TECHNOLOGY AND IDENTITY ENACTMENT AMONG MUSLIM IMMIGRANT FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

Grounded in sociocultural theory and informed by Bakhtinian's notions of dialogism, utterance, heteroglossia, and addressivity, this paper presents findings from a collective case study of the identity enactments and negotiations by way of their literacy practices of three children in the three families of Muslim immigrants (i.e., Muslim-Moroccan, Muslim-Somali, and Muslim-Indonesian) living in an American Midwestern town. Three types of data were collected: observations, spoken data, and artifacts. Data were analyzed at two tiers, first as individual cases and then as part of a cross-case analysis. This study revealed that there are co-occurring and mutually affirming processes that took place among the study participants identified as "eMersion," "acquiring Qur'anic literacy," "forging nostalgic alignments," and "bilateral nostalgia." This paper specifically highlights the complex process of literacy practices called "Acquiring Qur'anic Literacy" and "eMersion" and identity enactments called "Forging Nostalgic Alignment," and their relationships to a phenomenon called "bi-lateral nostalgia" among these three Muslim immigrant families.

Keywords: Muslim, Immigrant, Technology, Identity Enactment, Literacy, Sociocultural Theory, Negotiations, Dialogism, Utterance, Heteroglossia, Addressivity.

INTRODUCTION

On June 25, 2015, Congressman Michael T. McCaul introduced the Countering Violent Extremism Act of 2015 (Congress.Gov, 2015). This amendment to the Homeland Security Act of 2002 proposed the creation of the "Office for Countering Violent Extremism" in the Department of Homeland Security. It stated that the term 'violent extremism' meant ideologically motivated terrorist activities and attempts to marshal resources to act against ideologically motivated violence from groups such as ISIS or ISL, and Al-Qaeda. This multifaceted conflict situates Muslim immigrants in the United States as an enemy people. Islam has been posited as the cultural other, inimical to 'Western' values and traditions in an essential 'clash of civilizations' (El-Haj, 2002). As a consequence, Muslims have been put under intense scrutiny, regarded as "an alienated, problematic minority," and studied through a myopic lens with multiple trajectories tainted with misconceptions, collective essentializations, and prejudice (Werbner, 2004). This particular bill appeared in response to the observation that terrorist groups actively and creatively use digital media to radicalize Muslim youth.

Many Muslim immigrant families and their children have to navigate this dual difficulty. They are Muslims, minoritized, and viewed with suspicion, and they face linguistic barriers, making mainstream social and cultural networks less accessible (Ghaffar-Kutcher, 2008; Rogoff, 2003). This highly charged climate, which juxtaposes

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identity, religion, politics, and violent extremism, makes it imperative that this study seeks to understand the role literacy practices play in the identity development of the children of Muslim immigrants in the United States (Mitchell & Weiler, 1991).

This paper presents findings from a collective case study of the construction and enactment of identity through literacy practices in three families of Muslim immigrants living in an American Midwestern town (Street, 1984). Three types of data were collected: observations, spoken data, and artifacts. Data were analyzed at two tiers: each individual case and a cross-case analysis. Data analyses indicate that there are co-occurring and mutually affirming processes that took place among the study participants identified as "eMersion," "acquiring Qur'anic literacy," "forging nostalgic alignments," and "bi-lateral nostalgia." This paper specifically reports the complex process of literacy practices called "acquiring Qur'anic literacy" and "eMersion" and identity enactments called "forging nostalgic alignment" and their relationships to "bi-lateral nostalgia" among these three Muslim immigrant families. This study argues that understanding the ways in which the children of Muslim American immigrants make meaning, perform identity, express culture, and read the world might shed light not only on how their culture informs their learning but also on ways that cultural conflicts may be assuaged.

1. Literature Review

Children's identity development is inextricably linked to their literacy practices. Identity is connected to wants and desires like recognition, affiliation, and acceptance that flourish through social practices (Compton-Lilly et al., 2017). As people bring their lived stories to activities and events, they creatively negotiate and construct their views of themselves and the world. Holland (2001) theorized that people live in "figured worlds" that are socially situated and are "peopled by the figures, characters, and types who carry out its tasks and who also have styles of interacting within, distinguishable perspectives on, and orientations towards it" (p. 51). The identities embodied in these worlds are expressed in diverse ways, such as choices of clothing, language, and behaving in various discourse communities (Gee, 2014). Identities are also manifested in literacy practices, which may be intertwined with values, attitudes, feelings, and social relationships (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012).

"Literacy" has shifted from being viewed as singular to being viewed as multiliteracies, which are local, social, and culturally bound (Barton & Hamilton, 2012; Collins, 1995; Gee, 1994; Street, 1993). This perspective foregrounds the actor in literate and social practices and looks at people in their interactions and contexts (Moje & Luke, 2009). These activities take place at particular times and in particular spaces through the use of particular tools (Vygotsky, 1978). They incorporate multiple ways of making meaning, such as through written, visual, gestural, and tactile modes (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012). Multiliteracies also include diverse communicative forms such as visual, audio, spatial, and other semiotic systems (Cope, 2000). Therefore, children's literacies should be interpreted broadly, beyond reading and writing (Gee & Gee, 2007). The concept of multiliteracies acknowledges the multiple literate modalities that are applicable to Muslim immigrant families (Compton-Lilly & Nayan, 2015).

Muslim immigrant children and adults enact multiple identities that are dynamic, fluid, and contested depending on their social and cultural contexts and across time and space (Gregory & Williams, 2000; Gregory, 2002; Merry, 2005; Wallace, 2008; Fine & Sirin, 2008; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012; Sensoy & Stonebanks, 2009). Four types of identities are found salient to many Muslim immigrant children and their families: religious identity, cultural identity, hybrid or hyphenated identity, and language learner identity (Bigelow, 2010; Fine & Sirin, 2008; Heath, 1983; Khan, 2000; Peek, 2005; Wallace, 2008; Zine, 2001). In addition, in cultivating religious identities, Khan (2000) argued that some Muslims may perform symbolic activities like praying, fasting, celebrating festivals, wearing ethnic garb, and visiting mosques, restaurants, and Islamic schools. Studies also indicated that immigrant children engage in hybrid and syncretic literacy practices that are produced when multiple identities and cultural resources intersect and

converge during literacy activities (Gregory, 2000; 2002). For example, Pahl and Rowsell (2012) described the syncretic literacy practices of Fatih, a 5-year-old Turkish Muslim immigrant child in the UK who blended the English word "bird" and Turkish "kus" to describe his drawing of a bird while reading The Ugly Duckling at school. Fatih, like many immigrant children, produced syncretic literacy practices by blending the identity and knowledge they learned at school with their home identity, cultural knowledge, and practices. In this process of change, both identities and the worlds in which they were constructed were interconnected.

Muslim immigrant children acquire diverse literacies at diverse sites through diverse methods and at varying degrees of expertise. Some paths to literacy acquisition include self- or home-instruction, church or mosque affiliation, and bilingual education (Martin-Jones & Jones, 2000). At community sites, young immigrant children engage in reading, writing, drawing, and using the internet to connect with others (Gregory & Williams, 2002; Gregory, 2001; 2008; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012; Wallace, 2008). Gregory (2008) found that older immigrant children learned through "modeling, guiding, demonstrating, instructing, coaxing, looking after, comforting, and socializing younger children, and generally practicing their existing skills" (p. 91).

Finally, Muslim immigrant children's literacies are interwoven with culture, identity, gender, race, religion, ideology, and power. Muslim children struggle to negotiate an identity within three cultural frameworks: the dominant culture, their ethnic cultures, and Islam. Fine and Sirin (2008) theorized that Muslim American youth straddle "hyphenated selves," or identities that are at once joined and separated by the current socio-political climate, history, geography, longings, and loss (Fine, 1994). Aside from straddling hyphenated identities, Muslim immigrant children also struggle to find their voices in schools. Masny and Ghahremani-Ghajar (1999) found that minoritized and non-mainstream students' voices are silenced in schools because their personal and community literacies are seldom represented in the culture of their school. These differences between home practices and school expectations may lead to school failure and a negative influence on children's identity formation.

2. Theoretical Framework

- How do children in Muslim immigrant families enact identities through literacy practices?
- What are the relationships between enacted identities and the literacy practices engaged by children in Muslim immigrant families?
- What are the educational implications of identity work for teaching Muslim immigrant children?

To answer these questions, this study draws on sociocultural theory, which frames knowledge as socially constructed and human cognition and behavior as embedded in activity systems that are mediated by tools and artifacts (Vygotsky, 1987; Wertsch, 1998). From this perspective, Muslim immigrant families' existing knowledge is socially transmitted and negotiated and is also cultural and political in nature. This perspective positions immigrant learners as social beings and views culture as "located in the minds and hearts of people who are at the same time actors and creators of social interactions" (Geertz, 1973). This study is also informed by Bakhtinian's (2010) notions of dialogism, utterance, heteroglossia, and addressivity, as they emphasize the uniqueness of an individual and the individual's experiences. In this study, literacy practice is analogous to the notions of utterance and dialogism, which assume that literacy practices only become meaningful when embedded in social and cultural contexts. Heteroglossia assumes that multiple voices occur in the identity development of individuals in social and cultural contexts, and addressivity is the notion that voices are inextricably linked to discourse and notions of polity or power.

In this study, the term Muslim immigrant is used to refer to Muslims who immigrated to the U.S. The term Muslim American is used to refer to people who identify themselves as Muslims who are living in the U.S., and the term identity enactment signifies the repeated 'performance' of a particular sense of self (Enciso, 1997; Gee, 1994). Identity work can be traced through 'cultural

artifacts,' including objects, images, symbols, and discourses that are central to performing literacy (Bartlett, 2007).

3. Methodology

Data collected in this paper were part of a ten-year longitudinal case study involving ten immigrant families in a Midwestern town called Shoreline. This study employed case study methodology to gain a rich, multivariate view of the participants and the particularities that contextualize their action. Creswell and Poth (2007) explained that a case study explored a bounded system studied over time, involving multiple sources of information. This study reports on three cases and also offers a cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2014).

Since time and space were crucial in this analysis, data collection was designed to reference the diverse spaces that these Muslim immigrant families occupy or have occupied at various points in time so that change and continuity could be detected. For example, during yearly interviews, self-portraits drawn by the three focal children were collected to analyze how they see, describe, and envision themselves. These self-portraits were later compared and analyzed across time. All data were collected and analyzed by two researchers. All participant names are pseudonyms.

3.1 Participants

3.1.1 Case 1: Adam and His Family

The Bamrani family consists of Ameena, a 35-year-old mother; Isam, her 52-year-old husband; and their children, Adam, a 7-year-old son; and Laila, a 10-year-old daughter. During this study, Isam was not with his family in Shoreline due to unexplained immigration paperwork issues. The family is originally from Casablanca, Morocco, and moved to the US in the fall of 2008. In Casablanca, this family led a comfortable middle-class lifestyle where Ameena worked as a secretary. In Shoreline, Ameena works part-time from home as a babysitter. They live about five minutes away from Ameena's brother's apartment on the southwest side of town. Both Adam and Laila attend a public school located across from their two-bedroom apartment complex. Ameena is fluent in both Moroccan-Arabic and French, languages spoken at home with her children (Ahearn, 2001). She is not fluent in English. Both Adam and Laila speak English fluently because they attended a private school in Casablanca where English was emphasized heavily alongside classical Arabic and French (Yusuf Ali, 2000).

3.1.2 Case 2: Sarah and Her Family

The Mohamed family consists of Mac'alin, a 45-year-old father; Saadiah, a 37-year-old mother who is pregnant; and their four daughters and two sons. Sarah, a 5-year-old girl, is the focal child in this study. This Somali refugee family lives in a three-bedroom apartment in a new complex on the south side of Shoreline. Their immigration story began with Mac'alin's journey to Florida in late 2001 to look for better job opportunities while fleeing the civil war in Somalia. Mac'alin completed high school and college in Somalia, graduating with two degrees. In 1989, he was enrolled in a college in Mogadishu to pursue a Master's degree when the government collapsed. Shortly thereafter, Mac'alin and his family fled to Kenya as refugees, where they stayed for about nine years at a refugee camp. He eventually brought his family to the United States with the help of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees. They later relocated to Albany, where in 2007, Mac'alin graduated from SUNY Albany with a Master's degree in Business Administration. The family moved to Shoreline in 2009. At home, family members speak to one another in Somali and English (both parents also speak Swahili and some Somali-Arabic). Sarah speaks English fluently and does not speak Somali.

3.1.3 Case 3: Melina and Her Family

The Mochtar family consists of Jusuf Mochtar, a 35-year-old father, Hetty, a 32-year-old mother, and their two children: Melina, a 9-year-old daughter who is the focal child, and Faisal, a 3-year-old son. Jusuf was originally "a kampung boy" (a village boy) from the city of Madiun in East Java, while Hetty was "a city girl," born and raised in Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia. Their immigration story started in 2002 when Jusuf, who has a bachelor's degree in technology and communications from a university in Indonesia, was invited to work in Shoreline as a local

computer expert. A year after his arrival, Jusuf went back to Indonesia to bring Hetty and their infant daughter, Melina, to the United States. Jusuf has a successful career at his company with several promotions and is doing well financially. They are owners of a 3-bedroom house in a relatively new suburban area on the south side of Shoreline. This family speaks English and Indonesian Malay at home. Jusuf speaks Javanese with his family and Javanese friends. Hetty completed her elementary and high school education in Indonesia and in Shoreline and works part time as a teacher's assistant at a local Islamic school where Jusuf serves on the school board and volunteers (Merry, 2005).

3.2 Data Sources and Data Analysis

The data drawn upon in this study was collected over a period of two years. This study selected these families because they had immigrated to the United States within the past ten years and had diverse life experiences that were reflective of many Muslim immigrant families in the United States. Like many other families, they speak a wide variety of languages (i.e., Arabic, French, English, Somali, Malay, and Javanese) and represent a range of cultural, economic, and ideological positions (Haddad et al., 2006). These families were also chosen because they are considered "information-rich cases" (Patton, 1990). All of the families consider themselves "born Muslims" since their parents and ancestors were also Muslim. They also represent three of the largest groups of Muslims in the world (i.e., Southeast Asians, Africans, and Arabs).

Table 1 shows the evolving code list. Data collection included observations, interviews, and student-created artifacts. Observations were conducted five times at home, at school, and during community events. Interviews conducted with family members, teachers, and members of the community were audiotaped, transcribed, and later expanded. Student-created artifacts such as drawings, photographs (i.e., taken at school, home, and neighborhood), and writing samples were collected. Additional artifacts included reading assessments and running records (Leslie & Caldwell, 2006).

NVivo was used to code, memo, and organize interview transcripts and field notes from observations. The initial coding scheme (Table 1) featured a priori categories that were based on anticipated responses to the interview questions. Later, this initial code set was extended and refined as more data became available through multiple rounds of data collection. Throughout the coding process, some of the initial codes were omitted, revised, or collapsed as they were constantly compared to each other and to new data (Glaser & Strauss, 2017). Semi-structured interviews were analyzed using discourse analysis techniques focusing on the ways participants use language to situate themselves within time (i.e., "now," "then," "after") and space (i.e., "here," "home," "school"). Language related to identity and authority (i.e., "I-statements," "people back home," "my mom said") were noted and analyzed (Webb, 1994). The artifacts collected were labeled with relevant details and, together with classroom observations, were analyzed on three different occasions: when the artifact was first collected, in response to an audiotaped conversation with the student about each artifact, and after all, examples of an artifact have been collected so that the researchers can reflect on artifact development and note the changes.

Table 2 shows the list of characters and locations. Data were analyzed by using a two-tiered process. Firstly, data from each case study were analyzed individually. Secondly, data from all three cases were analyzed through cross-case analysis (Miles et al., 2014). The Eve Gregory typology of literacy practice purposes underpinned the use of a lens for examining identity (Gregory, 2001). Following this typology, literacy practices were grouped into four categories: religious (R), cultural (C), linguistic (L), and American or Hyphenated identities (A-H). This analysis was also guided by Bakhtinian's (1981) notions of dialogism, utterance, heteroglossia, and addressivity. This study treated these as sensitizing concepts rather than a priori codes (Glaser, 1978).

4. Findings

Four identity types emerged as salient in Adam's, Sarah's, and Melina's lives. These salient identity types are: religious identity, cultural identity, academic identity, and familial identity.

Code	Description
cgeneral (c = child)	General comments or discourse about child.
cbehavior	References to child's school behavior.
cattendance	References to child's school attendance.
cattention	References to attentional issues with children.
cchange	References to change or lack of change with the child over time (physical, academic, behavioral) at home or school.
cgoal	Comments about what the student intends to do and learn.
chealth	References to child's health issues.
cidentity	Relating to a child's view of self, this may include references or observations of dress, media practices, interests, and affiliations; also references to self as a reader or writer.
clabel	References that label that child in any way.
clanguage	Relating to child's language, language differences, or language practices.
cnormal	Comparison of student to others.
cnotschool	Comments about a child's informal learning experiences, including religious activities, cultural activities, formal language lessons, sports lessons, and supplemental educational experiences.
cother	Relating to child's attitudes and abilities in subject areas other than reading and writing.
cpreference	References to things or places or topics or activities that student likes or dislikes.
creading	Relating to child's reading ability and attitude.
cschool	Comments about child's school experiences in the US and native country.
cresist	Child's act of resisting.
cwriting	Relating to child's writing ability and attitude
different	Comments about similarities and differences between family country/US and home/school.
family	References to family members and activities that involve family.
finance	Comments pertaining to the financial situation of the family in the US or in the native country.
friend	Comments about friends and peers (does not include descriptions of interactions with peers).
hard	Child's comments about school and literacy activities as being hard or easy.
home	Comments about house or neighborhood or community.
immigrate	Comments related to the experience of immigrating and the circumstances under which family moved to the US.
in/out	Comparisons of in-class and out-of-class behaviors or practices that are not related to literacy; descriptions of behavior in each setting (i.e., home/school).
job	Comments related to differences in work expectations, hours, co-worker relationships, or the types of work held in the native country and the US, including discussions of status change.
lhomepractices	Literacy practices observed or stated as happening at home include reading, writing, online, and playful literacy.
lschoolpractices	Literacy practices observed or stated as happening in school, including reading, writing, online, and playful literacy.
nothing	Comments pertaining to the idea of "nothing" or "I don't know" in response to a question.
Peducation (p = parents)	Comments about parents' educational experiences, including recognition or lack of recognition, differences between the US and native country, and challenges faced due to differences or similarities.
planguage	Comments about parent language practices, challenges, preferences, or learning a new language.
pidentity	Relating to a parent's view of self, this may include references or observations of dress, media practices, interests,
rpreference	and affiliations, and references to self as a reader or writer.
	References to books, texts, genres, print that student likes or dislikes reading.
ssinteract (s=student)	Relating to student-peer interactions (not negative behavior).
stexts	References to school texts that are available to children.
tfrustration (t = teacher)	References to teacher's frustration.
tinteract	Relating to student-teacher interactions (not negative behavior).
travel	Comments about traveling within and outside the US, including excursions outside of the neighborhood.
teacher	Comments about teachers.
value	Comments about interactional expectations, principles, and beliefs such as "hard work," "honesty," " respect towards elders," etc.

Table 1. Evolving Code List

The religious identity type includes references to one's view of self as a Muslim with a strong allegiance to Islam. This identity is evoked through beliefs and concrete practices related to dressing, observing dietary requirements, and engaging in particular religious literacy practices. For these three Muslim immigrant families, religion was a defining identity marker that strengthened their family bonds, made sense of their lives, and helped navigate their life's struggles (Bigelow, 2010; Fine & Sirin, 2008; Rosowsky, 2008; Sarroub, 2013).

The cultural identity type relates to one's ethnic identity as Moroccan or Arab, Somali or African, or Indonesian or Malay. This identity involves engaging in a process called

Characters	Adam Bamrani 7 Year-Old (Morocco)	Sarah Mac'alin 6 Year-Old (Somalia)	Melina Jusuf Mochtar9 Year-Old (Indonesia)
Family Members	Ameena Bamrani – Mother, 36 Year Old Laila Bamrani – Sister, 9 Year Old Mohamed – Mother's Brother	Mac'alin Mohamed – Father, 46 Saadiah – Mother, 38 Muneera - 17 Year-Old Teenage Girl Hana - 16 Year-Old Teenage Girl Nura - 11 Year-Old Ilyas - 4 Year-Old And Aiman - The 3 Year-Old Hakim - Born on 10/29/11	Jusuf Mochtar – Father, 36 Year Old Hetty – Mother, 32 Year Old Faisal – Brother, 3 Year Old
Teachers	1st Grade - Mrs. Robbins 2nd Grade – Mrs. Zimmerman	KG – Mrs. Ginn 1st Grade – Mrs. Miles	Lead Teacher – David Arabic & Qur'an Teacher – Huda
Locations	*Adam Bamrani 7 Year-Old (Morocco)*	*Sarah Mac'alin 6 Year-Old (Somalia)*	*Melina Jusuf Mochtar9 Year-Old (Indonesia)*
Town School	Shoreline The Foxland Elementary School (A Public School K-5)	Shoreline The Cornwall Elementary School (A Charter School K-5)	Shoreline The Peace Academy (Islamic PK-3rd)

Table 2. List of Characters and Locations

"forging nostalgic alignment," whereby rituals and symbols in the country of origin are maintained and adapted to life and home in the adopted country. These rituals and symbolisms may include performing a particular identity through choices of clothing, food, home décor, language, or behavior. This identity links the individual to an ethic group with shared languages, practices, interests, histories, and ways of understanding the world (Ferdman, 1990; Norton, 1997).

The academic identity type includes statements made by the children or by other people in their lives (i.e., teachers, parents, or community members) that describe how they are doing at school. Some examples of these statements include: *"I'm a fast reader"; "I'm not good at reading"; "I love reading," "She's good at drawing,"* and others.

Lastly, the familial identity type relates to the child's relationship to parents, siblings, and other family members and familial norms, including cultural practices, beliefs, and roles. This identity is useful in describing the locus of life's meaning and in finding answers to questions such as who counts as a member of a family. Markers or indicators of familial norms include descriptions such as "a good sister" and "as the oldest one in the family."

The analysis of each individual case study revealed that these three Muslim immigrant children, Adam, Sarah, and Melina, and their families constantly negotiated their multiple identities based on the expectations set by the 'figured worlds' they inhabited (Holland, 2001). Academic identity emerged as prominent for these Muslim immigrant children. They enjoyed showcasing their abilities that were different from their peers. Adam and Melina shared stories with their peers and teachers that reflect their diverse identities, knowledge, lived experiences, memories, and feelings. Adam incorporated his memories and life experiences and travels in Morocco into the artifacts (i.e., essays and drawings) he produced at school. He also claimed that he could "speak French" as he translated the French word maman (mother) for his teacher during circle time. Like Adam, Melina enjoyed showcasing her cultural knowledge by translating some phrases in English or Arabic into Indonesian Malay as requested by her friends or teachers. She also enjoyed wearing her traditional two-piece Indonesian outfit, kebaya, and sharing Indonesian food at school. Sarah showed a clear preference for academic and familial identities over religious and cultural identities. She repeatedly said, *"I don't speak Somali language"* because she had never *"been to Somalia."* She repeatedly showed awareness of her role in the family as *"a big sister"* who *"played with my brothers"* and *"I take care of them."* She enjoyed talking about reading and writing "long stories" at school and shared them at home. At school, Adam, Melina, and Sarah were perceived by their teachers as "good students," who had

a strong "support system" in their families and were "involved in their children's schooling experiences."

In their home and local Muslim community, Adam, Sarah, and Melina enacted the identities that were prescribed and preferred by their parents. In front of his mother, Ameena, her friends, and other Muslim adults in their community, Adam displayed strong allegiance to his religious and cultural identities as a Moroccan Muslim boy. He participated in identity and literacy practices that projected these identities. For example, when speaking Arabic, his language was peppered with Islamic phrases such as "Alhamdulillah" (thanks be to God), "masha Allah" (what Allah wills), etc. He also behaved "Islamically" by offering Islamic greetings, behaving in an Islamic manner (i.e., handshakes and hugs), and participating in particular religious or cultural rituals.

Like Adam, Melina engaged in the same patterns of behavior when performing her religious and cultural identities as an Indonesian Muslim girl. She used Islamic expressions in Arabic when communicating with other Muslim children and adults, both Arabic and non-Arabic speakers who speak different languages. When she socializes with other Arabic and non-Arabic-speaking children, they use English as their primary language. Their conversations were interspersed with Arabic words that refer to Islamic beliefs or practices.

Unlike Adam and Melina, Sarah did not speak Arabic at all. Despite her parents' continuous effort at encouraging her to speak Arabic and Somali at home, Sarah continuously answers her parents in English, her preferred primary language. Throughout this two-year study, the researcher barely heard Sarah speak Somali except during the times when her father asked her to translate some Somali phrases during visits to their apartment. Sarah tried her best, but she clearly did not enjoy the experience as she struggled hard to translate the phrases while frowning. Sarah repeatedly showed a preference for her academic identity as opposed to her religious and cultural identities.

The enactments of multiple identities reveal that distinct identities become salient in different social settings. How these children viewed themselves and how they were viewed by others clearly influenced the identity and literacy practices in which they engage. The stories and artifacts they used and produced revealed how creatively they navigated their complex web of identity.

Further examination of data also revealed that these children of Muslim immigrants continually do identity work using these related and co-occurring processes: "acquiring Qur'anic literacy," "eMersion," and "forging nostalgic alignments."

4.1 Acquiring Qur'anic Literacy

Acquiring Qur'anic literacy requires multilayered knowledge in order to gain familiarity with the text and its authoritative role in the life of a Muslim. Qur'anic literacy includes knowledge of Arabic script and reading in the Arabic language. This is true even if Arabic is not the same as the spoken language of the community in question (Rosowsky, 2008). Qur'anic literacy also includes understanding rules, customs, and deep veneration of the text of the Qur'an. This includes learning certain behaviors and demeanors, including how to handle the Qur'an physically.

All three Muslim immigrant families in this study believed that it was important to instill and nurture religious identities in all their children. They prioritized the reading, memorization, and recitation of the Qur'an. All three children actively engaged in Qur'an reading and memorization classes in their local communities. Adam was personally tutored by his mother in their home, while Sarah and Melina were taught by teachers at the local mosque, the local Islamic school, and the community Islamic Summer School. For Adam, whose parents were native speakers of Arabic, acquiring both Qur'anic and Arabic literacy was critical. With Ameena as their primary Arabic teacher, the children used multimodal tools and materials brought from Morocco for memorizing Qur'anic verses, such as an iPod Nano, Qur'an and hadith apps, a cellphone, a digital camera, and online religious classes. This family felt that the memorization and recitation of Qur'anic verses increased their social status in their community. Table 3 shows the level of engagement.

Case	Research Findings		
	Qur'anic Literacy	Emergence	Making Nostalgic Alignment
Indonesian	+++	+++	+++
Moroccan	+++	++	+++
Somali	+	++	++

+ indicates:
+ Visible or Emergent
++ Visible Clearly
+++ Visible Very Clearly

Table 3. Level of Engagement

Acquiring Qur'anic literacy was also highly desirable and important to Sarah and her family, who were Somali refugees. For example, in an interview, Sarah's father stated, "In Somalia, there is no other religion. You have to be Muslim. You were born to it. Muslim means, you know, you have to worship God, and He's the only One." This was no easy feat for Sarah's family due to their socioeconomic situation and their refugee status. However, Sarah had a short-term Somali Qur'an teacher who used to come to her home to teach Arabic. When the teacher stopped coming, Sarah's father made plans for Sarah and her siblings to travel out-of-state during that summer so that they could acquire Qur'anic literacy at a duqsi, a religious school with the trappings and accouterments of traditional Somali learning contexts, in a Somali community in Minnesota.

For Melina and her family, acquiring Qur'anic literacy was so crucial that she attended a local full-time Islamic school co-founded by her father. She also attended Qur'an classes at the local mosque and at their community's Islamic Summer School. Her learning materials consisted of multimodal tools brought from Indonesia through family and friends. Melina was a successful student at her school. Her Qur'an and Arabic teacher commented,

> *"Melina, masha Allah (What Allah wills), she's progressing a LOT… Alhamdulillah (Thanks be to God). She's a hard worker. Because of that, she catches up so quickly, masha Allah! She's excellent (in learning Arabic)! It's amazing! …And she was performing better than the Arabic speakers. Yes! Her reading is excellent. She can read anything without any mistakes…So, with her, she's fine, she's excellent!"*

The teacher was very proud of Melina's achievements, particularly as a non-native Arabic speaker who rarely used Arabic at home. Melina's strong memorization of the Qur'anic verses increased her social status among her teachers, parents, friends, and their social networks in Shoreline.

Acquiring Qur'anic literacy, then, was seen as a meaningful and fulfilling part of these families' daily lives as they strived to enact their religious and cultural identities through learning, memorizing, and engaging with the Qur'an. Achievements made in memorizing Qur'anic verses signified 'success' for the individual, family, and community, which enhanced their social status. At the same time, it is found that the children of these three families were constantly engaged with electronic media and were immersed in the use of electronic devices and communication channels. It has dubbed this electronic immersion process "eMersion" and found that it co-occurs with two other processes, "Acquiring Qur'anic Literacy" and "Forging Nostalgic Alignments."

4.2 eMersion

eMersion is the participants' engagement with technological tools and digital media such as television, videos, computer games, cell phone applications, and social networks. Children's participation in digital media can reveal the sophisticated knowledge necessary to maneuver different electronic 'landscapes' and interpret different symbolic systems (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012).

The three families did a great deal of identity work through technological tools. Their engagement in eMersion was crucial for building what is called "homophilic networks," relationships with individuals who shared common characteristics, values, education, and experiences. In general, these families engaged in eMersion by writing emails, skyping, surfing the internet, searching for reading materials in their native languages, translating words, finding traditional recipes, and accessing religious knowledge. In addition, these families used their cell phones and digital cameras for taking photos and sharing them with families and friends. They also used applications such as the Kindle and gadgets like iPods

and iPads for religious purposes as well as entertainment. For example, Melina's dad, Jusuf, had an iPod that contained collections of chapters from the Qur'an, a collection of hadith, recordings of the azan (call to prayer), prayer schedules, nasyeed (religious songs), pop songs, videos, and the Twitter app.

Technological advancement was seen as a great blessing for uprooted families like the Mac'alins, who used multimedia heavily in their daily communicative practices. Sarah and her siblings played games on their Wii console. Sarah planned to have a Facebook account as she was aware of Facebook as a way to keep in touch with family and friends because she had seen her older sisters and parents navigating that social space on the computer. Her family generally used the Internet for skyping, e-mailing, finding recipes, acquiring Qur'anic literacy, and sharing information online. During the winter seasons when the weather was cold in Shoreline, digital media was a helpful babysitter for the children in this family. Through engaging deeply in eMersion, Mac'alin and his family were able to keep in touch with their family members and friends in Somalia and in other places. Mac'alin also used the internet to search for jobs. eMersion also helps Mac'alin to navigate prejudice and racism during his in-person job searches in Shoreline. When asked about the challenges he faced during his job search, he responded fervently,

> *"Prejudice... Here's my dilemma. I do have a business degree [a Master's degree]… I also have a teaching license in Minnesota…I have different skills that are transferable…I have been told several times that you're overqualified…The other thing is… when I walked into the place where they had the interview, I have a different name. I'm a black guy. When I walked in and when they talked to me, I have an accent. So, it kinda turned they off."*

He attributed his negative experiences to being a "black" and "Somali" man, but was able to partially overcome some of these problems by looking for part-time jobs online, where his qualifications were judged on written work rather than physical appearance.

As for the Bamrani family, they used diverse technological tools for academic and religious purposes and especially in Adam's interactions with peers and family members. Technology provided opportunities for his socialization processes. Adam used his mom's cellphone to contact friends for sleepovers and play dates. Among his peers, he was well known for having abundant knowledge of how to play electronic and online games, which were considered "cool." Children who could showcase their abilities in this area were given "respect" and "higher status" among their peers. Adam's use and knowledge of digital media reflected the enactment of social, cultural, and gamer identities situated in particular contexts. Despite not having a computer in their home for most of this study, Adam, Laila, and Ameena usually obtained access to one at Adam's uncle's house, local public libraries, and at friends' homes. This family's eMersion practice supports other researchers' findings that immigrant families use the local libraries and the cultural and leisure facilities available in their local communities to become more literate (Rashid & Gregory, 2017).

At home, Melina and the Mochtar family relied heavily on three laptops and one desktop computer to mediate their social lives and social identities. Melina and her brother, Faisal, used the computer primarily for entertainment. Melina also used the Internet for schoolwork and social networking. Hetty used the computer daily to keep in touch with family and friends. She also used the internet to search for recipes, movies, and TV programs from Indonesia. Hetty liked to keep abreast with the world of fashion and sometimes shopped online. Jusuf, Melina's father, used the computer to improve his knowledge of current events and to develop his many areas of interest. For example, Jusuf liked to organize educational and religious seminars online that connected people in different parts of the world. During the final round of data collection, Jusuf shared a design that he was working on for a piece of equipment that would harvest rice in his parents' sawah padi (rice paddy field) in Indonesia. He combined design elements that he learned in America with traditional rice harvesting methods in Indonesia. He used online interactive tools to

accomplish this paper. Jusuf's design illustrated how he wove his traditional local knowledge with new technological design practices to produce hybrid, syncretic, and 'glocalized' (i.e., global and local) literacy practices and identities (Luke & Carrington, 2003; Moje et al., 2004; Pahl & Rowsell, 2012).

For these families, eMersion demonstrates the role of technological tools as mechanisms for social, cultural, and economic advancement. Analyses of the three cases revealed how they used technology for academic, religious, social, and economic purposes. Computers and technological tools were important vehicles to find jobs, keep abreast with news in their native countries (i.e., Morocco, Indonesia, and Somalia), be in touch with family and friends, and overcome life challenges. From an early age, these Muslim children were becoming sophisticated readers and producers of complex multimodal work (Pahl & Rowsell, 2012).

However, access to technology and the Internet also presented a tension for these families in terms of exposing their young Muslim children to 'temptations' that might not suit their religious and cultural values. All the parents in this study expressed some level of concern over the notion that audio-visual media outlets may influence children negatively or erase the religious and cultural values that their parents tried to instill (Syed, 2001). While they were enthusiastic about eMersion, they were also skeptical.

4.3 Forging Nostalgic Alignments

At the second tier of data analysis, it was noticed that Adam, Melina, Sarah, and their families engaged in identity enactment called forging nostalgic alignments, a process by which rituals and symbols (e.g., clothing, food, home décor, language use, etc.) in the country of origin are maintained and adapted to fit. Nostalgia is a "tool kit of symbols, stories, rituals, and worldviews, which people may use in varying configurations to solve different kinds of problems" (p. 273). For many immigrants, especially refugees who have been uprooted and suffered diverse losses, forging nostalgic alignments from their native country within the new home helps to provide a sense of coherence and consistency and helps create and recreate a sense of identity in a new home.

In these three Muslim immigrant families, forging nostalgic alignments is kept alive, maintained, and adapted to life in Shoreline through their children's senses of sight, sound, taste, and smell, such as the décor of their living rooms.

Figure 1 shows Adam's living room decorated in Moroccan style. Figure 2 shows a wall hanging that contains village scenery in Indonesia. Figure 3 shows the wall hanging in Sarah's living room (morning prayers in Arabic).

To ensure that her children remembered their cultural and religious identities, Ameena decorated the living room in

Figure 1. Adam's Living Room Decorated in Moroccan Style

Figure 2. Wall Hanging That Contains a Village Scenery in Indonesia

Figure 3. Wall Hanging in Sarah's Living Room (Morning Prayers in Arabic)

their home with items that were brought from Morocco, such as the Moroccan furniture in their living room, the Moroccan tea set, zhikr beads (remembrance beads that resemble rosary beads), religious materials, clothing items, and Arabic cartoon videos. Adam and his family kept their religious and cultural identities alive through listening, reading, writing, and speaking in Arabic and sharing stories, events, and values practiced in their home countries. Maintaining home country practices and symbolisms and forging nostalgic alignments in the new adopted home helps alleviate the bittersweet memories that nostalgia stirs.

The children looked toward their home countries and at traditions rooted in the past. For example, Adam said, *"Some of the things and places in my neighborhood remind me of Casablanca."*

Figure 4 shows Adam's drawing of his native country, Morocco.

Adam treasured the memory of time spent with his father in Morocco, as reflected in this study that he wrote at school in first grade.

Figure 5 shows the essay Adam wrote about his day at the beach in Morocco.

As refugees, Sarah and her family did not have a lot of authentic materials from Somalia. Some of the decorative wall hangings were bought from Somali stores in Minnesota. In order to nurture their children's religious and cultural identities, Mac'alin and Saadiah strove to forge nostalgic alignments from their country of origin with

Figure 4. Adam's Drawing of His Native Country, Morocco

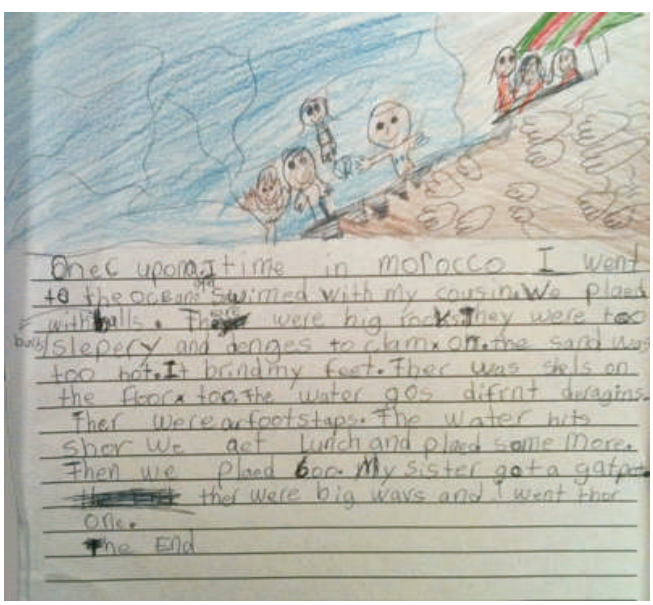

Figure 5. An Essay Adam Wrote About His Day at the Beach in Morocco

their new home through the language, food, home décor, and participation in community activities.

Figure 6 shows Sarah's drawing of her grandmother in Somalia, whom she never met.

In Melina's family, nostalgic alignments were forged through their Indonesian lifestyle, food, and language. Both Jusuf and Hetty strongly identified with their cultural and religious identities and wanted Melina and her brother, Faisal, to speak in Indonesian Malay more. However, since both children grew up in Shoreline, they were more comfortable talking in English at home. They replied to their parents in English instead of Indonesian Malay. Jusuf said, "It is very difficult and a big challenge to raise your children to be bilingual in the U.S." Jusuf did everything he could to expose his children to Indonesian Malay. He arranged play dates with friends from Indonesia. He encouraged the children to use the Internet to stream TV programs from Indonesia. The family sometimes watched lectures about Islam and contemporary Indonesian family dramas on the computer. During the visits to their house, it was noticed that even though the kids were engrossed in their play, they paused to watch the commercials for snacks and children's programs in Indonesian. It can be seen that Hetty and Jusuf tried hard to use their native language to maintain and nurture their cultural and religious identities, despite the preference for English demonstrated by their children (Ahearn, 2001).

Figure 6. Sarah's Drawing of Her Grandmother in Somalia Whom She Never Met

Figure 7 shows Melina's poster of 100 languages. Figure 8 shows Melina's drawing of what Indonesia is like. Figure 9 shows Sarah's essay written in first grade that reflected her 'American' identity.

Immigrants who left behind everything familiar to them to migrate to a new adopted home experience nostalgia, a sense of longing, or an affinity for the past. Many families

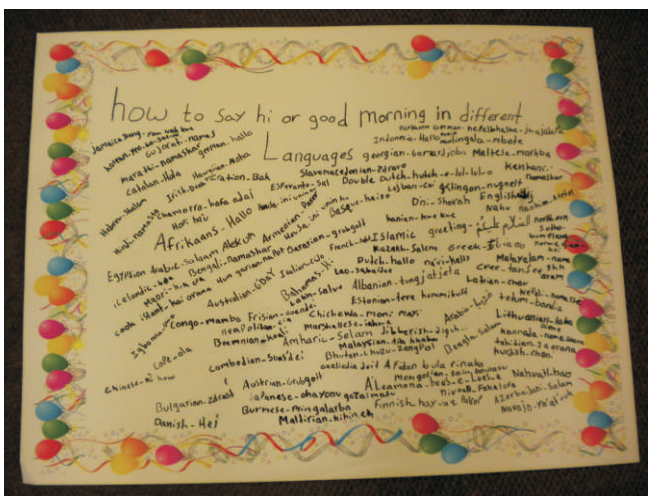

Figure 7. Melina's Poster of 100 Languages

Figure 8. Melina's Drawing of What Indonesia is Like

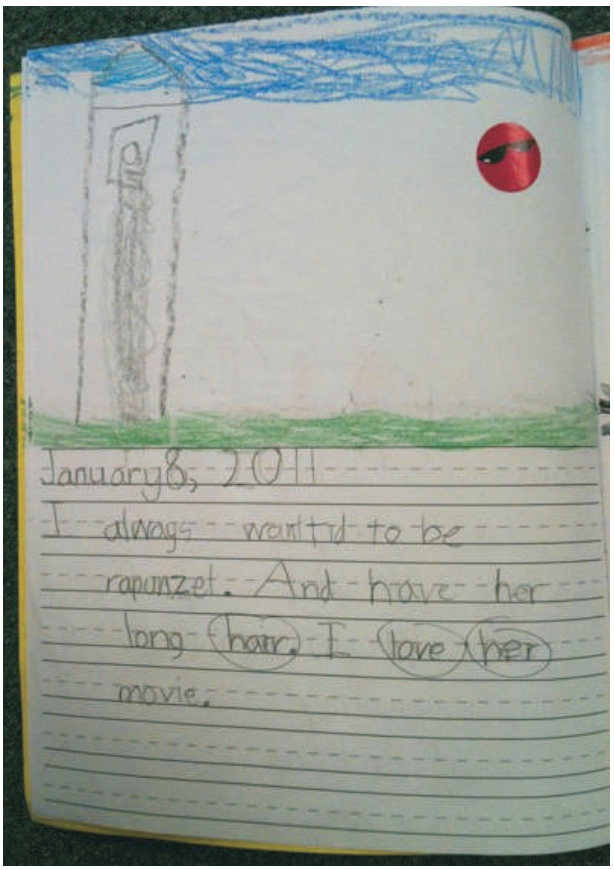

Figure 9: Sarah's Essay Written in First Grade That Reflected Her 'American' Identity

addressed this issue of nostalgia by forging nostalgic alignments in the new adopted home.

4.4 Bi-Lateral Nostalgia

Further examination of data reveals a phenomenon called bilateral nostalgia (Thomas & Nayan, 2011). The word nostalgia comes from the Greek words nostos, which means "return," and algia, which means "pain." Nostalgia is continually leveraged in temporal contexts to make and remake the present, past, and future selves. Nostalgia is used for identity construction for individuals, communities, and even nations. Many families addressed this issue by forging nostalgic alignments in their adopted homes through their choices of food, clothing, home décor, language use, and particular activities. Traces of nostalgia can also be found in narratives, texts, artifacts, and utterances, as discussed previously in this article.

Nostalgia propelled the creation of hybrid identities. When asked what "being a Muslim" and "being a Moroccan" meant to her, Ameena stated:

> *"You are Muslims. You HAVE to do what Islam says…. Being a Muslim means that they must perform the obligatory salat (five daily prayers), recite du'a (short prayers) before sleeping, eating and starting any action, read stories of the prophets and for my daughter, I teach her about clothes, what's good and what's not. I have EVERY DAY, EVERY day, I teach them, I have practices with them."*

When asked what being a Somali meant to him, Mac'alin explained explicitly,

> *"I'm a Somali. I was born there and I'm a Muslim in my religion. No matter what you do, I'm not gonna forget where I came from. Somalis have a deep sense of kinship…which means, you are what you are based on blood. You have to keep the traditional stuff. You have to teach your kids. For example, if people get into trouble in the US and even back home, my relative, they call me and I have to contribute, to help them out. It's an obligation, yes! It's called, Qaar-aan, which means…Basically Somali's tradition is based on extended family tradition that comes from the nomadic cultural of the Somalis…people like have been moving around and go after the rain. So, they move from this place to that place. So, they have to stick together to survive. We don't subscribe to the culture of individualism. I mean each individual on his own it doesn't work with the Somalis."*

This Somali concept of qaaraan reflects the "extended family tradition," "sharing," "sticking together" as a family, and helping one another is another example of nostalgic values that must be practiced and then passed on as part of their identities as Somali.

Maintenance of native language is another nostalgia that is also important for immigrants and refugees in order to retain and nurture their cultural identities in their adopted home (Bigelow, 2010). Mac'alin expressed the importance of developing Sarah and her siblings' language as part of their cultural identity:

> *"She hears… and… she knows we speak everything and do… everything in Somali language at home… because we don't WANT them just to be doing everything in English, so they'll forget the language that their parents speak. So, they do understand we have… our own way of thinking, our own way of doing things…harboring and holding onto our culture. So, to demonstrate that we ARE NOT… exactly like you know America… That's the whole point. In America, everybody has a tradition and they follow that, but at the same time, they're, they're Americans."*

Adam, Melina, Sarah, and their families are continually working to construct identities that long for a flourishing, technology-rich life while at the same time longing for and calling upon the traditions of "home." This bilateral nostalgia is problematic as it is an identity construction process set spatially and temporally in opposite directions. This study suspects that much of the Muslim world is facing this crisis of bilateral nostalgia when one strives to nurture an identity that is firmly rooted in a longing for an imagined future and an imagined past. The imagined future is marked by technological prowess and awe-inspiring material wealth, which contradicts the nostalgic past, a history with material austerity and moral rectitude in the form of Islamic puritanism. Consequently, bilateral nostalgia may contribute to cognitive dissonance and identity perturbation among American Muslim children. Future studies are necessary to discover how this potential problem may be dealt with or ameliorated.

5. Discussion

The study of these three Muslim immigrant families and their children leaves with many questions. For example, to what extent can bilateral nostalgia be a source of cognitive dissonance? Might a person struggling with this dissonance be more easily tempted to explore paths toward extremism? Does bilateral nostalgia create confusion?

This study's sense is that the answer to these questions is "no." However, in the exploration of issues related to countering violent extremism, bilateral nostalgia does give a concept to work with. An indispensable insight that we have gained by looking into the literacy practices of Muslim immigrants is that when immigrants decide to leave their homes, they leave behind people, time, and space that are familiar. For those who are displaced, feelings of exile may be more acute because of the compulsion surrounding their relocation. In global migrations, immigrants bring their identities and literacy practices into their adopted countries, homes, and classrooms. At the same time, time does not stand still for the immigrant. They are just as impacted by technology as anyone, and they leverage its affordances in support of what they care most about. They seek to maintain connections to the communities, traditions, and religious proclivities they see as indispensable to their very sense of self.

It is believed that it is important for schoolchildren, educators, and administrators to learn, understand, and respect diverse perspectives and the religious traditions of others (Nord, 2001). It is also believed that it is important to be aware of non-Christian students' experiences in coping under the pressures of a dominant school culture when "seen as an outsider" (Pang, 2005). Differences between home socialization and school expectations can contribute to school failure and have a negative effect on the children's identity formation (Stanton-Salazar, 1997). Masny and Ghahremani-Ghajar (1999) suggested the use of a language experience approach, which draws on the students' personal experiences to teach and increase vocabulary and reading/writing capabilities. The study called for teachers to learn about the cultures and experiences of their students to provide the children with a sense of voice and a link between school and community cultures.

It illustrated how family supports Muslim immigrant children's educational success and supports the view that immigrant families do not arrive in the U.S. without funds of knowledge. The study has different forms of human, cultural and social capital that they use to effectively interact within mainstream society's cultural contexts (Compton-Lilly & Nayan, 2015). These different forms of capital must be acknowledged and utilized to create

culturally relevant teaching pedagogy (Freire, 1970). Teachers need to build on these students' and families' prior knowledge, skills, and understanding of success and literacy. These families' experiences and expertise need to be introduced, included, and utilized at school in order to create empathy and provide meaningful lessons based on experiential knowledge and authentic interactions. In order to nurture success for children from minority communities, teachers and schools need to build partnerships with families by incorporating the children's language and culture into their curriculum.

This study gives insight into the relationships between literacy practices and identity construction in three Muslim immigrants' households. Educators must realize that literacy and identity are "sites of struggle" for immigrant children and their families (Norton, 1997). Immigrant families experience a complex web of social relations with significant implications for their families (Li, 2000). Teachers can help ease transitions for immigrant students by assuming the role of "cultural accommodator or mediator" in promoting student learning.

Conclusion

This study provides a nuanced understanding of the ways in which Muslim immigrant families engage in complex processes of identity enactment through their literacy practices in a new cultural context. By focusing on the unique experiences of children within Muslim-Moroccan, Muslim-Somali, and Muslim-Indonesian families, the research sheds light on the intersection of sociocultural theory and Bakhtinian concepts like dialogism, utterance, heteroglossia, and addressivity, which frame identity as an evolving and interactive process.

The findings underscore that literacy practices, specifically "Acquiring Qur'anic Literacy" and "eMersion," play a dual role: they act as both a cultural bridge and a means of identity negotiation within the context of a Midwestern American setting. The process of "Forging Nostalgic Alignments" also reveals that identity enactment is not only rooted in individual experiences but is also a collective phenomenon among families, fostering connections between past and present identities. The concept of "bi-lateral nostalgia" highlights the longing for heritage and homeland while simultaneously forming attachments to the new environment, creating a layered and dynamic sense of belonging.

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