural group in order to closely examine the group. The advantages of ethnographic research have attracted researchers' attention, and more scholars in language and literacy fields have highlighted the significance of ethnographic research to understand how students learn over time and what sociocultural factors affect their learning development (Barton, Hamilton, & Ivanic, 2000; Rogers, 2000; Street, 2000; Heath & Street, 2008)

Heath and Street (2008) noted that in ethnographic research, it is not just to include "a description of events and actions that people create, react to, assess, and learn within, but also for history and explanations informed by and leading to theories" (pp. 31-32). Their notion of how meanings are constructed and interpreted in an ethnographic research results from researcher's understanding of the situated contexts, the participants, and theories and previous literature that support or echo the current study. In addition, literacy scholars who adopt similar research approaches believe that literacy is not only about teaching a set of technical skills; it is about multiple literacies in various social communities and literacy practices that are socially constructed and embedded (Street, 2000). That is to say, this research approach requires researchers to pay attention to take both local and global social factors of student learning into account when analyzing and interpreting the data.

Ethnographic research techniques. Several important techniques of ethnographic research were applied in this study to achieve the goal of "thick description," which was drawn from Geertz's (1973) definition of culture. He noted that culture "is not a power, something to which social events, behaviors, institutions, or processes can be causally attributed; it is a context, something within which they can be intelligibly-that is, *thickly*-described" (p. 14). Geertz's notion of "thick description" stresses the importance of both a description of what is happening

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and a description of the researcher's understanding of the cultural meaning of the phenomenon from the research site (Merriam, 2009). In this study, I assumed a participant observer's role to not only lead the book discussion but also observe and collect the data. In the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, I was also one of the members who actively participated in the book club and contributed to the construction of the Strong Girl culture. Thus, the data analysis process was mostly interpreted from an emic perspective. An emic perspective is also understood as an "insider's" approach, which requires researchers to avoid their presumptions and background knowledge in order to find out patterns or themes that emerge from the data. Lett (1990) stated, "[e]mic constructs are accounts, descriptions, and analyses expressed in terms of the conceptual schemes and categories regarded as meaningful and appropriate by the native members of the culture whose beliefs and behaviors are being studied" (p. 130). The interpretations from an emic perspective were crucial to understand what happened in the book club. Although an emic approach helped provide an insider's view point, an etic perspective was also significant for me to uncover the cultural discourses and identities that the CLD girls' discussed and positions that were beyond the boundaries of the elementary school and America. An etic approach aims at helping researchers understand individuals' underlying actions and their co-occurring patterns and contextual features (Heath & Street, 2008). In this study, I was both an outsider and an insider; I was an insider of the book club; on the other hand, I was the outsider of the cultures that the CLD girls belonged to through their school community and their cultural communities. Thus, an etic approach was important for me to find the co-occurring patterns that emerged in the data in terms of their culture, language, ethnicity/race, and gender. In this study, I incorporated both emic and etic approaches to uncover the patterns of the girls' discourses. Integrating both approaches allowed me to take a particular and situated context and

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discover potential findings and cultures from the insider's perspectives in order to achieve the goal of thick description.

In this study, I adopted the notion of culture as a verb in order to understand the ever-shifting active process of meaning-making situations (Street, 1993). I paid close attention to the literacy practices that happened in this situated afterschool book club and how meanings were constructed from the social interactions. In addition, the ethnographic approach presented in this study echoes Street's (2000) notion that this approach is "more concerned with attempting to understand what actually happens than with trying to prove the success of a particular invention or 'sell' a particular methodology for teaching or management" (p. 1). I focused on both language and multiple modal forms of literacy practice. According to Heath and Street (2008), multimodal literacies refer to "systems of representation that include written forms that are combined with oral, visual, or gestural modes" (p. 4) and multimodalities refer to the non-written languages that an individual reads, interprets, and acts upon. Health and Street's (2000) point of view echoes Gee's (2001) conception of using capital "d" Discourse as an analytical tool to interpret an individual's social identity by looking at how an individual acts, behaviors, talks, or dresses to perform a particular social identity. Therefore, in this study, both verbal and non-verbal languages related to the research questions were taken into consideration in the interpretation process. Moreover, the techniques of an ethnographic study enabled me to expand a thick description of the CLD girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

Ethnographic research discussed in this section was important for my analysis of the cultural patterns and helped me describe and interpret the elementary girls' participation over time in Strong Girls. The purposes of this study is not only about exploring CLD students'

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different identities and literacy practices but also understanding how the socially embedded discourses affect their position of identity and their participation in the book club. Therefore, I incorporated concepts of critical discourse analysis (CDA) as a tool to address the complexity of literacy practices and discourses that were influenced by the unequal power relations in social worlds (Rogers, 2004). In the next section, I introduce CDA as a method and its key notions to analyze my data.

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA has been used widely in literacy research, and many language and literacy scholars have advocated using CDA to explore language learners' identity construction (Choi, 2009; Lewis, 2006; McKay & Wong, 1996; Rogers, 2004). Rogers (2004) stated that "CDA is both a theory and a method" (p. 2). It is different from other discourse analysis methods because it not only describes and interprets discourse in a specific context, but also explains the relationships of power in the discourse (Lewis, 2006). CDA is an important tool to investigate how power is enacted in different social contexts. Power is complex and surfaces in multiple ways (Gutierrez, Rymes, & Larson, 1995), and it exists in different ways (Fairclough, 2001). CDA provides both theoretical foundations and analytical tools to uncover how power relations affect, reproduce, change, and bring impacts to people or social groups (Blommaert, 2005; Rogers, 2004). In addition, CDA also plays a dual role to uncover unequal power relations and to explore opportunities to "create alternative realities that are based on equality, love, peace, and solidarity" (Rogers, 2004, p. 5). That is to say, questioning and criticizing, seeking alternative power relationships, and creating opportunities for alternating power relations are crucial to CDA.

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Although CDA has been widely used in many research fields, it was not until recent decades that researchers started using CDA to examine learning in education fields (Lewis, 2006; Rogers, 2004; Marshall & Toohey, 2010). Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, and Joseph (2005) highlighted the importance of applying CDA as an approach in investigating the relationships between language and society in educational research in primary grade classrooms. They reviewed educational research that applied CDA from 1980 to 2003 through various academic databases, such as Web of Science, MLA, PsycINFO, ERIC, and ArticleFirst. Among the research studies they summarized, only four of them were related to second language learning, which indicated the lack of examining power relations in the SLA field. Additionally, scholars in literacy research underlined the strength of using CDA to examine how power relations exercise in particular texts and exchanges (Lewis, 2006) and how our spoken and written texts are constructed from various local and institutional power relations (Moje & Lewis, 2007; Rogers, 2004).

Gee's (2011) concept of discourse analysis and Fairclough's (2001) concepts of CDA have been widely used by researchers in educational fields. They both emphasized the role of language as a form of social practice which helps construct meanings and social identities. Gee (2011) stated that we use language to act and to negotiate and construct meanings. He pointed out that we often simultaneously use language in ways that can be seen in these tasks: *significance, practices, identities, relationships, politics, connections,* and *sign systems and knowledge*. Fairclough (2001) stated that "language is part of society;" "language is a social process", and "language is socially conditioned process, conditioned that is by other (non-linguistic) part of society" (p. 19). In other words, the language we use to create and negotiate the meanings is not only a reflection of our society; it is also a social process and social practice.

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In addition, language is never neutral, it is a mediational tool that people use to create situated meanings and produce social goods or politics which determine who gets more money, social status, power, and so on (Gee, 2011). Fairlough (2001) noted that the language we use in different social practices is the production that result from our interpretations of various power relations in society. Thus, I adopted Fairclough's conception of CDA to expand the understanding of the critical aspect of CDA. Fairclough (2001) not only emphasized the importance of discourse analysis, but also encouraged analysts to examine the data from a critical stance and to look closely at power and ideologies behind our everyday language. He proposed three dimensions of CDA: description of the text, interpretation of the relationship between the text and its interactions, and explanation of relationships between various interactions and the larger social structure (Fairclough, 2001). In addition, he noted that when a person participates in the practices of a particular community, power can be both productive and inhibiting; it can be learned and becomes part of the person's identity. Thus, understanding the power relations in social communities is crucial because it helps individuals be more aware of their own identities and further gain agency and construct while also constructing and reconstructing their identity within the community.

To sum up, I used CDA to examine how the CLD girls used social languages to construct their different building tasks in order to let other members recognize their identities in the book club. In addition, CDA also allowed me to critically examine literacy practices and discourse which happened in the Strong Girls book club and how they were related to the power relations within different social structures. Additionally, adopting CDA hopes to critically examine power relations and bring insight into creating alternative learning opportunities for learning. The incorporation of both the ethnographic research approach and CDA aims to not only offer a thick

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description of the Strong Girls culture but also add to researchers' and educators' understanding of the complexity of identity constructions which result from local and larger social contexts.

The Setting

The data from my study were drawn from a larger research project, led by two professors from a large public university in the Midwest in the United States. The research project was conducted in a school library in a public elementary school on Fridays during the school year beginning in September 2012. The data included in this study were collected from September 2014 to December 2014, January 2015 to May 2015, and September 2015 to November 2015.

The Elementary School

The elementary school was located in the Midwest of the United States. The school was racially mixed, with approximately 71% of the students qualifying as minority non-white students (Common Core of Data in 2012). In the school, the size of each population group was in the following order, the largest being first: Black, White, Hispanic, Asian/ Pacific Islander, two or more races, and American Indian and Alaskan. The distribution of male and female students was about 50% respectively (Table 3.2). A more detailed look at the school's demographic population is shown in Table 3.1. In addition, according to National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES) (2012), there were 309 students who were eligible for free lunch, and 22 were eligible for reduced price lunch, which is 60.5% of the whole student population. Moreover, the elementary school was also categorized as a Title I school, meaning that over 40% of the total student population came from low-income families. Thus, the elementary school received Title I funding to offer school wide programs that provide assistance to students with diverse academic needs.

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Table 3.1

School Enrollment by Race/Ethnicity

Students	Amer Ind/ Alaskan	Asian/ Pacific Islander	Black	Hispanic	White	Two or More Races	Total
Number	7	36	215	123	157	9	547
Percentages	1%	6%	39.3%	22.55	28.7%	1.65%	1

Table 3.2

School Enrollment by Gender

Student	Male	Female	
Number	276	271	547
Percentages	50.45%	49.54%	1

Note. Adapted from CCD public school data 2011-2012. Retrieved from Institute of Education

The Strong Girls Strong Books Book Club

The Strong Girls Research Members

The research project had consisted of approximately 10 women from the University of Iowa in each semester and there were 11 members in the semester of September 2014: two University professors (Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Thein), two doctoral students, two master's students, and five undergraduate students. There were 8 members in the semester of January 2015: two University professors (Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Thein), one doctoral student, one master's student, and four undergraduate students. All of the research members have degrees in education and most of them have experience in teaching. Each member participating in this project was responsible for designing activities and leading book discussions with a group of girls in the afterschool book club. In addition, all the research members attended weekly research meetings to share their thoughts about the book club and contribute ideas for activities or book discussion.

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The History of the Strong Girls Read Strong Books Research Project

The larger research project was initiated since January 2012 and it can be separated into three phases: (1) reading and talking with experts, (2) individual interviews and a children's literature discussion with teachers, and (3) the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The data and findings in this study were all collected in the third phase which was informed by phase I and phase II. The following section is a brief summary of the three phases of the larger research project. Phase I and Phase II started from January 2012 and ended in December 2012, which helped the research team prepare for the implementation in phase III. Phase III began from January 2013 and it was the actual implementation of the book club, and my data collection time was within this phrase.

Phase I: Reading and Talking with Experts

The focus in phase I was twofold. The goals were to identify good quality children's literature with strong female protagonists and establish shared themes of a definition of Strong Girls in order to provide elementary school girls strong female role models and images. In this phase, the research team examined and reviewed children's literature and the recommended book lists from reliable children's literature websites and experts' recommendations, such as National Council of Teachers of English and International Reading Associations which provided resources for teacher's professional development. Also, American Library Association, Amelia Bloomer Project provide resources for literature with female protagonist, and some award-winning books. Then the research team interviewed experts and authors of children's literature, conducted regular research meetings, and learned the multiple meanings of being a Strong Girl in the modern time. The meanings of a Strong Girl can be categorized into four themes: (a) strong girls are not monolithic; (b) strong girls are real girls; (c) strong girls have grown; (d) strong girls

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act with agency (Schmidt, Thein, &Whitmore, 2013). The books the research team reviewed and selected in this phase included *Mockingbird* by Kathryn Erskine (2009), *Inside Out & Back Again* by Thanhha Lai (2011), *The Higher Power of Lucky* by Susan Patron (2006), *Ninth Ward* by Jewell Parker Rhodes (2010), and *Night Flight* by Robert Burleigh (2011).

Phase II: Interviews with the teachers and children's literature discussion with the teachers

The second phase of the research project focused on investigating and gaining a better understanding of elementary school teachers' definition of "strong" girls. Several elementary school teachers were interviewed about their interpretations of "strong girls." Meanwhile, Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Whitmore also conducted professional development workshops with elementary school teachers in order to enhance their pedagogy of incorporating children's literature in their teaching. The workshop included reading books with strong female protagonists and using various activities to encourage critical reading skills among elementary teachers. The preparation in phase I and phase II were significant for carrying out the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club in the third phase.

Phase III: Meeting the Girls: The Strong Girls Read Strong Books book Club

The third phase was the iimplementation of the afterschool book club, which was an ongoing process at the time of my data collection. In this phase, the research team recruited 4th to 6th grade girls in the public elementary school. The two professors, Dr. Schmidt and Dr. Thein, publicized the Strong Girls Read Strong Girls program in the school newsletter in January 2013. They visited the elementary school, introduced the after school book club project to all 4th to 6th grade girls, and distributed the consent form and emergency information form to the girls. During January 2013 to May 2013, the research team started the book club with about sixty 4th to

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6th grade girls. Then during September 2013 to December 2015, approximately thirty-five to forty 4th to 6th graders had participated in the book club in each school semester.

The book club met every Friday afternoon from 3 p.m. until 5 p.m. at the elementary school library and classrooms. In order to provide extensive opportunities for every girl to talk and participate, five to eight girls were assigned to six to seven groups with one or two research members. In the book club, each research member not only took responsibility of a home group, but also assumed the role of a book leader who designed various activities about literature and engaged the elementary school girls in reading books. For instance, activities included reading aloud, drawing, acting out, discussing books, creating artistic works, team working, dancing, and meeting with successful women who could be seen as role models for the girls, such as children's book authors, university professors, and doctoral students. In addition to working with the same girls in the home group, the discussion leaders also too responsibility of leading book discussion when reading the books. During late January through early May in 2013, the book discussion group spent 4 to 5 weeks on one book, and then the girls chose their second book and started a new book discussion group for another 5 weeks. Since September 2013, our research team decided to change grouping according to the girls' grade level. Thus, within the time of my data collection, we had two groups of 4th, 5th and 6th graders respectively in the book club.

The research team selected the booklist according to the four Strong Girls themes that were mentioned in phase I. Before assigning girls to different book discussion groups in the second week, the group leaders gave a short book talk about the choices of books and let the girls decide their favorite three books. Then, the girls were assigned to different book discussion groups according to their decisions. Once the girls were assigned to a group, they received their copy of the book. Each girl also had a journal to record her responses, stories, questions, and

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ideas. Each group leader gave the journals to the girls in the beginning of the meeting and collected them at the end. The research members read and took pictures of the journal, replied, or made comments to the girls' responses. The summary of the three phases attempts to provide a history of the larger research project and a broad picture of who participated, what happened, and where and how the activities took place in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The below table is a brief summary of the three phases of the larger research project.

Table 3.3
Summary of the Three Phases

Phases			
Phase I & Phase II Jan 2012 - December 2012	Preparation for Strong Girls Book selection Developing Strong Girl books criteria		
Phase III	Implementations of Strong Girls Read Strong Books Book club		
	Number of meetings	Number of Professors	Number of Graduate/undergraduate students
Jan 2013- May 2013	About 10	2	6
Sep 2013- Dec 2013	About 10	2	6
Jan 2014- May 2014	About 10	2	9
Sep 2014- Dec 2014*	10	2	9
Jan 2015- May 2015*	12	2	7
Sep 2015- Dec 2015*	8	2	7
Jan 2016- April 2016	11	2	9

Note: The asterisked three semesters were the periods of the data collection in this study.

Routines in the Book Club

Before every meeting, the research group arrived at the school library twenty minutes early in order to let each book discussion leader set up the tables and books and prepare snacks for their group of girls. In the first 15 to 20 minutes, all the 4th to 6th grade girls often met in a

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big group. While meeting with all girls, we read or watched a short literary text and had a conversation related to the text with the girls. For example, we watched commercials about Lego toys and encouraged the girls to apply a critical stance to observe the differences between toys marketed to boys and girls. Also, we watched a YouTube video of a speech from Michelle Obama about the Let Girl Learn Initiative. In addition, we asked questions and encouraged the girls to analyze how gender images are constructed in the media and our everyday life and how important it is for girls to have an education. These short literary texts and discussions provided opportunities for all the Strong Girls to listen to various definitions of Strong Girls from different female models and girls from different grades and group leaders. This activity also benefited the construction of the Strong Girls community. After meeting with the whole group, each girl met in her assigned group in one corner or area with her group leader, had the snack, and talked about the topics she learned in the big group. Each assigned group included one or two group leaders, and the group leaders designed their own reading and writing activities according to their group members and the book they read.

Routines in my book discussion group. In my own book discussion group, I often began with a short talk to continue the topics that were discussed in the whole group discussion while the girls were having their snack. The purposes of the short talk were to extend the conversation and gain a better understanding of the girls and their opinions about the topics and build up the group relationships. For instance, after watching the toy commercial in the big group, I asked the girls' opinions toward how people label toys according to different genders. After the short talk, I focused on reading and responding to the books the group decided. In my group, I included various reading activities in order to help the girls engage in reading. For

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instance, we did reading aloud, partner reading, silent reading, group discussion, and writing responses.

From September to December 2014, I collaborated with one of the undergraduate researcher members, Catie, to lead the book discussion with the same group of girls. While we were working together, we had a discussion about the book, the topics, the girls, and ideas for talking about the book before and after each book club meeting. The book discussion routine often started with a short greeting. We talked about our life experiences and had an extended conversation about the topic discussed in the previous large group discussion. Then we moved toward reading the book. During the reading process, Catie and I sometimes took turns reading aloud, let the girls take turns reading, or practiced partner reading or silent reading. While reading, Catie and I usually had a short pause and asked the girls to share their thoughts when the girls found something interesting, confusing, or curious about the content. We asked questions related to gender identities in the story in order to trigger the group members' discussion. Additionally, we invited the girls to talk and share their thoughts when the group members brought up topics that drew their attention. At the end of our book discussion meeting, we left 10 to 15 minutes to let the girls take notes and record their responses in their journals to what we have read or discussed in that meeting. For instance, we asked the girls to write down their questions when they were curious about the story or the author. We practiced taking different perspectives to respond to the story and made connections between their life experiences and the book. At the end of our book discussion, we asked the girls to write down their response to the story they read or questions they had when participating in the book club. Each small book discussion meeting lasted about an hour or an hour and a half.

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Participants

The Girls

The participants in this study were selected from a group of 5th graders with whom I have been working since fall 2013. An ethnographic inquiry requires the researcher to be immersed in the group in order to obtain both the etic and emic perspectives (Glesne, 2011). Therefore, the relationship between me and the CLD girls benefited my data collection and thick description. This group of girls included both CLD and non-CLD students. In this study, I paid particular attention to the CLD students. However, the data from non-CLD students and the group leaders were impossible to separate to gain a more comprehensive picture of the CLD girls' identity positions. In addition, the framework of literacy as a social practice emphasizes learners' interactions in different social groups. Therefore, when collecting and analyzing the data, I examined the whole-group interactions but focused mainly on interpreting CLD students' identity positions and discourses.

At the time of my data collection, my book discussion group included three white Americans, two Hispanic Americans, and one Asian American. These girls were randomly assigned according to their grade when they first participated in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club in September 2013. I started data collection for this study during the girls' third semester in Strong Girls when they were fifth graders. The girls were from two fifth-grade classrooms and most of them knew each other before joining the book club. When I started working with the girls in spring 2013, we read *How to Steal a Dog* by Barbara O'Connor, *Abduction* by Peg Kehret, *Drama* by Raina Telgemeier, *As Simple as it Seems* by Sarah Weeks; *El Deafo* by Cece Bell, *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson, and *Stargirl* by Jerry Spinelli Bell. These books were selected by the research team based on the criteria for books

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with strong female protagonists that we developed in the first phase. Before reading selected texts, I gave the girls short summaries of the books, and then they wrote down the title of their own reading preference in order. After receiving their reading preferences, I tallied their votes to decide which book to read for the next four to five weeks. The following section is a short description of each CLD and non-CLD student in my book discussion group at the time of my data collection. These brief introductions will help build up more understandings and extensive descriptions of the findings in next the chapter.

Table 3.4

Participants in the Book Discussion Group

Name	*Ethnic Background*	*Age at the start of data collection*	*L1*	*Language* spoken *at home*
Jamie*	Asian American (Vietnam)	11	Vietnamese	Vietnamese
Kathy*	Hispanic American (Colombia)	11	Spanish	Spanish
Anita*	Hispanic American (Honduras)	11	Spanish	Spanish
Bella	Caucasian American	11	English	English
Gina	Caucasian American	11	English	English
Jennifer	Caucasian American	11	English	English
Flora	Hispanic American	11	English	English

Note: The research mainly focused on the three asterisked CLD students: Jamie, Kathy, and Anita

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Table 3. 5

Name and Strong Girl Book List in Each Semester

Semester	Name	Selected group books
Jan 2013- May 2013	Jamie, Kathy, Anita, Bella, Gina	*Abduction* Peg Kehret
Sep 2013- Dec 2013	Jamie, Kathy, Anita, Bella, Gina	*How to steal a dog* by Barbara O'Connor *Me and Rolly Maloo* By Janet Wong
Jan 2014- May 2014	Jamie, Kathy, Anita, Bella, Gina	*As simple as it seems* by Sarah Weeks *Drama Raina* Telgemeier
Sep 2014- Dec 2014*	Jamie, Kathy, Anita, Bella, Jennifer	*Stargirl* Jerry Spinelli
Jan 2015- May 2015*	Jamie, Kathy, Anita, Bella, Jennifer	*El Deafo* by Cece Bell *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson
Sep 2015- Dec 2015*	Jamie, Kathy, Anita, Bella, Gina. Flora	*Roller Girl* by Victoria Jamieson *Counting by 7's* by Holly Goldberg Sloan

Note: While there were also other girls participating during Jan 2013- May 2013, Sep 2013- Dec 2013, and Jan 2014- May 2014, this table included only the girls I highlighted in the dissertation. * indicates the three semesters of my data collection (Sep 2014- Dec 2014, Jan 2015-May 2015, and Sep 2015-Dec 2015)

Jamie

Jamie was born in the United States and she identified herself as Vietnamese when I first met her. She had attended an ELL program until second grade, and she had a fluent English proficiency level that allowed her to comprehend and complete school assignments on her own. However, she told me that she could not understand English words before kindergarten because Vietnamese was the only language her family spoke at home. She was shy and quiet when I first met her, but she was more willing to share her story with me after the second semester in my group. Even though she and Kathy were from the same class, she did not have a lot of

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interactions with other students when waiting for the start of the book club. She lived with her parents, grandmother, and her twin brothers. Jamie told me that she used to visit Vietnam during the summers. However, the tickets were too expansive for her family, so she hadn't visited for at least three years.

Kathy

Kathy was born in the United States, and she identified herself as a Latina from Columbia. She attended an ELL program when she was in Kindergarten. She also had a fluent English proficiency level that allowed her to comprehend and complete school assignments on her own. She was the popular girl because she was always surrounded by other girls in the book club and she told me that "I know all the 5th graders!" Anita described Kathy as a "strong girl because she was always caring, friendly and nice to friends" when I asked them to describe a friend they considered as a Strong Girl. She had an older sister and an older brother but she did not live with them. She lived with her mom and her father was in Colombian during the time of data collection. She told me that she and her mom visited Colombia during the summers almost every two years.

Anita

Anita and her older sister both participated in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club since September 2013. She was born in the United States, and her parents were from Honduras. She lived with her parents and she was the middle kid among the three girls in her family. She attended an ELL program when she was in kindergarten and she exited her ELL programs and had a fluent English proficiency level to comprehend her school assignments. Like Kathy, she was also a good helper when we needed Spanish translators. She actively participated

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in the book club, and she liked to ask questions or raised her hand to share her opinions in the group. In addition, she sometimes wrote in her journal about some personal issues.

Bella

Bella is a Caucasian American girl and an active participant in my group. She always wanted to share her opinions. She was a good friend with Kathy and Anita. In addition, Gina, Kathy, and Bella were in the same class. Bella was reflective in the conversation but she sometimes ran over other people's opinions during our discussion. Even though Bella liked to share her ideas in the group, she seldom wrote her responses or ideas in her journal. When I asked the girls to write something in the journal, she would show her hesitance or choose to find a quiet space and keep reading the book.

Gina

Gina was a petite Caucasian American girl, and her voice was so soft that I sometimes had to listen to her carefully when she was speaking. She was a good friend of Bella, and they liked to read together when we had silent reading time. Gina was an active participant and a critical thinker when we were discussing books. For example, one week after the discussion of how boys' and girls' toys were gendered in commercials, she brought her Pokémon card collection to share with my group and to show both boys as well as girls played Pokémon toys.

Jennifer

Jennifer is a Caucasian American girl, and she did not participate in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club until the third semester because she was new to the elementary school. She had moved to many places and transferred to many elementary schools. Jennifer liked to read books related to nature and animals, but she was not a fan of reading stories about people. In addition, I found that she was not only knowledgeable about animal information, but also good at

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drawing. Jennifer talked in the book discussion, but she did not have many interactions with other girls except Jamie. They often separated themselves from the other girls by sitting away from the group center.

Flora

Flora did not participate in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club until September 2015. I did not get a chance to know her because she only attended one semester, and then she transferred to another elementary school. She was a good friend with Kathy, Bella, and one girl in another fifth grade group because she liked to share things she liked to do with her friends inside and outside of school, for instance, buying the same Halloween costumes, watching dramas on Netflix, or planning for a friends' birthday party. She was also a popular girl among 6th grade boys because both Kathy and Bella called her "a boy magnet." Although she was new to my group, she had no problem blending into the group, and she quickly adapted to the routines in the Strong Girls book club.

The Group Leaders

Catie

Catie played an important role stimulating conversation and understanding CLD students' identity constructions in this study. When I started data collection, she was a student teacher and it was her last year of college. She born in Paraguay, but she was adopted when she was young and raised in the United States. Many Strong girls thought that Catie and Kathy looked alike. According to Catie, she believed that the girls were "kind of confused about the fascinating way with me [Catie] because [I am] Hispanic but grew up more with a white American culture." We talked and shared ideas about leading book discussions through emails and informal meetings. Throughout my cooperation with her, she was willing to try different pedagogies and often

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offered ideas to help the girls engage in reading and to build up rapport among the girls. She often took on the "big sister" role when the girls needed advice about their lives.

My Roles as a Book Discussion Leader and a Researcher

Heath and Street (2008) noted that all ethnographic research is inherently partial, subjective, and interpretative. Therefore, the data I present and interpret are influenced by my understanding about the literature, the contexts, the Strong Girls, and myself. A researcher in an ethnographic study is an instrument for analyzing the data. Thus, my positioning in this research was essential to my interpretation of the data. Different identities were at play while I was participating in this research project. I am an independent Asian female. I am an international doctoral student who has lived in the US for six years. I come from a family with three daughters in which education is highly valued, and I had adequate social and cultural support from my parents for my education. I also have the privilege of studying in the United States, which many of my Taiwanese friends dare to dream about, but few of them actually do. I had been an English teacher for many years and worked with students from different age groups, but working with American elementary students was new to me. Also, I am a Ph.D. student who is continuously developing my critical awareness; I am always interested in language, cultural and gender in education. Before I participated in this project, I had been working with professors who are advocates of gender equality and pay careful attention to minority students and their learning opportunities. I am currently teaching undergraduate students in the Teacher Education Program about children's literature.

During my doctoral study, my understanding about learning, researching, teaching and how young learners are positioned in local and global contexts has been constantly challenged, constructed and reconstructed. Based on my professional experiences in foreign language and

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ESL education and my interests in literacy education with elementary school students, I was selected to participate in this research project. I understood that one of my roles in this book club was to create a safe and comfortable environment for girls to enjoy reading and try to create equal opportunities and space for them to share their responses to the literature. Although I have participated in this research project since 2012, my knowledge about the girls, their literacy practices, and their history was never enough; I understood and often reminded myself that what I perceived and learned about the girls in the book club offered only a partial portrait of their multiple and situated identities. Therefore, participating in this research project not only provided me with opportunities to investigate how the girls perceived their identities, but also pushed me to think harder about how learning took place in an afterschool setting.

Although I understood each Strong girl in my group was unique and brought diverse backgrounds, I was fascinated by the stories that the girls shared from their diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. I was surprised at the different cultural practices shared by the Hispanic Americans. I was shocked by the similar personal stories the CLD students shared among their friends. As I listened closely to people's questions and comments about their ethnic identities, I always wondered how the girls perceived themselves and how they understood other people's perceptions about them. Thus, the CLD girls' recognition of my appearance, my speaking, my behaviors, my interactions, my language, my questions, and my story all played a significant role to my social identities and their understanding of themselves and their participation in the book club.

In this study, I assumed the role of a participant observer in order to immerse myself in the culture of this girls-only book club. A participant observer is an "active membership role" (Adler & Adler, 1998, p. 85). Merriam (2009) argued that the purposes of being a participant

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observer are to gain a deep understanding of the group as well as building up "levels of confidentiality promised to the group" (p. 124). In addition, it was impossible to isolate other aspects of my identities that shaped and were shaped in the book discussion group while being a participant observer in this situated context, such as my identity as a researcher, a doctoral student, a woman, and an international student. Fairclough (2000) stated that "power exists in various modalities, including the concrete and unmistakable modality of physical force" (p. 3). In other words, the power relations might exist in the face-to-face moment or be hidden in the underlying discourses. Therefore, the decisions I made, the questions I asked in different situations, and the literacy activities I designed and modified to meet the institutional expectations were all constructed by the knowledge and information learned from larger social structures that underpinned the discourse. Hence, the data I shared were carefully interpreted and selected in order to provide an in-depth understanding of the power relations and identity constructions in this group.

Acknowledging of the impact of my multiple identities and their relations to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, I constantly reminded myself to aware of different perspectives and invite the girls to share their multilingual and multicultural stories. For instance, I brought photos of my grandmother's house in Taiwan to share family stories that helped me make sense of who I am with the girls. I brought a lucky charm and a photo of a Buddhist temple in order to share a common cultural practice with the group. For Taiwanese people, these artifacts provide comfort and solace when we need to overcome anxiety and worries. Sharing our diverse life and cultural experiences outside of American settings was important for the CLD students. Moreover, when encountering multicultural texts, I provided additional cultural notes or artifacts to build up the background of

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the context in order to help the girls be more aware of multiple cultural practices. In addition, I also invited the girls to add insight if they were familiar with the topic or the content. I carefully observed and took notes about the girls' reactions and interactions when discussing different topics. For instance, I paid attention to verbal and nonverbal language when they showed hesitation or interest discussing a particular topic. These observations all contributed to my understanding of the girls and my participation in the book club.

Data Sources

The data included in this study were from September 2014 to December 2014, January 2015 to May 2015, and September 2015 to December 2015. In order to increase the credibility of this qualitative research, I applied Denzin's (1978) approach of triangulation to analyze multiple sources of data. Merriam (2009) stated that triangulating multiple sources refers to comparing and cross-checking data from different places, people and different perspectives. Therefore, this study collected data from multiple sources in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

2. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

3. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

The data sources in the study included: (a) two semistructured interviews and multiple informal interviews with the CLD students; (b) field notes for twenty-four distinct book club

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observations; (c) twenty videos and twenty-two clips or audio recordings within the book discussion group; (d) fifty written responses in the girls' journals.

Interviews with the Participants

In September 2014, I collected the girls' background information when the research team received parents' consent forms and students' background information. Additionally, I conducted two semistructured interviews with the girls individually to help me understand them better throughout the whole study. Merriam (2009) argued that semistructured interviews "allow the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic" (p. 90). Semistructured interviews not only are guided by questions or topics that the researcher wants to explore, but also provide flexibility for researchers when conducting the interview. That is, the researcher does not have to follow the exact wording or the order of the questions. The flexibility of semistructured interviews allowed me to explore the girls' backgrounds as well as provided a more authentic interviewing environment. I conducted the first interview at the beginning of the book club and the second one at the end of the book club. The interviews focused on exploring the girls' family backgrounds, their perceptions of themselves in the book club, their reflections on participating in the book club, their perceptions of language learners, and their cultural identities. (See Appendix A for semistructured interview questions).

In addition to semistructured interviews in the beginning of the semester, I also conducted multiple informal interviews with both CLD and non-CLD students. The informal interviews often took place at the end of each meeting or before reading, and the questions focused on confirming my observations from the group discussions. For instance, sometimes I focused on

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asking following-up questions that were discussed from previous meetings, and sometimes I emphasized questions related to the girls' participation, literacy practices, and relationships outside of the book club. However, sometimes the informal interviews occurred while the girls were writing down their responses in their own journals. This instrument was helpful for me as a participant observer because it provided flexibility and I incorporated it in my reading and writing activity (See Appendix A for informal interview questions and Appendix B for the semistuctured interview questions).

In order to gain a better understanding of the girls, I applied a responsive interviewing approach in my study. Rubin and Rubin (2005) pointed out three characteristics of responsive interviewing. First, in responsive interviewing, both interviewer and interviewee are seen as human beings; interviewers have flexibility to develop their interviewing styles and ways to interact with the interviewees. In addition, interviewers' points of view are not expected to be neutral and their perspectives might affect interviewees' viewpoints. Second, the goal of responsive interviewing is to gain a "solid, deep understanding of what is being studied, rather than breadth (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p.35). Rubin and Rubin (2005) stressed that the interviewers have to ask follow-up questions, pay attention to the specific questions according to the context, or deal with complicated questions. That is to say, the feature of responsive interviewing must remain flexible, and the interviewers need to pay attention to the details of their interview conversation in order to explore deeper questions. The last characteristic is that the research design should remain flexible in order to probe for more information. Therefore, when I found that the girls showed uncertainty or hesitance during the interview, I modified my questions or changed to other topics and made sure that they knew that they had the right to remain silent for my questions. I found other opportunities for follow-up questions if the girls were willing to

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share. It is important to note that although I prepared the interview questions according to my observational field notes in advance, I found that it was sometimes challenging for me to conduct the interview individually due to my roles as both the researcher and the group leader. Therefore, I asked similar questions to the girls in order to affirm my findings.

Observation Field Notes from the Book club

I included twenty-four observation field notes from the book club meeting at the time of my data collection. The observation field notes were recorded after each book club meeting. According to Merriam (2009), field notes usually include verbal descriptions of the settings, event, and participants; direct quotation or words used from the participants; and the researcher's comments from the observation. She further indicated that the comments should be reflective, which could include the researcher's "feelings, reactions, hunches, initial interpretations, speculations and working hypotheses" (p. 130-31). That is to say, providing a description of the setting as well as the researchers' personal reflections should be included in the field notes. Due to my roles as a participant observer and the book discussion leader in this study, it was difficult for me to record detailed information in the field notes in the time of the meetings. Therefore, recording what happened in the group right after each book club meeting was essential for my observation field notes. The field notes focused on a brief summary of the site and the activities, the critical instances that happened in each book club meeting that were significant to my research questions, and my reflective comments about the critical instances. In addition, I used the field notes and the video clips of the book discussion to support and explain the data analysis.

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Video or Audio Recordings

Audio and video recording were also major data sources due to my role as a participant observer in the research site and the difficulties of taking notes while having group discussion. In this study, about twenty videos and twenty-two audio documents were included. During this study, each group discussion was documented unless we visited other places where video recording was not allowed or inappropriate, such as visiting the public library. In addition to video recording, I also carried an audio recorder with me to help capture the details of the voices from the conversation. The purpose of utilizing video and audio recording was to receive a more complete picture of what happened in the group and the interactions in the group. In the case of the video data, I used them to capture the non-verbal language in the group. The video recorder was set up before the meeting and it was placed in a location where each member of the group could be included in the video camera. I also placed an audio recorder in the middle of the group to capture completely the conversation of the group.

Written Responses in the Journal

At the time of my data collection, I collected and analyzed about fifty written responses from both the CLD students and non-CLD students. When analyzing the written responses, I focused on most CLD students' responses and I also paid close attention to non-CLD girls' responses that were salient to the research questions, for instance, the girls' descriptions or relationships with their friends. The purpose of the journal was to provide multiple ways to respond to the book, to reflect on their participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, and to share their personal stories. When and what to write in the journals varied; it depended on my plan of the reading activities, our group discussion about the book, or a random critical moment that happened in the book club. The journal was used for two purposes. The

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front part of the journal was used to record the girls' responses to the book or topics that were discussed in the book club. Before writing down their response, I often gave students a prompt or guiding questions, such as what would you do if you were in the main character's situation? Who is your favorite character? Why? Or if you could talk to the character, what would you tell her? In addition, the girls could write or draw their responses regarding their confusion, surprise or questions about the book. They also used the journal to reflect their ideas after group discussion, such as discussions about gender, race or culture. The second purpose of the journal was to provide a space for the girls to share their personal stories with the group leaders and establish their relationships. For instance, the girls shared stories about their family, friendships, school life or questions about themselves. The responses in their journals were photographed in order to benefit the process of data triangulation (Merriam, 2009) and discover new perspectives.

Data Analysis

The following section is a description of my analysis tools and my data analysis procedure. The data analysis procedure varied depending on the focus of the different research questions, and it is separated into several parts. It is important to note that the three research questions were interrelated with each other, and it was impossible to separate data analysis by research questions. Thus, the process of finding the results of an individual research question sometimes overlapped and interrelated with each other. The following table (Table 3.6) provides a summary of my data source and data analysis of each research question.

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Table 3.6

Date Sources and Analysis Procedure

Research Question	Data Source	Analysis tools
1. What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?	(1) Interview transcripts (2) The girls' written responses in their journals. (3) Audio and video transcripts (4) Observational field notes (5) Findings from research question 1 and research question 2	1.Open coding 2. Analytical coding -Gee's (2011) concept of Discourses and Conversation to finding out the building tasks: relationship and politics 3 Fairclough's MR and guiding questions from the explanation dimension
2. What kinds of identities do CLD students perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?	(1) Observational field notes (2) Audio and video transcripts (3) Transcription from the semistructured interviews (4) The girls' written responses in their journals.	1.Open coding 2. Analytical coding -Gee's (2011) concept of Discourses to finding out the building tasks: relationship, identity, and sign systems and knowledge 3 Fairclough's MR and guiding questions from the description dimension
3. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?	(1) Interview transcripts (2) The girls' written responses in their journals. (3) Audio and video transcripts (4) Observational field notes	1.Open coding 2. Analytical coding -Gee's (2011) concept of Discourses and Conversation 3 Fairclough's MR and guiding questions from the description and interpretation dimension

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Tools for Analysis

In order to identify CLD girls' identity positions, I applied analytical tools drawn from both Gee (2001) and Fairclough's (2001) CDA. The first tool I used was Gee's notion capital "d" Discourse as an analytical tool to explore CLD girls' multiple identities. Roger (2004) explained Gee's (2001) Discourse as "the ways of presenting, believing, valuing and participating with all of the sign systems that people have at their disposal" (Roger, 2004, p. 7). Lastly, I adopted Miles and Huberman's (1994) guiding questions in order to gain a thick description in my data collection.

I utilized Discourse as an analytical tool to find out the following building tasks suggested by Gee (2001): *practices, identities, politics*, r*elationships*, and *sign systems and knowledge*. *Practices*, according to Gee (2011), mean "a socially recognized and institutionally or culturally supported endeavor that usually involves sequencing or combining actions in certain specific ways" (p. 17). *Identities* refer to than individual who uses language to let other people recognize a certain identity. *Sign systems and knowledge* mean that individuals use a certain sign system and certain form of knowledge to build privilege, such as English or Spanish. *Politics* means that individuals use language to convey and construct a perspective of social goods. Gee (2001) stated that "social goods are potentially at stake at any time we speak or write so as to state or imply that something or someone is 'adequate,' 'normal, 'good,' or 'acceptable' (or the opposite) in some fashion important to some group in society or society as a whole" (p.17). That is to say, social goods can be defined as the standards that are socially acceptable by the mainstream society or a particular group of people who have more power to influence the representations of the social goods. *Relationships* aim to examine how individuals use language

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to signal what relationships we have and want to have when interacting with other people (Gee, 2001).

The second analytical tool I employed was Gee's (2001) concepts of social language and situated meanings. Social language refers to ways that individuals speak or write in order to let other people recognize their social identities and establish relationships. In addition, Gee (2001) argued to examine situated meanings when analyzing the data because the language forms that we use in a specific or situated meaning are all specific in different contexts. Thus, as I read the data, I sought evidence of how the CLD girls used different social languages when interacting with members in the group to position their multiple identities. I also focused on how situated meanings were constructed in the discussion in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club.

The third tool I used to examine CLD girls' talk regarding their gender, literacy practice and race/ethnicity was Gee's notion of *figured worlds*. Gee (2010) explained that "figured worlds are like different viewpoints from different people's stories which they can share, and those stories were distributed across different people in order to help each other develop the "big picture" (p. 105). Gee's figured worlds enabled me to examine how the girls constructed their cultural and linguistic identities and gender identities and how these identities affected their participation in the group. For example, I looked for the girls' figured worlds of gender practice at home and how different figured worlds interacted with each other.

The next tool I adopted was Gee's capital "C" Conversation, which consisted of "a myriad of international events taking place among specific people at specific times and places" (2001, p. 55). In other words, the Conversations that were discussed or argued by different social groups carried different meanings and values. The multiple meanings and values result from historical debate from different Discourses (Gee, 2001). Gee's notion of Conversation is

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significant for researchers to understand how meanings or a particular topic are socially constructed from historical debates among and between discourses within different power relations. Additionally, I asked questions suggested by Fairclough (2001) in order to obtain more understanding of how power relations from different discourses contribute to the Conversation in different times and places in both local and larger social structures. Some questions I asked were "What relational values do grammatical features have?" "What international conventions are used?" and "What larger-scale structure does the text have?" Gee's (2001) Conversation and Fairclough's (2001) guiding questions were helpful to interpret and explain how CLD girls' perceived their multiple identities, what underlying ideologies and power were hidden in their Discourses, and how these factors influenced the girls' participation in the group.

Lastly, in order to have an authentic and a thick description of "what happens" in the book club, a careful and systemic data collection procedure was followed throughout the research study. I applied Miles and Huberman's (1994) guiding questions when collecting my data:

- Are the descriptions gained "thick" enough? In other words, are they contextually rich; is there a lot of information and insight drawn specifically from the research site?
- Do the descriptions ring true, or do they seem in any sense improbable or highly unlikely?
- Have the rules for interpretation been made specific? Were they stated ahead of time and if they were changed, was that change justifiable?
- Have rival explanations been considered, or has only one explanation been considered from the start?

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- If there is an element of prediction, were the predictions accurate, or did the events that unfold fail to confirm the interpretations offered?
- Do the original informants agree with the interpretations? Have they been asked and is there a record of their views about their drawn conclusions?

Data Analysis Procedure

The first step of my analysis procedure was open coding. I first transcribed the semistructured interviews from the beginning of the book club and the field notes, in which I recorded the critical moments I observed and recalled from each book club meeting. After identifying the critical moments from my observational field notes, I searched the critical moments from the video and audio recordings and transcribed the events. After transcribing the critical events from the video or audio recordings, I read the transcripts and made notes on the transcripts that were salient to answering my research questions. In my first open coding step, I looked for data that were relevant to CLD girls' social identities and evidence that supported their particular social identity. I highlighted each CLD girl's different social identities in different colors. In the second step of my open coding, I created a chart in a Word document to group the three CLD girls' different social identities.

After open coding, I applied analytical coding strategy when analyzing the highlighted notes (Richard, 2005, p. 94). Richard (2005) described analytical coding as referring to "coding that comes from interpretation and reflection on meaning" and which goes beyond open coding. I searched the notes and the Word document regarding the three CLD girls' different social identities from the open coding. I asked questions and used Discourse as the analytical tool to find out the CLD girls' building tasks of *identities, relationships*, and *sign systems and*

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knowledge. Some example questions are: “What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?” and “What identity or identities is this piece of language attributing to others and how does this help the speaker or writer enact his or her identity?” (Gee, 2011, pp. 18-19). After identifying data related to the girls’ building tasks of *identities, relationship*, and *sign system and knowledge*, I changed the font color of that particular data and copied the data according to different building tasks into the identity Word document. In the file regarding CLD girls’ identities, I paid close attention to the Discourses in which the girls were members they belonged and how these Discourses informed the ways of thinking, speaking, valuing, dressing, believing, and so on. In addition, I also adopted Fairclough’s (2001) suggestion of examining the grammatical feature of the texts, for instance, how pronouns were used from each CLD girls’ conversation regarding their language, ethnicity, race, or gender. For instance, when I was reading the transcripts, I highlighted the pronouns that were salient to the CLD girls’ cultural and linguistic identities when they were describing different cultural practices. These questions and steps were important for me to identify the CLD girls’ multiple identities asked in research question one.

While coding and creating a Word file for the CLD girls’ social identities, I also created a file to identify Discourses related to the CLD girls’ cultural and linguistic identities. This Word file was important for answering the second research question. I followed the same procedure of creating the document of girls’ different social identities: I conducted an open coding and then an analytical coding. I applied the analytical tools: capital “d” Discourse, capital “c” Conversation, and “figured worlds” to find out Discourses related to the CLD girls’ cultural and linguistic identities. In this Word file, I focused on documenting the co-occurring patterns that I found in the data and categorized them into different topics, such as gender, race/ethnicity, literacy

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practices in different social institutions, or participation in Strong Girls. Each topic also included several sub-topics in the documents. In this step, I located data in the transcripts and field notes that were salient to each theme and made notes of my interpretations from situated meanings that were particular to a social identity in a specific social community. In addition, I also examined the CLD girls' member resources (MR), introduced by Fairclough (2001, p. 20). According to Fairclough (2001), MR can be defined as "what people have in their heads and draw upon when they produce or interpret texts- including their knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhabit values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on" (p. 20). This concept was also important to interpret what internalized MR the girls used when participating in different social practices and discourse. For instance, when examining the CLD girls' definitions of gender practice, I first identified how the CLD girls situated in the contexts and what member resources they had to help them construct their figured worlds of gender practice.

In order to answer how the emerging social identities and discourse illuminated the girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. I first paid attention to the Conversations and Discourses related to the CLD girls' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, how the social languages that both CLD and non-CLD students used when discussing a particular topic and how the meanings were constructed, and the languages that were used to build up *politics* and *relationships*. I searched the data of Conversation and Discourses found in the second research question and used Gee's guiding questions to answer the *social good* in the data. For instance, when the group had discussions about speaking different languages or CLD girls' heritage identities, I focused on how bilingual/multilingual ability and identities were perceived and described among the girls. In addition, I also emphasized the interactions among the group members while the CLD girls positioned particular social identities. I used Fairclough's (2001)

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guiding questions “what interactional conventions are used” to find out the turn-taking systems and the patterns of the interaction from both the audio transcripts and video data (p. 110). Observing and analyzing the interaction allowed me to examine the relationships between and among the girls and the power relations in the face-to-face discourse in the book club.

Furthermore, I also looked for evidence of power behind discourse suggested by Fairclough’s (2001) third dimensions of CDA, explanation, to explore how the CLD girls’ discourses and identities were influenced not only by face-to-face interaction but also larger social orders. Faiclough (2001) reminded researchers that language is a social practice and discourse is part of a social process, which is determined by social structures. In addition, the discursive practices take place in the discourse cumulatively, impacting on social structures, sustaining them, or changing them. Moreover, these social structures and discourses are mediated by member resources (MR), referring to what an individual has in their head and draw upon when they produce or interpret texts. That is to say, the relationship between social structures and MR is interrelated; “social structures shape MR, which in turn shape discourses; and discourses sustain or change MR, which in turn shape sustain or change structures” (Fairclough, 2001, p.135). Thus, the dimension of explanation can be seen as using discourse as a process of social structure in order to explore the power relations within different social structures. As I was reading and analyzing the data, I asked the three guiding questions suggested by Fairclough (2001) when investigating the different power relations in a particular discourse: 1) Social determinants: what power relations at situational, institutional, and societal levels help shape this discourse? 2) Ideologies: what elements of MR which are drawn upon have ideological character? 3) Effects: how is this discourse positioned in relation to struggles at the situational, institutional, and societal levels? Are these struggles overt or covert? Is the discourse

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normative with respect to MR or creative? Does it contribute to sustaining existing power relations, or transforming them? (p.137). For instance, when analyzing the perceptions of CLD girls' ethnic identity, I concentrated on the girls' MR and examined it from the societal, institutional, and situational levels; how their peers reacted to the conversation; and what power relations were exercised within the discourse that shaped their MR.

The process of my data analysis was not linear; it was retrospective. The retrospective analysis process enabled me to identify important themes that were significant to the research questions. In the recursive analytical coding process, each time I added interpreted notes or notes from previous literature to the documents when I revisited the files or explored more related information from the book club. The notes I took and the literature all supported and thickened my interpretations and explanations of my data. Furthermore, the ongoing research and analysis process offered me opportunities to confirm, change, or ground my interpretations and provided deeper explanations. For instance, after identifying the major findings from each research question, I revisited my data and transcripts repetitively in order to acquire a holistic perspective for a particular critical moment. If the data were inconsistent, I first paid attention to the situated meanings and I member checked with the other group leader or the girls; I took my preliminary analysis back to some of the girls and asked them whether my interpretations captured their points. This step was significant for me when interpreting the data regarding the CLD girls' ethnic/race and cultural identities in this study.

Analyzing the Video Data

I used the video clip data in the book discussion group to help me analyze the girls' nonverbal behaviors and communication when interacting with each other, such as facial expressions, gestures, proximity, and emotions. When analyzing the video data, I used

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Fairclough's (1992) three dimensions of CDA to analyze data from the video clips. When watching the video clips, I looked for events that were significant to the study, for example, girls' discourses expressing their understanding of identities related to their culture. When identifying a particular event, I wrote down a description of the event that included textual features, such as vocabulary, turn-taking, directness of speech, and facial expression. Then I reread my description to add or delete information regarding the girls' body language, facial expressions, proximity, and eye contact with their peers to clarify the description.

The second dimension of CDA is interpretation, which stresses the process of how "the texts and interactions are mediated by the participants' background, beliefs, values, and assumptions" (Young, 2000, p. 320). Thus, after writing down the description of a particular event, I interpreted the description data according to what I had learned about the girls, such as book club field notes, interviews from the girls and the teachers, or the girls' backgrounds.

The last dimension is explanation. Fairclough (1992) stated that this dimension is to illustrate how discourse is considered as social practice and is determined by social structures. In addition, discourse is seen as "a part of processes of social struggle, within a matrix and relationship of power." Therefore, I adopted Fairclough's (1992) questions to guide my analysis of the explanation dimension. Some leading questions are: how did the power between the girls and me and among the girls affect their interaction in the book discussion group? How did the girls' families or the school affect their participation in the book discussion group and their understanding of their identity? How did the local, institutional and societal contexts work together to sustain or transform the discourse of their cultural identity? In addition, scholars in literacy research pointed out that students' silence results from not only students' lack of power but also their exercise of agency to resist or to participate in a particular social context.

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Therefore, I also paid attention to identifying silence in different situated contexts from the video data to examine the hesitance or barriers to the girls' participation. When analyzing the data, I highlighted the important parts in the data with different colors according to the previous guiding questions, and then categorized the codes into situational, institutional and societal levels. Figure 3.1 provides a visual representation to demonstrate my data analysis procedure.

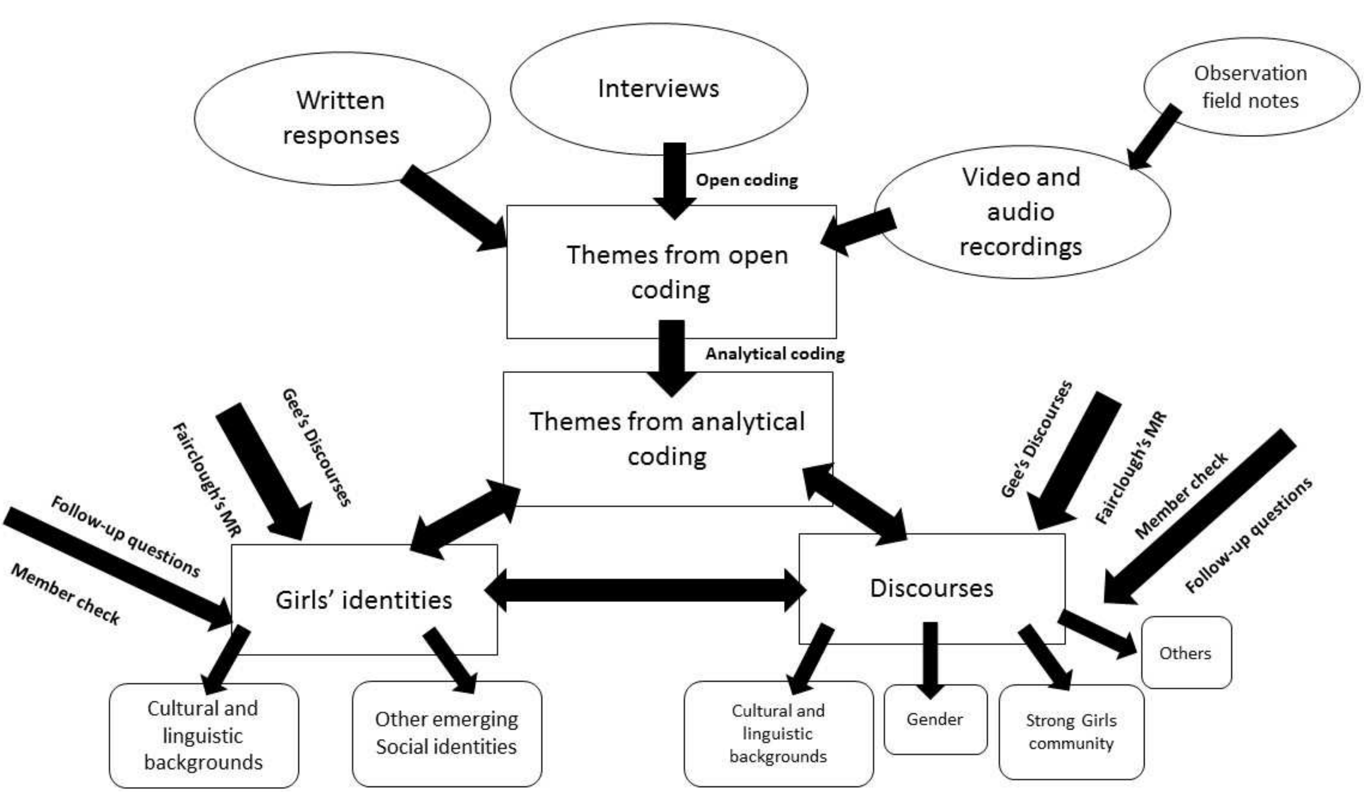

Figure 3.1. An Overview of Data Analysis Procedure

Credibility

Merriam (2009) pointed out that qualitative researchers apply different assumptions and hold a different world view than the traditional research approach, thus. It is impossible for a qualitative researcher to obtain an "objective 'truth' or 'reality'" (p.215). Gee (2011) explained

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that human beings use language or other symbols to interpret the world and thereby construct meanings in a certain context, and discourse analysis can be seen as "an interpretation of an interpretation" (Gee, 2011, p. 122). Both Merriam's (2009) and Gee's (2011) notions of qualitative research align with Heath and Street's (2008) notion that "all ethnographic research is inherently interpretive, subjective, and partial (p. 45). In addition, the credibility of discourse analysis is never fixed; it remains open for further discussion and the status might change according to how we interpret our data. However, it is crucial for qualitative researchers to be explicit about their decision-making process in order to provide a thick description. Thus, it is crucial for qualitative researchers to adopt tools of inquiry from various sources to help interpret different situated meanings in different discourse.

In order to increase the credibility of my interpretation of the data, I followed five important strategies drawn from Merriam's (2009) and Gee's (2011) suggestions as I examined the data. The first strategy was triangulation. Triangulation means using multiple sources of data to confirm emerging findings. In my study, I collected data from multiple resources in order to gain multiple perspectives from the members in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books, such as video and audio recordings, field notes, and the girls' written responses.

Having adequate engagement was another strategy in data collection, referring to spending adequate time in the research site to seek saturated data. Gee (2011) pointed out that in qualitative research, the "question could not be answered until enough of the 'tools of inquiry' used in a discourse analysis had been laid out (p. 123). Given the situated context of Strong Girls and the complexity of identity construction, I was both a participant observer and a group leader in the book club. I spent three semesters for data collection in order to achieve the goal of thick description. In addition, prior to my data collection time, I had worked with the same group of

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girls in my group since September 2013. My engagement in the Strong Girls book club since January 2013 helped build up the rapport among the members in the book club.

Adequate engagement enhances the validity of the next strategy, convergence. Gee, (2011) stated that the more data we can have to support and converge in our analysis, the higher validity we will have. In addition, Rogers (2003) stated that coverage is important because it "points out the significance of looking forward and looking backward in the representation of the data" (Roger, 2003 p. 32). Thus, when exploring findings from the identities revealed in the transcripts as well as discourses from the CLD students' participation, I carefully examined the evidence and identified critical elements to provide a plausible interpretation of the CLD students' identity positioning. I searched patterns that were related to similar situational contexts in different book club meetings. Although finding out the co-occurring patterns were important, I also made comparison with different parts of data if the girls changed or posited different viewpoints.

The fourth strategy was agreement, which means having discussions with colleagues regarding the data collection and data analysis process and the interpretation of the findings, such as peer review. In addition to my interpretations of the themes that emerged in the book club, I also received feedback from other group leaders to receive agreement from other members in the book club. Moreover, I also asked following-up questions in the informal interviews to member check with the girls and gain a deeper understanding.

The last strategy was rich and thick description. Merriam (2009) suggested that qualitative researchers should provide detailed description of the study in order to help readers decide the credibility of the findings. In addition, Gee (2011) stated that the findings are more valid if the analysis is closely related to the details of linguistic structure. Thus, when illustrating

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the salient themes related the CLD girls' identities and the discourses related to their identities, I emphasized both the local and global factors that influenced their identity construction. For example, global factors were conversations about literacy practices inside and outside of school settings, and the pronoun, the language, and the words that the girls used when discussing their identities were examined as the local factors.

Even though it was impossible to provide the perfect answer in discourse analysis, the purpose of the analysis was to provide a convincing and an in-depth interpretation of my research questions in my book discussion group. In order to increase the credibility of my interpretation of the data, I adopted five strategies to guild my data analysis process. Data collected from multiple sources benefited triangulation in the study. My role as a participant observer and a book discussion leader allowed me to be an active member in the Strong Girls book club and achieve the goal of engagement. In addition, the data collected from the three semesters and my relationships built prior to my data collection time all contributed to the quality of coverage when answering my research questions. Moreover, I used peer review to receive agreement from other group leaders and the girls. Lastly, the data collected from multiple sources from global and local levels all enhanced the validity of thick description.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my design of qualitative research in order to gain a more holistic picture of how CLD students positioned themselves in the situated literacy practice. This chapter introduces the ethnographic perspective of this study and provides detailed information about the setting, the history of the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, the focal participants, the data collection, and data analysis plan. In addition, I highlighted the significant role of using CDA to gain rich and deeper explanations and interpretations of the book

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discussion group as well as understanding how different power relations exercised in the local and global social levels. Both Gee's (2011) and Fairclough's (2001) concepts and techniques were used to find out how CLD students positioned themselves in the book discussion group. Lastly, I discussed strategies recommended by Gee (2011) and Merriam (2009) for enhancing the credibility of my study when collecting and analyzing the data.

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CHAPTER IV COMMUNITY AND SPACE IN STRONG GIRLS

This chapter provides detailed findings of my first research question. The goal of this study was to examine three elementary CLD students' identity positions in an afterschool book club. The three research questions that guided this study were:

1. What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
2. What kinds of identities do CLD students perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
3. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

Social practices play a significant role in shaping and reshaping our identities and discourses. Although this study focused on elementary girls with culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, these CLD girls' identities and discourses cannot be separated from broader social contexts. The findings showed that their identity positions were not only influenced by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds; they were also shaped by other past, current, and moment-to-moment sociocultural factors from inside and outside of school settings. For example, the three CLD students' past literacy practices could not be separated from the discussion. Also, CLD students' interactions with their peers and group leaders in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books afterschool book club all impacted their identity positions. Thus, although the main purpose of this study aimed at examining CLD students, including voices from CLD students, non-CLD students, and group leaders was essential to portraying their identity positions.

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The findings of the three research questions were separated into two chapters. In this chapter, I focus on discussing the social practices that were significant to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. There are two major parts in this chapter. I first provide portraits of each girl and the major social groups within their friendship map in the book club. Then I discuss findings that were salient to the construction of the Strong Girls community which were emerging from the book club. In the next chapter, I discuss the CLD girls' multiple identities regarding their ethnicity, race, gender, and social relationships found in the book club.

Portraits of the CLD Girls

Kathy. While we are waiting for the three o'clock bell for class to ring, Kathy runs from her classroom with her green Strong Girl t-shirt and gives Nita and me a hug. She asks me if I need help carrying the camera and the snacks. I hand her a bag full of juice boxes, and she tells me that she will find all of my girls. When I go into the sixth grade classroom, she is already sitting with her friends. I cannot hear what they are talking about, but they laugh, whisper to each other, giggle, and sit close to each other while waiting for other Strong Girls. When Kathy notices that Nita is standing in front of the girls and getting ready to talk, she immediately asks her friend, Bella, to calm down and to pay attention to Nita. She can relate every topic to her Colombian background.

Anita. Anita also has a Latin American background. It is hard not to recognize Anita from far away; her attention-drawing mixed colored outfit along with her long black hair, her petite body size, and her new square and black-frame glasses tell part of her persona. One of my girls describes her as "very colorful, like a rainbow shining through dark grey sky." Anita almost jumps toward me and starts chatting and provides all details about her life since she was not able

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to join us last week. When we sit together for snack, I ask the girls if they have any interests to share about their life. Anita immediately raises her right hand while holding her Capri Sun in her left hand. “Yu-Chi, I have something to share, I created a Haiku for Cece (the main character in the book *El Deafo* that we are reading) at home. Can I share? Can I share?” I tell her, “Of course” and she immediately takes out her journal and starts reading aloud to the group. At the end of the meeting, I ask the girls to share what they think their super power is after reading the main character’s super power from the book. “My super power is being weird and I am perky!” Anita says without hesitation.

Jamie. Jamie caught my attention when I met her the first time in Strong Girls Read Strong Books because of her Asian face, and I could not help but position my Asian connections with her before I become more familiar with her. She always carries her over-sized pink backpack that is always full of books. Jamie never misses any Strong Girls meetings, always finishes the book on time, or even faster than other girls, and always sits quietly in the group and listens to other girls talking. She will answer my questions if I ask her, but her answers are often short. If the whole group is having a conversation, her voice sometimes gets lost in the crowd. She seldom shows her preference when we are reading or having group discussion. Sometimes it is hard for me to read her emotions because she just smiles at me. She likes to draw animals and plants, and sometimes she likes to decorate the page of her journal.

Portraits of the Non-CLD Girls

Bella. According to the girls in my group, Bella is the “entertainer,” “the comic book,” and the “drama queen” in the Strong Girls book club. She is always energetic and never running out of ideas and opinions in group discussions. She is good friends with Kathy, Anita, and other 5th graders. She is always outspoken, and she likes to share her stories with people, such as boy

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issues, dramas with friends, and family stories. We never get bored if Bella is in the group, and it is easy to tell the difference if Bella is absent in the meeting.

Jennifer. Jennifer is new to the elementary school when she joins the Strong Girls book club. Like Jamie, she is also quiet in the group, but there is always a sense of aloofness and distance, and sometimes it is hard for me to approach her. She describes herself as a walking dictionary, and she knows a lot of information about animals and plants. Kathy, Jamie, and Anita also consider her as a smart and good student at school.

The Friendship Map

The Social Girl Group

Anita, Kathy, and Bella call themselves social girls at school and in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. Although Anita is not in the same fifth grade class with Kathy and Bella, three of them always sit next to each other in the discussion group. They are friends with almost every fifth grader in the Strong Girls. Jamie describes them as nice and popular girls at school. They like to hang around with their fifth grader friends before we separate into small groups. Their conversations vary from school gossip, boy issues, friendship issues, shopping, or competition about their school performance. When we are in our discussion group, Anita, Kathy and Bella are often the outspoken members in the group. They are also my "resources people;" they can always provide their opinions when I need any formal or informal information about the school. They seldom hesitate to answer my questions, and oftentimes they tell me more than I expect.

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The Quiet Girl Group

Jamie and Jennifer are the quiet girls in my group. Unlike the social girls, they carefully listen and participate in the group discussion. According to Jennifer, they only talk when they think it is necessary to contribute their ideas. Although both Jamie and Jennifer talk less in the group discussion, Jamie's voice is smaller than Jennifer's. Jennifer often talks first when I ask the girls questions, and she sometimes speaks for Jamie. They are always next to each other when they are in small or big group discussions. They always keep a distance between themselves and other girls when meeting in our group or in a big 5th grade group. Both of them are good at drawing, and Kathy and Anita describe them as the artists in our group. Although I tried several times to invite them to the group discussions, they would only move closer to the center of the circle and then gradually move back to their safe space, such as sitting behind a chair, the plant, or the book display rack. Besides reading, they tell me that they like to study information about nature and animals. They both like reading books about animal fantasy, but they are not fans of stories about people. Although Anita, Jamie and Jennifer are in the same fifth grade class, Anita told me that she only talks with Jamie and Jennifer in their assigned reading group.

The portraits in the beginning of this chapter of the three CLD girls and the social groups aims to provide a brief picture of the characteristics of each girl and their relationships with and among each other that I had observed for four semesters. The portraits hope to help contribute to the understanding of the identities that emerged in the discussion group. In the next part of this chapter, I discuss the findings that were salient to the construction of the Strong Girls community which emerged from the book club.

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Community and Spaces in the Book Club

Our identity is never a single or fixed answer. It is "lived in and through activity and so must be conceptualized as it develops in social practice" (Holland et al, 1998, p. xi). That is to say, it is the social activities and communities that we participate in that shape and reshape our multiple identities. The multiple identities that I observed in Strong Girls Read Strong Books could not be separated from the community that the elementary girls participated in. All the three CLD girls in this study were senior members in the book club; they had been in the book club since they were 4th graders. As a researcher and an educator, I wonder what motivated the Strong Girls to continuously return to the Strong Girls book club. Alvermann et al. (1999) stressed that both adolescents' experiences with their peers as they work communally with others and experiences with their family and adult members of the communities contribute to their identity construction and peer culture. The activities, routines, discussions, books, and interactions with the girls and group leaders all contributed to the culture of the book club. Therefore, in order to gain a deeper understanding of CLD girls' identity position, I focus on discussing the discursive literacy practices constructing the group culture in this section.

When analyzing the data, I focused on the girls' discourses related to their participation in this situated book club. The following extract provides a broad idea of why the elementary girls participated in Strong Girls.

> Kathy: I will meet them and say, if you have sibling and you don't want to stay with them, then you can get away from them. Whether they are older than you or not.
> Catie: A place to get away. Yeah. Bella
> Bella: A place you can tell a secret and it is fun….. You are not surrounded by boys, you get to share what is like.
> Kathy: For women.
> A girl: I have been with boys fir my all life and I still am. After Strong Girls, I have four brothers, and they sometimes hurt me.
> …….
> A girl: People comes, some people just come here for the food.

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…….

Kathy: I don't think we should talk about the food, people just come here to enjoy the food.

A girl: The free food, People come here for free food.
(multiple girls talk at the same time)

Catie: Wait, wait, wait

Me: I think it's okay if they come here only for the food.

M girl: Because they can be, they may realize that they want to come here for other things

(Note: Both A girl and M girls were 5th graders in the book club. A girl is also a CLD student.)

This conversation took place when all the Strong Girls met at the Teacher Leader Center in the College of Education. I asked the fifth grade girls to share their ideas about inviting more 4th, 5th and 6th grade girls to join the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The various answers from these fifth graders provide an initial picture of why these girls voluntarily participated in this afterschool book club. I listened closely to their reasons for being part of the Strong Girls community. Their answers indicated that for the elementary girls, Strong Girls was not only a place for improving reading and writing skills. Some girls came for food, some came for free books; some came for reading, some came to be away from their siblings and boys, and most of them came because of their friends.

Figured Worlds in the Book Club

I arrived at the school each week to smiling faces and friendly hugs. Despite the fact that these girls joined the afterschool book club for different reasons, perhaps they looked forward the routine of meeting with their group leaders, chatting while munching on snacks, and reading and responding to books about Strong Girls. The weekly routines and the literacy practices created a safe and predictable environment for the girls to participate in. I remember the last Strong Girls meeting in spring 2014. Kathy told me that she did not know what she could do on Fridays because there would be no Strong Girls meetings until the next semester. Also, the stable

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presence of the group leaders spending the two hours each week with the girls was crucial for the girls' participation. I was lucky to work with the same group of girls for three years and they always came to me to ask if they could be in my group in the beginning of the semester. At the end of each semester, they asked me if I would return for the next semester. Although the group leaders change almost every year, they knew that there would always be some familiar faces that they could come hug and share their happy news or dramas with the members in the book club. Interestingly, one fifth grader from another group came to me at the end of the fall 2014 semester and told me that she thought I would be her group leader for next semester because her current group leader was going to graduate. Her approach might indicate that although the girls in the book club were familiar with changing their group leaders, they still looked for a stable group leader and reliable person to build up their relationship. The stability of the literacy practices in the book club helped create a safe and welcoming environment for girls' participation.

The stable and predictable routines and the members in the Strong Girls were all important for the creation of Strong Girls culture. All Strong Girls and all group leaders participated in the afterschool book club to create a figured world that was accepted and recognized by the Strong Girls members. According to Holland et al. (1998), a figured world is a ‘‘realm of interpretation in which a particular set of characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others’’ (p. 52). In the following excerpt, I provide an example of figured worlds from new and senior Strong Girls members to illustrate the relationships and interactions in my Strong Girls group. The excerpt took place in the beginning of my third semester leading the same group of girls. In that new semester, our group had a new member, so I asked the senior girls to introduce our book

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club and share their likes and dislikes about the group. One of the new girls, Flora, had questions when she found my audio recorder at the center of our group.

> Flora: What's that? (*Stares at my digital recorder*)
> Kathy: A recorder. It's about their research project.
> Me: It's a recorder. Okay, it is the same like that (*points to the video camera*). You know sometimes all of you girls like to talk a lot, but sometimes I cannot catch it from the camera, so I need to use this [digital recorder]. And I listen to our conversations all the time and sometimes I just jot down a lot of things when I am analyzing my data just like our conversation. And of course I will not tell other people your real name, I will just tell them that, "Oh, this part is so interesting from Kathy," so I will write…
> Bella: Wait, did you share about that one guy story, that was like, okay, so…
> Me: You wanted to break up with someone and you wanted to go back again
> Bella: and then I broke up and then there was another guy
> Flora: You told her? You told her that?
> Bella: Yeah.
> Me: YES. She told me everything.
> Bella: Then I went out with other guy, then I broke up with him. Then I got back together with the second guy.
> Flora: Was this true?
> Kathy: Yeah, this all happened in 5th grade.

Flora's curiosity about my audio recorder showed her identity as a new member in the group. Kathy's immediate answer showed that audio and video recordings were a normal part of the book club. She understood that the Strong Girls book club was also a research project. In addition, Bella's question about whether I shared her stories showed that she understood the reasons for the recordings and the research project, and she trusted me and was comfortable sharing her personal stories. The question Flora asked showed she was trying to make sense of what Strong Girls is was about and what role I was playing in the group. When Bella asked me if I shared her "relationship issues with boys," Flora's reaction of "[Y]ou told her? You told her that?" and "was it true?" might indicate a gap between the practices in Strong Girls Read Strong Books and her figured world of an afterschool book club. The turn taking between Bella, Kathy, and Flora showed that they were friends with each other and Kathy and Bella were helping me to

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answer Flora's question and inviting her to Strong Girls. Flora's questions might illustrate that she positioned me as "the other" or an adult who did not belong to their social group. Also, discussing topics related to "boy issues" might not be legitimatized in her figured world of a book club, especially if she positioned me as the authority in the group. That is to say, her reaction showed her surprise at what topics were allowed in the discussion. The exchange between new and old members in the group showed a contrast between Flora's figured worlds and the communal literacy practices built by all the Strong Girls. Although the gap of different figured worlds created conflicts, the other girls' participation and positive comments of the figured world of Strong Girls invited Flora to be aware of her tension and to reconstruct and interpret the meanings of an afterschool book club and her social identities in Strong Girls.

In addition, a figured world is also a place "where people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understanding (identities)" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 108). One piece of evidence that showed the figured world of the Strong Girls community could be found when we had a discussion about the importance of having the right and freedom to express our opinion after we learned the story of Malala Yousadzai. In our discussion, I asked the girls to take a different perspective to imagine if they could not have their own voices in the classroom.

> Me: Yeah! If I say no, no, no, you are not allowed to have your opinions in the classroom or in this setting, you probably will feel this is not a book club anymore, this is not…
> Anita: It is not fair…
> Me: It is not fair! And you cannot say "it is not fair" to me because you are not allowed to talk.
> Anita: Yeah, but if I am not allowed to talk, how are we gonna do with strong girl and book club**.** we read, we talk, we…we chat we dance (pointed to her strong girl T-shirt)…that's why we have the shirts!

The above extract illustrated that Anita conceptualized the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book as a figured world that they can read, talk, and dance, and these are the literacy practices that

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were shared by all the members in the Strong Girls community. In addition, the Strong Girls T-shirt that she wore to the book club was a symbol to show her affiliation with the Strong Girl community.

A Safe Place for Sharing Personal Stories and Emotions

Across the data, emotional bonding played a crucial role in building trust and relationships in the Strong Girls community. One piece of evidence of Strong Girls book club as a safe place to share their personal stories was also found in their journals. The conversation started when I asked the girls in my group about their likes and dislikes about the group.

> Me: Do you know what I like the best? I like all the secrets that you wrote to me.
> Anita: Oh yeah, I told you all my secrets.
> Bella: Yu-Chi, do you know that boy problem? It's obvious that I really like one boy (*Girls laugh*)
> Me: Because sometimes you are so honest to me, so sometimes I really want to share this to my friends, but I couldn't because this is confidential, right?
> Anita: Right! (*Lower her voice*)

The conversation implies that there was a sense of trust between Anita and Bella and me, and they were willing to share their secrets with me. In addition, I affirmed the importance of keeping the girls' secrets, and Anita's reply indicates that Strong Girls was a safe space for personal stories.

Dutro (2008) highlighted the importance of embracing and integrating students' difficult stories and emotions into literacy classrooms to enhancing students' engagement in the literacy practices. The witness of the girls' personal stories and emotions occurred repeatedly in Strong Girls. These stories included their difficulties, their families, and their discomfort in their life experiences. One example of sharing a personal story happened while reading *Counting by 7's* by Holly Goldberg Sloan, a story about a gifted girl, Willow Chance, who tries to find where she belongs after her parents were killed in a traffic accident. In our group discussions, we talked

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about the issue of death and dealing with tragedy. Kathy shared her feelings of separating from her grandmother in Colombia at the airport, and Bella was on the verge of tears when sharing her grief of her family loss. The new Strong Girl member, Flora, was first hesitant and embarrassed and slowly revealed her worries of being separated, because she always heard her parents arguing, and she was afraid that they were going to divorce. I remember that when she ended her sharing, Bella and Kathy immediately gave Flora a comfort hug. The difficult stories shared in the group illustrated that the girls felt safe to share their discomfort and worries, and these personal stories all contributed to building up the rapport and intimacy in the book club. The circular and cyclical process of listening and sharing difficult stories was similar to Dutro's (2008) description of literacy witness and testimony. That is, the circle of witness and testimony happened when the Strong Girls witnessed the characters' tragedy or other girls' difficult life experiences. While Flora witnessed the character in the book, Bella, and Kathy, she responded with her personal story. Similar situations of witness and testimony within Strong Girls indicate that literacy practices cannot separate from emotions. It is through the witness of other people's stories that allowed the girls to share their personal stories and create the communal culture of Strong Girls.

In addition, Dutro (2011) stated that by sharing students' own stories and listening to other people's stories, students are able to build up visceral connections and be aware of disconnections between their own life experiences and others. One example of being more aware of the disconnection and questioning the girl's own status quo was found in a non-CLD girls' journal after she witnessed other girls' testimony. She wrote:

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Dear Yu-Chi:
In strong girls, when we talk about sad things, I never know quite what to say because I have a good life and I'm really lucky because no one in my family that I know well has died, so I feel bad when people talk about bad thing that happen to them because I don't know how to related. Any suggestion?

Sincerely,

(smiling face)

Although the non-CLD girl indicated that she could not respond to other girls' sad stories, her response showed her sympathy to other girls' emotions, and she was aware of her disconnection with other girls' life experiences.

The evidence of testimony and witness occurred repeatedly in our conversation and "it was not a linear and unidimensional process, but rather was circular and cyclical" (Dutro, 2011, p.197). I found that these circular and cyclical incidents of literacy process were important because the Strong Girls wanted their stories to be shared and heard. One fifth grade girl shared her favorite part of participating in Strong Girls with other fifth grade girls while having snack:

> "At the end you got these discussions, sometimes they don't have anything to do with the book. We like to talk about things that happen in your life that is nothing to do with the book, because we have real conversations…. People like ACTUALLY listen to you. Like they ACTUALLY want to hear what you are saying and you don't find that in most places."

In the formal interview in May 2015, Bella shared her recommendations for Strong Girls; she wrote: "it's okay to express yourself with your leader and your friends. Just express yourself." The two journal responses showed that being able to listen to and talk about their lives and other people's life, showing their emotions, and having "real" conversations was crucial for Strong Girls. Bella's recommendation indicates that the Strong Girls book club was a safe place to express ideas to people they trusted. The first fifth grade girl stated that "you don't find that in most places" might illustrate that talking about real life issues and their emotions were often not legitimate in the classroom settings (Dutro, 2011).

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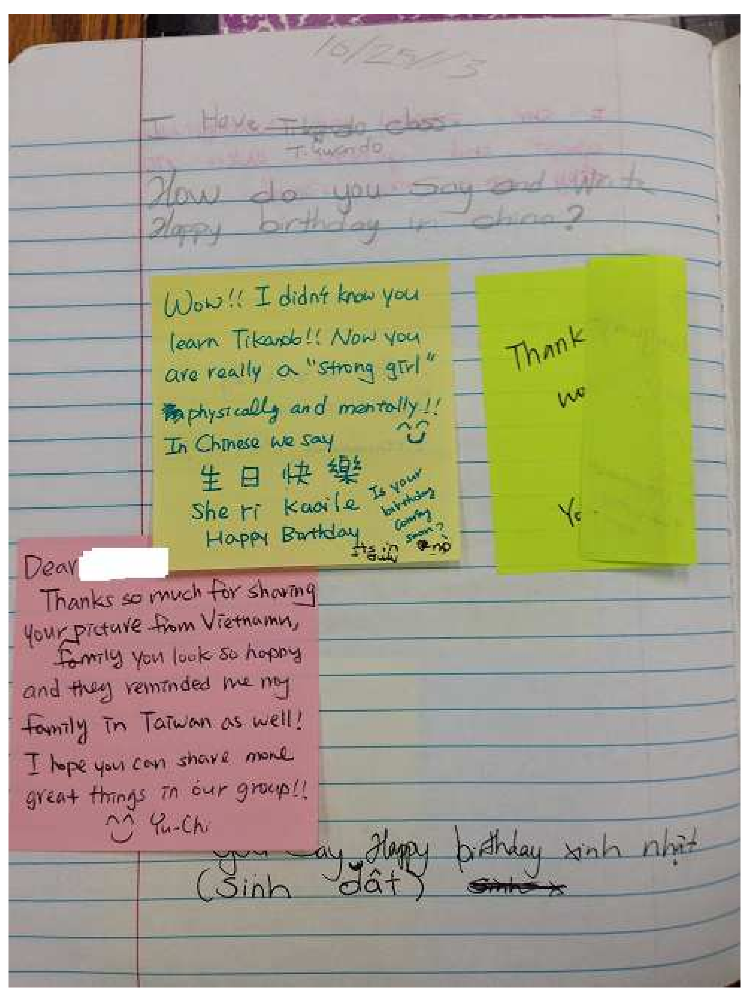
Some girls in my group were willing to share their personal feelings and stories, and some girls chose to share their personal stories by exchanging secret messages in their journals with me. For instance, in the beginning of fall 2014 semester, Jamie left a personal note in the back of her journal.



(*From Jamie) "I have Tikwando class." How do you say and write happy birthday in China?"*

(My respones) "Wow!! I didin't know you learn Tikwando! Now you are really a 'strong girl,' physically and mentally! In Chinese we say 生日快樂 (she ri kuai ke) Happy Birthday. Is your birthday coming soon?"

(My response) "Dear Jamie: Thank you so much for sharing your family pictures from Vietnem. You look so happ and they reminded me of my family in Taiwan as well!! I hope you can share more great thenings in our group!! Yu-Chi"

Figure 4.1 Jamie's Private Notes in Her Journal

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Jamie and I had some exchanged messages during that semester. Most of the messages that she left were about herself or questions about my background: “I have Taekwondo class.” “Do you have any siblings? Do you fight with your sisters?” The questions that she asked in our exchanged messages were more personal, which might show her curiosity of my background. These notes created opportunities to foster an interpersonal relationship between us.

In her journal, she asked me some questions related to my cultural backgrounds, such as “how to say happy birthday in Chinese?” and she wrote Happy Birthday in Vietnamese in her reply. The messages that Jamie wrote in her journal were never mentioned in the group discussion. The exchanges between Jamie and me indicate that she attempted to build up a relationship with me by telling me her personal stories. In addition, her questions and replies related to linguistic backgrounds illustrated that she was interested in my language background and wanted me to recognize the Vietnamese side of her in her journal.

Like Jamie, Anita chose to share her personal stories with me in the back of her journal. Anita’s messages emphasized questions related to her personal and emotional issues. The followings are examples from her journal.

Example1:

> “Dear Yu-Chi: personally I think I have anger issues. Because I get mad for the littlest things and I try not to get mad but I just can’t it. Help me! Anita.

Example 2:

> “Yu- Chi: I have a problem. I feel like I’m left out with two of my friends there (they’re) always spending time with each other and she is always telling me ‘I am busy; I am talking to Kiana.’ I don’t know what to do.” Should I tell her how I feel?

Most of Anita’s questions and personal issues, which were not mentioned publicly during the group discussion, were related to her relationships with friends. Her private messages indicate her comfort in revealing her personal issues, and her comfort in soliciting ideas from me. Also,

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the contradictions of her public and private identity echo Hall's (2000) conception that "[T]he identity passionately espoused in one public scenario is more ambiguously and ambivalently 'lived' in private" (p. xi). However, I found that the private journal exchange between Anita and I decreased after the third semester, perhaps due to the fact that she was unable to participate in Strong Girls regularly because her parents were not able to pick her up afterwards as they had before. I found that although Anita kept participating in Strong Girls, the changes in our relationship and her identity were not linear; they were situated and negotiated through different times and space. Also, it was a challenge to maintain my relationships with the girls since I only met them once a week in the afterschool book club, and my understanding about her was limited to her participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. Nevertheless, it is important to note that if students are allowed to share their emotions and stories in formal classroom settings, then it might benefit the teachers' understanding of the CLD students and encourage trust building between teachers and CLD students. These public and private responses related to the girls' personal stories and their emotions showed that the literacy practices in Strong Girls Reading Strong Books were more than reading and writing activities.

This afterschool book club also provided a safe environment for girls to read and respond to books and allowed them to listen to and share personal stories and emotions that were often important to the girls' participation. In addition, the disconnection between literacy practices at school and in Strong Girls might indicate that having real conversations in classroom literacy practices are important for engaging the girls' participation. If our understanding of literacy cannot be separated from our everyday life experiences, then it is crucial for teachers to provide opportunities to let students' personal stories and emotions enter formal classroom settings.

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A Space for Social Bonding with Friends

Another important element of Strong Girls community was friendship. The relationships between Strong Girls and their friends were found across the data. The following excerpt illustrates the influential role of having good relationships with other members in the group.

> Me: Can you tell me something you like and dislike about our group?
> Kathy: Oh! Our group?
> Me: What are something that you think you like a lot from last semester?
> …
> Bella: Oh! I like it that we all bonded well with each other.
> Anita: Umm... Okay. I like that you are (*point to me*) in our group and that you (*point to Catie, the other group leader*) and then all the girls in our group.
> Kathy: What I like is that you can get to read a lot and write. I don't think there is anything I dislike.
> Bella: THERE IS NOTHING I DISLIKE IN THIS GROUP!
> Gina: I like the girls in our group, the teachers, and all the books

Bella's response of "Oh! I like it that we all bonded well with each other" showed the significant role of establishing proximity in the book club. Gina also had a similar comment: "I like the girls in our groups, the teacher and all the books." The data showed that many girls perceived the book club as a place for not only reading and writing practices, but a place for maintaining their friendship and expanding their social worlds. As I was listening to the girls' discussion in the book club, I found that the social group girls were good friends at school but they were in different fifth grade classrooms. Therefore, being able to stay with their friends and getting involved in the same activities was important to maintain their friendship. Participating in the Strong Girls allowed them to be with their friends and read and discuss books or topics that they were all interested in. Friendship was also important for building up the relationships in the discussion group. For instance, when the girls were selecting what book to read, they often selected the same book that their friend selected. Anita clearly pointed out the important role of friendship in her note to Kathy:

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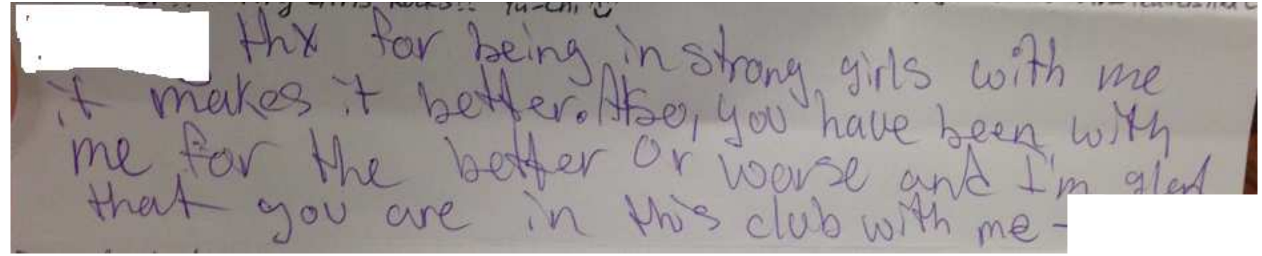
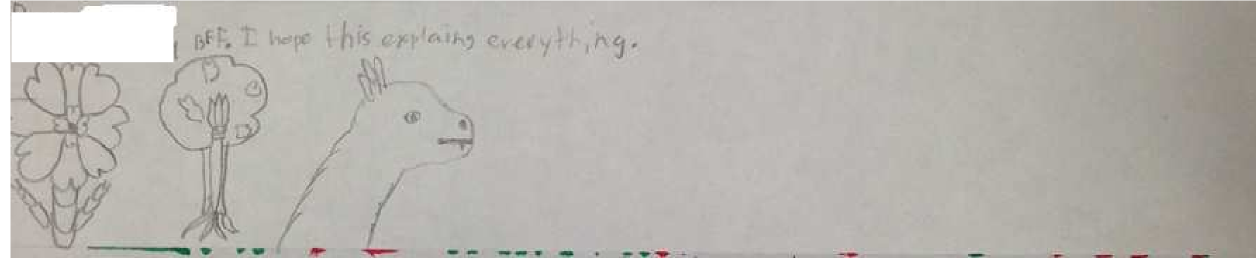


"thx for being in strong girls with me it makes it better. Also, you have been with me for the better or worse and I'm glad that you are in this club with me- Anita."

Figure 4.2. Anita's Note to Kathy.

In Anita's message to Kathy (*Figure 4.2*), she used "it makes it better" to highlight the importance of Kathy's role to her in Strong Girls even though they were not in the same 5th grade classroom. In addition, she described their friendship took place "for the better or worse" might indicate their relationship and friendship history and they had been going through some life stories together.

In addition, the message from Jennifer, "You are my BFF. I hope this explains everything," (Figure 4.3) was also strong evidence of the role of friendship in Strong Girls. Instead of using texts to depict their relationship, Jennifer used pictures as symbols to show their shared interests in drawing.



"BFF [best friends forever]. I hope this explans everything"

Figure 4.3. Jennifer's Note to Jamie.

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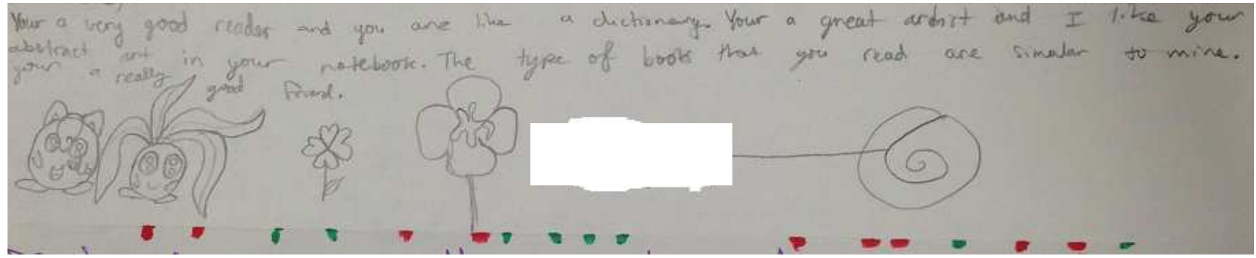

"*You are a good reader and you are a dictionary. You're a great artist and I like your abstract art in your notebook. The type of books that you read are similar to mine. You're a really good friend*."

Figure 4.4. Jamie's Note to Jennifer.

Participating in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club might also influence the girls' literary practices. In Jamie's note to Jennifer and other girls (Figure 4.4), she used similar writing patterns and similar abstract art styles to show her relationship with Jennifer (Figure 4.3). Jamie clearly pointed out that she liked Jennifer's "abstract art" style in her notebook and they had similar book tastes when selecting books. The important role of friendship in Strong Girls supports Park's (2012) study that the early adolescent girls relied on their friends when selecting and talking about books and participating in the afterschool book club. In addition, the Strong Girls book club provided Jamie a space to learn more about Jennifer and recognize her as a reader, an artist, and a knowledgeable person in the book club. These examples show that friendship played an important role in the book club that influenced their literacy practices. These relationships all contribute to the girls' construction of their identities and the shared identities in Strong Girls community.

Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club was also a place for girls to expand their social worlds and gain more understanding of other girls. For instance, although Anita was in the same grade with Jamie, she told me that they did not talk to each other very often when they were at school. Anita told me that she got more chances to know Jamie's stories and wanted to

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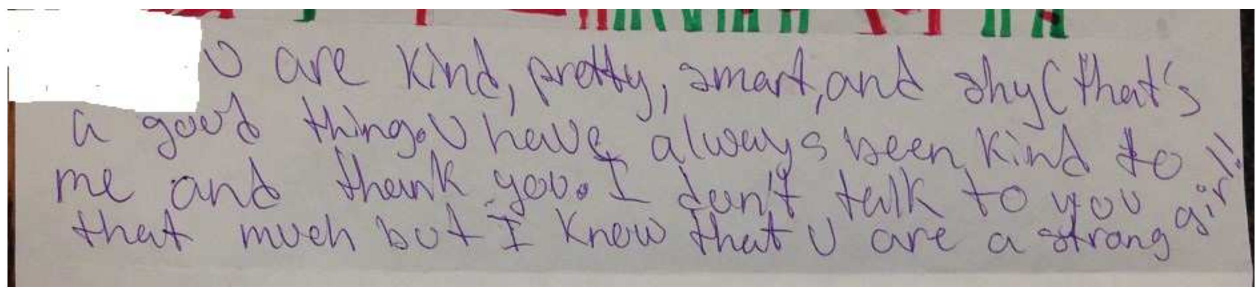
be friends with her after participating in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. Anita showed her admiration of Jamie and her kindness in a note to Jamie at the end of the semester of spring 2015.



"*U are kind, pretty, smart, and shy (that's a good thing,) U have always been kind to me and thank you. I don't talk to you that much but I know that U are a strong girl!*"

Figure 4.5. Anita's Note to Jamie.

In Anita's note to Jamie, she described Jamie as a pretty, kind, shy, and nice girl. She noted that although they were not familiar with each other, she considered her as a member of Strong Girls group. Another example of expanding the girls' social world was found in the new girl, Flora who only participated in the book club for one semester and transferred to another school. She was also the girl who asked questions about my audio recorder in the beginning of a new semester. I asked them the question: After participating in Strong Girls Read Strong Books, how do you describe yourself as a Strong Girl? For example: "what have you done that makes you feel like a Strong Girl. The following photo was her response of participating in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club."

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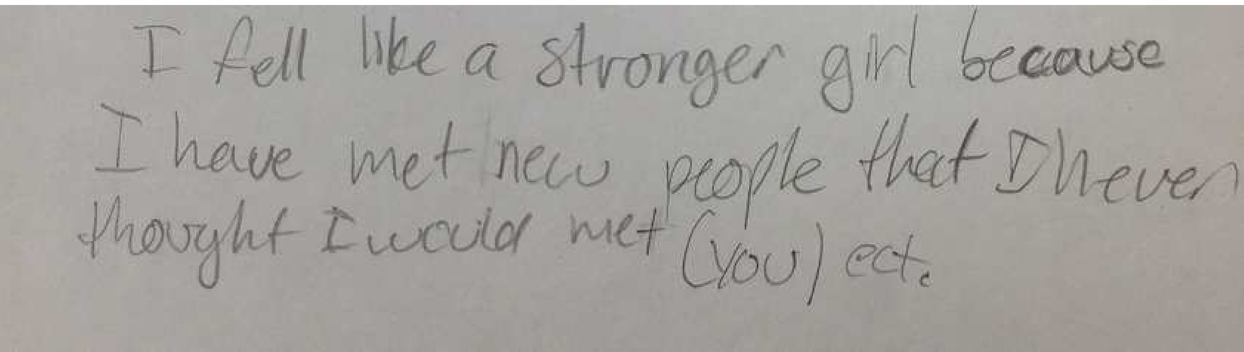

"I fell (felt)like a Strong girl because I have met new people that I never thought I would met (you) etc."

Figure 4.6. Flora's Response of Being a Strong Girl.

In her response, she pointed out that meeting new people was an important reason for her be part of the Strong Girl community. These responses show that participating in Strong Girls might provide avenues for Anita and other girls to know each other and recognize them as part of Strong Girls community.

The role of friendship not only influenced Jamie's preference of books and drawing style, it also contributed to Jamie's changing identity and performance. In a later informal interview with Jamie, I asked her if she was aware of how her participation in the group had changed over time. She told me that she felt more confident to share her ideas and stand up for herself after participating in the Strong Girls Read Strong books. She told me that she felt more confident speaking up in front of other girls. In addition, she told me that one of the reasons that motivated her to speak up was because of watching other girls' and her best friend Jennifer's performances in the group. In the interview, she told me that she recognized that although she and Jennifer did not belong to the popular girl group, Jennifer was not afraid to express her voice when there was disagreement in the group discussion. Jamie's reply implies that she was inspired by Jennifer's model to practice her voice and shape and reshape her identity. Additionally, when I asked her to

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write about her changes after participating in the Strong Girls book club in May, 2015, she wrote:

I feel more self cofident
and don't always listen to my classmates, For example
back then any time any one asked me if they could
cut me in line or have my food I always say
yes but now I mostly say no.

"I feel more self-confident and don't always listen to my classmates. For example, back then any time anyone asked me if they could cut me in line or have my food I always say yes but now I mostly say no."

Figure 4.7. Jamie's Response of Being a Strong Girl.

In her response, Jamie revealed that she was more confident after participating in Strong Girls, and she learned to use her agency to reject other people's requests. Her example might indicate that participating in Strong Girls allowed her to learn from her peers and be more aware of her agency, which helped her construct different identities both inside and outside of the Strong Girls book club. Jamie's changes from a silent girl to one who was more willing to speak up for herself support the notions that identity is a constantly negotiating process; learning from her peers and maintaining her friendship with Jennifer was crucial to create and reshape different social identities. This might indicate that providing literacy practices outside of classroom settings might offer opportunities for students to explore multiple identities that are hard to be found in formal classroom settings.

Although friendship played an important sociocultural factor to contribute to the girls' participation, it also led to recreation of unequal power relationships in the book club. For instance, when the topics were related to popular culture, the social girls often dominated the

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conversation and Jamie and Jennifer were marginalized in the conversation because they lacked interest in the topics. In addition, the data showed that when I assigned the girls for paired reading, and they were separated from their friends, the interaction with other girls decreased. On the other hand, if the girls chose their own group members, they participated more actively in the discussion but their discussion might digress. The changes of the girls' performances and their identities in the group discussion show that identity is fluid and situated when interacting with different girls.

Another example of the unequal power relations created by the girls' friendship was found in Anita's data. Although the Strong Girl community created opportunities for constructing and reconstructing multiple identities, the findings showed that not all social identities that the girls intended to assume were recognized if they were positioned as less powerful within the communities they participate in (Weedon, 1997). For instance, Anita sometimes failed to assume her reader/writer's identity when her friends did not participate in her story line. From my history of working with Anita, I learned she was a passionate reader and she wanted her reader/writer identity to be recognized in the group. When we were in the group, she was always the first one to raise her hand and volunteer to answer my questions, read aloud, or share her writing. Although Anita tried hard to let other members recognize her reader identity, I found that her reader/writer identity was sometimes challenged by Kathy and Bella in the group. The following incident happened after I let the girls work on their own to write down their responses to the book. While I was having a conversation with Jamie, Anita suddenly came to me and asked me some questions.

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Anita: Yu-Chi, if somebody says that you love writing and then someone says that, "Yeah, sure," (*mimicking a disapproving look*) what does that supposed to be mean? (*I did not know why she was asking the question so I did not say a word*). No, I am serious (*raising her voice*)
Me: They love writing?
Anita: No, if they love writing, and somebody says, "SURE, YOU DO," what is that supposed to mean?
Jennifer: They are being sarcastic; they are like…
Me: They are just kind of…
Jennifer: But it just means that they don't believe you.
Anita: Seriously, Bella?
Kathy: Yeah, we don't.
Bella: I didn't mean it like that. I was just like… I was just kidding about this thing. So don't be overreacting (*approaching Anita and smiling*). I am kidding sometimes.
Kathy: Yeah, we are thinking that you are so perky sometimes.
Bella: YEAH. Because I can be perky too. (*Starting to make funny sound*)

The beginning part of the excerpt showed that I had no clue why Anita asked me the question about writing. When Anita found out that I did not understand her situation, she said "No, I am serious" as a signal to let me know that she was serious and I realized that she was talking about herself. She was seeking for "the authority figure" to answer the question in order to legitimatize her writer's identity. The data showed that I did not know that she was talking about herself because she used "someone," "somebody," and "they" to distance herself from the characters of her story. The later part of the conversation revealed that the pronouns "somebody" and "someone" refereed to Bella and Kathy, and the pronoun "they" in "they love writing" referred to herself as a member in the writer community. Although Anita constantly assumed her writer's identity by sharing her poems, showing her interests in writing her parents' immigrant story, and showing her passion in writing in her journal, her writer's identity was not always recognized and validated by her friends in the book club. In this critical incident, when Anita found that her writer's identity was denied by her friends, she chose to come to me to validate her writer's identity. However, before receiving a valid reply from me, Jennifer's and Kathy's replies "they

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are being sarcastic," "it just means that they don't believe you," and Kathy's "yeah, we don't [believe you]" reconfirmed the action of rejecting Anita as a writer in the group. Later Bella tried to eliminate the awkward moment by changing the topic and adding that "we are thinking that you are so perky sometimes." Bella's comment suggested that Anita was perceived as the "perky" person in the group and her "writer's" identity was rejected by her peers.

Another example of friendship as power to prohibit the girls' participation was found when Kathy assumed the gatekeeper role.

> Anita: Okay, so I will tell them (the reader) if you read *El Deafo* because you would like, umm… (*Long pause*)
> Kathy: Do you want to think some more?
> Anita: Because it will give you more, umm… it's like (*pause*) if I talk umm, if you are one of my friend is deaf, I would tell them first.
> Kathy: You don't have any deaf friends.
> Anita: I know, if I have…
> Me: So you only introduce this book to deaf friends?
> Anita: No, no.
> Me: Okay, Anita, you think first. (*Kathy and Anita are talking*). Okay, I want to listen to Kathy's idea first. Okay.
> Kathy: I would say that…. (*Pause*) what's the question?
> Me: Why do you read it?

The above incident took place after we finished reading *El Deafo*, and I asked the girls what they would say if they wanted to recommend this book to other friends or readers. Anita immediately raised her hand to share, but when Kathy found out that Anita could not articulate her idea well, she took on her gatekeeper's role and asked Anita to stop and think more before answering the questions (Do you want to think some more?). Similar patterns were also found throughout the data in the book discussions. In this case, Anita's failure to articulate her idea in the group was considered as not acceptable according to Kathy's Discourses of being a "good" participant in the group discussion. The example echoes Gee's (2011) definition of "politics" or "social good" which refers to individuals using language to convey their perspective of what is "adequate,"

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“normal,” “good,” or “acceptable” in a particular social community (p.19). Additionally, my reply “Okay, Anita, you think first” reaffirmed Kathy’s Discourse and thus duplicated the power relations between Kathy and Anita. Interestingly, although Kathy assumed her gatekeeper’s role to suggest to Anita to think more, when it was her turn to answer, she replied “I would say that… what’s the question?” Her reply illustrated that she was able to continue the conversation by starting a common communication pattern to let people recognize her as a legitimate member in the group discussion, but the later part of her reply, “what’s the question?” indicated that she might either not comprehend the question or digress from the topic.

The excerpts shown above can be analyzed from the perspectives of power in discourse and power behind discourse (Fairclough, 2001). The interaction between Anita and Kathy was a face-to-face discourse in which Kathy was enacting her power of her leader identity and her interpretation of a legitimate discussion to police Anita’s participation in the discussion. On the other hand, the power hidden behind Kathy’s gatekeeper discourse can be interpreted as conventions of a book discussion group and how a “good” reader should perform in a particular way in order to be recognized as legitimate member in the discourse of a book discussion group. Fairclough (2001) pointed out that the type of power behind discourse is imperative to understand “the power effect whereby this discourse type with these properties comes to be imposed upon all these involved," (p. 49) including the group leader, the girls, the convention of having a book discussion, or the power-holder behind the institutions. Literacy practice is a social practice and each students’ performance is shaped by their figured worlds of a book discussion group. Thus, taking a critical lens to analyze how the girls interpret the meaning of literacy practice and how different power relations empower and inhibit their participation is

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beneficial for teachers to be aware of power in discourse and behind discourse that influences students' learning.

The findings of the afterschool book club as a social practice to maintain and expand students' relationship and friendship echoes Park's (2012) study of exploring adolescent girls' participation in an afterschool book club. In this study, friendship and peer relationships were crucial to the CLD girls' participation and construction of Strong Girls community and their identities. In this afterschool book club, the CLD girls were not only participating in the reading activities, they were also using this literacy practice to shape, reshape, and expand their relationship with other girls. They maintained their friendship by reading and responding to the same books with their friends. Additionally, they also expanded their social network by interacting with other girls outside of their friendship circle. These findings indicate that providing space for students to maintain and expand their friendship was crucial to the early adolescent girls' participation in the book club. In addition, the findings might call for the need for researchers to consider students' friendship when examining what sociocultural factors contribute to adolescent girls' identity construction and reading practices.

A Space for Negotiating Alternative Power Relationships

The Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club was also a place for exploring multiple identities and alternative power relationships. Lewis (2001) stated that literacy practice is also a social practice, and what we learn and experience from discursive literacy practices contribute to our understanding of the meanings and construction and reconstruction of our identities. While I was working with the Strong Girls, I found that both the girls and I were constantly using this afterschool book club to explore and negotiate different social identities, and this social practice cannot be separated from power relations in discourses and behind discourses. Although this

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book club took place in an afterschool program and the group discussion leaders had more freedom to brainstorm different reading and writing activities, it was impossible to separate my background and experiences as a teacher and the girls' literacy practices they learned at school. In reflecting on my participation in Strong Girls, I paid attention to the practices that challenged the norm of a book club and offered opportunities to create alternative power relationships.

The findings of multiple power relationships were not limited to the girls' participation; they also happened between the leaders and the girls. One incident of altering power relationships happened when Kathy enacted the leaders' role in the group. Throughout my participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books, my group leader identity has shifted constantly through negotiation with the girls, the research team, the inquiry of shaping and reshaping my understanding of a "strong" girl, and my approach to learn literacy.

> Bella: Yu-Chi, can I read this part? (*Waiting for my reply while I was talking to Catie*)
> Kathy: Sure, you can read the first part.
> (*Both Catie and I looked at each other*)
> Me: Yes, you can read that part first, and then Kathy can read the other part.

In this extract, the behavior that Bella asked permission from Catie and me shows that she positioned herself less powerful in the group. However, when Kathy answered Bella's question, the data from the video showed that there was one surprising moment appearing on Bella's face, and Catie and I exchanged looks. The nonverbal moment was one critical incident that demonstrated the challenge and the change of the power relationships in the group. Kathy's simultaneous reply to Bella showed that she perceived Strong Girls Read Strong Books as the space that allowed her to enact her power as a leader's role. A similar situation also occurred when Kathy answered the recorder question for the new member, Flora, in the previous section about discussing the communal practice in Strong Girls. The nonverbal exchange between me and Catie showed that we did not expect Kathy's reply, and it might also indicate that our leader

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identities have been challenged. One the other hand, the glimpse of Bella's surprising reaction might indicate that she was aware of Kathy's challenge of the conventional teacher/student relationship. Fairclough (2015) stated that "the relations of power which obtain between social forces, and the way in which these relations develop in the course of social struggle, are a key determinant of conservative or transformatory nature of reproduction in discourse" (p. 69-70). In addition, Fairclough (2015) claimed that the change of power relations through social struggle could lead to transformation of order of discourse. That is say, the moment of Kathy taking the floor and replying Bella's question illustrated her efforts to break the boundary of student/teacher relationship and which helped create opportunity for transformation of alternative power relations.

Participation in the Strong Girls project also allowed me to try on different social selves by constructing my identities and by exploring identities that helped and constrained the girls' participation in the book club. I have learned that the identities that emerged from the book club were situated and shaped by power relations in the face-to-face discourse (friendship and good students) as well as the power relations behind discourse (ex, conventions of a book discussion). For instance, although I was consciously reminding myself to avoid the conventional practices of "performing" school like discussion or "teacher's talk" and to try to emphasize ways and approaches to elicit the girls' responses and their multiple identities, the data from my interactions with the girls showed that I sometimes dominated the group discussion or adopted the traditional classroom conversational patterns that might reproduce unequal power relations in the book discussion group.

Another level of challenging the boundaries between the group leaders and the Strong Girls happened when the girls contributed their ideas to recruiting new Strong Girls for the new

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semester. At the end of the spring 2015 semester, all the Strong Girls were invited to create posters to recruit and welcome more Strong Girls to participate in our book club. When all the 5th grader sat together before splitting up to their groups, Catie and I asked if the girls had any ideas for recruiting new members.

> K girl: I think we (5th graders) should all go and introduce to the girls in 4th grade and then tell them "we stayed here since 4th grade, you should join this"
> Kathy: But I am afraid that they are not all gonna to like it but that's why we are here.
> Bella: We should put flyer on the whole school and the gym, on the other side of gym. Period.
> Kathy: YES! YES!
> Caite: Actually, it would be a better idea. You know. Nita and Amanda can go and talk about the Strong Girls, it's also what they want. But like that's something to think about, you are going to be sixth graders.
> Kathy: They (4th graders) aren't gonna to listen to them, but we have people who have been to Strong Girls since 4th grade, and we can talk to them. And you talk to them, and they would be "oh, okay." I don't think they will even listen to Nita or Amanda.
> Caite: Yeah, that's what I am saying is that Nita and Amanda could like recruit all of you to talk to them all about the Strong Girls and why. I am saying it's gonna happen, I am not saying any of that. I am just saying that it's a good idea. (Cora raises her hand again)

The above extract showed an active engagement in brainstorming for recruiting new members in the discussion. Both the K girl and Kathy suggested that they could visit 4th grade girls and share their experiences of participating in Strong Girls since they started when they were 4th graders. Bella suggested that we display their poster in different areas at their school. In addition, Kathy suggested that it was more persuasive for their 5th grade group to talk to 4th graders because "they (4th graders) aren't gonna to listen to them (the two professors)." This piece of data showed that the 5th graders not only actively participated in the reading and writing activities but also were willing to contribute their ideas for recruiting new members. In addition, Kathy's suggestion indicates that the 5th grade group had more social power in the elementary school than the two professors because they belonged to and were more familiar with the elementary culture. Their insiders' role of the members in the elementary changed the power relations between the leaders

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and them. Moreover, the idea of sharing their experiences in Strong Girls in public and displaying the posters showed that they were transferred their afterschool literacy practices to their formal school setting in public. Their creation of their posters, contribution of recruiting new members, and willingness to provide their participation experiences to other 4th, 5th, and 6th grade girls showed their embodiment of their Strong Girl identity that were constructed through the practices in the afterschool book club.

A Space that Gender Roles Are Discussed Explicitly

Given the fact that this study took place in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, it was impossible to separate gender discourses in my study. Thus, participating in this female-only afterschool school book club and reading and responding to books with strong female protagonists was a crucial practice that helped shift our paradigms by constructing and reconstructing the meaning of being a Strong Girl. In addition, the Strong Girls project is a social practice for 4th to 6th grade girls to explore multiple meanings of being a Strong Girl by critically reading and discussing books with strong female characters. In this section, I will explore how different gender roles were interpreted by the CLD girls and what discourses related to gender roles emerged from group discussion. In the following section, I focus on the themes that occurred from the data in terms of the girls' interpretation of gender practices.

Talking and discussing the meaning of gender roles was the most crucial part of Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The following extract of a conversation between students and leader demonstrated how the members in the Strong Girls book club negotiated and co-constructed the meanings of gender practices in situated contexts.

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A girl: It's like my dad, whenever he sees his friends, he goes like, he says in Spanish, he is like… (starts greeting in Spanish)

Amanda: So do you think that mean anything though? I don't get a pat on the back, I get a twist on the arm?

A Girl: Yeah, and then when he sees women, he is like, umm, like … usually when they see me.

Kathy: Oh~ is it like the hug.

Anya: Yeah, they hug their friends, their friends.

M girl : Like this? (place her hand on the shoulder of the girl next to her)

Kathy: No, it's usually this one, here. Come on, here. (Kim started demonstrating how Hispanics greet each other.) but when woman do it to woman, get up, they always like "hola" (demonstrate kissing each other in the air)

A girl: Yeah, they go like

(Kathy and the other CLD girl start acting out)

Amanda: Okay girls, if you were at school and the teachers did something different, like pat versus squeeze.

M girl: I don't want to anyone to squeeze my arm.

Kathy: NO, GET AWAY FROM ME.

Amanda: But beyond that, what does it to mean about how my boss thinks about me? Versus how he thinks about the man next to me?

M girl: Maybe you guys are better friends or something?!

Amanda: Could be that.

M girl: Or just like he greets you in different ways because…. He feels that he should do that because you are a woman.

Amanda: Yeah, right. I don't think he noticed that he does this to me even. I think that he thinks that he thinks that I am not as tough as the man, so he goes like this. He goes like this too. So he need to treat me more delicately, right? And that stuff is so subtle. Sometimes we notice people do it. But that matters, right? So he does, then it means that I am not as tough, and maybe he didn't want to give me a bigger job or something, right? So all that stuff matters and that's really hard to get asked.

A girl: Maybe he thinks that he might make you uncomfortable if he does things like that? Cause he never knows that if you used to or not.

Amanda: Sure. That's hard, humm.

(Note: The terms of the ethnicity used in this study were directly quoted from the girls' conversations.)

The conversation shown above illustrated that the discourse of the girls' understanding of their gender roles was related to the discursive cultural practices in their everyday life experiences. For instance, when we started talking about different greeting behaviors between men and women, one 5th grade CLD girl (A girl) demonstrated how her

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father greeted his friends. Kathy continued the conversation, and she even stood up and tried to demonstrate how Hispanic men and women greet each other to the non-CLD girl (M girl) to clarify the different performances of hugging among Hispanics. The conversation about the greeting routines in different cultures provided an opportunity for the girls to experience different cultural practices and expand their figured worlds in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. Although the greeting traditions varied with each culture and within each culture, the findings also showed that the discourse of the behaviors between how men and women were treated showed that the meanings of gender roles were situated and complex, and discussing the differences among different gender role practices might enhance the girls' awareness of their gender role. In the above excerpt, one of the leaders, Amanda, initiated the conversation of how different greeting behaviors might lead to different interpretations of gender practices from her interaction with her male colleague. The girls provided their own interpretations that the different behaviors might be because of their relationships (M girl: maybe you guys are better friends or something?!) or awareness of different genders (or just like he greets you in different ways because…. He feels that he should do that because you are a woman). Moreover, one CLD girl (A girl) assumed that perhaps the male colleague was trying to be careful to not to cause discomfort. The conversation ended with "sure. That's hard, humm" illustrated that the meanings of gender roles and gender practices were sometimes complicated and vague. However, the exchanges of different gender role practices among the Strong Girls and the group leaders provided opportunities to help the Strong Girl members engage in the community and explore multiple meanings of gender practices.

The Girls' Perception About Gender Inequality. One important goal of Strong Girls Read Strong Books was to help the girls be more aware of different gender roles by reading and

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responding to books or topics that had strong female characters. In my group, having discussions about gender roles and making connections to the girls' everyday gender practices played a dominant role. The following extract is a demonstration of Kathy's perceptions about gender inequality.

> Me: So have you heard something similar [that women were treated unequally like Pakistan] in different countries?
> Kathy: So basically in Colombia, there are like (pause)…wait, what's your question again?
> Me: Do you know other countries or place where they treat boys and girls differently?
> Kathy: Well, they used to be long time ago.
> Me: Can you tell me more about this?
> Kathy: ummm… so long time ago, women were not supposed to have education.

According to Kathy's conversation of gender inequality after introducing the new Nobel Prize winner, Malala Yousafzai, and her life story, Kathy explained her observation that gender inequality only happened in the past. Kathy used "they used to be long time ago" and later she made references to female heroines who fought for women's right. She further moved forward to Martin Luther King Jr.'s civil rights movement to support her belief that the problems of gender inequality no longer existed in the U.S. and all girls should have the right for education. Her definition of gender inequality and her references to the famous people in history connected to the capital "C" Conversation which tied the many interactional events taking places in the past among a specific group of people at specific times and places (Gee, 2011). In addition, although she first began with "So basically in Colombia, there are like" in her response, she changed her answer when she found out that her response did not match with the question. Her later performance of stepping back from the texts, making connections to the history, and using third-person rhetoric statements showed that she was enacting the discourses of academic culture.

When talking about the topic of gender inequality, Kathy used the discourses of academic culture and framed her statement in a dispassionate and third-person rhetoric without

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referencing her personal emotion. On the other hand, Anita adopted a different discourse to illustrate gender inequality. When talking about their opinions of gender inequality, Anita used a narrative form to demonstrate her understanding of gender inequality by sharing her experiences of being discriminated against on the soccer field.

> Anita: We [her female friends and her] all wanted to play soccer, and then she [her friend] got kicked in her stomach. They kicked the ball in her stomach and said, "See, this is why girls shouldn't play soccer!" (*She waves her hands excitedly and frowns*.)
> Me: So did you do some something?
> Catie: Yeah, so after he kicked your friend, did he say something or did he just walk away?
> Anita: He said something to me and Anya.
> Catie: Were you upset that something happened to you?
> Anita: YEAH.
> Catie: What would you say [to the boy]?
> Anita: I would have said, "You need a…did you…did you…?" (*Laughs*) never mind, it's too hard.

Anita's personal story on the soccer field showed that there were unequal power relations that prevented Anita and her friends from playing soccer. The boy's statement, "[S]ee, this is why girls shouldn't play soccer," suggested that his understanding of gender roles was still black and white. His conversation about girls not being able to play soccer was drawn from the discourse that biological features decide our gender practices; that is, boys are more powerful when the conversation is related to sports. In other words, in the boy's figured worlds, sports are for boys because of the external physical features. If meanings are socially constructed through discursive practices, then the boy's comment about girls' inability to play soccer indicated that the discourses related to gender roles in sports still remained in a fixed and traditional gender framework. Moreover, when Catie and I asked Anita if she and her friends responded to the boy's insulting behavior, Anita was not able to clearly articulate her idea and gave up her intention by saying, "never mind, it's too hard." The data showed that although she was upset

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about the incident; she did not have the language to reclaim her right on the soccer field. She stated that it was "hard" to express her voice. Anita's example showed that the boy held the power on the soccer field because girls were constructed and positioned as less powerful subjects due to their physical features. Although Anita and her friends felt upset, their failure to fight back might indicate that they were not taught to express their voices about unequal gender treatment on the sport fields.

Her description of the boys' attitudes toward girls playing in the soccer field was an example of face-to face power in discourse relation. Additionally, the story of Anita being prohibited from the soccer field could be a form of power behind discourse. According to Fairclough, "the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power" (2001). The boys' policing behaviors on the soccer field ("See, this is why girls shouldn't play soccer!") and Anita and her friends' inability to respond to the boys showed an unequal power relationship between gender roles. This unequal gender discourse might come from the ideology that boys are good at sports due to their biological determinants. This echoes Fairclough's (2001) power behind discourse of the boundaries between gender ability.

Although the data showed that the discourse of gender roles on the soccer field still remained dichotomous between boys and girls and reproduced unequal power relations, the data showed that Anita did not passively follow the traditional gender storyline. Another example that Strong Girls provided a space for the elementary girls to share their experience of gender inequality took place after the previous discussion in the 5th grade group, Anita raised her hand and wanted to share another story about the soccer field when we were getting ready to read. She described how she and her female friends played in an all-boy team soccer game.

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Anita: …When we started playing, I think they were just trying to mess up with my head or something. I don't know what they were trying to do. Like this kid, he and I were midfielders. He was in front of me and he was like, "Oh, girls playing, that is cute" (*mimics the boy's mocking voice*).
Kathy: Like sarcasm.
Me: I hate that.
Anita: Yeah. I said, "Don't try to mess up with my head for few minutes," because I couldn't play well. And then my dad put me on the bench because he is my coach. Then I got back in and then I got so mad, so I accidently kicked the ball in a boy's stomach.
Kathy: Well. GOOD FOR YOU! (*Raising her voice*)

The above example showed that multiple power relationships were enacted on the soccer fields in Anita's follow-up story. The boy's comment of "Oh, girls playing, that is cute," echoes the previous example that girls should not do sports because of the biological factors. Instead of keeping silent, Anita tried to resist the power by repeating "Don't try to mess up with my head," even though her action was not recognized by other team members. In the excerpt, Anita father's reaction toward the incident was also crucial to the reproduction of unequal power relations.

The two examples of Anita's narratives showed that the practices of gender inequality still took place in the girls' everyday life experiences. The ideology of the fixed gender role category that boys are stronger than girls has perpetuated the boys' gender discourses. Moreover, Anita tried to reclaim her voice to fight back, but her father dismissed her emotional reaction to oppress her voice. On the other hand, instead of staying silent, Anita's expression of being mad and kicking of the ball was salient to show her agency to resist the unequal power relations. Kathy's following-up response "well. GOOD FOR YOU" indicated her agreement with Anita's behavior. That is to say, the girls' story showed that some elementary school students might still constrain by the binary view of gender roles; however, the girls' responses were significant for educators and scholars in critically examining how the topic of gender roles is constructed in the school curriculum. In addition, providing a safe female-only space to discuss about issues related

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to their gender role might create space for gaining more awareness and understanding of elementary students' perceptions of gender practices in the society.

Talking and discussing gender topics through books also helped explore multiple figured worlds of gender practices. According to Urrieta (2007), a figured world is a place "where people come to conceptually (cognitively) and materially/procedurally produce (perform) new self-understanding (identities)" (p. 108). One example of showing different figured worlds in the group occurred when talking about where gender roles are learned. The follow extract appeared when we talked about Malala Yousafzai and the value of attending schools.

> Gina: The girls [in Pakistan] have to take care of the babies, do the house work, so they have to go to school to learn.
> Me: They [men in Pakistan] don't think they [women in Pakistan] have to learn.
> Kathy: Umm, Umm (*listening carefully and frown*). Let's say you watch your mother clean and then you learn how to do that.
> Me: If you are going to do the house work, they [men] don't think you need to learn to read the words.
> Gina: But you have to go to school to learn how to take care of the babies.
> Kathy: Like what I said, you watch them [mother and sister] and learn from your mother or your sisters

The above examples showed different values in the conversations toward the role of formal education in practice of gender roles. According to Gina's (non-CLD student) discourse, she believed that gender roles were learned from larger institutional settings, such as school. However, Kathy's response showed that gender roles could be learned from people who are outside of school settings (mother or sisters) and they don't have to have legitimate educational backgrounds. Her disagreement with Gina might come from her figured world that women did not have to be educated to learn how to take care of the babies or clean the house. Her interpretation might draw from her mother or other people's life stories that she had heard and had been exposed to in different social groups in which she affiliated with. The differences

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between Gina and Kathy's discourses regarding gender practices showed that girls' practices both inside and outside of school settings impacted their understanding of gender roles. This finding is in line with previous scholars' statements that students' literacy practices at home and school might be different from each other, especially students with diverse cultural backgrounds (Williams, 2006). That is to say, offering opportunities for students to be exposed to different figured worlds might increase their awareness of the diversity in their everyday life. Additionally, the discussion of Malala's story could be seen as a multicultural text that created opportunities for the girls to challenge their beliefs and construct new meanings about gender role practices (Galda, 1998; Glazier & Seo, 2005). In addition, incorporating multicultural texts allowed the Strong Girls to be more aware of their own cultural practices and those differing from their own. The discourses of gender roles from Kathy and Gina showed different figured worlds and created tensions; however, the conversation was interrupted, thus, it was hard to find out how Kathy and Gina's different figured worlds interacted with each other. Nonetheless, the tension that resulted from the different figured worlds might be a critical moment for both CLD and non-CLD students to reshape and redefine their understanding of gender role practices and learn to respect different cultural practices (Thein, Beach & Parks, 2007).

The findings of the girls' talk about different gender practices support the notion that literacy is a social practice and the girls understanding of gender roles depended on their present and past experiences. In addition, the girls' literacy practices in both school and out of school settings created different figured worlds and the figured worlds might conflict with each other. Nevertheless, the findings also indicate that encouraging the discussion of gender roles and enhancing elementary school girls' awareness of their gender role cannot be done in a short period of time. It is a complicated and ongoing practice, and it requires the group leaders and

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teachers to offer them opportunities to discuss, disrupt, and deconstruct the meanings of gender roles. Thus, providing opportunities for students to share and express their diverse perspectives through multicultural text might create opportunities for the girls to learn from each other.

A Space Where CLD Students' Diverse Backgrounds Are Recognized and Valued

The other communal practice co-constructed by the group members was offering an environment to invite the girls to share their cultural and linguistic backgrounds. I found that offering opportunities for CLD students to share their stories empowered them and encouraged participation. In addition, my diverse cultural background, my English accent, my Asian appearance, and my role as a woman all shaped and were shaped by my positioning in the Strong Girl group. I found that Jamie had more to say when I told the girls about the variety of street food I could have in Taiwan because she also had similar experiences in Vietnam. Kathy could not wait to show the group a picture of passionfruit, her favorite fruit in Colombia, after I told them how much I missed tropical fruits in Taiwan. Kathy greeted Catie by asking her favorite FIFA World Cup Soccer team, and Anita described her father's frustration when his favorite team lost points. Although the exchange of different fruit, food, or sports could not explicitly depict the complexity of their identity positions, CLD girls' willingness to share and their peers' curiosity of their diverse cultural experiences became a window for all the girls to learn from each other, to hear people's personal stories from different parts of the world, and to learn new cultural practices. In other words, discourses from the girls showed that recognizing and respecting CLD students' diverse backgrounds and gender roles had an impact on how they positioned their multiple identities. Also, if our purpose aims to use literature and group discussion as a mirror to reflect students' life experiences and to create a window to experience different worlds, then the group leader/ teachers' role cannot be separated in the discussion.

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Both the CLD girls' diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds and the social communities they participated in influenced their identity constructions. The findings in the previous section illustrated the role of CLD students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds, there were also the similarities and overlapping factors that intertwined with each other from the girls' discursive practices. In addition, how the group leaders were positioned by the girls, how they positioned their identities, and how they framed the conversations and discussions all contributed to the understanding of CLD students' stories. The discourses and conversations happened in the group discussion is in line with Yon's (2000) study that the talk about race is not only about race; it is also about the location, the social relations, and popular culture. It was also about how power was enacted in institutional and social contexts that influenced how CLD students perceived themselves and were perceived by other people (Yon, 2000). The data showed that CLD students' identities were often contradictory and complex. However, the conflicts and ambivalence created opportunities for the girls to acknowledge the complex layers of their identities. Moreover, acknowledging the complexity of identity construction and transferring it into literacy practices inside and outside of classroom settings were crucial to help all girls to be aware of their identities and factors that influenced identity constructions.

Nevertheless, it is crucial to note that although the CLD students had the chance to share their diverse backgrounds, their stories might not attract their peers' interests in the group, and some stereotypes might be reinforced or misinterpreted if the group leaders or teachers do not offer appropriate facilitation. Many research studies have showed that the content learned and literacy practices students experienced at school have focused on the dominant culture (Au, 1998; Blackledge, 2000; Stritikus & Nguyen; 2007). Although multicultural contexts have gained increasing attention in American classrooms, there are not enough opportunities to

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discuss the nuance and complexity of students' diverse identities. The members in this ethnically diverse group provided an environment for CLD girls to share their multicultural experiences and allowed all the members to appreciate the differences and similarity of diverse cultures. The shifts of the power relationship opened opportunities for CLD students to share their unheard stories.

A Space for Using Multimodal Ways of Learning to Explore Multiple Identities

An increasing number of scholars have suggested that multimodal literacy helps encourage students' participation in their meaning-making process and their identity construction (Leland & Harste, 1994; Loerts, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Kendrick & Jones, 2008; Vasudevan, Schultz, & Bateman, 2010; Young, 2010). This process includes students' interest and "encourages imagination, vision, and problem solving" (Albers & Harste, 2007, p. 13). In the discussion of communal practices in the Strong Girls book club in the beginning of this chapter, one important feature is to challenge conventional literacy practices in Strong Girls. One way to exercise different power relations was to adopt multimodal ways to read and respond to books in my group. I found that employing multimodal activities created opportunities for me to explore the girls' different identities, especially students who might not feel confident sharing in public.

Jamie was often positioned as the silent girl in my group since I started working with her. Catie and I both had a similar impression when I met her in the beginning meetings. Therefore, I tried to ask as many questions as possible to invite her into our discussion. Compared to other members in the group, her voice was often the least heard among the group members, and sometimes other girls' conversation made her voice harder to be heard. However,

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the longer I worked with Jamie, the more identities I explored from her participation. For instance, I found that she performed differently when the group was doing drama activity.

> I asked Jamie what character she likes to act out when we decided to use drama to perform the story. She told me "I don't care; I am fine with any character." I did not expect to see the exaggerated and loud side of Jamie, but I was quite surprised when Jamie was acting out the scene in the book. She was so different when she was using different tones and voices to express Cece's [the main character in El Deafo] feelings of her deafness being misunderstood by other friends at school. I could tell that everyone was totally engaged in the book and waiting for their turn to read aloud/act out their part. (Field note Feb 6th, 2015)

The first time I found her preference for acting was when we were reading *El Deafo* by Cece Bell. When I asked the girls to select the character that they wanted to perform, Jamie remained silent and waited until everyone made their decisions. I also worried that she might not feel confident performing in front of the group. However, my worry disappeared when Jamie started reading aloud her part. She was engaged when she was reading; she spoke out loud, changed her voices and tones, and read with emotion. I was surprised, and the other girls raised their heads to peek at Jamie. The girls' non-verbal response to her performance showed their surprise toward Jamie's acting out performance.

All the girls in my group showed positive feedback toward the acting out activity. Thus, I tried the same activity when we read Victory Jamieson's graphic novel *Roller Girl*. The girls quickly picked the characters they wanted to perform until only two characters left. One of the girls wanted to ask Jamie to be the character (Nicole) who is often quiet and always follows her friend's decisions in the book. Surprisingly, instead of following the girl's request, Jamie rejected the request and told the girl that she wanted to be the other character who the girls considered as the mean girl in the book. That was the first time Jamie clearly expressed her preference about her choice in the activity, and the girls in my group were silent for seconds when they found out Jamie wanted to be the mean character. Her rejection of other girl's request

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might echo the evidence that she felt more confident after participating in Strong Girls (*Figure 4.7*). The data from Jamie's interaction showed that the acting out activities allowed Jamie to engage reading and tried on different identities by imagining and imitating the character's role. In addition, the incident of rejecting other members' request indicated that she was taking the agency to resist other members' positions of her as the "quiet" girl. That is to say, the girls failed to position Jamie as the quiet girl in her storyline because Jamie resisted her attempt. This close look at Jamie's negotiation of her multiple identities can provide insight into how students use different speech acts to create opportunities to participate in and be recognized their other identities.

Another example of using multimodal strategies as a way to help the girls engage in reading and meaning-making process was using comics. In addition to using drama to enact the girls' participation in the Strong Girl book club and improve their reading comprehension, I incorporated different activities to let girls try on different perspectives. For instance, I purposely chose a scene that has the main three characters and asked the girls to write down each character's inner voice by creating a thought bubble. Jamie's creation of the characters' inner voices also provided evidence of her knowledge of reading graphic novels and application to her own writing.

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Figure 4.8. Jamie's Interpretations of the Characters' Voices (check Appendix C for the detailed written dialogue)

The short writing activity was designed before acting out each character's inner voice. This activity required students' comprehension of the story plot, understanding of the characters' personality and relationships with different characters in the book, and ability to make connection to their own life experiences in order to put themselves into different characters' shoes. In Jamie's work, she used not only the thinking and speech balloons but also the sound effect "grunt" between the two panels to reinforce the character's emotion. All the literary knowledge that Jamie used to create the tension of the three characters reaffirmed Jamie's identity as a careful reader.

After working on their own thought bubble, I asked the girls to shout out their sentences or words of the characters at the same time. I found that when the girls were shouting out the words together at the first round, Jamie was smiling, but she did not stand up to join the activity. However, when I asked the girl to repeat their words again and infuse their emotions according to each character's personality and emotion, and act out, Jamie stood up and joined the activity. I further asked the girls to perform individually, she acted out her part with no hesitation with her dramatic sounds and body language. One group leader came to me at the end of the meeting and

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told me that she thought the activity was fun and she was surprised and impressed by Jamie's performance. Scholars suggested that through different multimodal literacy practices, children can expand the way they think about the world, their identity positions, and their relations to the world (Leland & Harste, 1994; Loerts, 2013; Stein, 2004). That is to say, the acting out and reading aloud activity might provide opportunities for Jamie to try on different identities that helped her participate in the book club.

Another example of using multimodal techniques to encourage the girls' participation and meaning making process was found in Jennifer's response to *Stargirl*. Although Jennifer was a proficient reader, and she often read ahead of the other girls, she did not like to write when I asked them to document their response in their journal. After reading *Stargirl*, I offered different options to let the girls respond to the book, and Jennifer chose to create an extended version of the story by using a comic form (*Figure 4.9*). Jennifer told me once that she did not want to write because "it is not like school," which might show that her interpretation of writing was related to school assignments, and she did not want to have extra assignments in the afterschool book club. However, it is interesting to note that when I offered the idea of creating comics, she accepted and asked me if she could bring the comic home to finish her work.

The comic (*Figure 4.9.*) Jennifer created showed that she had to not only comprehend the story plot and the characters but also have knowledge of creating a comic in order to accomplish this multimodal activity. In addition, the extended story required Jennifer to use her imagination, vision, and problem solving skills (Albers & Harste, 2007) to create this comic. In her work, she included both a reader's response and a writer's creativity and imagination to expand the characters' story. This all required Jennifer's participation in negotiating the meaning-making process and her identity construction (Leland & Harste, 1994). The examples from Jamie and

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Jennifer illustrated that providing multimodal ways of reading and responding to children's book opened avenue for students with different learner styles and benefited teachers' understandings of students' learning. In addition, multimodal literacy might encourage shy or reluctant students to participate in the meaning-making literacy practice.

Figure 4.9. Jennifer's Extended Version of *Stargirl* (check Appendix D for the detailed narratives and dialogues)

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Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed important literacy practices salient to the elementary school girls' participation in the afterschool book and their construction of the Strong Girls community. The findings showed that the Strong Girls book club provided multiple functions for 4th to 6th grade elementary school girls regarding their emotional, cognitive, academic, and social needs. I discussed the six elements that were salient to the construction of the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The routines that took place in the book club and the members' active participation were important to the creation of the figured worlds of the book club. Also, the book club offered a safe space to share their personal stories and allowed emotions to enter our group discussion. Additionally, the conversation and discussion of different gender roles and discursive gender practices were crucial to the girls' awareness of their gender identities and power relations. The Strong Girls book club also provided a social space for the girls to maintain and expand their friendship circles. Another element found in the data was negotiations of multiple power relations among the members, leading to the creation of alternative literacy practices. Moreover, the Strong Girls book club provided a safe and respectful space to invite CLD students' diverse stories to be heard and valued in the group. Lastly, the Strong Girls book club was also a space to explore multimodal ways of learning and multiple identities. These elements were important to the construction of the Strong Girls community and benefited my understanding of the CLD girls' identity positions and discourses in the next chapter. This chapter provides a broader picture of important practices in the Strong Girls book club. In chapter five, I will include a detailed discussion of the three CLD girls' identities and discourse related to their cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

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CAHPTER V CLD STUDENTS' IDENTITIES AND DISCOURSES

According to Gee (2011), everyone has multiple social identities, and we assume different social identities by engaging ourselves in different identity-related discourses which includes both verbal and non-verbal ways to let other people recognize a particular social identity. The key to social identity is recognition. Recognition and being recognized include not only who we are but also what we are doing; it is all our languages, actions, interactions, values, beliefs, symbols, objects, tools, and places that we put together to show other people our identities (Gee, 2011). In this chapter, I discuss CLD girls' identity positions and the discourses that emerged in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. Two major themes of CLD students' identities and discourses were found in the data: discourses related to their heritage identities and discourses related to their American citizenship. In the following section, I will discuss the three CLD girls' identities that found in the data respectively, and then I will provide findings that related to the discourses of the CLD students' identities.

The Talk about Ethnicity/Race—Heritage Identity

Kathy: Colombian Identity. In this study, Kathy engaged herself in her Colombian Discourse by engaging herself in various identity kits in order to let her Colombian identity become visible. In the following extract, Kathy used language to show her Colombian identity in her dress code.

> K: On Monday, I wear my sport shirt, on Tuesday I wear my Colombian shirt, on Wednesday, I wear another sport shirt with different color, on Thursday, I don't know, it's free day for me. And on Friday I wear my Strong Girls shirt.

Kathy's description of her routine dress code illustrated that identities she wanted other people to recognize in her. Tuesdays had been the days that she wore her Colombian sport T-shirt to show

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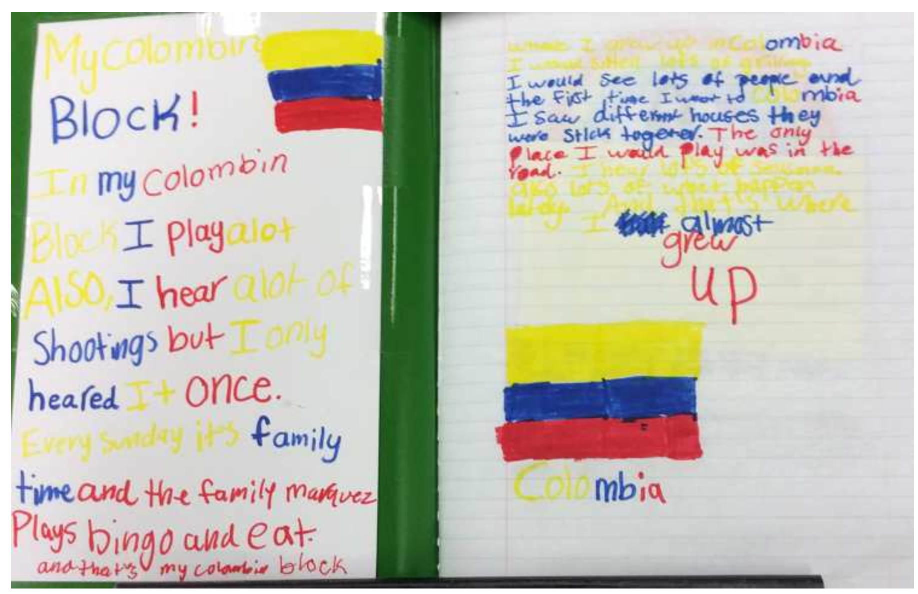
other people who she is and where she is from. Her daily dress code also showed what communities she participated in or she wanted to affiliate with.

She not only used language but also her writing and drawing to make her Colombian identity visible to the members in the Strong Girls. When I asked the girls to make personal connections to literature after reading, Kathy's Colombian identity was easy to identify in her writing work.



(Left)"*My Colombian Block! In my Colombiab Block I play at of. Also, I hear a lot of shootings but I only heard it once. Every Saturda it's family time and the family Mavavez plays bingo and eat. And that's my Colombian block."*

(Right)*"Where I grew up in Colombia, I would smell a lof of grilling. I woul see lots of people and the fisst time I wnet to Colombia I saw different houses they were stick together. The only place I would play was in the road. I hear lots of sellsman and lots of laughs. And that's where I almost grew up."*

Figure 5.1. Kathy's "On My Block" Introduction

This writing work was done after one group leader finished reading a picture book *Mama where are you from* by Marie Bradby. I asked the girls in my group to write down their neighborhood or childhood memories that were important and represented who they were and where they were

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from. I remember that Kathy picked up her journal and the markers, sat quietly, and engaged in her writing. In this journal entry, the words “Colombian” or “Colombia” were used five times. The two Colombian flags on each side of the page and the colors yellow, blue, and red are significant symbols representing where she was from. In addition, her narrative provided a vivid scene of what she saw, what she heard, what she felt, and what she did in her Colombian neighborhood.

Figure 5.2. Kathy’s Written Response to “No Mirrors in My Nana’s House”

Additionally, she often made connections or comparisons when responding to the literature or topics discussed in the group. For instance, Kathy drew this picture after one group leader asked all the girls to reflect on the song “No Mirrors in My Nana’s House” by using images. Most of the girls drew a house based on their comprehension of the lyrics; however, Kathy drew two houses: one represented her understanding of the song and the other represented her actual nana’s house in Colombia, which allowed her to make a comparison between the two. The above picture is the illustration of Kathy’s response to the two houses. In her picture, Kathy

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chose to put her nana's house on the top and she put the title Colombia on the top of the page, and the three font colors she used echoes the colors on the Colombian flag. Her illustration of the two houses also showed the differences of the house architecture in Colombia and in America. She also told the group about her grandmother and the activities that her family engaged in when they were at her grandmother's house. For instance, she wrote the word *NO WIFI* on the left lower side of the picture of her nana's house. The reason why they did not have Wi-Fi was because her grandmother did not want technology to distract from the quality of the family gathering time. Kathy's habit of making comparisons to her Colombian life reoccurred in the data, which had reinforced people's recognition of her Colombian identity. Kathy's illustration showed that she used her life experiences to help her make connection to the texts (Rosenblatt, 1995), and her drawing of her grandma's house was her multimodal way to respond to the literature. Also, the example echoes the notion that reading and writing are not limited to comprehending the text; they are also ways to connect and enact students' cultural practice, knowledge, and identity (Street, 2003). From Kathy's response to the song lyrics and the connections she made to her grandma's house, we learned of her relationship with her grandmother and the important value of family in her Discourse.

Gee (2011) pointed out that recognition and Discourse go hand-in-hand. In other words, in order to create a certain social identity, people need to recognize and accept the Discourse that we are enacting. The following conversation is an example of other girls' recognition of Kathy's Colombian identity.

> Cynthia: It's really getting annoying. When I hear the word "Colombia," I think of Kathy, and then it's so annoying.
> Bella: When I think about Colombia, I think about Kathy and Prince Royce.
> --------------
>
> Bella: She [Kathy] brings Colombia into every single thing, everything she draws is like (*pause*) Colombia thing, back in Colombia, I am not saying that it is bad (*she*

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turned to hug Kathy while talking)
Kathy: You drew Canada all the time, Canadian?! (*Raising her voice*)
(Note: Bella was not a Canadian. She and her family visited Canada during the break very often, and she misunderstood that she could also be Canadian. She later clarified that she was not Canadian)

The above excerpt took place when all the 5th graders got together to have snacks before returning back to their own group leaders. The conversation from Kathy's 5th grade peers indicated that the connection between Kathy and Colombia had been mentioned discursively in the girls' literacy practices. Cynthia used the emotional word "annoying" to emphasize the degree to which Kathy's Colombian identity has been recognized significantly and other students connected "Colombia" with her immediately when they heard the word. In addition, Bella's connecting Colombia with Kathy and Prince Royce (a Latin singer) illustrated not only Kathy's nationality marker, but also the symbols of the Latin pop culture that were important to Kathy's identity positions.

The excerpt also showed that discourses sometimes contest with each other when individuals interact with different people in different social groups. Bella said that, "I am not saying that it is bad [to show her Colombian identity]" she used "a bad thing" to show her feeling toward Kathy's repeated practices of her Colombian identity. Bella used an indirect sentence statement to indicate that she not only recognized Kathy's Colombian identity but also made the comment that "I am not saying it is bad" to show her indirect disagreement of the recurrence of her Colombian identity. However, Kathy's retort, "you drew Canada all the time, Canadian," showed that Kathy tried to position herself as Colombian by enacting her agency to make and remake her Colombian identity. After Kathy's retort Bella's face turned red and clarified that she was not Canadian, she was American. Kathy's construction of her Colombian identity through cultural practices such as wearing a T-shirt with a Colombian logo, drawing Colombian flags,

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telling her stories, and resisting her friend's comment on her Colombian identity echoes Bondy's (2015) findings in her study. Bondy (2015) showed that instead of following the assimilation path, the new generation (of immigrant students) actively participated in the process of self-making their citizenship identities by "publicly making the statements, asserting their voices and claiming spaces" (p. 367) to negotiate their new identities. Kathy's interaction with Bella echoes Bondy's study that instead of staying silent, Kathy asserted her voice to claim her space and Colombian identity.

One of the group leaders, Catie, also shared her impression about Kathy with me after the first meeting; she mentioned that she was interested in how the CLD students introduced who they were in the group. She told me that she could tell that Kathy was strongly engaged in her Colombian identity. Catie pointed out that although that was the first time she met with the girls, Kathy used the word *Colombia* multiple times in her conversation.

> Catie: … So for Kathy, I wrote, "She was proud to be Colombian," which is something I had heard you talking about before and then seeing her. I mean she must have said the word "Colombia" like multiple times through the whole time we were there, which I thought was really cool.

Kathy's Hispanic/Latina identity. Kathy's identity of an expert of Spanish and Latino culture was also found significantly from the data. Whenever we had topics related to different cultural practices, Kathy and other Latino students often made comparisons and references to Latino culture and provided information to share with their peers. For instance, one time Catie shared her surprise at how her Hispanic friends celebrated her birthday for the first time with all the 5th graders. Kathy and the other Mexican American girl responded immediately and started talking about the Mexican birthday tradition that the birthday person's face has to be shoved in the cake to have the first bite. Also, Kathy's identity as a Hispanic expert was shown evidently when we encountered some Spanish vocabulary in the book. When I was reading aloud *Stargirl*

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by Jerry Spinelli, Kathy found that I was stuck with pronouncing the Spanish words the author used in the book. She offered her help right away by continuing reading with her fluent Spanish and then translating the meanings to the whole group.

Not only did Kathy recognize and show her bilingual ability, but other girls also perceived her as the Spanish expert in the group. One of the non-CLD students, Jennifer, described Kathy as a "Spanish dictionary" when I asked them to provide a short description of each girl in the group in an informal interview. Another example was found when I asked the girls to write down words and thoughts to each other at the end of the 2015 spring semester. Jamie wrote to Kathy that she wished to know Spanish, which might indicate that Jamie perceived and valued Kathy's Spanish language speaking ability in our group (see Figure 9). The other non-CLD girl, Jennifer, wrote in Kathy's note that "I like hearing your stories about Colombia," which showed that Jennifer not only accepted Kathy's Colombian identity but was interested in listening to her story. Both Jamie and Jennifer's reflexive position of Kathy's identity was salient to her Colombian and Latina identity.

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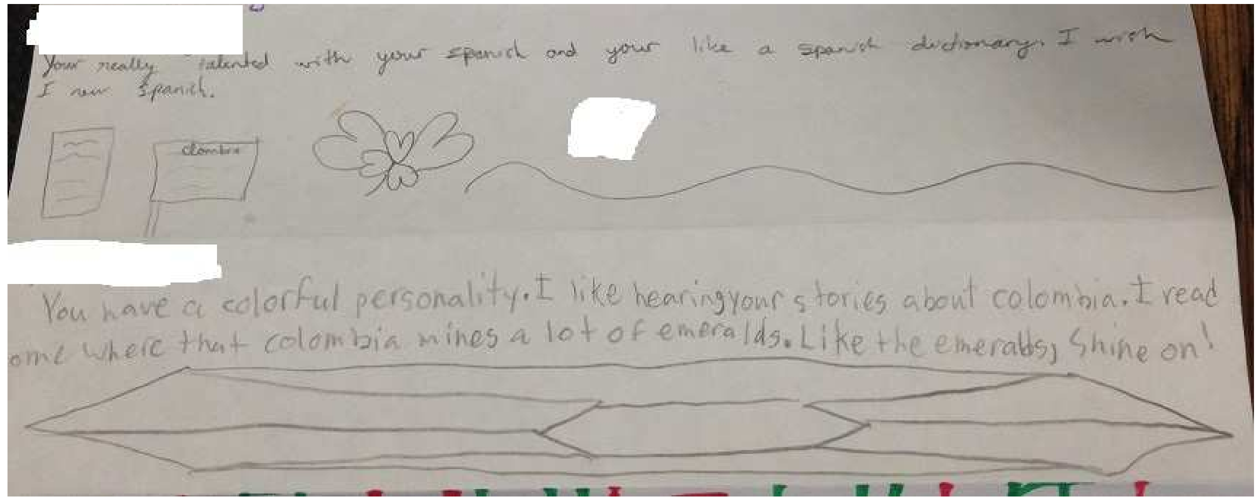

Figure 5.3. Jennifer's Note to Kathy.

> *(Upper) "You really talented with your Spanish and you're like a Spanish dictionary. I wish I new (knew) Spanish."*
>
> *(Lower) "You have a colorful personality. I like hearing your story about Colombia I read somewhere that Colombia mines a lot of emeralds. Like the emeralds, shine on!"*

Later in an informal individual interview, Kathy told me that her teacher asked her to speak Spanish with an immigrant student to help him improve his development and share Hispanic culture. The recognition of her Spanish and her Hispanic knowledge by other girls and her school teacher in her discursive practices reinforced and empowered her identity as a Spanish speaker. Although every girl had the same activity, Kathy was the only CLD student who received more comments regarding her Colombian and Latina identities. Her positive position toward her Colombian and Latina identity crucially impacted Kathy's identity position for her CLD background. This finding from Kathy's case might indicate that in order to help CLD students be more aware of their heritage identities and value them, their diverse backgrounds need to be recognized and valued.

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Jamie's identity as Vietnamese/ Asian.

> *I was so shocked and surprised that Jamie brought her family album to share with the group this week. She was always quiet in the group, but today she looked like a totally different Jamie. She came to me right after I arrived the classroom and asked if she could share her pictures. She kept her promise to bring her family's pictures from Vietnam, patiently introduced each photo and explained what she did when she visited Vietnam. It was the first moment that I could tell that she was confident and other girls were engaged in listening to her stories.* (Field note 2013)

The above excerpt was from my observational field notes in the beginning meetings in Strong Girls book club. Even though I had learned briefly about the girls' ethnic backgrounds in the first week, that was the first time I had more opportunities to know more about Jamie's Vietnamese background. Jamie had always been the quiet and shy girl in my group, and she was never the first person to initiate the conversation no matter what topics we discussed. However, when our group was talking about cultures or stories outside of U.S. setting, she would move slightly to the center of the group and listen carefully. She might not comment on all the topics, but she was willing to share her opinions when talking about Vietnamese culture. Her intention of bringing her family album to share with the group showed her enthusiasm of sharing her Vietnamese stories in to the group. Besides bringing photographs to share with the girls in the group, her writing work in the journal also depicted her vivid image of Vietnam.

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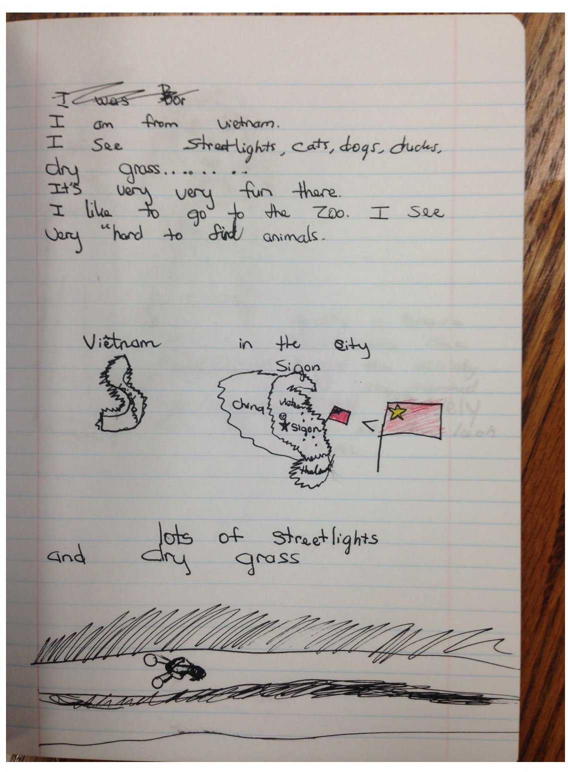

"I am from Vietnam. I see streetlights, cats, dogs, ducks, dry grass…. It's very very fun there. I like to go to the zoo. I see very "hard to find animals."

Figure 5.4. Jamie's Vietnamese Block.

Similar to Kathy's, Jamie's writing also provided ample evidence of her Vietnamese identity (Figure 13). When I asked the girls to describe their neighborhood that was significant to represent who they are, she chose to share her neighborhood in Vietnam. In her journal, she wrote "I am from Vietnam. I see streetlight, cats, dogs, ducks, dry grass…… It's very very fun there. I like to go to the zoo. I see very 'hard to find' animals." She also drew a map and a flag from Vietnam. On the right side of the picture, she provided a short history of Vietnam and she made a comparison between flags of Vietnam and China. Interestingly, she drew different sizes of the Vietnamese flag and Chinese flag to illustrated different sizes of the two countries. Moreover, when describing her visits in Vietnam, she used the adverb "very" twice to emphasize her positive and joyful emotion in Vietnamese. Her description of her imagined homeland, her

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knowledge of Vietnam, and her pleasant memories of her Vietnam trips showed Jamie's affiliation to her Vietnamese identity.

Identity is relational and it depends on how individuals position and are positioned by other people according to their understanding of the relationships to the world (Davies & Harré, 1990). For instance, the exchanged messages between Jamie and me in her journal about different languages showed that she was interested in my diverse language background, and she used Vietnamese to allow me to recognize her Vietnamese. For instance, she asked me "how do you say and write Happy birthday in Chinese?" (See picture below). After I replied, she wrote me back happy birthday in Vietnamese. Her ability to write Vietnamese was also found in other secret notes. Sometimes, she would write a paragraph of English on the top of the page and then a paragraph of translation below the English one. Her questions related to language showed that I was positioned by her as the person who spoke a different language than English, and her reply in Vietnamese also illustrated her bilingual background and ability. Although the data showed that she was able to speak and write Vietnamese fluently and share this with me, her Vietnamese ability was not shown in public. Jamie's enactment of her Vietnamese identity by sharing her family photos, responding to her life experiences in Vietnam, and exchanging personal messages all showed her desire to be recognized as a Vietnamese. The evidence of Jamie's questions regarding different linguistic backgrounds support Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning that Jamie's employment of her Vietnamese identity depended on her positioning of my Chinese-speaking identity; we all participated in the same story line as individuals who had diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds that shaped and reshaped our ethnic identities. The evidence found from Jamie's identity illustrated that providing opportunities for CLD students to sharing

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their stories and allowing their stories to be heard and recognized benefit their construction and reconstruction of their identity positions.

Although Jamie's Vietnamese identity was found obviously in the data, Jamie's diaspora identity was also found in the discourse when talking about where she belonged. One example of Jamie claiming her Vietnamese identity took place when I asked her about where she thought home was. The following excerpt illustrates Jamie's contestation of the question of where home was. She was a silent listener while listening to my conversation with Anita about her multiple ethnic identities. However, before we started reading and while everyone was getting ready for their reading, Jamie started talking:

> Jamie: Well…sometimes, I am kind of wondering [where home is] because I really don't have a lot of relatives in the USA.
> Jennifer: You have friends.
> Jamie: Yeah, but cause [if I am in Vietnam] I can travel to the beach. But here, I stayed at home. We only go to Iowa City and Coralville and that was it.

In the excerpt, Jamie's association with Vietnam and her life history in Vietnam became a reference point when comparing her life in the USA and Vietnam. Her definition of home was strongly attached to family when she said "I really don't have a lot of relatives in the USA." Moreover, when her best friend, Jennifer, tried to argue with her by pointing out that she had friends in America, Jamie immediately replied the constraint of living in the USA and the limited mobility in America. Jamie's conversation about unable to travel to many places and having fewer friends in the United States might provide a partial picture of her family's social relationship in her community in the United States. Jamie's experiences of feelings of ambivalence corresponds with Yon's (2000) notion of "diaspora space," which is a space where "diasporic peoples converge and where multiple subject positions and identities are proclaimed, juxtaposed, contested, and disavowed (p. 17).

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Jamie's reasons of questioning where home was echoed Yon's (2000) definition of diasporic identity as "being at home in one place where one lives while still living with the memories and shared histories of place from which one or one's ancestors have come" (p. 17). According to Jamie, her imagined Vietnam was a place where family members were and a place where she could travel around the city. In addition, family members in Vietnam were one of the significant factors that influenced her meaning of "home" although she was born and raised in America. Her imaginations of Vietnam, the limited social relations and the constraint of mobility in the USA, and her literacy practices and language use at home all played a discursive role in the process of negotiating and constructing her ethnic identities. Quach, Jo, and Urrieta's (2009) study of Asian immigrant students, and Thai's (2001) study of Vietnamese second-generation students highlighted that discourses related to family culture, gender, perceived cultural identity, experiences with discrimination, or usage of CLD students' heritage languages were all important to their identity constructions. Although Jamie's case might not be representative of the second-generation immigrant students, the findings and previous studies all showed that CLD students' diverse backgrounds and what they learned and experienced outside of school settings helped shape and create new identities.

Silence as an Agentic Move. One challenge of examining identity in my study was to analyze and interpret the girls' silence in the data, especially when analyzing Jamie's participation in the group. Previous literature often interpreted silence as a form an oppression that people who have less power was oppressed by a more powerful individual. However, some researchers argued that silence can also be interpreted and analyzed as agentic move (Lewis & Moje, 2007). From my interactions and observations with Jamie, I found that Jamie's silence

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might not only be due to the constraint from other girls but also her choice of taking an agentic move to stay silent in the group discussion.

> Jamie: I think I am more kind of like Nicole (one of the characters in the book) because I don't really like to get involved in things. But (*pause*) I am kind like Astrid, because I sometimes yelled and argued with Nat and Henry [her brothers] when they said that I did something wrong, but they did wrong because I know more about what I do but they think I am wrong. So I just yelled at them. Sometimes I tried to punch them, break their arm, break their knee, and poke their eyes.

The above example of Jamie comparing herself with the characters in the books showed that identity is multiple and relational and the individual has the agency to decide their identity positions. The first part of her conversation described that when she found that other people had diverse opinions in the group, she chose to distance herself from the problem because she did not like to get involved in the debates. The example showed that using literature provided opportunities for Jamie to step into the character's (Nicole) world and gain more understanding of herself. However, Jamie assumed a different identity when she had tension with her brother at home. Her description of her behaviors: "yelled at them," "try to punch them, break their arms," "break their knees," and "poke their eyes" were inconsistent with her quiet Jamie identity. The differences between interactions with her brother and the choice of distancing herself from other people and remained silence might be interpreted as her recognizing and enacting her agency in different contexts.

Another agentic move occurred when our group were talking about being silent at school. The following incident provided evidence of Jamie using silence as an agentic move happened after we finished reading *El Deafo*. The story is about the main character, Cece who loses her hearing ability after she contracts meningitis and how she goes through the struggle and uses her deafness as a super power to learn to be Strong. After reading the book, I asked the girls what

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their super power was. The girls shared with me their super power and Jennifer told us that her super power was being silent.

> Me: So what's your super power?
> Jennifer: Super smart and super quiet. (Girls laugh)
> Me: You are already super smart. All of you are super smart.
> Jennifer: And super quiet.
> Me: But I don't need…
> Jamie: my super power is super quiet.
> Kathy: they are really (laugh) quiet during class.
> Me: Really? So what do you talk?
> Kathy: Unless our teacher calls them and ask them question?
> Me: So why don't you talk at school?
> ….
> Jennifer: Because you will get bad reputation
> Kathy: Yeah (looks awkwardly) I wish I can (be quiet).
> Jennifer: And bad grades.
> ….
> Jennifer: …Sometimes it's better to be quiet.
> Anita: Sometimes we get trouble for talking.
> ….
> Jennifer: We will say stuff when we really really want to or we need to, but…
> Me: Kathy, so why do you talk. Cause for me, I think…
> Kathy: I talk (embarrassing sound) because I like, I am a social girl. I talk to everybody in the classroom (lower her voice)
> Anita: That's true.
> Kathy: That's true. I get trouble, I get embarrassed

The conversation above demonstrated how appropriate classroom behaviors were expected by their teacher. When talking about being quiet in the classroom, Kathy told me that Jamie and Jennifer would never get into trouble because they were always quiet in the classroom. According to their conversation, being quiet is considered as a social good in their classroom. On the other hand, talking without teachers' permission might result in a bad reputation and a bad grade. Different from the social girls Kathy and Anita, Jennifer and Jamie chose to talk when it was necessary because they did not want to get into trouble. If silence can be analyzed as an agentic move, then Jamie and Jennifer's silence at school showed that they were aware of the authority in the class and talking without permission might be considered as inappropriate in the

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classroom setting. Furthermore, they were aware that staying quiet was a way to embody their good student Discourse. Jennifer even suggested that Kathy keep quiet in the classroom participation because it would help her stay focused and she could learn more at school. Her decision to not get involved in the problem and remain silent in larger group might provide an important insight into the interpretation of silence in the community. Norton (2013) stated that when learners speak or remain silent, when they write, read, or resist, we need to understand the extent to which the learner is valued in a particular classroom, institution, or community (p. 103). The gap between my observation of Jamie's silence and her reasons for being silent indicated that being silent might be interpreted as a strategy for Jamie to enact a certain social identity to avoid or strengthen people's perceptions about herself.

Jamie's multiple identity positions had challenged my previous assumptions of her as the quiet reader and the silent participant in the book club. Jamie's illustration of the map of Vietnam, the portraits of the characters from *Stargirl*, and her lively reading aloud performance all showed that she was using multiple sign systems to make sense of the reading and construct her identities. Jamie's multiple ways of reading echoes Leland and Harste's (1994) argument that literate learners "need to be able to orchestrate a variety of sign systems to create texts appropriate to the contexts in which they find themselves" (p. 339). That is to say, in Jamie's case, her enactment from multimodal ways had helped her comprehend the text and find her voice from multiple sign systems.

Jamie's representations of her multiple identities were critical moments for me to reposition her identity and rethink my practice as the group leader in the book club. Her quiet identity in group discussion, and the artistic and writerly identities shown in her journey, and her actress identity when acting out the story showed that providing multimodal activities opens

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avenues for students to use different sign systems to understand and present their understanding of the meaning of the world. In addition, by integrating multimodal activities, Jamie could position and negotiate her multiple identities.

Anita's identity as a Latina American. Abundant evidence related to Anita's ethnicity was also found in the data. Her identity as Latina was mentioned overtly when the topics in group discussions were related to race and ethnicity. She introduced herself as Honduran to me and other group members. She also showed high interest in her parents' immigration story when we had the conversation about reasons why people emigrate to America. One time I asked the three CLD girls to describe their experiences of living in America and in their heritage countries. Anita first introduced herself as Honduran but quickly shifted back to her life in America. The following extract illustrated how she was positioned as Honduran by Honduran people.

> Anita: But it's more comfortable *here (America)*. I like *here* because it's comfortable. But it would be more comfortable because I don't like America people always ask me if I am Mexican. And *over there* they know I am Honduran cause a lot of people there are Honduran, they know that I am Honduran. And they never asked me if I am Mexican, so that's the reason I like there.
> Me: So people will not judge you by your skin color?
> Anita: Yeah. They don't ask you if you are American.
> Kathy: Yeah, they don't ask you if you are Mexican. They just "Oh, that girl, she is not American, she is Colombian" all that. Also because they can hear my Spanish and my Colombian accent, so they might say "oh, she is obvious Colombian."
> Bella: Yeah, but people here know nothing about that stuff unless they really know you. Because I know you (facing toward Anita), I know you are Honduran. When I was little, I thought many Hispanics were from Mexico.

In the dialogue, Anita noted that she liked it "there" (Honduras) because people did not question her identity as Honduran. She further expressed her uneasy feeling of being recognized and overgeneralized as Mexican by people in America. In the beginning of the dialogue, she revealed her preference of staying in the USA because "it's more comfortable here (America)," but later she used the comparative adjective "more comfortable" to illustrate her negative

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experiences of being misrecognized as Mexican in the US. However, there is no further evidence to compare how Honduran people perceived her American identity because she was recognized and labeled immediately as Honduran, perhaps due to her appearance.

Anita's story of being positioned as Honduran by Honduran people and as Mexican by people in America indicated that she was recognized by her external ethnic markers, such as skin color, appearance, and spoken language. Although I had a chance to have a member check with her to affirm my hypothesis, she told me that she did not know how people in Honduran perceived her American identity and she was not familiar with many people there. Perhaps she did not have many chances to visit her Honduran families, or perhaps she did not encounter situations in Honduras when people questioned her multiple identities. However, I did not have enough time asking following-up questions to clarify her opinions about Honduran people's perception about her. Her experiences in both America and Honduras showed that identity is relational to different social communities and other peoples' perceptions about them influence how they position themselves (Davies and Harré, 1990). In other words, Anita's contested positions of who she feels she is versus how her body is read were drawn from her history and the dominant discourses of race, culture, and ethnicity that prevailed in her everyday life.

The above extract provided an explanation of how Anita interpreted other people's perceptions about her Honduran identity. In addition, the statement from her best friend, Bella, was also significant to our understanding of the discourses of CLD students in our daily life practices. When Anita was sharing people's overgeneralization of her ethnicity, Bella replied that, "but people here (America) know nothing about that stuff (CLD students' backgrounds) unless they really know you," indicating that people in America might be likely to have the assumption that peoples who speak Spanish or have certain biological features are all Mexican.

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Although it is reasonable for people to have assumptions about their ethnicity based on Kathy or Anita's biological marker, Anita's reaction to people's judgment showed her desire to be recognized as Honduran and differentiated from Mexicans. The interaction between Anita, Bella, and Kathy might indicate that CLD students were often judged by their physical markers and categorized as the same cultural group. The label from the mainstream perception might conflict with the CLD students' ethnic identity and affect their identity positions. However, Bella's reply showed that early adolescent students were aware of differences and tension among their CLD friends, and they acknowledged that there was not enough discussion about the issues in public or school curriculum (Bondy, 2015). The CLD girls' narrative of their personal stories and their non-CLD friends indicated that elementary students were willing and capable of discussing the inequality between different racial issues.

Anita also showed a strong interest when she recognized someone who spoke Spanish or who shared similar cultural practices. For instance, when Anita first met Catie and found out that she could also speak Spanish, she leaned closer to Catie and wanted to join the conversation with Catie. In addition, when Anita was sharing her Honduran stories, she made a great connection to her family stories, such as visiting her grandparents' homes and stories about her parents' immigration. Anita's identity as Latina was recognized when other girls were talking about Hispanic/Latino culture. Whenever our group was talking about certain Hispanic cultural practices or pronouncing Spanish words. Kathy often made eye contact with Anita or directly faced toward her and spoke Spanish to her, and Anita would reply in Spanish. Kathy's non-verbal languages used at those moments influenced Anita's identity position in the Hispanic community. When Anita found that someone was talking to her in Spanish and discussing Hispanic/Latino culture, Anita often cracked a big smile or made a happy sound to show her

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confidence and pride to the group. The evidence of Anita using Spanish to interact with her friends is in line with the building task *sign system and knowledge* suggested by Gee (2000), referring to using language or different ways of knowing or believing to privilege or disprivilege specific sign systems. This building task was important to help shape and reshape her Hispanic/Latino identity. Using Spanish and sharing Hispanic culture were examples showing how the sign systems and knowledge empowered Anita's Hispanic/Latino identity.

Anita's Negotiation of Her Multiple Ethnic Identities. Although all the three CLD students' ethnic identities emerged from their Discourses, I found that Anita's Discourses of her ethnic identities were more fluid and not easily identified among the other two CLD students. I adopted tools suggested by Fairclough (2001) to explore their identities. Among the three CLD girls, the discourses of Kathy and Jamie were more predictable and consistent than Anita's when the conversations were about their heritage identity.

> Anita: Two years ago, we went to Honduras for like two months, so the first day we started living in my grandma's house. You need to greet everybody in Spanish and then we meet in our aunt's house and they made a big party for us.

In this excerpt, I paid close attention to the pronouns that Anita used when she was describing her story of traveling back to Honduras. Fairclough (2001) stated that analyzing how individuals use pronouns helps researchers gain a better understanding of the relationship of power and solidarity. In her Honduran story, she said "you need to greet everybody in Spanish." Instead of using "I" or "we", she used the pronoun "you," which was used as an indefinite pronoun that referred to people in general. It is possible that she used "you" to create a distance to claim herself as an outsider who described the custom of meeting people in Honduras. However, she chose to use the word "need" to indicate that it was a required cultural practice to greet her family members in Spanish. The pronoun "you" and the word "need" were used as a relational

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value that might show that the Discourse of the behaviors and customs of the Hispanic culture or her family in Honduras were different from her greeting discourse in America. She positioned similar identities when she was explaining the function of a visa to the group.

> Anita: ….when we are in different country, we need to come to the USA, AND we need the visa. Like people from different country from all over the world, they come to America, only if they have visa. Like people from Africa, Europe, Asia, Australia, and South America.
> Kathy: Yeah, the OTHER (*emphasizing the word*) people that are not in the United States.
> Anita: But if you are American, you were born in the USA,
> Kathy: So you have US citizenship (*talking to Jamie*),
> Anita: So you don't have to have a visa.
> Me: So before I came here, I went to a place for applying my US visa
> Anita: Yeah, Yeah, *you* went to a place for visa
> ……..
>
> Me: if you (*Jamie*) go to Vietnam, you don't have to apply any visa, but people want to come to the US, and they need to apply for a visa, why?
> Jamie: I think...
> Anita: Because they are Americans. American they can go everywhere they want to go, they can go everywhere.
> Jamie: Well, it's because other states (*she meant countries*) are poor.
> (Video recording 020615)

In the beginning part of the excerpt, Anita used the pronoun "we" when she said "we need to come to the USA" although she has American citizenship. The pronoun "we" was used exclusively to refer to people who are from countries outside of the USA. She might also be talking to the other CLD girls, Kathy and Jamie, herself, me or others who were from different countries and needed to apply for a visa in order to enter America. The identity that she assumed in this excerpt indicated that Anita positioned herself as an immigrant in this situated context. Also, Anita enacted a similar identity when talking about the advantages of having American citizenship. She mentioned that "they are Americans. American they can go everywhere they want to go. They can go everywhere." In this excerpt, she kept a distance from her American identity by using the pronoun "they" although she was born and raised in America. Moreover,

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she also recognized that being American meant to have power to access many countries without having to go through the process of applying for a visa. However, when I mentioned that I had to apply for a visa in the American Institute in Taiwan, Anita immediately replied “you went to a place for visa.” In this case, Anita shifted back to the pronoun “you” might be interpreted that she was talking to me about my specific experience, or she used “you “to distinguish herself as a person who does not need to go through the visa application process because of her American citizenship.

Anita’s changes of different pronouns revealed her ambivalence toward her ethnic identities. The data suggested that her multiple identities were contested and negotiated in her Discourses. The data also showed her awareness of her multiple ethnicities and her connections to the world. When she mentioned “when we are in different country,” the pronoun “we” she referred to was the collective identity that indicated people who are not from America or are immigrants. On the other hand, when I mentioned about going through visa application process, she said “yeah, you went to a place for visa.” The pronoun “you” she used here might mean that she was replying directly to me or people who need a visa to come to the US, which showed that she acknowledged and distinguished her right, obligation, and privilege of her American citizenship and her Honduran identity.

Another example of her identification of the differences between different ethnic identities happened when I had an extended conversation with Kathy and Anita about their ethnicity.

> Me: So when you are at home. What did your mom and dad tell you about *staying* in the US?
> Anita: They always tell me that. If I was there (*pause*), if I have choice, where will I stay? I would always say that in USA because *you* will have way better life here.
> Me: Will your parents go back to Honduras?
> Anita: Yeah, it’s only for vacation.

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Anita: Honduras is like poor, dangerous, only some parts are dangerous. And it is sad over there because there are a lot of…

Kathy: pollution.

Anita: Yeah, pollution.

…….

Me: So which place is home to you?

Bella: I only have, I only have couple friends…

Kathy: Home (*smiles awkwardly and pause*) I would say Central America, all my families are in Colombia, so I would say Colombia.

Anita: But it's more comfortable *here*. I like *here* because it's comfortable.

When I asked Anita and Kathy where they considered home to be, Anita replied "I would always say that in USA because you will have way better life here." In addition, Honduras, for her understanding, is a place "only for vacation." Similar to previous data, Anita's usage of pronoun "you" and other people's perceptions of her Honduran identity showed her vagueness of how she positioned her ethnic identities. In addition, when the discourse was related to her identity as an American citizen, her discourse was related to the comfort and the social, cultural, and economic capitals that her family could not access in Honduras. For instance, some words she used to in her discourse related to Honduras are "poor," "dangerous," "dirty," or "no opportunities for a good job." The language she used had shown a conscious inclination of her American identity. The findings of Anita's multiple identities and her usage of different pronouns to identify her ethnic identities lend support to findings in previous literature that the new generation of immigrant youth are more aware of their multiple ethnic identities and the privileges and disadvantages that carry with their multiple identities (Au & El-Haj, 2007; Nguyen, 2008).

In addition, the struggle and ambivalence of Anita's negotiation of her multiple identities reflects work on similar students in previous literature (Bondy, 2015; El-Haj, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Thai, 2001). The experiences of feeling ambivalent corresponds with Yon's (2000) notion

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of “diaspora space,” which is a space where “diasporic peoples converge and where multiple subject positions and identities are proclaimed, juxtaposed, contested, and disavowed (p.17). These excerpts showed that Anita was negotiating her multiple identities while situating herself in different discourses and interacting with different groups of people. Unlike Kathy’s evident Colombian and American identities, Anita’s identities as American or Honduran were more fluid. Anita’s identities as shown in these excerpts illustrated the complexity, fluidity, and hybridity of identity characteristics. Anita’s diasporic identity reminds us that students’ identity positions are constructed from not only their relationships with other people, but also from their associations of the multiple places that they encounter in their discursive practices (Yon, 2000). Also, Anita’s imaginations of her Honduran community helped her expand herself by exploring multiple identities in different time and space and help her create new images of herself and build up new relationships (Wenger, 1998). Anita’s changing pronouns when positioning herself in different social contexts emphasizes that identity is constantly shifting and situational. The changes of different pronouns might indicate that Anita was actively negotiating her multiple social identities; the process of negotiating the in-between interstitial identity passage might help Anita create opportunities for cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994).

Anita’s usage of multiple pronouns when switching to different topics suggests that her identities were hybrid and her sense of belonging was rooted depending on specific locations and contexts. The process of the CLD students’ negotiation of multiple national identities supports the poststructuralist perspective that identity is not essential. It is the character of polyculture that enabled them to take different routes to construct their multiple identities and open up space for belonging (Yon, 2000). Additionally, CLD students’ imagined community outside of American borders is also important to their identity construction.

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The Changes of CLD Students' Identity Positions. Although the findings showed that the CLD girls' cultural and linguistic backgrounds were significant to their ethnic identity, I also found that the talk of their CLD backgrounds has decreased throughout their participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. For instance, I asked the same questions individually about their perceptions and other people's understanding of their ethnic identities in an interview in November 2015, and I found that their answers changed, and part of them were different than their reply in previous semesters. For example, instead of introducing their diverse backgrounds, their answers were all similar to their non-CLD peers. When I asked them to introduce themselves in the interview, all three CLD girls first told me that they were born in Iowa City and Anita even clearly identified the location and the name of the hospital in which where she was born. Only Jamie included her Vietnamese identity when I asked them to write down their introduction. The changes of their identity positions support previous studies that identity is fluid and complex, and it shifts in different time and space (Norton, 2000). One possible reason might be that the CLD girls cared more about friendship with their friends because other sixth graders joined our group, and they were friends with Kathy, Anita, and Bella. While the CLD girls' discourses of their ethnic identities decreased overtime, the discourses related to their friendship circle increased in our group discussion. Although it was impossible to find out all the factors that influenced how they introduced themselves in different time and space, the changes of their discourses about themselves could not be separated from their discursive practices inside and outside of school settings. Moreover, the findings echo previous studies that that friendship and their peer culture played an influential role in pre-adolescents' identity constructions. That is to say, both CLD students' diverse cultural backgrounds and their peer culture might be important

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for educators' understanding of the relationships between pre-adolescents' construction of their learner identity.

The Discourses Related to CLD Girls' American Identity

After listening to the CLD girls' diverse cultural experiences and stories, I found that the three CLD girls often made comparisons between their experiences in the United States and their heritage countries. Therefore, when I was analyzing the data, I paid attention to the CLD girls' identity positions of their American identity and discourses that occurred when they described their American identity. When I asked the girls how they would introduce themselves to a new friend, both Kathy and Anita replied "Colombian" and "Honduran" without hesitation and only afterwards did their American identity receive mention. One possible reason that their American identity emerged later might be due to the fact that they considered their American citizenship as a default to their identity in the US setting, and thus they did not have to introduce the same information that they all shared with their peers. However, it was a challenge for me to confirm my hypothesis of their default American identities from the data.

In the data, I closely examined which of Gee's notions of Discourses and conversations the girls used when building up their American identities. The following example illustrates how Kathy positioned herself as American when she shared her Colombian friends being jealous of her American identity.

> Kathy: Usually my Colombian friends get very jealous because I am American. Because they know it's a free country and then that mostly they don't like here, because they get jealous. When I can put in the normal clothes at school [in America], and they have to wear uniform [in Colombia]. Or because they speak more than one language. And I am only speaking English and Spanish, so basically they were jealous.

The above excerpt illustrated that Kathy's American identity empowered her social identity when she made comparisons with her Colombian friends' life and her American life. In the

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excerpt, the themes in her story were freedom and having choices. She emphasized her American identity when she described America as a "free country" and by providing examples of students having freedom to choose what to wear at school. She used the word, jealous three times to contrast with the choices and freedom students could have in both countries. The social and economic capital Kathy had based on her American identity allowed her to attend a more expensive private school when she visited Colombia. Her friends were jealous because her friends' family couldn't afford the private school where students had the freedom to choose their dress code. In addition, Kathy and her Colombian friends' discourse about being American and Colombian elicited their awareness of the unequal power relationships between the two countries.

The other reason that made her friends jealous of her was about her statement that "I speak only English and Spanish." Her statement indicated that in their context, English and Spanish were considered as more valid languages in both countries. Her belief and value of the two languages could be interpreted that the two languages were spoken and valued by the dominant population and other languages were considered as less popular in a larger social context. The unequal power relations among different languages caused her Colombian friend's jealous. In this example, Kathy's economic capital and her ability to speak English and Spanish had enabled her to position and be positioned as a person who has more power in this context. On the other hand, her discourse of feeling empowered by speaking only English and Spanish might indicate that people who have are multilingual were not viewed as a valuable asset in their discourse. This might be a power behind discourse that English and Spanish were more legitimate than other languages in Kathy's discourse.

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Previous studies illustrated that CLD students were more aware of their identities and the privilege and power they had with their American identity (Abu El-Haj, 2007; Nguyen, 2008). One example of the CLD girls' comparison of their multiple ethnic identities occurred when we had a discussion about what a visa is.

> Me: Because my country [Taiwan] is too small, and we don't have a lot of cooperation [with other countries]. If I go to a European country, I have to apply for Visa, but for American, it's easier.
> Kathy: We [American] can travel everywhere.
> …..
> Me: If you go to Vietnam, you don't have to apply any Visa, but people want to come to the US, and they need to apply for a Visa, why?
> Jamie: I think…
> Anita: Because American they can go everywhere they want to, they can go everywhere?
> Jamie: Well, it's because that other states [she refers to states as countries] are poor.
> Kathy (*nods her head*): Yeah, we are the richest country.

In the above excerpt, Kathy showed her American identity when pointing out the resources American can access when traveling in the world. Fairclough (2001) stated that analyzing how individuals use pronouns helps researchers gain a better understanding of the relationship of power and solidarity. The pronoun *we* Kathy used can be categorized as an inclusive "we" (Fairclough, 2001, p. 106) that referred to all the girls in the group or other people who have American citizenship. In addition, her American identity enabled her or people who are in the same American community to have the access to travel to different countries without applying for a visa. She also used the superlative form "the richest" to emphasize and compare the power America has with other countries.

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Similar discourses emerged from Anita and Jamie's data when they compared the resources they could access in the United States.

> Anita: My mom came here first because she wanted to have a better life. Because over there (Honduras) where she lived was SO poor and SO dangerous. Because Honduras is the most dangerous place in the world. There are a lot of crimes and my grandma did not want that. My grandma said to them that "if you want to go, I know a place you guys can go." So my mom waited and my grandma said to go to US because they will have more stuff.
>
> ……
>
> Anita: I wonder if I stayed in Honduras. If I did, I might not get a good job, because they don't have good colleges over there. There is no middle school over there. So you need to go to school from elementary to high school.

Anita's excerpts revealed the global economic disparities and the unequal educational opportunities between the United States and Honduras. In her discourse, she used words like "SO poor" "SO dangerous," "the most dangerous," and "crimes" to compare with the "stuff" they could have in the United States. The "stuff" her grandma mentioned in conversation echoed Anita's examples of having better jobs, educational opportunities, and a safe living environment. The data shown from Anita and Kathy's examples showed that although all the CLD girls have American citizenship, their past life experiences and the discourses related to their ethnic identities had allowed them to be more aware of the unequal power dynamics in local and larger social contexts and their impacts to their future life trajectories.

Kathy also shared a similar story to Anita's in which parents immigrate to the United States in order to have a better life and educational opportunities for their kids. Her desire of hoping to be recognized as a successful student, and her desire of having a good education and being one of the elite students at a top university is shown in her discourse. When Malala Yousafzai's life story was introduced to the girls, I asked the girls to make a list of items that they considered as valuable; items they would be upset about if someone took them away. Kathy shared her disappointment if her opportunities for entering elite schools are missing.

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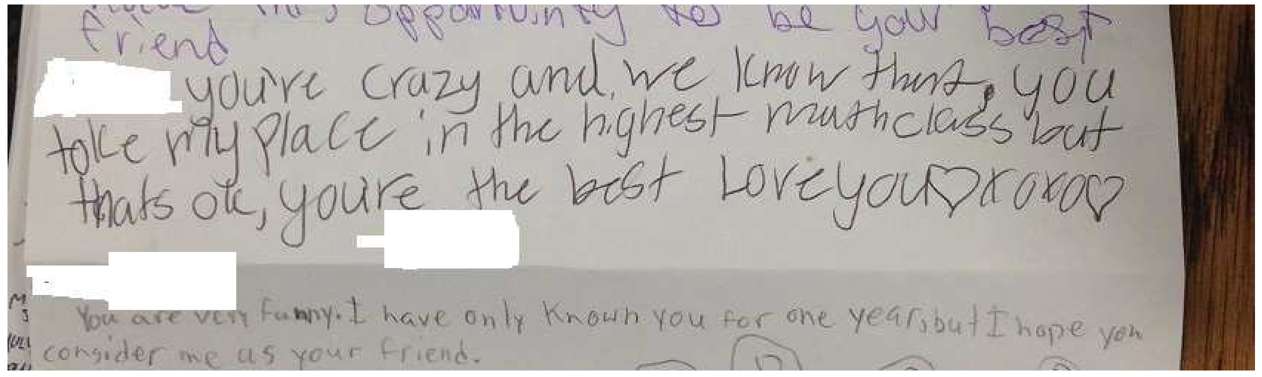
Jennifer: My house, my family, my clothes
Me: Your house, your family, and your clothes
Kathy: Let's say of you have the chance to go to Harvard and Oxford, and…
Anita: Harvard are for smart people, like really smart people.
Kathy: It is really hard [to be accepted in Harvard or Oxford]
Me: You ARE smart!
Kathy: I don't know. If there is only one spot left to college. And there is one spot, and someone take it away. I might be frustrated.

Kathy's idea of not only having good education but also entering top universities might echo her previous ethnic discourse of having better employment and educational opportunities in the USA. The discourse of her American identity might have a strong relation to her desire to gain social and economic capital in order to have a better life in the US. The following example also showed Kathy's desire to be recognized as a good student in her math class.



"Bella, you're crazy and we know that, you take my place in the highest math class but that's ok, you're the best. Love you"

Figure 5.5. Kathy's Note to Bella

The message that Kathy wrote to Bella indicated that although they were best friend and they knew each other well, the message of being the "highest" in math class showed her concern about her school performance. The discourses she revealed in her language, her interaction with the smart girl Jennifer, and the conversational patterns between me and her, all showed that she assumed her good reader/student's identity in the book group.

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In this study, Kathy's identities as Colombian/Hispanic, American, a leader, and a good reader/student were the most recognizable identities she perceived and those most perceived by other members in the group. The data found from Kathy's different identities showed that identity is multiple, relational, and continuously negotiated. Kathy positioned different identities when the discourses changed, and she interacted with different group members. Also, she continued negotiating her identities when she found out that her student identity was challenged or reinforced. The process of negotiating different identities played a critical role to construct her identity when participating in the Strong Girl Read Strong Books book club.

Jamie also shared her mom's immigrant story. She mentioned the insufficient medical resources, job opportunities, and economic power that were the major reasons her mother decided to emigrate from Vietnam to the United States.

> Jamie: I ask her [Jamie's mom] that "why don't American visit Vietnam or need to do things in Vietnam?" and she is like "no one really wants to stay [in Vietnam] because it is really poor."
> Me: So did your parents tell you that they are going back to Vietnam? Or are they going to move back or staying here?
> Jamie: Well, they just gonna stay here. She [Jamie's mom] thinks we have more opportunities in America for better jobs. And doctor in Vietnam, they just buy licenses to be doctors.
> Me: What do you mean? So they are not real doctors?
> Jamie: Yes. My mother's dad died because a doctor gave him too little medicine.

The discourse in Jamie's example shared a similar pattern and reinforces ideas in previous literature; CLD girls' families emigrated from their home country to the United States for their American dream: a higher quality of life, more job opportunities, and medical resources. The three CLD girls' discourses related to American identity encompassed functions, such as economic and educational opportunities and better life quality (Abu El-Hjai, 2009; Bondy, 2014; Bondy, 2015; Norton, 2000). In addition, the discourses indicated that they were aware of the differences between people's perceptions about their heritage countries and America, and this

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awareness might provide them opportunities to explore the power behind discourse in a larger social level (Nguyen, 2008).

CLD Students' Multiple Identities and Their Sites of Struggle

Tensions Among Their Multiple Belongings

In the discussion of the CLD girls' diverse ethnic backgrounds, the findings showed that they were often positioned in a certain ethnic category based on their biological markers and linguistic features, such as skin color, accent, race, and so on. They also revealed their uneasiness when people overgeneralized their ethnic and cultural identity in the United States. Fairclough (2001) defined discourse as socially constructed and recognized various power relations exercised in the discourse; on the other hand, there is also power behind discourses. Although the CLD girls' position of their American identity produced power, the unequal power relationship between America and their heritage countries also created tensions between their multiple ethnic identities. For instance, one of the group leaders, Catie, shared her story about how people made assumptions about her based on her skin color while she was travelling in Peru. She shared her story as being treated as a "gringa" when she went out with a group of Hispanic people. Kathy later also shared her ambivalent feelings when Colombian people mocked her American identity. The data showed that identity is relational and it varies when individuals are interacting with different social communities. When the discourse was related to the topic of visas in our Strong Girls group, Kathy's American identity was empowered; however, when her American identity was recognized by people in Colombia, her American identity was disprivileged. Kathy's example echoes the characteristics that identity is relational, and the contradictions and tensions that an individual experience with her multiple selves provide opportunities for students to understand themselves (Davies & Harré, 1990). That is to say, Kathy's experiences of being

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labelled as "gringa" might help her be more aware of her multiple identities and the power relationships between different social communities.

The discussion of being judged and positioned by people in the United States and the CLD girls' heritage countries showed that elementary CLD girls were aware of their multiple identities and some of them experienced the tension from different power relationships. Although Strong Girls book club provided opportunities for the CLD girls to explicitly discuss the tension in terms of their race, culture, and ethnicity, I found that facilitating the discussion, encouraging the CLD students to share their stories, and inviting their peers to participate in the discussion and contribute their voices were sometimes challenging. For example, the data illustrated that the girls showed different degrees of engagement when we had the discussion about applying for a visa; Kathy and Anita couldn't wait to explain what a visa was, Jamie asked questions and made the comparison of being an American and Vietnamese; other girls showed less interest in the topic. The reaction toward the talk of a visa created a symbolic border between the CLD students and their non-CLD peers. I employed Fairclough's (2001) concept of member resource (MR) to examine the girls' understanding of a visa. Fairclough defined member resources as "what people have in their heads and draw upon when they produce or interpret texts, including their knowledge of language, representations of the natural and social worlds they inhibit, values, beliefs, assumptions, and so on" (p. 20). While the CLD students were sharing their knowledge and member resources of a visa, the CLD girls shared different beliefs, values, assumptions, and interpretations of an American visa from their non-CLD peers. The meanings of a visa that each girl drew from their member resources varied and that helped shape the girls' understanding of meanings from different perspectives. As Fairclough (2001) states, individual member resources "are socially generated, and their nature is dependent on the

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social relations and struggles out of which they were generated" (p. 20). In addition, these internalized member resources are socially transmitted and create and produce different power relations. However, for some girls, the concept and functions of a visa were very different from their CLD peers, and thus they tended to lose their interest in participating in the conversation because they did not share the same experiences with the CLD girls. That is, if the discussion only benefits a certain group of students, then it became difficult to create new socially generated member resources in the discussion group.

Language is a Site of Struggle

Perceptions of CLD girls' heritage languages also influenced their identity positions. Poststructuralists believe that people use language to create meanings, construct our identities, and produce different power relations in different social practices (Weedon, 1997). Fairclough (2001) stated that language is part of a social society, a social process, and a socially conditioned process that is conditioned by other parts of society. Thus, examining the discourse of the language helps uncover the social processes, social practices, and different power relations in the society. For CLD students, the usage and their perceptions of their heritage languages also plays an important role in helping them maintain their heritage identity, make connections to their community, and expand their world views. One of the common characteristics that the three CLD students shared was that they could all speak their heritage languages and those were the languages they used at home. The three girls' stories indicated that they had no problem communicating with their families when they visited their homes in their heritage countries. The data from the three girls showed that their families had strong affiliations to the place where their family emigrated from. For instance, Anita told me that her parents had Skyped with their Honduran family every week; Kathy and her mother had visited Colombia every two years and

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her mom had to send money back to Colombia; Jamie's mom had forced her to learn Vietnamese on the weekend in order to be able to read and write in Vietnamese. In addition, their ability to speak their heritage languages without English accents helped them blend in their communities in Vietnam, Honduras, and Colombia. The data showed that the girls' affiliation with other family members in their heritage countries and their ability to speak their heritage languages were crucial to their position of their ethnic identities.

The other examples of how CLD students' heritage language and culture were seen as advantages of their ethnic identity were shown in the conversation with Kathy and me. When I asked Kathy how other people perceived her Spanish-speaking identity, she told me that people often think it is cool to speak Spanish, and one teacher at school even asked her to work with a new CLD student to help him review his Spanish and introduce and maintain his Latino cultural heritage. Kathy's positive attitude toward her Spanish-speaking ability indicated that her bilingual ability was recognized by her teacher in the formal institution. Kathy's case revealed that her bilingual identity was legitimized by people around her, and she used her recognized bilingual ability to gain more power and help her participation in the book club. That is to say, Kathy positioned her Spanish-speaking expert identity and further used this identity as an agency to take on her helper/teacher identity to help other students.

Although Kathy's bilingual ability was recognized in our group, her Spanish sometimes became a struggle when other girls did not recognize it. For instance, one afternoon, when all the Strong Girls sat in a big group and read the poem "The Bully" by Guadalupe Garcia McCall, one girl asked for the meaning of Guadalupe. Kathy responded confidently and pronounced the name in her fluent Spanish. Some girls began laughing when they heard the sounds of her native Spanish and made fun of her among themselves. I felt awkward but I did not intervene; Kathy

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blushed and was silent. Later, during the small group, Kathy told Dr. Schmidt that she was embarrassed when people were laughing at her. She was accustomed to other students making fun of her Spanish; she insisted that she was not bothered by it anymore. Kathy's embarrassment revealed her discomfort. However, her silence might be interpreted as an unequal power relation in the group because her Spanish was not understood by the majority of the girls. In addition, her reply of getting used to people's teasing indicates that similar situations happened before and she did not have enough agency to speak up for herself.

Anita also had similar experiences when she made comments on how people often overgeneralize Spanish-speaking people and how they lacked knowledge of Spanish-speaking countries other than Mexico.

> Anita: I think when people think about Spanish, they only think about that it's from Mexico. Spanish is the only language from Mexico, not from different countries. But I don't think they learned their geography well enough. Because we do some, so they probably, they do social studies in every single day, every single school year, so I don't know why they would say that because I think they were dumb because they don't know the geography well.
>
> Me: Did you get the chance to let other people know that not all people who speak Spanish are Mexican?
>
> Anita: Yeah, exactly. Like there are a ton of people (who speak Spanish). Most of them are in South America, like mostly Spanish, their language is Spanish and a little bit in Europe. Mostly the bottom of Central America.
>
> Me: You know, that's very cool. Because I know there are a lot of counties that they speak Spanish, but I didn't know a lot of them. But after I knew you, Kathy, and Catie, so I started google it and I started to look at the countries.
>
> Anita: Yeah. Because a lot of people suspect, because a lot of people think that because this country is more popular, then they must speak this language. But some people, like Asian, people always say that "Oh, they are from China." There are not just China, there are Hong Kong, there is Japan, Tokyo, Vietnam, and Korea.

In this excerpt, Anita explained that most people often overgeneralized her ethnic identity due to their deficient knowledge about Latino/Latina and Hispanic countries. In addition, she mentioned that one reason that people assumed she was a Mexican was because the Mexican population in

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the United States is the dominant Spanish-speaking group. She also provided examples of people's overgeneralization of Asian people when they did not know each other. Moreover, she complained that other students failed to distinguish different Spanish-speaking countries despite the fact that they learned the information in their social study class. Anita's discourse about peoples' mismatch and overgeneralization of her heritage identity illustrated that she wanted her ethnic identity to be recognized and valued. Nevertheless, the curriculum they learned at school did not provide enough opportunity for students to recognize and be more aware of the uniqueness among CLD students.

Furthermore, the contradiction of English and Spanish occurred when Anita shared her perspective of how Spanish-speaking immigrants were perceived negatively by the public in the conversation. At the end of Fall 2015 semester, I asked Anita if she still shared her parents' immigration story She told me that she was more reluctant to share her parents' stories because of people's judgement.

> Anita: I don't talk about my parents a lot because I don't want other people to judge me because…
> Me: You mean here (America) or Honduras?
> Anita: I mean here.
> Me: So do you think that if you tell them about your parents, your friend or other people will feel something weird?
> Anita: Not my friend, because they trust me and I trust them everything. But people that they don't know me or they are dumb, they don't understand me that well, I probably won't tell them because they would get the wrong thing.
> Me: they would have stereotype about you?
> Anita: you know how dumb Donald Trump; he is running for a president now. He didn't want Hispanic to stay here. So people goanna think that, because he is running for president now, some kids might feel that Asians and Hispanics are the enemy, but we are really not.

The transcripts from Anita's discourse showed that her hesitation to demonstrate her Spanish-speaking ability and heritage background resulted from other people's negative perceptions of Latino/Latina in the US. Anita's discourse revealed that the public perceived Latino/Latina as a

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negative influence in the US setting. Anita's response demonstrated her awareness of the public's perceptions of Latina/Latino in the United State through a socio-political lens. Moreover, the data showed that Anita's discourse related to the stigma of being a Spanish-speaking immigrant was from the political statement of the presidential candidate, Donald Trump, who publicly addressed his anti-Latino opinion in his speeches. Although Anita used the word "dumb" twice to describe people who were not familiar with or had stereotypes about Latino culture, the power from the social media, other people's assumptions, and the consequence of the misunderstanding invalidate Anita's Hispanic backgrounds. Anita's discourses of Hispanic America illustrated different levels of power from local, institutional, and situational determinants (Fairclough, 2001). Her response toward other people showed a situational factor she experienced in her story, which was influenced by the discursive practices that were shaped and reshaped at the institutional and the societal levels. In the excerpt, she makes clear statement that the school institution did not provide enough exposure for students to deepen their understanding of diversity from their curriculum. Moreover, the discourses she learned from the media were shaped and reproduced from a larger societal power relation that caused another struggle of her multiple identities.

The discourses from both Kathy's and Anita's stories toward their bilingual ability showed that identity is complex, and the knowledge of language is socially constructed through everyday literacy practice: personal stories and the history that resulted from different power relations within institutional and larger societal levels. Kathy's story is significant for educators to change our deficit view of CLD students' backgrounds and perceive their diverse culturally and linguistically backgrounds as assets to empower their identities (Webster & Lu, 2012). Moreover, Anita's example supports the idea that children's language ideologies are influenced

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by the literacy practices at school and home as an institution (Martinez-Roldan & Malav, 2004). Gee (1996) pointed out that our literacy is always constructed from a particular world view, and this world view is always ideological, and it empowers and marginalizes people. In Anita's case, her avoidance of mentioning her Spanish speaking identity resulted from the literacy practices she learned from inside and outside of school settings.

Although the data showed that the three CLD girls' multilingual abilities had legitimized their ethnic identities in their heritage countries, it also showed that the development of multilingual abilities might be influenced by their language policy at home or outside of school settings.

> Chase: Wait, do Colombian, do they speak Spanish?
> Kathy: Yeah. But what really cool over there [Colombia] [is that] every single time when I talked to my cousin, they are like "can you help my English homework?" I was like, "wait a minute, what are you talking about? Are you guys taking English course [in Colombia]? " "[her cousin] Yeah, how come you don't do that over there [America], like having Spanish or something?"
> Bella: We do.
> Kathy: No, I mean like in elementary. They get to learn English in elementary school, which is really cool.

The exchange between Kathy and her cousin in Colombia about their perceptions of learning a second language in elementary schools showed her positive attitude toward her Spanish ability. For instance, she used the word "cool" twice in the conversation when referring to learning English in a formal school institution in Colombia, which might reveal her positive value of having multilingual abilities. The data might also show her perception of the lack of multilingual learning environments in American elementary school settings. Her opinion showed her desire that Spanish could be used and recognized as a legitimate language in school settings. Another example showing English was more legitimate and recognized as a powerful language took place when Kathy shared her Colombian friends' perception about Speaking English (shown in p. 60).

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Kathy's experiences of speaking Spanish and English illustrated that language is a site of struggle and the hidden power relations between different languages represented different degrees of power in different contexts.

From Kathy and her friend's conversation, we learned that being able to speak Spanish was one way that Kathy could be legitimized as Colombian in her Latino social group; however, it was also seen as a threat to hinder her English development in her house. The CLD girls' language policy at home also affected their identity positions. For instance, although Kathy's Spanish speaking ability was recognized and valued by her school teacher, her mother possessed different opinions toward her English and Spanish speaking ability. Kathy mentioned that her mom suggested she speak more English outside of school settings because she believed that Kathy needed to practice more English in order to "improve her reading scores." Her mother's suggestion of decreasing her use of Spanish might indicate that English was the dominant language that influenced Kathy's academic achievement at school. Thus, speaking Spanish might inhibit her English development. On the other hand, Jamie once told me in the informal interview that her mom insisted that Jamie had to learn and use Vietnamese at home as much as possible in order to maintain the culture and language. Although Jamie was quiet in the group discussion, both the nonverbal and verbal language and symbols that Jamie illustrated in her Discourse showed her strong affiliation with her Vietnamese community.

The purpose of this section was to examine critically the relationships between students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and identity positions. Although the three CLD students shared different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the data showed that they were aware of their multiple ethnic identities and actively participated in the process of negotiating their ethnic identities. They used different Discourses to represent their diverse backgrounds and showed

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their desire to be recognized as different from their peers in the Strong Girls group. Even though the CLD girls were enacting their agency to shape their ethnic identity, they also experienced different forms of struggles that were the results of different power relations within local, institutional and social levels. For instance, Kathy and Catie's experiences of being recognized as gringa, and Anita's hesitance to discuss about her parents and Hispanic backgrounds were no single incidents. Their multiple identities and their Discourses were the intersections of multiple power relations and the result of discursive practices from the past history of people's everyday life in a larger social level. Thus, critically examining the discourses from local and larger social structures is essential in order to raise critical consciousness of the multiple power dynamics and how they influence students' learning and identity positions. The examples of CLD girls talking about where home was and where they belonged suggest that identity constructions were complicated and imagined. Their history of their ethnic affiliation, gender, social and economic capital, and other people's perceptions about them all took part in their identity positions. These factors are all important to educators' understanding of the relationship between CLD students' learning and their identities.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I provide a detailed discussion and examples of CLD girls' identity positions and discourses as they emerged in the Strong Girls book club. In this chapter, I aimed at exploring the three CLD girls' multiple identities in the book club. The findings showed that CLD students' diverse backgrounds were significant to their ethnic identities. Also, the discourses emerging from the group discussion about race/ethnicity, friendship, and gender also contributed to their identity construction. Lastly, although multiple identities were found, CLD students' multiple identities sometimes created tensions and struggles when they participated in

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different social communities. The findings of this chapter illustrate the complexity of identity positions and their relationships with learning. In the next chapter, I will provide conclusions, suggestions, and implications for future researchers, practitioners, and teacher education programs.

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CHAPTER VI CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

> *"You really judge somebody before you talk out loud. Like at the same time, you are gonna to make few assumptions about maybe where they came from. People do that to me all the time. I look like Hispanic, so they assumed my parents are Hispanics. I am like "Nope, you are wrong, they are white" and they are goanna to assume that I speak Spanish. It's not fair for me to be like so umm, what's the word, like stuck about that, like "how dare you made that assumption about me ……. I am like "yeah, that should offend you, "but take that opportunity to educate someone, don't get so defensive and just starts to open up and educate them and help them understand and see, you know. Like what really offend me is who people assume I am just Mexican or Colombian. Like the few countries that we hear from the radio or where the celebrities were from. You know. But instead of getting mad and saying "no, that's not where I am from." I am closing them off and then say "no, I am from Paraguay, it's a small country in South America." and I take the time to explain that." (Informal conversation with Catie)*

The above conversation took place at the end of the spring 2015 semester. When I shared some of my thoughts about the girls from my data with Catie, she started talking about her unique cultural background. I continue to realize that these external and physical markers of CLD students regarding their gender, race, and skin color will never go away. They will be part of their discourse that shapes and reshapes their identities and their trajectories. Catie's experiences with people's misunderstanding and stereotyping of her based on her physical markers, and her decision to help others recognize her diversity and educate her future students, shed light on my construction of my conclusion and implications of the findings presented in the previous chapter. In the first part of this chapter, I summarize and conceptualize the findings from the previous chapter in relation to the main three research questions. The findings of this study will help deepen understanding of the relationship between learning and identity in the field of language and literacy education. In this chapter, I provide suggestions and implications for future researchers, practitioners, and teacher education programs.

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The purpose of this study is to examine elementary girls' identity positions outside of a classroom setting. In this study, I focused on three elementary school students who have culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and were once ELL students. I adopted the term Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CLD) because it values students' linguistic and life experiences as assets instead of focusing on a deficit in language proficiency (Webster & Liu, 2012). The three research questions that guided my study are:

1. What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
2. What kinds of identities do CLD students perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?
3. What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?

The purposes of this study were twofold. First, the study attempted to gain a deeper understanding of current elementary CLD students' identity positions and to explore discourses that emerged in the discussion group and helped contribute to their culturally and linguistically diverse identities. In addition, the study attempted to build upon previous identity literature and add nuance to the conversation of CLD students' identity positions, especially early adolescent CLD students.

In this study, I adopted a poststructuralist lens to investigate identity as multiple, fluid, hybrid, and a site of struggle. Additionally, the literacy activities that took place in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club were considered as social practices which helped shape and reshape the girls' identity positions and discourses and helped change and reproduce different power relations. I applied an ethnographic research approach to receive etic and emic

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perspectives while collecting the data. Gee's (2001) and Fairclough's (2001) concepts of critical discourse analysis (CDA) and qualitative methods were employed to analyze the data. These qualitative methods allowed me to explore multiple discourses and power relations at local and global social levels. In the following section, I summarize the findings and address how the findings relate to previous literature.

The findings discussed in the previous chapters showed that identity is not fixed, it is ongoing and emergent through literacy practices that are constructed and reconstructed by power relations in society. In addition, the social identities we assume that produce and duplicate unequal power relationships also affect our discourse. That is to say, identity, discourse, and social power relations are interwoven with each other and it is impossible to discuss one without mentioning the others. In the following section, I will conceptualize and summarize my findings according to the three research questions.

1. ***What social practices contribute to the elementary school girls' participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?***

The communal identity and the literacy practices that were co-constructed by the members in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club were significant to the subjects' participation in Strong Girls. The findings showed the stable and predictable routines and the stable presence of group leaders created a safe space for the CLD girls to share their diverse cultural stories and read and respond to books and topics that were considered minority and illegitimate in the formal classroom settings. Also, this girl-only book club allowed the elementary girls to share their experiences of inequality of their gender roles inside and outside of school settings. These practices that were constructed in this girls-only community established

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a stable routine for them and created opportunities for the girls to be more aware of their gender roles.

In addition, Strong Girls was also a space for exercising and breaking through different power relations. The findings showed that both the elementary school girls and the group leaders challenged the conventions of a book club in Strong Girls. For example, Kathy's leader identity empowered her in the group discussion and challenged the traditional teacher-student relationship. Moreover, the co-constructed communal identities in the Strong Girls book club enabled the elementary girls to enact multiple identities from both inside and outside classroom settings and bring new insight into the construction of the Strong Girl culture. For instance, the fifth grade girls contributed their ideas on recruiting new members and offered help to assume their insiders' role at school in order to invite more new Strong Girl members. In addition, the interactions between me and the girls created opportunities for me as the group leader, educator, and researcher to be more aware of my positionality in the book club and the ways that power relations influenced the elementary school girls' participation.

Another important factor that influenced their participation in the club was their peer culture and friendships. For instance, the girls used Strong Girls as a social space to maintain their friendship by hanging out with their friends and reading and responding to books or topics that they were interested in. The relationships that were built before joining Strong Girls enabled the creation of a safe space for sharing personal stories and emotions. For instance, when the new member, Flora, participated in Strong Girls, her friendship with other senior members in Strong Girls and my relationships with those members facilitated Flora's participation in the book discussion. The bonding between the girls and their friends and the group leader opened avenues for literacy witness and testimony and allowed their emotions to enter our conversation (Dutro,

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2008). The culture that was created in the afterschool book club was also a space to expand the elementary girls' social worlds and increase their understanding of each other. For example, Anita disclosed that she was more familiar with Jamie after participating in the Strong Girls book club although they were in the same grade classroom at school.

However, friendship and peer culture could also hinder the girls' participation in the afterschool book club, sometimes creating and reproducing power structures that could prevent the girls' participation in the group. For instance, while other people's recognition of Kathy's Colombian identity and her leader identity provided her a higher social status among her friends, this same peer culture was sometimes employed to prohibit Anita's investment in her reader and writer identity. Anita's frustration at her failure to be recognized as a legitimate reader and writer among her friends was shown in her journal responses.

In addition to the observable identities, the CLD girls used multimodal ways to position their multiple social identities both in public and in private, which provided me insight into the ways these activities also contributed to shaping and reshaping the Strong Girls community. For instance, Jamie used her journal as a medium to relate to her Vietnamese identity and build up relationship with me. Anita's disclosure of the struggles she encountered with her friends and her use of her journal to solicit my opinions showed that she wanted to fit in and be recognized by her friends. Another multimodal way of showing their participation in the books club was through reading aloud and performing. For instance, Jamie demonstrated her participation by enacting expressive voices, body languages, and emotions when performing one of the characters in the book. She also exercised her agency when other girls tried to make decisions for her. This finding highlights the role of adopting multimodal activities to help students engage in the

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meaning making process and create opportunities for possible identities (Leland & Harste, 1994; Loerts, 2013; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Kendrick & Jones, 2008).

2. ***What kinds of identities do CLD students perform in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?***

In this study, four main categories of identity were found significantly throughout the data: a) identity related to heritage backgrounds, b) identity related to American citizenship, c) identity related to the communal practices in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club, and d) their hybrid identities. I adopted Gee's (2001) capital "D" Discourse as a tool of inquiry to understand how the CLD students presented different ways of using language, thinking, valuing, acting, performing, writing, and interacting to let other people recognize their social identities. The three CLD girls in my study assumed different identities when interacting with different social groups or discussing different subjects. This finding echoes previous identity literature in suggesting that the three CLD students' identities were multiple, fluid, hybrid, and a site of struggle and that CLD students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds were strongly influenced by their identity positions.

The first category of identity found consistently was the CLD students' identity related to their heritage backgrounds. The data showed that the three CLD students used various Discourses to demonstrate their diverse ethnic identities. For instance, Kathy used her Colombian Discourse by consistently wearing a Colombian T-shirt, comparing life experiences in Colombia and America, and speaking Spanish. Anita used writing and sharing her parent's immigration story to signal her Honduran identity. Jamie demonstrated her Vietnamese identity by drawing, sharing her stories from Vietnam, and peppering her narratives with Vietnamese words. When assuming their American identities, they adopted the discourses related to the

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resources and opportunities they could receive as American citizens.

These multiple identities that were found from their Discourses were not fixed; they were relational, which supported Davies & Harré's (1990) positioning theory that CLD students' identities shift across time and space and are positioned according to the CLD students' understanding of both themselves and other people's perceptions about them. Although these CLD students had diverse ethnic backgrounds, they showed varying degrees of eagerness in helping other people to recognize their ethnic identities in public and in private. The findings align with previous literature in the way that the CLD students in this study exercised their agency to position themselves in different identities when they interacted with different social communities. For instance, when Kathy and Anita interacted with peers who shared similar Hispanic backgrounds or talked about Hispanic cultural practices, their Hispanic identities were more obvious and they proudly exchanged dialogue in Spanish. However, when our topics shifted to girls' rights to education, they tended to use the pronoun "we" to refer to a collective identity as Strong Girls or girls who have the right to have an education.

Another category of their ethnic identity was their identities related to their American citizenship. The findings showed that the three CLD girls were all conscious of their American identity, and they were all aware of the difference and privilege of their American citizenship. For example, they often made comparisons between their current life experiences and their imagined communities from their heritage countries. In addition, they all revealed a sense of ambivalence and in-betweeness toward their multiple ethnic identities. The finding was in line with previous literature about experiences of immigrant students in the United States, Australia, and Canada. (Bondy, 2015; Díaz, 2016; El-Haj, 2007; Nguyen, 2008; Thai, 2001; Yon, 2000)

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The in-betweenness of their diasporic identities and their American identity also led to the construction of their hybrid identity, referring to a space that was created between CLD girls' fixed identity categories (Bhabha, 1994). In addition, these hybrid identities resonate with Bhabha's (1994) notion that identities are elusive and the meaning of identity can be "appropriated, translated, and rehistorized" (p.37). The CLD girls' hybrid identities were seen as a site of struggle, which helped reshape their identities and create new identities. For instance, Anita employed different pronouns when she positioned herself in different social communities. The evidence of Anita's examples might indicate that she was aware of and negotiated her multiple ethnic identities. In addition, the awareness of her multiple identities and her negotiations of her multiple identities might open an avenue for Anita to create and recreate her identities (Weedon, 1987).

Another identity category was CLD students' peer culture and friendship, which was crucial to scholars and educators' understanding of CLD students' identity construction. The findings show that CLD students' identity positions were strongly influenced by their cultural and linguistic backgrounds, their everyday life experiences, and interactions within different social communities. For instance, the Strong Girls' recognition of Kathy's Colombian and leader identities empowered her and encouraged her learner identity in the book club, which helped her imagine her future self. (Norton, 2000; Kanno & Norton, 2003). The girls' peer culture and friendships, which were developed both inside and outside of Strong Girls both helped and limited their participation in the book club. For example, although Anita and Kathy shared similar cultural and linguistic backgrounds, the data revealed that Anita often felt frustrated at not being recognized as a legitimate reader and writer among her peers. Her case showed that although she actively participated in the construction of her social identities, it was not a

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guarantee that she could successfully assume a certain social identity if the members in the group did not follow the same story line (Davies & Harré, 1990). Another example of friendship taking on a dual role in both empowering and discouraging participation was also found between Jaime and Jennifer. The relationship between Jamie and Jennifer may have prevented Jamie from sharing her voice in the group. For instance, Jennifer often replied using the pronoun "we" to answer for Jamie and herself collectively when I expected to hear their individual responses. However, Jamie also revealed that she gained more confidence and was more willing to speak up for herself because of her friendship with Jennifer and her peers. Moreover, although Jamie was often silent in the group discussion group, the findings show that her motivation to be silent might also be considered as an agentic move that she strategically enacted to avoid struggles or create different identities (Lewis & Moje, 2007).

Lastly, the communal identities that were constructed and co-constructed in the book club were significant to the Strong Girl culture. In this study, I adopted the notion of culture *as a verb* in order to understand the ever-shifting active process of meaning-making situations (Street, 1993). Alvermann et al. (1999) stressed that both adolescents' experiences with their peers and experiences with their family and adult members of the communities contribute to their identity construction and peer culture. For instance, all the three CLD students had voluntarily participated in Strong Girls since they were fourth graders. They showed multimodal ways to engage in the reading and writing activities. In addition, they showed their eagerness to contribute their ideas when brainstorming new books or recruiting new Strong Girl members in this peer-based community. Moreover, they shared and invited their friends outside of Strong Girls to participate and co-construct the Strong Girl community. That is to say, the language they used to discuss Strong Girls, their decisions to wear their Strong Girl T-shirts inside and outside

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of the book club, and their reading and writing behavior all illustrated their embodiment of their Strong Girl identity and co-construct the Strong Girl culture.

3. ***What discourses about language and culture emerge in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club?***

Fairclough (2001) stated that language can be seen as discourse which serves three important roles in the society: "language is a part of society," "language is a social process," and "language is a socially conditioned process" (pp.55-56). That is to say, discourses can reflect as well as produce social practices. In addition, these interpreted and produced discourses contribute to students' identity construction. In this study, I applied Fairclough's (2001) concept of discourse to critically examine how language was used to reflect and produce discourses related to CLD girls' cultural and linguistic identities that emerged in the book club. The discourses related to the CLD students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds were found and categorized into three themes: discourses related to other people's perceptions, discourses related to power relations among their multiple identities, and discourses related to CLD students' perceptions.

Other people's perceptions about the CLD students' bilingual ability affected their identity positions. The three CLD students in this study were similar in that they were all fluent in speaking their heritage languages and at home they spoke only their heritage languages. However, the findings showed that they had different attitudes toward their bilingual ability. In Kathy's case, people's recognition of her Hispanic identity and her leader identity were mutually reinforcing one another and contributed the strength with which Kathy expressed her identities. The opportunities to use Spanish in both formal and informal school settings, empowered her and reinforced her Hispanic identity. However, Anita's insecure attitude toward her Hispanic

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American identity was strongly influenced by her understanding of other people's perceptions about her heritage background as more negative.

Discourses learned from different power relations in local and larger social levels affected CLD students' identity positions. People's perceptions about their cultural and linguistic backgrounds helped and limited CLD students' construction of their ethnic identities. The findings illustrated that people often employed the differences of their physical and language markers, such as skin color, accents, gender, and race to position CLD students' identities. The findings showed that obvious physical markers sometimes benefited but also isolated CLD students in their participation in different social communities. For instance, when Kathy visited Colombia, she could successfully blend into her Colombian community by speaking unaccented Spanish. However, in Anita's case, her different physical markers were sometimes overgeneralized by people in the United States. In addition, their close non-CLD friend, Bella, revealed that many people did not recognize the differences of the CLD students' diverse identities unless they had close peer relationships. These findings indicate that recognizing CLD students' differences and discussing how these differences interact with each other might provide more understanding of students' identity positions for their peers and teachers. Bella's reaction might illustrate that there has not been enough discussion and exposure for all students to explore the differences among their CLD peers and create opportunities for awareness of diverse cultures.

Another influence of CLD girls' heritage identities on their educational trajectories might result from their parents' beliefs about their heritage language and English, supporting the idea that taking students' home literacy practices into account might deepen our understanding of CLD students' beliefs toward their heritage language and English (Blackledge, 2000). For

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instance, although Kathy was proud of her Spanish and communicated with her family in Spanish, her mom believed that reducing her Spanish speaking time would help her reading score at school. On the other hand, Jamie's mother self-taught Jamie and insisted that she should know how to read and write in Vietnamese in order to maintain her heritage tradition and her relationship with her family in Vietnam. The findings showed that CLD students' literacy practices were also related to their parents' attitude, and their parents' attitude also impacted CLD students' understanding of their identities.

The findings of discourses related to CLD students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds showed that the three CLD students not only consciously and unconsciously negotiated their multiple identities and create hybrid identities but also had various degrees of awareness of the power relations and privilege of their multiple identities. The discourses related to the different power relations were found most noticeably when the CLD students were making comparisons between their American identity and their heritage identities and communities. For example, the pronoun "we" was used firmly when Kathy described the abundant resources and educational opportunities she could have with her American citizenship. Anita described her preference of staying in the United States because it was safer and comfortable and she could have better education and job opportunities in the United States than in Honduras. Jamie also pointed out that the unequal medical resources and support system in Vietnam forced her mom to immigrate to the United States. However, Jamie showed an inclination toward staying in Vietnam because she could stay with her Vietnamese family and there were more opportunities for travel in Vietnam. Although the CLD students' American citizenship often empowered and privileged them, the discourses of the CLD girls' American identities illustrated that although they shared similar life experiences with their non-CLD peers, their identity positions might be more

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complicated, and they might experience more struggles because of the intersections of their multiple identities and the power relations that affect the construction of their social identities. For example, their American identities were sometimes challenged by people from their heritage countries. For instance, both Kathy and the group leader, Catie, shared similar experiences of being labeled as a “gringa” when visiting their heritage countries.

Conclusion

To sum up, the findings from the three researcher questions show the complicated relationships between the ramifications of language, identity, and literacy practices in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The findings show that the literacy practices and the members’ active participation in the book club impacted their construction of the Strong Girls community and their identity positions. The CLD students’ identity positions of their diverse backgrounds did enact both inside and outside of classroom settings. The construction of identity happens moment to moment, in the past, and the future. The sediment of CLD students’ identity positions from their past history impacted their ongoing identity positions and their participation in different social and imagined communities. Furthermore, the discursive practices that took place in their everyday literacy practices within various power relations were crucial to shape and reshape their identities and discourses related to their cultural and linguistic background. The findings of this study hopefully bring insight into language and literacy educational fields. In the following section, I provide suggestions and implications for the fields of language and literacy education for practitioners, teacher education programs, and future researchers.

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Implications and Suggestion

For ESL/ FL Education

This study can shed light into educators' and researchers' understanding of CLD students in ESL/FL education. The findings show that the CLD students' identity positions were complex and that, although the three CLD students had already exited their ELL programs, both the usages of their heritage languages and English, the culture they currently participate in influenced their current understanding of themselves and their identity construction. Therefore, it is essential for ESL/FL educators to recognize and gain a deeper understanding of CLD students' diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds and incorporate them as funds of knowledge into their formal classroom settings in order to empower CLD students and their identity positions (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & Gonzalez, 2011). They defined this concept as the "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (Moll et al., 2001, p.133). In addition, recognizing the complexities of CLD students' unique identities and the intersection of diverse students in school is important to creating an equal multicultural classroom (Kubota, 2004; Neito, 2000).

The discourses that emerged in the book club show that although the CLD students were more aware of their multiple identities, people still sometimes misunderstood or overgeneralized their heritage identities and that might influence CLD students' learning trajectories. The findings of this study also illustrated that the CLD students were often judged by their physical markers, and it was impossible to separate them from the conversation. Thus, instead of avoiding CLD students' differences in the classroom, ESL/FL teachers should help all students to be more aware of their multiple identities by providing adequate opportunities for students to be exposed

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to diverse cultures, talk about differences, and gain a better understanding of the complexity of identity positions.

Another suggestion for educators and scholars of language education is that language learning is multimodal. Although words play a predominant role in language learning, other nonverbal semiotic systems are also significant to our understanding of students' learning, such as clothing, positioning of ourselves in space, facial expressions, gestures, and so forth (Young, 2010). In addition, the interpretation of students' practices cannot separate from the situated contexts that students participate in and the interactions among the members in the social communities. Thus, educators who teach CLD students must provide opportunities for students to learn practices that will benefit their participation in classrooms, especially for ELL students who share different literacy and language practices from the mainstream classrooms. In addition, ESL/FL educators can provide multicultural learning opportunities to increase non-CLD students' awareness and recognition of CLD students' unique cultural backgrounds. These practices can help both language teachers and students be more aware of power relations within and beyond educational institutions and shape and reshape their social identities (Young.2010).

Lastly, some literacy and social practices that took place in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club will contribute to creating a safe learning space in ESL/FL programs. The findings of this study showed that both CLD and non-CLD students had positive attitudes and willingness toward their participation in the afterschool book club. Also, they had to invest their multiple identities in the book club in order to be recognized as members in the book club. That is to say, if language educators can create a safe learning space in ESL/FL programs or adopt some literacy practices in pull-out models for CLD students in mainstream school settings, then

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students might change their perceptions of ESL/FL programs from a deficit perspective to a more legitimate learning environment.

For Literacy Education

Although it might be challenging for the school teachers to incorporate the same literacy activities and routines from the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club for their formal classroom settings, it is worth discussing implications that can possibly be transferred into formal school settings and curricula.

Finders (1996) advocated that both male and female students are "keenly aware of disparate positions of power, and they need opportunities to practice dealing with intellectual uncertainties and political tensions" (p. 126). The study in Strong Girls showed that both CLD and non-CLD students were aware of the power relations among different identities they positioned themselves in the book club, and they learned to negotiate these power relations. Therefore, providing a safe space for early adolescents or students who might be considered as underrepresented to talk about their questions and concerns regarding differences, such as gender, race, ethnicity, social class, is crucial for their exploration of their struggles among multiple identities, and it might help create opportunities to question dominant power relations. One possible way to expose elementary students to power tensions is by incorporating children's literature dealing with different social issues into the curriculum and inviting students to respond to these books with discussion and conversation about real life experience.

Even though it might be risky and challenging for teachers and students to reveal their vulnerability and difficult experiences, life stories and emotions do enter classrooms in private and public. Allowing students' emotions and difficult experiences to enter literacy classrooms is also important for engagement in literacy practices that support identity construction (Dutro,

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2008). This can also provide opportunities for leaders to practice dealing with student discomfort and reflect on their teaching pedagogies. When I first participated in the group discussion, I found that sometimes it was challenging for me to provide legitimate responses if questions were related to their personal experiences and their emotional issues. However, I realized how important it was for the Strong Girls to share their stories and make sure that their stories were heard by people they could trust. Thus, creating a safe space for students' emotional outlet might benefit students' engagement in their learning.

The finding of this research also showed that friendship and peer culture played a significant role in the construction of the literacy practices in the Strong Girl's community. One potentially important implication when designing literacy practices for a formal classroom setting is to acknowledge these social factors. Teachers' awareness of these factors might help students maintain and expand their friendships while simultaneously benefiting the construction of communal identity at school. In the case of Strong Girls, participating in the book club provided girls who didn't have the chance to see each other during the school day, opportunities to be with their friends and discuss the topics that they cared about. That said, this also carries some risk that popular social groups might dominate the conversation and marginalize other students. Therefore, it is crucial for the teachers to provide equal learning opportunities for students and take students' friendships and peer cultures into account.

For Teacher Education Programs

Teacher education programs play a significant role in preparing teachers to meet students' diverse learning needs and enhance all students' awareness of diversity around them. However, studies have shown that many teachers don't have enough knowledge or experience to work with CLD students and that their teaching pedagogies still benefit native English speaking

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students in mainstream classrooms. While the increasingly diverse population of CLD students makes it impossible to know all students' linguistic and cultural practices, it is still imperative for both pre-service and in-service teachers to develop skills and knowledge about CLD students' diverse backgrounds and their learning needs. For instance, it is important to understand how linguistic patterns in different language systems influence students' language development. Therefore, teacher education program should provide curriculum for pre-service teachers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of diverse students' language learning patterns.

Teachers play a crucial role in helping students be more aware of their different power relations in different social worlds. Critical literacy pedagogy is one tool teachers might use to improve students' critical and social consciousness, open spaces for students to examine social practices and identities, and create opportunities for possible identities and social change (Luke & Freebody, 1997). One example of critical literacy practices is to discuss topics that might be considered challenging and controversial in the classroom. Most teachers are not prepared to talk about the controversial issues, and they tend to shy away from the topics that are considered hard to "manage" in a big classroom setting. Incorporating the study of critical literacy pedagogy into teacher education will prepare pre-service teachers to examine different power relations, discuss difficult topics, and allow literacy witness and testimony. Moreover, elementary schools can provide workshops for in-service teachers to enhance their professional knowledge of critical literacy pedagogies and exchange experiences with educators and scholars who are experts in the educational fields. Adopting critical literacy pedagogy in teacher education program helps pre-service and in-service teachers gain more awareness of their own role in advocating for social justice. They also help teachers view teaching as a political act, and teachers and teacher educators need to be the advocates for social justice and equity (NCTE, 2010). Therefore,

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including curriculum for pre-service teachers to promote their critical consciousness, the complex power relations, the relationship between power and students' learning are crucial in teacher education program.

Improving knowledge and multicultural awareness for non-CLD teachers of CLD students has become increasingly significant in American classrooms given that the population of CLD students has increased dramatically in the past two decades. Therefore, teacher education program should help pre-service teachers expand their knowledge of CLD students and provide opportunities for pre-service teachers to work with CLD students and collaborate with teachers who have CLD backgrounds or experienced in teaching CLD students. In addition, teacher educators can also find local resources and invite people related to CLD students' cultural backgrounds , such as family, community, and local institutions. Collaboration with experts or members of CLD students' community will benefit teachers' understanding and awareness of their own cultural boundaries and gain appreciation of CLD students' multicultural knowledge.

Another way to help pre-service and in-service teachers increase awareness of students' diverse cultures is through reading and responding to multicultural children's literature. Bishop (1990) stated that "literature functions as a major socializing agent" which can be used as windows and mirrors to expand and reflect students' diverse cultures (p. 561). Tschida, Ryan, and Ticknor (2014) highlighted the importance of using multicultural literature as mirrors to help CLD students see themselves in the text, and as windows to move readers beyond an ethnocentric view of the world. For instance, teachers of non-CLD students can use multicultural literature to facilitate discussion about diverse cultural practices and help students challenge their social norms. In addition, teachers can adopt culturally responsive pedagogy to ask students to share and compare each other's cultural practices from their family to help students understand

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the similarities and differences among different families. In addition, these researchers encourage teacher educators to design activities that require pre-service teachers to think about the messages they want to send to their students and ways to use children's literature to expand their questions. Tschida, Ryan, and Ticknor (2014) stated that providing opportunities for pre-service and in-service teachers to consider, identify, and name narratives that appear across cultures will help scholars and teachers to see needs for providing multiple and non-stereotypical stories in their own classrooms. That is to say, pre-service and in-service teachers need to develop their knowledge of selecting and employing multicultural literature in order to help students interrogate the messages and norms that are hidden in everyday texts.

Lastly, helping pre-service and in-service teachers develop their professional knowledge and their roles as both educators and researchers is crucial in teacher education programs. The population and the diversity of CLD students differs across schools, contexts, and students' individual learning needs. Teaching approaches change from context to context. In order to adopt appropriate teaching pedagogies, both pre-service and in-service teachers should have experience conducting action research in order to solve their teaching difficulties and improve their professional development and their curriculum design. In addition, local schools can also collaborate with teacher education programs in local universities to have workshops to enhance in-service teachers' visions of themselves as researchers in their classrooms. Teacher education programs can also provide opportunities for both pre-service and in-service teachers to network with each other in order to enhance their understanding of CLD students and teaching pedagogies.

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For Researchers

Scholars who study students' language and literacy development have highlighted the significant role of ethnographic approach (Heath & Street, 2008; Lewis, 2001; Young, 2010). They believe that this approach supports the conception of literacy as a social practice, focusing on not only reading and writing skills but also students' everyday life experiences. In addition, in ethnographic research, the researchers partly and fully participate in the culture to receive both an emic and etic perspectives of students' identity positions. Therefore, adopting ethnographic approaches allows for the creation of stable, trusting relationships, which enables researchers to focus on a particular theoretical lens which is necessary for understanding CLD students' complex identities (Heath & Street, 2008). In this study, the CLD students' identities were multiple, complex, and fluid and they shifted from context to context. It was impossible to explore these multiple identities and discourses without having stable and trustful relationships between the girls and group leaders. For example, I found that it took different lengths of time for different CLD girls to slowly reveal their likes and dislikes, happiness and discomforts, anxieties, or uncertainties in public or privately in the afterschool book club. Had I not also been a member of Strong Girls, the social bonding between and among me and the girls, the exchange of personal notes in their journals, and the recurring evidence of literacy witness and testimony would not have happened in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. Therefore, I found that ethnographic approach is crucial to students' comfort of disclosing their multiple selves and recommend an ethnographic approach for future study.

I argued that incorporating theories from both second language and literacy education benefits researchers' and scholars' understanding of CLD students' learning development. The definitions of language and literacy have moved beyond teaching a set of skills to learning that

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cannot be separated from learners' everyday life experiences and the power relations that influence both our discourses and the construction of who we are. Although the CLD students in this study exited their ELL programs, their culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds continue to impact their learning trajectories and identity constructions. The findings in this study showed that language and literacy education has a strong relationship with student identity construction. Norton's (2000) concept of investment brought insights into how CLD students assumed their different social identities and committed to the target language and their imagined communities. The theoretical framework of literacy as a social practice contributed to the understanding of how CLD students' identities were socially constructed through discursive practices in which multiple power relations were enacted in social communities (Barton & Hamilton, 1998; Gee, 1996; Gutierrez & Gogoff, 2003; Luke, 2003; Street, 1995). The hybrid relationship from these two fields can help bring different perspectives and add nuance to the increasing CLD population in the global world.

Lastly, adopting theories that allow researchers and scholars to take a critical stance to examine relationships between identity and power relations has become crucial for scholars and researchers. In recent decades, CDA has been used increasingly as an analytical tool in educational research to understand the relationships between language and power. Scholars who have adopted CDA view language as a cultural tool which mediates power relations, privilege, social interactions, and bodies of knowledge (Davies & Harré, 1990; Gee, 1999; Luke, 1995, Rogers, Malancharuvil-Berkes, Mosley, Hui, & Joseph, 2005). CDA is especially important in language and literacy learning because it enables researchers to examine power in the discourse and power behind discourse, and how these power relations influence students' participation in different literacy practices. Also, critical race theory can provide a new theoretical perspective on

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the persistent racist problem in the U.S. school settings, and help understand how race has been shaped and reshaped throughout the educational history (Ladspm-Billings & Tate IV, 1995). Studies that adopted a feminist approach and research from critical youth studies will also allow researchers to interrogate, decontextualize challenge, construct and reconstruct definitions of identity in education fields.

Limitations and Future Research

The study of CLD students' relationships between their participation in the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club illustrated that students' identity positions do not stop outside of classroom settings. They are shaped and reshaped in schools, families, and communities that students participate in. These inside and outside classroom discursive literacy practices all contribute to their social identities and their learning development. Also, although this is an afterschool program, the fact that Strong Girls meetings still took place in classroom settings, which might only allow the CLD girls to perform certain identities that they considered appropriate to their practice in a school setting. Although multiple identities were identified in the data, it is worth noting that the findings only partially represented the CLD girls' identities in the book club. Thus, in order to explore more possible identities, conducting research outside of school settings might bring insight into understanding of CLD students' identity positions. In this study, I did not include data from the CLD girls' practices outside of the book club, such as their participation in school, family, and community events. These identities were in relation to the situated contexts that they participated in and their interactions with the members in the book club. In addition, although some of the social practices in in the book club can be transferred into learning settings, it is important to take their complicated sociocultural factors into consideration,

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such as students' population demographics, parents linguistic and cultural backgrounds, and schools' learning cultures.

Including data from multiple perspectives might also support thick description and deepen researchers' understanding of CLD students' identities. In this study, I only focused on CLD students' participation in the book club. However, if we want to gain a deeper understanding of how participation in the Strong Girls book club affected their relationship with other girls and their learner identities, interviewing teachers and parents who have close contact with the CLD students would have enriched my understanding of their identities. In addition, interviewing CLD students' friends outside of the afterschool book club might uncover more identities that are often invisible in public. Moreover, the research members of the Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club were not directly related to the elementary school and we only visited the school once a week. Therefore, future researchers can invite and collaborate with their school teachers to participate in the book club project to not only gain a better understanding of CLD students, but also to advocate the legitimate practices of alternative learning sites in their own classroom settings.

In this study, literature played an important role in inviting the elementary school girls to continue participating in this Strong Girls Read Strong Books book club. The various genres and formats of children's literature exposed the girls to different writing style, author's messages, and different reading strategies. The multiple topics from children's books created different figured worlds to allow the girls to reflect on their life experiences and expand their worldviews. Therefore, it is crucial for future researchers to examine how different literature facilitates students' participation and learning in terms of their cognitive learning and social emotional development. In addition, multicultural literature benefits teachers to improve students'

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awareness of different cultures and their own cultural practices. Thus, future researchers can focus on how both CLD and non-CLD students respond to books with multicultural contexts and how reading and discussing literature influences their identity positions and learning.

Lastly, the findings of this research showed that although CLD students' diverse cultural background impacted their identity positions, friendship and their peer culture also played an important role in constructing the Strong Girls community and their multiple identities. Additionally, the relationships between the girls and their peers created a safe space for them to read and respond to books and topics they were interested in. That is to say, investigating the roles of friendship and peer culture in future research might add to scholars and educators' understanding of how these social factors influence elementary students' learning trajectories inside and outside of school settings.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to examine literacy practices of a girl-only afterschool book club and three elementary school CLD students' identity positions and discourses that emerged in the book club. The findings are in line with previous literature in that the CLD students in this study assumed multiple identities and their cultural and linguistic backgrounds had an impact on their identity positions and their participation in the book club. Additionally, these CLD students were not only aware of their multiple identities but also actively participated in the process of negotiation of those identities. However, although they exercised their agency to assume certain social identities, discourses that happened in their everyday life experiences within various power relations legitimized and prohibited the construction of their social identities. This study brings insight into educators and scholars' understandings of the current generation of CLD students and the ways that different sociocultural factors help shape and reshape their

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understandings of themselves and their relationships to the world. The findings of this study are significant for adding nuance into the conversation of the relationship between identity and learning in the language and literacy education fields and can hopefully contribute to creating safe and respectful learning spaces for students with diverse learning needs.

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APPENDIX A

<u>Semistructured Interview Question for CLD and non-CLD Students</u>

Questions about CLD and non-CLD students' participation in the book club (Used for beginning of the book club)

1. Have you participated in the *Strong Girls Read Strong Books* book club? If yes, how long have you participated in this book club? How you like it?
2. According to your experiences in the *Strong Girls Read Strong Books* book club, what role(s) do you think you play in the book club? What roles do other girls play in the book club? Take myself for example, I consider myself as a group leader in this group but I sometimes see myself as a learner when I learn new knowledge from you.
3. Tell me your favorite (least favorite) part of participating in the *Strong Girls Read Strong Books* book club.
4. Do you always have opportunities to share your ideas in the book club? If no, why?
5. Do you read outside of the school setting? What books are your reading now?
6. What are some differences between your participation in the book club and in your classes?

Sample Questions related to individual book discussion group meeting (Used for after the book discussion or in the beginning of each group meeting-for CLD and non-CLD students)

1. How do you feel the book club today?
2. Do you like the story so far? Why or why not?
3. Do you have enough opportunity to share your ideas in the group today? Why or why not?
4. How do you like the characters in this book? Why or why not?
5. If you were the character, what would you do in her/his situation?
6. Remember the time that you mentioned about ____________ when we met in our group (with all the *strong* girls), can you tell me more about it? Can you tell me what you are thinking?
7. I remember you said something about your family (information about her ethnic and cultural background) in __________ when we were discussion ________? I think it is interesting (amazing, informative), can you tell me more about it?
8. The main character ___________ in the story says that _____________? Do you agree? Why or why not?

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9. Do you think the main character is a strong girl? Why or why not?

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APPENDIX B

Semistructured Interview Question for CLD Students

Questions about CLD Students' Cultural and Linguistic Background Information (Used for the beginning of the book club)

1. If people ask where I am from, I will tell them I am from ____________________
2. What is your first language?
3. Are you proud that you can speak or write in a language other than English?
4. Can you read or write your first language? If yes, when do you write in your first language? (e.g. leave a note to your family member)
5. Does your family speak English at home?
6. What language is the most used language at home? With whom?
7. Where do you learn the knowledge about your culture? For instance, you mentioned about ______________? Where did you learn the information?
8. Is learning your first language important to you? Why?
9. Are you confident speaking (their heritage language) ________________ in front of other people? If not? Why?
10. Do you often have chances to share your culture in the class? When?
11. What's other people's reactions when you speak _____________? Do they look surprised? Do they listen to you? Do they ask you how to say things in the language you speak?
12. Who are your best friends? When and where did you meet them?
13. Do you know anyone who also speaks _______________?
14. Do you know anyone whose family also came from ________? Do you hang out with them? What language do you speak when you communicate with each other?
15. Have you visited _______________? If yes, what is the most unforgettable experience you had in that country? How was that experience different from your experience in the US?

Questions about CLD students' English language learning (Used for the beginning of the book club)

1. When do you start learning English?
2. Do you think English is easy to learn?
3. What is hard about learning English?
4. Who are ELL students?

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5. What subjects did you learn in the ELL program?
6. Are there any differences between learning in the ELL courses and your current courses?
7. Did you feel that you are different than other peers when you were in the ELL program?
8. Did people treat you differently when they knew you were in the ELL program?
9. Do you like your ELL courses? Why or why not? Describe your story as an ELL student when you were in the ELL program.
10. Do you think your English ability is as good as your classmates now?

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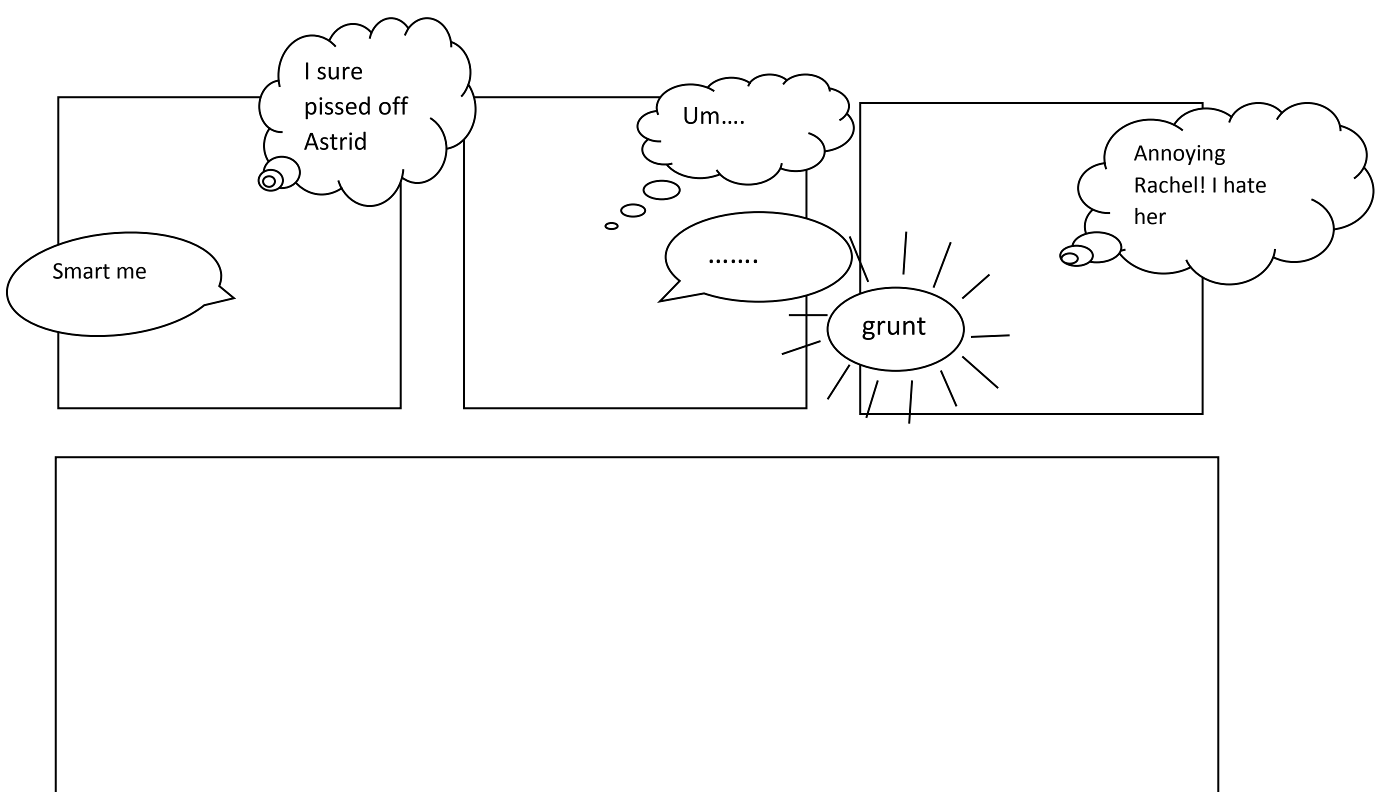
APPENDIX C

Figure 4.8



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APPENDIX D

Figure 4.9

Where is stargirl?

Hmmm

I must find her.

Leo went out to find stargirl after he learned that stargirl really cared for him

Back in Stargirl's house…

I do not want to do this!

I am going to faint

Who must that be?

Stargirl opens the door…

Hi!

Hi?!

It's for you

10 years later they got married

Dear diary,

Today Leo and I got married. I am so glad!

After many years of waiting.

Horary !

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