



CODE-SWITCHING AND SOCIAL IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN JULIA ALVAREZ'S *HOW THE GARCÍA GIRLS LOST THEIR ACCENTS*

Ahmed BELHACHEMI¹

Abstract

Literature today becomes a powerful tool to explore cultural hybridity, identity construction, and linguistic adaptation in the increasingly globalizing world we live in. Young adult immigrant literature, particularly from the Bildungsroman or coming-of-age genre, mirrors challenges and negotiations arising from cross-cultural experiences toward selfhood. This paper consequently aims to explore how identities are constructed in the case of young adult immigration narratives, Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, as a case study with particular emphasis on how protagonists navigate personal and social identities in diverse settings. This study will analyze how specific genres in literature introduce and expose themes as well as linguistic phenomena as markers of identity, focusing on code-switching within multilingual narratives and literary works. The case study will integrate the Social Identity Theory in explaining how language shapes identity, and further, this analysis of the four female protagonists traces how linguistic choices and cultural negotiations shape identity development in a social environment. Adopting a qualitative research approach, specifically employing a close and thematic analysis of the literary text to examine the language use, identity construction, and cultural affiliations of the characters. This extends to how code-switching is brought out through the characters' actions and its importance in self-expression and belonging. Findings from a different angle suggest that code-switching in literature reflects deeper identity struggles and social adaptation that individuals face, illustrating the fluid and dynamic nature of identity in multilingual and multicultural contexts.

Keywords: Bildungsroman, code-switching in literature, cultural hybridity, identity construction, linguistic adaptation, multilingual narratives, social identity theory

¹Lecturer, University of Saida, Algeria. E-mail: ahmeobhm@gmail.com. ORCID: 0009-0008-9066-0032

Introduction

In this age of fast globalization and increasing migration, cultural, linguistic, and identity issues constitute the crucial point of intersection both academically and literarily. Young adult literature, especially works detailing the immigrant experience, provides a rich medium to demonstrate how individuals expose their identities in diverse contexts. Within this genre, the Bildungsroman often defined by the coming-of-age journey can fruitfully become an effective method of narration to tell the struggles of identity construction. Immigrant protagonists of such fiction often struggle to define personal identity with societal expectations, following a precarious balance between roots and societal expectations.

The research problem revolves around how multilingualism in young adult immigrant literature acts as a medium for identity construction and leads to an impactful influence on the characters' behaviors and how they categorize themselves within their settings, with particular emphasis on migration. It is in this light that this paper tries to bridge the gap in analyzing how language, culture, and social categorization intersect in such narratives, drawing on experiences of challenges and resilience among the youth, to contribute to broader discussions of identity and belonging and the role of storytelling in shaping cultural and personal narratives. This paper aims to explore how identity is constructed in young adult immigrant literature, focusing on how the protagonists relate to their personal and social identities through language and cultural adaptation. This research will try to explain the role of code-switching a linguistic behavior where speakers switch between languages, dialects, or linguistic repertoires, and how language acts as a tool for identity construction, self-expression, and belonging in these works. The motivation for this research arises from both academic and personal interests as well. In the field of literature and sociolinguistics, there is a growing need to explore how multilingual narratives reflect identity construction, especially in immigrant contexts. The key objectives of the study are made to highlight:

1. How hybrid cultural affiliations influence individuals' behaviors and linguistics choices
2. To examine specifically self-expression and belonging through code-

switching in young adult immigrant literature.

3. How does Social Identity Theory enhance the analysis of language and identity in young adult immigrant literature?

The research questions forming the core of this study are stated in the following:

1. In what ways do immigrant young adult protagonists negotiate identity through language?
2. How does code-switching function as a tool for adaptation and self-representation in young adult immigrant literature?
3. How does Social Identity Theory develop an understanding of the connection of language to identity in literary texts?

The analysis uses a Qualitative approach, a close and thematic analysis of the selected literary work to understand the role of language in identity construction. The paper has incorporated Social Identity Theory into the study to better explain the psychological and social processes involved in the linguistic choices of the protagonists. The individuals in the case study will highlight how young adult immigrant literature, demonstrates the way the use of language and culture shape identity in diverse settings. The paper is structured as follows: It begins with an introduction to the broad topic and gives a comprehensive understanding of the necessary terms and theories to approach the case study novel by examining the broader literary landscape, exploring how different genres introduce themes and linguistic phenomena that serve and act as markers of identity in literary texts. Building on this foundation, the next section conducts a comprehensive analysis of the selected case study, integrating key theoretical notions to analyze the role of code-switching in identity construction. After that will be a discussion through a study of the four female protagonists, based on Social Identity Theory to examine how identity construction is revealed in multicultural environments. Finally, it will explore how code-switching is reflected through characters' actions, emphasizing its role in social belonging.

While this study provides a detailed exploration of identity construction

in young adult immigrant literature, it is important to acknowledge certain limitations in this path. One challenge lies in the limited availability and accessibility of the selected literary work, which may make it difficult for future researchers to expand upon the analysis. Additionally, the study primarily adopts a qualitative approach which while offering in-depth textual and thematic insights does not incorporate quantitative methods that could provide broader statistical perspectives on language and identity patterns.

Literature Review

Exploring the Bildungsroman « coming of age » in Young Adult Immigrant Literature

The Bildungsroman Narrative

It is a kind of novel that follows the development of a hero or heroine from childhood or adolescence into adulthood, through a troubled quest for identity, is how Baldick (2001) defined Bildungsroman. According to Graham (2019), a Bildungsroman is a work of literature that revolves around a young person dealing with the challenges of growing up. It is one of the most popular and lasting genres in literary history and will ultimately be read by any enthusiast of fiction. The journey from youth to adulthood is portrayed concentrates on a protagonist attempting to discover a balance between their wants and social norms. The term "bildungsroman," which was first used in German in the early 1800s, literally means "novel of education" or "novel of formation." . It is more frequently referred to be a "Coming of Age" narrative by contemporary audiences. The term "Bildungsroman" combines the German word "Bildung," which describes the process of transformation in a Medieval Christian context, with the suffix "-roman," Schwartz (2024) explained. Bonar (1996) and Christy (2016) highlighted some characteristics such as the evolution of the protagonist's psyche and personality from youth to maturity, conflicts or struggles with the external environment and the protagonist's inner self, along with an emotional loss that propels the protagonist on an important quest. The time span needs to be extended, allowing the main character ample opportunity to develop mental maturity. In addition to being exiled, which refers to those who were socially marginalized, and their status as outsiders heightened their

perception and understanding of the world.

The Bildungsroman serves as an exemplary educational model for childhood development aimed at children and Young Adult Literature. It often centers around a journey or quest that the young hero or heroine must undertake to develop themselves and, in numerous instances the community. Consequently, the target audience of children's and young adult literature is motivated to replicate this process of personal growth to better integrate or equip them for their forthcoming responsibilities as citizens (McCulloch, 2019).

Young Adult Literature

Since Young Adult Literature (YAL) serves as an orientation support throughout the crucial transition from adolescence to adulthood, it is intended to provide young people with insights and education about identity and the wider world. With a mirror that allows young readers to look within, it addresses contemporary issues and challenges that teenagers have encountered, some of which are related to social and emotional challenges, societal pressures, and self-development. It provides them with people and narratives that they can identify with to comprehend, find comfort in, and relate to. Young adult literature's narratives will lead young readers into pertinent scenarios and issues while assisting them in constructively processing them. Furthermore, the majority of young adult literature deals with complex, timely, and contemporary themes. As a result, every generation tends to be different in some way (Nilsen & Donelson, 2009). These works address topics of identity, self-discovery, and the journey to maturity while offering readers realistic scenarios that mirror their own experiences (Harrison & Ehlers, 2024).

Demir and Uysal (2024) examined the dynamics of YAL during a period of notable readership decline, emphasizing the challenges and prospects within the genre. They argue that there have been works appealing to both adults and young adults, as realistic "problem" novels have emerged alongside fantastical literature. Furthermore, it creates an environment for conversing about issues about young people. According to Cart (2016), the young adult literature genre is dynamic and continuously evolving to stay pertinent within the cultural and societal

contexts it inhabits. Sun (2024), who examined teaching methods related to L2 YAL, indicates that the reading program being studied lasted for ten weeks. During the initial five weeks of the program, students engaged with the novel and finished several reading tasks. The latter portion of the program focused on assessing students' reading abilities and closely analyzing characters and themes, utilizing the research by Bloemert, Paran, Jansen, and van de Grift regarding students' views on the advantages of EFL literature instruction, which acted as a comprehensive method for teaching L2 literature.

Immigrant Literature

Kanellos (2007) noted that Hispanic immigrants in the US have created books, periodicals, and various forms of print culture to support and strengthen their homelands with their native language, which helps maintain a connection to their country and assists immigrants in adapting to a new society and environment. In his 1981 publication, William Boelhower stated that the immigrant novel should be analyzed within its social and historical context, as well as the collective consciousness of the group, since this perspective reflects an important social and historical event. Numerous experiences begin with issues in the migrants' home countries, like political or cultural strife. Next arrives the challenge of escaping those circumstances. Upon arriving in a new environment, migrants face various early cultural adaptations and conflicts, such as acquiring new languages or adjusting to unfamiliar social norms.

As time progresses, the second-generation migrant demographic will observe the slow decline of the original culture, which genuinely results in intergenerational conflicts (Thomas, 2022). He further highlighted that migrant literature articulates the traumatic experiences of writers stemming from cultural conflicts or racial discrimination. A significant theme linked to immigrant literature is the theme of acculturation. Characterized as a process of cultural interaction and exchange whereby an individual or group begins to embrace specific values and practices from a culture that is not originally theirs (Cole, 2024). YAL acts as an essential medium for examining the immigrant experience, providing stories that deepen readers' comprehension of migration and identity. Scholars have used different analytical frameworks to explore the

intricacies of these narratives, demonstrating how both male and female immigrant protagonists manage the difficulties of their experiences. For instance, in-depth content analysis of acclaimed immigration themes in novels has emphasized language obstacles, socioeconomic conditions, and childhood perspectives. Although these stories frequently depict immigrants as "other," they also present chances for readers to address and question prevailing stereotypes and prejudices (Sung et al., 2017; Clifford & Kalyanpur, 2011, as cited in Hoppenjan, 2018).

Identity Construction in the Bildungsroman

Identity is a multifaceted concept influenced by diverse social and individual elements, including gender, race, and socioeconomic standing. This theme is a key to novels such as the Bildungsroman, which examines the main character's development from youth to maturity, along with postmodern analyses that emphasize the fragmented self (Barstad et al., 2019). The Bildungsroman genre centers on the exploration of whether a person can truly build a cohesive sense of self or not. Traditionally, this narrative emphasizes the importance of personal education, illustrating the main character's evolution from the fragmented world of childhood to a more unified and mature sense of identity. In novels like Goethe's Wilhelm Meister or Dickens's David Copperfield, characters are considered "successful" when they manage to align their individual aspirations with societal norms, thus achieving a cohesive sense of identity and a feeling of belonging to the community. This shift indicates a deeper and more essential analysis of identity construction where the protagonist's journey of self-discovery emphasizes confronting the ambiguities of selfhood rather than achieving clarity (Gordon, 2016). According to Baldick (2001) and Cuddon (1998), the Bildungsroman highlights the narrative's educational and developmental elements. Baldick defined it as the protagonist's quest to build a unified identity, whereas Cuddon highlights the ongoing journey of growth, characterized by ups and downs as the protagonist faces life's challenges. These definitions together emphasized the Bildungsroman's thematic focus on identity construction.

Factors Influencing Identity Construction

Within the framework of identity construction, unconscious factors,

especially those faced in childhood, are frequently reevaluated and challenged during the identity construction process.

From the side of conscious influences, people engage in self-reflection, consciously choosing how to portray themselves and manage their positions in society. Giddens (1991) clarified that identity is perpetually shaped through self-presentation and as traditional structures diminish, people in modern society are more frequently faced with numerous lifestyle options influenced by the ever-changing interaction between local and global factors. Goffman (1959) explored the process by which people shape their identities through their performance of social roles. He highlighted how individuals deliberately select their self-presentation to affect how others view them. This deliberate act of self-presentation plays a crucial role in shaping identity, enabling individuals to manage their roles in various social settings. Erikson (1968) highlighted that teenagers undergo identity crises necessitating intentional decisions regarding their future positions. He mentioned that American group identity supports personal ego identity, providing that individuals view their forthcoming actions as choices. Paul Gee (1999) further examined how adolescents consciously manage identity crises through language and discourse, especially in educational and social contexts. He posited that individuals use their linguistic and social practices to construct their identities and confront conflicting roles during adolescence by intentionally aligning their actions, speech, values, and beliefs with socially recognizable patterns.

For the unconscious influences, initially, Erikson (1950) emphasized also the unconscious elements that influence identity construction through early childhood experiences in his study of basic trust versus basic mistrust. He proposed that the mother's continual care is responsible for the infant's initial social success. The child can develop a fundamental understanding of ego identity through this connection, which relies on the interaction between internal feelings and external experiences. These initial interactions, marked by consistency and reciprocity, play a role in the unconscious mechanisms that affect identity construction. Likewise, Bowlby (1982) maintained that a child needs a warm, close, and often tied and connected bond with a main caregiver, like a mother or stable alternative, highlighting the significant influence of early attachment experiences on unconscious identity construction. Bourdieu (1990)

described habitus as internalized tendencies that people develop through socialization in diverse environments, including family, cultural customs, and institutional frameworks. These tendencies function below the level of conscious awareness, influencing how people interpret and react to their surroundings. Furthermore, Kristeva (1982) expressed a deep disconnection in the identity of the deject who navigates life by positioning, isolating, and situating themselves about others ultimately resulting in feelings of alienation instead of connection. This procedure highlights the fragmented aspect of their identity, which is deeply affected by subconscious mechanisms that influence their identity-building process. Also significant influences are emotional suppression and defense mechanisms, both Freud (1966) and Jung (1959) offered important insights into the challenges that a person could face during the journey of identity construction. Freud highlighted the conflict between egoism and selflessness in adolescents, noting that their increased self-focus coexists with an impressive ability for selflessness. This paradox illustrates the unconscious mechanisms influencing identity construction among adolescents, as they explore their developing self-concept in connection with their social surroundings. Likewise, Jung's investigation shows that when a woman does not develop a strong sense of Eros, her identity may become unknowingly linked to her mother's, resulting in a weakened self-image and suppressed emotions.

Social Identity Theory

Dixon (2016) recognized that SIT was created by Henri Tajfel and John Turner in the 1970s as an addition to Sherif's Realistic Conflict Theory, which appeared in the 1950s and 1960s. Both theories seek to clarify intergroup dynamics, especially the disputes that occur between groups. In this context, intergroup behavior refers to interactions determined by people's membership in distinct social groups, as opposed to interpersonal behavior, which is influenced by personal characteristics and features (Tajfel & Turner, 1985, as cited in Ashforth, 1989). SIT provides a framework for understanding the dynamics of large social groups by investigating the psychological factors connected with social identity. Over time, SIT developed into a broad term that encompasses various ideas on intergroup behavior and focuses as well on the complex development of identity, affiliation to a group, and the social

environment in which people live and interact (Harwood, 2020). SIT can be described as a framework that anticipates individuals will automatically categorize their social environment, differentiating between the groups they are part of (in-groups) and those they are not (out-groups), a difference that marks a crucial turning point (Aharpour, 1999).

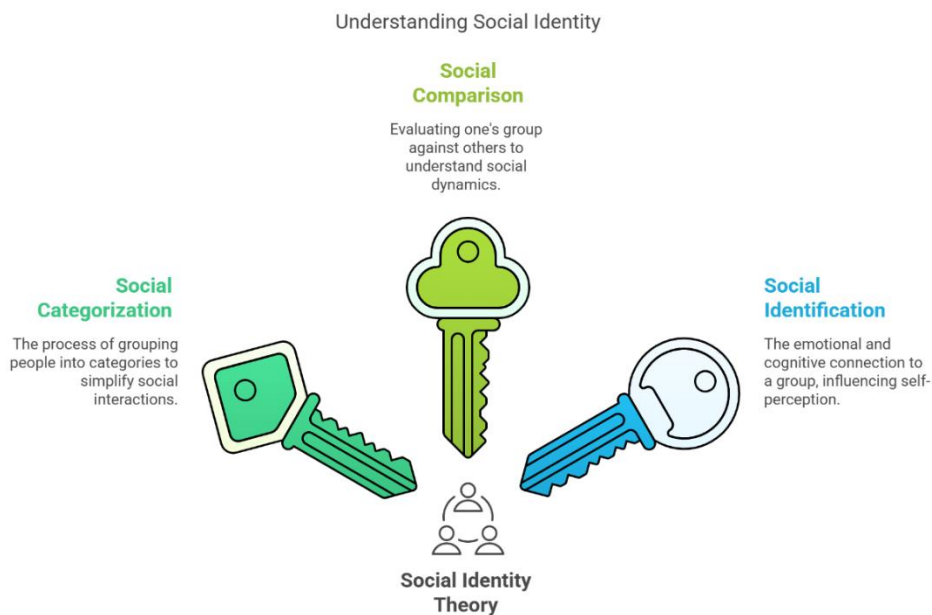
Cognitive and Psychological Processes of SIT

SIT identifies three fundamental processes that impact identity development: social categorization, social identification, and social comparison. These processes explain how social circumstances and group interactions shape human identity. As shown in Figure One.

Initially, social categorization involves grouping and labeling people into particular groups, which serves as a universal psychological strategy for navigating complex social situations. People can better organize relevant social facts by classifying them into a small number of social groups. Social comparison is a strategy for analyzing and assessing the characteristics of different groups. Without an objective criterion to evaluate the value of other groups, we typically judge a group's worth by comparing its distinguishing attributes, such as attitudes, actions, and characteristics, to those of other groups. Social identification emphasizes an essential difference between human groups and object categories, mainly because people can see themselves as members of social groups. This understanding influences how people perceive themselves concerning these groups, possibly creating a feeling or a sense of belonging and emphasizing distinctions. Social identification involves both cognitive recognition and the emotional significance of belonging to a group, impacting how individuals interact with their ingroups, frequently encouraging them to strengthen their group's unique identity and worth (Tajfel, 1974, 1978a, 1978b, 1978c, as cited in Ellemers & Haslam, 2012).

In-Group and Out-Group Dynamics

Figure 1. The Three Processes of Social Identity Theory (The figure is the researcher's own creation)



SIT highlights the difference between ingroup and outgroup dynamics, proposing that people develop their identities via comparison and differentiation processes, encompassing two key concepts: first, the ingroup, which denotes the group that one identifies with, and second, the outgroup, regarded as an external or distinct category from the ingroup. This distinction is flexible and reliant on the context which is influenced by the activities or positions individuals are involved in. For instance, teachers might align themselves with the group of instructors delivering the lessons while viewing students as belonging to the outgroup of the receivers (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006). In simpler terms, an ingroup refers to a social group where a person has a strong sense of belonging and attachment, influenced by factors like nationality, race, faith, political beliefs, or economic standing. On the other hand, an outgroup denotes a social group with which an individual does not associate, utilizing similar standards that influence their feeling of affiliation to an ingroup. The difference between

ingroups and outgroups affects behaviors, attitudes, and interactions in different social situations. These dynamics appear in common situations, like teenagers seeing their peers as their ingroup and adults as their outgroup (Shatz, n.d.).

Code-Switching and Multilingual Identity in Literary Texts

Code-Switching Overview and Identity

Code-switching (CS) is a prevalent linguistic practice that entails alternating between different languages, dialects, or repertoires during one conversation. This behavior is common in multilingual populations and is influenced by interactions among linguistic, social, and cognitive factors (Mona, 2024). It emphasizes the evolving character of language usage and adjustment, mirroring both personal and social influences in communication. CS entails the switch from one language or dialect to a different one by an individual or a set of speakers. (Mahbub-ul-Alam & Quyyum, 2016). The Role of Language in Constructing Identity

In a multi-cultural society, CS represents the different methods through which individuals convey their identities. It represents an important linguistic occurrence in sociolinguistics that extends the dialogue contexts or simple vocabulary deficiencies and it is deeply connected to how identity is influenced by language choices and the ability to express broader facets of individuals' lives which can often signify a deliberate or unintentional effort to align with preferred social identities. In this context, a person's choice of language may reveal the identity they aim to convey or represent in a specific context (A'Baed & Kamel, 2018). Identity is a dynamic process that is influenced by the situations, interactions, and cultural settings and conditions that people encounter where they frequently use a variety of linguistic forms and practices to explore and expose their identities to their environment. Language serves as a tool to define how people express their roles and connections within their communities, and variations like dialects, slang, and registers provide a flexible environment for identity construction (Hozhabrossadat, 2015). Research has demonstrated that this technique serves as a means of expressing social distinction, cultural affiliation, or even gender identity, going beyond simple communication. For instance, CS is used by educated Sindhi women in Pakistan to establish connections with particular gender groupings. Farida's study (2018) demonstrated that these women employ CS to define and express their

identities, particularly regarding gender. By alternating between languages, especially English, they indicate their alignment with fellow women, thus strengthening their sense of belonging to the broader female community.

Code-Switching and Identity in Bilingual and Immigrant Contexts

In diverse areas of language interaction, there are often solid connections between particular languages and particular ethnic groups. For example, within immigrant communities, the dominant language is viewed as a means of integration or assimilation into the host nation, while the minority language serves as a link to the country of origin or homeland. Such language in conditions of nationalism has clearly emerged (Casas, 2016). The language choices and switching behaviors of bilinguals are significantly shaped by the social and political environments surrounding immigrant communities, along with the symbolic significance of the languages they employ. These elements influence their CS methods as they either conform to or oppose the prevailing cultural and social norms of their new environment (Ben Nafa, 2016). Especially in areas with huge immigrant communities, such as California's San Fernando Valley CS is common. This area is inhabited by a significant population of Latin American immigrants and is noted for its cultural and linguistic variety, along with a large percentage of individuals who identify as Latino. The widespread phenomenon of CS, particularly the fusion of Spanish and English known as "Spanglish," mirrors the complex identity connections within these communities. For numerous individuals, especially younger generations raised in the US by immigrant parents, CS serves as a means to connect cultural gaps, representing both a link to their roots and an integration into the core of American culture (Zayas Ciriaco, 2024).

Code-Switching and Identity Construction in Literary Texts

CS has an important function in shaping identity, especially in multilingual and multicultural settings, and in literary works, it acts as a strong tool for writers to depict the complications and descriptions of their characters' identities and how they interact with various cultural influences within the settings of the piece. Aydan Ahn, the writer of *The Shelter*, used CS as a deliberate method to illustrate the construction of identities through the characters' interactions. The novel includes examples of code-switching between Indonesian and Korean, showcasing the use of particular

expressions like honorifics and greetings to improve cultural authenticity. These language changes happen at the clause or sentence level, with characters starting in one language and then transitioning to another, resulting in a smooth narrative progression (Azhar & Sutrisono, 2023).

Djehoubbi et al. (2023) claimed that to reflect linguistic diversity, writers often use CS to represent the cultural backgrounds, personal identities, and connections between their characters and that by highlighting the characters' feelings of belonging, their navigation of cultural norms, and the clashes among different cultural influences. Writers create a layered portrayal of identity that allows readers to engage more profoundly and subtly with the characters' points of view and their experiences. They explored the implementation of literary CS in diasporic Arab literature, focusing on Hala Alyan's *Salt Houses* (2017) and Rawi Hage's *De Niro's Game* (2006), where their study integrated Callahan's (2004) and Montes-Alcalá's (2012) frameworks to examine the roles of CS in these texts. The research highlighted how CS acts as a purposeful literary tool for immigrant authors, helping in the expression of bicultural identities, representation of character dialogue, and incorporating a local essence into the text. Barnes and van Heerden (2006) stated in their research on fictional languages that such languages serve two functions in literary pieces. On one side, they are vital to the world-building process and help to create the fictional environments of the stories. Nevertheless, similar to actual languages, they also function to construct an identity and significance within the narrative and its settings. CS serves as an important medium that enables characters to explore and express their connections and affiliations to the various cultures and languages in our world. In examining Junot Díaz's narratives, *Invierno*, *Nilda*, and *The Pura Principle*, it is notable that the protagonist Yuniór switches between Spanish and English where which illustrates his developing identity (Sánchez & Pérez-García, 2020).

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research approach grounded in Social Identity Theory to examine how code-switching functions as both a linguistic strategy and a marker of cultural identity for the characters in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*. The analysis follows a systematic process of text selection, data extraction, coding, and

thematic interpretation, focusing on both identity construction and CS instances and their role in shaping the characters' in-group/out-group dynamics.

Text Selection

The work of Julia Alvarez serves as a valuable and rich case study to explore such topics of identity construction in contexts of immigrants, and because of its bilingual narrative structure of integrating English and Spanish, it illustrates the hybridity of immigrants while simultaneously highlighting broader sociological concerns linked to assimilation. Also, the intergenerational perspectives that are present in the work particularly highlight the variations of code-switching among family characters. Moreover, the thematic emphasis on displacement and its impact on the lives of the characters enhances how the novel explores social identity construction by highlighting language as a key area of its development.

Data Extraction

The study began by systematically identifying explicit identity reflection passages that show and mark the construction of the characters' identities in different conditions. Then, going to highlight the implicit code-switching that was marked by direct shifts between English and Spanish and its contexts in addition to the moments where language loss or retention signaled deeper cultural negotiations. This dual approach ensured a comprehensive groundwork that shed light on both linguistic switches or choices and sub-identity markers embedded in the characters' language use.

Coding and Analysis

By using Social Identity Theory, the analysis focused on three mechanisms of constructing a social identity. Social categorization, which revealed how identity reflections passages and CS reinforced in-group (Dominican) versus out-group (American) boundaries that are created by each character. Social comparison examined how characters measure and compare themselves against dominant norms, or as they refer to restrictions. Finally, social identification pointed out how characters strategically adopted, resisted, or hybridized their identities. All to fit and seek for a sense of belonging. CS was analyzed as a tool for in-group/out-group dynamics, serving as a means for three key functions. First, it acted as resistance, where

the family's use of Spanish serves as a countermove against assimilation pressures that push to erase their Dominican identity. Second, it fostered empowerment through humor and solidarity, reinforcing in-group bonds and preserving cultural values and mainly to protect the sisters from forgetting that they belong to their homeland no matter what. Third, it exposed the psychological conflict and, more particularly that is shown in the fragmentation of the identity in the character of Yolanda due to competing cultural expectations.

Analysis

Identity Construction in How the García Girls Lost Their Accents Through Social Identity Theory

I. Social Categorization

1. Sofía (The Rebel)

"Sofía was the one without the degrees. She had always gone her own way, though she downplayed her choices, calling them accidents. Among the four sisters, she was considered the plain one, with her tall, big-boned body and large-featured face." (Alvarez, 1991, p. 26)

From the social identity theory perspective, Sofía is labeled as the family's outsider for rejecting traditional paths that her family followed before her, something that defines her in-group role as the rebel through the social categorization mechanism, where her defiance of norms marks the critical shifts that identity construction contains. A gendered perspective highlights her multifaceted rebellion that softens her disobedience of Dominican female ideals while affirming uniqueness. Her identity is formed by her conscious rejection of traditional roles, such as seeking degrees and her embracing of personal aspirations, which reinforces her status as a rebel who defies family standards. This contrast between societal expectations and personal independence highlights how her situation was hard to deal with, in which she finds herself marginalized within the family structure.

2. Yolanda (The Between)

"Yolanda, nicknamed Yo in Spanish, misunderstood joe in English, doubled and pronounced like the toy, Yoyo—or when forced to select from a rack of

personalized key chains, joey —stands at the third-story window watching a man walk across the lawn with a tennis racket" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 55).

The text underlines Yolanda's cultural displacement through the symbolism of her name. This linguistic conflict depicts her ambiguous identity, where she is divided between her Dominican roots, represented by "Yo," and American assimilation, represented by "Joe" or "Yoyo". The mispronunciation and renaming reflect the broader social categorization conflict, where language acts as a marker of in-group (Dominican) and out-group (American) boundaries, a social categorization that happens according to the context and to fit the situation she is in. Similarly, gender norms constrain Yolanda's autonomy, as seen when she "plans to bob up again after the many don'ts to do what she wants" (p. 13), directly opposing Tía Flor's warning: "A woman just doesn't travel alone in this country" (p. 13). This tension reveals how patriarchal expectations attempt to restrict her independence.

The fragmentation that we see in Yolanda's name from both the Dominican "Yo" to the Americanized "Joe" or the infantilized "Yoyo" exemplifies how the erasure of her cultural identity in the U.S. is seen As Matias-Ferreira (2019) noted, "In New York, Americans have never been able to pronounce her name correctly and called her Joe; her parents would also address her as either Yo or Yoyo" (p.5). This linguistic occurrence mirrors the broader assimilationist pressures faced by immigrants.

3. Carla (*The Conformist*)

"Carla, of course, knew the story well and had analyzed it for unresolved childhood issues with her analyst husband. But she never tired of hearing it because it was her story, and whenever the mother told it, Carla knew she was the favorite of the moment" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 36).

This passage reveals the dual identity of Carla as both a devoted daughter and an assimilated professional in this context. She is mabled as the conformist of the family, and she carefully balances Dominican familial expectations with American cultural norms. Her emotional devotion to her mother's retelling of the event exemplifies her in-group loyalty, as she grows as the favorite supporting the conventional family hierarchy. However, her analytical approach, influenced by her marriage to a therapist and her own professional training, displays her integration into American

psychological culture. This tension illustrates the social categorization process, where Carla maintains her Dominican identity through family bonds while at the same time she is adopting American values of self-examination and professional achievement to fit in the new environment. Thus, her character in the novel exemplifies the immigrant experience of being pulled between keeping cultural roots or origins and adjusting to new society norms. Carla's psychological approach to her own family story exemplifies what Matas (2001) identified as the immigrant's fragmented self. Where Yolanda resists and Fifi rebels, Carla professionalizes her cultural duality, treating her Dominican roots as a case study or unresolved childhood issues while still craving their emotional validation by being the favorite of the moment.

4. Sandra (The Beauty)

"Sandi wanted to look like those twiggy models. She was a looker, that one, and I guess it went to her head. There are four girls, you know" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 43).

This passage demonstrates how Sandra is socially categorized through competing lenses to meet them. Within her Dominican family, she occupies the fixed role of the beauty, which is a categorization that simultaneously elevates her status while trapping her in narrow expectations. The phrase "it went to her head" suggests this label carries both privilege and resentment from others. However, the personal aspirations of Sandra reveal a conflicting categorization system where her desire to resemble "twiggy models" shows internalization of American media's beauty standards, creating psychological tension between these group identities.

II. Social Comparison

1. Sofía

"She had always gone her own way, though she downplayed her choices, calling them accidents. Among the four sisters, she was considered the plain one, with her tall, big-boned body and large-featured face. And yet, she was the one with 'non-stop boyfriends,' her sisters joked, not without wonder and a little envy. They admired her and were always asking her advice about men" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 26).

The nonconformity of Sofía here triggers an intergroup evaluation where her sisters measure their adherence to Dominican collectivism against her

Americanized individualism. The quote reveals a hierarchical contrast in which, though deemed plain and as a marginalizing label within Dominican beauty standards, her romantic agency becomes a metric for the sisters' suppressed desires. Their "wonder and a little envy" exemplifies social comparison's dual effect where Sofia's success in navigating U.S. dating norms (in-group) elevates her status, while simultaneously framing Dominican expectations (out-group) as restrictive. This tension mirrors SIT's principle that increases the comparisons in such contexts to those perceived as advantaged and can motivate in-group critique.

2. Yolanda

"Here she comes, Miss America!" Yolanda clasps her brow and groans melodramatically as expected... "You look terrible," Lucinda says. "Too thin, and the hair needs a cut. Nothing personal" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 10).

This interaction operates as a direct social comparison, where the Americanized appearance of Yolanda becomes a benchmark against which her Dominican relatives measure cultural authenticity. The derisive "Miss America" label and critiques of her thinness and hair establish a clear dichotomy: her body and style represent the out-group (assimilated American values), while their remarks defend in-group Dominican ideals of beauty and belonging. The performative element of this conversation demonstrates how such comparisons serve as symbolic boundary marking. The paradoxical "Nothing personal" underscores how cultural restrictions appear as casual observation, intensifying the pressure to self-correct. When her cousins mock her "Miss America" appearance while simultaneously embracing her, they enact what Matas (2001) identified as the immigrant's perpetual measurement of self through the eyes of others. The critique of Yolanda's thinness and hair directly correlates with his observation that the sisters attempted to reconstruct their self by ironing their hair and going on diets to conform to conflicting standards.

3. Sandra

"But Sandi, Sandi got the fine looks, blue eyes, peaches and ice cream skin, everything going for her!... But imagine, spirit of contradiction, she wanted to be darker complected like her sisters" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 44).

This quote shows Sandra stuck between different beauty standards through social comparisons. Her family points out her as supposedly good traits, but say it in a way that feels more like pressure than praise. Meanwhile,

Sandra herself looks at her sisters and wishes she had their darker skin instead. This back-and-forth - comparing herself to both family and society's ideals - leaves her constantly unsatisfied. First, she's told her light skin makes her special, then she sees American magazines saying she should be super thin. Neither comparison makes her feel good about herself. These competing pressures eventually lead to her eating disorder, showing how dangerous it can be when young women are forced to measure themselves against impossible standards from different cultures.

4. Carla

"Carla, in fact, says it's a borderline schizoid response to traumatic cultural displacement" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 89).

How Carla diagnosed Fifi as "borderline schizoid" reveals how she uses American psychological frameworks (the out-group) to judge the Dominican coping strategies of her sister (the in-group). This shows social comparison in action where Carla measures Fifi's behavior against U.S. standards of mental health, framing traditional responses to cultural displacement as pathological rather than adaptive and by labeling the connection and labeling of Fifi to the Island life as a disorder, Carla demonstrates internalized hierarchy in her comparisons, where American norms automatically outweigh Dominican ways of processing trauma. The clinical language like borderline schizoid acts as a tool of distancing, allowing Carla to position herself as modern and progressive while framing Fifi's cultural retention as problematic.

Social Identification

Papi's Strategic Assimilation

"He came back to New York reciting the Pledge of Allegiance, and saying, 'I am given up Mami! There is no hope for the Island. I will become un dominican-york.' So, Papi raised his right hand and swore to defend the Constitution of the United States, and we were here to stay." (Alvarez, 1991, p. 82). Social identification entails adopting the norms and values of a specific social group, which shapes one's sense of self and Papi's adoption of a Dominican-York identity illustrates strategic social identification, in which he consciously aligns himself with American civic norms to redefine his group belonging in terms of the context in which he now lives. His

engagement in allegiance rituals, such as the pledge and oath demonstrates a conscious reconstructing of identity in order to obtain credibility in the US out-group. The hybrid identification "dominican-york" indicates a constructed identity in which he is neither totally abandoning his Dominican in-group nor fully embracing American-ness, but rather inventing a new affiliative category for survival.

Papi's adoption of a "dominican-york" identity exemplifies what Koziel (2015) identified in *Americanah* as a method of manifestation of different self-identifications through performative acts. Just as the characters of Adichie use Igbo phrases like "biko" (please) or "eziokwu" (truth) to assert identity while navigating U.S. spaces, Papi's pledge of allegiance becomes a ritual of strategic social identification and a conscious alignment with American norms to secure belonging. Koziel's ethnosizer framework clarifies this tension: like Adichie's Auntie Uju, who speaks Igbo only when angry ("This is America. It's different", p. 110), Papi's resignation ("I am given up Mami!") reveals the conflict between pragmatic adaptation and inherited identity. The hybrid labels "dominican-york" and "Americanah" both reflect, as Koziel argued, a negotiated identity that resists binary assimilation, instead creating a dynamic sense of belonging through language and performance.

The Sisters' Resistance to Americanization

"You can believe we sisters wailed and paled, whining to go home. We didn't feel we had the best the United States had to offer. We had only second-hand stuff, rental houses in one red-neck Catholic neighborhood after another, clothes at Round Robin, a black and white TV afflicted with wavy lines." (Alvarez, 1991, p. 82).

The rejection of the sisters of U.S. life shows the protective social identification with their Dominican in-group. Their visceral disdain wailed and paled for American material conditions reflects an intentional distancing from out-group norms, reinforcing their primary affiliation with Dominican identity. By framing their U.S. experiences as deficient second-hand stuff, they strengthen in-group cohesion through shared opposition to assimilation, and this resistance serves as identity maintenance, with collective complaints solidifying bonds and preserving Dominican cultural

markers despite geographical displacement and distance from their homeland.

Mami and Papi's Fear of Cultural Loss

"And of course, as soon as we had, Mami and Papi got all worried they were going to lose their girls to America. Things had calmed down on the Island and Papi had started making real money in his office up in the Bronx. The next decision was obvious: we four girls would be sent summers to the Island so we wouldn't lose touch with la familia" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 83).

The enforcement of the parents about summer return to the Dominican republic showcases prescriptive social identification, where familial authority actively shapes group belonging. Their fear of losing their daughters to the American new environment reflects anxiety about disrupted intergenerational identity transition. By physically re-embedding the sisters in Dominican spaces "la familia", they institutionalize in-group identification through ritual. This intervention highlights how social identification can be externally imposed, in which the sisters' identities are deliberately fixed to their heritage despite their U.S. environment.

Code-Switching as a Linguistic Tool for Identity Negotiation

The García family uses Spanish to reflect their intergroup status and their efforts to maintain a positive social identity. Through the act of code-switching, they assert cultural legitimacy and pride in their Dominican heritage, even as they adapt to new life and new circumstances in an English-speaking country.

Example 1: "¡Que viva la revolución!" (Alvarez, 1991, p. 95)

This phrase conveys a feeling of pride within the Dominican community and a disapproval of blending into the American out-group. The character makes a strong statement to remind her sisters of their shared ancestry and collective pursuit of liberation from their circumstances. The phrase serves as well as a potent means of social categorization via three interconnected mechanisms: Initially, as a marker distinguishing in-group from out-group, the Spanish expression establishes an instant linguistic divide between those who understand its cultural relevance (Dominican in-group) and those who do not (American out-group), illustrating Tajfel's minimal group paradigm, where basic indicators create robust group identities. Furthermore, it promotes a sense of positive distinctiveness by enhancing

Dominican revolutionary awareness beyond the assumed indifference of Americans, which is a thing that exemplifies Social Identity Theory's concept that groups enhance their self-worth by honoring their distinct characteristics and transforming language from simple exchange into a lively manifestation of cultural pride. In addition, the slogan draws on collective memory as a cultural signal, swiftly connecting the sisters to shared tales of resistance, illustrating how social categorization maintains a link between present identity and historical consciousness.

Example 2: "'U'té, que sabe," Altagracia says in a small voice. You're the one to know" (Alvarez, 1991, p.12)

The colloquial Dominican expression "U'té" acts as a strong indicator of belonging to in-group membership and categorizes Altagracia as an authentic cultural insider while implicitly framing Yolanda as an assimilated outsider in the community. This language choice strengthens group boundaries by creating a distinct contrast between individuals who use local dialect forms, representing the Dominican in-group, and those who do not, meaning the American-influenced out-group. The rigid enforcement of this dialect by the aunts illustrates how immigrant communities often utilize language to safeguard their cultural identity from assimilation pressures, transforming everyday speech into acts of social categorization. In this exchange, Alvarez illustrates how code-switching acts as both a means of negotiating identity and a mechanism for maintaining social boundaries, with specific language features functioning as symbolic indicators of group belonging amid cultural loss.

Example 3: "¡En español! The more she practices, the sooner she'll be back into her native tongue." (Alvarez, 1991, p. 12)

Illustrates how code-switching enforces social categorization by reinforcing linguistic boundaries between the Dominican in-group and American out-group. The command of the aunts "¡En español!" serves as a gatekeeping tool, urging Yolanda to conform to her heritage language or face the possibility of being excluded from the cultural in-group. Their warning that she'll go blank over some word in English reveals the significant consequences of losing language, as Spanish fluency is not merely about speaking but also about group belonging. Yolanda's challenge with Spanish while still being expected to represent it showcases the conflict between her

ascribed identity (how her family categorizes her) and achieved identity (her lived experience as an assimilated American).

Code-Switching as Resistance and Empowerment

The García family uses language to resist assimilation and reclaim agency.

1. Familial Empowerment

Expressions such as "No, no, Papi" (p. 25) utilize Dominican family dynamics to counter U.S. individualism. Despite its patriarchal nature, "Papi" provides the sisters with cultural validity. Calling their father "Papi" might seem like a small thing, but it's actually a smart strategy to maintain their resistance and belonging to their homeland and cultural values. On the surface, it sounds respectful, like they're following old-school Dominican family rules. But really, it's their way of keeping their culture strong while living in America. By using this word, they remind their father and themselves at the same time that they're still part of a Dominican family.

2. Humor as Solidarity

Lucinda's teasing "Yoyo climbing into an old camioneta with all the campesinos!" (p. 13)—uses code-switching humor to strengthen in-group bonds. By mocking and referring to Yolanda as an outsider status because of her Spanish use, she reaffirms their shared Dominican identity and their belonging to the island. When Lucinda jokes about Yolanda acting like a campesino (a country farmer), she's not just being funny, but she's actually reinforcing their Dominican identity more and that is to not lost their values. By mixing Spanish words (camioneta, campesinos) into an English sentence, she playfully points out to Yolanda that she is starting to go too far from her roots. thus, the teasing works because it's a way of saying that they might live in America now, but they are still and stay Dominican. So it is like an inside joke that only makes sense if you understand both cultures.

3. Linguistic Enforcement

The demand of the aunts "¡En español!" (p. 12) weaponizes the use of language against American cultural dominance, turning Spanish into a tool of resistance against the values and norms imposed on them in the new

country. The aunts don't just ask for Spanish, they directly demand it. Every time they scold Yolanda for speaking English, they're drawing a line and showing a position that this is their language, and they don't let America take it. This strict rule isn't just about words, but it is about survival. If they let English take over, they definitely risk losing their culture completely. So by forcing the younger generation to keep speaking Spanish, they're fighting back against assimilation.

The linguistic resistance of the García family aligns with what Romansyah and Adam (2023) identified as expressing group identity, which is a deliberate use of heritage language to assert belonging. The passages and aunts' command don't function as a correction to the sisters but as a social identity performance where Spanish becomes a shield against cultural erasure. Similarly, Lucinda's teasing mirrors the study's observation that these language choices often serve for solidarity purposes and in the goal of reinforcing a shared identity.

Conclusion

Language is more than a means of communication as a whole it is a fundamental aspect of identity, shaping how individuals perceive themselves and more importantly are perceived by others. For immigrants, language plays a particularly crucial role in delving between both their cultural heritage or homeland in general and the demands of their new environment. The main aim of this study has been to explore the construction of identity in young adult immigration narratives, with a focus on Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*. From this perspective, the analysis has aimed to explore how the García sisters tend to construct their social identities within various cultural and social environments showing the diverse challenges of identity construction in the realm of migration.

The analysis demonstrated that the García sisters—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda, and Sofía—use CS as a means to present their dual identities as Dominican or American. Their language choices reflect the tension between their Dominican heritage and their American new environment which illustrates how identity is not static but continually shaped by social, cultural, and familial influences. Through CS also the sisters navigate in-group and out-

group dynamics, asserting their cultural legitimacy while adapting to their new environment and this mainly aligns with SIT's emphasis on social categorization, comparison, and identification, which are central to understanding how the sisters construct their identities within a bicultural framework. Furthermore, the study highlighted how CS serves as a marker of social status and power, reflecting the sisters' efforts to maintain a positive social identity in the face of cultural assimilation. The findings also highlight the significance of literature as a means for investigating the identity construction process in diverse environments.

Alvarez's incorporation of CS enhances the story by offering a complex depiction of the immigrant journey that connects with readers encountering comparable difficulties in either immigrant context or non-immigrant. This research invites readers to understand and seek to understand the profound impact of language on identity construction particularly in multicultural contexts in which individuals live. These findings highlight the scholarly importance of code-switching phenomena as both a narrative tool and a practical method or an effective approach individuals employ for bicultural identity construction in their new countries, connecting sociolinguistics and literary analysis. This research provides important perspectives for educators and readers, indicating that CS ought to be redefined as cognitive flexibility within multicultural classrooms to acknowledge students' hybrid identities. Literary works such as those by Alvarez can reflect immigrant experiences, illustrating their living conditions and situations faced after leaving their home countries, promoting empathy and inclusion. Moreover, the emotional impact of assimilation is showcased in the fragmentation of Yolanda, emphasizing the necessity for culturally aware support systems.

Future research should explore four interconnected areas to enhance the comprehension of the pedagogical and literary importance of code-switching. Initially, comparative analyses are crucial to identify diverse culturally specific code-switching trends from universal approaches within immigrant literatures, forming a basis for future applications and future literary works. Secondly, research on pedagogical code-switching should explore how educators can include more literary works such as Alvarez's, in multilingual classrooms, especially in reconciling students' language skills with traditional text teaching, which is an essential requirement in ever-diversifying educational environments that our world is witnessing. Third, literary studies should explore how bilingual readers understand

and emotionally connect and engage with code-switched texts in contrast to monolingual readers this to show its great impact. Ultimately, research on curriculum development ought to create and evaluate literature units that combine Alvarez's novel with the multilingual writing tasks of students, evaluating effects on language acquisition and cultural identity in secondary education. The work of Alvarez ultimately challenges the readers to view linguistic hybridity not as a compromise but as creative resistance that individuals use. Additionally, it as a dynamic process that literature illuminates and society must honor.

Acknowledgment

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Professor Nadia Ghounane for her invaluable guidance, support, and expertise throughout this research journey. Her insightful feedback and encouragement have been a pillar in shaping this work. Thanks for your patience, dedication, and unwavering belief in my potential.

References

- A'baed, A. A., & Kamel, Q. A. (2018). Code switching and identity (Unpublished Master's thesis). University of Al-Qadisiyah, College of Education.
- Adolescent identity as an intertextual construct in Aidan Chambers' Postcards from No Man's Land (1999). (2020). *Children's Literature in Education*, 52, 326–341. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10583-020-09418-5>
- Aharpour, S. (1999). Social identity theory and group diversity: An analysis of functions of group identification (Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation). University of Kent.
- Auer, P. (2005). A postscript: Code-switching and social identity. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 37(4), 403–410. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2004.10.010>
- Azhar, R., & Sutrisono, A. (2023). Negotiating identity: The author's use of code-switching in the novel *The Shelter*. *Celtic: A Journal of Culture*,

- English Language Teaching, Literature and Linguistics, 10(1), 103–106. <https://doi.org/10.22219/celtic.v10i1.26388>
- Baldick, C. (2001). *The concise Oxford dictionary of literary terms*. Oxford University Press.
- Barstad, G. E., Knutsen, K. S. P., & Vestli, E. N. (Eds.). (2019). *Exploring identity in literature and life stories: The elusive self*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Barnes, L., & van Heerden, C. (2006). Virtual languages in science fiction and fantasy literature. *Language Matters*, 37(1), 102–117. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10228190608566254>
- Ben Nafa, H. (2016). Code-switching and identity construction among Arabic-English bilinguals: A stance perspective. In E. Nichele, D. Pili-Moss, & C. Sitthirak (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 10th Lancaster University Postgraduate Conference in Linguistics and Language Teaching* (Vol. 10, pp. 1–32). Lancaster University. https://www.lancaster.ac.uk/fass/events/laelpgconference/papers/v10/02_Hanan_Omar_A_Ben_Nafa.pdf
- Benwell, B., & Stokoe, E. (2006). *Discourse and identity*. Edinburgh University Press.
- Boelhower, W. Q. (1981). The immigrant novel as genre. *MELUS*, 8(1), 3–13. <https://doi.org/10.2307/467364>
- Bonar, C. M. (2002). *Expanding the Bildungsroman genre: Variation in contemporary youth narratives* [Unpublished master's thesis]. University of Georgia.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice* (R. Nice, Trans.). Stanford University Press.
- Bowlby, J. (1982). *Attachment and loss: Attachment* (2nd ed.). Basic Books.
- Bozonelos, D. et al. (n.d.). What is religious identity? In *Social Science LibreTexts*. Retrieved September 22, 2024, from <https://socialsci.libretexts.org/@go/page/150463>
- Cart, M. (2008). *The value of young adult literature*. American Library Association. <https://www.ala.org/yalsa/guidelines/whitepapers/yalit>

- Casas, M. P. (2016). Codeswitching and identity among Island Puerto Rican bilinguals. In R. E. Guzzardo Tamargo, C. M. Mazak, & M. C. Parafita Couto (Eds.), *Spanish-English codeswitching in the Caribbean and the US* (pp. 37–60). John Benjamins Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1075/ihll.11.02per>
- Christy, G. M. A. (2016). Bildungsroman. *The Dawn Journal*, 5(1), 1234–1237.
- Cole, N. L. (2024, June 25). Understanding acculturation and why it happens. ThoughtCo. <https://www.thoughtco.com/acculturation-definition-3026039>
- Cuddon, J. A. (1998). *The Penguin dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*. Blackwell Publishers.
- Djehoubbi, M. (2023). *A linguistic analysis of written code-switching in diasporic literature* (Unpublished Doctoral dissertation). University of Jordan.
- Donelson, K. L., & Nilsen, A. P. (2009). *Literature for today's young adults* (7th ed.). Pearson.
- Dixon, T. (2016, October 24). What is social identity theory? IB Psychology. Retrieved from <https://www.themantic-education.com/ibpsych/2016/10/24/what-is-social-identity-theory/>
- Ellemers, N., & Haslam, S. A. (2012). Social identity theory. In P. A. M. Van Lange, A. W. Kruglanski, & E. T. Higgins (Eds.), *Handbook of theories of social psychology* (pp. 379–398). Sage Publications. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781446249222.n45>
- Elle, M. A., Labaste, H. G. M. A., & Gomez, C. A. R. (2023). Code-switching types and functions: An analysis of Andrew E's "Sinabmarin." *Northwestern Mindanao State College of Science and Technology Journal*, 8(2), 83–98.
- Erikson, E. H. (1950). *Childhood and society*. Paladin, Grafton Books.
- Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Farida, P., Pandhiani, S. M., & Buriro, A. A. (2018). Code-switching and gender identity. *The Women-Annual. Research Journal of Gender Studies*, 10(10), 42–59.

- Freud, A. (1966). *The ego and the mechanisms of defence*. Karnac Books.
- Gardner-Chloros, P. (2009). *Code-switching*. Cambridge University Press.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511609787>
- Gee, J. P. (1999). *An introduction to discourse analysis: Theory and method*. Routledge.
- Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Polity Press.
- Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. Doubleday Anchor Books.
- Gordon, V. (2016). *Identity-construction and development in the modernist Bildungsroman* [Senior thesis]. Lesley University.
https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/clas_theses/3
- Harrison, W., & Ehlers, B. (2024, February 5). *What is young adult literature?* Oregon State University.
<https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-young-adult-literature-definition-and-examples>
- Harwood, J. (2020). Social identity theory. In J. van den Bulck (Ed.), *International encyclopedia of media psychology*. Wiley.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119011071.iemp0153>
- Heller, M., & Pavlenko, A. (2010). Bilingualism and multilingualism. In J. Jaspers, J.-O. Östman, & J. Verschueren (Eds.), *Society and language use* (pp. 71–83). John Benjamins Publishing.
<https://doi.org/10.1075/hoph.7>
- Hoppenjan, A. (2018). *Embracing new experiences: Young adult literature about the immigrant experience* (Published Master's Thesis). University of Northern Iowa. <https://scholarworks.uni.edu/grp/100>
- Hozhabrossadat, S. (2015). Linguistic identities: How code-switching and/or code-crossing help constructing solidarity or otherness in multilingual societies. *International Journal of English Literature and Culture*, 3(6), 194–198. <https://doi.org/10.14662/IJELC2015.054>
- Jung, C. G. (1959). *The archetypes and the collective unconscious* (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton University Press.

- Kanellos, N. (2007). Recovering and re-constructing early twentieth-century Hispanic immigrant print culture in the US. *American Literary History*, 19(2), 438–455. <https://doi.org/10.1093/alh/ajm010>
- Kozieł, P. (2015). Narrative strategy in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novel *Americanah*: The manifestation of migrant identity. *Studies of the Department of African Languages and Cultures*, 49, 97–114. <https://doi.org/10.32690/SALC52>
- Kristeva, J. (1982). *Powers of horror: An essay on abjection* (L. S. Roudiez, Trans.). Columbia University Press.
- Lopez-Banuag, L. (2020). Episodes of forms and reasons of code-switching in Facebook posts. *Asia Pacific Higher Education Research Journal*, 7(1), 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.56278/apherj.v7i1.1542>
- Mahbub-ul-Alam, A., & Quyyum, S. (2016). A sociolinguistic survey on code-switching and code-mixing by the native speakers of Bangladesh. *Manarat International University Studies Journal*, 6(1).
- Matas Llorente, M. (2001). And why did the García girls lose their accents? Language, identity, and the immigrant experience in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*. *Revista de Estudios Norteamericanos*, (8), 69–75.
- Matias-Ferreira, T., Jr. (2019). When immigrants speak: Diasporic voices in Julia Alvarez's *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*. *Romance eReview*, 22, 1–8.
- McCulloch, F. (2019). *Bildungsromane for children and young adults*. In S. Graham (Ed.), *A history of the Bildungsroman* (pp. 174–199). Cambridge University Press.
- Mona, A. (2024). Code-switching in multilingual societies. *European Journal of Linguistics*, 3(1), 38–51. <https://doi.org/10.47941/ejl.1770>
- Myers-Scotton, C. (1993). *Social motivations for codeswitching: Evidence from Africa*. Clarendon Oxford Press.
- Nguyen, A.-M. D., & Benet-Martínez, V. (2010). Multicultural identity: What it is and why it matters. In R. J. Crisp (Ed.), *The psychology of social and cultural diversity* (pp. 87–114). Wiley Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781444325447.ch5>

- Noels, K. A. (2014). Language variation and ethnic identity: A social psychological perspective. *Language & Communication*, 35, 88–96. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.langcom.2013.12.001>
- Oxford University Press. (2006). *Oxford Wordpower Dictionary* (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Sánchez, M. J., & Pérez-García, E. (2020). Acculturation through code-switching linguistic analysis in three short-stories: “Invierno,” “Nilda,” and “The Pura Principle” (Díaz 2012). *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies*, 61, 59–79. https://doi.org/10.26754/ojs_misc/mj.20205139
- Schwartz, S. (2024). What is a Bildungsroman? Oregon State Guide to English Literary Terms. Oregon State University. Retrieved from <https://liberalarts.oregonstate.edu/wlf/what-bildungsroman>
- Shatz, I. (n.d.). Ingroups and outgroups: How social identity influences people. Effectiviology. Retrieved October 3, 2024, from <https://effectiviology.com/ingroup-outgroup/>
- Sun, X. (2024). Teaching young adult literature in secondary L2 classrooms: A case study of *The Outsiders* reading programme. *The Language Learning Journal*, 52(3), 233–254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2022.2107694>
- Romansyah, N. D., & Adam, M. (2023). The use of code-switching and code-mixing to express social identity in the novel *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez. *Journal on Language and Literature*, 9(1), 115–127. <https://doi.org/10.36277/jurnalprologue.v9i1.86>
- Thomas, A. R. (2022). Benjamin’s *Jasmine Days*: A rereading of migrant literature. *International Journal of English and Studies*, 4(3), 35–44.
- Yim, O. (2023). Beyond bilingualism: Code-switching and its cognitive and social correlates. In G. Luk, J. A. E. Anderson, & J. G. Grundy (Eds.), *Understanding language and cognition through bilingualism* (pp. 86–119). John Benjamins Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1075/sibil.64>
- Zayas Ciriaco, L. A. (2024). Code switching at the California Valley: A case study of bilingual people (Unpublished bachelor’s thesis). Benemérita University Autónoma de Puebla.