A Story in Many Tongues: A Narrative Inquiry into the Linguistic Development of Multilingual Instructors

Willa Black

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A STORY IN MANY TONGUES: A NARRATIVE INQUIRY INTO THE
LINGUISTIC DEVELOPMENT OF MULTILINGUAL INSTRUCTORS

A Thesis
Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirement for the Degree
Master of Arts

Willa Black
Indiana University of Pennsylvania
May 2019
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This study aims to explore the connections between language ownership and teacher identity in multilingual instructors of English. While both have been studied extensively on their own, there has been little research on the intersections of the two subjects. This study aims to fill that void. To that end this study uses narrative inquiry to examine the development of multilingual instructors’ self-perceived language ownership and their self-perceived teacher identity over time starting with their earliest experiences with their second language (L2) and moving forward to their current states and imagined future. It also focuses on the idea of “languaged lives” (Ellis, 2016), which is the use of all linguistic experiences a person has influencing their teacher identity and their classroom practices. This is emphasized because Ellis (2016) began to study the intersections between the participants’ first language (L1), second language (L2), and perceived teacher identity.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

How it all Began

Language has always fascinated me, and from a very young age my parents instilled in me the importance of learning more than one language. They emphasized it to the point where, when I was grounded from watching television, I was allowed to watch our old VHS tape set of Muzzy videos. The tape was designed to teach young children a foreign language, and I would often sit in my child-sized bean bag chair, singing along to the metal-eating monster’s Spanish lessons for hours on end.

When I entered junior high I signed up for Spanish classes and devoted myself to learning the language, taking every Spanish class that I could. In addition, my parents indulged my love of languages by finding me tutors in Japanese and Korean. My senior year of high school, I decided to add French to my course schedule. It was that year, looking forward to college and beyond, that I realized that one of the defining features of my life was my multilingualism. When I reflected on what made me most proud, what I wanted people to know about me, my ability to speak another language--and the time and effort it took to acquire that language--was at the top of the list.

In college I continued my language learning by studying abroad at la Universidad de Córdoba (UCO), and my experiences there served to further my interest in language ownership as I grappled with my perceived ownership of Spanish in a Spanish-speaking country. Although I could speak and understand Spanish in a classroom setting, I found myself barely able to ask directions my first day in Spain, and only able to comprehend that the destination I was looking for was in deeper in the Judería because the man I asked was kind enough to point as he spoke.
All of a sudden those eight years of Spanish classes felt like they had been for nothing, and I felt as though I knew nothing about Spanish. By the end of the semester I spent there I had reconciled my formal, academic Spanish with the Castellano the people of Córdoba used every day, and I truly felt as though I spoke Spanish. When I entered the MATESOL program at IUP in August 2017, that experience pushed me towards studying how language ownership and language acquisition affect teachers, especially as I was training to join their ranks.

The final inspiration for this research came from Ellis’s 2016 study entitled “‘I may be a native speaker, but I’m not monolingual’: Reimagining all teachers’ linguistic identities in TESOL”. The study coined the term “languaged lives” defined as “the language-learning and language-using experiences that inform their identities and positioning as teachers of English” (p. 598). This description combined nearly all of my areas of interest. It gave me a clear direction for my thesis, and the emphasis on personal experience pushed me towards narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

As a future instructor and a writer, the stories that teachers tell fascinate me, especially my mother’s. I grew up listening to her stories from her college writing courses and the classes she took for fun. I watched, without realizing at the time, as her identity as a teacher changed as the years went by. As she experienced new challenges over decades of teaching, her confidence would rise and fall, and how she presented herself as a teacher in discussions would change. Perhaps most interesting to me were her little tidbits of Russian, a language she spent eight and a half years learning. She never taught Russian and never had the chance to go abroad, but she brought up her time learning the language so often when talking about her teaching that I grew to combine her second language (henceforth referred to as L2) experience and her teacher identity from a young age.
Exploring this connection between linguistic experience and teacher identity is my current goal. The powerful linguistic experiences related to me by every multilingual I’ve spoken to, along with my own experiences, have led me to agree with Ellis’s (2016) assertion that regardless of the language being taught and the languages spoken, the teacher identity of multilinguals is greatly influenced by their experiences learning additional languages. I want to explore multilingual instructors’ “languaged lives” and see how these peoples’ unique linguistic backgrounds shape their identity as instructors.

Purpose and Rationale

As my purpose for this study is to explore multilingual instructors’ “languaged lives” – in part answering the call for research by Ellis (2016) – I first need to define the terms used within this study. The first, naturally, is “teacher identity” a term that is at the core of both the term “languaged lives” and the study itself. Ellis (2016) and Song (2016) define this as the way teachers position themselves as complex and multifaceted individuals. Next is the term “language ownership” which Higgins (2003) defines as “the degree to which they [speakers] project themselves as legitimate speakers with authority over the language” (p. 615). The connection between language ownership and teacher identity is explored in Song’s 2016 article examining South Korean teachers of English and their reactions to instructing classes that include students who have returned from studies abroad. Several of the participants reported feeling that their ownership and authority over English were challenged by these students who were fluent in colloquial English. As a result, they felt they were no longer the teachers that they were before, and reported profound changes in their teacher identity. Finally, it is important to define “language acquisition”, which Negueruela-Azarola (2012) defines as the process of
learning and internalizing a language. These terms form the basis for the newer term “languaged lives”, and the connections between them explored by this study.

This is an important topic of study because, as this is a new perspective combining earlier, more confined research, there is a lack of research into how the linguistic identities of multilingual instructors of English affects their teacher identity, especially when the instructor has English as their first language (henceforth referred to as L1) (Ellis, 2016). Ellis argues that regardless of what languages are spoken and which language is counted as the mother tongue, all of the experiences teachers have with language acquisition factor into their teacher identity and can often be used as resources in the classroom. The effects of experiences in other languages, even if they are limited, are also explored by Kasun and Saavedra (2016), who examine the outcomes of exposing pre-service English instructors to Mexico in a host-family environment. The participants reported changes in their teacher identity and said that they felt closer to their students and Mexican culture. Teacher identity is at the core of my study, as is expanding its boundaries. Finally, as the profession of TESOL moves away from and continues to dismantle the old NEST/NNEST binary, it is important to explore the identities of all TESOL instructors as multifaceted individuals with unique skills and backgrounds. Many of these skills, though ignored in earlier research, are now perceived as useful in the classroom (Aslan & Thompson, 2016; Ellis, 2016; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Researching instructors as individuals opens new doors and, overall, helps to reassert the equality and access issues that TESOL is always striving for.
Research Questions

The research questions that are examined in this study are as follows:

1. How do the self-identified multilingual instructors define and perceive their language ownership?

2. What connections do they make between their perceived language ownership and the way they see themselves as teachers?

Methodological Approaches

For this thesis I utilized a qualitative research model with a heavy emphasis on the narrative inquiry approach as I felt it both fit the research questions and would give me the most complete pictures of the “languaged lives” and histories of my participants. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) assert, narrative inquiry places great emphasis on the retelling of events and experiences, and then places those smaller narratives in to a larger narrative that encompasses all of those experiences. This made narrative inquiry the ideal method with which to study the formation of teacher identity and language ownership. I used semi-structured interviews and digital autobiographies, as it gave the participants the ability to tell their stories their own way, while also giving me a solid guide for the specific information that I wanted. To analyze the data, I transcribed the interviews and coded them and the digital autobiographies as they came in using line by line coding and constant comparison.

I believe that the process of completing this thesis is important. When I interviewed my participants, we explored the story of their language acquisition and the formation of their multilingual identities together. I was permitted to see into their rich, complex, and unique lives, while they pondered questions that urged them to look at their identities in a new light. More than once I was left speechless and fascinated by a story, insight, or goal of a participant, and
more than once the participants had to pause and think deeply because they had never asked themselves that question before. Through the course of this study, I have gained a greater appreciation for the importance of multilingualism, both for myself and others. I hope that the stories of my participants can inspire this in others as well.

**Significance of the Study**

As a multilingual who grew up exposed to multiple languages I have frequently found myself calling upon my linguistic experiences when teaching, both formally and informally. My own identity is heavily influenced by the languages and cultures that I have been exposed to, as well as by their acceptance and use by various central or marginalized groups. For example, the stigmas attached to various dialects of Spanish within the Spanish speaking world, as well as the stigma associated with all Spanish in the United States. The narrative of my language acquisition is one of my greatest resources for my pedagogical practices and my development as both an instructor and a human being. Through the years the language professors I have had have related the same to me, and I want to bring attention to the lives and experiences—my own and those narrated by others—that influence the “languaged lives” of not only myself but also so many other teachers that I have met. This study aims to add to the knowledge base and explore a term that has been coined only recently and that ties together multiple important topics in TESOL. It is my hope that the findings here help draw attention to the narratives and skills of multilingual instructors of English regardless of L1 and L2, and demonstrate that no matter the language, linguistic experience can profoundly impact teacher identity.

**Chapters Overview**

Chapter one, “Introduction”, details my personal reasons for conducting the study as well as the research questions, the theoretical framework, and the significance of the study. Chapter
two, “Literature Review” details the research that has already been done on the topics directly related to the research questions. Because the term “languaged lives” encompasses many areas, they are all discussed equally in the chapter. Chapter three, “Methodology” describes the design of the study and the methods for data analysis, as well as introduces the participants. Chapter four, “Participant Narratives” presents the data that was gathered in a narrative format. Chapter five, “Discussion of Themes and Implications” explores the themes that emerged from the narratives, the implications for teaching and teacher education, and possible future directions the research may take.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Language plays an integral role in the lives of people all over the world, from sign language to Chinese to Spanish to English to any of the other 6,909 languages spoken in the world (Anderson, 2010). While every one of the estimated 7.6 billion people in the world speaks at least one language, between 60% and 70% of the world is multilingual, and those speakers of more than one language face a unique set of—often unjust—challenges in the academic world (Vince, 2016; Ellis, 2016). From others questioning their authority over a language to the intended use of their other languages to stigmas attached to their culture’s take on a language, a second language user faces many hurdles. Such challenges are perhaps most documented in relation to English and the field of TESOL (Ahn, 2014; Ates, Eslami, & Wright, 2015; Ellis, 2016). Researchers have given many reasons for this emphasis on English, including but not limited to left-over colonialist values, institutionalized racism, the infamous native English-speaking teachers (henceforth referred to as NEST) and non-native English-speaking teachers (henceforth referred to as NNEST) binary, the existence of World Englishes, and the cultural capital given to English not only in exams but also in the business world (Aslan & Thompson, 2016; Harklau, 2000; Higgins, 2003; Kobayashi 2017; Nuske, 2017). This complex web of identity, language, culture, education, and experience combine to shape the teaching and learning of young academics and seasoned instructors alike. Ellis (2016) addressed this by creating the new term “languaged lives”, defined as “the language-learning and language-using experiences that inform their [multilingual instructors] identities and positioning as teachers of English” (p. 598). In the same article, Ellis also calls for more research to examine “languaged lives”, and that is where my research comes in. This literature review will thus focus on the aspects of
“languaged lives”, from language ownership to the NEST/NNEST binary. To reiterate, the purpose of this study as a whole is, as previously stated, to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the self-identified multilingual instructors define and perceive their language ownership?
2. What connections do they make between their perceived language ownership and the way they see themselves as teachers?

In order to answer these questions, I first look at one of the focal points of the research questions: language ownership.

**Language Ownership**

Language ownership is both personal and social (Ellis, 2016; Song, 2016; Zheng, 2017). It is easy to prove ownership of a car, or a house, or even a pet, but language isn’t physical in the same way: language is multi-faceted, ephemeral, and one of the most important defining factors of personal identity (Ellis, 2016; Zheng, 2017). The Conference on College Composition and Communication reaffirmed their 1972 resolution on language ownership that states students have the right to own their language and their dialect, and that no one language or dialect is superior to another. It asserts that, because of this, regardless of dialect every speaker has ownership over their language (CCCC, 1974). But what constitutes language ownership to students and teachers? Some people believe that race and nationality are the deciding factors, while others believe that language skill and experience are the most important factors. Ellis (2016) offers an example of race determining language ownership when discussing a participant who struggled to gain an identity as a Japanese speaker in Japan. The participant, an Englishman, had taught English in Japan for decades, and had completely immersed himself in both Japanese language
and Japanese culture. He considered himself completely fluent, in his words up to a native level. However, he was not treated as such. He explained that the Japanese have a cultural idea called “nihonjinron”, which says that only a Japanese person who was born and raised in Japan can truly master Japanese and speak with “native” fluency. This ideology is so ingrained in the Japanese psyche that when he went to pick up a ticket he had ordered over the phone the clerk refused to give it to him because the person on the phone had sounded Japanese, which meant that the Englishman could not have been the one to order it. In this case, the expectations of language ownership were different for the participant and the people of the nation he lived in.

Multiple articles written about language ownership discuss the separation between where an individual places themselves within a language and their ownership over it and where other people place the individual (Ellis, 2016; Moussu, 2010; Song, 2016). Song examines this in her 2016 article exploring the sentiments of Korean nationals teaching English in South Korea. All of the participants were teaching classes that held “returnees” or students who had studied abroad in English-speaking countries like the United States or Great Britain, and as such held a comparatively high level of oral proficiency in English. The study focused on how the instructors reacted when faced with students who held a more up-to-date command of the English language than they did, and the internal struggles that arose from that situation. While all of the participants reported that they felt less qualified to teach, one participant took this even further. He felt that his authority as a teacher was shaken, and he was terrified that his students would no longer recognize him as an authority in English after their stay abroad. That, luckily, wasn’t the case, but this does show that sometimes an individual’s personal assessment of their language ownership actually places them lower than where others would place them.
An unfortunate truth is that language ownership is often seen as something racial, thus judgements on a person’s linguistic skills and identity are often made at a glance (Harklau, 2000). For example, Ruecker and Ives conducted a study in 2015 on hiring practices and ads for TESOL positions in Southeast Asian countries. The name of the article itself is very telling, “‘White native English speakers needed’: The rhetorical construction of privilege in online teacher recruitment spaces.” The researchers discovered that nearly all of the ads from companies recruiting teachers specified that NESTs would be considered above any NNESTs that applied. This was combined with the images shown in the advertisements and the brochures that were included on the websites, which showed an overwhelming number of young white men and women teaching smiling young Asian children. The authors state that this implies that only people who look like the stereotypical idea of English speakers should apply and discourages anyone who does not match that idea from applying. This marginalizes applicants based on race, and delegitimizes the language ownership of anyone who is not white.

Race can also connect to language ownership when it comes to an ancestral language, such as Yucatec Mayan, Lakota, Navajo, Hawaiian, Welsh, Gaelic, and many others (Pine & Turin, 2017). These languages are closely connected to cultural identity, and have been used as a means of reclaiming and protecting cultures and histories from colonialism (Pine & Turin, 2017). In the United States, for example, there are still people of the First Nations (commonly known as Native Americans) who, as recently as 1918, lived through being taken from their homes on the reservation and forced to speak English exclusively and act “American” to the point where they were given English names and were punished with needles through the tongue if they spoke their native language (CarlisleIndianSchoolDigitalResourceCenter.com). Since that time many tribes have made great efforts to reclaim their ancestral language. The Lakota,
for example, have schools taught only in Lakota, and there is a hard push to teach Cherokee to the younger generation (Cherokee.org; Lakotawaldorfschool.org). These efforts extend beyond the United States. Guerretaz (2015) details some of the efforts of Latin American governments to revitalize the indigenous languages of the area. More specifically, she delves into how schools and school planners in Mexico are working to preserve Yucatec Maya, an indigenous language spoken by roughly 758,000 people. Before recent changes made to the educational system, even bilingual Maya/Spanish schools rarely conducted class in Maya because the teachers lacked the necessary proficiency in the language and because the Mayan language was seen as lesser. The lack of training delegitimized the language they were attempting to preserve. The changes that were implemented did more to make the language seem dead than to revive it.

Language ownership can also be affected by how a language is represented and who is held up as the legitimate owners and users of the language (Ahn, 2014; Harklau, 2000). Although this lack of representation, such as the lack of people of color in the aforementioned advertisements, is often addressed in English language learning, it is also a problem in various other languages (Azimova & Johnston, 2012). As the lens of language learning broadens, issues of representation have expanded from race to include religion, gender identity, and sexual orientation. Azimova and Johnston address this shift in thinking in their 2012 article examining representation in Russian language textbooks used in universities. They discovered that all of the Russian speakers portrayed were “white Orthodox Christian ethnic Russians”. They went on to conclude that the complete erasure of any other speakers of Russian alienates anyone who does not fit into that elite group of people, and takes away their ownership of the Russian language. It alienates speakers who do not conform to the ideal speaker displayed, and delegitimizes the non-ideal speakers’ place in the language. In the political climate of modern
Russia in which ethnic nationalism is on a strong rise, this erasure is doubly problematic and, quite frankly, dangerous.

Finally, language ownership is related to where a person comes from. The idea of inner circle, outer circle, and expanding circle nations has been a popular one in TESOL for years (Higgins, 2003; Kang, 2015). English speakers from the inner circle countries are considered, by and large, as the default owners of the English language, while outer circle speakers are often seen as “non-native” even if they grew up speaking one of the many World Englishes (Ates, Eslami, & Wright, 2015; Higgins, 2003). The speakers from the expanding circle nations, similarly, are often seen as non-native English speakers (henceforth referred to as NNES) regardless of linguistic proficiency, and it is exceedingly difficult to break away from the stigma that comes from that categorization. Despite this, research asserts not only that any strengths and weaknesses are based on the individual, not the country of origin, but also that English speakers from all of the circles can obtain a strong sense of language ownership (Ellis, 2016; Higgins, 2003). Higgins (2003) comes to this conclusion when researching Singaporean English speakers’ sense of language ownership. Although Singapore is part of the outer circle, and Singaporean English (Singlish) is often looked down upon, the participants in the study used their English as a standard, thus displaying a strong sense of linguistic ownership and validity. Language ownership is based on many things, from representation to race to nationality, and like most aspect of language, it is acquired over time. This process of acquiring a language, language acquisition, is an important topic in and of itself. However, it must also be combined with language use, as using a language in interactions and socializations is key to its eventual acquisition.
Language Acquisition and Language Use

The actual process of acquiring an additional language has been the focus of a great deal of research, and over the years many advancements have been made (Pomerantz, 2012; Rebuchat & Williams, 2012). Language acquisition is defined by Negueruela- Azarola (2012) as the process of learning and internalizing a language. Negueruela- Azarola (2012) discusses the importance of internalization in language acquisition, and asserts that it is when a language has been internalized and assimilated into a person’s mind that the language has been acquired. This separates it from language learning, which is an act in which a person is exposed to a language in an attempt to acquire it, although it does not necessarily lead to language acquisition (Pomerantz, 2012). While the long and arduous process of language acquisition is complex and multi-directional, especially as languages have multiple facets, such as reading, writing, speaking, and listening (Mackey & Goo, 2012; Salaberri, 2012), here the main focal points of the topic are interaction, socialization, and identity formation. What all three of these focal points have in common, however, is they are examples of formed through language use.

Languages are tools and methods of communication, and the cultural capital they provide are due to their usefulness and perceived level on the linguistic hierarchy (Ahn, 2014; Mitchell, 2012; Kobayashi, 2017). English is considered one of the most important languages to learn for many countries, and as such English is given a large amount of cultural capital. There has been research in multiple fields (including TESOL) into the emphasis even American schools place on English at the expense of any other linguistic identity the student might possess (Mitchell, 2012). Mitchell (2012) studied the effects this push has on ESL students in an American classroom. Because the students were forced to have two separate linguistic identities--English for school, another for the home--the students’ had fewer educational opportunities and had
rougher times on their educational journey than their native English speaker (henceforth NES) counterparts. In essence, their language acquisition was held back because of issues with their language acquisition, as they were forced to follow two separate rules for interaction, socialization, and identity formation.

One of the uses of language acquisition that is focused upon heavily is the role interaction, a type of language use, plays within language acquisition (Mackey & Goo, 2012; Negrueruela-Azarola, 2012). Mackey and Goo (2012) claim that interaction is the only way to truly acquire a language with any measure of skill and certainty. This view places language as a social activity that absolutely requires other participants. Mackey and Goo (2012) assert that language can only be improved through feedback from other speakers, although whether the speaker giving the feedback is considered a native speaker or not was deemed irrelevant, provided they have a sufficient linguistic proficiency. This is supported by Matsumoto (2011), who observed the linguistic negotiation and growth of graduate students within an American dormitory. It was through interaction with each other that their linguistic skills grew and they learned to negotiate meaning. For example, it is next to impossible to negotiate meaning with a pre-recorded speech or a pre-written text. The idea of language as a tool to be used in and through interaction is a longstanding belief within TESOL. Recently there has been a renewed push toward English as a Lingua Franca (ELF) within the discipline, partially because of the view that language is best used as a tool for easier interaction. This argument is made by Kobayashi (2017) in an article that focuses on the potential uses of ELF in an East Asian context. Specifically, it focuses on how ELF can be used to bridge gaps in communication between different linguistic groups, and how teaching what would be considered a non-standard version of English tailored to fit the speakers could feasibly improve communication.
Interaction--and thus socialization--are important to the acquisition of another language, but they are not the only factors to consider when examining language acquisition. The reasoning behind the attempt to acquire a language is also key to the overall development of the language and its eventual use.

The reasons behind acquiring and using a language are as varied as the language learners and language users. Some people learn a language to increase their job prospects, to study abroad, or just to understand the movies that come from another country. The type of capital that the students are seeking will also play a role, as some students seek to gain cultural capital while others aim to build professional or academic capital (Park et. al, 2016; Shahri 2017). These differences can not only change the view a student has of a language, but also the method of learning and the type of language used (Shahri, 2017; Yung, 2015). Shahri addresses this in her 2017 study of two students from Iran. One intended to use his English in his future profession and thus spent a great deal of time learning vocabulary and formal English, choosing to forgo slang and informal phrasing. His habitus, defined as “certain ways of being/disposition as a result of being endowed with certain types of cultural capital” (p.1) by Park, Rinke, & Mawhinney (2016), is oriented around the academic and professional. His counterpart, on the other hand, intended to use his English for casual conversation and thus spent a great deal of time watching Hollywood movies, and modelled his English after the English he heard in them. His language use, as a result, was informal and full of slang terms. That said, neither of the two were unhappy with the amount of English they knew, as their intended use of the language affected what they needed to know. As a result, both felt like legitimate users and owners of English. Samimy, Kim, Lee, and Kasai (2011) also studied how language use played into language ownership and confidence by documenting how the participation of three graduate TESOL
students changed over time. With the help of seminars designed to legitimize their own experiences and struggles, the students showed a definite increase in confidence and reported that they felt they had stronger identities, and with that a sense of ownership of the language they were intending to teach. The social aspects of language acquisition and language use, as shown in the three participants, also demonstrates the importance of other people's’ opinions of the language learner and the language user.

How others perceive a language user is important, as no language user can truly exist in a vacuum: they are always surrounded by other voices. These voices have the power to legitimize a language user’s identity or de-legitimize it, and perhaps the most powerful judges, and the most studied, are teachers and students (Kang, 2015; Nemtchinova, 2005; Nieto, 2018). Because teachers are reliant upon students to be teachers, and students are reliant upon a teacher’s grade, the disapproval of one half can severely affect the other. Take Song’s 2016 study, for example. The teachers were terrified that the students newly-returned form English study abroad would delegitimize their use of English, and therefore their ownership, of English. The same fear was faced by the students in Samimy’s 2017 study, albeit from peers. Another study by Nemtchinova (2005) focuses on NESTs and their NNEST student teachers. In this study, the NEST observes the NNESTs’ teaching, language proficiency, and the students’ reactions. Although the most important part of the NNESTs’ reviewed performance was, of course, their skill as teachers, their language proficiency was also important, and the combination of the first two were what influenced the students’ reactions. More than one instructor was deemed not proficient enough to effectively teach because they could not communicate clearly enough in the opinion of the supervising teachers. This illustrates an aspect of the connection between language acquisition and language use. Language acquisition is often measured by how well the language can be used
in certain circumstances, such as communicating with students in a classroom. As a language is acquired and subsequently used, the formation of an identity within the target language is instrumental to continuing toward full acquisition of a language.

Just as socialization and interaction are considered important to L2 acquisition, the formation of an identity within the target language is an important step in the language acquisition process. However, the formation of that identity can be impeded by many social factors, including race, nationality, and linguistic background (Ellis, 2016; Kasun & Saavedra, 2016; Negueruela-Azarola, 2012). As Pomerantz (2012) asserts, language learners are often faced with identity constraints according to the social stigmas they may face. For example, in cultures where women are discriminated against in an academic context, a female might have more difficulty forming a confident identity. Lin (2014) discussed the many issues facing women instructors in Hong Kong, such as higher level classes all being given to men, while women were left with the less-desirable work-intensive classes. Although a person acquiring a language might not give credence to the societal stigmas of a language, the repeated emphasis on a perceived inferiority can be internalized over time, until it damages the linguistic identity of the language student (Harklau, 2000; Nuske, 2017). In TESOL, this is especially true when one speaks a non-standard World English, such as Indian English or Korean English. This also applies to local dialects of English, such as the New England accent or an American Southern accent (Ates, Eslami, & Wright, 2015).

World Englishes

Closely connected to the assigned ownership of language is the variety of language an individual speaks and the relative prestige of that variety; an unfortunate truth that has been widely researched in TESOL over the years (Ahn, 2014; Ates, Eslami, & Wright, 2015). An
incredible number of World Englishes exist, spanning the globe from southeast Asia to the heart of the American deep south and all points in-between. While linguists consider World Englishes to be valid forms of English and dialects in their own right, there is still a negative connotation given to many of the unique and fascinating forms of English.

These different World Englishes are an especially important issue in the so-called expanding circle nations and a lot of time and effort has been put into studying World Englishes such as Konglish (Korean English), Chinglish (Chinese English), and Malaysian English. One of the most interesting aspects of World Englishes from these nations is the mixed views their speakers have as to the validity of their version of English in relation to what they consider to be “native” English. Although they use their version of English when communicating in their home nations, the tests they take and the standard they strive for is in either American English or British English, depending on the nation. This places their World English as lower or lesser on the prestige scale, which can cause speakers of World Englishes to feel as though they are not legitimate speakers of English, or that their English is bad in some way. An example of this is the shifting view of Chinglish expressed by a TESOL graduate student (Nuske, 2017). Nuske describes how a student from China goes from disliking Chinglish and thinking it should not be used to acknowledging its usefulness and actually defending it. This change in view is accompanied by her rising confidence as a legitimate user of English. Another study focuses on Konglish and how English teachers view it (Ahn, 2014). Interestingly enough, both NESTs and NNESTs legitimized the use of Konglish in the classroom, although the Korean teachers still held a very negative view of Konglish, and felt that because it wasn’t as useful outside of Korea it couldn’t be put on the same level as the prestige Englishes. The felt that they should continue to push their students to aim for “native” fluency.
English is so important in these countries, in part, because of the emphasis placed on them by their educational systems. Their school entrance exams feature English as a prominent section, and the ability to speak English gives the speaker a large amount of cultural capital. In fact, English is so important to students that many parents pay large sums of money to send their children to after-school English tutoring or to enroll them in English medium schools (Yung, 2015). The English taught in these schools is prestige English, not their nation’s version of English. This makes “standard” English the language of academic success, and with native speakers inserted in every school in Hong Kong—as mandated by educational reform focusing on English language education—this idea is continuously being reinforced. The students studying English do so to pass their exams, but even the ones who do well on their exams report feeling unprepared to actually use the language in conversation, which makes them shy away from the idea of having an owner’s stake in English, according to Yung (2015).

World Englishes don’t only come from outer and expanding circle nations: they can be found in the United States as well. Perhaps the most well-known of these is African American Vernacular English, or AAVE, which has had a great deal of attention paid to it (Ates, Eslami, & Wright, 2015; Mutegi, 2013). While most Americans don’t think about the various versions of English within the country as being fundamentally different from standard American English, they do think about differences in accent. However, those differences are, often, actually different dialects. Pittsburghese is an example of this. It was recently voted the ugliest accent in America, although technically it is a dialect, not an accent (Evans, 2014). While people may laugh at that, it does illustrate that people who noticeably speak as though they’re from Pittsburgh and say things like “ret up”, “slippy”, and leave out “to be” are not speaking the English that academia expects (Evans, 2014). Another dialect is the southern dialect, which is
very far removed from the standard midwestern or mid-Atlantic version of English that is considered the standard American English. These different Englishes were actually introduced to students in a recent study by Ates, Eslami, and Wright (2015). In this study, the researcher exposes the students to a variety of World Englishes so that they could become not only accustomed to hearing different varieties of English, but also to see if their opinions of World Englishes would change. The study showed that through exposure to the different World Englishes, the students developed a more positive view of World Englishes and the place of World Englishes in the English Language classroom. American students seemed to be especially surprised by the inclusion of the southern dialect, as they reported that they had never really thought of it as a variety of English, and the realization that so many people in their own country spoke what is officially considered a World English placed the issue in a new light for them.

English as a Lingua Franca (henceforth referred to as ELF) is also based heavily on interaction (Kobayashi, 2017; Matsumoto, 2011). An example of this is in Matsumoto’s 2011 study, in which a group of international graduate students all live in one dormitory at a US university. With English the only language spoken by all of them, they were forced to use English at all times to communicate with their roommates. Through negotiation of meaning, changes in pronunciation, and many conversations at the dinner table, all of the participants were able to alter their versions of English to communicate effectively with each other. ELF is also being pushed in Malaysia, and Kobayashi (2017) examines the reactions Malaysian English teachers have to a proposed ELF approach to teaching English in place of the British English that was standard in Malaysian schools. The author asserts that the ELF approach takes into account various local differences, and makes English more accessible, and useful, to the Malaysian people. Although he received mixed responses from the participants, many of whom defended
the current idea of pushing students toward native speaker proficiency and felt that ELF might lower the standards of English, they did acknowledge that ELF would be useful for the students. This gets down to the very center and the main argument of ELF: language context and use.

**NEST & NNEST**

The NEST/NNEST binary is something that has been a part of TESOL for a very long time, and although many within the profession are giving a strong push to do away with the concept, it’s still an important historical framework for language ownership (Higgins, 2003; Faez, 2011; Selvi, 2014). This ideological binary has shaped pedagogical practices, student labels, and the perceived superiority of certain speakers over others. It has also granted certain varieties of English (American, British, Canadian, etc) far more cultural capital than other varieties of English, and has influenced hiring practices all over the globe (Ruecker & Ives, 2015). Not only that, but it has hurt many speakers who have been put under either label (Ellis, 2016).

One of the most harmful problems with the binary is that it trivializes any linguistic skills or identities that don’t pertain to English (Ellis, 2016; Mitchell, 2012). This is a problem for instructors who fall into both categories. Someone who is identified as an NEST is automatically assumed to be monolingual, or at the very least any other linguistic skills they might have are downplayed or ignored, regardless of proficiency. Ellis (2016) observed this in his article that focuses on the broad linguistic identities of TESOL instructors. He discovered that speaking another language affects the instructors’ pedagogical language, regardless of L1 or L2. Zheng (2017) came to a similar conclusion after he studied TAs who were multilingual, or in his term, translingual. He discovered that their broader linguistic knowledge could help them connect to
their students and gave them insight into other cultures, and he asserted that they should use their translingual identities as pedagogical assets, rather than ignore them as irrelevant to English.

The binary is incredibly pervasive, and affect more than just the instructors. Students and their parents have also bought in to the NEST/NNEST ideology, and as such they often have distinct preferences for which “type” of instructor they would like to be taught by (Dehuan & Miller, 2011). The general consensus many students have is that pronunciation and spoken English is best taught by native speakers because they are perceived as not having an accent, while grammar should be taught by non-native speakers who went through the process of learning the grammar just like their students (Macaro & Jang Ho, 2013). While a clear problem for instructors who would fall into either of the categories, multiple studies have shown that these biases fall apart under the microscope. Aslan and Thompson (2016) found that when the labels of NEST/NNEST were removed from their survey and the questions were posed so as to be neither positive nor negative, students actually rated their instructors equally, regardless of their country of origin or their L1. Similarly, a study done in 2010 by Moussu examined the effects of interaction with the perceptions students held toward their instructors, both NEST and NNEST. Moussu asserts that the binary should be dismissed, as there are far too many factors in the classroom and in each individual instructor that should be taken into consideration before the instructor’s L1 and L2. This was evidenced by the results of his study, in which the students opinions of NNES teachers, originally lower than their NES counterparts, were raised over time as students began to see them as authorities on English. Eventually, the teachers’ identities became more important than the label placed upon them.
Teacher Identity

One of the most studied and examined facets of TESOL is teacher identity (Ellis, 2016; Kasun & Saavedra, 2016; Song, 2016; Xu, 2012). Teacher identity is defined by Ellis (2016) and Song (2016) as the way teachers position themselves as complex and multifaceted individuals. While there is research into multiple aspects of teacher identity such as its negotiation and renegotiation (Song, 2016; Wolff & De Costa, 2017), imagined identity and practiced identity (Xu, 2012), and the influences of past experiences on teacher identity (Ellis, 2016; Zheng, 2017), but the logical place to begin is its formation (Kasun & Saavedra, 2016; Xu, 2012). The formation of teacher identity is exemplified in pre-service teachers, who are only just beginning to see themselves as instructors instead of students (Ates, et al, 2015; Kasun & Saavedra, 2016; Xu, 2012). Kasuun and Saavedra (2016), for example, focus on a group of pre-service ELL instructors. In their study, they attempt to change the participants’ identities through exposure to minority groups, languages, and cultures while they were participating in a study abroad program in Mexico. All of the participants reported a paradigm shift and became more student-centered and culturally sensitive. Though the degree of these shifts varied from person to person, it was clear that the pre-service teachers had their teacher identities changed before they could fully form. The moldability of teacher identities during this time was also shown in Ates, Eslami, & Wright (2015). One of the main reasons they chose to focus on pre-service instructors in the study was because they hypothesized that it would be easier to change their identities and their pedagogical ideologies, and the success of their experiment proved that they were correct. Their participants all reported a change in their teacher identities as well as an increased level of empathy toward speakers of World Englishes. This period of teacher identity development can be expanded to include the novice-teacher time period, which Farrell (2012)
defines as the first three years in which a new language teacher is in the classroom as an instructor. Xu (2012) also studied novice-teachers and focused on four female novice teachers who began teaching in different schools in Beijing. Xu asserted that in their first years of teaching the participants’ teacher identities transformed from imagined identities to practice identities as they experienced the realities of teaching for the first time. As they were forced to deal with real students and the strict rules of the institutions they worked for, they moved away from the idealism of their imagined identities, with the noted exception of Aurora who managed to maintain that imagined identity and successfully combine it with her practiced identity. As a result, she was the only one who underwent a change that could be described as positive as her teacher identity slowly stabilized. However, even after a teacher identity has been formed and has stabilized, that identity can still be subject to renegotiation (Song, 2016).

Song (2016) asserts that teacher identity is constantly being renegotiated, especially when faced with potential challenges. For example, the participants’ in Song’s 2016 study were all faced with a challenge in the form of “returnee” students who possessed high spoken English competencies. As a result, each participant was forced to re-position themselves as teachers in their classroom, and in response their teacher identities changed. Of course, challenges are not the only reason a person’s teacher identity could be renegotiated. Sometimes it is a sense of safety and freedom that allows for a shifting of teacher identity (Zheng, 2017). This can be seen in Zheng’s (2017) study, in which Sarah’s teacher identity began to change when she was in an environment where she felt she could share her own experiences and history with her students. As she grew used to this new environment she began to negotiate an identity that is less reliant on the cultural norms and ideas that she held previously, and as a result a multicultural teacher identity began to form. Teacher identity is also renegotiated through the
support and challenges of peers and students alike (Song, 2016; Trent, 2012; Wolff & De Costa, 2017). As teacher identity is inherently social, each new meaningful interaction has the potential to cause, aid, or hinder identity negotiation. An example of this is Puja from Wolff & De Costa’s 2017 study. Puja faced a great deal of pressure and stress as she adjusted to teaching in a new environment, which in turn put a strain on her teacher identity. However, she was able to successfully negotiate her identity in the classroom due to close friendships and support with and from her peers, which helped grant her confidence.

Teacher identity and confidence are closely intertwined, as it takes confidence in one’s place within a group to properly situate or position oneself as a teacher (Ellis, 2016; Song, 2016; Varghese et. al, 2005; Xu, 2012). This confidence comes from a sense of knowing or an understanding of what is expected of an instructor and the confidence that a teacher can meet those expectations (Park, 2012; Song, 2016; Xu, 2012). For this to occur there have to be clearly defined expectations, rules, and roles within the environment within which a teacher positions themselves (Trent, 2012; Wolff & De Costa, 2017). Because these rules and roles can change in each contact zone, teacher identity is constantly being negotiated and renegotiated as external and internal factors change (Trent, 2012; Wolff & De Costa, 2017). If a teacher does not know or understand what is expected of them or what role they are supposed to play, their sense of confidence is lowered because they do not know where they should place themselves in that context (Varghese et. al 2005; Zheng 2017). A stable teacher identity is an identity in which the disruption of the teacher identity, such as a change in context, does not cause a dramatic change or renegotiation of the instructor’s perceived teacher identity or cause a severe drop in confidence (Ellis, 2016; Song, 2016; Zheng, 2017). An example of this is Sunmi from Song’s 2016 study. Although she was frustrated by the returnee students and the fact that they
occasionally knew things that she did not know, that did not cause a renegotiation of her teacher identity. She had already undergone a renegotiation of her teacher identity in the past when she studied abroad and then again when she returned to South Korea which allowed her to understand her role as an instructor. As a result, when confronted with a new context in which there were students who knew more information about English-speaking countries or new slang she was not strongly affected. Furthermore, she overcame those changes in her teaching context quickly and without a major change in confidence, as there were only a few moments in which she felt unsure or challenged. In conclusion, a stable teacher identity is dependent upon the self-confidence that comes from an instructor understanding and being able to position themselves in the various contexts that they encounter.

**Chapter Summary**

- Language ownership is complex: Language ownership is decided by many different factors, and can change drastically over both long and short periods of time.

- Multilingual speakers have complex linguistic identities: Linguistic identities are multifaceted, and are comprised of factors such as culture, gender, educational background, and more. These factors are constantly in flux, and play into each other as the speakers grow and have new experiences.

- CCCC states every speaker has the right to their own languages: The CCCC stated that every language user has the right to speak and use their own languages with equal pride and prestige, regardless of what those languages are.
● Every speaker has a unique “languaged life”: Just as every person is unique, every “languaged life” is unique, as it was formed by the experiences, identities, and perceptions of every individual.

● Language teacher identity is multi-faceted and complex, and is often renegotiated when challenged or even supported.
CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

This chapter details the methodology that was used to carry out this study and answer the research questions posed. First, I present and explain the reasoning behind my choices to use a qualitative methodology, in particular narrative inquiry. Next, I discuss the context, participant guidelines, data sources, and data analysis. Finally, I conclude the chapter with a look at my position as a researcher and any ethical concerns the study may face.

Study Design: Qualitative

As this study was aimed at exploring deeply emotional and psychological responses and memories in detail, qualitative research methods are used. Richards (2009) asserts that the main aspects of qualitative research are 1) the studies are locally situated, 2) the studies are participant-oriented, 3) the studies are holistic, and 4) the studies are inductive. These are all traits that lent themselves to answering my research questions, which I restate here:

1. How do the self-identified multilingual instructors define and perceive their language ownership?

2. What connections do they make between their perceived language ownership and the way they see themselves as teachers?

As these questions all focus on personal and emotional experiences and can only be inferred, never truly witnessed, qualitative study is appropriate. To gain an idea of how the experiences build upon each other and potentially alter the participants’ “languaged lives” as well as to gain a deeper understanding of the participants’ linguistic identities, narrative inquiry was the qualitative method used in the study.
Narrative Inquiry

People live their lives in stories and scenes. From the first nursery rhymes they learn as a child to the stories they tell their grandchildren at family reunions, human beings are creatures who revel in the telling of tales, both now and in the distant past. Hendry (2010) suggests that narrative could be considered the first form of research conducted by humanity, as well as the oldest form of recording stories. The ancient Greeks recorded their mythology and history in oral tales as did the Vikings, who were famed for their warrior bards. All my life I have revelled in stories, both written and oral. I remember sitting enraptured as my grandmother told me stories of my great grandfather and as my mother laughingly relayed tales of her childhood. Humans organize their lives through narrative, and position themselves in relation to other “characters” in whatever story is being told (Pomerantz, 2012; Salaberri, 2012). As Kramp (2003) states, “narrative is a vital human activity that structures experience and gives it meaning” (1).

This deep connection between experience and narrative is why I selected narrative inquiry as the method for this study. Narrative inquiry is centered on experience and the retelling of stories (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000), which makes it an appropriate method with which to explore the moments that define and shape the multilingual instructors’ teacher identity. Hocker (2010) used this method reflexively in her article in which she details her experiences, thoughts, and memories as she sorts through items belonging to her family. The power in her piece comes not only from the vivid memories that she describes, but also the humanity of it. She took complex emotions and feelings and summed them up in memories so that her audience could understand them. She developed a firm timeline, even though there were holes in her memory that she could not fill.
I focused on developing a timeline through the narratives given by the participants. The participants were asked about their past, their present, and their imagined future, playing into Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) idea of the changing narrative. They assert that the state of a place or a person is constantly changing, and thus each memory or moment becomes a mapped point in part of a larger narrative. This describes the “time” dimension of narrative inquiry: as time moves forward and sites and people change, memories become defining snapshots in a narrative. People also play an important role in narrative inquiry, as social interaction is another dimension mentioned by Clandinin and Connelly. People are always reflecting on experiences as they appear to the “others” who are the people that they interact with. Finally, context is important to narrative inquiry, as any experience in one context can have a completely different meaning in another. For example, tripping in front of your friends and tripping in the middle of a dance recital will be remembered very differently and have different connotations. With these critical aspects in mind, I organized the digital autobiographies and the semi-structured interviews around specific events in specific time frames, such as the first time they were exposed to their L2, their first time teaching in a classroom setting, and their current state. This narrative study was centered on specific memories, experiences, and the participants’ perceptions of them.

**Context of Study**

The study took place in a public state university in Western Pennsylvania. In part this was because of the ease of access of using students from the university, but the fact that there is both an MATESOL program and a PhD program in Composition and Applied Linguistics also plays a role in the selection of the study setting, as the programs focus on developing a teacher-scholar identity in its students and asks those students to examine their own identities,
backgrounds, and linguistic ideologies. This means that the students were already thinking about some of the topics I wanted to address in my study.

The university is located in a small town that includes a community college. There are approximately 12,300 students enrolled at the university, with 1254 graduate level students. Although there is not a great deal of ethnic diversity at the undergraduate level, there is significantly more diversity within the TESOL programs, both at the masters and doctorate level. The school itself has a long history of “teachers teaching teachers”, dating back to an elementary through high school subset that helped prepare teachers starting as far back as 1875. This tradition has continued, albeit in different ways, up until the time of the study. The mentality of “teachers teaching teachers” and self-improvement can be seen in the willingness of the participants to examine their own pasts, even when some of the memories are painful.

Participants

In an effort to answer my research questions I sought out participants for the study who met the following criteria:

- The participant must self-identify as a multilingual
- The participant must have at least two years of experience teaching English
- The participant must be willing to understand and reflect on their linguistic identities

These criteria were chosen carefully. The first criterion simply follows the clear guidelines set out by the research questions. The second criterion, a minimum of two years teaching experience, helped ensure that the instructors had enough time to begin to sense and reflect upon their identity as a teacher. The third criterion was for the sake of integrity: the participants must have been willing to talk about deep and personal aspects of their identity, and if they held back relevant information they could have potentially skewed the data collected.
Based on these criteria, five participants were selected. It must be noted that these participants were all in a close proximity to the researcher, and as a result the selection was based largely on practicality and ease of access. The participants selected were from a range of countries and backgrounds. In all, there were three men and two women. The participants were from Japan, China, Korea, Afghanistan, and Saudi Arabia, and a total of six languages were spoken, with one of the participants being a trilingual. A number of teaching backgrounds were also represented, ranging from high school to test prep to university-level classes. These unique backgrounds broaden the data pool and allowed me to examine the narratives of people from around the world with very different experiences. The negative aspect of this range and uniqueness of participant backgrounds is that it eliminated any generalization.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>Languages Spoken</th>
<th>Languages Taught</th>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Data Collection Procedure**

The process of data collection began after the study passed IRB approval in July of 2018 [refer to appendix A for the approval letter]. The first step was to find willing participants for the study, and this was accomplished using the snowball method. Each new participant led to another, until the final count of five participants was reached. The participants were asked to complete the digital autobiography and submit it via email [refer to appendix B for the email to
participants]. From these autobiographies, semi-structured interviews were created and carried out with the participants in ninety-minute interviews.

All of the participants were given and signed informed-consent letters [refer to appendix C for the informed consent form] detailing the purpose of the study, what the data they provided would be used for, and their rights to that data. It was explicitly stated that should they at any point during the study no longer wish to participate and remove their data from what was collected they could contact me and be removed from the study. The participants were also informed of the measures that would be taken to protect their identities, such as pseudonyms and copies of their data being given to them upon request.

The time table for data collection was as follows:

July 2018: IRB approval
July 2018: participant selection
July/August/September 2018: data collection
August/September/October 2018: data analysis

Data collection went according to this time table. Each participant was contacted individually. After they returned their consent forms and their digital autobiographies, we met for the interviews. One thing that I noticed was that the interviews did not feel clinical in any way. Rather, it felt as though I was listening to a storyteller, and my function was simply to ask questions about the story as it went on. The participants never seemed reluctant to share any aspect of their linguistic story, although two related specific memories that seemed to embarrass them even years later. However, that didn’t seem to discourage them, and the participants often showed great amounts of enthusiasm as they shared their stories and discussed their plans for the future, both in and out of the classroom.
Data Sources

There were two main sources of data used in the study: digital autobiographies and semi-structured face-to-face interviews. These two sources played into each other and allow the researcher to gather more relevant data. Those data sources and the procedure used to acquire them is detailed below.

Digital Autobiography

The digital autobiography was intended to gather background demographic data on the participants, collect a clear written narrative from the participants, and inform the later semi-structured interviews [see appendix D for the digital autobiography writing prompt]. Because the online autobiographies were completed on the participant’s own time without the researcher present, participants had the time and the space to format responses without feeling pressure. The digital autobiographies directions were sent via email to the participants, and were submitted before the face-to-face interviews take place.

Semi-Structured Interviews

The next data collection method was a series of semi-structured interviews. Each participant was interviewed for approximately 30-45 minutes in a location chosen by the participant. Each interview was personalized for the participant based on the information they provided in their digital autobiographies, although there were similarities between all of the interviews. I asked the participants questions about specific experiences in their lives and their perception of those experiences, such as their first exposures to their L2, the moment they first felt fluent in their L2, and a moment in which they felt their linguistic authority was challenged. To satisfy the narrative inquiry aspect of the study, the participants were asked questions in a chronological order so as to establish a concrete past, present, and future. Although every
interview had a range of different questions due to the influence from the digital autobiography responses, the questions described were standard in all of the interviews. This design allowed for a “plot” to develop, and for me to better understand how the participants’ stories came to be (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Pomerantz, 2012).

The interviews were conducted face-to-face as it allowed for a more personable connection between the interviewer and the interviewee, something that is key when it comes to gathering good data from interviews for narrative purpose (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). As previously stated, each interview was designed with the information given in the autobiographies in mind, but the main point of each interview was to inquire about the participant’s development of language ownership and teacher identity, and how that development was reflected in their language [refer to appendix E for the interview questions and protocol].

**Data Analysis**

As this study was a narrative inquiry data was looked at in reference to stories and experiences. While of course a review of previous research offered a general idea of possible outcomes, there was no specific expectation of what I would find going in to this study, and as such categories for coding data for detailed analysis could not be selected beforehand. Using line by line coding and constant comparison, I analyzed all of the data as it came in.

The first step to analyzing the data was transcribing the interviews and sorting through the digital autobiographies. Because the autobiographies did not come in at the same time and the interviews were spaced out according to the preferences of the participants, the data from both sources was examined as it came in. The first pieces were analyzed and coded, then as more interviews and autobiographies came in, those were added to the pile and the relevant codes were expanded, changed, or combined as the new pieces were brought in. Each interview
was examined for themes, and although all of the perceived themes were considered important, extra attention was paid to themes that were repeated in more than one participant’s narrative. The same was done with experiences that were reported by more than one participant. Once I analyzed data and determined the codes, I took those codes and derived themes from them. In all, I came up with two themes, which are as follows:

I. Language Ownership, Fluency, Identity, and Power

For this theme I discuss connections between these four things as described and perceived by the participants.

II. Life Experiences Informing Classroom Practice

For this theme I discuss the participants’ reported use of their “languaged lives” in their classrooms and their overall pedagogical ideologies as related to their past experiences.

After coding and determining the themes, I put the data for each participant together into a narrative of their linguistic development and their journey toward becoming multilingual teachers of English. These narratives were arranged chronologically in order to accurately tell a story that can be easily read and digested.

**Ethical Considerations**

As in any study, there are ethical issues to consider. There was no compensation offered for participation in the study, and no academic incentives were given. In an attempt to balance any possible power imbalances, the participants were interviewed in a location of their choice where they would feel comfortable. I was not closely acquainted with the participants before this study, although I did read their digital autobiographies before the interviews and thus had some background information on them before the interviews. In addition, the participants in the study were graduate students, placing us all in a similar position of academic power. The participants
were fully informed of the measures that would be taken to protect their identities, such as pseudonyms and the right at any time to withdraw their consent to have their data included in the study. Moreover, the participants were reminded that they can withdraw or refuse to answer any question at the beginning of each phase of data collection, and they were all able to contact the researcher at any time should any issues have arisen.

Chapter Summary

In this chapter the reasoning behind the approach used in this study is discussed, as well as the process through which I gather and analyze data. The participant selection criteria as well as participant profiles are also presented. For the study five participants were selected, and each participant completed a digital autobiography and an interview.

The next chapter presents the narratives of the participants. They begin at the start of their linguistic journey and move forward in time until they point at the distant future goals of the participants, and detail their complex story as they told it.
CHAPTER FOUR

PARTICIPANT NARRATIVES

In this chapter I present the narratives of each of the five participants, which is the beginning of the analysis of the data. Each narrative is chronological in that it begins with the educational background of the participant and ends with their future plans. The narratives focus on the participants’ linguistic identity both inside and outside of the classroom, as well as their future plans and dreams. This follows Clandinin and Connelly’s (2000) suggestion for the organization of stories. It also happens to be how most of the participants related their stories. The headings of each story may be different, as no two narratives are the same, but all of the narratives focus on the linguistic development of the participants, as well as the development of their teacher identity. There is also a heading which examines something that was unique to each participant and their stories. It must be noted that the information provided in these narratives are all what the participants reported, as there were no classroom observations. Please, enjoy the fascinating stories of these wonderful people!

Dan’s Narrative

Early Life and Linguistic Experiences: Language as a Key

Dan was born in South Korea and began learning English at the age of 14 at school, and he felt a “…genuine level of curiosity…a sense of curiosity about what it could be like learning a different language” (Interview, July 31, 2018) at the prospect. Although Dan was required to learn English in school he willingly continued to learn the language because what he truly wanted was to gain access to books and articles in English on subjects such as “…psychology, history, politics, gender study, all the material I can read and understand with this English competency I developed” (Interview, July 31, 2018). He loved picking up books in other
languages, stating “...being able to read something different in different language is just awesome, it’s really nice, really. It encompasses all the struggle I have gone through, when you become able to read something you couldn’t before” (Interview, July 31, 2018). When he entered college, this same love of learning pushed him to take up his third language: Chinese. He was a student of Chinese modern history and politics, so he wanted to gain access to literature on the subject that was only available in Chinese, stating “I think I was so much interested in Chinese modern history, modern Chinese history, and other materials so, it was like motivation [to study Chinese]” (Interview, July 31, 2018). He did not learn languages just to learn them; rather, he believed that there had to be a practical application for each language. He stated:

> There are many students in Korea for example who say I love learning English, it doesn’t, it didn’t, it doesn’t make sense to me. Wow. It makes sense if somebody said learning English is useful, learning Chinese or English is useful or sometimes fun. Because I can do something with that kind of linguistic competence...The process of learning the language itself was fun too. Sometimes it is very fun, but a bigger interest to me is the other disciplinary material. (Interview, July 31, 2018)

Despite his emphasis on books and information Dan did not discount the communicative aspects of language, stating “that is interesting part, too!” (Interview, July 31, 2018).

Throughout his process of gaining two foreign languages he felt the challenges to his identity as a language user came mostly from himself and the culture he came from, stating “I think it’s not only, sorry, it’s so very cultural and ideological too... It is known to the society that it [speaking English] is very desirable it is almost impossible, that kind of ideology is in Korean
society…” (Interview, July 31, 2018). Although it took time, Dan gradually gained competence in his L2 and L3 until he felt he was ready to label himself a fluent speaker.

**Realization of Fluency: A Choice**

Dan finally felt that he was fluent in English in 1997 when he completed a milestone in his career as a language learner. He wrote:

> I finished reading a book (written in English) about socialist and anarchist movements in America before WWII. I guess I was a bit tired of being an English language “learner” by then (like “when I can stop “learning” English and move on to “use” it? Why not “learning” and “using” it together?). So I chose the book because it looked interesting to me, not because it suited my level of English competency. Also, I didn’t touch an English dictionary, nor I did pause to think about grammar while reading that book for two weeks, both of which had been my habits dying hard as an English language learner. (Digital Autobiography, July 27, 2018)

This was a defining feature of Dan’s linguistic journey as he not only pinpointed a single moment after which he identified as fluent but he also made the conscious choice to label himself as a language user rather than a language learner. He had a similar defining moment in Chinese. Like he did with English he grew unhappy with not using the language and decided to set his own standard for language use and fluency. He described his sentiments and his resulting decision, stating:

> ...so a majority of the students who tried to learn Chinese in the Chinese language school was from Korea, Japan, and…and United States I guess, three country. And the interesting thing is most of the American student once their, after the
classes were over they never remained in school, but all, most of the Korea and Japanese students and even after their classes were finished they remained in school and so-called studied and learned and translated in the library. And I got really tired of that, and I just, because, I was thinking like, hey I have something I can use right now why don’t I just go outside and use it to real people. And then it was really interesting, too. And that was the moment I found that um, there were so many grammatical and some other, some, uh, idioms I picked up in the textbook but not that I can use comfortably. (Interview, July 31, 2018)

He decided to call himself fluent the moment he “filled the gap between this classroom language and the language actually used” (Interview, July 31, 2018). This happened around the same time that he decided to call himself fluent in English, although he felt that it was easier to call himself fluent in Chinese. This was not because of his linguistic skill, but rather because there was less social pressure to be perfect in Chinese than there was in English so he could be less critical of it. Dan described this sentiment, saying:

Because now there’s a little bit more of the moment I found the different issue there’s a bit of a power structure between different languages. For example…I mentioned about this the issue of uncertainty about own linguistic competence in regards to the English. I guess I developed less of this kind of thing when I learned Chinese. I was less critical of my Chinese while I still remained very critical of my English competence. (Interview, July 31, 2018)

His decision to call himself a language user of Chinese came shortly after his decision to call himself a language user of English, in what he described as a realization of a shift in his linguistic identity that had already been forming. This shift that allowed him to “…utilize my
English not only learning all the time, I can use English to do something” (Interview, July 31, 2018).

I’m not an ELL, but I’m Still Anxious: Confidence and Anxiety

Even though Dan made the conscious decision to call himself a language user rather than a language learner he still feels a sense of anxiety about his English. He described this feeling as:

…that kind of hopeless feeling, anxiety, is something, language learner always carry themselves with. You connected with, even, even at this stage of PhD student in TESOL other writing disciplines still I still carry myself, I still carry it in myself because, you know, that kind of, uncertainty about my level, uncertainty about my competence, yeah. I don’t think I will be able to completely get over it… (Interview, July 31, 2018)

He knows that he is not alone, stating “there are still so many, most of the majority of the so-called EFL ESL or English Language Learner… it’s like me…uncertainty about their English competence” (Interview, July 31, 2018). English, in his eyes, will always be held to a higher standard than his Korean because “the problem is that we don’t know what, how much is good. How much is good enough. We don’t know…” (Interview, July 31, 2018). Because of this Dan still feels some anxiety when using English, but the amount of anxiety Dan feels is also directly related to the perceived rank and authority of the person or people he is talking to. He shared that he felt the most anxiety speaking with his advisor, because “…it was challenging emotionally…I don’t wanna look silly to her…it’s not about her native speaker status it is more about her, some kind of, power relation too…” (Interview, July 31, 2018). He believes that this pressure and emphasis on English comes from both internal and external factors, and the most
powerful of these factors is culture. The academic cultures he has found himself in emphasized and continue to emphasize a language user identity, and when asked if he still identified as a language learner Dan’s response was an emphatic “No, not anymore” (Interview, July 31, 2018).

When he was questioned about the strength of the response, he admitted that although he still attempted to improve his English he refused to identify as a language learner because of the connotation the term held in the cultures he lived in. In response to being asked if he still identified as a language learner, he stated:

Not, not anymore. But, but, uh, cause maybe my definition of learning is changed. Still, learning, sometimes still, learning the term learning has some kind of negative connotation like you are not…good enough, right? ... so it’s kind of dualistic connotation, right? Learning can have very positive connotation, right? Like you’re open minded you still want to develop your ability but in the meantime if you keep using the term learn...you are not proficient enough. You are student level, or class, right? (Interview, July 31, 2018)

Dan does not hold others to this standard, and does not attach the negative connotation to his students or other speakers who still identify as learners. When pressed, he admitted “I think maybe I’m against that kind of thing [negative cultural connotation] but not against the phenomena [language learner identity] itself, maybe, I guess” (Interview, July 31, 2018).

Although he is still unsure as to whether he is willing to identify as a language learner, Dan is comfortable acting as a language learner when necessary while teaching.

**Identity in the Language Classroom: Playing Identity Cards**

Dan has taught English, Chinese, and Korean in both American and Korean contexts. The types of classes he has taught range from test-prep for the test of English as a foreign
language, or the TOEFL\textsuperscript{1} for short, in Korea to English writing classes in the United States.

Over the course of those years teaching, his identity has gone through major shifts, ending in what he calls “identity cards” (Interview, July 31, 2018). In essence, he sees his identity as multifaceted and shifting, and with each shift he faces different challenges. By shifting identities he believes he can “…utilize all the potential, you know, choices as a teacher depending on the teaching context…” (Interview, July 31, 2018). This is especially true when he uses his identity as a multilingual. He stated “Yes, I, I sometimes push, I sometimes hold, sometimes hide it [multilingual identity], I guess. Yeah, like I like to say I play different identity cards all the time” (Interview, July 31, 2018). In addition to changing his identity card Dan also uses his entire repertoire of language learning experiences in his language classrooms.

Dan has come to view his linguistic experiences as indispensable tools in his classroom, eagerly answering “Sure, yeah. All of them, yeah” (Interview, July 31, 2018), when asked if he used his past experiences in the classroom. He uses these experiences to understand and connect to his students, stating:

…if you don’t understand your students it is very difficult maybe even impossible for you to teach, right? So, I think all of my experience, either negative or positive, even something I couldn’t understand before, still I think all are my assets as a teacher... (Interview, July 31, 2018)

The experiences he had helped to shape Dan’s identity, and as he stated that he views those experiences as assets in the classroom. These experiences connect to his identity which is a multifaceted reflection of himself composed of various identity cards. Using his identity cards in

\textsuperscript{1} The TOEFL is a standardized English competency test that is used for applications to universities around the world
the classroom means portraying himself to his students in the way that will be most helpful to them. He described the process as:

I think I have to and I do play to different identities depending on the context of each student, I guess. If a student, or, individual student or group of students, if I see the benefit of become, of acting like the more authoritarian, authoritative, I do that, honestly. Some, but in person I wouldn’t do that, I don’t believe in that kind of thing. But I think sometimes we have to…(Interview, July 31, 2018)

As he stated, Dan does not like all of the identities that he is sometimes forced to portray, but if he feels it is necessary he will use that identity in the classroom. One identity that Dan does enjoy presenting in the classroom is his identity as a multilingual, which he sometimes displays to students as an example to show them what they could be. Whichever aspect of his identity Dan is displaying, his identity as a whole has, according to him, became more open and accepting of others over time.

**Dan’s Identity: More Open and Accepting**

Dan acknowledges that he was not always accepting of differences in views, describing his past mentality as “…when I was much younger I thought, I considered those people whose ideas are so different than mine as a … as a kind of hindrance…” (Interview, July 31, 2018).

Dan asserts that he has moved past this mentality and that his acquisition of other languages has played a role in changed viewpoint. When asked how his identity changed as he learned languages, he responded:

Humans tend to become hostile against something they don’t know. So if you can read and you can talk to people who are in, you know in different language then your…sometimes groundless fear and hostility just shed away right? So, I
think this applies to my situation too. Because if I can, if I am a kind of person who has certain level of open-minded I guess? It’s definitely due to my language learning experience, I guess. (Interview, July 31, 2018)

He also applies this open-mindedness to his classes and his relationships with his colleagues. His earlier-mentioned acceptance of others’ language learner identities stems from this linguistic growth toward an open-minded identity, and when dealing with his students he no longer feels such a large divide between native-speakers and nonnative-speakers. This is because, as he puts it:

If for example my English 101 was my so-called native speaker students in my English 101 are indeed learners, too. So, my question, my understanding of the question is who isn’t a language learner in this world, right? Everyone is, right? (Interview, July 31, 2018)

Dan’s experiences learning English and Chinese have changed who he is as a person and have given him the tools to communicate with a broad range of people around the world. Most importantly to him, those languages have granted him access to a vast array of knowledge that he can use in the future.

**Plans for the Future: More doors to Unlock**

Dan is currently finishing up his PhD and plans to continue learning other languages and teaching. He has studied some Japanese in the past, so he plans on continuing to learn that language. However, he was most excited to learn Spanish, stating “I definitely want to learn Spanish in the future. Definitely” (Interview, July 31, 2018). Perhaps most importantly, Dan speaks of continuing to grow as a person and as an instructor. Dan is always ready to grow
linguistically. As he said “who isn’t a language learning in this world, right?” (Interview, July 31, 2018).

Themes Emerging From Dan’s Narrative

● Theme 1
  ○ Language Ownership: Dan has a very strong and stable sense of language ownership, and can laugh off challenges to it.
  ○ Teacher Identity: Dan has a stable teacher identity, and he claims to project different identities to his students depending on what they need, and that all of those cards are part of his identity as a teacher and a language user.
  ○ Fluency: Dan considers himself to be fluent in three languages, and achieved that fluency by setting his own goals that qualified him as fluent to his standards.
  ○ Power: Dan’s main focus when learning languages is the access he can potentially gain to new information, and everything else that comes with a language is secondary.

● Theme 2
  ○ Dan uses his past experiences to connect with his students and help guide them, and he especially relies on those experiences, his “language life” when teaching his L1.
  ○ Dan attempts to keep his class student-centered, but sometimes either the administration or his students themselves make him fall back to a more traditional pedagogy, although he resents it.
Lana’s Narrative

Don’t Laugh at me: Language Education

Lana began learning English, her L2, at her school in Saudi Arabia at the age of eleven. Although it was mandatory in her school learning English was not widely accepted by her culture at the time. She described the sentiment toward it as:

...those who were trying to speak [English] were suffering from mocking as if they should be ashamed of speaking English. Some people still have this bad attitudes toward English speakers. Moreover, most people believe that if you speak English then you should know every single word in English otherwise they would be a failure. (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018)

However, when she first sat in English class she was not thinking about how other people would react or even what she was learning; she was just happy to be in class with her friends, and happily repeated after her teacher with the rest of her classmates. As she said “I wasn’t thinking about learning the language. I was just having fun learning something new” (Interview, September 19, 2018). Unfortunately, this sentiment did not last.

As Lana grew older and continued with her English classes she began to grow less and less comfortable speaking out loud in front of other students. This was because the other students in the class “just started to laugh whenever I made mistakes and things like this. And it happened all the time…” (Interview, September 19, 2018). They students laugheded whenever anyone made a mistake, but Lana felt especially threatened and alienated by the ridicule, stating that she was “ashamed” and “not good enough” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018). She carried this fear with her for a long time, and early on it became a key factor in her “shy” behavior in English classes. One specific memory from this time still haunts her, and she used it
as an example of why she did not use English to communicate for a long time. She described the incident, stating:

When I was in high school because I had like a very nice teacher she was encouraging me to speak and she was, she, she asked… I still remember this because it was like one of the most embarrassing situation, because, uh, like we were like about 30 students in class, and she just asked me to read, that’s it! And I felt like I don’t want to do this, I don’t want to read in English. I’m just not good enough to read. And so I said no I don’t want to read. And she said Lana you can read! I said no I don’t want to read…So I just felt like it’s something that I can’t, I couldn’t do it. (Interview, September 19, 2018)

Lana carried this sense of shame, hesitance, and inferiority with her when she entered college. She did not want to study English because of it, but she stated “my father forced me to study English because he believed that English was one of the most important majors with great future careers” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018). She agreed, but she still struggled with her English classes. She disliked her college experience because she did not feel valued as a student. She said of her teachers and classes:

Our professors did not care about our achievements or progress. There were more than 60 students in all my classes. It was not a good learning experience and I did not really enjoy learning English. I felt like I was forced to learn. (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018)

During this time she continued to avoid speaking if possible, but even when she tried to practice speaking she could not find anyone to practice with. The previously mentioned sentiment meant that other students did not want to use English outside of the classroom. Lana recalled “…even
when you tried to speak with them in English they wouldn’t, like, answer. They would just, like, what are you? They would like…um, be maybe surprised like what are you doing?” (Interview, September 19, 2018). The combination of her low self-confidence in English and her lack of communicative practice meant that when she graduated from college with a degree in English she still felt that she was “not confident to speak English in front of anyone” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018).

This changed when Lana was selected to participate in an exchange program in Canada. While there she found many supportive friends, and her English slowly began to improve as she “started to challenge my fear and accept my mistakes” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018). The instructors cared about their students and were very supportive of them, and Lana often received praise for her skills. She also felt more confident because she found that she was one of the better students, stating “and because I studied with Chinese and their English wasn’t very good, and they used to, uh…they used to tell that your English is very good so I, I was like, a little bit happy with my English” (Interview, September 19, 2018). When she returned to teach English in Saudi Arabia she found that her English had vastly improved and she felt both alarmed at how little her students knew and proud of her own English proficiency. This was when she truly felt happy and thankful that she had studied English. In her words “Their English proficiency level was very low and this was the moment when I was happy to study English so that I can help other people to learn something helpful for their future” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018).

**It is Their Language: Native Speaker Ideology**

Lana still holds on to some parts of the native speaker ideology. She firmly believes that it is the responsibility of the people learning a language to speak as native speakers do, stating:
I know that we are not native speakers, but I think we should learn how ...uh... how native speakers pronounce words, because if we don’t then other people wouldn’t understand us and this is their language not our language. We should, like, pronounce it correctly. (Interview, September 19, 2018)

This belief is one of the reasons she feels so anxious about her grammar. She knows that she makes mistakes and she takes them very seriously, especially when talking to native speakers. She stated “...sometimes I feel bad when someone doesn’t understand what I say, and I feel like if I speak it very good they would understand me” (Interview, September 19, 2018). Lana also applied, and still applies, this ideology in her assessment of her instructors. Lana gave the example of one of her favorite instructors, who she described as “an Egyptian teacher she was nice too, but her Egyptian accent made me feel that she does not speak English very well” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018) and “she was a very good teacher but her accent wasn’t good enough for me” (Interview, September 9, 2018). Although she came to truly enjoy learning from that teacher she admits that if she were in that same class today she would still feel the same way about the teacher. Lana still is not sure why she holds this belief, laughingly stating “I don’t know why I have this idea in my mind” (Interview, September 19, 2018).

Lana feels that one of the widest gulfs between her and native speakers is the differences in culture. She said “...I feel like I’m a stranger, even though that I speak their language, I don’t, I don’t feel that I belong to them” (Interview, September 19, 2018). As she stated, she feels alienated among them native speakers even though she speaks their language and has lived among them. Lana admitted that she did not think of English as connected to people and a culture until she studied abroad for the first time. She described her view of English when she was a student and teacher in Saudi Arabia as “in Saudi Arabia I don’t care about culture, I just
speak the language with my teachers, with my classmates, with my students…” (Interview, September 19, 2018). However, after she studied abroad she insisted that the best place to learn a language is “outside your country” (Interview, September 19, 2018), and that studying with native speakers gives insight into how native-speakers see the world. Although her view of English has changed over the years, Lana feels that the views of her students and her country have not changed with her.

They’re Like I was: Teaching Methodology, Experiences, and Teacher Identity

Lana’s teacher identity has been shaped by her experiences learning English and she often presents herself to her students as a language learner, just like them. In fact, she states that one of the reasons many of her teachers were ineffective is because “they are not improving themselves” (Interview, September 19, 2018). To counteract this sentiment Lana is attempting to become a true teacher-scholar and improve herself for her students. She attempts to keep her identity and pedagogical practices as far from the “traditional” practices as possible so that her students do not become dependent on her. Lana said that she hates to “…treat them [her students] like children because I think they’re old enough to learn the language by themselves” (Interview, September 19, 2018). Because of this she reports treating her students more like equals and presents herself as a language learner like them, stating “I always, um, like to tell my student that I’m a learner just like you. We learn together” (Interview, September 19, 2018). This is especially important because she believes society still has the same sentiment toward English today that it had when she was a student. There is still the idea that learning English is useless, but at the same time anyone who learns it has to speak it perfectly. The students are still “…open to learn, but…hesitant to speak” (Interview, September 19, 2018). She takes this into consideration in her teaching methodology.
When teaching Lana aims to avoid the methodologies that her teachers practiced when she was a student. Her negative experiences with those methods, mainly the grammar translation and audiolingual methods, have caused her to reject them under most circumstances. She feels that those methodologies treat students like children, stating “I hate to ask my student to repeat after me because I think they’re old enough. They can get online to practice how to pronounce words. They can listen to me so they can understand how to pronounce the words…” (Interview, September 19, 2018). She is also aware that her students have very little motivation, and she does not hold her students to a high standard because of it. She stated:

I think they are…just like me. They are not interesting in this, and they are just learning it because they have to. So I’m not hard on them because I know that this is just a course that they will study and then they will just forget it.

(Interview, September 19, 2018)

Despite this bleak outlook on her students’ motivation she still strives to use new methodologies that emphasize communication even though she has large classes and strict regulations to work around.

It is important to note that Lana does not believe that her experiences learning English could be applied if she were to teach her L1, Arabic. When asked, she responded:

I think it’s gonna be totally different. I think I wouldn’t be able to teach Arabic…it’s like my own language I didn’t remember how I learn it, so I’m not sure like what my students would look for me or what they would expect me to teach them.

(Interview, September 19, 2018)
I’m Stronger Now: Multilingual Identity

Although it was a difficult journey that held “embarrassment” and a sense of not being “good enough” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018), Lana has claimed a multilingual identity. She believes that the process of becoming multilingual has changed her identity. One change that she does attribute to learning English is her social activism. She first began to think about that change when she was speaking with a friend, stating:

I was very excited…we were like talking about some, uh…some women issues in Saudi Arabia and that we shouldn’t be quiet, we should be strong to defend our rights and things like this. And she just asked me are you studying English?… those girls who study English are always like this…they just like to be like very strong and they…like they’re very activists. They…they don’t like to be… And I was, is this why? Is this why I’m like very…um…like I’m a very strong independent woman…and she said that this is because you study English. And I’m not sure actually about this, but maybe…(Interview, September 19, 2018)

One of the reasons that Lana is so hesitant to declare any one specific change in her identity as a result of becoming multilingual is that she can no longer imagine what her identity would be without English. She summarized this perfectly when she said:

…sometimes I find myself in English. Sometimes I can express myself in English better than Arabic. Sometimes I like to speak, I like to write in English but I don’t like to write in Arabic. I just feel like English is part of me. It’s part of my identity now. And, uh…and I don’t think that I could, that I can live without, without it anymore. I don’t know why but I think it’s like part of my identity now. It’s not anymore like a tool that I have to study or I have to master, it’s like
part of me, and that’s why I want to be perfect in it. (Interview, September 19, 2018)

Even though Lana feels that her English is an integral part of her identity, she does not always feel confident in her ability to speak it.

**Fluency: Shifting and Unreachable**

For Lana, reaching fluency is nearly impossible because she believes that she “should not make any mistakes as an English teacher” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2019). However, this does not mean that she has never felt fluent, as Lana says that she feels very fluent when teaching. She said:

…when I speak with my students I feel like I’m very fluent. I feel like I’m like a native speaker because they don’t under-, like they don’t understand almost everything. So I feel like I’m talking about things that…like they even can’t communicate with me in English. Like I can say whatever I want and they wouldn’t be able to know anything, so I feel like I’m very good. (Interview, September 19, 2018)

There are also many scenarios in which Lana feels as though she is not fluent in English. Some of them are context dependent and others are content dependent, but she recounts each with a sense of slight embarrassment and frustration. This is especially evident when she talks about medical situations, like when she brings her daughter in to see the pediatrician. She described the event, saying:

For example when I take my daughter to, to her doctor sometimes I just can’t explain her feelings or how is she suffering from something because I don’t have
the vocabularies like I don’t know what, what is the meaning of this? I don’t know how to say this, which is like very sad. (Interview, September 19, 2018)

In addition to subjects that give her trouble, she also begins to doubt her fluency when speaking with anyone in a higher position than her, such as professors or supervisors, and native speakers. The only time she explicitly states feeling comfortable when speaking with others is when she is speaking with her students. She feels that “…my professor my coworkers they… they expect that I speak very good” (Interview, September 19, 2018).

Plans for the Future

Lana plans on continuing to improve her English. She is also planning on learning French or Spanish, although she is leaning toward Spanish because she thinks it will be easier to learn than French. She thinks that “…it’s very important for me to…to learn a new language. I don’t know why, but I think it’s very nice…” (Interview, September 19, 2018). She is confident that she can learn another language because of her experiences learning her L2 and her knowledge of methodologies that work for her. Finally, she continues to search for new ways of helping her students and improving her teaching, saying “My students inspired me to improve my teaching skills and that is why I decided to do my masters in TESOL” (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018).

Themes Emerging From Lana’s Narrative

- Theme 1
  - Language Ownership: Lana has a very weak sense of language ownership, in no small part because she firmly believes that languages belong to their native speakers, not the people who learned the language.
○ Teacher Identity: Lana has a stable sense of teacher identity, and is comfortable enough to relate to her students as a language learner.

○ Fluency: Lana feels that she will never be fluent, and had a difficult time feeling any sense of fluency until she first studied abroad.

○ Power: Lana attributes at least some of her interest in social justice to her learning of English. She also studied English for the professional capital it could earn her.

● Theme 2

○ Lana uses her past experiences in an attempt to connect to her students, who she feels are highly un-motivated.

○ Lana tries to run a student-centered class, but there are restrictions on what she can do because of class size and academic climate.

Ken’s Narrative

Early Life and Linguistic Experiences: an English “Ego”

Ken was first introduced to English at a private afterschool program when he was six, although as he “had even no idea about what I was doing in the classroom at that time” (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018) he does not count that as his first English learning experience. Instead, he asserts that his first true introduction to English was at the age of twelve when he was in junior high school. At first he felt wary of learning the language because he did not see the use of it, asking “Learning English, why? For what?” (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018), but he soon realized that he had a natural talent for it. This was very important to him, as he reported:

...at the time I was not really good at studying or anything, and everything like, Japanese literature, mathematics, science, or anything, I didn’t do a good job on
the test. The only English was something I could do well, but it was the first time people said, “oh, you’re very good at English”, and that made me feel like oh, I can do something at least. (Interview, August 9, 2018)

Although his interest in the language began because he was naturally skilled at learning it, he began to enjoy learning the language when he realized his love of English grammar. Ken found that he loved the puzzle that English grammar represented and he enjoyed studying all of its facets, saying “when I learned more about vocabulary, or grammatical structure, it’s so interesting. It was like a puzzle” (Interview, August 9, 2018). The other students took notice of his prowess, and he developed a keen sense of pride about his English. He referred to this pride as his “ego”, and for years his goal was “expanding my knowledge on English…I could grow my ego as a student” (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018).

**University Life: A gap in Communication**

Because Ken excelled in English and loved English grammar, he decided to go to university to be an English teacher, calling it a “long time dream” (Interview, August 9, 2018). However, when he began taking college classes he discovered that his English communication skills were lacking. He took a class with an instructor famous for his ability to teach phonetics, and although the class went well he still struggled, stating “However, while I was enjoying learning English phonetics, I was also struggling with the reality that I could not actually speak English fluently” (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018). He spent a good deal of time comparing his English skills with that of his peers, and it left him feeling less confident in his language ability. He described this stage in his language learning as:
I was also struggling with the reality that I could not actually speak English fluently. For instance, while my cohort members in the seminar could speak English fluently with less Japanese accent, I remained heavy accent, and was unable to speak as well as others did. It was the first time that I realized that I was only learning English for knowledge, but not for the actual use or communication. Indeed, while my peers received high intermediate level scores on TOEFL (e.g., around 80 out of 120, and this is a minimum threshold line for foreigners to be enrolled into the US MA programs, especially TESOL), I kept receiving low scores (around 60). (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018)

Although he experienced this period of deep self-doubt Ken was able to increase his confidence and his language skills through both independent studying and studies abroad.

Ken was inspired to study abroad by one of his instructors, and so he began to take the TOEFL so that he could qualify to go abroad. However, his scores were at least twenty points below what they needed to be. He struggled most with speaking and listening, but found that he excelled in the writing portion of the test. He described his efforts to improve, stating:

I bought a few textbooks about how to compose English essays, and I found that writing a good essay can just follow certain structures or rules… I gradually came to receive higher score on TOEFL partly thanks to my enhanced writing ability in English. (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018)

His newfound skill in academic writing helped alleviate his self-doubt in his English competency, and as he said “…around this time, my writing performance became an ego and supported my silly pride as a learner/user of English. ‘I may not speak English well, but I can write well.’ This was what I was feeling at around that time” (Digital Autobiography, August 5,
At the end of this transition he went into a master’s program in the United States and began his teaching career.

**Teaching and Learning: L1 and L2**

Ken has taught in multiple places, but most of his teaching experience has been university classes in the US. He has taught both his L1, Japanese, and his L2, English, in college settings. His students have been both L1 and L2 learners, and as such he has dealt with a variety of students from a variety of backgrounds. Although he reports loving teaching and feeling comfortable in the classroom, he also reported feeling “more comfortable” (Interview, August 9, 2018) teaching English. This is because of the pressure he feels as a native speaker of Japanese teaching Japanese. He said:

> For Japanese learners…I have to be much more cautious about my existence as a native speaker. Because sometimes students said ‘you’re native speaker. You should know everything. What you say is real Japanese language’ and I always need to say I am just part of Japanese people or Japanese society and in order to construct that kind of idea what Japanese language will be, what Japanese culture will be, what Japanese society will be, you need to see many more Japanese people and try to make your own definition of those things. (Interview, August 9, 2018)

In an attempt to bolster his knowledge of Japanese to better help his students he decided to brush up on Japanese grammar, only to discover that he had been speaking differently from the Japanese displayed in the books, stating “…are you serious? I’m speaking different way!” (Interview, August 9, 2018). The combination of his non-standard Japanese, his disinterest in Japanese grammar, and the native-speaker-centered vision of the students left him feeling that his
“knowledge about Japanese grammar was not enough” and that he was “not really ready to teach Japanese as well” (Interview, August 9, 2018). However, he pulled on his experiences as a language learner to connect with his students and bolster their confidence in themselves. He said “I can just say okay we can think about it together, we can learn it together, or I can just honestly say I have no idea” (Interview, August 9, 2018).

This sentiment also applies to the English classes he teaches. He draws heavily on his own experiences as a language learner to not only connect with the students, but also to inform how he reacts to his students’ successes and failures. He is both a student and a teacher, and claims that this outlook “help me to stay closer to student side. I still feel I’m not really good learner. There’s a reason why I can feel more about learners’ feeling, I can feel more about students’ feeling” (Interview, August 9, 2018). He often thinks about how it is his responsibility to ensure that his students have the skills they need to advance and to do well in future classes, tests, or professions, and so he can be rather critical of his own skills. This is particularly true in his writing. He said about this anxiety:

And at the end of semester I realized students’ writing styles are exactly the same with mine! And I feel so afraid of students’ future because they just having similar, similar writing style, if it is not um proper, suitable enough after they, they get out of the ESL program and actually get enrolled in the first-year classes in college. You know, it is my responsibility that I didn’t make them well-prepared for the college life… (Interview, August 9, 2018)

In all, he happily claims that all of his experiences learning his L2, both the good and the bad, are not only useful when teaching his L2, but also his L1. He believes that language learners face similar emotional issues, and most of his students can benefit from his understanding of those
issues, especially when facing failure. Ken said he interacts with his students in such a way that they believe “when my students didn’t do a good job, I don’t complain about it so much. It’s just part of the learning process and you don’t have to worry about it” (Interview, August 9, 2018).

**Fluency as Temporary: Content-Dependent**

Ken has never had a turning point where he decided that he was fluent in English. However, he has had moments in which he felt comfortable and confident speaking or reading or writing. He described his view of fluency as:

Ah…maybe it’s only temporary? But you know, it depends on the situation so much. Like, I may be speaking English a little fluently now, because I am just talking about my own life which I know everything about. And, but…If you suddenly start to talk about your experience in foreign country which I may not know…I’ll just be a listener…(Interview, August 9, 2018)

The determining factor that decides whether or not Ken feels that sense of fluency is, according to him, the content that he is discussing. He said:

I don’t feel much difference between talking with some of the EFL people or talking with other people in general…yeah…because it doesn’t matter to whom I am talking, but it matters about what I am or what we are talking, because you know, the content of the conversation may influence the fluency of my language. (Interview, August 9, 2018)

His biggest challenge is content related to culture, such as Harry Potter or holidays, because he has not learned much about them. In addition, he often feels more fluent when he is writing as opposed to when he is speaking because “I usually feel a little more comfortable when I write something than speak because I feel like my fingers can move much faster” (Interview, August
To Ken fluency is fluid, dynamic, and complex, and although he claims English as his second language he does not always feel as though he has the right to claim himself as fluent.

One arena in which Ken feels very confident and comfortable is academia. He feels particularly confident when he is teaching in the classroom because he has had a chance to prepare the material and “as a teacher I practice so many times so…yeah. I try not to have any mistake” (Interview, August 9, 2018). He admits that his authority in the classroom has been questioned from time to time, especially by students who seem to try their hardest to find a word or a phrase that he does not know. One such occurrence involved the phrase “see you later alligator”, which Ken was unfamiliar with. The student responded with laughter and said to Ken “We won!” (Interview, August 9, 2018). Despite challenges like this Ken has gained confidence as a language teacher and a language user. This is partially due to the fact that he has learned to accept his linguistic and cultural mistakes and to move past them or even use them as educational tools.

Ken acknowledges that he makes linguistic mistakes in both his L1 and his L2. He also admits that he often holds his L2 to a higher standard than his L1, stating that “English should be lower [proficiency], but it depends on the topic as well” (Interview, August 9, 2018). One of the greatest developments in his language learning journey was the slow acceptance of his mistakes, as well as the inevitability of those mistakes. On the topic, he said:

And I can, I can show some mistakes that I have before and students can feel like, okay, we-we have different languages which may influence our language using in English and, maybe that kind of sharing my mistakes or errors could make my students a little released when they make continuous mistakes. This is
in ESL class. And I think I also share the same mistakes in my Japanese class just
to make students feel better. (Interview, August 9, 2018)

This change seemed to coincide with the development of his teacher identity, as he started
reporting this sentiment when he discussed his time as a teacher, but not before. He displays this
same acceptance of mistakes with his students, saying “I can just say okay you have make
mistakes that can happen no worries you’ll be fine in the future” (Interview, August 9, 2018).
This understanding is a key part of Ken’s identity in the classroom.

**Identity in the Classroom: You can be as Good as me or Better**

Ken began to develop a teacher identity when he began to teach English during his
master’s program. He first realized that he could teach at the college level when another
Japanese student in the program was teaching classes. Ken commented “I told myself, ‘A
Japanese person is already teaching. It is proved that even a foreigner can teach in this country. I
should try. At least, trying does not harm me at all, right?’” (Digital Autobiography, August 5,
2018). This small boost of confidence pushed him to apply, and soon he had his first position as
a teaching assistant. At first he struggled with his sense of language competency and his new
role as an instructor. He stated "I cannot count how many times I opened online dictionary and
visited corpus websites like MICASE or COCA when I left written comments on students’
papers” (Digital Autobiography, August 5, 2018). However, as time went on and he gained
confidence in himself he began to feel comfortable enough in the classroom to begin playing
with his identities. More specifically, he began to realize what identities he was willing to use in
the classroom, such as the language learner identity, and the identities he did not want to use in
the classroom. He specifically said that an identity which did not sympathize with students and
their struggles was out of the question. He feels that he is able to avoid that identity because of his multilingualism.

Ken identifies as multilingual, and he holds that identity up to his students. He said that he uses the identity to inspire students, stating “I frequently told them was just if you think I am a good user of language you can be like me at least and of course you can go beyond me” (Interview, August 9, 2018). As such, Ken feels that his multilingual identity is a great asset in the classroom, as well as in his life. He does not feel that he would be the same person if he had not learned his L2 and developed his multilingual identity, and says that without it he could have become “arrogant” as a teacher. With his multilingual identity he feels that he stands “closer to students” (Interview, August 9, 2018), and he intends to continue along that road.

**Plans for the Future**

Ken is currently planning on finishing his PhD. He has no plans on attempting to learn any additional languages, in part because he feels that he should master English before he begins to study another language. However, he admits that language is something that must be constantly improved because language is constantly changing. He said:

...even though I’m just learning English, the knowledge should be updated all the time...because what I think this is okay may not be okay in 10 years.

Any…language keeps changing so I have to keep, keep learning it. So, just, just English is okay. It’s enough. It’s to be enough. (Interview, August 9, 2018)

Although this truth means that, in Ken’s opinion, a language can never truly be mastered, he does hold out hope that one day he will feel truly fluent in his L2.
Themes Emerging From Ken’s Narrative

● Theme 1
  ○ Language Ownership: Ken has a stable sense of language ownership, although he does still hold a small bit of the old NEST/NNEST binary, which hold him back.
  ○ Teacher Identity: Ken has a stable sense of teacher identity, although it shifts slightly when he teaches his L1, Japanese, as he feels less qualified to teach it as he did not learn it as a foreign language.
  ○ Fluency: Ken feels that he will never truly be fluent because he views languages as always changing, so to be truly current he has to continuously learn the new words and phrases that appear.
  ○ Power: Ken is focused mainly on granting his students academic and professional capital, which is why he chose to pursue English, as well.

● Theme 2
  ○ Ken uses his past experiences in an attempt to comfort and reassure his students when they face difficulties. He also relies on them heavily when teaching his L1.
  ○ Ken attempts to be student-centered, and is very comfortable acting as a language learner around his students to create a feeling of solidarity.

Lidia’s Narrative

I Have to be a Good Student: English Education

Lidia began learning English at the age of twelve in her junior high school because English was a mandatory class for all students. She described her first reaction to learning English as “It’s like a unknown world in front of me. A little excited, but most of time scared
and nervous” (Interview, October 1, 2018). Lidia worked hard in the class, but an embarrassing incident in class shook her confidence. She described the incident as:

I was asked to go to the blackboard to point out the corresponding picture when my teacher spoke out the English. I was nervous, so I made a mistake. It was the “dog”, I knew it, I memorized this word. But I didn’t match it correctly because I didn’t respond fast enough. Then the class laughed. I still cannot forget how the laughs and my feelings at that moment. I was so sad and embarrassed. (Digital Autobiography, September 16, 2018)

This incident shattered Lidia’s language learner identity and her confidence in herself. As she put it “… I was good student and never made mistakes, but things changed. Something happened to me in my life. I was not good student anymore” (Interview, October 1, 2018). This event became one of the reasons Lidia studied so hard to become fluent in English. She became devoted to learning English, stating “…that event motived me to learn English well” (Digital Autobiography, September 16, 2018). She began to study as hard as she could to rebuild herself after she felt humiliated. That focus and dedication followed her to college and graduate school.

Originally Lidia learned English because it was a required course, but as she advanced English became the key that would open many doors. She recalled “We had to take the English test to enter college, graduate school, or get a good job” (Digital Autobiography, September 17, 2018). This mentality was firmly rooted in her when she applied to college, and the social currency English offered enticed her to declare it as her major. However, she still felt self-doubt, stating “I was not confident may be because of the setback I experienced in my junior school” (Digital Autobiography, September 17, 2018). She was so doubtful of her English skill that when one of her friends studied abroad in college Lidia refused to apply to try to do the same.
She said “I...she was really good, and I think, uh, I’m nothing, so I didn’t even apply. I didn’t even ask how to do that” (Interview, October 1, 2018). She continued on to a graduate program where she finally began to enjoy studying English. Although she was enjoying her studies she was also nervous and unsure, as she was a first-generation college student. She described her feelings as “I explored my path on my own. I had been feeling inadequate all the way” (Digital Autobiography, September 17, 2018). While in graduate school Lidia made great strides with her reading and writing skills, but was disappoint by the lack of “foreign teachers” in the program. Although she graduated feeling that speaking and listening were her weakest skills, she still stated “I think I started to be fluent in English since when I was in graduate school” (Digital Autobiography, September 17, 2018). Upon graduation, Lidia was employed as an English teacher at a university in China.

**I Need to Improve my Weaknesses: Reason for Continued Education**

Although Lidia was employed as an English teacher, she was not done with her education. After a few years of working she realized she felt unappreciated at work. She thought that there might have been multiple reasons for this, saying:

I felt I was not valued. I was not recognized compared with other peers. Maybe because I didn’t graduate from the famous university. In China, where you graduated mattered very much. So the other…my understanding is my other reason is because my accent is not as close to native as enough. And the third, I feel my teaching…you know this is complicated. The primary reason is I felt I was not valued, so I think it’s my fault. I blamed myself. I need to improve. I figure out, maybe it’s because of my teaching style, maybe it’s because of my
accent. So I cannot change my accent. I can improve my knowledge. (Interview, October 1, 2018)

As she said, she decided that the best place to begin to improve was her teaching, and so she signed up for a CELTA course. The course was designed by Cambridge to teach instructors how to teach TESOL, and was aimed toward NS teachers who were working abroad in China. The course was difficult, but Lidia completed it, proudly stating “I got that in my CV” (Interview, October 1, 2018).

To Lidia, the most important asset the course gave her was to expose her to new ways of teaching. She described the experience as “…I learn oh my gosh, there are so many interesting ways to teach. They have very small size class. They have students move around, different activities, like they use visuals, and they use different resources” (Interview, October 1, 2018). The classroom she taught in at her university was set up for large groups of students and the tables and chairs were stationary, making rearranging students was very difficult. Still, she began to try using her new skills and outlook and found some success, stating “It’s really hard you know…But I like that. I enjoy that” (Interview, October 1, 2018). When all was said and done, Lidia had spent around $5000 out of pocket to improve her English and teaching skills, even though her peers were not doing the same. Lidia stated:

What I did was not usual at my college. Few of them would do what I did—using my own money and time to study, let alone my university did not reduce any workload for me. No one paid $5000 by themselves to learn how to teach English. It is worthwhile! I felt more confident as a researcher and a teacher. (Digital Autobiography, September 16, 2018)
It was also during this time that she began attending lectures in a top language university in Beijing. As a result she was inspired to start researching and speaking herself. She stated:

So I went there to attend the lecture there. I listened. It’s so hard, I don’t understand, but I feel interesting. So I started to read, I started to do some research on my own. I started to the presentation…I hated presentation.

(Interview, October 1, 2018)

The new focus on research also came from her vying for, and eventually receiving, a competitive promotion to associate professor: a position that demands more research than her previous position.

After this, Lidia was presented with the opportunity to go abroad to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. When she first arrived she had difficulty understanding even basic conversations, stating “I couldn’t understand my hostess and my American friends well because the things they talked about, because the language they used, and because the accent… At that moment, I felt inadequate again. I NEED to learn…” (Digital Autobiography, September 16, 2018). Even as Lidia aimed to improve her English competency her attention was drawn to the new research methods and faculty members she was introduced to. One of them allowed her to attend her class and to visit the writing center, which captivated Lidia. She was so interested that she considered attending that university, stating “So, I think if I come here I will learn how to do the writing center, then I can open one in my old university” (Interview, October 1, 2018).

In addition to the writing center, one of the main things Lidia focused on while in America was R language, which she had heard of previously but never gotten the chance to learn. She was able to sit in on a class that focused on R language and NVIVO³, and she completed every

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² R is a programming language released by the GNU. It is used for statistical data analysis and graphic displays
assignment that was given. However, she felt that it was not her place to turn them in to the professor as “It’s good enough for him to allow me to sit there” (Interview, October 1, 2018). Although she did not learn as much as she wanted to, she was still able to get a firm grasp on the basics. The new theories and methods of research helped spark a greater love of research that carried on into Lidia’s PhD program.


Lidia’s teacher identity is complicated by the differences of the cultures in which she teaches and the aspects of her identity she feels comfortable showing to her students. Lidia still identifies as a language learner and is acutely aware of what she does not know in English. She stated “Gosh, whenever I begin to feel I am better, something will happen to remind me that I am not good enough and I need to keep learning” (Digital Autobiography, September 16, 2018).

When teaching in America Lidia is comfortable saying that she does not know something, relating how during one class discussion about food she admitted to her students “I don’t know what chili is!” (Interview, October 1, 2018). In China, however, she feels that she must hide that aspect of her identity and present herself as an authoritarian instructor who has complete confidence. She discussed this, saying “In our culture, teacher should know everything. If you didn’t know…some people can overcome that, but I remember the facial expressions on some of the students. It’s kind of disappointment” (Interview, October 1, 2018). Despite this stark context-based contrast there are constants in her teacher identity. She views it as her responsibility to do all she can for her students and works tirelessly to that end. She also views her students as equal regardless of country of origin, stating “…I teach American students, I’m

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3 NVIVO is a qualitative data analysis software that also does transcriptions
kind of not scared much because I know they are just kids. Chinese students, American students, they are similar” (Interview, October 1, 2018).

**I Know There are More Sides to the Story: Multilingual Identity**

Lidia’s multilingual identity is important to her, and she credits it with her ability to think clearly and fairly and “see things from different ways” (Interview, October 1, 2018). What she references most when speaking about this is her ability to see both sides of an argument or story, particularly when the two sides are American and Chinese. However, she also says that the skill goes further in helping her untangle arguments and ideas. The example focused on was how she examines news stories, stating:

They [news reports] all have their own purposes, so what we can do is try to figure out the fact. Do not trust them blindly.... because I am learning different language I know the culture, I try to be critical. That are resources that both sides do not have. (Interview, October 1, 2018)

As stated, she views her multilingual identity to be an asset that grants her access to many resources such as academic articles, newspapers, and movies. Like with her teacher identity, she views her multilingual identity as a way to connect with more people and places. She cannot imagine her life without English, especially as so much of her life has been spent studying and teaching the language. To summarize, Lidia views her multilingual identity as something that allows her to understand different people and cultures, and she feels it is a strong asset to her personally and professionally.
I Will Never be Good Enough: Fluency as an Impossible Goal

To Lidia, complete fluency is an impossible dream. This stems from her cultural ideologies and her own self-doubt. Lidia states that in China accent is harshly judged. As she put it:

...they judge you based on how well you can speak English. They don’t have chance to see how you can write it, but the first chance, the first impression is from your oral English...when we assess the teachers we say okay, his or her English is good. I mean, the spoken English is good. That’s the first thing…first…one of the first criteria are used to assess a teacher. Then we talk about how well the student can teach. (Interview, October 1, 2018)

This is especially difficult for her, because she believes that after the age of twelve a person cannot change their accent to match a native speaker. This is why, she admitted, she would want her child to be taught by a native speaker. She also reports that she feels like a failure when she does not know a word or a phrase, reminding her of her self-described “weak points”. In addition, she believes that her L2 will never be at the same level as her L1. All of this is compounded by her tendency to compare herself to others. As she put it:

I was compared with other people. So that impression make me always compare with others. I tend to use my weakness to compare with others’ advantages. When I was not valued, I began to find weakness, so I think it’s because of my English is not good enough. But no one’s English is good enough. I didn’t realize that. I just blame myself. (Interview, October 1, 2018)

Although she often says that she will never truly be fluent, she does occasionally hint that part of her believes she might consider herself fluent one day.
No More Languages: Future Plans

Lidia is currently working on completing her doctorate. She also intends to continue improving her English competence, and has no plans to learn another language. She feels as though she will not be able to learn another language until she has mastered English, and said “I kind of resisted another language. When people talked in another language I…I tended to pretended that I didn’t listen to it I…I blocked that language” (Interview, October 1, 2018).

Even though she currently avoids other languages, she does say that if she improves her English she might “consider another language” (Interview, October 1, 2018). Finally, she wants to one day be able to hold up her multilingual identity to students to demonstrate that they can find many more resources by branching out and growing, and that there are multiple sides to everything. She wants to show her students that “people are connected to each other. There is no way you just be yourself” (Interview, October 1, 2018).

Themes Emerging From Lidia’s Narrative

● Theme 1
  ○ Language Ownership: Lidia has a very shaky sense of language ownership, and suffers from a great deal of self-doubt because of it. She also seems to hold on to a bit of the old NEST/NNEST binary.
  ○ Teacher Identity: Lidia is still just beginning to explore a teacher identity in an American context, but she is attempting to build more confidence in herself after projecting an identity she did not agree with for years.
  ○ Fluency: Lidia is convinced that she will never be fluent, as she equates linguistic perfection with fluency.
○ Power: Lidia originally majored in English because of the professional and
cultural capital it could give her, but also believes that her true empowerment was
in a complete change in habitus, making her a critical thinker

● Theme 2

○ Lidia uses her “languaged life” to connect with her students and to help guide
them through difficult points.

○ Lidia is attempting to change her teaching methodologies to be more student-
centered and creative, but faces challenges from her academic context back in
China.

John’s Narrative

Gaining Confidence: Early Linguistic Experience

John was born in Afghanistan and Dari is his first language. He began studying English
in school when he was around six years old. He described himself in school as “…a shy student
back in the school, dealt with imposter syndrome, and had a pervasive feeling of self-doubt and
insecurity; however, I could achieve learning objectives and be placed among top grade
students” (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018). In English class his instructors used the
grammar-translation method almost exclusively, which made him very competent when it came
to grammar, but “totally incompetent in speaking skill” (Digital Autobiography, August 27,
2018).

When John began high school he became more “self-directed and goal-oriented” (Digital
Autobiography, August 27, 2018), because he had a clear educational and career goal. He
wanted to become a physician, which he described as an “educated person” (Digital
Autobiography, August 27, 2018). This was not only his dream for himself but also his parents’
dream for him. His memories from this time are fond and he felt as though he was not only on the right path, but also that his way was clear, saying:

I kept rising from the upper rungs of academic ladder until I graduated from high school with my teachers’ persistent support, inspiration, and instructions as well as my parents’ guidance and guardianship. I didn’t really feel glass ceiling personally or any unseen barriers along my way of academic success during this time although meritocracy was not at top mainstream repertoire in my society.

(Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018)

Although John had great academic success and a clear idea of what he wanted to major in, that changed when he took the Kankor exam, which is a nationwide university entrance exam in Afghanistan. He passed the exam, but was accepted into the College of Literature and Humanities. It was not the medical track that John had planned on, but he accepted it, stating that he “took into account a better future job prospect and the interest for learning languages, I took English language placement test, then I become student in English Language Department”

(Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018).

I Have to try Harder: College and Self-Doubt

College was a difficult time for John, especially his first year which he described as a “nightmare”. He found himself playing catch up and desperately trying to improve his communicative skills and his vocabulary. He described those first rough years when he said:

In the beginning, I was struggling because of lack of communicative skills, small vocabulary size and complexity of learning materials. First year of college was a nightmare; I was stressed out, stayed awake later at night to keep the pace with other students, so I lost 20 Lbs in a year; you can imagine how difficult it would
be. My GPA for first and second semester was not satisfactory at all; therefore, I tried to explore the reasons behind such drawbacks. (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018)

It took him some time, but with a private speaking course and hours of independent work John was able to bridge the gap and regain some of his confidence. Especially important to him was the help and support of his literature professor. John recalled “I was inspired by my literature professor’s constructive and positive feedback which paved the way and encouraged me to participate more in classroom discussion and learning process” (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018). With the support of his literature professor John began to overcome his anxiety and open up to the possibilities ahead of him.

It was during this time that John began to feel a change in himself. He said “I felt that I opened a new leaf in my life, so I didn’t stress out any more, but tried to explore…” (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018). With support from others he learned to conquer his fear and anxiety and instead enjoy the journey of learning and seeing each new detail or bit of knowledge learned as an opportunity to grow. With this newfound insatiable curiosity and his already impressive academic skills, he began to excel in school once again. His “enthusiastic academic behavior and upcoming successes” (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018) afforded him the opportunity to travel abroad through a university funded exchange program. The program had him travel to India to work with instructors from India, Australia, and the United States so that he and the other students could study various teaching methodologies. While there he was fortunate enough to find his ultimate goal for his teaching career.
I Want to Empower Them: English for Social Change

John began viewing the possible roles of teachers differently after he went through the exchange program. There, an American professor asked any students who wanted to stay after class and watch “The Dead Poet Society”, and John was one of the few who took him up on the offer. Watching the main character use his influence as a teacher to open his students’ minds and change the established system for the better inspired him to do the same. He described the message of the movie as “…inspiring for me how a teacher can be strong and inspiring to encourage students to discover more and more and delve into their, you know, their life journeys. Find their unique ways and so on” (Interview, September 6, 2018). This change followed him back to Afghanistan and into his new English for Specific Purposes (ESP) classroom.

John has a clear goal for his classes and his students beyond just increasing their language competence. He wants to encourage his students to “…help for the betterment of society … they can be an agent at the end. Agent for social change” (Interview, September 6, 2018). Above all, he wants to change society a little at a time, both through the content he teaches and his own example. He described his ultimate goal as:

We should actually pursue something beyond actually English language proficiency level [in the classroom] and that is, you know, encouraging students to be social agent by helping them to analyze the text critically, to question the power relations, to question the author’s position or publisher’s stand, what is, what is actually the purpose of the publisher what is the background that, of the author, and then read between the lines and uh…try to find evidence that make them close to the fair judgement...so they should have that ability, uh, to, uh, evaluate different actually arguments, find evidence, and try to make wise
decisions and try to help other people to...to have a better life, yeah, in their community...(Interview, September 6, 2018)

Ambitious though this goal is, John is confident that he can reach it.

For all his ambition, he also faces many hurdles. His teaching context is not conducive to the teaching that he wants to do, and he felt challenged by “a number barriers: large class size, heterogeneous class and material development” (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018). He decided that he had to learn new ways of teaching, especially new ways of stretching what he could do within his own context. As a result, he applied to an MATESOL program in the United States. He emphasized that he did this not only for himself, but to “seek out for solutions, and help my students” (Digital Autobiography, August 27, 2018). John was determined to improve for his students.

I am Always Learning: Experiences and Identity

John not only accepts his identity as a language learner, but embraces it, stating “I have to learn a lot in English. Still there are many many spots that I didn’t discover yet” (Interview, September 6, 2018). He emphasizes that his identity as a teacher is still developing, and that it will continue to develop as he gains new skills. That is one of the most important aspects of his understanding of his identity: he is acutely aware that it is always developing. Despite this, John has a very strong sense of confidence in his identity as an instructor, stating that his “ability to teach English effectively” (Interview, September 6, 2018) is one of the defining aspects of his identity. In fact, John uses his multilingual identity and his multilingual teacher identity as a model for his students. John also models his teacher identity on the accomplishments of others, stating:
I can see that many people they publish they are so good at teaching English so I’m gonna keep pace with them...so I’m gonna be like them. I’m gonna be like a model who is so successful in English language in terms of academic and professional skills in teaching English and also publishing. (Interview, September 7, 2018)

John places a strong emphasis on publication as both a measure of success and a way of forming his identity. When he talks about how his identity as an academic and an instructor will evolve he references future publications, stating “I need to publish more papers so in order to build a very solid kind of dynamic identity as an English language teacher” (Interview, September 7, 2018). Even when describing how he wants to model himself in the future he brings publications into that future identity, stating “I’m gonna be like a model who is so successful in English language in terms of academic and professional skills in teaching English and also publishing” (Interview, September 7, 2018). Although he already has years of teaching experience, he seems to equate a true identity as an academic with publications first and other factors second. Despite this, John still has a strong identity as a multilingual instructor, and is confident that he teaches “effectively”.

The acquisition of another language has irrevocably altered John’s identity, and he is absolutely certain of this. He frequently refers to a saying from his country, which he explains as:

...once you get one language, okay? So you are one person. And once you actually master another language, you become two, and then three and four, as you add the number of languages. Because language, uh, is not separated from the culture. Language comes with the culture. Language comes with the very,
uh, unique history, and language comes with the people who are associated with that language. So you come...uh...you come across with different knowledge domains like culture, like people in the culture like the different histories that they enrich you as a person, your level of knowledge, your personality type. They may change your perspective toward different things because the more you know the better you understand the truth. (Interview, September 7, 2018)

He reflects this mentality in his classroom, and attempts to foster a similar view of language in his students. John’s identity as a language learner, a multilingual instructor, and a social advocate all merge in his classroom and his overall teacher identity and are summarized by that saying, which John holds close to his heart.

In the classroom John has a strong emphasis on helping the students to have some measure of control over the classroom, attempting to ensure that “students can, can develop because they see that they are the most important actually assets of the classrooms” (Interview, September 7, 2018). To this end John will often hold up his own experiences as examples. He emphasized the importance of sharing experiences when he said:

...so the people who are going to learn English as a second language they are going through, like, not the same journey but you know there are many things in common like the challenges that we face. Like the some identities issues the we, actually, we encounter throughout learning English. Or some, the methods that we learn English. So they would be like, kind of similar, because like some people can learn by listening, by reading, and you know some other strategies that they use, um, they are kind of universal. And, so by sharing my experience I, I
believe that they can get the better knowledge how they can improve their English language proficiency level. (Interview, September 7, 2018)

As stated, John views language acquisition as a journey, and his descriptions of his language learning often paint him as an explorer on a difficult path. When describing himself as a multilingual instructor he discussed his useful experiences and how the students could benefit from them. He held up his journey to language acquisition as an example to his students, but his sense of fluency is more complex than he shows his students.

**Impossible, but Also Inevitable: View of Fluency**

John says that there was never a time in which he felt he would never learn English. Although he certainly had anxiety at points about his level of proficiency, it never occurred to him that his competency level would hit a wall. He said on the topic:

> I do not remember that [feeling as though he would never learn English]. Uh…I was good in grammar and that was something that matters in my context. So once they, um, you know once I get preparation for the exam, for the final exam, I just uh memorize some grammatical rules. (Interview, September 7, 2018)

To him, as long as he could continue to learn there was no reason to believe that he would not reach competency. However, he also does not believe that true fluency can be reached because “whatever you delve into the English language you can see that there are more actually more knowledge domains that you can actually discover, so there was not that moment that I feel that I am competent fully in English language” (Interview, September 7, 2018). This view contradicts his initial claim that he was confident that he would learn English. When describing competency and fluency, John’s claim seems to state that for him competency was assured, but fluency is impossible. John also admits that he holds his English to a higher standard than Dari, his L1. He
stated “I feel that again I couldn’t get that level of competency or confidence to compare to my native language” (Interview, September 7, 2018). It is also important to note that this is another aspect of his identity where his multilingualism comes into play, as he stated that he can use what he knows in his L1 and apply it to his L2, stating “I know…many kind of knowledge domains…in my native language…so that kind of you know knowledge can help me to do the same, even better, with English language” (Interview, September 7, 2018). He uses his linguistic strengths to help deal with his linguistic weaknesses as he continues to seek to improve his L2 competency.

**For the Better: Plans for the Future**

John has wide range of future goals, most of which involve bettering himself so that he can better his students. He plans on learning Arabic because he views it as important to his religion and considers it a beautiful, rich language, and Spanish because he wants to learn a language that he has not been as widely exposed to. He feels that learning another language again from scratch will not only help him as a teacher, but also as a person. The choice of Spanish as the language he is pursuing comes in part from his friendships with people from Spain and Mexico, granting him a greater connection to some of the cultures represented in Spanish. He reasoned:

> Because the more you travel, the more you…learn a different languages, the more you feel confident and competent in terms of sharing your knowledge, sharing your, um, experiences, and also you can have a very fruitful and promising identity in terms of…um…English language or, like, Spanish learner. (Interview, September 7, 2018)

In short, John plans to continue to improve himself so that he can improve the lives of others.
Themes Emerging From John’s Narrative

● Theme 1
  ○ Language Ownership: John displays a stabilized sense of language ownership, and does not report any direct challenges to his ownership from students.
  ○ Teacher Identity: John has a strong sense of teacher identity that is built around empowering his students and causing social change through them.
  ○ Fluency: John views fluency in his L2 as impossible because there are an infinite number of knowledge domains within his L2, so that means he can never learn enough to call himself fluent.
  ○ Power: John is very focused on the empowering his students through language, creating more critical-thinkers and community leaders.

● Theme 2
  ○ John uses his experiences to help his students through linguistic difficulties, and he claims to act as a guide.
  ○ John, having been encouraged by a past instructor, tries to lead a very student-centered class when possible.

Conclusion

In this chapter the narratives of each of the participants was presented in chronological order so that the narratives could best address the research questions. In chapter 5, I discuss the themes emerging from the participant narratives in chapter 4 by synthesizing the themes with the existing literature. In addition, I discuss the implications of these finding for teaching, teaching education, and future research. I conclude the thesis with some final reflections.
CHAPTER FIVE
DISCUSSION OF THEMES AND IMPLICATIONS

Introduction

In Chapter Four I presented the participants’ narratives, each of which was created using the data analysis steps that were outlined in Chapter Three. In this chapter, I discuss the themes that emerged from the participants’ narratives by connecting them to the literature presented in Chapter Two. Within these themes I also address the tentative answers to the research questions, which are:

1. How do the self-defined multilingual instructors define and perceive their language ownership?
2. What connections do they make between their perceived language ownership and the way they see themselves as teachers?

The participants’ perceptions of their language ownership and teacher identity were dynamic and constantly fluctuating based on a wide array of variables, including but not limited to cultural capital, sense of fluency, and past experiences. This is demonstrated in the two themes, which are 1) language ownership, fluency, identity, and power; and 2) life experiences informing classroom practice. As implied by the first theme, fluency emerged as an important factor in the participants’ perceptions of their language ownership and teacher identity, and their sense of fluency was just as dynamic. In fact, as their sense of fluency increased their language ownership and teacher identity also tended to stabilize or improve. The “power” aspect of the first theme came from the empowerment the participants reported as a result of their multilingualism. This empowerment took many forms as the power the participants were seeking varied according to the reason the participants chose to study and pursue their
L2. Finally, the second theme focuses on how the participants used their past linguistic experiences or their “languaged lives”, and how they affected their pedagogical practices in the classroom. In all, the participants were constantly forming and reforming their identities, sense of fluency, and sense of language ownership.

**Theme One: Language Ownership, Fluency, Identity, and Power**

Language ownership, fluency, identity, and power are all connected in the eyes of the participants, and the links between these four things are dynamic and complex. Dan, Lidia, John, Ken, and Lana wanted all of them, but not all of the participants reported reaching that goal. In fact, some of them felt as though some of the articles on that list are impossible to attain. This is especially true of language ownership and fluency. In some cases, like Lana’s, it is the old dichotomies and ideologies, such as the antiquated NEST/NNEST binary, that informs her outlook on language ownership and fluency. For others it is the lack of guidelines and feedback that causes them to doubt their abilities. Dan, on the other hand, is confident that he has reached all four objectives. Whatever the case may be, all of the participants have felt their identities change and grow as a direct result of their L2 acquisition.

**Language Ownership and Teacher Identity**

Language ownership, defined by Higgins (2003) as “the degree to which they [speakers] project themselves as legitimate speakers with authority over the language” (p. 615), is one of the ultimate goals of language programs and language learners, and was a goal for the participants in this study as well. However, language ownership can be difficult to obtain, and the culture the language learner comes from or learns a language in can greatly impact language ownership. For example, Park (2017) detailed the various ideologies toward English that she encountered both in the United States and in South Korea. Park described a cultural ideology
that emphasized the native speaker over the language learner, and this ideology challenged her socially and professionally. It was more difficult for her to gain the respect and language ownership that native-speakers seemed to have. My data closely connects to this, as the participants all cited the idealization of the “native-speaker” within their cultural contexts, including their classrooms, as a barrier they had to face when attempting to build a sense of language ownership. Lana especially struggles with her language ownership, stating that English will never truly be hers because “this is their [native speakers] language not our language,” (Interview, September 19, 2018). Like in Park (2017), Lana feels a sense of alienation when among native speakers, stating that she feels like a “stranger”. This lack of belonging is a defining feature of Lana’s linguistic identity, as she views the native speaker as both the standard and the owner of a language, and the result is that her sense of language ownership suffers.

The data suggests that this lack of self-perceived language ownership may have been compounded by the lack of spoken English practice as she learned English, as she frequently stated that she did not receive enough practice with spoken English. The other participants made similar statements, such as John and Ken stating that they struggled in college because of their lack of communicative competence and Lidia’s sadness that her masters program did not emphasize spoken English. This finding is reflected by Guerretaz (2015) who studied the attempts by some Latin American governments to both revitalize and preserve the traditional Yucatec Maya language. The study stated that one of the main issues with the original language education attempts was the lack of spoken language in the classroom, as well as the cultural view that Yucatec Maya was a lesser language. This connects to the issues the participants had with their language learning experiences and the environments in which they learned. Lana learned in an environment similar to the ones studied by Guerretaz (2015), in which spoken English was not
emphasized and the general culture regarded English unfavorably. Lana described the cultural sentiment in her home country as:

...those who were trying to speak [English] were suffering from mocking as if they should be ashamed of speaking English. Some people still have this bad attitudes toward English speakers. Moreover, most people believe that if you speak English then you should know every single word in English otherwise they would be a failure (Digital Autobiography, September 8, 2018).

This created a great deal of cultural pressure for her and her students.

The pressure of cultural expectations affected most of the participants, including Dan. His initial difficulty claiming ownership over English is due to the strong native-speaker sentiment found in South Korea. His experiences mirror the statements made by the participants of Ahn’s 2014 study, all of whom were South Korean teachers of English. The study asserted that the participants believed that native-speaker English should be the standard and what students should aim for, although they also believed that Konglish (Korean English) had its own place and time in casual conversations. This is the mentality Dan, Ken, Lana, and Lidia all suffered from and attempted, sometimes successfully, to overcome. They reported a direct connection between the cultures they grew up and studied in and their lack of confidence in their L2. Lidia, for example, stated that speakers of English were judged according to how closely their English mirrored that of native-speakers. Those ideologies were internalized by the participants and followed them outside of their home countries and continued to be a barrier to language ownership. Because of teachers like those examined in Ahn’s 2014 study and educational environments such as those shown by Guerretaz (2015) the participants had to overcome an internalized emphasis on the native speaker standard and a lack of communicative
competency. However, despite this cultural challenge many of the participants, especially Dan, reported developing a sense of language ownership in their L2s.

Although there are cultural ideologies that can hold back the development of language ownership, studies also assert that language learners can develop a strong sense of language ownership in their L2s. Park (2012) demonstrated this when examining the narrative of one of her participants, Xia. Although it took years and an understanding mentor, Xia was able to validate her NNES identity and her right to teach English, and in doing so she validated her equal rights to the language she was teaching. Xia’s narrative is very similar to the slow process of gaining language ownership that my participants underwent. Dan is a prime example of this. Out of all the participants, Dan has the strongest sense of language ownership by far, and he states that he is nearly completely unfazed by challenges to his language ownership. For example, Dan said that his father is very critical of his linguistic competency because he does not know many culinary words, and as a result he often asserts that Dan is not truly fluent. Dan also states that he can laugh at this criticism and counter it with his own idea of fluency and language ownership. This sense of security and confidence in his language ownership supports and is supported by Ellis (2016), who states that a strong sense of language ownership allows language users to withstand challenges from others, such as the Englishman who had his ownership of Japanese challenged by the ticket clerk. Ellis (2016) also pointed out that challenges against a speaker’s L1 can often be laughed off, but that often is not the case with an L2. However, Dan’s narrative conflicts that assertion, as he is simultaneously certain that his L2 will never match his L1 because he “quote about not knowing” and confident enough in his L2 to meet challenges like his father’s criticism head on with no real loss of language ownership. This also connects to the experiences of Song’s (2016) participants, as the participants who responded best to the
challenge presented to their language ownership and teacher identity were the ones who had stronger and more stable perceptions of their language ownership and teacher identity. From these examples it appears that one of the defining features of a strong sense of language ownership is the ability to face criticism and challenges without losing confidence in the perceived language ownership. Furthermore, a connection between perceived language ownership and perceived teacher identity can be seen in these examples.

Ellis (2016) and Song (2016) define teacher identity as the way teachers position themselves as complex and multifaceted individuals. Based on my data, perceived teacher identity can be strongly affected by perceived language ownership, but language ownership is not strongly affected by perceived teacher identity. This argument is strengthened by Song (2016) who demonstrated how a blow to the perceived language ownership of the participants strongly affected their perceived teacher identities. The greater the blow to the participant’s language ownership, the further their self-perceived teacher identity sunk. Xu (2012) also saw this phenomenon in the form of one particular participant, Ingrid. Ingrid felt as though her language ownership and competency were falling rapidly at the school she was teaching in, and during this same time her teacher identity, though new, was shaken to the point that she felt she had to quit teaching altogether. Similar reactions were reported by my participants, especially those with a lower perceived language ownership. For example, Lidia recalled that once she was asked a question by a student that she did not know the answer to, which was a major cultural faux pas that challenged her language ownership. As her language ownership was threatened so was her perceived teacher identity, and her self-confidence fell. Ken also demonstrates this connection between language ownership and teacher identity, although on a more positive note. He reported that he began teaching with a very weak sense of language ownership and teacher
identity. Over time he felt his language ownership strengthen as he learned to accept his mistakes as a natural part of using any language. As his language ownership strengthened and stabilized so did his perceived teacher identity, and he reported feeling more at home in the classroom and more confident in his role as an instructor. Just as was demonstrated by Xu (2012) and Song (2016), the participants underwent a change in their perceived teacher identity that correlated with a change in perceived language ownership. However, the participants’ narratives also provide evidence that the opposite does not hold true.

Lidia went through extensive training during her teaching tenure at her university, and she reported that the results were a much stronger and more stable sense of teacher identity along with a repertoire of new activities and lessons. However, this change in teacher identity did not seem to affect her language ownership in any discernible way. As Lidia often referenced accent as a way of judging language ownership in China, at least to an extent, her following statement on her sentiment toward her accent and her decision to take the certification course is very telling.

So the other…my understanding is my other reason is because my accent is not as close to native as enough...I need to improve. I figure out, maybe it’s because of my teaching style, maybe it’s because of my accent. So I cannot change my accent. I can improve my knowledge (Interview, October 1, 2018).

As Lidia had previously stated that accent was one of her standards of language ownership, her decision to improve her teaching skills rather than her accent demonstrates that she felt her teaching could be improved more than her language ownership. The fact that she still reported a weak sense of language ownership even after the growth of her teacher identity and a large renegotiation of said identity adds credence to the assertion that perceived teacher identity does
not strongly affect perceived language ownership. Ken also reported that his teacher identity is still in flux, although much more stable than in the past. However, he did not report any fluctuations in his language ownership which he now views as stable. Like Lidia, changes in his perceived teacher identity did not show any evidence of changing his language ownership. In fact, none of the participants reported any major shifts in their language ownership as a result of a change in their perceived teacher identity. Song (2016) support this evidence, as the participants in the had their teacher identities challenged by language ownership, but the changes they experienced in their teacher identity as they dealt with those challenges did not also change their language ownership. Xu (2012) also supports these findings when examining the first three years of English teachers’ careers in China. Although all of the participants faced great challenges to their teacher identity they did not feel as though they were less legitimate speakers of English. What is most telling here is the lack of evidence showing a connection between a challenge to teacher identity and a resulting change in language ownership. The participants’ teacher identities can fluctuate without seeing a correlating fluctuation in language ownership, but any change in language ownership is almost always accompanied by a change in teacher identity. These changes in identity were both positive and negative depending upon the context and situation, but the participants stated that they would use the different facets of their identity gained through these changes in their classrooms.

The participants reported changing their identities to best fulfill their goals as instructors, but Dan was the one to coin a term for this action. He called it “identity cards” and described it as the various identities instructors would use or “play” in the classroom to fulfill their goals. He also emphasized that the identity cards were all part of the instructor’s identity, and that they were using aspects of their identity to best control their classroom and connect with their
students. This philosophy is mirrored in Menard-Warwick (2008) in which the identities and classroom practices of two transnational instructors are examined. Menard-Warwick emphasized that shifting identities in the classroom was very useful, especially when teaching students from different cultures. In that study, the various aspects of the participants’ identities became classroom tools specifically designed to help students feel comfortable, learn, and grow.

However, my data goes a step further and shows the participants using identities that they do not actually perceive themselves as having, at least not yet. For example, Lidia reported that she often had to use the identity of a confident language user in the classroom when in reality she identified as the opposite. This caused a cognitive dissonance which she felt caused her great stress. Ken had similar feelings when teaching his L1, and he stated that it made him feel anxious in the classroom. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Song (2016) and Xu (2012). Song (2016) demonstrated how the rift between how the participants were supposed to act in their classrooms and how they actually felt could cause stress and anxiety. Likewise, Xu (2012) asserted that the differences between how participants felt they should be as teachers and what they were forced to be in the classroom greatly demoralized them, with only one out of four participants still holding on to a positive outlook on teaching in general. My participants displayed the same issue with being forced to portray one identity because of the requirements of the academic culture they were teaching in, and although they did not report the same level of stress and anxiety as was reported by Song (2016) and Xu (2012) they did report a need for change and a displeasure with being forced to act in such a manner. In conclusion, shifting between identities in the classroom is fine and even useful, but being forced to portray an identity that conflicts with a perceived identity can be stressful and demoralizing.
Empowerment Through Multilingualism

Although all the participants began learning their L2s because it was a requirement in their schools, they chose to continue studying the language after it was no longer mandatory for them. The main reason they cited for their continued language education was the power and opportunities they anticipated receiving as a result of learning an L2. They emphasized the cultural and academic capital they could receive, but all of them also emphasized that they gained an unexpected gift of a new habitus. Habitus is defined by Park, Rinke, and Mawhinney (2016) as “certain ways of being/disposition as a result of being endowed with certain types of cultural capital” (p. 1). This often-unanticipated new habitus was what the participants focused on when describing being empowered through multilingualism. John, perhaps, best summarized the mentality of the participants when he said, “...once you get one language, okay? So you are one person. And once you actually master another language, you become two, and then three and four, as you add the number of languages,” (Interview, September 7, 2018). This change and growth took many forms in the participants: from the ability to question and think critically to the ability to stand up for oneself and attempt to make a change in the world around them. For example, John credits his language learning experiences with his social activism. It was his habitus is what allowed him to see language as a tool and his classroom as a medium for social change. This is reflected by Park, Rinke, and Mawhinney (2016), who emphasized how Bakar’s habitus focused on the hegemony that came with English. His disposition gave him an understanding of the sociocultural issues and advantages that came with learning English. My participants became aware of social issues and hegemonic practices as a direct result of their study of English. These changes also appeared to be independent of the amount of experience they had as language teachers, which suggests that the change in habitus is more closely tied to
the process of learning a language rather than the time spent as an instructor. This is supported by Ellis (2016), who asserted that language learning experiences can change the outlook and mentality of multilinguals, regardless of the classroom they learned it in or use it in. Although the participants anticipated cultural, professional, and academic capital, and in most cases received that capital, they also stated that the greatest power they gained from their L2 was the new outlooks and new dispositions were what they treasured most. Finally, it was through their language learning experiences that these changes happened, not through their teaching of the language.

Regardless of how or why they became teachers, the participants all stated that they cared deeply about empowering their students through the language they teach and their classrooms themselves. John and Lidia focused on helping their students develop a new habitus that would help them see the world in a multilingual, multicultural, and free-thinking way. This is because one of their long-term goals is to cause cultural and societal change both in and through their students. As a result, they reported emphasizing cultural differences and critical-thinking, in an attempt to grant their students the same habitus that they gained through their language learning experiences. Dan and Ken, however, are far more focused on granting their students academic and professional capital. They feel that their duty as instructors is to prepare their students for their futures, both in academics and their future professions. As a result, Dan and Ken reported focusing mainly on academic and linguistic topics in the classroom. The medium through which all the participants are attempting to elicit change is multilingualism. This is because the participants reported that language and empowerment are closely connected, and teaching language means empowering their students and themselves. This is similar to what Kobayashi (2017) asserts when examining the possible uses of ELF, stating that using this language and
having a sense of ownership would empower English instructors in Malaysia both socially and professionally. For both the participants and Kobayashi, language is a key to empowerment. However, John and Lidia took it a step further, as they felt that language could change and empower students to cause great change around them outside of academia. As John put it, learning another language means becoming “two people”, and he wants that growth for his students: he wants them to expand beyond themselves.

**The Ultimate Goal of Fluency**

Linguistic fluency is something that all the participants are aiming for, but despite the participants identifying as multilingual, only Dan was willing to claim fluency in his L2. He also claimed fluency in his L3, and when describing becoming fluent he described it casually, as though it was a certainty that he would achieve it. This is in line with Ellis (2016), who stated that one of the greatest strengths of multilingual instructors was that they viewed language acquisition as “possible, achievable, and unremarkable” (p. 615). While Dan’s narrative supports this, the narratives of the other four participants contradict this assertion, as none of the other participants are confident that they will ever be able to call themselves fluent.

One of the barriers that the participants reported facing when attempting to reach fluency was the fact that they have no solid idea of what constitutes linguistic fluency, and so they seem to have made perfection the standard. The only participant willing to call themselves fluent was Dan, and what set him apart from the other participants was that he set a goal for himself that he felt would determine his fluency. For English, his L2, that goal was reading an advanced English book that he was interested in without using a dictionary, which was a habit of his as a student. When he finished the book, he felt that he had achieved fluency and began calling himself a language user rather than a language learner. For his L3 Chinese, the standard for
fluency he decided on was connecting what he learned in the classroom to the Chinese he used with people on the street. Once he made that connection, he called himself fluent. This reflects a study by Shahri (2017), who studied the development of personal voice according to the purpose the participants had for learning a language. The two participants in the study had very different reasons for studying English, and as a result had very different perceptions of what constituted successful language learning. However, they still had a clear idea of what constituted success. This clear understanding, demonstrated both by those participants and Dan, was lacking from the other participants. However, despite the participants’ feelings of hopelessness toward gaining a fluency of their L2, John and Lidia never felt that they would be unable to acquire English.

Language acquisition is defined by Negueruela-Azarola (2012) as the process of learning and internalizing a language, and the participants reported feeling confident that they would succeed at acquiring their L2s. For example, Lidia said:

Why I don’t have that feeling that’s a good question. I never felt that way. Yeah, I just want to, because this is a course, I took it, so I knew that I have to learn it. Yeah. Even though I’m not confident all the time, I always feel I’m not good enough, but I believe I can learn it. (Interview, October 1, 2018)

John also felt that his acquisition of English was inevitable. He stated that all he ever had to do was memorize more vocabulary and grammatical structures to get through any linguistic challenges he was facing. However, this viewpoint does not match up with the literature, as Negueruela-Azarola (2012) asserts that the simple memorization of a word or piece of language does not lead to internalization, which is what leads to acquisition. That said, the participants’ viewpoints came from a time in which they had clear guidelines for success. Lidia saw it as her
duty as a “good student” to learn English, and so she simply did. John also had the clear boundaries that came from an academic environment which included feedback and grading. Negueruela-Azarola (2012) would likely attribute this to the cultural internalization of linguistic standards that happens when feedback is given to a language learner. Lidia and John had the clear internalized guidelines for language acquisition that their classmates and instructors gave them during their classes. This helped them to feel less doubt, as they knew exactly what was expected of their L2 and how they were expected to reach those goals. However, the other participants reported having moments of doubt that they would ever acquire English, even though they reported having the same general academic structure and feedback. The strength and duration of these instances varied from participant to participant, but all the other participants reported this. Regardless of doubts (or lack there-of) the participants reported that the experiences they had learning their L2s were invaluable to them. In addition, they reported using them frequently in the classroom.

**Theme Two: Life Experiences Informing Classroom Practice**

Ellis (2016) emphasizes the usefulness of all the linguistic experiences a multilingual instructor has, regardless of which language they are teaching. He calls the sum of these experiences the instructors’ “languaged lives”, which he defined as “the language-learning and language-using experiences that inform their [multilingual instructors] identities and positioning as teacher of English” (p. 598). All the participants taught English as their L2, but Ken and Dan also taught their L1. They emphasized the usefulness of their “languaged lives” when teaching their L1, and Ken reported that it was key when attempting to teach Japanese, as he had never had the same interest in Japanese grammar that he had in English grammar. He also realized that he spoke Japanese very differently than the textbooks showed because he came from a rural area.
that had a different dialect. Because of this, he reported that he relied on his past experiences learning English to give examples of language learning strategies to his students. Both Ken and the rest of the participants reported using their “languaged lives” to connect with their students emotionally and to help guide them through rough patches in their language learning. They also reported using their past linguistic experiences to guide themselves in the creation and execution of their classes.

**Connecting With and Helping Students**

Lana and Ken both stated that they used their past language learning experiences to help their students feel better when they made a mistake in the classroom or on an assignment. They emphasized the importance of connecting to their students as language learners who went through similar setbacks, and they reported that by using their past language learning experiences, or their “languaged lives”, they were able to connect with their students. This same technique can be seen in Zheng (2017), where Sarah uses her experiences to connect with her students, especially her Arabic-speaking students. Sarah counted herself as bilingual in Arabic and English, and as such she was teacher her L1. Ken also taught his L1, and reported that his experiences learning his L2 were instrumental in connecting with his students. He used his past experiences learning an L2 to talk to his students as a fellow language learner who could sympathize with their difficulties and recognize their triumphs. This is in line with Ellis (2016), who asserted that past language learning experiences were helpful when teaching any language, even an instructors L1. One of his participants was an excellent example of this idea. He was an Englishman who taught English in Japan. He had learned Japanese to the point of fluency, and he used his understanding of what it was like to be a language learner to connect to and encourage his students. Dan also supports this ideology, perhaps especially because he has
taught all three of his acquired languages: Korean, English, and Chinese. He reported that all of his language learning experiences, what Ellis (2016) would call his “languaged life”, were useful in his language classrooms. He also asserted that everyone is a language learner in a language classroom, regardless of their L1 or L2. He stated, “If for example my English 101 was my so-called native speaker students in my English 101 are indeed learners, too. So, my question… is who isn’t a language learner in this world, right? Everyone is, right?” (Interview, July 31, 2018). This shows that language learning experiences are seen by the participants as a means for connecting with students as equals, and are the evidence of the participants’ language learner identity. The participants used their “languaged lives” to connect with their students, but they also used those experiences to guide their students both emotionally and academically.

All of the participants reported that their linguistic experiences were useful in their language classrooms, and all of them reported using those experiences to guide their students through rough linguistic patches and to offer them some possible strategies to help them improve linguistically. John described this as putting up signs and guideposts, which is an apt metaphor for what the other participants described. Their reports of using their experiences in the classroom matches the observations of Zheng (2017), as Sarah also reported using her experiences to help her students because she knew what they were going through. Ellis (2016) also had his participants report that they used their experiences in the classroom to help guide their students through rough linguistic patches. One of his participants used those experiences to offer language learning tips even though he was teaching his L1, which was also reported by Dan and Ken. Both stated that language learning strategies can cross between languages and be useful in any language classroom, and both reported using them liberally in their classrooms. However, Lana disputes the claim that experiences learning one language can be
useful when learning or teaching another despite never having taught her L1. This is in direct contrast with what Ellis (2016) claims, and is also in contrast to the participants who have taught their L1s. Despite these inconsistencies, all of the participants agreed that their language learning experiences, or their “languaged lives” as Ellis (2016) would call them, were invaluable tools in the language classroom when attempting to guide students through difficult times in their linguistic journeys. More importantly, they asserted that the use of these experiences helped them interact with their students as equals when possible and give some power back to the students in a more student-centered classroom.

**Learning From Unhappy Memories**

The participants all reported having negative educational experiences as well as positive, and they stated that these negative experiences have affected their teaching strategies. Lana is a prime example of this. Lana had a very difficult time in her English classes from her first lesson to her college years. When asked if she used or would use the same pedagogical practices and strategies as her old professors she responded negatively, stating that those methods left students feeling alienated and uncared for. Her negative experiences with a traditional teacher-centered classroom and the resulting negative connotations she holds with the associated methods discourage her from using these methods because she does not want to become like her former instructors. This reflects Zheng’s 2017 findings, especially in one participants, Sarah. Sarah disliked the educational system that she had seen in Egypt, and she went out of her way to avoid being a “modaresa”, or a teacher that is overly strict and traditional and leads a teacher-centered class, which is the cultural idea of what a teacher is in her mind. Like Lana, who reports that she tries to be closer and more supportive of her students, Sara attempts to leave behind the ideologies that she was exposed to in the past. Lidia also showed this tendency, as she reported
her frustration with the traditional methods and teachers that she grew up with and were still teaching students in her university. She cited this as one of the reasons she decided to seek further teacher education outside of the university. She used her negative experiences as a personal guide for how she did not want to teach and helped her break free of the methods she grew up with. Like the other participants, she reported attempting to change how she ran her classroom to avoid giving her students the same negative experiences that she had. However, Lidia and the other participants were not always able to implement these changes in their classrooms.

While many of the participants wished to be able to avoid the pedagogical practices that they disliked, the academic cultures they were in had a great deal of say in how they were allowed to teach. For example, although Lidia said that she would prefer a more student-centered classroom with an array of group activities and a more equal power dynamic between herself and her students, the academic culture of her university reportedly forced her to use a more traditional pedagogy. This mirrors the experiences of the participants in Xu’s 2012 study, all of whom had dreams of teaching using pedagogical methods that they loved and were excited to try. However, when they actually began teaching they found that they could not implement those practices because of the expectations of the administrations overseeing them. This caused the instructors a great deal of stress and frustration, to the point where one of the participants left the education field all together. In Lidia’s case, however, she chose to go to graduate school in order to learn how to better implement the teaching strategies she has. While Lidia certainly had problems with the administration’s idea of how she should teach, both herself and the other participants would occasionally face issues from their students as well. For example, Dan reported that sometimes his students were so used to one way of teaching that the only way to
effectively run the class was to match what the students were expecting, even if it meant imitating the traditional and rigidly structured pedagogical practices that he so dislikes. This matches the observations of Yung (2015) who examined tutors in China. Although one tutor was teaching in fun ways that her students appreciated, those same students were far more worried about preparing for their exams than enjoying their English lessons. Because of this she was forced to focus on teaching to the test. Dan expressed the same issue, and like the tutor changed his practice to meet his students’ expectations and needs. Again, the pedagogical practices of the participants are affected by the academic environment in which they teach, and that environment includes the students. However, as the participants expressed that they wanted to keep their classrooms student-centered and grant the students more power, they also expressed that they would willingly change their practices if their students responded best to a particular method or practice. Often times this meant using their past experiences in the classroom, as those experiences often matched what they said their students expected, such as Dan being forced to teach in an authoritarian, grammar-heavy manner when his students would only respond positively to that identity and method. For all of this, the participants do state that they enjoy teaching, and look forward to continuing to teach in the future.

Summary

Thanks to the wonderful interviews and digital autobiographies given by the participants, a wealth of data was gathered. From this data came a tentative answer to the research questions. The participants perceived and described their language ownership as an intangible but very real entity that fluctuated based on many different factors, such as what they were talking about or who they were talking with. When in the classroom, this fluctuation is controlled by the “identity card” that they are playing at the time, showing only the aspect of their identity that will
most resonate with a student, even if they have to make up an identity that they do not truly possess. Their overall teacher identity is affected by their perceived language ownership, but the reverse does not hold true. The development of their language ownership and the formation of their teacher identities is equally complex, and almost always is something the participants consider to be a lifelong journey. Finally, the linguistic experiences that make up the participants’ “languaged lives” are valuable tools in the participants’ classrooms, and they report using them frequently to connect with students, help their students, and guide their pedagogical practices.

**Implications for Teaching and Teacher Education**

Perhaps the most important implication for teaching and teacher education that emerges from this study is the importance of the self-perceived language ownership instructors possess. For the participants, more confidence in their language ownership means a stronger and more positive teacher identity, while learning new teaching styles or methods did not improve their sense of language ownership. This could mean changes in mentor programs, which are generally aimed at improving the repertoire of lessons and activities the mentee instructors rather than focusing on legitimizing the mentees claim on language ownership of the language they are teaching. It also means that even if pre-service teacher and mentees demonstrate a strong teacher identity in the classroom, their perceived teacher identities might be very different, and very closely connected to their sense of language ownership. As support from other language learners seemed to help the participants, perhaps there should be more emphasis on community building among instructors, even if those instructors have years upon years of teaching experience, like Lidia.
Because the participants’ language ownership and fluency were connected, it is also important to focus on helping pre-service and in-service instructors find their own healthy definitions of fluency. Because Dan was the only participant who chose to label himself as fluent, the others have not truly reached their goal of fluency although all of them identify as multilinguals. Although a standardized and accepted definition of fluency is unlikely, instructors should emphasize a healthy and achievable idea of fluency. Above all, it should be emphasized in classes, readings, and discussions that fluency and perfection are not synonymous and that fluency is, in part, a personal choice. Connected to this, more awareness of the differences in standards between and L1 and an L2 should be addressed, as all of the participants reported holding their L2 to a far higher standard than their L1. For all but Dan, this translated to a need for perfection in their L2. This meant that to them fluency was impossible, although they demonstrated the opposite to their students. More emphasis should be placed on helping students and pre-service teachers set realistic goals and learn to accept mistakes as an inevitable part of language use. Above all, instructors should teach their students and themselves to be kind to themselves. Finally, it should be noted that sometimes having a student-centered ideology means running a more teacher-centered classroom if the students only respond to that classroom style. Students reflect the cultures they come from, and as the participants stated, that sometimes means a culture that has very specific ideas of how a teacher should teach and what should be covered in class. This means that teacher education programs should have a focus on each teacher’s context and culture and how best to navigate it with the new techniques and ideologies they gain in their programs.
Implications for Future Research Directions

- Language ownership and teacher identity: Given the findings, more research should be done into the interplay between perceived language ownership, perceived teacher identity, and projected teacher identity, as the connections between them and the implications of those connections could be far reaching and far more complex than displayed here.

- Personal measures of fluency: Given the findings, research should be done into personal measures of fluency, as well as who speakers perceive as being able to grant fluency. Is it a test, a person, a degree? How can these results change how institutions teach language and design their tests?

- Personal standards in L1 and L2: As the findings suggest a clear difference in the standards the participants held for their L1 and L2, research should be done on these differing standards and their effects on multilinguals and language students and users around the world.

- Internalized ideology, perceived ideology, and projected ideology: I would like to conduct more research into the ideologies multilingual instructors of language possess, how they perceive their ideologies, and the ideologies they present to others, as well as the discrepancies and connections between them.

Concluding Reflections

This thesis study was an unforgettable experience, in no small part because it helped me understand my own linguistic identity and where I place myself in the world. I had been absorbed in my own story and could only see things from my point of view, but listening to my participants tell their stories and subsequently writing them down forced me to think differently.
I had to look at the world through their eyes when I was writing their narratives, and in doing so I gained a new perspective. I asked myself the same questions that I asked them, and the fact that I was not able to answer all the questions myself has forced me to think more seriously about my own identity.

This study also changed me as an academic. While I am admittedly still rather new to being a part of the academic world, I had developed a decent sense of who I was as a scholar and an academic. Looking back I recognize that I truly had no idea what it meant to be a scholar who conducted their own research, as before this my only formal academic writing took the form of term papers in college. The process of designing and conducting the research for this thesis gave me a new respect for the work and dedication it takes to make it as a scholar. The process of taking that research and writing it down in this thesis showed me how much I have yet to learn and the practice it will take to become a successful academic writer. Perhaps most importantly, I know that I have changed as a researcher because if I was to do this project over I would do it differently, and that shows me that I am not the same as I was when I began.

Through the writing of this thesis I have learned to write academically. I learned how to design a research project and follow through to the end. I saw a brief glimpse of how challenging a future in academia will be, and the time and effort I will need to put into my future writing. After the joy this thesis brought me, the wonderful participants I was lucky enough to interview, the personal changes I went through and the way my skills developed, I can safely say that I am enthusiastic for that future. This thesis showed me that I have a long journey ahead of me, but it also showed me that the journey is a rewarding one. I am confident that I am on the right path now, and am looking forward to what comes next.
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Appendix A

IRB Approval Letter

July 16, 2018

Dear Willa Black:

Your proposed research project, “A story in many tongues: A narrative inquiry into the linguistic development of multilingual instructors,” (Log No. 18-177) has been reviewed by the IRB and is approved. In accordance with 45CFR46.101 and IUP Policy, your project is exempt from continuing review. This approval does not supersede or obviate compliance with any other University requirements, including, but not limited to, enrollment, degree completion deadlines, topic approval, and conduct of university-affiliated activities.

You should read all of this letter, as it contains important information about conducting your study.

Now that your project has been approved by the IRB, there are elements of the Federal Regulations to which you must attend. IUP adheres to these regulations strictly:

1. You must conduct your study exactly as it was approved by the IRB.
2. Any additions or changes in procedures must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented.
3. You must notify the IRB promptly of any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects.
4. You must notify the IRB promptly of any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in items 2 or 3.

The IRB may review or audit your project at random or for cause. In accordance with IUP Policy and Federal Regulation (45CFR46.113), the Board may suspend or terminate your project if your project has not been conducted as approved or if other difficulties are detected.

Although your human subjects review process is complete, the School of Graduate Studies and Research requires submission and approval of a Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF) before you can begin your research. If you have not yet submitted your RTAF, the form can be found at http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=91683.
Appendix B

Invitation Email to the Participants

Dear _____________,

My name is Willa Black, and I am a graduate student in IUP’s MATESOL program. I am currently conducting research for my thesis, which examines multilingual English instructors’ “languaged lives”. I am interested in how the linguistic experiences instructors have had shape their teacher identity as told through the instructors’ narratives. I humbly invite you to participate in this study.

To participate in this study you must 1) self-identify as a multilingual, 2) have a minimum of two years English teaching experience, and 3) be willing to understand and reflect upon your linguistic identity. What would be required of you as a participant are a digital autobiography, which would be sent to you via email to complete, and an interview lasting between 40 to 50 minutes. While there is no monetary reward for participation, I hope that the process itself will be rewarding.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary, and you are free to withdraw at any time. All of your responses will be anonymous, and whether or not you participate will in no way alter your standing at IUP. No faculty member or student will know whether or not you decided to participate. This project has been approved by the Indiana University of Pennsylvania Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects (Phone 724-357-7730). If you have any questions, concerns, or comments, please feel free to contact me at 724-549-9862 or at hnfs@iup.edu.

I sincerely thank you for your time and your consideration.

Yours respectfully,

Willa Black
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Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Informed Consent Form
A story in many tongues: A narrative inquiry into the linguistic development of multilingual instructors

My name is Willa Black, and I am a graduate student in the MATESOL program at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. I am currently conducting my master’s thesis on the formation of multilingual instructors “languaged lives”. You have been invited to participate in the study because you 1) self-identify as a multilingual, 2) have a minimum of two years English teaching experience, and 3) are willing to understand and reflect upon your linguistic identity.

Purpose and Benefits of This Study

This study is designed to examine the narrative of language learning in relation to language ownership and language use. Upon completion of the study, it is hoped that more will be known about the formation of multilingual instructors’ “languaged lives”, or how the linguistic experiences instructors have had shape their teacher identity.

Your Involvement in This Study

Your participation in this study, after signing this consent form, consists of completing the digital autobiography that will be sent via email. The length of time it takes to complete this section may vary, but it is estimated to take no more than two hours to complete. Upon completion of the digital autobiography, you will then meet with the investigator for a 40-50 minute interview that is based on the answers given in the digital autobiography. You will also select a pseudonym that will be attached to the data you provide in order to keep your anonymity.

Potential Risks

There are no risks involved in this study.

Your participation in this study is completely and absolutely voluntary. You are by no means required to participate in this study. Whether or not you choose to participate will not affect in any way your standing in the university. Should you at any point in the study decide to withdraw as a participant you are free to do so. No faculty members or students will be told that you participated in this survey. All information you provide will be kept secure, and will only be seen by the investigator and you, the participant. When the study is finished, the data may be used in a publication or presented at a conference, but it will only be used for academic purposes.
Appendix D

Digital Autobiography Task

Dear ___________.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study. Your time and effort are both greatly appreciated.

This study focuses on the story of your language acquisition, focusing specifically on your L2. You are eligible to participate in this study because you have taught English for a minimum of two years, you identify as multilingual, and you are willing to understand and reflect upon your linguistic identity.

A copy of the consent for you signed is attached to this form, and you are reminded that participation in this study is completely voluntary. All information given in this study is completely confidential, and in an effort to ensure you anonymity, you are asked to include in your response a pseudonym that will be used when representing the data.

Directions:

For this part of the study, please fill out the basic demographic questions listed below, and please fill in what you want your pseudonym to be. After answering the questions, proceed to the writing prompt. Please answer the prompt in English, but if there are certain phrases or words that cannot be translated well, feel free to include them, along with a definition. Your responses here will shape the interview that will follow, so please answer as completely as you can.

Demographic Information:

Pseudonym: 
Age: 
Marital Status: 
Current Educational Level: 
Country of Origin: 
Native language/languages: 
Languages you are Proficient in:

Prompt:

Think about your linguistic journey. Why did you start learning your L2? What specific memories come to mind when you think about your language learning process? What moment or moments finally made you feel as though you were fluent in your L2? Keeping all of this in mind, write the story of your language learning. You could start at the first moment you remember wanting to learn your L2, or maybe the first class you had in it. Feel free to write this story in your own style, and let it truly represent your language learning journey.
Should you choose to complete this digital autobiography, please send it to hnfs@iup.edu or willa.black@yahoo.com by (date).

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns about this section of the study or the study itself, please feel free to contact me at my email, hnfs@iup.edu.

Thank you again for you time! Your responses are very valuable to this study, and your effort is greatly appreciated.
Appendix E

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Hello ___________.

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study. Your help is greatly appreciated. Again, I’d like to emphasize that your participation in this study is voluntary, and that you can withdraw at any time. Here is a copy of the consent form that you signed before. Feel free to read it before we begin the interview. The interview should last for around one hour. Can I record this interview? The recording will only be heard by myself and you, and is completely confidential. We’ll use your pseudonym during the interview, okay? If at any point during the interview you feel uncomfortable, or if you don’t want to answer a question, just let me know.

Questions will be determined by the digital autobiographies.
Set questions are:

Do you have any memories of time where you felt you would never learn your L2?

Could you elaborate on ________? (moments mentioned in the digital autobiography)

What kept pushing you forward as you learned your L2? Necessity? The urge to travel?

Do you feel that your experiences learning another language help you in the classroom? If so, how?

Do you feel that your identity as a multilingual is an asset in the classroom? If so, how?

Do you think that you would be a different person if you had not learned another language?

What are your language learning plans for the future? Are you planning on adding another language to your repertoire?

Thank you for participation in this study. It is greatly appreciated, and if you have any questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to email me at hnfs@iup.edu.