

MEXICAN ENGLISH TEACHERS' IDENTITY
NEGOTIATIONS: A NARRATIVE STUDY

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This study examines how five Mexican EFL teachers negotiated their professional identities while interacting with ideologies implicit in social practices, power relations, and discourse. I approached teachers' identities using a hybrid narrative approach that combined content and discourse analysis of the participants' life histories, small storytelling, and classroom practices. Diverse public documents were analyzed to identify socially constructed views about English teachers. The analysis showed a tendency in the public opinion to construct the failure of most Mexicans to acquire English as the result of poor teaching and not as the consequence of complex socioeconomic and political factors. These perceptions were also found in the teachers' narratives of their past, present, and projected professional development. My analysis revealed that, as part of the process of identity negotiation, the teachers struggled with the native speaker fallacy since their initial teacher education. These struggles also continued, as the teachers negotiated their legitimacy as EFL teachers at the workplace. While some of the participants problematized the assumption that the best type of English teacher should be a native speaker, they still considered the proficiency features of these speakers as their standard to measure their own L2 proficiency. The analysis also showed that the teachers tended to present their reality through binary oppositions that separated them from their colleagues, perceiving their peers as being at the negative end of their dichotomous representations. Finally, the participants' projections of their professional development showed a tendency to see their future as uncertain which may be connected to the increasingly uncertain situation of Mexican teachers' working conditions. These findings have three implications. First, the participants' struggles to negotiate their identities as legitimate teachers suggest that in-service EFL teachers, in Mexico and other similar contexts, may be in need of professional development programs to help them identify and constructively contest ideologies at the workplace. Second, teacher education programs may need to focus on raising student-teachers' awareness about the value of their multicompetent linguistic knowledge. Finally, teachers' tendency to define their identity in antagonistic ways should be addressed to neutralize possible negative effects on teachers' collaborative work.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It was a regular working day at the main plaza of Serrana, a pseudonym I chose for one of the major cities in the center of Mexico. At this time, I was starting my fieldwork for the present research project and my mind was full of the events I had witnessed the previous morning, during my first visit to a school. As I approached the main street, I began to hear loud voices chanting slogans as a group of protesters moved towards the plaza. When I finally met with the group, I saw them carrying a piñata¹-like figure satirically representing the likeness of the Mexican President, Enrique Peña Nieto. Amused by the protesters' ingenuity, I stood on the sidewalk, trying to figure out the cause they were defending. Very soon, I realized that these people were unionized teachers from the public schools in Serrana. They were protesting against the new Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente (General Law of the Professional Teaching Service) that recently changed the rules regarding tenured teaching positions and retirement, among other things. As I saw the teachers marching around the square, several questions arose in my head. For

¹ A clay container decorated with paper to evoke different figures. These containers are filled with fruit, candy and other treats and broken during the Advent celebration or children's parties.

instance, I wondered who those teachers were and why they had decided that they should leave their classrooms that morning and publically express their dissent. I also asked myself how other passerby that morning would perceive this act of pacifist civil resistance. More importantly, I wondered how these events would impact on how the teachers themselves thought about who they were and what it means to be a teacher in Mexico. This study tries to contribute with a few tentative and partial answers that address this broad question. In the following introduction, I will begin my narrative by summarizing how I approached this topic.

1. 1 Identity studies

In today's postmodern world of ambiguity, relativity, and fragmentation, scholars have increasingly turned towards a definition of identity as fluid and socially constructed (Benwell & Stokoe, 2006; Bucholtz, 2003; Taylor, 1989). This construction is mediated by discursive practices that play a central part in assigning positions and intentions to human actions (Weedon, 1987/1997). Understandably, the prominent role assigned to language in identity studies has attracted the attention of applied linguists in recent decades (Block, 2007). The ground breaking work of Norton (1995, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1997) ushered in a series of studies devoted to explore identity transformations under the influence of second language acquisition (SLA) processes. Although initially focused on the complex dynamic of identity as it influences acquisition beyond classroom walls, this still vibrant strand of research has developed over the years to include instructed acquisition. As such, identity studies have equally focused on learners and teachers. In this context, the study of teachers' identities and how they impact teaching and learning has become a topic of great interest.

1.2 The study of teachers' identities: A brief theoretical background

Since language has been acknowledged as one of the forces that shape our multiple identities, it then follows that teachers' language identities, especially in the case of foreign and second language (EFL/ESL) teachers, are relevant to understand their work and ways of being. This logic has led the study of EFL/ESL teachers' identities to intersect the study of teachers'

linguistic backgrounds as divided into two camps: native and nonnative English speaking teachers (NESTs and NNESTs). The first studies that addressed the topic of NESTs/NNESTs, however, were not really concerned about identity. Instead, they focused on providing evidence to substantiate this dichotomous view of EFL/ESL teachers by addressing four main topics.

Those studies addressing the first topic looked at NNESTs' perceptions about their position with respect to their native English speaking counterparts. Some of these research projects concluded that NNESTs felt in disadvantage with respect to their L2 proficiency and their opportunities in the job market (Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Butler, 2007a; Tang, 1997). Simultaneously, other studies in this first group reported the opposite showing predominantly confident views of NNESTs about their linguistic skills and working conditions (Andrews, 1994; Inbar-Louri, 2005; Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik, & Sasser, 2004). On the other hand, a second group of studies reported NNESTs being perceived as more rigid and form-oriented teachers (Cheung & Braine, 2007; Sheorey, 1986), while Llurda and Huget (2003) found elementary EFL teachers in Spain more communicatively oriented. Considering a third topic, researchers reported that some administrators (Moussu, 2006; 2010) preferred NESTs over NNESTs. Although some scholars are still concerned about these results, others have suggested that school administrators' perceptions and hiring practices have become less biased in recent years thanks to the efforts of the NNEST advocacy movement originated by a group of nonnative English-speaking scholars (Braine, 1999, 2010). As for the last group of studies, scholars have found that students also tended to prefer NESTs (Butler, 2007b, Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002), but were likely to change their minds when having positive experiences with NNESTs (Moussu, 2002; Moussu, 2006; Pacek, 2005).

In spite of the obvious contradictory results, the research on perceptions about NNESTs and NESTs revealed that, in many cases, administrators, students, and even teachers were greatly influenced by a belief labeled by Phillipson (1992) as the native speaker (NS) fallacy. This belief holds that the ideal English teacher should be a native speaker of the language. In this context,

nativeness is identified with the linguistic abilities exhibited by monolingual speakers born and raised in countries where English is the mother tongue and the language of daily communication (e.g. Great Britain, The United States, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand²). Scholars have long debated that this notion is partial since it excludes those speakers of indigenized varieties that have emerged in multilingual postcolonial nations (Canagarajah, 1999). It has also been argued that the notion of the superiority of the so-called native speaker is based on an artificial abstraction of human linguistic competence that does not reflect how social factors and contextual constraints impose variability to linguistic performance (for an extended discussion of this topic see Davies, 2008). Thus, some researchers have opposed the use of the ‘nonnative’ label because it fails to represent the complex linguistic identities of many second language teachers around the world (Liu, 1999; Faez, 2011). Unfortunately, as debatable as the NS fallacy may be from the point of view of the linguist, research shows that it is still at work in people’s perceptions.

The research reviewed above represents the first wave of studies on NNESTs/NESTs, which mostly relied on questionnaires and rating scales. By the late 90s, some researchers slowly began to include qualitative tools in their research designs. Eventually, this epistemological turn also implied a shift from the exclusive interest on dichotomous categories towards more complex aspects of the phenomenon of teachers’ linguistic backgrounds. This shift included an interest on teachers’ identities that was introduced by the pioneer works of Duff and Uchida (1997) and Amin (1997). These studies revealed that teachers’ multiple identities (e.g. language, gender, race, and culture) usually influence how teachers approach their work in complex and differentiated ways.

More recent research has revealed that NNESTs actively engage in constructing themselves as legitimate users of the target language (Gu, 2011; Park, 2012; Sayer, 2012). Often, these efforts could be viewed as the ways in which teachers respond to socially constructed views

² In this dissertation, I will alternatively refer to these countries as *the center*, or the inner-circle (Kachru, 1999; Canagarajah, 1999). I will use the term *periphery* when referring to the rest of the world.

about nonnativeness that impact on their access to power and social acceptance. In some cases, these struggles have been observed in periphery teachers who work in the center (Ates & Eslami, 2012; Brown & Miller, 2006; Case, 2004; Clark, 2010; Liu, 2005) where xenophobic attitudes are often associated with NNESTs being perceived as illegitimate English teachers. In other cases, this *otherization* suffered by migrant NNESTs has also been part of teachers' struggles in the periphery whenever English is used as a power-differential (Gu, 2011; Lengeling, Mora-Pablo, & Rubio-Zenil, 2011; Petró, 2003; Trent, 2010a, 2010b, 2012).

In this study, I adopt a view of identity as the fluid result of constant negotiations between individuals and their sociocultural landscape. I am interested in observing how second language teachers engage in these negotiations through time. Although the topic has already been addressed to certain extent, there are but few studies focusing on Latin American teachers and how they negotiate their identities at the workplace (Ban, 2006; Petró, 2003; Sayer, 2012; Trejo-Guzmán & Mora-Vázquez, 2014). As these studies have all been qualitative, they present concrete examples that show the reality of a group of teachers within a very specific context. More studies need to be conducted to understand how other groups with different characteristics face the challenge of becoming an English teacher while being labeled as a nonnative speaker. Certain groups have especially been neglected by previous studies and require attention, such as African and Latin American teachers. Moreover, the evidence so far presented has always been analyzed using thematic analysis. Other analytical methods such as discourse and narrative analysis that have been successfully used to capture how individuals index identity by discursive means have been rarely applied in the study of second language teachers' identities (Clarke, 2008; Menard-Warwick, 2014).

1.3 Beliefs, language ideology, and identity negotiation: Key concepts

Before going any further, it is first necessary to briefly clarify a few key concepts that will be recurrently used in the course of the present study. This clarification is necessary since most of these concepts have been used by other researchers with various meanings and

applications. The concepts to be clarified will be: beliefs, knowledge, ideology, language ideology, multicompetence, and identity negotiation.

1.3.1 Beliefs and knowledge.

Scholars have long discussed the nature of the distinction between beliefs and knowledge. In order to establish a difference between these two terms, some authors have traditionally defined beliefs as non-consensual views that are essentially evaluative and include both an emotional and a cognitive component (Abelson, 1979; Nespor, 1987). By contrast, knowledge has been characterized as assumptions that are based on facts, thus implying that knowledge has a consensual nature and is supported by reason without relation to emotions and moral values. As neat as this distinction may seem, in his comprehensive review of beliefs studies, Pajares (1992) pointed out that, for some researchers, the boundaries between knowledge and beliefs are not so clear, since knowledge is not absolutely free of judgments or evaluations and beliefs are not always exclusively personal and non-consensual. Trying to clarify the confusions implied in this dichotomy, Barcelos (2000), based on Dewey's (1976) conceptualization of the two terms, posited that beliefs and knowledge (or knowing, as Dewey proposed) are two aspects of our efforts to make sense of the world in which we live, or the process of inquiry.

Therefore, knowledge and beliefs are interrelated and are generated, revised, and changed as we perceive and act upon our reality. Simultaneously, both beliefs and knowledge are connected to our actions since we are compelled to act on the basis of our views about reality. In the present study, I see beliefs and knowledge as a continuum that stands for our ways of understanding the world that may be more or less based on factual information, more or less shared by others, and also charged with cognitive and emotional force at different degrees. Also, both beliefs and knowledge are tentative, relatively stable for now, but always subjected to possible changes in the future and usually mediated by diverse symbolic tools, one of which is language.

1.3.2 Ideology and language ideology.

The definition of beliefs and knowledge presented above is related to another term that will be recurrently used in the present work and has long been acknowledged as polysemous and ambiguous: ideology. The term has been connected to Marxist theory and refers to a distorted interpretation of reality that justifies and perpetuates the power status of certain classes over others and reproduce the conditions that support this status in the future (Williams, 1977).

Although this view of ideology was prominent in the works of critical theorists during the second half of the twentieth century, it has become less used in recent times. In spite of this decreased interest, Gee (2008) recognizes that Marx and Engel's concept of ideology is still a useful conceptual tool to understand how the elites in a society, consciously or subconsciously, embrace a set of dubious beliefs to perpetuate their power and activate mechanisms, often by using educational institutions, to ensure that these beliefs are also accepted by the broader society. However, Gee also warns us that this view of ideology is problematic because it may lead to assume that, while some groups see reality through a distorted belief system, others do not. Gee argues that none of us can claim seeing reality directly; we all see reality and make sense of it through symbolic tools, such as language. In other words, even the information we gather through our senses is always interpreted on the basis of a socially constructed symbolic system.

Notwithstanding this inevitable tendency, the realization of this condition, says Gee, should at least lead us to question our perceptions:

“We all use words in ways that are colored by our lives, interests, values, and desires. We all have ample opportunity to be wrong. We all have ample opportunity—even a moral obligation—sometimes to change and do better. We all live and communicate with and through “ideology”. We cannot do otherwise, but we can seek to interrogate our ideology when we come to believe that aspects of it are wrong or hurtful to others” (Gee, 2008, p. 29).

Therefore, in this work, ideology will be considered as a set of culturally-generated set of values, beliefs, and common-sense theories that we all use to interpret and act upon the world and are created and transmitted through different symbolic means. Ideologies are thus a social construction and are embraced by groups and individuals alike. This social characteristic of ideology, however, does not imply that individuals are deprived of all agentive power under the influence of ideology. As some ideologies tend to preserve the interests of certain groups in detriment of the interest of others, those who are deprived of power by the effect of ideologies would at times resist or contest them, even if only partially and in an contradictory fashion. Therefore, following Sayer (2007, 2012), I also consider ideology as multiple, contradictory, and contested.

In agreement with the definitions provided above, when referring to language ideologies, I will rely on Jaffe's (2009) characterization, which describes language ideologies as socially shared ideas about the nature of language, the values and hierarchy of values attached to the diverse linguistic codes used by a community, and the diverse ways in which our perceptions of linguistic codes are connected to identity. In this view, language ideologies refer to our views of language form, but also to how we perceive its use and meaning and how these perceptions shape our views of others on the basis of how they use language. In the present work, as I explore the identity of five foreign language teachers, a consideration of how language ideologies may be implicated in these teachers' views about their profession will be central. At this juncture, the construct of language ideology meets with the previously cited NS fallacy and the assumption implicit in this fallacy, which considers the native speakers of a language as the ideal examples and rightful owners of their language. In this work, I will referred to this particular aspect of the NS fallacy as the NS ideal. These concepts are closely connected with a third construct that I will address in the following section: multicompetence.

1.3.3 Multicompetence

The concept of multicompetence will also receive some attention in the present work as a conceptual tool to understand the linguistic knowledge of EFL teachers who are not monolingual speakers of English. Cook (1991) was the first one to use the term as a way to problematize one of the tenets of universal grammar: the poverty of the stimulus argument. This argument posits that human linguistic knowledge cannot be entirely inferred from the linguistic evidence to which learners are exposed. If the available language input were the only source of linguistic knowledge, the production of novel utterances would be impossible. Since human beings are actually able to produce novel utterances, the supporters of the poverty of the stimulus argument concluded that our knowledge of grammar develops thanks to the human mind's innate and universal capacity for processing, understanding, and generating language.

The poverty of the stimulus argument was based on the assumption that all humans without physical/mental impairment who live in conditions of normal social interaction are able to learn a language. Under such conditions, all native speakers of a language are able to develop more or less the same level of linguistic competence (knowledge) (Cook 1991, 2003). This argument, however, does not seem to apply to second language acquisition that exhibits a high degree of variability. In other words, although people achieve more or less the same competence in their L1, they may display diverse levels of achievement when acquiring an L2. Therefore, under the logic of transformational generative grammar theory, the linguistic ability of the so-called native speaker was considered as the most developed example of linguistic competence (and performance) of any given language. On the contrary, the linguistic competence of the second language speaker was to be measured with respect to the native speaker's ideal. Following this logic, the first wave of psycholinguistic studies regarded second language knowledge as a somewhat defective version of L1 competence.

In his critique to this view, Cook (1991, 1992) rejected the use of the native speakers' competence as the yardstick to measure all linguistic knowledge. He argued that linguistic

research based on the study of monolingual individuals presented a partial view of the phenomenon of language acquisition and use because the great majority of individuals in the world are not monolingual, but bilingual or multilingual. Since the linguistic abilities of a monolingual speaker are in reality the exception and not the norm, using monolingual evidence to characterize the complex and variable linguistic knowledge of those individuals who use more than one language is inappropriate. Cook called these individuals *multicompetent* language users.

Cook thus first defined multicompetence as “the compound state of a mind with two grammars” (1991, p. 112). In this context, grammar is not conceived as prominently dominated by syntax, but as the totality of human language knowledge that also encompasses lexis, morphology, phonology, pragmatics, and discourse (Cook, 2008; 2015). He also argued that multicompetent language systems are not the result of the juxtaposition of two or more separated sets of linguistic knowledge, but a new unit that is qualitatively different from that of the monolingual linguistic system. This new concept ushered a long discussion on the nature of multilingualism that attempted to disassociate the characterization of second language users (no longer to be always considered as learners) from the concept of the so-called native speaker as understood by generative grammar.

Since its first definition in the early 1990s, scholars have revised the concept of multicompetence in several occasions. In an influential conceptual article, Hall, Cheng, and Carlson (2006) presented a threefold critique that urged for a reconceptualization of multicompetence. First, they argued that, by the time their article was published, most research based on the concept of multicompetence persisted in treating L1 and L2 as two separate or distinct systems. Second, they pointed out that, from a usage-base point of view, the difference between monocompetence and multicompetence was not qualitative but quantitative. They argued that the social and contextual conditions under which a multicompetent mind acquires languages usually vary in terms of the amount of input and the number of opportunities a learner has to engage in communicative activities with other users. As a third and final objection, Hall

and colleagues posited that, by representing L2 as variable and L1 as more or less homogeneous, Cook had not acknowledged that the linguistic knowledge of the monolingual mind is also variable, malleable, and locally situated. Using an analysis of the available evidence at the time, Hall and colleagues concluded that both monocompetence and multicompetence are “tied to the pragmatic variation in the use of language within and across social experiences in which individuals are engaged” (p. 230).

In a similar vein, Alptekin (2010) suggested that the original concept of multicompetence did not include a cultural component or, at least, did not engage in a more comprehensive discussion of how biculturalism interacts with multicompetence. Moreover, in the particular case of English, when used as Lingua Franca (ELF), Alptekin suggested that the phenomenon requires a special treatment because ELF is not acquired and used to satisfy the norm of the native speaker or a specific culture. In fact, in cross-linguistic encounters in which people use ELF, the interactants may adopt a multicultural identity. How this unique linguistic context influences the users’ multicompetence is still a phenomenon that requires further exploration.

In recent years, researchers have used the concept of multicompetence as a framework to interpret how L2 affects L1 (Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2009) and how multicompetent individuals use their languages in different settings, such as the emergent multilingual communities in Europe (Franceschini, 2011), L2 teaching (Scott, 2009), and heritage language literacy acquisition (Wei, 2011). The most recent discussion that uses multicompetence as a central concept (Brown, 2013) is now posing new challenges to L2 assessment standards based on the monolingual norm.

The concept of multicompetence is relevant in the present work because it is compatible with a critical view of those language ideologies that influence the negotiation of second language teachers’ professional identity. In this context, I will adopt a working definition of multicompetence in a situated EFL contexts as the integrated, complex, and context-bound knowledge of L1 and L2 in the mind of teachers of English who are L1 users of Spanish.

1.3.4 Identity negotiations.

The notion of identity negotiation will be central to the present study. Following a view of identity as a socially situated construct, in this work, I will focus on how individuals generate a sense of self while they engage in social practice (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005; Wenger, 1998). By saying this, I do not mean that human beings simply adopt pre-packed identities already available in their context. On the contrary, what I agree is that identities are the ever evolving result of individuals' social interaction and their engagement in different social pursuits. In these interactions, we all face and are affected by ideology, but, at the same time, we also contend ideologies, especially when they prevent us from achieving our goals. In other words, in striving to access what we desire, we may find ourselves positioned by others in disadvantageous places. This is the point where negotiations become necessary, as individuals interact with others to gain the right to be perceived by others in more favorable ways and ultimately gain access to power. Therefore, in this dissertation, I adopt Pavlenko and Blackledge's (2004) view of identity negotiations as a contested transaction in which individuals attempt to modify, challenge, or affirm their desired self-image with respect to others. These negotiations are usually necessary when there is an unbalanced of power between those involved in the negotiation, or in the situation. As an example of this type of negotiations, Pavlenko and Blackledge proposed that, in multilingual contexts, where different language ideologies coexist, individuals often have to negotiate their rights to access power on the basis or in spite of the linguistic codes they use. A similar situation applies in the cases of the individuals who participated in this study, who are in the process of affirming their professional identities as EFL teachers.

1.4 Research questions and research design

Therefore, in the present dissertation I use narrative analysis to look at the identity negotiation of five experienced Mexican teachers from their college years to the present time. The study focuses on the following overarching questions: Do the participants discursively position

themselves with respect to the NS fallacy and the ownership of English? If so, how? If not, why not? Have sociocultural forces such as power, social practices, and discourse interacted in the negotiation of the participants' professional identities along their careers? If so, how? If not, why not? Does identity impact the participants' teaching practices and to what extent they are able to exert agency in these practices? If so, why? If not, why not?

In order to address these questions, I collected teachers' narratives about their professional lives using written autobiographies and interviews. I also gathered evidenced of teachers' everyday work by means of a year-long teacher journal and onsite observations. These data were compared with historical information and public documents that expanded my understanding of the sociocultural environment in which the participants work and live. To conduct the interpretation of the data, I used a hybrid narrative approach that combined thematic and discourse analysis. Within this perspective, I understand narrative as the account of an event real or imaginary that entails collaborative efforts from tellers and audience. Therefore, I do not regard the data derived from interviews and artifacts as factual evidence. They are but textual creations in which the participants attempt to make sense of their experience. My interest was focused on observing how teachers negotiated their identities within this narrative world as they engaged in conversations with me and in interactions with their students. I also care about the intertextual interaction of teachers life histories with their classroom discourse, in particular when this classroom discourse was conveyed through small storytelling³. For this reason, I compared these two types of storytelling by combining theme analysis as most narrative inquiries do (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000; Freeman, 2006; 2011; Riessman,1993; 2008) and positional analysis with close attention to narrative structure and linguistic features (Bamberg, 1997; 2011; Gee, 2008; Davies, & Harré, 1990).

³ For a clarification of the terminology used to characterized narratives, the reader can refer to the glossary at the end of Chapter 3.

The participants in this study were selected by convenience with the support of the professional networks I formed during my time as a teacher educator in Mexico. As part of the selection criteria, teachers had to be Mexican urban mestizos raised by monolingual speakers of Spanish. These requirements were considered necessary to include individuals that were somehow different from those studied by Sayer (2012), who were of indigenous descent and trilingual. Teachers were also required to have a minimum of 3 years of teaching experience so that they could be considered as having passed the novice stage of their careers. Of the five teachers, one of them had acquired English as a transnational child living in the United States for ten years. The others learned English in the classroom and had never been abroad by the time the study started. This combination allowed for the comparison of experiences between the more common mono-cultural Mexican teachers and a teacher that can rightly be considered as occupying a third space. All the participants graduated from the same university-based teacher education program in a city located in the South East of Mexico. After their graduation, each one of these teachers developed their careers working at different educational levels and geographical regions in Mexico. This combination of different and similar experiences diversified the narratives, but also provided points of comparison between the cases.

1.5 Summary of the findings

The results of this study can be explained as divided in three main categories. In the first one, I consider the findings derived from my review of local research, public documents, and media communications regarding the teaching of English in Mexico. These findings were essential to understand the participants' first encounters with English and their subsequent professional development. In the second category, I group the results obtained through thematic and discursive analysis of teachers' life histories centered on the initial episodes of their professional development. The last category comprises those findings connected to teachers' perceptions and actions concerning their lives at the workplace and how they negotiated their professional identities with colleagues, students, and school authorities.

In the first place, the document analysis revealed that the teaching of English in Mexico has historically been perceived as deficient. The empirical evidence that concurs with this perception, although still scarce and partial, suggests that a complex combination of political, social, and economic factors have negatively impacted on the way English is taught in the country (Basurto-Santos, 2010; Davies, 2009a; González-Robles, Vivaldo-Lima, & Castillo-Morales, 2004; Sayer, 2015). This appraisal of the present situation of English teaching in Mexico as a systemic problem is not usually shared by authorities and the general public. A historical review of the evolution of the Mexican curriculum, educational policies, and media material on the subject reflected a tendency of the public opinion to construct the failure of most Mexicans to acquire English as a result of poor teaching and not as the consequence of complex socioeconomic and political factors. In this vision, Mexican teachers are seen as incompetent, indolent, and corrupt. In agreement with this view, recent legislation and educational policies concerning public school teachers show an emphasis on accountability measures, but fail to propose solid teacher professional development programs (Del Castillo & Valenti-Nigrini, 2014). In this context, the five participants of this study narrated their first experience with English and their initial teacher education. These stories represented English instructed acquisition in contradictory terms. While some accounts focused on small successes and positive experiences, when put together, most of the narratives constructed a view of less than appropriate instructional environments not only in public schools, but also in private institutions. Moreover, at the beginning of their teacher education, three of the participants perceived their L2 proficiency level as insufficient to use English as a means of instruction, which was required in their program.

As a second important group of findings, the participants' life histories offered evidence of how teachers performed identity as they narrated their career-decision making processes, their first attempts at teaching, and their experiences at graduate school. The stories of how the participants decided to become English teachers were characterized by struggles and hesitations, since some of the young protagonists were still undecided when they chose their major. The

comparative analysis of written autobiographies, and interviews suggested that at least three of the participants chose to major in English without having a teaching career in mind. These stories provided evidence about the lack of pertinent social scaffolding received by high school graduates when taking such a high-stakes decision. Also, the stories showed how these decisions are often connected to hazardous events and the urge to fulfill social expectations. In spite of this randomness, the participants made sense of this episode by using social constructions that see occupational choices as a call for the best suited. Ultimately, the narrative analysis revealed that the decision of becoming an English teacher was truly made through a continuing process and not at a specific moment. Therefore, the genesis of the participants' professional identities was slowly negotiated as their agency interacted with the sociocultural conditions and affordances that eventually contributed to their becoming second language teachers.

In their narratives of their first teaching experiences, the participants performed their identities in various ways. For example, Sofia presented herself as an independent problem solver that eventually conformed her own teaching theories during her first years of teaching practice. In a different fashion, Leiliani constructed herself as a responsible but naïve teacher who was caught unawares by the social and economic limitations of the classroom.

As part of their professional development, the participants sought to continue their education in diverse graduate programs. In this occasion, the participants' choice was mediated by the teachers' economic situation, their professional commitments, their multiple identities, and the availability of graduate programs in their region. Regardless of their different situations, this experience was marked by a mismatch between the purpose and contents of the programs and the participants' perceived professional needs. Unsurprisingly, by the time this study concluded, only one of the participants had successfully graduated from her MA in Education program. In sum, in spite of some disappointing experiences, social affordances and context restrictions interacted with the participants' agency leading them to develop a career as language teachers.

The last group of findings showed how the teachers interacted with discourse, power and social practices at the work place. First of all, the participants' representations of their workplace was ambivalent. On the one side, they reported encountering opposition and resistance from their students, institutional structures, their colleagues, or the contextual limitations. In very few cases, they talked about their workplace as a source of support for their continuous development. However, they agreed that they had learned the most from facing the everyday challenges of their job. In fact, some of the participants believed that their true teaching-selves had come into being at the workplace. This idea was especially prominent in Adam's stories, in which the teacher's ability to establish friendly relationships with his students was presented as the most important factor that helped him deal with the students' rebellious attitudes and see himself as a real teacher.

Second, the analysis of teachers' journals, interviews, and onsite observations demonstrated that to legitimize their professional identities in the midst of opposition, the participants used discursive resources. In their narratives, the participants used dichotomies to position themselves within three main binary oppositions: NNESTs/NESTs, good and bad teachers, and young and veteran teachers. These opposite pairs were connected to current social representations of the teaching profession as well as instantiations of the NS fallacy. The latter was found present in teachers' lives in spite of the fact that they had but few opportunities to work or interact with NNESTs. A biased in which the NS fallacy was evident emerged in students' attitudes during classroom observations, teachers' selection of materials, and their perceptions of their need to be professionally validated by some sort of contact with the so-called native speaker. With regards to the other two opposite pairs, teachers tried to resist assigned professional identities by claiming a professional identity as progressive, hardworking, and committed professionals. These qualities were set in intertextual opposition with current perceptions of teachers as indolent and incompetent. Thus, these dichotomies were used to represent teachers' beliefs about good professional practices and attitudes. Although these

discursive tools helped teachers to interpret their reality, they may have also contributed to alienate them from their colleagues and reduced their possibilities to benefit from collaborative work. Material and organizational conditions at schools did not provide an appropriate setting to neutralize the negative impact of these discursive influences on the creation of a local English teachers' Community of Practice (Wenger, 1998).

Finally, the data obtained through observations and teaching journals showed that teachers used discourse and covert actions to mediate their identity negotiation with students and school administrators. For instance, Betty's resisted the second-rate position given to English in the curriculum during her interactions with students. In a different way, Daniela and Adam covertly resisted their employers' policies when they clashed with their ideas about assessment and teaching. The former demonstrated her disagreement by treating certain assessment practices as pointless paperwork, the latter allied with students to overlook school's religious views that prohibited certain types of classroom activities. In spite of these acts of insubordination, the participants also aligned with social practices, values, and elements of the master narrative that were embedded in their teaching practice, such as view of teachers as knowers. This alignment was evident in their typical teacher-centered approach, their use of the textbook as syllabus, and a traditional view of how power should be distributed and exerted in the classroom. The evidence suggested that in spite of teachers best intentions to enact teaching in ways that could lead to effective L2 acquisition they were often limited by lack of resources and an organization that sometimes was chaotic and others excessively focused on rules that controlled teachers' and students' actions.

1.6 Overview of the chapters

The chapters of this dissertation are organized as follows:

In Chapter 2, I first develop a conceptual framework that deals with the deconstruction of the term identity following the poststructuralist tradition. I provide a brief historical review of how the study of identity became such a prominent construct in social sciences in general and in

applied linguistics in particular. As a second point, I move to trace how the field expanded its research agenda from an initial interest on second language learners' identities to include second language teachers' identities. In a third section, I explore the findings of 74 studies on NNESTs and what they have contributed to our understanding of how NNESTs' identities are negotiated through their professional lives. I close with a consideration of the questions that still remain unanswered in this strand of research and how the present study attempts to address a particular research gap.

Chapter 3 outlines the methodological framework in which this study is embedded and describes the research design. I first review the most common research designs used by previous studies on NNESTs and elaborate on which methods and research tools need to be explored in future research. As a second consideration, I address the epistemological underpinnings of narrative research and present a working definition of narrative as used in the present study. In the third section I present the research design starting with the personal narrative of how this study relates to my experience as second language teacher and teacher educator as well as my evolving identities as applied linguist and social researcher. I give details on how this study attempts to combine different types of data, narrative approaches, and methods of data analysis. In Chapter 4, I begin the narrative with the broad view of the history of English teaching in Mexico as told by my review of local research, public documents, and the media. I use this analysis to contrast the available empirical evidence with dominant discourses and the ideologies that lie beneath these discourses. This narrative is set in contrast with the narrow narratives of the five teachers who participated in the story. I use an approach to narrative inquiry that relies on content analysis to create researcher-generated accounts on the basis of data provided by the participants (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). These summarized narratives are useful to see the participants' life histories in a nutshell and guide the detailed analysis of their narratives in the following chapters.

In Chapter 5, I present highlights of interview data compared to the participants' autobiographies. The data is analyzed following Gee (2008), Riessman (1993, 2008), and Mishler (1999) approach to narrative analysis playing close attention to discursive features. The big stories displayed in this chapter present narratives of the participants' pre-service life and pay close attention to how they interpreted their first interactions with English, the process by which they decided to become teachers, and their memories of their experience in their initial teacher education program. I analyze how these experiences were used by the participants to perform their identity and showcase their interpretations of how they became who they are.

In a similar fashion, Chapter 6 displays big stories that narrate the participants' lives as in-service teachers. In these accounts, the participants reflect on their experiences with traditional forms of professional development such as Master's programs, certifications, and summer courses. They oppose these experiences to their lives in the classroom and how they impact on their professional identities. An analysis of teachers' search of professional legitimacy and their representations of how social relations and job mobility impact in their careers is also included in this chapter.

In Chapter 7, I step out of the participants' life histories to focus on results from field observations, extracts of the participants' teaching journals, and transcriptions of teacher-student naturally occurring interactions. I use these data to observe teachers' positioning in actions and discourse as they interacted at their workplace. I apply Bamberg's (1997) approach to position analysis on small stories taken from classroom conversation.

Chapter 8 contains the discussion of findings. In this section I present a cross-case analysis that centers on four main categories. I first consider how the participants represented their initiation as L2 teachers and connect their narratives to two common beliefs present in dominant discourses discussed by previous studies (e.g. beliefs about English teaching as a career option and English as cultural capital). As a second category, I analyze the participants' identity negotiation at the workplace in light of current research on second language teachers'

professional development. In the third section, I discuss the risks implied in the use of binary oppositions in the teachers' identity negotiations and consider alternatives. As a fourth category, I consider the implications of having teachers' professional legitimacy negotiation so closely connected to the NS fallacy in Mexico and how my findings relate to previous research. In the fifth section I discuss the implications of the participants' preferred teaching practices and how they confirm and expand the findings of previous studies conducted in Mexico. Finally, Chapter 9 presents my conclusions. I begin with a summary of the study, then I move to discuss the implications of the findings, the limitations of the study and some suggestions for future research, especially in the context of Mexico.

CHAPTER II

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

At the heart of every personal journey, lies a daunting question that urges us to discover who we are. As esoteric as such a quest may seem, it has not only enkindled the interest of artists and philosophers, but has also attracted scholars whose disciplines are traditionally associated with more earthly matters. In fact, nowadays, it is not surprising to encounter all sort of scholarly work devoted to the topic of identity. For example, a simple search in a generic database such as ProQuest can render several hundreds of results that approach the subject from diverse disciplines such as psychology, management, and political science, to mention just a few examples of disciplines. One might as well wonder where and when all this identity frenzy began. In this chapter, I will begin by explaining how the topic of identity earned such a prominent place in the social sciences in general, and in applied linguistics in particular. With that purpose in mind, in the first section (2.1.), I will analyze the definition of identity and how it was deconstructed by poststructuralist theorists. In doing so, I will discuss issues such as social practice, agency, and power, and how they are relevant to our understanding of identity. This revision will address how the concept has been incorporated in the field of Applied Linguistic and how it has been considered important for understanding second language acquisition.

In the second section (2.2), I will consider how the field of Applied Linguistics has shifted from an exclusive focus on the learner to a more holistic view that includes teachers and their mental and emotional processes as a legitimate objects of study. Through reviewing the literature related to this topic I hope to lead the reader to the main topic of my dissertation: second language teachers and their identities.

In the third section (2.3), the discussion will narrow down to ponder the identity formation of one special type of teachers, those who teach English when it is not their first language. Some scholars have used the term nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs) to refer to this group. Although with some reservations, I will use this term in the present chapter to review the two main research traditions that have dealt with the topic and consider their contributions.

The fourth section (2.4) will look at a relatively under-explored group of teachers: NNESTs in Latin America. I will review the available studies that focus on this group of teachers and look at the remaining questions. The final section will offer a summary of the chapter.

2.1 A definition of identity

2.1.1 The fluid nature of identity.

According to the Merriam-Webster and the Oxford English Dictionaries, the first record of the word identity in the English language dates back to 1570 as a borrowing from French. At the time, the new word was employed to mean: “quality or condition of being the same in substance, composition, nature, properties, or in particular qualities under consideration; absolute or essential sameness; oneness” (Identity, Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). By 1596, says the same source, the word was already being used to refer to the essential characteristics that distinguish individuals from one another. In this new acceptance, the word identity implied that in spite of age and life changes, there was something within all human beings that was bound to remain immutable. From that initial point, the word grew in semantic complexity.

Those who have studied the historical development of the concept behind the term (Taylor, 1989; Benwell & Stokoe, 2006) have argued that identity was already a constant in the works of European philosophers even before the French Revolution. This fact, of course, was not fortuitous; Bendle (2002) suggests that perhaps identity became an issue of interest for most scholars of the Enlightenment because it responded to the ontological shift that placed the individual at the center of Western thought. Once this shift was successfully achieved, identity became increasingly popular, until its presence was established in everyday discourse to refer to who we are. Therefore, nowadays we hear all sort of discussions about *discovering*, *defending*, and *preserving* one's identity, as if it were something tangible one can grab and possess for a lifetime, but which can also be lost at any given moment. At the same time, people talk about becoming a better version of themselves by developing, expanding, or transforming their identities. How the original idea of an individual's immutable essence became intertwined with a seemingly contradictory idea of change is perhaps best explained by analyzing the transition to the fuzzy historical time in which we now live: postmodernity.

Discussing postmodernity and postmodernism, Crotty (2003) describes the former as a historical moment ushered in by the structural transformations experienced by advanced industrial societies, while the latter is defined as a cultural response to those changes. In other words, when the patterns of social organization established during the industrial revolution were replaced by the new order that emerged after WWI, the ideology that supported the old order also experienced radical transformations. As part of this reorganization of thought, the essentialist views that supported the consolidation of capitalist societies (e.g. positivism, structuralism, among others) reached a crisis during the second half of the twentieth century. Therefore, the essentialist perspective that explains the behavior of social groups as a byproduct of the biological and/or cultural forces that define them was called into question (Bucholtz, 2003). In this context, ambiguity, relativity, and fragmentation were introduced in the postmodern thought, and the idea of a stable self was debunked. It is in this scenario that poststructuralism, an approach to social

theory that reacts against the determinist views of structuralism, proposes a different interpretation of the individual that allows for agency and the instability of identity.

2.1.2 Discourse and practice in identity construction.

The poststructuralist idea of identity as subjected to transformations is closely linked to its social nature. Although this association had long been insinuated by various social scientists, it was best articulated in the works of Christine Weedon. Drawing from Althusser and Foucault, Weedon (1987/1997) attempted to develop a feminist theory that would legitimize women's experience without dismissing reason on the grounds of being a product of patriarchal societies. In doing so, Weedon posits that gender roles, instead of being naturally assigned by innate sexual characteristics, are socially constructed. To elaborate on this idea, Weedon uses the concept of subjectivity, which she defines as "the conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions of the individual, her sense of herself and her ways of understanding her relation to the world" (Weedon, 1987/1997, p. 32). Consequently, subjectivity emerges as individuals try to make sense of who they are in relation to others. Seen in this light, the term implies a meaning-making process and a site of struggle. In other words, as people negotiate their place in the world their subjectivities constantly experience reformulations, becoming fluid and closely knitted to the upheavals of history and social change. In this emergence of subjectivity, or of identity, as restated by other theorists (e.g. Butler, 2006; Giddens, 1991; Mathews, 2000), language plays a central role.

In Weedon's thought, as in the views of many other poststructuralist writers, language becomes the site of struggle where social organization is maintained and contested (Weedon, 1987/1997, p. 21). It then follows that, far from being a neutral communication tool, the language used in everyday discursive practices actively participates in the construction of people's identities, assigning positions, intentions, and attitudes to individuals' actions. Hence, it is not surprising that such association between language and identity has become fertile soil for

linguists; especially sociolinguists and applied linguists who are interested in the intersection between the more abstract study of language and social life.

One of such linguists is James Paul Gee, whose work on the relationships between language and culture has vastly informed the research on identity. For Gee, in order to understand language in context, one must focus on *Discourses* (with capital D and in plural). The concept encompasses the many ways in which people behave and interact with each other, as well as the thoughts, beliefs, and values that stand behind social actions. These “ways of being” that include the things we say, how we say them, and how we choose to present ourselves when we say them, become instantiations of our identities (Gee, 2008, p. 3). In sum, Discourses is a term Gee uses to refer to socially situated identities that can be as multiple as the groups to which we belong. Understanding the role of language in the configuration of these identities is crucial for Gee, because all linguistic devices (from isolated sounds to a complex array of linguistic features working at once) are intrinsically connected to our tacit or overt understandings of reality; our socially negotiated theories, stories, or cultural models that we use to make sense of the world and shape our ideas of who we are (Gee, 2008, Chapter 1). Therefore, in Gee’s view, just as in Weedon’s idea of subjectivity, identity is discursively constructed, socially negotiated, and multiple. Gee, however, is not the only linguist who has devoted time to the topic of identity. Sociolinguists Penelope Eckert, Sally McConnell-Guinet, and Mary Bucholtz also contributed to this conversation since the early 90s by adopting a construct they borrowed from Lave and Wenger (1991): Communities of Practice. I will elaborate on this construct below.

The term Communities of Practice (CoP) emerged from the collaboration of Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger in a number of ethnographic studies that focused on the social genesis of learning. From their perspective, learning is not seen as an internal or individual phenomenon that happens as the direct result of controlled and purposeful teaching, as it supposedly occurs in schools. Instead, they propose a view of learning as a social process that is organic, learner-focused, and unavoidable. Wenger (1998) advanced the idea that this type of spontaneous

learning occurs as individuals participate in communities, or groups conformed to achieve common goals. For Wenger, these CoPs are not necessarily officially recognized organizations. They are rather informal groups, so common-place and familiar that they often go unnoticed. However, even without a formal structure, these communities are united by common practices. These practices are defined as ways of acting and doing that have been socially created and agreed upon to maintain the members of a group actively involved in their common pursuits (Wenger, 1998).

The concept of CoP has become a powerful theoretical tool to interpret identity formation because it directly addresses the interplay between the individual and the social context. In Wenger's own words identity is considered "a way of talking about how learning changes who we are and creates personal histories of becoming in the context of our communities" (Wenger, 1998, p. 5). In other words, identity emerges as three main forces interact: social practices, learning, and time. Moreover, Wenger argued that identity formation is far from being a smooth process, since members usually have to cope with power structures and certain amount of disagreement within their communities. These considerations arouse the interest of a handful of sociolinguists who were in search of a conceptual framework that would do justice to the interaction between language, society, and the individual.

For example, dissatisfied with the way sociolinguists had addressed the interaction of gender and language, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (1992) proposed to observe linguistic practices from the perspective of CoP. They suggested that previous efforts to analyze linguistic variations by focusing either on the difference between men's and women's discourse styles, or on the idea of male dominance in language had failed to account for subtle local nuances and instances of resistance to male domination. They argued that sociolinguists could achieve a superior understanding of language variation by observing how individuals engage in the negotiation of meaning as they pursue common goals. Using Lave and Wenger's ideas, Eckert and McConnell-Ginet suggested that practice had a central role to shape the relationships between

language and society. They hoped that this focus would contribute to explaining language variation among individuals of the same sex, since the same person can move in different CoP at the same time and achieve diverse degrees of power within them. The goal of this research agenda would be to study gender construction in social practice and how this process relates to identity formation and language use (Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992).

Taking this challenge to heart, Mary Bucholtz (1999) conducted a study of a small community of high school nerd girls using the framework of CoP. Armed with this conceptual tool, Bucholtz was able to uncover that her participants did not assume the nerd identity as a stigma, but embraced it as an alternative gender identity which was purposefully promoted by the discursive practices of their small community. What this type of scholarship proposed at the time was a new focus on individuals' agency. In other words, without denying that identity is greatly influenced by social structures, the feminist sociolinguists of the turn of the twenty-first century argued that unexpected linguistic identities were not to be feared or discarded by sociolinguists. On the contrary, they should be considered as instantiations of the innovative force of individual speakers. Furthermore, Bucholtz argued that individuals' adoption of diverse linguistic selves is a proof that identity is not a direct product of social structures, but a negotiated process in which individuals are active players (Bucholtz, 2003). A similar interest on the individual was also instrumental in leading applied linguistics to consider the study of identity.

2.1.3 Agency, power, and identity in applied linguistics.

Identity became a topic of great interest in applied linguistics by the second half of the 1980s; however, this interest did not emerge in a vacuum. Block (2007) argues that identity was somehow implied in those early second language acquisition (SLA) studies that had paid special attention to how individual learners interacted with society and how the interaction could trigger or inhibit second language learning. The studies on motivation (Gardner, 1960; Gardner & Lambert, 1972; Masgoret & Gardner, 2003), the acculturation model (Schumann 1976, 1978), and the noticing hypotheses (Schmidt 1983; Schmidt & Frota, 1986) were some of the theoretical

products that resulted from this type of research. These contributions were united by a common thread: a belief in the critical role of the individual's inner forces to achieve success in second language learning. In other words, whether one focuses on the role of integrative motivation, the learners' willingness to acculturate, or their interest to pay attention to linguistic features, second language learning was considered to rest almost entirely on the learners' shoulders. By the same token, the social context in which the said learners were expected to interact was perceived as evenly receptive, stimulant, and ready to accept L2 speakers as legitimate interlocutors. These perceptions remained uncontested until Bonny Norton directly challenged them with her study of five immigrant women in Canada (Norton, 1995, 2000; Norton Peirce, 1997).

As a well-defined poststructuralist proponent, Norton used data from her dissertation to launch identity as a prominent agenda in applied linguistics. As such, the focus proposed by Norton did acknowledge individuals' agency in L2 learning, but added a view of language as a site of struggle through drawing heavily from Weedon (1987/1997), Gee (2008), and Bourdieu (1977). From the latter, she adopted several constructs such as *cultural capital*, and *the right to speak* that were central to uncover the rather complex conditions under which L2 speakers have to move and interact.

To better understand these conceptual elements, more attention needs to be paid to the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his influence in the current conversations on identity. Bourdieu's main project was the creation of a theory of social practice that would stay clear of essentialist explanations. In other words, he was searching for a theory that would interpret society without overemphasizing human agency or relying excessively on social structures (Navarro, 2006). He decided that such theory would be one that focused on what people actually do; their practices and what is behind these practices. In order to explain how social practice works, Bourdieu coined a number of terms that he used in the context of an economic metaphor partially inspired by Marx and Engels. I will only briefly sketch four of these terms (*field*, *habitus*, *cultural capital*, and *the right to speak*) as they are relevant to the present discussion.

In Bourdieu's theory, society is considered as composed by a series of *fields* or social scenarios that are relatively independent of each other. These fields maintain a similar structure in which various forms of material and symbolic resources (capital) are generated and consumed. Bourdieu sees social life (instantiated in each field) as being always oriented towards an interest: the generation and maximization of the resources (material or symbolic). This conceptualization of social life means that people move and act to obtain major access to these resources. In each field there is capital (power) at stake, and people move and interact within their positions to access power (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In other words, social actors are driven by self-interest, and this self-interest is objectively manifested in social struggle.

A second important term is *habitus*. Bourdieu coins this term to express the relation between the individual's subjective world and objective reality. Wacquant interprets Bourdieu's idea of habitus as the dialectic way in which society's values and relations of power are internalized and transformed into people's ways of acting, thinking, and feeling. These ways of being in turn generate ways in which individuals react to reality in their own creative fashion (Wacquant, 2005, p. 316). This concept allows Bourdieu to interpret social practice as the dialectical relationship between social structures and the individual's agency.

A third element in this economic metaphor is the concept of *cultural capital*, which understands culture as a site of domination and struggle. Considered as a symbolic system, culture has been generated to mediate our understanding of reality and maintain the status quo. Cultural elements such as artifacts or language serve as tools to mediate social practice and regulate access to power (Navarro, 2006, p. 15). Hence, in order to ensure social mobility, individuals need to achieve major access to cultural capital. By the same token, to preserve a given social order, the dominant groups need to ensure their control of this cultural capital. As cultural capital, language is an instrument of power, which leads us into the fourth term in Bourdieu's theory that is directly connected to Norton's work: *the right to speak*.

Bourdieu argues that people do not only speak to be understood. We speak to impose reception, to be heard, believed, obeyed, or respected (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 648). This power to impose reception over our possible interlocutors is referred to in Bourdieu's theory as *the right to speak*. This concept implies that people use language with the ultimate purpose of being recognized as one who holds a certain amount of power. Bourdieu criticized the linguists of his time because they seemed to consider the conditions to establish communication as a given, when in reality speakers have to experience a continuous struggle to be considered as legitimate interlocutors. Norton found in the concept of the right to speak a suitable tool to understand why the participants in her study sometimes refrained from using their L2 in spite of their strong integrative motivation and evident interest in improving their proficiency.

The five women in Norton's study had immigrated to Canada with the expectation of building a new life in that country. All of them wanted to become active participants in their new culture and recognized that learning English was one of the primary conditions to ensure such participation. To pursue this goal, they enrolled in an evening class in spite of their very busy lives and family commitments. What is more, once the evening course had reached its end, these women accepted Norton's invitation to participate in the study with the hopes of continuing to improve their English. However, the study showed that the women's energy and determination often faltered when they attempted to use English outside the secure confines of their small language class. Instead of finding a willing interlocutor in each native speaker available, the five participants reported experiences of indifference and open rejection that confined them to silence. Norton's analysis suggests that these struggles stemmed from the conditions of marginalization implicit in the participants' status as immigrants and their gender, which deprived them of the necessary access to power. In other words, the participants failed to engage in conversation with the speakers of the mainstream culture because they lacked the necessary power to claim the right to speak. It was a very impressive study at that time, to say the least.

Based on this evidence, Norton takes a critical stance regarding previous views of motivation that do not consider the role that inequitable power relations may play in language learning. To fill this gap, she coined a new construct to describe the various levels of engagement with the target language that L2 users may exhibit: *investment*. In Norton's own words investment ". . . signals the socially and historically constructed relationships of learners to the target language and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it. It is best understood with reference to the economic metaphors that Bourdieu uses in his work – in particular the notion of cultural capital" (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Investment is not *instrumental motivation* as conceived by Gardner and Lambert (1972), but a more complex and evolving concept that is connected to the sociocultural context that speakers inhabit. It is an intricate set of desires to gain access to material and cultural resources that are considered as property or privilege of the target language speakers.

The concept of investment is best explained in light of the one construct around which the present work revolves: identity. For Norton, just as in Weedon's and in Wenger's views, identity is placed at the intersection of an individual's internal world and the social context in which each person relates to other subjectivities. Therefore, identity is defined as "how a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2000, p. 5). According to Norton, identity must be understood in relation to larger and inequitable social structures and is intimately related with desire: "desire for recognition, desire for affiliation and the desire for security and safety" (p. 8). Consequently, identity implies a complex relationships with the power each person can exert. It then follows that whenever we attempt to achieve more power, this move is intrinsically one of investment and is essentially connected to who we are, or plan to be.

All these considerations have strong implications for how applied linguists understand second language acquisition. If we take Norton's interpretation of Bourdieu's social theory

seriously, we have to acknowledge that every speech act is influenced by the relationships of power established between the speakers and their multiple social affiliations. What is more, when a learner acquires an L2, she is not only acquiring information, but is experiencing a transformation of herself through reorganizing her identity. Such an experience implies a struggle that is both internal –as the speaker battles to make sense of the changes – and external, as the community that is expected to receive the new member exhibits different levels of rejection or acceptance. After all, the addition of a member necessarily implies a readjustment of how power is distributed within a group. Following this interpretation, acquiring an L2 becomes a site of struggle and a learner’s investment in her own learning may suffer dramatic fluctuations under the influence of the opposing forces within a given social scenario (or field). In Norton’s study, this struggle was translated into differentiated levels of achievement in language acquisition for the five participants. She concluded that these achievements (or failures) were closely connected to the participants’ social, ethnic, and gender identities.

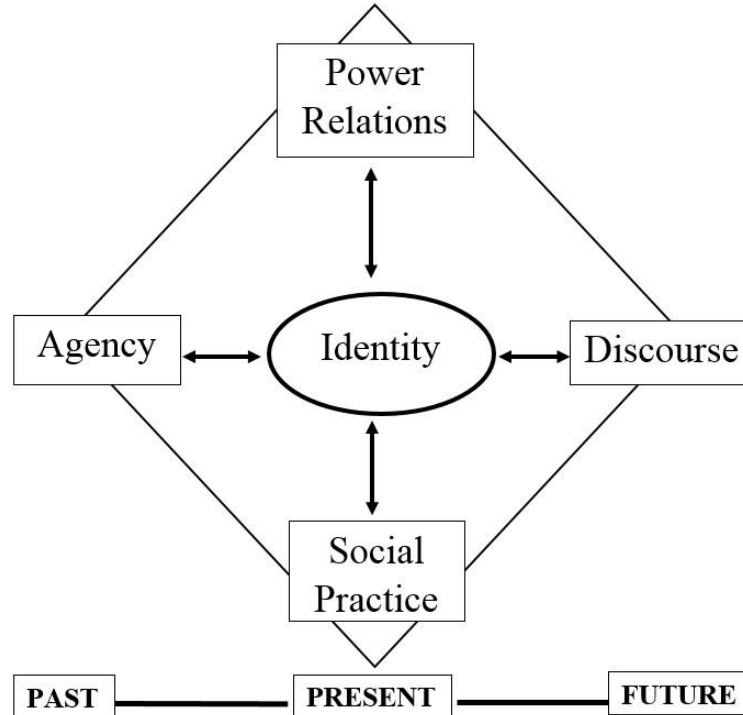
2.1.4 A definition of identity.

At this point it is necessary to pause and consider how the studies so far reviewed have shaped our understanding of identity. To begin with, it has been discussed that although the word identity was initially used to refer to an individual’s immutable characteristics, the definition of the term suffered serious transformations through history. Nowadays, most social identity theorists agree on defining identity as a context-bound and socially situated construct since it is intimately related to the forces of social practice (Lantolf & Pavlenko, 2001; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005; Wenger, 1998). This is not to say that people’s identities are fixed by static social structures. On the contrary, just as society moves, identities are fluid and constantly negotiated, while individuals strive to define the relationship of their own selves with others. Following this logic, most scholars talk about multiple identities. This is possible because individuals assume different ways of being in their relationships with the various groups in which they hold a membership (Norton, 2000; Taylor, 2013).

This social view of identity implies a give and take between society and each person's desires to access safety, recognition, and resources. In a nutshell, this view of identity calls for a consideration of power. Agency has a place in this dialectic process, but only to the extent that such capacity to act finds support for its expression (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). Consequently, the construction of identity is a struggle because just as much as individuals may fight to express agency in defining their identities, society has devised ways to control access to the power required to claim a given identity. In this process, discourse acts as a major tool that allows for the establishment and acceptance of assigned or socially imposed identities (Johnston & Buzzelli, 2008; Weedon, 1987/1997). In the same way, sociolinguistic research has found that it is also through discourse that individuals may find ways to resist undesired social pressures and redefine their identities (Bucholtz, 1999; Eckert & McConnell-Ginet, 1992). Finally, identity construction is conceived as a historical process, meaning that its construction is defined on the basis of past experiences and future projections. Figure 1 attempts to capture the social construction of identity with the caveat that this highly complex process may have somehow been over-simplified.

The figure suggests that power relations, discourse, social practice, and agency work together to shape identity. The double arrows imply that the relationship between identity and the other four elements of the figure is an interactive one. On the one hand, one's identity emerges from the interaction of human agency with the surrounding sociocultural forces. On the other, people's identities impact on the way they exert power, the way they use discourse, their social practices, and their perceived opportunities to act. In short, the influence flows in both directions. The line at the bottom of the figure represents how identity emerges through time and connecting who we were with who we want to be. I will elaborate on this idea with more detail in Chapter 3. For the time being, suffice to say that in this work I will assume a definition of identity as a historically and socially constructed process in which all the elements in Figure 1 play a part.

Figure 1. The complex construction of identity



2.2 Second language teachers' identity

2.2.1 From teachers' actions to teachers' cognitive processes.

Researchers' interest in language teachers is relatively recent. This neglect is not accidental since language teaching has long been considered a marginalized profession which is uncomfortably located among the boundaries of diverse disciplines such as linguistics, education, and SLA (Johnston, 1999). For this reason, it is not surprising that the first studies that shifted from a dominant trend centered almost exclusively on the learner to a focus on teachers emerged from the general field of education during the late 1960s. Prior to this period, most research only considered teachers as their observable actions (or behaviors) served to trigger learning outcomes in students (Borg, 2006). This situation changed with the development of cognitive psychology and the advent of the interpretative paradigm into education.

Most reviewers (Borg, 2006; Clark & Peterson, 1984; Freeman, 2002) cite Jackson's *Life in the Classroom* (1968) as one of the most prominent works that, at a conceptual level, served to

turn the tables and prompt researchers to consider teachers' cognitive and emotional processes. What Jackson did with his description of teachers' everyday tasks was to highlight the complex mental processes that mediate teachers' actions, a domain which had been almost totally ignored until then. Jackson called this mental realm the "hidden side of teaching" and posited that, in order to understand life in schools, researchers needed to include these covert processes in their research agenda. Soon, other studies followed Jackson's lead (Dahllof & Lundgren, 1970; Lortie, 1975; Sutcliff, 1977), trying to shed light on teachers' mental processes. Following this new trend, a new generation of studies on teachers' decision-making, thoughts, beliefs, and knowledge began to flourish. During that same period, SLA researchers were still too preoccupied with the learner to consider teachers beyond their role as feedback providers and lesson directors.

It was not until the 1980s when applied linguistics began to show some interest in teachers. Larsen-Freeman (1983) made a call to discard the concept of teacher training to concentrate on teachers' education as an individually-oriented process to develop awareness, attitudes, knowledge, and skills necessary to face the complex processes of decision making in the classroom. Additionally, Freeman (2002) pointed to two main events that may have also contributed to this shift towards the teacher. The first of these events was the publication of the ethnographic study of Shirley Brice Heath (1983) on young speakers of AAVE, which highlighted, among other things, the role of teachers and their impact on students' achievements. The second event was the inauguration of the first interest sections on teachers' education within important professional associations such as TESOL and IATEFL during the late 1980s. As a consequence of these influential circumstances and with the support of the research already developed in education, applied linguistics finally saw the appearance of the first group of studies on language teachers' decision-making (Freeman, 1989; Woods, 1989). However, focusing on teachers' decisions was at that time still within the process-product approach that regarded teachers' actions as connected to learning outcomes in a simple cause-and-effect relationship.

Becoming aware of this danger, the research on language teachers conducted during the 1990s slowly began to part from an essentialist point of view by looking at more complex cognitive processes such as language teachers' learning (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Freeman & Richards, 1996), teachers' knowledge (Johnson, 1999; Richards, 1994), and the hybrid construct of teachers' beliefs (Allen, 1996; Kern, 1995; Peacock, 1998). This line of research would evolve into a new strand referred by Borg (2006) as the study of teacher cognition, which he defines as follows:

Teacher cognition can thus be characterized as an often tacit, personally-held, practical system of mental constructs held by teachers . . . – i.e. defined and refined on the basis of educational and professional experiences through teachers' lives. These constructs have been characterized using a range of psychological labels (particularly belief and knowledge) which may often be distinguished at the level of theoretical or philosophical debate but which seem to defy compartmentalization when teachers' practices and cognitions are examined empirically (p. 35).

This resistance to atomistic interpretations posed a number of challenges to second language researchers. In order to tackle the complexity of this new object of study, they needed to develop new methodological and conceptual tools to deal with constructs that were still undergoing definition in the neighboring fields of education and psychology. Considering these challenges, Borg (2003, 2006) reviewed the developments achieved by this new strand of research by the first decade of the twenty-first century. He concluded that researchers had at least reached an agreement on the following points:

1. The impact of language teacher education programs on teacher cognition was highly variable. Most of the outcomes depended on student-teachers' personal ways to make sense of the contents and experiences provided by the program. This variability called for more longitudinal studies that could account for the role of personal histories on teachers' development.

2. The relationships between cognition and behavior was more complex than previously thought, since changes in cognition did not neatly translate into behavioral changes and vice versa.
3. The evidence showed that teacher cognition interacted with a broad range of situational and social factors, whose roots could be traced beyond the classroom walls. Such complexity called for a holistic approach that could integrate wider concerns and make sense of the apparent human contradictions often reported in the studies.
4. The proliferation of terminology that increased the difficulty of establishing connection between studies. The consensual generation of a body of common definitions to operate the still fuzzy constructs of beliefs, practical knowledge, pedagogical knowledge, and interactive decisions, among others, was (and I would add, still is) a pending task.
5. The results so far obtained had strong western biases with most of the research being produced in only eight countries, notably in the US.

In spite of these limitations, the progress made was evident. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the study of teachers' mental lives was well established in the field, and researchers had developed a clearer common research agenda they had to address. In this context, the field was about to incorporate a new construct into the equation: second language teachers' identity.

2.2.2 The genesis of the research on teachers' identities.

Similarly to the study of teacher cognition, the interest in teachers' identities was originally generated in the field of education. Part of this interest derived from the influential work of Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly who, towards the second half of the 1980s, began to delve into the topic of teachers' knowledge (Connelly & Clandinin 1984, Clandinin, 1985). These initial studies focused on the type of knowledge that emerges from the circumstances and the actions taken to respond to these circumstances. Clandinin and Connelly named this knowledge "personal practical knowledge" and set to study it by using an array of ethnographic

techniques that explored the participants' experience in narrative form (see Chapter 3 for more details). The ultimate goal in their research was to address the disconnection between theory and practice and find new bottom-up solutions to generate new knowledge about teaching and learning based on teachers' experiences. However, during the course of a collaboration that lasted for over fifteen years, Clandinin and Connelly found out that, when teachers narrated their experiences to refer to their knowledge about teaching, they were often referring to aspects of their identity. In other words, in narratives of professional experiences, one element that seemed to unify the data was the teachers' sense of who they were, and not their knowledge about teaching, the subject-matter, or the connections between these two (Connelly & Clandinin, 1999).

While these developments were occurring in the field of education, SLA was experiencing a shift towards learners' identity, which was previously described in the first part of this chapter. After Norton published her first article on second language learners' identities (Norton Pierce, 1995), a number of scholars already working from an interpretative stance rose to Norton's challenge. Their responses would be evident two years later, when Norton was invited as a guest editor for the autumn issue of TESOL Quarterly. This issue, which would be entirely devoted to the topic of identity, served as a historical landmark for the development of the theory of language and identity. In that issue, three papers formally inaugurated the conversation on second language teachers' identities. I will first refer to the now classic Duff and Uchida's (1997) paper on the sociocultural identities of four English teachers working in Japan.

Using an ethnographic approach, Duff and Uchida looked at the relationship between teachers' identities and their teaching practices, especially those related to the explicit and implicit teaching of culture. The researchers found that the ways in which the participants incorporated or purposefully ignored the presentation of the target language culture in their classes were initially supported by their personal biographies. However, under the pressure of their sociocultural context, the participants had partially modified their approach so that their teaching could respond to their students' expectations and the demands of institutional policies.

By the same token, students' identities also experienced a transformation by being socialized into classroom routines and interactions that sometimes contradicted the dominant Japanese cultural values and practices. Also, Duff and Uchida observed that the curriculum (in this case the textbook) and the lived-curriculum embodied by diverse institutional practices (employers' expectations, colleagues' identities, and common teaching practices) interacted with the participants' past experiences, helping the participants to negotiate their identities and impacting on their teaching.

While it is true that this study did not report data coming from a large number of individuals, it presented insights and interpretations that were transferable to a wide range of contexts. First of all, Duff and Uchida had purposefully selected a group of practitioners that could represent different types of teachers around the world (e.g. native and nonnative English speaking teachers, teachers who favored the teaching of culture and teachers who didn't, teachers who used humor as well as teachers who preferred a more serious and business-like approach to instructions). Second, although the cases had been narrated with attention to detail to provide rich data according to the ethnographic tradition, the authors had highlighted themes that were not excessively idiosyncratic. In other words, the study discussed issues that most teachers around the world would find relevant, such as the balance between language-focused instruction and the teaching of cultural practices of the target language communities. In fact, this study started a conversation about the role of culture in the second language classroom which is still ongoing (Menard-Warwick, 2014). But perhaps the most important contribution of this study was setting the spotlight on the issue of teachers' identities as an expansion of the ongoing research agenda on teachers' mental and emotional lives.

The other two papers included in this 1997 issue were shorter reports of minor or ongoing studies (Amin, 1997; Tang, 1997) that targeted the topic of nonnative English speaking teachers (NNESTs). The discussion on this topic had already created a research space in the field since the publication of the ground-breaking work of Péter Medgyes (1983, 1992). However, what Tang

and Amin did with their papers in this issue was important to summon the members of the NNEST Caucus to join the discussion on teachers' identities. Given the relevance of this topic for the purpose of the present work, before I can review the work of Tang and Amin, it is necessary to provide more information spotlighting NNEST research. With that aim in mind, in the following section I will summarize the development of the topic before 1997.

2.2.3 The controversy surrounding the nonnative English speaking teachers.

In 1983, the aforementioned Péter Medgyes published a paper in the *ELT Journal* discussing a topic that had been previously neglected by the field: the nonnative English speaking teacher. This omission was later considered a serious one, given the fact that an overwhelming majority of practitioners in the field belong to this group in one way or another (Canagarajah, 2005). Medgyes, a NNEST himself, had noticed that most NNESTs face various apprehensions and insecurities during their career. These fears, he posited, stem from their condition of second language users. Medgyes' first paper did not present empirical data but brought to the table the consideration of the psychological pressures experienced by NNESTs. He argued that these pressures could explain certain aspects of NNESTs' actions and attitudes, such as their obsession with grammar and their insecurities about pronunciation.

The first empirical study that responded to Medgyes' call to analyze the differences between NNESTs and native English speaking teachers (NESTs) was conducted by Ravi Sheorey (1986). Using a list of student-generated writing errors, Sheorey compared the error judgments of NNESTs in India to a cohort of native English speaking teachers (NESTs) in the US. The evidence suggested that NNESTs were less tolerant to errors and tended to be harsher when grading grammar accuracy as opposed to native speakers. These results offered empirical support for Medgyes' assumption that NNESTs and NESTs teaching practices were substantially different. However, little else was to be done to provide further evidence regarding teachers' actions in the following fourteen years. Following a different logic, the studies published during the rest of the 1980s and 90s focused on NNESTs' perspectives about their aptitudes and work.

It was Medgyes himself who would initially start the trend of focusing on NNESTs' points of view using a survey-based approach. He initiated with a quick poll composed by one single multiple-choice question that he first piloted rather informally during two professional conferences held in London and Paris in 1991 (ELT Journal 45th anniversary symposium, and IATEFL convention). The respondents, the TESOL specialists attending the conference, answered this question:

“Suppose you were the principal of a commercial ELT school in Britain. Who would you employ?

- a. I would employ only native speakers, even if they were not qualified EFL teachers.
- b. I would prefer to employ native-speaking EFL teachers, but if hard pressed I would choose a qualified non-native rather than a native without EFL qualifications.
- c. The native/non-native issue would not be a selection criterion (provided the non-native speaking EFL teacher was a highly proficient speaker of English)” (Medgyes, 1992, p. 343).

Unsurprisingly, the participants' responses showed a preference for hiring NESTs over NNESTs, although they accepted that, given the circumstances, they would choose a qualified NNEST over a NEST without appropriate qualifications. Based on this first poll, Medgyes advanced the idea that NNESTs were indeed at a disadvantage in the EFL/ESL job market because their L2 proficiency would never be at the same level with that of a NEST. Additionally, although Medgyes recognized that the term native speaker (NS) is problematic (Kachru 1992; Davis, 2008), he also acknowledged the fact that the monolingual NS was, by far, the yardstick most commonly used to measure the perceived value of second language teachers. At the same time, Medgyes also conceded that well-qualified NNESTs could have other virtues that made them effective teachers.

The first two hypotheses that emerged from this first poll were:

1 NESTS and non-NESTS differ in terms of their language competence and teaching practice.

2 The discrepancy in language competence accounts for most of the differences found in their teaching practice (Medgyes, 1992, p. 345).

Two years later, Medgyes published a more ambitious study in which a third hypothesis was addressed: “The awareness of differences in language proficiency influences the non-NESTS’ self-perceptions and teaching attitudes” (Reves & Medgyes, 1994, p. 354). As a way to approach this assumption, the authors collected more representative data from 216 NES-NNES teachers located in 10 different countries (Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Sweden, Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe). To focus on teachers’ perceptions, the study used a questionnaire of 23 close-ended questions to target two main issues: 1) How NESTs and NNESTs characterized their teaching behaviors and English language proficiency levels and 2) The perceptions of NNESTs on how their nonnativeness impacted their teaching.

The results were developed through descriptive statistical analysis and some correlations between variables such as qualifications and perceived difficulties with the target language were calculated. Over 60% of the participants perceived differences between NNESTs and NESTs in teaching behavior. However, regarding more specific differences that implied a superiority of one group over the other, the opinion was less clear-cut. Moreover, almost half of the respondents did not acknowledge important differences between NEST and NNEST in terms of professional success. Additionally, when asked whether they would favor one group over the other, almost half of the respondents said they would hire a balanced number of teachers from both groups. One third said they would prefer employing NNESTs, and only 10% declared preference to hire NESTs. The questions addressed to the NNESTs were designed to find out details about the teachers’ contact with the target language and how they perceived their proficiency and teaching abilities. The answers to these questions indicated that over a third of the respondents had never been in an English-speaking country. Only 10% of the participants had lived abroad for over a

year, and the rest reported short stays of just a few months. The contact with NESTs was limited, with only a fifth of the NNESTs having daily interactions with their NS counterparts. Regarding their perceptions of their abilities, the NNESTs reported different types of language difficulties, such as difficulties with vocabulary, fluency, conversation, pronunciation, and listening. Challenges with grammar were less frequently mentioned. The majority of the respondents declared that this perceived language deficit impacted their teaching even if only 'a little', or 'quite a bit'.

In spite of these revealing descriptive findings, more sophisticated statistical analysis did not yield quite satisfactory results. In the correlational part of the study, the degree of most correlations was low (0.2 - 0.3) with the most interesting (but predictable) relationships being:

1. Positive correlation between stays in an English-speaking country and degree of contact and interactions with NESTs.
2. Negative correlation between low qualifications and perceived language abilities.

In addition, a more important, but equally predictable, correlation (0.47) was found between the degree of contact with NESTs and their presence in the school where the respondents were working. The authors interpreted teachers' perceived difficulties with their L2 as language deficiencies that should be addressed by proficiency-oriented training and by encouraging their contact with NESTs.

When the results of this study are compared with more recent developments in the topic of NNESTs, we may perhaps disagree with some of Reves and Medgyes' (1994) conclusions. For instance, researchers nowadays may feel reluctant to agree with Medgyes' implicit judgement of NNESTs against the inflexible (and for some, theoretically unsound) NS norm. However, this study represents a corner stone in the history of the inquiry on second language teachers as it successfully placed the NNEST on the research map and opened the door for further developments. In fact, Medgyes' first studies stirred much more than mere scientific curiosity

about NNESTs. Very soon the discussion became politically charged, as we can see from the review below.

2.2.4 The TESOL nonnative speakers' caucus.

In 1996, a group of young scholars met at the TESOL annual conference in Chicago. All of them were accomplished applied linguists and English teachers with a long-standing career in their native countries and in the United States, where they had obtained their graduate degrees. However, during most of their professional training, these scholars had struggled with the NNEST label that seemed to stay with them no matter how impressive their teaching efforts were, thus invoking an ever-constant need to prove their legitimacy. These linguists were George Braine, Suresh Canagarajah, Ulla Connor, Kamal Sridhar, Jacintha Thomas, and Devi Chitrapu, who, by Braine's initiative (Braine, 1999), presented a colloquium entitled "In their own voices: Nonnative speaker professionals in TESOL." In this discussion, the presenters shared narratives of their struggles as English specialists while being nonnative speakers of this language. Their experiences resonated with those other NNESTs in the audience, unleashing pent-up emotions and exposing a long-standing prejudice that prevailed in the field at that time.

The conversation initiated in that colloquium would ignite further reactions questioning the hiring practices that seemed to favor native speakers of English over qualified NNESTs. But the arguments that the new pro-NNEST movement put forward were not only based on grounds of labor equity. There were heated debates among linguists about the notion of the native speaker that, some contended, was more politically loaded than theoretically grounded (Kachru, 1976; 1992; Phillipson, 1992). In this discussion, Kachru's idea of World Englishes was vital. For one thing, the concept had led linguists to acknowledge that English was not exclusively owned by the countries that traditionally use it as a mother tongue (Britain, the US, Australia, Canada, New Zealand). Kachru argued that the spread of English had exposed it to natural processes of language change and appropriation by other groups of speakers who, by the end of the twentieth century, outnumbered the so-called native speakers. These facts had made linguists consider that

there were no scientific bases to hold the monolingual native speakers as the ultimate standard of usage. With these arguments at hand, a new advocacy movement officially emerged with the creation of the Nonnative English Speakers (NNES) in TESOL Caucus in 1998. Although the members of this Caucus were interested in making a case in favor of labor equity for NNESTs, they also had an additional and equally important agenda: undertaking the task of developing a whole new line of research on the topic of NNESTs.

Although the members of the NNES Caucus were united by a common cause, they were a diverse group in terms of their linguistic backgrounds, nationalities and, most importantly, their epistemological allegiances and research interests. This variety of scientific perspectives has diversified the nature of the research developed in the field since the second half of the 1990s. In the following sections I will discuss how the research on NNEST connects with the studies on teachers' identity. Special attention is given to the diversity of this research in relation to the research methods applied, the perspectives considered, and the types of teachers who have been featured in the studies.

2.3 NNEST Identity

In the previous sections, I have mentioned how the work of Bonny Norton opened the discussion about identity issues in the field of applied linguistics. This idea found a fertile soil in the emerging research on teachers' mental lives and eventually led to the development of a new line of studies on second language teachers' identities. Concurrently, the NNEST movement in TESOL drew attention to the relevant role of this group of teachers and raised questions about the impact of their linguistic background on teaching and learning. When TESOL Quarterly published a special issue on identity in 1997, the nascent research on second language teacher identity met with the equally new studies in NNESTs. This encounter was evident in a couple of short articles published in the Teaching Issues section by two novice scholars: Cecilia Tang and Nuzhat Amin. The two articles focused on the identities of NNESTs but approached the subject using different methods to collect their data. While Amin had used interviews, Tang had relied on

a survey. Apart from that apparently subtle difference, the two articles seemed to take a very similar poststructuralist stance to support the NNEST's cause. However, the methodological choices of these two articles were harbingers of a more profound epistemological divide that was already impacting the field.

2.3.1 The interpretative and quantitative approaches in NNESTs research.

Until 1997, the few studies on NNESTs already published (Andrews, 1994; Reves & Medgyes, 1994; Sheorey, 1986) had all relied on surveys as their sole method of data collection and the analysis had been quantitative. The researchers were interested in identifying trends to characterize the advantages and disadvantages of being a NNEST and how NNEST were perceived by others and by themselves. Therefore, using close-ended questionnaires and rating scales seemed to be the most appropriate path to collecting data from rather large groups of individuals. In other words, researchers at the time were interested in drawing generalizations and prescriptions for better practices from their results; hence, the use of statistical procedures to analyze data was appropriate.

This tradition did not fade with the introduction of other methods. On the contrary, the use of surveys has been a constant in the research on NNESTs to this very day (Moussu & Llurda, 2008). In fact, for the purpose of this work, I reviewed 74 empirical studies published from 1986 to 2014 (see Table 1 on page 45 and the appendix at the end of this chapter). Out of these studies, 20 of them had used surveys as their only data collection method, with the latest having been published in 2010. These studies mainly addressed the perceptions about NNESTs' qualifications, attitudes, and teaching styles from the points of view of students, employers, teacher educators, and the NNESTs themselves. Together, the studies addressed four main assumptions regarding the presupposed negative perceptions about NNEST. These assumptions were:

1. NNESTs suffer from an inferiority complex, considering themselves in a disadvantaged position vis-à-vis their native English-speaking counterparts.

2. NNESTs tend to be more rigid and form-oriented teachers.
3. If given a choice, school administrators would prefer hiring a NEST over a NNEST.
4. Students consider NESTs as the ideal English teachers and prefer being taught by them.

Table 1. Studies on NNESTs in this literature review

Geographic Distribution	Type of Teachers	Number of studies
Studies conducted in the center	Pre-Service Teachers	15
	In-Service Teachers	15
Studies conducted in the periphery	Pre-Service Teachers	9
	In-Service Teachers	31
Other foreign languages	Pre-Service Teachers	1
	In-Service Teachers	3
Total		74

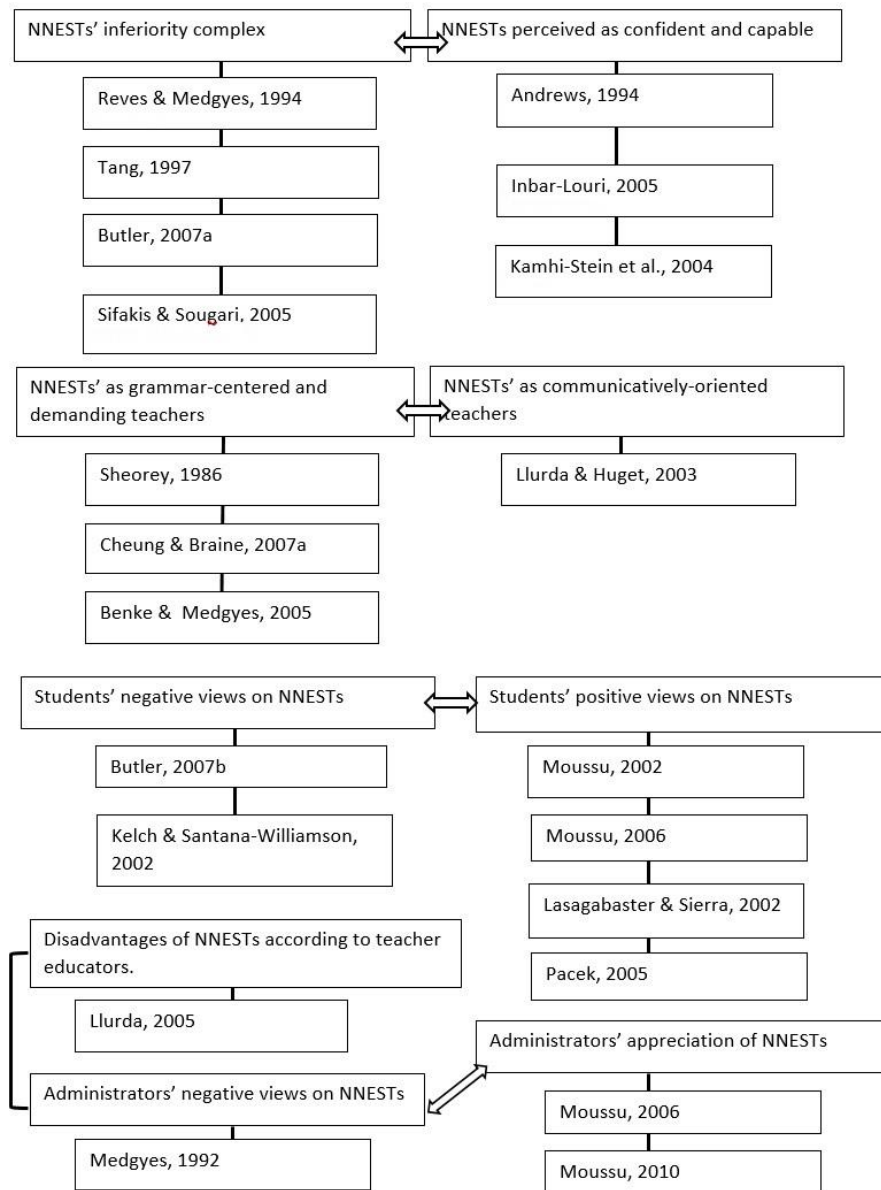
Note: For more details on these studies, see the appendix at the end of this chapter.

Although these survey-oriented studies originally searched for objective evidence to either prove or disprove the assumptions listed above, they have yielded some rather contradictory results (see Figure 2). Regarding the first assumption, the international survey conducted by Reves and Medgyes (1994) offered some evidence suggesting that a predominant number of NNESTs did indeed consider that their being nonnative English speakers was a disadvantage in the job market. This same trend was also found among the 112 elementary NNEST surveyed by Butler (2007a) in Japan and among the 47 Hong Kong NNESTs who responded to Tang's (1997) questionnaire. However, other surveys conducted in Israel and the US (Inbar-Louri, 2005; Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Chin, Paik, & Sasser, 2004) showed predominantly confident views of NNESTs about their language abilities and work conditions. Additionally, in

an early survey, Andrews (1994) reported that NNESTs' appreciation of their language knowledge and skills increased with time and teaching experience.

With respect to the second assumption, Sheorey (1986) and Cheung and Braine (2007) found that NNESTs in different parts of the world (India and Hong Kong) displayed a strong tendency to focus on grammar and examinations and were generally perceived by students as

Figure 2. Contrasting results of survey-based studies



more demanding than NESTs were. By contrast, elementary school NNESTs in Spain were reported by Llurda and Huget (2003) as being more communicatively oriented. Similar contradictions existed regarding students' and administrator's preferences. Some studies found a clear NS bias among students (Butler, 2007b, Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002; Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002), while others reported that students were either happy with their NNESTs (Moussu, 2002; Moussu, 2006) or sensibly improved their views about their teaching with time (Pacek, 2005). The same variation appears in the few survey studies that have analyzed the views of administrators (Moussu, 2006; 2010) and teacher educators (Llurda, 2005).

These contrasting views can be best understood when considering that the surveys in question were conducted in very diverse conditions, with teachers working at different levels, within countries where the status of English varied, and at different historical times. For instance, the self-assured NNESTs surveyed by Kamhi-Stein et al. (2004) had lived in the United States for many years, in some cases since their childhood. Kamhi-Stein and associates admitted that this experience may have contributed to these teachers' confidence in their linguistic skills and knowledge. The limitations of the survey format, however, did not allow the researcher to delve into these experiences. In another example, the elementary teachers in Llurda and Huget's study were certainly influenced in their teaching by the communicative approach that prevailed in their curriculum. On the contrary, the secondary school teachers in the same study showed a stronger grammar focus, which was also present in the secondary education curriculum they followed. Also, school administrators' opinions that seemed to range from supportive to biased against NNESTs (Medgyes, 1992; Moussu, 2006; Moussu 2010) may have varied over the years under the pressures of the NNEST advocacy movement. This may be especially true in the United States where issues of political correctness have received more attention. Without more evidence to discuss this possible explanation, one can only speculate. Moreover, it has been pointed out elsewhere (Moussu & Llurda, 2008) that some surveys (e.g. Reves & Medgyes, 1994) have yielded contradictory results because of reliability issues, such as the diverse conditions under

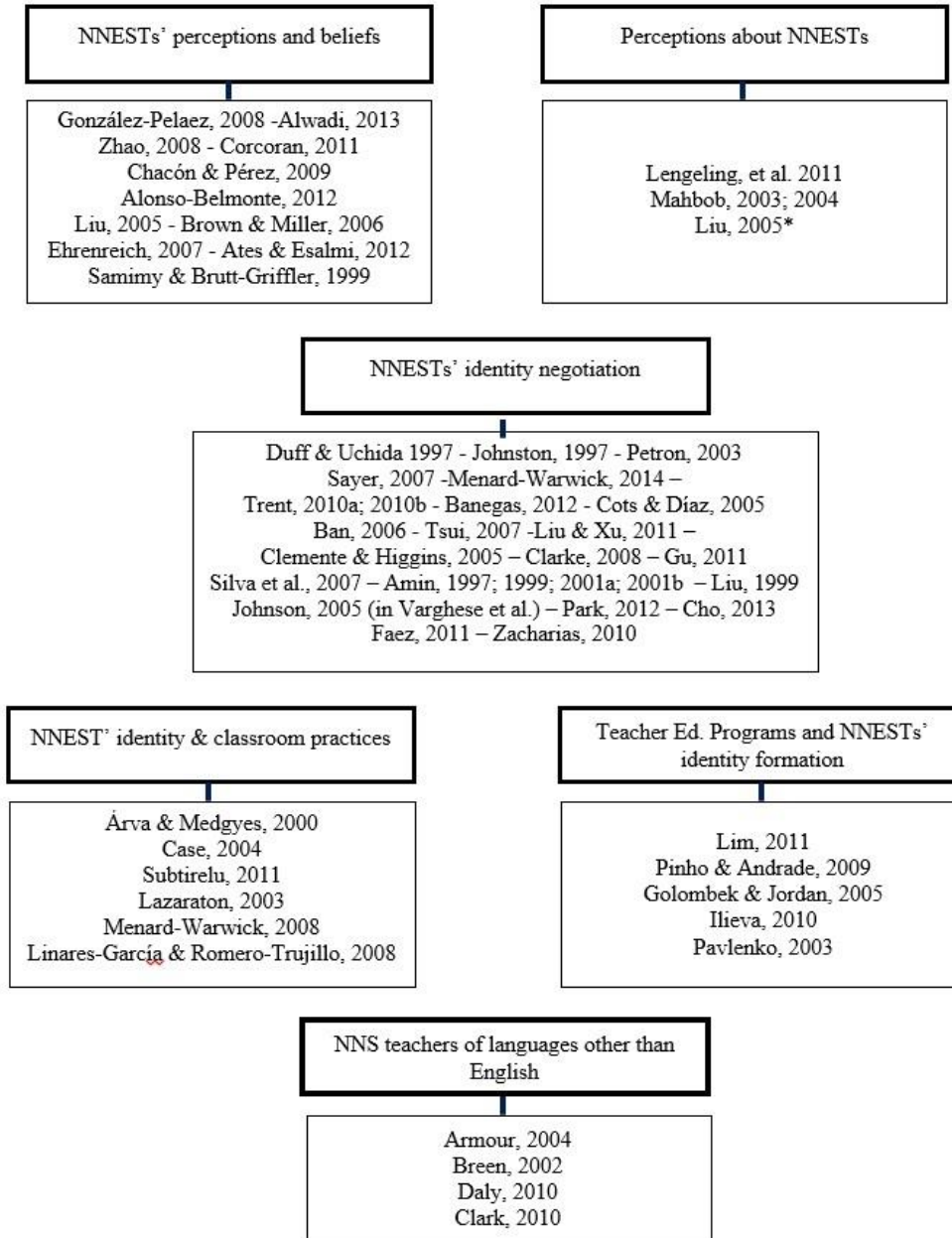
which the survey was collected. (For more details on these studies refer to Appendix at the end of this chapter.) The impact of these sociocultural factors may appear as undesirable intervening variables that should have been controlled by the researchers to neutralize their effect on the data. Nonetheless, these considerations take on a different meaning when researchers work from a different epistemological stance.

2.3.2 Qualitative studies in NNEST research.

An important number of studies on NNESTs have relied on rich data looking at details considered by others as too idiosyncratic; such data often turn out to be relevant to understand the complexity of social realities the NNESTs operate within. In this spirit, the studies following a qualitative approach have used in-depth interviews, observations, and artifact analysis either in combination or in lieu of surveys. By looking at the muddy details that surveys cannot capture, qualitative researchers have tried to comprehend the sociocultural forces that may have influenced the variation observed by the survey-based studies. Considering this, the present review led me to identify five main recurrent themes across these studies, which shed light on the complex relationships connected to the variation observed. These themes are namely: NNESTs' perceptions and beliefs, perceptions of other actors about NNESTs, NNEST's identity negotiation, the impact of the NNESTs' identity on their teaching, and the impact of teacher education programs on the identity formation of NNESTs. As it can be observed, the one thread that seems to connect most of these five themes is identity. In this section, I address the theme of identity negotiation since it is the most relevant for the present study. Nevertheless, I also pay attention to studies that focus on the other four themes whenever they interact with the findings related to teachers' identity formation. Additionally, the contributions of some studies conducted with nonnative teachers of foreign languages other than English will also be brought to the table as they contribute to the present conversation.

From a total of 54 qualitative studies considered in this review (see Figure 3), 32 featured identity as their major theme, and in some of the cases this identity was explicitly referred as that of the NNEST.

Figure 3. Qualitative studies on NNESTs



*Liu, 2005 is considered twice in this classification because includes both teachers' and students' perspectives

In some other cases, however, researchers resisted the use of the ‘nonnative’ label because they found that it did not fully represent the complex linguistic identities embodied by their participants. Liu (1999) was perhaps one of the first members of the NNES Caucus to address nonnativeness as a label that society attaches to teachers' identities, but that teachers themselves can either accept or contest. In an ethnographic case-study of two faculty members and five graduate teaching assistants (GTAs) in a major Midwest university in the US, Liu observed that the participants had different linguistic backgrounds. Some of them were multilingual and their relation to English encompassed different types of bilingualism, cultural affiliations, and experiences. Because of this diversity, some of the participants considered that the NNEST label did not fully represent who they were. Additionally, some of them saw it as a term that had political implications connected to English as a ramification of British and American imperialism. Conversely, others did not see any problem with the categorization. In spite of this difference in perceptions, all the participants agreed that the NNEST label represented a disadvantage for them in the job market.

More recently, Faez (2011) compared the experiences of NNES and NES student-teachers in an undergraduate degree in education in Ontario to challenge the native/nonnative speakers' dichotomy. The study showed that the participants' relationship with English was far more complex than what can be implied from the NNES/NES dichotomy. Using a combination of questionnaires, interviews, and instructors' ratings of the participants' English language proficiency, the students were classified into six different linguistic groups. Group One represented bilinguals who had parents of different linguistic backgrounds and, as a consequence, had been raised using two languages at home. Group Two comprised individuals who had been born in Canada to English speaking parents and who had been raised using English in English-dominant settings. Other languages, if any, had been added only after English was well settled in their linguistic identity. This group of monolinguals was identified by all the raters as native

speakers. They correspond to the stereotype of a NES as understood by society at large and normally represented as such in the literature.

On the contrary, Group Three referred to learners who had been raised in English dominant settings, but in homes where a second language was used by both parents as their L1. These participants had some difficulties in ascribing themselves at either side of the NNEST/NEST dichotomy, but eventually chose to consider themselves as NES. However, one of the raters categorized them as NNESTs. Group Four was integrated by individuals who had learned a language other than English in their childhood and moved to English dominant countries later in life. They declared that they felt more proficient in English given that they used their L1 less often than English. Unlike Group Four, members of Group Five were bilinguals for whom L1 was still dominant. Finally, Group Six was composed of speakers whose linguistic identity was more complex since they were English speakers from the outer circle (in Kachru's terms) and had lived and studied in their home countries as well as in inner-circle countries. Due to this complex composition, Faez concluded that the binary opposition of NNEST/NEST could not fully describe the participants' complex linguistic reality. Moreover, the author warned us that his categorization was neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive. Faez regarded these categories as a proof of how complex second language teachers' linguistic identities can be and how they resist simplistic representations.

In spite of these reserves, other researchers have maintained the use of the nonnative label because the teachers featured in their studies have employed it of their own accord. Therefore, for the rest of this chapter, I will keep using the term to refer to teachers whose relation to the language they teach is different from that of the monolingual speakers who belong to Group Two in Faez' categorization. However, conscious of the dangers of oversimplifications, whenever relevant to the discussion, I will specify the particular features of teachers' linguistic identities, and if redundant, I will only refer to them as NNESTs.

2.3.2.1 Nonnative teachers' identity negotiation.

The studies on NNESTs have offered a wide range of evidence that shows how the NNEST identity has resisted categorization because it is continually negotiated and context-bound. In this construction process, the influences of sociocultural factors, at large scale, and of the immediate CoPs in which teachers live and interact seem to be predominant. In some cases, for example, teachers seemed to be more particularly invested in constructing themselves as legitimate users of the target language (Amin, 2001b; Gu, 2011; Park, 2012; Sayer, 2007). This interest, however, did not exclusively depend on the teachers' nonnativeness per se. It was also contingent on how their nonnativeness was constructed by the social groups in which teachers moved and how the teachers chose to respond to it.

Recovering the evidence provided by the survey-based studies, it is here relevant to remember that this type of research had identified a contradiction. While the teachers in Reves and Medgyes (1994) had singled out NNESTs' perceptions that represented themselves as inferior to their NES colleagues, the survey conducted by Kamhi-Stein et al. (2004) had found a more self-assured group of NNESTs. The initial conclusion suggested that the second group of teachers had been influenced by their long-standing experiences as first or second generation immigrants in the US. It seemed that this fact gave them a stronger claim to own the language they taught. Such variations in the ways NNESTs can negotiate their identities called for an in-depth approach to study identity formation that surveys alone could not provide. In this section, I will review some qualitative studies that had attempted to fill this research gap.

Studying a group of NNES student-teachers in a graduate program in the US, Samimy and Brutt-Griffler (1999) used Reves and Medgyes' questionnaire in combination of in-depth interviews, autobiographical writings, and classroom discussions. With this evidence, the researchers found that the participants perceived themselves as capable and experienced teachers who knew their students' needs, could relate to them, and use their L1 as an instructional tool if necessary (when they were in their native countries). This perception did not mean that the

participants considered themselves in the same category they reserved for NESTs. On the contrary, they knew there were differences, but did not see these differences as an impairment or a real professional disadvantage. Therefore, similar to the ESL K-12 teachers in Khami-Stein et al. (2004), these student-teachers did not perceive their linguistic background as a disadvantage. On the other hand, unlike the teachers in Khami-Stein's study, the participants in this study did not derive their security from a life-long experience in an inner-circle country, but from their teaching experience and their own success as second language learners. This early study did not directly address identity construction. However, it was perhaps one of the first studies that delved into the relationships between NNESTs' perceptions of their abilities and the context from which they derive these perceptions. More recent studies have uncovered a reality that is even more complex and conflicting.

In a study with eight female NNESTs from the outer and expanding circles living and working in Canada, Amin (2001b) found that the participants had chosen different ways to negotiate the nonnative label. For these teachers, the immigrant experience had included diverse forms of linguistic and ethnic discrimination: being denied the right to speak, losing ownership over a language they thought they had already mastered, and losing their professional identities. In this scenario, the teachers had problematized the NEST-NNEST dichotomy to some extent. For some of them, this problematization had led them to assume that English was something they actually owned, in spite of the popular opinion that categorized them as NNES based on their ethnicity and accent. Others, on the contrary, had concluded that English was not a language they could legitimately call their own, but still they resisted certain aspects of the NNES label that fell short to represent them. In any case, the ways in which these teachers chose to construct their identities appeared to impact their teaching and how they related to their immigrant students. Unfortunately, this study did not include detailed classroom observations to actually offer evidence of the relationship between identity construction and instruction.

In a similar way, a Chinese student-teacher studied by Park (2012) showed how her relationship with English had shifted as she moved in different scenarios. The teacher by the pseudonym of Xia had initially seen herself as a top L2 student who excelled at the regular examination-centered English classes in China. Later on, she had successfully established communication with NESTs in the context of a special course for gifted English learners. In spite of these achievements, her confidence had decreased during her experience in a MATESOL program in the US, where she struggled with feelings of powerlessness. In this new setting, the participant's identity had undergone a redefinition that encompassed her own preconceptions about the NS fallacy and the diverse social and linguistic interactions in which she engaged. This negotiation was especially painful because it included contradictory Discourses (in Gee's terms). On the one hand, her initial struggles to be understood by native speakers in the US sent her messages that conflicted with her previous experiences of success. On the other hand, the new contents to which Xia was exposed in her program and the mentorship of an experienced Japanese NNEST had led her to value her identity as a bilingual teacher. At the same time, while Xia was still trying to adjust her perceptions about her identities as a learner, user, and teacher of English, other actors such as a Chinese friend, and a Chinese-American recruiter had questioned her legitimate right to teach the language. In such conflicting circumstances, it does not come as a surprise that the participant was so especially invested in defining herself as someone who was entitled to be recognized as a legitimate English teacher. As a result of this negotiation she had decided to claim legitimacy on the basis of her learning experiences and her abilities to use the language, even if she was not an English-dominant bilingual. Similar experiences of multiple identities as learners, users, and teachers are described in studies on nonnative teachers of other second languages (Armour, 2004).

The conflicted identity negotiation of the NNESTs portrayed by Amin (2001b) and Park (2012) are especially interesting because of their coincidences in spite of their being separated by a span of over 10 years. One thread, however, seems to connect these cases otherwise separated

by time and linguistic particulars: the immigrant experience in an inner-circle country. Similar evidence has also been afforded by Ates and Eslami (2012), Brown and Miller (2006), Case (2004), Clark (2010), and Liu (2005). In some cases, the immigrant status of the participants has been permanent (Clark, 2010), while in others, the studies had featured participants in transitory sojourns, even if they implied a stay of several years. These differences notwithstanding, it is evident that all of these studies uncover unstable and emotionally-charged processes of identity loss, and renegotiation. In such circumstances, NNESTs often feel deprived of the right to speak or experience an urge to legitimize their status and recover their previous identities. Frequently, the surrounding context resists and opposes the NNESTs' positioning and this opposition generates tensions that very likely affect teachers' actions.

Moreover, this *otherization* suffered by migrant NNESTs' has appeared in other contexts where English is used to establish a power-differential. An interesting case in which complex processes of cultural identity are implied is found in Hong Kong, where different views of what it means to be Chinese and Hongkonger enter into conflict. In this context, the prior political relationship between Hong Kong and Great Britain has contributed to generate a pervasive idea that Hongkongers have a superior claim to English as opposed to mainland Chinese citizens. These views seem to prevail even now when Hong Kong has been reincorporated to China, as noted in a number of studies conducted by Gu (2011) and Trent (2010a, 2010b, 2012).

Studying seven mainland pre-service teachers enrolled in a Hong Kong program, Gu (2011) found that the featured teachers had negotiated their professional identities through a process that implied two main strategies: gaining legitimacy in their CoP and positioning themselves within the broader community of language teachers. While in their role of students, the participants had established their identities as different from those of their Hong Kong colleagues. They had strived to be recognized as more diligent and learning-oriented students by using actions (e.g. handing-in assignments ahead of the deadline as opposed to doing it just before the deadline; enrolling in learning-oriented extra-curricular experiences instead of finding

a side-job to earn money) and discourse features (e.g. using personal pronouns to strategically signal membership). These strategies had seemed effective while interacting in the more controlled context of the program courses, but had fallen short during the practicum experiences. When in their assigned schools, the participants had to face the dominant prejudice held against mainlanders that positioned them as underqualified to teach English. As a reaction, the participants rationalized the situation considering the advantages implied in their ethnic/linguistic identity (as mainlanders). In doing so, they had resorted to positioning themselves in a broader context of the teaching profession beyond Hong Kong.

This focus on teachers' discourse highlights the fact that the negotiation of professional identities is so intricate because it is in constant evolution. This evolution is manifested in actions but also at different levels of individuals' discourse. At one level, Gu observed that teachers deployed diverse discursive devices to establish their position in the conversation event in which they and the researcher took part (e.g. in the context of an interview). At a broader discursive context, the teachers also positioned themselves within the master narrative in which the narrated experiences were embedded. In spite of this emergent quality, there is one commonality that unites the experiences of these teachers to that of the NNESTs described in other studies: their being represented by their hosts as *others* with an inferior claim to English. So, even if, in strict political terms, the Chinese teachers in Gu's study were living within the borders of their own country; they had been perceived as immigrants by their colleagues and students. This perception had triggered in them different reactions to legitimize their professional identity.

At this point, it seems evident that in the negotiation of NNESTs' legitimacy a number of global and local forces are at play, establishing differences on how teachers define their professional identities. It may then follow that those teachers living and working in the outer and expanding circles, where English plays a different role, could experience their identity negotiation in different terms. One such case was studied by Johnston (1997), who found that Polish NNESTs defined their professional identities as transient. Since the perceived opportunities for

professional development were rather limited at the time and place of the study, the participants anticipated leaving the profession at some future point in their lives. This condition was essential to understand why these teachers were not overly worried about gaining legitimacy and did not include language teaching as a part of their identity construction. On the contrary, the Brazilian teachers in a study conducted by Corcoran (2011), who had a stronger investment in their professional identities, were especially annoyed by the fact that the prevailing hiring practices in Brazil seemed biased against them. They had observed that school administrators not only seemed to favor NESTs, but also showed a preference for those NNESTs who had lived in an English-speaking country. Therefore, even if these teachers were in a context where they could negotiate their identities on the basis of their abilities to relate to their students' second language learning experience, the NS fallacy seemed to cast a shadow over them. This influence transformed their beliefs about their work conditions, which were the main focus in Corcoran's study.

A third contrasting evidence is presented by Alwadi (2013) who interviewed 10 NNES college instructors in Bahrain to identify their perceptions about the differences between NESTs and NNESTs. The teachers in this study agreed that the main characteristic that set them apart from their NES colleagues was not their different linguistic identities, but their distinctive levels of professional qualifications. Because of this distinction, they were perceived as superior to the NESTs. These perceptions revealed that, in hiring university instructors, Bahrain administrators were willing to relax their criteria if the candidates were NESTs. However, they seemed to raise the bar for national candidates. If the participants in Alwadi's study had only been surveyed, perhaps their responses would have described them as confident and self-assured NNESTs, since they perceived themselves as qualified instructors. Without considering a more in-depth view into this reality, the inequalities in which these teachers have to negotiate their professional identities would have been obscured. In sum, qualitative studies conducted in the periphery (Braine, 1999; 2010) show that NNESTs in such contexts also define their identities in the midst of conflict, but

the ways in which they play their cards and the resulting interactions are locally defined. To illuminate these complexities, a single look at teachers' perspectives, even if this look is a profound one, may seem insufficient. For this reason, the need to conduct more studies that triangulate perspectives and diverse types of evidence is still a pending point in the NNEST research agenda.

2.3.2.2 Nonnative teachers' identity and teaching practices.

The few studies that to this day have compared teachers' perspectives with their actions in the classroom cast some additional light on how these NNESTs' identities are manifested in teaching practices. In a study that contrasted perspectives and teaching practices of NNESTs and NESTs in Hungary, Arva and Medgyes (2000) found that NNESTs had integrated in their discourse certain stereotypes that derived from the NEST/NNEST dichotomy. However, the same teachers contradicted these stereotypes in their teaching practices. For instance, when defining the weaknesses of each group, the participants had described their NES colleagues as less-focused on systematic lesson planning. By the same token, they had depicted themselves as limited by an inferior level of fluency and a lack of familiarity with the target language culture. In spite of these negative views, when observing a series of lessons conducted by both NESTs and NNESTs, the researchers had found that these teachers defied their own stereotyped representations. In other words, NESTs were equally concerned with planning and achieving learning goals as their NNEST colleagues, while NNESTs were able to display rather fluent and communicatively effective levels of proficiency in their classes. Also, they demonstrated the ability to address cultural topics rather successfully, if needed.

Using discourse analysis to study the interactions of teachers and students, Cots and Díaz (2005) drew from Fairclough's concept of modality to study NESTs and NNESTs in Catalonia, Spain. They found that modal use in the samples of teacher talk conveyed either social relationships or linguistic knowledge. The former could signify power strategies or solidarity strategies, while the latter made distinctions between categorical and non-categorical knowledge.

They also identified language used to convey instructions, direct confrontation, and downtoning to deflect the effect of power imposition in class instructions. Some uses of pronouns were also discussed. Surprisingly, the authors did not find enough evidence in the analyzed samples to establish any difference between NNESTs and NESTs in the way they addressed personalization in their classroom discourse. In fact, the authors found that gender had played a more important role than nonnativeness in the definition of the interactions observed.

The results obtained by Cots and Díaz do not necessarily imply that NNESTs and NESTs linguistic approach to discourse is identical. In fact, another study conducted in Spain (Linares-García & Romero-Trujillo, 2008) found that NNESTs actually used more discourse markers in their classroom speech than NESTs and native Spanish speaking teachers. These differences, however, could be interpreted as a manifestation of bilingual multicompetence (Cook, 1991; 2003) absent in the other two groups of teachers who used their dominant L1 in their work. Therefore, the point made by Cots and Díaz still stands; the evidence provided does not suggest that the pedagogical actions of NNESTs and NESTs are substantially impacted by their differential language use. On the other hand, the question of whether teachers' linguistic identities, with their emotional charge of perceptions and contradictions could be translated into differentiated pedagogical actions remained unanswered in these studies.

A study conducted by Lazaraton (2003) tried to address this question by applying Conversational Analysis. Using detailed transcriptions from video-taped lessons, Lazaraton compared how two NNESTs and one NEST approached the teaching of the target language culture in an Intensive English Program (IEP) in the United States. In this comparison, the researcher did not find that any aspect of the participants' gendered, ethnic, or linguistic identities had a relevant impact in any particular segment of the conversations analyzed. After analyzing the transcript following the rigorous procedures of Conversational Analysis, Lazaraton concluded that NNEST and NEST's discourse had not been substantially different. The only aspect in which the NNESTs had differed from the NEST was in their reluctance to admit in front of the students

when they ignored something. Finding an explanation for this behavior, however, would require elaborations that would go beyond the evidence provided by the text. Therefore, triangulation with other types of data and an approach different from Conversational Analysis would be required to offer more satisfactory interpretations.

Taking this challenge, a more recent study tried to integrate interview data with recorded classroom sessions. Analyzing the impact of ethnicity and linguistic identity on teaching practices, Subtirelu (2011) followed the lessons of a Dutch teacher of English, whose ethnic features and accent did not give away his identity as a NNEST. In spite of this apparent advantage, the instructor did not use his appearance or his native-like proficiency to negotiate legitimacy as an English teacher. Instead, the evidence showed that he chose to uncover his nonnativeness since the beginning of his courses and established legitimacy by other means. For example, the teacher positioned himself as a non-traditional instructor who favored alternative teaching methodologies, challenged the authority of the textbook, and demonstrated expertise as a well-trained linguist. This example, unfortunately, may be far from the most common experiences of the vast majority of NNESTs in the world.

2.3.2.3 Nonnative teachers' identity formation in teacher education programs.

Some of the studies on teachers' identity formation have focused on student-teachers transformational experiences as they transit teacher education programs. Most of these studies describe programs in the inner circle that have long been questioned as not appropriately geared towards the learning needs of NNESTs. In an important number of cases, the student-teachers enrolled in these graduate programs intend to return to their native countries after graduation to initiate or continue their careers as foreign language educators. The experiences provided by their graduate program, however, do not cater to their needs to face the challenges of teaching English in the periphery.

Perhaps the first time that this problem was publically acknowledged was during the 1989 annual TESOL conference. In that occasion, England and Roberts presented the results of a

survey that exposed how, out of 123 MATESOL programs, not even one addressed the particular language learning needs of their NNES student-teachers. This call, however, was practically ignored for quite a long time after this conference. Ten years later, Govardhan, Nayar, and Sheorey (1999) revisited the topic analyzing the descriptions of 800 graduate courses listed in the Directory of Professional Preparation Programs in TESOL. Comparing these course descriptions with 237 job ads and their own experience teaching English in the periphery, these scholars found that the courses were still far from responding to the student-teachers' need. In fact, they concluded that the courses suffered from:

. . .an overinfusion of elements from linguistic theory . . .which are only remotely relevant to language pedagogy; an overemphasis on theoretical aspects of second language acquisition instead of the more practical applied linguistic components, such as cross-linguistic studies, discourse analysis, pedagogic grammar, sociolinguistic aspects like multilingualism, and new Englishes (p. 120).

In the same vein, Kamhi-Stein published that year a book chapter in which she introduced her own proposal to address the learning and teaching needs of NNES student-teachers in American MATESOL programs (Kamhi-Stein, 1999). It seemed that Kamhi-Stein's intention in that piece was to find new ways to empower NNESTs through teacher education. Moreover, even though she did not mention it explicitly, her call was essentially one to promote a different kind of professional identity. Ever since, this call has been attended by a few graduate programs that have purposefully addressed the need. In some cases, the teacher educators in those programs have shared their experiences at trying to help NNESTs negotiate legitimate identities as English educators. One of such experiences was reported by Pavlenko (2003). As an evidence of the actions taken in this program, Pavlenko presented a discursive analysis on 30 linguistic autobiographies written by NES and NNES student-teachers. The intention was to prove how the participants positioned themselves within the discourse of two opposed views of linguistic competence, namely the NS/NNS dichotomy and Cook's notion of multicompetence. Pavlenko

argued that the two notions were used as tools of discursive positioning vis-a-vis different imagined communities. The preliminary content analysis showed evidence of struggle in the NNEs linguistic biographies as they attempted to achieve the standards suggested by the NS fallacy. On the contrary, the notion of multicompetence allowed NNEs to reposition their identity as bilinguals. In the discourse analysis, the author found evidence of the participants' repositioning in their use of change-of-state verbs and tense shift to index change across time.

In a similar attempt, Golombek and Jordan (2005) documented the appropriation of new imagined identities of NNE student-teachers in relation to their pronunciation and their legitimacy as English teachers. In this study, the two student-teachers involved wrote reaction papers about pronunciation pedagogy and the myth of the native speaker. The analysis suggested that the exposure to alternative approaches to the teaching and learning of pronunciation and the issue of intelligibility impacted (or disrupted) the participants' previous perceptions. Like in the case followed by Pavlenko, the participants in this study adopted new imagined identities as legitimate L2 users that were based on concepts such as multicompetence and the value of pedagogy. These new constructs gave the students discursive elements to assert their legitimacy as English teachers. However, contradictions and insecurities remained, partly because the notions connected to the NS fallacy were still strong, and partly because the student-teachers were aware that the context would still question their legitimacy. Also, the students realized that their progressive views on the teaching of pronunciation would still find resistance at different levels (e.g. the teach-to-test approach in Taiwan, unsupportive schools policies, and parents' and students' beliefs). Several intervention programs similar to the ones orchestrated by Pavlenko, and Golombek and Jordan have also been reported in Canada (Ilieva, 2010), Australia (Brown & Miller, 2006), and in a rare study conducted in Venezuela among undergraduate student-teachers (Chacón & Pérez, 2009).

In spite of these developments, it is still unknown to what extent this type of interventions really impact on NNEs' professional identities. After all, while being part of a credit-based

course, such contents could simply be assumed by student-teachers in a rather superficial attempt to meet the course requirements. Also, if not properly tempered with a sober view of NNESTs' prospects of career development, this sort of programs could only raise unrealistic expectations that could backfire once the new teachers face the often shocking experience of their first teaching job.

A final important consideration regarding NNEST student-teachers' identity takes us to observe that the great majority of studies featuring students provide a rather limited picture. Out of 25 studies focusing on student-teachers, only nine were focused on the periphery, and four of those studies were conducted in Asia (Far and Middle East included). The other five were distributed in the following way: two in Europe and three in Latin America. Additionally, one study already reviewed (Clark, 2010) discussed the identities of student-teachers of a language different from English.

One of the studies showcasing the identity formation of Middle East student-teachers (Clarke, 2008) deserves special mention because it is a book-length research project that has received considerable attention. Drawing from Wenger, Foucault, Halliday, and Fairclough, Clarke conducted a discourse analysis of the online and face-to-face interactions of a group of student-teachers in the United Arab Emirates. During the last two years of a four-year college program in English teaching, a group of student-teachers reflected on their practicum and on how they envisioned their future as elementary school EFL teachers. These interactions were viewed by Clarke as discursive evidence of the emergence of the student-teachers' professional identities within their CoP. The analysis included an innovative hybrid approach that combined poststructuralist lenses with the tools of critical discourse analysis. As a result, Clarke was able to observe student-teachers' interactions at three different levels: the discursive constitution of their pedagogical beliefs, their interpersonal relationships, and their intrapersonal identity construction.

At the first level, the student-teachers constructed an interpretation of teaching and learning situating themselves in clear opposition to older generations of Emirati teachers. Nine

binary discursive constructions were identified, showing how the student-teachers saw themselves as a progressive group positioned in a new pedagogical paradigm. By contrast, all senior teachers were viewed as representatives of a traditional paradigm that had become obsolete. Clark argued that students did not simply assimilate the discourse promoted by their Bachelor's in Education program, but they selectively and creatively took from the available discourse those elements that the group perceived as useful to construct their identities.

At the interpersonal level, certain forms of interpersonal address as well as linguistic and rhetoric devices were used to keep the stability of the common system of beliefs and the coherence of the community. These discursive constructions also worked to set the agenda of the group and a sense of purpose, at one cost: the *otherization* of other communities of teachers that the student-teachers considered obsolete. Finally, at the third level, Clarke found evidence to claim that intrapersonal identities were co-constructed as the individuals committed themselves to a system of knowledge and beliefs. This co-construction was evident in the participants' engagement in meaningful discursive participation in a CoP.

It is interesting to note that, in all these main findings, Clarke did not highlight the participants' identities as NNESTs. This is more a purposeful strategy than an omission. In his data, Clarke observed that the student-teachers did not find the native-nonnative dichotomy relevant to their context, since they had but few experiences with the so-called native speaker. Moreover, in the predominant political discourse in the UAE, education was expected to be taken over by national teachers as part of a process of *Emiratization*. As students gave evidence of having bought into this dominant discourse, defining their professional identities in opposition to Caucasian monolingual speakers of English was rather inconsequential. (For more information on studies that focus on student-teachers, the reader can refer to the Appendix at the end of this chapter).

Considering all the evidence here presented, it is now a good moment to summarize what the research on NNESTs identities has accomplished. Evidence from studies conducted in the

periphery and the center shows that NNESTs' identities are situated, historical, emergent, contested, and generated in struggle. Very often, it is within antagonistic relationships that these identities can be negotiated and possibly associated to teaching practices. At the same time, the results of the accumulated research are still partial for several reasons. First, research still needs to clarify in more precise terms how identity construction impacts teaching practice. Second, for the sake of research credibility, transferability, and trustworthiness, there is a need of more studies that use triangulated data from different sources and perspectives. Third, only a handful of studies have demonstrated changes in identity formation during long periods of time, and last but not least, the evidence so far collected represents only a partial view of NNESTs around the world. For this reason, in the following section, I argue how the present study fits into this enterprise of generating a more comprehensive view of NNESTs' identities.

2.4 The Southwest of the periphery: An underrepresented region

In his latest book on the state of the art of NNESTs research, Braine (2010) affirms that the presence of NESTs in the countries of the periphery is directly related to the global distribution of wealth outside the inner circle. In more precise terms, the richer the country, the greater the number of NESTs hired, especially in the private sector. Braine does not offer specific figures to backup this claim simply because, to this date, there have not been any precise quantifications of the number of English teachers in the world, let alone reliable information on their linguistic backgrounds, location, or salaries. However, Braine did the next best thing one can do to figure out the situation in the fastest way possible. He gave a quick look at the job offers on global websites such as Transition Abroad and drew from his own experience as a teacher educator in Hong Kong. Based on such sources, he posits that some of the non-English speaking countries whose economies have skyrocketed in the last decades (e.g. China, Korea, Japan, Saudi Arabia, etc.) are also some of the most well-known destinations for travelling NESTs, by virtue of the high salaries available.

In the same way, a few informal comparisons can be drawn as a way to prove that, while the availability of NESTs in countries such as Saudi Arabia or Korea is higher than ever, the presence of NESTs is not quite prominent in other countries. Table 2 shows a comparison of the estimated salaries for EFL teaching jobs in five Asian countries that received the highest reviews in three commercial websites. The reliability of the information in these commercial websites can be questioned. However, a quick review of the jobs listed at the TESOL International Association's website (April, 2015) suggested that the estimates provided by these commercial sites were not totally inaccurate.

Table 2. Salary estimations for EFL jobs in some Asian and Middle East countries (April, 2015)

Source	Salary estimated per month in USD				
	United Arab Emirates	Saudi Arabia	Japan	South Korea	China
Gooverseas.com	2,400-4,000	3,000	3,000	2,000	1,000-2,000
Internationalteflacademy.com	1,800-3,500	1,500-3,000	2,500- 2,800	1,700-2,000	950-1,900
Es1101.com	2,000-4,000	3,000	2,300-2,800	2,000-2,600	1,300-1,800

It is interesting to note that European countries are not included in this list of the countries with the best job offers (see Table 2). Only the site of the International EFL Academy lists salaries in Europe with some countries such as Austria, France, or Belgium offering salaries as competitive as the ones in the Middle East. The difference lies in the cost of living and the margin for savings. For instance, while jobs in Saudi Arabia provide free housing and a margin to save up to \$ 2,000 USD a month, all jobs in Europe expect teachers to pay for their housing and the opportunities to save from the salary are practically nonexistent due to the high cost of living in these European countries. This disadvantage may explain the omission of European countries in GoOverseas and ESL101 websites.

On the other hand, it is obvious that the salary estimations for Asia and the Middle East are strikingly superior when compared to those in Latin America (see Table 3). Moreover, it should be noted that only one of the three websites consulted provided salary estimations for Table 3. Salary estimations for EFL jobs in some Latin American countries (April, 2015)

Source	Salary estimated per month in USD			
	Nicaragua	Argentina	Bolivia	Mexico
Internationalteflacademy.com	600-900	800-1,000	400-600	800-1200

Latin America. Additionally, none of the websites mentioned above provided information on possible job offers in Africa. It is then not difficult to conclude that the likelihood of finding NESTs working in Latin America and in non-English dominant African countries is as meager as the possibilities to find an enticing job offer in those latitudes. This does not mean, of course, that NESTs are totally absent in those geographical areas. It only means that NESTs may be minimally represented. If this is true, then it is possible to suppose that a great number of teaching positions in developing countries within Africa and Latin America must be occupied by NNESTs. This conclusion is only reinforced by the fact that native speakers of English (in the traditional sense) are outnumbered by NNESTs all over the world. (Crystal, 1997; Graddol, 1999; Canagarajah, 2005).

Surprisingly, the research on NNESTs in those geographical areas is scarce. Table 4 shows a list with the studies conducted in Latin America that have been reviewed for the purposes of this work.

The studies marked with an asterisk were conducted by Latin American researchers and published in open source journals affiliated with local universities. Unfortunately, the impact of these publications in the worldwide applied linguistics community is presumably limited since they are not included in the Journal Citation Reports® (Thomson Reuters, 2015). The work by Lagenling, Mora-Pablo, and Rubio-Zenil was also conducted by researchers residing in the

Table 4. Studies on Latin American teachers

Author (Year)	Country	Source
*Banegas (2012)	Argentina	Open source journal
*Silva, Greggio, Lucena, Denardi, & Gil (2007)	Brazil	Open source journal
Corcoran (2011)	Brazil	Open source journal
*González Peláez, (2008)	Colombia	Open source journal
Menard-Warwick (2008)	Chile	Journal
Menard-Warwick (2014)	Chile	Book
Lengeling,, Mora-Pablo, & Rubio-Zenil. (2011)	Mexico	E-Book
Petron (2003)	Mexico	Dissertation
*Clemente, & Higgins (2005)	Mexico	Open source journal
Ban (2006)	Mexico	Dissertation
Sayer (2007; 2012)	Mexico	Dissertation and book respectively
Chacón, & Pérez (2009)	Venezuela	Open source journal

country and locally published as part of an edited open source e-book. The rest of the studies were produced by American or Canadian authors, although the research was conducted in Latin America. Still, even these pieces have had but a minor impact on the scientific community (two of these pieces are unpublished dissertations). Only the works produced by Sayer and Menard-

Warwick have received serious attention in reputed journals (e.g. TESOL Quarterly) and in the form of published books. This brief sample shows the limited evidence so far gathered and the questionable visibility of the few existing studies. In spite of these limitations, some of the studies suggest that, just like in other regions of the world, NNESTs live under the shadow of the NS fallacy. How these teachers respond to the discursive force of this construct and how it interacts with other sociocultural elements is an issue in which researchers have only begun to delve, as my review of these studies shows below.

In an initial survey with 58 Venezuelan undergraduate student-teachers, Chacón and Pérez (2009) found ambivalence in students' beliefs about their pronunciation. While over half of the students estimated that their pronunciation was good, only 8.1% reported that they preferred their own accent to sounding more native-like. On the contrary, over 50% of the participants showed preference for what they roughly identified as British accent, and 29.5% favored American accent. Moreover, when asked to select who would qualify as a native speaker from a list of nationalities, the students only attributed such category to people from England and the United States, discarding speakers of diverse World Englishes. Considering that these students were in the last year of their teaching program, these results signaled an important gap in their education. This gap led the researchers to implement an intervention program that reported certain success at modifying the participants' beliefs about their own accents. Unfortunately, as it often happens in similar programs, there has not been any evidence of the long-term effects of this intervention.

Teachers are not alone in their admiration of the so-called NS ideal. Looking at college students' categorizations of English teachers in Mexico, Lengeling, Mora-Pablo, and Rubio-Zenil (2011) observed that, beyond the NNEST/NEST dichotomy, a new category was emerging. This new group owes its existence to the important flow of temporal immigration of Mexicans into the United States. Although some of these immigrants manage to put down roots in the US, others return to Mexico either voluntarily or as a result of deportation. In some cases, the

children of these repatriated individuals end up joining the ranks of English teaching. This new generation of teachers, having acquired English during their childhood, are placed in students' discourse within a third-place category of sorts. The students in this study agreed on characterizing these *Pocho* (a speaker of Mexican-American vernacular English) teachers as having an advantage by virtue of their long-standing experience living in the US. However, students also implied that the *Pocho* teachers were not perceived as having the same level of legitimacy and authority attributed to NESTs of Anglo-Saxon descent.

Another study that targeted the growing presence of the *Pocho* teacher in Mexico was conducted by Petró (2003). Using an ethnographic approach, Petró analyzed five cases of female teachers that had used the cultural capital of their transnational experience to develop a teaching career. Far from being mere isolated cases, these teachers were part of an important majority in their region (the Monterrey metropolitan area in the Northern state of Nuevo León), where, according to Petró, *Pocho* teachers represented 95% of the English teachers working in public schools. As many of their peers, the participants had succeeded in turning their painful experiences as children of undocumented immigrants to land into jobs beyond their expectations. Even if some of them had not received a formal teacher education, they had brought their complex linguistic identities to the classroom. Petron observed that they distinguished themselves from Mexican NNESTs by their free use of code switching, the incorporation of cultural topics, and the special support they provided to returning immigrant children.

Although important in the North region of Mexico, *Pocho* teachers are less common in other States, and very few cases of similar third-space teachers are discussed by other studies in the rest of Latin America. In this respect, two studies seem to offer some additional evidence from countries geographically removed from the US border. In the first of these studies, NNESTs in Brazil (Corcoran, 2011) perceived unequal hiring practices that favored those colleagues who had enjoyed the benefit of a stay in an English-speaking country over other NNESTs. Also, in a more extensive project, Menard-Warwick (2008, 2014) compared multicultural teachers in Chile

and California and how their complex identities contributed to the presentation of cultural issues in their classes. Furthermore, in portraying the teachers' pedagogical practices, Menard-Warwick also considered how power was implied and dealt with in the presentation of cultural topics. She suggested that power relations at play outside the classroom created discursive *faultlines* –or differential ways in which teachers in California and Chile enacted the teaching of culture.

As interesting as this category of transnational, multilingual, and multicultural teachers may be, it is important to remember that they represent only one part of the complex composition of English teachers in the world. Also, it is important to consider that a great number of individuals in Central and South America and the Caribbean are monolingual and mono-cultural. Although most countries in these regions are rich in indigenous languages, historical and political forces have made a few European languages prevail upon the local ones and reach the status of statutory national languages (Paul, Simons & Fennig, 2015). As a result, monolingualism, and everything that comes with it, is common; especially in large urban areas. Additionally, due to economic restrictions, most individuals rarely enjoy the luxury of travelling abroad. So, the possibilities of living a transnational experience, if not prompted by forced immigration or facilitated by unusual wealth, are rare. Therefore, it could be inferred that many English teachers in these regions have been raised as monolingual speakers of a language other than English, having acquired the latter in classroom settings.

How these Latin American teachers face the challenges of teaching English while being L1 dominant bilinguals is a topic that has been less explored. Sayer's published dissertation (2012) is the only one in this review that provides some answers to this question. In his ethnographic portraits of three Mexican teachers of English, Sayer analyzed how the participants negotiated their professional identities drawing from different and often contradictory ideologies. In doing so, they strived to make sense of their social role and find arguments to legitimize and perform their identities as English users and teachers. The rich descriptions in this study open possibilities for a deep emic view of the participants' professional lives. These descriptions

included detailed accounts of three lessons where some connections between teachers' identities and teachers' practices were drawn. However, since the analysis is content-based, some important discursive details were not foregrounded. Finally, as any long-term ethnographic study, this piece provides a deep view into one reality, that of the particular region where the participants lived. The drawback, of course, is that it leaves out other realities. The task is then open to provide more evidence on how the teachers in the uncharted South East negotiate and enact their identities in diverse scenarios.

Special mention should be made of how considerations of power seem rare in the studies on Latin American English teachers. With the exception on Menard-Warwick's more direct observations of power manifested in the teaching of culture and some of Sayer's descriptions about language ideologies present in his participants' narratives, the rest of the studies have little to say about it. If one gives some credit to Bourdieu when he asserts that we are all moved by the need to have access to power, then it is possible that we still need to dig deeper into the issue of power. Therefore, researchers still need to pay more attention to how such considerations play a role in conforming second language teachers' identities in Latin America.

Considering these gaps in the research on Latin American NNESTs, in the present study I focus on the professional identity negotiation of five Mexican teachers of English living and working in three different regions in Mexico. Taking an interpretative-narrative stance, which will be further explained in Chapter 3, this work initiated with the broad purpose of describing the teachers' identity formation from their college years to the present. However, as the study evolved the following research questions were defined:

1. Do the participants discursively position themselves with respect to the NS fallacy and the ownership of English? If so, how? If not, why not?

2. Have sociocultural forces such as power, social practices, and discourse interacted in the negotiation of the participants' professional identities along their careers? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Does identity impact the participants' teaching practices and to what extent they are able to exert agency in these practices? If so, why? If not, why not?

2.5 Considerations before an impending journey

I prefer to think of social research as a journey. The researcher spends part of her life considering possibilities for a future voyage, gathering resources, and projecting different alternatives for the adventure. One day, after long considerations, the traveler finally sets off, and so the adventure upon the strange territory of other people's life experiences begins. At this point, I have only led the reader to the initial part of the journey: the preparations. The narrative of this quest after Mexican teachers' identity negotiations will unfold in the following chapters. Before we decide to take off, may be worthwhile to go over some of the pieces of luggage that we are taking with us for this journey.

This chapter has briefly highlighted the evolution of the term identity and how it has been deconstructed by poststructuralist authors. From a static view of an individual's sense of self, the concept of identity has evolved to be considered as fluid and situated. In the context of this work, identity is understood as the result of a socio-historical process by which individuals define who they are with respect to the groups in which they belong, their past experiences, and their future projections. In this process, power relations, social practices, discourse, and the individual's agency interact in dialectical fashion in multiple and complex ways.

The redefinition of identity has been of major importance in the development of applied linguistics in the last two decades. In combination with theoretical frameworks such as CoP, identity has been useful to expand our understanding of language variation, the resilience of already existent non-prestige dialects, and the emergence of new ones. Identity has also been useful to illuminate complex social processes such as second language acquisition in the context

of migration and its impact on the ESL classroom. Finally, identity has also been incorporated into the discussion on second language teachers, especially as it is connected to teachers' practical knowledge, beliefs, decision making, and other aspects of teachers' mental lives. However, since it is essentially a social construct, identity allows us to explore teachers' lives beyond their isolated selves and bring some further understanding on how and why teachers act the way they do.

Examining second language teachers' identities, we encountered that they are often related to socially constructed ideas about the native speaker as the one legitimate owner of a given language. This latter route took us to explore the topic of NNESTs and how it evolved into a professional advocacy movement on the one hand, and into a research strand on the other. As an area of study, the research of NNEST has developed in two different traditions. An initial tradition studied NNESTs by means of quantitative methods, relying on surveys and focusing on a characterization of the NNESTs as a different type of teacher, in opposition to NESTs. A second research tradition, however, has used interpretative approaches to explore the multiple and complex identities of those teachers of English for whom English is not the only language of their linguistic repertoire.

Diverse studies conducted in Asia, the Middle East, Europe and America have constructed a complex picture of the different ways in which teachers construct their identities. Sometimes these identities have been constructed in function of binary oppositions, especially in relation to NESTs. However, in other contexts, teachers of different linguistic backgrounds have demonstrated that they can construct their identities considering other discourses and social forces such as older generations of peers, the intervention of teacher education programs, or their own teaching experience. Finally, it has been observed that while the study of second language teachers' identity in the periphery has been quite prolific, most of the studies have focused on teachers in Asia or the Middle East. This trend leaves the teachers in Central and South America and in non-English speaking African countries out of the picture. In order to contribute to

expanding our understanding of Latin American teachers of English, this study is here presented. So, with these things considered, let's initiate the journey in the following chapter by setting the GPS: the research design.

2.6 An overview of the 74 studies: An appendix

Color Codes

Yellow= employers/TESOL authorities' perspectives
 Peach = teachers' perspectives
 Pink = narratives of teachers' perspectives
 Green = students' perspectives
 Blue = teachers' discourse
 Gray = teachers' perspectives and discourse
 Purple = triangulation of perspectives

Abbreviations

D= Dissertation
 T=Thesis
 U= Undergraduate Students
 G= Graduate Students
 n.l.u. = No label used (The label of native vs. nonnative was not used)

In-Service Teachers in the Periphery

Discourse analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Cots & Diaz, 2005	Analysis of teachers' talk in 2 lessons (Benveniste; Ducrot; Kerbrat; Orecchioni; Fairclough)	2 NNESTs (male and female)	Gender seemed to impact more on socialization and the construction of linguistic knowledge than nonnativeness.	Spain
Linares-Garcia & Romero-Trujillo, 2008	A section of UAM-LESS Corpus (6 sixty-minute lessons of History)	CLIL NNESTs CLIL NESTs Spanish teachers (NS)	NNEST used more discourse markers than NNEST and Spanish teachers.	Spain
Menard-Warwick, 2014	Interviews and classroom interactions transcripts	13 NNESTs in Chile 6 NEST in California (n.l.u.)	Evidence of the impact of discourse and life experiences in establishing intercultural contact between the two groups of teachers, and in teaching culture	Chile and the USA

Survey-based studies

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Respondents	Results	Country
Sheorey, 1986	A six-point ranking scale and 20 sentences with student-produced errors.	62 NESTs 31 NNESTs	NNESTs were harsher than NESTs when identifying grammar errors.	India USA
Medgyes, 1992	One-single multiple choice question	TESOL specialists	A general trend to hire NEST over NNEST	Conferences in London and Paris
Reves & Medgyes, 1994	23 questions the majority of which were close-ended	216 NEST-NNEST teachers	NNESTs perceived disadvantages vis-a-vis NESTs	Brazil, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Israel, Mexico, Nigeria, Rusia, Sweden, Yugoslavia, and Zimbabwe
Andrews (1994)	Open and close-ended questions about grammar	101 NNEST pre-service teachers (L1 speakers of Cantonese) 29 NEST 9 NNEST (unknown L1)	NNEST knowledge/awareness of grammar influenced by years of teaching experience, but other variables also interacted without a clear pattern.	Hong Kong
Tang (1997)	Questionnaire about advantages and disadvantages of being NNEST/NEST	47 NNESTs in a retraining course	The only advantage of NNEST was found in their knowledge of their students L1 and in their own experience as L2 learners	Hong Kong
Lasagabaster & Sierra, 2002	5-point Likert scale questionnaire	76 undergraduate students	Students favored NESTs	Spain

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Respondents	Results	Country
Llurda & Huget, 2003	9 closed-questions (oral questionnaire)	101 NNEs secondary and elementary school teachers	Secondary school teachers showed higher orientation towards grammar while elementary school teacher were more oriented towards communication.	Spain
Inbar-Louri, 2005 D	Self-report questionnaire and semi-structure interviews	93 NESTs 171 NNESTs 9 interviews	NESTs only showed more confidence than NNEST in teaching certain language areas, and when relating to students.	Israel
Benke & Medgyes, 2005	46 close-ended questionnaire for students	422 Hungarian learners	NNESTs were perceived as more demanding than, but as patient as NESTs	Hungary
Sifakis & Sougari, 2005	13 questions (open and close-ended)	421 teachers	NNESTs adhered to the NS norm in teaching pronunciation without awareness of EIL.	Greece
Cheung & Braine, 2007	The International Teaching Assistant Questionnaire	420 undergraduate students	Students had a good opinion of their NNEST with the exception of the excessive emphasis in grammar and examinations.	Hong Kong
Butler, 2007a	3 close-ended questionnaires	112 elementary school NNESTs	60% of the teachers agreed that English was best taught by a NES. This idea correlated with a negative appreciation of the respondents' linguistic abilities in L2.	Japan

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Respondents	Results	Country
Butler, 2007b	Matched-guised technique and a questionnaire. The same Korean-American speaker switched accents reading the same text	312 6 th graders in 2 elementary schools	Children's comprehension was not significantly different in each text, but their opinions favored the American-accented version as a better teacher	Korea

Mix-method studies

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Participants	Results	Country
Corcoran, 2011	Online Survey Interviews Classroom observations Focus Groups	24 NNESTs Students Administrators	Beliefs about advantages of NNESTs with experience abroad over those who lacked of it were detected.	Brazil

Content analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Duff & Uchida, 1997	Ethnography	2 NNESTs & 2 NESTs	Evidence of identity negotiation in the teaching of culture	Japan
Johnston, 1997	Semi-structured Interviews (life histories)	12 NNESTs 5 NNEST (n.l.u.)	Multi-layer identities Participants did not identify themselves as teachers, giving evidence of seeing ET as a permeable occupation.	Poland
Árva & Medgyes, 2000	Video recorded lessons Interviews (hypotheses used)	5 NNESTs Hungarian 5 British NESTs	Typical assumed differences between NNESTs and NESTs such as poor lesson planning for the former group, and lack of L2 proficiency for the latter were contradicted by classroom observations.	Hungary
Petron, 2003 D	Ethnography	4 female and 1 male NNESTs who had acquired English as immigrant children	The transnational experience impacted on the participants' linguistic and professional identities.	Mexico
Sayer, 2007 D	Ethnography	3 NNESTs (n.l.u.)	Participants constructed themselves as legitimate L2 users	I

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Lengeling,, Mora-Pablo and Rubio-Zenil, 2011	Interviews survey	267 students (survey) 9 students (interview).	Students showed preference for NESTs.	Mexico
Gonzalez-Pelaez, 2008	Classroom observations and interviews	2 female NNEST	Participants' beliefs about CLT impacted their teaching practices.	Colombia
Menard-Warwick, 2008	Interviews and classroom observations	A teacher from C and a teacher from Brazil (n.l.u.)	Transnational experience and intercultural competence evidenced in teaching practices.	Chile and the USA
Trent, 2010b	Interview (Wenger- Fairclough)	4 NNESTs 4 Subject- matter teachers Secondary school (n.l.u.)	Antagonistic identities impacted on collaboration between ESL and other subject- matter teachers.	Hong Kong
Banegas, 2012	Researcher's journal (Collaborative action research)	The researcher and a group of colleagues in a CLIL course	The researcher's multiple identities entered in a conflict with the collaborative action research project.	Argentina
Alwadi, 2013	Interviews	10 NNEST college instructors (4 males and 6 females)	The NNESTs perceived their NES colleagues as more familiar with the target culture, but less qualified to act as teachers because of their lack of formal training.	Bahrain

Narrative studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Ban, 2006 D	Narrative Analysis Electronically-mediated interactions	13 Mexican NNESTs in an academic-exchange program	New experiences mediated identity and identity mediated the possibilities of new experiences.	USA/Mexico
Tsui, 2007	Narrative Analysis Interviews	A male NNEST	The participant's diverse life-experiences negatively impacted the development of his identity as a communicative language teacher.	China
Zhao, 2008	Analysis of Narratives	4 male NNESTs 13 female NNESTs	Different factors such as accountability procedures and national examinations contributed to demotivate teachers	China
Liu & Xu, 2011	Narrative Analysis	1 novice female NNES college instructor	Transformation from a traditional to a more liberal identity under the influence of the work place.	China

Pre-Service Teachers in the Periphery

Content analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Lim, 2011	Concept mapping method used as heuristic to guide teachers' reflections on their professional identity	90 NNESTs US and GS	Core concepts in teachers' identity development were identified: background for career pursuits, concept of good teaching practices, confidence, and aspirations).	Korea
Pinho & Andrade, 2009	Observations and reflective journals	4 NNEST US	Reports on an intervention program to develop a pluri-lingual professional identity.	Portugal
Trent, 2010a	Interviews	8 NNEST US	How teachers handle the different demands and contradictions between their teaching courses and their practicum to construct professional identities.	Hong Kong
Chacón & Pérez, 2009	Two questionnaires (pre-post intervention) Reflective journal Focus group Action Research	58 NNEST US	50% of the teachers considered their pronunciation as good, but different from that of the NS. They identified listening and speaking as strengths of the NESTs They also manifested a preference for the British accent. The intervention raised awareness about World Englishes.	Venezuela
Clemente & Higgins, 2005	Ethnography	2 male and 2 female NNESTs US	Teachers developed aspects of their personal and professional identity through experiences in the program.	Mexico

Discourse Analysis Studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Clarke, 2008	Focus groups and online forum interactions content-analysis and discourse analysis	75 female NNESTs US	Participants constructed imagined identities in an antagonistic relationship with in-service teachers	United Arab Emirates
Gu, 2011	In-depth interviews	7 Mainland Chinese NNESTs US	Professional identities had been negotiated to gain legitimacy in their CoP and in a broader context in opposition with Hong Kong colleagues.	Hong Kong
Alonso-Belmonte, 2012	Written narratives and reflective journals Discourse-Analysis	A cohort of pre-service teachers	Participants used diverse attitudinal resources in their narratives to express positive assessment of their experience as they began to develop a professional identity	Spain

Narrative Studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Silva, Greggio, Lucena, Denardi & Denardi, 2007	Analysis of Narratives	5 NNEST GS	By reflecting on their personal narratives, the participants related their experiences to their practical teaching knowledge and uncovered their emerging teachers' identities.	Brazil

In-Service Teachers in the Center

Survey-based studies

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Respondents	Results	Country
Moussu, 2002 T	Close-ended and open ended questions	84 ESL students in an IE program	Students reported positive attitudes and beliefs about the figure of the NNEST	USA
Kelch & Santana-Williamson, 2002	A nine close-ended question survey and a match guise test with accented and non-accented voices	56 intermediate students	Students' ability to distinguish native and nonnative accents was low. However, their perceptions of the instructors' nativeness determined their attitudes towards them.	USA
Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Chin, Paik, & Sasser, 2004	Close-ended and open ended questions	32 NNESTs 55 NESTs in K-12 schools	There were but slight difference among NESTs and NNESTs in perceptions about their opinion on their teacher education, job satisfaction, language skills, and level of comfort to teach language.	USA
Pacek, 2005	Open-ended questionnaire about advantages and disadvantages of having a NNEST Lecturer	48 students in a vocabulary class 46 students in a teaching-training program	Most students initially believed that nonnative pronunciation and fluency were the main disadvantages of a NNEST Lecturer, but some of them improved their opinion after the course.	England

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Participants	Results	Country
Moussu, 2006 D	Three questionnaires with short closed-ended questions and a few open ended questions	78 NESTs 18 NNESTs 643 Students Administrators from 12 IEPs	Students' attitudes towards NNESTs were not negative, but NNESTs had a low perception of their linguistic abilities. Administrators did not admit considering nativeness as a relevant hiring criterion.	USA
Moussu, 2010	Likert-scale close-ended questions	18NNESTs 78NESTs 21 administrators (IEP)	Teachers and IEP administrators agreed that NNEST contributed to enhance teaching and diversity in the IEP. Teaching experience was estimated as more relevant than nativeness	USA

Content analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Amin, 1997	Interviews	5 Ethnic-minority female English teachers	Evidence of an association between race and the ownership of English	Canada
Liu, 1999	Email and face-to-face semi-structured interviews	7 teachers that had been labeled as NNESTs	The label NN did not capture the complexity of the participants' linguistic identities, but represented a professional disadvantage. Ethnic implications are also discussed.	USA
Amin, 1999; 2001a; 2001b	Interviews	8 female NNESTs from the outer circle	Experiences with ethnic discrimination had impacted these teachers' ways to negotiate their identity and their approach to teaching minority students.	Canada
Article & D				
Case, 2004	Interviews, classroom observations, and artifacts	1 male NNEST born in West Africa	The teacher's teaching practices encouraged equal participation and reinforced the identity of immigrant students.	USA
Subtirelu, 2011	Interviews Recorded classroom sessions	1 IEP male NNEST from Germany	The instructor did not use his ethnicity to build his authority to teach grammar. Instead, he positioned himself as a knowledgeable linguist and a non-traditional teacher that defied conventions.	USA

Mixed-methods studies

Author(s)	Type of data	Participants	Results	Country
Mahboob, 2003 D	Close-ended questionnaire	122 IEP Administrators	IEP administrators considered nativeness as part of their hiring criteria.	USA
Mahboob, 2004	Students' writing samples (essays).	32 ESL adult students	Students showed a general positive attitude towards NNEST	

Pre-Service Teachers in the Center

Content analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Liu, 2005	Ethnographic case study	4 Chinese NNES GTAs NES college students	GTAs had found ways to cope with the stress of teaching NES, but still suffered an inferiority complex. Students' opinions were divided.	USA
Johnson (in Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005)	Informal discussion, interviews, a reflective journal	A Mexican NNES GS	The participant became aware of her overlapping multiple identities. The imposed labels made her feel alienated.	USA
Golombek, & Jordan, 2005	Reaction papers about pronunciation pedagogy and the NS fallacy	2 female NNESTs GS	The exposure to alternative approaches disrupted the participant's perceptions on the role of accent as a form of professional legitimacy for NNESTs.	US
Brown, & Miller, 2006	A questionnaire about participants language learning histories Email communications (with one participant)	34 NNESTs	Participants agreed that NNESTs did not have to sound native, but required a high level of proficiency and linguistic knowledge. The focal participant struggled with feelings of insecurity and inadequacy related to her NN condition.	Australia
Ehrenreich, 2007	Interviews	German NNEST Study-abroad program	Participants experienced failure to connect with their hosts in spite of their high motivation.	England

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Ilieva, 2010	Reflective portfolio	20 Chinese NNEST GS GS	The students were exposed to literature discourse and integrated those ideas that resonated with their own perspectives.	Canada
Ates & Eslami, 2012	Online teaching journals	3 NNEST-GTAs	The participants manifested having a hard time establishing credibility with their classes and claimed having experience some sort of racial discrimination	USA
Park, 2012	Language learning histories (email) Journal of educational incidents Interviews	1 Chinese NNEST GS	The participant's identity as a legitimate teacher and multicompetent user of English is disrupted and negotiated during her experience in the US	USA
Cho, 2013	In-depth interviews	3 Korean NNESTs GS	The identity negotiation of the participants was analyzed as they assimilated the disciplinary culture of their profession (disciplinary acculturation). Some struggles and devaluation of the students' prior identities were reported.	USA

Mixed-method studies

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Participants	Results	Country
Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999	Questionnaire Classroom discussions Interviews Biographical accounts	17 first-year NNESTs GA	The participants perceived differences between NNESTs and NESTs, but they did not believe these differences implied that one group was better than the other	USA
Faez, 2011	2 Questionnaires (background and follow-up) Interviews	25 linguistically diverse student teachers (n.l.u.) (11 born in Canada) 3 instructors in the program to rate students' proficiency and accentedness	A classification of 6 different linguistic groups demonstrate the complexity of the linguistic heritage of English teachers questioning the use of the NNEST label.	Canada

Survey-based studies

Author(s)	Type of Survey	Respondents	Results	Country
Llurda, 2005	Email survey with closed and open-ended questions about NNES GS-teachers' language abilities and expectations for employment	41 practicum supervisors	The students were compared to the NS norm and found competent but with some limitations. 14% to 28% of students were rated as weak.	USA Canada

Discourse analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Lazaraton, 2003	Video tape classroom observations	2 NNESTs 1 NEST and their classes	Nonnativeness was found mostly irrelevant in the conversations with the exception of NNEST's reluctance to admit ignorance in front of their students.	USA
Pavlenko, 2003	Student-teachers autobiographies	24 Americans of diverse linguistic backgrounds 20 NNESTs	The student-teachers were exposed to readings and discussions on the NS fallacy and the concept of multicompetence. Some participants gave evidence of having changed their views as a result of this experience.	USA

Narrative Studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Zacharias, 2010 D	In-depth interviews Focus groups Artifacts Analysis of narratives	12-Southeast Asian GS	The participants negotiated their multiple identities as they found a balance between their core ideologies and new experiences and ideologies to which they had been exposed.	USA

Studies on Nonnative Teachers of a Second Language other than English

In-Service Teachers

Content analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Armour, 2004	Interviews and classroom observations	A female NNS of Japanese teacher	The participant juggled 3 or her identities (L2 learner, L2 user, and L2 teacher) and her insecurities with respect to her L2 proficiency.	Australia
Breen, 2002	Focus groups Individual interviews Questionnaire with biographical data	20 teachers who transition from being generalists to become second language teachers	The participants' sense of legitimacy as teachers was shaken during the transition, as they also faced loss of recognition and lack of support by school structures.	Australia
Daly, 2010	Semi-structured interviews	6 NNS Second Language teachers	The participants identified some core roles pertaining to their identity as L2 teachers.	New Zealand

Pre-Service teachers
Content analysis studies

Author(s)	Type of Data	Participants	Results	Country
Clark, 2010	Observations Interviews Focus groups Artifacts (Ethnography)	7 French as a second language student-teachers of Italian descent.	The participants used different ways to cope with and resist the contextual pressures to homogenize their complex linguistic identities.	Canada

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

The study of teaching and learning is hardly a matter of mere abstraction for one reason: Teachers and students are real people who live in real scenarios and relate to each other in complex manners. That being so, some still insist on theorizing about teaching while maintaining an outsider's perspective. It is even more intriguing to notice that some presume that relevant prescriptions for better practices may derive from research that only considers an etic perspective. However, a great deal of research on teaching and learning has been conducted in this manner, maintaining an etic perspective and separating theory apart from practice. Because of this disconnect, it is not surprising that practitioners often dismiss theory as irrelevant. Fortunately, remarkable efforts have been made to approach the research on teachers with an emic and holistic perspective. This shift is evident in the changes observed in the history of the studies on second language teachers' identity that I have reviewed in the previous chapter.

Reflecting on this history, I will begin the present chapter with a brief review on the methodological approaches used to study NNESTs (3.1). This review will focus on the types of

data collection techniques and analytical procedures used in the same sample of 74 studies featured in Chapter 2. This review will show how the research design of the present study fits in the context and the general framework of previous research. Section two (3.2) will aim to explore the epistemological principles of narrative research that have been adopted in the present study. To do so, I will mostly review the works that have informed the methodological principles and procedures adopted. At the same time, I will briefly discuss some of the different types of narratives and explain which types have been considered in this research project.

Section three (3.3) will present the research design of this dissertation. This presentation is composed of six sub-sections: the researcher, the participants, the procedures of data collection, the analytical procedures used to maintain trustworthiness in data analysis, and ethical issues.

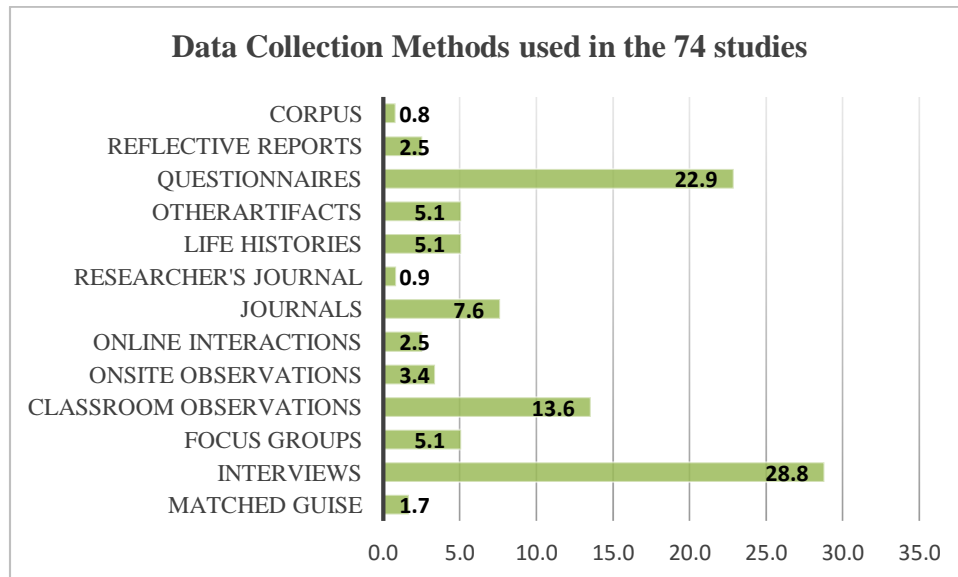
3.1 Research methodology in NNEST studies

A swift look at the research pieces revised for this study allows us to note a change from an initially dominant survey-based approach to interpretative-oriented research designs. Although questionnaires are undoubtedly useful instruments to collect information from large samples, some scholars have questioned the suitability of surveys to capture the details of social interaction and people's perspectives (Barcelos, 2006; Block, 1997). One of the main objections to the exclusive use of the questionnaire is its being restricted to researchers' a priori conceptualizations of the object of study. This limitation impedes the emergence of unforeseen categories that may be relevant to the purposes of the research. Also, the usual close-ended format, meant to reduce data to manageable numeric values, implies a reduction that may flatten the complex texture of social phenomenon. Moreover, some have criticized the fact that questionnaires are essentially based on the assumption that research is expected to be conducted in a top-down fashion, moving from theoretical knowledge towards reality by means of deduction to ensure objectivity. This

assumption leaves teachers in the position of subjects from whom researchers are expected to extract data in a unilateral fashion. In view of this criticism, some studies have tried to use other data collection procedures. This trend is evident in the studies reviewed for the purpose of this work, as shown in Figure 4.

As can be observed, questionnaires were employed in over one fifth of the studies, most of which were published during the early 90s and the first decade of the twenty-first century. By contrast, since the publication of Duff and Uchida’s article (1997), the use of qualitative methods and techniques has become increasingly more common. Nearly 34% of the studies in this review used either individual or group interviews (focus groups), while an additional 16.95% employed some sort of observation. Within this last category, classroom observation was the most recurrent (13.6%). Additionally, 24.54% of the studies included diverse documents produced by teachers (e.g. journals, lesson plans, emails, online forum posts, and other artifacts).

Figure 4. Data collection methods in NNESTs research.



Note: Numbers represent percentages.

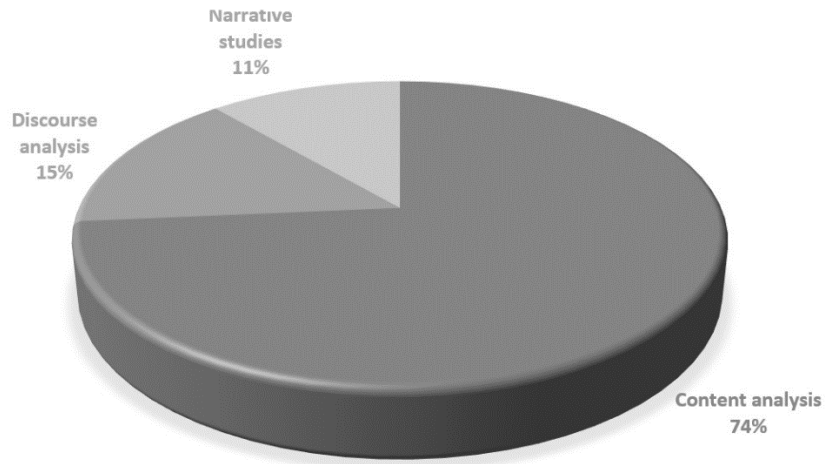
This trend suggests that most of the research on NNESTs has prominently employed rich data to approach teachers with an insider’s perspective.

Furthermore, diverse approaches to qualitative data analysis have been embraced, but one of them seems to be the most recurrently used. Figure 5 shows how most qualitative studies in this sample resorted to some kind of content analysis. Alternatively, various forms of discourse analysis appear as a still incipient trend followed by only eight studies in the sample. Three of these research projects followed Fairclough's procedures of critical discourse analysis to uncover the ideology beneath the surface of teachers' discourse. Among these studies, Clarke's (2008) study best describes the analytical procedures used. As expected from any work that follows Fairclough, Clarke's work was influenced by Systemic Functional Linguistics, with the linguistic analysis being based on Halliday's meta-functions of meaning. The other two studies (Cots & Diaz, 2005; Gu, 2011) emphasized more on the ideological part of the analysis but made their linguistic tools for the analysis less prominent. Finally, the rest of the studies featured diverse approaches or theoretical frameworks to conduct the analysis:

- Speech Act Theory (Linares-Garcia & Romero-Trujillo, 2008),
- Martin & White's Appraisal Theory (Alonso-Belmonte, 2012),
- Conversational Analysis (Lazaraton, 2003),
- Bakhtin's dialogism (Menard-Warwick, 2014),
- Discursive positioning (Pavlenko, 2003).

As much as this variety of perspectives is welcomed, other approaches to discourse analysis have yet to be included. Moreover, the fact that only one study used the framework of discourse positioning to analyze teachers' discourse is noteworthy. This construct has received considerable attention in the study of identity (e.g. Bamberg, 1997; Barkhuizen, 2010; Davis & Harré, 1990; De Fina, 2013; Trent, 2012) because it addresses the fluid nature of identity as it is performed through discursive interactions. Therefore it would be desirable to see more studies using diverse approaches to discourse considering positioning in their analysis.

Figure 5. Data analysis approaches in qualitative studies on NNESTs



A third methodological choice featured in Figure 5 is represented by six studies that used some type of narrative approach. Broadly speaking, these studies carried out either content or discourse analysis, which could misguide the observers to consider them in either one of the previous two categories. However, the nature of the data used and the structure of the research report gave these studies a distinctive character that set them apart from other research projects in the sample. In order to make some sense of the particular characteristic of these studies, I used Kalaja, Menezes, and Barcelos' (2008) categorization, which classifies narrative studies into two different approaches:

- a) Analysis of narratives: The researchers collect narrative material produced by the participants (e.g. short written autobiographies, life histories told during in-depth interviews, and journal entries, among others). These data are used to identify common themes or to analyze the form of the narratives. The presentation of such analysis takes the form of a classic qualitative report in which common categories are used to analyze data across different cases.
- b) Narrative analysis: The researchers gather rich data using diverse techniques (e.g. participant observations, artifacts, and interviews among others) to construct a case which is reported in the form of an explanatory narrative.

Table 5 summarizes the content of the aforementioned narrative studies. Column 2 shows that half of the researchers used narrative analysis, while the other half preferred using analysis of narratives as their methodological approach. In spite of this difference, all of the researchers carried out some sort of content analysis to make sense of the data. Only Silva, Greggio, Lucena, Denardi, and Gil (2007) added a form-oriented component to analyze the metaphors used by their participants. It is also interesting to note that there is one particular theoretical influence that seems to dominate in most of these studies (see Column 3). Thus, it could be concluded that the studies in the sample follow a rather unified trend strongly influenced by the works of Clandinin and Connelly. This rather homogeneous sample, however, does not adequately represent the various forms of narrative research used within the field of applied linguistics (Riessman, 2008). Therefore, the addition of new studies that bring different versions of narrative research to the area of NNEST's identities may be desirable. These new studies could include a consideration of how the linguistic features of teachers' narrative discourse may be related to the negotiation of their identities. Given the fact that the present study draws from theoretical and methodological principles that may be qualified as narrative in nature, I will devote more space for a discussion of these possibilities in the rest of the chapter. In the following section I will begin by roughly summarizing the origins of the present interest in narrative studies. For a more detailed review the reader can refer to Bamberg (2006a).

3.2 Narrative research

Narrative research may mean different things to researchers working in diverse disciplines. This polysemous characteristic is not surprising given the fact that personal accounts have long been used as data source in sciences as different as medicine, history, psychology, and sociology. The present interest in narratives within the social sciences is connected to their use in the form of life histories as conceived by the sociologists of the Chicago School.

Table 5. Narrative studies on NNEST's identity

In-Service Teachers in the Periphery					
1.Author(s)	2.Type of Data Analysis	3.Theory	4.Participants	5.Results	6.Country
Ban, 2006 D.	Narrative Analysis (Electronically-mediated interactions)	Wenger's CoP Activity Theory Clandinin & Connelly's Narrative Inquiry	13 Mexican NNESTs in an academic-exchange program	New experiences mediated identity and identity mediated the possibilities of new experiences.	USA/Mexico
Tsui, 2007	Narrative Analysis of (Interviews)	Wenger's CoP Clandinin & Connelly's Narrative Inquiry	A male NNEST	The participant's diverse life-experiences negatively impacted the development of his identity as a communicative language teacher.	China
Zhao, 2008	Analysis of Narratives (Interviews)	Clandinin & Connelly's Narrative Inquiry	4 male NNESTs 13 female NNESTs	Different factors such as accountability procedures and national examinations contributed to demotivate teachers	China
Liu & Xu, 2011	Narrative Analysis (Interviews, reflective journals, and reflective reports)	Clandinin & Connelly's Narrative Inquiry	1 novice female NNES college instructor	Transformation from a traditional to a more liberal identity under the influence of the work place.	China

Pre-Service Teachers in the Periphery

1.Author(s)	2.Type of Data Analysis	3.Theory	4.Participants	5.Results	6.Country
Silva, Greggio, Lucena, Denardi & Gil, 2007 D.	Analysis of Narratives (self-recorded autobiographies)	Lakoff & Johnson's (1980) metaphors	5 NNEST GS	By reflecting on their personal narratives, the participants related their experiences to their personal practical knowledge and uncovered their emerging professional identities.	Brazil

Pre-Service Teachers in the Center

1.Author(s)	2.Type of Data Analysis	3.Theory	4.Participants	5.Results	6.Country
Zacharias, 2010	Analysis of narratives (In-depth interviews, focus groups, and artifacts)	Clandinin & Connelly's Narrative Inquiry	12-Southeast Asian GS	The participants negotiated their multiple identities as they found a balance between their core ideologies and new experiences and ideologies to which they had been exposed.	USA

Although the beginnings of this sociological movement are usually attributed to Robert Park and Ernest Burgess, the seminal work of W.I. Thomas and Florian Znaniecki (1927) is regarded as the study that first transformed the field with the use of life histories (Bulmer, 1986). In this type of studies, researchers looked at narratives to gather factual information. Such facts had to be

filtered by comparing the stories with other sources such as documents or the accounts of other informants. Bulmer argued that the ultimate purpose of this narrative research was to provide empirical proof that would explain social norms and how human behavior adheres or deviates from those norms. This effort to maintain objectivity was ultimately found insufficient when the positivistic turn began to dominate sociology during the 1930s. Therefore, the use of life history, as a method, was abandoned for some decades.

The interest in narrative data would arise again with a new generation of social researchers that emerged during the 1970s (Polkinghorne, 2007). This time, however, researchers used narratives with different purposes in mind. For one group of these scholars, narratives represented the specific research object. For the other group, narratives were the means to answer their research questions (Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, & Zilber, 1998). Those interested in personal accounts as a form of oral or written communication focused on analyzing the narrative structure by means of literary or linguistic analytical tools without necessarily incurring into dramatic paradigm ruptures (e.g. Labov & Waletzky, 1967). By contrast, the scholars who adopted narratives as a way to answer their questions, needed to justify their decision to break with the quantitative canon. Such a change required a new theoretical justification, which was partly provided by Jerome Bruner, whose contribution I will describe in the section below.

3.2.1 Narrative and the construction of social reality.

Bruner (1986, 1991) contested the dominant views that approached the study of the human mind by focusing on the development of factual and logical knowledge. He argued that psychology was doing a disservice to science by not taking into consideration the social nature of human mental processes. Instead of explaining thought as an internal process, Bruner suggested considering the role of socially constructed symbolic systems in the mediation of thought. If such mediation was as central as Vygotsky had proposed, studying the emergence of social reality within the human mind was of considerable import. Such studies, however, should not assume that social reality is generated by means of the same operations used in the production of

scientific knowledge (by means of posing arguments and finding proofs). Thus, Bruner propounded that individuals made sense of social interaction through cognitive processes that could be traced by analyzing individuals' personal narratives:

As I have argued extensively elsewhere, we organize our experience and our memory of human happenings mainly in the form of narrative –stories, excuses, myths, reasons for doing and not doing, and so on. Narrative is a conventional form, transmitted culturally and constrained by each individual's level of mastery and by his conglomerate of prosthetic devices, colleagues, and mentors. Unlike the constructions generated by logical and scientific procedures that can be weeded out by falsification, narrative construction can only achieve 'verisimilitude'. Narratives then, are a version of reality whose capability is governed by convention and 'narrative necessity' rather than by empirical verification and logical requiredness (Bruner, 1991, p.4).

Bruner was essentially proposing that a great deal of our interpretations of the "messy domain of human interaction" were embedded in the socially constructed ways used to communicate our daily experiences through narratives. If that was so, it then followed that, by studying personal accounts, social scientists were more likely to achieve a better understanding of the human conscience and its representations of the social world. With this call to study narratives, Bruner was not only reinstating them as legitimate data, but also suggesting a different type of research questions. In other words, he was no longer seeing narratives as source of objective information, but as the doors to individuals' subjective representations about social reality. In accordance with the qualitative movement, people's views became a legitimate research object and narratives a suitable means to studying them. From this point in history forward, the use of personal accounts spread to different disciplines. In the field of education, the narrative turn was led by the work of two Canadian researchers: Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly. Considering the analysis of the six narrative studies reviewed in the present work (see Table 5), it is obvious that the influence has also left a mark in applied linguistics. For that

reason, I will explore the main tenets of Clandinin and Connelly's narrative inquiry and specify the part of their approach I have adopted in this study.

3.2.2 Narrative inquiry in education.

To begin with, it is important to understand that Clandinin and Connelly's methodological proposal emerged from a long-term project conducted in an inner-city school in the province of Ontario, Canada (Clandinin, 1985; Clandinin & Connelly, 1989; 2000; Connelly & Clandinin, 1982; 1984). Even though the official object of the study was school reform with a strong institutional focus, the researchers' main interest was teachers. Believing that the pedagogical knowledge that truly impacts teaching is the one originated by teachers' practice, Clandinin and Connelly intended to approach this knowledge right where it starts, teachers' everyday work. However, to target an emic perspective and honor their convictions about the value of teachers' personal theories, Clandinin and Connelly decided to reduce the power differential between researchers and practitioners. They attempted to achieve this goal by employing participant observation, which required an intense involvement in the field. Such a time consuming approach was possible because the researchers had secured full funding from several agencies, prolonging their presence on site for several years. As a result of this intensive involvement, a number of narratives emerged. Some of them were produced by the participants during interviews and daily interactions; others were created by the researchers as they wrote their field notes. Reflecting on this recurrent presence of narrative discourse and influenced by the work of others (e.g. Bateson, 1994; Coles, 1989; Dewey, 1929; Geertz, 1995; Johnson, 1987; MacIntyre, 1981), Clandinin and Connelly decided to take narratives to the level of the research report.

Therefore, in this version of narrative inquiry, researchers embed their findings within a story, leaving aside the traditional genre features of the research report. This narrative report transgresses well-established rhetorical conventions such as the inclusion of a literature review. In a narrative inquiry report, instead of being organized in a specific section or chapter, this review

is spread all over the document. In similar fashion, the findings section becomes a narrative within which descriptions, stories, and arguments are mixed in a unified plot. In this narrative, the researchers, seen as actors positioned at the same level as the participants, insert their own subjectivity and personal motivations. Unsurprisingly, these radical innovations have incited severe criticisms and the dismissal of such studies as narcissist and idiosyncratic (He, 1998). In spite of these objections, Clandinin and Connelly's principles for social research have become highly influential, even if only partially adopted. Perhaps the reason for this success is connected to the fact that the epistemological underpinnings of narrative inquiry resonate with other qualitative approaches.

In the first place, Clandinin and Connelly's proposal is theoretically indebted to the ideas of John Dewey about human experience as the site where social phenomenon is best manifested. They argue that by representing social reality as experience, researchers can move from the personal to the social realm, from past to present, and even delve into people's projections about the future. Moreover, from the vantage point of personal experience, researchers can free their minds from the limitations of cross-sectional analysis (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 2). In other words, experience provides holistic lenses to see all the colors of the spectrum at once. Such a possibility is equally appealing for perspectives as diverse as sociocultural theory, poststructuralism, or the theorists of complex dynamic systems. It is then not surprising that some of the supporters of these theories have adopted some kind of narrative approach to study L2 teachers and learners in recent times (Feryok, 2010; Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Norton, 2000; Pavlenko, 2007).

Second, narrative inquiry was partially inspired by Clifford Geertz' reflections on the role of change in social phenomena. For this anthropologist, social change constitutes an unavoidable force that turns research into an open-ended endeavor. Because of the mutability of human experience, scientists cannot aspire to dissect reality to measure it and achieve accurate explanations and predictions. Instead, they can only venture interpretations, attempting to put

together the pieces of a puzzle *after the facts* have happened (Geertz, 1995). Due to the influence of change, these interpretations are neither absolute nor definitive; they are merely tentative. Hence, what narrative researchers do is capturing memories of fleeting moments that are mediated by their own perceptions. To illustrate this idea of tentativeness, Clandinin and Connelly adopted Geertz' metaphor of a parade in two main senses:

- a. Tentativeness has to do with the position the observer has while watching a parade. What we can perceive depends on where exactly we are positioned at. However, this view is destined to change if we move.
- b. Tentativeness is also related to the position of the objects we observe. In the parade, our view is modified whenever the objects move, which happens constantly (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 16-17).

By keeping contact with the participants for extended periods of time and by reporting their findings in narrative form, researchers are expected to account for this change while maintaining a tentative attitude. At the same time, the tentative attitude is considered in this context as a tempering element to distance the narrative researcher from the illusion of false objectivity. Additionally, the principle of tentativeness enables the researchers to keep their research projects open to possibilities that were unanticipated before the entrance to the field. Such an attitude is obviously indebted to phenomenology and for this reason resonates with a good number of qualitative approaches to research.

Based on this epistemological foundation, Clandinin and Connelly organized narrative inquiry around three constructs that they named *commonplaces* (Schwab, 1962): *temporality*, *sociality*, and *place*. The first *commonplace* refers to the representation of events and people's experiences in the context of time (and the possibilities of change that time implies). Temporality means that the narrative inquirer is not supposed to describe people's actions and ways of being as fixated facts, but rather as manifestations of reality in a specific present time. These manifestations are also influenced by the past and may develop in different directions in the

future (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006). The second commonplace, *sociality*, is narrative inquiry's own way to synthesize an interest in the individual and a focus on the collectivity. It works as a set of bifocal lenses that allow the researcher to consider agency and structure at the same time. Moreover, the inclusion of sociality also serves to set the narrative in the context of human interaction. Therefore, the inquirer should keep in mind that individuals cannot be fully understood if seen as isolated agents. The relationship of the participants with others, the researchers included, should be included to illuminate our understanding of human actions and social life. Finally, a consideration of *place* is necessary to set the narrative in perspective and locate the events in the "topological boundaries" in which the inquiry develops (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p.480). *Place* is important because it impacts people and their actions. It also interacts with temporality, changing the landscape in which the action happens as time passes. No picture of narrative inquiry is complete if place is not considered. More importantly, if a complete account of this third commonplace is missing, the transferability of the study could be questioned.

The almost ethnographic approach to data collection proposed by Clandinin and Connelly is essential to unlock the full potential of the three commonplaces previously described. Such a prolonged presence in the field warrants the possibility to experience and analyze reality considering temporality, sociality, and place. This experience is considered important to compose in-depth, rich descriptions that give the narrative an intimate character, which is the hallmark of narrative inquiry.

Given the requirements of long-term involvement and the controversial genre features of this narrative approach, it is not surprising that only a few studies have fully adopted it. For these same reasons, I cannot claim that the present study met all the standards of narrative inquiry. Neither the data collection nor the composition of the research text followed Clandinin and Connelly strictly speaking. However, this work is indebted to them in principle, at least in three main aspects.

First of all, in interpreting the data I have striven to maintain a tentative attitude. The conclusions drawn from my experience with the research participants and their discourse are anything but definitive. The reader should take them as glimpses at a world delimited by a specific time and place. The descriptions of the participants' perspectives and actions presented in this study are not a representation of who the participants may be now that the study has reached its end. In the same way, the findings cannot be used to make predictions about the ways in which the participants' identities may change in the future. As a tentative study the focus has been on describing the particular ways in which people enacted their professional identities within a particular context at a given moment.

The three commonplaces of temporality, sociality, and place have also been considered in the design of this study. These commonplaces are akin to my definition of identity and identity formation, as represented in the dimensions sketched in Figure 1 (page 35). For this reason, the reader will see them revisited at different points of this study. Temporality is brought to the surface in the participants' own narratives of their careers and in my following their practice for over one academic year. Sociality is present in the interactions observed in the participants' classes, their journals, their narratives, and in my delving into the social and political context in which the participants live and work. Place is present in my going back and forth to the site, keeping online contact with that world, and observing the ways in which place impacts the enactment of identity. These three commonplaces are considered in the presentation of findings and discussion, but perhaps they are more evident in Chapter 4.

A final principle that this work adopts from Clandinin and Connelly's methodological proposal is an estimation of teachers' experience as relevant. My interest in teachers' identities stems from the conviction that teachers' experiences and ways of being are key to understand teaching and learning. In many ways, it is we, researchers and teacher educators, who may learn the most from teachers' experiences, and not the other way around. Therefore, in my dealings with the participants, I have attempted to suspend judgement about what was happening in their

classrooms and their careers. This suspension of judgement does not mean that the analysis does not observe the social processes involved with a critical eye. What it means is that I have abstained from assigning labels of right or wrong to teachers' choices. Instead, I have attempted to describe and analyze teachers' interactions and discourse, hoping that these efforts will enhance our understanding of what it means to be a second language teacher in a developing country.

As relevant as Clandinin and Connelly's principles of narrative inquiry can be, they were not sufficient to achieve all the goals of this study. In order to explore teachers' narrative discourse, I needed an approach that could provide analytical tools to study teachers' stories with the perspective of a linguist. The works of James Paul Gee, Elliot Mishler, Catherine Kholer Riessman, and Michael Bamberg helped me define the necessary methodological tools that I used in this study. In the sections that follow, I will describe how the contributions of these scholars are relevant to the present study.

3.2.3 Life histories as a narrative approach to identity.

As mentioned before, narrative research has taken diverse forms to answer different research questions. One scholar who has prominently supported the study of narratives (life histories in particular) to address questions regarding identity formation is Elliot Mishler (1995, 1999, 2006). Originally a psychologist, Mishler reacted against the Ericksonian characterization of identity as an internal process that follows a predictable path of developmental stages. More inclined to see identity as a psychosocial phenomenon, Mishler proposed that scholars should be open to observe the important role of variability in the shaping of identity. By paying attention to this variability, particularly in shifts and disruptions experienced through a lifetime, Mishler observed the impact of individual choices in the conformation of professional identities. These choices, often influenced by social forces (e.g. social class, gender), may trigger identity shifts in ways that do not fit into universal patterns (Mishler, 1999). Therefore, the use of life histories

becomes a suitable tool to uncover the variable and the particular ways in which people form their identities.

This conviction notwithstanding, Mishler warns us against the dangers of taking life histories as unproblematic and transparent descriptions of people's lives. Here, I mention two of the main reasons that Mishler considers to suggest such precautions. In the first place, narratives are conceived by Mishler as performative displays of individuals' identities in the context of a dialogue between the interviewer and interviewee. Because of this dialogical nature, the analysis of the data requires attention to both form and content. This attention is especially important as each response is thematically and structurally connected to the prior question and the entire text of the interview. Second, because each narrative is a performance, narratives should be considered as unique representations of the participants' identities in the here and now of the interview. They cannot be considered as fixed portraits of the participants' identity (This idea resonates a great deal with Geertz' parade metaphor). The difference between Mishler's approach to the treatment of narratives and that of Clandinin and Connelly is that the former provides specific linguistic tools for the analysis.

In his study of craft-artists' professional identities, Mishler (1999) developed a method to analyze narrative interview data. He applied the basis of case-study (observing differences and similarities across cases) without codifying the data in the usual content-based form. In other words, he did not segment the text in arbitrary lines that would later be isolated by means of thematic codes and categories. He argued that such a procedure isolates the data from their original linguistic context, thus causing the loss of meanings embedded in the flow of the narrative. Therefore, his analysis was based on longer sections of narrative discourse that include the contributions of the interviewer, namely the questions that triggered the narratives. This analysis included a synthesis of form and content that used concepts borrowed from James Paul Gee. In the following section, I will discuss those concepts as they are also relevant to the present work.

3.2.4 Linguistic tools for the analysis of narratives.

In Chapter 2 a few lines were devoted to discussing the ideas of James Paul Gee on Discourses and their role in the social construction of identities. In this chapter, I adhere to his view about the prominent role that language has in the study of society and how these two are intimately connected (Gee, 2008). In this view, analyzing language implies looking at the word without losing sight of the world that the words serve to represent. The world, in this context, refers to the social reality that the words represent. The intimate connection between the world and the word is especially relevant for Gee because he believes that language encapsulates our interpretations about the world in what he calls *cultural models*, or “generalizations about what is similar to what” (p. 97). In other words, Gee posits that discourse is loaded with values, judgments, and prejudice that respond to a socially constructed order or view of the world. These cultural models are so well entrenched in our minds that we seldom pause to reflect on them. Problematizing these theories or cultural models is not something we can do all the time, but it is undoubtedly part of the task of a social scientist.

With the purpose of delving into these cultural models buried at the intersection of meaning and language, Gee proposes considering five interrelated linguistic systems summarized in Table 6.

These five systems are regarded as the basic constituents of discourse, which Gee understands as “stretches of language which hang together so as to make sense to some communities of people” (Gee, 2008, p. 116). Therefore, considering prosody, cohesion, discourse organization, contextualization signals, and themes, Gee’s version of discourse analysis proceeds to observe the connections between meaning, language, and context. In this endeavor, Gee makes a distinction between speech and writing, which he understands as fundamentally different types of language. As a result of this consideration, certain differentiations in the treatment of writing and speech as discourse do apply.

To begin with, prosody constitutes a linguistic system that is instantiated in speech only. While it is true that certain aspects of spoken languages can be represented in traditional written forms, the written word always falls short to capture all nuances of speech. Also, conventional ways to parse language into clauses and sentences used in writing do not always capture the true auditory properties of speech. Therefore, Gee adopts Chafe's (1994) suggestions to dissect speech into units that correspond more naturally to spoken language, even if this dissection sometimes violates the clause unit. Loosely adapting this idea and adding some considerations about the

Table 6. The five linguistic systems (Gee, 2008, p. 119-120)

System	Definition
Prosody	The auditory representation of words and sentences that includes the integral use of sounds (pitch, loudness, stress, and length), silence, and pauses in speech.
Cohesion	The diverse features that are used to link sentences to form longer stretches of language.
The overall discourse organization of the text	All the resources used to organize a message in units beyond the sentential level such as arguments or episodes.
Contextualization signals	The different ways used to lead the listener or reader of a text to construe the most appropriate context to interpret the message. In other words, context is not a given but actively negotiated by means of these signals.
The thematic organization of the text	The ways in which speakers or writers build and develop themes through their messages.

other four linguistic systems, Gee proceeds to analyze speech by identifying what he calls *lines* and *stanzas*. The former are small stretches of speech that are delimited by intonation contours and pauses. Within these limits, a line contains simple sequences of given and new information (Gee, 2008). Stanzas are sets of lines unified by topic and syntax. Each stanza features the speakers' view about a specific issue (e.g. a character in a story, an event, or a claim in an

argument). In the present study, I have adopted this unit system to analyze teachers' speech in their interviews and classroom interactions. For this reason, the interview data that appears in Chapters 5 and 6 is divided in intonation units following Chafe (1994) and those stretches of elicited responses that contain narratives are divided in stanzas as suggested by Gee. The same applies to the naturally-occurring conversations between teachers and students presented in Chapter 7. A more detailed example of how I analyzed the text to dissect the data in stanzas is provided in Chapter 5, more specifically in Excerpt 23 (see page 220)

3.2.5 A linguistic approach to life histories.

Gee's procedures to analyze discourse in arguments and narratives are especially useful for close analysis of unified narratives, especially those shaped in the form of stories (Gee, 2008). However, Mishler (1995, 1999) and Riessman (1993) have adapted these procedures to the convoluted discourse of life histories. As mentioned before, in this type of analysis the questions produced by the interviewer are considered as part of the data. The long stretches of the biographical narratives are segmented in "episodes" (sections unified by themes and composed by several stanzas). Those sections that are considered distracting or irrelevant for the analysis are deleted, but explanatory brackets are added wherever a deletion has occurred. When necessary to provide appropriate context for the analysis, some descriptions of the event and the reactions observed in the participant are added. Finally, during the analysis, the researcher pays attention to form and content. On the one side, attention is given to thematic similarities and differences. On the other side, the analyst observes the linguistic features and structure that are used to organize the narrative and convey meaning. This thematic and structural analysis is followed by an observation of how the participants' narrative relates to the sociocultural landscape of which the narrative is a part. Mishler calls this part of the process keeping a "critical analytic perspective" (Mishler, 1999, p. 51).

In a way that echoes Clandinin and Connelly's interest in change, Mishler also focuses his analysis on observing discontinuities, disruptions, and sudden shifts over a lifetime. This focus implies the observing of life events beyond the surface of the apparent chronological order that the teller or the analyst may wish to impose to the text. He suggests that in the course of an interview, or a series of interviews, the events may seem to follow a logic organization. However, they seldom occur in an orderly fashion. For example, in his study of craft artists, Mishler (1999) discovered that his participants initially spoke of their artistic activity as something they had always done. Nevertheless, further examination of the narratives showed that most of them had undergone disruptive periods without involvement in the arts. Therefore, if observed more closely, the narrative may offer clues to discover how change is sometimes reflected in multiple plot lines that compete against each other. These observations, followed by a consideration of the broader social context, led Mishler to note how gender and social class were connected to disruptions in the craft artists' lives. In conclusion, the linguistic analysis of entire episodes coupled with a critical analytic perspective can help to problematize the data, considering how social practice and discourse impact identity.

In spite of these advantages, Mishler's analytic approach did not offer specific analytical solutions to approach a construct that I wished to explore in this study, positioning. In the following section, I will discuss a definition of positioning and some principles used for its analysis in narrative discourse.

3.2.6 Positioning.

In his effort to build a theory to represent the situated nature of language, Erving Goffman created a series of constructs that were originally based on a dramaturgical metaphor. In this initial elaboration (Goffman, 1956), the term positioning was defined as *poses* or ways of acting. However, in later versions of his work, Goffman (1974) favored other terminology and the use of positioning within his theory lost momentum. It would take almost two decades for other theorists to concoct a new definition that would give to positioning a very relevant function

within identity theory. This task was taken up by the feminist writer Bronwyn Davies and the philosopher Rom Harré.

Davies and Harré (1990) analyzed the interaction of socially created discourses and peoples' individual choices in the emergence of social reality and psychological reality. In their view, conversation is defined as a series of speech acts that require the negotiated efforts of the interactants. In other words, the act of decoding a message does not fall entirely on the listeners' lot. On the contrary, in the act of conversing, people jointly attempt to socially determine their actions in speech. In this process, all interactants make efforts to interpret meanings and intentions in their interlocutors' speech, while they also try to make their own intentions clear. This interpretation process can seriously be affected by the positions taken by the participants and the illocutionary force of the speech acts.

In their description of discursive practices, Davis and Harré tried to synthesize the opposite poles of agency and structure through the concept of *subject positioning*, which amalgamates three elements:

- A *repertoire of concepts* that people use to read reality
- A specific *location* for each participant within a *structure of rights*
- The *structure of rights* itself understood as predetermined ways in which individuals are expected to act within a *conceptual repertoire* (Davis & Harré, 1990, p. 46).

The moment a person takes a position, this position assigns a particular point of view, a conceptual framework, a set of story lines, representations, and metaphors that are automatically conjured up to serve as lenses to read a situation. Nevertheless, taking a position is not a definitive act. The same individual may take different (and even contradictory) positions within a single conversation and across different conversations. In their choice of positions, the speakers exert agency. On the other hand, the available positions are given by the dominant discourses. In

this way, social structures (or socially generated discursive practices) influence conversation, communication, and the social emergence of identity. From this point of view, the emergence of who we are is a process of social interaction. It is neither socially pre-determined nor totally independent and internally based. Therefore, Davis and Harré define positioning as “. . . the discursive processes whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines” (Davis & Harré, 1990, p. 48).

According to this view, positioning is conceived as a dynamic concept, as opposed to the idea of roles. The actors in a play follow a role which is clearly fixed and delimited by a predetermined script. They are expected to behave in a given fashion and reproduce the same lines regardless of the circumstances. On the contrary, positions can change depending on each individual’s personal history, direct experiences with a specific position, and the negotiation that takes place between interlocutors. Hence, the concept of positioning allows for a degree of agency in the here and now of each conversation. Positioning transforms interactants in more than mere actors. They become coauthors of the play, instead of non-agentive actors. In the present study, I adhere to this view of positioning to analyze identity formation considering the interplay of power, discourse, agency, and social practice. For example, in Chapter 5, I present how one of the participants, Adam, justified his decision of entering an undergraduate English program as the one choice that best fitted his inclinations. Prior to this moment in his narrative, I had questioned Adam about his dreams of becoming an actor. Responding to my elicitation, Adam used the following stanzas to introduce his decision as a more mature and realistic choice based on an early positive experience with English learning. By contrast, acting is represented as an unrealistic plan. In the analysis, I argue that Adam used these stanzas to position himself as a mature decision-maker in spite of his youth at the time of the narrative. The story is thus not only an account of the events, but an example of how Adam performs his professional identity by taking a specific position in the story:

Stanza 7

112. Then,
113. I started thinking,
114. <Q I have to,
115. to consider,
116. the things that I'm good at Q>,
117. I said,
118. <Q well,
119. I like acting,
120. but I have never acted before Q>,
121. @@@@,
122. u=h,
123. <Q I like singing,
124. but I have never,
125. uh sung before,
126. also Q>,

Stanza 8

127. so I said,
128. <Q well,
129. wha-
130. what are the,
131. the **real** skills I have Q>,

Stanza 9

132. And I started thinking,
133. I said <Q well\,
134. I **used**/,
135. to hate English,
136. when I was in elementary school,
137. because I didn't know,
138. I didn't know anything Q>,

Stanza 10

139. I said <Q Well,
140. maybe English is something really,
141. uh,
142. interesting Q>,

Stanza 11

143. Why?
144. because,
145. when I started those extra classes,
146. with a teacher,
147. uh,
148. she inspired me,
149. she was like,
150. a model for
151. me.

In order to apply this conceptual framework to my analysis, I have used Michael Bamberg's model which dissects positioning in three specific linguistic levels:

Level 1: Positioning of the characters within the story (Character-to-character and in relation to the events in the story world).

Level 2: Positioning of the speaker in relation to the audience (Alluding to the discourse mode used by the speaker to address the audience).

Level 3: Positioning of the narrators in relation to themselves (Referring to the tellers' claims about themselves beyond the story world and their relationship with pre-existing master discourses). (Bamberg, 1997; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008).

In Chapter 7, I will show how these three levels of positioning can be helpful to analyze naturally-occurring interactions of teachers and students when storytelling is used as a means of

taking positions in classroom talk. For instance, I will show how Betty, a college instructor, handles one of her students' playful banter when she admits that she did not know an English word used by one of the students during the lesson. For a moment, Betty accepts being positioned as a lousy English knower, if only to turn the tables of the joke on the student and continue the class without taking offense (see Excerpt 57 on page 402).

The three levels of positioning have been put to use by Bamberg and associates in a number of studies that focus on what he calls *small stories*. Because of the controversy regarding the issue of *small stories* and *big stories* in the studies of narratives, it is now necessary to present some clarifications regarding the diverse definitions of narratives. These definitions will be relevant to understand the logic of the research design that will be presented in the second part of this chapter. With that purpose in mind, I now move to the following section.

3.2.7 Narrative: A definition.

Nowadays most narrative researchers would agree that personal narratives are neither factual nor transparent accounts of what happened (Pavlenko, 2007; Riessman, 2008; Schiffrin, 2006). They are not meant to realistically describe human actions and events, even when tellers may tend to believe that they are actually doing that. Narratives are a linguistic product and, as such, the material they offer is not unproblematic and deprived of ambiguity. On the contrary, narrativized accounts are rich in polyphonic meanings that derive from the interpretative nature of narrative discourse. In narrative research, different actors and interpreters are involved: the teller, the listener's influence at the time of the performance, the interpreter who constructs the research text, and the readers that add a final layer of interpretation every time the research text is subjected to scrutiny (Riessman, 1993, 2008). This intricate web of meanings is what makes narratives an interesting and productive material for social research, especially for those interested in the study of the socially constructed representations that mediate human life.

To add an additional layer to this already complex view of narratives, Riessman (1993) notes that narratives have been typified differently across approaches and disciplines. According

to Labov (1972), narratives are accounts of past events organized in a sequential manner, with well-defined structure and boundaries⁴. However, for others (Michaels, 1981; Mishler 2006), the narratives told in conversation or in the context of an interview do not always follow a neat time order. For some, narrative accounts are often organized in thematic sequences, while others argue that causation could be an important organizer considered by tellers. It would seem that the classic organization of a narrative is more in the mind of the interpreter than in the narrative itself. In any case, Riessman reminded us that narratives told in qualitative interviews are rarely neatly packed. For that reason, she initially distinguished between the restrictive concept of *story* (defined in the Labovian tradition) and a more inclusive view of *narrative* that comprises other possible genres:

- a. Stories: These narratives include protagonists, initial conditions that trigger events, and conclusive events.
- b. Habitual narratives: Accounts of events that occur multiple times, in a regular routine, without a climactic moment.
- c. Hypothetical narratives: Speculative accounts of things that did not happen.
- d. Topic-centered narratives: Brief depictions of isolated events that are only united by a common theme, but do not maintain any temporal or causal relationship among each other. (Riessman, 1993, p. 18).

In her more recent book on narrative research, Riessman (2008) did not emphasize on the difference between stories and the other narrative genres in a strict manner. However, she still supported the inclusion of non-canonical accounts in the category of narratives. She argued that

⁴ Labov and Waletzky (1967) and Labov (1971) proposed that oral personal accounts follow an overall narrative structure composed of six distinctive structure features that fulfil different rhetorical functions: abstract, orientation, complicating section, evaluation, resolution, and coda. The abstract summarizes the main point of the story, the orientation provides background details, the complicating section includes the main action of the story, the evaluation establishes why the story is worth-telling, the resolution conveys the final actions and the coda closes the story and links it to the present time. In the analysis of the narrative data in this study, I will sometimes refer to this framework, but the analysis will neither be dictated nor limited by it.

the traditional definition (as in the first of the genres listed above) is strongly biased by the Western tradition. This bias limits the scope of narrative analysis and marginalizes from scrutiny the rich narrative tradition of other cultures.

In the same vein, Bamberg led a discussion on the relevance of non-canonical stories that he calls small stories (Bamberg, 2004; 2006a; 2006b; Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008). His initial point was to call the attention of narrative researchers to consider non-elicited conversational narratives as legitimate data. Bamberg included in this category actual short narratives and also stories that metaphorically speaking are small because they do not have the biographical scope of life histories. Small stories may focus on everyday experience seemingly irrelevant to identity theory. Nevertheless, Bamberg argued that they do have a great deal to say about identity because individuals develop a sense of their selves in everyday conversations. Such stories include all the genres presented in Riessman's classification and also allusions to shared events, untold stories, refusals to tell a story, and stories about nothing that say something about the interactants (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008).

In opposition to small stories, Bamberg characterized big stories as those narratives that result from direct elicitation and present an individual's life history. He claimed that such stories focus more on the content of the interviewee's narrative, seeing people's actions and lives as texts that can be hermeneutically interpreted. The problem with such a focus is that it effaces the effect that conversational interaction has upon storytelling. For the proponents of a small-story turn in narrative research, it is in this dialogical negotiation that identity emerges and thus can be observed more directly (Bamberg, 2006b). Therefore, Bamberg's claims about big and small stories imply more than a distinction based on the mere size and shape of the narratives. The call for the inclusion of small stories became what Georgakopoulou (2006) called *a second wave* in narrative analysis that looked at the study of narrating as an action and as a sociocultural practice.

Mark Freeman responded to this criticism of big stories by arguing that the distinction between the two types of data was only one of proximity and distance (Freeman, 2006). He

accepted the belief that life history narratives are the product of the interviewees' reflection upon their past experience. This belief, however, does not render big stories less real or artificial.

Freeman concluded that narratives told as the participants reflect back on what happened simply offer a different after-the-facts perspective. This reflection may even serve to enhance the teller's understanding of the events and enrich the interpretative possibilities of the data.

The controversy went on for a good number of years, with the small-story camp not conceding the possibility of using both small and big stories as complementary approaches to the study of identity. While such complementarity of perspectives were considered by Bamberg in his initial papers (2004), he denied such possibility in later ones (2006b, 2011). In fact, he regarded those attempts to include small stories within big-story-centered research as unsatisfactory because small stories had been only featured simply as *add-ons*. The bottom line was that without incorporating the epistemological underpinning proposed by short-stories proponents, a hybrid method was not warranted. In one of his last responses to Bamberg, Freeman (2011) agreed to disagree with his opponent and allowed himself the freedom to have different goals in mind when studying narratives. In his opinion, analyzing narratives as text to focus on the content is as relevant for the study of identity as conversationally centered analysis of small stories. Freeman admitted that the life history movement had certainly neglected the value of everyday storytelling, but he denied the need to entirely abandon big stories. Instead, he challenged narrative researchers to find a synthetic solution: "What is needed, therefore, is neither an antidote nor an alternative but a truly synthetic, dialectical endeavor in which the multiple order of time and being, practice and reflection, that characterize the life of experience find a suitable home" (Freeman, 2011, p.120).

Considering all this discussion, in this study, I understand narrative as the account of a real or imaginary event that entails a collective interpretative effort involving one or multiple tellers and an audience. Such accounts may take different forms and convey events with diverse degrees of tellability. Although in Riessman's (1993) first classification of narratives she reserved

the term story for those narratives whose discursive features are closer to the Labovian framework, in this work I will use the terms story and narrative interchangeably. For more details about the terms used in this dissertation to refer to narratives and their structure, the readers can refer to the glossary at the end of this Chapter.

Additionally, as a way to respond to Freeman's challenge, in the present work I put into conversation big and small stories and combine content and discourse analyses. By doing this, I also attempt to respond to Pavlenko's (2007) recommendations on the importance of considering three dimensions of narrative data: "subject reality (i.e. findings on how 'things' or events were experienced by the respondents), life reality (i.e. findings on how 'things' are or were), and text reality (i.e. ways in which 'things' or events are narrated by the respondents)" (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 165). Pavlenko thus suggests triangulating narrative and observational data as well as combining thematic and discourse-oriented forms of analysis. In the following section I explain how the present research design attempts to integrate the methodological considerations that have been described so far.

3.3 The research design

In this study, I seek to tap into the identity negotiation of Mexican teachers and identify the possible ways in which agency, social practice, power, and discourse interact in this negotiation. With this purpose in mind, I devised a research design that addressed teachers' lives and work as the sites in which this negotiation takes place. In the present section I will describe this research design in five sub-sections. As a narrative researcher, I will begin by disclosing how this research project fits into my own professional history and personal motivations (3.3.1.). Then, I will move to describe the participants, the history of their involvement in the study, the nature of their professional relationship with me, and the reasons why I chose them for this study (3.3.2.). In the third subsection (3.3.3), I will describe the adopted data collection techniques and how they fit into the methodological and theoretical underpinnings of the study. In the fourth subsection, I will describe the analytical procedures used and how they are expressed in each one of

the chapters that feature the research findings. Finally, I will refer how I addressed ethical issues and trustworthiness.

3.3.1 The researcher.

If the conventional path for a second language teacher is that of attending college first, having a practicum experience, graduating, and finally finding a full-time teaching job, my own trajectory was rather unconventional. However, less than perfect professional trajectories are not rare in developing countries like Mexico. In such contexts, economic pressures and lack of institutional structure often push people to join the workforce without appropriate qualifications. When I entered college to follow what would be equivalent to a degree in Curriculum and Instruction in the United States, I was already accumulating teaching experience in a local language institute. Therefore, while I was still dealing with highly theoretical contents in my college coursework, I had to make sense of the practicalities of English teaching on the go.

At the time, I had a job at a local language institute teaching English to teenagers and adults. In those years (the early 90s) and perhaps even today, it was relatively easy for a bilingual speaker without a degree to find such a position. This was possible because small language institutes and even franchised schools used to hire people without certifications or a language degree. For them, it was enough if prospective teachers were able to use the target language and show at least a basic understanding of grammar. As a remedial measure, some institutions required new hires to take in-house training courses to ensure they would follow the trademark methodology promoted by their franchise. Thus, previous education in language teaching was not required and perhaps not even welcomed. After all, people without any previous teaching knowledge could be more flexible to embrace the trademark methodologies of the franchise.

The institute I worked for followed a presentation-practice-production method. After a succinct grammar explanation, learners usually had plenty of oral pair drilling assisted with visual aids, and some role-play freer practice. Writing was kept to the minimum and correction was most of the time limited to occasional oral negative feedback, mostly with the use of repetitions

and clarification requests. As a result, learners would often develop a degree of confidence to speak, but were highly inaccurate and practically L2 illiterate. However, they would normally be promoted to the subsequent level due to a rather lenient assessment policy that kept the clients happy.

Even in those initial moments of my career, I knew that this way of working did not resonate with the theories I was studying at college. However, the constant supervision of the institute coordinators did not allow much room for any innovation, especially if it ran against the methodology sanctioned by the franchise. In retrospect, I believe that even if I had had the freedom to implement some changes, I would have been hard pressed to develop any pertinent solutions without proper guidance. So, I did what most unhappy teachers around the world usually do, which is following the script without protest. As a result, I would finish each lesson with a slight feeling of dissatisfaction lingering in the air for me.

Years later, as a teacher educator, I saw many of the student-teachers under my tutelage follow hazardous first teaching experiences in similar or much more difficult conditions. I knew that a great deal of content they were studying in our program was insufficient to guide them into the morass of teaching. Unfortunately, I had but few theoretical resources beyond my own experience to equip them for the realities of teaching in Mexico. The reason was simple: most of the content in our program had been developed in social realities far too removed from ours. Latin American teachers were facing challenges which North American and British applied linguistics had not addressed. What was even worse, Latin American teachers and teacher educators were also failing to formulate a theory of teaching practice that could be responsive to our local needs and problems, without losing sight of the global context.

Years later, when I found myself pursuing a doctoral degree, the needs observed in my former students' professional development and in my own teaching practice came to my mind again. As I became familiar with the theories of teachers' knowledge and teachers' identity, they began to strongly resonate with my idea of a bottom-up approach to language teaching. This

exposure to identity theory strengthened my conviction that, in order to address the challenges of our teaching context, Mexican educators first need to define who we are in relation to our students, our society, and ourselves. Consequently, this conviction became the initial motivation for this dissertation. With this purpose in mind, a participant-centered narrative approach seemed to be a suitable way to explore the topic of my interest.

3.3.2 The participants.

When I decided to engage in a study about Mexican teachers, I knew that I could not achieve my goals with a large sample. My interest in taking an in-depth look at the teaching experience of Mexican teachers required a case-study approach that would use an insider's perspective to analyze rich data. Hence, I searched for ELT colleagues in Mexico that would be willing to commit to a long-term project with high levels of personal involvement. Additionally, I aimed to identify teachers who had enjoyed the benefits of formal teacher education and some teaching experience before graduation. I wanted to observe how these two different experiences interacted in their narratives.

The teachers would also have to be experienced enough to be able to narrate their professional trajectories dating back to at least three years of teaching before the study started. This ability would allow them to have several academic years to compare in their narratives. Also, I searched for teachers who had had at least some graduate school experience, to see how their professional development choices had played out in their identity formation. Finally, I tried to search for teachers of different genders, marital status, and family obligations. I wanted to see if these sociocultural factors played any role in their professional trajectories and discourse.

With these defined criteria in mind, I began my search by taking advantage of the professional networks I had formed during my years as a teacher educator in Mexico. I identified a total of 12 candidates in my initial screening, out of which only six met all the criteria and expressed an interest in the study. Unfortunately, when I finally presented the research design to the authorities in the different schools in which these teachers worked, one of the cases had to be

discarded because the school did not approve part of the protocol, namely the observations. Therefore, the study was conducted with the participation of five teachers who met the selection criteria. These are the teachers whose profiles I will proceed now to describe.

The participants in this study will be known by the pseudonyms of Daniela, Leiliani, Adam, Sofía, and Betty. They were all born in Mexico to parents who grew up as monolingual speakers of Spanish. With the exception of Sofía, these teachers received all of their education in Mexico and learned English in classroom settings. By contrast, Sofía lived in the United States from age four to age fourteen. When she was fourteen, she returned to Mexico to study high school and pursue a higher education.

All the participants graduated from the same university-based teachers' education program in a city located in the South East of Mexico. They all belonged to different cohorts and graduated in different years. After their graduation, each one of these teachers followed different paths. Two of them even moved to other regions in the country. Adam moved to Serrana (a large city in the Central Region) and Betty to Altamira (in the West coast of Mexico). Years later, Betty moved again, this time to Sotavento (in the South). Sofía, Daniela, and Leiliani stayed in Miranda, the city where their college was located⁵. The first two of these teachers decided to stay because they got married and settled down there. On the contrary, Leiliani chose to stay in Miranda because she inherited a teaching position in that city. (The reasons why this position is considered as "inherited" and the impact that this job had on Leiliani's professional development will be detailed in the following chapters.) Table 7 provides the detailed demographic information of the five participants and their educational background. In order to keep the participants' personal information confidential, the names of all the people, institutions, and geographical places involved in this study have been substituted with pseudonyms.

⁵ All city, states, and school names used in this dissertation are pseudonyms.

Table 7. Participants' demographic characteristics in 2013

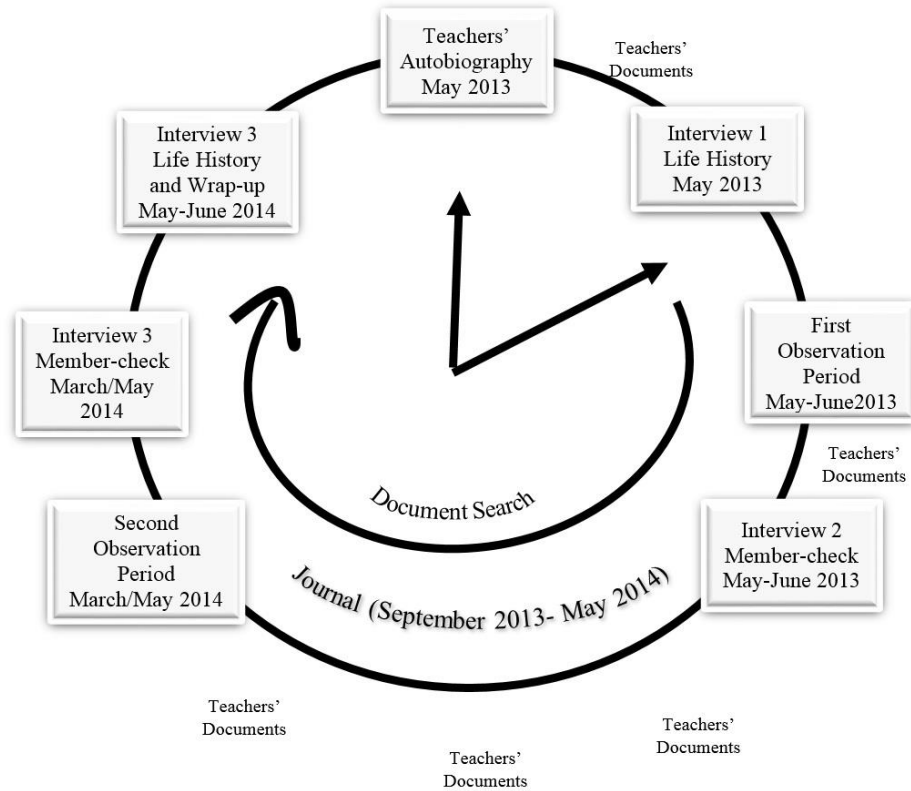
Name	Age	Marital Status	Education	Teaching at	Region
Leilani	30	Single	MA in Education	Middle School, High School and Language Institute	Southeast
Daniela	30	Married w/children	MA in EFL Teaching	Middle School and Language Institute	Southeast
Sofia	28	Married without children	MA in Education	College	Southeast
Betty	27	Single	MA in Translation	College	South
Adam	25	Single	MA in Applied Linguistic (thesis in process)	Middle School, High School and Language Institute	Central Region

3.3.3 The procedures.

In order to obtain data that would enable me to triangulate two realities: subject reality (the participants' views on the events narrated) and life reality (the events as seen from the perspective of the findings⁶), I combined interviews, teachers' autobiographies, teaching journals, and classroom observations. The interviews and the classroom observations were collected in the spring of 2013 and 2014, when I visited each teacher to observe their work. In every visit, my stay in each school lasted for a week. The geographic distance did not allow for longer periods in the field to develop an insider's view (Patton, 2002). However, conscious of this limitation, I requested the participants to keep an electronic teaching journal. This instrument served the purpose of helping the participants keep in contact with me, narrate their challenges, and discuss teaching concerns during an academic year.

⁶ See page 127 for an explanation of these terms and the reasons why they are to be considered in this study.

Figure 6. Data collection process



Additionally, the participating teachers shared with me a series of documents such as class materials, lesson plans, and photos of their classes and classroom projects. We used those materials to feed our discussion in our email exchanges, the journal, and the interviews. The combination of all these texts also served to enhance my understanding once I faced *life reality* during field work. Additionally, in order to develop a deeper sense of the sociopolitical landscape in which the participants were living and working, I conducted a documentary search in national newspapers, official documents, and books about Mexican educational policies.

Figure 6 shows the different instruments listed above and the order in which the information was collected. The figure should be read clockwise starting on the top center.

3.3.3.1 *Autobiography and teachers' documents.*

After the teachers and their schools consented to participate in the study, teacher participants began their involvement by writing a short account of their professional lives that I will refer to as the participants' *autobiographies*. Although I will talk about these texts in more detail in Chapter 4, the reader can see the writing prompt used to elicit the autobiographies below:

To begin your participation in this study, please write a short autobiography telling the story of your professional life. You can begin by telling how you decided to become an English teacher, continue by narrating some relevant experiences you had during the years of teacher education (college and/or graduate school years), and finish by adding some details about your life as an in-service teacher.

These autobiographies were used by the participants to give me a summarized account of their professional history. The autobiographies were emailed to me before my first visit. I carried out a preliminary content analysis of this material, which enriched the guide of the first interview. Additionally, the teachers provided me with some documents created for the organization of their work, such as syllabi, some lesson plans, and class materials. These documents enhanced my comprehension of the work they were doing at the moment. Armed with this information, I visited the participants to conduct the first series of interviews and class observations.

3.3.3.2 *The interviews*

All the interviews, a total of four with each participant, were conducted in English for two main reasons. First of all, I wanted to keep a record of the teachers' speaking skills in a conversational context and represent them in my transcriptions as faithfully as possible. I expect that these transcriptions will allow the readers to see evidence of the participants' speech and get a feel of their abilities as second language users. These abilities are relevant because they are intimately connected with the participants' professional identities. Second, I wanted to avoid using translations, which would imply adding another layer to the already complex array of storytelling renditions necessary in any qualitative study. I am aware that the readers may wonder

whether the interview event would have rendered different details if the participants had been allowed to use their first language. While this assumption may be true, I would rather run this risk of losing some potential details, than diluting the effect of the participants' story-telling with the effect of a translation.

Regarding their purpose and structure, each interview followed a different rationale. The first one was used to elicit a narrative of the participants' professional history. This interview was semi-structured in the sense that I had prepared a set of prompts that would be used for all the cases. However, I kept a flexible attitude to allow the participants to take different narrative routes if they considered them necessary. Also, the fact that some teachers had provided very case-specific details in their autobiographies gave each interview a particular character. Moreover, since I was looking for the occurrence of conversational narratives, I did not hesitate in asking unprepared questions during the course of the interviews. I was not working under the illusion that my interventions would not affect the course and content of the conversation. As mentioned before in section 3.2.3, the narratives elicited in interviews are co-constructed by interviewer and interviewee (see page 114). However, I also did my best to avoid excessively leading questions. The account of this initial interviews is presented in Chapters 5 and 6 where I deal with the teachers' big stories. Specifically, I followed (1999) and Riessman (2008) to look at the narratives as a performative display in which the participating teachers presented their professional identities as they interacted with me in conversation.

Interviews 2 and 3 were used as interviews for member-checking after the observation period. Teachers listened to highlights of their classes (from the classroom observation audios) and presented their views on the lessons and their outcomes. In that exchange, I took the opportunity to ask more focused questions about the students and other actors in the school (principals, coordinators, colleagues, and parents). Therefore, in these interviews, I tried to delve into the social and discursive practices that seemed to impact the participants' pedagogical

practices and ultimately their professional identities. For example, in my second interview with Sofía, she commented that some of her students tended to lose interest in the lesson quite often:

1. I don't know,
2. they uh,
3. their attention is so,
4. easily diverted,
5. that just,
6. in a second,
7. you have their attention a moment,
8. and then another second,
9. it's just gone,
10. they're talking about their life,
11. and about their families,
12. and going to the movies,
13. and their boyfriends,
14. and girlfriends,
15. so, yeah, it happens a lot,
16. it varies from group to group,
17. but it happens a lot (S2:352-357).

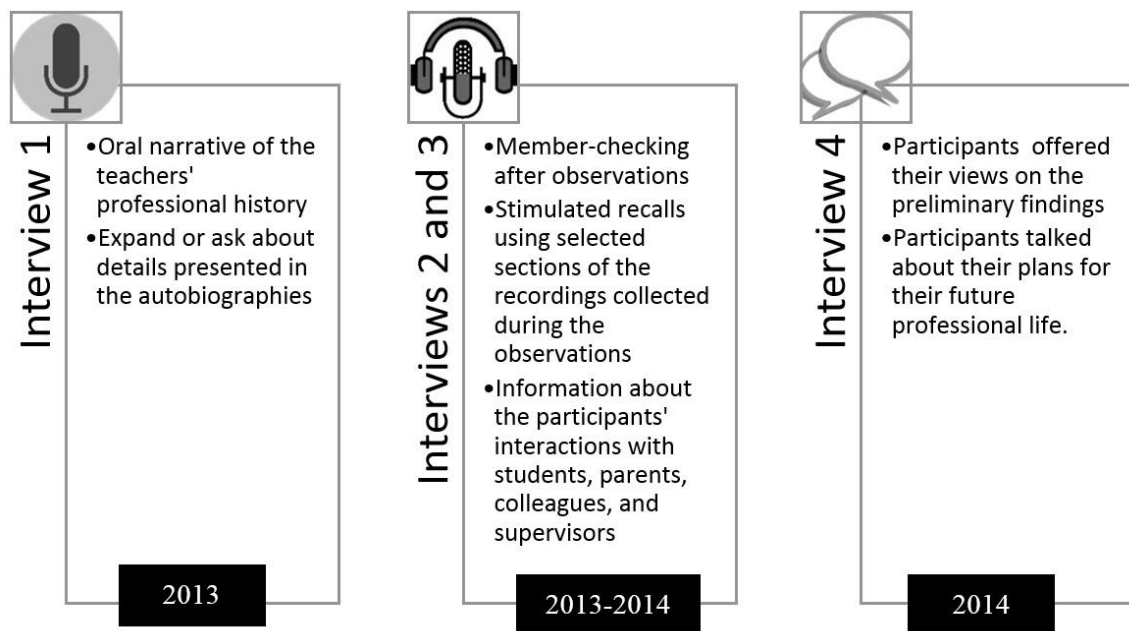
In cases as this one, I would try to prompt the teacher to comment more on how this practice may have influenced her own approach to teaching with a question as the following: “How do you deal with that, emotionally, I mean, the idea that you're talking and these people are in their own world?” In other words, I was seeking for a closer look into the realm of *sociality*, considering participants as individuals in interaction with a collectivity (Clandinin, & Connelly, 2000; for more details see page 111-112), and how this relationship influenced identity formation.

In addition to this main purpose of member-checking, the second and third interviews also served to obtain additional information about the participant’s life histories. Sometimes the participating teachers offered this information spontaneously when a random comment in the conversation triggered a memory that led the participant to illustrate his or her point with a story.

The fourth and final interview was used to discuss my preliminary findings with the teachers. This step is important because in this study I was interested in developing an insider’s view (see pages 132). Therefore, I presented a summary of my perceptions about the participants’ professional histories and teaching practice. In doing this, I encouraged them to tell me any possible disagreement with my views and, if so, to offer their own interpretations. I also asked the teachers to talk about their plans for their future professional development and how their personal lives may have fitted –or not – with these plans and other wishes they had for their future. I used the data obtained in this fourth interview to complete the picture of temporality, considering how

time plays a part in the emergence of identity. In the course of this final interview, some teachers added new episodes to their life histories and made some comments on how larger social and political issues were impacting their present and future. A summary of the information collected in each interview is graphically presented in Figure 7. Additionally, the reader will be able to know more details about the prompts used for the first interview in Chapter 5 and access the interview guides in Appendix 1 (page 525).

Figure 7. Information collected in each interview.

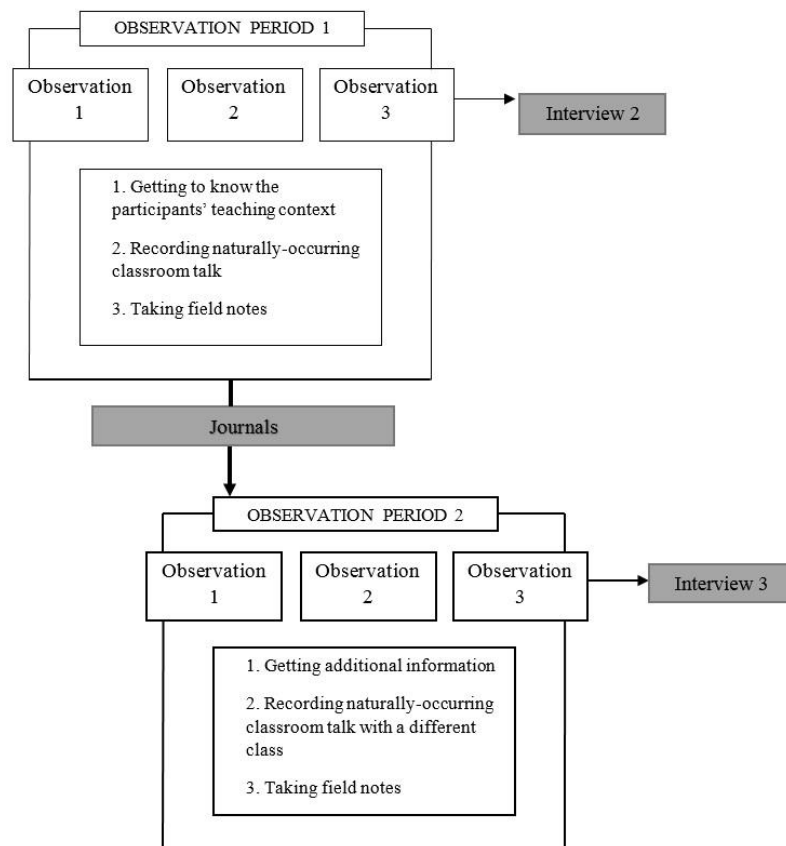


3.3.3.3 Classroom observations

Due to institutional restrictions and the lack of time for more prolonged involvement, I chose to perform the role of a passive observer during the classroom observation periods. Teachers were observed an average of three times in each period (See Figure 8). The first observation period served to enter the field and familiarize myself with the participants' teaching context. These observations took place in May 2013 by the end of the school year (In Mexico, the academic year usually finishes by the end of June). For the second year, I observed each teacher in a different class, which was the same one that teachers had discussed in their teaching journals.

Therefore, before this second period started, I had obtained some additional information regarding the actors involved and the scenario. Finally, in order to accommodate to the teachers’

Figure 8. The two classroom observation periods.



schedules I had to plan the second observation period at two different times: March and May of 2014.

The classes were audio recorded using a wide-angle microphone placed on the teacher’s desk. This set up allowed for the recording of most of teacher and students’ interactions during class. Admittedly, some conversations between students were not properly registered in the recording. However, since the focus was on teacher-student conversations the equipment satisfied the needs of the study. Additionally, because video recording was not authorized by some of the schools, I took detailed notes during each class to keep a record of extra-linguistic interactions and the characteristics of the place. These annotations were consulted during the transcription of

the classroom dialogues to provide a fuller picture of the interaction. The conversational exchanges and a few small stories that emerged during these classes will be discussed in Chapter 7 where I focus on *text reality* (how the participants narrate events). In that analysis, I will adopt Gee's organization of lines and stanzas, keeping in mind the five linguistic systems listed on Table 6 (see page 114 in this same chapter) and considering Bamberg's three levels of positioning (the position of the characters within the story, the position of the speaker in relation to the audience, and the position of the narrators in relation to themselves). The first observation scheme created before my first visit to the participants' school and a sample of my observation notes and observations transcript excerpts as recorded in my field journal appear in Appendix 2 (page 530).

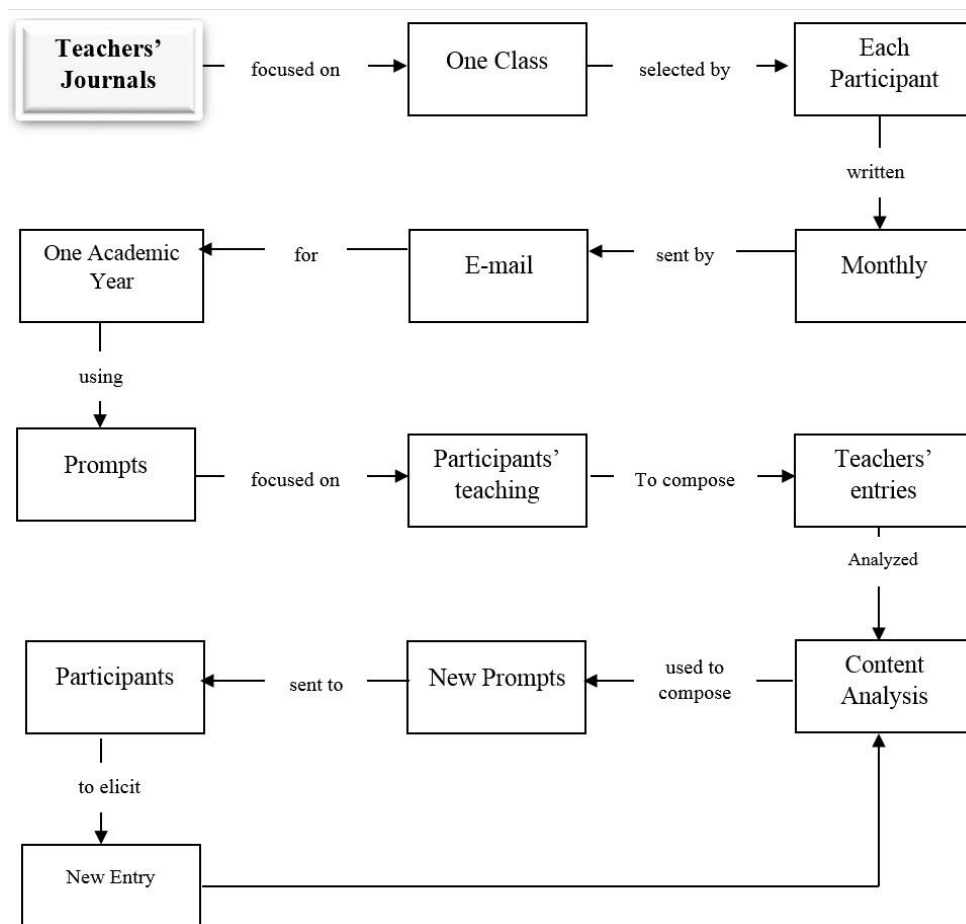
3.3.3.4 The journal

As noted earlier, I requested the participants to keep a journal as a method of maintaining contact with me and narrate events happening during their classes. These journals focused on only one of the classes that the participants were teaching during that academic year (2013-2014). They were given the freedom to choose the class that would be featured in the journal. Generally speaking, I used this instrument to familiarize myself with the participants' professional landscapes (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996; Connelly, Clandinin, & He, 1997) in spite of the impossibility of prolonging my stay on site. The teachers were expected to write a monthly entry and email it to me, which they did from August to April. For the first entry, I provided a set of prompts but made it clear that, if they wanted, they could write about other incidents or issues related to their classes. As can be seen in Appendix 3, the first prompt mainly asked the participants to describe the class on which they would be focusing for the journal, the objectives they expected to achieve with these particular students during the school year (or semester), and how they planned to achieve these objectives. The objective I pursued with the first entry was to develop a global understanding of the participating teachers' expectations for that school year. It was a way to start an online conversation about teachers' perceptions of the interactions occurring in their classrooms. As the participants wrote about their work with their students, I expected that

I would be able to develop a keener understanding of different aspects of their professional identity from their narratives.

I carried out a preliminary content analysis of each monthly entry by interrogating the data with the research questions in mind, labeling the phenomena observed, and identifying categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Using this analysis, I developed a set of questions specifically tailored for each teacher, which I emailed to them before the teachers began writing their subsequent entry. These questions requested clarifications or suggested possible themes for future entries. Additionally, to keep a record of my thinking during this process, I kept a research journal for each participant. Finally, when the journals were concluded, I used that material to inform the guides used for the second period of interviews. Figure 9 summarizes this process.

Figure 9. The journals



3.3.3.5 The documents

During the 2013-2014 academic year, a number of documents were collected with two main goals in mind: enhancing my experience with the participants' teaching landscapes and deepening my understanding of the participants' social context. As I mentioned before, the participants provided some of the documents, and I collected the rest of them from different sources. These documents are listed in Table 8 that also describes the rationale for the selection of the documents and the analysis conducted on that data source.

These documents were used to inform my analysis considering the effects of current socio-political events on teachers' professional lives. This information became especially relevant because important changes in the laws that regulate teachers' employment in Mexico were made at the time of the study. The social unrest that ensued during 2013, after the new law was enacted, resulted in nation-wide protests led by the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (SNTE by its acronym in Spanish). The scene narrated in the introduction of this dissertation is only a vignette of the broader narrative of these sociopolitical events. By making these events salient, the narrative presented in Chapter 4 attempts to reflect on how these greater power issues impacted on the participants' professional identities at the time of the study.

3.3.4 The method for analyzing and presenting the data.

In this study, I combined three different approaches to qualitative data analysis. During the preliminary phases of this study, I used content analysis with a grounded approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) to organize my initial observations on the participants' autobiographies, journals, and interviews. I am aware that, for most life-historians, this is not the preferred procedure since they favor other forms of thematic analysis that deal with each case separately (Riessman, 2008). However, I found that grounded theory provided a solid way to organize my first impressions of the data. Therefore, as I was working on site and during the process of journal writing, an initial round of open coding was used to focus my attention on specific aspects of the teachers' perceptions (subject's reality). By identifying and naming the phenomena in this phase, I was able

Table 8. Documents used to understand the participants' social context

Source	Description	Rationale	Method
Website of the Mexican Senate	This organism publishes information regarding amendments, bills, and new laws in Mexico.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the new Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente (General Law of the Professional Teaching Service, LGSPD by its acronym in Spanish), which regulates public teachers' employment conditions, professional development, and accountability processes. 	Content analysis (A round of open coding conducted every month from January 2014 to March 2015 on available documents).
Website of the Secretaría de Educación Pública (Mexico's Secretariat of Public Education, SEP by its acronym in Spanish)	The ministry that develops and regulates the operation of the national curriculum for basic, secondary education, and teachers' colleges in Mexico.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop an understanding of the current Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (National English Program for Basic Education) and its antecessors. 	
<p>Leading national newspapers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> El Economista El Financiero El Universal Excelsior La Jornada Milenio Reforma 	Newspapers of national circulation of diverse political orientations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow the news regarding the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Union of Education Workers, SNTE by its acronym in Spanish) and the reactions of this organization towards the application of the LGSPD. Follow the news and public opinion's reactions after the publication of Mexicanos Primero's report on English teachers and teaching. 	
Website of Education First	An international education corporation that specializes in foreign language training and study-abroad programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To analyze the English proficiency ratings by country issued by this organization and develop a sense of Mexicans' English proficiency in comparison with other Latin American countries. 	
Website of Mexicanos Primero (Mexicans First)	A non-governmental organization focused on education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To analyze the assessment of English teaching and learning in Mexico that this organization published in 2015. 	
Website of TELEvisa	Mexico's most powerful open television network	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To analyze the presentation of news regarding the LGSPD, the changes in the leadership of the SNTE, and Mexicanos Primero's reports on education. 	

to return to the participants and ask more refined questions. In this way, I could test my initial interpretations against the participants' extended responses. This initial exploration allowed me to observe common themes across the cases and also certain differences that emerged as signs of variation between cases. For example, once the participants had sent me the first journal entries, I ran a software-aided analysis to identify the most frequent nouns used by each participant in their journal entries (I used NVivo 10 for this type of analysis and for organizing all the coding done as part of the content analysis). In the case of Adam, the most prominent word was "students". With this information, I read Adam's entries again to identify in which contexts he was using the word student. This allowed me to identify that he recurrently talked about his having "a good relationship" with his students. This led me to create a code for Adam's case and to generate a specific question for this teacher as part of my prompts for his subsequent entry:

In your first entry, I detected that the word "students" is the most prominent in your text. Very often, it is connected with the idea of the *good relationship* you have with them. Why do you think your student-teacher relationship is in such good standing? How is this connected with who you are as a teacher?

Over this initial analytical layer, I added a second examination considering how issues of temporality, sociality, and place were manifested in the participants' everyday work (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). This secondary view helped me refine the initial observations and finally weave the summarized life histories offered in Chapter 4. This part of the study can be considered as narrative analysis (Kalaja, Meneses, & Barcelos, 2008). In terms of combination of perspectives, in these narratives I tried to connect the aspects of life reality that I could observe on site and through my analysis of documents with the participants' biographical representations presented in their written autobiographies and their interviews with me. In this part of the study, the commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place served as organizers of that narrative.

The second type of analysis (Chapters 5 and 6) focused on the participants' life histories following Riessman (1993, 2008). For this phase, I listened again to the interviews as I reread the first version of the transcriptions. This exercise led to an identification of the big-narrative passages in which the participants told the story of their becoming English teachers. By doing this, I was able to determine where the narratives started and ended. This process required me to pay attention to the interaction between the participants and the interviewer. Attention to prosodic and syntactic features was also given in this part of the analysis. As a result, a new transcription of each story emerged including all the features that had been identified as relevant for the interpretation.

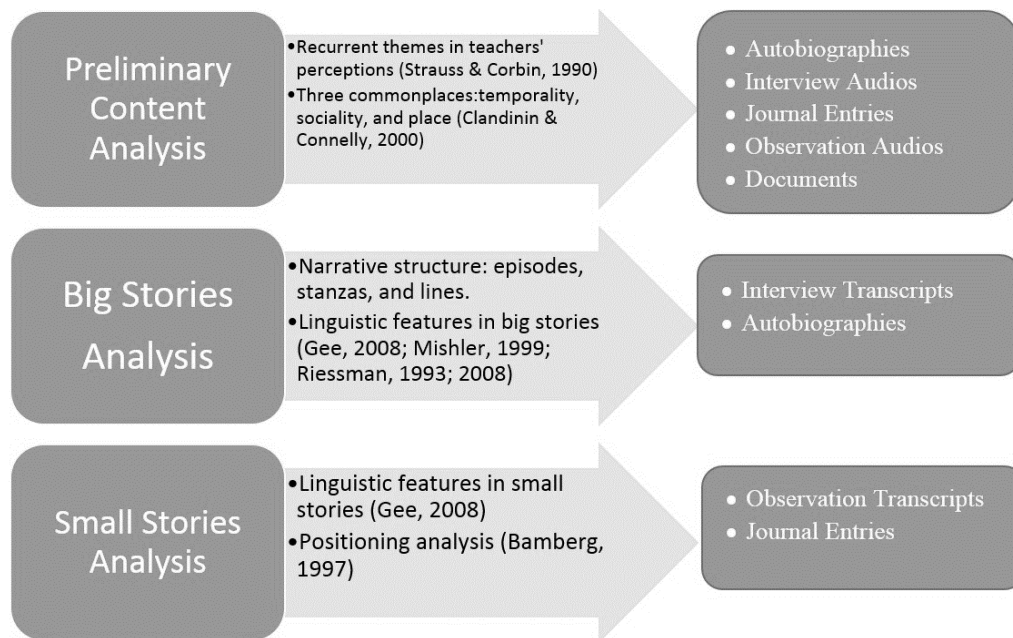
In this second transcription version, the stories were divided in episodes (Mishler, 1999). Even though this initial step was useful to sort the stories into more manageable pieces, I noticed that the narratives could often be subdivided in smaller sections that either marked a topical shift within an episode or fulfilled a specific rhetoric purpose (e.g. presenting the problem, describing a climactic moment, or stepping out of the story world to offer an evaluation of the events, among other functions). Since these subsections often extended for two or more stanzas, I felt the need to use a different name to mark this distinction. I called these subsections *topical passages*. Although I am aware that, in some cases, these topical passages are similar to the features outlined by Labov and Waletzky (1967), I decided not to use the names proposed by these authors because they imply a more rigid distribution of the narrative that does not always accurately represent what the participants, as narrators, were doing with their stories. Therefore, to facilitate the analysis, I established the following distinctions:

- Episodes, sections unified by larger themes that describe particular anecdotes or memorable events within the participants' life history.
- Topical passages, subsections within an episode that may extend for one or more stanzas and focus on a specific topic or fulfill a specific rhetorical purpose.

- Stanzas, clusters of several lines or intonation units (Chafe, 1994) that are unified by prosodic or syntactic features and focus on a theme (Gee, 2008).

Once the second transcription was completed using the parameters mentioned above, I paid attention to the organization of the narrative. This was done to identify the particular ways in which each participant represented their lives. In this process, I interrogated the data to discover whether the narratives spoke of the ways in which issues of power and social practice had impacted the participants' representations of their career development. If not, I looked for other relevant clues that served as main organizers in each narrative and across cases. Although each narrative required very specific analytical effort, a common denominator to all this analysis was a dual focus on content and form following Mishler (1999).

Figure 10. Three types of data analysis used in this study.



The third analysis presented in Chapter 7 features a collection of small stories which emerged during classroom observations, in the journals, and in some sections of the interview data. As I mentioned before, I based my analysis on Gee (2008) and Bamberg (1997) to observe how form and content interact in the process of identity positioning in conversational interaction

and in the journal narratives. This analysis is placed at the end in order to take the reader from the broader issues dealt in the previous chapters, to the minimal details of small stories. It is expected that this change of lenses may serve to deepen our understanding of how elements of greater social concerns interacted with everyday discourse in the here and now of the participants' identity positioning. The combination of analyses here described is summarized in Figure 10.

3.3.5 Trustworthiness.

The present work did not aim to achieve validity and reliability in a positivistic sense. In other words, congruent with a representation of identity as an emergent and fluid phenomenon, this study cannot claim that its findings capture a static sort of reality. This does not mean that scientific rigor was not a concern during the design and conduction of the study. Instead of controlling measures and replicability, this study has followed Lincoln and Guba's (1985) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. In sum, trustworthiness—understood as the persuasive power that compels the audience to perceive a study as worthy of being considered—has been taken into account. In this section I present a brief account of the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness.

For starters, while quantitative studies aim for internal validity by ensuring that their studies successfully capture the reality represented, interpretative research seeks for credibility (Merriam, 2009). The reason for this difference resides on an epistemological stance. From a qualitative point of view, reality is not considered as something that can be grasped. Because of its dynamic nature, observers can only aspire to achieve certain correspondence between their representations and reality. Hence, achieving *credibility* means that the researcher has found ways to enhance such “correspondence between research and the real world” (Wolcott, 2005, p. 160). In this study, credibility posed an initial challenge because one of the central strategies used to achieve it requires the prolonged engagement of the researcher in the field. Thus the impossibility to stay on site for longer periods was problematic. In order to address this problem, the journals and the email communication served to maintain contact with the participants' world between the

observation periods. These interactions served to keep my involvement with the participants and their work for most of the academic year. Such time was estimated sufficient to gain an emic perspective.

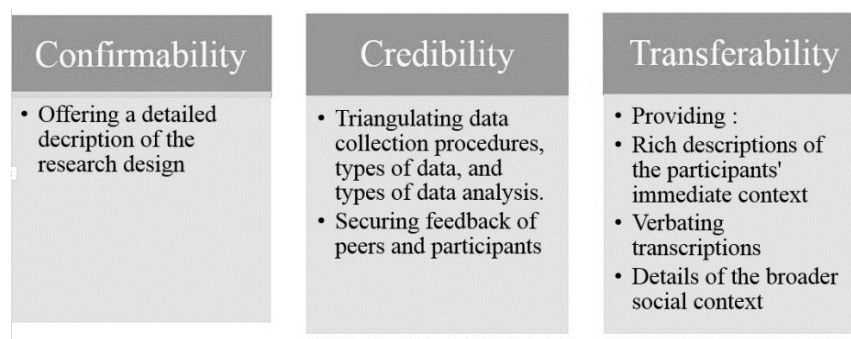
Another strategy usually employed to enhance credibility is by securing feedback from peers during the conduction of the study. This was achieved via three main sources of peer debriefing: The comments provided by the committee that supervised this study, a colleague who offered her valuable help codifying sections of the data, and a presentation of preliminary results at a round table held during the 2015 TESOL conference. Finally, the participants themselves contributed to refine my interpretations during the member-check interviews and by offering comments on the drafts.

A second criterion to be considered is *transferability*, which some have compared to external validity (Mackey, & Gass, 2005; Merriam, 2009). While it is true that social phenomena are considered unrepeatable, qualitative researchers care about the applicability of their findings. In other words, the findings of a study may be applicable to other contexts that are similar to the one featured in the study. Such applicability is more likely to become salient if the audience can receive enough information about the context and actors involved in the study. For that reason, this research text provides verbatim transcriptions of the conversations registered, rich descriptions of the events observed, and details about the social context. Also, as explained in the previous section, the teachers featured in the study worked at different educational levels and regions. This variety of backgrounds provides the readers with diverse perspectives about the teaching of English in Mexico. Therefore, it is then more likely that the findings may resonate to a wider range of teachers working under similar conditions.

In the third place, in this chapter I have attempted to offer plenty of details about the research design and its theoretical basis. This has been done with the purpose of disclosing all necessary information to clarify the process followed during the study. In the same way, as the findings are presented, more details of both the process and the outcomes of the study will be

rovided. It is expected that this information will enable the readers to follow the researcher's steps (*audit trail*) and authenticate the study if considered *confirmable* (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As part of this same effort, this study aims to achieve triangulation of methods of data collection, types of data, and data analysis perspectives. Such combination of points of views is considered necessary to make the findings not only more credible, but also more *dependable*. A summary of the measures here described in presented in Figure 11.

Figure 11. How the study addressed confirmability, credibility, and transferability.



3.3.6 Ethical considerations.

Before and during the conduction of the study, I took a number of measures to address ethical concerns. First of all, I obtained appropriate consent from the participants, their supervisors, and students as required by the Institutional Research Board at OSU. The school authorities and the teachers received a full written description of the purpose of the study and the actions required from them if they decided to participate. Likewise, students and their parents were informed in written about the details pertaining to the observations. As said before, when one of the parties involved did not agree to participate, the case was taken out of the pool and not considered in the study. Furthermore, all participants were informed that they could retire their consent to continue their involvement in the study at any moment if desired.

Second, to eliminate any possible conflict of interest neither the teachers nor the students received any reward for their participation and were aware of this circumstance since the very beginning of this study. Also, there were no institutional connections or work relationship of any

kind between the schools and the researcher at the time of the study. Therefore, the researcher, the participants, and the schools involved could not expect or derive any benefits from their participation beyond those related to the advancement of knowledge implicit in the study. As a final consideration, adequate provisions to preserve confidentiality were made by using pseudonyms to refer to the people, institutions, and places involved in the study. Moreover, the participants were given the opportunity to revise the sections of this research text concerning their case. As part of this activity, they were requested to verify if the presentation of information effectively prevented any possible breach of confidentiality. Pertinent corrections to protect confidentiality were made following the participants' suggestions on that score. For greater details about the procedures followed to comply with ethical regulations, confirmability, credibility, and transferability, the reader may refer to the Trustworthiness Chart that appears in Appendix 4 (page 525), as well as the approval of the research protocol as authorized by Oklahoma State University's Office for Research Compliance, which appears in Appendix 5 (page 536).

3.4 Chapter's summary

In the present research I set out on a journey to study the professional identity negotiation of five Mexican English teachers. To decide on the route that I wished to take, I pondered different options and finally chose a narrative approach to analyze teachers' discourse and actions. This decision alone posed a methodological challenge because narrative research is used as an umbrella term that encompasses different approaches. Hence, my methodological stance demanded clarifications. For that reason, in this chapter I have devoted a considerable space to discussing the methodological framework that guided the study before I proceeded to describe the research design.

Based on an analysis of the methodological tools employed in previous studies, I have demonstrated that the use of narrative approaches in the study of NNESTs is still relatively new and strongly influenced by the seminal work of Clandinin and Connelly. Most of these studies

have resorted to some form of content analysis to deal with narrative data, but have seldom considered applying discourse-oriented tools used in other areas of applied linguistics. Therefore, in this chapter, I have proposed a combined application of narrative approaches that deal with discourse, actions, and context at the same time. To that purpose, this study included an emphasis on life histories (Mishler, 1999; 2004; 2006), a focus on small stories (Bamberg, 1997, 2006a), and a narrativized description of the socio-political landscape in which the study took place (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

I selected these perspectives because they enabled me to analyze how, in the negotiation of identity, teachers' discourse interacted with contextual elements such as power, social practice, and agency. First of all, the use of teachers' autobiographies and oral life histories allowed for the reconstruction of teachers' identity negotiation in the context of a big story. Second, a consideration of the socio-political landscape was included to understand how social issues may impact teacher's identity negotiation. Finally, the analysis of classroom observations and teachers' journals provided an opportunity to study how teachers' discourse interacted with social practices in the collaborative telling of small stories. In sum, this combined approach was chosen because it enabled me to observe and describe the phenomenon of identity negotiation in a holistic manner.

3.8 Glossary of key terms

Analysis of narratives, a type of narrative research in which the researchers collect diverse forms of narrative material produced by their participants (e.g. written autobiographies, life histories, journal entries, etc.). These data are used to identify common themes or to analyze the form of the narratives. The presentation of such analysis takes the form of a classic qualitative report in which common categories are used to analyze data across different cases.

Autobiography, a term used in this study to refer to summarized accounts of the participants' professional lives written by the participants for the purpose of this study.

Big story, long narratives about an individual's life experiences that are the product of direct elicitations. In this study, the term big story is used as a synonym of *life history* as a type of qualitative data.

Episode, or sections unified by larger themes that describe particular anecdotes or memorable events within a big story, especially those produced in the context of an interview.

Labovian story, a narrative about past events that includes protagonists, a background, initial conditions that initiate the action, a series of events, and a conclusion. In the present study, this type of narratives will also be referred as *canonical stories*.

Life history, a term that equally refers to a specific research method used in social sciences and the type of data produced by that method. As a method, life history uses the collection of individuals' comprehensive accounts of their experiences by means of interviews to obtain a holistic view of the participants' lives. As data, life histories are the extended narratives of participants' lives as produced during interviews and transcribed by the researcher.

Narrative analysis, a sort of narrative research that focuses on the collection of rich data by different methods (e.g. participant observation, interviews, artifacts, etc.) to construct a case which is reported in the form of an explanatory narrative composed by the researcher.

Narrative inquiry, an approach to social research first created by Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly that requires the researcher's intense involvement in the field by means of prolonged participant observation and the collection of rich data (e.g. field notes, interviews, and artifacts). The final product of narrative inquiry is a research report that emerges from a synthesis of the data and takes the shape of a narrative text in which the authors weave findings, analysis, and theory.

Narrative, an umbrella term used to refer to the account of real or imaginary events. A narrative entails a collective interpretative effort involving one or multiple tellers and an audience.

Narratives can vary in length, modality, purpose, and organization. Also, they may relate events that happened in the past, actions that occur repeatedly as in daily routines, or speculations about a possible future course of action. In this study, the terms *narrative* and *story* are used interchangeably.

Small story, brief narratives that emerge in naturally-occurring conversations and do not always follow the canonical structure of Labovian stories. These stories may take any of the possible forms considered in the broad definition of *narrative* and may reach different degrees of tellability.

Stanza, units of several lines or intonation units (Chafe, 1994) that are unified by prosodic or syntactic features and focus on a theme (Gee, 2008).

Topical passage, a subsection within an *episode* that may extend for one or more stanzas and focus on a specific topic or fulfill a specific rhetorical purpose.

CHAPTER IV

FIVE LIVES PUT INTO CONTEXT

In this study, I have reconstructed the life histories of five Mexican English teachers using information from interviews, observations conducted in the participants' workplace, and autobiographies that the teachers wrote at my request. By applying the principles of temporality, sociality, and place proposed by Clandinin and Connelly (2000; 2006), I have organized the present chapter in a narrative that describes people's interactions embedded in temporal and geographical dimensions.

Therefore, the narrative is structured in two main sections that provide macro and micro perspectives of how Mexican English teachers live and negotiate their professional identities. In the first section (4.1), I will look at the broader context in which the participants' life histories developed. I will not only focus on the professional context in which the participants now live, but will move *backwards* (towards the past) and *outwards*, looking at the existential or environmental conditions (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000).

In the preparation of this narrative, I have analyzed multimedia material, public documents, and scholarly work. This analysis helped me narrate the social, political, and economic conditions that have impacted on the ways English has been taught and learned

in Mexico for the last forty years. Therefore, in this part of the narrative, the protagonist will be the teaching of English in Mexico. Without this first glance at the participants' world, the narrative of their lives runs the risk of being judged as a series of unarticulated events. From this initial view of the larger picture of which the participants' lives are a part, I will narrow down my lenses to consider the participants' professional life histories. To do this, in the second section (4.2), I will introduce a summary of the five life histories that I have crafted based on the data. In this part, I will move inwards (exploring participants' feelings, interests, and hopes) and forward (including the participants' prospective views).

This two-fold analysis has been conducted in order to respond to the following research question: Have sociocultural forces such as power, social practices, and discourse interacted in the negotiation of the participants' professional identities along their careers? If so, how? If not, why not?

In the conclusion of the chapter (4.3.), I will highlight the ways in which the macro narrative and the participants' professional lives converge into one single scenario. Special emphasis will be given to pinpoint how certain social practices seem to prevail in spite of the different contexts in which each participant lives and works.

4.1 The teaching of English in Mexico

Education in Mexico is at present divided in four systems: early, elementary, upper secondary, and higher education. Table 9 presents the organization of the different educational levels within each system, the duration of each level is expressed in academic years, and the expected age of the students at each level if applicable. In translating the names of each level to English, I have tried to use the closest cognate available and added the equivalent in the US educational system in parentheses if necessary.

Nowadays, English is the foreign language that is most commonly taught in Mexico and the only one that is officially included in the national curricula for systems 2 and 3 (see Table 9). Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education or SEP, by its acronym in

Spanish) first chose English to be compulsorily taught in all secondary schools in Mexico in 1926 (Reyes-Cruz, Murrieta-Loyo, & Hernández-Méndez, 2009). Before that time, English had been part of the preparatory schools' program, but only as a second option after French (Muriel, 1964). By contrast, in the twentieth century, English increasingly consolidated its dominance becoming a steady component of the Mexican curriculum for secondary and preparatory schools. More recently, the presence of English was extended to the preschool and elementary levels (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011b, 2011c). Additionally, most higher education institutions also include English in their programs either as a credit-based course or as a degree requirement.

Table 9. The four education systems in Mexico

1.Educación Inicial (Early Education*)		2.Educación Básica (Basic Education)		3. Educación Media Superior** (Upper Secondary Education)		4.Educación Superior (Higher Education)	
Centro de Desarrollo Infantil (Child Development Center or CENDI by its acronym in Spanish) **	From age 0 to 5	Preescolar (Preschool)	3 years Age 3-5 and 11 months	Preparatoria o Bachillerato (High School)	3 years Age 15 to 18	Licenciatura (Undergraduate School / 4-year college)	4 to 5 years
		Primaria (Elementary School)	6 years Age 6-12			Maestría (Master's degree)	2 years
		Secundaria (Middle School)	3 years Age 12-15			Doctorado (Doctoral Degree)	3 or more years

* Translations of the Spanish names of the four systems are provided in parenthesis (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011, January 11).

**CENDIs are similar to Daycare Centers and their functions often overlap with preschools according to an expert from Escuela Normal Veracruzana (D. Rangel-Martínez, personal communication August 13, 2015).

This consistent presence of English across the educational systems may lead one to suppose that most Mexicans achieve a high level of proficiency in that language. As logical as such conclusion may sound, it is nonetheless inaccurate. Recently, Mexicans' level of English was ranked within the range of "low proficiency" and in the 34th place within a group of 63 countries (Education First, 2014). This ranking only expressed in numbers what, according to

Davies, “every Mexican knows” (Davies, 2009a, p. 4) about their frustrating experiences with English. To understand how these negative realities about English learning in Mexico are intertwined with equally negative discourses, I here present a four-folded analysis. I will begin by analyzing the available evidence about the way in which English has been taught at secondary schools for the last forty years (4.1.1.). In the second part of the analysis, I will describe the conditions of English instruction at elementary schools in recent years (4.1.2.). In a third subsection, I will look at the significance of English as an indicator of social inequalities in Mexico (4.1.3). Finally, I will refer to the negative social constructions about teachers in general and English teachers in particular that pervade the media and the current legislation that regulates teachers’ employment (4.1.4.).

4.1.1 English at secondary schools.

Secondary schools in Mexico are roughly equivalent to the middle school system in the US. Since 1993, these schools have been considered part of the system of mandatory basic education (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011a). The history of the secondary school curricula and their evolution is important to understand the dominant discourse and social practices about English teaching within Mexican society for one main reason. For decades and up to the beginning of the twenty-first century, it was at this educational level that most Mexicans would have their first contact with English. Therefore, an analysis of the historical conditions under which English has been taught at public secondary schools is a good start to comprehend the socially constructed views about English held by a great number of Mexicans.

For the last forty years, the teaching of English at secondary schools has been regulated by four different curricula. The earliest one within this period, introduced in 1973, was based on a structural-situational approach (Davies, 2009a) that still relied on grammar instruction and translation (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006). This curriculum coincided with a massive growth of the student population, which increased 175.3% during the period between 1970 and 1980 (Subsecretaría de Educación Básica y Normal, 2002). The challenge that such a growth

imposed was not appropriately met by an equal increment in the general teachers' population, which only increased 130% for the same period (Zorrilla-Fierro, 2004). Moreover, it should be noted that this figure stands for all teachers. There is no precise information available about the number of English teachers working at the public system at the time. Therefore, one can only estimate that their proportion was even smaller and their growth slower since appropriate training for English teachers was scarce.

By the early 70s, Mexican universities did not offer any TESOL or TEFL programs (Davies, 2011). The main supply of professionally trained teachers was provided by the Escuela Normal Superior (the graduate teachers' college) that offered a BA in English teaching for in-service general elementary teachers who wanted to work at secondary level. Additionally, a few in-service training programs were offered by institutions such as Cambridge and the British Council. These two Anglophone agencies have promoted the teaching and learning of English as a way to enhance the UK's friendly relationships with Mexico since the 1950s. However, these options were only available at major urban centers as Mexico City; thus their impact was rather limited (Davies, 2009a; 2011). This lack of human resources, along with over-crowded classes and limited access to materials, resulted in choir-repetition drills, endless translation tasks, and no aural input apart from that provided by the teacher. Under such conditions, it is likely that very little second language competence, if any, could be developed. These drawbacks notwithstanding, some improvements were achieved when universities began to create and offer ELT undergraduate programs during the 1980s (Davies, 2011).

The successor of the 1973 curriculum was introduced in 1993. This second curriculum was based on communicative language teaching and had a functional organization (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006). The same principles were also proposed for the teaching of Spanish as the mother tongue (Quiroz, 1998). Unfortunately, the proposed shift from structure to communication was not supported by an improvement of the teaching conditions. Teachers continued working with large number of students whose attention for English had been reduced

by an increment of mandatory subject classes, from 8 to 11 (Quiroz, 1998). Additionally, without an effective program of professional development, most teachers were not able to implement instructions in accordance with the communicative principles that guided the curriculum. In such conditions, the findings of an ethnographic study conducted by Díaz (1995) were not surprising. The study showed that old teacher-centered practices in most subjects (not only in English) and an examination-based type of assessment had been preserved in spite of the curricular changes.

In the period comprising 2001-2002, SEP conducted a study in over 100 public secondary schools whose evidence concurred with Díaz' findings. English teachers' practices had not changed as expected. The said study reported that:

. . . a lack of appropriate means for the diffusion and implementation of the approach caused misunderstandings and *false clarities* amongst teachers; changes do not seem to have been well assimilated. An example of this can be seen in teachers' most 'common practices': reading aloud, translating, making lists of vocabulary, repeating in chorus, amongst others, all of which are very distant from what is suggested in the PPE 1993 (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006, p. 7).

It is worth noting that Mexican government offices rarely acknowledge a failure. This unusual statement, however, may likely be explained considering the possible political interests involved. The text cited above comes from the introduction of the 2006 English curriculum that would replace the 1993 version. The fact that this curricular change was implemented during President Vicente Fox's final year in office should not be overlooked. Fox was the first member of the conservative party (PAN) to be elected president after 75 years of supremacy of the PRI party. An acknowledgment of the 1993 curriculum's failure could have been an electoral strategy to remind the public of the flaws of past administrations. Moreover, the results of the study cited above should be regarded with certain reserves since they are merely mentioned without providing more specific details of the research design.

While it is true that the report cited above possibly lacks scientific rigor, other more reliable sources offer evidence to attest to the unsatisfactory outcomes of the 1993 curriculum. A research team commissioned by the Asociación Nacional de Instituciones de Educación Superior (National Association of Higher Education Institutions, ANUIES by its acronym in Spanish) tested the L2 competence of 4,960 first year college students from 9 large top-ranked universities in Mexico City (González-Robles, Vivaldo-Lima, and Castillo-Morales, 2004). The results showed that an overwhelming majority of the students (over 75%) had merely reached a very basic L2 proficiency after been exposed to 4 years of instruction (in secondary and preparatory school). Considering the social and material conditions described in the previous paragraphs, such results do not come as a surprise.

In this context, the 2006 English curriculum introduced a couple of innovations that deserve mentioning. First of all, this curricular proposal was the first one to implement a competency-based model with more precise achievement standards. Second, the curriculum was organized considering language use as a social practice. Therefore, the aim of this curriculum was to enable students to use English in the social practices of the language that involve oral and written texts (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006). The methodological principles fostered by this program were partly based in Kolb's (1984) experiential learning. Additionally, the achievement standards adopted were those of the Common European Framework of Reference (Council of Europe, 2001). Considering that most students would enter secondary schools as true beginners at the time, the 2006 curriculum expected that, upon graduation, students would reach an A2 level of proficiency. Such level is roughly equivalent to the lower-intermediate level in ACTFL standards (Martínez-Baztán, 2008; Tschirner, & Bärenfänger, 2012). Although these expectations were modest for a three-year curriculum, if met, they could have been considered as a watershed in the history of English teaching in Mexico.

It should also be added that, when the 2006 curriculum was launched, at least two important contextual factors had changed for the better. In first place, by the turn of the twenty-

first century, the accelerated population growth reported during the 1970s and 1980s had slowed down considerably. For example, while the secondary school students' population had grown a 40% during the 80s, the same group only registered a 27% increase by the end of the 1990s (Zorrilla-Fierro, 2004). Thus, Davies (2007) perceptions about a decrease in the size of some of the secondary school classes (from 60 to 35 students in average) may be connected to this demographic trend. A second positive change that may have supported the implementation of the new curriculum was the increment in the number of teacher education programs. By the end of the twentieth century, a good number of public universities had developed BA and MA programs in TESOL or Applied Linguistics (Davies, 2011; Pérez-López, Bellatón, & Emilsson, 2012). Furthermore, according to Davies (2007), even the undergraduate programs offered by the Escuela Normal Superior (graduate teachers' college), about which he had previously been skeptical, improved to some extent.

In spite of these positive developments, certain persisting challenges cast a shadow over the implementation of the 2006 curriculum. For example, the lack of appropriate resources and limited opportunities to support teachers' professional development seemed to prevail (Basurto-Santos, 2010; Dietrich, 2007). Additionally, it should be mentioned that the 2006 curriculum was designed considering first-year secondary students as true beginners. However, not all students that began secondary school by 2006 really fell into that category. An incipient implementation of the teaching of English at some elementary schools had contributed to the generation of a student population whose experience with English was more heterogeneous than in the past.

Assuming that the North American Trade Agreement (NAFTA) would impose a greater need of English, the governments of some states had launched regional English courses in public elementary schools during the 1990s (Reyes-Cruz, Murrieta-Loyo, & Hernández-Méndez, 2011; Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011b). Although these curricula were not totally satisfactory (Castañedo & Davies, 2004), because of their existence some children in Mexican public schools began to have certain contact with English before secondary schools. The needs of such students

could not be appropriately met with a course for true beginners (Chepetla, 2005). Therefore, unlike their predecessors, twenty-first's century English teachers at some public secondary schools had to face an additional challenge, that of having multi-level classes.

Considering all these challenges, one can only wonder about the achievements of the 2006 English curriculum. Unfortunately, as it has happened with previous curricula, SEP did not make provisions for an appropriate large scale assessment of the 2006 curriculum. Moreover, before any university-based researcher could organize an evaluative study, the following administration led by President Felipe Calderón-Hinojosa began to prepare a new proposal whose pilot version was launched in 2009 (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2010). This new curriculum that finally reached full implementation in 2011 followed the pedagogical principles of its predecessor. The one novelty introduced was the expansion of the nation-wide English curriculum to include elementary school and pre-school (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011b).

4.1.2 The inclusion of English in the basic education system.

The Programa Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (National English Program in Basic Education, henceforth to be referred to as NEPBE), which is the current English curriculum for the basic education system, aimed to enable students to become independent L2 user of English (B1 level in the CEFR) in a 10-year period starting at age 5. The arguments used to support this ambitious expansion of the 2006 curriculum were mainly two. First, SEP contended that the elementary school English curricula that some state governments had initiated were “extremely heterogeneous in aspects such as coverage, achievement levels, types of contents addressed, as well as teaching hours” (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011c, p. 93). Thus, in order to guarantee more standardized achievements by the end of the basic education system, a national curriculum that covered all the levels in the system was required. As a second but not less important argument, SEP claimed that there was an urgent need to align Mexican educational policies with international trends. Such trends, basically those promoted by organizations such as

UNESCO and OECD, singled second language education as a basic need to survive in the globalized world (Chiesa, 2008; Delors, 1998; UNESCO, 2003). These claims were supposed to derive authority from those experts who have collaborated with the organizations named above in the definition of international standards to assess national education curricula. As important as these considerations may be, it is surprising that the decision to launch the NEPBE was not directly supported by empirical research conducted in Mexico prior the design of the pilot curriculum.

This absence of research-based arguments in the original proposal of the NEPBE does not imply that researchers were indifferent to the topic. In my literature search, I identified at least two empirical studies which were conducted in Mexican secondary and preparatory schools between 2000 and 2005. This research was the result of the individual efforts of Mexican scholars who were pursuing graduate degrees in England (Aramayo, 2005; Basurto-Santos, 2010). In their dissertations, these authors presented evidence from case studies reporting that old practices such as an excessive reliance on teacher-fronted grammar explanations, isolated use of textbook exercises, limited availability of resources, and little L2 use were still the norm in the secondary and preparatory school classrooms during the operation of the 2006 curriculum. The teachers and students featured in these studies appeared as overwhelmed and unhappy with the contextual conditions that seemed to nullify their best intentions of teaching and learning the language. In spite of the value of this rather rare empirical evidence, these findings were not taken into consideration for the elaboration of the NEPBE. Additionally, regarding the teaching of English at some state-run elementary schools prior to the pilot stage of the NEPBE, I found only one isolated study. In this research project, Chepetla (2005) claimed that some positive results had been achieved in a pilot curriculum implemented in the state of Morelos in 1992. However, the author also identified that the transition between elementary and secondary school had become problematic because of the lack of continuity between the two curricula.

Once the NEPBE pilot work was announced and initiated, two important large-scale studies and one qualitative project were undertaken. The first of these efforts was conducted by 12 major Mexican universities (Ramírez-Romero, Plampión-Irigoyen, & Cota-Grijalva, 2012). This study began just a few months before the introduction of the NEPBE. For that reason, some of the data used in the study described the implementation of the original State-based curricula. The data collected in the latter stages of the project provided evidence of the NEPBE's implementation. The study included descriptive statistics and qualitative data collected from 96 rural and urban elementary schools in 11 of the 32 states of the Mexican Republic. The data were collected through interviews with school principals, teachers, students, and parents. Additionally, a few classroom observations were conducted. In the partial report published in 2012, the authors presented evidence about the participants' experiences with the English curricula (State-based and federal curricula). The results of this study can be summarized as follows:

1. Principals, teachers, and parents declared that they were not certain about the purpose and characteristics of the English curricula.
2. Although some of the participants agreed that learning English was important, others did not consider it essential and were afraid that the time devoted to English would negatively impact the learning of other subject-matters.
3. Some participants expressed concerns regarding the ambivalence of the government towards the English curriculum. They observed that the authorities would normally make public statements about the importance of learning English, but they would often underestimate the time and continuity needed for the success of the curricula.
4. The coverage of the curriculum across all the regions, the teaching resources, and the physical conditions of the classrooms were described as insufficient.
5. Teachers based their planning on the textbook arguing that the states had not provided an official curriculum when they launched their curricula.

6. Some caveats of the curricula observed by the participants were the time allocated for the courses (2 to 3 hrs. a week) and the fact that English was treated as a non-credit and non-mandatory subject (English was not included as part of the grade reports)
7. The researchers detected a lack of adequately trained teachers coupled with a shortage of permanent positions that impeded the hiring and development of qualified personnel.
8. The States had neglected to implement appropriate teachers' development curricula
9. Textbook publishers and the embassies of the United Kingdom and the United States had provided some training. However, these efforts had been limited to the state capitals leaving a great number of teachers without support.
10. During the observations, the researchers found some commendable teaching practices but also others that were not in agreement with the curricula. Some classes were centered on a decontextualized teaching of vocabulary or oriented towards the examinations.

The second large-scale study was conducted by a research team hired by SEP to provide the empirical evidence that was lacking in their curricular proposal (Blanco-López, Mercau, & Sayer, n.d.; Mercau, Sayer, & Blanco López, 2012; Sayer, Ban, & Quezada, 2012; Sayer, 2015). This study was directed by Peter Sayer from the University of Texas at San Antonio. In this research project, 365 teachers in 24 states answered an online questionnaire of twenty questions. Additionally, the research team conducted interviews and classroom observations in seven States. Some of the major problems identified in this study were consistent with the results presented by Ramírez-Romero, Plamplón-Irigoyen, & Cota-Grijalva (2012). For instance, Sayer and his associates found an alarming lack of permanent teaching positions with benefits (over 90% of the respondents were hired on a temporal basis), limited material resources, poor classroom conditions, and a need of pedagogical support to help teachers deal with young learners and interpret the NEPBE.

Finally, a qualitative study conducted by scholars from the University of Guanajuato (Lengeling, Mora-Pablo, Rubio-Zenil, Arrendondo-Muñoz, Carillo-Barrios, Ortega-Hernández, & Caréto, 2013) explored the perspectives of 24 primary school teachers on the English textbooks provided by SEP. According to the participants, not only were these textbooks not properly aligned with the contents and objectives of the NEPBE, but also SEP failed to send them on time for the beginning of the academic year. In fact, some of the teachers reported that they had to wait up to six months for the arrival of the textbooks, which forced them to improvise teaching materials. Very often, this improvisation required an extraordinary effort and investment from the part of the teachers, which was not supported by the schools' administration. Additionally, although some of the textbooks activities included audio materials, most of the teachers did not have access to the necessary equipment to play the audios. In other cases, the CDs were not provided with the textbook. In sum, this qualitative research adds an in-detail view of the reported lack of appropriate materials and equipment that was identified in the large-scale studies mentioned above.

As it can be observed, in spite of some more recent positive developments, most studies here reviewed agreed that the teaching of English in elementary and secondary public schools is still deficient and limited by an overwhelming lack of material and human resources. The same situation seems to persist in the preparatory schools as some studies also suggest (Basurto-Santos, 2010; Herrera-Villa, Vallejo-Casarín, Segura-Celis Ochoa, Figueroa-Rodríguez, Ramírez-Marín, 2013; Lemus-Hidalgo, Duran-Howard, Martínez-Sánchez, 2008; Uscanga-Méndez, 2011). These problems do not seem to have been appropriately addressed by any of the curricular proposals and educational policies implemented in the last forty years. On the contrary, these problems have only been expanded, and perhaps worsened, with the recent compulsory inclusion of English in the entire basic education system.

4.1.3 English and social inequality in Mexico.

Up to now, the available evidence suggests that Mexico's public education system is not yet prepared for the implementation of an English curriculum that is supposed to cater to the needs of a population of over 24 million children. In the 2013-2014 academic year, these children represented 90% of all the students enrolled in preschool, primary, and secondary schools in the country. The remaining 10% (2, 494 433 children) were enrolled in a private school (SEP-INEGI, 2013). There are some reasons to suspect that Mexican children studying at private schools are exposed to a more effective type of English instruction.

If the quality of English instruction in the private sector is indeed higher as some suggest (Davies, 2011; Dietrich, 2007), then the disparity in the distribution of students in private and public schools represents a serious problem of access to effective English learning. To respond to the question of whether English is in reality more effectively taught at Mexican private schools or not, one can again refer to the previously cited González-Robles and associates (2004). Using their data pool composed by first-year students from 9 universities, the researchers disaggregated the data corresponding to the two top-ranked private universities participating in the study. In this analysis, it was found that over 76% of the first-year students in these two universities had attended a private school before enrolling at college. These same students obtained higher scores in the English proficiency test used in the study as opposed to the students in the public university group. While an 84% of the private university students ranked as either low or upper intermediate learners, a majority that surpassed the 75% of the public university group was ranked at the basic/elementary level. It could be concluded that, at some point during their basic and upper-secondary education, the students at the two-top ranked private universities were benefitted by a more effective second language learning experience. The results offered by González-Robles and his associates suggest that it is likely that this experience took place, at least to a certain extent, at a private school.

More recently, Davies (2009a) added to this discussion by comparing the level of English in the courses offered by the foreign language departments of two major universities in the center of Mexico, one public and one private. He examined the level of the textbooks used in each course and the number of students (graduate and undergraduate) enrolled at every level. Davies found that approximately 84% of the students enrolled in the private university foreign languages center were taking a course at either upper or lower intermediate levels. On the contrary, in the public university, 78% of the students in the language center were taking a basic-level course. Furthermore, the chances that these students would develop more than a basic proficiency before graduation were thin because a higher level of English was not a graduation requirement.

The inequitable access to English that these figures suggest is only worsened by the fact that not all private schools operate under the same conditions. In some cases, large classes and limited access to resources are also part of the context in certain private schools. I was able to witness such conditions during the course of this study and in my own experience working in Mexico. For this reason, a number of extra-curricular language schools have thrived since the 1940s with the opening of the British Council and the creation of the Anglo-Mexican foundation, both in Mexico City. Davies (2009b) argued that it is in this sort of elite institutions that Mexican students achieve a level of proficiency past the intermediate threshold. For example, according to Davies, in 2009 the language school of the Anglo-Mexican Foundation had 9000 students out of which 68% were enrolled in either intermediate or advanced level courses. Unfortunately, very few people have access to these language schools, not only because of their cost, but because most of them are only located in the largest urban centers. Additionally, because of their elite-based population and their urban location, these language schools are usually able to offer more reasonable working conditions. Because of this affluence, these language schools can afford to attract NESTs to join their teaching staff.

Therefore, because of these socioeconomic circumstances, in the public opinion, the success of a few privileged Mexicans in achieving higher levels of English proficiency is usually

associated to their having attended a language institute where, ideally, most teachers are native speakers of English. By the same token, the Mexican English teacher is often associated with the poor learning outcomes of the public system, where NNEST compose an overwhelming majority. These negative perceptions can be problematized at different levels, but they tend to remain uncontested in the public opinion. Moreover, these notions have been recently enhanced as the most powerful teacher union in the country became entangled in a dispute with the federal government over the approval of a new law. In the following section, I will briefly summarize the particulars of this issue that have also contributed to the Discourses⁷ about English teachers in Mexico.

4.1.4 Social constructions about teachers and the Law of Professional Teaching Service.

Corporatism (also corporativism) is understood as the system in which labor or professional organizations represent the interests of the large masses of workers, especially with respect to labor legislation. Often, the power with which these organizations are invested has been linked to organized social change on the one side, and to the manipulation of electoral results on the other. In Mexico's history, corporatism has taken an active part in the negotiation of opposed interests such as social welfare policies, the expansion of capitalism, and the legitimization of the political system (Torres, 1991). In this scenario, the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (National Union of Education Workers , SNTE by its acronym in Spanish), being the largest union in all Latin America with approximately 1.5 million members, has played an essential role in most electoral processes for the last 70 years (Hernández, 2015, December 22; Loyo, 2001; Torres, 1991). This power has often been used by SNTE leaders to align the vote of the union members in favor of one political power or the other. In fact, the general public and scholars agree that teachers' corporative vote has been key to guarantee the political supremacy of the PRI party for decades (Muñoz-Armenta, 2008; Torres, 1991). The fact that the three SNTE

⁷ In Gee's (2008) sense (see page 26).

leaders who have controlled the union for the last 43 years were imposed by the President's office (Muñoz-Armenta, 2008) proves the existence of a strong alliance between SNTE and the federal government. Moreover, during the 12-year hiatus during which the PAN party was in charge of the President office (2000-2012), many believed that the SNTE's change of allegiance had been instrumental in this victory (Ornelas, 2008).

In a political system in which corporatism plays such a powerful role, it is expected that unions would receive something in return for their political support. In the case of the SNTE, this investment return has taken the form of certain benefits for education workers such as life-long employment status and retirement plans, while SNTE leaders have amassed large fortunes ("Fortuna de la maestra supera \$100 mil millones," 2013, February 27). However, when considering that the average salary of a primary school teacher in the Mexican public sector is below the modest standards of other countries struggling with recession such as Chile and Spain (OECD, 2015), it would seem that SNTE members have received but a minor reward for their loyalties. This objection notwithstanding, the type of safety that most teachers working in the public system enjoyed for decades appeared as a considerable advantage in the perceptions of many Mexicans. Such perceptions can be best understood considering that, during the last forty years, Mexico has endured several periods of harsh economic recessions (Acevedo-Fernández, 2008). Therefore, being affiliated to SNTE was seen as a benefit since having a low-salary job that will last for life is preferable than having no job at all. It is not difficult to understand that this perception was key to guarantee the adherence of more and more members that gave the union its unparalleled corporative power for so many years.

Ironically, SNTE's power has also worked against teachers' professional interests and public image in at least three ways. First of all, because teachers' permanence in their jobs was guaranteed by all means, applying measures of quality control has been practically impossible. By the same token, those committed teachers who attempt to do something to improve their practice often have to fight against a cumbersome bureaucracy that resists change.

Second, because the federal government legally categorized public school teachers as workers and not as professionals (without any opposition from SNTE), the implementation of professional development programs has always been problematic (Loyo, 2001; Muñoz-Armenta, 2008; Pardo, 2014; Torres, 1991). This means that, because teachers were considered in the same category as most manual workers, they were not expected to access promotions by virtue of their developing higher or more updated professional qualifications. In many cases, what a member needed in order to ascend the ladder of the public system was seniority and an active participation in the union. At the same time, teachers' individual initiatives to continue their education beyond the teachers' college have neither been supported nor encouraged by the official apparatus. For instance, even today, if a teacher acquires a graduate degree, this academic accomplishment is not necessarily reflected in a salary raise or an improvement of the working conditions.

Thirdly, because SNTE has supported a policy of promotion based on seniority and active participation in the union's activities, the implementation of a merit-based criterion and the development of teacher assessment programs were systematically resisted by the union for decades (Pardo, 2014). As a consequence of these complex social practices and how they have been addressed by the media, teachers are usually seen as mediocre and indolent bureaucrats that oppose progress.

Considering this context, it is not difficult to imagine that SNTE's national leader has a decisive role. This is especially so since the union was directed by the same person, Elba Esther Gordillo-Morales, for nearly 24 years (1989-2013) (Muñoz-Armenta, 2008). Under Gordillo-Morales' leadership, SNTE temporarily transferred its loyalties to favor the PAN party during the 2000 and 2006 presidential elections (Ornelas, 2008). However, with the return of the PRI to the presidential office in 2012, the new administration decided to put an end to Gordillo-Morales' power detaining her under the charges of money laundering (Castillo-García, 2013, February 27). However, this dramatic move did not happen in isolation.

For years, the Mexican federal power has worked to keep the union's power under check, especially when they became an obstacle to implement the neo-liberal measures that have characterized Mexico's economic policies since the 1980s (Patroni, 2001). Having been successful to dismantle one of the unions that controlled the electric power workers in central Mexico (Belmont, 2012), president Calderón-Hinojosa (2006-2012) tried to begin a similar process with SNTE. Although he ultimately did not dare to act against Gordillo-Morales, during Calderón-Hinojosa's term a media campaign, supported by the two main open television networks (TELEVISA and TV Azteca), began to set the scene for the fall of SNTE's leader. This campaign would also worsen the already deteriorated public image of SNTE members and, by association, the image of all Mexican teachers, even those who are not members of the union.

In August of 2008, the nation-wide TV Corporation, TELEVISIA, aired an interview with Gordillo-Morales conducted by one of the most popular news anchors at the time, Carlos Loret-de-Mola. The main topic of this interview was a recent agreement that had been signed by SNTE's leadership and the federal government to improve the quality in public education (Gobierno Federal, SEP, & SNTE, 2008). Surprisingly, in the interview, Loret-de-Mola deviated from the topic to address rumors of rampant corruption in the union, embezzlement of funds, and accumulation of unexplained wealth on the part of Gordillo-Morales. Such an aggressive approach in an interview with a public figure who was considered an allied of the President was an uncommon practice in TELEVISIA's shows. Nevertheless, this type of open negative representations of all things connected with the teachers' union began to be more and more common in the following years in that TV chain. In the past, a similar approach had been used to discredit the members of a dissident group of teachers in the Southern region who left SNTE in the late 1970s to form alternative teachers' union (Sayer, 2012).

Four years later, the cited Loret-de-Mola collaborated with Mexicanos Primero (Mexicans First), an non-governmental organization supported by the owner of TELEVISIA and other business men, in the production of a documentary about the quality of education in Mexico.

The documentary entitled “De Panzazo”⁸, analyzed the education issue gathering the opinion of students, parents, teachers, and a few public figures. Along this 1-hour long movie, Loret-de-Mola’s voice argued that a great part of the education problem in Mexico was on teachers’ shoulders:

Why do students drop out? Why, if staying at school represents an economic advantage? Where does the problem lie? In students? In parents? In the government? In the Unions? In the teachers? In all of us? Perhaps we don’t know what is going on with students because we don’t know what is going on with teachers (Alatorre, Rulfo & Loret-de-Mola, 2012, min. 11:12).

This argument was reinforced over and over in the voices of different actors captured in the video. In sum, the documentary advanced the need of at least three important changes: a reform of the laws that regulated teachers’ employment, the implementation of a national system of teachers’ assessment, and the creation of a reliable register of the teachers’ population.

It is interesting to notice that these three suggested strategies and the destitution of Gordillo-Morales were among the first issues that the government of President Enrique Peña-Nieto addressed since the beginning of his term (December, 2012). First, Gordillo-Morales was arrested in February of 2013 (Castillo-García, 2013, February 27), just a few days after she had again been aggressively interviewed by another famous TELEVISIA’s anchor, Adela Micha (Micha, 2013). In a second move, SEP started to organize its first census of teachers, students, and schools (SEP-INEGI, 2013), which finally took place between September and December of 2013. Third, the Senate passed the new Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente (General Law of the Professional Teaching Service or LGSPD by its acronym in Spanish) that same year (Senado de la República 2013, September 3). The correspondence of these political actions with

⁸ Mexican slang loosely equivalent to the English idiom “by the skin of one’s teeth”. The expression “de panzazo” is mostly used in the context of school exams and is usually employed to mean “barely passing a test or a course”.

the suggestions presented in De Panzazo is, to say the least, intriguing. The suspicion only grows when considering that TELEVISA, the same corporation behind De Panzazo, also deployed all its mediatic power to support Peña-Nieto's presidential campaign (Serra, 2014).

All these convoluted details are relevant to the present study because of two main reasons. First, these political changes derived in the creation of the previously cited LGSPD law. The academic community has seriously criticized this law, describing it as a mere political act that threatens teachers' labor rights without appropriately addressing their needs of professional development (Del Castillo & Valente-Nigrini 2014). By modifying the laws that guaranteed public teachers' permanent employment, the LGSPD has enabled the implementation of a system of teachers' quality control. This system is expected to operate through large-scale teachers' assessment procedures strongly centered on an exam and the presentation of a portfolio. Those teachers who fail these examinations after three attempts will be dismissed from their positions. Because of these serious consequences, in the course of this study, teachers repeatedly referred to this law and how it has directly or indirectly affected their lives. Therefore, knowing the context in which this law was created was a requirement to understand teachers' discourses and actions.

Secondly, it is important to recognize the role of organizations such as Mexicanos Primero and TELEVISA in shaping the public opinion because, recently, they decided to target Mexican English teachers in particular. Early in 2015, Mexicanos Primero issued a report that mixed research evidence, seemingly randomly selected comments of parents and students, and the opinions of the authors that seemed to voice the same ideologies presented in De Panzazo. In general, the report supports the premise that the learning of English is severely underdeveloped in Mexico and that national teachers are largely responsible for this failure. To support this claim, the organization uses figures from the recent census (SEP-INEGI, 2013) and the results of a study conducted by a research team hired by Mexicanos Primero. This team was led by Miguel Székely, former Deputy Secretary of Upper Secondary and Higher Education, and composed by other two scholars from different institutions (Székely, O'Donoghue, & Pérez, 2015). These

researchers, neither of them applied linguists, developed an English proficiency test to assess secondary school teachers and students. The test was composed of five sections that assessed written and aural comprehension, vocabulary, grammar, and certain pragmatic abilities (called multimodal skills by the test developers). Speaking skills were not included. The design of the test followed the standards of the CEFR that SEP had selected for the NEPBE. As mentioned before (see 4.1.2 on page 161), these standards entail that, in ideal conditions, students in the final year of secondary school are expected to reach the B1 level. Teachers, on their part, are expected to display a proficiency above this level.

The test was validated by the experts of CENEVAL (a well-known national testing agency) and administered to a sample of 504 public secondary school English teachers and 4,727 students. These students were recent graduates from public secondary schools. The participants were selected from 11 of the largest cities in the country including Mexico city with the expectation that these individuals would have higher scores in the test. The results showed that only 3% of the students reached the expected B1 standard, while an appalling 79% ranked even below the A1 level. As for the teachers, nearly 49% reached the B1 standard with the rest of them falling at some point between the A0-A2 continuum; in other words, as novice users or below. None of the teachers ranked above the level that their students are supposed to reach (Székely, O'Donoghue, & Pérez, 2015).

As alarming as these results may be, they do not come as a surprise when considering the socio economic conditions and history that I have referred to in this chapter. What is really thought provoking is the way in which the information was presented in the media. While the report suffers from some important editorial inconsistencies, it does admit in certain sections that Mexican teachers are not the only problematic factor in the equation. However, when the results were featured in most newspapers, the poor performance of the teachers and students in the sample was the one piece of information that became salient. To instantiate this bias,

Table 10. Headings about Mexicanos Primero's report in 10 major newspapers

Newspaper and date	Heading in Spanish	Translation to English
El Financiero February, 02, 2015	En México, se puede ser maestro de inglés sin saber el idioma: Mexicanos Primero.	In Mexico, one can be an English teacher without knowing the language: Mexicanos Primero.
La Jornada Jalisco March 24 th , 2015	8 de cada 10 alumnos de secundaria obtuvieron 0 en inglés.	8 of each 10 students in secondary schools got F in English.
El Economista January 26th, 2015	México, reprobado también en la enseñanza del inglés: estudio	Mexico also fails in the teaching of English: Study
Milenio January 26, 2015	Enseñanza del inglés en México, una gran simulación: Mexicanos Primero	The teaching of English in Mexico, a great simulation: Mexicanos Primero
Milenio February 10, 2015	En México, maestros no saben inglés pero lo enseñan.	In Mexico, teachers do not know English but they teach it.
CNN Expansión February 10, 2015	Uno de cada 7 maestros de inglés en México no conoce el idioma.	One of each 7 English teachers in Mexico does not know the language
El Universal January 27th, 2015	Reprueba inglés 97% de egresados de secundaria: estudio.	97% of secondary school graduates failed English.
Río Doce March 22, 2015	“Sorry”, alumnos y maestros de inglés reprobados.	“Sorry”, English students and teachers failed.
MVS Noticias January 26, 2015	Falla el sistema educativo en enseñanza del inglés: Mexicanos Primero	The educational system fails in the teaching of English: Mexicanos Primero
Reforma January 26, 2015	Simulación, enseñanza del inglés: ONG	Simulation, teaching of English: NGO

Table 10 shows the headings of 10 leading newspapers that presented the news during the first trimester of 2015.

As can be observed, the most salient theme in four of the ten selected newspapers headings is “English teaching,” while other 4 headings focus on “teachers.” Only two of the headings emphasize exclusively on students’ outcomes. It is also worth noting that these articles were not all issued in the same month. It appears that the media kept talking about the publication of the report for several weeks. In the case of Milenio, the same piece of news was presented in two different dates, but the emphasis on teachers’ incompetence and the failure of English teaching did not change. Finally, it should be considered that, although the entire report is available at Mexicanos Primero’s website, due to its length (over 120 pages), the broader public is likely to have only received the reductionist view promoted in the media.

It is in this complex and highly challenging context that the five participants of this study live and work. Their ages ranged between 30 and 25 years at the beginning of the study, which means that they grew up at a time where English was not officially taught at primary school level. When these teachers reached secondary school, the communicatively oriented 1993 curriculum was supposed to be in full implementation, while the preparatory school curriculum focused only on reading comprehension in English. Again, at the time of the study, the professional history of these teachers ranged between 5 to 10 years of teaching experience. During this period, the national curriculum for basic education had changed twice, while the rules that regulated teachers’ employment and teachers’ collaborative work had also suffered important reforms. The reader should keep all this in mind while perusing the five biographical summaries that appear in the following section.

4.2 Five teachers in Central and South Mexico

The five teachers in this study –Daniela, Leiliani, Adam, Sofía, and Betty – have developed professionally in diverse ways. At the time of the study, two of the participants worked at Higher Education institutions. One of these two teachers was employed in the private sector

and the other worked for a public university. It should be noted that these universities are located at different regions in Mexico.

The other two teachers in the sample worked in elite private high schools, yet one of these teachers was located in the center of the country, while the other lived in the South. This same fourth teacher had an additional part-time position in a public secondary school. Finally, the fifth teacher worked primarily at a private secondary school.

Regardless of their varied professional contexts, these teachers shared one particular educational experience. They all graduated from the same bachelor's degree program offered by a private university in the Southeast of Mexico. In this study, I will refer to this university by the pseudonym of Independent University of Miranda (IUM).

Miranda is a relatively important urban center with a population of over 800 thousand inhabitants (INEGI, 2010). Because Miranda's economy is mostly industry centered, most higher education institutions in the city have traditionally offered programs in business, sciences, and engineering. The programs oriented towards the humanities and the social sciences are less common. The program in which the participants studied was one of the few with a social orientation at the time.

The undergraduate English program at IUM was originally structured in four areas of specialization, namely EFL teaching, management of second language centers, translation, and interpretation. Students were required to take courses for all the four areas. The courses of the first two years were mainly geared towards developing students' L2 proficiency and knowledge about English. However, even during this initial period, students took at least two teaching-related introductory courses. Courses for the other areas of specialization were not included until the third year. Almost half of the courses were taught using English as the medium of instruction (EMOI), including some non-language related courses such as Research Methods, Educational Psychology, Educational Administration, or Curriculum Design. The operation of these content-based courses was dependent on the availability of an instructor that could teach a subject-matter

other than English using EMOI. This availability varied over the years. Therefore, since the participants belonged to different cohorts, not all their narratives refer to the same experience with EMOI. Additionally, in 2003 some of the courses were modified reducing the contents related to language centers' management. For more details regarding the program, the reader can refer to the plan of study in Appendix 6 (page 537). The following subsections show how the participants' experience at IUM fits into the larger picture of their lives before and after college. Special emphasis is also made on the participants' L2 acquisition experience and their former professional development at graduate school and the workplace. I decided to use these summaries to give the readers a holistic view of the participants' professional lives before I lead the presentation of findings to the more specific aspects of the discourse analysis featured in subsequent chapters. In the summaries, I have woven into the narrative my own representations of the participants' accounts, direct quotations taken from their autobiographies, interviews, email communications, and my observations during my visits to the participants' workplace.

Regarding the data sources used in this chapter, I should add a few clarifications. First of all, the interviews were conducted in English. The interview audio recordings have been transcribed using an adaptation of Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming, and Paolino's (1993) transcription conventions (see Appendix 7 on page 529). The lines in these transcriptions vary depending on the length of the speakers' intonation units. In this chapter, the analysis is focused on content. For this reason, I will not address the implications of the participants' intonation and other phonological details implicit in their speech at the time of the interview. However, I will consider these details and other linguistic features in the subsequent chapters. Second, the autobiographies were also written in English. In this chapter, I present some excerpts from the participants' original manuscripts with only minor corrections to eliminate typos. Finally, whenever the participants' ideas expressed in interviews or autobiographies are ambiguous or unclear, I have added explanatory comments using double bracket (()).

4.2.1 Daniela.

Daniela, born in 1983 in Miranda, was raised as the eldest of a family of four children. Her family experience could be considered a traditional one with a stay-at-home mother and a father whose work as a garage owner was enough to provide for the whole family. Daniela's parents gave her the best education they could afford, enrolling her in one of the most prestigious private schools available in town at the time. This school happened to be affiliated with IUM's elementary and secondary education system. It was in this context that Daniela had her first contact with English.

As well-reputed as Daniela's school was, the second language instruction she received there was nonetheless of little importance for her. Her memories of her first experiences with English during elementary school are rather fuzzy and related to very basic contents:

Excerpt 1. Daniela's first interview, May 2013: Daniela talks about her L2 learning experience.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. AR: But does that mean, | 12. DANIELA: Exactly, exactly, |
| 2. that you started learning English, | 13. when I was in fourth grade, |
| 3. in your Elementary school? | 14. I was ten years old, |
| | 15. I remember a teacher, |
| 4. DANIELA:(H)Well, | 16. who brought a song, |
| 5. I don't remember anything, | 17. to the class, |
| 6. maybe I learned, | 18. . . . and, |
| 7. a little bit of vocabulary, | 19. I was really, |
| 8. and basic things, | 20. immersed in the class, |
| 9. I remember, | 21. because I wanted, |
| 10. nothing, | 22. to pronounce, |
| | 23. the words correctly, |
| 11. AR: [It didn't make an impact on you] | 24. so, |
| | 25. I remember that point
((moment)), |
-

When Daniela was a teenager, she became more interested in English, but a conversation she had with a teacher at the time made her doubt the effectiveness of the instruction she was receiving at school. This teacher encouraged Daniela to enroll in a language school if she truly wanted to learn English. Daniela followed this advice which led her to the learning experience

that she identifies as her real start with English. These first lessons, however, are not remembered with great enthusiasm in Daniela's narrative as shown in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 2. Daniela's first interview, May 2014: Daniela's learning experience in a private institute.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| 1. AR: A=nd uh, | 16. a=nd, |
| 2. from this, | 17. it was boring, |
| 3. learning process that, | 18. sometimes I was like, |
| 4. somehow started, | 19. interested but, |
| 5. when you were a teenager, | 20. for, an hour, |
| 6. at the beginning, | 21. two hours, |
| 7. when you started the language school, | 22. but then it was, |
| 8. what was your first impression, | |
| 9. in that language school? | 23. AR: [Your attention drifted], |
| | |
| 10. DANIELA: Boring (Hx), | 24. DANIELA: Yes, |
| 11. because, | 25. it was like, very, |
| 12. I studied on Saturdays, | 26. very sleepy so, |
| 13. maybe four or five, | 27. I was like u=h, |
| 14. or sometimes six hours, | 28. <Q I don't want to be here but, |
| 15. so it was very exhausting, | 29. I have to Q>. |
-

Contrary to what one would expect from this first impression, Daniela claimed that her interest in English did not fade. In fact, through this experience, she began to perceive herself as having the abilities to understand grammar and explain difficult aspects of it to her classmates. This confidence gave her a sense of success and competence that she believes had something to do with her eventual decision to major in English.

Notwithstanding Daniela's perceptions about her abilities, when the time came for her to decide what to do after high school she experienced serious doubts. Her memories of that episode are, in fact, surrounded by confusion and contradictions which are evident in her different accounts of the same event. In her two versions of the same story, Daniela claimed that she initially had an interest in Psychology, which she later discarded because she thought that this discipline was too bookish for her taste. Later, she pondered other options which, according to her first account (autobiography), had to be connected to some sort of teaching career because she wanted to "help people":

Excerpt 3. Daniela's autobiography, May 2013: Daniela decides to study for a BA in English.

1. It was May of 2001. I was about finishing high school and I had to be getting ready to start
 2. college. There was a huge problem though. I had not decided what I wanted to study. I knew
 3. it had to be something related to education because I wanted to be a teacher; but spending four
 4. years and study "Education" did not seem the best option for me. I wanted to help people but
 5. "Psychology" was too much reading. At the end, by elimination I chose something called
 6. "Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa" ((Bachelor's degree in English)). And that was the beginning
 7. of my journey.
-

In her second account of this event (interview), however, Daniela's narrative attributes her decision to her interest in language (see Chapter V for more details). Beyond this contradiction, in the two accounts Daniela talks about these events as a problematic moment in her life. Moreover, during the interviews she added that she felt pressed to make a decision to avoid "losing a year" of her life without studying. Therefore, she avoided this loss of time by enrolling at IUM after considering the suggestions made by one of her friends.

In her autobiography, Daniela describes her overall experience in the English program as "interesting and enriching." However, in the interviews, she went into the details of her initial shock when she first took a course with a NES instructor whose dialect challenged her listening skills. This experience made Daniela reassess her opinion about her second language proficiency and conclude that she had overestimated her abilities. In spite of this realization, Daniela did not drop out of the program. She attributes this outcome to her belief in finishing what she started.

Excerpt 4. Daniela's autobiography, May 201: Daniela talks about her determination to graduate from her BA program.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| 1. AR: And, | 11. that I am going to do something, |
| 2. What happened?, | 12. and I give like my word, |
| 3. What made you believe, | 13. or I get this, commitment, |
| 4. that you could finish, | 14. is this the word? |
| 5. when you were so shocked? | |
| | 15. AR: Yeah. |
| 6. DANIELA: Umh, | 16. DANIELA: I do my best, |
| 7. I am very, | 17. and I try to finish, |
| 8. I don't know how to explain this, | 18. what I said that I was going to do. |
| 9. or I don't know the exact word, | |
| 10. but when I say, | |
-

-
- | | |
|--|--------------------------------|
| 19. DANIELA: I do my best, | 25. so I said, |
| 20. and I try to finish, | 26. that's what I decided and, |
| 21. what I, said that I was going to do. | 27. even if I didn't like it, |
| | 28. I was going to finish, |
| 22. AR: So you're a woman of your word. | 29. I started, |
| | 30. and I had to finish, |
| 23. DANIELA: Exactly, | 31. and I did it. |
| 24. that's what I think, | |
-

Daniela's struggle with English did not represent the only challenge she faced during her undergraduate education. She also reported some disappointing episodes when she began her practicum and discovered that teaching was not as easy as she had expected. In her stories of her first teaching experiences, Daniela narrates typical beginner's mistakes that she allegedly overcame with time.

After graduation, Daniela got a full blast of first-time experiences. She got a first formal teaching assignment at a language institute (which she kept for a year), she got married, and soon had her first and only child. All this happened in a period of two years. Understandably, the birth of Daniela's son made her put her career on hold for a while. She actually took a year off, the only one she has taken so far in a period of 10 years of teaching career. From her memories of her first teaching assignment, she wrote the following about her feelings of inadequacy (Line 1 and 2) and her first attempts at choosing an approach to teaching (Lines 5-8):

Excerpt 5. Daniela's autobiography, May 2013: Daniela decides to study for an MA.

1. I finished my studies in June of 2005. I learned a lot and I felt proud of myself but I did
 2. not feel good enough to start teaching. However I started to work in July of 2005 in a
 3. language center called "International Language Center". It was my first
 4. professional opportunity. I started to teach and used all that I learned at the university.
 5. I was not required to implement any specific method. I was able to use the approach
 6. and method that I wanted. So I decided not to focus on a single one. I used everything
 7. I had available, a little bit of grammar translation method, a little bit of communicative
 8. approach, a little bit of audiolingual method, task-based, etc.
-

The fact that Daniela was “not required to implement any specific method” (Line 5) in her first job was presented in Daniela’s autobiography as an advantage. While this freedom seems to have been welcomed by Daniela, it may also suggest that the institution did not have any program to support novice teachers during their first in-service experience. Similar unscaffolded teaching debuts were also described by Adam and Sofía and will later be discussed in subsequent chapters.

After the birth of her son, Daniela started working as a pre-K English teacher in a small private bilingual school. She remembers this experience as her best time in her teaching career up to the time of the study because she had a small class and the children were receptive to her instruction (see more details of this memory in Chapter 6). In spite of this positive experience, Daniela resigned from her teaching position at the kindergarten after an academic year because she got a better offer from a larger school. In this third job, Daniela worked as a middle school English teacher since the fall of 2007 and was still employed there at the time of this study.

In 2011, Daniela decided to study for a Master’s degree. The program of her choice, an MA in English, was of recent creation in Miranda and was offered by a small private university. Her decision was motivated by Daniela’s desires to refresh her English and move forward professionally. She claimed that the program had met most of her expectations but had left her exhausted. When this study began, Daniela was about to finish her coursework but still needed to write her thesis. She had some vague interest in studying something related to motivation; however, she was still uncertain about how to translate her interest into clear research questions. When Daniela’s participation in this study ended, her thesis was still a project she had left aside for the time being. To summarize her experience as a graduate student, she wrote that it had given her pause to realize the complexities of her profession at a deeper level, as well as some of the mistakes she had made as a teacher (See Excerpt 6, Lines 4-7).

1. In September of 2011 I started to study a Master's program in English language teaching
 2. and learning. I realized that I decided to study again to improve my English skills, and
 3. of course to know a little bit more about my profession. These last 2 years have been
 4. very challenging and I have found out that teaching a second language is not as easy as
 5. I thought. The deeper I went through the program the more frustrated I felt. I have
 6. learned a lot in this Master's program and there have been so many things that I have
 7. been doing wrong that sometimes I feel that I chose a very difficult profession.
-

Although Daniela relates her realization of the challenges of second language teaching to her Master's program, her job is actually a site where she faces these challenges on a daily basis. Her school, which will be here referred by the name of "Latin-American School," is a private institute that offers K-12 education. Unlike most similar private schools in Miranda, the Latin-American School is not located in a wealthy neighborhood. However, the facilities are not so different from Leiliani's school that can boast of being situated within Miranda's old suburban area. According to my observations and my conversations with Daniela, the families in this school are from the middle-class, with a few of them being slightly more affluent. If there is any difference to be remarked between this school and Leiliani's, that would be the size of the classes and the availability of equipment. Daniela usually worked with larger classes (35 to 40 students per class) and had to deal with more limitations regarding access to material and technology as opposed to her colleagues working in more affluent schools. Also, Daniela's classes were significantly more difficult to manage and the students' prior knowledge of English was really basic. Daniela had to conduct most of her classes using L1, while Leiliani could keep an L2-only policy without great problems to be understood by her students.

In our conversations, Daniela admitted that she was not totally satisfied with her work at Latin-American School because of the limited learning outcomes she could see in her students. She argued that some factors that hindered her work were the rather lenient assessment system imposed by the school and the limited freedom she enjoyed to plan and implement classroom

management more effectively. In my visits, I could observe that discipline was indeed a problem that was not entirely in Daniela's hands to control. The assessment policies were also a cause of concern because they required teachers to include attitudinal criteria such as keeping neat notes, or decorating the cover page on their notebooks. Daniela considered that those requirements were not relevant to assess students' proficiency development and only served to inflate students' grades. Daniela discussed this issue in her teaching journal, the content of which will be explored in Chapter 7.

In order to ease these frustrations and to boost her income, Daniela kept a secondary job. During the first year of the study, she worked for a small language institute. She had worked there for some time and referred to this job as the one place where she could see more progress in her students' proficiency. Although the pay was not so good and the commitment required her to sacrifice some of her evenings, she said that she kept the job because it lifted her mood and made her feel useful.

In spite of Daniela's positive perceptions about her second job, she was considering resigning in order to have more free time for her son. Before she could act upon these plans, the owners decided to close the institute the following fall semester. Not long after her dismissal, Daniela took another temporary job as college instructor at the Foreign Languages Department at IUM. This assignment was only for a Saturday course during the spring of 2014, which was about to finish when I last visited Daniela. She told me she would take another similar course if the opportunity arose, but she still considered her work at Latin-American School as her main job. In our last interview, Daniela admitted that she was not willing to give up her position at this school because the pay met her expectations and the school also gave her a tuition waiver for her son, who was then in first grade. These advantages were more important for her than her everyday frustrations in the classroom (see the details of this interview in Chapter 6).

4.2.2 Leiliani.

As Daniela, Leiliani was also born in 1983 in Miranda. She was raised as the only child of a former Spanish middle school teacher and a naval lieutenant. As most working women, Leiliani's mother faced the challenge of dividing her time between motherhood and her job. Since her position was a full-time one, she had to do morning and evening shifts in two different schools. This means that Leiliani's mother would work a morning shift from 8am to 1 pm, have a lunch break of one or two hours, and then return to work in a public secondary school until 6 or 7pm. Unlike her mother, as a child, Leiliani would end school by 1pm. Therefore, Leiliani's mother needed someone to look after her daughter while she was doing her evening shift. This responsibility was fulfilled by Leiliani's grandmother. However, when Leiliani was about nine, her parents began to suspect that she was spending too many hours in front of the TV during their absence. In order to eradicate this habit, Leiliani's parents decided to enroll her in some sort of evening extra classes to ensure that she would be investing her free time learning something useful.

It is in this context that Leiliani began her journey learning English. The first evening school to which she attended was a small local language institute. Leiliani's experience in this school was described by her as "boring." From this period, she has memories of book-oriented classes that would stick to grammar rules and some sporadic reading practice. Unhappy with this situation, Leiliani complained to her parents and they moved her to a different language school. This time she was enrolled at a franchised language institute. Classes in her new school included games, visual aids, and oral activities. Finding this environment more appealing, Leiliani continued attending this institute for about five years.

This experience gave her a certain level of confidence as a language learner, which was increased when she was invited to teach a summer course. She was by then seventeen years old and her students at that time were only four or three years younger than she was. Although she enjoyed this first experience, she did not identify it as the moment that led her to choose a career

as an English teacher. In fact, when Leiliani was about to finish high school, she planned on enrolling at a program in Communication. These plans were suddenly changed when she visited a local private university and requested information about other options. (The details of this interview appear in Chapter 5).

In a last-minute change of mind, Leiliani chose the English program at the IUM. Nevertheless, this decision was not motivated by a desire to become an English teacher. She declared that the idea of developing a career in the media industry was still in her mind, only in a different way. She had been persuaded to believe that by majoring in English she could still find a job in the media business and also have some additional skills to act as a translator or an interpreter.

Leiliani's years in the language institute had contributed to make her feel confident about her abilities to use a second language. Therefore, it came as a surprise when she found herself struggling with some of her courses during her first semester at IUM. She felt especially challenged in those courses taught by NESTs. In such contexts, her lack of familiarity with the use of EMOI and her inexperience with the regional dialects spoken by some of her instructors made her doubt about her suitability for the program. These initial reserves, however, were eventually overcome with time.

Unlike some of her university colleagues, Leiliani did not get a paid teaching job before her practicum. However, she acquired certain experience by other means:

Excerpt 7. Leiliani's email communication: Leiliani talks about her tutoring experience while still a student-teacher.

1. I worked, but not officially. I helped my mom, she was a 6th grade teacher in a public
 2. elementary school and I taught her students basic things in order to help them get
 3. previous knowledge of the language [English] before they started middle school.
-

In spite of the benefit of this contact with young learners, Leiliani's memories of her practicum classes are marked with certain disappointment because of the unfavorable conditions in which she had to work. Some of these conditions included large classes, limited classroom spaces, and teaching and learning practices that worked against her lesson plans. Although these experiences were less than satisfactory, Leiliani developed a career in teaching instead of pursuing one in translation or interpretation. In a series of email communications, Leiliani tried to make sense of this change in her original plans:

Excerpt 8. Leiliani's email communication: Leiliani talks about why she did not pursue a career in media or in translation.

1. I noticed that I wasn't really keen on translation. I understood that my abilities were
 2. focused on the teaching area. It was innate.
-

Beyond Leiliani's explanation, which hints at the idea that nature has an important role in career decisions, an analysis of the biographical data points to certain social and economic circumstances.

After finishing her coursework, Leiliani found her first formal job in a small language institute. She recalls that one of her professors at IMU recommended her for the position. At the same time, Leiliani worked for a private bilingual school in which she was initially taken as an intern to fulfill the Social Service requirements⁹. Once her service period ended, she was formally hired as an elementary school teacher. She stayed in that school for a number of years working at different educational levels (pre-school, elementary, and middle school). Leiliani referred to this period as one during which she learned a great deal. She argued that part of this learning was connected to the positive influence of a more experienced colleague who was the schools' English coordinator at the time (see Chapter 6).

⁹ A graduation requirement that all Mexican undergraduate students have to fulfill working without pay for a minimum of 480 hours in a public or private institution or corporation.

Variety of teaching experiences and appropriate mentorship were not the only positive aspects of Leiliani's time in this bilingual school. According to her story, the salary she received at the time still remains as the highest in all her teaching career. In fact, her income in that period allowed her to buy her first car and return to IUM as a part-time graduate student.

By the time Leiliani decided to enter graduate school her career choices seemed clear. Not only had she accumulated valuable teaching experience, but also she was about to take up her mother's position once her retirement process concluded. Therefore, Leiliani's decision to study for a Master's degree was part of a professional development project within a field in which her long-term involvement was a realistic possibility. However, because of her job, Leiliani's choices had to be limited to the graduate programs available in Miranda at the time. This left Leiliani with only a few viable options that did not include specialized degrees in TESOL or applied linguistics; thus she decided to pursue a Master's in special education. She hoped that this program would enable her to address a challenge she was facing in her work: teaching special-needs children who had been mainstreamed into the regular classroom.

Given the nature and objectives of the program, it didn't appear as a surprise when Leiliani turned out to be the only English major in her cohort. Her colleagues were mostly psychologists, special education teachers, and regular elementary teachers. In her interviews, Leiliani spoke in positive terms about this variety of backgrounds, which, she claimed, enriched her learning experience. She provided an example of how one of her colleagues in her Master's program helped her develop materials for her students with special needs:

Excerpt 9. Leiliani's first interview, May 2013: How a colleague in the master's program helped Leiliani to teach children with special needs.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. . . . in the Master's degree, | 8. she was the principal of a special |
| 2. there was a teacher, | school, |
| 3. who worked in a special school, | 9. and I asked her, |
| 4. she was an experienced teacher, | 10. how to, |
| 5. doing her Master's degree, | 11. deal with these children, |
| 6. she was like, | 12. and she told me, |
| 7. between 45 and 50 years old, | 13. <Q Ok, Leiliani, |
-

-
- | | |
|---|---|
| 14. for example, | 24. why don't you try? Q>, |
| 15. tell me a topic, | 25. or then, |
| 16. what do you want to teach them? Q>, | 26. <Q look Leiliani, |
| 17. <Q I want to teach them, | 27. I bring this to you, |
| 18. the verbs Q>, | 28. to understand. |
| 19. <Q Ok, | 29. this material, |
| 20. Leiliani, | 30. it's for a Spanish class, |
| 21. in Spanish we do this, | 31. why don't you adapt it for your English |
| 22. this, | class? Q>, |
| 23. and that | 32. so she helped me a lot, |
-

In spite of these advantages, Leiliani's professional development needs as an English teacher were not directly met by her MA program. Encouraged by her first English coordinator, Leiliani tried to address these needs by obtaining some certifications and by taking some courses for in-service English teachers. Such a project was possible through a local language institute that functioned as an authorized examination center of Cambridge English Language Assessment (CELA) in Miranda. After some time, Leiliani accumulated the appropriate certifications to become a CELA oral examiner for young learners' examinations. So, armed with these credentials, she started to collaborate with the said language institute as a freelance examiner.

Contrary to what the reader may expect, Leiliani's efforts to develop professionally did not directly translate into a financial advancement. In fact, her income was significantly reduced when she decided to leave her job at the bilingual school and take her mother's position in a public school. Her mother's teaching assignment had been a full-time one. However, because of SNTE's internal regulations, the position changed when it was passed on to Leiliani. She was given an English assignment in accordance with her credentials, but only as a part-time job. Furthermore, in the public school context, Leiliani's newly acquired MA could be useful to help those special-need students in her classes, but it did not make any difference on her paycheck.

During her conversations with me, Leiliani admitted that it would have been possible for her to keep the two jobs. However, certain problems with classroom management and discipline in her former job gave her reasons to consider her resignation:

Excerpt 10. Leiliani's first interview, May 2013: Leiliani's difficult experience at her first job.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1. I was teaching junior high, | 12. and I was frustrated, |
| 2. and I got a group of students, | 13. because, |
| 3. from third grade, | 14. although I work, |
| 4. that, | 15. although I gave, |
| 5. they were very, | 16. consequences of their, |
| 6. very nasty, students, | 17. behavior ((meaning that she |
| 7. they thought, | planned classroom management |
| 8. because they had money, | measures to control misbehavior, |
| 9. they can do whatever they want, | but the school did not supported |
| 10. they can do whatever they want | these plans)) |
| 11. even with the teachers, | 18. nothing happened to them. |
-

After this first resignation, Leiliani moved to other jobs in the private sector. Ever since, in order to maintain a higher income, she has usually kept two or three positions per academic year, working mornings, evenings, and occasionally during the weekends. However, whenever she has encountered serious problems, especially concerning the school's administration, Leiliani has left the position, as she did with her first job. These bold moves have been enabled by the fact that Leiliani still considers her public school assignment as a permanent job.

Since Leiliani was the only one of the participants who was working in the public basic education system, I requested to observe her work in that setting during the first year of this study. The said junior-high school that I visited was located in a working-class neighborhood in the Southern area of Miranda. The facilities reminded me of my own middle school which was also a public one. The simplicity of the building and visible neglect of the furniture were all very familiar to me. What struck me as notably different from my experience was the small size of the class (only 9 students). This was a great contrast with my own overcrowded class of over 50 students back in the early 80s. Leiliani explained that such small classes were rather common in

her school's evening shifts, since most parents preferred enrolling their children in the morning classes. Usually, the evening classes are taken by children who have a job¹⁰ or need to help their parents with home chores or taking care of younger siblings during the mornings. The learning outcomes of these classes are usually lower when compared to the morning shift classes. Multiple socioeconomic factors can be associated with this low achievement, such as parents' relatively low educational backgrounds and students' lack of attention due to physical exhaustion.

In the midst of these social and material limitations, Leiliani makes efforts to meet her own standards of an effective English class. For instance, she keeps her own L1 use to a minimum and brings supplementary material to her classes (e.g. handouts, posters, flash cards, and other visual aids), which she often pays out of her own pocket. However, the differences between this class and the ones I observed in her private school (Cervantes School) are considerable.

Among the four secondary/preparatory schools visited in this study, Cervantes School can be considered as the second one in terms of the availability of resources (e.g. facilities, equipment, and teaching materials). Also, Cervantes School and Saint Monica's College (Adam's school) are the only preparatory schools where I observed students truly using English for communication among themselves and with their instructors. There are reasons why Leiliani chose one of her classes at Cervantes School to follow up in her teaching journals. She explained that it was in this context where she felt that her work was more successful in terms of her students' learning outcomes. Ironically, the job in this private school did not give Leiliani the same sense of permanence and security she still enjoyed in the public system. To make matters worse, in this private school, Leiliani and her colleagues worked under the constant surveillance of a close-circuit television camera, used by the coordinator to enforce discipline and a strict English-only policy. Unsurprisingly, Leiliani left Cervantes School the same year I closed my

¹⁰ In Mexico, as in many other developing countries, child labor is still a reality.

second observation period. After that event, she taught English in a culinary arts academy for an academic year. When I last contacted Leiliani so that she could read the draft of this dissertation and offer me her comments, she had just been hired in another private high school in Miranda.

Unfortunately, even Leiliani's modest but safe position in the public school is now at risk. The recent approval of the LGSPD has made Leiliani harbor doubts about her retirement possibilities. Therefore, even though Leiliani still thought of herself as a secondary and preparatory teacher, she was considering new developments for herself in the future, probably at higher education.

Regardless of these possible professional development options, when I closed my contact with Leiliani she was still keeping her multiple jobs while she waited for her turn to take the English proficiency national teachers' examinations in 2015. She had already submitted her teaching portfolio and was confident of her abilities to successfully pass the proficiency test. Nevertheless, how her career will develop within the frame of the new legislation is still uncertain.

4.2.3 Adam.

Adam was born in Miranda in 1988 as the second of two children. His father studied architecture and his mother graduated as a medical doctor, but none of them developed a career in their chosen fields. Instead of working as an architect, Adam's father found a teaching job in a public preparatory school which he still kept at the time of the study. Adam's mother stayed home to raise her children. Although Adam's family cannot be considered wealthy by Mexican standards, their situation was comfortable enough to support Adam and his brother's education in private schools (mostly during their secondary and higher education). However, for a period of four years (from the 3rd to the 6th grade), Adam was transferred from a private school to a public one. Since English was not part of the curriculum at public elementary schools at the time, Adam's parents paid for private lessons during that period. Adam narrated this experience in positive terms:

Excerpt 11. Adam's autobiography, May 2013: Adam talks about his first English teacher.

1. Learning English was not one of the most relevant issues during my academic preparation,
2. because when I was at elementary school, it was the main difficulty I had to face every
3. single day. In fact, my parents had to pay for extra English classes in the afternoon for me
4. to develop all the skills needed, so that I could be well prepared in that specific area of
5. study. In essence, it was a complete disaster for me because I did not even know basic
6. information such as pronouns, verbs, and so on. Luckily, I had an excellent teacher whom I
7. was, and I still am, absolutely thankful because she was the reason why I learned how to
8. communicate in English. Truly, if it had not been for her, I would have never appreciated
9. the importance of studying and learning a foreign language. Consequently, she shared her
10. knowledge and helped me a lot during three years. Sadly, we had to stop the classes since
11. she had to leave the country for family issues. I felt overwhelmed, though I made
12. a huge effort to continue learning and developing my skills in high school.

During his secondary education, Adam continued to take English and some French. These experiences were generally favorable and contributed to his perceiving himself as being “good at” understanding foreign languages’ grammar. In spite of these perceptions, Adam did not consider a career in language teaching at first. In fact, he was rather uncertain of his preferences by the time he reached the senior year of high school. However, he went on and applied to an undergraduate program in Communication offered by the local public university that will be here referred as Miranda State University (MSU). Unfortunately, this application was rejected, which represented for Adam a significant “disappointment”. Apparently this setback forced him to reassess his plans and change his choice of major. As a result of this assessment and considering his previous successful experiences with languages, Adam entered the major in English offered by IUM.

Adam's memories of his time as an undergraduate English major at IUM are presented as a story of success. The use of EMOI in some of the courses at IUM represented a challenge for Adam at the beginning, just like in Leiliani's and Daniela's cases. Nevertheless, he managed to develop the necessary skills to survive and graduated with honors. At some point of these four years, although he cannot say exactly when, Adam developed a preference for teaching over the options of translation and interpretation. He argued that this preference for teaching was

somehow latent in him since his childhood, but had been ignored due to his lack of confidence on his potential to become a teacher.

Excerpt 12. Adam's autobiography, May 2013: Adam proclaims that he always wanted to be a teacher.

1. Honestly, I always dreamed about becoming a teacher. Unfortunately, I never trusted in
 2. myself for that kind of profession because I felt that I did not have enough knowledge and
 3. culture required in Maths, History, Geography, and so on. However, I always loved the
 4. idea of checking assignments, sharing ideas with others and, above all, helping those who
 5. need your support and commitment.
-

Regardless of his self-doubts, Adam followed the common practice among the students in his program and looked for a teaching position before the due time for his practicum. As mentioned before, finding such a job in the Mexican context is not extraordinarily difficult given the important number of private schools in need of instructors. Therefore, it is not surprising that Adam did not take long to find the job he wanted in a small and family-owned elementary school. As would be expected, the school's owner did not hesitate about hiring him in spite of his having no prior teaching experience. Additionally, the school neither checked his recommendations nor required certifications of his language proficiency. By the same token, Adam did not receive any sort of benefits apart from a salary of about \$ 100 US a month (considering the exchange rate at the time).

In retrospect, Adam assessed his two years in this position as successful because he appreciated the opportunity "to finally teach." However, during that time he had to face a number of challenges such as the poor quality of the teaching materials, the lack of appropriate mentoring, and some unpleasant episodes with his employer. In one of such episodes, Adam narrates his being required to work during the summer break. Since there weren't any students during this period, Adam was requested to perform activities that were unrelated to his position. He got only 50% of his normal salary for these activities, which included a few janitorial duties. Such conditions eventually led to a strong disagreement between Adam and the school's owner

which concluded with Adam's dismissal. Surprisingly, he was rehired for the following academic year because the owner did not find a new teacher willing to take the position that Adam had left vacant.

By his senior year, Adam began to search for a graduate program in order to study for a Master's degree. In his autobiography and in his interviews he explained that he wanted to acquire additional professional expertise not necessarily related to teaching:

Excerpt 13. Adam's autobiography, May 2013: How Adam chose his MA program.

1. I wanted to continue studying and preparing in order to get better professional opportunities.
 2. For that reason, I decided to check possible master's degrees all over Mexico. Actually, I
 3. was interested in studying something more than only teaching, and a professor from
 4. university helped me in looking for the best masters in linguistics. She recommended me
 5. the program offered in Serrana and, in that moment, I felt it was the best option.
-

The graduate program to which Adam applied is offered by a university that will be here referred as the Autonomous University of Serrana (AUS), one of the top 20 research universities in Mexico (SCIMAGO Institutions Ranking, 2015). Due to the university's strong research orientation, this master's in applied linguistics focuses more on first and second language acquisition research than on second language pedagogy. Therefore, Adam's expectations of learning contents beyond the scope of language teaching were likely to be fulfilled in this program.

Upon his graduation from IUM, Adam was admitted into AUS' program and moved to Serrana the following fall. To top this success, Adam found a teaching job in Serrana that was much more financially rewarding than his first job in Miranda. This new job enabled him to become financially independent. Although these prospects were promising, Adam's new life in Serrana would not exactly move in the direction he initially expected.

Adam's life as a student at AUS' Master's program was not as successful as his previous experience at IUM. Since the first semester in the MA program, Adam found out that most of his

courses were geared towards developing a career in academia. This fact was not initially perceived by him as a problem, but as he progressed in the program, he began to lose interest in research. This decline in interest coincided with an increased involvement in his new job, which very soon became his priority. At the same time, a series of tensions with his adviser and committee members began to arise. The situation became so strained that he requested a change of adviser. Far from being a solution, this request left him without an adviser at the precise moment when he had to prepare his thesis proposal. Adam explained that the other faculty members refused to take him as advisee. Seeking for a solution, he negotiated an authorization to seek for an adviser in his former university. The request was accepted and he went on preparing his research proposal that was eventually approved by his committee. In his biography, Adam summarizes this experience in the following manner:

Excerpt 14. Adam's autobiography, May 2013: Adam's conflicts with his professors at the Master's program.

1. The Master's degree program started in August 2010 and finished in December 2012. So, I
 2. studied Linguistics during two years and a half. Nowadays, I am focused on trying to
 3. finish my thesis, which is about the influence of the online dictionary in the production of
 4. narrative texts written by teenagers. This is the last step in order to conclude this important
 5. part of my professional development, even when it was not the best phase in my life, since
 6. I did not get the support I expected from the doctors of my faculty at the AUS
 7. (Autonomous University of Serrana); therefore, I decided to change my tutor. From
 8. that moment up to now, I have been working on my own with the support of just one
 9. person: Dr. Martínez ((pseudonym)). He was a teacher of mine when I was at university,
 10. and now he is helping me in concluding my thesis being my tutor and mentor, too.
-

When this study began, Adam had finished the coursework of his MA program and was still working on this thesis. During our interviews, he expressed his resolution to graduate as soon as possible. However, when this study ended, his thesis was still unfinished. Adam's interests were by then totally invested in his job as a high school English teacher.

Unlike his experience in the Master's program, Adam's history with his second job at Saint Monica's School was presented in his autobiography as much more rewarding for two main reasons. First of all, the mere fact of being hired at Saint Monica's was considered by Adam as a professional advancement. Saint Monica's is a private pre-school, elementary, and secondary education college owned and run by a religious order. The school is located in an affluent neighborhood. Accordingly, the students that attend Saint Monica's come from local wealthy and upper middle-class families. When Adam first visited the place, he was surprised and somehow intimidated by the school's facilities, which can rightly be considered above-average.

Excerpt 15. Adam's autobiography, May 2013: Adam finds a job at Saint Monica's School.

1. I took a taxi and went to a school named "Saint Monica's School." The English
 2. coordinator, Miss Tamara Iglesias ((pseudonym)), was in charge of interviewing the
 3. candidates for teachers. She was looking for a teacher who could be able to work
 4. in middle school only. I was completely nervous and amazed of the big school I was
 5. applying to. She asked me to prepare a sample class by the following day about
 6. present perfect tense. Since I knew how to organize a class with the lesson plan
 7. format that one of my professors had taught us at university, I planned that class
 8. considering those criteria. As a result, Miss Iglesias loved the sample class and
 9. I got a call from her in the afternoon that same day . . .
-

In my visits, I could verify that the school's resources were indeed a far cry from Adam's descriptions of his first teaching position and also superior to Leiliani's and Daniela's schools. For instance, in Saint Monica's School, there is a small library, several courts for volleyball and basketball, and a well-kept soccer field. The sport areas in the other two schools are considerably smaller and there are no libraries available. Moreover, the organization, in terms of the size of the administrative and academic personnel, is also more complex in Saint Monica's school. Most importantly, Saint Monica's is advertised as a bilingual school. This means that apart from the regular L2 courses, EMOI is used in a number of the subject-matter courses. The other schools in this study do not fall into this category.

Second, Adam's positive views about his job were connected to his perceived success in becoming a popular teacher. In several passages in his autobiography and especially in his interviews, he enthusiastically mentioned that he had "a good relationship" with students. In his narrative, this success is set in contrast with the story of an initially difficult start at Saint Monica's. In the following passage taken from his autobiography, Adam relates his initial issues with class management and accepts that the problem persisted for a whole academic year:

Excerpt 16. Adam's autobiography, May, 2013: Adam difficulties with his teenage students.

1. Everybody told me that being with youngsters was going to be a difficult task
 2. to accomplish, but mainly, the worst experience ever, and that if I could teach to
 3. junior high students, I would be able to teach everywhere. And you know what?
 4. Everybody was right! Even when I was having the time of my life interacting with
 5. teenagers, developing new skills as a teacher, learning the institution's policy, and so on,
 6. the main problem I had to face was to deal with seventh graders. In fact, the problems
 7. with those students were not only their behaviour and bad education, but also their
 8. attitude. To be perfectly honest, I did not experience too many issues with eighth and
 9. ninth graders, not even with high school students, because I could set a good relationship
 10. with them. During that first year working with teenagers, the fact of trying to fix a broken
 11. relationship with seventh graders was an everyday purpose, but nothing worked
 12. through all that school year.
-

In spite of this negative experience, Adam closed his biography with a triumphal tone. He emphasized that after his first year in Saint Monica's, he had managed to figure things out. He felt that he had the practical aspects of teaching under control and had successfully established a reputation as a "demanding teacher." In a word, he felt in charge and at home as a high school teacher:

Excerpt 17. Adam's autobiography, May, 2013: Adam describes how he grew confident as a teacher.

1. Once I survived up to the second school year, I have to admit that it was much better
 2. than the previous one. All in all, my second year as an English teacher was excellent and
 3. I felt successful because I reached many objectives: my image as a demanding teacher
 4. was perfectly established and fixed; discipline and group control were not issues for me
 5. anymore; organization became even more accurate than it already was; and my
-

-
6. commitment, not only with the school but also with my students, was a daily basis. I
 7. think that all my students knew how convincing my devotion was. Basically, that second
 8. year was the key for me to acknowledge how I love and enjoy being a teacher, especially
 9. in those school levels.
-

Regardless of this positive closure, Adam's feelings towards his work suffered a transformation during the course of this study. He began to question the school's administration, which he perceived as excessively rigid and restrictive. He also talked about the workload that had increased when Saint Monica's administration committed to a quality management system or ISO certification that required him to submit all his paperwork to meticulous audits. Students' assignments, attendance roles, lesson planning, and other documents were periodically revised by internal and external auditors every semester. In these periods, classes were cancelled and teachers had to take part in the audit, peer reviewing documents such as grade books and lesson plans, which Adam considered as a loss of teaching and learning time.

In his teaching journal, he wrote about several episodes in which the school's rules became an obstacle to certain activities he attempted to implement in his classes. Moreover, with the exception of his supervisor, of whom Adam always spoke in the highest terms, Adam did not seem to have a great deal of communication with the other English teachers at Saint Monica's School. In fact, when he told me about the obligatory teacher meetings that he and his colleagues held every month, he admitted that he did not find those encounters as truly beneficial for his teaching. In such a context, I was not surprised to find out that, when the conflicts with his employer began to emerge, Adam tended to side with his students, sharing with them the same frustration and desires for a freer atmosphere. I will analyze these episodes in more detail in Chapter 7.

Although Adam's disagreement with the school's general policies and regulations was not resolved during the course of the study, he continued working there. He talked to me about his desires to close a chapter in his professional life and begin a new one; however, to the date I

closed my contact with him, he was still working at Saint Monica's. In a way, the fact that his immediate supervisor, the English teacher coordinator, was supportive of Adam's ideas about teaching served to encourage him to stay. Moreover, the last time we talked, Adam told me that he had turned his attention towards personal issues that were more important to him than searching for a new job. Furthermore, at the time this study ended, the Mexican currency, the peso, was suffering a rapid depreciation. In such an uncertain economic context, it was not so surprising that Adam had chosen to stay within the security of a relatively well-paid job.

4.2.4 Sofía.

Born in 1985, Sofía grew up in a working class family as the eldest of three daughters. When Sofía was four, her parents decided to migrate to the United States in search of better employment opportunities. Therefore, like many other Mexican children, Sofía grew up within the complex context of undocumented immigration and bilingualism.

At the beginning of her schooling, Sofía was "pulled-out" for ESL instruction. She remembers her bilingual teachers as truly "helpful" and the ESL small class as a safe place that she was sorry to leave when she was finally mainstreamed into a regular English-only class.

Excerpt 18. Sofía's fourth interview, May 2014: Sofía remembers her favorite American teachers.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| 1. . . . well I remember her, | 9. I started with Mrs. Martin, |
| 2. I remember Mrs. Walters, | 10. and, |
| 3. from third year, | 11. I remember that, |
| 4. and I remember Mrs. Valdez, | 12. I was so afraid, |
| 5. I still remember their names, | 13. because I, |
| 6. because they were so helpful, | 14. I was leaving the safe environment, |
| 7. they were so understanding, | 15. in which I had been for, |
| 8. a=nd, in fourth grade, | 16. many years before, |
-

Regardless of Sofía's initial fears, her learning experiences in the English-only environment were happy ones. Her teacher that year turned out to be one of the best she ever had and her relationships with her classmates were also satisfactory. Unfortunately, this situation changed when she was promoted to middle school. In that new setting, Sofía first experienced

bullying and racial discrimination from some of her classmates, which she mostly endured in silence. This harassment, however, was not so serious as to put Sofía at physical risk and did not last long. As Sofía learned to move in the environment of her new school, she grew in confidence. She attributes this change to her making new friends and showing that she was capable of interacting with people of different ethnic backgrounds.

Excerpt 19. Sofía's fourth interview, May 2014: How Sofía began to interact with various ethnic groups as a child.

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| 1. The third year, | 17. . . . I sort of like, |
| 2. I had friends from everywhere, | 18. did a little transformation there, |
| 3. I felt really comfortable, | 19. I stopped, |
| 4. that was like a great year for me, | 20. being friends with certain people, |
| 5. but at the beginning, | 21. and I started hanging out with, |
| 6. it was really hard, | 22. people who=, |
| 7. a=nd we, | 23. hung out with other races, |
| 8. we sort of like were, | 24. I sort of started, |
| 9. the Hispanic group, | 25. I started to hang out with, |
| 10. and that first year, | 26. my friends, |
| 11. I remember, | 27. my circle, |
| 12. we were the Hispanic group, | 28. . . . by third year, |
| 13. and then, | 29. I had a lot of friends, |
| 14. there were, | 30. and we were from all over the world, |
| 15. the groups from different races, | 31. so yeah, |
| 16. but we didn't really mix . . . | 32. that was. |
-

In spite of this small victory, Sofía remembers that, even as a teenager, she continuously felt under pressure because of her immigration status. A constant fear of being deported impacted her life in different ways and eventually affected one important decision she made while still in middle school. Due to Sofía's academic achievements, she was invited to join an advanced program for gifted students. However, Sofía rejected the offer because she was afraid of the visibility that this distinction could bring to her. It is uncertain whether Sofía's inclusion in the said program would have truly put her family under risk of deportation. On the contrary, the feeling of having lost an important opportunity was much more real in Sofía's mind and made her

pause to consider what the future could hold for her. She knew that, because of legal constraints, she would not be able to continue her education after high school, if she remained in the US.

Convinced that she wanted more than the sort of job she could get with a high school diploma and a forged social security number, Sofía persuaded her parents to return to Mexico. They did so when Sofía graduated from middle school at age 14. Unexpectedly for Sofía, this move did not run smoothly when she finally found herself back in Mexico. She was required to retake the last year of middle school, her GPA dropped, and a slight accentedness in her Spanish made her stand out in an uncomfortable way. Moreover, she could not help comparing the Mexican and American educational systems and feel frustrated with the limited resources in her new schools.

When she was finally ready for high school, Sofia chose a program that included career-oriented technical education courses. She thought that it would be her best option to press ahead with her plans of becoming a computer specialist. Nevertheless, these plans were thwarted when she took the first course and realized that she actually disliked the usual solitary tasks of a computer programmer. Therefore, instead of going ahead with her initial plan, Sofía changed her mind and decided to become an English teacher. She briefly explained her decision-making process in her autobiography:

Excerpt 20. Sofía's autobiography, May 2013: Sofía explains why she became an English teacher.

1. I decided to become an English teacher because of a combination of things. When I was
2. growing up I wanted to be a computer engineer as an adult, well, supposedly. The problem
3. was that in high school, I studied to be a computer technician and I hated it! My second
4. choice was always to become a teacher somehow, but I didn't know how to do that here in
5. Mexico. I investigated around a bit and decided to become a primary teacher. One day,
6. before high school graduation I observed my English teacher there in front of me and
7. thought, how did she become an English teacher? Do you just have to know English and ask
8. for a job? Well, I had previously lived in the USA for 10 years, so I knew English very well,
9. like a native, so I decided to investigate. I came upon many degrees in a variety of
10. universities here in the city and in the state. I narrowed it down between MSU and
11. IUM, I studied the programs carefully, analyzed 11. what they entailed, and decided
12. that it was what I wanted.

As a result of her research, Sofía decided to join the English program at IUM. At the new setting, Sofía's bilingual abilities became an asset that placed her, once again, at the top of her class. Her first two years in the program are described by her as a pleasant experience that made her feel confident with her decision. Nevertheless, her transition from being student to becoming a practitioner would be less straightforward.

In her junior year, before the beginning of her practicum, Sofía took a part-time position at a small private elementary school. Alone, with a group of children of various ages, and without any mentoring, Sofía had to discover on her own the basis of classroom management and instructional task development. In such a situation and regardless how confident she felt with English, Sofía experienced some momentary doubts about her career choices. In spite of these doubts, she learned from her everyday trial-and-error experience and managed to survive her first academic year.

After this first experience, Sofía took a semester off to concentrate on her studies, but soon found herself on the search for a new job. Her second assignment was in a similar private school. She got this second job as easily as she had secured the first one. In her perception, employers would tend to be impressed by her "near-native" pronunciation, making her job-hunting a rather easy task.

After graduation, Sofía had a number of jobs in private schools and then began to work for IUM as a college instructor. During this period, she started a relationship that evolved into a marriage. Sofía admitted that this decision did not alter her intentions to continue developing her career as an English teacher, but required some adjustments. For example, when she was invited to join the faculty of the same program in which she had studied, her employer required her to obtain a graduate degree to keep the position. The selection of a graduate program to accomplish this objective had to be mediated by Sofía's responsibilities as a wife, the availability of the programs in the city, and their cost. She ended up settling for the only program she could afford

with her parent's support, even if it did not totally fulfill her expectations (see details in Chapter 6).

Not completely satisfied with the outcome, Sofía applied for a scholarship to follow a number of online courses offered by an American university. The experience allowed her to develop new strategies for her assessment project with her college students at the time of the study. This professional development opportunity also left her desirous of finding new options to learn more. When we had our last interview, she shared with me her projects for future development, which included a possibility of leaving Miranda. This time, she was counting on her husband's support to make the move. However, when we last had contact with each other during the revisions of this dissertation's first draft, she was still working in Miranda.

4.2.5 Betty.

Betty was born in 1986 in Miranda, into an upper-middle class family in which several generations have enjoyed the benefits of higher education. Her grandmother, whom Betty identified as a very influential person in her life, was an elementary school teacher. Betty's parents also pursued professional careers but in different fields. Her mother studied dentistry and developed a successful private practice. Additionally, she ran a family business that was still flourishing at the time of the study. Betty's father, a civil engineer, worked for the national oil company, PEMEX, until his retirement. In this socioeconomic context, Betty grew up as the only child of an educated family of certain means. Therefore, Betty's education was carefully monitored and planned.

During her early childhood, Betty's parents moved to a small town in the neighboring state of Fuerteventura because of her father's job. Within the limitations of this new environment, Betty's mother did her best to provide her daughter with the best educational options available. These efforts included initiating Betty's second language education at the age of six:

Excerpt 21. Betty's first interview, May 2013: Betty talks about her experience at her Master's program.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. AR: . . . how old were you, when you started learning English? | 23. BETTY: It's like a Community Center, |
| 2. BETTY: My first contact with English, | 24. so, |
| 3. was at the age of six. | 25. as I am an only child, |
| 4. AR: Six, | 26. my mother had the idea, |
| 5. was it, | 27. that, |
| 6. like a bilingual school, | 28. <Q the girl should go to the classes, |
| 7. or was it a Language Institute? | 29. she interacts with people, |
| 8. BETTY: Uhm, | 30. she learns Q>, |
| 9. it was a very, | 31. AR: Ummhm. |
| 10. very informal instruction, | 32. BETTY: As the daughter of a teacher, |
| 11. during my childhood, | 33. my mother was aware that, |
| 12. I was living, | 34. taking extra classes was important, |
| 13. in a small town, | 35. and also the socialization, |
| 14. in the border between Fuerteventura, | 36. so, |
| 15. and Sotavento, | 37. I was there for about, |
| 16. there weren't any bilingual schools there, | 38. two years, |
| 17. and there was this program, | 39. my first teacher didn't have a formal training, |
| 18. at DIF, [National System for Family Development] | 40. after that ((unfinished thought)), |
| 19. an English institute, | 41. who was studying, |
| 20. was established there, | 42. the degree, |
| 21. with my first professional teacher, | 43. the English language teaching degree, |
| 22. AR: Umhm. | |
-

From that first moment onwards, Betty attended one or other language institute to keep learning English. She identifies this early experience as one of the most important factors that contributed to her decision to study for a degree in English. She especially emphasized the fact that the influence of her grandmother and of her first formally trained English teacher inspired her desire to become an English teacher.

Betty's representations of her life as an undergraduate student generally showed her in a stimulating environment where she moved with ease and confidence. In the initial episodes, when Betty narrated her decision to enter IUM's program, she presented herself as a prepared and well-

informed decision-maker. Later, her experiences during her first year were portrayed as a confirmation that she had chosen a program that was the right fit for her, not as a shock or a disappointment. Additionally, her first teaching experiences were also presented as a success only emphasized by those challenges that she eventually overcame. The only moment in which she perceived a certain degree of inadequacy was when she engaged in material-development tasks as part of her coursework. Even then, she reasoned that this dislike was a matter of “personality” that made her a less-than-perfect teacher for young learners. She argued that she lacked the patience and creativity needed to develop new materials for that type of learners. However, she did not see this personality trait as a problem in her present job where she teaches young adults.

The events in Betty’s stories turned out to be less unproblematic after her graduation from IUM. Her first employers in a private school were described as excessively demanding, especially regarding their expectations of students’ learning outcomes. Later, her narratives of her experience in graduate school and finally as a junior faculty member in a public university showed Betty’s more acute perception of how diverse sociocultural factors represented a challenge in her work. For example, she realized that her students’ socioeconomic background impacted on their learning despite her best efforts at teaching.

A year after Betty graduated from IUM, she was accepted in a Master’s program in translation offered by the Autonomous University of Altamira. The AUA is one of the few private universities ranked among the first 100 best higher education institutions in Mexico. Unlike Sofía, Daniela, and Leiliani, who had to settle for the programs available in Miranda, Betty could freely choose from all the graduate programs available in the country because she had the means to do so. Also, unlike Adam, who found a job to support his living in Serrana, Betty moved to Altamira (in the Pacific coast), counting on her parents’ support to continue as a full-time student. So, during the subsequent two years, Betty devoted herself to translation studies without any involvement in English teaching.

When I asked Betty about her motivations to pursue a Master's in translation, she explained that she wanted to know more about translation and interpretation. In her bachelor's degree program, some of her coursework had addressed certain aspects of these disciplines. However, in her opinion, these experiences had not been enough to make her feel prepared to work on those capacities if the occasion arose. Therefore, with the hope of developing a well-rounded professional expertise as a second language expert, she had entered the translation program at AUA. Her experiences in that program are once again narrated in positive terms in her autobiography:

Excerpt 22. Betty's autobiography, May 2013.

1. Those three semesters were very enriching because they expanded my vision about our
 2. field, besides I had the opportunity to be with very professional and interesting people
 3. in conferences and lectures.
-

These positive perceptions, however, have to be considered in contrast with the fact that Betty was still unable to graduate from her Master's program five years after concluding her coursework. Betty explained this procrastination as a result of AUA's slow administrative processes, her professors' work overloads, and her being unable to directly press the members of her committee into revising her proposal more expeditiously. Beyond all these possible problems, one factor that may have played a part in the situation is Betty's present job in the University of Sotavento (UoS).

Among the five participants in this study, Betty's job is undoubtedly the most fortunate with respect to salary and benefits. First of all, in Mexico, as in most parts of the world, a job at a higher education institution is usually better paid than a teaching job at the basic and secondary levels. By the same token, a position as a college instructor is perceived as a more prestigious job than that of a school teacher. Second, in Mexico, faculty members at public universities, as is the case of UoS, are organized in unions that are relatively strong. This organization has historically

allowed public university professors to earn tenure and receive benefits such as health insurance, productivity bonuses, sabbaticals, and retirement programs. Sofía, as a junior faculty member in a private university, does not enjoy most of these privileges and can be fired at any time. Finally, once Betty is awarded tenure, which in her university is a matter of seniority and union participation, she will be able to access different funds or grants to study for a doctoral degree. This support can also include a leave of absence for professional development and academic exchange purposes. Betty was fully aware of all these benefits, which she described to me in detail during our interviews. The other teachers in this study are not in the same position of receiving such support from their employers, not even Leiliani as a public middle school teacher.

With all these advantages, it is easy to comprehend why Betty did not hesitate in taking the position at the Foreign Languages Center at UoS when the opportunity opened up. In the interviews, Betty said that she was aware that moving from Altamira to Sotavento was going to complicate her graduation process at AUA. Nevertheless, she also knew that no graduate diploma could compete with a permanent position at a public university. So, when one of her relatives, who held at the time an important administrative position at UoS, recommended her for the vacant position, Betty was more than thankful for the opportunity.

In spite of all the financial advantages, Betty's first experiences at UoS were a bit of a shock for her. To begin with, for Betty, who had been educated at private institutions, the complex and seemingly chaotic organization of a large public university came as a surprise. She also discovered that having benefits came at a price. Before she could understand why, she was expected to participate in the activities of the union, including taking part in a protest. Additionally, she also discovered that her students were more politicized than she had ever been at their age. In fact, during her second academic year at UoS, the students went on a strike demanding tuition reduction. This strike interrupted classes for almost three weeks putting the conclusion of the semester under risk. After the strike, Betty realized that her students were at war

with each other because of disagreements that had arisen during the strike. She had to find ways to deal with dichotomized classes and reduce the animosity during the lessons.

Finally, she also discovered that although all professors were supposed to have the same rights and status, foreign language instructors were not regarded with the same respect. Students and other faculty members tended to see the foreign language requirement as a non-essential part of higher education. For some of her students, English classes were more a nuisance than an advantage. Betty found it difficult to understand such a position, and kept resisting it even in her classes. I will elaborate on this resistance in the subsequent chapters.

As it could be expected, the challenges that Betty found in her job did not weigh more than the financial safety afforded by her position at UoS. Betty worked at UoS Foreign Languages Center for four years and was still working there when I finished my observation period. However, by the time Betty read the draft of this dissertation to give me her opinion on my interpretations of her case, she had been transferred to be part of the faculty at UoS' English and Tourism undergraduate program. These changes in her professional context constitute a new episode that could not be covered in the present study because they happened when the data collection had concluded.

4.3 Summary and conclusions

In the past forty years, the English curriculum in Mexican public education has progressively moved towards more updated pedagogical principles that emphasize a view of language as a social practice and the achievement of standardized proficiency levels. However, research has proved that the implementation of these principles in the classroom has been crushed by the weight of political, social, and economic pressures. This failure has been instantiated in the learning experiences of the five teachers who participated in this study, as has been shown in this chapter.

Born in the same decade, the participants in this study came into contact with English in ways that were intrinsically connected to the affordances provided by their social class and their

geographical location. For example, Betty was raised in a family where she had more access to cultural and material capital than the other participants' had. However, the limitations of the educational context in the South of Mexico, where she was raised, did not allow her to benefit from systematic second language instruction at an early age. By contrast, Sofía, who grew up in a working class family, acquired English in a naturalistic environment, due to her status as an undocumented immigrant. In spite of these important differences, in their memories, none of the teachers identified their experiences in the regular English class at secondary schools as significant to their L2 acquisition. In fact, with the exception of Sofía, the participants attributed their breakthrough in English to their experience in a language school or with a private tutor. Moreover, in three of the cases, even these positive experiences were deemed as insufficient when the participants faced the challenges of the use of EMOI in their undergraduate program.

When the participants entered the English program at IUM, their life histories were brought together in place and sociality. By being part of the same teacher education program, even though they belonged to different cohorts, they became part of the same community of practice. Therefore, the five participants shared a common professional origin, had similar learning experiences, and initiated their teaching careers with the same credentials. It is then not so strange that their professional development initially followed parallel trajectories. First of all, apart from their first shocking weeks at the program, the participants narrated their first teaching experience in similar ways. For all of them, teaching was first represented as either difficult, disappointing, or shocking. In spite of these negative perceptions, the overall experience did not discourage them from continuing in the teaching profession.

While the coincidence in the participants' narratives about their college years are predictable, the appearance of similarities in the subsequent episodes of their life histories require an interpretative effort. The fact that all the participants sought professional development through a graduate program shortly after they had acquired their undergraduate degree is the first one of these coincidences. This urgency is very likely associated with the remarkable growth of graduate

programs registered in Mexico during the 1980s and 1990s (García-García, 2009). The evidence thus suggests that the teachers in this study belong to a generation that grew up during the boom of graduate schools. Therefore, it is not surprising that the idea of a graduate degree as a requirement to advance professionally was instilled in the participants' minds and, by consequence, considered as an accepted social practice.

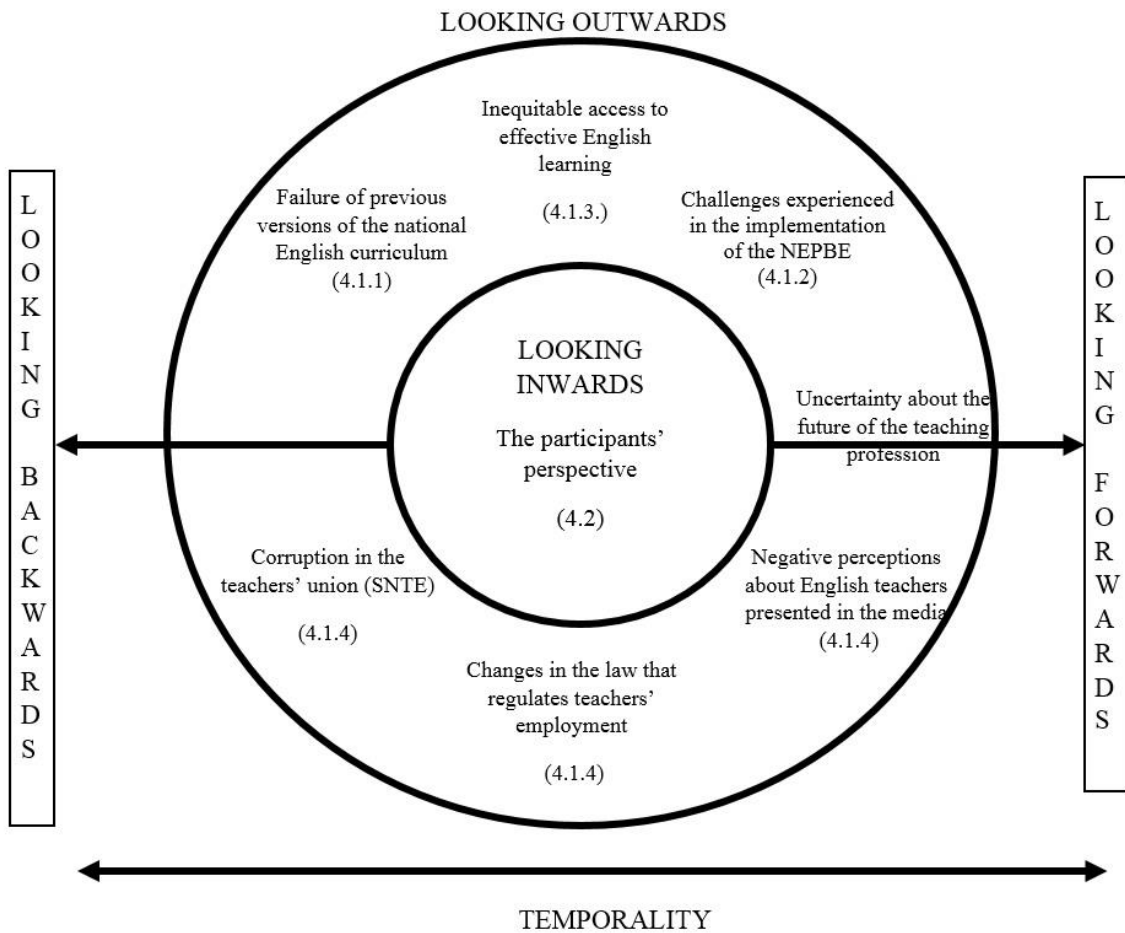
A second parallelism in the participants' life histories can be found in their experiences at graduate school, which were similarly marked by some kind of mismatch between their most immediate professional development needs and the contents studied in their graduate programs. Moreover, even in cases where the participants assessed their experience in their Master's program in positive terms, like in Betty and Daniela's cases, their failure to graduate from their programs stands as an intriguing contradiction with their positive assessment of their programs.

Other similarities manifested in the participant's life histories emerged in their narratives about the workplace. The participants seem to agree that their teaching efforts have found different types of opposition coming from students, institutional structures, their own colleagues, or the limitations imposed by the lack of resources. In very few cases, the participants talked about their workplace as a source of support for their professional development. These negative perceptions seem to echo the persisting problems exposed by the research reviewed in this chapter. Furthermore, when the participants were asked to discuss their plans for their future professional development, they all talked about a common need of change of some sort. In most of the cases, this change implied moving to a new job that would offer better opportunities. Ironically, by the end of the study, the five participants still kept the position they considered as their primary job. At this point, it is convenient to remember that the current situation of teachers' employment in Mexico is uncertain given the socio-political scenarios presented in this chapter. Thus, the participants' reluctance to leave their present position, in spite of the unsatisfactory conditions, is understandable.

Apparently, the difficulties to implement the English curriculum all across the country are part of the social practices lived by the five teachers in this study in spite of their different teaching contexts. Although prudence advises against taking the participants' narratives as factual accounts, it is still interesting to observe how five teachers working at different regions and educational levels narrate their experience along such similar lines. These coincidences should at least call our attention to the narratives, even if not as factual data, at least as evidence of common discursive practices.

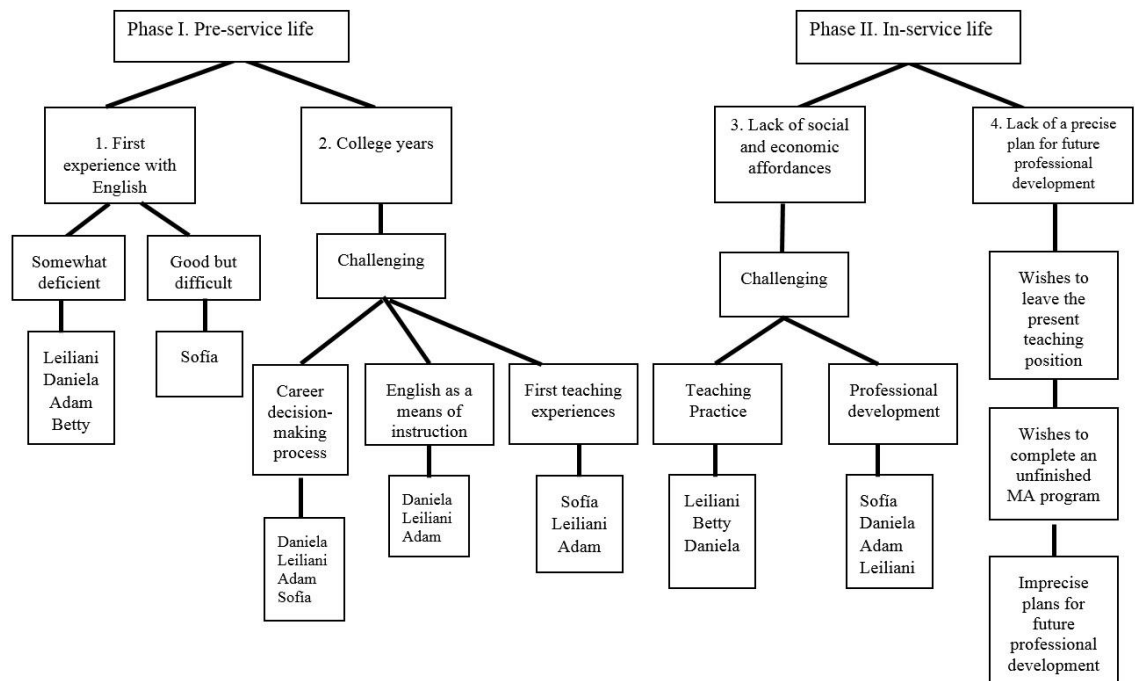
In conclusion, a content-analysis that moved in four different directions—backwards, forwards, inwards, and outwards—has allowed us to establish connections between the

Figure 12. Looking outwards, backwards, and forwards.



participants' narratives and the broader context of the teaching of English in Mexico. In figure 12, the outer circle represents the socioeconomic and political conditions and events that have impacted on the teaching of English in Mexico since the 1970s to the present. These events have been organized considering time in a left-to-right order. The arrows represent the backward and forward perspective that integrates temporality¹¹ as one of the main constructs used to interpret the data sources used in this chapter. With this consideration of time in mind, I have placed inside the figures' outer circle the six main findings obtained through the review of the literature and the analysis of relevant documents, such as newspapers, the current legislation that regulates teachers' employment (LGSPD), and a television documentary (De Pansazo). The inner circle represents the looking inwards perspective provided by the participating teachers' life histories as narrated to me in the autobiographies, interviews, and journals, which I summarized in section 4.2 of this chapter.

Figure 13. Main categories identified by focusing on the participants' perspectives.



¹¹ The representation of events and people's experiences in the context of time.

Figure 13 zooms in to the details of the inward look and displays the two broad phases of the participants' professional lives (pre-service and in-service life) and four main categories that I identified by means of content analysis. In this analysis I observed that, although the participants' access to social and material capital during their lives has been different in each case, the narratives of their professional development have coincided in a number of themes. First of all, looking backwards, the summarized life histories have offered a look at the participants' perceptions of their first experiences with English (1) as either deficient to some extent or difficult. Similarly, their college years (2) were represented as surrounded by challenges to select a major, adjust to the use of English as a means of instruction, and to face a professional practice perceived as difficult. In the second phase, the participants narrated their in-service life as a challenging endeavor in which the affordances (3) provided by their context (e.g. graduate school, workplace, colleagues, among others) have not always supported the participants' teaching practice and professional development. By looking at the participant's perceptions (inward perspective), I have been able to identify that the participants' narratives have coincided with the macro-analysis presented at the beginning of this chapter (see Figure 12), which provided an opportunity to look outwards. For example, the challenges described by the participants in their narratives of their first contact with English learning seem to match the description of the failure of past and present English curricula and the inequitable access to English described in the literature. Finally, looking forward, the participants' expectations about their professional life (4) were vague and their investment in their future project was not strong to judge by their actions (e.g. see the vague or unfulfilled plans in Sofia's and Adam's cases in this chapter). This lack of precise plans for the future seem to correspond to the uncertainty generated by the application of the new Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente (LGSPD).

All the commonalities represented in the participating teachers' life histories suggest that in spite of geographical distance, the participants share a common set of perceptions about what it entails to be a Mexican English teacher. Therefore, the analysis presented in this chapter partially

answers the research question regarding the impact of sociocultural forces such as power, social practices, and discourse on the negotiation of the participants' professional identities along their careers in the following manner:

The analysis shows that in their narrative representations of their realities, the teachers' describe English teaching as a profession characterized by a difficult practice that is often misunderstood and poorly supported by the surrounding social structures. These perceptions seem to coincide with the evidence afforded by a review of the literature and the analysis of diverse documents suggesting that the inequitable distribution of power, the lack of social affordances, and the negative social constructions surrounding the English teaching profession have played a part in the negotiation of the teachers' identities in their narratives. The commonalities observed in the narratives suggest the existence of a shared discourse from which the teachers draw ideas to perform their identities.

In the following two chapters, I will focus on teachers' discourse in greater detail. I will present the participants' representation of their professional life histories as divided in two main moments: their pre-service experience and their in-service life. In the analysis, I will especially focus on the participants' use of narrative discourse in the context of their big stories as a tool to negotiate their identities in our conversations.

CHAPTER V

BIG STORIES OF PRE-SERVICE LIFE

The content analysis presented in the previous chapter allowed for the identification of certain common social practices that had an impact on the participants' perceptions of their work. These perceptions were expressed through storytelling and summarized by the author so that the readers could get a broader picture of the participants' life histories. As useful as this type of third-person report can be to afford a holistic view, a direct look at the interview transcriptions provides a different and relevant perspective. By looking at teachers' personal accounts, it is possible to observe in detail how the participants performed their professional identities. For these reasons, in the present chapter, I used narrative discourse analysis to make focal observations on three episodes that tell the story of how the participants entered the teaching profession.

The analysis here presented was conducted to expand our understanding of how social practices, power relations, and discourse have interacted with the participants in the negotiation of their identities. It is expected that an analysis of the participants' narratives will allow for the identification of examples of how teachers in a Mexican context negotiate their identities as they narrate events of their professional lives. Additionally, the evidence to be presented in this

chapter will also explore how the NS fallacy interacts with these teachers' narratives and how it is used to represent conflicting aspects of the participants' professional identities.

In order to uncover the possible meanings hidden in the narrative structure and turn-taking interactions between teller and audience, I have selected narrative passages that compose entire episodes of the participants' life histories. For this reason, the reader should expect long passages that also include my own contributions in the co-construction of the narratives.

Most of the material here analyzed was taken from the interviews, but whenever it was considered relevant to the analysis, I have also included passages from the written autobiographies. Out of the four interviews conducted with each participant, the one from which I extracted the largest amount of material concerning the participant's past was the first one. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, this first interview was conducted to elicit an oral account of the participant's professional life histories. The teachers were previously informed that during this interview we would revisit the information they had provided in their written autobiographies. However, instead of starting with a series of specific questions to fill-in any gaps in the written accounts, I decided to lead the participants to retell their stories without having their autobiographies at hand. This was done with the purpose of observing to what extent the narratives were modified when told through a different medium (interview) and time. Therefore, once the usual pleasantries had been exchanged, the interview began with the following preface and opening question:

Preface:

People may become educators following very different paths. I am interested in finding out the very unique details of your own journey becoming an English teacher. In doing this, I regard you as the expert of the topic. I am mostly interested in learning from you. So, I would like you to keep that in mind during this interview.

Question 1:

Can you please go over the story that you wrote for me and highlight the aspects that you

believe were relevant in your decision of becoming an English teacher?

The participants reacted to this question by centering their initial response on the decision-making act. Most of them initially represented the decision as a specific event that took place at a well-defined time, namely when they were about to graduate from high school. Therefore, four of the five participants began their interview with an episode that narrated the events surrounding the participants' enrollment at IUM's English program. By contrast, the fifth participant began her story at some indefinite moment prior to her college years. In spite of this difference, once the initial episode reached its end, I requested all the participants to relate a memorable event during their college years. This second prompt elicited episodes that mostly focused on the participants' first weeks in the program. Finally, a third attempt to obtain more information led to an episode connected with memories of the participants' first teaching experiences. In most of the cases, these experiences took place during the teachers' junior or senior year at college. When I analyzed the responses to this part of the interviews, I grouped these three episodes under the category of memories of pre-service teacher education.

The episodes in the pre-service teacher education set were analyzed using a transcription organized by intonation units (here also understood as lines) and stanzas. As mentioned in Chapter 3 (117-119), lines are stretches of speech containing small sequences of given and new information. These units are delimited by changes in speed, duration, intensity, rising and falling intonation contours, or pauses (Chafe, 1994). Because the limits of a line depend on the physical and cognitive constraints that govern improvised speech, their length may vary and their structure does not always follow a clause-like organization. As a result, the readers will find that the transcriptions reflect this irregularity. On the other hand, parsing the stories into stanzas was done considering them as sets of lines that fall together because they share common syntactic or phonological features and address the same theme (Gee, 2008). In the transcription process, parsing a text into lines and stanzas required paying closer attention to linguistic details, which were not relevant in the thematic analysis used as the basis for the previous chapter. Excerpt 23

shows how a stretch of interview was segmented by looking at stress, falling intonation contours, discourse markers, syntactic parallelism and theme. To illustrate how the transcriptions were organized, the right column shows my notes on what linguistic features and themes were taken into account to segment the text in stanzas:

Excerpt 23. An example of how the narratives were divided in stanzas (Leiliani's Interview No.1)	
Transcription	Annotations
1. AR: So, 2. to begin with, 3. can you, 4. summarize the story, 5. of how you decided, 6. to become an English teacher?	Researcher's question (Rephrased from the original first question after an interruption).
Stanza 1 7. LEILIANI: Well I, 8. made the decision because, 9. I= was not interested in being a teacher, 11. I was interested in, 12. to study, 13. Media\ 14. as a major\ Stanza 2 15. So I <u>was</u> u=h, 16. <u>surfing</u> on the web\ 17. Looking for universities\ 18. that offered that major, 19. <u>and I found</u> \ 20. the university where I studied,	The narrative starts with a discourse marker Disclaimer: This story will contradict expectations of a straightforward career decision-making. An unexpected event is made salient with a stress in the negative particle 'not' The most important piece of information (Leiliani's original interest) ends the stanza with a falling intonation contour. A discourse marker opens a new stanza This stanza sets the scene of the decision-making event. It includes a series of clauses that describe the first actions taken by the main character (underlined verbal phrases). The scene is initially set with a clause in past continuous (double underlines).

Stanza 3

21. And that university offered,
22. not only Media,
23. it offered English Language,
24. s a major,
25. so I decided,
26. and I opened the link,
28. a=nd I started reading\,

This stanza adds to the scene set in the previous one.

In this addition, the teller focuses on her search at IUM's website.

Agency is placed on the main character (also the teller).

There's certain parallelism in all the *action clauses* (underlined). They all start with "and" or "so."

All the action clauses refer to events prior the moment in which the teller first entered into contact with the information she was looking for.

Intonation is list-like and falls on the last line.

Although the transcriptions used in this study followed Gee's and Mishler's model, I considered each line as intonation units in a stricter sense (Chafe, 1994). For this reason, I included truncated intonation units and repetitions, which are usually obviated in transcriptions featured by Gee and Mishler. By including this type of units, I intended to remain closer to the original discursive event in which the stories emerged. In some cases, this inclusion allowed me to spot hesitations and emphases that may be related to the different cognitive and emotional processes at work during the storytelling event. Whenever such processes emerge in the narrative as relevant to the purposes of this study, I will bring them to the attention of the reader.

Following this logic, I have used an adaptation of Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming, and Paolino (1993) transcription conventions because they provided tools to represent the teller's speech with more attention to linguistic details (see Appendix 7 on page 529). The reader should be aware that, in this type of transcription, the use of punctuation marks does not always follow the usual orthographical conventions. For instance, while the comma serves to mark the closure of an intonation unit (also referred as *line*) when the speaker is still intending to keep the floor, a period is used to mark that the speaker has concluded his or her turn. Also, I have used capital letters to emphasize the beginning of each stanza, even if the previous intonation unit ended with a comma to mark a continuation of the turn. Finally, unlike Du Bois and associates, I have kept

the question mark to indicate the end of a question and not to indicate final rising intonation contours. I found that the use of the question mark (?) to indicate rising intonation contours was redundant and confusing, especially when considering that the slash (/) is also used with similar purposes.

In each episode, only the segments that contain narrative material produced by the participants have been labeled as stanzas. Those lines that contain non-narrative question and answer exchanges have not been labeled. Additionally, the parts of the story that I co-constructed with the participants are named as “listener’s contributions”.

The presentation of the narratives that now follows is divided into three sections that correspond to the three types of episodes mentioned before: decision-making, the first weeks in the program, and first teaching experience. In the selection of each narrative passage, I have tried to present the episodes as close to the original rendition as possible. However, whenever it is necessary to keep the analysis centered on the topic, I have eliminated those passages in which the tellers digressed. In such cases, the readers will encounter notes that will specifically let them know when a deletion took place and what type of content was eliminated.

5.1 The decision-making moment

Before proceeding to the presentation of the findings, a brief clarification about the educational context referred in the narratives that follow is required. In the Mexican higher education system, which is mostly organized following the Spanish and Napoleonic models, the undergraduate curriculum is designed to cover a full introduction to a specific disciplinary specialization since the first year. For this reason, high school graduates are required to choose a major when they enroll to the first year of college. Understandably, this high-stakes decision constitutes a challenge for high school students. The following stories show how the participants represented this crucial moment in their lives through their oral narratives.

5.1.1 Leiliani's story: An interview that persuaded Leiliani to study for a BA in

English.

Excerpt 24 presents the first episode of Leiliani's pre-service life. This interview took place in a café. I had already finished the introduction and asked the first question from the script, when the waitress came to ask a question about our order. After this interruption, I restated the first question as it appears in the transcription. This means that Leiliani had the opportunity to listen to the same question twice. In spite of this repetition, Leiliani did not address the question directly. In fact, instead of discussing how she actually decided to become a teacher, Leiliani told the story of how she chose a major.

Excerpt 24. How Leiliani decided to enter the English program in Miranda.

1. AR: So,
2. to begin with,
3. can you,
4. summarize the story,
5. of how you decided,
6. to become an English teacher?

Stanza 1

7. LEILIANI: Well I,
8. made the decision because,
9. I= was not interested in being a teacher,
10. I was interested in,
11. to study,
12. **Media**\,
13. as a **major**\,

Stanza 2

14. So I was u=h,
15. surfing on the web\.
16. looking for universities\,
17. that offered that major,

Stanza 3

18. And I found\,
19. the university where I studied,
20. and that university offered,
21. not only Media,

22. it offered English Language,
23. as a major,
24. so I decided,
25. and I opened the link/,
26. a=nd I started reading\,

Stanza 4

27. And I said,
28. <Q Well\,
29. this sounds,
30. that sounds interesting Q>,
31. and I said,
32. <Q Well/,
33. let's ask for information,
34. for both,
35. and then,
36. I'm going to decide Q>,

Stanza 5

37. The lady,
38. who gave me the information,
39. suggested me that,
40. why not having an interview with,
41. both principals ((Meaning the head of the programs)),
42. the principal from,
43. English language,

44. and the principal from Media,
45. and I accepted/,

Stanza 6

46. The first interview that I had,
47. was with the,
48. principal of the English language,
49. I don't know/,
50. I think,
51. he had the power of,
52. to persuade me,

Stanza 7

53. but I,
54. when I,
55. left,
56. his office,
57. I said,
58. <Q I'm going to study English
language\ Q>,

Stanza 8

59. Why/,
60. I don't know\
61. he explained the things,
62. very=,
63. carefully,
64. in detail,
65. he explained me little by little,
66. all the things that I can ((could)) do,
67. when I,
68. when I,
69. get the de-
70. graduated,
71. when I get the degree,
72. that I said,
73. <Q Ok, I'm going to study this Q>,

Stanza 9

74. Then I,
75. I talked to the,
76. girl,
77. who was in charge of the information,
78. I said,
79. <Q I don't want to talk to the,
80. to the other principal,

81. I'm going to study English language
Q>.

Listener's contribution

82. AR: So,
83. you didn't even give the chance,
84. to,
85. the Head,
86. of the Communication program.
87. to talk to you.

Stanza 10

88. LEILIANI: [No, no]
89. I just talked to,
90. in this case,
91. his name is,
92. was Mario ((Pseudonym)),

Stanza 11

93. And I said
94. <Q No I like the way he explained Q>,
95. and because he,
96. he told me,
97. <Q if you're interested in Media,
98. with English language,
99. you can,
100. touch ((work or find a job in)) that
area,

Stanza 12

101. because we,
102. you can work with,
103. subtitling,
104. translating,
105. dubbing,
106. and,
107. if you like that,
108. you can combine both Q>,

Stanza 13

109. And I said
110. <Q Well,
111. yes why not Q>,
112. and I said,
113. <Q Well,

114. I prefer to study English language
Q>,
115. a=nd,
116. so that's why I took ((made)) that
decision.

Stanza 14

117. And I,
118. I liked media a lot,
119. even my friends told me,
120. <Q No, it's because your voice is
like a,
121. radio announcer,

122. so why don't you study that Q>,
123. <Q Yes, I'm going to,
124. I'm going to study that Q>

Listener's contribution

125. AR: Wow, that's a huge ((Gasping in
admiration))
126. @@@,
127. a huge ((change of mind))

Stanza 15

128. LEILIANI: A=nd, that's why,
129. I decided to study ((English)).

In Leiliani's account, her choice of major is represented as initially inspired by an interest that was unconnected to the teaching profession. The teller foregrounds this fact by breaking the news with an elongated vowel (*I* in Line 9) and revealing the discipline of her choice with a slight stress (Lines 12 and 13). These prosodic features are used by the teller to emphasize the fact that, although Leiliani studied English, her pursuing a career in teaching was not part of her original plans for her professional life.

7. LEILIANI: Well I,
8. made the decision because,
9. I= was not interested in being a teacher,
10. I was interested in,
11. to study,
12. **Media**\,
13. as a **major**\,

In the story that follows after this initial disclaimer, two main features are salient: the main character's agency in the decision and an unexpected turn of events. Regarding the first feature, it is clear that the episode is centered on Leiliani acting as the main character in her own narrative world. Other characters emerged at certain points and even had an important role in the decision-making event, as in the case of Mario. However, most agency is placed on Leiliani's shoulders, who is leading the great majority of the actions, dialogues, and thinking in the story. This central role is emphasized by the abundance of first person narrative clauses (containing

actions that took place in the narrative), first person constructed dialogues and monologues (e.g. I said), and clauses that focus on the main character’s thoughts and decisions, as shown in Table 11.

In fact, in the first nine stanzas most of the action is led by Leiliani (e.g. surfing on the web, looking for universities, deliberating with herself, deciding to visit the campus, and making a final decision.). The other two characters, the woman at the admissions office and the head of the English program, are given very small parts and their voices are only heard indirectly (e.g. “suggested me that”, “he explained things very carefully”). In this fashion, Leiliani first concluded her story in the ninth stanza with her decision to enter the English program without

Table 11. Tally of 1st person / 3rd person clauses in “How Leiliani decided to enter the English program in Miranda”

Types of clauses	Tokens
First person narrative clauses	14
First person constructed dialogues/monologues	7
Clauses that expressed the main character’s thoughts in a constructed dialogue (e.g. I think, I don’t know)	2
Third person constructed dialogues (e.g. she said, he suggested)	5

talking to the head of the Communication program. However, my intervention in the following turn elicited a reaction:

Listener’s contribution

- 82. AR: So,
- 83. you didn’t even give the chance,
- 84. to,
- 85. the Head,
- 86. of the Communication program.
- 87. to talk to you.

The negative statement (Lines 83-87), which was, in fact, an evaluative comment about Leiliani’s abrupt decision, was apparently taken by her as a request for clarification. She did so by adding six stanzas that provide more information about her conversation with Mario and her final

decision. Stanzas 11 and 12 feature a constructed dialogue in which Mario's voice finally comes forward.

Stanza 11

93. And I said,
94. <Q No I like the way he explained
Q>,
95. and because he,
96. he told me,
97. <Q if you're interested in Media,
98. with English language,
99. you can,
100. touch ((work or find a job in)) that
area,

Stanza 12

101. because we,
102. you can work with,
103. subtitling,
104. translating,
105. dubbing,
106. and,
107. if you like that,
108. you can combine both Q>,

This passage should not be taken as a verbatim report of the actual conversation, but can be considered as a verbal representation of how Leiliani remembered the event. As such, the advantages of majoring in English are presented in a way that the agency is, once again, placed on Leiliani. This time, however, the teller used second person clauses (see underlined sections) and the ideas are represented as coming from Mario's mouth. Thus, the ideas are put forward with phrases that sell the English program by projecting future possibilities that the young Leiliani could choose from. As a result of this persuasive conversation, Leiliani automatically dismissed her initial plan and decided to apply for the English program.

This leads to the second relevant feature in this story: an unexpected turn of events. The story shows how Leiliani modified her original plan (studying Communication), but not her original intentions of developing a career in the media. This change of mind is presented as mostly based on the presumable versatility of the program at IUM. Ironically, the story suggests that Leiliani was not basically changing her initial goals; she was only choosing an option that, in her opinion, would make her more marketable once she started job hunting. In sum, Leiliani presents herself as a solitary and independent decision maker apparently moved by her desire to develop a career in the media industry. At the end of this episode, the audience is left wondering

when and how Leiliani actually chose to become a teacher, or whether she ever made a conscious choice for that matter.

It is also interesting to notice what this story fails to reveal. Either by design or by an unconscious selective process, in this episode Leiliani did not portray herself as someone with some previous knowledge of English and some informal teaching experience. However, she did so later on, in other episodes of the same interview. Additionally, she did not talk about her subsequent change of heart (from a career in the media to a teaching career) more explicitly. In fact, we actually did not discuss the subject until almost two years later, through a written communication. When Leiliani revised the draft of this dissertation, we exchanged a few emails and she wrote the following reply to one of my questions:

Excerpt 25. Leiliani's personal communication, September 18th, 2015.

AR: Why did you desist from developing a career in translation or in the media?

Leiliani's written response: I noticed that I wasn't really keen on translation. I understood that my abilities were focused on the teaching area; it was innate.

Additionally, an interesting detail that Leiliani obliterated from her narrative is her parents' possible involvement in her decision. She did not mention that her mother had a permanent teaching position in the public system and that, by pursuing a teaching-related major, she was eligible to inherit her mother's position in due time. In the same way, her two parents were totally absent in the actions leading to the decision. The narrative shows her as though she had faced that whole experience on her own. However, through my informal interactions with Leiliani, I found out that her parents were actually supporting her in this process. In fact, she was fully financed by her parents and lived with them all through her college years, which is not an uncommon social practice among Mexican college students.

Finally, one thing that this episode does show is a sort of abrupt and superficial decision-making event that is not connected with a clear intention to develop a career in teaching. For

instance, apart from an exploration of the university website, the episode does not include any other previous research effort made by Leiliani to inform her decision. This omission, of course, does not necessarily mean that the participant did not make any further inquiries. She could have omitted details in her story for multiple reasons or simply forgotten about them. However, in this story, all possible information-seeking efforts are presented as easily overridden by one single interview with Mario. Moreover, it is interesting to notice that the teller does not reveal her reasons for being interested in the media industry in the first place. She only mentioned that she liked the idea and that some friends had told her that she would be suited as radio announcer because of her pleasant-sounding voice. If Leiliani's story does not omit any other more powerful reasons, then it is possible that her initial choice was based on misinformation of what a career in the media truly entails. If this were true, the fact that she was so easily persuaded during the interview would not be so surprising. It is interesting to note that Leiliani's lack of preparation to make such a high-stakes decision is not exclusive of her case. The following two stories also portray similar decision-making events in which the protagonist did not feel quite ready for the event.

5.1.2 Daniela's story: How Daniela explains her decision in terms of a general interest in language.

As in Leiliani's case, Daniela narrated the story of how she chose a major as the result of a last-minute decision. Although the question presented to Daniela was based on the same script, I modified it at the moment. During the conversation that took place before the interview began, I noticed that Daniela was slightly nervous and hesitant to speak. I supposed that, by suggesting a specific moment in her life as the starting point, she could feel more certain of how to begin her narrative. She took this hint, but just as Leiliani did in her story, Daniela began her account by emphasizing that English was not her first choice.

Excerpt 26. How Daniela decided to enter the English program in Miranda.

1. AR: So, to begin with,
2. can you please,
3. go over the story,
4. of
5. how you became an English teacher,
6. whatever you think is relevant,
7. since,
8. when you made the decision,
9. to enter,
10. an English program,
11. to the present,
12. whatever you think is relevant.

Stanza 1

13. DANIELA: Well I think that u=h,
14. the story is very,
15. interesting because,
16. at the beginning I didn't,
17. want,
18. I didn't know sorry,
19. what I wanted to study,

Stanza 2

20. So,
21. it was my final decision,
22. <Q I am going to study,
23. a degree in English Language Q>,

Stanza 3

24. And uh,
25. I was,
26. I was always interested,
27. in the language so I,
28. think that I,
29. chose this degree,
30. because I was interested in the
language,
31. more than,
32. being interested in teaching,
33. umh\,

Listener's contribution

34. AR: . . How did you know about the
degree,
35. you are a High School student,
36. and,
37. what triggered the decision?

Stanza 4

38. DANIELA: There was a classmate,
39. and,
40. she told me about it,
41. and I,
42. asked her ((for)) more ((information)),

Stanza 5

43. Then we,
44. went to the university and,
45. I got a,
46. brochure,
47. and I got the information,

Stanza 6

48. And I said <Q Well/,
49. it's seems,
50. it looks interesting,
51. so I am going to,
52. pick this\,

Stanza 7

53. Because I don't have any other option,
54. and I have to,
55. do it,
56. because I don't want to,
57. lose a year,
58. uh trying to,
59. find out what I want to do,
60. with my life,

Stanza 8

61. so I am going to choose this,
62. because I like English language and,
63. I want to learn more, so/ Q>.

As a teller, Daniela seemed to be aware that her story contradicted a basic line in the Mexican master narrative, according to which, first-year college students should know what they want to do with their lives. Daniela admitted that her story did not follow this script, but she introduced this transgression by presenting it as an interesting fact (Lines 14-19):

Stanza 1

13. DANIELA: Well I think that u=h,
14. the story is very,
15. interesting because,
16. at the beginning I didn't,
17. want,
18. I didn't know sorry,
19. what I wanted to study,

As a teller, Daniela used this catchy line (15-16) to emphasize that the story was worthy to be told and perhaps to avoid the listener's judgement as she revealed that she did not know her own mind. In this way, Daniela's story keeps certain parallelism with Leiliani's. For starters, just as her colleague, Daniela narrates a story of a decision made without having much information at hand. Secondly, Daniela's final decision is facilitated by a suggestion coming from a third party, in this case a classmate. Finally, the participant's parents are also absent in this episode, leaving the main character as the sole responsible person for the decision.

Apart from these evident similarities, Daniela's story developed with more difficulty. She summarized her decision in the initial three stanzas, ending with a vocalization that carried a falling intonation contour (Line 33)

Stanza 3

24. And uh,
25. I was,
26. I was always interested,
27. in the language so I,
28. think that I,
29. chose this degree,
30. because I was interested in the language,
31. more than,
32. being interested in teaching
33. umh\,

In this case, Daniela's use of *umh* followed by a falling intonation and a pause seem to be marking that she was struggling to find material to include in her story. This brief hesitation cued my additional elicitation (Lines 34-37) that finally encouraged Daniela to include one of her classmates in the story. It is only at this point that the narrative began to include a few actions. However, even then, the story was more centered on what Daniela thought at the time, than on the characters' actions, which could only be summarized as follows:

- She (the classmate) told me about it (the English program)
- We went to the university
- I got the brochure
- I said "I'm going to pick this"

Therefore, Daniela's account of her decision appears as a more introspective decision-making event expressed in fewer words. First of all, the teller justifies her decision by invoking a prior interest to learn more about English. So, unlike Leiliani who chose the program as a means to a different end, Daniela claimed a direct interest in the subject matter. However, this interest should not be mistaken by a specific desire to become a teacher (lines 24-32). Additionally, part of the story is presented as an internal dialogue in which the main character deliberates with herself about her decision. This is evident in the material presented as constructed monologues (marked with quotation brackets <Q Q>).

Stanza 6

48. And I said <Q Well,
49. it's seems,
50. it looks interesting,
51. so I am going to,
52. pick this\,

Stanza 7

53. Because I don't have any other option,
54. and I have to,
55. do it,

56. because I don't want to,
57. lose a year,
58. uh trying to,
59. find out what I want to do,
60. with my life,

Stanza 8

61. so I am going to choose this,
62. because I like English language and,
63. I want to learn more, so/ Q>.

In these stanzas, it seems that the teller considered that the events were more effectively told from an internal stance. Using this approach, Daniela summarized her rationale (Lines 48-63) suggesting that the program appeared as a solution for a daunting dilemma: deciding what to do with her life. On Lines 53 through 55, it is important to note the feeling of urgency and necessity evoked by the use of a negative statement (“I don’t have any other option”), and a semi-modal (“and I have to”). Therefore, the decision is depicted as having been ushered by Daniela’s urgency to avoid a year off (Lines 56-57), which in her perception was represented as a loss. A similar feeling can be observed in Adam’s story displayed in the following section.

5.1.3 Adam’s story: The end of his dreams about being an actor and the beginning of a professional project to become an English teacher.

In Adam’s first interview, after I delivered the initial interview prompt, he chose not to begin his narrative with the story of how he selected a major. Instead, he talked for a while about his first teaching experience during his junior year at college. This narrative did not truly convey a decision, but since it was relevant for the general purpose of the study, I let it flow for a while¹². When I noticed that the participant had exhausted the topic, I redirected the conversation to revisit an episode presented in Adam’s autobiography. For this reason, at the beginning of the story, my interventions are more frequent, as Adam and I collaboratively reconstructed the events he had initially mentioned in his writing:

Excerpt 27. How Adam decided to enter the English program in Miranda.

Listener’s contribution

1. AR: Uh,
2. now I would like to go=,
3. back a little bit,
4. ADAM: Yes.
5. AR: Uh,
6. you told me your,

7. in your story,
8. that you wrote for me\,
9. that when you were in High School,
10. although you were,
11. conscious or aware that,
12. you were kind of good,
13. at explaining things to other people,
14. you were not,
15. truly,

¹² This story is presented in Chapter 6 (Excerpt 48)

16. uh,
17. like you were not decided,
18. on the idea of becoming a teacher,
19. you wanted to be an actor,
20. Right/?

21. ADAM: [@@@@@]
22. yes.

23. AR: So\
24. when,
25. what kind of school\
26. you wanted to apply/
27. or you tried to apply to,
28. to become an actor?

Stanza 1

29. ADAM: Actually,
30. I didn't,
31. do anything/
32. for becoming an actor,
33. not even taking classes,
34. it was just something like
35. <Q Oh,
36. I like that,
37. I think that it's interesting Q>,
38. but I never did,
39. uh,
40. something for,

Listener's contribution

41. AR: You didn't,
42. you didn't move,
43. towards that goal.

44. ADAM: No no.

45. AR: And all of a sudden,
46. you were,
47. on the last year of high school,
48. and you had to choose,
49. Right?

50. ADAM: Yes.

51. AR: So,
52. what led you to choose,
53. studying English?

Stanza 2

54. ADAM: Because,
55. actually well,
56. I applied for,
57. uh,
58. I sit for an exam,
59. an exam for,
60. university,
61. uh for Communication,
62. but,
63. I didn't get into that school\

Stanza 3

64. I,
65. I don't know why,
66. the-
67. everybody told me,
68. <Q Nah,
69. that's just because they,
70. take people at random,
71. at the MSU Q>\

Stanza 4

72. And it was like,
73. <Q Wow,
74. I,
75. I don't know,
76. what was the rea-
77. uh,
78. what,
79. was exactly the reason Q>,
80. because,
81. I was really disappointed,
82. at that moment,

Stanza 5

83. I think that I said,
84. <Q Well,
85. I don't have,
86. a good level,
87. a good acade-
88. academic level,
89. What can I do now? Q>,

Stanza 6

90. But I started thinking,

91. I said,
92. <Q Well,
93. it's because,
94. there are too many people,
95. who want to go to that,
96. degree\ Q>,

Stanza 7

97. Then,
98. I started thinking,
99. <Q I have to,
100. to consider,
101. the things that I'm good at Q>,
102. I said,
103. <Q well,
104. I like acting,
105. but I have never acted before Q>,
106. @@@@,
107. u=h,
108. <Q I like singing,
109. but I have never,
110. uh sung before,
111. also Q>,

Stanza 8

112. so I said,
113. <Q well,
114. wha-
115. what are the,
116. the **real** skills I have Q>,

Stanza 9

117. And I started thinking,
118. I said <Q well\
119. I **used**/,
120. to hate English,
121. when I was in elementary school,
122. because I didn't know,
123. I didn't know anything Q>,

Stanza 10

124. I said <Q Well,
125. maybe English is something really,
126. uh,
127. interesting Q>,

Stanza 11

128. Why?
129. because,
130. when I started those extra classes,
131. with a teacher,
132. uh,
133. she inspired me,
134. she was like,
135. a model for me,

Stanza 12

136. Because she really loved her job,
137. even when she wa- uh,
138. the class was at,
139. in her,
140. dining room,
141. with other,
142. two or three students,
143. **she did**,
144. that\
145. with love\

Stanza 13

146. She really committed herself with uh,
147. with me,
148. and with the rest of the students,
149. and I think that I felt that,

Stanza 14

150. Maybe,
151. I wasn't aware,
152. of that at all,
153. because I was a teenager and,
154. teenagers tend to,
155. ((lip smacking))
156. don't notice,

Stanza 15

157. They,
158. they say they don't notice,
159. this kind of things,
160. but,
161. I was really motivated,
162. every day,

Stanza 16

163. Uh,
164. I,
165. I think that,
166. from hating,
167. English to,
168. being motivated,
169. motivated every day\
170. why,
171. because,
172. I really,
173. **liked** the class\

((A passage with more details about the private classes was omitted.))

Listener's contribution

174. AR: But then,
175. you were like,
176. on a crossroad,
177. <Q Well,
178. what should I do,
179. what direction should I take? Q>,

180. and then a friend,
181. tells you about the degree.

((Adam's additional comments about studying English and French in high school are omitted)).

Stanza 17

182. ADAM: But,
183. we were uh,
184. actually in French class,
185. we were talking,
186. <Q Nah,
187. what are you going to study?
188. I'm going to do this,
189. bla, bla, bla Q>,

Stanza 18

190. And,
191. uh,
192. two,
193. actually two,
194. classmates,
195. were talking about,

196. the English language degree,
197. at IUM,

Stanza 19

198. (H) A=nd,
199. they told me
200. <Q Why don't you go?
201. and ask,
202. get information about it,
203. it's good,
204. because you can,
205. be a teacher,
206. interpreter,
207. a translator,

Stanza 20

208. and I was like
209. <Q What is an interpreter?
210. what is a translator?
211. I know what is a teacher but,
212. I don't know what are those,
213. the other two things\ Q>,

Stanza 21

214. And they told me,
215. <Q And you can learn,
216. French too,
217. Italian Q>,

Stanza 22

218. I was like,
219. <Q Let me talk to my parents,
220. I will tell them,
221. about this situation,
222. and let's see Q>,

Stanza 23

223. I went,
224. with my Mom and my Dad,
225. to the university,
226. they asked for the leaflet,
227. with all the information,
228. and everything,
229. and they **loved** the idea,

Stanza 24

230. And uh,

231. since I was about to get into college,
232. we had,
233. just,
234. few weeks left,
235. my Mom told me,
236. <Q I=f,
237. you don't like this/,
238. you will have to,
239. start looking for other options Q>,

Stanza 25

240. (H) and it was like,
241. <Q Ok,
242. it's my **la=st** chance Q>,
243. because they were like,
244. <Q Ok,
245. let's wait until,
246. you decide on something,
247. **you** really like,
248. something you really want to do Q>,

((A passage asking for clarification about Adam's parents' conditions is omitted)).

Stanza 26

ADAM: ((Adam's parents talking))
249. <Q If you really like the option,
250. and you get in this university,
251. perfect,
252. if not,

253. you will have to think
254. about another degree,
255. so you,
256. but you have to study ((speeding up
speech tempo)),
257. you cannot take a year off Q>
258. @@@.

Listener's contribution

259. AR: All right.

Stanza 27

260. ADAM: And I was like <Q Ok/ Q>,
261. I,
262. and actually I,
263. have always had,
264. that in mind ((not taking a year off)).

Listener's contribution

265. AR: So,
266. they were not going to tolerate
laziness,
267. in their home.

268. ADAM: [No, no no no]

269. AR: Ok.

This story discloses two decisions that Adam, as the teller of this story, presents with a different tone. While the initial plan of becoming an actor is introduced as an almost childish plan, the final decision to study English is represented as rooted in the participants' real abilities and interests. A dismissive tone used to present the first decision is perceived since the opening of Adam's turn with chuckles (Line 21), which seem to be a reaction to the interviewer's questions.

Listener's intervention

19. you wanted to be an actor,
20. Right/?

21. ADAM: [@@@@@]
22. yes.

This attitude increases with a series of negative statements that become the central topic of the following stanza (Lines 29 to 40). In this passage, the teller acknowledged that his initial plan was not founded in any coherent appraisal of his previous experiences and perceived attitudes.

29. ADAM: Actually,
30. I didn't,
31. do anything/
32. for becoming an actor,
33. not even taking classes,
34. it was just something like
35. <Q Oh,
36. I like that,
37. I think that it's interesting Q>,
38. but I never did,
39. uh,
40. something for,

This acknowledgement becomes the preface of Adam's narrative about his failing the admission exam for Miranda State University (MSU) Communication School. The reason why this narrative is important requires certain previous clarifications not included in the story. First of all, Adam's intention to study Communication was directly motivated by his original plan of becoming an actor. While it is true that this program does not offer any acting-related courses, it represented the only option offered in Miranda that loosely approximated Adam's interest. Getting into a theater program would have required Adam to move to another city, which was not something that Adam's parents encouraged (as Adam mentioned later during an informal conversation). A second necessary clarification is needed with regards to MSU admission examination. MSU's undergraduate candidates usually take this exam in May and the results are published in June. This happens when the candidates are about to finish their last academic year in high school. Therefore, the timing implies that even by the end of his senior year in high school, Adam was still planning on a career in acting or in the media industry, as a second option.

All these plans were thwarted when Adam did not pass the admission exam. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Adam was not alone in this personal misfortune. Thousands of

students are rejected by MSU every year. Some of these students take some time off and try again the following year. Others desist from pursuing a college education. Finally, those whose parents have the necessary means enroll in a private university. The evidence provided in the story shows that Adam and his parents did not even consider the first two options. Just as in Daniela's case, the idea of taking a year off was deemed as unacceptable. The social pressure under which this decision was made seems more evident in the repetitive use of the semi-modal *have to* (Lines 238, 253, and 256) and the negative form of the modal *can* to express prohibition in Line 257.

Stanza 24

230. And uh,
 231. since I was about to get into college,
 232. we had,
 233. just,
 234. few weeks left,
 235. my Mom told me,
 236. <Q I=f,
 237. you don't like this/,
 238. you will have to,
 239. start looking for other options Q>,

Stanza 26

ADAM: ((Adam's parents talking))
 249. <Q If you really like the option,
 250. and you get in this university,
 251. perfect,
 252. if not,
 253. you will have to think
 254. about another degree,
 255. so you,
 256. but you have to study ((speeding up
 speech tempo)),
 257. you cannot take a year off Q>
 258. @ @ @.

Having his parents' support to enter any program at IUM, as lines 233-239 suggest, it is intriguing that Adam did not enter in the Communication program at that university. In the story, Adam argues that the shock of not being accepted at MSU made him reassess his original plans. This event is presented in the narrative with emotions that seem to linger in his memories in spite of being far removed in time. These emotions are evident in Adam's narrative which becomes hesitant and evaluative at this point. The passage features several truncated intonation units (e.g. Lines 55, 57, 59, 60, 62, 64, 66), negative statements (63, 65), and constructed dialogues that introduce Adam's interpretations in the voice of his acquaintances (67-71) or his own (84-89 and 90-96):

Stanza 2

54. ADAM: Because,
55. actually well,
56. I applied for,
57. uh,
58. I sit for an exam,
59. an exam for,
60. university,
61. uh for Communication,
62. but,
63. I didn't get into that school\,

Stanza 3

64. I,
65. I don't know why,
66. the-
67. everybody told me,
68. <Q Nah,
69. that's just because they,
70. take people at random,
71. at the MSU Q>\,

Stanza 5

83. I think that I said,
84. <Q Well,
85. I don't have,
86. a good level,
87. a good acade-
88. academic level,
89. What can I do now? Q>,

Stanza 6

90. But I started thinking,
91. I said,
92. <Q Well,
93. it's because,
94. there are too many people,
95. who want to go to that,
96. degree\ Q>,

It is in this context that Adam presents his decision to major in English as a more realistic plan. Unlike his previous plans about acting, this new decision appears in the story as supported by an assessment of his actual abilities. This whole assessment takes a prominent role in the narrative occupying five stanzas (Lines 97-127). In this evaluation, Adam contrasts his previous dislike of English to his more recent interest in it, which he believes stirred from a specific learning experience (Lines 128-135).

Stanza 7

97. Then,
98. I started thinking,
99. <Q I have to,
100. to consider,
101. the things that I'm good at Q>,
102. I said,
103. <Q well,
104. I like acting,
105. but I have never acted before Q>,
106. @@@@,
107. u=h,
108. <Q I like singing,

109. but I have never,
110. uh sung before,
111. also Q>,

Stanza 8

112. so I said,
113. <Q well,
114. wha-
115. what are the,
116. the **real** skills I have Q>,

Stanza 9

117. And I started thinking,

118. I said <Q well\
119. I **used**/,
120. to hate English,
121. when I was in elementary school,
122. because I didn't know,
123. I didn't know anything Q>,

Stanza 10

124. I said <Q Well,
125. maybe English is something really,
126. uh,
127. interesting Q>,

Stanza 11

128. Why?
129. because,
130. when I started those extra classes,

131. with a teacher,
132. uh,
133. she inspired me,
134. she was like,
135. a model for me,

Stanza 12

136. Because she really loved her job,
137. even when she wa- uh,
138. the class was at,
139. in her,
140. dining room,
141. with other,
142. two or three students,
143. **she did**,
144. that\
145. with love\
,

The consideration of Adam's change of heart about English takes the narrative into a subplot in which Adam retells the story of his classes with a private English teacher. This story, which had already been included in the autobiography, takes the following stanzas. These stanzas reiterate two themes that are recurrent in Adam's life history, namely teachers' commitment to their work (Line 136) and the importance of engaging one's emotions in teaching (Lines 143-145). At this point Adam digressed for a few minutes and I had to prompt him to redirect his narrative to the episode about his choice of major (Lines 174-179).

Listener's contribution

174. AR: But then,
175. you were like,
176. on a crossroad,
177. <Q Well,
178. what should I do,
179. what direction should I take? Q>,

180. and then a friend,
181. tells you about the degree.

In the final passage (from Line 182 to the end), Adam includes other characters apart from his parents to narrate how he made his decision. The story takes the audience to a specific

moment (during a French class) when Adam's classmates suggested him considering the English program at IUM.

Stanza 17

182. ADAM: But,
183. we were uh,
184. actually in French class,
185. we were talking,
186. <Q Nah,
187. what are you going to study?
188. I'm going to do this,
189. bla, bla, bla Q>,

Stanza 18

190. And,
191. uh,
192. two,
193. actually two,
194. classmates,

195. were talking about,
196. the English language degree,
197. at IUM,

Stanza 19

198. (H) A=nd,
199. they told me
200. <Q Why don't you go?
201. and ask,
202. get information about it,
203. it's good,
204. because you can,
205. be a teacher,
206. interpreter,
207. a translator,

This event echoes Daniela's experience with a classmate, but in his story Adam adds other important characters in the stanzas that follow. In these passages, Adam's parents take part in the decision. They actually appear in the campus visit where they play the role of supporters, but at the same time they also exert pressure on Adam to continue his education at all cost (as mentioned before). Therefore, Adam's decision-making story amalgamates different social and internal forces such as peer's influence, parents' pressures, positive and negative previous experiences with English, and Adam's own uncertainties about his abilities and possible professional prospects. These forces interacted to make Adam change his mind. In this process, he left a dream behind and engaged into a seemingly more feasible plan.

5.1.4 Sofia's story: How she acted as an informed decision-maker when she decided to become an English teacher.

Sofia's story narrates a relatively different decision-making event marked by two prior experiences that played an important part in her decision. The first of these experiences refers back to her second language acquisition during her transnational experience in the US. The

second one has to do with the technology-oriented high school in which she studied when she returned to Mexico.

Excerpt 28. How Sofía decided to enter the English program in Miranda.

1. AR: So,
2. the question is,
3. can you please,
4. cover the story,
5. of how,
6. you became an English teacher?
7. Try to find out the highlights,
8. of any aspect,
9. that you believe is relevant.

10. SOFÍA: [Ok]

Stanza 1

11. AR: In making your decision,
12. to become an English teacher.

Stanza 2

13. SOFÍA: Alright,
14. well,
15. it's umh,
16. it's a semi-long story,
17. there are many things that,
18. contributed,
19. in my,
20. in me becoming an,
21. an English teacher,
22. but,

Stanza 3

23. When I was little,
24. mainly,
25. I wanted to be a computer,
26. like a computer,
27. engineer,

Stanza 4

28. I really loved computers,
29. because I was growing up in the 90s,
30. and,

31. the whole,
32. with the whole,
33. technological boom,
34. I just,
35. I got captivated by computers,
36. so I really wanted to be a computer engineer,

Stanza 5

37. Bu=t,
38. when I came,
39. when I came to live in Mexico,
40. in High School I studied to be,
41. a computer technician,
42. so the problem was,
43. that I hated computers,
44. in high school.

Listener's contribution

45. AR: @@
46. AR: Why?
47. How come?

Stanza 6

48. SOFÍA: Because I didn't know what it,
49. I didn't know what it was about,
50. not really,
51. I mean,
52. I had like this dream,
53. of,
54. of being a computer engineer,
55. but I didn't know what,
56. what it entailed,
57. I didn't know,
58. What,
59. it was about,

Stanza 7

60. So,

61. what I di-,
62. what happened was,
63. that I hated it,
64. I hated programming systems,
65. I hated,
66. I hated everything,
67. that had to do with programming,

Stanza 8

68. So I hated it so much,
69. that I just gave it up,
70. I said <Q I don't want to do this Q>,
71. not for the rest of my life,
72. this is like,
73. it's boring Q>,
74. I don't know,
75. I didn't like it,

Stanza 9

76. So=/
77. I remembered that I always wa-
78. like being a teacher,
79. when I was little,
80. I always played,
81. that I was,
82. the little teacher,
83. with my sisters and everything,

Stanza 10

84. So I,
85. I said <Q Oh,
86. being a teacher,
87. would be really great Q>,
88. I think,
89. I thought it would,
90. really fill me,

Stanza 11

91. So=,
92. what happened was that,
93. when I was about to finish high
school,
94. I started investigating,
95. different schools,
96. to become a primary teacher,
97. which is what I wanted to do,

Stanza 12

98. Bu=/t,
99. and well,
100. well,
101. I did find different,
102. different options,
103. I=,
104. knew that I had to go the,
105. what we call <L1 Normal L1>
((Teachers college))
106. here in Mexico,

Stanza 13

107. And,
108. there were also,
109. some private universities,
110. where I could go,
111. I investigated everything I,
112. (TSK) I found the prices and
everything,

Stanza 14

113. And then **one day** \,
114. I don't know how just,
115. one day,
116. I was
117. I was there,

Stanza 15

118. I,
119. I always knew English,
120. because I grew up in the States,
121. I lived there for 10 years,
122. I knew English well so,

Stanza 16

123. One day I was in,
124. my last semester in,
125. in high school,
126. and I remember that,
127. I was just observing my English
teacher,

Stanza 17

128. And I was like,

- 129. and suddenly,
- 130. it just came into my mind,
- 131. that I just asked myself,
- 132. <Q how did she become a teacher?
- 133. How did,
- 134. how did she become an English teacher,
- 135. what do you have to do? Q>,

Stanza 18

- 136. It was just curiosity,
- 137. really,
- 138. I already knew what I wanted,
- 139. but it was just curiosity,

Stanza 19

- 140. so I was like,
- 141. <Q Ok,
- 142. **Hu=mh**/,
- 143. maybe I should just,
- 144. See/,
- 145. right?
- 146. I mean I know English,
- 147. so\,
- 148. let's see\ Q>,

Stanza 20

- 149. So I started investigating,
- 150. to be an English teacher,
- 151. and I saw that,
- 152. there were many many many degrees,
- 153. in Mexico,
- 154. to become umh,
- 155. to have a bachelors in...
- 156. what?
- 157. <L1 lenguas modernas L1> in,
- 158. modern languages in uh,
- 159. I don't know,
- 160. in languages itself,
- 161. just by itself,
- 162. or <L1 lengua inglesa L1> or,
- 163. there were many options\,

Stanza 21

- 164. And I saw,

- 165. that there were some options,
- 166. here in the State,
- 167. in the city,
- 168. and well,
- 169. I narrowed it down to,
- 170. IUM,
- 171. here in Independent University of Miranda ((pseudonym))
- 172. o=r,
- 173. at MSU
- 174. in Capital City ((Pseudonym for the State's capital)),

Stanza 22

- 175. And I saw ((name of a third option)),
- 176. and I saw,
- 177. many options,
- 178. right?
- 179. but\,
- 180. I thought that,
- 181. these two ((IUM and MSU))
- 182. were like the strong ones,

Stanza 23

- 183. So=,
- 184. what happen
- 185. was that...
- 186. I don't know ho-,
- 187. I don't know/,

Stanza 24

- 188. I analyzed the programs,
- 189. I analyzed,
- 190. what,
- 191. I analyzed I,
- 192. I analyzed the two options,
- 193. being a normal teacher,
- 194. for,
- 195. some kind of Math subjects,
- 196. and things like that,
- 197. or,
- 198. on this other hand,
- 199. I had this new option,
- 200. to be an English teacher,

Stanza 25

201. So I said,
202. I analyzed the programs,
203. Fo=r,
204. languages,
205. and I said,
206. <Q I know English,
207. I wanna be a teacher Q>,
208. the programs looked very
interesting,
209. because they had a little bit of
linguistics,
210. and they had literature and,
211. I don't know,
212. it just,
213. it caught my attention\.

Stanza 26

214. So=,
215. I said,
216. <Q I think this...
217. this is better for me,
218. right Q>,

Stanza 27

219. So what I did/
220. was that I decided to
221. study ((Name of the program she
chose)).

((The interviewer asked clarification about
when exactly the interviewee had returned
to Mexico))

222. SOFÍA: Yeah,

223. so,
224. I was already here ((in Mexico)),

Stanza 28

225. So,
226. what happened was just,
227. I just had to make the choice where,
228. MSU in Capital City,
229. or here in IUM,

Stanza 29

230. But my mother said,
231. <Q Well, you'll spend,
232. I think you'll spend,
233. the same amount of money in
Capital City
234. because you're going to live alone,
235. so
236. all the boarding,
237. plus food,
238. everything Q>,

Stanza 30

239. So I said,
240. <Q well yeah,
241. she's right,
242. if I study here,
243. in IUM,
244. I can just stay with my family/
245. and well/
246. I just\
247. end up paying,
248. the tuition fees and everything,
249. the enrollment and everything Q>,
250. so=,
251. I decided to study here/.

After my initial prompt, Sofia began a long turn with a stanza that works as an introduction or an abstract, to use Labov's term (1972). In other words, the stanza foreshadows what I interpreted as the bottom line of the story: Sofia's decision was motivated by several factors (Lines 16-21).

13. SOFÍA: Alright,
14. well,
15. it's umh,
16. it's a semi-long story,
17. there are many things that,
18. contributed,
19. in my,
20. in me becoming an,
21. an English teacher,

After this introduction is closed, Sofía began her story by narrating her demotivating experience with computer programming in high school. As a result of this event, she goes from being “captivated” by the idea of becoming a computer engineer to “hating” computer programming. She foregrounded this event as a turning-point that would deviate her path from her original plans and take her to consider a teaching career. Therefore, using a narrative strategy that resembles the one used in Adam’s story, Sofía opposed two career options identifying computer programming as a “boring” endeavor (Line73), while teaching is presented as connected to her early inclinations (Lines 77-83).

Stanza 8

68. So I hated it so much,
69. that I just gave it up,
70. I said <Q I don't want to do this Q>,
71. not for the rest of my life,
72. this is like,
73. it's boring Q>,
74. I don't know,
75. I didn't like it,

Stanza 9

76. So=/,
77. I remembered that I always wa-,
78. like being a teacher,

79. when I was little,
80. I always played,
81. that I was,
82. the little teacher,
83. with my sisters and everything,

Stanza 10

84. So I,
85. I said <Q Oh,
86. being a teacher,
87. would be really great Q>,
88. I think,
89. I thought it would,
90. really fill me,

At this point of the story, Sofía depicts herself changing directions and engaging into a search for a teachers college. However, after a brief passage that summarizes the beginning of her search, Sofía’s search narrative is interrupted to move into a detailed narrative of what could be called an “Ah-ha” moment. Here, she displays her skills as a storyteller, stopping the flow of

action clauses to open a new scene with a typical orientation phrase: “and then one day.”

Moreover, on this line, Sofía strategically stresses the word “one” and makes her intonation unit end with a falling contour, which increases the attention of the audience and foreshadows that something important is about to be revealed.

Stanza 14

113. And then **one** day\
114. I don't know how just,
115. one day,
116. I was
117. I was there,

Stanza 15

118. I,
119. I always knew English,
120. because I grew up in the States,
121. I lived there for 10 years,
122. I knew English well so,

Stanza 16

123. One day I was in,
124. my last semester in,
125. in high school,
126. and I remember that,

127. I was just observing my English teacher,

Stanza 17

128. And I was like,
129. and suddenly,
130. it just came into my mind,
131. that I just asked myself,
132. <Q how did she become a teacher?
133. How did,
134. how did she become an English teacher,
135. what do you have to do? Q>,

Stanza 18

136. It was just curiosity,
137. really,
138. I already knew what I wanted,
139. but it was just curiosity,

Once this announcement is made, the teller uses Stanza 15 as a parenthetical passage which adds information that Sofía had previously overlooked. The fact that Sofía had lived in the US for 10 years becomes relevant at this point. This is the first time in the interview that Sofía openly refers to her transnational experience in the US, even if it is only to provide background knowledge for her main story. Once Sofía makes clear that she knew English at this time (Line 121-122), she continues to build the scene (Stanza 16) providing more details of the time and place when she first pondered the possibility of a career as an English teacher. It is at this point that Sofía explains that the presence of a high school English teacher moved her to consider this possibility (Lines 113-122). It is interesting to note that this teacher does not intervene as an active character in the story. She is not portrayed as an inspiring figure or as an encourager of the

idea. However, in the story world, the sole presence of this character is positioned as the spark that ignited an idea which apparently had not occurred to Sofía before. She could capitalize on her second language abilities to develop a career. It is not possible to know with certainty if Sofía had never thought about this before. However, this event seems to be identified in her story as the one moment of realization that inspired her final decision. Certain linguistic clues emphasize this event as one of great import in the story:

- Stress used on Lines 113 and 142,
- A line that includes a cognitive verb which emphasizes and evaluates the importance of the event (“I remember that”) on Line 126,
- Constructed dialogues on Lines 132-135,
- Adverbial phrase that indicates an unexpected turn on Lines 129.

Furthermore, the fact that this passage is also included in Sofía’s autobiography confirms its importance in her interpretation of the events surrounding her decision.

Table 12. Sofía’s use of cognitive verbs to narrate her search

Verb	Tokens	Lines
See	And I saw that there were many, many, many degrees.	153-154
	And I saw that there were some options here in the State.	165-166
	And I saw many options.	176-177
Analyze	I analyzed the programs [two tokens]	188 and 202
	I analyzed the two options.	192
	I analyzed [2 truncated units]	189 and 191
Narrow	I narrowed it down	169
Think	I thought that these two ((options)) were like the strong ones.	180-182

From this point on, Sofía narrated her search with more details than any other participant in this study. She emphasized the thoroughness of her search by using verbs that have a dynamic

lexical aspect, but also imply a cognitive action (“see” and “analyze”). She also used “narrow” to express how she proceeded by elimination, and “think” to introduce her conclusion (See Table 12). With all these verbs, Sofía represents her decision as one that was proceeded by a serious pondering of the actual characteristics of the programs.

To this solitary intellectual effort, Sofía added the intervention of her mother, who made her think of certain practical matters that she had not considered (see last three stanzas below).

Sofía introduces her mother’s participation in the story with a contrastive conjunction that announces an objection (Line 230) that is presented in subtle terms:

<p>Stanza 28</p> <p>225. So,</p> <p>226. what happened was just,</p> <p>227. I just had to make the choice where,</p> <p>228. MSU in Capital City,</p> <p>229. or here in IUM,</p> <p>Stanza 29</p> <p>230. But my mother said,</p> <p>231. <Q Well, you’ll spend,</p> <p>232. I think you’ll spend,</p> <p>233. the same amount of money in Capital City</p> <p>234. because you’re going to live alone,</p> <p>235. so</p> <p>236. all the boarding,</p> <p>237. plus food,</p>	<p>238. everything Q>,</p> <p>Stanza 30</p> <p>239. So I said,</p> <p>240. <Q well yeah,</p> <p>241. she’s right,</p> <p>242. if I study here,</p> <p>243. in IUM,</p> <p>244. I can just stay with my family/,</p> <p>245. and well/,</p> <p>246. I just\,</p> <p>247. end up paying,</p> <p>248. the tuition fees and everything,</p> <p>249. the enrollment and everything Q>,</p> <p>250. so=,</p> <p>251. I decided to study here/.</p>
---	--

In spite of the use of “but”, Sofía represents her mother’s advice as an indirect suggestion to discard MSU from her list of options (See constructed dialogue on Lines 231-238). Actually, in the story, the mother only points out that the two options would require an equivalent expense. It is Sofía’s character that voices that this fact was a reason in favor of choosing IUM, since this institution was located in the city where Sofía and her family lived (Lines 239-249). To understand why this consideration was estimated as relevant in the decision, it is necessary to

explain more about Mexican young people's social practices regarding leaving home for the first time and Sofia's family's prior history.

First of all, it is true that a relatively important number of Mexican young men and women leave their homes to pursue a college education. However, these cases are greatly outnumbered by those who choose a local college to stay with their parents whenever that is possible (De Garay-Sánchez, 2003). Moreover, in an analysis of the 2000 Encuesta Nacional de la Juventud (Youth National Survey), Oliveira and Mora-Salas (2008) emphasized the fact that only 4% of upper-middle class women and 1.9% of their male counterparts between 15 and 29 years of age had left their parents' home at the time of the survey. The percentage is even lower among working class youth. Since this trend is so strong, it is very likely that this social practice had a part in Sofia's mother suggestion.

Second, as mentioned in Chapter 4, Sofia's parents' decision to leave their life in the US behind had been strongly motivated by her desire to pursue a college education. They had decided to support Sofia's decision and return to their home country to prevent her leaving home prematurely (see Excerpt 29). After Sofia's parents took such measures to keep their family united, encouraging her to move to Capital City would have defeated their initial object.

Excerpt 29. Sofia explains why she decided to return to Mexico: Interview 4, May 16, 2014

Stanza 1

1. SOFIA: and I was like,
2. <Q So what I=,
3. what am I gonna plan,
4. I'm not gonna plan anything,
5. when I leave,
6. High School,
7. I'm gonna work in a McDonalds,
8. that's not what I want Q>,

Stanza 2

9. So I convinced my parents,
10. that I wanted to go back to Mexico,

11. I was fourteen at that time,
12. I remember,
13. fourteen,
14. fifteen,
15. leaving Middle School,

Stanza 3

16. And I was like,
17. <Q Please, I don't care,
18. I'll live with my grandparents,
19. I'll live with my aunt,
20. but I don't wanna be here,
21. I want to study university,

Stanza 4

22. I'm sorry,
23. but that's what I want,
24. and I,
25. and I'm not gonna get it here,
26. this is not my country,
27. this is simply not,
28. where I was born,
29. and I just accept that Q>

Stanza 5

30. And I know that Mexico is not,
31. the best,
32. you know,
33. it's like,
34. there aren't as many opportunities as
 here,

Stanza 6

35. A=nd,
36. there's a lot more poverty,
37. and it's harder,
38. and it's insecure,
39. and all the things,
40. that they had told me about Mexico,
41. that it's horrible,
42. etcetera, etcetera,

Stanza 7

43. But in the end,
44. I said,
45. <Q But that's where I was born,
46. and I have rights, there,
47. I might be poor,
48. but I have rights, after all Q>,
49. right now I have a different
 perspective,
50. right @@@,

((side comments about her perspective on
people's rights))

Stanza 8

51. SOFIA: Yeah,
52. they agreed,
53. and they said <Q Ok,
54. you know what,
55. well, this is what we'll do Q>

((Interview is interrupted at this point))

Stanza 9

56. we decided to come back,
57. a=nd, they came back with me,
58. actually,
59. yeah,

Therefore, since Sofía's parents were so invested in keeping their family together, it is possible that her mother had a more important influence in the young woman's decision than Sofia's story reveals. However, Sofía does not attribute her mother such a decisive role; instead, she places most of the agency of the decision on her own shoulders. This perception of the decision-making process is similar to the views presented in Leiliani's and Daniela's accounts, in which their parents were apparently effaced from the narrative. It seems that, for these teachers, positioning themselves as independent decision-makers was especially important to perform their

identities during the interviews. Regardless of this similarity, Sofía's story differs from the other stories in one special way.

From my own experience advising Mexican undergraduate students, I identified Sofía's investment in this search as rather unusual. Therefore, I requested her to elaborate on this process. As a response to my request, she expanded on this episode with the following passage:

Excerpt 30. Sofía elaborates on her search of an undergraduate program.

Stanza 1

1. AR: So,
2. what made you,
3. what motivated you to say,
4. <Q well,
5. I really have to look this up,
6. before I make a decision Q>

Stanza 2

7. SOFÍA: Because I=,
8. Umh,
9. (TSK)
10. when I said,
11. <Q I have to analyze my subjects Q>

Stanza 3

12. I mean,
13. I had already seen my experience in,
14. in high school,
15. when I idealized this,
16. profession,
17. that,
18. I didn't really analyzed,
19. that I was going to have programming,
20. that I was going to learn Excel,
21. really well,
22. and things that,
23. I just didn't,
24. really **care** about\,

Stanza 4

25. And I said,
26. <Q well,

27. I'm not gonna make the same mistake
again,
28. right? Q>

Stanza 5

29. So,
30. what happened was that,
31. when I started studying these
programs,
32. I said,
33. <Q I want to know what,
34. I'm going to do/Q>

Stanza 6

35. I mean,
36. <Q OK they give you this **mission**,
37. and they give you these **objectives**,
38. and you are going to become **this**,
39. and **this**,

Stanza 7

40. Ok/,
41. that sounds,
42. that all sounds really nice but,
43. what am I going to do,
44. in the classroom?
45. What am I going to learn exactly? Q>,

Stanza 8

46. So I analyzed the subjects,
47. I wanted to see,
48. exactly what,
49. I was going to have,
50. what I was going to study,

51. I got,
52. I really got,

Stanza 9

53. AR: [So, did you actually look it up?
54. For example],
55. did you know what linguistics was?

Stanza 10

56. SOFÍA: No,
57. but I,
58. I investigated,
59. I wanted to know,
60. so I said,
61. <Q Linguistics is the study of
language,
62. **O=h that's interesting Q**>

Stanza 11

63. And it,
64. and it caught my attention so,
65. I didn't really,
66. research it,
67. very,
68. profoundly or very,
69. intensively right? But,
70. I **did**,
71. research a little bit/,

Stanza 12

72. And I said
73. <Q **oh grammar**,
74. and I was always really good at
grammar,
75. when I was little,
76. over there in the States,

77. I loved,
78. my language classes Q>,

Stanza 13

79. And,
80. I always wanted to learn French,
81. and they had French here,
82. and I could have four,
83. four levels ((courses)) of French,
84. and four levels of Italian,
85. and I said,
86. <Q I'm going to learn other languages
too/ Q>...

Stanza 14

87. I said,
88. <Q that's it for me,
89. this is what I want Q>,
90. it just,
91. it interested me more,
92. than being a primary teacher,
93. for me,
94. it was like,
95. a lot more exciting,
96. than that,

Stanza 15

97. So that's why I said,
98. yeah,
99. I like the program,
100. I like the subjects,
101. I like that I'm going to learn,
102. this other thing,
103. that I really want to learn too,
104. so\.

In her response, Sofía attributed the intensity of her search to her initial disappointment with computer programming. She restated these events in two stanzas (Lines 12-28) concluding that she was not willing to make the same mistake twice. After this summary, Sofía attempted to construct her rationale in three parts and a conclusion. First, Sofía stressed that she did not take the information provided by the universities on face value as her comments suggest: “they give

you this mission . . . these objectives . . . , but what am I going to learn exactly?" (Lines 32-45).

In second place and prompted by my questions (Lines 53-55), Sofía dramatized her discovery of three areas of the plan of study that caught her attention (linguistics, grammar, and the additional language component). Sofía performed this dramatization using constructed dialogues that allowed the audience to follow the main character's train of thought while she appraises the plan of study (Lines 61-62, and 73-78):

61. <Q Linguistics is the study of language,

62. **O=h that's interesting Q>**

73. <Q **oh grammar,**

74. and I was always really good at grammar,

75. when I was little,

76. over there in the States,

77. I loved,

78. my language classes Q>,

Thirdly, Sofía reiterated that becoming a second language teacher would give her an edge that would be more interesting than being a generalist teacher (Lines 87-96). The strength of her conviction at this point is especially stressed by her use of a triumphant "that's it for me."

87. I said,

88. <Q that's it for me,

89. this is what I want Q>,

90. it just,

91. it interested me more,

92. than being a primary teacher,

93. for me,

94. it was like,

95. a lot more exciting,

96. than that,

Finally, she concluded her narrative with a stanza that emphasizes her satisfaction with the program. In this final section the verb "like" is used three times in parallel clauses: "I like the program, I like the subjects, I like that I'm going to learn this other thing" (Lines 99-101). With this final passage, Sofía concluded her episode after having established her position, not only as

an independent decision-maker, but especially as one who was well-informed and knew what she could expect from her program.

5.1.5 Betty's story: I always knew what I wanted to be.

Unlike the previous narratives, Betty's story did not pinpoint a specific moment in which the decision of becoming a teacher was made. Her account revolves around the idea of the influences of nature and nurture on her life choices. In Betty's view, these influences were always present in her life and led her to an early realization of what she wanted to become.

Excerpt 31. How Betty decided to enter the English program in Miranda.

1. AR: Uh,
2. which,
3. of all the things
4. that you told me,
5. which are the most relevant things,
6. that,
7. led you,
8. to become an English teacher?

Stanza 1

9. BETTY; Ok\,
10. I have discussed this,
11. with many of my students,
12. or people,
13. when they,
14. tell their stories,
15. about **how** they choose,
16. their degree,
17. or the career,
18. they want to follow\,

Stanza 2

19. A=nd,
20. it's fine because,
21. what catches my attention,
22. when I analyze the situation,
23. is that,
24. I always knew,
25. what I wanted to be,
26. it was like,
27. a natural process,

Stanza 3

28. **Maybe**,
29. it is because,
30. my grandmother,
31. and my great- grand mother,
32. are teachers,
33. they were,
34. Elementary school teachers,

Stanza 4

35. So my whole life,
36. I was involved,
37. with all this,
38. area,
39. and they told me stories about that,

Stanza 5

40. And then I discovered English,
41. and I discovered that I like it,
42. so maybe was like,
43. my natural,
44. instinct,
45. combined to,
46. (. .) the passion for languages\.

Listener's contribution

47. AR: But,
48. you,
49. somehow,
50. you were used to see people teaching,
51. probably you saw,
52. people in your family grading,

53. and being involved in teaching,

54. When you,

55. finished,

56. High School,

57. did you know,

58. that you were going to be,

59. an English teacher?

Stanza 6

60. BETTY: Yes,

61. yes,

62. because in middle school,

63. I had decided tha=t,

64. I wanted to study the English
language degree,

65. So=,

Stanza 7

66. In fact,

67. the decision,

68. I'm from Sotavento

69. and I moved to Miranda,

70. and the move,

71. that decision was,

72. because,

73. I knew the school,

74. in which I wanted to study so,

Stanza 8

75. I would have a,

76. continued line, ((there would be
certain continuity))

77. because it was the same school,

78. in which I ((was going to)) study high
school,

79. and then,

80. the college,

Stanza 9

81. So it was for me to get,

82. used to the environment,

83. and to the people,

84. because I already knew,

85. what I wanted to do.

Listener's contribution

86. AR: And why did you choose a
school,

87. in Miranda,

88. instead of,

89. going for example,

90. to Fuerteventura,

91. or,

92. choosing uh,

93. any of the uh,

94. the options,

95. that you have,

96. here in Sotavento?

Stanza 10

97. BETTY: Ok,

98. at **that** time,

99. I was more related to Fuerteventura,

100. but,

101. <@ the quality @>,

102. of the school,

103. in Fuenteeventura,

104. is not very good,

105. it doesn't have a very good
reputation,

Stanza 11

106. Also,

107. for comfortable ((practical)) reasons,

108. if I,

109. there was,

110. already a house,

111. a family house,

112. in Miranda,

Stanza 12

113. so it was easier for us,

114. all the family,

115. despite of being from Sotavento,

116. we,

117. my,

118. uncles,

119. my mom,

120. my dad,

121. all of them studied in Miranda.

122. AR: Ok.

Stanza 13

123. BETTY: And also,

124. one of my uncles,

125. he also studied,

126. in the same college,

127. that I studied.

128. AR: So there was some history,

129. BETTY: Uhuh.

In the story's first stanza (Lines 9 to 18), Betty warned the audience that the topic she was about to discuss was something she had pondered over and talked about with others in numerous occasions. In a way, she might be tacitly suggesting to me that I should not take her interpretation lightly because they were the result of well-rehearsed thinking. In other words, she had already told the same story before and compared it to other people's similar experiences.

Stanza 1

9. BETTY; Ok\
10. I have discussed this,
11. with many of my students,
12. or people,
13. when they,
14. tell their stories,
15. about **how** they choose,
16. their degree,
17. or the career,
18. they want to follow\

Stanza 2

19. A=nd,
20. it's fine because,
21. what catches my attention,
22. when I analyze the situation,
23. is that,
24. I always knew,
25. what I wanted to be,
26. it was like,
27. a natural process,

Furthermore, the second stanza reinforced this idea of careful premeditation. For example, when Betty actually introduced the controlling idea of her story ("I always knew what I wanted to be"), she did it in a rather indirect manner. She used a complex sentence where the main message is embedded as a relative clause and placed at the end. The lines that appear at the beginning (Lines 21-23) seem to delay the blow of the revelation and remind the audience that this conclusion is the product of extended analysis (Line 22). Betty closed this stanza with a final sentence that wraps up her message and connects it to the idea of the role that nature played in her decision (Lines 26-27).

The following two stanzas continue to align Betty's story to the master narrative of inherited and nurtured inclinations that are supposed to run in all families. Betty began this passage with a tentative "maybe" that is phonologically stressed (Line 28). However, her interpretation gains assertiveness as she argues that her "whole family" nurtured her interest in

teaching with their own career choices (her grandmother and great grandmother are told to have been teachers) and with their own stories (Lines 35-39). She closed this initial passage adding her specific interest in English, which is represented as a passion that she discovered on her own (Stanza 5).

Stanza 4

35. So my whole life,
36. I was involved,
37. with all this,
38. area,
39. and they told me stories about that,

Stanza 5

40. And then I discovered English,
41. and I discovered that I like it,
42. so maybe was like,
43. my natural,
44. instinct,
45. combined to,
46. (. .) the passion for languages\.

Following my request for further clarifications, Betty vaguely located her decision at some point during middle school. However, she did not narrate any specific event leading to her decision as her colleagues did. Instead, Betty moved on to provide details that seem to be brought up to reinforce the idea of her early certainty about her career choice (Lines 66-74). Therefore, the listener is told about Betty's move to Miranda as part of a well-thought out plan to prepare her to join the English program at IUM.

At this point of the story, a new intervention from the interviewer (Lines 86-96) prompted Betty to talk about how her education was connected to three different states in Mexico. Although Betty was born in Miranda (this fact is provided in her autobiography), because of her father's job, she spent part of her childhood in the Southern states of Fuerteventura and Sotavento. However, when it was time for her to begin high school, Betty used her family networks to begin moving up north. This decision was connected with the general negative views that most Mexicans hold about the education system in the Southern states. That this evaluation is shared by Betty is evident in Lines 97 to 105, where not only the statements but also the laughter quality on Line 101 confirm this interpretation.

Listener's contribution

86. AR: And why did you choose a
school,
87. in Miranda,

88. instead of,
89. going for example,
90. to Fuerteventura,
91. or,

92. choosing uh,
93. any of the uh,
94. the options,
95. that you have,
96. here in Sotavento?

Stanza 10

97. BETTY: Ok,
98. at **that** time,

99. I was more related to Fuerteventura,
100. but,
101. <@ the quality @>,
102. of the school,
103. in Fuenteventura,
104. is not very good,
105. it doesn't have a very good
reputation,

The last two stanzas of this story refer to the financial and social resources that facilitated Betty's move to Miranda. In a way, these details add another layer to Betty's representation of a career choice in which nurture played an important role. I would also add that social class and cultural capital are essential players in this story, even though it is likely that they were not consciously foregrounded by the teller.

Stanza 11

106. Also,
107. for comfortable ((practical)) reasons,
108. if I,
109. there was,
110. already a house,
111. a family house,
112. in Miranda,

118. uncles,
119. my mom,
120. my dad,
121. all of them studied in Miranda.

122. AR: Ok.

Stanza 12

113. so it was easier for us,
114. all the family,
115. despite of being from Sotavento,
116. we,
117. my,

Stanza 13

123. BETTY: And also,
124. one of my uncles,
125. he also studied,
126. in the same college,
127. that I studied.

On that score, it is here pertinent to note that moving away from the paternal home to pursue an education was not a central theme in any of the other stories in this section. This plan is only considered in Sofía's story but subsequently dismissed by the intervention of her mother. Moreover, in that representation of the events, Sofía did not question the wisdom of that decision. Actually, she approved the change of plans without reflecting on the pros and cons of the two programs beyond monetary considerations. On the contrary, Betty talks about a family-supported decision to move to another city right after she finished middle school.

54. AR: When you,
55. finished,
56. High School,
57. did you know,
58. that you were going to be,
59. an English teacher?

Stanza 6

60. BETTY: Yes,
61. yes,
62. because in middle school,
63. I had decided that,
64. I wanted to study the English
language degree,
65. So=,

Stanza 7

66. In fact,
67. the decision,
68. I'm from Sotavento
69. and I moved to Miranda,
70. and the move,

71. that decision was,
72. because,
73. I knew the school,
74. in which I wanted to study so,

Stanza 8

75. I would have a,
76. continued line, ((there would be
certain continuity))
77. because it was the same school,
78. in which I ((was going to)) study high
school,
79. and then,
80. the college,

Stanza 9

81. So it was for me to get,
82. used to the environment,
83. and to the people,
84. because I already knew,
85. what I wanted to do,

My request for more specific details about this event (Lines 54-59) led Betty to explain that her career decision at that young age had been supported by her having access to information (Lines 71-74) as well as a plan to help young Betty get used to a new environment (Stanza 9) and make her transition from high school to college less difficult (Stanza 8). Therefore, as Betty openly suggested, leaving her parent's home did not imply for her any discomfort or risk, since she lived with her grandmother during the seven years of her preparatory and college education. Once again, family networks provided the necessary resources to make Betty's plan possible.

5.2 The shock of the first weeks in the participants' English teacher education program and the NS ideal

The three students who made the least premeditated decisions (Leiliani, Daniela, and Adam) also had a stressful freshman year at IUM, during which they experienced self-doubts and fears of having chosen the wrong major. This emotional reaction was heightened by the additional stress of having instructors who were native speakers of a variety of English that was

unfamiliar to them. In the following section, I will present the three episodes that I have categorized as stories of shock in which the NS ideal plays an important role.

5.2.1 Leiliani's class panics in the first lesson with a NEST.

Excerpt 32 displays an episode in Leiliani's life history in which she realized that she could hardly understand the speech of one of her NES professors at the English program at IUM.

Excerpt 32. Leiliani's story of her first day of classes at IUM's English program.

1. AR: So,
2. The=/n,
3. you entered university/

4. LEILIANI: Yeah/

5. AR: And,
6. what are your memories,
7. of your experience,
8. as a college student?

Stanza 1

9. LEILIANI: <@ Well @>,
10. I remember,
11. very,
12. very clearly,
13. the first day of classes,
14. the first class,

Stanza 2

15. It was with an Australian teacher,
16. he started to speak,
17. and I said,
18. <Q Oh my God,
19. did I make the right decision? Q>,
20. I'm not understanding any single
word,
21. word from this man,
22. am I,
23. am I here,
24. did I make the correct decision? Q>,

Stanza 3

25. I was,
26. I was,
27. so= confused,
28. and scared,

29. and scared of the teacher,

Stanza 4

30. And then I realized that,
31. I was not,
32. the only one,
33. there were others,
34. who were like,
35. <Q U=h ((gasping)),
36. what is he saying? Q>,

Stanza 5

37. And then we talked to the principal
((Mario)),
38. and we said,
39. <Q Is it because the teacher?
40. uh,
41. uh,
42. maybe we're not in the correct,
43. in the correct,
44. uh,
45. degree,
46. or the correct major,
47. because we,
48. we didn't understand the teacher Q>,

Stanza 6

49. And he said <Q Ok,
50. come on,
51. take it easy,
52. it's the first hour,
53. the first day,
54. the first class,
55. so you don't have to,
56. to,
57. to be scared of,
58. of the major Q>,

Listener's contribution

59. AR: And a,
60. before that teacher,
61. had you ever had a native,
62. speaker of English,
63. before,
64. as a teacher?

Stanza 7

65. LEILIANI: Just a teacher from USA,
66. and it was in the institute,
67. where I started studying,
68. English,
69. and that's all,
70. that was the first,

71. the first,
72. native teacher,
73. that I had.

Listener's contribution

74. AR: And only one case.

Stanza 8

75. LEILIANI: Yes,
76. yes,
77. so=,
78. for me,
79. it was the first time,
80. that a ma=n,
81. native speaker,
82. was a teacher for me\.

When prompted to produce a story of her college years, Leiliani immediately responded with an episode of her first impressions in the program. This narrative is filled with emotional expressions of fear, confusion, and self-doubt, just as in the other cases that will be presented in this chapter:

- Expressions of surprise embedded in constructed dialogues: “Oh my God” (Line 18), “U=h ((gasping))” (Line 35)
- Questions about having chosen the right program that repeated several times: “Did I make the right decision” (Lines 19, 24, 42-45).
- Direct allusions to fear: “I was confused, scared” (Lines 25-29)

However, a couple of things are unique in this episode. First of all, Leiliani emphasizes that her reactions to an Australian professor were shared by most of her colleagues.

Stanza 4

30. And then I realized that,
31. I was not,
32. the only one,
33. there were others,
34. who were like,
35. <Q U=h ((gasping)),
36. what is he saying? Q>,

In fact, the anxiety was so high among the members of Leiliani's cohort that some of them decided to talk to the head of the program. The repeated use of *we* (see underlined words below) in this passage reveals that Leiliani was part of this group and that they all shared her fears at not being able to understand every word uttered by their instructor:

Stanza 5

37. And then we talked to the principal ((Mario)),
38. and we said,
39. <Q Is it because the teacher?
40. uh,
41. uh,
42. maybe we're not in the correct,
43. in the correct,
44. uh,
45. degree,
46. or the correct major,
47. because we,
48. we didn't understand the teacher Q>,

A second aspect of this story that makes it different from the other two accounts showcased in this section has to do with Leiliani's interpretation of why this experience was so shocking for her. I requested Leiliani to specify if, previous to this moment in her life, she had contact with other NESTs. In her response she added a gender consideration that I was not expecting:

Stanza 7

65. LEILIANI: Just a teacher from USA,
66. and it was in the institute,
67. where I started studying,
68. English,
69. and that's all,
70. that was the first,
71. the first,
72. native teacher,
73. that I had.

Listener's contribution

74. AR: And only one case.

Stanza 8

75. LEILIANI: Yes,
76. yes,
77. so=,
78. for me,
79. it was the first time,
80. that a ma=n,
81. native speaker,
82. was a teacher for me

When Leiliani was required to specify how familiar she was with native speakers' speech, not only did she stress the fact that she was not familiar with the instructor's dialect, but also mentioned with the emphasis of an elongated vowel that he was a man (Line 80). It seems

that in Leiliani's memories, the fact that her new professor was not of the same gender of her first American teacher and her own made him even more intimidating.

5.2.2 Daniela's shocking first day: A different view of the same event.

At this point, it is necessary to mention that Leiliani and Daniela were part of the same class during their freshman year. Therefore, the episode that will follow is a second version of the same event expressed in the previous sub-section. The reader will be able to note that the two stories take a somewhat different direction. The episode that follows starts at the same point Daniela ended her decision-making process:

Excerpt 33. Daniela's story of her first day of classes at IUM's English program.

1. DANIELA: <Q So I am going to choose this,
2. because I like English language and,
3. I want to learn more,
4. so Q>.

5. AR: But you knew some English,
6. by this time ((when Daniela started her bachelor degree at IUM))..

Stanza 1

7. DANIELA: I don't know,
8. I,
9. I'm not quite sure,
10. I thought,
11. <MRC that I knew some MRC>,
12. English,
13. but when I started,
14. I realized that,
15. I was able to,
16. read,
17. and to understand some words,
18. but it was really difficult,
19. because I didn't have,
20. a good level.

Stanza 2

21. AR: Do you have a memory,
22. of your first day of classes?
23. Can you tell me the story of that?

24. DANIELA: [Yes, of course, of course]

Stanza 3

25. Yes it was uh,
26. I was shocked,
27. because,
28. I realized that,
29. most of my classmates,
30. knew about the language,
31. and they were able to communicate,
32. and I could understand some words,
33. but I wasn't able to communicate,

Stanza 4

34. And,
35. we had an Australian teacher,
36. and it was the first day,
37. and he started to talk about the,
38. options that we had to,
39. get the diploma,
40. and it was,
41. awful,
42. because I didn't understand,
43. many of the things that he was saying,

Stanza 5

44. His accent was,
45. new for me,
46. it was the first time that,

47. I had the opportunity to,
 48. listen to an Australian person,
 49. and,
 50. he was saying,
 51. I don't know,
 52. maybe,
 53. I don't,
 54. I don't remember the exact words,

Stanza 6
 55. But he was saying something like,
 56. Monday,
 57. or everyday ((/mɒn.dai/, /ɛ.vri.dai/)),
 58. and I was asking,
 59. <Q Who's gonna die?
 60. Oh my Gosh,
 61. who's gonna die? Q>.

Although Daniela and Leiliani refer to the same event, their memories are narrated in a very different way. While Leiliani's story (analyzed in the previous subsection) presents a generalized panic, Daniela, being consistent with her more intimate and minimalist narrative style, chooses to express in fewer intonation units the story of her personal shock.

The narrative of this episode was preceded by my question regarding Daniela's previous knowledge of English when she started her studies at IUM's program. Her response was not as optimistic as I expected, considering the fact that she had attended a private English institute when she was a teenager (Excerpt 2, p. 180).

5. AR: But you knew some English,
 6. by this time ((when Daniela started her bachelor degree at IUM)).
 7. DANIELA: I don't know,
 8. I,
 9. I'm not quite sure,
 10. I thought,
 11. <MRC that I knew some MRC>,

12. English,
 13. but when I started,
 14. I realized that,
 15. I was able to,
 16. read,
 17. and to understand some words,
 18. but it was really difficult,
 19. because I didn't have,
 20. a good level.

Daniela began her response by implying that, in retrospect, she was not so certain that her proficiency level was so good at the time. Her cautious "I thought that I knew some English" (on Lines 10-12) spread throughout three intonation units and the marcato speech (stressing each word) on Line 11 suggest that Daniela was taking some time to figure out how she could respond to my question. Following Daniela's hesitant beginning, the contrast introduced on Line 13 ("but when I started") opens the revelation of Daniela's disappointment on her English proficiency

when she started the program. This was the information bit that finally led into the narrative of her first day at IUM.

At this point, Leiliani's and Daniela's stories differed in two main details. First of all, while Leiliani remembered the same event as a collective experience of panic, Daniela narrated her experience focusing on her disappointment at not being able to understand the instructor. Second, Leiliani mentioned that her classmates were equally puzzled as she was and as a consequence they requested a meeting with the head of the program. On the contrary, Daniela represents her classmates as more proficient and confident (Lines 30-32), while she is described as not "able to communicate" (Line 34). Daniela refers to this realization as "shocking" and to the experience of not being able to understand her instructor as "awful" (Line 42). The visit to Mario's office is not mentioned in this story, probably because Daniela did not take part in that conversation:

Stanza 3

26. Yes it was uh,
27. I was shocked,
28. because,
29. I realized that,
30. most of my classmates,
31. knew about the language,
32. and they were able to communicate,
33. and I could understand some words,
34. but I wasn't able to communicate,

Stanza 4

35. And,
36. we had an Australian teacher,
37. and it was the first day,
38. and he started to talk about the,
39. options that we had to,
40. get the diploma,
41. and it was,
42. awful,
43. because I didn't understand
44. many of the things that he was saying,

Stanza 5

45. His accent was,
46. new for me,
47. it was the first time that,
48. I had the opportunity to,
49. listen to an Australian person,
50. and,
51. he was saying,
52. I don't know,
53. maybe,
54. I don't,
55. I don't remember the exact words,

Stanza 6

56. but he was saying something like,
57. Monday,
58. or everyday ((/mɒn.dai/, /ɛ.vri.dai/)),
59. and I was asking,
60. <Q Who's gonna die?
61. Oh my Gosh,
62. Who's gonna die? Q?>

Instead of mentioning what others felt or said about the first lesson with the Australian instructor, Daniela chose to provide her audience with an imaginary internal monologue that

showed her confusion (Stanza 6). It is obvious that Daniela was not really quoting verbatim what her instructor said. She admitted that she could not remember the exact words (Lines 52-53). However, the imaginary passage accomplishes its purpose effectively. It closes the story positioning Daniela as a shocked L2 learner unable to comprehend an unfamiliar variety of the target language.

5.2.3 It was completely different: How Adam describes his first weeks in the program.

Adam is the only participant who openly talked about a shock during the first days in the program in his autobiography. He did so in his usually dramatic style:

Excerpt 34. Adam's story of his first day at IUM as recorded in his autobiography.

1. To be perfectly honest, the first weeks were a total nightmare because there had been almost
 2. two years without studying English properly. In fact, I did not understand any class
 3. because I was not used to different accents of native English speakers. At university,
 4. I had teachers that were from Canada, the USA, England, Australia, and even Mexican
 5. teachers with an excellent language production, so that I had to get used to listening to all
 6. speech styles and accents. At first, I considered that it was not "my world"; I thought that
 7. I had chosen the incorrect degree, but then I encouraged myself to not feel suppressed or
 8. defeated, and I worked hard by all means. Because of the positive motivation, I realized
 9. that I was doing the right thing, and that I truly wanted to be successful whether as
 10. a teacher, translator or interpreter.
-

As in Leiliani's story, Excerpt 34 shows that Adam also experienced shock and fears of having chosen the wrong major. These feelings are maximized by his use of a metaphor ("a nightmare"), modifiers ("to be perfectly honest", "a total nightmare"), and an open avowal of Adam's fears ("I thought I had chosen the incorrect degree"). However, the details of what exactly happened during those first weeks are lost in this passage. On the contrary, Adam's oral narrative of the same event elaborates on this initial rendition adding a few circumstantial details and a considerable amount of evaluations. Before proceeding to the story, it should be here noted

that the instructor Adam is referring to in this episode is not the same one featured in Leiliani and Daniela's story.

Excerpt 35. Adam's story of her first day of classes at IUM's English program as told during interview 1.

1. AR: And well,
2. you entered,
3. the degree,
4. and you mentioned,
5. in your story that,
6. at first you were shocked.

7. ADAM: Yes.

8. AR: Can you,
9. elaborate a bit more about that,
10. first year experience of,
11. getting all your subjects in English?

Stanza 1

12. ADAM: Yes @@@@,
13. that was really difficult\,
14. the first week was,
15. difficult for me,
16. because,
17. well it's university,
18. the teachers are completely different from,
19. uh,
20. junior high,
21. and high school,

Stanza 2

22. But basically,
23. because in the second hour\,
24. the first day\,
25. Well/ actually I arrived late,
26. the first day of classes because,
27. there was a big storm,
28. Ok\,

Stanza 3

29. It was terrible because,
30. I don't like,
31. being late,
32. I,
33. I always want to be on time,

34. in my classes you know,
35. anywhere\,

Stanza 4

36. So I arrived late and,
37. the second,
38. class I took that day,
39. uh was with,
40. a teacher who was from,
41. Australia,
42. (H) and it was Grammar\,

Stanza 5

43. And I had,
44. I hadn't been studying English for,
45. a year and a half,
46. or more than a year and a half,

Stanza 6

47. Because I can say that the,
48. the last semester,
49. we had English class,
50. since we were in the advanced level,
51. the teachers was just like,
52. <Q Ok,
53. open your book,
54. page 45,
55. and 46,
56. do= the Workbook activities,
57. and we check it at the end\ Q>,
58. that was the class,
59. for advanced levels,

Stanza 7

60. And it was li-,
61. it was uh,
62. monotonous,
63. it was boring,
64. completely boring because,
65. I didn't learn anything in that,
66. last semester,
67. and,

68. and then,
69. I started French\,
70. so\,
71. **im**agine.

Listener's contribution

72. AR: But with your Grammar professor;
73. things were different,

Stanza 8

74. ADAM: (H) It was completely different,
75. because,
76. actually,
77. I never cared about grammar,
78. even though I was good at grammar,
79. I never,
80. uh,
81. I didn't have in my mind like,
82. <Q Oh Grammar,
83. perfect,
84. excellent Q>,

Stanza 9

85. I had forgotten everything,
86. for,
87. I had,
88. I hadn't used English for,
89. almost two years,

Stanza 10

90. So\,
91. when I arrived,
92. in that second hour,
93. the teacher,
94. the Australian teacher arrived,
95. and he was,
96. talking,
97. and I said,
98. <Q What is he saying?
99. In what language is he speaking? Q>
100. @ @ @ ,

101. AR: [@ @ @ @ @]

Stanza 11

102. ADAM: I didn't know,
103. I didn't understand at all,
104. his name was Mark ((pseudonym)) ,
105. @ @ @ ,

106. and it was like,

Stanza 12

107. Actually he was an excellent teacher,
108. once the semester uh,
109. went by,
110. but it was di=fficult at first,
111. because,
112. uh,
113. he focused on,
114. since this,
115. English Grammar,
116. since it was,
117. English Grammar is,
118. <Q What is a noun?
119. What is a verb? Q>,

Stanza 13

120. I think his strategy was really good,
121. he only wrote uh,
122. well,
123. during those first topics,
124. he wrote on the white board,
125. uh,
126. for example,
127. noun,
128. and started,
129. <Q What is a noun? Q>,
130. and everybody was like,
131. <Q A noun? Q>,

Stanza 14

132. I didn't have,
133. a piece of idea of that,
134. anything,
135. I didn't know,
136. what was a noun,
137. what was a verb,
138. no no no,
139. nothing,

Stanza 15

140. (H) I didn't understand,
141. my uh listening,
142. skill was also,
143. obviously,
144. left behind for a long time,
145. (H) and didn't understand everything\,

Stanza 16

146. And I felt,
147. uh,
148. in the second day,
149. I was like,
150. <Q I think,
151. this is not for me Q>,
152. @@@,

Stanza 17

153. I felt really stressed,
154. shocked,
155. and,
156. frustrated,
157. because,
158. I really wanted to be in there,

Stanza 18

159. I said <Q well,
160. speaking in English is something
really good,
161. learning English,
162. acquiring English,
163. is excellent,
164. it will be useful,
165. in the future,
166. so,
167. I'm in the right place Q> but,

Stanza 19

168. But,
169. uh,
170. with those classes I felt like,
171. <Q No,
172. this is not for me\ Q>,

Stanza 20

173. (H) I tried to,
174. encourage myself,
175. and with the,
176. the new friends,
177. that I had made in the moment,
178. uh,
179. everybody was like,
180. <Q No,
181. I didn't understand either,
182. don't worry,
183. it's because his accent Q>,
184. and,
185. everything was solved,
186. during a week,

Stanza 21

187. I think we got used to his accent,
188. a=nd,
189. I also thought,
190. well,
191. he's not the only teacher,
192. we have,
193. more teachers in here,

Stanza 22

194. A=nd,
195. when I= met,
196. a teacher who,
197. who was from London,
198. I said,
199. <Q@ Nah,
200. She has a **beautiful** pronunciation
@Q>
201. she has an excellent accent,
202. so,
203. I can understand,

Stanza 23

204. U=h,
205. and obviously,
206. with the Mexican teachers,
207. I felt like,
208. <Q Ok,
209. I understand a little bit more Q>
because,
210. those were the models I had,
211. when I was uh,
212. in high school\,

Stanza 24

213. So=,
214. during the first semester,
215. that was the problem,
216. uh during the first week,
217. the problem was the accent,
218. getting used to the accent,
219. but then,
220. I think that I=,

Stanza 25

221. . . Well,
222. I did a good job
223. @@@@,
224. I improved,
225. my= skills a little bit\.

If this story were to be analyzed by focusing on the actions of the first day of classes, it would not offer a great deal of narrative material to discuss. The narrative clauses are, in fact, so scarce and repetitive in this episode that the whole passage could be reduced to four clauses:

- a. I arrived late.
- b. The instructor arrived.
- c. He talked.
- d. I didn't understand anything he said.

In spite of this apparent simplicity, the episode becomes convoluted and emotional by virtue of diverse narrative strategies. Since the very first line, which opens the story with nervous laughter (Line 12), Adam narrated his experience with evaluative lines and additional stories embedded in the episode. For instance, Lines 43-66 tell a story about Adam's English classes during his junior year at high school (e.g. Lines 43-66) and Lines 76-89 evaluate Adam's views about the study of grammar at the time he was a high school student. The repeated use of negatives ("I never cared about grammar", "I didn't have in my mind") stress the evaluative force of the passage.

Stanza 5
 43. And I had,
 44. I hadn't been studying English for,
 45. a year and a half,
 46. or more than a year and a half,

Stanza 6
 47. Because I can say that the,
 48. the last semester,
 49. we had English class,
 50. since we were in the advanced level,
 51. the teachers was just like,
 52. <Q Ok,
 53. open your book,
 54. page 45,
 55. and 46,
 56. do= the Workbook activities,

57. and we check it at the end\ Q>,
 58. that was the class,
 59. for advanced levels,

Stanza 7
 60. And it was li-
 61. it was uh,
 62. monotonous,
 63. it was boring,
 64. completely boring because,
 65. I didn't learn anything in that,
 66. last semester,

.....

Stanza 8
 76. actually,
 77. I never cared about grammar,

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| 78. even though I was good at grammar, | |
| 79. I never, | Stanza 9 |
| 80. uh, | 85. I had forgotten everything, |
| 81. I didn't have in my mind like, | 86. for, |
| 82. <Q Oh Grammar, | 87. I had, |
| 83. perfect, | 88. I hadn't used English for, |
| 84. excellent Q>, | 89. almost two years, |

These stanzas are used by Adam for different rhetorical purposes, such as justifying his reactions or emphasizing a contrast. This story-embeddedness and profusion of evaluations is typical in Adam's narrative style, especially when dealing with delicate issues. These features hint at the fact that the memories presented in this episode are still charged with emotions.

As a dominant theme, Adam advanced the idea that his lack of familiarity with the Australian English variety was his main problem during his first week at IUM. Although it is hard to believe that the whole situation was actually solved in a week, the main idea here is that the anxiety level was lowered and the student-teacher gradually got used to the instructors' speech. In fact, in other parts of the interview, Adam referred to an adjusting period of about a month, not a week. Regardless of this fuzzy representation of time, Adam attributes his shock to the instructor's speech (Lines 90-100: "What is he saying? In what language in he speaking?" /213-220: "During the first week, the problem was the accent") and his own limited listening skills (Lines 140-145). The linguistic analysis of this stanza shows that the memory evoked strong feelings to judge by Adam's frequent and sonorous inhalation (Lines 140 and 145) and the adverb used on Line 143 to emphasize how evident his low listening skills were at the time. This same sentiment was reiterated a year later in my last interview with him, when he talked about the language skills he still needed to work on, as will be explained in Chapter 7.

- Stanza 15
- 140. (H) I didn't understand,
 - 141. my uh listening,
 - 142. skill was also,
 - 143. obviously,
 - 144. left behind for a long time,
 - 145. (H) and didn't understand everything\,

Table 13. Crisis and solution in Adam's story about his first weeks at his BA program

Stanza No.	Topical Passages	Summary of the content	Linguistic details
16	Crisis	Adam doubts about his choice of major	<Q I think, this is not for me Q> @@@
17		Adam's distress at realizing his inability to understand English	I felt really stressed, shocked, and, frustrated,
19		Reprise of the defeatist theme	<No, This is not for me Q>
18	Solution of the problem	Reasoning that learning English was a worthy endeavor	<Q Acquiring English, will be useful, so, I'm in the right place Q>
20		Finding out that other classmates were facing the same challenges	Everybody was like, <Q No, I didn't understand either, don't worry Q>,
21		Getting used to the instructor's idiolect	I think I got used to his accent,
22		Meeting other instructors he could understand with less difficulty	I said, <Q @ Nah, She has a beautiful pronunciation @ Q>
23			With the Mexican teachers, I felt like, <Q Ok, I understand a little bit more Q>
24	Conclusion	Summary of the problems	So= during the first semester, that was the problem,
25		Evaluating his success at overcoming the challenge	I did a good job @@@ I improved,

Nevertheless, Adam's low proficiency is not the only problem highlighted in Adam's narrative. He also considered all the following issues by means of small stories and incidental comments embedded in the episode:

- a. The disparity between secondary and postsecondary education (Lines 12-21)
- b. The additional stress derived from Adam's late arrival on the first day of classes (Lines 29-35).
- c. The inherent difficulty of grammar and Adam's indifference towards the subject at the time (Lines 42, 76-84).
- d. A hiatus in Adam's English learning during his junior and senior years at high school (Lines 43-71; 85-89).

Considering these factors, Adam's interpretation seems to prevent the possible judgments coming from his audience and positions the teller as now removed from his extreme reactions at the time. Once these mitigating circumstances were presented, Adam proceeded by introducing two distinct topical passages that I interpreted as the crisis and solution of the story. In this way he concluded the narrative by turning it into a story of success. Table 13 shows how this was accomplished displaying the contents and some samples of the linguistic details used to support Adam's point.

It is worth-noting that in the stanza 23 (see Table 13), Adam mentioned his NNEST at IUM with a seemingly positive remark. In this stanza, the non-native instructors' speech is set in contrast with that of the Australian instructor and described as intelligible. Thus, the NNESTs seem to be placed in the story as a factor that reduced Adam's anxiety and as part of his rationale to stay in the program. In the second interview, however, I observed that Adam's memories of his classmates' perceptions about NNESTs –and possibly Adam's own opinion at the time –were not totally positive:

Excerpt 36. Adam's classmates' views regarding the NNESTs in his undergraduate program.

1. AR: [All right],
2. and,
3. other than that,
4. what's your experience with,
5. native speakers as teachers,

6. ADAM: Umh,
7. the problem is,
8. that the only experience that I have had,
9. with uh,
10. with native teachers,
11. was,
12. when I was at university,

13. AR: Umh-hum,
14. can you,
15. just elaborate a little bit?

Stanza 1

16. ADAM: It was,
17. it was really good,
18. as I told you last time,
19. well,
20. the first day was like,
21. (H), very shocking for me because,
22. an Australian teacher,
23. a new accent,
24. and then a difficult topic,
25. uh,
26. well a difficult subject,

Stanza 2

27. And then,
28. trying to,
29. understand the,
30. my English teacher,
31. who was uh,
32. from,
33. London,
34. she was from London,
35. so we were like
36. <Q (H),
37. how can I understand but,

Stanza 3

38. The time,

39. went by,
40. and we cou-,
41. we were able to understand their accents,
42. and I think that,
43. it was really good,
44. uh,

Listener's contribution

45. AR: As a learning experience,
46. was it good for you?

47. ADAM: It was really good,

Stanza 4

48. A=nd,
49. most of my= classmates,
50. used to,
51. but I don't want to say hate but,
52. they didn't use to like uh,
53. umh,
54. Mexican teachers,
55. and their personal pronunciation,
56. and the pronunciation we all,
57. we all have,
58. and giving an,
59. an English class,
60. so just a few,
61. teachers we had in there.

Listener's contribution

62. AR: What do you think about that?

Stanza 5

63. ADAM: Now that I'm a teacher I say,
64. well,
65. I think they were wrong,
66. because,
67. the pronunciation,
68. well,
69. for me,
70. pronunciation is not,
71. is something that,
72. cannot stop your learning,
73. or your students' u=h,
74. learning process,
75. that's not the important thing,

Stanza 6

76. The important thing is that,

77. they ((the students))actually acquire
the

78. language, in the best way possible . . .

This additional passage adds a contrasting layer to the NNEST theme introduced in the previous narrative episode. While the first-day story briefly mentioned NNEST's speech as intelligible, their pronunciation is labeled as dispreferred by Adam's colleagues in this second episode. The revelation of this information did not come out easily for the teller. The language used in the passage reveals that Adam was aware of the existing tensions between this opinion and his own identity as a NNEST. The fact that the interviewer is also a NNEST only added difficulty to the presentation of this part of Adam's experience. The linguistic details that support this interpretation are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Linguistic strategies used by Adam that show his awareness of the existing tensions between his linguistic background and the NS ideal.

Linguistic devices	Examples
Personal pronouns and possessives that establish a distinction between Adam's opinion and that of his former classmates	48. A=nd, 49. <u>most of my= classmates</u> , 52. <u>they</u> didn't use to like uh,
Use of several regulatory intonation units that imply ongoing cognitive processes (well, a=nd, umh)	53. umh, 54. Mexican teachers, and their personal pronunciation
Use of hedging	51. <u>but I don't want to say hate</u> but,
Personal pronouns that include the teller in the same category of his former NNESTs.	56. and the pronunciation <u>we all</u> , 57. <u>we all have</u> , 58. and giving an, 59. an English class, 60. so just a few, 61. teachers we had in there.
Downplaying the role of pronunciation	63. ADAM: Now that I'm a teacher I say, 64. well, 65. I think they were wrong, 66. because,

67. the pronunciation,
 68. well,
 69. for me,
 70. pronunciation is not,
 71. is something that,
 72. cannot stop your learning,
 73. or your students' u=h,
 74. learning process,
 75. that's not the important thing,
-

Therefore, Adam's choice of words seems to have been influenced by a consideration of the tensions implicit in his classmates' dislike of NNESTs and the fact that they all, including Adam, were also nonnative speakers of English. (Lines 51-61). Finally, in his response to my question about his opinion about his classmates' preferences, Adam addressed this tension more directly by downplaying the role of the instructor's pronunciation in a learner's L2 development. This same opinion emerged several times in other interviews with the same participant.

5.3 Not ready to teach: The first teaching experience

As mentioned in previous chapters, the economic and social conditions in Mexico allow for a premature insertion of uncertified English student-teachers in the workforce. This was the experience of some of the participants in this study who sought and found a teaching position before starting their practicum. By contrast, other pre-service teachers at IUM decide not to commit to a full-term contract in a private school. These students can still fulfill the practicum requirement by teaching a few lessons at IUM basic (pre-K, elementary, and secondary school) and preparatory (high school) education division. In any case, once IUM student-teachers reach their junior year, they are all assigned a practicum supervisor that observes them while teaching a few sample lessons and provides feedback on their work. If the student-teachers are observed in a class where they are not the actual teacher, the student also receives feedback from the in-service teacher in charge of the class. Finally, those students who do not face a full or part-time teaching experience during their practicum often end up teaching for real during their mandatory social

service period. This period can take place during the students' senior year or after they have finished their coursework.

In this section, I will discuss the first teaching experience of three of the participants that instantiate the different modes of professional initiation described above. In first place, I will introduce Sofía's story as an example of a first time experience without the support of a practicum supervisor. The second story will display an example of a supervised practicum experience. Finally, the last story will narrate a full-time teaching experience in the context of service-like experience.

5.3.1 "I decided to change": Sofía makes sense of her first teaching experience.

Sofía tells her story of her premature experience in an episode that does not follow the format of a classic narrative quite strictly. Instead of listing a substantial succession of actions, Sofía presents a few narrative clauses enriched with evaluative comments. These comments function as arguments that show that something needed to change in the novice teacher in order to transform her into an effective educator.

Excerpt 37. Sofía's first teaching experience during her junior year at IUM.

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. AR: And during those four years, | Stanza 2 |
| 2. that you were in college, | 15. U=h, |
| 3. was there any moment of crisis, | 16. because I knew what I wanted, |
| 4. in which you said, | 17. and, |
| 5. <O\h, | 18. I went for it, |
| 6. I don't think, | 19. I started and everything, |
| 7. this is what I wante=d | 20. but, |
| 8. probably I should change> | |
| 9. Did you ever have such a crisis? | Stanza 3 |
| | 21. When we got to fifth semester, |
| 10. SOFÍA: Yeah, I did. | 22. precisely, |
| | 23. when I started working, |
| 11. AR: What led you to that crisis? | 24. and then I think, |
| | 25. we had practicum in seventh semester, |
| Stanza 1 | 26. I believe. |
| 12. SOFÍA: It wasn't at the beginning, | |
| 13. it was, | Stanza 4 |
| 14. during practicum, | 27. (H) |
| | 28. The problem was that I=, |

29. I discovered,
30. that,
31. theory is not practice,
32. <@ Right? @>

33. AR @@@

Stanza 5

34. SOFÍA: So I was like,
35. <Q Ok,
36. this is a bit harder than I thou/ght Q>,

Stanza 6

37. And you need to have a lot of
 patience,
38. and I was younge\r,
39. and I was not very patient,
40. and I was not,

Stanza 6

41. I'm not saying that I am mature,
42. or anything,
43. but I was,
44. not very **mature**,
45. then,
46. I'm certain,
47. so,

Stanza 7

48. I thought,
49. <Q what am I going to do/?
50. @@@@,
51. I don't have the patience or,
52. not so much,
53. right? Q>,

Stanza 8

54. But,
55. what happened,
56. was that I said,
57. <Q Well, I'm already here,
58. I'm already,
59. halfway through this,

60. this is what I wanted,

Stanza 9

61. So,
62. either I= drop ou/t,
63. or I follow what I want,
64. and just,
65. I'm gonna have to change,
66. certain things about **me**,
67. in order to be able to do this Q>,

Stanza 10

68. So I decided to,
69. change certain things about **me**,
70. in my attitude,
71. and the way I am,
72. and my habits,

Stanza 11

73. So=,
74. I changed these aspects,
75. of my life in order to,
76. be a little bit more patient,
77. to learn to help people,
78. follow their on step,

Stanza 12

79. Because they all,\
80. each student has their own,
81. their own step ((pace)),
82. their own way of,
83. thinking,
84. and doing things,
85. so I just had to do that,

Stanza 13

86. But it took me a while,
87. it didn't happened over night,
88. and still,
89. hasn't finished,
90. right?
91. It's probably something that,
92. will continue to develop.

This story was told as part of the first interview. I asked Sofía if she had reached a moment of crisis during her pre-service years that made her question her career choice. For that reason, the teller uses the first three stanzas to fit her storytelling into that frame. Once that

mission is accomplished, Sofía introduces an idea that seems to summarize the main point of the episode in one phrase: “theory is not practice” (Line 31). In spite of what this provocative assumption may suggest, the story that follows does not contradict any specific theoretical principle. What it actually does is referring to how a student-teacher discovered a few theoretical principles through practice.

Building on the opposition between theory and practice, Sofía introduces an evaluative comment of the whole experience by saying: “it was harder than I thought” (Line 36). Right after this statement, the teller steps out of the story-world and explains the situation. In this way, Sofía argues that her initial shock was due to her youthful lack of patience (Lines 37-47). This argument is followed by a second narrative passage in which the main character sustains an internal dialogue (Lines 54-67). Sofía places herself debating whether she should drop out or continue with the program regardless of the difficulties she had encountered:

Stanza 8
 54. But,
 55. what happened,
 56. was that I said,
 57. <Q Well, I'm already here,
 58. I'm already,
 59. halfway through this,
 60. this is what I wanted,

Stanza 9
 61. So,
 62. either I= drop ou/t,
 63. or I follow what I want,
 64. and just,
 65. I'm gonna have to change,
 66. certain things about **me**,

67. in order to be able to do this Q>,

Stanza 10
 68. So I decided to,
 69. change certain things about **me**,
 70. in my attitude,
 71. and the way I am,
 72. and my habits,

Stanza 11
 73. So=,
 74. I changed these aspects,
 75. of my life in order to,
 76. be a little bit more patient,
 77. to learn to help people,
 78. follow their on step,

In this way, the story presents the main character solving her problems out of sheer determination after she assessed her situation. The solution to her dilemma is announced on Line 73 with an elongated *so* that dramatically introduces Sofía's conclusion. The problem, as Sofía assesses it in this story, was not in her circumstances but was within her attitude and her lack of awareness of learners' individual differences (Lines 73-78). She closes this episode by arguing

that the referred changes were more easily said than done: “But it took me a while, it didn’t happened overnight, and still, hasn’t finished”. The last two lines seek for the listener’s approval and close the story with a statement regarding teachers’ learning as a life-long endeavor: “It’s probably something that will continue to develop.”

As I mentioned before, the expression “theory is not practice” seemingly suggests that Sofía’s previous knowledge of teaching fell short to help her when facing real students. However, this idea was revised later on, when I asked for more details of this experience:

Excerpt 38. Sofía provides more details about her first month at her first teaching job.

1. AR: And,
2. can you tell me,
3. a little bit more,
4. or more specific details of,
5. the story of your first class,
6. during your practicum?
7. SOFÍA: During my practicum?
8. AR: Yeah, what was...
9. SOFÍA: [Or when I started] working?
10. AR: No,
11. your practicum,
12. what was so frustrating about it?,
13. that made you think,
14. <Q Oh this is <CRK not CRK>>,
15. what I have to do Q>.

Stanza 1

16. SOFÍA: Well,
17. the thing was,
18. the thing is,
19. that my first job,
20. **was** my practicum,

Stanza 2

21. Because professor Rodríguez ((pseudonym)),
22. was my teacher,
23. and she . .
24. I asked for permission,

25. Since I was already working in a school,
26. I asked for permission,
27. if that could be my practicum,
28. environment,
29. and she said yes,

Stanza 3

30. So,
31. I remember that
32. . . . I don't remember my first,
33. first **class**,

Stanza 4

34. But what I **do** remember,
35. of my first month,
36. there,
37. was that is was just,

Stanza 5

38. They were children,
39. primary children,
40. and,
41. they were between the ages of five,
42. and seven,
43. and they were mixed levels,
44. no,
45. between the ages of five and eight,
46. and they were mixed level students,

Stanza 6

47. And it was just,
48. I didn't know what to do,

49. I didn't know,
50. **how** to maintain discipline in the classroom,
51. I didn't know,
52. how to help the children,
53. pay attention,
54. so=

Stanza 7

55. I really didn't know,
56. how to handle the situation,
57. because they were little,

Stanza 8

58. They were little children,
59. so,
60. of course,
61. they need different activities,
62. every five minutes,
63. and of course,
64. they are going to be hyperactive,
65. but I didn't know that,

Stanza 9

66. So=,
67. I wanted to **teach**,
68. like I would **teach**,
69. older students,
70. right?

Stanza 10

71. Oh,
72. on the board,
73. and look at these examples and,
74. no,
75. that's not how((dismissive tone)),
76. the children will learn @@@

77. AR: @@@

Stanza 11

78. SOFÍA: So,
79. of course,
80. that didn't work,

Listeners' contribution

81. AR: Nobody told you.

82. SOFÍA: Yeah, nobody told me,
83. no,
84. no no no,

Stanza 12

85. So,
86. that was,
87. I remember that,
88. that was very bad,

Stanza 13

89. Bu=t,
90. I started asking for advice,
91. started looking in books,
92. I started looking on the internet,
93. and it really helped,

Stanza 14

94. And I started finding games,
95. and different activities,
96. that they can do\,
97. coloring, etc.,
98. and songs,
99. especially songs,
100. children love songs,
101. and they learn,
102. **really** well with songs,

Stanza 15

103. And what I noticed,
104. was that,
105. for example,
106. we had ((a)) methodology ((course)),
107. and what I noticed was that,
108. children,
109. it has to be very meaningful but,
110. there has to be repetition,
111. they have to repeat things,
112. because they forget them,
113. they forget them, ((moving her hand upwards and letting it drop on the table))

Stanza 16

114. So,
115. I tried not to do things like,
116. repeat,
117. repeat words,
118. no **but**,
119. repeat the songs,
120. or repeat the lessons,

Stanza 17

121. Or do,
122. the same lesson but

123. with one activity,
 124. then another activity,
 125. then another activity.
 126. but the same lesson,

Stanza 18

127. Not repeat exactly like
 128. < Q ok,
 129. apple,

130. apple Q> ((Faking a monotonous
 tone of voice)),

131. not like that but,
 132. but,
 133. you **do** have to repeat,
 134. repeat things,

Stanza 19

135. <WH yeah WH>,
 136. but I remember that frustration.

In her extended version, Sofía explained that she started working before she began her practicum. This detail means that, considering the plan of study that Sofía followed, the theoretical knowledge she had at the time was as limited as her experience was. This background information explains why Sofía felt challenged during her first month teaching. Once this information is clarified, Sofía presents her story in three main topical passages listed in Table 15:

Table 15. Topical passages in Sofia’s first teaching experience story

Topical Passages: Summary of the Content	Linguistic Details
12.1. Introduction: Description of the class	38. They were children, 46. and they were mixed level students,
12.2. Presentation of the problem: Sofia’s lack of teaching practical knowledge at the beginning	48. I didn’t know what to do, 61. They needed different activities, 65. but I didn’t know that,
12.3. Crisis: Sofia’s first attempts to teach	67. I wanted to teach 68. Like I would teach 69. older students, 72. on the board, 73. and look at these examples and 75. that’s not how ((dismissive tone)) 76. the children would learn @@@
12.4. Solution: Sofia’s asks for help and finds resources	90. I started looking for advice, 92. I started looking on the internet, 94. And I started finding games 95. And different activities.
12.5. Conclusion: What Sofia learned from her trial-and-error experience	106. and what I noticed was that, 108. children, 109. it has to be very meaningful but, 110. there has to be repetition, 119. repeat the songs, 120. or repeat the lesson,

In the introduction (12.1), we are told that, before the young Sofía could realize the seriousness of her situation, she was given the responsibility of dealing with a multilevel class of children of diverse ages. This type of class could have represented a challenge for an experienced teacher, let alone for a novice without proper training. As a second topical passage (12.2) in the narrative, Sofía describes her problem, which was basically her lack of teaching knowledge at the time. This limitation leads to the crisis (12.3), where Sofía makes her first attempts to teach using explanations and examples that would have been more appropriate for an adult audience. Only after this approach failed, the story moves into the solution (12.4). In this passage, Sofía asks for help and searches for materials and activities that could address her young learners' needs. Finally, Sofía gives closure to her narrative (12.5) by showing what she learned from this experience.

This trial and error experience may suggest that the school that had hired Sofía did not provide much guidance and teaching resources to help the novice teacher face the challenge of her first teaching experience. In spite of these circumstances, in her story, Sofía positions herself as an independent trouble shooter who looked for solutions and constructed her own practical theory about the importance of rote learning during the first stages of young learners' L2 acquisition. Since this is just a memory, we cannot conclude that this is exactly the way she faced the situation and that she truly learned a lesson about the role of repetition through this experience. However, the narrative evidence shows that she made sense of this event in her life as a difficult but important learning experience. Moreover, she seemed to support her idea about rote learning on this instance of her experience. Furthermore, Sofía's methodology and practicum courses were not given such an important role in this story. Only Lines 21-29 and 106 vaguely referred to those courses. By contrast, Sofía's memory of how she first solved her problems with a real class occupies most of the narrative material in this episode.

5.3.2 Leiliani's frustrating practicum experiences.

I mentioned in the previous chapter that Leiliani's first teaching experience happened when she was a teenager when she was invited to teach a summer course. This story was produced in the context of Leiliani's response to the following question: "So, before that moment in your life, when you visited the head of the English program, had you ever thought about English? What were your ideas about English?" This question prompted a narrative of Leiliani's second language learning history of which the summer course story presented below is a part:

Excerpt 39. Leiliani's first teaching experience during a summer course.

Stanza 1

1. LEILIANI: And that school ((where Leiliani was studying as an upper-intermediate English learner)) offered me,
2. <Q Why don't you,
3. teach,
4. summer course for those,
5. who need help Q>,

Stanza 2

6. And I said <Well,
7. why not?,
8. I'm not going to travel anywhere,
9. so,
10. I'm going to,
11. to work with you this summer,
12. yes,
13. and this summer,
14. because I'm studying high school Q>,
15. <Q Yes,
16. of course Q>,

Stanza 3

17. I was in high school,
18. I was seventeen years old,
19. and that was my first opportunity as a teacher,
20. but I didn't,
21. wanted,
22. to be a teacher,
23. that was not my dream.

Listener's contribution

24. AR: So you did it just because,
25. it was a chance to get some money, or?

26. LEILIANI: Yeah yeah,
27. yes, yes,
28. a chance to get money.

Listener's contribution

29. AR: So you,
30. you taught that summer,
31. and,
32. what kind of students,
33. did you have?
34. LEILIANI: Junior high students.
35. between, twelve and fourteen years old.

Listener's contribution

36. AR: Do you have any memories or, how that worked?

Stanza 4

37. LEILIANI: Ummh,
38. yes,
39. if I have to compare with my work,
40. nowadays,
41. it was totally different,
42. I just covered,
43. what the book said,
44. the activities,
45. some games,

46. and that's all.

Listener's Contribution

47. AR: Do you think that,
48. what you did was similar,
49. to the,
50. way you had been taught,
51. before,
52. by your English teachers?

53. LEILIANI: Yes,
54. I was very influenced,
55. by them.

Listener's contribution

56. AR: You just followed it.

57. LEILIANI: Yeah.

58. AR: And how did you feel?

Stanza 6

59. LEILIANI: Well,
60. at that moment I,
61. feel,
62. I felt good,
63. I felt that I was doing right,
64. because if I learned,
65. in that style,
66. the students
67. that I had,
68. they were,
69. obviously,
70. they were going to,
71. to learn too.

Leiliani delivered the story of the summer course as a mere business transaction in just a few stanzas that required considerable prompting (I had to request clarifications or elaborations five times). Regardless of this brevity, she took care to note that although this teaching experience was her first, it did not signify a great deal because it was not part of her dreams for the future (Lines 20-23). This detached attitude towards this memory was maintained even after I asked more probing questions to expand the narrative. Leiliani's brevity in her answers may suggest that she engaged in her summer job with the usual low expectations of a teenager that was doing her first summer job. Therefore, it may not be too outlandish to suggest that her memories were as imprecise as her emotional investment in the experience.

The narrative of Leiliani's practicum stands in great contrast to the simplified summer job story. In this second story, not only did Leiliani require considerable less prompting to produce the narrative, but she also used a full range of linguistic devices to convey the emotions experienced during the narrated events.

Excerpt 40. Leiliani tells the story of the first lessons she taught during her practicum.

1. AR: And,
2. during,
3. the four years that you were working,

4. uh,
5. as a,
6. university student,

7. you tell me that,
8. you had some practicum,
9. like,
10. first you observed teachers?

11. LEILIANI: Yes

12. AR: Did you have the chance to,
13. work as a teacher?

14. LEILIANI: Yes, yes.

15. AR: Can you tell me a little bit more,
16. about that?

Stanza 1

17. LEILIANI: It was in,
18. seventh semester,
19. or eighth,
20. I don't remember,
21. exactly,
22. when,
23. the period,

Stanza 2

24. I had the opportunity to teach,
25. any level,
26. I had to choose it,
27. and I chose,
28. junior high students,
29. from the secondary ((school))
30. where you observed me.

31. AR: Uh-huh

Stanza 3

32. LEILIANI: Because my mother worked there,
33. and I had the opportunity,
34. to be with the teacher,
35. and I asked the chance,
36. to practice there,

Stanza 4

37. And then,
38. I had to,
39. practice in,
40. high school,

Stanza 5

41. And,

42. it was hard,
43. because there were,
44. forty students,

45. AR: Forty/? ((In amazement))

46. LEILIANI: Forty\.

Listener's contribution

47. AR: Goodness,
48. what did you do?

Stanza 6

49. LEILIANI: And I had to plan,
50. a very narrow classroom,
51. forty students,
52. and I wanted to do dynamics ((games)) with them,
53. was **so** difficult,

Stanza 7

54. And I was **so** nervous,
55. because I,
56. I didn't know,
57. the size of the room,
58. and planned my class,
59. **beautifully**,

60. AR: Ok

Stanza 8

61. LEILIANI: Like,
62. we're going to move,
63. and we're going to,

Listener's contribution

64. AR: So you did all your planning,
65. without having the chance to,
66. see the place where the,

67. LEILIANI: Yeah,

68. AR: Where the class was gonna,
69. happen,
70. and you didn't know,
71. how many students,
72. you were gonna have?

73. LEILIANI: I knew,

74. AR: Ok.

Stanza 9

75. LEILIANI: The number of students,
76. I knew the number of students,
77. but I said,
78. <Q Well,
79. if there,
80. if there were forty students,
81. the space is going to be,
82. relative,
83. to the stu-
84. to the students,
85. <L1 ¿no? L1> ((tag question)) Q>.

Listener's contribution

86. AR: To the number of students.

87. LEILIANI: Yes,
88. the number of students.

Listener's contribution

89. AR: So you were expecting,
90. a bigger,
91. sort of classroom,
92. because if it was a large class,
93. they're supposed to have,
94. a la=rger room.

95. LEILIANI: Yeah.

96. AR: Oh surprise.

97. LEILIANI: So,
98. oh surprise,

99. AR: @@@

Stanza 10

100. LEILIANI: So,
101. I modified at the mo-
102. at that moment my plan,

103. AR: <W Ok W>

Stanza 11

104. LEILIANI: Um the,
105. and,
106. I was observed by my teacher
((meaning the university instructor in
charge of the practicum)),
107. and by the teacher,

108. who was in charge of that group,

Stanza 12

109. The comments,
110. of the teacher of the group,
111. were,
112. and I remember perfectly,
113. that I need more,
114. group control ((discipline control))

115. AR: Ok.

Stanza 13

116. LEILIANI: And my teacher told me,
117. <Q I have here the,
118. the comments of the teacher,
119. and says that you need,
120. group control,
121. I know it is your first time,
122. for the students Q>.

Stanza 14

123. And I explained ((to)) her,
124. it's because I,
125. thought,
126. I was going to have more space to
move them,
127. and,
128. I tried to move them and,
129. it was,
130. not,
131. properly,
132. carried out,

Stanza 15

133. And she told me,
134. <Q Yes, I understand Q>.

Stanza 16

135. Uh, I was worried,
136. because,
137. I thought,
138. it was going to affect my grade,
139. but not,
140. it was just,
141. part of,
142. the game,
143. that I had to,

Stanza 17

144. And the teacher explained,

145. <Q Don't worry,
146. this is a practice,
147. this is your first practice,
148. what I expect,
149. is that you do it better,
150. next time,
151. because now,
152. you know the group,
153. you know,
154. you know the size of the classroom,
155. so,
156. don't worry Q>,

Stanza 18

157. And I had the opportunity to do it,
158. again,
159. with that group.

Listener's contribution

160. AR: And the second time,
161. what was it like?

162. LEILIANI: Better,
163. I think it was better.

164. AR: And what about the junior high
students,
165. the ones,
166. in your Mom's school,
167. what was that class like?

Stanza 19

168. LEILIANI: Umh,
169. I think it was like a **mess**,
170. because I wanted to speak,
171. everything in English,
172. and of course they don't,
173. have,
174. they have their,
175. English class in Spanish,

176. AR: Mmh.

177. LEILIANI: Everything was,
178. uh,
Listener's contribution
179. AR: Is that a common practice?
180. Is it common,
181. for English teachers?

Stanza 20

182. LEILIANI: Yes,
183. yes,
184. it's very common,
185. very very common,
186. they don't,
187. even in,
188. when they are,
189. umh,
190. designing the exams,
191. they,
192. they write the instructions in Spanish,
193. AR: Un-huh.

Stanza 21

194. LEILIANI: A=nd,
195. I gave,
196. gave the handouts,
197. with,
198. instructions in English,
199. and they ((the students)) were like,
200. <Q What?
201. Can you tell me? Q>,
202. so at the end I started speaking
Spanish ((intonation hints
disappointment)),
203. in my English class,

Stanza 22

204. And,
205. that was frustrated,
206. frustrating for me,
207. because,
208. that was not my plan,
209. to speak Spanish in my English class.

As in most stories identified in this research, Leiliani's narrative is not rich in actions; however, it compensates this limitation with orientation details and a profusion of evaluative comments. It is through these evaluations that I, as the audience, could perceive that Leiliani's

memory of this event was much more emotional and intense than her recollections of her summer job experience.

After setting the scene, Leiliani advanced her first opinion about her class in a private school with a dramatic emphasis that closes the fourth stanza. She used an elongated vowel in the word “and” to anticipate an important piece of information: “it was hard, because there were forty students” (Lines 41-44). This important number of students in the context of a small classroom is presented as the main justification of Leiliani’s failure in her first teaching attempt. This representation is skillfully delivered with the use of stressed adverbs, such as “**so** difficult”, “I was **so** nervous”, and “(I) planned my class **beautifully**” (Lines 53, 54, and 59 respectively) that emphasize the adverse unanticipated conditions under which Leiliani’s lesson plan failed.

A second hint of the emotional importance of this passage is found in the interview with the practicum supervisor in which Leiliani’s explains her concerns about her grade (see Stanzas 16 and 17 below). The inclusion of this scene is not gratuitous. Additional information provided by Leiliani through other data sources (e.g. email communications and informal conversations) allowed me to understand that this scene was more important than the summer course experience because the stakes were much higher. Low marks in the practicum credits could have affected Leiliani’s grade point average, which she was hoping to keep high enough to graduate with honors. Hence, Leiliani’s concern about her academic performance is shown in the explanatory inclusion of this dialogue with her practicum supervisor.

Stanza 16

135. Uh, I was worried,
136. because,
137. I thought,
138. it was going to affect my grade,
139. but not,
140. it was just,
141. part of,
142. the game,
143. that I had to,

Stanza 17

144. And the teacher explained,

145. <Q Don't worry,
146. this is a practice,
147. this is your first practice,
148. what I expect,
149. is that you do it better,
150. next time,
151. because now,
152. you know the group,
153. you know,
154. you know the size of the classroom,
155. so,
156. don't worry Q>,

At the same time, it should be considered that, while the summer job story represented a merely informal sort of experience, the practicum episode portrays a moment in Leiliani's formal teaching education. As such, this event might have been perceived by Leiliani as having a more significant role in the construction of her professional life history. It is likely that this awareness of the rhetorical importance of the passage could have increased Leiliani's engagement in the narrative, rendering her storytelling more intense.

The second part of this episode tells the story of a memory from the practicum times that took place in a public school (see Lines 168-209 below). The contrasts and similarities between these two stories account for my decision of including Leiliani's practicum episode in this chapter. One of the first things that became salient during the analysis was the fact that Leiliani's expectations for her classes had been disappointed for two lessons, in spite of the differences between the settings. Moreover, Leiliani implied that the lesson in the private school had gone out of her control, but she did not mention anything about her inability to communicate with students using English. By contrast, she explicitly assessed her experience in the public school as "a mess" because she could not carry out her lesson without using her L1, which is Spanish.

Stanza 19

168. LEILIANI: Umh,
 169. I think it was like a **mess**,
 170. because I wanted to speak,
 171. everything in English,
 172. and of course they don't,
 173. have,
 174. they have their,
 175. English class in Spanish,

176. AR: Mmh.

177. LEILIANI: Everything was,
 178. uh,

Listener's contribution

179. AR: Is that a common practice?
 180. Is it common,
 181. for English teachers?

Stanza 20

182. LEILIANI: Yes,
 183. yes,
 184. it's very common,
 185. very very common,
 186. they don't,
 187. even in,
 188. when they are,
 189. uhm,
 190. designing the exams,
 191. they,
 192. they write the instructions in Spanish,

193. AR: Un-huh.

Stanza 21

194. LEILIANI: A=nd,
 195. I gave,
 196. gave the handouts,
 197. with,
 198. instructions in English,

199. and they ((the students)) were like,	Stanza 22
200. <Q What?	204. And,
201. Can you tell me? Q>,	205. that was frustrated,
202. so at the end I started speaking	206. frustrating for me,
Spanish ((intonation hints	207. because,
disappointment)),	208. that was not my plan,
203. in my English class,	209. to speak Spanish in my English class.

Leiliani's failure to conduct her second practicum lesson keeping an L2-only policy points to a theme that emerges quite often in this participant's representations of what teachers ought to be. Leiliani emphasized a contrast between her expectations and the reality in a matter-of-factly manner: "and of course, they ((the students)) have their English class in Spanish." Sensing that this phrase was charged with meaning, I asked Leiliani to expand her comments on this practice in public secondary schools (Lines 170-181). Leiliani's response deviated her from the narrative to open a parenthesis in which Leiliani talked about English teachers who strongly rely on the use of L1. In this short passage, Leiliani took care to demarcate herself from this practice using the pronoun "they" to refer to English teachers who overuse L1 during their classes. Therefore, when the story finishes, the responsibility of the young student-teacher in the failure of the lesson is lessened by force of this demarcation. After all, Leiliani could not be held responsible for a well-consolidated social practice that opposed the logic of her lesson planning to the point of ruining it. This binary opposition between Leiliani's representation of an ideal English teacher and her flesh-and-bones colleagues represented by the almost impersonal referent "they" is a constant in her narratives. I will revisit this theme in the analysis of other passages in the subsequent chapters.

5. 3.3 Betty's first "real" teaching assignment: A service experience.

Unlike Leiliani, who narrates a failure story with an unhappy ending, Betty's narrative focuses on a successful experience in both her autobiography and her interview. In the autobiography, she actually mentioned her practicum as if by passing and gave more attention to a teaching experience she had during the summer after her senior year at IUM. Therefore, this

story was not connected to her graduation requirements. It seems that Betty judged this experience as more interesting to be told than her actual practicum. This appreciation is evident in the language she used to describe this experience as “challenging”(Lines 8 and 16), “difficult” (Line 12), and “hard” (Line 19), but also “valuable”(Line 10):

Excerpt 41. Betty’s autobiography: May, 2103. Betty writes about the time she developed and taught an English course as a service experience.

1. At fourth semester and through the remaining degree, as part of my college assignments, I
 2. visited schools, made observations and learned how to do lesson planning and syllabus
 3. design. Moreover, I had the opportunity to practice in different school levels, from
 4. kindergarten to university.

 5. In senior year, I worked in a private language institute as part of my mandatory social
 6. service, my job there was to help in the process of incorporation to the Mexican
 7. Secretariat of Public Education (SEP). I had to review all the courses and adapt them
 8. to the specific format required; this was a very challenging task because the school
 9. did not have any order neither in the administrative registers nor in the academic records.

 10. Another valuable experience that I lived that year was during the summer holidays.
 11. In association with the Rotary Club, I designed a summer course in my hometown.
 12. It was a difficult task because we had to look for a space, visit schools to promote the
 13. courses and make different kind of publicity. As the course was designed to be a social
 14. service to the city, the Art Community Center let us use their facilities. Although they
 15. did not have the most appropriated conditions; that was all we could get. It was
 16. challenging because the groups were very big, some of the people had never had an
 17. English class before and, moreover, we did not have enough budget for material
 18. or any technological tools. At the end, I managed to have 4 groups: children, teenagers,
 19. young adults, and adults, it was hard but worth it.
-

In the interview, Betty seemingly disregarded my request of a story connected with the practicum and offered again a second version of her summer course experience (Excerpt 42). As these two versions of the same story complement each other, I will first present the data. The analysis will be introduced after the excerpt.

Excerpt 42. Betty retells the story of her service experience during interview 1.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. AR: And, | 5. when you were, |
| 2. . I understand, | 6. doing a Practicum, |
| 3. that during those four years, | 7. that you=, |
| 4. there was a time, | 8. actually, |

9. had the chance to practice,
10. with real students,
11. before you graduated,

12. So,
13. do you remember,
14. what happened when you,
15. were,
16. the first time you were,
17. in front of real students?

Stanza 1

18. BETTY: . . Uh,
19. the first time,
20. that wasn't an assignment,
21. that I was in front of students,
22. was in my hometown,

Stanza 2

23. I=,
24. when I was student,
25. when I was in high school,
26. sometimes,
27. my teachers trusted me,
28. to be in charge,
29. of the classroom,
30. but it's different,
31. because you're,
32. the same like them,

Stanza 3

33. The first time,
34. I was there ((working as a teacher)),
35. U=h,
36. it was,
37. a different feeling,
38. because **now**,
39. you know,
40. you **know**,
41. what you're talking about

Stanza 4

42. But also,
43. it wasn't very stressful,
44. because this was kind of a social
service,

Stanza 5

45. A=nd,
46. the people,
47. the children,

48. or the adults that were in the course,
49. all of them were there,
50. because they wanted to be,

Stanza 6

51. So they made it easier,
52. they helped me to create,
53. a good,
54. atmosphere,

Stanza 7

55. So,
56. it (the experience) was important,
57. but it wasn't that,
58. big shock\.

Listener's contribution

59. AR: Ok,
60. so you mention,
61. children and adults?
62. Were they mixed?

63. BETTY: <@ No @>

64. AR: @@@

65. Ok.

Stanza 8

66. BETTY: I had,
67. uh,
68. I created,
69. a= summer course,
70. with the help of the,
71. Rotary club,

Stanza 9

72. It was like kind of,
73. giving something,
74. to my hometown,
75. before I start the real,
76. commitment,
77. to my profession,
78. and I didn't know where,
79. life was going to take me,
80. so,
81. before abandoning that hometown,
82. I wanted to give something and,

Stanza 10

83. That's why because it was for free,
84. there were a lot of people,

85. in that course,

Stanza 11

86. A=nd,
87. people from elementary school,
88. to the parents of my,
89. students,
90. so\,

Stanza 12

91. Uh,
92. there were like,
93. four different groups,
94. of different ages.

Listener's contribution

95. AR: So tho-
96. those are the courses that you
designed,
97. you wrote about,
98. in your,
99. biography,

100. BETTY: [Uh-huh,
101. Uh-huh]

102. AR: and I remember the pictures,
103. that you took,
104. from those classes.

105. BETTY: Yes.

106. AR: But,
107. the classes I saw,
108. were mostly children,
109. right?

Stanza 13

110. BETTY: Yes,
111. mostly were children,
112. between six,
113. u=h,
114. twelve years,
115. in Elementary school,

Stanza 14

116. And then\
117. there was other group of people,
118. that was in middle school,
119. high school,

120. and adults.

Listener's contribution

121. AR: You designed the courses,
122. but did you also teach.
123. some of those courses?

124. BETTY: I taught **all** the courses,
125. it was all my responsibility,
126. to design it,
127. and to teach them

128. AR: And which one,
129. did you enjoy the most?

Stanza 15

130. BETTY: Umm,
131. . . I like better,
132. the=,
133. . .high school one,

Stanza 16

134. Because,
135. they ((the students)) were comparing
things,
136. that they were,
137. studying at that time,
138. at school,
139. and also,
140. despite of the age,
141. they were interest-
142. interested.

Listener's contribution

143. AR: You said that,
144. this was not a mandatory course,
145. they,
146. they were motivated,
147. intrinsically motivated.

Stanza 17

148. BETTY: Exactly,
149. and little children,
150. they behaved well but,
151. my personality,
152. doesn't go very well with children,
153. but,
154. it was a very good group,
155. in spite of that\.

An observation of the autobiography's organization (Excerpt 41) offers a few interesting clues to understand Betty's views about her initial teacher experiences. Betty rhetorically moves from the least to the most important events increasing in content and details while using different genres. The first paragraph (Lines 1-4), in which she talks about her methodology courses (starting at fourth semester in her plan of study) and practicum credits, is written as it were a list of professional experiences. The second paragraph (Lines 5-9) that refers to the social service requirement takes the shape of a dispassionate job description in a resume. Only Line 8 in that paragraph includes details about the degree of difficulty of Betty's task, which adds an evaluative tone to the paragraph.

In contrast with the first two paragraphs, the third one takes a narrative form. Lines 10 and 11 work as a small introduction that talks about the importance, time frame, location, and main point of the story. The following sentences take the reader through the story of the difficulties Betty faced, how they were overcome, and what results were obtained. The last phrase works as an epilogue that tells the reader why the story matters: "It was hard but worth it" (Line 19 in Excerpt 41).

The emphasis given to this last experience was preserved during the first interview with Betty. In my question, I specifically asked for a practicum-experience narrative, expecting that this story would feature Betty's first experience with a real class (see my questions and prompting utterances in Lines 1-17). In spite of this prompt, Betty chose to highlight the Rotary Club experience once again. This choice, on her part, does not mean that Betty was totally ignoring the prompt; it only means that she chose to address it in a manner different from my expectations. As a matter of fact, Betty's story begins right at the same place the prompt ended: "what happened the first time you were in front of real students?" Taking that idea to heart, Betty first states that this event happened in her hometown (in Fuenteventura) (Line 22). In Stanza 2 (shown below) Betty opens an incidental comment meant to establish a contrast between an informal teaching-

like experience and a story that includes all the power implications of a real teaching assignment (Stanza 3). It is interesting that, in order to mark this contrast, Betty does not use her practicum experience. Instead, she juxtaposes a high school experience with the service experience in

Fuenteventura:

Stanza 2

33. I=,
34. when I was student,
35. when I was in high school,
36. sometimes,
37. my teachers trusted me,
38. to be in charge,
39. of the classroom,
40. but it's different,
41. because you're,
42. the same like them,

Stanza 3

43. The first time,
44. I was there ((working as a teacher)),
45. U=h,
46. it was,
47. a different feeling,
48. because **now**,
49. you know,
50. you **know**,
51. what you're talking about

Therefore, it seems that, once again, Betty obliterates her practicum memories even as an example of questionably legitimate teaching experience.

In this story, Betty sees herself as a full-fledged teacher already invested with the power conferred by a superior knowledge of her subject-matter (Lines 36-41). However, even if this story is regarded as an example of a real professional assignment, Betty is careful to add that the pressure was lessened because it was not a paid assignment but a community service (Lines 42-44; 72-83). In this context, Betty's recollections are even more light-hearted than in the autobiography. While in the written text Betty devotes some time to emphasize the challenges she faced in the planning and implementation of the course, in the interview the students are reported as motivated and well-behaved. The circumstances are presented as so favorable that in this story the pronoun "they" is used repeatedly to emphasize how the students made things easier for the participant.

Betty's insistence in presenting her service experience as the most relevant teaching experience of her pre-service years is interesting. Apart from the legally required social service, which Betty fulfilled working in the administration of a private school, volunteer work in Mexico

is not a common practice embraced by society at large. Historically speaking, unpaid and non-mandatory service has remained as a privilege of people of means and leisure, especially women associated with religious groups or elite organizations. Only recently, has the emergence of different forms of volunteer work has begun to attract the attention of Mexican sociologists (Serna, 2015). However, since Betty's service story is associated with her family's involvement with the Rotary Club, the event seems to align with the most traditional kind of volunteer work referred above. In this context, Betty's narrative choice could be related to her explicit desire to highlight an experience that she perceives as socially rare and therefore worth mentioning. Additionally, the prominence given to this story could also be taken as an unconscious way in which the teller discursively indexed social class membership.

5.4 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter I have paid close attention to the participants' representations of their pre-service experiences. Using discourse-analysis techniques to examine three main episodes in the participants' life histories, I have been able to explore the participants' interpretations of their experience of being initiated into the teaching profession. At the same time, the analysis has enabled me to detect some ways in which social practices, power, discourse and the NS fallacy that impacted the ways in which the participants narrate their debut as English teachers. In this final section, I will summarize my observations and emphasize the possible connections that can be drawn between the participants' narrative discourse, as seen in both their autobiography and their interview data, and the social reality this discourse tried to represent.

The decision-making stories provide us with materials to consider the lack of pertinent social scaffolding received by high school graduates during the transition between secondary and tertiary education. In a system that tackles discipline-specialization since the first year of college, the pressure to choose a program is greater than in other educational contexts. Since this is an important decision to be made at such a young age (18), one would expect that parents, high schools, and universities would take a more active part in guiding students in this process.

Nevertheless, in their narratives, four of the participants did not foreground memories of important adult support during the decision event. For instance, Leiliani and Daniela talked about conversations they had with their classmates that vaguely helped them figure out the available options. Apart from that informal and admittedly not quite well-informed source, these two teachers narrated stories of solitary decisions. On the other hand, Sofía and Adam had to face failure after choosing career options that did not fit their skills and interests before they decided to study English. In their stories, parents appeared as financial supporters, but not as a source of guidance. Furthermore, school support is not mentioned even once in any of the stories here presented. In sum, most of the participants represented themselves as solitary decision makers. Moreover, in three of the stories (Leiliani, Daniela, and Adam), the main characters' actions seemed to be motivated by random events, informal conversations with peers, and an urge to fulfill social expectations (as in Daniela and Adam's stories).

Regarding the role of power as directly or tacitly represented in the participants narratives, the evidence also shed some light. The pre-service stories suggest that a differential access to cultural capital made a difference in the participants' experiences during their freshman year and the way they represent these differences in their stories. For instance, the teachers who made the most abrupt decisions (Leiliani, Daniela, and Adam) tried to make sense of this episode by relating their decisions to one aspect of the master narrative about occupational choices as a call for the best suited. On the contrary, the teachers who narrated more structured and premeditated decisions (Betty and Sofía) presented their experiences as supported by certain aspects of their cultural and/or material capital. Being part of the third generation with a college education within one's family or having a prior experience with an occupational choice are some of these cultural assets emphasized in these stories. Some other aspects of the role of access to power are implied in the stories but not foregrounded (e.g. Sofía's linguistic competence in English and Betty's family economic status).

The three stories that featured a shocking experience during the first college year showed that the NS ideal played an important part since the early stages of the student-teachers' education. In this context, the discourse surrounding the NS is as full of ambivalence as it is problematic. First of all, three of the participants singled out stressful experiences when placed in a class with a native speaker whose dialect was unlike any of their previous experience. This event is still important enough in the participants' memories to evoke feelings of doubts about their suitability for the profession (see Excerpts 32, and 35 in which Leiliani and Adam doubt about their career choices), moments of generalized panic in their cohort (Leiliani's and Daniela's stories in Excerpts 32 and 33), and a devalued representation of their linguistic abilities at the time (See Daniela's reference to her low proficiency level in Excerpt 33). In spite of these negative memories, it is interesting to note that the participants referred to their NESTs as the point of reference they used to measure their L2 acquisition. We see this tendency in Daniela's and Adam's stories, in which they concluded that their English was not good enough when they could not understand their Australian instructors (Excerpt 26). At the same time, they referred to English as a valuable cultural asset. This conviction was evident in their decision to major in English, even when some of them were not initially interested in teaching. We can see this belief expressed in Leiliani's, Daniela's, and Adam's decision to enter the program at IUM for reasons different from teaching (Excerpts 24-27).

By contrast, Adam problematized the generalized admiration of the NS ideal, if only to a certain extent. Nevertheless, the ambivalence of the discourse regarding NESTs was not evident until I requested some clarifications leading Adam to elaborate his story (as seen in Excerpt 36). In this context, Adam's experience as a NNEST was foregrounded, deflecting his previous beliefs about the superiority of NESTs.

The narratives of first teaching experiences may globally appear as accounts of either good or bad experiences (being ready as opposed to not being ready to teach). However, when analyzed in detail, a richer picture of teachers' identity performance in the tellers' discourse

comes to the fore. For instance, Sofía's story underscores the limitations of theoretical knowledge and the informal conditions in which private schools in Miranda hire novice teachers. In this unfavorable context, Sofía landed on a job even before beginning her practicum. In spite of her inexperience back then, she was thrown into a multi-level class without guidance or supervision. In this unsupportive setting, the story begins by presenting Sofía as ignorant of the most basic teaching principles (as we see in Excerpts 37 and 38). Nevertheless, the narrative ultimately serves Sofía's need to perform the identity of an independent problem solver that faces a process of trial and error and eventually arrives to conform her own teaching theory. This performance is consistent with Sofía's view of herself as a practical person that favors a hands-on kind of learning. This theme is a constant in other passages of her interviews.

Although we can question the accuracy of Sofía's memory, the narrative evidence shows that she made sense of the events by positioning herself within the dichotomy theory vs. practice. Therefore, through this narrative of her experience, the audience is given an explanation of why Sofía interprets herself as a practical teacher.

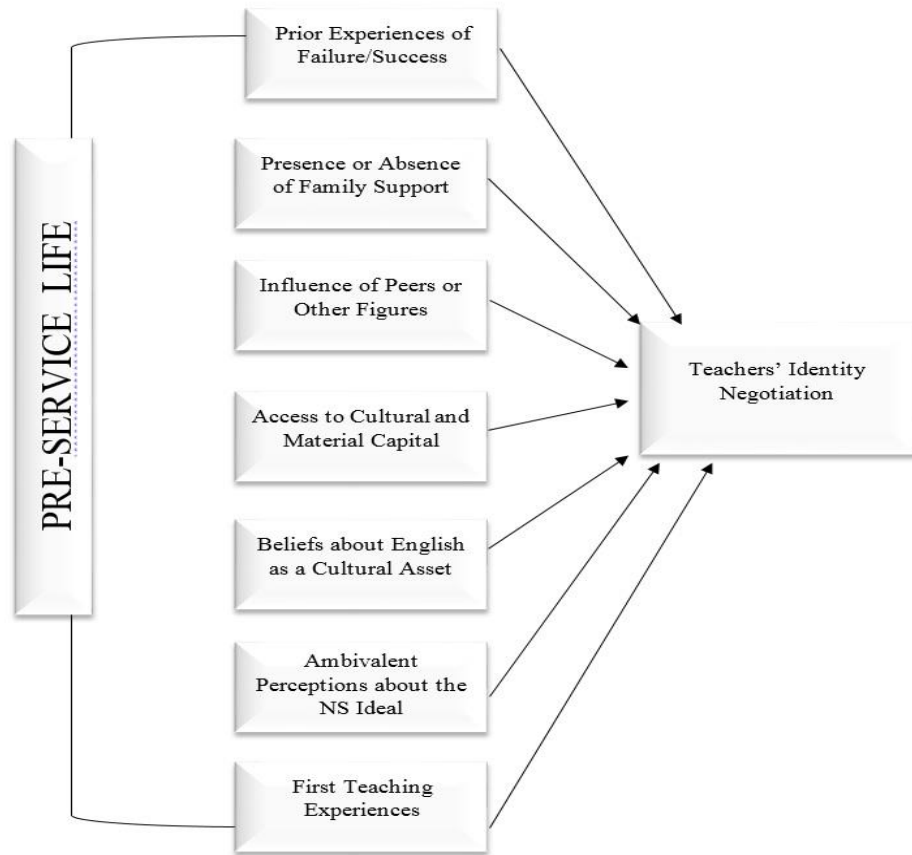
Other examples of the ways in which first-teaching experience stories were connected to each teacher's identity performance are:

- Leiliani's positioning as a public school teacher who is different from the rest (a teacher who uses English in her class)
- Betty's view of her volunteer work as a valuable experience

Finally, this collection of pre-service narratives shows that the teachers in this study did not define their professional identity as a result of a single act. When I requested the participants to narrate how they had made up their minds to become English teachers, most of them referred to the story of how they had selected an undergraduate program. We can see that from Excerpts 24 to 30. In doing so, the participants seemingly represented this decision as a specific event delimited in time and place. However, a closer analysis of the participants' autobiographies and interview data suggest that this high-stakes decision was truly made through a continuing process

and not at a particular event. We can see that in the participants' narratives of their first teaching experiences (Excerpt 37, 38 and 39). Thus, the evidence presented in this chapter demonstrates how different sociocultural forces that were not limited to a single historical moment played an important part in this negotiation. These forces included prior experiences of success and failure, lack or presence of family support, influence of peers and other important figures, availability of opportunities afforded by the participants' access to different forms of cultural and material capital, beliefs about the role of English as a cultural asset, and ambivalent perceptions about the NS ideal (See Figure 14). All these forces interacted for sustained periods that truly originated years before the events featured in the narratives. Furthermore, these forces were still represented in the participants' narratives as being at work during their initial teaching education, especially in the stories of the participants' first teaching experiences during their pre-service life.

Figure 14. Stories of pre-service life: Summary of findings



In the following chapter, I will show how this complex array of social affordances interacted with the participants' agency to continue to add to the process of becoming a teacher during the first years of in-service teaching.

CHAPTER VI

BIG STORIES OF IN-SERVICE LIFE

In the previous chapter, the evidence provided by the participants' interviews and autobiographies showed that, for some of the teachers, the decision of pursuing a degree in English did not originate from a clear interest in developing a teaching career. However, doubtful or certain about their choices for a teaching career, the five participants persisted until the end of the program. Moreover, after the threshold of graduation was crossed, four of them joined the ranks of in-service teaching. Only one of them, Betty, continued as a full-time graduate student for two additional years. In spite of this difference, all of the participants eventually developed a career as second language teachers. This chapter will present evidence to expand our understanding of how young second language teachers develop and consolidate a professional identity through interacting with the multiple social forces that surround them. The presentation of the narratives will be segmented in episodes, topical passages, stanzas, listener's contribution sections, and lines used in previous chapters. For a detailed explanation of these terms, the reader can refer to Chapter 3 (pp. 117-119 and 150-152) and Chapter 5 (pp. 219-222).

In the following sections, I will present a discourse-oriented analysis of teachers' professional identity negotiations in stories of their in-service lives. With this purpose in mind, I

analyzed eight episodes that deal with different aspects of this negotiation. In the first section (6.1), I will center on stories that contrast teachers' perceptions of the influences of everyday teaching practice over their professional identity with the impact of graduate education programs.

The second section (6.2) will deal with narratives that show how the participants present themselves as legitimate second language (L2) teaching professionals. Section 6.3 will feature stories used by the participants to make sense of the frustrations faced at the workplace and their attitudes towards their jobs. Finally, section 6.4 will present a summary and some conclusive comments.

6.1 The workplace vs. MA programs: The five teachers' perceptions of their professional development

All the participants pursued a graduate education and had finished their Masters' coursework by the time this study started; however, only Leiliani had graduated from her program. The other teachers had postponed the fulfillment of the last graduation requirement, namely the writing and defense of a thesis, for different reasons. This situation did not change during the two years I maintained contact with the participants.

The graduate programs in which the participants studied show the diversity of options available in the Mexican higher education system. For instance, while Adam studied in a top-ranked research-oriented program that required full-time involvement, Sofía had to make do with a professionally oriented online Master's program. Regardless of the differences among these programs, the results in terms of program completion have been very similar. In four out of the five cases, the teachers' investment in their programs has not been strong enough to carry them through the solitary process of research writing to complete their programs. On the contrary, the participants' work commitments have apparently increased since they concluded their graduate coursework. In this section, I will present three episodes that allow us to look at how the participants made sense of these contradictions.

6.1.1 Adam's developing sense of legitimacy as a teacher: Teaching practice and professional development.

Adam started his Master's program in the fall of 2010 and simultaneously began working at Saint Monica's School as a middle school teacher. For this section, I have selected two episodes from the interview data that show how Adam made sense of these two experiences and their impact on his perceiving himself as a full-fledged second language teacher.

As in the previous chapter, in the transcripts, only those stretches of interview that include narrative content will be labeled as *stanzas*. In a similar way, when one of my questions or comments elicits additional narrative details from the participants, such lines will be labeled as *listener's contribution*.

Excerpt 43. Adam tells the story of his first year as a teacher at Saint Monica's School.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. AR: @@, all right, | 21. junior high, |
| 2. now, | 22. well eighth grade, |
| 3. you have been working with the same class for, | 23. in here. |
| 4. how long? | 24. AR: And will they be with you, |
| 5. ADAM: Four. | 25. next year too? |
| 6. AR: With the same class, | 26. ADAM: Uh yes, |
| 7. ADAM: Uh with these students? | 27. but they will be, |
| 8. Yes, | 28. in conversation class. |
| 9. AR: So, four academic years, | 29. AR: So, |
| 10. ADAM: Four academic, | 30. what do you think about this? |
| 11. AR: So the who=le, | 31. how do you feel about this experience? |
| 12. high school, | |
| 13. you mean, | Stanza 1 |
| 14. ADAM: U=h, | 32. ADAM: Excellent, |
| 15. more or less, | 33. uh, |
| 16. uh, | 34. because, |
| 17. because, | 35. actually, |
| 18. I started with them, | 36. with this specific group, |
| 19. when they were in, | 37. I feel, |
| 20. second grade, | 38. umh, |
| | 39. free , |
| | Stanza 2 |
| | 40. I don't know, |

41. with all my,
42. I feel,
43. excellent with all my students,
44. but I have a special relationship,
45. with this specific class,
46. uh,

Stanza 3

47. And I told them,
48. <Q You made it,
49. **easy** for me,
50. when I started Q>,
51. because uh,
52. they were my first,
53. eighth graders,
54. in life,
55. @@@

Stanza 4

56. A=nd,
57. I=,
58. was really worried about,
59. uh my performance as a teacher,
60. in middle school,
61. because it was my first experience,

Listener's contribution

62. ALYS: [Because you] were
coming from elementary,
63. Right?

Stanza 5

64. ADAM: Elementary school,
65. and only two years of,
66. uh,
67. of,
68. becoming a teacher,

69. AR: Uh-humh,

Stanza 6

70. ADAM: So,
71. I actually,
72. I think that I,
73. became a real teacher here,
74. with them,

Listener's contribution

75. AR: How come?

Stanza 7

76. ADAM: Because,
77. in the other school it wa-
78. I know,
79. I don't know/
80. I,
81. it was elementary school,
82. and since there was no pressure,
83. there,
84. there weren't,
85. any,
86. rules to follow,
87. or any expectations from me,
88. as a teacher,

((A passage with more reiterative comments on how unstructured Adam's first school was has been deleted.))

Stanza 8

89. So for me,
90. I started as a teacher,
91. yes,
92. when I was in elementary,
93. but basically in here,

((An explanatory passage about the number and types of courses Adam took under his charge that year has been removed here))

Stanza 9

94. When I started in this school,
95. (H) those who were in seventh
grade,
96. (Hx) was the,
97. worst experience in my life,
98. terrible,
99. rude,
100. boys and girls,
101. terrible attitude,
102. uhm,
103. arrogant,
104. <L1 no no no no L1> ((emphasis)),

Stanza 10

105. I always say that,
106. the only thing that,
107. I didn't do during that year,
108. was crying,
109. they made me suffer,
110. they made us suffer,

111. all the teachers,

Stanza 11

112. Because they were terrible,
113. terrible **people**,
114. not students,
115. people,
116. with bad,
117. feelings,
118. not,
119. they always u=h,
120. they used to,
121. do things,
122. with the purpose of making you,
123. uh,
124. hurting you,
125. they wanted to hurt you,
126. and that was,
127. it was,

Stanza 12

128. **Imagine**,
129. you are twelve,
130. or thirteen years old,
131. and you want to hurt people,
132. it was a terrible experience,
133. in se-
134. when the-
135. they were in seventh grade,

((A passage with more details about each of the classes Adam was talking about has been removed here)).

Stanza 13

136. So,
137. in seventh grade,
138. the problem was their attitude,
139. in ninth grade,
140. they were like the big ones,
141. they were all,
142. they were now,
143. old enough,
144. they did,
145. they were mature,
146. they knew everything,
147. and they were like,
148. uh,
149. the,
150. the kings and the queens of the world/

151. and it was,
152. <Q Oh my God\ Q>

Stanza 14

153. And,
154. for me it was like,
155. <Q They know more English than me,
156. how can I teach them,
157. if I don't know anything? Q>,
158. that's the first thing that,
159. came to my mind,
160. when I started in elementary school,

Stanza 15

161. And when I started working here,
162. <Q I don't know English,
163. how come,
164. I'm going to teach them?
165. if they know more than me Q>.

Stanza 16

166. But,
167. I ha-
168. I worked,
169. on my confidence,
170. I gave myself confidence,
171. a=nd I think that,
172. I have done a good job with that.

Listener's contribution

173. AR: How do you do that?

174. ADAM: They helped me,
175. I think.

176. AR: Your students?

177. ADAM: Yes.

Stanza 17

178. ADAM: Yes,
179. they don't see it,
180. I don't know how to explain it,
181. but,
182. the way they,
183. uh,
184. they **act**,
185. with me,
186. the way they **work** with me,

Stanza 18

187. A=nd,
188. having this trust/
189. this confidence,
190. this good relationship,
191. a **real** connection,

Stanza 19

192. Not only teacher-student because,
193. they don't see me as a teacher,
194. they see me as their friend\
195. sometimes thi-,

Stanza 20

196. At the beginning/
197. this caused me problems,
198. because they,
199. checked,
200. they said <Q Ah,
201. he's young,
202. he's our friend Q>,
203. and they forget I was their,
204. their teacher,

Stanza 21

205. (H) But,
206. nowadays they know,
207. that I'm their friend/
208. but I'm their teacher\
209. I'm also their teacher\

Stanza 22

210. And they don't,
211. there is no lack of respect,
212. not anymore,
213. because at the beginning it was,
214. more or less like that/,

Stanza 23

215. Because,
216. they acted like,
217. they don't know how to diff-
218. uh,
219. to make a difference in that,

Stanza 24

220. And,
221. this specific group helped me in
that,

222. because they,
223. they trusted in me,
224. u=h,
225. from the first moment,

Stanza 25

226. U=h,
227. I think that,
228. the,
229. the actual moment,
230. the actual,
231. reason,
232. the real reason why we have,
233. a **good** relationship,
234. was because when I,
235. started working in here,
236. we had like an altars',
237. contest,
238. in November/,

Stanza 26

239. I was with this,
240. group,
241. and we won\

Stanza 27

242. So/
243. I start-
244. I started uh ((meaning the event
was his idea)),
245. one of the events,
246. and we won the event,

Stanza 28

247. And they were happy,
248. we had a,
249. a day off,
250. we went to,
251. bowling,
252. we had,
253. **so** much fun/,

Stanza 29

254. And since that moment,
255. we started like a good relationship.

in Adam's eleventh grade class (second year of preparatory school in the Mexican system). At the time, I knew that Adam had been working with the same class for more than one academic year. Based on this information, I made a comment on this continuity. Adam then revealed that he had in fact worked with the same students for four academic years. Amazed at this circumstance, I asked him how he felt about working with the same class for so long. This question elicited a narrative about Adam's first year at Saint Monica's and the role of his relationship with this particular class in overcoming his insecurities as a novice teacher.

This episode is told in 29 stanzas starting on line 32. I have deleted a few segments that included clarifications that Adam, as the teller of this story, considered necessary to help me remember the students to whom he was referring. Without these digressions, the narrative is structured in five *topical passages*¹³ that explain how the eleventh grade class helped Adam assume his teacher identity. The first topical passage introduces the story as a preface of sorts. The second topical passages compares Adam's first job in Miranda to his second job in Serrana, where he was still working at the time of the study. The third topical passage narrates Adam's first academic year at Saint Monica's School in Serrana and the professional challenges he encountered at the time. The fourth topical passage tells how Adam found a solution for the problems he had with his students. The final topical passage narrates a specific event that Adam considered essential to explain his present success with his students.

The first passage that includes 3 stanzas (Lines 32 to 55) advances a global evaluation of Adam's relationship with his students, which he qualifies as "excellent" (Line 43) and "special" (Line 44). On Lines 48 to 50 Adam switches gears from a narrative centered on his appreciation of his students, to a constructed dialogue where the agency is placed on the students ("you made it easier for me" on Lines 48-50). Adam maintains such an approach in several passages within this episode, with the students taking over the narrative as central characters. For instance, we can

¹³ A *topical passage* is a subsection within an *episode* that may extend for one or more stanzas and focuses on a specific topic or fulfill a specific rhetorical purpose.

see Adam's students' playing a central role in the story in the following selected lines:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 109. they ((the students)) made me suffer | |
| 110. they made us suffer | |
| 111. all the teachers | 174. They helped me, |
| | 194. they see me as their friend |
| 120. they used to, | 219. they make a difference in that, |
| 121. do things, | 221. this specific group helped me in that, |
| 122. with the purpose of making you, | 222. because they, |
| 124. hurting you, | 223. they trusted in me, |

The preface concludes with an incidental comment reminding me, the audience, that the eleventh grade students were in their second year of middle school when Adam first met them

(Line 51-54):

Stanza 3

- 47. And I told them,
- 48. <Q You made it,
- 49. **easy** for me,
- 50. when I started Q>,
- 51. because uh,
- 52. they were my first,
- 53. eighth graders,
- 54. in life,
- 55. @@@

In this third stanza, the final clause “they were my first eight graders, in life” (Lines 52-54) followed by Adam's laughter (Line 55) closes what I interpret as the preface section and accomplishes at least two discursive functions. First, these lines remind me about Adam's inexperience and attempt to gain my sympathy before he actually reveals his first-year struggles. Second, the laughter either marks Adam's state of nervousness or shows that he is already distant enough from the unpleasant moments to see their humorous side.

The second topical passage goes from stanza 4 to 8 (Lines 56-93) and presents a contrast between Adam's first job in Miranda, where he worked as an elementary school teacher, and his present job in Serrana. This comparison was probably used by Adam to highlight his becoming more confident as a teacher, an event he perceives taking place during his first year at Saint Monica's School in Serrana. On lines 56-61, Adam begins by reiterating how concerned he was

about his job in Saint Monica’s School when he first started. He expressed his concern by stating that he “was really worried about” his performance as a teacher (Lines 58-61). Adam’s fears are elaborated in more detail when he emphasized that he was fully aware that his new job at Saint Monica would be his “first experience” (Line 61) in middle and high school. As a response, I built on this topic by bringing up Adam’s prior experience at an elementary school (Lines 62 and 63), which was previously mentioned in Chapter 4 (see pp. 193-195).

Stanza 4
 56. A=nd,
 57. I=,
 58. was really worried about,
 59. uh my performance as a teacher,
 60. in middle school,
 61. because it was my first experience,

Listener’s contribution
 62. ALYS: [Because you] were
 coming from elementary,
 63. Right?

Stanza 5
 64. ADAM: Elementary school,
 65. and only two years of,
 66. uh,
 67. of,
 68. becoming a teacher,

69. AR: Uh-humh,

Stanza 6
 70. ADAM: So,
 71. I actually,
 72. I think that I,
 73. became a real teacher here,

74. with them,

Listener’s contribution
 75. AR: How come?

Stanza 7
 76. ADAM: Because,
 77. in the other school it wa-,
 78. I know,
 79. I don't know/,
 80. I,
 81. it was elementary school,
 82. and since there was no pressure,
 83. there,
 84. there weren't,
 85. any,
 86. rules to follow,
 87. or any expectations from me,
 88. as a teacher,

Stanza 8
 89. So for me,
 90. I started as a teacher,
 91. yes,
 92. when I was in elementary,
 93. but basically in here,

When defining his limited teaching background, Adam introduced the notion “of becoming a teacher” (Line 68), probably intertextually related to our prior conversations in which the idea had been mentioned more than once (see Excerpts 27 in Chapter 4). It is interesting to note that, by choosing a preposition (Line 67) that made the use of the continuous aspect obligatory (Line 68), Adam, as the teller of this episode, seemed to be suggesting that the process of negotiating his teacher’s identity had not actually ended with his first job in Miranda. The use

of the adjectival phrase “only two years” (Line 65) emphasizes Adam’s suggestion that, in his view, this process may take several years of teaching experience. To this idea of becoming a teacher as process, Adam juxtaposes his experience with his students at Saint Monica’s School, which is announced in Stanza 6 as the scenario where he actually became “a real teacher” (Line 73).

This claim about Adam becoming a full-fledged teacher in Saint Monica’s School is followed by two stanzas that seem to present evidence of the differences between Adam’s first and second teaching assignments (Lines 76-93). The first of these two stanzas describes Adam’s first job with a series of negative statements that give the passage an evaluative tone (Lines 82-88):

- There was no pressure
- There weren’t any rules to follow
- Any expectations for me, as a teacher

These negative statements show that Adam’s perceived lack of structure at the first school had made him feel that his teaching assignment was not totally formal. On the contrary, the job at Saint Monica’s School was perceived as a real professional job and as a significant professional advancement since the very beginning (see pp. 196-198). This perception was not only reiterated on the stanza that goes from Line 89 to 93, but was also present in some of our informal conversations (roughly registered in my field notes).

The third topical passage of this episode finally moves the narrative into the account of Adam’s struggles during his first year at Saint Monica’s School. Adam uses seven stanzas (Lines 94-165) to describe his experience with two difficult classes (seventh and ninth graders). In this passage, students start taking over the narrative through Adam’s descriptions of their character and attitudes. Some of the intonation units are composed of small and often repetitive adjectival phrases that depict the difficult nature of Adam’s students (e.g. “terrible, rude, terrible attitude,

terrible people” on Lines 98, 99, 191 and 113). In spite of their brevity, these lines are charged with discursive force that is emphasized by means of phonological clues (e.g. stress on the word people used on Line 113 when Adam refers to seventh grade students as “terrible **people**”) or code switching (Line 104, where Adam uses a repetitive *no*, as it is often used in Mexican Spanish to imply emphasis). From these descriptions, Adam, as the teller, moved to representing the student as main agents (Lines 109-11 and 120-125):

<p>Stanza 10</p> <p>105. I always say that,</p> <p>106. the only thing that,</p> <p>107. I didn't do during that year,</p> <p>108. was crying,</p> <p>109. they made me suffer,</p> <p>110. they made us suffer,</p> <p>111. all the teachers,</p> <p>Stanza 11</p> <p>112. Because they were terrible,</p> <p>113. terrible people,</p> <p>114. not students,</p>	<p>115. people,</p> <p>116. with bad,</p> <p>117. feelings,</p> <p>118. not,</p> <p>119. they always u=h,</p> <p>120. they used to,</p> <p>121. do things,</p> <p>122. with the purpose of making you,</p> <p>123. uh,</p> <p>124. hurting you,</p> <p>125. they wanted to hurt you,</p> <p>126. and that was,</p> <p>127. it was,</p>
---	--

Thus, these seventh grade students appear as leading actions that did not only affect Adam, as a novice teacher (Line 109), but also affected the entire teaching staff (Lines 110-111). In contrast with the central role given to the students in this passage, Adam portrays himself as being at the receiving end of the actions (e.g. “they made me suffer” on Line 109) or as a defenseless actor. As such, he is describe as almost being at the end of his wits (e.g. “the only thing I didn’t do was crying” on Lines 106 and 107).

The second difficult class that Adam describes in this episode is presented as an intimidatingly advanced group of English users. The description of this class is constructed by means of clauses (Lines 140-150) that emphasize the students’ qualities: “they were old enough, they were mature, they knew everything”. This description leads into two stanzas that show Adam, as the protagonist of the story, in an internal monologue revealing his doubts about his legitimacy as an English teacher (see Stanzas 14 and 15 below).

Stanza 14

153. And,
154. for me it was like,
155. <Q They know more English than
me,
156. how can I teach them,
157. if I don't know anything? Q>,
158. that's the first thing that,
159. came to my mind,
160. when I started in elementary

161. school,

Stanza 15

162. And when I started working here,
163. <Q I don't know English,
164. how come,
165. I'm going to teach them?
166. if they know more than me Q>.

Adam compares these feelings to the ones experienced at the beginning of his first teaching job (Lines 160 and 161), implying that the insecurities he dealt with in these two occasions were very similar. However, this admission of his insecurities is cut short in Stanza 16 (Lines 166-172), where Adam takes the story back to the present time, arguing that his confidence has increased ever since: “I worked on my confidence, I gave myself confidence”.

At this point of our conversation my requests for clarification (Lines 173 and 176 where I asked Adam how he gave himself confidence) elicited the fourth part of this episode where Adam explains how the 8th grade class helped him build his confidence (174-186):

174. ADAM: They helped me,
175. I think.

176. AR: Your students?

177. ADAM: Yes.

Stanza 17

178. ADAM: Yes,

179. they don't see it,
180. I don't know how to explain it,
181. but,
182. the way they,
183. uh,
184. they **act**,
185. with me,
186. the way they **work** with me,

Stanza 17 presents a list of noun phrases that refer to students' nature and habitual actions (e.g. “the way they are”, “the way they act”, “the way they work”). This parallel phrases complement the original idea presented on line 174 (“they helped me”) and serve as an elaboration of the answer to my question (Lines 176). In this way, the full answer seems to be: “they helped me by having a good relationship with me.”

Once this idea is introduced, Adam, as the teller of this story, appears to become aware of

the possible negative interpretations that could be derived from his having such a close relationship with his students. In previous informal conversations with me, Adam had already brought up the subject of whether teachers could consider themselves as their students' friends or not. In those occasions he had concluded that teachers could be friendly as long as they did not cross the invisible line that supposedly sets a friendly attitude apart from intimate friendship. In this narrative the same theme emerged, but this time, Adam apparently chose to favor the option of a close friendship between a teacher and his students. This tension in Adam's discourse suggests his struggle with the master narrative that condemns deep friendships between teachers and students and dismisses the idea as a typical beginners' mistake. Therefore, the stanzas going from line 196 to 219 are used by Adam, the teller, to oppose the dominant discourse and argue in favor of the feasibility of friendship between a teacher and his or her students. The passage ends with a summary in which Adam reiterates that, through a relationship of trust, his students helped him see himself as a real teacher (Lines 220-225).

The fifth topical passage (Stanzas 24-29) of this episode leads into an embedded story in which Adam narrates the event that, in his view, initiated his friendship with his favorite class.

Stanza 24
 220. And,
 221. this specific group helped me in
 that,
 222. because they,
 223. they trusted in me,
 224. u=h,
 225. from the first moment,

Stanza 25
 226. U=h,
 227. I think that,
 228. the,
 229. the actual moment,
 230. the actual,
 231. reason,
 232. the real reason why we have,
 233. a **good** relationship,
 234. was because when I,
 235. started working in here,
 236. we had like an altars',

237. contest,
 238. in November/,

Stanza 26
 239. I was with this,
 240. group,
 241. and we won\,

Stanza 27
 242. So/
 243. I start-
 244. I started uh ((meaning the event
 was his idea)),
 245. one of the events,
 246. and we won the event,

Stanza 28
 247. And they were happy,
 248. we had a,
 249. a day off,
 250. we went to,

251. bowling,
252. we had,
253. so much fun/,

Stanza 29
254. And since that moment,
255. we started like a good relationship.

Several lines within this topical passage fulfill functions similar to the narrative structure features defined by Labov and Waletzky (1967, see Chapter 4, especially footnote on page). For instance, Lines 236 to 238 function as an orientation providing me, as the audience, with a few temporal details that would help me understand the context in which the story took place. Also, the complicating action is briefly presented on Lines 239-246, where Adam explains that he “started an event” (a competition that was Adam’s idea in the first place) which he and his class ended up winning. The passage also contains two evaluations (Line 247 and Lines 252-253) where Adam establishes that his students were pleased with the outcome and also “had so much fun”. As a resolution, the story ends with Adam and his students celebrating their victory with a bowling outing (Lines 248-253). Finally, the last remark (Lines 254-255) functions as a coda, closing the embedded story and bringing the conversation back to the present by stating that “since that moment, we started like a good relationship”. This wrap-up sentence also serves to connect the embedded story with the broader context of Adam’s narrative of his first year at Saint Monica’s School.

The event narrated in this topical passage (see definition in the glossary at the end of Chapter 3) is related to an extra-curricular activity that Adam led. Although the audience is given some orientation about the context, some details are omitted by Adam. As the teller of this story, Adam rightly assumed that I, as the listener, being Mexican, would understand that the said contest was part of the Day of the Death festivities¹⁴. Adam sees the fact that he and his eighth grade students won that competition as the initial experience that established an emotional bond between him and his students (254-255). The event is relevant not only in the context of this

¹⁴ During the festivities of the Day of the Death in November, schools usually encourage students to engage in the creation of altars with offerings for their diseased family members and national heroes, as a reminder of the ancient Aztec tradition.

episode, but also as intertextually connected to other events described in Adam’s teaching journal and also noted in my second round of observations. These stories will be referred in Chapter 7 because they are key to understand how similar extra-curricular events have been used by Adam to negotiate his identity as a friendly teacher.

Adam presents the narrative of his first year in Saint Monica’s School as key to affirming his identity as a real teacher. This perception is set into contrast with his experience in his graduate program. The evidence presented in the narrative that follows suggests that Adam’s reluctance to graduate from his Master’s program is connected to a shift in Adam’s investment at the workplace and in academia.

Excerpt 44. Adam explains why he lost interest in his Master’s degree program.

1. AR: You told me about you experience,
2. during your graduate program,
3. ADAM: Uh-humh,
4. AR: And you told me that,
5. during that time,
6. you somehow,
7. prioritized,
8. your work,
9. over,
10. your Master's degree.

11. ADAM: Yes.

12. AR: And it was the opposite,
13. when you were at college,
14. for you the first thing,
15. would be,
16. your college classes,

17. ADAM: Umh-hum,

18. AR: And,
19. in second,
20. place,
21. it was the job,
22. that you had,

23. ADAM: Exactly.

24. AR: So why was that?
25. Why did you prioritize,
26. work over,
27. Master's degree.

Stanza 1

28. ADAM: To be honest/,
29. I don't have a specific answer,
30. what I think,
31. @ @ @,
32. I think that,
33. when I was,
34. uh,
35. in college,
36. when I was in the university,
37. trying to finish the,
38. the program,
39. I really **wanted**,
40. my diploma,
41. as,
42. a Bachelor’s in something,

((Reiterative comments on how strongly he felt about graduating from college as an important goal))

Stanza 2

43. But at that moment ((junior and senior

years at college)),
44. unfortunately,
45. I wasn't motivated enough,
46. because of the school,
47. as I told you,
48. in the school,
49. they ((his employers)) are just the
owners of the school,
50. they are not people,
51. who are really,
52. well prepared for,
53. an education context,
54. for an educational institution,

Stanza 3

55. So uh,
56. I think that,
57. I was motivated,
58. just for,
59. uh giving my students,
60. a really good class,
61. but I wasn't,
62. that committed with the school,
63. a hundred percent committed with
students,
64. but not with the school\.

((Comments on his feelings upon
leaving his first job))

Stanza 4

65. But when I=,
66. entered to the Master's degree,
67. I was,
68. the=,
69. ironic thing too,
70. is that I was really motivated,
71. at first,

Stanza 5

72. But once I got all,
73. all this responsibility in this new job,
74. new students,
75. and **more** students,
76. than the ones that I had,
77. I had,
78. before I,
79. I moved,
80. I had only like,
81. fifteen students in total,
82. and now,

83. I have like,
84. two hundred students,
85. @@,
86. more or less,

Stanza 6

87. So\
88. it's comple-
89. it was like,
90. a lot of responsibility,
91. a lot of things that I had,
92. I had to take care of,
93. a=nd,
94. to plan a lot of classes,
95. to write many lesson plans,
96. to check,
97. a lot of homework assignments,
98. to design many exams,

Stanza 7

99. A=nd,
100. the Master's wasn't',
101. exactly what I,
102. I thought it was,
103. since I told you,
104. it wasn't,
105. focused on teaching,
106. it was focused on,
107. just research,
108. and I wasn't that uh,
109. keen on,
110. research,
111. right?/

Listener's contribution

112. AR: So,
113. gradually,
114. it was like,
115. on the one side,
116. you lost interest,
117. in the Master's program,
118. and on the other side,
119. you gained responsibilities,
120. in your job.

121. ADAM: Yes\

Stanza 8

122. A=nd,
123. I felt that I was,
124. **actually** working,

At the beginning of this episode Adam admitted (Lines 28-39) that he had not a clear answer to my question about the reason why he had prioritized work over the completion of his Master's program (Lines 24-27). However, as he engaged in the narrative an explanation emerged. Referring to his college years, Adam described his investment in academic work as more intense than his investment in his teaching job (Lines 32-52). He made sense of this difference by highlighting the informal and unprofessional organization of his first school (Lines 46-54) that made him feel uncommitted to the institution. Specifically, he mentioned that the first school in which he worked was owned and run by people who were not professionally prepared for the task. By contrast, his second job was represented as one in which his responsibilities increased because of the number of students under his charge (Lines 80 to 85) and the professional tasks he was expected to carry out, such as lesson planning and test design (Lines 94-98). Apparently, the structure provided by Saint Monica's made Adam feel that he was "actually working in a real school" (Lines 124-125). The stress on the words "actually" and "real" in these lines convey how important this job was for Adam. By contrast, Adam's life as a graduate student turned especially unsatisfactory, as we can see in Stanza 7.

Stanza 7

99. A=nd,

100. the Master's wasn't',

101. exactly what I,

102. I thought it was,

103. since I told you,

104. it wasn't,

105. focused on teaching,

106. it was focused on,

107. just research,

108. and I wasn't that uh,

109. keen on,

110. research,

right?/

In this stanza, Adam presents the mismatch between the Master's program objectives, geared towards developing linguistic research (Lines 106-107), and his interest in teaching (103-105) as the main reason for his failure to complete the MA program. The evidence provided by the participant's autobiography and other passages of the interview data discussed in Chapter IV complement this explanation. Specifically, in Chapter 4, I summarized Adam's lengthy account of his conflict with his adviser and how he had to seek an external adviser to complete his thesis

prospectus (see pp. 193-193). Considering that evidence, it is possible to add that Adam's unfortunate history of disagreements with his committee also had a saying on the participant's change of heart. As a conclusion, the data suggest that at some point during his first year at Saint Monica's College Adam negotiated his professional identity on the basis of his bond with his students and the multiple tasks and responsibilities he had to fulfill in that job. At the same time, Adam's negative experiences in his Master's program were used in this negotiation to make sense of his failures and to eliminate research from his personal representation of his professional identity.

6.1.2 Sofía's limited range of choices to pursue a graduate education.

Sofía made her debut as a college instructor in 2008. She started working for IUM, the same university from which she obtained her bachelor's degree, as part of the teaching staff of the Foreign Languages Department. Not long after her first semester, Sofía was appointed as a faculty member of the English program from which she had graduated. From that moment on, and due to quality control policies, IUM authorities started to put pressure on Sofía to pursue a graduate degree that would allegedly help her secure her position. However, the institution did not offer any financial support to help Sofía achieve the required degree. In the following narrative, Sofía tells me how she faced this challenge:

Excerpt 45: Sofía tells the story of the challenges she faced when she pursued a required degree at her own expense.

1. AR: And can you tell me,
2. a little bit more,
3. about your decision of,
4. starting a graduate degree,
5. going to grad school,
6. How did that happen?

Stanza 1

7. SOFÍA: [O=h],
8. well,
9. I always wanted to study,
10. a master's.
11. I always wanted to study a master's,

12. and I've always liked studying.
13. since I was little,
14. I think that's why,
15. maybe that influenced,
16. my decision to become a teacher.
17. I've always loved school.

Stanza 2

18. I love studying/,
19. I loved reading/.
20. I still love reading,
21. a=nd
22. . . . I love learning,

23. and just,
24. learning new things
25. not staying behind\.

Stanza 3

26. So\
27. that's why,
28. I just wanted to study more.

Stanza 4

29. But\
30. the thing was,
31. when I graduated,
32. I=
33. I didn't get
34. married immediately,
35. but I did get married,
36. at the age of 24,
37. li=ke,
38. two years after I graduated.
39. so,
40. that changed my plans,
41. a little bit.

Stanza 5

42. So\
43. I started,
44. I didn't really have the money,
45. to study a Master's,
46. at that moment.
47. so,
48. when I wanted to\.

Stanza 6

49. I wanted to study a Master's,
50. like at 25 or,
51. but I couldn't,
52. I didn't have the money,

Stanza 7

53. So what **happened**,
54. <@ was that I had to do it anyway
@>.
55. @ @ @

Stanza 8

56. The thing is that,
57. here in the university,
58. in the year 2011,
59. umh they started,
60. implementing this new,

61. thing,
62. certifications,
63. etcetera\.

Stanza 9

64. So they **required**,
65. a Master's from me,
66. I had to study it\
67. that's why,
68. as you know,
69. that they told me,
70. so\

Stanza 10

71. <@ What I did@>
72. was I had to.
73. <@ ask my parents,
74. to help me pay for it/@>,
75. because I wasn't earning enough
money,
76. and my husband wasn't earning
enough money,
77. for us to pay for that too,
78. with other payments that we had to
make.

Stanza 11

79. <@ So\@>
80. my father started helping me,
81. pay for the Master's,
82. and I paid for the other half,
83. so that was how I did it.

Stanza 12

84. But I always
85. so,
86. it was like a two way thing,
87. I wanted to do it,
88. becau-
89. and I,
90. I still do,
91. would like to study,
92. actually to study another one,
93. here at MSU ((Miranda State
University)) that they have,
94. but,
95. and then a doctorate,
96. sometime in the future,
97. but\

Stanza 13

98. On the other hand,
99. I was a bit forced into it,
100. at that moment,
101. I mean,
102. I knew I was going to do it,
103. but I was forced into it,
104. at that moment.
Listener's contribution
105. AR: Now or never,

Stanza 14
106. SOFÍA: Exactly,
107. yeah,
108. because I needed it,
109. I needed to have it,
110. and now I have to,
111. I have to get my,
112. my degree ((write and defend her
thesis)),
113. yeah\.

Stanza 15
114. AR: So,
115. out of the programs,
116. that you had as,
117. an option for the graduate degree,
118. which was the criteria,
119. that you used to select,
120. the one you chose?

Stanza 16
121. SOFÍA: Well,
122. I knew I wanted something in ed-
123. in the field of education,
124. or English teaching,

Stanza 17
125. **But**,
126. but\,
127. here in Miranda,
128. and in Mexico,
129. there aren't many options
((plaintive tone)).

Stanza 18
130. Or maybe in Mexico yeah,
131. but not in Miranda,
132. especially in the city,
133. a=nd,
134. I couldn't leave,
135. because now I was married,

136. a=nd.
Stanza 19
137. Well,
138. that was something that,
139. I **wanted** to do,
140. and I,
141. I still don't regret getting married,
142. actually,
143. I love being married with my
husband,
144. so,
145. yeah/.

Stanza 20
146. So I=
147. started looking for,
148. for universities here,
149. and there weren't many options,
150. and I didn't want to have,

Stanza 21
151. I didn't want to be,
152. in a schoo=l,
153. that was completely,
154. I don't know,
155. <@ that nobody knew@>,
156. I think I ended up,
157. studying at a school,
158. that nobody knows a lot anyway,

Stanza 22
159. Well,
160. let me tell you about it,
161. so,
162. Ok,
163. there was the MSU,
164. At MSU,
165. they didn't have what I needed,
166. or maybe in Capital City,
167. but I could go to Capital City,
168. Ok,
169. that was one option.

Stanza 23
170. There was here,
171. at IUM,
172. but,
173. . . . it was too expensive.

Stanza 24
174. So,

175. There was,
176. it was what I wanted,
177. there weren't many options,
178. and then,
179. the options that there were,
180. were very expensive.

Stanza 25

181. So I said,
182. my only option,
183. here at IUM/
184. no\
185. I couldn't,
186. I couldn't afford it.

Stanza 26

187. So I said,
188. <Q Ok/
189. the public school\ Q>,
190. right?,
191. <Q Yeah Q>,
192. but they didn't have what I wanted/.

Stanza 27

193. So I said,
194. <Q What am I going to do/?Q>
195. Righ/?

Stanza 28

196. So,

197. then I heard about this other,
198. the new government school,
199. that wasn't,
200. it's **not** very prestigious,
201. but,
202. some people have told me,
203. that the teachers,
204. are **good** teachers,
205. because,
206. they have Doctorates and Master's,
207. they are studied people,
208. and they work in different
universities in the State/.

Stanza 29

209. So I said\
210. <Q Well Ok\
211. I'm going to learn,
212. right/?
213. which is the important thing,
214. so I just,
215. and it's a lot cheaper Q>,
216. so I had to make the choice,

Stanza 30

217. And I,
218. I chose that school,
219. because of those,
220. because of those things\.

Unlike Adam, who entered a Master's program right after obtaining his undergraduate diploma, Sofía waited four years to make that move. During that time, her life gravitated around a couple of minor teaching jobs she got after her graduation, her first professional commitments with IUM, and her marriage (see Chapter 4 for a summarized account of Sofía's life history, pp. 201-205). On the surface, these circumstances could make her appear as less ambitious or less interested in her professional development than some of her colleagues were. The organization of the first four stanzas of this story suggest that Sofía was probably aware of this perception and wanted to avoid any possible misconstruction of her professional commitment. Below, I will offer a close analysis of this organization and explain how Sofía uses these stanzas to position herself as a committed professional in spite of the circumstances.

In her storytelling, Sofia begins by emphasizing her steady interest in learning (Lines 7-28). She accomplished this by presenting mantra-like repetitions of transitive verbs that implied cognitive states (want, like, love) and took nouns such as “learning”, “school”, and “studying” as their objects (Lines 9, 11, 17, 18-25, and 28). With these clauses she was clearly presenting herself as one genuinely interested in academia in spite of the appearances.

Stanza 1

7. SOFÍA: [O=h],
 8. well,
 9. I always wanted to study,
 10. a master’s.
 11. I always wanted to study a master’s,
 12. and I’ve always liked studying.
 13. since I was little,
 14. I think that’s why,
 15. maybe that influenced,
 16. my decision to become a teacher.
 17. I’ve always loved school.

Stanza 2

18. I love studying/
 19. I loved reading/
 20. I still love reading,
 21. a=nd
 22. . . . I love learning,
 23. and just,
 24. learning new things
 25. not staying behind\.

Stanza 3

26. So\
 27. that’s why,
 28. I just wanted to study more.

Although Sofia’s love of learning could simply be taken as a natural tendency in one whose life is devoted to teaching, the contrast in Stanza 4 introduces an additional meaning that should not be overlooked to understand Sofia’s narrative at this point:

Stanza 4

29. But\
 30. the thing was,
 31. when I graduated,
 32. I=
 33. I didn’t get
 34. married immediately,

35. but I did get married,
 36. at the age of 24,
 37. li=ke,
 38. two years after I graduated.
 39. so,
 40. that changed my plans,
 41. a little bit,

By introducing her reasons to delay her plans to continue her education with “but the thing was”, Sofia turns this Stanza in the second part of an argument whose bottom line seems to be: “I love learning and wanted to continue studying, but marriage changed my plans”. The use of “so” on Line 39 also contributes to emphasize marriage as the main reason that altered Sofia’s intention.

After these first four stanzas that I interpret as the preface of the story, the episode can be

divided in two large topical passages. The first one is composed by Sofía's immediate response to my original question (Lines 42-113), and the second one was elicited by my request for further elaboration (see my question on Lines 114 through 120). In the first topical passage, Sofía uses Stanzas 5 and 6 to list the socioeconomic circumstances that prevented her from continuing her education right after she graduated from college (namely, financial limitations). To this obstacle, in Stanzas 7 through 9, Sofía adds a list of pressures coming from her employer (represented by an impersonal and imprecise "they" on Line 64) that pushed her to get a graduate degree in spite of the financial burden. As the teller of this story, Sofía emphasizes how strong these pressures were by intently stressing that her employer "required" her to get the degree (line 64) and, as a consequence, she "had to" (Line 66) find the way to comply with the requirement.

After this explanation has been given, Sofía added two more stanzas to refer the role that her father played to help her surmount the financial obstacles (Lines 71-83). This solution, however, is not presented as the ideal scenario. This idea is suggested by the following stanza (Lines 84-97) where Sofía admits she still wants to apply for a second Master's. This expressed desire tacitly implies Sofía's dissatisfaction with her current graduate program. After this wistful comment, the first topical passage of this episode closes with two additional stanzas that summarize and evaluate the story, emphasizing that Sofía was "forced" (Line 98) by her employer to enter into a graduate program. The necessity of this step is also emphasized by the semi-modals ("need to" and "have to") repeatedly used on Lines 103 through 106:

Stanza 13

93. On the other hand,
 94. I was a bit forced into it,
 95. at that moment,
 96. I mean,
 97. I knew I was going to do it,
 98. but I was forced into it,
 99. at that moment.

Listener's contribution

100. AR: Now or never,

Stanza 14

101. SOFÍA: Exactly,
 102. yeah,
 103. because I needed it,
 104. I needed to have it,
 105. and now I have to,
 106. I have to get my,
 107. my degree ((write and defend her thesis)),
 108. yeah\.

The fact that Sofía previously insisted on her love of learning and her avowal that she had actually been forced to continue her education could be taken as a contradiction. However, the elaboration provided on the second topical passage of this episode (beginning on Line 121) leaves no room for misunderstandings. Sofía did not resist entering into her graduate program because she did not want to continue her education. She did it because the only program she could afford was neither reputed nor geared towards Sofía's interest in second language teaching and learning.

When I requested Sofía to refer to the criteria she had used to select a program, a new topical passage was initiated as Sofía elaborated on the idea of having been bound by the circumstances. On lines 125-129 she suggested that, at the time, there were not any linguistic-related programs available at Miranda that she could afford. Moreover, moving from Miranda to another city where other more appropriate programs could be available was out of the question. Sofía suggested that her being married was the main reason that made this plan totally unfeasible. She did not mention, however, that moving away from Miranda would have also implied leaving her job at IUM. This course of action, of course, would have defeated her initial objective of preserving her job.

Regardless of the choices made to represent the situation, it seems that Sofía genuinely felt she did not have many options from which she could choose. This fact is emphasized by the various linguistic features she used to represent her despair. Some of the dramatic devices used are:

- The two “buts” differentially stressed on lines on lines 125 and 126,
- a plaintive intonation used on line 129,
- an adverb used as intensifier on line 153,
- the laughter quality used in her sarcastic remark on line 155,
- the rising final intonation contour on the quoted question on line 194.

Besides making her point by linguistic means, Sofía takes care to use a considerable

amount of narrative content (for stanzas from line 174 to 195) to build on the idea of being cornered. The story reaches a climax at this point with the rhetoric question “What am I going to do?” After this crisis, the solution she found, an online and professionally oriented program in general education, is vaguely introduced and defended (Lines 197-208). The final two stanzas function as an evaluation and a coda of sorts, in which the teller seems to offer herself some consolation with the prospect of learning in spite of the adverse circumstance.

In contrast with the seemingly optimistic final note, Sofía’s efforts in complying with her employer’s demands have not led to the desired outcomes. When I closed my contact with Sofía, her thesis was still pending and by consequence the degree was yet to be conferred. Ironically, four years after IUM gave Sofía an ultimatum to get a Master’s degree, not only was Sofía still working for the same institution without that degree, she had been promoted to a position of greater responsibility. Such tolerance, however, should not be interpreted as excessive benevolence on the part of Sofía’s employer. The shortage of qualified second language professionals discussed in Chapter 4 and the fact that Sofía is often perceived as a near-native English speaker (she mentions that in one of our interviews) have very likely counterbalanced the disadvantage of not having a graduate degree.

Notwithstanding Sofía’s failure to graduate from her Master’s program, the history of her professional development does not end at this point. True to her claims about her love of learning, Sofía has pursued other options of continuous education that she has sought by her own initiative. In 2013, she successfully completed an online course on assessment sponsored by the American Embassy. She spoke to me very enthusiastically about the outcomes obtained in that experience, emphasizing how she could translate the contents of that course into practical applications in her classroom. Additionally, in the year this study concluded, Sofía traveled to Cuba in order to teach a summer course for English teachers who work for a school affiliated with IUM. These experiences seemed to be contributing to affirm Sofía’s identity as a teacher educator.

Additionally, when comparing Sofía’s experience with graduate education to that of her

colleagues, one cannot overlook the importance of gender considerations to understand the participants' decisions. At some point of her narrative, Sofía considered it necessary to explicitly defend her choice of marrying relatively early in life. She was aware that her identity as a wife socially imposed limitations on her professional choices; therefore, she devoted some time and space to let me know that she did not regret it. Moreover, in several instances during our conversations, Sofía manifested that, in her life plan, her marriage and personal life had a more important place than her professional development. It is not coincidental that the only participant that expressed a similar set of priorities was the other married woman in the group, Daniela.

By contrast, when choosing professional development options, Adam and Betty enjoyed the privilege of a wider range of options. Either because of gender conditions, in the case of Adam, or due to economic status, as in the case of Betty, these participants were able to move around the country following the program that seemed to fit their interest perfectly. Surprisingly, these teachers have not completed their programs. Until this moment, this circumstance has not represented a serious professional problem for either of these two teachers. Adam continues at Saint Monica's College as one of the only two teachers in charge of the secondary and preparatory school division. Betty was recently transferred from teaching a non-credit mandatory English course to become part of the faculty of a new program on Tourism as a language specialist. While it is true that Betty will not be able to access certain professional opportunities that are only available to university instructors with a graduate degree, the permanent status of her job does not seem threatened.

Finally, Leiliani, the only participant who has successfully finished her Master's, graduated from a program that offers a course to guide students during their thesis writing. A methodology specialist is in charge of the course and a content specialist functions as an advisor of sorts during the extent of six months. Ironically, as I already mentioned in Chapter 4, Leiliani has not financially benefitted from her graduate degree. It has not had an impact on her salary or helped her secure a full-time appointment in the public school system. Moreover, since Leiliani's

graduate program was not directly related to second language teaching, she did not gain any discipline-specific expertise from that experience. In this context, Leiliani and other participants have tried to legitimize their professional identities by other means. I will deal with some examples of this legitimization in the following section.

6.2 In search of legitimacy as an English teacher

Very early in their teaching career, the participants discovered that an undergraduate diploma was not enough to secure the social recognition of their professional expertise. While this perception may be usually true for novice practitioners in most disciplines, it was particularly salient in the participants' memories. For example, I noticed that these concerns were evident in the interview data where the participants' negotiation of their professional legitimacy emerged as a recurrent theme. In this section, I will present three episodes that instantiate how the participants made sense of this negotiation process and what resources they identified as useful in legitimizing their second language teaching identities. In this analysis, it will be useful for the reader to keep in mind that I consider that identity negotiations take place whenever there is a struggle for power among individuals, groups, or institutions (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). In this section, I will particularly focus on power struggles derived from the fact that the participants are perceived, by others and by themselves, as nonnative English speakers.

6.2.1 Leiliani's perceptions about the role of international certifications.

During my first interview with each participant, I prompted them to point out specific people or events that had an impact on how the five teachers define their professional identity. When answering this question, Leiliani immediately identified the influence of a particular person and proceeded to tell the following story:

Excerpt 46. Leiliani explains how she was persuaded to take the TKT and other certifications.

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. AR: Can you tell me some examples of people or, | 4. as a teacher? |
| 2. or situations that have influenced, | Stanza 1 |
| 3. the way you are, | 5. LEILIANI: Well, |

6. when I,
7. when I started my social service,
8. there was a,
9. a specific institute,
10. that coordinated ((the English section of)),
11. the school where I did my social service,
12. and this person,
13. in charge of the coordination,
14. at,
15. at first was,
16. like a **pain** in the neck for me,
17. AR: @@@@

Stanza 2

18. LEILIANI: Because,
19. she wanted,
20. me to study more,
21. and I said,
22. <Q How am I going to study more,
23. if I finished my degree,
24. that's why I studied four years there Q>,

Stanza 3

25. And she ((said)) <Q No,
26. it's because you don't have,
27. any certification of your level of English,
28. you have to,

Stanza 4

29. No,
30. it's because you don't have,
31. any certification of your knowledge of teaching,
32. you have to Q>,

Stanza 5

33. And I said,
34. <Q My goodness,
35. what else does she want from me? Q>.
36. AR: @@@

Stanza 6

37. LEILIANI: But then I realized,
38. and nowadays I tell her that,
39. I am very thankful,
40. thankful because,
41. she pushed me,
42. to do more things,
43. not to be just,
44. the English teacher,
45. who finished four years of,
46. university,

Listener's certification

47. AR: And that's it.

Stanza 7

48. LEILIANI: And that's it,
49. I continue studying,
50. I continue improving,
51. and I'm still improving,

Stanza 8

52. I think my level of English,
53. my teaching,
54. all things,
55. but,
56. I think she was one of the,
57. person who influenced,
58. she still influences my,
59. my teaching.

In this episode, Leiliani narrates how her boss at that time persuaded her to take some of the English proficiency and teaching examinations issued by Cambridge English. As the main character in this story, Leiliani progresses from experiencing resistance to her superior's suggestions (Lines 114-16 and 22-24) to accepting and adopting the coordinator's ideas (Lines 48-51).

In the first five stanzas, Leiliani's linguistic choices to express her initial resistance suggest that, at first, she found the coordinator's ideas annoying and unexpected:

- A metaphoric idiom that describes the coordinator's stubborn insistence ("a pain in the neck" on Lines 15-16).
- Use of constructed dialogues that present Leiliani's and her coordinator's points of views in a dramatized fashion (Lines 22-24 and 25-28).
- Parallel phrases that introduce the two main reasons to take the examinations as presented by the coordinator and suggest, by virtue of repetition, how insistent the coordinator was when making her case ("no, it's because you don't have" on Lines 26-28 and 29-32).
- Use of a minced oath ("My goodness" on Line 34) that precedes an expression of exasperation: "What else does she want from me?" (Line 35).

After Leiliani's initial position is clearly stated, she moves the narrative to explain that, although she once believed she didn't need to continue studying after graduation, she no longer holds the same belief. This is especially stated in Stanza 7 with two parallel clauses, where Leiliani said: "I continue studying, I continue improving". Moreover, in considering the situation in retrospect, Leiliani expresses gratitude towards her former boss (Lines 37-46) for insisting on her obtaining certifications from an Anglophone agency such as Cambridge. She concludes the story by reiterating that her former boss is, for the reasons presented in the narrative, one of the most influential figures in her professional life (Stanza 8). With this conclusion, Leiliani winds-up her story using the theme of "an influential person" that was requested by my initial question (Lines 1-4).

Beyond the evident information offered in this episode, the story offers interesting clues to infer at least two of Leiliani's beliefs about English teachers' professional development. First of all, Leiliani shows herself as a teacher who is now convinced that teachers need to keep on

learning and developing professionally along their lives. Second, Leiliani seems to suggest that, for English teachers, that goal can partly be achieved through acquiring certifications issued by an Anglophone agency located in the inner circle.

In order to verify if Leiliani truly held the two ideas mentioned above as part of her beliefs, it is necessary to remember the decisions she has made regarding her professional development. The data provided by Leiliani's autobiography and my personal communications with her (emails and instant messages) were used to construct Table 16 that shows how Leiliani has acted upon her belief on continuous teacher's development. The information includes only those certifications and degree diplomas that she had successfully obtained or concluded by the time of the present study.

Table 16. Leiliani's time line of professional diplomas and certifications

Degree or certifications obtained	Year
Graduation from IUM with a BA in English	2005
Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test (TKT)	2006
Admission to IUM's MA's program in Special Needs Education	2007
Conclusion of MA's program coursework	2009
Cambridge In-Service Certificate of Language Teaching (ICELT) [Not conferred]*	----
Proficiency test of the International English Language Testing System (IELTS)	2010
Graduation from the MA program	2012
TKT KAL module (Knowledge about language)	2012

*Note: Leiliani could not conclude the ICELT course due to other professional commitments at the time, namely the writing of her Master's thesis.

From this information, we can infer that, along the first decade of her professional life, Leiliani has not spared efforts and financial resources in her continuous education. She has focused part of these efforts on obtaining Cambridge certifications, which suggest how important

these credentials are for her. Moreover, Leiliani's strong investment in taking Cambridge exams and teaching courses becomes more evident if one considers the high cost of these certifications, especially when compared to teachers' salaries¹⁵. Therefore, with her actions, Leiliani seems to confirm that she holds two strong beliefs regarding teachers' professional development:

1. Professional development should be continuous.
2. International certifications of English teachers' proficiency and pedagogical knowledge play an important part in this development.

In the subsequent episode, Leiliani elaborates on these ideas and shows how she perceives that her investment in her professional development has impacted on her teaching career.

Excerpt 47. Leiliani's perspective on the role of foreign certifications in her career

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AR: Now, 2. I'm gonna move a little bit, 3. from the idea of, 4. teaching, 5. and I want to talk a little bit about learning, 6. how do you see yourself, 7. as a nonnative English speaker, 8. where do you stand, 9. in proficiency, 10. confidence, 11. familiarity with the language, 12. how do you feel? <p>Stanza 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 13. LEILIANI: Well\, 14. . . sometimes, 15. I think I'm not, 16. I think I'm, 17. well prepared, 18. to be a teacher\, <p>Stanza 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. But there are other times, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 20. that I say, 21. that I have, 22. to continue growing, 23. by\, 24. improving my English/, 25. by\, 26. learning new strategies for teaching/, 27. because, 28. things change, 29. the students that we receive every year, 30. they are totally different every year, 31. they are reloaded ((probably meaning more developed)) every year, 32. you know? 33. So/ <p>34. AR: [@@@]</p> <p>Stanza 3</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 35. LEILIANI: (Hx), 36. I think that's why I think, 37. and then, |
|---|---|

¹⁵ According to the last survey of occupations and employment, teachers in Leiliani's region (with one single teaching position) earn an average of \$ 9, 496 Mexican pesos a month (INEGI, 2015). On the other hand, the fees for IELTS are \$ 3,330.00 (International House Website/December, 2015).

38. when I see,
39. native teachers,
40. that are my peers,
41. and I see that,
42. that I have to accept that I am,
43. better prepared than them,

Stanza 4

44. And I say <Q Well,
45. I'm not doing bad,
46. because if they're native,
47. they have the language,
48. but not,
49. the teaching style,
50. and probably,
51. I have the teaching style,
52. but I'm not the native s-,
53. a native speaker Q>.

Listener's contribution

54. AR: And,
55. what do you think is best for,
56. for students?

Stanza 5

57. LEILIANI: I think,
58. to have,
59. a good teacher,
60. no matter if,
61. if the teacher is native,
62. or non-native,
63. but with a good,
64. teaching style.

Listener's contribution

65. AR: So,
66. someone that is,
67. well-trained.
68. LEILIANI: That's right,
69. yes,
70. a well-trained teacher.

71. AR: And,
72. have you ever felt,
73. felt uh,
74. that there is some kind of,
75. discrimination,
76. towards non-native teachers?

Stanza 6

77. LEILIANI: Sometimes,
78. and I think because of my,
79. my preparation,
80. I= haven't had the,
81. the,
82. the opportunity to,
83. to receive,
84. a no as an answer,
85. when I knock doors,
86. the doors are open for me,
87. so,

Listener's contribution

88. AR: Because your degree is directly in English.

Stanza 7

89. LEILIANI: Directly in English,
90. I've got my certifications,
91. I am a,
92. Cambridge oral examiner,

Stanza 8

93. So,
94. when they see my CV,
95. they say <Q Well\,
96. you're Ok to be here Q>,
97. so,
98. I have not that problem,

Stanza 9

99. But I have noticed with other,
100. peers,
101. who only have the,
102. the degree,
103. that the,
104. for example,
105. they ((prospective employers)),
- 106.
107. they have a curriculum,
108. just with a,
109. degree,
110. and they say <Q No,
111. this ((teacher)) is more prepared,
112. so,
113. we need,
114. this teacher Q>,

Stanza 10

115. Now here in Mexico,

116. the SEP,
117. they want people prepared,
118. and with a major,
119. so,
120. if native teachers come,

121. they have to have a paper,
122. that proves,
123. that they are prepared,
124. to be teachers.

The question that elicited this episode was purposefully designed to change the focus of the conversation from teaching to learning. However, when I brought the notion of being a nonnative English speaker into the discussion, Leiliani's immediate response was intimately connected to her teaching identity. Moreover, introducing the theme of nonnativeness apparently triggered a whole argument that presented evidence to support Leiliani's legitimacy as an English teacher. In the first stanza of her response (Lines 13-18) Leiliani began what seems to be a concession to the language ideology that sets NESTs on a superior ground. Right after my question, the participant admitted having insecurities that are assumed to be related to her condition as a NNEST ("sometimes I think I'm not well-prepared to be a teacher" on Lines 14-18). To this concession, Leiliani opposed two main counterarguments. First, she reiterated her conviction on the importance of continuous professional development ("I have to continue growing" Lines 21-22). As a second argument, she suggested that some of the NESTs she knew lacked the pedagogical expertise required for the job (Lines 35-43). Finally, on Lines 44 to 53, Leiliani closed her argument with a conclusion that assessed how NEST and NNEST groups have their equal share of strengths and weaknesses.

The discussion of this subject would have probably ended here, if I had not insisted on an additional question: "what do you think is best for students?" (Lines 54-46). Leiliani responded to this second prompt by siding with the idea that an appropriate teachers' education is more relevant than a teachers' native vs. nonnative speakership. This argument was further elaborated after my third question about how Leiliani had faced the competition on the job market. With respect to the possible inequitable conditions under which NNEST and NEST access teaching positions, Leiliani denied having encountered discrimination (Stanza 6, Lines 77-84). However, the one factor that Leiliani pointed out as the main reason for her successful job-hunting

experience was not her English degree. In fact, even though I insinuated that having a teaching degree could be the reason of her success (Line 88), Leiliani stressed the importance of her Cambridge credentials. In order to emphasize this fact, Leiliani created a small imaginary story in two stanzas in which some unidentified employers argue about hiring her over other candidates (Lines 89 to 114). In the last stanza, Leiliani sought to balance her response commenting on the new requirements established by Secretaría de Educación Pública (Secretariat of Public Education or SEP by its acronym in Spanish) for the hiring of English teachers. She adamantly emphasized that these requirements also apply to any NES candidates.

Leiliani's imaginary story (Stanzas 7-9) seems to suggest that NNESTs working within their own country may be more successful on the job market if they hold certifications issued by a foreign agency or corporation. In the same vein, Leiliani's degree from a national university is not presented as the main reason for her success in finding jobs. While it may be true that employers may be interested in hiring teachers with international certifications to make their schools or language institutes more attractive for potential students, focusing on certifications as a way to ensure teachers' development may be problematic. A second look at Leiliani's professional development history (as shown in Table 16) set into context with the narrative evidence shown in Excerpts 46 and 47 offers an interesting perspective to problematize this issue.

The reader may remember that in Excerpt 46 Leiliani described how her first boss strongly suggested Leiliani to take an exam to certify her teaching knowledge (Stanza 4). As can be seen in Table 16, Leiliani obeyed her coordinator and sat for the TKT the year after she graduated from her BA's English program. Leiliani's success in this exam (she obtained band 3 in all the modules) might have boosted her confidence and satisfied her employer's demands. However, the TKT was not exactly the best option to help Leiliani move forward in her professional development. This test is mostly addressed to pre-service teachers, teachers who intend to move into English teaching after teaching other subjects, or in-service teachers in need of refreshing their theoretical knowledge (UCLAS, 2015). As a recent graduate of a teaching

program with a two-year practicum Leiliani did not truly fit into any of these categories. However, Leiliani did not mention this drawback in any of the episodes here analyzed. Instead, she emphasized the important role that these certifications had in her continuous professional development (Excerpt 46) and described them as a professional asset that increased her competitiveness on the job market (Excerpt 47). Furthermore, it is interesting to notice that in the second excerpt Leiliani invoked the value of her certification as a way to avoid being discriminated by some employers because of her linguistic background (Excerpt 47, Stanza 6). Therefore, it could be said that Leiliani's investment in obtaining certifications was at least partially related to her perceptions of the disadvantages faced by NNESTs in her context. In other words, Leiliani's efforts may be interpreted as compensatory measures used by her to negotiate the legitimacy of her professional identity. In Leiliani's view, these measures seemed to be necessary in a context that otherwise could position her as someone who is not "well prepared to be a teacher" (Excerpt 47, Line 17).

Leiliani's story offers a glance into a teacher's perceptions about the value of formal credentials to legitimize a teacher's identity. By contrast, the second story in this section talks about informal experiences also considered relevant by Adam to legitimize a NNEST's identity.

6.2.2 Adam's views about his L2 proficiency.

During our first interview, Adam's initial response did not start with the episode of his decision to enter an undergraduate program oriented towards English teaching. Instead, he chose to narrate the story of his first teaching job. He listed different aspects of that experience without needing much prompting from me, apart from some back-channeling mainly used to let him know that I was following his narrative. In the episode transcribed below, Adam briefly refers his inability to respond to a question posed by one of his young students. This memory elicited a series of considerations about Adam's legitimacy, as perceived by himself, as an English teacher at the time.

Excerpt 48. A “shrimp” story: Adam presents an example of his problems teaching English vocabulary.

Stanza 1

1. ADAM: And,
2. problems with,
3. children,
4. well actually,
5. I **learned** a lot from them,
6. because,
7. uh the fi-,
8. the se-,
9. in the second class,
10. u=h,
11. the second class of,
12. my entire life as a teacher,
13. they asked me,
14. <Q What is,
15. the meaning of shrimp? Q>,
16. and they said it in Spanish\,

Stanza 2

17. And I was like,
18. <Q Shrimp\,
19. Uh,
20. let me check it,
21. in the dictionary tomorrow Q>,
22. @@@@.

23. AR: @@@@

Stanza 3

24. ADAM: And tell me if I will,
25. Ever forget,
26. shrimp in English,
27. **ne=ver**.

Listener’s contribution

28. AR: <@ Yeah @>
29. because you didn't know it,
30. at **that time** ((tapping on the table for emphasis)).

31. ADAM: Exactly,

Stanza 4

32. It was really hard because,
33. actually,
34. I didn't have enough confidence in myself,
35. in that moment,

Stanza 5

36. Because I said,
37. (TSK),
38. <Q me/?,
39. a teacher/?,
40. in front of children?/Q>
41. they ((students)) want a,
42. high le-,
43. uh,
44. a very,
45. very **strict** teacher,
46. with,
47. all the **knowledge** in the world,
48. @@@,
49. and you're like their hero\,

Stanza 6

50. And I said,
51. <Q No,
52. my English has to,
53. has to improve more,
54. I **cannot** uh,
55. be a teacher right now\Q>,

Stanza 7

56. And actually,
57. you learn from uh,
58. every day,
59. I can see that,

Stanza 8

60. I need to practice my English,
61. I would like to go to the United States,
62. or to another place **but**,
63. I have to admit that it's not the same,

64. right now,
65. as it was,
66. five years ago,
67. for example\.

Listener's contribution

68. AR: Because of your work
((experience))

69. ADAM: Because of my work.

This short episode seems to have juxtaposed two different points of view on what makes a legitimate NNEST. To illustrate the first point of view, Adam refers to his insecurities as a novice teacher using a story of an embarrassing moment. In three stanzas (Lines 1 to 27), the participant tells the story¹⁶ of how his younger self was unable to function as a second language resource for his students. Adam's self-perceived inability to fulfill a task considered inherent to his professional function (i.e. not knowing the word "shrimp", as we can see in Stanza 2) is presented as an unforgettable (as emphasized by the stress and elongated first vowel in the word "never" on Line 27) and difficult moment (Line 32). It made him question whether he could consider himself a real teacher or not. In a dramatized internal dialogue (see Stanzas 5 and 6), Adam concludes that he was not ready for the task (Lines 51-55) because of two main reasons: he was neither knowledgeable enough (Line 47) nor strict enough (Line 45) to be perceived as "the hero" Adam supposed his students were expecting (Lines 36 to 40).

By contrast, Adam's older self, talking to me during the interview, refutes his former logic by arguing that teachers learn from their everyday practice (Stanza 7). This perception could be seen as another way of saying that in spite of novice teachers' lack of experience and knowledge (as in the "shrimp story"), their ability to continue learning from their practice enables them to make up for their shortcomings (see Lines 46-58). In this context, the expression "I can see that" (Line 59) evaluates and supports Adam's present view point as he reflects on the events in retrospect. However, in an unexpected concession that does not seem to respond to any

¹⁶ Although this story can rightly be considered as a "small" one because of its length, it is not included in Chapter 7 because it was not produced in the context of naturally occurring conversations as it is the case of the stories that will be presented in that chapter.

additional prompt produced by me, as the interviewer, the participant suggests that his English is still in need of improvement (“I need to practice my English”, Line 60). Not only does Adam admit that he still needs to practice his English, he also adds that a visit to the United States, or any other English-speaking country, is still a pending task in his to-do list. Although Adam does not mention why, given the conversation context, I, as the audience, can infer that the said visit is seen as a requirement to improve his language proficiency. In other words, this conversation suggests that Adam was looking forward to practicing his English and confirming his professional legitimacy by facing the challenge of everyday communication in an inner circle country.

After this admission, the last few lines following a suggestively stressed “but” on Line 62 function to open a counterargument that is similar to the one used by Leiliani in the previous story. Specifically, Adam reiterates that he has improved by saying “I have to admit that it’s not the same, right now, as it was five years ago” (Lines 63-67). These lines are produced to support the participants’ claims to present himself as a legitimate English teacher in spite of his linguistic background. However, Adam does not use his certifications to negotiate his teaching identity as Leiliani did. Even though he also has some Cambridge ESOL credentials under his belt, Adam chose to claim legitimacy by using his five years of teaching experience as his support, as we can see in Stanza 8.

In spite of this apparent self-assured version of himself that he presented in this episode, Adam truly meant what he said about a perceived need to visit an English-speaking country. In his journal, a couple of events confirmed that Adam was truly invested in the idea. First, the participant shared with me his frustration when he was not appointed to travel to England with one of his classes during a trip organized by the school. He complained about the fact that the school authorities preferred sending a teacher who was not part of the English teaching staff to encourage him or her to learn the language (Journal entry 2, September 1, 2013). English teachers, they deemed, did not require such motivation because they already know the language.

As a consolation, Adam decided to travel to the United States the following year, paying for the trip out of his own pocket. Although his stay was very short and was for leisure purposes only, he was really happy with the experience when we talked about it months later during our third interview. Moreover, during our last interview the following spring, Adam talked again about considering future trips as part of his plans for professional and personal development. The following interview excerpt shows Adam's comments on the subject when considering possible changes in light of his growing dissatisfaction with the school's administration.

Excerpt 49. Adam considers some possible future alternatives of professional development.

1. AR: Now tell me,
2. what,
3. what now/?
4. If you are,
5. kicked out or,
6. if you decide to resign,
7. what's the next step for you?

Stanza 1

8. ADAM: I think that,
9. I would have to,
10. to move to a new challenge,

Stanza 2

11. U=h,
12. first of all,
13. to become a new teacher,
14. continuing,
15. applying the skills that I have,
16. and everything,

Stanza 3

17. But not only as a teacher but,
18. having new goals,
19. in life,
20. not only as a teacher,
21. in **life**,
22. personal things ((personal goals)),
23. maybe,
24. travelling abroad,

Stanza 4

25. u=h,
26. in this moment,
27. I
28. to be perfectly honest,
29. I am not interested in a PhD.,

Stanza 5

30. a=nd, five,
31. months ago,
32. I was,
33. very interested,
34. and I was,
35. <Q ((Gaspng)),
36. yes I have to finish the Master's,
37. because I want to,
38. a PhD Q>,

Stanza 6

39. And then,
40. now I say,
41. <Q Why do I want a PhD?
42. Is it going to make me happy?
43. no,

Stanza 7

44. In **this** moment,
45. **today**,
46. I don't think so Q>,

Stanza 8

- 47. But,
- 48. something that would,
- 49. make me really,
- 50. really happy,
- 51. would be,
- 52. like actually,
- 53. being,
- 54. in a native,
- 55. in an,
- 56. in a=,

Listener's contribution

- 57. AR: English-speaking country?

- 58. ADAM: Exactly,
- 59. So,
- 60. I,

Listener's contribution

- 61. AR: Why is it important for you?
- 62. As a nonnative,
- 63. English speaking teacher,
- 64. to visit,
- 65. an English speaking country?

Stanza 9

- 66. ADAM: Because I need to,
- 67. **develop** more skills,
- 68. in my=,
- 69. English performance,
- 70. especially listening,
- 71. listening is one of the skills,
- 72. I'm not very good at it,

Stanza 10

- 73. Speaking,
- 74. it's not something that,
- 75. u=h,
- 76. it's a problem for me,
- 77. maybe I don't have the perfect pronunciation,
- 78. but,
- 79. I don't care,
- 80. if I can communicate,
- 81. it isn't important @@@,

- 82. and that's why,
- 83. what,
- 84. I tell my students,

Stanza 11

- 85. But I think that I need to be in,
- 86. in a real context,
- 87. because,
- 88. also in the way I express it,
- 89. the way I use English,
- 90. is in a normal way,
- 91. for me right now,

Stanza 12

- 92. But if I go=,
- 93. to another,
- 94. to an English speaking country,
- 95. they will tell me,
- 96. <Q No that's not right Q>,

Stanza 13

- 97. So,
- 98. learning,
- 99. some,
- 100. expressions,
- 101. everyday expressions,

Listener's contribution

- 102. AR: So you want to become more,
- 103. **idiomatic**,
- 104. in your language use?

- 105. ADAM: [Exactly],
- 106. yes
- 107. not only academic,
- 108. I think that right now,

- 109. AR: Or colloquial?

Stanza 14

- 110. ADAM: More colloquial,
- 111. I want more colloquial language,
- 112. and common,
- 113. that if I am,
- 114. taking a shower,
- 115. and with the=,

116. the **news** on TV,
117. I want to be able to,
118. understand everything,
119. in English,

Stanza 15

120. It's not like,
121. I have to be paying attention,
122. no,
123. I want to understand just by,
124. <Q What did they say? Q>

Listener's contribution

125. AR: To become like a second nature,
126. to you,
127. to understand,
128. all kinds of discourse.

129. ADAM: [Exactly],
130. not only academic,
131. everything so\,

Stanza 16

132. Obviously for my personal
development,
133. because I,
134. I **love**,
135. being independent,

Stanza 17

136. Bu=t,
137. I think that,
138. being in another country,
139. in a foreign country,
140. it would be **excellent** for me,

Stanza 18

141. Because,
142. in that way,
143. I would,
144. I think that,
145. I would become,
146. more independent,

147. and facing,
148. **real** things,
149. in other places,

Stanza 19

150. In Mexico,
151. I am happy to be Mexican,
152. and everything,
153. but we have some troubles,
154. we have,
155. we have many things to change,
156. but,
157. it seems that people,
158. don't want to change,
159. so for,
160. and for me,
161. change is important,
162. @ @ @,

Stanza 20

163. Because,
164. change,
165. makes you,
166. happier,
167. it helps you,
168. develop things,
169. you cannot,
170. you cannot think,
171. in the way you,
172. you used to think,
173. when you were,
174. fifteen,
175. twenty,
176. twenty five,

Stanza 21

177. So,
178. I am twenty six,
179. years old right now,
180. and when I,
181. when I am thirty,
182. I want to experience,
183. many other things.

In a strict sense, the conversation excerpt presented above cannot be considered a story although a few stanzas present a narrative-like passage. Encouraged by my prompt (Lines 1-7), Adam engaged in an argumentative soliloquy of sorts, listing future scenarios and explaining why these plans would be useful to further his professional and personal development. This interview excerpt seems to be organized in four topical passages that respond to my initial question and additional elicitations (61-65 and 102-104). Table 17 shows how these four topical passages are distributed in the story:

Table 17. Four topical passage in Excerpt 48

Topical Passage	Stanzas	Quotes from each passage
Topical Passage 1: Preface: A new goal.	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “I would have to move to a new challenge” (Lines 9-10). • “Having new goals” (Line 18) • “Maybe travelling abroad” (Lines 23-24).
Topical Passage 2: Not interested in academia any more.	4-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “To be perfectly honest, I’m not interested in a PhD” (Lines 28-29) • “In this moment, today, I don’t think so” (Lines 44-46).
Topical Passage 3: How a sojourn in a country of the inner circle would help Adam improve his English and become more independent	9-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Listening is one of the skills I’m not very good at” (Lines 71-72) • “I want to be able to understand everything in English” (Lines 117-119) • “So, learning some expressions, everyday expressions” (Lines 97-101) • “Obviously, for my personal development, because I love being independent” (Lines 132-135)
Topical Passage 4: Reflections about change.	16-21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It seems that people don’t want to change” (Lines 157-158) • “And for me, change is important” (Lines 160-161)

The first of these passages, which I interpret as the preface of the story, presents Adam’s immediate and succinct response to my question regarding his plans for the future. In the first three stanzas, Adam announced that he wanted to begin moving towards “a new challenge”

(Lines 8-10). These plans would target professional but also personal goals, which are emphasized on Lines 20-21. The achievement of these goals would require new trips abroad (23-24). In the context of the whole excerpt, this first passage appears to function as a summary of what is discussed in more detail in subsequent stanzas.

In the second topical passage (Stanzas 4 to 8), Adam explained that his new goals did not include a career in academia. With this clarification, he was discarding other projections expressed the year before, which contemplated entering a doctoral program (Stanza 5). Adam's stand against continuing his graduate education seems to be voiced quite emphatically. For example, he emphasized his resolution with a passage that represents the teller's thinking process and change of mind in a narrative fashion (Lines 30-46). Also, the adverbial phrase on Line 28 and the stress on the words "this" and "today" (Lines 44-45) are used to reinforce the message from different rhetorical standpoints. While the phrase "to be perfectly honest" appears to reinforce Adam's credibility, as a speaker in this instance, the phonological clues stress the appropriate timing of his decisions.

Therefore, in spite of its brevity, the variety of discursive devices used in this passage demonstrates the importance this clarification takes in the interview event. When the clarification was accomplished, Adam closed the section by revisiting the topic of travelling abroad, which was introduced as the one project that would replace his academic ambitions (Stanza 8).

The third topical passage (Stanzas 9-18) was prompted by my elicitation on Lines 61-65, which guided Adam to elaborate on his plans to travel to an English-speaking country. This topic dominates the interview excerpt occupying up to 10 stanzas (66-149). The extent to which Adam talked about these plans and the detail in the passage not only hint at the importance of the topic in Adam's representations of his prospects, they also allow for the emergence of various relevant themes. For starters, Adam reveals what he would expect from his hypothetical trips in terms of L2 proficiency gains and personal growth. Regarding the first goal, the participant implied that his listening skills would improve and would require much less conscious effort (Lines 117-119).

Also, his vocabulary would be enriched with the use of more colloquial words and expressions (Lines 97-101). He talked about developing his proficiency to such an extent that English would become second nature to him. Regarding the second goal, Adam imagined that his already independent personality would be enhanced by the experience (Lines 132-135). These imagined scenarios reveal at least three interesting themes emerging in Adam's discourse.

First, Adam's wishes suggest that he still aspires to see his L2 proficiency develop to the same level of ease of his L1, at least as far as vocabulary and listening skills are concerned. Second, the hypothetical situation in which he imagined himself being corrected by native speakers (Lines 92-96) may have implied about Adam's beliefs on the superiority of naturalistic learning and the value of direct correction provided by a native speaker:

Stanza 12

92. But if I go=
93. to another,
94. to an English speaking country,
95. they will tell me,
96. <Q No, that's not right Q>,

Stanza 13

97. So,
98. learning,
99. some,
100. expressions,
101. everyday expressions,

Third, when manifesting an interest in becoming more colloquial (Lines 100-101) as opposed to being more focused on academic English (e.g. "not only academic" as he says on Line 107), Adam seems to be emphasizing his decision to leave academia behind. In sum, Adam's response to my questions does more than just hypothesizing about possible future scenarios. Adam, as the teller of his narrative, apparently used the topic to represent his decreased interest in graduate school and other professional pursuits. In Adam's representations of the future, neither of these two options has been projected as a site of personal growth or professional development. On the contrary, possible scenarios of informal learning and a need to focus on his personal life occupied much of the space and time in this passage. Even when considering his growth as a second language teacher, Adam does not look up to formal venues of education. It seems that, in his imagination, the one thing he is missing to become a better teacher is a more extended visit to

an inner-circle country. These considerations lead quite naturally towards the final section of this topical passage in which Adam pondered over the need for change in his life.

In the fourth topical passage, Adam used three stanzas to conclude that he was ready to welcome change. He began by arguing that, although a generalized fear of change is quite widespread in the Mexican psyche (Lines 150-162), he does not share that mentality. The last two stanzas build on that topic and conclude with Adam setting a deadline to bring his projects to fruition before he turns thirty.

In Excerpt 48 (A “shrimp story”), Adam struggled with the notion of his legitimacy as an EFL professional when his vocabulary knowledge failed him. While he first suggested that his work experience had reduced his insecurities as an L2 teacher, he still seems to perceive a need to improve his L2 proficiency. This same notion is evident in the excerpt analyzed above (Excerpt 49) where Adam reiterates the need to enhance his L2 use, particularly his vocabulary and listening skills, by travelling abroad. Adam’s insecurities with lexis and how he handles them in class will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter, where I will bring up an additional example of another participant, Betty, who also struggled with vocabulary during one of the classes I observed.

This interview excerpt has provided discursive evidence of how a teacher views his proficiency level as essential to creating and enhancing one’s legitimacy as an ELT teacher. Although Adam’s perceptions of his L2 proficiency are not independent of dominant social constructions, they have been internalized to the point of becoming part of the teacher’s personal standards. Therefore, Adam apparently feels compelled to meet these standards as a way to achieve legitimacy out of personal wishes to develop personally and professionally. In the final part of this section, I will analyze an episode that features a teacher seeking legitimacy in a different way. In this case, Betty refers to actions that are not necessarily connected to the acquisition of formal credentials or new informal experiences with the target language as in Leiliani’s and Adam’s cases.

6.2.3 Betty's opinions about the role of English at the University of Sotavento.

In my interactions with Betty, I noticed that being acknowledged as a legitimate professional was important to her. Although this preoccupation was also present in Leiliani and Adam's narratives, Betty's perspective on this matter was slightly different to that of her fellow participants in this study. Betty seemed to be especially concerned with the degree of respect that people around her manifested towards EFL teaching and whether they considered it a relevant component of the higher education curriculum. The following passage illustrates how some students' and faculty members' perceptions on the issue were characterized as problematic in Betty's discourse.

Excerpt 50. Betty's perspective of her students' opinions about English

1. AR: How are,
2. English instructors,
3. regarded?
4. In the opinion of other professors?
5. Or other people from other fields?

Stanza 1

6. BETTY: I have perceived,
7. tha=t,
8. they ((English instructors)) don't have the same,
9. importance,
10. a=s other teachers have,

Stanza 2

11. Becau=se,
12. sometimes,
13. my students have classes with us,
14. they have a certain schedule,
15. and it happens that their professors,
16. from their faculties
((Departments or Schools)),
17. they say,
18. <Q Oh is your English class,
19. don't worry,
20. you just go and say,
21. you have classes with me Q>,

Stanza 3

22. <Q You have to finish your clinics,
23. what do you prefer?,
24. to fail,
25. **my** subject,
26. or to fail English Q>,

Stanza 4

27. So,
28. apparently we're all the same,
29. AR: [Ummh].

Stanza 5

30. BETTY: We have the same salaries,
31. we have the same processes,
32. but,
33. uh-humh,
34. we're not,
35. as valued,
36. as the others ((faculty members)) are.

Listener's contribution

37. AR: So,
38. it seems that both,
39. professors and students regard,
40. English,
41. as an addition,
42. as a secondary addition.

43. BETTY: Exactly.

44. AR: And,
45. in spite of this,
46. context,
47. what kind of teacher,
48. would you like to be in the future?

Stanza 6

49. BETTY: I would like to be,
50. a teacher,
51. that,
52. inspires people/,

53. AR: Umh-huhm,

Stanza 7

54. BETTY: And also,
55. for example,
56. in translation,
57. and interpretation,
58. we have a term,
59. that is,
60. or a phrase,
61. that is to educate the client,

62. AR: Umh-hum,

Stanza 8

63. BETTY: To make them know,
64. what translation,
65. and the hiring of a
66. professional,
67. is important,
68. a=nd,
69. that is why,
70. I would like to have,
71. in,
72. in this position,

Stanza 9

73. Because many people don't,
74. have any idea,
75. about the value,
76. of teaching,
77. or why,
78. are they taking this courses,
79. I would like to **educate**,
80. my students,
81. or,
82. the people around me,
83. about the importance of this.

My elicitation of this topic was motivated by some events observed during Betty's class and a few comments that Betty had made in her email communications prior my first visit to Sotavento. To respond to my question, Betty used a habitual story (Lines 11 to 26) that narrates events that are assumed to happen in repetitive fashion or as a routine. Within this narrative, UoS faculty members from other departments make English appear as a second-rate type of subject. On the contrary, all discipline-oriented courses are positioned as essential to students' education, making students' attendance in these courses a priority over English whenever a schedule conflict occurs.

Although Betty's story has to be considered as a narrativized presentation of the teller's perceptions and not necessarily as a factual event, it is not such an inaccurate interpretation of the place that English actually has in the UoS curriculum. As Betty explained to me in subsequent

conversations, English is considered a non-credit graduation requirement for all undergraduate students at UoS. Such a requirement is common in most large universities in Mexico and represents a way to comply with current trends in higher education and to ensure success in accreditation processes. However, just as I mentioned in Chapter 4, this requirement rarely goes beyond a basic proficiency level. As a result, the mandatory courses offered to help students fulfill the requirement are also within the basic to pre-intermediate range (see Davies 2009a). As I could notice during my visits, that is precisely the case of UoS' English program. Therefore, students end up attending lessons that only recycle contents already covered during their secondary education. Unsurprisingly, students' interest in these courses is really low. Even those whose proficiency level is not above the course contents seem to look at English as a minor contribution to their education. By Betty's account, one can infer that the same attitude has also been adopted by faculty members outside of UoS Foreign Language Department. These perceptions expressed in Betty's narrative were verified during my visits to Sotavento. In Chapter 7, I will present narrative data taken from my classroom observations that will show how the students in Betty's class perceived the place of English in their curriculum and how these perceptions seemed to have affected their attitudes in class.

In this context, it is not surprising that Betty felt that her professional self was not appreciated the way it should be. Accordingly, Betty's views on the future of her teacher's identity (her projections of memberships she could claim in times yet to come) appear in this passage as directly connected to negotiating the place that English has in her students' and in other faculty members' opinions (see Stanzas 7 to 9).

Stanza 7

54. BETTY: And also,
55. for example,
56. in translation,
57. and interpretation,
58. we have a term,
59. that is,
60. or a phrase,

61. that is to educate the client,

Stanza 8

63. BETTY: To make them know,
64. what translation,
65. and the hiring of a
66. professional,
67. is important,

68. a=nd,
69. that is why,
70. I would like to have,
71. in,
72. in this position,

Stanza 9

73. Because many people don't,
74. have any idea,

75. about the value,
76. of teaching,
77. or why,
78. are they taking these courses,
79. I would like to **educate**,
80. my students,
81. or,
82. the people around me,
83. about the importance of this.

In her projection, Betty borrows an aphorism commonly used by translators (Line 61), who, in Betty's view, also perceive themselves as underrated professionals (see Betty's claim about translation in Stanza 8). The use of "we" on Line 58 suggest that Betty sees herself as one who holds membership in two professional communities (This positioning is not surprising since she spent two years of her life in a Master's program in translation). As a teller, Betty draws from this experience to argue that both professions are in need of social recognition. Therefore, considering herself as part of an undervalued professional minority (both as a teacher and as a translator), Betty sets the goal of becoming an educator that will promote the perception of second language teaching as a legitimate and relevant profession.

In sum, although Betty, Leiliani, and Adam work at very different contexts, they all seem to view that their professional identity is constantly put into question. In some cases their fight for professional legitimacy is connected to their linguistic background and the inferior place socially assigned to multicompetent and multilingual English teachers. In other circumstances, as in Betty's case, the struggle for legitimacy is related to the place that English has in the curriculum and how this position is perceived by others. Beyond these differences, the participants' narratives suggest that their identity as EFL professionals faces problems that are inherent to the social constructions created around English. Apparently, the participants struggle with these social constructions, accepting but also contesting them at different episodes in the narrative data analyzed in this chapter. Similar contradictions are also evident in the teachers' account of their relationship with employers, students, and their colleagues. Although Adam's story in Excerpt 43 (about his first year at Saint Monica's School) addressed the role that students may play in

teachers' identity negotiation, in the following section, I will elaborate on the topic adding different perspectives from other participants' narratives.

6.3 Social relations, job mobility, and teacher's identity

As part of their professional history, the participants narrated their passage through different teaching jobs and how various social and material conditions had led them to move on in search of new professional opportunities. All the participants had resigned from at least one teaching position prior to the one they held at the time of the study. Furthermore, three out of the five teachers had an additional part-time teaching job, which functioned as a secondary source of income. During the time of the study, two of them either resigned or were found redundant in those secondary jobs (see Table 18).

In spite of these changes, the five participants considered themselves well-established members of the school community where I observed them work. Time seems to have given them the right to feel so. In all the cases, the participants had taught in the same school for a minimum of 4 years at the beginning of the study and were still working there when the study reached its end. However, at some point, all the teachers admitted feeling somewhat uncomfortable with certain prevalent conditions at the workplace.

Some of them placed the source of this discomfort within the school administration; others said that their relationship with their students had become a source of concern. Because of these problematic circumstances, I asked them about the possibility of moving on to other jobs, to search for better opportunities. They all admitted they had thought about this possibility and speculated on the subject during the interviews.

Additionally, I asked the participants to consider their relationship with their colleagues and what it represented for them as part of their professional life. While in some cases these teachers acknowledged that their colleagues were a source of support, a degree of distance and even isolation was also present in the participants' comments about their peers. In some of the narratives, colleagues emerged in the form of the few individuals within the local English

teaching staff. By contrast, sometimes peers were seen as impersonal figures, a sort of *professional other*

Table 18. Teachers' job history

	Adam	Betty	Daniela	Leiliani	Sofia
First job (pre-service)	Bilingual Elementary School 2 years	Bilingual Elementary school (Administrative Assistant) 1 year	Adult education courses 1 year	Language school (1 summer) Occasional private tutoring for elementary school students	Elementary school (2 years, on and off)
Second job	Bilingual Junior and High School 5 years	Volunteer work for the Rotary Club (Developing and teaching and a course) 1 summer	Language school 1 year	Bilingual school (preschool, elementary and middle school) 5 years	High school 1 year
Third job		College 5 years	Bilingual preschool 1 year	Public high school 7 years	College 8 years
Fourth job			Secondary school 7 years		
Secondary jobs at the time of the study	College (Saturday courses)		Language Institute College (Saturday courses)	Bilingual high school Language Institute Freelance oral examiner	

that teachers used to define themselves in a dichotomous fashion. Below, drawing from these conversations, I will use three episodes from Leiliani's and Daniela's interviews that show how these teachers discursively present their relationship with other actors at the workplace.

6.3.1 Daniela decides to move to a new teaching job: "The pay was better".

Daniela is one of the participants who has worked the longest for the same employer. Ironically, she is perhaps the one who has the strongest reasons to feel uneasy at her workplace. As it was already mentioned in Chapter 4, the size of her classes and the leniency of the school's rules make classroom management a significant and persistent everyday challenge. In order to understand Daniela's decision to keep her job in Latin American school in spite of the challenges faced in that work environment, it is necessary to put her present job experience into perspective. The following series of episodes from my interviews with Daniela provide this perspective.

Excerpt 51. Daniela summarizes the different teaching jobs she had before working at Latin American School (Interview1)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. AR: So you said that you began working,</p> <p>2. in a language institute,</p> <p>3. and you taught,</p> <p>4. adults and teenagers,</p> <p>5. DANIELA: For a year.</p> <p>6. AR: And then,</p> <p>7. can you just,</p> <p>8. uh,</p> <p>9. summarize,</p> <p>10. the different,</p> <p>11. types of courses,</p> <p>12. and schools in which you have taught?</p> <p>Stanza 1</p> <p>13. DANIELA: Yes,</p> <p>14. as soon as I finished,</p> <p>15. the university,</p> <p>16. I started to work in a language center,</p> <p>17. I worked with adults,</p> <p>18. and teenagers,</p> <p>19. for a year,</p> <p>20. then I stopped working,</p> | <p>21. because I got pregnant,</p> <p>22. and I,</p> <p>23. have a son now,</p> <p>Stanza 2</p> <p>24. A=nd,</p> <p>25. after that,</p> <p>26. I,</p> <p>27. worked,</p> <p>28. one year in a kindergarten,</p> <p>29. honestly,</p> <p>30. <MRC it was my best year ever MRC>,</p> <p>31. I would like,</p> <p>32. to come back,</p> <p>33. to work in a kindergarten.</p> <p>Stanza 3</p> <p>34. It was a bilingual school,</p> <p>35. it was,</p> <p>36. such an amazing experience,</p> <p>37. I just had,</p> <p>38. sixteen or seventeen children,</p> |
|--|--|

Stanza 4
39. I mean,
40. they are very demanding,
41. u=h,
42. I finished my days,
43. exhausted,
44. but it was very rewarding,

Stanza 5
45. And I,
46. was not the English teacher
47. for one hour,
48. I was with them,
49. since seven thirty in the morning,
50. until 2 pm, ((the usual time of a
regular school day in Mexico))
51. so I was the teacher.

Stanza 6
52. I am not a kindergarten teacher,
53. but I got this job,
54. because I speak English,

Stanza 7
55. It was awesome,

56. I had to,
57. teach them,
58. numbers,
59. I don't know,
60. uh,
61. letters,
62. alphabet,
63. and everything was in English,
64. and I was amazed about their ability
of,
65. absorbing,
66. learning,
67. it was amazing,

Stanza 8
68. After that,
69. I stopped working there,
70. because I was offered this job,
71. a=nd,
72. the pay was better,
73. that's why I accepted,
74. it was like the double,
75. so\.

In this brief episode Daniela used different linguistic devices to emphasize a job experience that she rated as the best of her 10-year teaching career. The adverb on Line 29 (“honestly”) and the *marcato* intonation used in the evaluative statement on the subsequent line frame the beginning of Daniela’s praising of her job in kindergarten. The conditions described in her narrative certainly sound like a far cry from the classes I observed. As opposed to her present job, Daniela’s memories of her job at a kindergarten depicted a small class of active but attentive children and L2 centered classes where true learning was happening. Besides the enthusiastic descriptions, the negative statement in Stanza 5 also provides information of other positive aspects of this job such as having more time and control over the students:

Stanza 5
45. And I,
46. was not the English teacher
47. for one hour,
48. I was with them,
49. since seven thirty in the morning,
50. until 2 pm.

51. So I was the teacher,

In other words, unlike her job at Latin-American School, where Daniela only works with each one of her classes five hours a week, in the kindergarten Daniela was in charge of on single class for the whole morning (see Lines 48-51). The use of the article “the” on Line 51 implies that she was the only instructor in charge of that class, which is a common practice at the kindergarten level.

Besides the facts established in this short episode, the details that Daniela omitted can also serve to expand our understanding of Daniela’s decision to leave. In the first place, Daniela does not question the fact that she was given the job in spite of her lack of appropriate qualifications to teach at the preschool level. Furthermore, the apparent total omission of the use of L1 (see Line 63), which could also be highly questionable, is also overlooked. All of these signs may suggest that Daniela was working for a small institution, very likely of recent creation and limited means. These limitations could explain the small classes and the lack of a Spanish teacher to alternate with the English instructor, as is customary in larger bilingual schools. In sum, the advantages that Daniela enjoyed might have also been a consequence of an incipient organization. Daniela’s modest salary, which is something she does mention in this story but was suggested in other sections of the interviews, may have been the natural consequence of the limited resources of the school. In such context, it is not surprising that Daniela did not hesitate in leaving the place, especially considering her financial responsibilities as a new mother.

The contrasts between the kindergarten students and the students at Daniela’s present job at Latin-American School is salient in Excerpt 52. The episode reveals some of Daniela’s perceptions about her relationship with some of her students, their parents, and her colleagues.

Excerpt 52. Daniela talks about her students’ attitudes towards English (Interview 4)

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. AR: So, | 4. this ((academic year)) is going to |
| 2. how do you, | finish? |
| 3. how do you predict, | 5. What's your assessment, |
| | 6. almost at the end? |

Stanza 1

7. DANIELA: [U=h]
8. Well,
9. as always,
10. it's difficult,
11. because,
12. at this point,
13. they= ((the students)) already know,
14. if they have passed,
15. the subject,
16. or if,
17. they have already **failed**.

Listener's contribution

18. AR: Really?
19. How can,
20. how can they know that
21. no=w?

Stanza 2

22. DANIELA: Uh because,
23. from the grades,
24. from the previous,
25. exams,
26. if they have,
27. good grades,
28. it doesn't matter,
29. if they,
30. fail this final exam,
31. they already passed,

Stanza 3

32. Because,
33. this is,
34. the way,
35. the system works,
36. you know,
37. they have like,
38. five examinations,
39. so if they get,
40. for example,
41. if they get 10 ((A)),
42. in the first three ((periods))
43. they can fail,
44. all of them ((the rest of them)),
45. because you know,
46. ten,
47. twenty,
48. thirty,
49. divided by,
50. five,

51. is six ((D)).

52. AR: Oh\,
53. yeah,

Stanza 4

54. DANIELA: So,
55. they pass.

Listener's contribution

56. AR: So\,
57. for,
58. you mean that for,
59. most of them,
60. or for some of them,
61. just getting a six ((D)),
62. is more than enough/?

Stanza 5

63. DANIELA: <W Ye=s W>,
64. yes I don't know,
65. what's going on,
66. with these new generations,
67. but they are happy,
68. when they get a six,

Stanza 6

69. Because,
70. <Q Oh, I passed,
71. <W Oo=f W>,
72. I feel so good Q>,
73. and I say like,
74. <Q Six/,
75. it's not,
76. a good grade\ Q>,
77. <Q Yeah,
78. but my parents,
79. told me,
80. <<Q If you just pass,
81. that's Ok Q>> Q>,

Stanza 7

82. And I was like,
83. <Q Oh\,
84. that's not good,
85. when I was,
86. your **age**,
87. my father asked ((demanded)) me,
88. nines and tens ((A minus and A plus)),
89. and if I,

90. got an eight ((B)) Oo=h\
91. problems for me Q>
92. <Q No no no,
93. my parents are very relaxed ((not
strict)) Q>

94. AR: @@@

Stanza 8

95. DANIELA: So\
96. yes,
97. at this point,
98. just the,
99. the ones who are,
100. really motivated and,
101. really like the language,
102. work,
103. because they want to,
104. keep that good average,
105. and they don't want it low,

Stanza 9

106. But the other ones,
107. they know that,
108. they have passed,
109. so=,

Listener's contribution

110. AR: What would be the percentage
of,
111. those who don't care,
112. and just,
113. are just happy with six?

Stanza 10

114. DANIELA: U=h,
115. Ok,
116. let me think/
117. maybe like,
118. fifty percent/.

Listener's contribution

119. AR: Ok,
120. half of the class,
121. is like,
122. totally,
123. absent-minded,
124. not paying attention,

Stanza 11

125. DANIELA: Umh-huh/,

126. or,
127. or,
128. they pay attention because,
129. the teacher is there but,
130. they know they have passed/
131. so,
132. they don't care\,

Stanza 12

133. And the other ones know,
134. <Q Oh,
135. even though I,
136. I get a good grade,
137. in this exam,
138. I am going to fail the subject Q>,

Stanza 13

139. So=,
140. more,
141. they are like,
142. more distracted,
143. noisy,
144. <Q I don't care,
145. I failed so= Q> ((Dropping her
hands on the table)).
146. <Q I don't see the point,
147. of working Q>

148. AR: [Wow\]

Stanza 14

149. DANIELA: And,
150. it's,
151. terrible for us,
152. but it's not just with English,
153. it's with a=ll the subjects,

Stanza 15

154. When we((teachers)) go,
155. to the teachers' room,
156. we talk about that like,
157. <Q Oh my Gosh,
158. these,
159. these last,
160. weeks are,
161. very,
162. very difficult for us,
163. they don't want to do,
164. **anything**,
165. because they don't,
166. they know\.

In this episode, Daniela described the scenario of the last month of the school year with a weary tone, as suggested since the first stanza when Daniela begins to assess her school year stating that “it’s always difficult” (Lines 9-10). As we can see in Stanza 2, school activities, seen as mere business transaction, have lost their power to interest students once they have achieved the minimum passing grade. Consequently, students are presented as complacent (as suggested on Lines 67-68 where Daniela says that her students are happy with a six, the minimum passing grade) and almost cynical players no longer willing to engage in the game (see Line 77-81 and 144-147). Teachers, on the other hand, appear as powerless and exhausted victims that are forced into a classroom full of adolescents who have lost interest in school subjects (see Stanza 15). In Daniela’s representation of this situation, parents also play a part, but their role is equally negative when Daniela compares their uncaring attitude towards their children’s grades with the academic standards that her own father demanded from her. Additionally, the situation is also presented as clearly discouraging to judge by the use of several linguistic and paralinguistic cues:

- Daniela’s use of stress on the word “anything” on Line 164,
- The use of constructed dialogues to increase the dramatism of the story (Stanzas 6, 12, and 13),
- Body language (see Line 145).

By Daniela’s comments in other passages and in her diary, I understood that this was only one of the many unfavorable circumstances she had to endure. In such a context, questioning the participant about Daniela’s decision to continue working in the same job was unavoidable. The following episode contains Daniela’s explanation of her reasons to stay at Latin-American School in spite of the difficult working conditions.

Excerpt 53. Daniela talks about the reasons why she keeps working for Latin American School
(Interview 4)

1. AR: Do you see yourself,
2. as staying in the school for long,
3. like for many years?

4. DANIELA: I don't know,
5. I don't know,
6. it's,
7. a really difficult question,
8. I don't know.
9. AR: Why is it difficult?

Stanza 1

10. DANIELA: Becau=se,
11. of my personal situation,
12. at home,
13. with my husband,
14. and,
15. with my son\,

Stanza 2

16. DANIELA: I=,
17. I really like,
18. uh,
19. the payment,
20. and the schedule,
21. you know,
22. I just work,
23. in the mornings,
24. I start it,
25. at seven,
26. and I finish,
27. at one forty,
28. sometimes,
29. two thirty,
30. just one day,
31. and it's a,
32. good schedule for,
33. for my son\,
34. so I am working,
35. while he's studying.

Stanza 3

36. A=nd,
37. it's just like,
38. six or seven hours,

39. and,
40. for these hours,
41. I get paid,
42. very well,
43. well/,
44. comparing,
45. well,
46. not **very** well,
47. but comparing to other,

48. AR: Umh-humh,

49. DANIELA: Uh,

Listener's contribution

50. AR: So if you were,
51. doing a different job,
52. and you had to stay,
53. eight hours a day,

Stanza 4

54. DANIELA: Y-yeah,
55. because,
56. I've,
57. looked for,
58. another options,
59. a=nd,
60. they work more hours,
61. a=nd,
62. less salary,
63. or,
64. sometimes,
65. they have to work in the mornings,
66. and they have to come back,
67. in the afternoons,
68. and it's,
69. more or less the same,

Stanza 5

70. So\,
71. I am,
72. very,
73. comfortable here,
74. and besides,
75. it's near my house,

76. and that.

Listener's contribution

77. AR: So,

78. it seems that its,

79. uh=,

80. in certain way,

81. it's a perfect job,

82. for you,

83. right?

84. DANIELA: Mmmmh,

85. Umh-humh,

86. it could,

87. AR: [Sort of]

Stanza 6

88. DANIELA: Sort of,

89. yes,

90. yes,

91. and also my,

92. my son is,

93. studying,

94. in the school/

95. AR: Umh-humh,

Stanza 7

96. DANIELA: So he has a,

97. scholarship,

98. because,

99. he's my son so,

100. I'm very comfortable,

101. right now,

102. I,

103. I know I have to move,

104. I know.

Listener's contribution

105. AR: But you mentioned that,

106. you have your son in the school,

107. so somehow you feel that,

108. it is a good school,

109. is it?

110. DANIELA: Well,

111. elementary school is different.

112. AR: How different?

Stanza 8

113. DANIELA: Umh,

114. well,

115. the way my son is learning things,

116. and the way,

117. uh,

118. he's been taught,

119. I like it,

120. I mean,

121. I don't have any problems,

122. with Elementary school,

Stanza 9

123. I don't know in,

124. secondary school,

125. I don't know if,

126. he's going to continue there,

127. or maybe I am going to,

128. choose another school,

129. I don't know yet,

130. but right now,

131. I'm,

132. I'm happy

Daniela characterized her decision to stay at Latin-American School as complex, and she is fully aware of the reason she needs to stay at the school despite the problems described in Excerpt 53. In most of her communications (mainly e-mails and instant messages) with me, Daniela had openly talked about the adverse conditions that she had to face in the classroom. To her credit, I observed during my visits that she was not exaggerating. For example, I noticed that students were indeed easily distracted and the size of the classes made it more difficult for

Daniela to manage misbehavior. However, in this last conversation, she acknowledged that her position was not so unfavorable in terms of salary, schedule, and certain benefits. In fact, when she compared her present position to the alternatives she perceived were available to her, she described her situation at Latin-American School as “comfortable” (Lines 73 and 100). These advantages coupled with her responsibilities as a wife and mother made her hesitate whenever she considered other options.

Daniela’s awareness of these contradictions is expressed in more than one way. For instance, she clearly addresses it on Lines 100 through 104, where she simultaneously admits her comfort at staying and her need to leave. These discursive tensions were even more evident when I questioned her about the decision of having her son studying at the same school. In her response, Daniela did not only imply her approval of the organization and teaching at the elementary school division, she also implied that the middle school was not included in this positive assessment (see Stanza 9). This comparison is clearly established since the beginning of the response, where Daniela describes the elementary school as “different” (Line 112). When I asked for clarifications, Daniela presented her opinion of the middle school by means of discourse organization, semantic clues, and syntactic devices. First of all, Daniela used two stanzas to respond to my question. The first one (Lines 113-122) centers on a positive evaluation on the elementary school division that is emphasized with a negative statement at the end of the stanza, which dismisses unfavorable criticism. By contrast, the first line of the following stanza introduces the idea of hesitation regarding the suitability of the middle school division for Daniela’s son. This evaluation is also introduced with a reiterated negative statement (Lines 123 and 125). The tensions between Daniela’s criticism of the middle school’s administration and her moderate comfort with the labor conditions is left unsolved. Uncertain about the situation, the teller leaves the decision about the future of her son’s education opened to revision. The conclusion stresses that in spite of the contradictions (expressed with the use of a contrastive conjunction on Line 130, “but right now”), she feels content with her present circumstances.

After this interview concluded and I stopped the recorder, Daniela explained that because of personal and economic reasons she was not able to consider moving to a new teaching position, even if she wanted to do so, which supports her argument in Stanzas 2 and 4. The details of Daniela's personal reasons cannot be revealed in this Dissertation by expressed request of the participant. Suffice to say that Daniela was prioritizing her family over her career at the time because important and high-stakes personal issues were occupying her mind and energies at that point.

Daniela's case became salient and noteworthy in this study because of the weight that gender and socio-economic issues had on her professional development. The reader may remember that the same perceived impossibility to leave her present job surfaced in Sofía's narratives. Also in the last interview, Sofía mentioned that she wished to find more encouraging and less restrained teaching environments. However, a mixture of economic and personal circumstances were connected to her staying in a position that was not satisfying. Once again, this conversation cannot be presented in this study because the participant requested it so. Contrastingly, Leiliani and Betty, both of them single and with a teaching assignment in the public system, manifested an attachment to their jobs that was connected to the perceived stability of their positions and not to personal reasons.

Leiliani, located in the same city where Daniela lives, provides an interesting point of comparison between the relative freedom Leiliani enjoyed and the way gender issues appeared to limit Daniela's choices. As I already mentioned in Chapter 4, Leiliani has resigned several times from her secondary jobs whenever she realized that the school's administration undermined her freedom to teach or to establish appropriate measures of classroom management. In all of these occasions, Leiliani relied on the security provided by her job at the public middle school. While it is true that this relatively speaking more stable job is still not a full-time position and does not pay well enough, it has given Leiliani a basic steady income and certain freedom to be more selective with her secondary jobs. The fact that Leiliani is single and still lives with her parents may also

have contributed to her being more selective and less willing to compromise her standards for the sake of a higher salary. Additionally, possibly because she was not limited by the demands of motherhood, Leiliani has been able to take jobs at different hours and during the weekends.

Daniela has avoided working at such odd schedules because of her child.

In spite of her uncompromising attitude toward private school jobs, Leiliani has learned to tolerate the limitations that prevail in the public sector. For instance, she has had to cope with a generalized shortage of teaching resources and students who face diverse learning challenges due to socioeconomic marginalization. In this unfavorable context, Leiliani has remained in her position. Moreover, this job has become so important in Leiliani's professional life history that it would not be possible to understand who she is as a teacher without considering the experiences she has had in these settings. In the following sub-section, I will present narrative evidence that shows how the social networks in the public school system have contributed to Leiliani's construction of her identity as a second language teacher.

6.3.2 Leiliani's Colleagues: "They just have . . . Normal Superior".

Since Mexico's public education is controlled by a centralized system with very limited resources, as we have seen in Chapter 4, orchestrating programs of teachers' professional development has always been a challenge. Because of these limitations, SEP has often resorted to a top-down strategy to organize peer-to-peer professional development courses. As part of this strategy, each school sector recruits teacher-volunteers to attend a model course given by a higher-ranked teacher or a teacher educator. By the end of this course, the attendees assume the role of course facilitators in their school sector, so that the information can reach their peers (as Leiliani explains in Excerpt 54). The following story shows Leiliani taking the role of a course facilitator after she was unexpectedly invited to take one of the model courses referred to above.

The transcription corresponds to a story retelling that I requested during my first interview with Leiliani. Before this event, the participant had spontaneously produced the first version of the story during an informal conversation. In the retelling, some of my interventions

were clarification requests that sought Leiliani's confirmation regarding certain contextual details. I have deleted some of the verbatim transcriptions of these questions to focus on Leiliani's narrative. However, a summary of these clarifications has been given when considered necessary.

Excerpt 54. Leiliani's experience during a teachers' course in Capital City

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>1. AR: And,
 2. in this context,
 3. you told me,
 4. that,
 5. I don't know when but,
 6. recently,
 7. you were sent to,
 8. I mean,
 9. SEP offers courses,
 10. for teachers,
 11. who work for the public schools,</p> <p>12. LEILIANI: Yes.</p> <p>13. AR: And you were sent to,
 14. one of these courses,
 15. and then you were in charge to,
 16. reproduce the course,</p> <p>17. LEILIANI: Yes.</p> <p>18. AR: With your peers,
 19. in your,
 20. your same sector,
 21. can you tell me about that experience?</p> <p>Stanza 1</p> <p>22. LEILIANI: Well/,
 23. we,
 24. I had to travel,
 25. and I received that course for,
 26. two days/,
 27. we were all,
 28. English teachers,</p> <p>29. A=nd,
 30. when I was there with those English teachers,
 31. it was like fun because,</p> | <p>Stanza 2</p> <p>32. When the,
 33. supervisor,
 34. wanted a teacher to send to Capital City,
 35. the place,
 36. nobody wanted,
 37. <Q No,
 38. because,
 39. because of my children,
 40. no= because,
 41. uh,
 42. to be there/?,
 43. two days/?,
 44. no thank you\ Q>,</p> <p>Stanza 3</p> <p>45. A=nd,
 46. the last option,
 47. <MRC was me MRC></p> <p>Listener's contribution</p> <p>48. AR: So you,
 49. other people were offered the opportunity,
 50. before you did\.</p> <p>Stanza 4</p> <p>51. LEILIANI: [Yeah yes yes],
 52. and then the,
 53. supervisor called me and,
 54. he asked me,
 55. <Q don't you want to go,
 56. and take this course? Q>,</p> <p>57. AR: [@@@@@]</p> <p>Stanza 5</p> <p>58. LEILIANI: <Q It's for,
 59. teachers,</p> |
|--|--|

60. and then you have to reproduce this course,
61. with your,
62. with the teachers,
63. from your area Q>,

Stanza 6

64. And I said,
65. <Q Yes,
66. why not,
67. of course I want it Q> ((enthusiastic tone)),
68. <Q Really? Q>,
69. <Q Yes Q>,

Stanza 7

70. <Q But it's two days,
71. course,
72. it's a,
73. it's a two-day course Q>,
74. <Q So what? Q>,
75. <Q So,
76. do you accept? Q>,
77. <Q Yes,
78. I'm telling yes Q>,
79. <Q Perfect Q>.

Listener's contribution

80. AR: Why do you think your other,
81. your,
82. your colleagues,
83. rejected the offer?

Stanza 8

84. LEILIANI: I think because they have to reproduce it,
85. because they have to reproduce,
86. to other teachers,
87. most of the teachers on my sector,
88. just have,
89. the major,
90. but,
91. the,
92. <L1 Normal Superior L1>
((not a university-based degree)),
93. AR: Ok.

Stanza 9

94. LEILIANI: And they,
95. just have that,

96. so they, don't feel,
97. capable,
98. to reproduce uh,
99. that kind of course.

Listener's contribution

100. AR: And these courses are supposed to be,
101. taught in English?
102. LEILIANI: Yes,
103. yes.
104. AR: [Oh, Ok]

Stanza 10

105. LEILIANI: And,
106. the person who,
107. who gives these courses,
108. is a person who speaks,
109. English,

Stanza 11

110. So,
111. that's another reason that,
112. why they don't want to go,
113. because,
114. all the information,
115. they were going to receive,
116. was in English.

((A passage with a clarification request about the frequency of these courses has been deleted. Leiliani explained that these courses were rare.))

Stanza 12

117. So when I arrived there,
118. to that place,
119. they ((other attendees)) were asking me
120. <Q How many years of experience do you have? Q>,
121. and I only had three years of experience,
122. <Q Three Q>,
123. well,
124. working for,
125. the public school,
126. three,
127. <Q Three?

128. and what are you doing here? Q>,
 129. and I said,
 130. <Q Well/
 131. <@the supervisor sent me/@> Q>,

Stanza 13

132. So,
 133. <Q Yes,
 134. but we're here only,
 135. experienced teachers,
 136. that we have to receive this course,
 137. and that we have to reproduce it Q>.

((A passage with a clarification request about the number of years of service considered necessary to be an "experienced" teacher is deleted. The answer was approximately 10 years or more))

Stanza 14

138. <Q And how many hours do you teach,
 139. in the public school? Q>,
 140. <Q Six Q>,
 141. <Q Six hours/
 142. and you're here/?Q>,
 143. <Q Yes,
 144. I told you, nobody wanted,
 145. so=,
 146. I was the only one that said,
 147. yes Q>,

((Deletion of a passage with a reiterative comment from the audience about the supervisor's motives for inviting Leiliani's to attend the model course.))

Stanza 15

148. So,
 149. that's why I was the last option,
 150. and I,
 151. if we had to,
 152. to,
 153. if I have to compare myself,
 154. with the other teachers,
 155. I was the **baby** in that course.

((A passage with the audience's question about Leiliani's and her colleagues' age has been deleted. She was in her late twenties and their colleagues in their forties or fifties))

Listener's contribution

156. AR: And what happened,
 157. when you reproduced the course,
 158. can you tell me a little bit more about it?

Stanza 16

159. LEILIANI: That,
 160. that uh,
 161. course,
 162. there were,
 163. administrative problems,
 164. and I didn't,
 165. or I couldn't reproduce it,
 166. But then,
 167. there were another opportuni-
 168. there was another opportunity,
 169. to take another course,
 170. and I could reproduce it,

Stanza 17

171. It was,
 172. simpler than the other,
 173. but,
 174. I could do it,
 175. and I=,
 176. had teachers,
 177. around fifty,
 178. sixty years old,
 179. and I had **two** teachers,
 180. that were my teachers,
 181. where,
 182. when I was in junior high\,

Stanza 18

183. And for me was like
 184. <Q Wow,
 185. I am going to be the teacher of my teachers Q>,
 186. <L1 ¿No? L1> ((Tag question)),

Stanza 19

187. A=nd,
 188. I prepared my course,
 189. everything in English,
 190. the only thing that,
 191. I was going to say in Spanish,
 192. was like,
 193. something administrative,
 194. that was,

195. only in Spanish,
196. and was the first thing,

Stanza 20

197. Then the rest of the course,
198. the course was,
199. in English,
200. and there were like,
201. two teachers raising,
202. their hands,
203. saying,
204. <Q Could it be,
205. in Spanish? Q>,

Stanza 21

206. And I said
207. <Q The problem is,
208. that the material that I brought,
209. everything is in English,
210. posters,
211. cards,
212. everything is in English,
213. so,
214. how can I change?,
215. and,
216. if you see my plan,
217. it's in English,
218. so,
219. sorry\,

Stanza 22

220. But if you have any question,
221. if something is not clear,
222. you can ask me,
223. and I can answer you in Spanish,
224. if you want to Q>,
225. <Q Ok,
226. of course Q>,

Stanza 23

227. So,
228. the first thing that I did with them,
229. I said,
230. I gave them a card,
231. and I said,
232. <Q Please,
233. just write,
234. the years of experience ((you have)),
235. and why did you decide,
236. to become a teacher Q>,

Stanza 24

237. For some of them,
238. it was so difficult to write,
239. I noticed,
240. that they,
241. took,
242. a lot of time,
243. to write that information,
244. they just wrote,
245. <Q Twenty,
246. twenty five Q>,
247. and why?,
248. <Q Because I like it Q>.

249. AR: @@

Stanza 25

250. LEILIANI: And that's all,
251. those were most of the answers,
252. that I received,
253. from them.

254. AR: [Wow]

Stanza 26

255. LEILIANI: And I was like,
256. <Q Wow Q>,
257. and I said <Q Well,
258. that's why they are asking me,
259. or they were asking me to,
260. give the course in,
261. in Spanish,
262. instead of English Q>,

Stanza 27

263. And when I gave the report to the,
264. supervisor,
265. I said,
266. <Q In the course happened,
267. this,
268. this,
269. and this,
270. and there were teachers asking me/,
271. to use Spanish,

Stanza 28

272. But,
273. this the only opportunity that,
274. to get together,
275. all the English teachers,

276. and to practice what we know Q>,

Stanza 29

277. And he told me,

278. <Q Ok Leiliani,

279. you're the director of the orchestra,

280. you decide,

281. what you're going to do Q>,

282. so that's why.

Listener's contribution

283. AR: How do you feel about this experience?

284. LEILIANI: Proud of myself,

285. @@

Since English teachers' opportunities to access professional development courses are scarce, one could imagine that most teachers would be glad to be singled out with an invitation to participate in a model course. However, Leiliani's narrative reveals that, although being selected to attend these courses may be seen as a distinction, the honor is not always received with enthusiasm. Leiliani seems to make this contrast salient by organizing her narrative using a well-known fairy-tale-like template. In this template, the seemingly least deserving character becomes the unexpected hero of the story. Considering this logic and the fact that the story is rich in constructed dialogues, I have divided the narrative in eight passages using a dramatic metaphor, as if dealing with a play. The first passage (beginning on line 22) constitutes a *prelude* of sorts that provides background information and a general evaluation of the story as a "fun" experience (Line 31). After the prelude, the story's main action is expressed through constructed dialogues that constitute what I see as the five *acts* of a dramatized fairy tale. Inserted in-between these acts, Leiliani has added what I perceived as two *interludes* in which she steps out of the story world to provide explanatory comments or additional interpretations.

In the first act (Lines 32-79), we see the supervisor struggling to find a volunteer to attend the course in Capital City. Leiliani's colleagues, like the elder sisters of a fairy tale, disdain the invitation with dismissive tone evident in Leiliani's intonation rises and falls ("to be there/? Two days/? No thank you\" on Lines 42-44). At this point, Leiliani, as the teller of this narrative, introduces herself as the heroine of the story who is considered as the supervisor's "the last option" (Lines 45-47). When the supervisor finally talks to Leiliani, the invitation is extended without much conviction of its being accepted. This uncertainty is shown in the supervisor's

negative question (“don’t you want to go and take the course?” on Lines 55-56), the use of “really” to express disbelief when Leiliani accepts (Line 68), and the list of disadvantages mentioned by Leiliani from Line 70 to Line 79. Much to the supervisor’s surprise, Leiliani, a little similar to the heroine in a quintessential fairy tale, is not scared by the drawbacks of the assignment.

What I noticed as something similar to the first interlude starts on Line 84 with Leiliani suggesting that her colleagues’ lack of confidence in their professional skills was their main reason for declining the invitation. To back up this claim, Leiliani used an argument that she assumed her audience, being familiar with the context, would understand without additional explanations: Most of her colleagues were graduates from the teachers’ college (Normal Superior). With this brief statement, Leiliani categorized her colleagues within a group of English teachers commonly perceived as less qualified than those who graduate from university-based programs (see Chapter 4, p. 160). This disadvantage was lexically enhanced with the use of the adverb “just” (Line 88 and 95), implying that the teachers in question *only* had the most basic professional qualifications. It is likely that these lines may also maintain intertextual relationships with other episodes narrated in the same interview. For instance, Leiliani had previously talked about the benefits of obtaining Cambridge certifications as a way to achieve professional legitimacy or to make up for the disadvantage of being a nonnative English speaker. By saying that her colleagues “just” had an undergraduate degree, she was very likely implying that their credentials were not as updated and solid as hers.

What I perceive to be the second act starts on Line 117 and focuses on Leiliani’s confrontation with her more experienced colleagues during the model course. In this act, the old-timers question the novice’s presence in the course. The dialogues seems to suggest that seniority and a full-time teaching position constitute the hallmark of central membership in the public schools’ Communities of Practice. Leiliani lacked these two attributes, making her an unlikely peer to attend the model course; hence, it is easy to explain the old-timers’ surprise. Contrasting

this surprise, the young teacher responded in a nonchalant manner, openly accepting that she had been invited as the last available option in her sector.

At this point of the story, Leiliani apparently positions herself as a representative of a new generation of teachers set in binary opposition to senior peers. Leiliani's responses to her colleagues suggest that, although she was indeed "the baby of the course", she was confident enough to stand among her seniors with her head held high. The participant's previously manifested opinions about professional development suggest that her security was based on a perception of her academic merits as valuable professional assets. On the contrary, seniority and full-time position are represented as an old standard, only considered relevant by the senior members. The story seems to call this standard into question when Leiliani's senior colleagues decline the invitation to engage more actively in their own professional development.

What I perceive to be something similar to the second interlude (Line 156-170) was actually a response to my elicitation about the outcomes of the model course. Leiliani succinctly explained that she was not able to act as the course facilitator due to administrative problems. After this explanation, the teller moved to the following act announcing that she did have the chance to facilitate a course in a second occasion. The third act narrates the tellers' enthusiasm and surprise when she found herself working with peers who were her teachers when she was a teenager. The age difference between Leiliani and the attendees in this course is once again the central topic.

In the fourth act (187-282) Leiliani, as the teller, adds more details to reinforce her evaluation of the old-timers as a group whose professional expertise, namely their English proficiency, is not acceptable. This time, the story calls the senior teachers' L2 proficiency into question when they resist Leiliani's idea of conducting the course in English. Once again, the teller represents herself as a legitimate member of her profession set into contrast with a group of teachers who struggle to use the target language. This act confirms the tellers' position as a member of a new generation of English teachers who defy the stereotype of the incompetent

public school teacher (see Chapter 4).

In what I consider as the final act, Leiliani summarized her report to the supervisor detailing the challenges she encountered regarding the target language use during the course. Leiliani's brief defense of her decisions (Lines 272-276) suggests that the tensions between the course attendees and the facilitator had been palpable. As a consequence, Leiliani made her case when she talked to the supervisor in order to secure her superior's support, probably anticipating possible complaints coming from her colleagues. Once again, in a manner that I perceive as similar to following the fairy-tale script, the teller gives her story a happy ending. The supervisor approves Leiliani's decision and expresses trust in the young teacher's judgement. In the end, the young generation prevailed against the old-timers.

Leiliani's story demonstrates how a teacher may use her interactions with colleagues to build her professional identity in binary oppositions. In this case, the characters used as the teller's antagonists were members of the broader community of public school teachers in the state of Miranda. This aspect of the story will be further discussed in Chapter 8.

The final story to be featured in this chapter presents a variation of the same theme. This time, the participant's professional identity is defined through her various interactions with specific colleagues at her workplace and the abstract notion of the NS' ideal.

6.3.3 Teachers' relationships at the workplace: "I don't talk to them".

During one of my first visits to Latin-American School, I found myself sitting in the halls awaiting Daniela. As I was looking around, my attention was caught by a large poster hanging on one of the walls. I made some field notes regarding this observation and later on used them as a topic of conversation during my second interview with the participant. The poster's anecdote led to a whole episode about the role that peer interactions played in Daniela's professional life. Some of the passages in the following conversation are rather descriptive; others, however, take the shape of a narrative with dialogic interactions. Since all the sections of this episode, narrative

or not, address different aspects of Daniela's perceptions about her peers, I decided to present the whole passage without omitting the non-narrative sections.

Excerpt 55. Daniela talks about her relationship with her co-workers and her views regarding the NS ideal.

1. AR: Now,
 2. going back to the school,
 3. that I visited ((the Latin-American School)),
 4. When I was in the halls,
 5. waiting for the class,
 6. I observed,
 7. there was a huge poster,
 8. that was advertising,
 9. some languages,
 10. foreign language courses,
 11. different languages,
 12. English,
 13. French,
 14. German,
 15. Bla-dee-dee-bla,
 16. DANIELA: Uh-huh,
 17. AR: Uh,
 18. what kind of classes are these,
 19. are these offered by the school?/,
 20. or\,
 21. what's the connection of the school,
 22. with these classes?
 23. DANIELA: Well,
 24. uh,
 25. the school has a,
 26. I don't know how to say it,
 27. <L1 convenio L1>,
 28. AR: An agreement?
 29. DANIELA: An agreement with this language school,
 30. and it's supposed that,
 31. if we have,
 32. uh,
 33. a student,
 34. who doesn't have the level,
 35. we're teaching,
 36. this student is offered,
 37. uh,
 38. like a scholarship,
 39. with this language center.
 40. AR: Ok,
 41. So,
 42. in order to like,
 43. to make up for the problem,
 44. they send the student to this,
 45. this institute.
 46. DANIELA: Yes,
 47. but it's not,
 48. compulsory,
 49. AR: Mmh.
 50. DANIELA: A=nd,
 51. I don't know,
 52. a lot of students who really,
 53. go to this school,
 54. and,
 55. do that.
 56. AR: I was observing,
 57. the,
 58. the whole information in the poster,
 59. and it said that they had uh,
 60. European,
 61. technology or,
 62. methodology,
 63. DANIELA: [Yeah, yes],
 64. just native teachers,
 65. AR: [Native speaker],
 66. what,
 67. what do you think about that?
- Stanza 1
68. DANIELA: <@ Well @>,
 69. uh,

70. I see it,
71. every day in,
72. the language center,
73. ah,
74. there's an American,
75. teacher,
76. oh but oh my God,
77. he's face is like,
78. he doesn't like,
79. uh,
80. teaching,
81. he's just there because,
82. he's native speaker,

Stanza 2

83. so we have like,
84. native,
85. untrained teachers,
86. versus a foreign,
87. but **well-trained** teachers,

Stanza 3

88. So,
89. it- it's,
90. it's complicated,
91. they are selling <Q Yes,
92. we have native,
93. teachers Q> but,
94. I don't know how,
95. **well-prepared**,
96. are the,
97. the teachers,

Listener's contribution

98. AR: These teachers?

99. Daniela: Exactly

100. AR: And what about,
101. talking about colleagues now,
102. how about the
103. relationship with your colleagues,
104. in the two,
105. schools?

106. I mean,
107. do you have time like,
108. in-between breaks or,
109. during the day,
110. to talk to your,
111. colleagues,

112. is there a space,
113. for you guys to be together like,
114. whenever,
115. you have time to write down,
116. lesson plans,
117. or preparing material,
118. is there a place like that?,
119. do you have a chance to?

120. DANIELA: The teachers',
121. the teachers' room?

122. AR: Yeah,
123. yeah,

Stanza 4

124. DANIELA: The teachers' room,
125. yes sometimes I have time,
126. to,
127. talk to my,
128. English teachers right?

Listener's contribution

129. AR: Yeah,
130. I'm talking about English teachers.

Stanza 5

131. DANIELA: Well,
132. I have two,
133. two co-workers,

134. AR: Mhm,

135. DANIELA: A=nd,

Listener's contribution

136. AR: In the morning school?

137. DANIELA: Yes,

138. AR: Ok,

Stanza 6

139. DANIELA: One of them,
140. is,
141. u=h,
142. <WH and old man WH>,

143. AR: Mmh,

Stanza 7

144. DANIELA: So=,
145. I don't talk,
146. <@ too much @>,

147. AR: [<@ Ah, Ok @>]

Stanza 8

148. DANIELA: Yes,
149. and also he's kind of shy or,
150. I don't know,
151. he's,
152. he's weird\,

Stanza 9

153. But I have another one/
154. and he's young,
155. and we,
156. studied,
157. in the same school/ ((same
undergraduate program)),
158. so, I,
159. talk a lot,
160. with him,

161. AR: Yeah,

Stanza 10

162. DANIELA: And uh,
163. he,
164. this is the second year that,
165. he's in the school,
166. and he's a dreamer\,

Stanza 11

167. <W Oh W>,
168. he's so,
169. uh,
170. he's motivated,
171. and he wants to get students,
172. cert-
173. a certification,
174. and he's,
175. (Hx),
176. he's like the best,
177. and he's,

Listener's contribution

178. AR: So, he's very enthusiastic,

179. DANIELA: Yes,

180. he is,

Stanza 12

181. And sometimes I say,
182. <Q Oh,
183. come on, forget it,
184. don't,
185. don't,
186. don't do that,
187. because it's going to be Q>,
188. <W <Q No,
189. you're lazy W>,
190. Daniela,
191. you're- Q>,
192. <Q No, I'm not lazy,
193. it's just that,
194. look at the situation here Q>,

Stanza 13

195. Of course,
196. he's working with,
197. third,
198. fourth,
199. fifth,
200. and sixth semester,

Listener's contribution

201. AR: Ok,
202. he's in high school,

203. DANIELA: Exactly,
204. so,
205. it's not the same age,

206. AR: Ok,

Stanza 14

207. DANIELA: And it's different,
208. even though they are noisy too,
209. uhm,
210. I don't know how,
211. he does,
212. @@@,
213. I don't know,

214. AR: [@@@@@]

Stanza 15

215. DANIELA: I don't know but,
216. he,
217. he's very young,

218. and he has a good relationship like,
219. like **friends**/,

220. AR: Ok,

Stanza 16

221. DANIELA: With the students,
222. but I cannot do that with my,
223. with my students,

Stanza 17

224. I'm,
225. older than him,
226. so,
227. maybe that's,
228. the reason

Listener's contribution

229. AR: So,
230. do you think you have the chance,
231. to learn from each other?

232. DANIELA: Yes,
233. of course,

Stanza 18

234. Uh he,
235. has taught me a lot of things,
236. and,
237. also I
238. think that he,
239. has learned,
240. a lot from me,
241. about teaching,
242. about English,
243. about pronunciation,
244. about meanings,
245. about everything\.

Listener's contribution

246. AR: And what about your colleagues,
247. in the afternoon job?

Stanza 19

248. DANIELA: Uh,

249. I don't talk to them,
250. because,
251. (H)(Hx),
252. uh,
253. we don't have,
254. that time to,
255. get together and chat,

Stanza 20

256. I just have one I guess,
257. or two,
258. two,

Stanza 21

259. With,
260. with one of them,
261. sometimes we,
262. go out,
263. outside,
264. of the classroom and we chat,

Stanza 22

265. Sometimes,
266. because this teacher is Mexican,
267. but he,
268. had the opportunity to live in the
States,

269. AR: Mmh,

Stanza 23

270. DANIELA: So,
271. sometimes when I have some doubts,
272. I ask him,
273. and,
274. he doesn't
275. know,
276. @@@

277. AR: [@@@@@]

Stanza 24

278. DANIELA: At the end,
279. I am helping him,
280. instead of,
281. him helping me

This long interview excerpt was produced as a response to five main elicitations listed on

Table 19.

Table 19. Topical passages in Daniela's narrative about her relationship with her colleagues.

Main elicitations in the episode	Passages	Content	Lines
First elicitation: Question about the poster Lines 4-22	Question and answer exchange	Details about the nature of the relationship between Latin-American School and the Language Institute advertised on a poster pasted on the walls of the school.	Lines 1-55
Second elicitation Lines 56-62 and 65-67	Topical Passage 1	NESTs who may not be as well-trained as they should be.	Lines 68-97
Third elicitation Lines 100-119	Topical Passage 2	Daniela's colleagues at Latin-American School.	Lines 120-228
Fourth elicitation Lines 229-231		Conclusion of the third topical passage	Lines 234-247
Fifth elicitation Lines 246-247	Topical Passage 3	Daniela's colleagues at the Language Institute	Lines 248-281

The first and longest one of my interventions opened the topic with the poster anecdote occupying Lines 1 through 22. This part led into a question and answer exchange but did not elicit a narrative. For this reasons, the first lines have not been labeled as stanzas. Additional elicitation was required to inquire into Daniela's perceptions of the NS fallacy implied in the poster's commercial discourse (see Topical Passage 1 on Table 19). The third question that I used to elicit specific information opened a passage centered on the participants' NNES colleagues at Latin-American School (see Topical Passage 2 on Table 19). The fourth elicitation prompted the participant to close this same passage with an evaluative comment about her professional relationship with a younger colleague. Finally, the fifth elicitation inquired about the participant's relationship with her other colleagues at the language institute (Lines 246-281). Following this logic, for the purpose of this analysis I have divided the passage in three main topical passages.

In the first passage, Daniela began by explaining the presence of the poster on the walls of Latin-American School. Her explanation was not only brief but also implied that the commercial arrangement between her school and the language center had not been quite successful (see lines 50-55 where Daniela said that, as far as she knew, not many of her students had enrolled in the institute). To prompt further comments, I added a description of the poster's message (Lines 56-72). Daniela's overlapped speaking turn on line 63 suggests that she was already anticipating the direction that our conversation would take. This anticipation is not surprising because I had already discussed with her about the NEST/NNEST dichotomy in a previous interview (Interview 1). This time, however, she was the one to openly bring the topic of the NS fallacy to the table by offering the concrete example of the only NES colleague she had at the time.

Daniela then used two stanzas to tacitly present her views on the NS fallacy's effect on teachers' employment (Lines 68-82). The lines feature linguistic and para-linguistic cues that contribute to building Daniela's meaning, even if she never used Phillipson's terms in her problematization of the situation. She begins her comments with a meaningful discourse marker (*well*) framed with laughter quality (Line 68). This utterance is followed by a matter-of-fact statement about the tellers' immediate cognitive state (I see it every day). This sequence suggests that in this instance Daniela's use of "well" may be similar to illocutionary adverbs such as "frankly" or "confidentially" (Schourup, 2001). The fact that Daniela laughs while uttering this discourse marker adds a slightly disdainful undertone to the confession that follows: she sees *it* every day. Although she, as the teller, never clarified what *it* stood for, the example that followed this reference (Lines 72-82) is quite explicit. The audience is expected to guess that *it* makes a reference to the negative consequence of the NS fallacy personified by Daniela's unmotivated NS colleague. The two stanzas that followed Daniela's example (Lines 83-97) summarize her perception of the matter in a dichotomy that divides NESTs in the categories of "untrained" and "well-trained" teachers. The existence of these two groups, she reckons, problematizes the use of

native speakers as an advertising strategy (Lines 90-97), as it was the case of the poster we were discussing.

The second topical passage foregrounds age as a factor that influences teachers' professional interactions with each other. The teller represents herself as awkwardly situated between two colleagues who are either too old or too young to fully understand her views. The older colleague is described as "shy" and "weird" (Lines 148 and 152 respectively). These characteristics are tacitly implied as the reason for Daniela's lack of communication with her senior peer, at least as she claims in the excerpt. By contrast, the relationship with the younger colleague is presented in more enthusiastic terms but also marked by important differences of opinion. Daniela's disagreement with her young colleague's ideas is voiced through language that alternatively praises, sometimes perhaps tongue-in-cheek, (see Daniela's widened pitch range on Line 167 and her loud exhalation on Line 175) and questions the young teacher's enthusiasm (e.g. "he's a dreamer", "he's motivated", "he's like the best" on Lines 166, 170, and 176).

Stanza 10	168. he's so,
162. DANIELA: And uh,	169. uh,
163. he,	170. he's motivated,
164. this is the second year that,	171. and he wants to get students,
165. he's in the school,	172. cert-,
166. and he's a dreamer\,	173. a certification,
	174. and he's,
Stanza 11	175. (Hx),
167. <W Oh W>,	176. he's like the best

This enthusiasm is apparently constructed by Daniela as youthful naiveté and expressed through the constructed dialogue presented on Lines 181 through 194:

Stanza 12	188. <W <Q No,
181. And sometimes I say,	189. you're lazy W>,
182. <Q Oh,	190. Daniela,
183. come on, forget it,	191. you're- Q>,
184. don't,	192. <Q No, I'm not lazy,
185. don't,	193. it's just that,
186. don't do that,	194. look at the situation here Q>,
187. because it's going to be Q>,	

In this stanza, the more experienced Daniela, aware of the limitations of her contexts (Line 194), advises her colleague not to go ahead with his projects (not specified in the imaginary dialogue), which she deems unfeasible. In spite of the fact that the young teacher accuses Daniela of being lazy (even if presented by Daniela as a playful banter), her position remains unswayed. In her defense, the teller adds more stanzas that draw from the same age-difference argument (Lines 215-228). In the end, Daniela acknowledged that her relationship with her younger colleague has been mutually beneficial. This acknowledgment, however, seems to only come as a response to my prompt (Line 229-231). Even if we take into consideration the possible interviewer's effect here, Daniela's positive final assessment of her relationship with her younger peer should neither be taken as mere compliance with me, as the audience as well as the interviewer, nor as reluctance to disparage a colleague. In other passages of this episode Daniela has shown that, when she considers it necessary, she does not shy away from expressing negative assessments about her colleague (see Stanza 1). Also, the last topical passage of this episode shows another instance in which Daniela expresses her opinion of one of her colleagues in the Language Institute where she worked at that point.

In the third topical passage (Line 248-281), Daniela describes her work at the language center as one in which social interaction with peers is practically non-existent (Lines 248-255). At this point in the narrative, I, as the audience, know that Daniela works along with two other teachers in the language institute. I have also been previously told that one of these teachers is a NEST who is generally stern and perceived by Daniela as unmotivated. The new information provided in this passage concerns the second colleague. This teacher is defined as a NNEST who lived in an English-speaking country. Daniela construes him as friendly but mostly unhelpful professionally speaking. Daniela's laughter on Line 276 and the summary offered in the last stanza are indicators of her perceiving this colleague as less knowledgeable than she herself is. Unsaid in this story, but probably implied by the context of the entire conversation, may lie the assumption that neither being a native-speaker nor staying in an English speaking-country are

adequate qualifications to turn an English user into a professional second language teacher.

6.4 Summary and conclusions

In this chapter I have used evidence from the participants' life histories (composed by interviews, personal communications and autobiographies) to examine how the teachers who participated in this study negotiated their professional identities as in-service teachers.

In Table 20 (see page 381), I offer a view of the main findings obtained through the analysis of the teachers' narratives. In their stories, the participating teachers have shown me how people (e.g. students, colleagues, and supervisors, the participants' families), institutional structures, economic conditions, and socially generated constructions such as the NS fallacy have interacted with them to negotiate their perceptions of their professional selves. These perceptions have been manifested and renegotiated in the participants' discourse as they interacted with me during the study.

The narrative events that the transcriptions represent were, at the time and place they occurred, performative acts in their own right. They foreground what the teachers wanted to show of themselves during the interviews. For that reason, I cannot assume that these stories represent every single aspect of the participants' perceptions about their professional identities. Similarly, I do not assume that these stories show exactly how the participants have actually interacted with their social realities. What I would argue is that these stories show an instance of how the participants construct their discourse around their professional identities and relate this identity to the social context of which they are part.

The analysis of the stories presented in this chapter showed that the participants worked on presenting themselves as professional L2 teachers supporting their claims on different evidence. In most of the cases, teachers perceived that their true teaching-self had come into being at the workplace. This perception was especially salient in Adam's narratives. For this participant, his ability to construct a friendly relationship with his students was the most

Table 20. Chapter 6: Summary of findings

Key Findings	Supporting Evidence	Case	Excerpt
Institutional structures have impacted on the participating teachers professional development	• Available institutional support for teachers' development (or the lack thereof) mentioned in the narratives	Sofia Leiliani	45 54
	• Presence or absence of peer networks	Daniela Leiliani	55 54
Material conditions have influenced the participants' decisions about their professional development and job mobility	• Salaries, contractual conditions, and access to benefits mentioned by the participants as relevant considerations in their decisions.	Sofia Daniela Teachers' job history	45 51, 53 Table 18
Sociality People near the participants have impacted the participating teachers' professional identity negotiations.	• Gender identities and family interests impact on the teachers' decisions regarding their professional development and job mobility.	Sofia Daniela	45 53
	• A supervisor's influence seen as supportive of a teacher's professional development	Leiliani	46, 47
	• Colleagues seen as a 'professional other' to define identity using binary oppositions.	Leiliani Daniela	54 55
	• Students seen as supportive of a teacher's identity as a legitimate ("real") English teacher	Adam	44
	• Students as forces that opposed teachers' desires to be perceived as legitimate teachers	Adam Betty Daniela	44 50 52
	• Teachers' perceptions of employers and students' expectations about their professional qualifications and linguistic abilities.	Leiliani Adam	46 and 47 44 and 48
	• Teachers' own perceptions about their language proficiency, their linguistic backgrounds, and their legitimacy as English teachers	Leiliani Adam Daniela	46-47 48 and 49 55
Discourse Socially generated constructions expressed through discourse that have impacted on the participants' identity negotiation.	• NS fallacy perceived as an ideology that may affect employers' hiring decisions	Daniela	55
	• The NS ideal seen as a standard of quality to measure teachers' proficiency and knowledge about the target language	Adam Leiliani	49 46 and 47
	• Mexican teachers seen as indolent and incompetent	Leiliani	54

important factor that has allowed him to see himself as a teacher. By contrast, the experiences that Adam and other participants had in their graduate programs was scarcely featured as relevant in their processes of negotiating their professional identity, at least as seen through their narratives. Moreover, the teachers' failure to acquire a graduate degree has not negatively impacted their permanence in their present jobs or, in Sofía's case, their promotion.

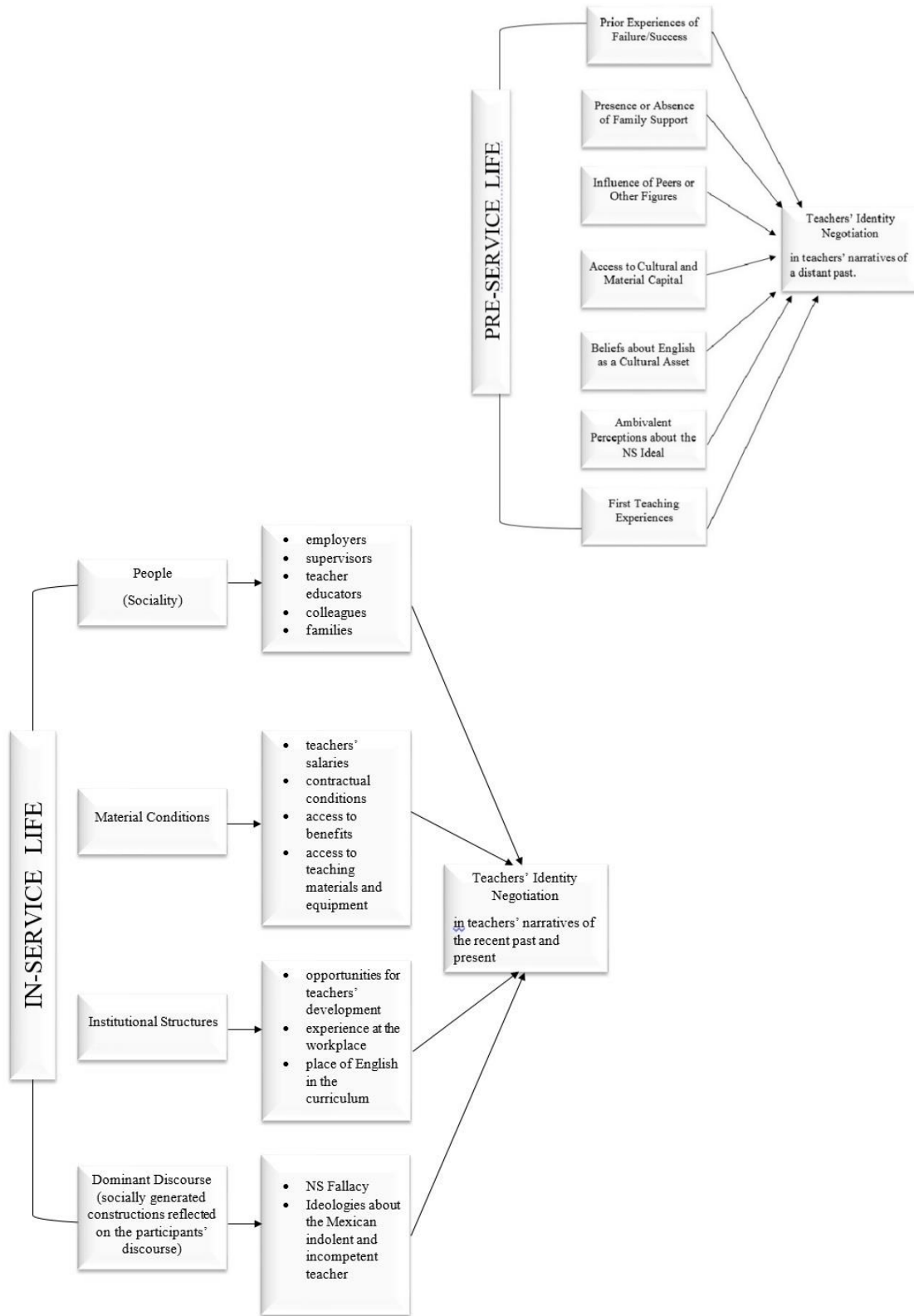
To legitimize their professional identity, the participants used different discursive means. One common element in these discursive representations was their taking a position within the NNEST/NEST dichotomy. Although they all saw themselves as professional second language educators, in some cases, they felt the need to defend their position when their nonnative identity was brought up in the conversation. In some other cases, the participants felt the need to invoke specific actions they have taken to validate their professional identity. For instance, their international certifications or their trips abroad (real or projected) were seen as important ways in which they gained additional legitimacy and became more native-like in certain aspects of their second language proficiency. Although one may question whether these teachers truly needed these actions to legitimize their professional identities, from their perspective, these measures were an important part of their teaching credentials. The participants thus represented themselves as dependent upon the countries at the center. This view may also suggest that the participants perceived the native speakers of these countries as the legitimate owners of English. This perceived dependence does not imply that the participants were blind to the negative effects that the NS fallacy has on the perceptions that other actors such as employers and students have about the teaching and learning of English. Daniela's problematization of the poster's message shows this awareness. Therefore, these teachers seem to accept but also contest the NS fallacy in their discourse.

Material conditions and institutional structures figured as prominent players that impacted the ways in which the participants negotiated their professional identities. In situations where the working conditions represented a threat to teachers' views of what their professional

identity entailed, teachers made different decisions. Some of them chose to compromise their beliefs and keep their jobs; others preferred leaving the position and sought teaching opportunities elsewhere. The evidence provided by the five cases shows that economic issues such as teachers' salaries, access to benefits, and contractual conditions were mentioned as important factors that teachers took into account to determine whether they could leave a teaching position or not.

Sociality emerged as an important player in the negotiation of the participants' teaching identities and their plans about their professional development. Issues such as students' acceptance, colleagues' support, and family demands contributed to shape teachers' career decisions, their perceptions of what they had achieved as second language professionals, and the future opportunities they could envision. In some cases these teachers felt compelled to defend their rights to be considered as relevant actors in the curriculum (as in Betty's story). In others, teachers only allowed themselves to plan their professional development within the constraints imposed by their gender and their economic situation (e.g. Sofía and Daniela). Additionally, these teachers seemed to have drawn from dominant discourses about teachers and teaching to construct who they are. In these discursive constructions, the teachers used their colleagues as a means to defining a set of dichotomies that helped them define who they are. By positioning themselves at the positive end of each dichotomy, these participating teachers negotiated their identities as either progressive, updated, or knowledgeable second language professionals (especially shown in Excerpts 46, 47, and 54 for Leiliani's case, and Excerpt 55 used by the participants to demonstrate what the participants perceived as instance of good professional practices and attitudes). At the same time, these dichotomies also revealed that the participants did not fully identify themselves as members of the social groups that could be considered as their Communities of Practice. Their discourse was full of *I* and *they* instances, but the use of *we* was

Figure 15. Findings of Chapters 5 and 6: Stories of pre-service and in-service life.



less prominent. The few references made to interactions with peers suggest that the participants perceived their life at the workplace as a solitary enterprise in which they and their students were left to their own devices (see Daniela's case in Excerpt 45 for an example of this). One can only wonder to what extent these perceptions correspond to the participant's everyday experience. In the following chapter I will present evidence from observational field notes and classroom discourse data. I will use such evidence to draw connections between the participants' discursive representations and the reality observed during the course of this study. Figure 15 shows how the findings of in-service life stories presented in this chapter connect with those findings presented in the previous chapter on pre-service life.

Finally, the analysis of teachers' use of narrative discourse in this chapter was useful to uncover how the participants engaged with dominant discourse and incorporated it to their representations. For instance, the ideologies that construct Mexican English teachers as incompetent had a prominent role in Leiliani's stories. Also, narrative templates and other elements taken from dominant master narratives were used by the participants to position themselves and perform their identities during the narrative event. The analysis of how these discursive strategies were used in the teachers' discourse was useful to identify teachers' meanings and perceptions of their social reality.

CHAPTER VII

IDENTITY NEGOTIATIONS IN SMALL STORIES AND CLASSROOM ACTIONS

Several scholars have challenged the exclusive reliance on interview data to draw conclusions about identity (Bamberg, 2011; Benson, 2011; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Pavlenko, 2007). It has been argued that personal accounts cannot be treated as factual information since they only represent the participant's perspective at a given time and place. Not only is this perspective subjected to change, but it is also influenced by memory loss, the nature and structure of the elicitation, and the interviewers' presence. For this reason, applied linguists have been urged to analyze narrative data through different lenses. They are expected to look beyond the content and consider how the rhetorical organization and linguistic features used by their participants can shed light on social phenomena (Bamberg, 2006a; Ochs & Capps, 2001, Pavlenko, 2007). Furthermore, in the study of identity, researchers are expected to incorporate other sources that may furnish appropriate triangulation (Merriam, 2009).

In previous chapters, I have delved into the participants' elicited narratives of their professional lives through considering the content and form of these narratives. Their big stories have taken us into a journey from the participants' first impressions about their second language

learning to their recent representations of who they have become as educators. These stories have revealed how the participants have performed their professional identities as they made sense of their memories through their storytelling.

In the present chapter, I will step out of the participants' professional life histories in search of other data sources and approaches to narrative research. With this purpose in mind, I will present summaries of my field observations, excerpts from the participants' teaching journals, and transcriptions of naturally occurring teacher-student interactions in the participants' classrooms. Together, these data sources will contribute demonstrate how three of the participants (Betty, Adam, and Daniela) positioned themselves with respect to social practices and power struggles at their workplace. I will especially focus on how the participants negotiated their identity by moving through the three levels of positioning (Bamberg, 1997; Barkhuizen, 2010) in the context of small stories told in the classroom and in their teaching journals.

Although I have outlined a definition and characterization of small stories in Chapter 3, before I proceed to present the data, I will revisit the concept to clarify the criteria used to select the stories presented in this chapter (7.1). The second (7.2) and third (7.3) sections will display examples of these small stories. Also, considering that small-storytelling may be difficult to interpret without some familiarity with the social context in which they emerged, I will provide additional information. Therefore, to facilitate this understanding and highlight the representativeness of the selection, I will present summaries of observational data in each section.

More specifically, in the second section (7.2), I will draw from two naturally occurring conversations in Betty's class to demonstrate how this teacher negotiated legitimacy and power with respect to her students. I will make comparisons of these instances of identity performance and the elicited material in the previous chapters to achieve data triangulation. Also, I will make certain comparisons with observational data from Adam's case, in order to establish cross-case relationships.

In the third section (7.3), I will analyze small stories that emerged in Daniela's class and a few passages taken from Adam's and Daniela's journals that contribute to expanding our understanding of the participating teachers' everyday work and concerns. These stories will show contradictory instances of support and resistance towards institutional structures and highlight how these teachers reacted to institutional impositions. I will pay special attention to those structures that disrupted teachers' personal teaching theories and their professional identities. In the last section (7.4), I will present a summary of the chapter and draw some conclusions. I will especially focus on how the data respond to the question regarding the impact of the participants' identity on their teaching practices and the extent to which the teachers could exert agency in these practices.

7.1 Small Stories: A Definition

Branching out from Labov and Waletzky's (1967) narrative framework, some researchers have argued that personal accounts in naturally occurring interactions serve diverse communicative purposes (Georgakopoulou, 2006; Riessman, 1993; Vásquez, 2011). Unlike the elicited narratives in the classic sociolinguistic interview, conversational storytelling is used to negotiate a social relationship between tellers and their interlocutors. Therefore, these stories may be told to present justifications for one's actions, amuse the audience, establish rapport, index membership, perform or negotiate identity, heighten or ease tensions, or advance interpretations of everyday events. Moreover, in some cases, especially when in voice of those who exert power over others, conversational stories may be used to educate and to reinforce social structures (Thornborrow & Coates, 2005; Vásquez, 2007). Given this variety of social functions, non-elicited narratives go beyond non-shared past experiences to include collaborative narratives of common experiences, hypothetical events, or prospective scenarios (Barkhuizen, 2010; Georgakopoulou, 2006; Riessman, 2008). In many cases, this type of narratives are performed in just a few lines, thus breaking the canonical structure outlined in Labov and Waletzky's Harlem stories. Although brief, these small stories are ubiquitous in everyday interaction. This frequent

use of small storytelling makes this type of stories play an important role in the interactional construction of social meanings where identity is performed and negotiated (Bamberg, 2011).

Due to the multiple forms that small stories may take, for the purpose of this study, I have followed Georgakopoulou's (2006) characterization of small stories as an umbrella term in which a variety of times, tellers, lengths, and media may be included. However, I have at least established four essential requirements to qualify an interaction as a small story. First, to be considered a story, a message should be centered on one or more characters engaged in some sort of action. The action, however, may or may not lead into a climactic moment or conclude with a well-defined coda.

Second, the events could refer to past, on-going, routine, or hypothetical actions. Additionally, in some cases the events may not follow a time sequence, but they may be connected to the broader context of the ongoing conversation by a common theme. In this chapter, the small story displayed in section 7.2.2 is considered a hypothetical small narrative because it depicts actions that happened in an imagined future situation. By contrast, the story analyzed in 7.3.2 is defined as a theme-centered small narrative because it features a specific theme that gives unity to the story. Third, although one of the interactants could function as the initial teller, other interactants may take turns to function as co-tellers. Fourth, the telling of the events should exhibit significance for the interaction (tellability) (Ochs & Capps, 2001).

Finally, although the research on small-story telling has focused on face-to-face and technology-mediated interactions, I have added a couple of small journal narratives to this set. These small narratives are treated as artifacts created by the participants for the purpose of this research. Therefore, the data here to be displayed cannot be considered as forms of naturally occurring small-story telling in a strict sense. However, the journal narratives offer snap-shots of the participants' narrative representations of their realities, in a way very similar to small story-telling. Furthermore, unlike the interview stories, journal story-telling shows how the participants narrate their daily professional practice on the here-and-now of specific teaching situation.

Therefore, these written narratives have also been included as additional instances of the participants' identity negotiation at the workplace.

7.2 Legitimacy as a second language education professional and power struggles in Betty's small stories

In this section, I will focus on Betty's interactions with her students at the University of Sotavento (UoS). From that data source, I have selected two small excerpts that include passages in which Betty used non-canonical forms of story-telling to negotiate her legitimacy as a second language professional. I selected these stories because they were connected with two salient themes that I identified during the initial content analysis of the participants' interviews and journals. The first one had to do with Betty's complaints about English not being taken seriously by her students and other faculty members in her university. The second story is linked to a common concern expressed by Betty and other participating teachers about their ability to respond to their students' questions about vocabulary.

Before presenting these two small stories, I will introduce a profile of the class taught by Betty with information taken from my observation field notes and from Betty's own teaching journal. After providing this contextual information, I will present the small stories featured in the section and analyze their connection to other data sources used in this study. These two small stories will be displayed in the conversational context in which they occurred. For this reason, the transcription will show what was said before and after the small story was told. As in previous chapters, the transcriptions are organized in lines and stanzas. To facilitate the identification of each small story, they will be enclosed by a frame. Finally, in the case of conversational interactions that were carried out entirely in Spanish or that contain code switching, I will display the original conversation on the left and the translations to English on the right.

7.2.1 The background information about Betty's small story: English at the University of Sotavento.

As mentioned before, all undergraduate students at UoS are required to take four courses of English for general purposes at the basic levels of the Common European Framework of Reference (A1 and A2 levels). At the time of the study, the courses were mostly dictated by the textbooks in use, which were the first two books of the Open Mind series (Taylore-Knowles, J, Taylore-Knowles, Rogers, M., & Zemach, D., 2010). Additionally, students were required to do some extra readings taken from a reader written by a faculty member in the Department of Foreign Languages and published by UoS. The reader featured a collection of short texts about Sotavento's cultural traditions and festivals.

According to Betty's account, a considerable number of the undergraduate students at UoS come from working-class families. Some of them are non-traditional students with a full-time job and the responsibility as the head of their respective households. The student population at the Department of Foreign Languages consists mainly of these undergraduate students who take English as a non-credit graduation requirement. Additionally, a small group of adult non-degree seeking learners are also included in these English language classes.

Most classes I observed had 20 to 30 students; however, the students' often missed classes which made the number of students per lesson fluctuate. Due to mandatory activities in their departments (e.g field trips, unscheduled examinations, schedule overlaps, internships, and other activities or events), degree-seeking students missed some of their English classes. Apart from academic events, students' jobs and family responsibilities also caused some students' repeated absence from class. In order to accommodate to unplanned schedule changes and students' personal challenges, the Department of Foreign Languages allowed students to attend classes at the corresponding time slot of a different section if needed. Because of these reasons, sometimes classes were reduced to a half or even one third of their size in certain sessions.

This flexibility resulted from unpredictable contextual pressures that often forced the institution to make changes in the academic calendar. During my visits, for example, I noticed how two extra weeks were added to the calendar to make up for class time that had been lost for various reasons. Because of this unpredictability, most teachers at the Department of Foreign Languages would not give their students a detailed syllabus. Betty would give her students a general overview at the beginning of the course and keep them informed about possible changes using Facebook group notices. She argued that this Facebook group was the most effective (and affordable) way she had found to keep in touch with her students even if they had to miss classes for several days. Unfortunately, although Betty would invite all of her students to this Facebook group, some of them never joined it. This lack of communication often led to misunderstandings, which were worsened by other contextual factors. For instance, the students could not contact faculty members at a time other than the scheduled class hour because the faculty members did not have cubicles and thus could not keep office hours.

In Betty's class, Spanish was used as the main means of communication. English was used by the instructor for the presentation of the target language contents and sometimes by the students when they responded to the instructor's specific questions. Often, Betty would say a sentence in English and follow it with its Spanish translation. Even with this strategy, a good number of students showed signs of encountering difficulty in following Betty's explanations. For example, in one of the lessons I observed, Betty spent a good while explaining the meaning of the word "obey." By the end of the class, when Betty was giving instructions about the homework, one of the students raised her hand to ask for the meaning of "obey." I inferred that the student who had asked the question was not alone in her confusion because her colleagues did not offer a Spanish translation to help her (which they usually did). Instead, students only looked at Betty with a puzzled expression on their faces. These communication problems were common. In fact, they constituted a typical characteristic of the observed classes and the descriptions provided by Betty in her journals. It is in this context of communication mismatches,

unpredictable time management, and contradictory discourses about the role of English that the following stories emerged.

7.2.2 A story about Betty’s defense of English as an important subject: “Teacher, you didn’t give me notice.”

The following short story (Excerpt 56) could be considered a small hypothetical narrative. It presents Betty’s speculation of what could be her students’ fate if they failed to comply with the second language requirement. The story was used as part of Betty’s response to one of her students’ implicit comments about the secondary role of English in the curriculum. This conversation occurred at the end of the class as a group of four students approached Betty’s desk. One of these students tried to negotiate the date for a make-up exam and the remaining three requested for a make-up assignment.

Orlando (pseudonym), a Psychology student, was the first one to present his plea. He had been absent for several days due to a conference trip. Thus, he originally initiated the interaction to confirm if the instructor had received the usual absentee notice (Line 3).

Excerpt 56. Betty uses a small story to show the importance of meeting the second language requirement to one of her students (May 19, 2014).

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. BETTY: Orlando, | 1. BETTY: Orlando, |
| 2. hello. | 2. hello, |
| 3. ORLANDO: ¿Recibió el permiso, | 3. ORLANDO: Did you get the memo |
| 4. de toda la semana? | ((notifying authorized absences)) |
| 5. BETTY: [Sí] | 4. about all the week? |
| 6. recibí el permiso, | 5. BETTY: [Yes] |
| 7. ajá, | 6. I received the authorization, |
| 8. y= | 7. uh-huh, |
| 9. hoy vamos a empezar unidad nueva, | 8. a=nd, |
| 10. pero, | 9. we’re going to start a new unit, |
| 11. hubo examen. | 10. but, |
| | 11. there was an exam. |
| 12. ORLANDO: Si pero, | 12. ORLANDO: Yes but, |
| 13. BETTY:((Unintelligible)) | 13. BETTY: ((Unintelligible)) |

14. ORLANDO: Pero no me avi-,
15. mañana teacher,
16. no avisó,
17. no estudié\@.

18. BETTY: [Hubo] examen,
19. hubo examen,

20. ORLANDO: Mañana teacher,
((plaintive tone))
21. para que estudie un día,

22. BETTY: Ay Orlando,
23. (.05) déjame ver,
24. quiénes son los que faltan,
25. (...09) ya saben,
26. ya saben,
27. que si se van\
28. tienen que preguntar/
29. lo que pasó,
30. no se pueden ir así,
31. a la deriva,
32. (.04) volvemos al mismo cuento de
siempre,

((A random question asked by a second student about a different issue has been deleted))

33. BETTY:(...11) A ver eres,
34. (...9) Creo que nada más faltas tú,

35. Orlando.

36. ORLANDO: ¿De qué?
37. ¿Del horario?

38. BETTY: [Del examen],

39. ORLANDO: ¿Del examen?

40. BETTY:(..5) Tú y Ernesto,
41. y Ernesto,
42. si no me presenta el justificante,
43. ahí quedó,

44. ANA: (...11) Miss,

45. BETTY: Mande,

46. ANA: ¿Puedo hablarle?

14. ORLANDO: But you didn't no-,
15. tomorrow teacher,
16. you didn't notify me,
17. I didn't study\@.

18. BETTY: [There was] an exam,
19. there was an exam,

20. ORLANDO: Tomorrow teacher,
((plaintive tone))
21. so that I can study for a day,

22. BETTY: Oh Orlando,
23. (.05) let me see,
24. who else didn't take the exam,
25. (...09) you already know,
26. you already know that,
27. if you go away,
28. you have to find out,
29. what happened ((in class)),
30. you can't go away like that,
31. totally adrift,
32. (.04) we go back to the same old
story,

((A random question asked by a second student about a different issue has been deleted))

33. BETTY: (...11) Let me see you're,
34. (...9) I think you're the only one
missing,
35. Orlando.

36. ORLANDO: What?
37. The schedule?

38. BETTY: [The exam],

39. ORLANDO: The exam?

40. BETTY: (..5) You and Ernesto,
41. and Ernesto,
42. if he doesn't bring a justification,
43. that's it,

44. ANA: (...11) Miss,

45. BETTY: Tell me,

46. ANA: Can I talk to you?

47. Es que,	47. uh,
48. le queríamos hablar,	48. we wanted to talk to you,
49. MATEO: Es que queremos una extra,	49. MATEO: We want an “extra”,
50. @@ ((nervous laughter))	50. @@ ((nervous laughter))
51. ANA: Es que,	51. ANA: This is,
52. nos,	52. we,
53. estamos preocupados pues usted,	53. we’re worried ‘cause you,
54. no sé si nos pueda,	54. I don’t know if you could,
55. dejar un trabajo extra,	55. give us an extra assignment,
56. así,	56. so,
57. que no valga los veinte sino,	57. not for twenty points,
58. quince o diez,	58. fifteen or ten,
59. cinco.	59. five.
60. BETTY: El trabajo ya pasó,	60. BETTY: It’s past the deadline,
61. ANA: No por eso,	61. ANA: For that reason,
62. pero un extra,	62. an extra one,
63. BETTY: No. ((decidedly))	63. BETTY: No. ((decidedly)) ((Betty’s explanation about the need to respect submission deadlines and students’ subsequent attempts to persuade her have been omitted))
64. les hago más mal,	64. BETTY: I do you a disservice,
65. aceptándoles las cosas cuando sea,	65. by accepting your work any time,
66. y el examen ((talking to Orlando)),	66. and the exam ((talking to Orlando)),
67. te lo debería de poner hoy,	67. I should have you take the exam today,
68. sí,	68. yes,
69. es ti,	69. I’m talking to you,
70. Orlando,	70. Orlando,
71. ORLANDO: Pero teacher,	71. ORLANDO: But teacher,
72. no avisó,	72. You didn’t notify me,
73. y tenemos clases,	73. and we have ((other)) classes,
74. clases en la carrera,	74. classes in our major,
75. y proyectos importantes,	75. and important projects,
76. BETTY: Y el examen no es importante,	76. BETTY: And the exam is not important,
77. ORLANDO: Yes teacher,	77. ORLANDO: Yes teacher,
78. pero es extra ((secondary, non-essential))	78. but it’s ((the exam)) extra ((secondary, non-essential))
79. teacher nos debería de,	79. teacher you should,
80. de avisar,	80. give us notice,

81. BETTY: [Es extra],	81. , BETTY: [It's extra],
82. o sea es una clase extra,	82. meaning a non-essential class,
83. así le vas a decir al,	83. that's what you're going to say,
84. al de Profesiones,	84. to the Registrar's guy,
85. cuando no te quieran dar el título,	85. when they refuse to give you your diploma,
86. porque no pasaste inglés.	86. because you didn't pass English

87. ORLANDO: Yes teacher,
88. está fácil pero,
89. ah,
90. no me avisó,
91. iba a estudiar.

87. ORLANDO: Yes teacher,
88. it's easy but,
89. uh,
90. you didn't give me notice,
91. I was going to study.

Note: there are some lengthy silent lapses during which Betty busied herself organizing a pile of papers on her desk, apparently ignoring students' pleas.

The instructor responds to Orlando's first question with a seemingly unexpected piece of information: During Orlando's absence, his class had taken an exam (Lines 4-9). The student knew that the instructor's usual practice in those cases was to administer the test upon the student's return to classes. Therefore, in his subsequent turn (Lines 12-17), Orlando started to make his case to have the exam postponed for the following day.

12. ORLANDO: Si pero,
13. BETTY:((Unintelligible))
14. ORLANDO: Pero no me avi-
15. mañana teacher,
16. no avisó,
17. no estudié\@.

12. ORLANDO: Yes but,
13. BETTY: ((Unintelligible))
14. ORLANDO: But you didn't no-
15. tomorrow teacher,
16. you didn't notify me,
17. I didn't study\@.

Since the beginning of his turn (Line 12), Orlando's use of "but" implies that he was introducing an objection to taking the exam that day. In fact, the student tried to present the objection twice, but his intonation units were truncated (Lines 12 and 14). When he finally completed his idea (Lines 16 and 17), Orlando implied that he was not prepared for the test because the instructor had failed to notify him. The student's emphasis on placing the responsibility on the instructor for his not being prepared is also evident in the order he used to

present his case. First, Orlando remarks that the instructor failed to do something (Line 16); second, because of the omission, the student did not study. By blaming the instructor, Orlando momentarily positioned himself as holding a certain degree of power within the conversation. From this position, the student apparently felt entitled to impose a change of date to take the test, in spite of the usual subordinated position traditionally assigned to students with respect of their instructors.

Nevertheless, Betty, as the interlocutor of this conversation, ignored Orlando's allegation. This is evident on line 18, where Betty takes over the next turn which overlaps Orlando's justification ("I didn't study"). Moreover, the content in Betty's turn is not a response to Orlando's imposition. She only kept repeating the information already given in her previous turn ("there was an exam"). As a reaction to this resistance, the student assumed a different attitude in his following turn when he repeated his request saying "tomorrow, teacher, so that I can study for a day"; this request was uttered with an intonation that implied a plea (Lines 20-21).

As a response, on Lines 22 through 32, Betty began to give in to her student's demands. We can see how her attitude changed through Line 23, where her "let me see" implies that she may have been considering the possibility to accommodate to the student's request. However, after a pause of 9 seconds, as seen on Line 25, Betty changed gears again by responding to Orlando's previous accusation and reverting the blame to the student (Lines 25-32):

25. (...09) ya saben,	25. (...09) you already know,
26. ya saben,	26. you already know that,
27. que si se van\,	27. if you go away,
28. tienen que preguntar/,	28. you have to find out,
29. lo que pasó,	29. what happened ((in class)),
30. no se pueden ir así,	30. you can't go away like that,
31. a la deriva,	31. totally adrift,
32. (.04) volvemos al mismo cuento de siempre,	32. (.04) we go back to the same old story,

By saying "you already know that" (Line 25), Betty finally responds to Orlando's implications of her being at fault for not sending him notice (on Lines 16-17). She does that by

reminding the student that finding out what happened in class during his absence was his responsibility (Lines 27-31). She also began to imply that she had already warned the students about the procedures they should follow when missing a class. This intention can be understood by the admonition that begins on Line 32 after a pause, where Betty says “we go back to the same old story”.

This admonishing speech would have probably lasted longer if Betty had not been interrupted by a second student who intervened with an unrelated question (omitted in the transcription). After this distraction, Betty seemed to be considering the possibility of rescheduling the exam, as her repetition of “Let me see” implies (Line 33). However, at this point, a new request coming from a third student changed Betty’s mood once again (starting on Line 44). We can see Betty’s change of mood since her first response to Orlando’s colleagues’, which included a sharp “it’s past the deadline” (Line 60) and a decided “no” on Line 63 without the use of any modifying clause to soften the impact of her refusal.

Betty’s indignation at the students’ request made her revert to the admonishing tone she had previously used and finally readdress Orlando’s case on Line 66. Specifically, Betty readdressed the topic of the exam by using deontic modality to refer to the standards that would apply in the case (“I should have you take the exam today”). Orlando responded to the instructor’s admonition with the same argument he had used before (“you didn’t send me notice”) and added a new element to his defense. He claimed that, not only was he not notified (Line 72), but he was also busy dealing with important issues such as his other classes and school projects (Lines 73-75):

71. ORLANDO: Pero teacher,
72. no avisó,
73. y tenemos clases,
74. clases en la carrera,
75. y proyectos importantes,

71. ORLANDO: But teacher,
72. You didn’t notify me,
73. and we have ((other)) classes,
74. classes in our major,
75. and important projects,

Betty reacted to this suggestion by openly stating the evaluation of the situation that was only implicit in Orlando’s line: “the exam was not important” (Line 76). Orlando must have

understood that his argument had been counterproductive and tried to concede (“yes teacher” on Line 77). This concession notwithstanding, we can see that Orlando was not willing to abandon his defense since he immediately followed his brief concession with a refutation on Line 78 (“but ((the exam)) it’s extra”). Orlando’s representation of the English class as something “extra” was taken by Betty as an attempt to belittle the role of English in the curriculum. Betty’s response to Orlando took the shape of an imaginary situation that I have categorized as a hypothetical small story. To make an argument about the importance of English, Betty tried to imagine a future scenario where Orlando experiences problems to get his degree diploma because the foreign language requirement is not fulfilled.

In this hypothetical small narrative, Betty functioned as the narrator of a scene where Orlando and a nameless employee at the Registrar’s office interact.

81. BETTY: [Es extra],	81. BETTY: [It’s extra],
82. o sea es una clase extra,	82. meaning a non-essential class,
83. así le vas a decir al,	83. that’s what you’re going to say,
84. al de Profesiones,	84. to the Registrar’s guy,
85. cuando no te quieran dar el título,	85. when they refuse to give you your diploma,
86. porque no pasaste inglés.	86. because you didn’t pass English

On line 82, Betty takes Orlando’s argument about English being unimportant and imagines Orlando using the same argument as he tries to negotiate his graduation papers at the Registrar’s (83-84). In this hypothetical situation, Orlando’s effort to persuade UoS’ authorities is rendered ineffective since they refuse to confer the degree without the fulfillment of the English requirement (Line 85-86). This refusal is not even directly uttered by the Registrar’s officer. It is only implied in Betty’s statement (“when they refuse to give you your diploma”).

Using Bamberg’s three levels of positioning (1997), I analyzed this small story giving attention to the following aspects of the narrative. At the first level of positionality, Orlando’s character is presented as a powerless student whose pleas are rejected by unsympathetic and impersonal institutional authorities. These authorities do not even open a dialogue with Orlando. Betty, as a traditional narrator, stays aloof to Orlando’s misfortune. At the second level, Betty

seems to voice a stern reminder to her audience, the real-life Orlando. The hypothetical situation could come true if Orlando does not take English seriously. At the same time, Betty reaffirms her power-status in relation to Orlando. She positions herself as the institutional authority entitled to give the student a passing or failing grade. By the same token, at a third level, Betty positions English as a relevant component of the curriculum by appealing to institutional regulations. In this way, Betty seems to be using the institutional structures to resist the student's attempts to position her class, and by extension her professional identity, in an inferior status. Unfortunately, under deeper scrutiny, the same rights that Betty claims for her subject-matter and implicitly for herself could fail to support her argument. English at UoS is indeed a graduation requirement, but it is also classified as a non-credit class. Hence, the student's perception of English as an extra requirement was not entirely ungrounded, despite Betty's attempt to project such a perception as erroneous through the hypothetical small story.

In this context, it is unsurprising that Orlando was not impressed by the arguments implicit in Betty's narrative regarding the importance of English. In fact, although Orlando briefly conceded right after Betty's story ("yes teacher" on Line 87), he did not back down from his demands to have the exam rescheduled. In fact, Orlando used again his prior argument blaming the instructor on Lines 90-91 ("you didn't give me notice, I was going to study"). At the end of this discussion, Betty allowed Orlando to take the test the following day. In a subsequent interview, Betty explained to me that she had to give in because the student had been authorized to be absent. In such cases, UoS faculty members are expected to make the necessary accommodations to help students make up for missing assignments and tests. In light of this sanctioned social practice, the fact that Betty insisted in extending her argument suggests that her engagement in this conversation was more focused on power negotiations than in pondering whether the test could be rescheduled or not. This struggle of power is relevant for this study because it seems connected to the status of English and English language teaching professionals at UoS. This interpretation becomes more convincing when this instance is compared to Betty's

claims regarding the need to educate students about the important role of English and her complaints about English teacher not being as well-respected as other faculty members (see Excerpt 50 on page 350).

Negotiating the importance of English with her students was not the only way in which Betty struggled to access the necessary power to command respect as any other faculty member at UoS. Her professional identity was questioned by students during one of the lessons I observed. In the following section, I will present a second passage in which Betty engaged in a small narrative to defend her status as an English instructor when a student playfully challenged her in class.

7.2.3 A story of how Betty deflected one of her students' comments about her not knowing an English word: "Miracles happen".

In order to understand the meanings implied in the small story that I will present in this sub-section, I will first describe some relevant contextual details. One of the most recurrent themes that emerged in the content analysis conducted at the beginning of this study was teachers' struggles to function as a linguistic resource for their students. Feeling that part of their professional function was acting in the capacity of English knowers, the participants were especially concerned about not being able to respond to students' unexpected linguistic questions. A failure to respond would represent a loss of professional credibility and the cause of tensions between teachers and learners.

Among the different types of linguistic content that teachers were expected to know, lexical knowledge was perhaps the one that the participants worried about the most. Adam's "shrimp story", discussed in the previous chapter (Excerpt 48, page 340), is an example of how second language teachers may link their professional legitimacy to their lexical knowledge. In that episode, Adam was critical of his own performance as a teacher when he could not answer to one of his students' vocabulary questions. In this view, the public seems to expect English teachers to function as human dictionaries ready to provide an English equivalent for every L1

word that comes to their students' minds. Excerpt 57, instantiates how these expectations were shared by Betty's students and how they generated tensions that Betty, the instructor, attempted to deflate with a playful small narrative. The conversation took place during a class where the instructor introduced household items as listed on the textbook (Taylore-Knowles, J, Taylore-Knowles, Rogers, & Zemach, 2010). Betty drew a table on the board for students to classify household items according to the room of the house where they are regularly placed and used. She requested students to add all the English words they knew that could fit into each category.

Excerpt 57. Betty and one of her students co-construct a small story. May 21, 2013

1. BETTY: Ok,
2. in the kitchen,
3. you have,
4. refrigerator,
5. stove,
6. who wrote this?
7. Jorge,
8. what's that?

9. JORGE: Skillet,
10. Sartén ((student provides the Spanish equivalent)).

11. BETTY: <L1 ¿Sartén? L1> ((checking on her electronic dictionary))

12. ANDRES: <L1 Con Teflon,
13. yo diría L1> ((Jokingly))

14. STUDENTS: @@@

15. ROSA: <L1 ¿Qué es skillet? L1>

16. JORGE: <L1 Sartén L1>

17. BETTY: I know it,
18. as,
19. frying pan ((writing on board))
20. <L1 los dos son correctos,
21. yo no conocía esta palabra,
22. O=h,
23. hoy aprendí algo nuevo L1>

24. CARLOS: <L1 ¿Y así aprobó? L1>

12. MS 2: With Teflon,
13. I would say

15. ROSA: What is a skillet?

20. Both are correct,
21. I didn't know this word,
23. Today I learned something new.

25. STUDENTS: @@@ O=h\.	24. CARLOS: And yet you passed? ((College))
26. BETTY: <L1 Suceden los milagros L1>	26. BETTY: Miracles happen.
27. STUDENTS: @@@@	
28. BETTY: <L1 Y así llega mucha gente, 29. a las quemadas de planos, 30. ¿Verdad? L1>	28. BETTY: And that's how many people, 29. make it to the Blueprints Burning feast ¹⁷ , 30. Don't they?

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 31. STUDENTS: @@@ | |
| 32. STUDENT: [Por] ejemplo. | 32. STUDENT: [For] example. |
| 33. BETTY: Hablando de planos,
34. This is,
35. An architect's house plan ((showing a picture on the textbook to redirect students' attention to the topic of home, rooms, furniture, and other household items)). | 33. BETTY: Speaking of blueprints, |

The appearance of Betty's electronic dictionary in this scene should not be taken as an unusual event in her classes. She would often carry and use her device whenever it was required. Some students would sometimes playfully refer to it as the teacher's Game Boy. In spite of the fact that Betty would openly admit her reliance on such resources, Carlos used the skillet incident to playfully question Betty's professional legitimacy with a sarcastic one-liner ("And yet you passed?" on Line 24). With this line, Carlos pretended to be surprised at the fact that Betty had managed to graduate from her English program without knowing the word skillet. The banter caused the class to break into laughter and elicited an expressive minimal response with a falling intonation contour (see Line 25 where several students uttered an expressively elongated "Oh" with a falling intonation at the end). These reactions showed that the students were aware of the playful challenge implicit in Carlos' question and elicited a reaction in Betty. Therefore, taking

¹⁷ In Mexico, before the official commencement ceremony, students celebrate their graduation by symbolically burning their books or other object that represent their profession. Architecture students burn blueprints. Carlos, the student in this story, was an architecture major at the time.

up the student' insinuation, Betty's replied by adding two turns (Lines 26 and 28 through 30) which, when put together with Carlos' line, seem to co-construct a small story.

On line 26, Betty appears to concede to her opponent. Her "miracles happen" statement seems to take at least three functions in this conversation. At an interactional level, it accepts Carlos' joke and takes his representation as the grounds upon which Betty builds her rejoinder. Second, the line functions as the door to an imaginary world where Betty momentarily accepts the position assigned by her student. Finally, the line also evaluates Betty's success at graduating from college as a miracle, not as a result of her having the necessary qualifications to be an English teacher. I do not imply that Betty was truly admitting not being fully qualified to be an English teacher. My point here is that, considering the first level of positioning, where the characters are placed within a narrative world, Betty, the character, assumes this position, if only within the context of the playful banter.

At the second level of positioning, with this story, Betty accepts the position of a player within a conversational joke. In this position, Betty collaboratively constructs the story to turn the tables on Carlos as the new target of the ongoing joke. This is accomplished with a one-liner that functions as a classic coda-like formula ("and that's how" on Line 28). As such, this coda concludes the small story and suggests that the situation could also be taken as a typical example of events that are common in other contexts, namely in the Architecture school. The tag question on Line 30 invites the audience to agree with the comparison, returning to the here and now of the conversation.

In this small story, Betty uses her interlocutor's initial theme, students graduating without having the minimum qualifications required for their profession. However, by adding the theme of architecture students' typical graduation festivities, Betty insinuates that Carlos, who was an architecture student, may have been familiar with similar cases. The fact that Carlos was a senior student who was getting close to his graduation time while he still had to fulfill the second language requirement may have also played a part in this joke. As a response, Carlos only

laughed at Betty's witticism. If the instructor had accepted being negatively represented as a mediocre college student within the joke, Carlos also had to accept the same positioning. On the contrary, if Carlos had refuted his interlocutor's insinuation, the exchange would have turned into an argument instead of remaining in a humorous tone. With both interlocutors now at the same level, Carlos' challenge lost force allowing Betty to repair her damaged image and regain students' attention to continue her class.

At the third level of positioning, Carlos initially invokes the master narrative that represents second language teachers as infallible lexical knowers. In light of this narrative, Betty's ignorance of the word skillet was considered as a suitable opening for a good joke. In other words, the fact that Betty admitted not knowing an English word seems to have contradicted the students' belief regarding the knowledge that English instructors are supposed to possess; this contradiction made the joke possible. Similarly, Betty responded by covertly reminding Carlos and, indirectly, the class that nobody is perfect. The fact that Carlos decided not to respond to Betty's challenge suggests that he might have accepted her argument as the smart way to close the banter. However, it does not necessarily imply that the exchange was enough to make the students' see Betty's point. Since the class conversation moved on to continue focusing on the vocabulary lesson, we cannot draw more conclusions from the analysis of this small story. In the following paragraph, however, other data sources shed light on the situation.

When I talked about this incident with Betty, she commented that she had repeatedly told her students that her knowledge of English was limited. This admission, however, was obviously not enough to neutralize a generalized belief about second language teachers' obligation to have unlimited knowledge of the target language lexicon. During my classroom observations, I could notice that this belief was not only embraced by students, but it was also supported by instructional practices in which teachers functioned as the main language resource. This contradiction between teachers' manifested beliefs about their capabilities and their teacher-centered practices apparently added tensions to the participants' attempts to negotiate a legitimate

professional identity. Ironically, the observation data showed that teacher-centered practices were common in most of the participants' classes, including Betty's.

As an additional example of how teaching practices and teachers' perceptions seemed to contradict each other, I will briefly refer to another participant. During one of my observations in Adam's class, he experienced difficulties to respond to a student's request to provide the English equivalent to the Spanish word "gruta" (cave, in English). Although Adam knew the word cave, he struggled for a moment to figure out a different equivalent. At the end, he suggested the class to look up the word using an online dictionary. In a subsequent interview, when commenting on this incident, Adam argued that teachers are not infallible knowers. He also said that he was happy to encourage students to find answers to their own questions by using online dictionaries and cell phone applications. As a matter of fact, his unfinished Master's thesis had focused on that topic. In spite of this stance, in Adam's classes, most linguistic content was not learned by interacting with tools and resources. Instead, Adam would organize most of his unit introductory lessons as a deductive presentation of rules and meanings in which he would act as the main and often sole source of information aided by a Power Point presentation. Moreover, in the follow-up lessons, while students worked on textbook exercises, Adam again would function as the main language resource answering students' vocabulary questions most of the time. In such a context, whatever unrealistic expectations learners may have about their instructors are likely to be reinforced rather than neutralized.

Teachers, regardless of their subject matter, are usually expected to know more than the students and be prepared to answer their questions. While this expectation is fairly reasonable, the extent to which second language teachers are able to meet this standard on a daily basis may vary because of diverse and equally reasonable circumstances. First of all, language teachers may sometimes experience memory lapses when trying to establish accurate equivalence between a word in the students' native language and the target language. Sometimes these lapses may lead them to appear as not adequately prepared to fulfill their function (e.g. Adam trying to find an

equivalent for “gruta” in the incident described above). Second, teachers may experience problems trying to solve vocabulary questions related to lexical items used in activities or domains unfamiliar to them. Additional complications may be added considering that a second language teacher may find difficulties to identify the meaning of words or phrases used only in the context of certain varieties of the target language. Last but not least, teachers in contexts such as the ones described in this study, face the challenge of teaching a language they regularly use in their classrooms, while they lead a life outside the classroom using a different language. Moreover, the ease of use and extent of teachers’ L2 lexicon may vary depending on the proficiency level of the courses they teach. Betty, for example, admitted that maintaining her English skills while being assigned to teach only basic level courses was a challenge.

These considerations remind us of Leiliani’s comment to her supervisor about teachers’ scarce opportunities to use English outside the classroom (Excerpt 54, on page 367). Given the situation, the teacher-centered practices observed in the participants’ classroom seem to be working to reinforce beliefs and attitudes on their students that may work against the teachers’ interest to appear as competent second language professionals.

In the excerpts presented in this section, I have shown how Betty tried to defend her grounds from her students’ insinuations regarding the secondary role of English in the curriculum. I have also shown how she tried to neutralize, through a small narrative, the tensions in an episode in her class that threatened her legitimacy as a second language teacher. In these cases, Betty responded to the tensions that emerged from social interactions (Excerpt 56) as well as from classroom interactions (Excerpt 57). In the first case, Betty attempted to negotiate the importance of English as part of the university curriculum through a hypothetical small story. In the second case, Betty accepted her student’s playful banter and used it to co-construct a small story that dealt with the theme of her efficacy as a second language professional. Through these small narratives, Betty performed and negotiated her professional identity in interactions with her

students. The stories also show an example of how Betty enacted the way power is perceived, negotiated, and distributed in her context.

In the following section, I will show discursive and observational evidence of instances in which two of the participants put up a certain degree of resistance towards institutional structures. The stories also show the teachers' resistance towards certain attitudes in their students which threatened their identities.

7.3 Stories of cover resistance and teachers' identities

In this section, I will present a theme-centered small story, as opposed to a hypothetical one above, used by Daniela to assert her authority in the classroom. Also, I will present a written story taken from Adam's journal that shows his resistance to school's authorities. A theme-centered story, as one may remember from section 7.1 in this chapter, is one that does not necessarily include sequential actions but is united by a common theme. I will also compare the positions taken by the teacher-participants in their stories with their actions in the classroom as seen through my analysis of the data from my observations and from the participants' teaching journals. Finally, I will compare the evidence analyzed in Daniela's and Adam's narratives mentioned above with their own interpretations of the events expressed in their interviews. As in the previous section, I will begin by summarizing the most salient features of the lessons observed and any relevant contextual details that serve to provide the readers with an insider view.

7.3.1 The background information about Daniela's small story: English at a private secondary school.

In this section, I will provide some background information about Daniela's class so that the information would be useful for understanding the narrative later. As previously mentioned, Daniela works with secondary school (middle school) classes that averaged between 35 and 40 students per class section. The courses were organized according to the 2006 English curriculum since the 2011 version (NEPBE) was still in its expansion phase at the time of the study. The

2006 curriculum for the teaching of English at middle schools, as we may remember from Chapter 4, assumed that students were true beginners when they reached the first grade of middle school. By the end of the three grades that comprise middle school education, students are expected to reach a basic level of proficiency equivalent to the A2 level in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2006). This means that the classes I observed were all within the basic level. However, a few students in those classes had a proficiency level slightly above that standard, as I could see from my classroom observations. The textbook in use was Next Step 1 (Brewster, Lethaby & Maness, 2011), which follows a grammar syllabus based on the CEFR. As in Betty's case, the syllabus was dictated by the textbook. Her classroom was a 30' by 20' room with 40 school chair desks and a desk for the instructor, as I noticed during my visits. In many of the sections I observed, the students were often noisy. Although Daniela mentioned that the school regulations were not so strict about keeping students quiet during the lessons, she was especially concerned about excessive noise during her classes. For instance, loud chattering and laughter that could suggest that students were not engaged in school work during a lesson was something that Daniela attempted to avoid, sometimes unsuccessfully. This concern was evident by her frequent calls to order and the sanctions she used to control students' disruptive behavior. She especially focused on two main aspects of classroom management, namely making sure that students engaged in class activities and enforcing respectful turn-taking during class interactions. In the following subsection (7.3.2.), paying attention and taking turns function as the central theme that unites the featured small story.

Because of the number of students and the space available, Daniela rarely ventured to have students working in small groups. When they did, she would try to have students paired up with their closest neighbors so that they would not have to move a great deal and make noise in the process. Only in the few occasions when Daniela had access to a larger room, would she sometimes choose to play language learning games or use role-plays in her class. During one of my observations, she had students working with a memory game on the floor. The game required

her students practice vocabulary matching words to images. However, to avoid excessive noise, she requested students to whisper during the game. Students who raised their voices were excluded from the game and given a textbook task to do instead.

With such classroom management policies one could imagine that Daniela's classes were subdued and quiet. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Although I never witnessed any especially offensive behavior from Daniela's students, they were indeed noisy, easily distracted, and tended to challenge Daniela's authority in small ways. For instance, they would rarely do their English homework; however, some of them would try to use class time to do work for other subjects instead of focusing on English. Excerpt 58 gives an illustration of this type of class interaction.

7.3.2 A story of how Daniela used classroom talk to instill in her students the importance of paying attention in class: "He was ignoring me".

The following excerpt shows Daniela interacting with her secondary school first graders (Roughly equivalent to the US seventh grade) while they reviewed verb tenses and frequency adverbs. This was the first day of preparation prior the fourth period of partial examinations¹⁸ and Daniela wanted to engage her students in some speaking practice. With that purpose, she would formulate a question addressing a specific student by his or her name. After the student gave an answer, Daniela would provide corrective feedback or simply make a comment on the content of the student's response.

The first part of this interaction (Line 1-87) has been added to provide some context and show the teasing tone kept by most of the students in class during this activity. In order to review tenses, Daniela asked some questions regarding students' responsibilities at home. However, as some of the students replied that they did not help with house chores, Daniela shifted her questioning towards one specific theme, being attentive in class, which unifies the whole

¹⁸ Each of the five exams that students in Daniela's school were required to take during the school year. Each partial exam included the contents studied during the previous two months.

interaction beneath the surface of the review of tenses. Excerpt 58 shows how this theme shift was used by Daniela to accomplish a discursive goal different from the grammar review she was pursuing in this lesson.

Excerpt 58. Daniela tells a small story to remind her students to pay attention in class. March 19th, 2014

1. DANIELA: Ok,
2. so,
3. I have some questions for you,
4. listen,
5. Lolita,
6. how often,
7. how often,
8. do you,
9. make your bed?

10. LOLITA:<WSP I always make my bed
WSP>

11. DANIELA: Good,
12. Can you repeat that,
13. louder?

14. LOLITA: I always make my bed.

15. DANIELA: Very good,
16. Elba,
17. how often,
18. do you wash the dishes?

19. ELBA: Uh,
20. I never was the dishes.

21. DANIELA: [Oh],
22. Oh my God,
23. really?
24. you never wash the dishes?

25. ELBA: Yes,

26. DANIELA: Ok,

27. STUDENTS: ((multiple voices))

28. DANIELA: ¿No tienen responsabilidades en su casa?
- 28: Daniela: Don't you have responsibilities at home?

29. STUDENTS: ((simultaneous and various negative answers))
30. No,
31. Nah,
32. solo hacer la tarea.
32. Just doing the homework.
- ((Students' buzz increases at this point and turn taking becomes chaotic.))
33. DANIELA: Sh ((Hushing students)),
34. nos ponemos a trabajar con el libro,
35. verdad?
34. Shall we work on the book?
35. Is that right?
36. MS1: No no.
37. DANIELA: Para que estén calladitos.
37. So that you keep quiet.
38. STUDENTS: No.
39. DANIELA: So be quiet,
40. listen,
41. and pay attention,
42. Ernesto,
43. how often,
44. do you,
45. ignore,
46. the instructions?
47. ERNESTO: Never,
48. MS2: [Always]
49. MS3: [@@ Always]
50. DANIELA: Ay Ernesto,
51. cómo te cambió la voz.
50. Oh, Ernesto,
51. your voice has changed so much.
52. STUDENTS: @@@
53. MS4: ¿Qué?
53. MS4: What?
54. DANIELA: [Sssh]
55. ERNESTO: I hardly never,
56. DANIELA: I hardly ever,
57. FS1:A=h,
58. FS2: [A=h]

59. MS5: [A=h]
60. DANIELA: Los voy a anotar,
61. van a ver,
62. les voy a bajar décimas,
60. DANIELA: I'm going to add your names
((on her blacklist))
61. You'll see,
62. I'll deduct a few decimals ((from their
final grade)).
63. STUDENTS: ((Voices decrease and
finally fade))
64. DANIELA: Can you,
65. give me,
66. your answer?
67. ERNESTO: I hardly ever,
68. DANIELA: I hardly ever,
69. ignore,
70. ERNESTO: Ignore uh,
71. DANIELA: The instructions,
72. how often,
73. do you interrupt,
74. the teacher?
75. STUDENT: Never,
76. STUDENTS: @@
77. DANIELA: Shh,
78. ERNESTO: Este,
79. DANIELA: Este,
78. ERNESTO: Uh,
79. DANIELA: Uh,
80. ERNESTO : I=
81. never,
82. STUDENTS: @@@
83. DANIELA: Ok,
84. I never,
85. MS6: <@ No me digas @>
86. ERNESTO : Interrupt,
87. the teacher.
85. MS6: <@ Really? @>
88. DANIELA: Ok,

((Other habitual examples that followed were omitted. The review moves into the present continuous)).

- 89. DANIELA: Actions,
- 90. in this moment,
- 91. for example,
- 92. ((walking quietly towards one of the students))

93. What is he doing?

94. MS7: @ @ @

95. FS3: He is sleeping,

96. MS8: Sleeping,

97. STUDENTS: He's sleeping,

98. MS9: @ @

99. DANIELA: What i=s,

100. ((walking towards another student))

101. STUDENTS: @ @ @

102. Ay,

103. Elena,

104. DANIELA: Sigue durmiendo
((Addressing the student who was resting his head on his desk as if he were taking a nap)).

104. DANIELA: Keep on sleeping.

105. STUDENTS: @ @

106. DANIELA: What is he doing?

107. STUDENTS: He's sleeping,

108. DANIELA: He was ignoring me,

109. FS4: Uh-huh\

110. DANIELA: He was ignoring me,

111. Good,

112. siguiente tema.

112. Next topic.

MS= Male student FS= Female student

In the passage that precedes this small narrative (Lines 93-110), Daniela addressed two questions to Ernesto (not his real name), a student who was usually boisterous and distracted. None of these questions were really meant as information requests, but as an indirect way to chastise Ernesto for his inattentive behavior in class (e.g. “Ernesto, how often do you ignore instructions?” on Lines 39-46). Other students, catching Daniela’s sarcastic meaning, intervened in the dialogue overlapping their contributions with Ernesto’s response and contradicting him (Lines 48-49 and 57-59). In the first occasion, Daniela responded to these interventions, which she obviously considered as interruptions, with a teasing remark (“Oh, Ernesto, your voice has changed so much” on Lines 50-53). As this strategy did not work, she then openly hushed students’ mocking responses (Line 54). Apparently unabashed by the instructor’s request to avoid interruptions, the students kept interrupting Ernesto’s second attempt to respond to Daniela’s questions. This time, Daniela reacted with a more direct reprimand. She threatened the students with adding their names to her black list and reducing their grades (Lines 60-82). With the teasing mood apparently lost after Daniela’s threat, the instructor focused on helping Ernesto formulate a neutral answer. This exchange, although brief and apparently concluded at this point, seems to have a discursive impact on the direction taken by the following exchange (Lines 89-110).

When Daniela shifted the review from the simple present to the present continuous, she maintained her questioning by focusing on the students’ behavior. This time, she chose a student who was apparently taking a nap to call everybody’s attention to his infraction. In this context, Daniela and her students built a small story that could be sketched in just three turns

1. DANIELA: What is he doing?
2. STUDENT: He’s sleeping
3. DANIELA: He was ignoring me ((after the student woke up)).

The grammatical composition of Daniela’s last line (the change from “is” to “was”) suggests that she was no longer focused on the grammar review. At this point, students did not know past continuous; therefore, her comment was not made for the benefit of the grammar

review, but to contribute to the theme of students' inattentiveness. In this small story, Daniela uses an on-going event and she and her sleepy student become the characters of the narrative. The story moves from present to past and the other students function as secondary tellers. Within the story, Daniela positions herself as one who is being ignored by the sleeping student; hence within this story world she is taking a passive position. At a second level, Daniela functions as the narrator who calls the audience's attention to observe a student who is not conforming to the expected behaviors in class. Considering the third level of positioning, Daniela and her students refer to the socially expected behaviors that people are supposed to exhibit in classroom settings. Students are expected to do their work and pay attention, while teachers are supposed to be heard and obeyed. Daniela repeatedly said so in the previous exchange and students were well-aware of this message. By using the questions of her review to instill these expected behaviors, Daniela employs class discourse to position herself as one that should command respect. By contrast, the boy's infraction is taken humorously by students, as suggested by their laughter.

In spite of the importance that Daniela seemed to attribute to obedience and respect in this conversation, she also tried to keep a balance between serious work and a playful attitude. Unfortunately, her attempts at sarcastic humor in this excerpt (Lines 42-46, where Daniela asked Ernesto how often he ignored instructions) were suffocated by her concerns to keep her students under check (as shown in Daniela's thread on Line 60 when she says "I'm going to add your names ((on the black list))"), perhaps triggered by the influence of my presence. Regardless of this possible reserve, certain aspects of Daniela's teaching practice contradict her apparent zeal for order and attentiveness in class. This leads into a second story that was initially revealed in her journal and finally instantiated during my observations.

7.3.3 Evidence of how Daniela resisted institutional structures.

As I mentioned in Chapter 4, Daniela was not a believer of the assessment scheme imposed by the administration of Latin-American School. In one of her journal entries she elaborated on the subject:

Excerpt 60: Daniela explains how she manages time to grade her students' work. Journal entry of October 2013 and emails exchanged after that day.

1. The first days of October were the week before exams. During these days, I did nothing to
2. improve my students' oral production because I had to spend the week checking notebooks,
3. student's books and workbooks. In secondary school, I have 2 groups of 37 students, 1 group
4. of 34, and another of 36. It means I had to check 144 notebooks, 144 student's books and 144
5. workbooks. I spent the first week of October checking all these. I do not usually take work
6. home. I check everything during the classes; so I asked my students to answer some exercises
7. to review for the exam while I checked all the books and notebooks and projects too.

Email sent to the participant: October 2013

8. First of all, you said that you try not to grade tests and homework at home. Instead, you do
9. your best to grade stuff during class, while your students focus on written work. Once
10. again, I want to thank you for your honesty here. I clearly understand your decision and
11. if I were in your place, I might be doing the same. Could you please talk a little bit more
12. about this decision? How did you decide to organize your work this way? Why? How do
13. you feel/think about this strategy? Do other teachers at your workplace do the same?

Daniela's reply: November 2013

14. I decided to grade as much as I can during my working hours because I have other
15. responsibilities at home (as a housewife), with my son, his homework, and also with the
16. language center where I work in the evenings. So, I take advantage of my time in the
17. school. Sometimes when it is really necessary, I take some work home. It is important to
18. remember that I have 144 students in first grade, but I also teach high school, 1st semester,
19. so that adds 150 students. It's a lot of work. I try to design exams easy to grade so I check
20. exams very quickly. I may spend 1 minute or 1.30 min. grading 1 single exam. I start the
21. day of the exam. As soon as they finish and give me the exam I check it. I am not sitting
22. on the desk. I am standing, monitoring, walking around the classroom, solving doubts and
23. grading. When my 50 minutes exam finishes I sometimes have 10 or 15 exams graded. I
24. feel great with this strategy because I do not have to waste an hour at home grading a
25. group (I have 8 groups in total) I think I am smart because I hear how other teachers about
26. complain the hundreds of exams they have to grade at home. They go to bed late. I do not. I
27. have heard about other teachers that do the same but they are sitting at the desk losing the
28. students. That does not happen to me.

As can be seen in the excerpt, Daniela was persuaded that considering students' notetaking and written exercises did not contribute relevant information assessing students' learning. In spite of her disagreement with school policies, she felt forced to keep an appearance of conformity in order to stay in her job. This compliance, however, posed a conflict for her other

identities as a mother and a wife. As mentioned before, when put in a dilemma to choose between her teaching identity and motherhood, Daniela's identity as a mother would regularly take precedence over her identity as a teacher. Therefore, since complying with the assessment scheme required work that Daniela was not willing to do at home, she transferred her grading to her class time. She was aware that this practice could be considered as a sign of her being indolent and irresponsible. However, she represented her decision as the smart-way-out of a grading system that she considered irrelevant.

In her diary, Daniela had candidly talked about this topic and I tried to respond to her honesty without judging her decisions. Perhaps due to this previous interaction, when I visited her class in March 2014, she allowed me to observe how she carried out her grading in the classroom. During this lesson, the same noisy students were given a drawing task while Daniela checked the workbooks. Students seemed to know the drill pretty well by then, so they remained engaged in their task even if sometimes Daniela had to remind them to lower their voices. When I asked Daniela about the nature of the drawing task, she explained that the school required students to decorate the cover page of each new unit in their notebooks. This activity was supposed to instill principles of order and organization in students' character as required by the competencies-based model promoted by the national curriculum. Daniela doubted the task could truly produce the desired effect. Nevertheless, since the cover pages had to be done anyway, she used them as a way to take time for her grading.

In sum, although Daniela agreed with the socially accepted concepts of obedience to authorities, she was not always willing to comply with her school's regulations. She navigated the contradictions she perceived at her workplace by trying to comply with school policies (as we can see by her emphasis on paying attention and avoiding overlapped participations in the small story presented in Excerpt 58) only to the extent that they did not represent a threat for her multiple identities. Excessive work load (Lines 17-19 in Excerpt 60) combined with irrelevant assessment practices were identified by her as the main cause to take these secret measures of resistance. It is

left unsaid that negotiating assessment policies with the school's administration was not a possibility. However, the fact that Daniela was using covert resistance strategies implied this lack of negotiation.

In a similar instance of covert resistance, in the following section, I present evidence from Adam's case. Using journal entries, I will show how Adam also used resistance strategies when his identity as a friendly teacher was threatened by school policies.

7.3.4 A story of how Adam covertly resisted his employers' prohibitions regarding the use of Halloween as a composition topic because of religious reasons.

To properly contextualize this section, I must state that Adam was raised within the Catholic faith and does not consider himself to be an atheist. However, his religious beliefs were never of a strict nature. Therefore, people's radical position against certain socially accepted practices on the grounds of a religious conviction were perceived by him as incomprehensible. For this reason, he felt challenged when such beliefs imposed restrictions to his use of the popular culture in his classes. For example, while still in his first teaching assignment, he had to censor himself and exclude certain topics from his lesson plans because most of his students were Jehovah witnesses. Although he learned to accommodate to these circumstances, he was relieved when he left this job.

By the time Adam moved to Saint Monica's School, he imagined that he would not face any similar problems since the school is Catholic. Being of the same religious persuasion, Adam did not anticipate any tensions coming from differences in religious beliefs. As a matter of fact, in his first school year at Saint Monica's, Adam was able to organize different activities in his class and also participate with his students in several extra-curricular activities, as mentioned in the previous chapter. In these occasions he did not recall any obstacles to implementing fun activities with his students. However, as time went by, he began to perceive that the strict rules imposed by the school's administration represented a challenge for implementing some of his ideas for class activities. During the academic year when Adam kept his teaching diary for the purpose of this

study, an incident regarding an extra-curricular activity made this kind of tension emerged in his narratives.

In October, Adam and his junior high school students were in charge of writing and editing the school's bulletin board. This bulletin board is a collection of students' compositions that are pasted on one of the walls of the school's halls. Adam considered this activity as an opportunity to engage students in searching and reading authentic material in English. Moreover, he appreciated the fact that students could compose texts of their own that would be read by a real audience (e.g. other students, parents, and teachers). Beyond these pedagogical goals, Adam saw the bulletin board as a way to reinforce his good relationship with his students. Perhaps because Adam was interested in this second goal as much as he cared about his students' learning, he allowed them to take certain liberties in the design of the bulletin. This decision led to a conflict that is described in the following excerpt.

Excerpt 61: How the school censored Adam's students' bulletin board. Journal entry, October 2013

1. A couple of weeks ago, this specific group of students and I experienced a difficult situation.
2. We designed the bulletin board for all October school events, holidays, celebrations, etc. and
3. we decided to honour three main celebrations: The Discovery of America (Columbus' Day),
4. The United Nations Organization, and. The Fall Season. Obviously, students are exposed to
5. Halloween advertising and promotion, which is something "common" for them. However,
6. since we are in Catholic institution, this celebration is considered as a diabolic representation,
7. and that is why The Catholic Church considers it as something inappropriate.
8. Before starting everything, I let students know that we were not going to base the entire
9. bulletin board as something for Halloween. I gave them the opportunity to put a small section
10. about it. Unfortunately, that was a total mistake because in the next day we finished the
11. board, my boss (the English coordinator) was forced to remove the Halloween materials from
12. the wall. The problem was that three or four of the nuns and the junior high school principal
13. put pressure on her to omit the Halloween celebration. The exact day my boss removed the
14. materials from the wall, she talked to students to explain them the situation and to try to
15. convince them about the religious "proper thinking" about this issue. Obviously, my students
16. were completely furious because they felt that it had been lack of respect to remove the
17. materials without telling them in advance. My boss was like "the bad girl" of the movie
18. because the nuns washed their hands of this matter and forced her to solve the situation, since
19. they did not want students to feel that they were making them do and think in the way they
20. considered was the correct one.

21. To be perfectly honest, they only specified ((delegated)) that responsibility to us because

22. they knew that students were going to have a bad feeling against the nuns or even against.
23. the Catholic Church. We were really mad but at the end of the whole mess, I encouraged
24. them to feel proud of their work. I made them reflect on the important issue, which was to
25. show everybody that they could do an excellent job no matter what obstacles they faced. At
26. the end of the day, everything ended up “well” although my students were in disagreement
27. with that kind of suppression they experienced.

28. To finish talking about the bulletin board situation, I have to admit that students showed a
29. sort of incorrect behaviour for a couple of days, not with me but with the school’s point of
30. view. Actually, they decided to put the Halloween material all over their classroom.
31. Obviously, one of the nuns (the one that is their “adviser”) almost died when she saw the
32. classroom like that and she tried again to talk to my boss and me, for us to force students
33. change their attitude, but my boss and I were in total disagreement with it. We decided to
34. forget about the issue. Up to now, there has not been any other problem related to this.

Adam’s allegiance in this narrative seems to be established in a complex fashion. In the introduction, “we” is used twice to refer to Adam and his students working collaboratively on the bulletin (Lines 2 and 3). Also, “we” and “us” refer to Adam and the English coordinator’s disagreement with the school’s authorities (Lines 20 and 21). Finally, “we” is employed to include the teller as part of Saint Monica’s school (Line 5). These positioning shifts show how Adam constructed this conflict as one in which he related to the actors around him in different ways. While it is clear that Adam perceived himself as part of his school, it is also true that his loyalties lay with certain groups of his community and not with the entire institution. He repeatedly identified himself with those actors that he considered as his true interlocutors, his students and his direct supervisor. On the contrary, the school authorities and the Catholic Church were positioned as the opponents with whom it was not possible to establish a dialogue.

Since the school authorities decided not to address students directly on this issue, Adam and his colleague were forced to assume the role of intermediaries. Although the two of them did as they were told, they only fulfilled this task to minimize the conflict and preserve their jobs. Adam’s resistance to the intervention of his superiors in what he considered an inoffensive class activity is manifested in the content of the narrative and in his word choice. For instance, he asserts that he and his colleague “were forced” to act and the students are said to be

“suppressed.” Also, Adam’s disagreement is manifested in his cheering speech to his students (Lines 22 through 24) and the metaphors he used to represent the event as a “mistake”, a “mess”, and a “difficult situation.”

The narrative is also constructed in a way that the school authorities’ position is framed as the ultimate loser in the controversy. First of all, in the introduction, the teller justifies the students’ interest in Halloween as a result of the media influence. Second, once the conflict is presented (in the second paragraph), the school’s censorship is minimized by Adam’s speech praising the students’ good work. Finally, the students’ rebellious reaction, although foregrounded as incorrect behavior (Lines 28-30), is not considered as highly reprehensible. Therefore, by closing the story with the students’ act of resistance, the teller sides with them (Lines 33-34) and represents the authorities’ religious zeal as excessive.

A second conflict, similar to the one narrated above but of less dramatic consequences, was observed during my second period of field work in Serrana. This time, Adam’s students were engaged in a small simulation in which each team was expected to cook a special hamburger with a recipe they had created for the occasion. In this project, each team had prepared an oral presentation to narrate the creation of their recipe and highlight the product’s best features. The simulation was organized as a competition and some external judges were invited to choose the best hamburger. For the preparation of their dish, students had brought cooking utensils and small electric grills. However, one of the teams had some problems with their equipment and requested permission to use the school’s cafeteria microwave to heat their hamburger buns and pre-cooked patties. Since the permission was denied, Adam, visibly disappointed, requested other teams to help their classmates to heat the food on their grills. As he did so, he cheered his students by saying “we can do this on our own, can’t we? We don’t need their help.” When I discussed this event with him in an interview, he used again “we” and “they” in the same sense, siding again with his students and representing the school as the other.

Although one may feel tempted to disapprove Adam's apparent disloyalty towards his employers, his attitude may be best understood when considering Adam's beliefs about teaching and learning. As mentioned before, Adam's classes were mostly teacher-centered and dictated by the pre-packaged book contents. Only in a few occasions every semester, did he venture to implement student-centered activities. Although these tasks were always planned to have students use the target language in one way or another, Adam's ulterior motive to venture out of his comfort zone was to allow students to have some fun and nurture a good relationship with him. In one of the interviews, the topic of his relationship with students became so prominent that he even connected it to his personal learning theory:

Excerpt 62: Adam presents himself as a strict but friendly teacher. Interview 4, May 29th, 2014.

- | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| 1. AR: So now, | 25. Because, |
| 2. considering that, | 26. actually, |
| 3. if you were given the chance, | 27. we have some teachers like that, |
| 4. to be, | 28. in this school, |
| 5. a school coordinator, | 29. they ((the students)) don't enjoy |
| 6. or principal in the future, | learning, |
| 7. how do you think, | |
| 8. you would address, | 30. And I, honestly think, |
| 9. rules, | 31. that, |
| 10. and freedom, | 32. learning, |
| 11. with teachers, | 33. uh, |
| 12. and students? | 34. is affected by that, |
| | 35. if you are very strict. |
| 13. ADAM: It's a difficult question, | |
| 14. @@@, | 36. And, |
| 15. it's a difficult question because, | 37. it doesn't have to do with, |
| 16. I have never thought of being, | 38. not being a demanding teacher, |
| 17. an English coordinator, | 39. because sometimes |
| | they((students)) tell me, |
| 18. But, | 40. <Q You are demanding, |
| 19. I think that I would talk to my, | 41. and sometimes strict, but we like |
| 20. teachers, | you Q>, |
| 21. and tell them, | 42. @@@. |
| 22. and suggest them, | |
| 23. that it is important, | |
| 24. to establish a connection with | |
| students, | |
-

In this interview excerpt, I engaged Adam in considering a prospective scenario. The introductory phrase (considering that) refers to a comment made by me regarding Adam's preference to work in a flexible and free environment. Framed in this context, Adam carefully chooses his words to position himself as a flexible person. For example, in presenting his interactions with his imaginary teaching staff he "suggests" instead of imposing his view. The content of his advice to teachers goes along similar lines. They should make learning enjoyable (Line 29) and strive to establish a good relationship with their students (Line 24). This advice is based on Adam's personal teaching theories (Lines 30-35) and in his perceived success to establish good rapport with his students (Lines 36-41). Therefore, being able to implement fun activities in his classes, even if only occasionally, was Adam's way to build a relationship he considered necessary to promote learning. Moreover, this relationship allowed him to affirm his identity as a demanding but friendly teacher. From this perspective, the school's reluctance to support Adam's fun activities represented an obstacle to his ideal of good teaching and his perception of his professional identity. The signs of his low-key resistance in the stories here presented were very likely Adam's way to defend his professional image in front of his students without risking his employment.

7.4 Summary and Conclusions

My analysis of the data presented in this chapter shows how teachers engage in negotiations of power and identity with students and with employers. Teachers used stories and covert actions to mediate these negotiations. In all of the examples shown in this chapter, a certain degree of struggle between the participants and their most immediate interlocutors was evident. This struggle was intimately connected to the participants' efforts to perform and defend their professional identities or, as in Daniela's case, to find a balance between her professional and other identities, such as her identities as a mother and a wife.

In the midst of these struggles, the teachers' personal practical knowledge and their professional identities interacted to exert an impact on their actions as well as their stories told in

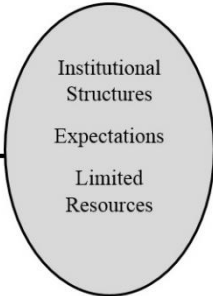
and out the classroom. In the case of Betty, her awareness of the imposed perception of English as a second-rate subject-matter influenced her use of discourse in her interactions with students. For Adam, his view of himself as a popular teacher set him in opposition to his employer's religious views and values. Similarly, Daniela's teaching theories and multiple identities took her to resist institutional assessment policies, in spite of the fact that she supported other aspects of her school's regulations, such as keeping her students quiet and paying attention. These examples of resistance, however, were restricted to instances of covert actions without openly challenging school authorities. These teachers' fears of losing their jobs or their awareness of their limited range of power within the institutional context was always present in their covert actions.

In contrast with this resistance, the participating teachers also demonstrated a degree of conformity with social practices, values, and elements of the master narrative that became part of their teaching practices. For instance, a generalized teacher-fronted approach, a common reliance on the textbook as syllabus, and an orthodox view of power distribution in the classroom was evident in most of the lessons observed as well as in some of the episodes of interactions presented earlier in this chapter. Additionally, teachers were expected to and acted as the main source of linguistic stimuli, but in their discourse they showed awareness of the need of incorporating other sources, such as authentic materials or online dictionaries. Limited access to resources and an organization that ranged from complex and chaotic (as in UoS) to excessively centered on formality and rules (as in Saint Monica's School) limited teachers' affordances to act in agreement with their expressed views. Figure 16 shows the different ways in which the participating teachers showed instances of resistance and conformity in their teaching practices (marked with a P in square brackets in the figure) and in their narratives (see N in square brackets).

These teachers' opportunities to implement instructions in ways that would be coherent with their claimed professional identities were restricted by institutional structures and dominant Discourses. Betty's discursive attempts to assert the importance of English in the curriculum were

not supported by the institution's categorization of English as a non-credit subject. Moreover, the fact that the Department of Foreign Languages had to readjust its calendar and schedules to accommodate to changes dictated by other departments also worked against Betty's intentions. The same can be said of faculty members' obligation to adapt to the circumstances.

Figure 16. Betty, Daniela, and Adam's identities interacting with social practices and structures in their narratives and their teaching.

	BETTY	DANIELA	ADAM
COMFORMITY  RESISTANCE	-Accommodating to the student's request to reschedule the exam [P]. -Functioning as the first linguistic resource of her students [P].	-Instilling in her students the importance of order and attention [N]. -Teacher-centered instruction [P].	-Functioning as the first linguistic resource for his students [P]. -Teacher-centered instruction [P].
	-Positioning English as important [N]. -Positioning English teachers as fallible as other professionals [N].	-Positioning herself as a mother [N]. -Minimizing grading time during class as a resistance to assessment policies [P].	-Covertly supporting his students' resistance to school religious rules to position himself as a friendly teacher [N]. -Implementing a few student-centered activities [P].

N= Teachers' Narratives / P= Teaching Practices observed during the study

It is in this context of limited institutional support that certain contradictory teaching practices emerged. They can only be understood by appropriately relating them to the realms of sociality and place. For instance, although Daniela expressed her conviction that the L2 should be taught in ways that students could develop 4 skills, her class activities did not always respond to these goals perceived by her as reasonable and productive. The snippets of the review lesson presented in this chapter showed that her speaking practice turned into a series of grammar-centered prompts. In this context, only some of the students had the opportunity to actually produce a few controlled examples. However, implementing student-centered class activities was

a challenge given the number of students, their different levels of proficiency, and the teacher's evident concern about disciplining the students.

Teaching practices were also affected by social structures beyond the limits of the participants' immediate institution. In Daniela's case, the assessment criteria that she considered irrelevant to implement L2 instruction stemmed from the national curricula that requires teachers assess values and attitudes¹⁹. These principles seemed to have been given a reductionist interpretation by the school administration and were not considered as negotiable.

Finally, I close this section by considering students' expectations regarding their instructors' linguistic abilities. While it is reasonable to expect that L2 teachers exhibit an appropriate level of proficiency of the target language, common sense suggests that teachers should be allowed to have a memory lapse once in a while. The tension and discomfort evident in the participants' regarding these lapses suggest that they commonly perceive themselves as being judged as incompetent in such cases. One can only wonder if these tensions are somehow heightened by the fact that these instructors are NNEST. Only Adam's comments regarding his shrimp story stand to partially answer this question from a teachers' perspective. This leads to a final consideration. Would Carlos (Betty's student in the skillet story) have reacted in a different way if Betty had been identified as a NEST? This question cannot be answered in this study but offers an opening to the discussion that will follow in Chapter 8.

¹⁹ According to the national curriculum (SEP, 2011a), instructors are expected to include an attitudinal component in their assessment schemes of each subject. In Daniela's school this requirement was satisfied by assessing aspects such as good penmanship or the inclusion of neat illustrations as a sign of neatly organized note-taking.

CHAPTER VIII

DISCUSSION: A CROSS-CASE ANALYSIS

Poststructuralist theorists have repeatedly asserted that identity should be considered as a fluid construct that evolves as individuals learn (Wenger, 1998), claim different affiliations (Bamberg, 2011), and struggle to access power (Norton, 2001/2014; Weedon, 1987/1997). Following these principles, there is a general agreement to consider teachers' identities as simultaneously individual and psychological as well as social (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Because of this social dimension, identity is not considered as something that develops out of every individual's internal changes, but as a negotiation in which language takes a paramount role (Duff & Uchida, 1997). For those involved in the teaching of English as a second or foreign language, this negotiation may become especially difficult because the profession is disadvantageously positioned at the boundaries of different disciplines (Johnston, 1999). In this problematic context, multicompetent language users who choose to become English teachers face additional challenges in negotiating their professional identity due to ideologies connected to the Native Speaker (NS) fallacy (Phillipson, 1992). The present study offered evidence from a group of teachers still underrepresented in existing literature to illuminate our understanding of how these individuals negotiate their identities through narrative discourse.

In this chapter, I will discuss the findings in light of the contributions of recent research about the interface of teachers' identities and professional development. I will present a cross-case analysis developed in five themes. In the first section (8.1), I will discuss how people begin to negotiate their identities as EFL teachers through a social process in which shared beliefs about English and teaching are intertwined. As a second point (8.2), I will argue that the workplace is one of the most prominent settings where teachers' identities are performed, negotiated, contested, and consolidated through time and social interaction. In section three (8.3), I will suggest that teachers' perceptions of their colleagues as a *professional other* and not as peers contribute to their alienation and pose a threat to teachers' collaboration and professional development. As a fourth point (8.4), I will consider how teachers' teaching practices relate to the broader historical and sociopolitical context in which they are embedded. In the fifth and final point in this analysis (8.5), I will consider the findings about the participants' teaching practices and how these findings relate to previous research. I will close the chapter with a summary (8.6).

8.1 The beginning of the process of becoming a teacher: Beliefs and ideologies involved in the participants' career choices

Understanding people's professional identities requires a longitudinal approach to trace back how people interact with the surrounding sociocultural forces to negotiate their identities through time. One way to advance this understanding is by studying the many different ways in which individuals first engage in the process of becoming part of a particular professional group. Such a study does not only demand pinpointing the actions people take when they decide to get involved in a profession, but also requires a view of how individuals make sense of their career choices. In other words, understanding people's perceptions on this matter and what motivations they acknowledge were involved in their decision making is also relevant in the study of professional identities. For this reason, in the present section, I will consider how the participating English teachers perceived the events that led them to become English teachers and how these particular perceptions resonate with previous studies.

Although the different motivations and perceptions behind individuals' decisions to become teachers have been widely studied in the field of general education (e.g., Manuel & Hughes, 2006; Olsen, 2008; Richardson & Watt, 2005; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Watt & Richardson, 2008), the topic has been mostly overlooked by second language and TESOL studies (the exceptions are Simon-Maeda, 2004 and Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Moreover, to my knowledge, no study thus far has focused on second language teachers' career choices through a qualitative perspective. Only Simon-Maeda (2004), when examining how female English teachers contested professional disempowerment in Japan, presented some narrative evidence on this matter. In that study, some of the participants explained their decision to become English teachers as a way to challenge disempowering assigned identities. However, since this was not the main focus of the study, Simon-Maeda did not examine the issue in detail. Therefore, as one of its main contributions, the present study sheds light on how multicompetent second language teachers represent their career choices.

In the present study, the combined use of life histories and teaching journals has afforded a longitudinal view of the participants' representations of their professional trajectories. By looking at the participating teachers' accounts of their professional lives and their teaching practice, I have been able to observe how these teachers made sense of their professional choices since they first entered a teacher education program. While some scholars have examined career-decision making as a cognitive process (Stemberg, 1997), and others have looked at it as a psychosocial phenomenon (Grotsky & Riegle-Crumb, 2010; Nora, 2004), the present study analyzed the teachers' career decisions with a sociocultural perspective. The evidence offered by the five life histories examined in this study suggests that these decisions were mediated by social forces and discourse which interacted with the participant's agency through time. The decision to enter the English program in Miranda was only an episode within a process that began long before the participants' freshman year and continued even after graduation. The fact that three out of five participants did not choose their major with a teaching career in mind suggests that intense

negotiations took place during and after their initial teacher education. The use of multiple narratives (autobiographies and interviews) afforded an understanding of these complex social processes in ways that previous cross-sectional studies could not offer (Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). In this part of the discussion, I argue that two main opposite sets of beliefs about English learning and the teaching profession were apparently at work in the participants' narratives about their decision. I suggest that these beliefs were constructed on the basis of dominant discourses that the participants used to make sense of their experience.

8.1.1 Beliefs about English teaching as an undesirable career option.

Choosing a career option is a complex process that equally involves human actions and socially co-constructed notions about the different professions and occupations available in a given social context. In the case of foreign language teaching, some of the collective notions that typify the profession in the perception of the general public are often connected to how people in a specific community experience the acquisition of a foreign language and what views about this language are popularly held. The literature reviewed in this dissertation suggests that, in the case of Mexico, the views that a great number of Mexicans hold about English may be connected to their unsuccessful attempts to learn the language (Castañedo & Davies, 2004; Davies, 2009a; González-Robles, Vivaldo-Lima, & Castillo-Morales, 2004). If this is so, it then follows that, in the opinion of at least some Mexicans, the English teaching profession may not be seen in the best of lights.

Considering this background, I analyzed the participating teachers' perceptions about their profession as these views were presented in their narratives. The triangulation of evidence across cases and across data sources in this study suggests that at least three factors may be connected to the formation of negative beliefs about English teaching: the participants' early experiences with English learning, the collective views of teaching as a low-prestige profession, and the NS fallacy. First of all, the data showed that the participants remembered a few positive experiences with English learning during their childhood. However, most of them also

complained about book-centered lessons and few opportunities to use the target language during their English classes. These practices were not only portrayed in the narratives of those who had some experiences in public schools (e.g. Adam and Leiliani), but also in the narratives about learning experiences in the private language schools that some of the participants attended (see Betty's and Daniela's cases in Chapter 4).

These representations are consistent with the available evidence that accounts for the unfavorable conditions under which English is taught in Mexico (Basurto-Santos, 2010; Davies, 2009a). Moreover, the shocking freshman-year experience featured in the narratives suggests that, for at least three of the participants, their previous second language instruction was indeed insufficient. The fact that the same situation was true for individuals of different cohorts points towards a problem that goes beyond an idiosyncratic experience.

In addition to the negative perception of English teaching and learning mentioned above, the participants also had to deal with other unfavorable notions about teaching in general. In the historical review of the teaching of English in Mexico presented in Chapter 4, the evidence demonstrated that the teaching profession is traditionally associated with low salaries and corruption. While it is true that teachers' salaries are usually perceived as modest world-wide, in Mexico, the low-prestige of the profession associated with low salaries has worsened with the influence of the corrupt association of the Sindicato Nacional de Trabajadores de la Educación (the National Union of Education Workers) with the political powers (Muñoz-Armenta, 2008; Torres, 1991). It is also true that none of the participants manifested agreement with this diminished view of teaching. They would hardly do that since they were well-established in the profession and identified with their profession rather profoundly at the time of the study. However, the collective representations created about the profession were undoubtedly present in the participants' discursive context at the time they were required to choose a major. Speaking of the relevance of such a discursive context, Clarke advises researchers to consider how the social, historical, cultural and political discourses may be present in our belief systems, even at an

unconscious level (Clarke, 2008). Therefore, it is not improbable that beliefs about the teaching profession as a low-prestige option might have been at work at the first-stages of the participants' decision-making process.

As a third factor, several instances in the participants' discourse suggest that the NS fallacy was actively at work in their belief system. For instance, Adam's comments on his former classmates' preference for NESTs imply that in his CoP the ideal English teacher had to be a native speaker. The same can be inferred from Daniela's feelings of inadequacy during her first classes at IUM. When she was unable to understand every word uttered from her instructor, she did not question her professor's abilities to establish effective communication with his students. Instead, she represented herself as inadequately equipped to succeed in the program. Even Sofia, who so adamantly declared herself against the NS fallacy, chose NESTs as the teachers who had impacted her the most during her initial teacher education. Consequently, if the participants' belief system included a view of the NS as the ideal English teacher, it is not so surprising that Adam, Daniela, and Leiliani did not consider English teaching as their first career option. If these beliefs were at play in the participants' decision-making process, it is imperative to question why they ultimately decided to go against these beliefs and to major in English. This question leads the discussion into the following section that addresses how a second important belief identified during the cross-case data analysis interacted with sociocultural forces: A view of the role of English as cultural capital.

8.1.2 How a view of English as cultural capital may play a part in the decision of pursuing a degree in English.

When the participants conveyed the initial reasons they had to major in English, at least three of them mentioned the value of English as an asset they could capitalize in different professional scenarios. The fact that the undergraduate program they chose included courses in translation and interpretation reinforced the idea that they could do something different from teaching with their degree. Similarly, in a recent survey conducted in the Southern state of

Guerrero (real name), Vaca-García, Toledo-Espino, and Ocampo-Herrera (2010) found that most of the students in the English teaching program of a state university had not chosen their major by considering teaching as their future career. The students' responses suggested that they believed that knowing English would open doors to access other jobs. Similar beliefs were shared by a group of student-teachers in a major public university in the state of Oaxaca studied by Sayer (2007). In this study, Sayer found that most of the students in an English language teacher education program did not realize that the main focus of their BA program was on teaching until they were well-advanced in their sophomore year. Their initial reasons to enter the program were connected to their desire to learn English as a tool. Comparable views about the value of English as a necessary cultural asset to secure professional advancement were evident in English teachers' discourses in Chile (Menard-Warwick, 2014).

In the data displayed in Chapter 5, the same beliefs were present in Leiliani's narrative of her conversation with the head of her department, which presumably persuaded her to enter the program. Therefore, the available evidence suggests that the participants' decision to major in English may have been mediated by beliefs about the value of English as cultural capital. Although these beliefs may be contended, it is obvious that for the participants and their parents these notions were solid enough to warrant the effort and the investment required by a college-level English language teacher education program.

Finally, in spite of the relatively limited outcomes of the participants' L2 acquisition before college (Sofia's case notwithstanding), their learning experience was foregrounded as one of the main reasons to major in English. Before entering the program, the participants had perceived themselves as successful learners with a knack for grammar and an innate skill to explain how English works. Previous studies in teacher education agree that perceptions of being good at tasks traditionally connected to teaching such as explaining concepts or writing are usually associated with the decision to pursue a teaching career (Olsen, 2008; Richardson & Watson, 2005, 2006). If these perceptions were truly evident for the participants prior to their

entrance to college, it is interesting that, with the exception of Betty, English teaching was not their first choice (Chapter 5, Excerpts 24, 26, 27, and 28). The idea of becoming a teacher appeared relatively late in the participants' decision-making processes. In fact, the narratives show that the decision became more evident when the participants began to work as teachers. The combined effect of the negative experiences and notions mentioned in the previous sub-section may account for the contradictions in the participants' memories and their delayed decision.

Therefore, the narrative evidence suggests that the participants' decision to become English teachers was a process that required time and the influence of common beliefs, social affordances, and constraints that often operated in competing directions. For instance, although Betty declared that she was inspired by her grandmother to become a teacher (Chapter 5, Excerpt 31), she did not choose to pursue a Master's program in TESOL. Instead, she chose a graduate program in translation to maximize her professional options in the job market. Such a decision can probably be explained by considering the beliefs associated with teachers' salaries as referred to in this section. By the same token, Betty's ultimate decision to pursue a teaching career was made possible when the opportunity to get a job in a public university arose (Chapter 4). The same may apply to Leiliani, who explained her change of heart on the basis of an innate disposition to teach (Chapter 5, Excerpt 25). However, the fact that Leiliani was offered a teaching job when she finished her internship and later inherited her mother's teaching position should not be overlooked. In other words, a close look at the participants' accounts of their career choices shows the genesis of their professional identity as a contested negotiation. Their choices, which otherwise would look contradictory and irrational, derived from a negotiation between their agency, belief systems, and the available affordances in their social environment (Johnson & Golombek, 2011). These complex relationships could not have been properly addressed and contextualized if the participants had only responded to a questionnaire, as other researchers have done before (Mori, 1966; Richardson & Watt, 2006; Topkaya & Uztosun, 2012). Moreover, tapping into teachers' beliefs regarding the nature of English and teaching is relevant to the

present discussion because these beliefs are a component of the inter- and intrapersonal construction of professional identities (Clarke, 2008). In the following section, I will expand the discussion to consider the ways in which teachers' interactions with their workplace may also contribute to this construction.

8.2 Power struggles, institutional structures, and colleagues' influence in the negotiation of identity at the workplace

In this section, I will draw from Wenger's participation metaphor to understand how teachers negotiate their professional identities as they engage in actions and establish relationships within their Community of Practice or CoP (Wenger, 1998). Also, considering Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson's (2005) warning to avoid what they saw as one of the greatest pitfalls of Wenger's theoretical framework, which is the lack of attention to power, I will incorporate an emphasis on power issues into the discussion. Based on Wenger, I see practice as the process in which individuals generate and negotiate meaning in interaction. In these negotiations, those who want to become part of a CoP learn the ways of being in that community and shape their own identities accordingly. However, people are not mere passive agents. They do offer resistance and contest those aspects of the socially constructed identities when these identities oppose their beliefs and interests. This resistance is closely related to an individual's need to access power (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977), which is why identity formation is not seen as a natural developmental process, but as a negotiation, where a differential of power is implied (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004).

As I demonstrated in Chapter 2, the topic of in-service nonnative English speaking teachers has been extensively studied. However, not many research projects have focused on how these multicompetent teachers negotiate their identities at the workplace. The pioneer work of Amin (1999; 2001a; 2001b) showed how outer-circle teachers experienced and contested ethnic discrimination when teaching English in an inner-circle country. Also, Armour (2004) studied a

nonnative Japanese teacher juggling her multiple identities as L1 learner, user, and teacher while she transitioned through different schools and learning experiences.

Looking at pre-service teachers, Liu (2005) examined how NNESTs cope with the stress of teaching reluctant students. However, the conditions under which Liu's participants worked were very different from those surrounding the participants in the present study. Liu's participants were NNESTs working as GTAs in the United States. Although some of the students acknowledged the advantages of learning new cross-cultural knowledge and writing skills from their Chinese instructors, others resisted being mentored by NNESTs throughout the semester. Understandably, the experience was stress-inducing for the GTAs, but the evidence provided by this and other similar studies (Ates & Eslami, 2012) is not enough to infer the long term impact of these struggles on the participants' professional identities.

Additionally, as illuminating as the previous studies may be, they did not focus on NNESTs within expanding-circle contexts. Perhaps the only two studies that have been able to shed light on the topic are those conducted by Liu and Xu (2011) and Sayer (2012). The first one of these studies examined the identity negotiation of a Chinese EFL university instructor as she tried to make sense of the educational reforms embraced at her workplace. The second one, already commented in Chapter 2, showed how a group of teachers in the Mexican state of Oaxaca contested language ideologies that questioned their legitimacy as English speakers.

The main difference between Sayer's participants and the teachers in the present dissertation is their socioeconomic and ethnic origin. The teachers in Sayer's study were born and raised in working-class rural families of Zapotec²⁰ descent. As part of social groups that are constructed as outside the dominant culture, the Oaxacan teachers had to face a great deal of social challenges to claim legitimacy for their professional identity. On the contrary, the participants in this dissertation are urban *mestizos*²¹, which places them within Mexican

²⁰ One of the indigenous peoples of the state of Oaxaca (real name as used by Sayer).

²¹ People of combined Spanish and indigenous descent.

mainstream culture. Considering this difference, in this section, I will elaborate on how the participants in the present study negotiated their professional identities at their workplace. I will pay special attention to the social forces that mediated this negotiation. These social forces include power struggles with students, the impact of organizational structures, the lack of appropriate mentoring, and the influence of colleagues.

The case of Adam is particularly salient when considering the way in which the professional identity of a novice teacher can be shaped at the workplace. In the narratives of his first year at Saint Monica's School, Adam's discourse foregrounded three main agents that contributed to his perceiving himself as a real teacher. The first one of these agents was not a group of individuals, but the physical conditions and organizational structures in Saint Monica's School, which, when set in comparison with the informality of Adam's first teaching job, made him feel he had finally moved into a real teaching position (Chapter 4). The second agent was represented by Adam's students, simultaneously positioned in his narrative as antagonists and supporters (Chapter 5, Excerpt 43). Finally, Adam's supervisor was also given an agentive role when portrayed as his ally in the Halloween's bulletin board story (Chapter 7, Excerpt 61). In these stories, the teacher used the memories of his interactions with these agents to describe how he had transitioned from being a student-teacher to considering himself as a real teacher. In agreement with Adam's narratives, Johnson (2009) posits that learning to become a teacher is something that occurs when teachers' minds interact with their sociocultural context. This learning is mediated by the relationships that teachers establish with those they work with; especially their students. Therefore, it is not surprising that among the three agents mentioned earlier, the figure of Adam's students emerged as the most prominent.

Adam's interaction with his students draws our attention to how his feelings of professional inadequacy were associated with his condition as a second language English user and his power struggles with students. Adam's discourse suggests that his insecurities may have partly been derived from the NS standard that he used to judge the quality of his work. In his

narratives, he repeatedly described himself as concerned about his proficiency level and his ability to answer students' questions. These perceptions were very likely enhanced by the fact that Adam's students had lived or traveled abroad while he lacked such experiences at the time. In this context, Adam chose to represent his transition from an insecure novice to an established teacher as assisted by his relationship with his students. In this representation, Adam negotiated the identity of a friendly but demanding teacher, establishing an alliance with the students of one particular class. Simultaneously, the other classes were represented in the narratives as too advanced in their L2 learning and obnoxiously resistant to Adam's authority. In this struggle, the alliance with the eighth graders afforded Adam a way to overcome his insecurities and gain power as a popular teacher. Since Adam is a white-mestizo, unlike the teachers who participated in Sayer's study (2007, 2012), the difficult negotiations with his students, who are also of the same ethnic descent, should be associated to factors other than race. As an alternative interpretation, teachers' differential socioeconomic background may be considered as an influential factor.

Social class has not traditionally played such an important role in the analysis of second language teaching education. However, recent work has pointed out that using the lens of social class may be relevant in cases such as the one presented here (Vandrick, 2014; Darwin & Norton, 2014). Therefore, it could be possible that a combination of Adam's inexperience and his conditions as a nonnative English speaker clashed with his students who, thanks to their socioeconomic status, had seen more of the world than Adam had. In his memories of these events, Adam attributed his success to neutralize students' resistance to his role in helping students win the Altars' competition. Therefore, in this case, identity was successfully negotiated as the participant engaged in relevant social practices within his CoP. Surprisingly, the one practice singled out as relevant in this case was not related to language teaching.

In spite of the happy ending that Adam gave to his life history narratives, not all student-teacher relationships depicted in the participants' stories were presented as supportive as in

Adam's case. Betty's discursive struggles to assert her legitimacy as an L2 teacher and faculty member (Chapter 7) show how the organizational structures may have also contributed to disempowering teachers in front of their students. Contradictory discourses about the role of English expressed in the curriculum and in the social practices sanctioned by the administration positioned Betty in a disadvantage. In such a context, the negotiation of a friendly and supportive relationship with students becomes rather improbable. Consistent with Wenger's framework (1998), the social practices and reifications (e.g. the curriculum, timetables, attendance policies) at Betty's workplace appear to shape how she was perceived by other members of her community. Unfortunately, these social constructions seemed to be working against Betty's best intentions to negotiate her professional identity as a full member of her CoP. This conflict was apparently promoted by the place that English, as a subject matter, has at most higher education institutions in Mexico, particularly in public universities (Davies, 2011). Positioned as a second-class type of faculty member, Betty's access to power was limited and so were her chances to negotiate her identity.

Other ways in which teachers related their professional identities to their workplace had to do with their engagement with teaching. For instance, Sofia made sense of her overcoming the initial phase of her teaching career by being able to find solutions to deal with young learners (Chapter 5, Excerpt 38). It seemed that her learning to teach—and become a teacher—was associated in her memories with the emergence of her own teaching practical theories. In her case, this learning process was embedded in the unscaffolded circumstances in which she began to teach. These circumstances were enabled by the shortage of L2 teachers in Mexico (Sayer, 2015) and the socioeconomic conditions that have led to the proliferation of small and understaffed private schools. Similar experiences were shared by Betty, Adam, and Leiliani (Chapter 4) even though they did not elaborate on how these experiences impacted their teaching knowledge. In spite of the struggles evident in the participants' narratives, the teachers were relatively lucky to receive at least some initial support from their teaching program in the form of a practicum.

The role of mentoring to assist teachers' knowledge development has been extensively studied in developed countries (Johnson, 2009; Johnson & Golombek, 2010). However, the phenomenon still requires attention in outer-circle developing countries. Moreover, in Mexico, the problem of novice English teachers entering the profession without appropriate mentoring is very likely to grow exponentially in the near future. The inclusion of English in public schools (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011) from preschool to secondary level will require the training of an estimated total of 98,000 new English teachers by 2018 (Ramírez-Romero, Sayer, & Pamplón-Irigoyen, 2014). This demand will very likely increase the transition of some generalists into English teaching positions. How this transition will be carried out and how it will impact teachers' professional development at the workplace is yet to be seen. The present study thus contributes to setting the spotlight on the problem. Studying unassisted teachers' careers and any remedial teacher development programs that may emerge in the future should be considered a priority in the Mexican context.

A final aspect of teachers' identity negotiation at the workplace has to do with teachers' interactions with their colleagues. My analysis of the participating teachers' narratives and of the data related to my on-site observations showed that English teachers led rather solitary professional lives. Regardless of their hiring conditions, the five participants in this study had but few opportunities to work collaboratively with their peers. Daniela's narratives presented in Chapter 6 can be considered as representative of the types of colleague-to-colleague relationships I observed during my visits. Teachers remained in their schools only for the time needed to teach their classes, had a few superficial exchanges with their colleagues, and hurriedly left. Those who worked within the basic education system had the obligation to meet with their colleagues on a monthly basis. However, these meetings produced very few results. Even Adam, who was the only one who had a coordinator he respected as a peer, regarded these meetings as a waste of time. The ways in which teachers establish a relationship with their colleagues, I suggest, are linked to the available discourses and supported by the prevalent social and material conditions

that regulate how teachers access power (Bourdieu, 1977). I will discuss the topic of teachers' isolation in greater detail in the following section.

8.3 The professional other: How the participants claimed identity by using binary oppositions

The presence of dichotomies in discourse has long attracted the attention of scholars. Some have concluded that human beings have a natural tendency to represent reality by using binary oppositions (Lévi-Strauss, 1981; Saussure, 2007). With a different perspective, Derrida (1998) proposed to question binary oppositions as part of his deconstructionist project because, in his view, all texts are built on them (Cooper, 1989). In discussions that have dealt directly with identity negotiation, other authors have also considered the role of binary oppositions. For instance, Wenger (1998) posited that identities are constructed by developing a double consciousness of who we are and who we are not. The duality of participation and non-participation is also used in the CoP theory as essential to developing a sense of belonging within a group.

In this section, I will discuss how binary oppositions were used by the participants to index membership within specific real or imagined CoP (Norton, 2001/2014) and to separate themselves from other teachers. I will focus on how the participants discursively constructed their teaching identities through three specific binary oppositions: the good and the bad teacher, young and veteran teachers, and the NESTs/NNESTs dichotomy.

8.3.1 The use of the good and the bad teacher dichotomy to negotiate an identity as a committed and competent English teacher.

In Chapter 4, I have presented evidence that shows how people's perception of the public school teacher has been discursively connected to notions of incompetence, indolence, and corruption. For years, the media has taken a special role in launching a disparaging campaign against Mexican teachers (Sayer, 2012; 2015), which has only increased in recent years with the implementation of the Ley General del Servicio Profesional Docente (General Law of the

Professional Teaching Service, LGSPD by its acronym in Spanish). This pervasive discourse could not be ignored by the teachers in this study, especially when they were engaged in positioning themselves as committed professionals during the interviews. The narratives of the five participants contain different instances of this positioning, but it is Leiliani's who, being a public school teacher, addressed the good and bad teacher dichotomy more intently.

In her pre and in-service narratives, Leiliani specifically distanced herself from the assigned identity of the lazy public school teacher. Simultaneously, she used discursive devices to construct a different kind of identity, one that singled her out as a committed L2 teacher. This identity, however, is not only negotiated by emphasizing her professional accomplishments and values; a dichotomized discourse that *otherizes* Leiliani's colleagues inevitably emerges by virtue of binary oppositions (e.g. willing and unwilling to attend teacher development courses, able or unable to use English, among others). Therefore, by trying to distance herself from unwanted assigned identities, Leiliani unconsciously reinforces the myth of the indolent teacher. In her stories, the "bad Mexican teacher" is no longer an impersonal entity. It becomes real and is embodied by Leiliani's colleagues, at least as seen in her construction of these colleagues' identities.

With this analysis, I am not suggesting that the participants maliciously used their stories to make their colleagues look bad. They were simply using discourse to disassociate themselves from charges they considered unjust. In doing so, they interpreted their realities by using the same discourse templates available to them without problematizing their content. For instance, when presenting her experience in the model course, Leiliani suggested that her colleagues had refused to attend because they were afraid of using their L2 to reproduce the course. However, Leiliani did not question the system that has left teachers without appropriate supervision and professional development for so long that they have lost their confidence using English. Other complications such as the lack of childcare or travel allowance to attend the course were not questioned either. This tendency towards blaming teachers for the failure of education without considering the

responsibility of other actors and circumstances is a common trait of current dominant discourses in Mexico (see Chapter 4). This is precisely the danger of ideologies; they are so intricately woven into our language use that we are rarely able to identify how they may have influenced our perceptions and our discourse (Gee, 2008; Van Dijk, 2006).

Leiliani's identity performance as an updated and merit-driven teacher is enhanced by her highlighting the generational difference between the good and the bad teacher figure. In her stories, two different standards to mark legitimate membership are opposed. Seniority and full-time contracts are presented as part of the old standard that has allowed outdated and indolent veteran teachers to hold a higher position in their CoP. On the contrary, Leiliani negotiated her identity in an imagined CoP of young teachers who are invested in their continuous professional development and are unafraid of the LGSPD. It is interesting to note how this interpretation of teachers' reality divided into two camps is in agreement with the ideologies of the LGSPD itself, which allegedly promises to turn teachers' hiring system into a meritocracy. The age factor added to the equation appears as a natural association given the fact that Leiliani is a young person and has had learning experiences different from those of her senior colleagues.

The use of a combination of the age and merit dichotomies is similar to the one employed by the pre-service teachers in The United Arab Emirates studied by Clarke (2008). In that study, the young student-teachers saw themselves as a new generation of progressive national teachers who opposed the teacher-centered practices of their predecessors. According to Clarke, this discourse seemed to agree with the current ideologies regarding the modernization of the country by the assimilation of Western standards and practices. Both cases show how political discourses may take root in teachers' perceptions and may be used uncritically to negotiate their identities.

Additionally, when discussing his results, Clarke pointed out that it was likely that the antagonism manifested in his participating student-teachers' views about their senior colleagues would eventually decrease. He hoped that, as the United Arab Emirates continued moving towards a more progressive second language pedagogy, the new teachers would feel more at ease

with their colleagues, since they would be all working towards the same goals. An interesting and unique finding in the present study stands in stark contrast to Clarke's assumption. The analysis of Leiliani's case suggests that she has not experienced such a change of perspective even though the Mexican ministry of education (SEP) has also adopted a curriculum based on equally progressive principles. Moreover, although Leiliani has interacted with her public school colleagues for long (she was in her eleventh in-service year at the time of the study), this interaction had not led her to perceive her colleagues at the public school as her true peers. In her narratives at least, Leiliani's colleagues are still portrayed as a professional other. In the following sub-section I will elaborate on the age dichotomy drawing examples from the experience of other participants.

8.3.2 The young and the veteran English teacher dichotomy used to make sense of different attitudes towards teaching.

In his classic representation of teachers' career cycle, Huberman (1988) suggested that educators' professional development can be considered as divided into four stages closely related to their years of teaching experience. These stages could be taken as a rigid description that does not represent the very complex variations that teachers' careers may experience accurately and fairly. However, the model offers an alternative interpretation of how time and experience impact teachers' attitudes towards their work. It is only because of its value as a heuristic device that I will refer to Huberman's model in this part of the discussion.

In the model, the first stage of teachers' careers is said to be characterized by a period of discovery during which novice teachers may struggle to survive. This period is supposed to last for about three years until teachers achieve certain control over the professional tasks they are expected to fulfill. The second stage, the stabilization period, is expected to last from the fourth to the sixth year of service. It is a time in which teachers perceive themselves as finally having established their professional identities and statuses. Conversely, the third stage, described by Huberman as considerably longer (10 to 12 years), is one of redefinitions, self-doubts, and

experimentation. Some teachers may decide to leave the profession as a result of this sort of professional identity crisis. Others, on the contrary, reaffirm their professional selves and stay within the educators' ranks. In some cases, this reaffirmation leads into the adoption of conservative views and the establishment of an emotional distance with respect to students. Finally, the last stage is viewed by Huberman as a preparation for retirement. In this period, teachers are said to become either serene or bitter as they grow increasingly more disengaged with their professional lives.

Although it is obvious that teachers may transit through the stages described above at different rates and with distinct results, time and experience do make an impact on practitioners' perspectives. The data in the present study attested to the observation that the participants certainly perceived a difference in their professional lives on the basis of age and teaching experience. The expression of this difference is especially salient in their representations of their relationships with colleagues and students, as seen in Chapter 7. The way teachers perceived their relationships with their colleagues is of particular importance for the present discussion.

When this study started, the youngest of the participants, Adam, was already in his fifth year of service. In his narratives, he presented himself as a full-fledged teacher who had a well-established position in his CoP. According to Huberman's model, it could be said that he had reached the period of stabilization. Nevertheless, according to some of my informal conversations with his supervisor and other authorities in the school, Adam was still considered as a young teacher with innovative ideas but slightly unrealistic views. The interview data showed that Adam was aware of his being perceived by his coworkers as a dreamer, especially with respect to his relationship with students. Even among those colleagues with whom Adam had established a close friendship (none of them English teachers) there was a disparity of opinions regarding the role of social distance and strict discipline in the classroom. Adam was also aware of how this difference of opinions made a distinction on how he and his colleagues related to students. For instance, while most of his colleagues enforced a strict policy on the use of cell phones during

class, Adam would occasionally encourage student to use their cell phones as a tool. At the end of the day, this polarized distinction between Adam's and his more mature colleagues' teaching styles contributed to reducing their possibilities to collaborate.

A similar age distinction was evident in Daniela's descriptions of her relationships with her colleagues at the Latin American School. In this case, Daniela perceived herself occupying an intermediate position between the enthusiasm of her younger colleague and the apparent indifference of her senior coworker. In spite of these differences, as Daniela felt closer to her younger colleague in age and by virtue of their being graduates of the same program, she admitted that they had supported each other in several occasions. Nonetheless, this support was limited since Daniela perceived her colleague as a dreamer. Consequently, Daniela was not always ready to follow her colleague's suggestions, especially when they contradicted her beliefs of what was feasible to do in their context. Moreover, in her story, Daniela also suggested that the mistrust was mutual because her colleague jokingly positioned her as an indolent teacher. Following Huberman's model, the disagreement between these two colleagues could be explained on the basis of their undergoing different career stages. However, such an explanation would perhaps be too simplistic, as the data in the present study suggest. Other striking differences between the two young teachers such as their different gendered identities should certainly be considered in the equation. Regardless of these possibilities, the analysis of the data showed that the participants' perceptions about age differences were used to dichotomize their representations of their interactions, or lack thereof, at the workplace. The *otherization* of the teachers' closest colleagues is likely one of the reasons that may have contributed to the perceived lack of peer support at the workplace.

8.3.3 The NNESTs vs. NESTs dichotomy as perceived by the participants.

Ever since the NS ideal was called into question (Cook, 1999; Kachru, 1976, 1992; Phillipson, 1992; Canagarajah, 1999), TESOL scholars have increasingly felt the distinction between native and nonnative English speaking teachers does not adequately represent the

complex and very diverse linguistic identities of these teachers around the world (Faez, 2011; Liu, 1999; Mahboob, 2010; Nayar, 1994; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Thus, researchers have suggested that, to understand second language teachers' identities, we need to look beyond this dichotomy. While keeping in mind teachers' complex identities is necessary, in this section, I argue that the NEST/NNEST binary opposition was still part of the participating teachers' self-definition and might as well be present in the perceptions of other teachers living in similar contexts.

In this study, the participants' perceptions of being positioned within a specific point within the NNEST/NEST dichotomy were clear in all the cases. Even Sofia, whose transnational experience could rightly place her within a third space, decided to identify herself within this dichotomy as a NEST. Using this binary opposition, the participants constructed representations of their native English-speaking colleagues (Chapter 5, Excerpts 32, 33, and 36; Chapter 6, 47, 49, 55). However, these representations were not always based on direct experiences. While all the participants had been taught by various NESTs during their college years (Chapter 5), only Sofia had more extensive experience with American teachers during her childhood (Chapter 4). Furthermore, once the participants graduated from their undergraduate program, they had but few opportunities to interact with NESTs at their workplace, as I could verify during my observations.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the countries that represent a more attractive job market for NESTs are found in Asia, most especially in the Far East and in those regions of the Middle East less affected by war conflicts. On the contrary, due to the low salaries, few travelling NESTs venture to find jobs in Latin America. When they do, they mostly stay within the urban centers that have more to offer in terms of salary, accommodation, and tourist attractions. Additionally, as NESTs usually expect higher salaries, small private schools are not able to afford having NESTs in their staff. On the other hand, the bureaucratic procedures required to get a job in the public system and the difficult working conditions may account for the noticeable absence of

foreign teachers in public schools. As a consequence, with the exception of Sofia, most of the participants did not have major opportunities to collaborate with NESTs.

In spite of their limited first-hand experience, all the participants had clear representations of how NESTs and NNESTs differ in abilities and knowledge. Generally speaking, NESTs were believed to be superior because of the phonological features of their speech. In Adam's view, for example, these features were those of the Received Pronunciation (Excerpts 34-36). Ironically, Adam also held this dialect as the ideal even though he also perceived it as unattainable for his learners and for himself (Interview 3, May 27, 2013). Similar contradictions have been found in other studies with NNESTs (Sayer, 2012; Corcoran, 2011). Additionally, NESTs' knowledge of their own culture was often perceived as a pedagogical asset together with their ability to use informal registers and colloquial lexis. Similar beliefs on the imperative of teaching the culture of the inner-circle countries along with English are still popular among many NNESTs in the outer-circle (Menard-Warwick, 2014; Sayer, 2012). On the other hand, NESTs were also perceived as less aware of the grammatical rules that govern English and, in some cases, they were categorized as lacking in pedagogical knowledge. These stereotypical representations of the NEST are consistent with perceptions held by other teachers in the world as attested by previous studies (Reves & Medgyes, 1992; Tang, 1997; Sifakis & Sougari, 2005). Other scholars, however, have challenged these overgeneralizations, thus opening the possibilities for the existence of instances that contradict the stereotype (Árva & Medgyes, 2000; Nemtchinova, 2010). The evidence in the present study indicate that, unfortunately, the participating teachers were not in contact with recent research on this topic. As a result, their perception of NESTs seems to remain as the linguistic model and standard by which the participants measure their L2 proficiency, as seen in the findings in this dissertation (Excerpts 33, 34, 36, 47, and 49).

By the same token, the teachers in the present study acknowledged that NNESTs did possess a few strengths that gave them certain advantages over their native English-speaking

counterparts (Excerpts 45 and 55). The teachers also pointed out that their knowledge of their students' L1 and culture was key to catering to their students' learning needs. Additionally, their having experienced L2 acquisition (Chapter 4), their formal teacher education (Excerpt 42, 46, 47), and their years of teaching experience (Excerpt 37) were considered as the basis of their legitimacy as L2 teachers. When they were asked to assess their professional expertise, they all responded that they felt confident in their capacities and regarded themselves as legitimate L2 teachers. In sum, the participants had very specific beliefs about their own abilities and those of the NESTs.

The participants were also aware of the existence of a bias in the job market on the basis of English teachers' linguistic backgrounds. Even though the teachers admitted not having many NESTs as their colleagues at most of their jobs (as it was the particular case of Adam, Leiliani, and Betty), they narrated some of the few experiences with NESTs that they had after college. In these occasions, the teachers had observed how their employers would sometimes hire NESTs without appropriate qualifications (see Daniela's stories in Chapter 7). As a consequence, these experiences, though rare by these participants' own admission, had only reinforced the participants' perceptions of English teachers as being divided into two camps. In one camp, NNESTs managed to access jobs based on their professional credentials, effort, and enthusiasm for teaching. In the other, NESTs obtained positions by virtue of their linguistic backgrounds, which may just be part of their birth rights, notwithstanding their shortcomings. Therefore, the pervasiveness of these binary oppositions in discourse along with the lack of opportunities to work with NESTs may have decreased the participating teachers' chances to see beyond this dichotomy. Furthermore, these dichotomies may have fostered the development of antagonistic identities among the participating teachers. Trent (2010b) found that such identities may become a serious obstacle for teachers' collaboration and the development of peer support networks.

Aware of this danger, some scholars have not only focused on defending NNESTs' rights to enjoy equitable working conditions (Braine, 2010), but have also chosen to contest the

NEST/NNEST dichotomy by calling for actions to facilitate the collaboration among teachers of different linguistic backgrounds and competence. This line of research has attempted to counterbalance inequities and advance the teaching of English by implementing team teaching programs in the US, Japan, Korea, and Taiwan (De Oliveira & Richardson, 2001; Luo, 2006, 2010; Matsuda & Matsuda, 2004; Tajino & Tajino, 2000). Researchers have found that, although NEST/NNEST collaborations face organizational and cross-cultural challenges, they can favorably impact teachers' development and students' learning (Luo, 2010). In the literature reviewed for this study, only one study has shown an example of some online encounters between American NESTs and Chilean NNESTs (Menard-Warwick, 2014). The lack of NESTs, material resources, and organizational structure required to orchestrate this type of horizontal collaborations has not allowed, as far as I know, for a similar implementation in Mexico. However, the findings from the present study have put the spot-light on how dichotomized discourses may represent an obstacle to overcome before any similar efforts can be considered in Mexico. The evidence presented in this dissertation thus suggest precaution, since antagonistic identities could easily be developed among teams of NEST/NNEST teachers if dichotomized notions are not first addressed and problematized. Finally, the evidence also shows that NEST/NNEST collaborations do not emerge out of natural interactions between NEST/NNEST working within the same institution (see Excerpt 55). This type of collaborations should be purposefully promoted if the participants or other teachers living in similar contexts are ever going to enjoy the benefits of peer support recommended in the literature.

In sum, in this third section, the analysis of the participants' narratives has shown that they perceived themselves as separated from their colleagues. This isolation was evident in their use of a dichotomized discourse but was certainly not restricted to discourse alone. The organizational and even physical conditions that I observed during the field work did not foster teachers' collaboration. For instance, teaching staff worked on very different timetables, thus limiting their opportunities to meet and engage in collaborative work. In some cases, such as the

University of Sotavento (UoS), faculty members did not have cubicles nor a teachers' lounge (see section 7.2.1. in Chapter 7) that could promote the exchange of ideas and the expression of concerns. In other more fortunate cases, such as in Daniela's school (Excerpt 55), although instructors enjoyed the luxury of a teachers' lounge, that room was not purposefully used as a space to establish productive collaborations. Moreover, according to the participants' narratives, when collegial meetings did occur, these meetings usually did not address issues directly related to the challenges that the participants were facing in their classrooms (see Adam's summarized life history in Chapter 4). A lack of leadership that could use the available resources to implement English teachers' collaboration became evident in the observation data. Specifically, as noted in Chapter 6 (see Excerpt 43, stanza 7), there were school administrators and owners, but a clear leadership that could foster teachers' collaboration seemed to be lacking. The fact that teachers perceived their colleagues as a *professional other* instead as members of the same CoP was certainly not contributing to counterbalance the combination of isolation and lack of leadership.

In this context, it is interesting that Adam could identify the workplace as the main scenario where his professional identity was consolidated. Sofia also privileged her everyday teaching experience as more relevant to her than other sources of professional development. In the following section, I will discuss how teachers' representations of professional legitimacy and career development were intertwined with identity, power, and social practices at the workplace.

8.4 How the participating teachers negotiated their professional legitimacy in their narratives of their past and in their projections of their professional future

One of the main themes that emerged in the analysis is related to teachers' perceptions of their professional legitimacy. Considering identity as a sociocultural construct, in this study, I have looked at the formation of second language teachers' identities as a negotiation in which power differentials are implied (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). In other words, in order to be perceived as a part of a given CoP, individuals often need to gain entrance by negotiating inclusion with well-established members of the community in positions of power. Additionally, in

contexts such as second language teaching, where the ownership of the target language is seen as the hallmark of professional group membership, individuals have to negotiate their identities in the terms that are often influenced by dominant linguistic ideologies (Canagarajah, 1999; Razfar, 2012). Furthermore, to be publically acknowledged as rightful members of their community, language teachers often have to negotiate their identities with other individuals who are not part of their group of peers, but who are directly connected with teachers' work, namely employers, students, and their parents.

Previous studies have shown that EFL/ESL teachers whose linguistic backgrounds and phenotypic features do not respond to the ideal of the white native English speaker often struggle to be perceived as legitimate experts of the subject matter they teach (Amin 1999, 2001b; Kamhi-Stein, 2013; Mahboob, 2010). In such circumstances, research has demonstrated that NNESTs and non-Caucasian native speakers of non-prestige varieties of English often resist assigned identities that position them as less capable than their white native English-speaking peers (Amin, 1999; Clark, 2010; Park, 2012). However, other studies have shown that, in certain cases, the NS fallacy becomes part of teachers' own perceptions of who they are, even though this language ideology positions them as second-class English professionals (Chacón-Corzo, & Pérez, 2009; Corcoran, 2011).

Similar language ideologies were endorsed by the three Mexican teachers studied by Sayer (2012). In that research project, two of the teachers, after graduating from an English teaching program, found that their degree was not enough to find employment in the local schools. As a consequence of this circumstance, these teachers took great risks to enter the United States as undocumented immigrants with the hopes of finding a job and improving their English. Predictably, the participants had only managed to get manual jobs and lived in Latino ghettos, which had significantly limited their opportunities to use their English. When assessing this event, the two teachers agreed that their English had hardly improved during their stay in the US. Surprisingly, they also concluded that their experience had enhanced their confidence as English

teachers. In other words, they felt they had proved themselves that they could use English to communicate, even though such experiences had been limited to a few interactions with Americans. The teachers explained that after that experience they felt reassured and eventually managed to find a teaching job in their hometown when they returned to Mexico. The evident contradiction between the teachers' admitted lack of progress in their L2 proficiency and the change in their perceived confidence as English professionals demonstrates the power of the NS fallacy over NNESTs' perceptions. Furthermore, these cases suggest that language ideologies can still exert an important influence over the professional identity negotiations of individuals with certain training in second language acquisition, such as the teachers in Sayer's study.

In the present study, the data obtained from the interviews, the teachers' journals, and the naturally occurring dialogues point to the insight that the participants were actively involved in negotiating their professional legitimacy. The participating teachers overtly expressed their commitment to being competent English teachers; teachers who are socially sanctioned by experience and official credentials. In spite of the teachers' reassuring beliefs about their commitment to their profession, the data also point to the existence of an interesting contradiction when these teachers attempted to defend their professional legitimacy. Specifically, while they attributed a great part of their pedagogical strengths to their formal education, they felt the need to reaffirm their professional credentials by other means. For instance, three of them had taken academic international examinations to certify their L2 proficiency even though none of them had required these certifications to study abroad.

Specifically, the analysis showed how at least one of these teachers believed that her international certifications had been important in making her more competitive in the job market. The same teacher, Leiliani, had been told that she also needed additional foreign examinations to certify her teaching knowledge. Ironically, the one examination she was advised to take, the Cambridge Teaching Knowledge Test, was not the best fit for her professional development needs. According to Cambridge English (2015), the TKT is designed for professionals from other

fields who want to begin a career in English teaching. Additionally, the exam is also recommended for practitioners who need to refresh their teaching knowledge. At the time, Leiliani had just graduated from an English teaching undergraduate program. Consequently, her knowledge and practicum experience were so recent that the TKT represented a mere review of contents instead of a real step forward.

A similar belief connected to teachers' professional legitimacy was expressed by Adam, who considered that traveling abroad would give him a professional edge and positively impact his L2 proficiency. In his prospective view, Adam imagined that native speakers would offer relevant corrective feedback and that daily exposure would enhance his listening skills. Researchers would agree with Adam's beliefs about the benefits of prolonged exposure to the target language (Ellis, 2008; Gass, 2013). Nevertheless, research evidence would also contest his assumption regarding the availability of encouraging interactions and corrective feedback during a visit to a country of the center (Jackson, 2008; Kinginger, 2013). Regardless of this discrepancy, a study conducted in Brazil (Corcoran, 2011) suggests that Adam's beliefs about the social recognition he would derive from a sojourn in the US or England are not entirely unfounded. All these beliefs show how some of the participants felt that their subject-matter knowledge and professional skills had to be legitimized by meeting some sort of NS standard in one way or another.

This evidence shows that similar feelings of insecurity and struggle that were manifested in the literature seemed evident in most of the participating teachers in the present study and their efforts to negotiate their identities, regardless of the means employed for this purpose. These feelings, however, were not only the product of the participants' self-doubts. Narrative and observation data proved that the participants' professional legitimacy had been questioned at some point by different actors and instances of discourse (e.g. the curriculum in the case of Betty, the media as shown in the analysis presented in Chapter 4, students as narrated in Adam's stories in Chapter 6, or employers in the case of Leiliani's narratives about her efforts to obtain various

certifications). In the previously cited study conducted by Sayer (2012), the focal teachers, all of whom of indigenous descent, also experienced similar problems, especially when trying to obtain their first teaching job. In that study, however, parts of the struggles were related to the participants' ethnic origin. For instance, one of the teachers was denied a job in a language institute because they allegedly hired NESTs only. However, it was later found that the job had been assigned to a national teacher. This candidate had the same credentials presented by Sayer's participant but was a white-mestiza. In that case, the opposition was obviously connected to dominant racist ideologies probably only enhanced by the NS fallacy.

By contrast, in the present study, the participants were not part of an indigenous group, as those teachers in Sayer's (2012) study. While it is true that the five teachers featured in this dissertation did not struggle so significantly to get their first job, they still faced credibility issues and resistance. Betty's difficult conversations with her students (Excerpt 56 and 57), Adam's bitter first year at Saint Mónica's School (Excerpt 43) or Leiliani's continuous job changes (Chapter 4) are only a few examples of such struggles. In some cases, the opposition experienced may have been connected to the fact that these teachers were perceived as nonnative English speakers (e.g. the skillet story in Excerpt 56). In other instances, however, the contradictions expressed in the curriculum, power struggles between teachers and students, or abusive employers (as in Adam's story of his first job in Miranda which was told in Chapter 4) could be considered as the main source of resistance.

As part of their professional legitimation, all the participants had pursued graduate studies; unfortunately, their experiences were not entirely free and satisfactory. Teachers' multiple identities as well as the available social affordances and constraints had mediated in their choice and successful (or unsuccessful) completion of the program. For example, in Sofia's case, financial concerns and her gender identity along with pressures from her employer had played a part in the decision to pursue a graduate degree (Excerpt 45). The limited availability of programs in town had also been a consideration for Leiliani who felt tied to Miranda because of her job

(Chapter 4). Finally, Daniela, Adam, and Betty had pondered other interests when choosing a graduate degree. Daniela admitted that she was mainly thinking about refreshing her English, not her teaching knowledge and skills (Excerpt 6). Adam was hoping he would develop non-teaching-related professional expertise, although he was vague about which type of expertise he had in mind (Excerpt 13). Betty's intentions were connected to her desires to develop a career as a translator (Chapter 4).

Therefore, even after completing an English teaching undergraduate program and having some teaching experience, the participants were ambivalent about their professional development. This ambivalence was also present at the time of the study, especially in their projections about their future. Such lack of focus may be connected to the participants' multiple identities and their differential levels of investment. As a mother, Daniela was only willing to focus on her career to the point that it did not interfere with her responsibilities as a mother (Excerpt 60). The same applied to Sofia for whom her marriage was the first priority (Excerpt 45).

To understand this ambivalence, it is necessary to remember that teachers' fluctuating investment in their future professional development is related to the financial and social benefits they may perceive in their profession (Richardson & Watt, 2005). After all, people's need to access cultural and material capital and some degree of power within the scope of their profession cannot be ignored (Norton, 2000; Simon-Maeda, 2004). Furthermore, human beings neither operate in isolation nor without purpose. On the contrary, they work towards premeditated goals and, in doing so, they mediate and are mediated by the relationships they establish with each other (Johnson, 2009). Therefore, the participants' different levels of investment in their careers should be understood in relation to the few available incentives and limited social support enjoyed by teachers in the Mexican context. This is especially true at a time when Mexican teachers find themselves caught in the center of social unrest, conflicting political interests, and different manifestations of violence.

In spite of this ambivalence and the bleak social and political scenario, the teachers who participated in this study are indeed committed educators and do their best to fulfill their responsibilities. In the last section of this chapter, I will discuss the participants' teaching practices and how they relate to the few available studies on the teaching of English in Mexico. In doing so, I will strive to discuss the participants' teaching styles and practices with the greatest of respect even if these practices do not always agree with my own views of teaching and learning.

8.5 The participants' professional identities as presented in their teaching practice

The influence of the apprenticeship of observation (Freeman & Johnson, 1998; Johnson, 2009; Lortie, 1975), or learning to teach from observing our teachers since childhood, was evident in the participants' teaching practices. The review of the literature presented in Chapter 4 strongly suggests that several of the practices described in this study have been in use in Mexico for decades (Basurto-Santos, 2010; Davies, 2007, 2009a; Sayer, Ban, & Quezada, 2012). The fact that the participating teachers followed these practices was not only to be expected, but justified to a certain extent by the prevalent sociocultural conditions, which are usually resistant to change.

Specifically, the teacher-centered approach often used by the participating instructors was closely related to the usual size of their classes, their students' heterogeneous levels of L2 proficiency, and, in some cases, certain classroom management issues. As mentioned in previous chapters, most of the classes I observed were of about 30 or more students with different levels of proficiency (see the descriptions of the teaching contexts provided in Chapter 4 and 7). This difference was more evident in the private schools where students would often have diverse learning experiences with English apart from those afforded by their schools. These differences demonstrate the persistence of what Sayers (2015) calls elite English bilingualism in spite of the new curriculum imposed by the Secretaría de Educación Pública (2011). In addition to the challenges imposed by heterogeneous proficiency levels, students in all the classes were usually talkative and playful. Understandably, students' attitudes made classroom management more difficult, especially when they were given the opportunity to work in small groups (e.g. Excerpt

58). Also, I observed different levels of involvement and willingness to focus on class work. For instance, Leiliani's students in her private high school were moderately interested and used the target language most of the time (see page 191-192). Daniela's students were noisier and would hardly use English unless they were not directly called by the teacher (see pp. 181 and 409-410). Surprisingly, Sofia's English majors were similarly reluctant to use English and kept a blasé attitude during the lesson (see page 136). Of course, as adults, they would normally be more manageable than Daniela's noisy children, but one would have expected more intense involvement in a class of English majors. On the contrary, in Leiliani's public school class of only nine children, the students would follow the teacher's instructions and keep engaged in classwork. They were also generally subdued and even fearful to speak. When they did, they would often offer one-word answers and experience challenges to remember lexis and pronunciation (see the summary of Leiliani's life history in Chapter 4). Unlike students, teachers would speak in English most of the time, especially Leiliani, Adam, and Sofia. Code switching was more common in Betty's and Daniela's classes.

In these contexts, teachers normally favored a teacher-fronted approach (see Chapter 7). Most lessons were organized following the presentation-practice-production model, but the production phase was sometimes skipped or reduced to pre-scripted roleplays. As mentioned before, with the exception of Sofia's class, teachers usually relied on the textbook to structure their lessons and implemented some additional activities when time and conditions allowed. In spite of these limitations, the participants' efforts to exert their agency and eradicate the old grammar-translation approach are commendable. Specifically, Adam's experimentations with plays, the hamburger fair, a save-the-environment project, and other similar tasks were examples of his efforts to deviate from the strict succession of book-exercises (see Excerpt 61). On the other hand, most of the materials were written by authors of the center and the dialects featured in them fell somewhere within the scope of the so-called standard varieties of American or British English (as shown in Chapter 7). Finally, three of the teachers were also expected to help students

prepare for the different Cambridge English examinations according to their age and alleged proficiency level.

Teachers were also under the pressures of the present accountability policies and an increasing teach-to-test emphasis. For example, Adam mentioned that the strict audits that he and his colleagues had to undergo each year to obtain the ISO certification that the school used as a proof of quality control were usually time-consuming and, in his opinion, of little benefit for his teaching (page 200). With similar control purposes, Leiliani would regularly work under the surveillance of a close-circuit television camera in her high school morning job (page 189). Simultaneously, as a public school teacher, she had to submit herself to the nation-wide teacher assessment that was imposed by SEP in the Fall of 2015 (see Chapter 4). In spite of this obsession for quality-control, as I mentioned before in this chapter, the participants did not receive the benefit of relevant collegial work or mentoring that would help them improve their practice. It seemed that all these policies were mostly concerned about sanctioning teachers' actions as the only responsible agents of education failure. None of these policies provided measures and resources to help teachers construct scientifically-sound and contextually-coherent teaching alternatives (Johnson, 2009).

In this scenario, without being exposed to recent research in their field, the participants would normally adhere to a vision of English as the property of the inner-circle countries (see Adam's opinions about a specific variety of British English in Excerpt 35). They usually strove for grammatical correctness and considered as their aim to help their students acquire a neutral standard variety. The one interlocutor they always had in mind was the monolingual, native English speaker born and raised in the inner-circle. Obviously, the concept of World-Englishes (Jenkins, 2006; Kachru, 1992; Kirkpatrick, 2007) and the possibility of teaching English as Lingua Franca (Dewey, 2012; Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011) were not part of their pedagogy. Other constructs such as multicompetence and intelligibility, which have been especially

empowering for NNESTs in other geographical and social locations, seemed totally unfamiliar to these teachers (Chacón-Corzo, 2006; Pavlenko, 2003).

With these conceptual limitations, one can only imagine the difficulties that these teachers would encounter to appropriately interpret the National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) launched by Secretaría de Educación Pública (2011). In that program, learning is supposed to be understood from a sociocultural perspective, which requires a definition of language as a cultural practice, dynamic, emergent and situated (Johnson, 2009; Lantolf, 2000; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006). This definition is clearly at odds with the practices described above. Therefore, in spite of being perfectly functional and competent L2 users, the teachers in this study will certainly face a great deal of pedagogical challenges in the near future. If this is the case of those teachers educated in university-based programs, the challenges that the broader and less privileged English teaching force will face are expected to be far greater.

8.6 Summary

In this chapter I have carried out a cross-case analysis to show how the five Mexican teachers negotiated their identities through narrative discourse. Although I do not claim that the participants are representative of the vast majority of Mexican teachers, the analysis on the data do show, in a situated and concrete manner, how some teachers in Mexico may be responding to their everyday professional challenges. The findings in this study illuminates how these teachers represented their career choices, negotiated professional legitimacy at the work place, and experienced teaching in the midst of conflicting social practices and interests.

In the stories about their career decision-making processes, the evidence suggested that negative beliefs about English teaching as a low-prestige profession, the participants' negative early experiences as L2 learners, and the NS fallacy were related to the participants' initial resistance to become English teachers. On the contrary, the combined effect of participants' beliefs about the value of English as cultural capital, their perceptions of being good second language learners, and their disappointment with other career options influenced participants to

change their minds. These motivations coincided with evidence identified by previous research on NNESTs. However, the triangulation of qualitative data allowed for the identification of the complex connections of these sociocultural factors along the participants college years and during their first years of teaching service. Therefore, the study suggests that the decision to become an English teacher is a process that involves time and the influence of socially constructed beliefs, social affordances, and constraints that often work in contradictory ways.

The findings also show that, in order to negotiate and consolidate a professional identity as legitimate language teachers, the participants engaged in various relationships within their corresponding CoPs. In these negotiations, the participating teachers faced resistance and, in return, contested opposing forces. These struggles were connected to these individual teachers' need to access power. A major part of the negotiations, as seen through the teachers' narratives and through my own observations, took place at the participants' workplace. In these processes, students, organizational structures, lack of appropriate teacher development programs, and the influence of peers or lack thereof played an important role. Additionally, the analysis of teachers' discourse showed how binary oppositions were used by the participants to index membership within specific real or imagined CoP. The findings also show that, beyond discursive constructions, the participating teachers' isolation was also evident in the social practices and material conditions at the workplace. These social forces, as my analysis indicates, impose challenges on the development of collegiality and teachers' continuous professional development.

The teachers' claims to professional legitimacy emerged as ambivalent and complex. On the one side, teachers presented themselves as competent professionals sanctioned by experience and official credentials. On the other hand, in their discourse and classroom interactions, the teachers manifested insecurities about their professional expertise. Some strategies used to counterbalance these insecurities were the use of international certifications or planning future sojourns in an English-speaking country to claim legitimacy. These strategies seemed to be connected to language ideologies related to the NS fallacy. Apart from this influence, the

teachers' self-doubts were enhanced by different actors and instances of discourse such as the curriculum, the media, students, colleagues, or employers. The findings also suggest that, in some cases, social class differences between teachers and students may play a role in making English teachers' legitimation even more problematic than it already is.

The teachers' continuous development through graduate programs was also represented by the teachers in their narratives as not entirely satisfactory. The findings suggest that the participants' multiple identities and the available social affordances seem to have mediated their choices. Additionally, participants' narratives showed that they had been ambivalent about their teaching careers since they had chosen their undergraduate program. This ambivalence was also manifested in their choice of graduate program and in their projections about the future. The teachers' actions about their professional development, which seem to be fraught with ambivalence, constitute one of the most unexpected findings in this study. This observation was possible thanks to the methodology adopted which allowed for the comparison of past, present, and projected scenarios of the participants' career development.

Classroom observations additionally revealed that the apprenticeship of observation had a powerful effect on the participants' teaching practices. This influence often ran against the progressive tenets of the National English Basic Education Program (NEPBE). Other important factors at play such as the current accountability policies and the increasing teach-to-test approach also negatively impacted the participants' teaching practices. These neoliberal trends and their impact on teachers' professional development and students' learning outcomes will be discussed in more detail in the last chapter of this dissertation.

CHAPTER XIX

CONCLUSIONS

9.1 A summary of the study

In the present study, the use of narrative research allowed me to focus on how five Mexican multicompetent teachers of English represented their professional life-histories and their identity negotiation through different career stages. The comparison of teachers' written and oral narratives uncovered contradictions that pointed to how teachers still struggle to make sense of their professional choices even after they have passed their novice years. These contradictions were analyzed through a close look at the narrative text. This interpretative task was enhanced by bringing additional information into the analysis. Onsite observations and a historical review of the teaching of English in Mexico added broader narrative layers and contributed to understand teachers' personal accounts in time and social context.

Specifically, the study set to explore the participants' professional identity negotiations along their careers as represented in their narratives, how these teachers positioned themselves with respect to the NS fallacy and the ownership of English, and how the teachers' identities impacted their teaching practices, as well as the agency they exerted in these practices. The analysis revealed instances of how discourse, social practices, power issues, and teachers' agency shaped identity negotiations in texts (the participants' written and oral narratives) and actions in the classroom.

The narrative analysis conducted in this study allowed me to observe that various sociocultural pressures cast doubts on in-service teachers' rights to legitimately claim their professional identities. These struggles were evident at different moments narrated in the teachers' professional histories, in their interactions with their students, and in the teachers' plans for future professional development or lack thereof. Therefore, this study uncovered how the participating teachers' identities continued being negotiated and renegotiated after several years of professional practice. Such negotiations were often contested and difficult as institutional structures, dominant discourses, and actors such as employers, students, and colleagues at times offered support, but also resisted the participants' positioning as competent second language professionals.

With respect to the research question regarding the impact of sociocultural forces on the participating teachers' identity negotiation, the evidence presented in Chapter 4 showed that the teachers' narratives confirmed the evidence found in the literature and the analysis of documents (e.g. newspapers, a documentary, and the national English curriculum, among others). I found that the teachers' perceptions reflected the views identified in the document analysis in at least four main points:

- A view of the learning of English in Mexico as marked by inequitable conditions of access to effective instructions.
- An unscaffolded process of career decision-making during the first stages of English teachers' education.
- A representation of English teaching as a challenging profession as a consequence of a lack of economic and social affordances.
- An imprecise projection of future professional development probably due to a lack of appropriate working conditions and benefits (See figures 12 and 13 in Chapter 4).

Additionally, the discourse analysis of the pre- and in-service episodes presented in Chapters 5 and 6 contributed with detailed instances in which the participating teachers performed their professional identities in their narratives. In these stories, power relations, social practices, and discourse seemed to have an important role. For instance, Adam narrated his teaching experiences at Saint Monica's School as a negotiation of his claimed identity of a "demanding" but "friendly" teacher with students that were perceived as difficult. In Sofía's case, she performed an identity as an independent problem solver when her school did not offer appropriate mentorship during her first teaching job. Also, Leiliani performed the identity of a committed professional in stark contrast with her colleagues, who were presented in her stories as indifferent to their own needs of professional development. This last example also showed how dominant local discourses, such as the negative perceptions about the teaching profession promoted by the media, became a part of Leiliani's narratives as she tried to disassociate herself from those negative notions.

With respect to the NS fallacy, the analysis demonstrated that this language ideology was present in different episodes of the teachers' pre- and in-service narratives. In the case of the pre-service stories, teachers reported having experienced doubts about their suitability for the profession when they could not understand the speech of their native English-speaking instructors in their teacher education program. By contrast, when comparing these initial experiences with their present teaching practice, some of the teachers questioned the NS fallacy. Specifically, when narrating their experience with a few native English-speaking colleagues, some of the participating teachers explained that they considered themselves as well-qualified for their profession as opposed to some NESTs without appropriate teaching education. However, the participants did not challenge the NS ideal that confers the ownership of English to the speakers of the inner-circle countries. In their narratives and in their teaching, the participants referred to these speakers of English as their model and their standard to measure their own L2 proficiency.

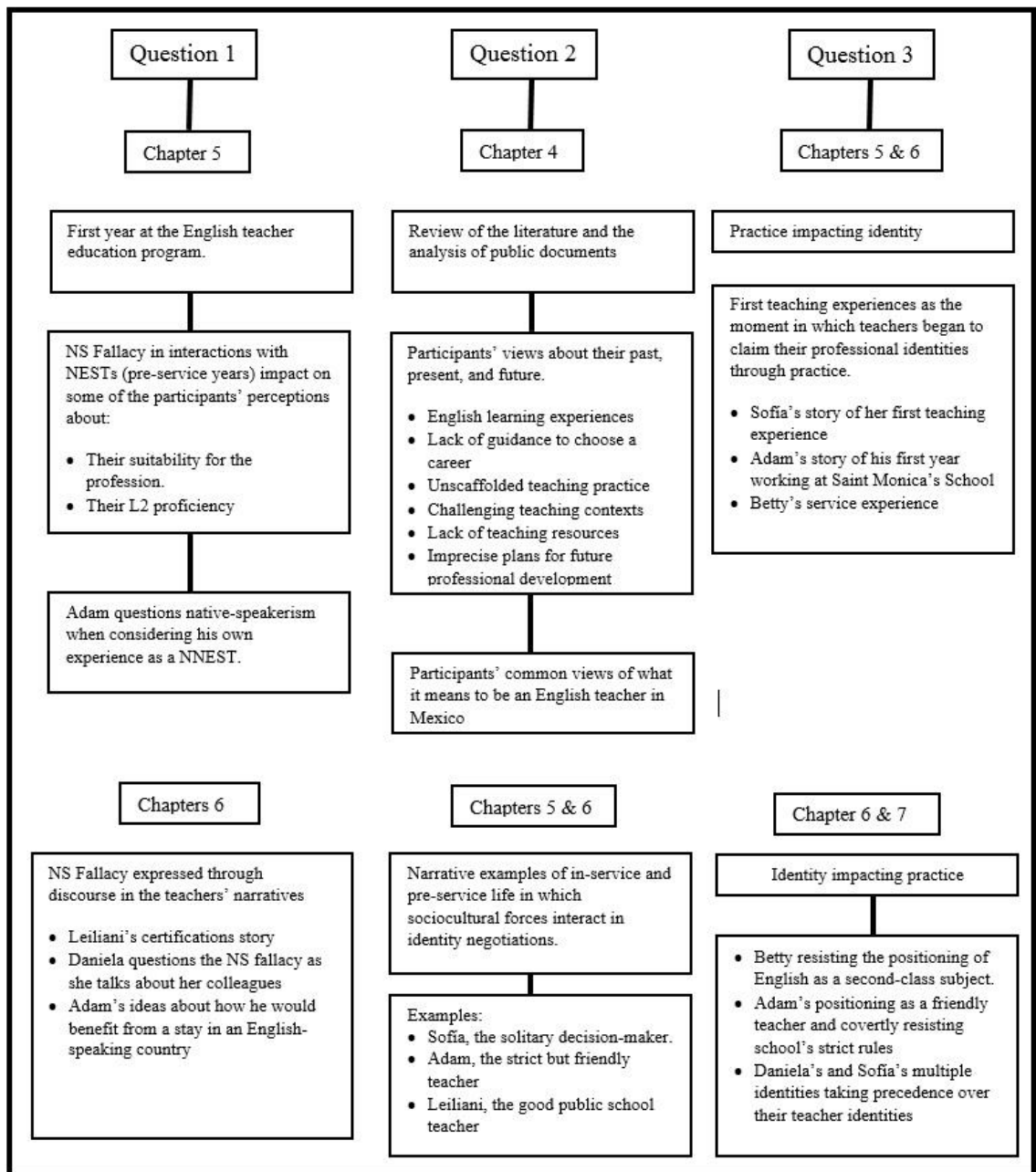
Finally, regarding the question about the impact of identity on the participants' teaching practice, the analysis showed that identity and teaching practice were interrelated. On the one hand, some of the narratives suggested that teaching practice had impacted on the teachers' identity negotiations. For instance, the narratives of the first teaching experiences were often presented by the participants as the moment in which they had finally felt entitled to consider themselves as true English teachers (see Sofia's, Betty's, and Adam's stories in Excerpts 38, 42, and 44 respectively). On the other hand, teachers' perception of their multiple identities impacted on their teaching practice. These relations became evident in the participants' actions and in their verbal interactions with their students during the classroom observations. In some cases, teachers resisted how institutional structures or actors such as students, colleagues, or employers perceive the English teaching profession. In other words, teachers resisted undesired assigned identities that were in conflict with their claimed professional identities and other gendered identities such as mother or wife. This resistance was evident in the following instances:

- Betty's resistance to the perception of English as a second-rate type of school subject.
- Adam's resistance to the school rules that contradicted his desires to position himself as a friendly teacher.
- Daniela's and Sofia's resistance to allow their jobs to take precedence over their gender identities.

The findings summarized above are graphically represented in Figure 17 which shows how the evidence responds to the research questions. These findings have at least three implications for the study of teachers' identities and the area of English teacher professional development in Mexico and other countries of the periphery.

Figure 17. Research questions connected to the findings in this study

1. Do the participants discursively position themselves with respect to the NS fallacy and the ownership of English? If so, how? If not, why not?
2. Have sociocultural forces such as power, social practices, and discourse interacted in the negotiation of the participants' professional identities along their careers? If so, how? If not, why not?
3. Does identity impact the participants' teaching practices and to what extent they are able to exert agency in these practices? If so, why? If not, why not?



9.2 Implications

9.2.1 Supporting teachers' sense of legitimacy at the workplace and through locally informed and globally aware teacher education programs.

The first implication is that multicompetent EFL teachers in Mexico and other similar contexts may be in need of professional development programs to assist teachers in their struggles to legitimize their professional identities. These programs should go beyond the influence of graduate education programs and certifications. Since the early 1990s, TESOL research has turned towards the study of teachers' identities to expand our understanding of instructed second language acquisition (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, & Johnson, 2005). Some studies have suggested that NNESTs face greater challenges in developing a sense of professional legitimacy due to the negative perceptions associated to their condition of second language users (Amin, 1997; Ban, 2006; Liu, 1999; Sayer, 2012). The present study has contributed with new evidence that shows how a group of Mexican teachers faced these challenges without receiving much assistance from their professional environment. On their own, the participants tried different options of professional development to keep themselves updated and validate their professional identity (e.g. graduate programs, high stakes examinations, summer courses). In spite of these experiences, the analysis showed that teachers still struggled to negotiate their professional identities and gain power at the workplace. Diverse discursive and social practices that do not promote teachers' peer-to-peer support worked against the affirmation of teachers' legitimacy and reinforced teachers' isolation. In light of the evidence provided by previous studies (Petron, 2003, Sayer, 2012) and findings in the present dissertation, I would argue that legitimacy struggles are very likely a common challenge faced by national English teachers in different regions of Mexico. Part of these struggles are related to the NS fallacy that seems to be still strong in Mexico. However, other factors such as ethnicity, social class, and gender identities seem to contribute to making these challenges even greater.

The study has thus uncovered the inadequacies in the current model of offering teacher development based on graduate programs and certifications in sustaining English teachers' sense of legitimacy. An approach to English teacher development that operates at the workplace would perhaps be more efficient to assist teachers along their professional lives. Although a number of workplace-based alternatives have been previously proposed in the center (Johnson, 2009), countries in the periphery such as Mexico need to develop their own programs. The present study has revealed a need to generate locally informed and globally aware teacher development programs in every school. These programs need to acknowledge teachers' needs and experiences instead of imposing new ways of being and acting. Such programs should not overlook the challenges faced by national English teachers because of their multiple identities and how they interact with teachers' assigned identities as NNESTs. More research is required to guide and support the development of these programs.

9.2.2 Developing student-teachers' proficiency and reaffirming their identities as multicompetent speakers through teacher education programs.

The second implication that is driven by the findings in this study is the need to help Mexican English teachers to construct a professional identity that considers their multicompetent linguistic backgrounds as a professional asset and not as inferior to the linguistic abilities of their native English speaking counterparts. With respect to the participants' identities as English experts, the evidence suggested that teachers' efforts to claim professional legitimacy were at odds with some of their own beliefs. The participating teachers' perceptions about English, its varieties, and its role as cultural capital were greatly influenced by dominant ideologies. These perceptions were evident in the participants' discourse, which contained views that privileged the so-called standard English variations as the only valid target language. By the same token, the teachers struggled with the notion of how close to the NS ideal their own English proficiency should be. Although they clearly knew by first-hand experience that a native-like proficiency was very difficult to achieve in their learning environment, they still held it as the ideal goal. These

notions caused a great deal of dissonance and contradiction, as seen in the teachers' discourse, and influenced their selection of the material used in their classes. At the same time, these teachers assumed that English was a necessary cultural asset that all their students needed to make their education complete. However, Betty, Daniela, and Leiliani's cases showed instances of learning environments where English was positioned as a second-class type of school subject. This positioning was reinforced by a limited access to resources and unfavorable curricular conditions that did not support English learning. The teachers in this study were aware of these contradicting circumstances, but they never problematized how these contextual conditions may have reserved access to English for only an elite minority. The role that teachers may play in this stratified access was not questioned by these teachers either.

These unproblematized notions point to the need to revise English teacher education in Mexico with a critical lens. In order to demystify the ideologies about English that have been socially constructed, some researchers have argued that teachers may benefit from being exposed to theories about World Englishes, English as Lingua Franca (ELF), and Multicompetence (Chacón-Corzo & Pérez, 2009; Golombek & Jordan, 2005). Consequently, the opportunity to uncover ideologies such as those embedded in the NS fallacy may help local teachers in Mexico define their identities with more realistic parameters and affirm themselves as legitimate second language users and teachers. Up to the point of this dissertation study, only one study conducted in Latin-America (Venezuela) discusses the effects of such a program in the identity definition of student-teachers (Chacón-Corzo & Pérez, 2009). Mexican teacher educators and curriculum developers should perhaps learn from this experience. Moreover, since the short-term results of this critical approach were positive, more research and curriculum development efforts should be organized to observe and assess long-term effects. As mentioned before, teacher development programs should not be limited to undergraduate/graduate teacher education. Research should address innovation in professional development of in-service teachers at different stages of their

career. Based on the findings of this study, the inclusion of a critical approach as part of this innovation needs to be researched and assessed in Mexico.

The affirmation of teachers' identities as multicompetent users does not imply that teacher education programs should reduce their efforts to help student-teachers develop their L2 proficiency. In general, English teaching programs in Mexico have to deal with the fact that most first-year students in all disciplines, TESOL programs included, have a low L2 proficiency level (Davies, 2009a). Three of the stories presented in this dissertation are an example of this phenomenon and add to the existing evidence provided by previous studies (Ban, 2006; Petron, 2003; Sayer, 2012). Given this context, most Mexican student-teachers need to work intensively to achieve higher proficiency levels during their initial teacher education. This study, however, suggests that Mexican student-teachers' L2 instruction should be planned and implemented in a nuanced and context-sensitive manner. All efforts should be aligned with our current knowledge of adult second language acquisition and the development of the very diverse English varieties in the world. First of all, student-teachers need to know what to expect of their own L2 acquisition processes and how their two or more languages will inevitably interact with each other during their life-time (Cook, 2005; Pavlenko & Jarvis, 2002; Jarvis & Pavlenko, 2009). Second, student-teachers could benefit from knowing more about the role of English as Lingua Franca (Jenkins, Cogo, & Dewey, 2011) to understand the skills their students may need in today's global world. This knowledge should also guide policy makers to define the L2 proficiency standards that Mexican teachers need to achieve at a personal level and strive for when teaching.

9.2.3 Raising awareness about the importance of collaborating with peers in finding pedagogical solutions for everyday teaching challenges.

A third and final implication derived from the findings is the need to develop professional networks that may provide pertinent and relevant pedagogical support for in-service English teachers. The need of teachers to engage in collaborative work has been partially addressed by the implementation of mandatory meetings in all the basic education system in Mexico (Secretaría de

Educación Pública, 2008; 2011a). However, in the present study, the analysis of the findings showed that the participants' professional lives were still very isolated and unscaffolded. A tendency to represent teachers' reality through dichotomies discursively represented and emphasized this isolation. A career without peer support may not only be harsher but also reduces teachers' possibilities to develop and learn from each other. Therefore, this study reveals how the present sociocultural conditions may be obstructing the development of true collaborative work among teachers. Very few improvements in the dynamic of teachers' interactions with peers can be expected if these conditions are not addressed and changed.

The findings suggest that the current policies that require monthly teachers meetings are but mere bureaucratic acts without significant pedagogical impact (e.g. see how Daniela and Leiliani present their relationships with their colleagues in Excerpts 54 and 53). To achieve more substantial outcomes, teachers' awareness needs to be raised in the first place. Teachers need to be convinced about the benefits of implementing collaborative work and positive mentorship programs in order to change the ways in which they face or resist engaging in collaborative projects to improve their teaching. Also, appropriate leadership needs to be developed to make peer mentorship possible. Part of this change can begin at teacher education programs, but should also be continued at different stages of teachers' professional development. In Mexico, such programs, when applied in the very rare teacher staffs that include NESTs, should consider ways to help teachers integrate a team in which NNESTs and NESTs can learn from and support each other. Cross-cultural barriers and old prejudices should be directly addressed in these cases to increase the likelihood of success in this sort of program (Lou, 2010).

Of course, teachers' awareness about the importance of collaborative work does not automatically remove other adverse contextual conditions that obstruct the possibility of working with colleagues to face teaching challenges. However, if teachers are convinced of their need to work collaboratively, it is likely they will apply their agency to address those obstacles that stand in the way. Moreover, at the present moment, when Mexican teachers need to combat unwanted

assigned identities, defend their diminished labor rights (as discussed in Chapter 4), and contest unreasonable accountability measures a sense of community is greatly needed. Therefore, the creation of effective and strong professional networks should be one of the main objectives of today's teachers' development in Mexico and in any other country facing similar challenges. These considerations lead now into how this study may be significant for the field of second language teaching.

9.2 Significance of the study

In this study I have analyzed Mexican teachers' identities and teaching practices considering the historical and political contexts in which these social phenomena come into being, as suggested as important by other researchers (Blommaert, 2010; Johnson, 2009; Pavlenko, 2007). This approach is necessary and relevant because teachers' work and students' learning outcomes are influenced by current global and local policies that prescribe and assess teaching actions. As Flores (2013) has rightly pointed out, the present neoliberal policies have turned TESOL into a profitable industry. The economic interests of this industry along with sociopolitical ideologies historically tied to English (Phillipson, 1992) have undoubtedly been influential in the consolidation of the current place English has in global educational policies. Therefore, it is not accidental that Latin American countries have been developing English-centered linguistic policies in the past two decades (Sayer, 2015). As part of this trend, Mexican policy makers made changes on the national curriculum of basic education to allegedly increase the number of English speakers in the country. Unfortunately, the historical and empirical analyses here presented revealed that the approach chosen to implement these changes faces a number of serious challenges.

First of all, this study has contributed evidence to show that serious deficiencies, such as the lack of teaching materials (e.g. in Leiliani's public school), the absence of appropriate support for teachers' continuous development (e.g. Sofia's struggles to finance her graduate studies), and the limited number of jobs that offer appropriate work conditions (e.g. most of the participants

needed a second job to make ends meet), may challenge the implementation of the new English curriculum for basic education. While these problems are especially true in public education, as shown in Leiliani's life history, the same deficiencies are not entirely absent in private institutions as Daniela's and Sofia's cases have revealed. In sum, these findings suggest that new curriculum that includes English as a mandatory subject for all the basic education system is not based on a realistic estimation of the available material and human resources. Moreover, previous studies have also concurred with this appraisal of the situation (Ramírez-Romero, Pamplón-Irigoyen, & Cota-Grijalva, 2012; Ramírez-Romero, Sayer, & Pamplón-Irigoyen, 2014; Sayer, 2015). The analysis presented in this dissertation is unique because it compared the teaching practices of five Mexican teachers living in different regions of the country and working at different educational levels. In spite of the participants' diverse context, the lack of resources mentioned above seemed to be a constant problem, even in wealthy private schools such as Adam's. This problem is particularly alarming when considering that the full implementation of the Program Nacional de Inglés en Educación Básica (National English Program for Basic Education, NEPBE) should be operating by 2018. The present study thus uncovers a problem that needs to be addressed to support the implementation of NEPBE.

Second, this study showed that the participants were mostly unaware of the role of ELF as their teaching practices suggest, since these practices were mostly focused on textbooks that only featured inner-circle English varieties. Consequently, the teachers would usually try to negotiate their identities and implement their teaching on the basis of NS proficiency standards. This focus led to contradictions, dissatisfaction, and an approach to teaching that may limit students' possibilities to function well in international encounters. Although this study focused only on five cases which may not be representative of all the teachers in Mexico, the results raise concerns nonetheless since they reflect practices that may be common in similar contexts. Teachers' lack of awareness about the role of ELF uncovers a gap in their professional knowledge that should be considered to guide future actions in teacher education in Mexico.

Also, this need challenges applied linguists to work more intently on concrete pedagogical applications of the concepts of ELF and World Englishes that may be relevant in contexts such as those described in this dissertation.

As a third contribution, this study has revealed an example of how neoliberal governments such as the present Mexican administration use different strategies to persuade the public opinion that they need to learn English and satisfy NS standards. The questionable work of Mexicanos Primero (Székely, O'Donoghue, & Pérez, 2015), analysed in Chapter 4, and their mediatic campaign against English teachers is only an example of how discourse is being used to reinforce these ideologies and justify current policies. The evidence displayed in this study is significant because it exposes the dangers of these policies and warns against their most likely consequences: The creation of a poorly-staged simulation that might only work to reduce the political pressure from international organizations (e.g. OECD and UNESCO) while boosting TESOL industry in Mexico. In this context, researchers should continue to develop a socially-concerned research agenda to problematize these contradictions and offer alternatives. Also, the study is important because it showed how the current mediatic campaign used to disparage teachers as an incompetent and corrupt group seems to have impacted on teachers' representations of their work and their professional identity. For instance, the fact that Leiliani used part of her narratives to disassociate herself from the "bad teacher" stereotype shows how these socially constructed notions had become part of her identity negotiations. As mentioned before, the use of this sort of binary oppositions in discourse may eventually generate antagonistic identities and negatively affect teachers' collaborative work. Therefore, the influence of this negative discourse about teachers should also be problematized and properly addressed to find more positive ways to encourage teachers to develop professionally and support each other in manners that positively impact students' learning.

At a methodological level, this study is relevant because it demonstrates the possibilities of narrative research as a useful tool to holistically analyze individuals' discursive forms to

represent their reality, contrary to the view that focuses only on a cross-sectional analysis of data. People tend to represent their past and present experiences through narratives as well as their projections in ways that reveal how they make sense of their social world across time. An instance of this tendency was shown in Sofia's first teaching experience story (Chapter 5), where a teaching principle in which she believes (the value of repetition) came to the fore in her narrative. Additionally, the study has shown that analyzing these representations becomes more relevant when comparing people's narrative representations with observational data and historical evidence. For example, Betty's repetitive comments about her students' unenthusiastic attitudes towards English were best understood when compared to her interactions with her students (see Betty's small stories in Chapter 7). Furthermore, this study has demonstrated that the existing intertextual interaction between teachers' life-histories, teachers' short storytelling in the classroom, and themes and templates provided by master narratives are useful to uncover teachers' ways to negotiate their professional identities.

Additionally, the combination of thematic and discursive analysis used in this research design has enabled observations at a deeper and broader level. By looking at common themes across cases, I have been able to observe how the five participants' professional trajectories instantiate similar ways to negotiate identity. For instance, realizing that the use of binary oppositions was recurrent in the participants' discourse as shown in Chapters 6 and 7 would not have been possible without analyzing the recurrence of common themes across cases. At the same time, the in-depth look into each case and the positional analysis of the participants' narrative discourse has enabled the emergence of distinctive strategies to index identity. As an example of this, Adam's perception of himself as a friendly teacher was uncovered by my analysis after I compared several instances of the same case in which the participant recurrently positioned himself as his students' friends.

By the same token, detailed narrative analysis has unveiled teachers' beliefs that lay beneath their discursive positioning in different media (e.g. interviews, naturally occurring

conversations, autobiographies, and journals). For instance, by analyzing the participating teachers' narratives about their decisions to study for an undergraduate degree in English, I could identify their tendency to perceive English as a cultural asset, which suggested the presence of a common belief among the participants. Also, by triangulating several renditions of teachers' storytelling in interviews, artifacts, and naturally occurring interactions, the findings are rendered more credible. For instance, Adam's preference for a particular variety of English (the Received Pronunciation) was more evident when I compared his stories with his teaching practice and the materials he used in class. In a similar way, the contextual descriptions of the participants' workplace and the observed teaching practices have increased the possibilities to make the findings transferable to similar contexts. For example, to understand Betty's students lack of interest in English it was necessary to describe the place that English has in the curriculum in Betty's context. When a Mexican colleague who works in a public university in a different state read the draft of Betty's case at my request, he expressed that Betty's stories resonated with parts of his own experience as foreign language instructor.

Also, the triangulation of data and the comparisons between cases allowed me to alternatively switch my position during the analysis, sometimes being an empathetic observer and others functioning as a questioning skeptic. Specifically, the fact that the teachers' experiences resonated with my own, since they are simultaneously my colleagues and my fellow-country people, helped me empathize with their situations, gaining an insider's view. For example, when Daniela talked about her strategies to reduce her grading time, I could understand her reasons were genuine even though they would not be generally considered as an acceptable practice. On the other hand, when dealing with the narratives, I kept in mind that these personal accounts were not necessarily factual information. Therefore, in my interpretations I considered that certain details in the stories were mostly expressions of how teachers made sense of their experience, which is what I was looking for in the first place. For example, when Sofía told me that her theory about the importance of using repetition had first emerged from her first teaching

experience, in my analysis I concluded that she was making sense of the use of repetition through her narrative of one particular teaching practice. This interpretation was what I considered as the most plausible conclusion obtained from that interview excerpt, as opposed to assuming that Sofia actually first learned about the use of repetition in that moment of her life. In sum, moving among types of data sources and cases kept me switching perspective and increased my opportunities to balance the analysis.

Finally, combining the analyses of big and small stories allowed me to compare teachers' positioning in the context of interviews and autobiographies with the positions that the teachers took while teaching and talking to their students. Going back and forth between these two types of storytelling provided a holistic view of teachers' efforts to present themselves as coherent individuals and the contradictions also implied in certain instances of their positioning. For instance, Betty's defense of the position of English as an important subject in an interaction with one of her students served as linguistic evidence of a theme that was also present in Betty's interviews. On the other hand, Daniela's interest in keeping her students quiet and attentive during one of her lessons in the small story told in Excerpt 58 could have made her look as excessively rigid and concerned with complying with her school's regulations. However, considering the big story provided by her journal entries and my observations in several of her classes, I could understand that, while Daniela was usually careful to comply with institutional rules, she was also covertly opposing other aspects of those rules. This contradiction was important to uncover how Daniela's identity as a mother impacted on her teaching practice. The combination of perspectives through big and small stories thus provided a richer and more in-depth picture of the participants' perceived realities. All these advantages considered, the study has also faced methodological and material limitations that I acknowledge in the following section.

9.3 Limitations and future research

In this research, I made direct observations on teachers' elicited and naturally occurring narratives. Despite the advantages implied in this approach, the conditions in which the data were collected imposed certain limitations. In the first place, the collection of data from geographically distant locations limited the time spent on each site. For this reason, the participants and their students may not have had enough time to get used to my presence. The novelty of having an outsider observing their actions could have affected the participants' behavior. Therefore, the findings should be considered as instances of the participants' interactions with students at a very guarded and controlled level. It is likely that in less guarded contexts, the teachers could have reacted more or less emotionally to students' behavior and verbal responses. To minimize this disadvantage, the data were triangulated with teachers' journals and member-check interviews; however, the reserves still stand since my time in the participants' context was limited. Future studies that wish to tap into teachers' narrative discourse in classroom interactions should make provisions to focus on the same classroom for extended periods of time. Specifically, they should include observations in the classroom, teachers' lounge, and teachers' meetings during several weeks or months, if possible. Such studies could focus on the use of teachers' narratives with different instructional purposes and across the teaching of diverse language contents.

Secondly, it should be remembered that the data provided a close-up on teachers' perspectives and the researchers' accounts of classroom interactions. Although students' reactions towards teachers' discourse were also part of the analysis, the design did not include a more substantial look at students' perspectives. In fact, studies that include a comparison between teachers' identity positioning in the classroom and students' perceptions of this positioning are yet to be attempted. The implementation of such a study would be equally relevant for TESOL and discourse studies.

As a third consideration, it should be acknowledged that this study only centered on individuals' identity performances as they narratively engaged with the researcher and their

students. In order to expand our comprehension of English teachers' identity negotiation, more studies addressing how these identities are shaped as individuals interact with peers need to be attempted. This type of research project should focus on teacher-to-teacher interactions at different stages of educators' careers and in different contexts. Direct observations of naturally-occurring interactions during meetings and other collegial activities could serve this purpose. Additionally, such data would be useful to document the implementation of current educational reforms in different contexts. In the case of Mexico, this research could shed light on how teachers are actually carrying out the monthly meetings imposed by SEP in public and private schools. These data could also be applied to assess the implementation and create locally-appropriate teacher development programs at the workplace. In sum, more research on the role of discourse interaction in instances of teachers' collaborative work is required, not only to analyze teachers' identities, but also to inform teacher development programs.

An additional limitation of this study derives from the very nature of social research. During this study I have kept in mind that the material a social researcher deals with is but a mere representation of individuals' experiences (Riessman, 1993). Therefore, the claims made in this study are merely tentative interpretations of texts created by the participants. These texts do not represent the objective reality. They are only the participants' telling of their experience as they attempted to remember it. Even during the onsite observations, when I witnessed first-hand teacher-student talk, the transcriptions generated from these interactions are again a representation. Although these texts were composed with the greatest rigor possible, they are not absolutely free from interpretative efforts to transfer audio recordings into writing. These transcriptions were enhanced by my field notes to add details about the body language and other behaviors displayed at the time. Nevertheless, once again, this effort adds one more layer to the interpretation process and distances the final narrative from the objective reality. In order to reduce the multiple layers of representation evident in this research, future studies on teachers' identity could perhaps incorporate video recording whenever the conditions allow it. Sharing the

data thus obtained by electronic means would also enhance future studies' credibility and transferability.

As a final implication consideration for future research, it should be noted that the findings in this study uncovered an increasing tendency to implement accountability policies that seemed to negatively impact teachers' work. Scholars have been calling for caution regarding how such policies may be working against the best interest of students' learning and may be discouraging teachers from staying in the profession (Assaf, 2008; Johnson, 2009; Zhao, 2008). The evidence presented in this study showed how an excessive emphasis on accountability is now leading to all sorts of cumbersome practices that have little to do with real teaching and learning. Following such trends, Adam and his colleagues had to undergo time-consuming audits that only increased their paper work without much impact on their teaching practice. Similarly, Leiliani was burdened with surveillance measures that did not provide healthy feedback to improve her teaching (see Chapter 4). These experiences are just an example of the different ways in which teachers may be perceiving and enacting accountability policies. Given the trends uncovered through the findings in this study, more research to document these processes may be necessary. Furthermore, researchers need to provide quantitative and qualitative evidence and properly disseminate their findings if teacher unions and teacher educators are ever to persuade authorities to revise their policies.

In Mexico, basic and high secondary education teachers have been resisting accountability measures that they perceive as opaque and unilateral (Olivares-Alonso, 2015, December 14). This resistance has degenerated into violent encounters between the dissident wing of the teacher union and the government (Cano, 2015, November 29; Gómez, 2015, November 22; Ímaz-Gispert, 2015, December 8). In this context, it is possible that English teachers will soon be the target of additional controls that will require them to certify their L2 proficiency by means of high-stakes tests. Some advances have already been made towards that goal in the last five years. For instance, in 2011 SEP created the *Certificación Nacional de Nivel*

de Idioma (National Certification of Language Level, CENNI by its acronym in Spanish), which provides the organizational structure to certify untrained in-service teachers on the basis of their experience and L2 proficiency (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011d). In this system, proficiency standards are satisfied by submitting results of international examinations such as IELTS, TOEFL, or Cambridge. Additionally, since 2012, SEP has been collaborating with ELTeach²² to provide online courses to enhance teachers' English use in the classroom (Freeman, Katz, García-Gomez, & Burns, 2015; Freeman, Katz, Le Dréan, Burns, & Hauck, 2012). Nowadays, the project is still in its pilot phase, but it may reach national coverage in the near future.

Although these measures seem to be addressing highly desirable goals, there are important nuances to consider that should temper the implementation of these policies. In the first place, it is still unclear how teachers will be able to afford these high-stakes tests to prove their proficiency level. While some of the teachers in this study have paid for high stake examinations from their own pocket, this was possible because they are urban teachers with relatively well-paid positions. Teachers across the country, and particularly in rural areas, would certainly face greater financial struggles to be certified by such means. Secondly, the five teaching histories outlined in this study showed how English teachers across the country and at different educational levels deal with very distinct contexts. Not only do the participating instructors teach diverse student populations with unequally distributed resources to support their students' learning, but they also have a different array of personal learning experiences. For instance, teachers who acquired English in a transnational experience such as Sofia and teachers who learned English in a classroom will inevitably display different linguistic competence. In consequence, a different approach may be needed to help this diverse teacher population maintain or improve their proficiency.

²² An online professional assessment and certification program for English teachers that is managed by ETS, National Geographic, and Cengage Learning.

Additionally, since the standards chosen by Secretaría de Educación Pública (2011b) are based on native-like proficiency (CEFR), it is still questionable whether the certification process will justly represent the abilities of multicompetent teachers. Therefore, a need to look at the implementation of these policies and their effects on teachers' working conditions and identities arises as a pending issue to be considered in the future.

9.3 Final remarks

As the present work was largely driven by narratives, it is just befitting to finish it with a brief reflection on the power that narratives may bring to the interpretative work that social researchers do. In a thought-provoking film named *Adaptation*. (period included in the original title), Charlie Kauffman, the screenwriter, narrates his own struggles to adapt a nonfictional book into a film. Using a multilayered narrative, Kauffman does not only write himself into his own story, but he also adds the voices of an imaginary twin brother and of other individuals involved in the crafting of the story (e.g. the author of the original book, and the person whose work about a rare species of orchid was reported in the book). As the plot thickens, the audience begins to wonder where Kauffman's voice ends and where the other voices begin, especially when the action ends up by entangling all these characters in a dramatic conclusion.

Unlike Kauffman, in the past, social researchers composed their research texts keeping simplicity and straightforwardness as an overarching principle, for the sake of objectivity. While order and clarity may be, in essence, still desirable, simplicity of storylines does not always appropriately reflect the complexity of subject, object, and text realities. In writing this dissertation, I hoped that my narrative could bring a little of this complexity into the final text. If at some point the readers felt that my voice and those of the participating teachers and other actors involved were intricately woven in the same narrative fabric; then, at least part of my purpose was achieved.

Coming back to my experience in the main plaza of Serrana, which I used to open this dissertation, I now can conclude, in retrospect, that those teachers' identities that are being

negotiated in such contexts are simultaneously the result of local and global forces. On the one side, global accountability policies are now changing the rules of the game for teachers' jobs and professional practices. At the local level, teachers may choose to contest, negotiate, or adapt to the new conditions and ideologies. The teachers who participated in the march that morning in Serrana were doing what they could to resist those changes that they found unjust and disruptive. As I see myself, standing on the sidewalk and becoming a character of my own story, I keep wondering what researchers like me can do to add a line to this ongoing story.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Interview guides

General guide for interview 1

The interview will have two parts. The first one will be unstructured. Initially, teachers will refer back to the professional autobiography that they were requested to write prior to the interview.

Preface:

People may become educators following very different paths. I am interested in finding out the very unique details of your own journey on becoming an English teacher. In doing this, I regard you as the expert of the topic. I am mostly interested in learning from you. So, I would like you to keep that in mind during this interview.

Question 1:

Can you please go over the story that you wrote for me and highlight any aspect that you believe was relevant in your decision of becoming an English teacher?

In the second part of the interview, I will use the following guide (Depending on the participant's response to the first question, I will decide whether to use all or only some of the prompts below):

2. In your story, I perceived that the main event that led you to enter an English program in the first place was _____. Can you elaborate more on the reasons that made you believe that this course of study could be interesting/rewarding/appropriate for you?

3. Do you consider that during your college years there was a moment of crisis in which you doubted that language teaching could be an option for you? What led you to that crisis?

4. Did you ever have any other professional interest that has competed with your preference for teaching? Could you tell me more about that?

5. Could you tell me with more specific details the story of the first class you ever taught? If you don't remember the very first one, could you tell me the story of a memorable teaching moment during your pre-service years?

6. How did you make your decision to enter graduate school and why did you choose that particular program?

7. Which experiences/people/work places were more influential in the development of your views on Foreign Language Teaching? Why?

8. What was your first in-service teaching job like? Can you elaborate on the teaching experience in that school/college?

9. Do you believe that your colleagues have affected/influenced your teaching practice? Why?

10. How do you see yourself as a non-native English speaker?

11. What does it mean to be an English teacher in Mexico?

12. What kind of teacher would you like to be in the future? Why?

Closing question:

You have shared with me your experience as a foreign language teacher in a very detailed and interesting way. I'm sure your story will help me understand better the process by which a person becomes a foreign language educator in Mexico. Is there anything else you would like to add before we close this interview?

Interview guide 2 for Betty's case (Stimulation Recall and Member Check 1)

1. [Recording passage used as stimulation recall: 0:14-1:34] At the beginning of yesterday's class, you mentioned that a good number of your students had missed the previous class. How often does this happen? How do you feel about this? Why did you open the class by discussing the absence issues?
2. [04:25-04:38; 04:42-05:05] In this section, you often repeated the same information in English and Spanish, Why did you do that?
3. Why did you open today's topic requesting your students to provide an example of the best/worst excuse they had ever made?
4. [08:33-08:42; 14:35 -14:56, 07:59-08:05] In these sections, some students arrived late at different moments when the lesson was already well-advanced. How often does this happen? Is it justified? Can something be done to prevent it? Does attendance count?
5. [12:44-13:22] During this part of the class, students worked on some readers they had, different from the textbook. Can you talk about the role these readers have in your class?
6. [15:36-16:15] In this excerpt, you asked students to work on their books and I observed some of them didn't have the textbook with them. How often does this happen? Do all of the students have a copy of the required textbook? Why is this so?
7. [17:14-18:20] This excerpt was taken from lesson 2, the class focused on the present progressive used to express future plans as opposed to be-going-to. Why did you present this topic in this particular way? How do you feel about the curriculum you use? How do you feel about the textbook selected for this class? Do you choose it? If not, who does it?
8. Do you believe the materials and contents selected in the curriculum you used are relevant for the students? How so?
9. [21:40-22:54] In this excerpt, the grammar presentation is carried out in Spanish. Why is this done so? How do you feel about the teaching of grammar?
10. [44:16-44:47] How did you feel about not knowing the word skillet at this point of the lesson? How do you usually react in those cases?
11. Student X was confused with the words table in English and the word "tabla" in Spanish. This is surprising because this confusion should have been solved in the first courses and this student is in Level 3. Right? Is this a rare case? Is it common? How do you deal with these situations?
12. Is it possible to organize more pair-work and other types of student-centered tasks in your teaching context? Why yes/no? What kind of improvements/changes would you like to make in your classes?

Note: The numbers in square brackets stand for the stretches of time within the recording of the classes previously observed. I used these recording excerpts to help the participants remember the events of the lesson during the interview.

Interview guide 3 for Daniela's case (Stimulated Recall and Member Check)

1. This week, I observed the last part of the 4th unit, right? What was your aim in the first lesson of this series?
2. What was the purpose of the homework that was reviewed at the beginning?
3. [10:12-11:02] What did you choose this task to begin the class?
4. [13: 20-14:17] Students worked with physical descriptions (height, built, etc.). Why did you approach this class by asking students to produce examples, taking turns? What was the function of the visual aids you used at this point?
5. If you had the ideal conditions to teach, how would you have conducted this class?
6. [25:38-25:55] In this excerpt, students overlap each other's turns when they participate. What do you think about this way of interacting? What does the school say about it?
7. In the second class, you had an "oral review". Let's listen to an extract [05:23-0555]. Why did you handle this review this way?
8. You mentioned that there will be a "writing review" the following class. What are you planning on doing?
9. Now I want to focus on your instructions [11:20-11:25/ 14:03-14:30] What sort of objectives were you pursuing with these instructions? Do you think the students follow your instructions the way you expected? What would you change in this part of your lesson if you could?
10. Do you think your students are motivated enough to learn the language? Why? Could you give me an example?
11. Why were the students request to draw pictures on the notebooks at this point? What is the purpose of having them engaged in this activity?

Closing question

12. The end of the academic year is close. What are your expectations for the rest of the course? What are your plans to achieve the pending learning objectives? Is there anything else you would like to add?

General guide for interview 4

Preface:

During this year, I have identified a few essential traits on your teaching style, beliefs, and identity as a teacher. One of these traits, has to do with----- I see that you appreciate-----and that you consider -----important for your teaching practice. Do you agree? If not, why not?

1. Another important feature in your teaching is ----- . You mentioned that this aspect of your teaching may be connected to-----Is this interpretation accurate? Could you elaborate more on how you see -----?
2. In most of our interviews, I've noticed that you recurrently describe yourself as ----- kind of teacher. You used words such as -----, -----, or ----- to describe yourself. Do you think these words describe who you are, as a teacher?
3. In your classes, I have observed that you tend to focus on ----- . Do you agree? Why yes? Why not?
4. In spite of this point of view, in one of your journals/interviews/emails you also mentioned that ----- Why is this so?
5. How do you think this conviction was formed in you?
6. In my analysis I noticed this recurrent theme ----- To what extent do you think this theme is important to characterize your work?
7. By now, you seem pretty settled as an English teacher/instructor at ----- [level in which the participant teaches----- . However, in the past you also taught ----- What factors influence your leaving your previous teaching positions? In retrospect, how do you assess this decision?
8. Have you ever found yourself and your teaching in conflict with your school's regulations, procedures, teaching model? If so, could you elaborate on that?
9. By the end of the semester/school year, what is the take-away message you get?

Closing question

10. Is there anything else you would like to add?

Thank you very much for your help. Your participation has been extremely important for the conduction of this study.

Appendix 2. Classroom observation first scheme and observation notes sample

Observation 1 Objective:

I am interested in observing the participants as they conduct a number of classes to lead them to discuss with me their ideal of what a teacher should be and their actual implementation of some of their lessons. During the class I will focus my observations on the following:

1. Teaching style and classroom management
2. Teachers' body language and use of space during the lesson
3. Rapport with students
4. Lesson structure
5. Class materials

I will take field notes in a free manner and draw a diagram of the classroom and positions of participants during the lesson.

Observation notes and transcript sample

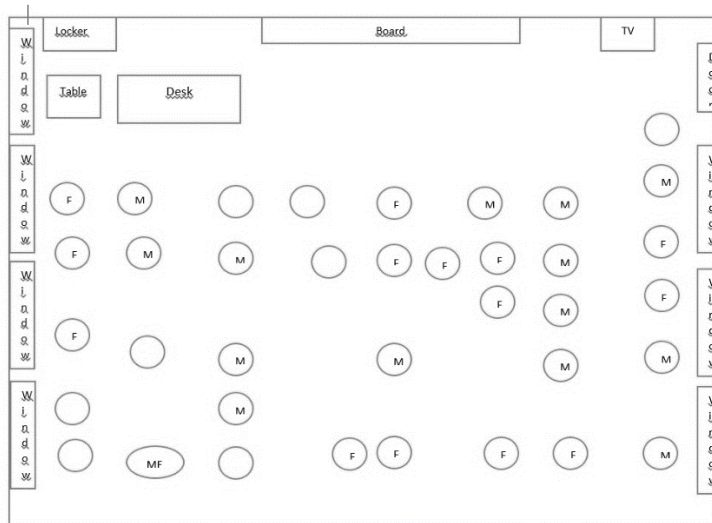
May 23rd, 2013 (Betty)

Hour 2pm

Level – Basic English

Number of students = 28 college students from different majors

Resources available = TV set and a CD player



Betty and I entered the classroom together. After setting the recorder on the desk I sat at the back row. Students arrived to the class in small groups or one by one with not apparent urgency. While the students sat on their seats, Betty took the roll.

The teacher joked about the students who had not yet arrived, a group from the Psychology department that usually got late to class. Some students also made comments about it. The playful banter kept on for over ten minutes, until Betty decided that they had waited long enough. So, she began by flipping the pages of her textbook, as she requested students to open their books on a specific page:

BETTY: Page fifty seven, page, fifty, seven, . . . and, it says, living spaces, and then, can you see these letters in here? Feng Shui, have you heard, about, Feng Shui, before?

FEMALE STUDENT: Yes,

STUDENTS: Yes.

((Noise of marker as Betty write on the whiteboard))

She wrote the word on board as she spoke. Some students attempted to answer Betty's question, sharing what they knew about Feng Shui. A few students responded in English; others used Spanish.

BETTY: Ok, what do you know about Feng Shui?, What, have you heard?, What information? What do you know? <L1 Muy Adela Micha el asunto L1>, about, Feng Shui?

FEMALE STUDENT: <L1 Pues que es, es como algo, para relajar L1>,

BETTY: It's fo=r, relaxing? Ok, does anybody have, another idea?

MALE STUDENT 2: Decoration

MALE STUDENT 1: For peace

BETTY: Decoration, and,

MALE STUDENT 1: Peace,

BETTY: Peace, and what did you say?, ((unintelligible)), ok, any other idea,

Some of the answers were produced in whisper-like quality, which Betty could not even perceive. Others, on the contrary, could take the floor with a phrase or two:

MALE STUDENT 3: It's from, China,

BETTY: It's from China, Ok, who, hasn't, heard, about Feng Shui, before?, <L1 ¿Quién no tiene ni idea, de qué cosa es el Feng Shui?, en pocas palabras L1>, who hasn't heard, about Feng Shui, before?

((Students unfamiliar with the topic raise their hands))

BETTY: Edgar, who else, Floribey, boys, you have heard about Feng Shui?, Yes?

MALE STUDENT: Yes.

BETTY: Marco?, Yes?, Mario?,

((Mario nods))

BETTY: No?, Ok, it doesn't matter, <L1 Bien L1>, what do you, imagine, Feng Shui is?, people, that doesn't have, information about Feng Shui, what do you imagine, this is about?, what do you think, this is about?, any ideas?

To her words, Betty added ample mimic gestures and simplified tag questions using only "Yes? No?" with raised intonation contours. As she was still trying to explain, one student arrived late to class. Betty ignored this interruption. As Betty spoke, she would constantly cue students to check if they were following her.

Appendix 3 First journal prompt

Dear Participant:

For the entries of the first month of your teaching journal, consider the following topics:

1. Briefly describe the class whose development and work you will be referring to in your journal.
2. Generally explain what you expect to achieve in this school year (or semester) with this class.
3. Describe how your work with this class could help you improve as a teacher. State whether you will be focusing in developing certain aspects of your teaching practice/skills as you work with this class.
4. In the last entry of the month also refer whether you think things are working according to your original plan, or if you have encountered certain challenges as the first month unfolded.
5. Feel free to include other themes that may arise during the month if you consider them relevant to our work.
6. Also, if you have questions regarding your teaching practice that you would like to share with me, I encourage you to include those. I will be happy to read them and offer you feedback to the best of my knowledge.

Appendix 4. Trustworthiness chart

TRUSTWORTHINESS CHART (Criteria based on Patton, 2002)

Technique	Result	Examples
Prolonged engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build trust -Develop rapport -Obtain wide scope of data -Obtain accurate data 	<p>My first contact with the participants was through an e-mail, which was sent before my first visit to their corresponding cities and schools.</p> <p>My onsite visits happened in May 2013, March, and May 2014. I visited each participant twice, in each case the visit lasted for a week. During that time, I carried out the following activities to collect a wide scope of data sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Observed the participants at work with several of their classes • Interviewed the participants (4 times) • Met the participants' supervisors • Talked to some of the participants' students • Conducted observations on the schools' premises to get familiar with the participants' work environment • Shared a few informal meals with the participants before the observation periods to help build rapport. <p>From August 2013 to April 2014 I kept in contact with the participants through email as they wrote their journal and sent me their monthly entries.</p> <p>After my last visit, I maintained contact with the participants' through e-mail in case a question arose as I analyzed the data. When the first draft of my analysis of each individual case was ready, I sent it to the participants. Two of them sent me a few comments regarding information they thought was missing or have been misinterpreted. I made the necessary changes following the participants' feedback.</p>
Persistent observation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Obtain in-depth data -Obtain accurate data -Sort relevancies from irrelevancies -Recognize deceptions 	<p>The data collection took one year (May 2013-May 2014). The first data source that I analyzed was the set of participants' autobiographies, which were sent to me before my onsite visits. I read these documents and identified a few themes that I wanted to explore in depth during the interviews.</p> <p>Each interview lasted an average of an hour, but were not limited to that time. When the participants were more talkative or extended their stories, some interviews lasted up to two hours.</p> <p>After each interview, I listened to the recordings and used NVivo 10 tools to sort irrelevancies out using a quick open coding on the audios. This initial analysis helped me refine my questions for the subsequent interviews or observations during my visits. This process continued during the academic year as I transcribed the interviews and my observation notes. The same process was followed with the journal entries. I used the method of constant comparison to recognize common patterns within the relevant parts of the data.</p> <p>In a second phase of this study, I chose a sections of the interviews, journals, autobiographies, and audio recordings of classroom interactions to conduct an analysis of the narratives following Gee's (2008), Mishler (1999), and Riessman (2008).</p>
Triangulation	Verify data	<p>The triangulation of sources was done as followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The content of the autobiographies were revisited and expanded during interview 1. - The situations observed and recorded during classroom observations were revisited during interviews 2 and 3. - The preliminary results were discussed with the participants during interview 4. - During the analysis, I combined data sources to construct the summarized participants' life-histories presented in Chapter 4. - The stories analyzed in Chapters 5, 6, and 7 were revised considering the information provided by other data sources.

Technique	Result	Examples
Referential adequacy	Provide a "slice of life"	During each classroom observation I created a diagram of the classroom and took notes on visual details such as body language, students' positions in the classroom, information written on the board, among other things. I used these notes to guide my transcription of the classroom dialogues. During the visits, I kept a research journal with descriptions of the events of the day during my time in the school, my conversations with the participants, and the physical conditions of the building.
Peer debriefing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Test working research questions -Find alternative explanations -Explore emerging design and research questions 	<p>I used my initial research questions to guide the first data collection. These questions were revised and refined once I started analyzing the data.</p> <p>The final version of my research questions were revised by my advisor, who offered feedback to make the wording more precise and focused.</p> <p>As the study unfolded, I discussed the preliminary results with my husband—who is also an Applied Linguists and foreign language instructor. When I began writing the preliminary research report, I asked two of my colleagues in the Department of English to read a couple of chapters and share their comments with me. Finally, when the first draft was completed, I sent a copy to the participants, so that they could also send me their comments. Additionally, I also discussed part of the methodological aspects of this study with my advisor. He carefully went over my analysis and offered feedback to improve it.</p>
Member checking	Test categories, interpretations or conclusions (constructions)	<p>The second and third interview after the observations were used as member-check. These interviews addressed questions that emerged as a result of my preliminary analysis of the observation audios and notes.</p> <p>I used the fourth interview to present my preliminary interpretations of the data to the participants and give them the opportunity to offer me their point of view. As a final member-check, I sent the participants a copy of my first draft that contain my analysis of their case in order to get feedback from them.</p>
Reflexive journal	Document researcher decision	I kept audio recordings of my impressions after each interview and observation. I also kept a journal during my field trips and during the year I received journal entries from each participant.
Thick description	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide data base for transferability judgment -Provide a vicarious experience for the reader 	Chapter 4 provides thick descriptions of each case. The verbatim transcriptions of interviews and classroom interactions provide the readers with a vicarious experience.
Purposive sampling	Generate data for emergent design and emerging hypotheses	Keeping contact with the participants for a school year while they were writing the journal allowed me to ask more focused questions and observe aspects of their everyday teaching practice. For instance, considering the different ways in which teachers' resisted to institutional structures was not originally considered when I started the study. This theme emerged during my analysis.
Audit trail	Allow audit to determine trustworthiness of study	Interview guides, audio-field notes, transcripts, samples of the participant's class material, researcher's journal.

Appendix 5. Approved form from Oklahoma State University's Office for Research Compliance

Oklahoma State University Institutional Review Board

Date: Tuesday, May 07, 2013
IRB Application No AS1347
Proposal Title: English Teaching Histories in Mexico

Reviewed and Processed as: Expedited

Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved Protocol Expires: 5/6/2014

Principal Investigator(s):

Alys R. Avalos Rivera	An Cheng
104 N. Univ. Pl. Apt. 11	205 Morrill
Stillwater, OK 74075	Stillwater, OK 74078

The IRB application referenced above has been approved. It is the judgment of the reviewers that the rights and welfare of individuals who may be asked to participate in this study will be respected, and that the research will be conducted in a manner consistent with the IRB requirements as outlined in section 45 CFR 46.

The final versions of any printed recruitment, consent and assent documents bearing the IRB approval stamp are attached to this letter. These are the versions that must be used during the study.

As Principal Investigator, it is your responsibility to do the following:

1. Conduct this study exactly as it has been approved. Any modifications to the research protocol must be submitted with the appropriate signatures for IRB approval. Protocol modifications requiring approval may include changes to the title, PI, advisor, funding status or sponsor, subject population composition or size, recruitment, inclusion/exclusion criteria, research site, research procedures and consent/assent process or forms.
2. Submit a request for continuation if the study extends beyond the approval period of one calendar year. This continuation must receive IRB review and approval before the research can continue.
3. Report any adverse events to the IRB Chair promptly. Adverse events are those which are unanticipated and impact the subjects during the course of this research; and
4. Notify the IRB office in writing when your research project is complete.

Please note that approved protocols are subject to monitoring by the IRB and that the IRB office has the authority to inspect research records associated with this protocol at any time. If you have questions about the IRB procedures or need any assistance from the Board, please contact Dawnett Watkins 219 Cordell North (phone: 405-744-5700, dawnett.watkins@okstate.edu).

Sincerely,



Shelia Kennison, Chair
Institutional Review Board

Appendix 6. Plan of Study of the English program at the Independent University of Miranda (Pseudonym)

IUM PLAN OF STUDY 1 1998-2003

First Semester

- English 1
- Grammar 1
- Spanish 1
- Introduction to Linguistics
- Introduction to Educational Psychology
- Epistemology

Second Semester

- English 2
- Grammar 2
- Spanish 2
- Linguistics
- Educational Psychology

Third Semester

- English 3
- English Composition 1
- Contrastive Grammar
- Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics

Fourth Semester

- English 4
- English Composition 2
- Contrastive Grammar 2
- Introduction to methods and techniques in second language teaching
- Research Methods

Fifth Semester

- English 5
- Literature 1
- Traductology
- Methods and techniques in second language teaching
- French 1 or Italian 1

Sixth Semester

- English 6
- Literature 2
- Translation workshop 1
- Introduction to practicum
- French 2 or Italian 2
- School management

Seventh Semester

- English 7
- Translation workshop 2
- Teaching practicum 1
- Assessment and testing
- Management planning
- French 3 or Italian 3

Eight Semester

- English 8
- Interpretation
- Teaching practicum 2
- French 3 or Italian 3

IUM PLAN OF STUDY 2 (2003-2008)*

First Semester

- English 1
- Spanish Composition 1
- Grammar 1
- Educational Psychology
- Linguistics
- Psychology

Second Semester

- English 2
- Spanish Composition 2
- Grammar 2
- Introduction to research methods

Third Semester

- English 3
- English Composition 1
- Contrastive Grammar
- Psycholinguistics

Fourth Semester

- English 4
- English Composition 2
- Contrastive Grammar 2
- Introduction to methods and techniques in second language teaching
- Research Methods

Fifth Semester

- English 5
- Literature 1
- Introduction to translation
- Methods and techniques in second language teaching

Sixth Semester

- English 6
- Literature 2
- Translation workshop 1
- Introduction to practicum
- Syllabus design

Seventh Semester

- English 7
- Translation workshop 2
- Teaching practicum 1
- School management

Eight Semester

- English 8
- Interpretation
- Teaching practicum 2
- ~~Development of personnel training courses~~
- ~~Research project~~

According to information provided by the head of the Department of English at IUM, Daniela and Leiliani's BA program was based on Plan of Study 1. Sofia, Betty, and Adam followed Plan of Study 2. Mandatory non-credit courses such as ethics, critical thinking skills, or entrepreneurship workshops are not included. In Plan of study 2, students also took two additional foreign languages that were considered as a non-credit requirement.

Appendix 7. Transcription Conventions

(Adaptation of Du Bois, Schuetze-Coburn, Cumming, & Paolino 1993)

Symbol	Description
Capital Letter	Restart (Start of a new unit, or restart after false start)
--	Truncated intonation unit
[]	Speech Overlap
,	Intonation contours that conveys continuity
.	Intonation contour that is understood as final
Terminal Pitch	
\	Terminal pitch movement is falling
/	Rising terminal pitch
=	Indicates that the preceding segment is lengthened
Pauses	
..	A short pause (about 0.2 seconds or less)
...	A medium length pause (between 0.3 and 0.6 seconds):
... (.7)	A long pause or .7 second or longer.
Voice Quality	
<W W>	Widened pitch range (high involvement or surprise)
<MRC MRC>	Marcato speech
<WH WH>	Whispered utterance
<CRK CRK>	Creaky voice or glotalization of the enclosed word
Vocal Noises	
(COUGH)	Single parenthesis are used to indicate nonverbal noises
(THROAT)	Clearing throat
(TSK)	Click of the tongue
(H)	Inhalation (As a signal one is about to take a turn at speaking,
(Hx)	Exhalation
	Other vocal noises: (SWALLOW), (SNIFF), (YAWN).
@	Laughter
<@ @>	Laughing quality over a stretch of speaking
<Q Q>	Quotation quality
Others	
(/ /)	Phonetic or phonemic transcription
(())	Transcriber's comment (use all capitals inside this double parenthesis)
X	Indecipherable speech
< X X >	Portions of text that are not clearly audible to the transcriber
x-	Truncated word
<L2 word L2>	Code Switching
Words in bold prints	Stressed word

VITA

Alys D. Avalos-Rivera

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Thesis: MEXICAN ENGLISH TEACHERS' IDENTITY NEGOTIATIONS: A
NARRATIVE STUDY

Major Field: ENGLISH

Biographical:

Education:

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Completed the requirements for the Master of Arts in Education at Universidad Cristóbal Colón, Veracruz, Ver. México, in 2007.

Completed the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts in Education at Universidad Veracruzana, Jalapa, Ver. México, in 1998.

Experience:

Graduate Teaching and Research Associate, Department of English, Oklahoma State University, 2013-2016

Curriculum Developer and Instructor at Universidad Cristóbal Colón, Veracruz, México, 2004-2011

Head of the Foreign Languages Department, Universidad Cristóbal Colón, Veracruz, México, 2002-2004

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