SELF-CONCEPT ASSESSMENT OF LINGUISTICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS

THESIS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not students of linguistically diverse backgrounds tend to have lower self concepts, particularly in the academic setting, than those students who are from "standard" English linguistic backgrounds. This study took into account the students' linguistic backgrounds; the language most frequently used in the home, whether it is "standard" English, Black English, Spanish, or any other language. It was the premise of this researcher that if a child's first language or dialect deviates from the "standard," which is typically valued and emphasized in the classroom and the society at large, then those students who deviate from the educators' norms will tend to have lower self-concepts. The *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* was used to assess each students' self-concept.

The results of this study indicated that there exists no significant relationship between language variation and one's self-concept. It is possible that these results are due to a skewed population since the sample only included students from one school, which is a magnet school. This study merits further examination with a larger, random sample of participants.

The *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* was administered to a convenience sample of 87 students, from a magnet elementary school in the Rochester City School District, Rochester, New York.

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Chapter I

Introduction

As a more heterogeneous population emerges and as our society and research community at large discards the ethos of the melting pot theory, an increased focus is needed on the impact of cultural and linguistic diversity in the learning environment. Consequently, the needs of students from non-majority cultures are being more fully realized. Therefore, research in the area of linguistic variation in relation to self concept is not merely an interest but also a necessity for our emerging multi-ethnic student population. This study examines the impact of linguistic variation on self concept in the classroom setting.

One of the challenges for classroom teachers is adapting the instructional needs to a multiplying diverse student population. Equally challenging for the students from ethnically diverse backgrounds is learning bicultural socialization (Pinderhughes, 1989). Biculturism, as defined in Pinderhughes (1989), is the ability to live in two worlds and to tolerate the associated conflicts in cultural values and practices. The ability to possess this dual perspective both culturally and linguistically is an important asset for any individual. In today's society there exists a rapidly growing shift in which the number of minorities will soon replace the current white/European majority; therefore, students', as well as educators', abilities to become bicultural will become increasingly important. This researcher recognizes the fact that while many students must truly face biculturalization, for many teachers it remains an option; an option which teachers may not choose and which many districts are not even entertaining.

A brief review of the literature concerning teacher attitudes toward linguistically and culturally diverse students will be made since it provides greater insight into the topic of this thesis. Although the central themes of this work are that of self concept and language variation, teacher attitudes do influence and shape the students in their learning environment. Teachers are playing an increasingly important role for students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. "They [teachers] must be able to function as a bridge, respecting the children's cultural values while simultaneously upholding the values of the school" (Pinderhughes, 1989, p. 182).

This view is also supported by Saville-Troike (1979) when stating:

> We cannot fault our educational system for attempting to transmit the dominant American culture to all its students, since such enculturation is the essential purpose of education in all cultures. We can fault lack of provision or respect for children's culturally diverse backgrounds, however. We can ask our educational system to make aspects of the dominant culture a meaningful part of the children's experience without displacing or conflicting with the corresponding parts of their native cultures.
> Teachers working with children from other groups must learn to see themselves and the school from a perspective of cultural relativity. They must learn to respect and be able to deal with the culturally different backgrounds which children bring to school (p.141-142, in Trueba & Barnett-Mizrahi, 1979).

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not students of linguistically diverse backgrounds tend to have lower self concepts, particularly in the academic setting, than those students who are from "standard" English linguistic backgrounds. The working hypothesis is that students of the non-dominant culture perceive themselves as being less able

than their white Anglo counterparts in the dominant cultural academic setting.

This study took into account the students' linguistic backgrounds; the language most frequently used in the home, whether it is "standard" English, Black Vernacular, Spanish, or any other language.

Chapter II

Literature Review

The present literature review contains information pertaining to self concept, linguistic variation, those terms associated with such variations, and a brief section on teacher attitudes as mentioned in the introduction. This research addresses the relationship of language variation and self concept in the academic setting. Therefore, self concept and linguistic variation are examined in depth. This extensive literature review did not reveal any studies specifically addressing the relationship of language variation and self concept in the academic setting.

Self-Esteem/Self Concept

For the purposes of this paper, this researcher, in accord with others (Wylie, 1974; Piers & Harris, 1984) uses the term "self-concept" interchangeably with the terms *self-esteem* and *self-regard.*

Self-esteem is probably the most pervasive aspect of any human behavior. The concept of self-esteem has been defined,studied and related to many research endeavors (Chiu, 1988; Coopersmith, 1967; Crandall, 1973; Heyde, 1977,1979; Hughes, 1984; Leonetti, 1980; Malinowski, 1923; Piers-Harris, 1973, 1984; Steinem, 1992). It could easily be claimed that no successful cognitive or affective activity can be carried out without some degree of self-esteem, self-confidence, knowledge of yourself, and belief in your own capabilities for that activity (Richard-Amato, 1988). The following is a commonly accepted definition of self esteem (Coopersmith,1967, p. 4-5):

> By self-esteem, we refer to the evaluation which the individual makes and customarily maintains with regard to himself; it expresses an attitude of approval or disapproval, and indicates the extent to which an individual believes himself to be capable, significant, successful and worthy. In short, self-esteem is a personal judgement of worthiness that is expressed in the attitudes that the individual holds towards himself. It is a subjective experience which the individual conveys to others by verbal reports and other overt expressive behavior (p. 4-5).

People derive their sense of self-esteem from the accumulation of experiences with themselves and with others and from assessments of the external world around them (Richard-Amato, 1988).

In more recent years, the definition of self-esteem has been elaborated upon and further defined. Three levels of self-esteem have been identified: global or core self-esteem, situational or specific, and task self-esteem (Heyde, 1979; Ricard-Amato, 1988; Steinem, 1992). General, or *global*, self-esteem is defined as the conviction of being loved and lovable, valued and valuable as we are, regardless of what we do (Steinem, 1992). Situational or specific self-esteem, has been identified by others (Richard-Amato, 1988; Steinem, 1992) as referring to one's appraisals of oneself in certain life situations, such as social interaction, work, education, home, or on certain relatively discretely defined traits--intelligence, communicative ability, athletic ability, or personality traits like gregariousness, empathy, and flexibility. This second level of self-esteem may vary according a particular situation an individual experiences. Situational self esteem comes from knowing we are good "at" something, compare well with others, meet other people's expectations, and can complete ever more challenging and interesting tasks for the sheer joy of it. In this phase comes satisfaction with new abilities, a new sense of interaction and

community with others, and increased curiosity about the world, which we satisfy with all five senses (Steinem, 1992).

Task self-esteem is related to a particular task in relation to a specific situation. For example, within the educational domain task self-esteem might refer to particular subject-matter areas (Richard-Amato, 1988). Specific self-esteem might refer to second language acquisition in general, and task self-esteem might appropriately refer to one's self-evaluation of a particular aspect of the process: speaking, writing, a particular class in a second language, or even a special kind of classroom exercise (Richard-Amato, 1988).

Richard-Amato (1988) states that in general, self-esteem leads to self-confidence. The degree of self-esteem and/or self-confidence may vary from situation to situation or from task to task. Both may increase as one performs well in a variety of situations.

Language Variation

As previously mentioned, language is a key component of culture. It is the primary medium for transmitting much of culture, making the process of language learning in children in part a process of enculturation (Saville-Troike, 1979; Winch, 1990). Saville-Troike (1979) states that children learning their native language are learning their own culture; learning a second language also involves learning a second culture to varying degrees, which may have very profound psychological and social consequences for both children and adults. Saville-Troike (1979) goes on the say that the vocabulary of a language provides an interesting reflection of the culture of the people who speak it, an index to the way they categorize experience.

Language also reflects and reveals the inequalities that are enshrined in the social process (Carter, 1982; Winch, 1990). Additionally, the usage of language is formative in others' perceptions and beliefs about a ethnic group employing the use of their given language. The usage of language allows people to be grouped and categorized according to a power structure within the larger society. "The hierarchical statuses that are accorded to different groups within society--social classes, ethnic groups, the generations, the sexes, urban and rural populations, or whatever they may be; and it's not surprising that these structures are revealed by language, because they are maintained by language, both actively and symbolically" (Carter, 1982, p. 14). Winch (1990) clearly makes the connection between the role of language within a society and how language usage plays an important role in defining different social groups. Such roles play a vital part in the theories of cultural deprivation. Winch (1990) notes, one can go further and say that theories of language deficit are a subspecies and even form the core of these theories. Language deficit theories maintain that poor language and poor social conditions go together and that poor language, especially, is responsible for poor educational achievement.

The verbal deficit model of minority speakers is widely documented (Gladney, 1973; Goodenough, 1981; Labov, 1969; Laffey & Shuy, 1973; Winch, 1990). There is a well-known stereotype in the educational world in which minority group children are said to be nonverbal, language-deficient, and culturally deprived (Shuy, 1973). The language-deficient or verbal deficit model has been largely discusses in terms of dialects and speech styles, including Black English Vernacular (BEV).

Linguistic Terms

For the purposes of this study, the terms dialect, style, and vernacular will briefly be discussed and defined. The rationale for defining these terms is that they are often times used to describe Black English. There exists much controversy and debate within the field of linguistics and sociolinguistics as to the exact usage and definitions of each.

Dialect, according to Winch (1990), refers to differences in language according to time, geographical region, or social class. Wardaugh (1986) defines language and dialect as the following:

> *Language* can be used to refer either to a single linguistic norm or to a group of related norms, and *dialect* to refer to one of the norms.; but the norms themselves are not static (p. 25).

Haugen, (1966a) as cited in Wardaugh (1986), further states that dialect is often thought of as standing outside the language...As a social norm, then, a dialect is a language that is excluded from from polite society (pp. 924-5). It is often equivalent to *nonstandard* or even *substandard*, when such terms are applied to language, and can connote various degrees of inferiority, with that connotation of inferiority carried over to those who speak a dialect (Wardaugh, 1986, p. 25).

Standard English exists solely in a social sense. Standards in language change as do people and their cultures. As discussed in Wardaugh (1986), "a 'standard' variety of a language is 'better' only in a social sense: it has a preferred status, it gives those who use it certain social advantages" (p. 315). Wardaugh goes on the state that nonstandard varieties of language possess the opposite effect as to the positive advantages of a standard.

Vernacular, according to Petyt (1980, p. 25) as cited in Wardaugh (1986), is defined as "'the speech of a particular country or region', or, more technically, 'a form of speech transmitted from parent to child as a primary medium of communication'" (p. 37).

Black English is most often described as a vernacular, or otherwise known as Black English Vernacular (BEV). There are many different and opposing views concerning Black English. Some linguistics claim that Black English is just another dialect of American English (Kurath, 1949; McDavid, 1965--as cited in Wardaugh, 1986). Others maintain that Black is a creole, 'a variety of English which originated quite independently of Standard English' (p. 325, Wardaugh, 1986). Yet others, speakers of Black English, believe that their language is not a variety of English but is a separate language in its own right (Wardaugh, 1986). The point for this digression into the various linguistic terms, particularly those which pertain to Black English, is that despite the varying linguistic views, they are all variations in language and variations from standard English.

Another facet of linguistic diversity within our society and schools is Black English Vernacular (BEV). It is the primary mode of communication for a large proportion of urban blacks (Foster, 1986). Many people, educators included, have held erroneous beliefs about BEV and its speakers. Some people believe that speakers of Black English are just being lazy in their speech patterns. However, there is evidence to the contrary of this notion. Winch (1990) discusses Labov's point that there is a valid and consistent set of grammatical rules governing nonstandard forms of English such as Black English Vernacular.

Speakers of black vernacular also represent a deviation from the norm of standard English and needs to be considered in the educational process.

Michaels (1980), as cited in Hale-Benson (1982), emphasizes a significant difference between the oral presentation styles of Black and white children. The two styles of oral-presentation being topic-centered and topic-chaining. Michaels (1980) discusses how these two different oral-presentation styles are used by Black and white children, and how their varying styles negatively effect the Black child in the academic setting when teachers are not cognizant of the stylistic differences.

Most white children converse and share information in a topic-centered style. Since the majority of teachers are also white, this style is compatible with the teachers' notions of good sharing episode (Michaels, 1980). Topic-centered discourse is a tightly organized and centers on one topic, or topics closely related to the main topic. The Black child's style of discourse is termed as "topic chaining." Michaels (1980) describes topic-chaining as "loosely structured talk that moves fluidly from topic to topic, dealing primarily with accounts of personal relations" (p. 83). Teachers typically have a difficult time following the theme of such discussions since they expect the discourse to focus on a single topic. These sharing turns gave the impression of having no beginning, middle, or end and hence no point at all. The result was that the Black children seemed to "ramble on" about a series of commonplace occurrences (Hale-Benson, 1982).

Additionally, black speech has been viewed as being cognitively deficit and verbally deprived (Gladney, 1973, as cited in Laffey & Shuy, 1973). This belief runs parallel to that of the cultural and linguistic deprivation model discussed further in this paper.

Regardless of the contrasts and various definitions of language variations, they all indicate one central theme which few linguists would argue. This one central them is that language variations all reflect societal

norms and values (Carter, 1982; Ferguson, 1959; Goodenough, 1981; Rubin, 1962; Wardaugh, 1986, Winch, 1990). Any variation in language and/or dialects reflect a common belief as stated by Winch (1990) in the following:

> Different dialects and styles have different levels of *prestige*: they are valued differently in different parts of society. It is certainly true that in different situations different styles and dialects are more advantageous than others in both social and career terms. Dialect and style contribute powerfully to the sense of culture and community that is so important to a human sense of identity and well-being.

The different levels of prestige of language and its usage are acknowledged whether one looks at this issue through the eyes of a bilingual child who speaks any language other than English, or through the eyes of a child speaking a variation of English in the academic setting. Students of varying ethnic and linguistic backgrounds must acquire some level of competency in English in order to successfully function in the society at large.

Self-Esteem, Language and Education

Students' sense of social identity within the educational setting and their self-esteem will be effected by their sense of belonging to that particular group and setting (Winch, 1990). Winch (1990) goes on to state that "the sense of belonging to some social group is a quite basic need for most people, and our particular values, opinions, knowledge, interests, and skills are developed through participation in such a grouping" (p. 29). It is an innate human quality to need to feel a part of one's community.

The school community represents a major part of students' lives, particularly at the primary levels when they are forming and shaping their knowledge and understanding of themselves and their roles within a particular community. Students, as all human beings, want to fit into their environment in a positive fashion. If one does not have a sense of belonging, then there is little motivation to remain a part of a group or community (Winch, 1990).

Many students are taught, directly and/or indirectly, from the day they enter our schools that they must conform to the norms of the setting in order to be successful and fully accepted (Richard-Amato, 1988); language and its use are both strong social marker of the levels of conformity. One's language and its use is one of the first social markers for students. For many minority students and linguistically diverse students, their language is often seen as a negative social marker (Carter, 1982; Hewett, 1970; Ortego, 1970; Williams, Whitehead & Miller, 1971; Williams, 1976). Many educators view children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds as being "culturally or linguistically deprived" (Gladney, 1973; Laffey & Shuy, 1973; Ovando & Collier, 1985; Winch, 1990). When students are viewed by educators as being culturally and linguistically deprived, they adopt a sense of inferiority with the academic setting (Carter, 1982). Halliday (1968) further elaborates this point and warned:

> When attitudes of inferiority come to be shared by those who themselves speak the nonstandard or stigmatized dialect, and no other, they become harmful. A speaker who made ashamed of his own language habits suffers a basic injury as a human being; to make anyone, especially a child feel so ashamed is as

indefensible as to make him feel ashamed of the colour of his skin (pp. 165).

Teacher Attitudes Towards Linguistically Diverse Students

Teachers' attitudes and perceptions of culturally and linguistically diverse students is an important facet that can either positively or negatively affect a child's self concept (Burns, 1979). As mentioned in the introduction, the theme teacher attitudes is not a central one or focus of this study; however, there exist definite implications that teacher attitudes play an important role in the child's self concept in the academic setting. This literature explains the current discussion that teacher attitudes and perceptions are often tied to their own biases and assumptions about students abilities as related to students' language. The belief that teachers' attitudes has a significant effect on the self concept of students of numerous linguistic backgrounds is well-founded (Casso, 1976; Leonetti, 1980; Perkins, 1970; Saville-Troike, 1979; Williams, 1976; Williams, Whitehead & Miller, 1971).

Chapter III

Methods and Procedures

Sample

Participants in this study represent a convenience sample consisting of 87 fourth and fifth grade students from a magnet elementary school within the Rochester City School District, Rochester, New York. The participants were primarily from three fourth grade classes. In order to achieve a somewhat proportionate sample of linguistic backgrounds, it was necessary to include 13 fifth grade students in this study. The participants were chosen from this particular school for the purposes of convenience and since these students are bussed in from throughout the district, they represent a sampling of students from throughout the Rochester City School District.

The data was collected by the use of both a cover sheet (see Appendix A) and the administration of the *Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale*. For the purpose of confidentiality as required by the school district, surveys were administered without identifiers as to students' or teachers' names. The participants' classroom teachers administered the PHCSCS. The fifth grade students participating is this study were administered the test by this researcher.

This researcher met with the three classroom teachers prior to the administration of the test to review the materials and to answer any questions that they had. The teachers were instructed how to administer the test. Additionally, the purpose of the coversheet was explained to the teachers to prevent any confusion for the participants.

The variables examined in this study included the students' language(s) used in their homes and self-concept as measured by the PHCSCS. For the

purposes of this study, language was used as a categorical variable and self concept as a continuous variable.

Instrumentation

The *Piers Harris Children's Self Concept Scale*, subtitled "The Way I Feel About Myself", was used to measure the students' self concepts. The PHCSCS is a brief, self-reported measure designed to aid in the assessment of self-concept in children and adolescents (Piers, 1984). The scale consists of 80 first person declarative statements, such as "I am a happy person," "I cause trouble in my family,"; participants respond with by circling "yes" or "no." The PHCSCS is intended to be used with students/children grades 4-12. The scale may be administered individually or in groups. It is recommended to read the questions to children at the fourth and fifth grade levels, even though the test is written at approximately a third grade level. The administration time is approximately 20 minutes and can be scored by hand or by computer processing. Interpretation of the PHCSCS is based on individual item responses, the cluster scales, the summary scores, and the integration of the test data with information from other sources, especially clinical interviews and parental or teacher's reports (Piers, 1984). The major function of the scale is to provide a global index of self-concept (Piers, 1984).

Reliability and Validity

According to Piers (1984) the *Piers-Harris* appears to be a highly reliable instrument. The *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale Revised Manual 1984*, states the following:

> Test-retest reliability coefficients range from .42 to .96 and internal consistency estimates for the total score range from .88 to .93. The reliability figure compare favorably with other measures used to assess personality traits in children and adolescents. For instance, Marsh, Smith, Barnes, and Butler (1983) recently reported stability and internal consistency of .61 and .92 for student self-concept ratings using the *Self Description Questionnaire*. The Piers-Harris is thus judged to have adequate temporal stability and good internal consistency (pp. 57).

Several different tools were used to test the validity of this instrument. Among them were estimates of the content, criterion-related, and construct validity of the *Piers-Harris* which have been obtained from a number of different studies. These studies have used a variety of approaches including item analysis, intercorrelations among the scales and item, and comparisons of the response of various criterion groups. Finally, the *Piers-Harris* has been compared to other scales designed to measure similar constructs (Piers, 1984). For a more indepth description of the research behind this tool, see Piers (1984).

Categorical Independent Variable (Language)

For this study, language is being considered as a categorical variable while self-concept is the continuous variable. The various language categories considered in this study which were reported to be used in the student's home include: Standard English (students of white/European backgrounds), Black English (African American students), Standard English (African American students), and Other Languages. The participants in the convenience sample which fell into the "Other

Languages" category reported speaking Spanish, Laos, Vietnamese and Jamaican at home.

Continuous Dependent Variable (Self-Concept as measured by the PHCSCS)

Self-concept was a continuous dependent variable in this study. The *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* was used to measure the students' self-concept. According to Piers (1984), the normal values for determining significant deviation from the mean (+/-1 standard deviation) correspond to the 16th and 84th percentiles, respectively. Therefore, any student whose percentile score fell below the 16th percentile was considered to have a low self-concept. Any student whose percentile score fell within the forementioned normal range was considered to have an average self-concept. And any student whose percentile score fell above the 84th percentile was considered to have a high self-concept.

Why Chosen for This Study

The *Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale* was chosen for several reasons. The *Piers-Harris* is cost effective, easy to administer, and not time consuming. An addition advantage is the feasibility of teacher scoring. The PHCSCS was highly recommended for use as a classroom screening device (Chiu, 1988). This scale has also been regarded as the most psychometrically sound instrument for assessing children's self-esteem (Crandall, 1973; Hughes, 1984; Jeske, 1985; Wylie, 1974; as cited in Chiu, 1988). Additionally, the PHCSCS was developed as a research instrument to provide a quantitative, self-report measure of children's self-concepts (Piers, 1984). Since this scale has been previously used to

investigate the relationship between self-concept and other traits or behaviors (Chiu, 1988; Piers, 1984; Reyes & Jason, 1993) it was chosen for this study to measure the children's self-concept in relation to linguistic variation.

Analysis Plan

Discussion of Chi-Square

Chi-Square Analysis was chosen as the statististical measure since this type of analysis aims to detemine whether there are global relations between variables. Additionally, chi-square implements the use of categorical variables which were necessary for the purposes of this study.

Chi-Square consists of a contingency matrix with one variable in the columns and the other in the rows. Within the matrix, each unit is divided by a diagonal line. In the upper half of the unit the observed frequency (Fo) is recorded, and in the lower half of the unit the expected frequency (Fe) is recorded. The frequency expected is calculated by the following equation:

$$(\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}) \div n$$

[with n = # of students participating in sample]

Once the totals from the contingency matrix are calculated they are then tabulated into the chi-square table (See Results Section). Chi-square is calculated by adding up all of the figures obtained in the last column of the chi-square table [(Fo - Fe)2 ÷ Fe]. The result is the obtained chi-square value. Each cell of the chi-square table corresponds to one of the Row (R) variables in conjunction with its corresponding Column (C) variables. For the porposes of this study, the 95% confidence level was selected in order to determine a statistically significant relationship between the stated variables. This can be determined by comparing the *obtained chi-square* value and the *required chi-square* value. The *required chi-square* value is determined by calculating the degrees of freedom (df) and *the Distribution*

of Chi Square (see Rubin & Babbie, 1993, p. 603 for this table). The degrees of freedom are dependent upon the contingency matrix, and is calculated as follows:

$$df = (R - 1) * (C - 1)$$

If the *chi-square obtained* is higher than the critical value for *chi-square required*, at a 95% confidence level, then there exists a statistically significant relationship. In addition to the Chi-Square Analysis, *Cramer's Phi Coefficient* was used to determine the percent of global relationship. The equation for figuring Cramer's Phi Coefficient (ϕ) is:

$$\phi = \sqrt{\frac{\chi^2_{obtained}}{n\,(k-1)}},$$

where k is the lesser of R or C and n=sample size.

Sample Size

The sample size of students administered the Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale was 87. A total of 8 of those 87 scales were invalid. Therefore, the sample size used in the analysis is n=79.

Chapter IV

Data Analysis and Results

Results of PHCSCS

A total of 87 *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scales* were administered. Of the 87 total, 74 scales were administered to the fourth grade students and 13 scales were administered to the fifth grade students. There were 8 tests which were invalid since the students did not indicate what language(s) they used most often at home. Also one student refused to complete the scale. Therefore, 79 scales were used in the data analysis.

From these 79 participants, 22 (28%) students reported speaking standard English, 26 (33%) students reported speaking Black English, and 8 (10%) students reported speaking some other language in their homes other than the above categories. Those other languages include Spanish, Vietnamese, Laos, and "Jamaican." Additionally, 23 (29%) African-American students reported the use of standard English in the home. As a result of such a high percent (29%) in this category, this researcher felt it important to introduce this as an additional category in the chi-square analysis.

The null hypothesis states that there will be no statistically significant differences in one's self-concept as measured by the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* if the language spoken at home varies from the linguistic norm of the language spoken in school (standard English in this study). The hypothesis will be tested at the 95% confidence level, as determined by the *Distribution of Chi Square* (Rubin & Babbie, 1993).

For the values obtained for this study using Chi-Square analysis see Figure 1. The Chi-Square Table for this study is shown in Table 2. The critical value for chi-square was calculated at 12.592, with the df = 6.

Figure 1. Chi-Square Contingency Matrix Results

Self-Concept / Language	C1 Low 0-15%	C2 Average 16-84%	C3 High 85-100%	Row Totals
R 1 Standard English	0 / 0.835	11 / 11.140	11 / 10.025	22
R 2 Black English	1 / 0.987	16 / 13.165	9 / 11.848	26
R 3 Standard English (African Amer.)	2 / 0.873	8 / 11.646	13 / 10.481	23
R 4 Other Languages	0 / 0.304	5 / 4.051	3 / 3.646	8
Column Totals	3	40	36	79

$$F_e = \text{Frequency Expexcted} = \left(\frac{\text{Row Total} \times \text{Column Total}}{n}\right)$$

F_e = Frequency Observed

Table 1. Chi-Square Table Results

Cell	F_o	F_e	(F_o-F_e)	$(F_o-F_e)^2$	$(F_o-F_e)^2/F_e$
R1, C1	0.000	0.835	-0.835	0.697	0.835
C2	11.000	11.140	-0.140	0.020	0.002
C3	11.000	10.025	0.975	0.951	0.095
R2, C1	1.000	0.987	0.013	0.000	0.000
C2	16.000	13.165	2.835	8.037	0.610
C3	9.000	11.848	-2.848	8.111	0.685
R3, C1	2.000	0.873	1.127	1.270	1.455
C2	8.000	11.646	-3.646	13.293	1.141
C3	13.000	10.481	2.519	6.345	0.605
R4, C1	0.000	0.304	-0.304	0.092	0.304
C2	5.000	4.051	0.949	0.901	0.222
C3	3.000	3.646	0.646	0.417	0.114

χ^2 Obtained: 6.068

Since the critical values for chi-square is 12.592 and since the chi-square value obtained is 6.068, we must retain the null hypothesis and conclude that a student's language is not related to that student's self-concept.

Cramer's Phi Coefficient (ϕ) was calculated as follows:

$$= \sqrt{\frac{6.068}{79\ (3\text{-}1)}}$$

$$= \sqrt{\frac{6.068}{158}}$$

$$= \sqrt{.038}$$

$$= .195$$

Therefore, knowing a student's language spoken in the home explains 20% of the global relationship in a child's self-concept, and vice versa. In this research study, evidence obtained indicates that there exists no strong relationship between one's language and self-concept.

Chapter V

Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

Discussion

The intent of this study was to discover whether or not students of linguistically diverse backgrounds tend to have lower self concepts, particularly in the academic setting, than those students who are from "standard" English linguistic backgrounds. The results show no significant relationship; however, this study has several limitations which may have had an impact on the results.

First, in order to administer the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* in the Rochester City School District, it was required to have a blind study so that no test could be linked to the given student completing the scale. Therefore, it was not possible to consider other variables, such as teacher or peer ratings as to the accuracy of the students' self-reported concepts. Piers (1984) does state that it is helpful to integrate the findings of the scale with information from other sources, such as teacher or peer ratings, to yield an overall picture of the child's positive and negative self-evaluation. Additionally, without additional information on the participants, it is not possible to determine whether or not the students attempted to distort or produce a given effect. Considering that there was a large percentage of participants whose scores exceeded the normal range of the PHCSCS, it is possible that the students either consciously or unconsciously distorted their outcomes. After reviewing the completed scales, there is no apparent inconsistency in the participants' responses to various items.

Additionally, since the school where the scale was administered is a magnet school, it is also possible that the participants represent a skewed

population. Parents and/or the students themselves have chosen to attend this particular school within the district.

Another consideration is that only one variable was investigated in the study. This study merits further research including additional variables to determine whether or not language variation is related to one's self-concept. Additionally, this researcher recommend that a larger, random sample be used in further studies on this topic. It is possible that the convenience sample used in this study was not sufficient in determining a possible relationship between the two variables investigated.

Lastly, it is also possible that, in fact, there exists no relationship between students of linguistically diverse backgrounds and their self concepts in the academic setting if their linguistic backgrounds deviate from "standard" English linguistic backgrounds.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, this researcher recommends a more indepth study with the use of a larger and random sample which needs to include a more diverse student population. Previous research, although not related specifically to linguistic variation and self-concept in the academic setting, does support that variations in the usage of language does have an impact, both positively and negatively on a child's self-concept (Carter, 1982; Halliday, 1968; Hewett, 1970; Ortego, 1970; Williams, Whitehead & Miller, 1971; Williams, 1976; Winch, 1990).

Due to the fact that language and its usage reflects societal values and norms, it should be noted that in the classroom teachers place their own biases and assumptions on their students' usage of language. Saville-Troike (1979) states that teachers need to be sensitive to areas where there may be

differences in language use. It is proposed that further research pertaining to teacher attitudes and expectations of multi-ethnic students merits further study. As Pinderhughes (1989) states, it is imperative that the acceptance and support of a dual perspective be recognized in our society. It is essential that this dual perspective become integrated into the foundation of our educational system. As previously stated in the introduction, the challenge for educators is to adapt their instruction to a multi-ethnic student population. The challenge facing students is that they successfully engage in the biculturization process.

One needs only to look at the high dropout rates of our nation's minority students to recognize that their diversity exemplifies and embodies the inequities of our current educational system. *Being different* often holds a negative connotation in our society. Language, being the primary medium through which one's culture is transmitted, does play an important role throughout our society and does not stop at the classroom door.

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Appendix A: Cover Sheet

Cover Sheet

Piers-Harris Children's Self Concept Scale (PHCSCS)

Study for Masters Thesis
by Rebecca Rauscher-Bethlendy
Department of Education & Human Development
State University of New York
College at Brockport

Grade: _____ **Age:** _____ **School #:** _____

Date: _____ **Gender:** (please circle) Male Female

Please check the box below that indicates your dominant language (the language you use most often):

_____ Standard English _____ Black English

_____ Spanish

_____ Other Language (please write which language on line below)

_____

Please check one box below to indicate the language most often used in your home:

_____ Standard English _____ Black English

_____ Spanish

_____ Other Language (please write which language on line below)

_____

Please check one box below that best describes your racial ethnic background:

_____ Black/African American _____ White/European _____ Asian

_____ Hispanic/Latino _____ Other: _____

DO *NOT* WRITE YOUR NAME ANYWHERE ON THIS SHEET OR IN THE BOOKLET

Appendix B:

Copy of the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale*

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Attention: Rebecca Rauscher-Bethlendy
c/o Dr. Susan Taylor-Brown
5 PAGES TOTAL

November 11, 1993

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