

THE UNITY OF COGNITION AND EMOTION IN PRESCHOOL TEACHERS'  
UNDERSTANDINGS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING AND LANGUAGE USE

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## ABSTRACT

My research study investigates how teachers of linguistically diverse young learners understand language learning and language use in the context of their professional and personal experiences. Drawing on the concept of *plurilingualism* (The Council of Europe, 2001, 2018), language competence is understood as dynamic and context-dependent. Plurilingual language users are viewed as active agents whose linguistic repertoires are unique to their individual biographies and experiences. To explore what five teachers working in linguistically diverse preschool classrooms think, know and believe about language learning and language use, my study employs a dynamic and situated view of *teacher cognition* (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015), which pays particular attention to the specific context of teachers' biographies. Additionally, the study recognizes the relationship between teacher cognition and teachers' emotional lives. This understanding of language teacher cognition allows me to go beyond descriptive accounts of teachers' beliefs and explore their origins. To analyze the collected data, I employed Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994), in which the interconnection between emotion and cognition is in the foreground. Findings emerging from this research study suggest that although teachers usually have numerous language learning experiences, their understanding of bilingualism is founded on monolingual assumptions (Cummins, 2001), and, as a result, bilingualism is seen as complete fluency in both languages. Teachers rarely see themselves as successful language learners and language users, and because of that they often feel that inclusion of their students' home languages in daily classroom activities is a practice they are not capable of doing. Additionally, my study shows that teachers' beliefs regarding language learning and language use are closely intertwined with their personal, and often very intimate, associations and experiences, and these two cannot be analyzed in separation from each other.

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## Table of Contents

ABSTRACT .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .....	iii
TABLE OF CONTENTS .....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES.....	viii
CHAPTER ONE.....	1
INTRODUCTION .....	1
Language and Change.....	1
Superdiversity as a Challenge to Balanced Bilingualism .....	2
Linguistically Diverse Children and the School Context .....	3
Teacher Cognition.....	7
My Research Study.....	8
CHAPTER TWO .....	10
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	10
Conceptualizing Language.....	10
Towards the Idea of Language as a Contextualized Practice: From Bilingualism through Translanguaging to Plurilingualism.....	13
Early Conceptualizations of Bilingualism .....	14
Dynamic Bilingualism .....	17
Plurilingualism.....	18
Bilingualism vs. Multilingualism vs. Plurilingualism.....	19
School as a Language Learning Context .....	21
The Field of Language Teacher Cognition.....	25
Historical Overview .....	26
The Language of Teacher Cognition .....	29
The Interrelatedness of Emotion and Cognition .....	32
Perezhivanie.....	33
Perezhivanie and its Connection to Learning and Teaching.....	36
The Intersection of Teacher Cognition and Language Learning .....	37
Rationale for the Present Study.....	40

CHAPTER THREE .....	42
METHODOLOGY .....	42
The Setting.....	43
Gaining Access .....	45
Data Gathering Strategies .....	45
Biographical Data Questionnaire.....	46
Semi-structured Interview.....	46
Observations and Field Notes .....	47
Informal Conversational Interviews Based on Observation .....	49
Data Analysis and Interpretation .....	50
Ethical Concerns .....	53
Situating Myself within the Research Setting and the Research Process .....	54
CHAPTER FOUR .....	56
THE STORIES FROM THE BUSY BEES NURSERY SCHOOL .....	56
Busy Bees Nursery School.....	56
The Teachers .....	58
Blythe.....	58
Emily.....	65
Felicity .....	71
Heidi.....	77
Tess .....	84
CHAPTER FIVE .....	90
COGNITION AND EMOTION IN TEACHERS' STORIES.....	90
Perezhivanie and Teachers' Biographies .....	91
Emotions as Prism in Teachers' Stories.....	98
Sense of Self .....	99
Relationship to Difference .....	101
The Motif of Care .....	103
Language as More Than Communication.....	105
Preparedness for the Setting.....	108
CHAPTER SIX.....	110
RETURN TO THE QUESTIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF MY RESEARCH....	110
Overview of My Study .....	110
Connection to the Research Questions .....	111

The Limitations of My Study.....	117
Implications of My Study .....	117
Directions for Future Research .....	119
Concluding Remarks.....	120
References.....	121
Appendix A.....	136
Appendix B.....	137
Appendix C.....	139
Appendix D.....	141
Appendix E .....	142

**LIST OF FIGURES**

Figure 1: Elements and processes in language teacher cognition

30

**LIST OF TABLES**

Table 1: Timeline of study procedure and data collection instruments	46
Table 2: Emerging themes in teachers' stories	93

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this introductory chapter is to introduce the concepts of bi/multilingualism<sup>1</sup> and teacher cognition, with a particular focus on language-teacher cognition. In what follows, I will also situate the two ideas in the global context. A more thorough review of the research in these fields is discussed in the Literature Review chapter.

#### Language and Change

The use and value of languages change over time, depending on social, cultural, political and economic contexts. On one hand, these changes are natural and inevitable; on the other hand, however, it is important to remember that they often happen because no language is neutral and free of affiliations with specific communities and nations (Canagarajah, 2007). To be more specific, the spread of languages, specifically prestigious languages like English, French, Portuguese or Spanish, has happened mainly through colonization and the creation of state borders, and resulting from them political dominance, trade, education (often forcefully imposed), religion and mass media (Baker, 2011). As a result, in countries like the United States, Canada, Australia, UK, Ireland or New Zealand, English is the first language of the majority of the (often monolingual) population. Similarly, Portuguese and Spanish have become the first languages of the majority of people in South America. In both cases, these colonial languages minoritized or drove to extinction the continents' Indigenous languages. These observations are particularly

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<sup>1</sup> Bi/multilingualism is understood in this introductory chapter as the knowledge and use of two/more languages.

important in the context of my doctoral research, in which I had to assume that there are majority and minority languages of a given geographical space, keeping in mind that historically these languages have not had the same status as they do today.

### **Superdiversity as a Challenge to Balanced Bilingualism**

The most recent example of how geo-political changes affect language and its use is the creation of new superdiverse demographic patterns (Vertovec, 2007) caused by the population shifts happening across the globe. To be more specific, in the last few decades the borders between some countries became less evident, or, in other cases, shifted dramatically, and this resulted in the intensive flows of people, capital, goods, images, and discourses. As Blommaert and Backus (2012) note, superdiversity is linked to unpredictable variations in the way individual people use their individual linguistic repertoires. Superdiversity challenges the notion of language as a static and closed system. Instead of focusing on language as a fixed and autonomous structure, researchers in the field of language education have turned their attention to the notion of language as an activity which is always situated in a particular context. To quote Blommaert and Backus (2012), “[language is viewed] as an emergent and dynamic pattern of practices in which [the] semiotic resources [of an individual] are being used in a particular way” (p. 6). These practices are often referred to as languaging, translanguaging, or code-meshing (Garcia & Wei, 2014).

In light of these changes, long accepted models and concepts in the fields of bi/multilingualism and bi/multilingual education may no longer adequately describe the complexity of the globalized world. Terms such as *first vs. second language* [the language first learned, best known or most used vs. language learned after acquiring the first language (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008)]; *simultaneous vs. sequential bilingualism* [learning two languages from birth vs. learning a second language later, after about three years of age (Baker, 2011)]; or

*additive vs. subtractive bilingualism* [a second language is an addition to the first language vs. learning a second language results in the loss of the first language (Landry & Allard, 1991; Fishman 1996)] often cannot be applied to particular situations of many bi/multilinguals around the world, specifically when we talk about children. For example, in the case of young bi/multilinguals it is often assumed that their first language is the language of their parents, which might not necessarily be true.

### **Linguistically Diverse Children and the School Context**

Given this context of superdiversity, it is not surprising that the early childhood<sup>2</sup> experiences of children who have facility in more than one language have received more research attention in the last decade (Heydon, Moffat & Iannacci, 2015; Iannacci, 2014). However, multiple misconceptions and myths regarding early childhood language learning are still widely spread among both practitioners and the general public (Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013; Espinoza, 2013). Some of them are the following:

- Children learn languages quickly and easily.
- The younger the child, the more skilled in acquiring a second language the child is.
- Total immersion in the early years is the best way for a language learner to acquire the language.
- Children have mastered a second language once they speak it.
- All children learn a second language in the same way.
- Learning two or more languages during the early childhood years will overwhelm and confuse the child.

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<sup>2</sup> Following the National Association for the Education of Young Children (*About NAEYC*), I define early childhood education (ECE) as learning of young children from birth to the age of 8.

Generally, these misconceptions can all be summed up in the following way: once children are in the environment in which a second language is spoken, they will quickly absorb it, so there is nothing to worry about. Research in childhood bilingualism tells us that this presumption of learning by osmosis is not true. For example, discussing children's language learning, Cummins (2001) makes a distinction between *conversational fluency*—that is, the ability to carry on a conversation in a familiar context; *discrete language skills*—that is, very specific phonological, literacy and grammatical knowledge that students acquire through direct instruction and both formal and informal practice; and *academic language proficiency*—that is, the understanding of language which is highly decontextualized (pp. 65-66). All of these aspects of language proficiency are important, but as Cummins (2001) notes, there is a great deal of confusion about the relationship among these three. For example, often students who do not speak a majority language may seem to be fluent in conversational skills, but they may still perform below grade-level in academic language proficiency. Similarly, these students may seem to read fluently in the majority language (*discrete language skills*), but they may have very little understanding of the words they can decode (Cummins, 2001, p. 66).

Even before young children acquire a majority language well enough to gain acceptance of their peers, or to simply communicate with people around them, they stay confused, uncertain and socially isolated. Social isolation and loneliness are central to the picture of the young linguistically diverse child that is painted by Kirova (2001) and Chumak-Horbatsch (2012).

Furthermore, while learning a dominant language, too often young children lose languages that are spoken in their homes. Wong-Fillmore (1991) and Weinstein-Shr (1995) suggest that the consequences of that loss extend beyond an individual's social, emotional, cognitive and academic development; they argue that the stability of families, communities, and society in which

linguistically diverse children live is also affected. For instance, parents or grandparents cannot communicate with their children, which means that they are unable to pass on their family values, beliefs, and traditions. When family relations are broken, the next generations are deprived of the most influential part of their lives. As Wong-Fillmore (1991) writes, “the breakdown of family can mean a loss of everything” (p. 344).

Despite the linguistic and cultural diversity of Canadian and American students, instructional practices in schools are often founded on monolingual assumptions which are unsupported by research (Cummins, 2007, 2017; Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Garcia, 2009a; Garcia, 2009b; Heydon, Moffat & Iannacci, 2015; Iannacci, 2007; Ippolito, 2010). Cummins (2007) describes the situation in the following way:

Instructional policies are dominated by monolingual instructional principles that are largely unsupported by empirical evidence and inconsistent with current understandings both of how people learn ... and the functioning of the bilingual and multilingual mind. (p. 222)

In many cases, schools are not prepared to work with linguistically diverse children, and too often the languages that these children bring to schools are treated as obstacles rather than assets. Cummins (2012) notes that the very essence of the term *education*—the nurturing of students’ abilities and talents—is being negated by the education linguistically diverse students are receiving in Canadian schools. He writes: “Education is supposed to make children *more* than they were, but, in the case of bilingual children, it [is] often making them *less* than they were” (Cummins, 2012, p. xiii). For example, many linguistically diverse students who enter the Canadian or American school system are often fluent in more than one language; however, they are still referred to as English Language Learners (ELL), English as a Second Language (ESL), or English as a

New Language (ENL). These terms focus only on their lack of English language proficiency, rather than their knowledge of multiple languages.

Educators' instructional choices in the classroom determine whether students identify with, and are defined by, their assumed limitations, or by their actual talents and accomplishments, both linguistic and intellectual (Cummins & Early, 2011, p. 9). Factors such as curriculum, assessment policies, funding, administrative pressures, teachers' own availability, and characteristics of students and school community, mean that teachers may not have complete freedom, but they always have a choice in how to respond to these factors. Cummins, Early, Leoni and Stille (2011) put it this way: "Paradoxically, choice is not an option—we have no choice but to choose from a range of instructional alternatives" (p. 169). In addition, teachers are usually the first point of contact at school; consequently, they are often asked by parents for advice. In this way, teachers not only have control over what happens in the classroom but can influence what happens outside of classroom as well (De Angelis, 2011).

Teachers' work may be explored through a variety of lenses. Some researchers look at how teachers' gender, race, or class affect their knowledge and their work. For example, employing the approaches of critical pedagogies and Critical Race Theory, Gérin-Lajoie (2008) explores how dominant discourses are reproduced within school practices and the effects of this reproduction on racially, culturally and linguistically diverse students. In the second language education field, numbers of researchers examine second language teaching and learning through the issues of race, culture and identity (see, for example, Kubota & Lin, 2009). Adopting Critical Race Theory, critical pedagogies, and critical multicultural education, Kubota and Lin (2009) explore issues of racialization and racism in second language education and examine language teachers' views of race, racism, culture and language. Beside the influence of these large systemic issues on language

education, at a practical level, language education occurs at the teacher-student interface. Therefore, it seems important to consider teachers' knowledge and work in relation to teacher cognition—that is research on understanding what teachers think, know and believe.

The relationship between teacher cognition and what practitioners do in a classroom has been widely documented by research (Borg, 2006; Haukås, 2016; Kagan, 1992; Pajares, 1992; Lara-Cinisomo, Fuligni, Daugherty, Howes & Karoly, 2009; Stipek & Byler, 1997). Teachers' beliefs about instruction may or may not always be realized in their work, but the literature indicates that some of these beliefs affect teachers' practice (Borg, 2009). Regardless of the fact that their practice may be discussed and critiqued, teachers' expertise should not be dismissed as merely personal and subjective. Cross (2011) puts it in the following way: “[T]eachers, as a collective, hold a body of expert knowledge about what constitutes effective pedagogy based on their own personal professional knowledge and experience” (p. 167). To put it differently, teachers usually do things the way they do because their practices work and make sense for them.

### **Teacher Cognition**

Research on teacher cognition in mainstream education stretches back over 40 years (for a historical overview, see Borg, 2006 chapter 1). For many decades before that time, the work of teachers was mostly analyzed in terms of what could be observed and externally documented. Teachers' private mental work—knowing, planning, thinking, reacting, and decision making—was not studied at all (Borg, 2006, 2009; Burns, Freeman & Edwards, 2015). In the 1970's, researchers started acknowledging that teachers are not robots who simply implement curricula designed by others but are thinking agents who make informed decisions before and during teaching. An important development within the research on teacher cognition in mainstream education came in 1975 when a panel of academics in the United States published a report in which

they concluded that, in order to understand teachers, researchers have to study psychological processes through which educators make sense of their work (Borg, 2009). One effect of this report was greatly increased funding for the study of teacher cognition in the United States, and consequently, a significant growth of research exploring various psychological dimensions of teaching. The early studies remained mostly in the domain of educational psychology rather than teaching and teacher education; however, in the 1980's, concepts like *beliefs* and *knowledge* emerged and became dominant in the field of teacher cognition (Borg, 2009).

Interest in the study of teacher cognition in mainstream education eventually affected the area of second and foreign language education. From the mid-1990's onwards there has been a steady increase in the volume of research examining what second and foreign language teachers know, think, and believe and the relationships between these constructs and what teachers do (Borg, 2009). I review this body of research in the next chapter of my work; however, it is important to note here that most of the work in the field is conducted with teachers of adult learners. As Borg (2009) notes, "the area of young learners has been particularly under-studied from the teacher cognition point of view" (p. 4).

### **My Research Study**

Because teachers have pedagogical agency inside and outside the classroom, a deep examination of their beliefs, knowledge, and thinking is crucial to understanding what happens in the classroom context. Moreover, because the area of young language learners has been under-studied from the teacher cognition perspective, an exploration of what teachers of young language learners know, think and believe in relation to their students' language learning and language use

is much needed.<sup>3</sup> Given that linguistic diversity is the norm in the globalized world, and keeping in the foreground the complexity of language learning and use, the purpose of my research study is to explore how teachers of linguistically diverse young children understand language learning and language use in the context of their professional and personal biographies. The study adopts a dynamic and situated view of teacher cognition (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Cross, 2010), which recognizes its relation to teachers' emotional lives.

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<sup>3</sup> Some may argue that early childhood educators are not language teachers per se. While it is true that the majority of early childhood teachers are not trained as language teachers, the findings emerging from my study show that in the context of bi/multilingual children who enter preschool centres with minimal knowledge of a dominant language, these teachers actually work in the area of language teaching and learning on a daily basis.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I discuss the development of the research in the field of bilingualism (still understood as the knowledge and use of two/more languages) and talk about the key concepts in second and foreign language learning. Next, I introduce the topic of teacher cognition and look at its possible conceptualizations. I also look into the interrelatedness of cognition and emotion. In the last part, I review the most relevant studies that lie at the intersection of language learning and teacher cognition.

I begin with a brief discussion of various debates regarding the nature of language itself. My goal here is to signal major issues arising in the current sociolinguistic scholarship.

#### Conceptualizing Language

Ferdinand de Saussure, one of the founders of modern linguistics, described language as a system of arbitrary signs. To study language, he distinguished between *la langue* and *la parole*. *La langue* refers to a system of rules and conventions that are independent of individual users; *la parole*, on the other hand, refers to particular occurrences of speech within the system, or in other words, to the actual language use (Dimitriadis & Kamberelis, 2006). For Saussure, *la langue* constitutes the primary object of inquiry, because it is for him the overarching linguistic system that makes *la parole* possible. According to Garcia and Wei (2014), the distinction between *la langue* and *la parole* led to two very different trends in the field of linguistics. As they write: “One trend pursued universal structures across human languages; the other followed how human beings

put to use their linguistic knowledge in real-life contexts” (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 6). In my doctoral research I was interested in language used by people in real-life situations, or to use Garcia’s (2014) words, “framed within social practices” (p. 95). In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, Mikhail Bakhtin argued that being bound to the context in which it exists, language, by its nature, emerges from the actions of speakers (Garcia & Wei, 2014). Bakhtin’s contemporary, Vološinov (as cited in Garcia & Wei, 2014) claimed that language acquires life “in concrete verbal communication, and not in the abstract linguistic system of language forms, nor in the individual psyche of speakers” (p. 7). A few decades later, one of the most influential sociolinguists of the twentieth century, Dell Hymes, trying to find a new approach to understanding language in use in different social contexts, proposed the term *ethnography of speaking*, which was later amended to *ethnography of communication* (Johnstone & Marcellino, 2010). Hymes (1989) proposed ‘ways of speaking’ as an object of study for linguistics. According to him, the ‘ways of speaking’ encompass both the ‘means of speech’ available to speakers and the ‘speech economy’ in which the speakers participate. Johnstone and Marcellino (2010) explain it in the following way:

This bipartite understanding of language is important because it equally foregrounds two aspects of speaking that Hymes feels cannot be separated: what speakers can and do say, and the communal context such speech occurs in. Speech does not occur in a vacuum, but rather within a specific context, and “when the meaning of speech styles are analyzed, we realize that they entail dimensions of participant, setting, channel, and the like, which partly govern their meanings” (p. 4).

Language is understood here as a complex network consisting of what individual speakers have to offer, as well as the context in which the communication occurs.

Current sociolinguistic scholarship (Blommaert & Backus, 2012; Canagarajah, 2007; Jørgensen & Juffermans, 2011; Makoni & Pennycook, 2007) focuses to an even greater extent on the importance of particular circumstances in which speakers are embedded. According to sociolinguists, what we know as language can be understood only in terms of *linguaging*<sup>4</sup>— a social process that is constantly reconstructed in accordance with environmental factors (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 94). Within a *linguaging* perspective language is seen not as a rigid and closed system but as a dynamic process that is constructed and performed by people. Consequently then, we cannot say that people use a particular language but rather that they language, or to be more specific, they use linguistic resources that are available to them. Jørgensen and Juffermans (2011) refer to this shift in looking at language as the “human turn in sociolinguistics” (p. 2).

To take it even further, the *linguaging* perspective views boundaries between languages as arbitrary—they are socially and historically constructed. What we traditionally know as separate languages are ideologically constructed concepts which do not represent real life language use (Jørgensen & Juffermans, 2011, p. 1). The boundaries between different languages are a result of history of standardization and regulation. Jørgensen and Juffermans (2011) write:

Standardizing language means compartmentalizing the free and unbounded linguaging of a particular geographical area and class of people as the language for that particular geographical area and its people and freezing its evolution. Standardizing language also

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<sup>4</sup> As Garcia and Wei (2014) note the term *linguaging* was first used by Chilean biologists Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela in the 1970’s in the context of their theory of *autopoiesis* (*autopoiesis* meaning autoproduction). The theory argues that we (human beings) cannot separate our biological and social history of actions from the ways in which we perceive the world. Our experience is tied to our structure, or our biological make-up, and the processes involved in our actions as human beings, constitute our knowledge. *Linguaging* is understood here as an act in which we get to know the world, and also through which we become who we are. It is a continuous process of becoming of ourselves and of our linguistic practices as we interact and make meaning in the world (Garcia & Wei, 2014, p. 8). In the 1990’s, the term *linguaging* was used by A. L. Becker in the context of translation and was quickly appropriated by linguists.

means enregistering particular linguistic features as normative: selecting particular phonemes, morphemes, words, syntax, etc. as normal, as the norms for the language while designating all variation to those norms as substandard, dialect, or even deficit language (p. 2).

In the context of the *linguaging* perspective, bilinguals, for example, do not use two different languages, but rather they use all their available linguistics resources that have been historically seen by others as parts of separate languages.

Canagarajah (2007) applies this line of thinking about language to the context of language learning. He writes: “Language learning involves an alignment of one’s language resources to the needs of a situation” (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 94). As he explains, rather than reaching for some imaginary target level of competence, speakers and learners employ whatever linguistic resources they have to negotiate their needs in diverse situations. Consequently then, speakers adjust to each other, as well as to their social and physical environments. It is noteworthy here that language, or rather the potential of *linguaging*, resides not only in individuals but also in specific situations. It is the context in which and through which the different ways people language become possible; in other words, individual linguistic resources actualize themselves in particular situations.

### **Towards the Idea of Language as a Contextualized Practice:**

#### **From Bilingualism through Translanguaging to Plurilingualism**

Developments in sociolinguistics impacted the field of language learning. In what follows, I discuss the progress of the research in the field of bilingualism and talk about the key concepts in second and foreign language learning.

## Early Conceptualizations of Bilingualism

In her review of research on the history of the use of the term bilingualism, Bialystok (2001) cites work as far back as the 1920s and as recent as the 1960s, in which bilingualism is viewed as one's knowledge of two or more distinct languages. Not only were languages viewed as separate, but Caldas (2006) reports that in 1928 Reynold associated bilingualism with language mixing and language confusion which results in decreased ability to think clearly (p. 12). However, this idea of the negative consequences of bilingualism did not persist. Garcia and Wei (2014) note that in 1956 Haugen defined bilingualism as the practice of using two separate languages, with no emphasis of its negative consequences; however, in the mid 1970s Lambert developed the terms *additive* and *subtractive bilingualism* to stress positive and negative outcomes of bilingualism (Garcia & Wei, 2014). According to Lambert, learning a second language could lead to either positive or negative effects on acquiring and maintaining the first language. The case when acquisition of a second language did not impact the maintenance of the first language was referred to as *additive bilingualism*. On the other hand, the situation in which a second language was learned to the detriment of the first language was called *subtractive bilingualism*.

From the bilingualism perspective, the different languages of an individual were treated as separate—almost as residing in different parts of an individual's brain. By the end of 1970s, this view is challenged by Cummins (1979) who argues that the knowledge of two languages is not stored separately, but that each proficiency influences the other. Using the metaphor of a dual iceberg, Cummins proposes that although on the surface the structural elements of two languages might look different, there is a cognitive interdependence that allows for transfer of linguistic practices. He names this concept the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP). As Garcia and Wei (2014) report, more recent neurolinguistic studies of bilinguals have confirmed, and even gone

beyond Cummins's hypothesis, showing that even when one language is being used, the other language remains active and can be easily accessed (p. 13).

Not only did some early definitions of bilingualism treat the learning of another language as potentially detrimental, but these discussions treated language proficiency as something that was obvious and did not need explanation. In other words, issues such as how much of a language one should know to be described as being proficient in it, or how proficient a person should be in both languages to be called bilingual, were not debated. Yet, as Bialystok (2001) writes, "At best, bilingualism is a scale, moving from virtually no awareness that other language exists to complete fluency in two languages" (p. 8).

The last three decades of the research in the field brought attention to the importance of specific contexts when defining one's bilingualism. Beginning with Grosjean's 1985 (as cited in Baker, 2011) definition of a bilingual person as "a fully competent speaker/hearer who has developed competency in two languages to the extent required by his/her needs" (p. 9), more recent definitions of bilingualism are further concerned with the particular circumstances of an individual. For example, both Bialystok (2001) and Baker (2011) emphasize that bilingual people rarely have balanced fluency in their languages because they use them for different purposes, with different people, and in different circumstances. Bialystok (2001) writes:

Children ... experience different kinds of interactions with each language, interact in different types of social situations with each, encounter different opportunities for formal study, and may also develop different kinds of attitudes to each language. For these reasons, the various configurations that lead to bilingualism leave children with different levels of competence in each of the languages. (p. 3)

Most of the time children do not seem to be bothered by their varying language competencies and accept them as something natural.

Recently researchers have been moving away from looking at bilingualism as a competence in two or more autonomous languages, and have been focusing at the linguistic practices of individuals instead. This change is undoubtedly influenced by the shifting conceptualizations of language in sociolinguistic debates. For example, such terms as *first* and *second language* have been largely contested, as many researchers have argued that with significantly increased global mobility, it is often hard to differentiate between individuals' distinct languages—that is, between their first, second or third languages (Taylor & Snoddon, 2013). For example, the term *first language* can simply be understood as a language that a person learned as first or knows best (Skutnabb-Kangas & McCarty, 2008); however, Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) proposes that a definition of the term *first language* depends on which criterion one decides to use when defining it. Consequently, if the criterion is *personal identification*, first language will be understood as the language with which an individual identifies. If, however, the criterion is *external identification*, first language will be defined as the language with which an individual is identified by others. Similarly, one might use the criterion of *competence* (the language one knows best), *function* (the language one uses most), or *origin* (the language one learned first).

Scholarship in the field of language learning (Canagarajah, 2007; Creese & Blackledge, 2010; Cummins & Hornberger, 2008; Garcia, 2009a, 2009b; Garcia & Wei, 2014) points to globalization as an important factor in the development of the key terms in the field. The recent creation of new socioeconomic and socio-political organizations has affected the way in which languages are used (for example in the European Union where the borders between countries are not as evident as they used to be). These socioeconomic and socio-political changes have resulted

in great population shifts—people move between countries as migrant workers, refugees, international students, business workers, or tourists. As Garcia (2009b) writes, “These population movements bring about changes in language use, and amplify the presence of bilingualism, as people need to communicate or access information outside their primary language group” (p. 27). There is an agreement in the field that these changes call for different ways of thinking about language and the ways people use it.

### **Dynamic Bilingualism**

Expanding Cummins’ (1979) CUP hypothesis, which claims that there is a cognitive interdependence between languages of an individual, Garcia (2009a) proposes the term *dynamic bilingualism* which is defined as: “...a varying degree of abilities and uses of multiple language practices needed for people to cross physical or virtual borders” (p. 144). According to this definition, languages of bilinguals do not exist as separate linguistic codes, but they form one linguistic “supply” from which a speaker may choose, depending on the context. It is important to note that Garcia (2009a) uses the term *dynamic bilingualism* to describe language practices consisting of drawing from an unspecified number of languages according to the needs of a speaker.

*Dynamic bilingualism* is founded on the assumption that bilinguals do not go from one language to another (code-switch) but they use one linguistic repertoire to communicate effectively – they translanguage.<sup>5</sup> Garcia (2011) notes that translanguage refers to what bilinguals do all the time; it emphasizes language as practice and action, not merely as a system of structures (p. 1).

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<sup>5</sup> As cited in Baker, Jones and Lewis (2012) “translanguage is a new and developing term” (p. 641). It comes from the Welsh term “trawsieithu” (translanguage) and was initially created by Williams in the 1980s, for “the planned and systematic use of two languages for teaching and learning inside the same lesson... translanguage means that you receive information through the medium of one language and use it yourself through the medium of the other language” (p. 643).

Only when forced to use one language at a time (for example in a school setting) will bilinguals treat their two languages as autonomous. Moreover, bilinguals cannot be treated as a homogenous group because the reasons for which one becomes bilingual and uses two languages differ from person to person. Therefore, when discussing bilingualism, it is crucial to take into consideration dynamic factors that affect one's language choices.

According to Garcia (2011), translanguaging is not a transitory stage between different levels of language proficiency. Bilinguals do not stop translanguaging when they become fully competent in a given language; on the other hand, there is also no particular language proficiency level at which bilinguals start translanguaging. If allowed, people who live in bilingual contexts move freely between their languages depending on their needs. Garcia (2011) explains it in the following way:

A bilingual person is not two monolinguals in one, with each language linked to a separate culture. Instead a bilingual person is one person with complex language and cultural practices that are fluid and changing depending on the particular situation and the local practice. Translanguaging supports the ability of bilingual students to have multiple identities that are not exactly like those constructed in monolingual contexts or in other contexts. It actually buttresses the multiple and fluid identities of bilingual students. (p. 3)

### **Plurilingualism**

A different concept that brings to forefront the individual as a locus of linguistic and cultural contact (Moore & Gajo, 2009) is the concept of *plurilingualism* (The Council of Europe, 2001, 2018). Marshall and Moore (2013) write:

Plurilingualism has been defined as the study of individuals' repertoires and agency in several languages; it places the individual as the locus and actor of contact and emphasizes

the idea that a person's languages and cultures are not kept in separated and balanced compartments but interrelate in distinct ways that can change over time and circumstances and are highly dependent on individual biographies and experiences, social trajectories, and life paths. (p. 476)

This definition of plurilingualism brings attention to plurilingual speakers as active agents whose linguistic repertoires are unique to their individual biographies and experiences. At the same time, the term plurilingualism highlights the dynamic integration of languages within an individual and stresses the importance of the social context that is constantly changing and evolving. Within the plurilingual understanding of language knowledge and use, linguistic repertoires are often skilfully negotiated according to very specific circumstances of an individual. People rarely develop equivalent competencies for each language in their repertoire because they use their languages for specific and differentiated needs. Partial knowledge in one language should not be confused with lack of or reduced competence in this language. As Moore and Gajo (2009) put it:

Depending on how the speaker (and her/his interlocutors) interpret and categorise the situation of communication, she/he can be encouraged to use her/his repertoire as a bilingual or as a learner and sometimes, even, as a monolingual. (p. 142)

Moore and Gajo's (2009) words stress the agency of the speaker. A plurilingual speaker is able to choose with what language s/he wants to be identified, depending on particular circumstances of the situation.

### **Bilingualism vs. Multilingualism vs. Plurilingualism**

In the field of language education, the terms that are used to describe the knowledge and use of more than one language are sometimes used interchangeably. However, some argue that

there are differences between what these terms describe. For example, the Council of Europe (2001, 2018) makes the following distinction between multilingualism and plurilingualism: the term multilingualism is used to describe the knowledge of a number of languages on a societal level, whereas the term plurilingualism is used to describe the dynamic integration of languages within an individual's repertoire (p. 4). Accordingly then, there are multilingual communities and plurilingual individuals.

Others, however, do not differentiate between *multilingualism* and *plurilingualism* in the same way. For example, Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarty (2008) make a distinction between individual bi/multilingualism, which, as they note, is sometimes called plurilingualism, and is defined as the proficiency and use of two or more languages (hence bi/multi), and societal bi/multilingualism which refers to the use of two or more languages in a community or state (p. 5). However, according to Haukås (2016), neurolinguistic researchers distinguish between bilingualism as proficiency in two languages and multilingualism as proficiency in more than two languages. These researchers have shown that bilinguals and multilinguals demonstrate different metacognitive and metalinguistic abilities.

Dynamic bilingualism (Garcia, 2009a) and plurilingualism (The Council of Europe, 2001, 2018) are two concepts that are widely discussed in the current sociolinguistic scholarship. It is noteworthy that these two notions have their origins in different socio-political contexts and realities (the US and Europe, respectively), which influenced their development. While dynamic bilingualism (Garcia, 2009a) and plurilingualism (The Council of Europe, 2001, 2018) are somewhat similar—they both emphasize one's ability to use several languages to varying degrees and for different purposes, there are differences on which researchers working within the tradition

of both concepts focus.<sup>6</sup> Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) argue that the main difference between the two lies within their understanding of language. While in plurilingualism there is a discussion of integration of various languages (or bits and pieces of various languages), in dynamic bilingualism languages are not seen as autonomous systems, but rather as practices that create one linguistic system of a language user. Both concepts acknowledge the influence of the context on one's linguistic competence, and therefore see it as a product of socio-historical forces; however, I believe that an individual's agency is more emphasized in the concept of plurilingualism, and therefore this notion is able to better inform researchers about linguistic choices of an individual.

My own understanding of language learning and language use is the closest to the concept of plurilingualism (the Council of Europe, 2001, 2018), and therefore I use this term as an analytic lens in my dissertation. However, in the practical context of my research, for example during interviews with teachers, terms such as “bilingual” were used to broadly describe a person who speaks more than one language. On those occasions, I tried to seek clarification for the meanings intended by such terms. In what follows, I did not settle on one term but often used a number of different, mostly descriptive names instead, perhaps reflecting the ways in which my discussion is intertwined with school as a site for language learning.

### **School as a Language Learning Context**

The school reality directly mirrors for language learners what is happening in the outside world. Just as the use of multiple languages has become the standard in the current globalized world, linguistically diverse students have become the norm in North American schools. Pointing to the American context, Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) write:

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<sup>6</sup> For a thorough discussion on the subtle nuances in dynamic bilingualism, translanguaging and plurilingualism see, for example, Garcia and Otheguy (2020) or Moore, Lau and Van Viegen (2020).

No matter which data we use, it is also clear that nationally, the emergent bilingual population is growing much more rapidly than the English-speaking student population (p. 9).

Similarly, referring to Canadian urban classrooms, Chumak-Horbatsch (2012) notes:

Immigrant children are everywhere! My two studies . . . revealed their strong presence in Toronto childcare centres. Nearly half are from homes where a heritage language is spoken, and, in some of these homes, families speak multiple heritage languages. Other Canadian cities with large immigrant populations report a similar presence of immigrant children. (p. 3)

Research points to the fact that despite this enormous linguistic and cultural diversity of North American students, the monolingual assumptions identified by Cummins (2007)<sup>7</sup> more than a decade ago are still present in some schools, both in mainstream classrooms as well as bilingual or immersion programs (Cummins, 2007, 2017; Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Heydon, Moffat & Iannacci, 2015; Iannacci, 2007; Ippolito, 2010). These assumptions are inconsistent with current conceptualizations of language, its knowledge and use.

What is also noteworthy is that teacher education programs across North America often do not prepare teacher candidates for working in diverse settings and treat racial, ethnic and linguistic diversity as something atypical. Discussing teacher education and its role in preparing prospective teachers for the current, diverse population of students, Nieto (2000) explains in the following way:

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<sup>7</sup> These assumptions are: 1. Instructions should be carried out exclusively in the target language (in the context of Anglophone Canada and the United States it is English). 2. Translation between the target language and students' home languages has no place in teaching language or literacy. 3. In the context of immersion programs, or second language classes, two languages should be kept separate and never mixed. (Cummins, 2007, pp. 222-223).

Programs . . . are frequently guided by the assumption that the job of schools of education is to train teachers to work in “regular” (i.e., White, middle-class, and monolingual English) classrooms. Typically, teacher education programs give little consideration to the fact that all classrooms in the future will have students of racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds and whose first language may not be English. (p. 182)

More recent publications confirm Nieto’s (2000) observations and note that novice teachers do not feel prepared to teach linguistically diverse children (Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015; O’Neal, Ringler & Rodriguez, 2008; Sullivan-Hewett, Ballard, Hedge & Ticknor, 2014).

However, just as researchers have been realizing that many long-accepted models in the field of language acquisition may be problematic when one tries to account for situations of extreme linguistic complexity (Taylor & Snoddon, 2013, p. 440), practitioners and administrators are becoming aware that it is ineffective to approach linguistically diverse students in the ways that have been done for years. A number of multilingual projects conducted in schools across Canada illustrate how plurilingual education is possible (Cummins & Early, 2011; Lotherington, 2011; Prasad, 2013, 2014, 2016; Schechter & Cummins, 2003); however, many schools are still not prepared to work with children who use multiple languages on a daily basis. Often, the rich cultural and linguistic backgrounds of these students are treated as challenges, instead of being recognized as assets. In Canada, ministry reports draw attention to the importance of building on students’ prior knowledge (for example, Ontario Education, 2005); yet the recognition of this knowledge is not evident in many Canadian schools. In the American context, enshrining bilingual education in legislative imperative such as, for example, the Bilingual Education Act in 1968 or the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 increased top-down oversight and enforcement. This resulted in a shift from the recognition of the importance of students’ home languages and cultures to the focus on

the implementation of standardized testing (Gándara & Escamilla, 2016; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Pietrzela, 2010).

One may ask why knowledge of another language should be treated as an asset. Is there any advantage to it? Specifically, is there anything positive to being plurilingual in the school context? Besides the obvious—being the knowledge of another language, research findings consistently point to a number of advantages of knowing more than one language. Cummins (2001) notes that there are more than 150 empirical studies carried out during the past 30 years that have reported a positive association between bilingualism and students' linguistic, cognitive, or academic growth. Their findings show that bilinguals develop better awareness of structures and functions of language itself—that is, they develop metalinguistic abilities. Moreover, bilingualism can positively influence the learning of additional (third and fourth) languages, which may support students' academic development. Additionally, children who are expected to learn multiple languages may be at a recognizable advantage for developing self-regulation (Rimm-Kauffman & Wanless, 2012). Numerous studies show higher self-regulatory skills in children who use more than one language than in their monolingual peers (Bialystok & Craik, 2010; Bialystok & Martin, 2004). Besides these cognitive advantages, children who know another language most likely will have a better understanding of another culture (since language is not just a system of signs but rather a practice), which seems to be more important than ever in the current global reality. Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) sum it up in the following way: “It is clear that having flexible language practices, being able to use language bilingually . . . can become an important resource for all in the future” (p. 4).

In both the Canadian and the American contexts, students who enter the school system and are fluent (more or less) in a language (or languages) other than English, are still referred to as

English Language Learners (ELL), English as Second Language (ESL), English as a New Language (ENL), or even Limited English Proficient (LEP) (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). These terms are harmful in many ways. First, they focus only on students' lack of English language proficiency—that is, on students' deficit. By doing so, they are reducing these students' to merely what they are not and to what they lack. Second, by discounting students' home languages they perpetuate inequities in education and assume that bilingual students' needs are the same as the needs of monolingual children. Third, these labels highlight the superiority of the English language and its power over other languages of the world (Phillipson, 2016). As Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) note, there is little agreement about what name best describes students who come to schools with their home languages and little or no proficiency in English (p. 2). They, for example, propose the term *emergent bilinguals*, which demonstrates the hope that meaningful education will change these young students into bilingual adults. As mentioned before, in my dissertation research, I do not settle on one term, but I use a number of different, mostly descriptive names instead, for example “children who speak more than language” or “linguistically diverse children.”

### **The Field of Language Teacher Cognition**

Given the importance of teachers' influence and choice inside and outside the classroom, it seems important to consider teachers' beliefs in relation to plurilingualism. De Angelis (2011) notes,

We know that teachers, students, and families have their own opinions about multilingualism and language learning and these may influence what they say or ask while at school. As teachers are likely to be the first point of contact for immigrant families,

assessing what their beliefs are may help us understand if they need to be better supported in their daily work with a student population that is increasingly multilingual. (p. 217)

De Angelis' (2011) remarks remind us that teacher beliefs, which are studied in the field of teacher cognition, must be a key consideration in language education.

To use the simplest definition, teacher cognition is what teachers think, know and believe, and the relationship of these constructs to teachers' classroom practices (Borg, 2003, 2006). By analogy, language teacher cognition is what language teachers think, know and believe and its relationship to language teachers' practices in language classrooms. Most typically, when using the term language classrooms, researchers refer to first, second and foreign language education settings. However, in the context of the present study, I use the term language teacher to refer to preschool teachers who work with linguistically diverse young children who either do not have any or have minimal facility in English upon starting school.

### **Historical Overview**

To analyze how the field of language teacher cognition conceptualizes the teacher as a thinking agent, Burns, Freeman and Edwards (2015) reviewed the research in the area. In what follows, I briefly summarize their review.

The first phase in research on language teacher cognition that Burns et al. (2015) distinguish is the individualist ontology orientation that emerged in the first half of 1990's. According to Burns et al. (2015), the most important publication in this phase was Richards and Nunan's in 1990, in which the language teacher is recognized as a reflective and critical agent with her own assumptions, beliefs and attitudes about the classroom. The main foci of this phase were beliefs of a language teacher, how they were constructed, and how they affected classroom practice. The predominant analytical units used here were the cognitive dimensions of the

decision-making process in individual teachers' minds. Researchers were trying to grasp the process of decision-making and the relationships it created, as they recognized that that process itself was complex and decisions were interrelated. There was also a recognition that the relationship between a teacher's belief system and practice was often indirect and inconsistent.

The second phase that Burns et al. (2015) recognize is the social ontology view that emerged in the second half of 1990's. The authors report that this reorientation was triggered by a collection of papers in Freeman and Richards published in 1996. This shift in language teacher cognition research was also a result of a broad call to take into consideration the sociocultural contexts in which teaching and learning second and foreign language occur. The main focus here was a link between language teacher cognition and language teacher learning. Burns et al. (2015) write:

Teachers' (re)conceptualization and (re)construction of their experiences, previous knowledge, and personal beliefs were seen to respond to both macro- and micro-level contextual factors in their classrooms, schools, and communities. (p. 590)

Researchers started recognizing that teachers' thinking was shaped both by internal and external factors—that is, everything that was happening in the teacher's head and the social settings they were in. The units of analysis in this phase were participant-oriented conceptualizations and explanations—researchers were not looking only at their interpretations of teachers' actions and thoughts, but were asking teachers to self-interpret their mental lives and the relationships between their mental lives and their own practices. There was also a growing interest in relationships between teachers and students, and teachers and teachers. Thus, it can be said that there was a considerable shift away from looking only into teachers' individual minds.

The next stage in the development of research on language teacher cognition is the sociohistorical ontology perspective that started emerging in the early 2000's. The major publication, according to Burns et al. (2015), was Tsui in 2003, in which the author theorized expertise in teaching and its development over time through various theories, knowledge, experience and goals that shape what teachers did in the classroom. The process of developing language teacher expertise was shown here as something that was sociohistorical, distributed and complex, and language teaching was shown to appear in situated interactions between teachers' personal inclinations and social practices (Burns et al. 2015, p. 592). Burns et al. (2015) write,

Thus, the unit of research analysis in this ontological system placed emphasis on capturing thinking as a function of place and time operating through interaction or negotiation. (p. 592)

Crucial here was also the recognition of researchers' own conceptualizations and their position within the language teacher cognition research.

The final stage in the development of research on language teacher cognition, according to Burns et al. (2015), is the phase of complex and chaotic systems ontology. For them, the key publications here were de Bot in 2008 and Larsen-Freeman and Cameron published in the same year, in which the authors argue for integrating into language teacher cognition the attributes of complex systems, such as emergentism, dynamism, change and unpredictability (Burns et al., 2015, p. 593). Researchers note the interrelationship between beliefs, knowledge, and practice, but they see them as emergent rather than stable constructs. Moreover, these mental constructs are viewed as dynamic, situated and complex. Thinking seems to be situated not in particular teachers, but rather may be relational. Teacher learning then is not viewed as a linear process, but it is viewed

as “dynamic, nonlinear, dependent on initial conditions (prior experiences), unpredictable, and chaotic” (Burns et al., 2015, p. 594).

While there is a definite shift away from the individualist approach to language teacher cognition research (that is, the interest in the cognitive aspect of thought-processes of individual teachers), the current scholarship in the field represents a diversity of holistic, ecological, and situated positions on cognition (Burns et al. 2015, p. 595; for a collection of various position on language teacher cognition, see the special edition of the *Modern Language Journal*, 99 (3), 2015).

### **The Language of Teacher Cognition**

In the last 25 years, in teacher cognition research in both mainstream education and language education, a number of labels have been used to describe teachers’ mental lives. Oftentimes identical terms have been defined in different ways, and different concepts have been used to describe very similar mental constructs. For example, while Kagan (1992) defined *belief* as “tacit, often unconsciously held assumption about students, learning, classrooms and the subject matter to be taught” (p. 65), Pajares (1992) wrote a great deal about *belief* and *knowledge* not only differentiating between them, but also insisting on a more affective, evaluative and episodic nature of *belief* (while still seeing these two constructs as inseparable). Because of this conceptual variation in the field, Borg (2003, 2006) argues that the term *teacher cognition* should refer to the complexity of teachers’ mental lives; he insists on using teacher cognition as an inclusive term because in the mind of teachers these constructs are not isolated. This is illustrated in Borg’s (2003) diagram, which is represented in Figure 1.

As illustrated in Figure 1, on one side, there is a list of various mental constructs that could go under the label of teacher cognition (such as, beliefs, knowledge, theories, attitudes, images, assumptions, metaphors, conceptions, and perspectives); and, on the other side, there is a list of

various aspects of teachers' work that might be the subject of these mental constructs. For example, teachers can hold beliefs about teaching, learning, students, subject matter, curricula, other teachers, instructional activities. Additionally, Borg's (2003) framework consists of four areas: schooling, professional coursework, contextual factors, and classroom practice.

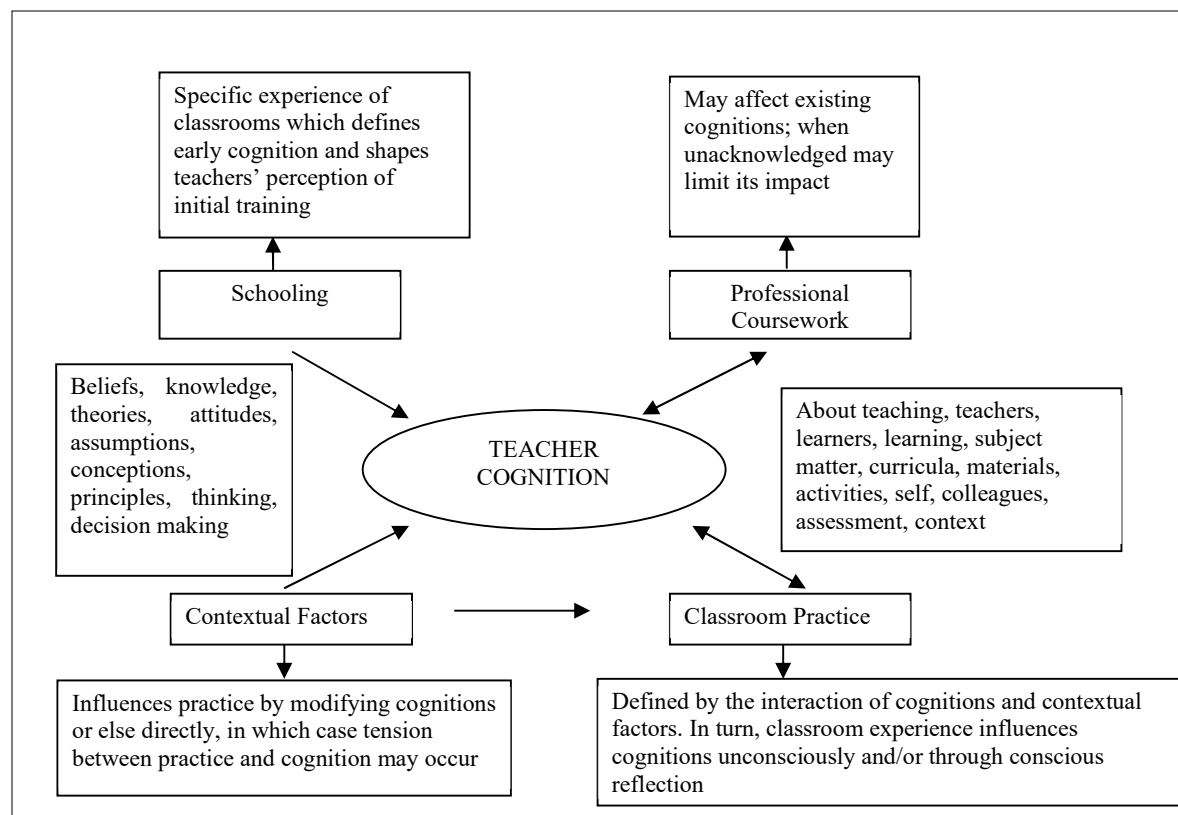


Figure 1: Elements and processes in language teacher cognition. Reproduced from "Teacher cognition in language teaching: A review of research on what language teachers think, know, believe, and do," by S. Borg, 2003, *Language Teaching*, 36(2), p. 82. The permission of the author and the copyright holder is granted.

When looked at holistically, these four components emphasize the importance of historical, social, and cultural context in language teacher cognition—that is, they represent teacher cognition as situated in a specific time and place. Freeman (2016) notes,

Schooling and professional coursework are historical in the sense that they contribute to teachers' background and the formation of their thinking, while contextual factors and

classroom practice are categories of the present environment of thinking. Of these two, classroom practice, which includes practice teaching, is specifically about place; classroom experience and contextual factors are catch-alls for elements that may contribute to shaping instruction. (p. 158)

When discussing Borg's (2003) diagram, Freeman (2016) points to the importance of the language that wraps around the outside of the diagram. The top of it illustrates early experiences that shape teacher cognition, while the bottom refers to the present time "reflect[ing] progression in thinking over time as teachers learn through what they experience" (Freeman, 2016, p. 160).

The importance of contextual factors such as time and place in understanding teachers' mental lives' is emphasized by Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015), who propose the phrase "the ecology of language teachers' inner lives" (p. 436). Recognizing that teachers' mental lives are complex and situated in particular contexts of their activities, Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) argue that teacher cognition should be viewed as "an emergent sense making in action" (p. 436). When understanding teacher cognition in this way, one has to take into consideration that the human mind is not a container in which mental constructs such as beliefs or attitudes are stored ready to be discovered and named. Similarly, practices are not spaces in which particular mental constructs may or may not be applied, but they are viewed as outcomes of meaning-making acts in which individual and communal are bound together by the context (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 238). Looking at teacher cognition through the lens of the ecology of language teachers' inner lives situates it in the broader context of teachers' larger lives, their classrooms, schools, local and national education systems—that is, all that can be called social, historical, and cultural contexts. Researchers have to be sensitive here to these broader contexts, as well as their own role in the research event. Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) put it in the following way:

When teachers describe their emotional struggles, passions, motivations, values, or beliefs, they do not simply put words to pre-existing mental mechanisms that reside, fully developed and ready to be coherently articulated, in their heads. When they tell, they tell with a particular purpose, to a particular audience. What and how they tell is shaped by the context of the telling which influences what can, should, or even must be told about their selves, their students, and their teaching worlds. (p. 438-439)

What Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) indirectly point to is the view that what teachers know, think and believe is intrinsically linked with their emotions and values, which are interrelated.

### **The Interrelatedness of Emotion and Cognition**

Thought and affect have often been separated and looked upon as two completely different worlds. Swain (2013) traces this separation back to Socrates, who emphasized the pursuit of reason, prioritizing cognition over emotion. This trend was developed during the Age of Reason and again during the Enlightenment, and it has had a tremendous impact on traditional psychology (p. 197). Although the existing literature points to the importance of the emotional aspect of teaching both in mainstream education as well as SLA (e.g., Hargreaves 1998, 2000, 2001; Imai, 2010; Nias, 1996; Noddings, 1996; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007), researchers agree that the relationship between emotion and cognition in teachers' work has still not been thoroughly examined (Borg, 2003; Zembylas, 2004, 2005a, 2007), or even has been somewhat neglected. However, teaching is a deeply emotional work and, as Zembylas (2005a) rightly notes, teaching is a way of "being and feeling," which is always in relation to others (p. 469).

My understanding of teacher cognition has been enriched by the Vygotskian socio-cultural theory of mind, in which the two seemingly different worlds of emotion and cognition are brought

together. While going into the details of the social-cultural theory of mind goes beyond the scope of the present work, I briefly touch upon Vygotskian concepts that are relevant for my research. In this context, Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie*, in which the interconnection between emotion and cognition is foregrounded, is of particular importance. Although Vygotsky was mostly concerned with the development of children, following Mahn and John-Steiner (2002), I understand and use the concept of *perezhivanie* in the context of transformative experiences of all types, not only those limited to children.

### **Perezhivanie**

Vygotsky's writings on the relationship between emotion and cognition remain largely unknown, although, according to some scholars (e.g., Mahn & John-Steiner, 2002), they are crucial in understanding his work as a whole. Vygotsky passed away before fully developing many of his concepts, including the concept of *perezhivanie*. Vygotskian scholars have emphasized different aspects in integrating "the emotional" into contemporary writing and interpretation of Vygotsky's theories.

The concept of *perezhivanie* was first introduced by Vygotsky at the very beginning of his work, in "The Psychology of Art," in which he used the concept in relation to psychological processes related to art. In the later period of his work, Vygotsky addressed *perezhivanie* in a lecture translated into English in 1994 under the title "The problem of the environment" (Blunden, 2016). Here Vygotsky (1994) uses the term to describe "the emotional experience arising from any situation or from any aspect of his [child's] environment" (p. 339). It is the second use of the concept of *perezhivanie* that is of particular significance in the context of my work.

Blunden (2016) argues that there is no appropriate English translation of the word "perezhivanie," at least not the one that would capture all the connotations that the term entails in

Russian (p. 274). The most typical translation of perezhivanie is “lived experience,” “emotional experience,” or “experiencing.” Blunden (2016) explains the origins of the Russian word in the following way:

Perezhivanie comes from the verb perezhivat. Zhivat means “to live” and pere means carrying something over something, letting something pass beneath and overleaping it, something like cutting out a piece of space, time, or feeling. So perezhivat means to be able to survive after some disaster, that is, to “over-live” something (p. 276).

One of the possible meanings of the word perezhivat is to “over-live” a painful experience, but suffering is not necessary in the experience; perezhivat can also mean to “go through” something. Perezhivanie in the Vygotskian sense refers to any experience that leaves a lasting impact on a person; that somehow changes their development. In that sense perezhivanie refers to life-changing experiences.

It is important to note, though, that living through an experience does not guarantee that it will have any effect on one’s life; what is crucial in perezhivanie is processing the experience, interpreting it and making sense of it. However, the emotional relation to an event is as critical here as cognitive processes of an individual. In other words, in perezhivanie both intellectual functions of one’s consciousness and its affective aspects, such as needs and desires, meet and give meaning to a certain experience. Here the interrelation between emotion and cognition can be seen very clearly. One can say that experiencing an event happens in the sphere of emotion and processing an event happens in the sphere of cognition, but when Vygotsky (1994) talks about emotionally relating to a certain event, he suggests that these two spheres are closely intertwined. Working over, processing and interpreting are reserved not only for cognition, but one’s emotional relation to an event is also crucial in these processes. Accordingly, meaning-making depends as

much on an individual's intellectual work as on the individual's emotional state. As Vygotsky (1997) writes: "Meaning does not belong to thinking but to consciousness as whole" (p. 138).

Vygotsky (1994) emphasizes that not only do environmental factors shape an experience and impact a person, but so do individual characteristics of the person themselves. He refers to *perezhivanie* as a prism through which the environment is refracted and makes an impact on a person. In other words, *perezhivanie* is not only an experience, but it is what the experience means to the particular person and what the person does with the experience. He writes:

*An emotional experience [perezhivanie] is a unit where, on the one hand, in an indivisible state, the environment is represented, i.e. that which is being experienced – an emotional experience [perezhivanie] is always related to something which is found outside the person – and on the other hand, what is represented is how I, myself, am experiencing this (...)* So, in an emotional experience [perezhivanie] we are always dealing with an indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics, which are represented in the emotional experience [perezhivanie] (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 342, emphasis in original).

Consequently, two people can go through the same event, but their experience of the event may be completely different. As a result, the event may have completely different effects on their lives.

*Perezhivanie* is a formative experience. It adds to one's personality, changes it and transforms it. Blunden (2016) argues that *perezhivanie* is a unit of one's personality, in which personality is made up of life's *perezhivaniya*. He puts it in the following way:

*Perezhivaniya* are the units or chapters of one's autobiography, the episodes that stand out in the memory from the background of one's life, and having been worked over by you and told and retold (to yourself or others), and "coded" in language and images, become meaningful. Together *perezhivaniya* form the basis of who you are: not just what happened

to you, but what you did, what you made of your life, in the context of the life-projects to which you were committed and that made the event life-changing and emotion-charged, how you worked over them and gave them meaning. (p. 278)

What is particularly important here is the active role of the one who undergoes the experience. It is the individual who experiences that gives the meaning to the experience; who takes it and makes it their own, and, ultimately, whose development is changed. This last point is particularly relevant for the language teacher cognition research, as it recognizes teachers as social agents who have an active role in their interactions with the environment.

### **Perezhivanie and its Connection to Learning and Teaching**

In the last decade, Vygotsky's theoretical framework, particularly his concept of *perezhivanie*, has been utilized in language learning and language teacher cognition research (Davin, Chavoshan & Donato, 2018; Golombek, 2015; Mok, 2015; Veresov & Mok, 2018). For example, Mok (2015) suggests that employing the concept of *perezhivanie* in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research leads to more learner-centered approaches that are locally-sensitive, that is, they examine subjective experiences of the learner, linking these to both past and ongoing development. Golombek (2015) details the self-inquiry of a language teacher educator who examined her *emotional dissonance* regarding her mediation of the reflection journals of a teacher learner teaching an ESL class. Using the concepts of *perezhivanie*, *sense* and motivation in her analysis, Golombek (2015) demonstrates how recognizing the cause of her emotional dissonance and its effect on her mediation enabled the teacher educator to reframe her understanding of the teacher learner as a learner. Golombek (2015) calls for a redefinition of the language of teacher cognition to integrate the interaction of both language teacher learner and teacher educator emotion and cognition.

Following this line of research, I argue that the concept of *perezhivanie* is appealing because it counters and challenges reductive cognitivist assumptions both in language teacher cognition and in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research. When looking at one's development through the prism of *perezhivanie*, individual and the environment are represented as a complex and dynamic unity (Mok, 2015, p. 151). Consequently, utilizing the concept of *perezhivanie* as a theoretical framework opens a possibility of a more emic and locally sensitive approach to research.

### **The Intersection of Teacher Cognition and Language Learning**

Teachers' cognition about multilingualism has been explored only in few studies (Haukås, 2016, p. 3). Most of them emerge from the European context, with few coming from the Australian context. The following section offers a brief overview of some of these studies.

De Angelis (2011) investigated 176 secondary teachers' beliefs about the role of prior language knowledge and the promotion of multilingualism (understood simply as the knowledge of more than two languages) in enhancing students' learning. The participants taught different subjects in Austria, Great Britain and Italy. The results in all three countries were similar—that is, De Angelis (2011) reports that while the teachers believed that knowledge of a home language may be positive for students, they were also convinced that its use in the classroom context may delay learning the majority language. Teachers also believed that to be able to refer to students' languages and cultures in the classroom, they must be themselves familiar with these home languages and cultures.

Plurilingual<sup>8</sup> awareness among multilingual foreign language teachers in Poland was the focus of two studies conducted by Otwinowska (2014). In the first one, she uses a questionnaire to examine 233 pre- and in-service English teachers' plurilingual awareness. The second study involves a focus group discussion with five in-service English teachers who taught in secondary schools. The first main result of the two studies is that the more experienced teachers are, the more plurilingual awareness they have. The second result reported is that the more languages teachers know and use, the more plurilingual awareness they have. Additionally, the participants of the two studies report reluctance towards using languages they are not familiar with in the classroom context, a finding which is similar to De Angelis (2011).

Teachers and principals in elementary schools in Finland were interviewed by Björklund (2013) to examine their views on multilingualism and multiculturalism, the challenges they experience and the tools they need for support. The results demonstrate several different views on multilingualism and multiculturalism in the classroom. First, the teachers view the multilingual classroom as an arena of a potential challenge for a teacher, which might be both rewarding and frustrating. Second, the participants view the multilingual classroom as something natural—simply a result of a changing environment. Third, the multilingual classroom is seen as an asset, with participants indicating that the different languages and cultural backgrounds represented in the classroom should be used in order to develop the language awareness, curiosity and sensitivity of all students. It is noteworthy that, as Björklund (2013) notes, often individual teachers in the study represented more than one of the above perspectives.

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<sup>8</sup> *Plurilingualism* is defined by Otwinowska (2014) according to the Council of Europe's definition as "the dynamic integration of languages within an individual's repertoire", Council of Europe, 2001, p. 4; *multilingualism* is defined as simply the knowledge of more than two languages; plurilingual awareness is described as: "the complex ability to promote plurilingual approaches in the language classroom", p. 103).

The professional knowledge and beliefs in the context of language biographies of 31 English as Second Language (ESL) teachers of adults in Australia are investigated by Ellis (2013). The main focus of the study was whether the language learning experience of ESL teachers contributed to their professional knowledge and beliefs, and if so, what kind of experience made this contribution. To differentiate between plurilingual and monolingual teachers, Ellis (2013) uses the term plurilingualism as it is defined by the Council of Europe (2001, 2018)—that is, as a repertoire of varieties of language that individuals use. The study focuses on teachers' knowledge about language and language learning and the origin of that knowledge, assuming that, as Ellis (2013) puts it, "language learning experience may be an important part of teachers' personal histories which form part of the life experience contributing to the knowledge and beliefs underpinning practice" (p. 451). Working under the assumption that teachers' beliefs may not be consciously accessible, the study uses classroom observations to provide "rich and grounded" context for questioning teachers about their practices and beliefs (Ellis, 2013, p. 453). Ellis (2013) reports that plurilingual teachers talked about their language learning in neutral terms, admitting that it is generally a challenging but normal and possible process. On the other hand, in describing their language learning experiences, monolingual teachers did not use the same neutral terms as their plurilingual peers—they characterised language learning as charged with possible embarrassment and failure. The findings also demonstrate a direct link between teachers' own second language learning and their work as ESL teachers. Plurilingual teachers, for example, showed better understanding of practices natural to plurilinguals, such as translanguaging. Such understanding may have great pedagogical consequences as teachers may be able to better relate to their students. Additionally, recounting their own language learning experience plurilingual teachers demonstrated better knowledge of different language learning strategies, while

monolingual teachers lacking similar experience had to rely on textbooks. Ellis (2013) proposes that more attention be paid to the language learning experience of ESL teachers as a resource on which they can draw in their own practice (p. 466).

### **Rationale for the Present Study**

Studies in the area of teacher cognition focusing on multilingualism (understood in the reviewed literature as knowledge of more than one language on both individual and group level) or plurilingualism generally tend to adopt the individualist and cognitivist view of teacher cognition. There is an expectation that teachers' perspectives, beliefs or attitudes can be captured in questionnaires or single interviews. There is also an assumption that the link between teachers' mental constructs, their articulation, and their demonstration (for example, in classroom practices) is simple and direct. Cross (2010) notes that there is a need for the reconceptualization of the theoretical framework for studying language teacher cognition to include the influence of social context on teachers' understanding and thinking. He writes:

First, and most significantly, it is now clear there is a need for a more expansive psychological theory of cognition that recognizes the influence of the social in relation to thought—that is, a theory of cognition that extends its focus to include mental processes together with teachers' practice, and, increasingly, the contexts within which the interaction between thinking and practice takes place. (Cross, 2010, p. 437)

Cross (2010) further adds that the theoretical framework must recognize cognition as “neither static nor fixed” but subject to development across time and experience. Such understanding of teacher cognition is expanded with the recognition of the importance of teachers' prior experiences in relation to how they think and behave in the present.

Although the reviewed studies mention some role of emotion in language teachers' work (Björklund, 2013; Ellis, 2013), I argue that a stronger recognition of the relationship between emotion and cognition is needed (Borg, 2003, 2006). In my dissertation, I do that by employing Vygotsky's (1994) concept of *perezhivanie*. I view this concept as fruitful because, as stated earlier, it recognizes the unity of human consciousness and the interdependence of each of its units, without prioritizing either of them. In other words, it allows one to view and explore language teaching not only as understanding, thinking, knowing and planning but also as feeling.

Exploring what teachers know, think and believe in relation to young language learners is important because, as existing research demonstrates, young children who have some facility in more than one language have become the norm in North American schools (Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012). Additionally, the literature shows that there are multiple misconceptions with regard to how young children learn languages, and these myths are widely spread among both school practitioners and general public (e.g., Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013; Espinoza, 2013; McLaughlin, 1992).

Researching the literature in the field, I have not come across a study that examines teacher cognition in the context of young language learners, particularly a study that would adopt a dynamic and situated view of teacher cognition, recognizing its relation to teachers' emotional lives. My hope is that the present study fills this gap.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of my research study was to examine how teachers of linguistically diverse young children understand language learning and language use in the context of their professional and personal biographies. Although existing literature in the area of bilingualism, bi(multi)lingual education and second language learning was to serve as a necessary context for my study, my goal was not to determine whether teachers implement or do not implement the current research in the field. Instead, I aimed to explore my participants' beliefs and understandings, that is, their cognitions (Borg, 2003). To guide my work, I developed the following research questions. The main question of my study was:

***Q1:** How do teachers who work with young students who have facility in more than one language understand language learning and language use?*

To obtain a holistic answer to the research question, I articulated two subquestions that stemmed from the main question. These were:

***SQ1:** How does this understanding of language learning and use affect teachers' beliefs about their linguistically diverse students?*

***SQ2:** How does this understanding of language learning and use affect teachers' practices in a linguistically diverse classroom?*

I employed qualitative research design and analysis. My choice was not accidental because, as Borg (2006) reports, qualitative research instruments, such as verbal commentaries, observation,

and reflective writing are the most common instruments used in language teacher cognition research (p. 198). These instruments have the potential to illuminate meanings and demonstrate how participants engage in meaning making (Patton, 2015, p. 6). During the data collection, I stayed flexible and sensitive to my participants' needs, keeping the dynamic and situated understanding of teacher cognition (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015) in the foreground.

The study was designed as naturalistic inquiry. As Patton (2015) notes, the degree to which a design is naturalistic falls along a continuum with completely open-ended fieldwork on one end to a fully controlled laboratory experiment on the other end (p. 49). I called my study a naturalistic inquiry because I conducted my research in a real-world setting, and, as much as it was possible, I did not affect, control or manipulate its results in any way. Instead, as mentioned, I remained open to emerging possibilities. In my data analysis and interpretation, I chose a generic approach to qualitative research (Lichtman, 2010, p. 87), combining the narrative inquiry with the case study approach. My goal was to focus on each participant's personal story, keeping its uniqueness and distinctive characteristics.

### **The Setting**

Due to some changes in my personal life, I found myself moving from Toronto to a small town in the Midwest United States – Diversville.<sup>9</sup> The town is located in the southern part of a very White and linguistically homogenous state; however, due to the presence of a major state university, it has a relatively large international community that is linguistically diverse. Diversville is home to 85,000 residents, and about 50,000 students enrolled at the university.

Initially, I planned to collect my data in four kindergarten classrooms of a public elementary school; however, this plan had to be changed upon difficulties receiving approval for

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<sup>9</sup> All names used in this work are pseudonyms.

the conduct of the research from the county school administration. I had to alter my initial research plan to conduct research in a public school context and look for a different setting.

Looking for a setting that would have some linguistic diversity among its student body, I came across the “Busy Bees Nursery School,” a preschool centre affiliated with the university. The centre has been operating for almost 70 years and it is well known in Diversville. It is licenced by the state, accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, and continuously receives the highest indicator of quality given by a voluntary state-wide rating system. It serves children aged three to five and offers full-time and part-time care. A vast majority of children are enrolled on full-time basis, and from what I observed, many of them are dropped off early in the morning and are picked up at the end of the day (the centre operates between 7.30am and 5.30pm). The center has three classrooms with two lead teachers and around twenty children in each of the rooms. Additionally, there are two assistant teachers in each classroom. According to the centre’s website, the centre offers a “continuity of care,” that is, teachers and children remain together throughout a child’s experience in the program. As the website further explains: “this practice supports the formation of close, nurturing relationships between caregivers, young children, and their families.” Many children come from countries other than the United States and do not know any English upon starting. As the website states, the teachers working in the centre have “vast experience working with children who know no English.”<sup>10</sup> As I could see for myself after entering the setting, around 25% to 33% of the children in each classroom come from families who speak languages other than English at home, but the teachers often do not know if the children in their classrooms were born in the US or in their home countries. The curriculum in each classroom is entirely play-based. Rather than following a prescribed curriculum, the

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<sup>10</sup> Due to the issue of anonymity, I do not include bibliographical reference for these pieces of information.

teachers implement an emergent curriculum, that is, the curriculum which is responsive to children's individual abilities and interests. Neither the state licensing agency nor the early childhood accreditation office regulate education of English language learners in early childhood education settings.

### **Gaining Access**

Upon obtaining the ethics approvals from the director of the university's Early Childhood Education Services, I set up a meeting with the director of the preschool centre and all six lead teachers working there. During the meeting, the teachers were given letters explaining my study (Appendix A) along with consent forms to sign (Appendix B). One of the lead teachers had other obligations and could not participate in my study. Therefore, I received five signed consent forms and recruited five participants in total.<sup>11</sup> After the initial meeting with the director of the center and all of the teachers, throughout the duration of the data collection I met with each of the participants individually. All of the meetings took place in the staff room of the Busy Bees Nursery School. Because I had direct access to children during classroom observations, I also obtained consent forms from parents/guardians of each child in all of the classrooms (Appendix C). Parents of one child in one of the classrooms did not agree to my observations, and I did not record any of his interactions with any of the teachers.

### **Data Gathering Strategies**

As mentioned, I employed a qualitative research design. Table 1 summarizes the instruments and duration of each stage of data collection.

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<sup>11</sup> I introduce the participants of my study later in this dissertation.

Table 1  
Timeline of Study Procedure and Data Collection Instruments

Phase	Instrument	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4-8	Week 9-10	Week 11-13
Recruitment and Informed Consent (Teachers and Parents)	Recruitment Letters; Informed Consent Forms	✓	✓				
Teachers Biographical Data	Biographical Data Questionnaire (10 min)	✓	✓				
First interviews	Semi-structured Interview (30-60 min., audio-recorded)		✓	✓			
Classroom Observations (5 days per teacher; 2 hrs. each session)	Field notes				✓		
First Interviews & Classroom Observations Data Analysis						✓	
Second Interviews	Informal Conversational Interview (25-45 min., audio-recorded)						✓

### Biographical Data Questionnaire

The goal of the questionnaire (Appendix D) was to gather data about each teacher's education, prior work experience, and possible personal exposure to learning languages. This information was important because, as research points out (Borg, 2006; Ellis, 2013, Otwinowska, 2014), there is a connection between teachers' personal experiences with language learning and their beliefs and practices. Other factors, such as ethnicity or gender may also have influence on teachers' knowledge and their beliefs regarding language learning and use (Kubota & Lin, 2009).

### Semi-structured Interview

When conducting these interviews (Appendix E), I employed an open-ended interview approach (Patton, 2015, pp. 437-440). In this approach each question of the interview is carefully

worded and arranged in advance, and all participants are asked the same questions. However, questions are worded in a completely open-ended format and participants are free to respond in whichever way they wish. I, as an interviewer, was also flexible to probe into given answers to elicit more information, which I often did. The ultimate goal of these interviews was to gain insights into individual teacher's views on teaching young language learners, language learning in general, and their own experiences with languages in and out of the school context. Because of my understanding of teacher cognition as situated in a particular historical, social, and cultural context, these questions referred both to teachers' past experiences with language learning as well as to immediate context of their present work.

### **Observations and Field Notes**

During my classroom observation I kept in mind that any links between teachers' beliefs and thoughts and their practices may not always be direct and consistent. As a result, I had to remember that inferring what teachers' beliefs are from their classroom practices may turn out to be problematic for an outside observer. However, I believe that only firsthand observations of each teacher in action and in the natural context of their every day work had the potential of providing me with a holistic picture of the teacher participants' understanding of linguistic diversity in their classrooms. Patton (2015) explains it in the following way:

In addition to the value of direct, personal contact with and observations of a setting through fieldwork, the inquirer is better able to understand and capture the context within which people interact—for understanding context is essential to a holistic perspective. (p. 332)

Additionally, I chose to engage in classroom observations to obtain “rich and grounded context” (Ellis, 2013, p. 453) for questioning teachers in relation to their beliefs.

In this way, the classroom observations were crucial in developing questions for informal conversational interviews.

During the observations, I initially positioned myself as a non-participant observer (Patton, 2015, p. 336), although this positioning had to be slightly altered during my subsequent visits to each classroom because young children tend to spontaneously engage in interactions with people around them, especially if there is a new adult in their classroom. During my observations, children often approached me asking numerous questions and, at times, I was asked to participate in some of the classroom activities. On the occasions when I was not able to continue note-taking during my visits in the classroom, I completed the field notes directly after leaving the centre.

Following Creswell (2013), in addition to “descriptive notes” (p. 137) in which I recorded what was being observed in the classroom, I kept track of “reflective notes,” (p. 137) documenting my own activities, circumstances in which I was observing, my emotional responses to what was happening, and questions that came to my mind during the observations.

As I expected, manual note-taking turned to be challenging but also the most appropriate and the least intrusive method of recording my observations, given the context. Had I used audio or video recording device to record my classroom observations, it would have taken much longer for preschool children to get accustomed to the equipment and not pay much attention to it than to my sole presence in the classroom. My choice was motivated by Borg (2006), who notes the following:

[D]ecisions about the recording options which are adopted will need to reflect both the resources available to the researcher and, often more importantly, what is appropriate and permissible in the context under study ... Decisions about how to record observations, then,

need to be made not only on methodological grounds but with an appreciation of the context in which the observations will occur. (p. 281)

### **Informal Conversational Interviews Based on Observation**

In the second round of interviews, I adapted an informal conversational interview approach (Patton, 2015, p. 438) in which questions emerge from the immediate context. In this case, the immediate contexts were the semi-structured interviews and the classroom observations. In these informal conversational interviews, participants were not asked the same questions. The goal of these interviews was to explore some of the themes mentioned in the semi-structured interviews and to discuss what was recorded during the classroom observations. In other words, these interviews served as a tool for further elicitation of teachers' beliefs. For example, below is a brief extract from my second interview with Tess, in which I ask her about something I had observed during the classroom observation:

Researcher: *And now, during the observation, it happened a couple of times, this particular situation was with the linguistically diverse child, but I noticed this was with children who have English only, at least that's what we think ... you tend not to correct children. For example, the girl said, "I cut myself, and I bleded." And you didn't correct her ...*

Tess: *Yes, right.*

Researcher: *Why? And I'm not saying you should. It's just something that I noticed.*

Tess: *I think that usually I'll try to use the correct language in the conversation, but I don't want them to feel self-conscious, and not want to speak because they are afraid, I'll correct them, and so usually I would say, "Yes, your finger is bleeding." Or use the word in the context in correct English.*

Borg (2006) reports that there are studies which examine teachers' actual classroom practices in relation to teachers' reported beliefs—that is, their focus is on the congruence between classroom practices and teachers' beliefs. As mentioned, I did not want to follow this path. To avoid possible misunderstandings and situations that may have seemed threatening to the participants, before I started the observations, I assured teachers that during my classroom visits I was not assessing consistency between their stated opinions (as expressed in semi-structured interviews) and their practices. Rather, the goal was to familiarize myself with the context in which my participants worked. I restated this affirmation before the informal conversational interviews.

### **Data Analysis and Interpretation**

In naturalistic inquiry, the distinction between data collection and data analysis is not always clear cut (Patton, 2015). Additionally, as Lichtman (2010) notes, naturalistic inquiry can be iterative and nonlinear, with multiple beginning points (p. 19). This pattern occurred numerous times during my research process. For example, I began some initial data analysis while the other data were still being collected. The questions for the informal conversational interviews were based on the semi-structured interviews and the classroom observation; therefore, they had to be analyzed before the end of the data collection.

After completing all of the classroom observations, I organized my field-notes into one manageable computer file. All of the interviews were audio-recorded, and I transcribed each of the audio-recordings in full. I chose to transcribe the recordings myself because, following Lapadat and Lindsay (1998), I believed that the process of transcription in itself is useful for further analysis and interpretation. Lapadat and Lindsay (1998) put it in the following way:

We want to emphasize that it is not just the transcription product – those verbatim words written down – that is important; it is also the process that is valuable. Analysis takes place

and understandings are arrived at through the process of listening and re-listening, viewing and re-viewing. We think that transcription facilitates the close attention and the interpretive thinking that is needed to make sense of the data. (p. 31)

During the transcription process I aimed at transcribing the interviews word-for-word. At times, however, for the purpose of clarity, I simplified the transcript omitting filler sounds and expressions (e.g., “like,” “you know,” uhm”). I made this choice because, as Ochs (1979) notes, “A transcript that is too detailed is difficult to follow and assess. A more useful transcript is a more selective one.” (p. 44)

After numerous readings of the interview transcripts and other data, I decided to present my data as narrative inquiry in which the focus is on an individual’s personal experience (Creswell, 2013, p. 55). Naturally, this narrative was guided by my theoretical framework (dynamic view of teacher cognition and its relationship with teachers’ emotional lives) and by the research questions. In order not to lose distinctive characteristics of each participant, I made a decision to treat each teacher as a separate case. Case study approach is a common method used in research on second language learning and use, and as Duff (2008) notes “it highlights the ‘bounded,’ singular nature of the case, the importance of context, the availability of multiple sources of information or perspectives on observation, and the in-depth nature of analysis” (p. 22). Following that decision, I engaged in a deep examination of each interview to create an in-depth, detailed, and holistic story for each participant (Patton, 2015, p. 528). When creating each story (a “portrait” as I called it in the analytical chapter), I used descriptive language, keeping the interpretation of what I recorded to minimum. The goal was to immerse myself in the language used by the participants, adapting an *emic* approach (Patton, 2015, p. 544), and staying true to each teacher’s telling of their story.

Upon completion of the portraits, I spent a substantive amount of time with each participants' story. Rereading them multiple times, I realized that these narratives were taking me in a slightly different direction than I had initially anticipated. The portraits seemed incomplete, and I realized that I was missing a theoretical component that would help me thoroughly analyze and interpret the stories. To be more specific, when I was planning my research and later, at the initial stage of my data collection, I expected to see some interrelatedness of teachers' knowledge and their emotional lives. However, only during numerous readings of the transcripts did I start realizing how much of what the teachers said was saturated with various emotions or recollection of emotions. When one looks carefully at the participants' statements, emotions seem to function almost like a blueprint added on top of teachers' beliefs, understandings, attitudes, opinions, and assumptions – something through which all aspects of their cognition are sieved. Keeping the relationship between cognition and emotion in mind, I opened myself to new possibilities and went back to the literature. Exploring this link between cognition and emotion, I rediscovered Vygotsky's sociocultural theory of learning and made a decision to employ his concept of *perezhivanie* in the analysis of my data.

Next, using my research questions to guide my work, I engaged in the further analysis and interpretation of previously created stories. I followed Bell (2002), who explains narrative inquiry as follows:

In its fullest sense, narrative inquiry requires going beyond the use of narrative as rhetorical structure, that is, simply telling stories, to an analytic examination of the underlying insights and assumptions that the story illustrates. (p. 208)

I immersed myself in deep textual analysis, using an inductive approach. I also used direct interpretation. Creswell (2013) describes the process in the following way:

A researcher looks at a single instance and draws meaning from it without looking for multiple instances. It is a process of pulling the data apart and putting it back together in a more meaningful way. (p. 163)

During the process, I revisited the transcripts and questioned my interpretations, challenging myself to represent the richness and complexity of each narrative. Finally, after completing analysis and interpretation of each single story, I cross-examined all five of them, looking for their similarities and differences, seeking to find patterns and developing naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2013).

I triangulated my research comparing data across various sources. I used different types of data: my field notes collected during classroom visits, data collected during the initial interview, and data collected during the second interview. These different data sources provided me with a holistic picture of the problem I explored.

### **Ethical Concerns**

The proposal of my research study was submitted to the York University Ethics Review Board, it underwent ethical review and was approved. Following ethics approval from York University, I submitted the proposal of my research study to the local school corporation. The school corporation does not have a research review committee; instead, requests for ethics approvals are handled by individual administrators. After failing to receive approvals from the local school corporation, I submitted an amendment to the proposal in which I described the need for changing the setting. The amendment was approved by the York University Ethics Review Board. Following the approval of the amendment, I submitted a Research Proposal Package both to the departmental administration of the local university and the administration of the preschool centre (the university research office stated no need for their involvement in the process). As

mentioned, upon obtaining the approvals, I set up a meeting with the director of the preschool centre and all lead teachers working there. During the meeting, I obtained the signed consent forms from five participants. I also obtained consent forms from parents/guardians of each student in all of the classrooms. Parents of one student in one of the classrooms did not agree to my observations, and I did not record any of his interactions with any of the teachers.

The data I collected were treated with complete confidentiality, and no identifying features of the institution or the participants are used. All names of people and places used in my work are pseudonyms. The collected data are securely stored, and only I have access to it. The anticipated duration of the data storage is three years, and after this time the data will be destroyed.

### **Situating Myself within the Research Setting and the Research Process**

While being an insider to a research setting may provide a researcher with an easier access to the setting and more acceptance from the participants, it may also have negative impact on the research process (Corbin Dwyer & Buckle, 2009). As a member of a given community, researchers have their own experiences in any particular (or similar) setting, which may influence the way they interpret what they witness during the data collection. On the other hand, the participants may assume shared knowledge and understanding with the researcher and, therefore, they may not feel the need to explain their position as they would to someone who is an outsider. Being the outsider to the setting may turn out to be an asset and yield more meaningful data. Corbin Dwyer and Buckle (2009) put it in the following way:

Although this shared status can be very beneficial as it affords access, entry, and a common ground from which to begin the research, it has the potential to impede the research process as it progresses. It is possible that the participant will make assumptions of similarity and therefore fail to explain their individual experience fully. It is also possible that the

researcher's perceptions might be clouded by his or her personal experience and that as a member of the group he or she will have difficulty separating it from that of the participants. (p. 58)

I was an outsider to the setting I was investigating. Although I have an early childhood education diploma and have experience working in an early childhood education context, I did not perceive myself to be a member of teachers' community, nor was I considered as one by the participants of the study.

During the process of representing the participants' stories, I struggled with approaching my data in such a way that it would not silence the teachers, keeping in mind that providing participants with space to have their voices heard is important. Connelly and Clandinin (1990) explain it in the following way:

In narrative inquiry, it is important that the researcher listen first to the practitioner's story, and that it is the practitioner who first tells his or her story. This does not mean that the researcher is silenced in the process of narrative inquiry. It does mean that the practitioner, who has long been silenced in the research relationship, is given the time and space to tell her or his story so that it too gains the authority and validity that the research story has long had. (p. 4)

Consequently, I chose to represent the findings in a way that would give the participants of my study an opportunity to tell their stories before I engaged in their interpretation.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE STORIES FROM THE BUSY BEES NURSERY SCHOOL

This chapter is divided into two sections. First, I briefly talk about the setting of my study, that is, the “Busy Bees Nursery School,” my first encounter with the centre and the teachers working there. Next, I introduce the teachers. My main goal is to present what these practitioners said about language learning, language learners, and language use, and how they connected their current teaching in the classroom to their own language learning experiences. I also describe what I observed during my classroom observations. I mostly use descriptive language, keeping the interpretation of what I recorded to a minimum. My goal is to immerse myself in the language used by the participants, adapting an *emic* approach (Patton, 2015, p. 544).

#### Busy Bees Nursery School

The Busy Bees preschool centre is located on the university campus. It is a small, one story building. A neighboring high-rise and multi-family townhouses that serve as student family housing give the area a busy feel. As I walk into the building (after being “buzzed in” by an administrative assistant), I see a long hallway with a number of semi-open doors. Because my first visit to the centre takes place during the lunch hour, the kitchen, which is located directly across the main entrance, is busy, with a number of adults going in and out of it. I hear lots of noise coming from different directions and, as it turns out later, rightly assume that children are waiting in their classrooms to be served lunch. I soon find the office where I am directed to the staff room to meet the director and the future participants of my study. Because they are not in the room yet,

I ask the administrative assistant if I can look around the building. Peeking into semi-open doors, I discover that the centre has three spacious classrooms, each with its own fenced outdoor playground. The children are too excited about their lunch to pay any attention to my presence. I notice that each classroom has multiple displays with children's artwork on the walls. As I learn later, there are plenty of print sources in each classroom, in the form of books, magazines, posters, and flyers. In each classroom, there are a few books in different languages (I notice Chinese and Korean), and one of the classrooms has hand-made posters with an Arabic and Russian alphabet placed on the writing table next to the English one. I look around the hallway. There are various displays of framed pictures, including photos of the centre's staff and children from previous years, photos of current staff members, and photos of the director's visit to a preschool centre in a foreign country. Along the walls, there are children's cubbies, with names printed on each cubby. After a couple of minutes of looking around, I head to the staff room to meet the teachers and the director of the centre. As I sit behind the big table, the director and five female teachers walk in one by one. Each of them is holding a plate with lunch. They apologize for a slight delay and explain that they want to make sure that everything in their classroom runs smoothly before they leave for their lunch break. The director introduces me and I start talking about my dissertation research. When I am done, the teachers do not have any questions but eagerly agree to take part in my project. Noticing my surprise with the ease of the recruitment process, one of the women explains that because of the centre's affiliation with the university, it is common for them to take part in various research studies. By the end of the meeting, a sixth teacher shows up and explains that she will not be able to take part in my project. She seems to be in a rush and quickly leaves the room. I move on to talk about the specifics of my future meetings with individual teachers. We make arrangements regarding distribution of parental consent forms and first round of interviews. As I chat with them,

I notice that the atmosphere in the room is rather informal and the women seem to make a good team. The director, although not participating in the project, stays in the room and listens to the conversation. She also seems to have a good, collegial relationship with the rest of the women in the room. As I leave, I feel that the teachers seem excited about working with me.

### **The Teachers**

As mentioned earlier, five lead teachers agreed to participate in my study. These were:

Blythe, Emily, Felicity, Heidi and Tess.

#### **Blythe**

Blythe has a master's degree in child development and family studies. She is a teacher with extensive experience in primary classrooms. Before her employment at the Busy Bees Nursery School, she had worked in the public-school sector as a special education teacher for over 30 years. After retiring, due to personal reasons, she moved to Diverseville, and began her employment with the Busy Bees Nursery School. She worked as a teacher assistant until she got a position as the lead teacher in one of the classrooms. At the time of the data collection, Blythe had been teaching in the nursery school for a little over three years. On the background questionnaire, she reported herself to be a native speaker of English, with an Irish Catholic ethnic background.

During our interviews, Blythe stated that working in such a culturally and linguistically diverse setting as the Busy Bees Nursery School was quite new to her. Although she had been a teacher for a long time, her previous work experiences were characterized by lack of cultural and linguistic diversity, which differed from Busy Bees. However, she also said that she felt rather confident working with children who learn English at school and speak one or more different languages at home. She explained it in the following way:

*I mean, I don't want to brag or anything but I think that I work better with them [linguistically diverse children] than anybody else because of my background. I think that I'm able to come up with ways to communicate and really able to notice when they don't know certain things, certain concepts, and start working on those.*

The background Blythe was alluding to was her special education background, the influence of which was evident in both interviews and the classroom observations. When talking about her work in her preschool classroom, Blythe drew parallels between linguistically diverse children and children who require special education services. For example, when discussing her readiness for working in such a diverse setting such as Busy Bees, she noted:

*But I think some of those skills that I have are helpful in making sure that . . . you are working on language the same way I would do with a special ed classroom.*

Later, when commenting on the fact that in preschool classrooms linguistically diverse children learn the language alongside native speakers of English, she stated:

*I always worked with typically developing children and special ed children at the same time.*

Blythe was focused on deficits rather than strengths of linguistically diverse children. Although she did note that these children often think of various ways to express their wants and needs, which she considered to be their strength, she talked a great deal about what they could not do. This emphasis on deficits was also evident during my observations, and it applied not only to linguistically diverse children but to all children in Blythe's classroom. I observed different examples of this deficit-oriented approach, from an explicit correction of a linguistic error (such

as Blythe's comment: *We say "went" instead of "goed"*) to more subtle comments on appropriate ways of behavior at the snack table, such as the interaction recorded below:

Blythe: *Last call.*

Child A: *I'm not hungry.*

Blythe: *What do you say?*

Child A: *No, thank you.*

Blythe: [nods]

Blythe strived for accuracy, and she readily detected when things were said or done in a way that she considered inaccurate. This manifested itself outside the classroom as well. For example, during our first meeting Blythe was given a questionnaire which contained a typo. She crossed out the misspelled word with a pencil and wrote the correct form above it.

This attention to deficits was understood by Blythe as the best way of supporting children in her classroom. Similarly, she believed that the best way parents can support their children is through recognizing their deficits and seeking help. Blythe gave me an example of a little boy for whom she was a babysitter and an English tutor. She said the following:

*And then . . . Theodore, the little boy I babysit for. That's why his mother has me – I'm really supposed to be his tutor. Because she can't really do his homework. And her English is fine for the most part. In fact, I don't understand how she can have any English problems. She speaks so fast I can't even follow her. That's her English, not Vietnamese. But she says she can't pronounce the words well enough to work with him. So, she hired me. That might be one thing, is to notice the deficits.*

Despite stating that she felt very confident working with linguistically diverse children, Blythe admitted to not feeling knowledgeable enough when it comes to their needs. In our first

interview, Blythe said that the biggest challenge of working with children who learn English at school but speak other languages at home is not knowing how to efficiently teach them. She said:

*I don't know what the norms are. Even though I have a master's degree in child development, and I've been a teacher . . . for more than 30 years with this age, I just don't know what the norm is. That's the hardest thing for me. And I don't know how to really informally assess what they do know and what they don't.*

Blythe had a strong conviction that there are standardized norms against which young language learners can be assessed. Blythe expanded on this later, adding that lack of formal assessment makes her work with preschoolers particularly challenging:

*In my career I always had a speech therapist to refer to, and they'd already done all sorts of testing. And even if I had, we had typically developing kids too, and if I had typically developing kids and I was concerned, they'd do a quick assessment and they would tell me. . . . They would say, "This is the problem."*

It became very clear during our interviews that Blythe paid particular attention to assessment. It was for her an ultimate indicator of one's abilities or a validation of one's knowledge. Interestingly, she brought up testing when she was talking about her own language experiences. When she was a Spanish language learner back in college (which was over 30 years prior to our interviews), she failed her final language test. Despite the fact that Blythe felt very confident in Spanish prior to the test, the failing mark made Blythe believe that she did not know the language that well at all. Remembering this experience, she said:

*Everyone thought I was a genius in Spanish. They thought I was so good at it. But I got an, I'm going to cry, I sincerely got an F on the test . . . It's the first I ever got an F in college. . . . I have a sincere desire to communicate . . . But you know, when it came time to be like*

*the book part of it . . . For one thing, if anything was misspelled it was automatically wrong. And I'm a terrible speller. My classmates didn't believe me that I flunked.*

Failing the test not only changed Blythe's opinion of herself as a language learner, but also she believed that it changed her image in her peers' eyes, which she found so embarrassing that she almost cried recalling it over 30 years later.

Expanding on her own language learning experiences, Blythe stated that throughout her life she had been able to find a way to communicate with people who did not speak English, but learning another language at this point would not be possible for her. She said:

*I think it's just really important that they know you are not . . . afraid to talk to them because they don't speak English, or whatever. You can figure out a way to both somehow get on the same page. Even if it's really hard.*

Later in the interview she added:

*But, now I'm just way more apprehensive about my ability to learn any other languages. I just, it sounds terrible, like you can tell I just give up. I don't think it's possible. I think it'd be super neat. . . . I feel like some languages you can only really learn when you're little. Even French, I think there is so many sounds. I can't even make those sounds. There is something going on in their mouth that I don't even...my mouth is not even formed like that.*

Blythe mentioned the role of pronunciation in learning a language on a different occasion, when she was talking about her own language learning experience. She said the following:

*When I do start talking, they think I know a lot of Spanish because the words I can say, I can say them just right.*

Blythe touched on an important concept here – specifically, what it meant for her to learn a language. Her discourse suggested that a native-like pronunciation meant a mastery of a language, that is, “learning a language.” Although she did not explicitly state this, she implied here that a successful language learner sounds like a native speaker, while a not fully successful language learner does not sound like a native speaker. A successful language learner for Blythe is usually a person who learnt the language as a child, while an unsuccessful one is usually someone who learnt the language later on in life.

Blythe pointed out that children learn the majority language very quickly. She was at times somewhat surprised by how well children who did not know any English a couple of months prior would do. She said:

*I have witnessed children who came in with no English whatsoever and magically just did fabulous. I don't even know how it happens. It's really neat to watch.*

She added, however, that this ease of learning English may result in additional challenges for the teacher. More specifically, Blythe observed that at times children seem to fit very well in the preschool group and their everyday language seemed well developed, which she felt gave a false impression that they are quite fluent in the majority language, but these children might not be able to even understand the more sophisticated language that children who are native speakers of English are able to use. According to Blythe, a “quick” assessment of what a speaker can and cannot do would solve the problem of this uncertainty. Blythe never mentioned any possible challenges that this superficial fluency might pose to young language learners.

During my observations in Blythe's classroom, I did not notice any differences between the ways she worked with children who were native speakers of English and those who were just

starting to learn English at school. I am not sure how such differences would show in every-day teaching practices, but it seemed that Blythe employed the same strategies for all children in her classroom. One of these teaching strategies was to narrate whatever she was doing in the room, regardless if or how many children were listening at the moment. For example, when she was making muffins, she was sitting at the table with a couple of children talking them through the process (e.g., *And now, I'm breaking this egg. I'm going to add two cups of flour after that.*). Even when the two children left the table, she kept talking about her following steps. When asked about this in our interview, Blythe explained that because there is not much explicit instruction happening in the classroom, she tries to do a lot of implicit teaching, and narrating her actions is one of her teaching tools. She also stressed that all children in the preschool age have similar needs, regardless of their cultural or linguistic background, and one of the main ones is socio-emotional well-being. Consequently, this is the domain that she is mostly concerned with when working with young children.

Commenting on her participation in my study, Blythe came back to her feeling of not knowing enough about teaching children who just start learning English at school. In our first interview, she expressed slight regret that my study did not involve some kind of intervention, during which participants would learn how to work with linguistically diverse children in the most efficient way. She stated:

*I almost wished when I read about your study, that you would teach us how to teach people.*

In the second interview, which was conducted about two months later, Blythe reported that she noticed some benefits of our discussions about language learning. She said:

*I realize there is benefit to just pondering these things, even if there are no answers, or whatever. To think about it, and also to remain open-minded. And even when you ask me*

*all these questions, I realize that maybe in some ways I am close-minded about certain things, and I should be more open-minded (...) Also, I think sometimes teachers, especially if they are as old as me, and have been through so many experiences as me, they don't really realize that they don't know anything about a certain thing. You know, you just kind of assume you know about things. Then, when you ask me these questions, I realize I have no idea, I don't know how people do this, you know when it comes to this subject. And also, I realize I have very little experience really in this, working with children from other countries.*

### **Emily**

Emily is a teacher with a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education. At the time of the data collection, she had been teaching in the Busy Bees Nursery School for four-and-a-half years. It was her first teaching position after college graduation. Shortly before the data collection, Emily had started her part-time job as an online English as a Foreign Language (EFL) tutor to elementary school students in China. Emily identified as a native speaker of English, and she reported "White American" as her ethnic background.

During our interviews, Emily looked back at her college program and how it prepared her to work as a preschool teacher. She said that she liked how the courses stressed learning through play in the early years; however, she did not recall any course that focused on linguistic diversity of children. She stated that she herself had to develop specific strategies of working with linguistically diverse children in her classroom. She said:

*The program taught me a lot about flexibility of teaching, that you don't have to just stick to your academic standards and that those standards can be learnt through play . . . it wasn't specific to linguistic diversity, but just kind of all types of diversity, I guess.*

Later she added:

*I think I've probably just become more accustomed to, you know "this works well when I have a child who doesn't speak English." So, at first it was sort of a learning process, but now I work with them differently than with other kids, at least in the beginning to simplify my language, and kind of pay a little bit more attention to them in social situations to make sure they are able to say what they want to say.*

When commenting on the strengths that her linguistically diverse children possess, she mentioned flexibility, patience, and ability to negotiate with peers. She put it in the following way:

*Like this one little girl who started with no English, she now speaks English very well, and she understands kind of the social nuances of like, "No I don't want to play that, but we can try this," and she can sort of negotiate that.*

During my observations in her classroom, I noticed that Emily regularly checked if the children understood vocabulary she was using or which was in the books she was reading. I did not observe Emily paying particular attention to the children who were linguistically diverse when checking for understanding; rather, she would address the whole group. For example, while reading a book to a group of children she was asked what the word "crabby" meant. She asked the group if they knew what it meant, and when they did not answer, she said: "Crabby means grouchy."

When talking about helping new children transition to the classroom routine, Emily mentioned that it is helpful to use home language at the beginning. She gave the following example:

*This year, the child who spoke no English coming in, her parents asked us to write her name in their home language and in English on her cubby, sign in sheet, and her journal because she recognized her name in Korean. She could recognize her name written in Korean, but not in English yet. So, they wanted her to see those side by side until she started to recognize her English written name.*

Emily added, however, that the use of words from a home language in the classroom is phased out as the children learn the school language. In the case of the child from the above example, the parents explicitly asked Emily to stop using dual language signs once the girl could recognize her name in English.

When talking about the use of home languages in the school, Emily expressed excitement about the idea, calling it “great;” however, she also showed uncertainty about its implementation. She said:

*I think, maybe one way it could happen is for the teacher to learn a couple of words, like the most important words when a child hardly speaks English, like “bathroom,” or “eat,” or “food,” or “water.” Maybe just two or three words because that feels doable to me. . . We can find resources that have written language, like books and the alphabet, but I don’t know how to read the language. I can’t really do much rather than just have it available for them to look at.*

Emily added that parents often switch to English at drop off and pick up, which she found helpful. She commented on it in the following way:

*Speaking English when they drop off kind of starts off the day, by saying: “Okay, now we’re transitioning into speaking English,” so the kids kind of feel that. Like: “Okay, in*

*the classroom we speak English.” Maybe it’s also sometimes for us, for the parent to know that we understand what they are saying to the child. Because sometimes I heard the parents speaking their language, and then it seems like they are repeating what they said, but in English, and when we’re nearby by it’s obviously for our benefit. . . . I think if they are wanting their kids thinking more in English, and starting to speak more English, then they speak it here to kind of emphasize: “This is an English-speaking place.”*

Emily added that she and her co-teacher encourage parents to continue using home language at home. She also thought that parents can help support children’s emerging literacy by reading books written both in home language and in English. She said:

*And we encourage parents actually to work on their home language at home because kids will get so much English language learning in school. They learn so much through their play, and reading and literacy activities. . . . So, I think that’s true for non-native English speakers too. That they [parents] read in their native language, and maybe some in English too.*

When talking about parents working with their kids on literacy skills in home language, she described it as a “fantastic” practice.

During our interviews Emily talked about different expectations for two contexts in which she was teaching. As a preschool teacher she was expected to focus more on socio-emotional development of children. Her teaching involved very little direct instruction, and she almost never explicitly corrected children’s language. As an online tutor of English, she was expected to explicitly teach the language, including correcting children when needed. She explained this in the following way:

*Because in my [online] teaching we correct those things, you know if you hear them, you know leave out a word, then you say it back to the child, ask them to repeat it with the word that they miss. I don't feel like that's really my role here. I mean my job is to just talk to children and have conversations, and I think they pick it up that way. Even though, I might say it back to them, for example, if they say: "I goed to grocery store this weekend," I might say: "Oh, you went to grocery store this weekend." But I'm not expecting them to repeat it back to me or anything. We do it with all the kids though, like you know, if they say a past tense incorrectly, we probably just say it the correct way, not expect them to say it but maybe that they just will pick it up from that.*

When asked which approach felt more natural to her, she added the following:

*Here [in preschool] it just feels natural to have a conversation with kids, but in the tutoring, since the expectation is "I'm . . . explicitly teaching you English right now," it makes sense and feels pretty natural to correct anything. And since it's one-on-one, maybe it's different too. Because I'm working with this one child on how to pronounce a word, or whatever. But here, it's kind of like, it's not my main focus. She's learning English, but also, she's interacting with the environment, and the learning that happens there is kind of the main focus here.*

Emily's own language experiences consisted of learning Spanish starting in middle school through college and going on a number of school language learning trips to Spanish speaking countries. She reported "loving" learning the language, calling it "her favourite subject in middle school and high school." Learning Spanish did not turn out to be useful in her work in "The Busy Bees Nursery School" because during her four-and-a-half years of teaching she only had one or

two children who spoke Spanish as their first language, but learning this language turned out to teach her more than just the language. Emily said:

*That has been such an important part of my life just to kind of open my eyes to other parts of the world, and how other people live. So, I think travel along with language learning have been very influential for me, just as a human being, kind of my development in that way. And I think, as a teacher, it helped me understand a little bit of how people feel when they move to another country and step into a completely different culture.*

According to Emily, her school language learning trips affected her understanding of bilingualism and multilingualism as well. Emily reported that on the most basic level, bilingualism would be the ability to speak two different languages. However, she added that there was a deeper level of understanding this concept. She expressed it in the following way:

*In the sense of my kids who I know, it's not only speaking two languages but it's kind of living a culture at home, and maybe a different culture at school, and in the rest of the public world. . . . For me, learning Spanish as a young person, it was kind of like just learning to speak another language because I was kind of choosing to learn a language. But for the kids who arrive in the United States and are thrown into school where everyone speaks English, they are kind of being forced to learn another language to adopt to our cultural practices, and then at home they might live something that's different. . . . It's different for different people, I think. For me, it's - bilingualism is I can speak a little bit of Spanish. But for them, it's – they can speak two languages, probably fluently, and they live, you know, their identity and how they live at home is a different culture than what they live at school.*

Emily concluded our first interview expressing the feeling of “not doing enough” to support linguistically diverse children. During our second interview I asked her to expand on this thought and she said the following:

*When you start talking about the potential of labeling things in multiple languages, or having all the kids’ names printed in both languages, if they speak another, I just think we could probably do that. I also have tendency to think that I’m not doing enough. That’s just kind of personal thing. I think maybe we could have a book that is in another language and figure out how we could translate it, and write out the English along with the other language. I think sometimes maybe we could have even more print resources on the classroom. Even for the kids who don’t speak another language to see that English is not the only like system of symbols, or not the only sound of language that we can hear.*

### **Felicity**

Felicity has a bachelor’s degree in Early Childhood Education, and at the time of the data collection she had worked in the Busy Bees Nursery School for 12 years. This preschool was her first teaching position after graduating from university. On the background questionnaire, she reported herself as a native speaker of English, with “Caucasian” ethnic background. During one of our informal conversations, Felicity told me that her ancestors were Syrian immigrants, but no one in her family spoke the language; yet, she did not write that information down on the questionnaire and never mentioned it during our interviews.

In our first interview, Felicity reported being somewhat surprised by the cultural and linguistic diversity of the Busy Bees Nursery School upon starting her teaching. She said:

*And when I was in school, I wasn’t thinking I would end up here. I thought I’d be teaching in a public elementary school ... So, then I was mostly thinking about diversity like “Oh, if*

*I got a job in [our state], it'll be speaking Spanish." My mother-in-law taught first grade for years, and if kids didn't know English, it was Spanish. So, I was thinking, "Ok, I can deal with this."*

When talking about culturally and linguistically diverse children in the preschool, Felicity touched upon the current discourse regarding diversity in the United States. She said that because Diversville is a college town, the population, especially people affiliated with the university, tend to be more educated, which influences their perception of diversity. When talking about parents' reactions to the presence of various languages in the classroom, she said:

*I think that they are excited that their kids are exposed to that. Again, we're in a place where diversity is great and not scary or, you know like "They're taking our jobs away." (...)* They are in this part of Diversville because they are happy here. And most of them are associated with the university, and I think it's just how it is around here.

Felicity stated that over the years in the classroom, she learnt some strategies for working with linguistically diverse children. She stated:

*It's always very interesting to watch how everyone progresses, but I think picking up the tips, like asking parents for key words or phrases, or finding another kid, or sometimes we're looking if there is an assistant teacher to help, to step in, to bridge that gap.*

Felicity recognized various ways in which linguistically diverse children learn the language. She pointed out that while some children who come to school with no knowledge of English may wait even six months to utter their first sentences, others start using new words right away, experimenting with the freshly acquired language. She explained it in the following way:

*The little girl I was talking about, she started in August, and until about the beginning of November, she used very few words. She would say "pee pee" or "eat," or "go home,"*

*you know, just very minimal. And very quietly, you know. And then one day in November, I remember, she was finally away from me, she gotten comfortable, she painted a picture at the easel, and came and got me and said: "Look, I painted a beautiful flower." So . . . she was one of those kids that waited until she could . . . say everything she wanted to say before she really started talking. And then, other kids . . . I had one little boy. His first day, he'd been riding bicycles outside, and . . . later in the day, he wanted to go outside, and he said: "Bicycle, bicycle." And everything outside was a bicycle. It was like, "Oh, I have a word, I'm going to use it."*

Felicity expressed belief that children learn languages quicker and easier than adults. In our first interview, she said: *I can see it's so much easier to pick it up as a kid than waiting till school or high school.* Later, in the second interview I asked her to expand on this idea, and she added the following:

*They still have a lot more of those connections that, you know, as you get older your brain decides, "I don't really need this anymore. I don't really need this and may trim it back." And I also think that, at least here, they're immersed in the English. . . . If I was going to go learn Polish for example, in a class or something, I'm just having those little chunks of time . . . [To really learn] I would have to do the same thing that the kids do, go to Poland and really . . . be only around other things. I think the combination of those two, they still have a lot more of those little connections that haven't been trimmed back yet, and immersed in it. They just, they're playing and picking up.*

Felicity admitted that because of this ease of picking up a new language, some of the children in her classroom become so fluent in English in a short period of time that she sometimes

forgets that they speak other languages at home. When asked about the number of linguistically diverse children in her classroom that year, she replied:

*I always forget because some of them are already so fluent in English that they've been learning, but I think it's four.*

When discussing linguistically diverse children's biggest strengths, Felicity talked about certain kind of flexibility, or as she called it "ability to adapt." She said she is always very impressed when she sees these children being able to switch between languages. She stated:

*[Their strength is] having that skill of being able to switch from one language with mom and dad at home, and coming to school, that's just really impressive.*

During my observations in Felicity's classroom, I did not see any differences between her interaction with children who were native speakers of English and those with linguistically diverse children. However, as Felicity stated in our interviews, all of the linguistically diverse children were rather fluent in English, at least in the every day conversations of three to five year olds.

When talking about the needs of linguistically diverse children, Felicity stated that her focus is on their socio-emotional development, which is an important area for all children this age. She stated:

*I think it would be what we want for all of our kids. Like, we focus on socio-emotional skills because we feel like if you have strong foundation in those, you can move on and pick up the academics very easily because kindergarten is now so hard, much harder than it was years before . . . so these things of like how to get along with people, and how to share and how to negotiate, those skills aren't taught [in kindergarten]. There is the conflict resolution or learning the skills. "So, what do you do when somebody takes your toy and*

*you're upset about it?" We want them to feel like they're strong and capable. And the academic parts will come very easily later.*

Felicity added that all preschoolers are at the stage of learning a language, even if they are native speakers of English, and that is why their needs are similar. She went on to say that she does not think of linguistically diverse children in her classroom as a separate group. She stated the following:

*It's so interesting to think about them like a separate group. Because obviously, they are, but it's the same things that we do [with rest of them].*

Felicity stated that she tries to advise parents to speak their native language at home. After explaining that, she touched upon her belief that children learn languages easier than adults. She said:

*And sometimes they'll say: "Should we speak English to them more at home?" We can't tell them "yes" or "no," but usually we say: "You know, you should keep your home language at home. They pick their English so easily at school because they're immersed in it, and their brains are so young and they can still make those connections." Of course, it's up to parents, but we say: "You should keep your language."*

Felicity stated the need for recognizing cultural differences in the classroom. She reported that the administration of the preschool had organized workshops to make sure that all teachers, including teaching assistants, become aware of such differences. She stated:

*She [the director] did a conference, not necessarily about the linguistics, but you know, recognizing different cultures, or how to interact, or things like that. Especially for hourly assistants who don't have much experience, realizing like: "Oh, if the parent is doing this, it might not necessarily be that they are mad at you or, you know, not welcoming, that's*

*just culturally how things are done for them.” So, she did one on cultural diversity in classroom. By that point I had been here a couple of years, so I knew some of them [differences], but I think it was good for everybody. Like Korean and Chinese parents feeding their kids. And some of younger assistants are like appalled by that. “What, a 3-year-old cannot feed themselves?” It’s not that they can’t, it’s in the culture, they want interdependence. And Americans are all about being independent. So, the director said: “It’s teaching the kids I will take care of you as a child and then when they grow up, their role is to take care of their parents.”*

Felicity expressed here a belief that teachers should try to understand the rationale behind certain cultural practices and see that what is important in one culture might not necessarily be seen as valuable in a different culture. As another example of such differences, Felicity spoke about East Asian parents feeling hesitant to share their feedback out of the fear of being perceived as rude. She explained that the majority of linguistically diverse parents come from countries where teachers are highly respected, and parents are afraid that feedback might be mistaken for criticism, which is not acceptable.

Reflecting on her own language learning experiences, she talked about learning Spanish in high school and college. She recalled feeling “miserable” when her Spanish instructor in college told the class to speak only Spanish, which ended with her dropping the class. Expanding on her language learning, Felicity stated: *It’s something I wished I was better at.* She also expressed some regret for not knowing another language well enough to be able to use it. In our second interview when asked to think of a reason for that regret, Felicity said:

*I don’t know if it’s true, but I feel like people who know more than one language seem smarter, or you know, more intelligent. And I think too, once you, if it’s a similar kind of*

*language, if you know French you can sort of learn Italian or Spanish, like the roots are the same. Not everything is exactly the same, but you could build on that and be able to learn more.*

She also stated that it would be important for her own children to become bilingual or multilingual; however, even though her children were in lower grades of elementary school at the moment, she did not actively pursue that goal.

When talking about bilingual or multilingual education, Felicity made a distinction between exposing children to languages, which is having one or two foreign language lessons a week (like most public schools do), and teaching kids in order for them to be bilingual or multilingual, which is “dedication” to using the language most of the day. She said:

*I feel like we have kids here who are obviously bilingual or multilingual, but I wouldn't say I'm teaching bilingually. I mean the children are, but we are not able to, you know, teach all day in Korean.*

## **Heidi**

Heidi has a bachelor's degree in elementary education, with a minor in special education. At the time of the data collection, she had been a lead teacher in the Busy Bees Nursery School for 21 years, and she had also worked there as a teacher's assistant while in college. On the background questionnaire, she identified as a native speaker of English, with “Caucasian” as her ethnic background.

When watching Heidi's interactions with young children, it was very clear that she felt comfortable in her job of a preschool teacher. At the beginning of our first interview, she shared with me how much she enjoyed working in this diverse setting, in which she had stayed for over

two decades. She explained that she had been in the centre for a very long time because she “loved working with international kids,” that is, kids who are learning English. She told me that witnessing linguistically diverse children going from not knowing any English to speaking it fluently in six months was her favourite part of the job. She enjoyed spending time not only with children but also with their families. For example, once a year her whole classroom community went on a two-day camping trip—an extra responsibility for which Heidi was not financially compensated.

Over the years in her classroom, Heidi developed numerous strategies for working with her language learners. However, she reported that she had not felt prepared for working in such a diverse setting upon starting her employment with the Busy Bees Nursery School. She stated:

*[My teacher education program] didn't prepare me at all. Not at all. We had one class that was like multicultural education, but I don't think it helped me at all. I worked here as a teacher's aide when I was in college, so that helped me, but it wasn't the program, you know. Sorry, I wish I could say more but really it didn't prepare me.*

When talking about how teaching linguistically diverse children was different than teaching children who had one language only, she said:

*It's not a lot different, you know? Because when you're working with young kids, you do a lot of stuff with body language, and facial expression, and songs, and comfort. And even, with other kids I say: "Hey, go wash your hands," and I'm rubbing my hands together, and I'll do it like that, so I think it's not a lot different, except that they aren't comfortable as quickly as the other kids. And maybe I teach that way because I have had so many.*

*That's why I say "Wash your hands" [rubbing my hands together]. So, it doesn't feel that different for me because I'm doing it to all of them.*

When asked if and how her teaching had changed since she started working at the preschool, she added:

*[It's difficult to say] since I've done it from the beginning. I think I do teach with hand gestures, specifically "Wash your hands" or "Do you need something to eat?" I do that a lot, probably more than I would if I didn't work at a centre where there were kids who don't speak the language.*

Heidi expressed a belief that linguistically diverse children were generally confident and very resourceful when it came to communicating with others. She explained it in the following way:

*I think most of them are pretty confident. I guess you have to be pretty confident to be able to venture out and learn a new language in front of people. Not in the privacy of their home, or the class. (...) You know, they figure how to communicate without words. They figure out to get their point across by using hand gestures and facial expression, and showing you things. They are probably more aware of their needs than other kids because they have to figure out how to get what they need without words.*

Heidi recognized various ways in which linguistically diverse children react to their first weeks or months at school and to learning a new language. She said:

*We always have kids that first start speaking one of two ways. Like one group of kids don't speak at all; for like 6 months they are completely silent, and then all of the sudden they start speaking in full sentences. And that's rare. And then others, the very first day they are trying out new language. So, I think that definitely varies.*

In our second interview, following up on the topic of silence of the newly arrived children, Heidi added:

*I don't push them because that's just how it works. Some are speaking the very next day, and for others it takes like 6 months and then they are speaking it perfectly. So, I try to respect their different learning styles. It doesn't mean that I don't talk. I communicate with them just as much. I talk to them, and you know. (...) I don't stay silent, but I let them stay silent.*

She added that the first thing she tries is getting children's trust. She tries to develop a strong bond between her and a newly arrived child. Once they trust her, they start speaking, even if it is in their home language, which she does not understand. She noted, however, that it usually helps "not to feel like they are just mute."

When talking about parental support, Heidi expressed her belief in the fact that home language should be maintained at the children's homes. She considered it crucial in situations when families immigrate to the United States permanently. She described it in the following way:

*I feel pretty strongly, especially if parents are planning to stay in the United States, I feel it's really important that they keep speaking their home language at home. Because it's a lot easier to lose this language than it is to learn English. (...) I kind of consider it our job to be the ones that teach them English. And the kids teach them English. They teach each other.*

Heidi stated that incorporating children's home languages in the classroom was a great idea; however, she also indicated that it might sometimes be challenging for teachers who do not speak these languages. She said:

*We have CDs in the languages of the kids (...) We have books, but we can't read, unfortunately. We do encourage parents to come and read in their home language. They do not often take us up on it. I think it's great, when it can be done. I think it's fabulous. And ... I tried to pick up some words in all of the languages. I know 10 or 20 words that help. And I think that leads to the comfort too that I can say few things, or sing a song in that language. That helps them feel more comfortable.*

During my classroom observations, Heidi talked to me about her beliefs regarding language learning in childhood. She expressed the belief that children learn languages easier and quicker than adults. I asked her to explain to me why she thought this was the case, and she said the following:

*I guess it's where they are with their language development. They just learnt to speak English, one or two years ago, they just start talking at 2 or 3, so it's still fresh for them. And I think developmentally there is an age where you're supposed to learn to talk, and they are still within that range, so their brain is just ready to learn it. (...) Maybe it has to do with brain development. The way their brain is connecting, it's right now, and it's connecting places where it's learning language, so it picks it up quicker. And I also think, usually, they are less self-conscious, so they are more willing to take a risk and try even if it's not perfect. When they get older, even a little bit older as a kid, it's harder because they notice that they sound different, and when they are this age, they really don't.*

When talking about children's bilingualism and the importance of keeping children's home language, Heidi mentioned her personal situation. Heidi's husband was born in Germany and immigrated to the United States as an adult. They had two children who were in elementary school.

Heidi admitted that their kids were not bilingual and her husband chose to use only English at home. She said:

*[The kids] don't speak German. I'm so sad about it. My husband spoke German to them when they were very little, and before they started speaking English. And then when they started speaking English back to him, then he switched to English with them, which makes me very sad.*

In our second interview, I asked Heidi if she thought that her family had lost anything through her husband's decision of speaking only English at home. She replied:

*I guess what was lost is (...) a benefit to be able to speak two languages. Though I think they will get it later. I really do. If they take German in high school, I think they will have an advantage of that. But because of the way their brain works, it's easier to learn it when they are younger. So, we're kind of missing that step. Especially with like a dialect and pronunciation of words, it gets harder as you are older than 12, right? If you learn it before 12, you have a higher chance of getting the pronunciation and dialect, right? But then I also feel bad that my kids can't communicate with their grandparents, or their cousins. Their cousins, the younger ones speak English. The older ones, the great aunts and great uncles, they can't speak English, so they really can't communicate with my kids.*

Following up on her husband's language choice, I asked Heidi if she thought there was any gain in keeping just one language, and she said:

*I think my husband would probably say that there is. I look at the negative part. But I think he didn't feel as close to the family when he was speaking German and they were speaking English back. And I think when he started speaking English to them, he felt closer to the boys.*

Heidi expressed her belief that bilingualism is complete fluency in two languages. When asked to explain what fluency meant for her, she stated that it is the ability to understand everything that is being said in a given language and the ability to respond in that language. As she put it, it is “the ability to communicate both ways.” An example of Heidi’s belief about bilingualism was manifested during my data collection. On the background questionnaire Heidi did not put German as one of the languages she could understand, speak, write or read in. Later, during our interviews, it became obvious that she had at least elementary, if not intermediate, level of proficiency in German. I asked her why she did not put German as one of the languages she knew, and she said the following:

*I think when you say bilingual, and I know it’s not true, but I think you must be fluent in another language. And I’m not fluent. I understand a lot, but I’m not fluent in German. So, I think fluency is what matters. (...) Because fluency really means that you don’t even have to think about it. You just can communicate, and maybe occasionally get stumped up on a word, but you can get all of your ideas across.*

As an illustration of her “lack” of proficiency in German, Heidi told me about her family visit to Germany. Her husband’s family did not understand her German, despite the fact that she was convinced she “was speaking correctly.” She said that even though she wanted to try, she got discouraged when people did not know what she was saying. She added that just like her preschoolers who stay silent for a long time, she was not a risk-taker and needed to wait until she was ready to start speaking the language.

Heidi recognized, however, that knowledge of a language is also context dependent. When talking about bilinguals or multilinguals using their languages interchangeably, she said:

*I think it has to do with where you learnt the language. So technical phrases that you use at work, for example, and especially like my husband, like he is a construction worker, so all of his construction words are in English, not necessarily in German. So, you can see that there is a difference there. So, if he is talking about work, he would speak in German, and then throw in a couple of English words. So, I think it's where people learnt technical phrases, I guess, or phrases that are specific to what they are doing.*

At the end of our second interview Heidi stated that talking about language learning and teaching was very interesting to her, and she took part in my study because she felt that she wanted to contribute to the research in that field. She concluded our conversation with the following:

*I really thought that you would be able to share what you learnt, or that you were going to write something that other people are going to read and that could help them work with kids who speak another language. But I guess that is an interesting topic to me. Because it's so second nature to me, because I've always done it, and that doesn't even seem like something that not everyone is doing.*

## **Tess**

Tess has a bachelor's degree in elementary education. At the time of the data collection, Tess had been a teacher for 25 years, and she had been working in the Busy Bees Nursery School for 7 years. Tess identified as "Caucasian," with English as her native language. On the background questionnaire, Tess reported having beginner proficiency in French, Spanish and Dutch.

Tess stated that the biggest challenge of teaching linguistically diverse children, particularly the ones who cannot express their needs in English, is to learn words that are familiar to those children; words that bring them comfort. When explaining this, Tess said:

*[The biggest challenge of working with these children is] learning the words that they are familiar and comfortable with, from the family usually. And making that part of my language. I'll make a request in English, like "it's time to go outside." And if they don't appear to understand or respond with the appropriate response, then I will try to learn a word for outside. Or something that bridges the two languages. And if they ask me a question in their language, then I run through mental list of possibilities, "is it this, or is it this?" so finally we meet at some common ground.*

Tess expanded on this later in the interview when she talked about teaching all children in her classroom specific responses appropriate to particular situations, or as she called it "giving children scripts." Tess stated that by offering children certain scripts, teachers teach children a specific kind of a classroom language – language that is understood by all people in the room. She described it in the following way:

*And, you know for this age group we do a lot of socio-emotional, so it's a lot about expressing your feelings and interacting with children to give them the words. (...) And to say: "How do you feel about her taking that toy?" And just articulating all those words to have them choose from (...) And because some of it is that culturally we socialize differently, and so, they might do it differently at home. But this is how we do it at school; this is what you might say in this situation. And really it works because all of the children are learning those same words, so they all speak the same language. I think it works well. It feels like a family to be able to all speak with the same intent.*

Tess used the idea of school as family again in the same interview. This time she was talking about her interactions with parents. She said:

*We speak to parents in the mornings, and at pick-up. We talk about how they are doing. You know, we see them every day, so we know things that are happening in their lives, we know how their semester is going. (...) . And so, we really try to think of it as an extension of home and family, because it's important job to have their children . . . I feel like if kids can't be at home, which is really the best place for them to be, then, and they are here for many hours, then it needs to be as home-like as possible. I think, we want them to know that we love their children. So, I think it feels like a big family.*

Tess admitted to feeling sad that she was not fluent in any other language than English, and in our second interview I asked her about the reason for that feeling. Explaining it, she revisited the idea of meeting children's needs and making the classroom as home-like as possible. She said:

*I feel that part of being respectful is to be able to connect with people in their language. And that happens repeatedly in my job. So, it feels like an area where I'm deficient to meet the needs of the children and the families. But, it's such a big undertaking that I let it slip through the cracks because I'm busy doing other things, I don't really pursue it, even though, really, I do think it's important and I wish I was more proficient.*

She added that whenever she knows some words from children's languages, she would try to use them with the children to form more personal connections, or as she stated, to show them that "she is on their team." She added that taking care of her preschoolers is at times, specifically at the beginning of their presence in the classroom, like "mothering" because they are often so intimidated. She used the metaphor of a teacher as a mother twice more in our second interview, when she was expanding on the importance of having a common classroom language. She stated the following:

*I think one of the things that is very important is consistency, and that children can trust the person who is taking care of them, and trust my reactions. And that's what a mother would do. And that by using the same language in many situations over and over again with twenty children, they are familiar with, they know how I will react. So, I feel like that's a source of comfort and it doesn't create stressful or anxious feeling.*

Later she said that because she could not communicate with children who come to school not knowing English in their own languages, she tried to give them “motherly support” in other ways, such as by offering close physical contact when they expressed the need for it.

During our interviews, Tess touched upon uniqueness of teaching children who know more than one language. She said:

*I think they do have a stronger sense of not the language but ... a stronger foundation for the language, and then also for the written word. So, I see that they seem more comfortable and less intimidated by writing and the written word. I feel like children who only speak English, not all of course, but generally they say: “I don't want to do that, I want to play.” They see it as work, and I don't think I see that in children who are learning more than one language.*

Tess added that one of the biggest strengths of linguistically diverse children is independence. She described it in the following way:

*What I know about those children that I have, especially now, they seem very independent. I think because they are not comfortable necessarily asking for what they need, they might have to do it themselves. And so, I see that they observe more, and they are taking in the whole classroom; they are taking in what children are doing; they are learning their*

*names; they are very attentive to observation. And they are independent and doing for themselves.*

When talking about incorporating children's home languages in the classroom, Tess expressed her approval of the idea. She stated it is beneficial not only for the children who speak languages other than English at home, but for all children in the classroom, because they could develop "the ear to accept other languages." However, according to Tess, the implementation of the idea is difficult for teachers who usually cannot communicate in all of the languages of their children. She also added that in her experience parents are happy to provide words from home languages for the transition period, when their children are just getting familiar with the classroom. Beyond the transition, however, parents usually want their children to learn English as fast as possible, and therefore, they do not want languages other than English at school. Tess noticed that often parents want their children to speak only English at school, but with time, when they see how quickly children stop using their home languages, the same parents enroll children in home language classes so they do not lose their languages altogether.

Reflecting upon her college experience and how well the program prepared her for her work in the Busy Bees Nursery School, Tess expressed disappointment. She said that none of the courses in her Elementary Education program touched upon linguistic or cultural diversity in the classroom. Despite that, she felt rather confident when starting her work in this multicultural and multilingual setting. She explained the reason for it in the following way:

*I can tell you why then. Because my mother and her parents came from Amsterdam, and so they spoke Dutch fluently, and I heard it every day. I never learnt to speak Dutch, but I heard it every day of my childhood. And I learnt to understand or at least pull out enough bits and pieces to know what they were talking about. And so, I think, I'm just comfortable*

*with it. (...) I could piece together a bit more than that, so I enjoy languages. I think that's interesting. I just think probably that is why I'm comfortable with it.*

Although Tess reported knowing bits and pieces of a number of languages, she did not consider herself to be bilingual or multilingual. She shared with me that she enjoyed listening to languages she did not understand, but she expressed feeling sad that she was not fluent in any foreign language. When asked to expand on her understanding of fluency and bilingualism, she said:

*I speak tiny bit of Spanish, tiny bit of French, but I would never say that I'm multilingual. To me, bilingual is two fluent languages. [And being fluent means] that you know every word; you can speak in a conversation.*

Tess concluded both of our interviews stating that taking part in my research refreshed her interest in linguistic and cultural diversity in the classroom. She said:

*You ask questions that I don't really know the answer to because I really haven't dug into that. For me professionally it gives me more food for thought. It's thought provoking. And it makes me more mindful of the languages in the classroom.*

The above stories constituted a collection of the participants' personal and professional biographies. The stories were constructed during my interviews, observations, and informal conversations with the five teachers. Telling them, I aimed to illuminate the role of the teachers' views on language learning and language use, both in their own lives, as well as the lives of their classrooms and their linguistically diverse young children.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### COGNITION AND EMOTION IN TEACHERS' STORIES

Although the literature points to the importance of the emotional aspect of teaching both in mainstream education as well as SLA (Hargreaves 1998, 2000, 2001; Imai, 2010; Nias, 1996; Noddings, 1996; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007), the role of emotion in language teacher cognition has not been thoroughly examined (Borg, 2003, 2006). When I was planning my research, I myself did not realize how much the complex relationship between my participants' beliefs and their emotional lives would be evident in the interviews I conducted with them. In some interviews, emotions are clear, at times explicitly stated; in other interviews participants express the emotional aspect of their beliefs in a less obvious way; however, in all of the cases it is clear that my participants' beliefs are closely connected with their emotional relationship to specific experiences in their lives.

All of the stories show the connection between the teachers' emotional lives and their cognitions (Borg, 2003, 2006); however, each of them does it in a unique way. In what follows, I review my participants' stories, illuminating patterns that are emerging from them. I employ a contextual understanding of teacher cognition that brings to the forefront the relationship between one's thinking and feeling (Golombek 2015; Kubaniyova & Feryok, 2015). I revisit Vygotsky's concept of *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994), utilizing it to read the teachers' biographies.

### **Perezhivanie and Teachers' Biographies**

Looking at my participants' biographies, I notice how their experiences with language learning and language use influence their beliefs regarding these linguistic practices, and consequently their work in linguistically diverse classroom. Their experiencing (in both cognitive and emotional sense) of their own language learning and language use affects their beliefs, as well as their experience as teachers of young language learners. This finding is in line with previous research (e.g. Davin et al., 2018; Swain, Kinnear & Steinman, 2011) which reveals the deep interconnections between cognition, learning, and socio-emotional experience, in the context of one teacher's practice.

I notice that in all of the stories, both the teacher's emotional relation to specific events as well as processing and interpreting of these events are equally important. The way the teachers in my study created their stories resonates with Vygotsky's understanding of the construction of one's personality.<sup>12</sup> Blunden (2016) writes:

[Perezhivaniya are] the episodes that stand out in the memory from the background of one's life, and having been worked over by you and told and retold (to yourself or others), and "coded" in language and images, become meaningful... This is the sense in which Vygotsky said that *perezhivanya* are units of a consciousness or of a personality as whole. (p. 278)

Perezhivanie then is not limited to a particular point of time. Because perezhivanie refers to both experiencing an event in a particular moment of time, and also interpreting it and re-living it after the event has already happened, it "takes place" in circular time, in which the one who experiences comes back to the event over and over again. In that sense, perezhivanie of a past event is

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<sup>12</sup> For the discussion on the development of the concept of personality in Vygotsky's work see Rey (2011).

somewhat reconstructed because of what happens after it; at the same time, *perezhivanie* of current events is influenced by the experiences of the past. This circular aspect of the creation of one's personality echoes Zembylas (2005b), who suggests that emotions initiate specific experiences for an individual and at the same time emotions are constructed in and through these experiences. Zembylas (2005b) writes: "On the one hand, emotions motivate and accompany the performances of subjectivity; on the other hand, emotions are constituted, established, and even reformulated by these performances" (p. 33). In this sense, just as emotions emerge from one's experiences, they also construct one as a human being and as a teacher.

This circular and non-linear aspect of *perezhivanie* (Blunden, 2016), and the way in which my participants' multiple *perezhivaniya* form chapters of their autobiographies, is clearly traceable in all of the five stories. Another important characteristic of *perezhivanie* that is evident across all five biographies is the inseparable unity between the individual and the context in which one lives (Vygotsky, 1994). Reading the teachers' stories, I see how each of the five women experienced and worked over the unique events in their lives, making them meaningful parts of their personality (Blunden, 2016).

For example, in order to understand Blythe's attachment to assessment, norms and standards, one has to look back at her as a language learner and her memories of the failed test in a college Spanish course. Blythe's reaction to these memories indicated that it was a powerful experience, which after decades still brings a lot of emotions. As mentioned before, she was considered by others as one of the best students in her college Spanish class, and she herself judged her fluency in the language as high. When it came to the test, however, she failed it, leaving her peers and herself in disbelief. When Blythe was telling me about this experience, she got very emotional and warned me that she was about to start crying. When I asked her about her reaction

in the following interview, she tried to disregard it with a laugh, but later told me that she got so upset because she remembered that, back then in college, she had thought she was successful and it turned out that she was not.

In the way Blythe experienced (and possibly had still been experiencing at the time of the interview) the event, I clearly see the indivisible unity between specific characteristics of her personality and her environment (Vygotsky, 1994). The experience had a lasting effect on her, and while it did not affect her life in general (she was able to graduate from college and go on to do her graduate studies), she kept a part of that event for the rest of her life, which was evident when she was recalling it over thirty years later. It is very likely that the same experience could have had a dramatically different effect on a different person; after all, it is not uncommon for college students to fail a final test, and many recover from it without even remembering the event. For Blythe, however, the experience was formative—it shaped her beliefs regarding herself as a language learner, regarding children under her care, as well as learning language in general. All this, in turn, impacted her pedagogical choices.

First, the experience of the failed test changed Blythe's opinion about her Spanish language fluency. She thought she was successful, but the test proved otherwise, and while she could have dismissed its results, she could not ignore the fact that the test had to be retaken. Her peers discovered that she was not a "genius in Spanish" as they had previously thought, and that was extremely embarrassing to Blythe.

Moreover, the test affected her opinion of herself as a language learner in general. Thirty years after the event she told me she had given up on learning a foreign language because she would never be able to sound like a native speaker. At the same time, however, she admitted to being successful when it came to communicating with people who did not speak English well.

Perhaps, just like with her Spanish fluency back in college, she felt confident about her skills, but when measuring herself against the norm (which would be a native-speaker pronunciation), she kept being painfully reminded that, in fact, she could not do well.

Furthermore, paradoxically, the experience made Blythe even more reliant on assessment. For example, when she was talking about young language learners, she indicated that she could not trust their seeming fluency, as this was only superficial and often children had much lower proficiency than they appeared to have. This comment was one of the examples of the circular aspect of Blythe's *perezhivanie* (Blunden, 2016). In her work as a teacher, she was afraid to trust her judgement because it had already failed her in college. Back then, Blythe wanted to succeed and that feeling made her believe she would; however, the test, which in her eyes was the indicator of what she really knew, proved otherwise. Blythe's current experiences with young language learners, in which she was often misled by their seeming fluency, reinforced what she had learnt back in college – that is, that the only reliable tool for measuring someone's language skills was assessment.

The way in which Emily grounded her beliefs about language learning in the two specific contexts of her work resonates with the dynamic and situated definition of teacher cognition in which teachers' mental lives are always bound to particular contexts of their activities (e.g. Davin et al., 2018; Golombek, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). It also echoes Vygotsky's (1994) emphasis on the integration of an individual and their environment, that is, the circumstances in which they exist. Emily's teaching—both its theoretical component, that is, her beliefs, as well as her practice—was dependant on the context in which it occurred and cannot be described outside of its rules, regulations, and responsibilities.

When recalling her language experiences, Emily emphasized the importance of her school language trips to Spanish speaking countries. She stressed their significance in her understanding of language learning and language use. She credited the trips with “opening her eyes to other parts of the world,” and “helping her understand how people feel when they step into a completely different culture.” Furthermore, she recognized that travelling abroad gave her a deeper understanding of what it meant to speak another language.

I suggest that Emily’s current experiences, that is, working in the Busy Bees Nursery School, gave a new meaning to these past school trips and in that sense, her *perezhivanie* of both the current and past experiences is characterized by circularity (Blunden, 2016). The trips happened more than a decade prior to our interviews; however, by recalling them in her mind and interpreting these recollections, and finally talking to me about them, Emily was looking at them through her current life events; through her *perezhivanie* of the context she was in at the moment. However, it was not a one-way movement—Emily’s *perezhivanie* was dynamic and it went back and forth in a circular motion. To be more specific, the *perezhivanie* of her school trips was reconstructed because of the current experiences; at the same time, the interpretation of the current *perezhivanie* of working in a linguistically diverse classroom was influenced by the experiences of the past. The school trips and the experiences of learning the language abroad were being reinterpreted in the context of Emily’s current work with young language learners; her work with linguistically diverse children was being experienced through the perspective of her past language learning biography.

Reading Felicity’s story, I can see how her understanding of bilingualism was informed both by her early experiences with language learning and language use and by her current experiences with people who speak more than one language. Felicity grew up in a small,

Midwestern town; in the community which she perceived as an all-white and monolingual. From the way she talked about this setting it was clear to me that she considered it uninteresting and that she was happy she had moved away. As she told me, her Spanish learning experiences, although initially quite successful, ended with her dropping her advanced Spanish class in college and left her feeling “miserable.” They also convinced her, a young adult at that time, that it was too late for her to learn a new language. However, during our interviews, she explicitly stated that she wished she was better at learning languages. I notice here the non-linear character of the creation of Felicity’s personality (Blunden, 2016), and I suggest that her earlier failure of learning Spanish in college and the feeling of misery connected with this experience was intensified by *perezhivanie* of her current contacts with bilingual speakers, that is, children and families of the Busy Bees Nursery School. In her present-day experiences with language learning and language use, almost all of bilinguals that Felicity knew were her preschool families—educated and successful university professors or graduate students. She equated their success with their ability to speak more than one language—it was, for example, evident when she openly stated that “being bilingual means being smarter.” Additionally, I connect Felicity’s belief about children learning languages easier and faster than adults with both her own experiences with language learning and her current experience of a teacher of linguistically diverse children. As a college student, Felicity did not succeed in learning Spanish, yet her preschool children become fluent in English in a very short period of time. She did not believe it was possible for her to learn a new language any more; however, she still hoped that her own children would become bilingual—that because they were still fairly young, it would be easier for them than it was for her.

Similarly to previous stories, Heidi’s story demonstrates how her *perezhivaniya* of the struggles to be understood while speaking German as well her husband’s decisions regarding home

language choice created her personal and professional language biography (Blunden, 2016; Zembylas, 2005b). Although Heidi did not talk about these events as particularly painful, her beliefs about what it meant to be bilingual revealed that her perezhivanie of these experiences left a long-lasting impact.

During our interviews, Heidi emphasized that working with people who speak more than one language had always been her favorite part of the job. She had a strong desire to successfully learn a foreign language and become bilingual, particularly after meeting her future spouse. However, despite her numerous efforts she was never able to “learn” any foreign language. Heidi’s conviction about her own inability to learn a second language was reinforced during her visit to Germany, when despite using all the right words and structures, people around her found it difficult to communicate with her. She tried very hard to be understood but got discouraged after people could not understand her. The perezhivanie of her struggles to communicate resulted in her belief that “speaking” a language meant to be able to say anything and to always be understood. It also resulted in her conviction that she was not a successful language learner—evidence of that conviction was the fact that on the questionnaire she did not report German as one of the languages in which she had at least some fluency. She herself realized that she might be wrong in believing that, to be bilingual, one must be able to speak the language perfectly, and she even admitted that knowledge of a given language might depend on the context one is in, but her perezhivanie of the events that had happened in Germany reinforced her idealized view of bilingualism. As a result of her own language learning, bilingualism remained unattainable and elusive—something that could happen to other people but not to Heidi.

Looking at Tess's story, I see that her previous experiences with language learning and language use, namely being a monolingual child in a bilingual family is the key to understanding her beliefs regarding her role in the linguistically diverse classroom (Davin et al., 2018; Swain et al., 2011). I also notice the circular aspect of Tess's *perezhivanie* (Blunden, 2016). As mentioned, Tess grew up in a household in which both parents and grandparents had immigrated from Holland and spoke Dutch among each other. As Tess told me, she felt an intimate connection with the language, but she could not communicate in it. As a teacher of linguistically diverse children, she felt that her inability to communicate with children in her classroom was a missing piece in her relationship with them. Paradoxically, when talking about her linguistically diverse classroom, Tess connected her ease and comfort around foreign languages to her childhood experiences with Dutch. In a parallel way, her relationships with children under her care were very harmonious; however, just like with her family relationships, Tess was lacking in something—namely, in her ability to speak the first language of those who were close to her. In this way I notice how her *perezhivanie* of her current situation affected and gave meaning to the events of the past; while at the same time her *perezhivanie* of the past events influenced what was happening in the present day (Blunden, 2016).

### **Emotions as Prisms in Teachers' Stories**

The emotional aspect of my participants' cognitions (Borg, 2003, 2006) was represented in different ways across their biographies: in their sense of self, in their relation to difference, in their valuing of caring for children, in their understanding of language, and in their own sense of efficacy in dealing with children who are linguistically diverse. These five themes in the teachers' collective beliefs and understandings are illustrated by Table 2.

Table 2  
Emerging Themes in Teachers' Stories

	<b>Sense of Self</b>	<b>Relationship to Difference</b>	<b>Motif of Care</b>	<b>Language</b>	<b>Preparedness for the Setting</b>
<b>Blythe</b>	Regret	Atypical; something that needs correction	Importance of socio-emotional domain; care	Fluency in a foreign language – sign of intelligence	Felt prepared because of her special ed experience; linguistically diverse children atypical
<b>Emily</b>	Sense of inadequacy regret	Fascinating	Importance of socio-emotional domain; care	Relationship between language and culture	Felt not prepared - did not expect the diversity; linguistically diverse children atypical
<b>Felicity</b>	Regret; sadness	Celebration of difference; fascinating	Importance of socio-emotional domain; care	Fluency in a foreign language – sign of intelligence and status	Felt not prepared - did not expect the diversity; linguistically diverse children atypical
<b>Heidi</b>	Regret; sadness	Celebration of difference; fascinating	Importance of socio-emotional domain; care	Common language as a symbol of emotional connectedness	Felt not prepared - did not expect the diversity; linguistically diverse children atypical
<b>Tess</b>	Sense of inadequacy regret; sadness	Familiar; fascinating	Importance of socio-emotional domain; care	Language as a symbol of intimacy; lost language	Felt not prepared - did not expect the diversity; linguistically diverse children atypical

### **Sense of Self**

Nias (1996) writes that: “[t]he emotional reactions of individual teachers to their work are intimately connected to the view that they have of themselves and others” (p. 294). In the context of language learning, there is a growing body of research (Davin et al., 2018; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015; Li, 2019; Swain et al., 2011) that suggests that one’s past language learning history influences their present teaching practices. It is evident across all five stories of my participants that for each of them their perezhivanie of their own language learning and language use resulted in a particular view of themselves as language learners and language users. In all five cases, this image is characterized by the feelings of regret and sadness. This is demonstrated by the way each

teacher talked about their language learning experiences, their inability to successfully communicate in a foreign language, and their work in preschool classroom.

For example, although Blythe did not explicitly express a feeling of regret or sadness over her stated inability to learn a foreign language, these feelings were evident when she was recalling her failure on a college test. These feelings were also showing when Blythe was comparing her own language learning to the experiences of her preschool children. When she stated that children “magically do fabulous” while she could not even pronounce certain sounds, it was apparent to me that she wished she was able to learn as quickly and easily as young children. Similarly, Emily never expressed a feeling of regret; however, I suggest that it manifested in her openly expressed sense of inadequacy. She told me she felt that as a teacher of young language learners she was not doing enough in her classroom. She also said that she wished she could do more to support her linguistically diverse children. Felicity expressed her regret in a more explicit way. She clearly stated she wished she was better at learning languages and she hoped that, unlike her, her own children would be able to successfully learn a foreign language. Heidi also openly expressed a sense of regret and sadness. In her case, these feelings were directed towards her family’s loss of German and her inability to learn this language. Although it was mostly her children’s loss—Heidi felt that they lost an advantage of being bilingual and an ability to communicate with some family members who were back in Germany, it was also her personal loss; she lost another chance of learning German, a hope she had had before her spouse made a decision of giving up on his language. Likewise, Tess expressed a feeling of sadness, openly stating that she was sad that she was not fluent in any foreign language. Her regret was also manifested when she talked about her relationships with children in her classroom. She tried very hard to make a family-like environment

in her preschool classroom, but she felt that her inability to speak children's first languages was making it impossible to accomplish.

The participants' view of themselves as unsuccessful language learners was also characterized by their evaluations of their own linguistic performances against idealized models (Aragao, 2011; Swain et al., 2011). Swain et al. (2011) note: "It seems that perception of linguistic performance too is socially constructed. Others evaluate our performance and how we react to those evaluations make bi- and multilingualism more or less comfortable – more or less a source of pride and strength" (p. 88). Looking at the stories told by the five teachers, it is clear to me that their experiences with language learning and language use resulted in negative evaluations of their own linguistic performances. These, in turn, developed into feelings of sadness and regret.

### **Relationship to Difference**

Antiracist education research (e.g., Ajodhia-Andrews, 2013; Alismail, 2016; Banks, 1995; Chan, 2011; Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Harper, 1997; Kymlicka, 2010) points to a number of strategies often employed by teachers working in ethnically, racially and linguistically diverse classrooms. These strategies, although intended to promote tolerance and inclusion, do not go beyond superficial understanding of diversity in which people are clustered into homogenous groups that can easily be described by food they eat or festivals they celebrate (Ajodhia-Andrews, 2013; Harper, 1997). For example, Alismail (2016) notes that teachers often feel uncomfortable recognizing differences among their students (particularly ethnic or racial differences) and because of that discomfort they tend to deny existence of difference in their classrooms. Another common strategy is a celebratory approach to diversity, in which minoritized students are celebrated for their unique qualities, such as linguistic abilities, religious practices or cultural traditions (Ajodhia-

Andrews, 2013; Banks, 1995; Harper, 1997). All five teachers working in the Busy Bees Nursery School manifested both of these, seemingly contradictory, approaches to diversity. Each of them denied that there were any major differences between their linguistically diverse and monolingual children. These teachers emphasized that all children have similar needs, regardless if they come from monolingual or linguistically diverse homes. Consequently, according to my participants, teaching linguistically diverse children does not differ from teaching children who are native speakers of English. At the same time though, the way in which each teacher talked about their linguistically diverse classrooms shows a certain kind of fascination with the cultural and linguistic diversity of the preschool community. My participants seemed to be open to difference and celebrated it in their classrooms; however, it was clear to me that their understanding of diversity did not go beyond superficial fascination with it. For example, Blythe's attraction with diverse children manifested itself when she discussed preschool children's magical language skills, as if she believed that these children were really equipped with some supernatural abilities. Felicity's fascination with diversity evidenced itself when she talked about her own language learning and inability to become bilingual, comparing these experiences with those of her preschool children and their families. She clearly admired people who have facility in more than one language and equated their bilingualism with success and prestige. Heidi openly expressed her amazement with the diversity among the children attending the Busy Bees, stating numerous times throughout our interviews that working with diverse families was the favourite part of her job. The way in which the teachers made the distinction between the two groups, American families and international families, indicated that they were very much aware of the difference between the two, almost overemphasizing it. For example, when Felicity told me that East Asian parents usually do not share any feedback with their children's teachers, she pre-emptively explained that characteristic

with cultural difference, not thinking of other possible reasons for such behavior. It also suggested that Felicity thought of a culture as a homogenous group of people who all behave and think in the same way.

It is possible that these individual teachers' beliefs about diversity were a reflection of a larger culture of the preschool centre. For example, the conferences about recognition of cultural differences within the preschool community that were organized and led by the director of the centre were an example of this shallow understanding of diversity, which Harper (1997) describes in the following way:

[The underlying assumption is that] culture and cultural identity is a stable, unified, and distinct object, transmittable by anyone, even those without intimate knowledge of the culture and equally well by those with such knowledge. (p. 6)

### **The Motif of Care**

The image of teaching as mothering has been well documented by research (Collins, 1998; James, 2010; James, 2012). For example, James (2010) points out that the assumption about women's natural disposition toward caring for others is tied to the assumption about women's natural need to raise children. She also notes that this relationship between caring and teaching is particularly evident with regard to preschool and elementary school teachers whose role has been associated with attending to young children's socio-emotional development since the beginning of early childhood education (p. 522).

Along this line of thinking, Pruitt (2019) conceptualizes ECE as dominated by two discourses: the discourse of teaching and the discourse of caring (p. 150). For the teachers working in the Busy Bees Nursery School, the two discourses were intertwined with each other. Echoing the body of research that points to the fact that socio-emotional skills tend to be a top priority for

preschool teachers (e.g., Hains, Fowler, Schwartz, Kottwitz & Rosenkoetter, 1989; Lara-Cinisomo et al., 2008), all of the five teachers expressed a belief that attending to socio-emotional needs of children is crucial in preparation for later school success, the fact that is widely supported by literature (e.g., Konold & Pianta, 2005; Shala, 2003). Accordingly, all teachers working in the Busy Bees provided an excellent learning environment, fostering the development of the whole child (Noddings, 2005). I feel, however, that two out of those five women, Heidi and Tess, went beyond this. Everything that these teachers told me with regard to their work with young language learners, and what I observed during my time in their classrooms, suggests that their approach to teaching was defined by relational care (Noddings, 1988; 2005).

Noddings (2005) notes that in a relationship characterized by care, care is relational, that is, a teacher cares and a student feels cared for. The one who cares is attentive to the needs and wants of the one they care for, not to some preestablished ideas of those needs. The one who is cared for recognizes the caring and responds with trust. It is clear that the relationship is dialogical. Noddings (1988) describes it in the following way:

The first member of the relational dyad (the carer or “one caring”) responds to the needs, wants, and initiations of the second. Her mode of response is characterized by *engrossment* (nonselective attention or total presence to the other for the duration of the caring interval) and *displacement of motivation* (her motive energy flows in the direction of the other’s needs and projects). She feels with the other and acts in his behalf. The second member (the one cared for) contributes to the relation by recognizing and responding to the caring. (p. 220).

Noddings (2005) adds that teachers who work from the perspective of students are in continuous and consistent touch with their students.

Heidi's and Tess's relationships with young children in their classrooms could definitely be described by love and mutual trust. For example, Tess explicitly stated that she truly loved children in her classroom—a statement that few teachers would openly express in a school setting. Heidi stated that the first step in her relationship with newly arrived children is gaining their trust. Similarly, Tess stressed the importance of trust between children and their caregivers. Furthermore, both teachers talked about children's comfort and their ways of providing it. Heidi shared with me different strategies of releasing young children's tension of not understanding the classroom language, such as using body gestures, facial expressions or singing songs. Tess talked about providing comfort in relation to learning crucial words from children's home languages.

It was evident that both Heidi and Tess pushed themselves to meet their children's needs. They challenged themselves to know the children in their classrooms not only in the school context, but to be aware of what was happening in these children's lives on a daily basis. An example of this interest was evidenced in Tess's description of daily drop-offs and pick-ups and Heidi's comment about annual camping trips.

Observing the teacher-student interactions in the two classrooms, I was confident that the children were aware of their teachers' love and care towards them. They arrived to their classrooms genuinely happy and full of smiles, running from their parents' arms into the arms of their teachers. When hurt or distressed children sought their teachers' physical presence, knowing that comfort would be provided.

### **Language as More Than Communication**

Wong-Fillmore (1991), Phillipson (2016), Cummins (2000), (2007); Baker (2011) are just a few among many scholars who suggest that language represents much more than merely a code with which people communicate. It can serve as an indicator of an intimate relationship, transmitter

of cultural values, a symbol of social status, or a badge of loyalty. Accordingly, when one loses or learns a language, they lose or get much more than just the ability to communicate with those around them—such loss or gain may affect relationships within family or community; one’s belonging to a particular ethnic, religious, or racial group; or their social status.

Each of my participant’s understandings of language was complex and connected to their previously discussed language learning biographies and their *perezhvaniya* (Vygotsky, 1994) of particular events in their lives.

Blythe’s fixation on norms and standards indicated that language in use was for her a symbol of intelligence and education (Baker, 2011). To be more specific, she emphasized numerous times the importance of speaking correctly, be it in one’s native language (in which the standard is the official form of the language) or in a second language (in which the standard is native speech). In her own recollection of language learning, she remembered everyone thinking of her as a “genius” because she seemed to speak perfect Spanish. Her devastation and embarrassment after failing the test in college was caused by the fact that her peers found out she was not as smart as they had thought she was, as if good knowledge of Spanish was a sign of her intelligence.

Emily emphasized the connection between language and cultural belonging. It was manifested when she talked about young language learners in her classroom and their struggle of living in between two worlds. Interestingly, Emily emphasized the need for the separation of the two realms when she commented on parents’ switch to English upon arrival in the school setting. She praised the parents who use English at drop offs and pick-ups for setting the “right tone,” making it clear that home languages and cultures belonged to the outside world – an approach common to teachers of linguistically and culturally diverse students and widely discussed by

existing research (Cummins, 2000; 2007; Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Garcia, 2009; Goodwin, 2002; Iannacci, 2007; Ippolito, 2010).

Felicity associated speaking more than one language with intelligence, prestige and status (Baker, 2011). It was evidenced numerous times when she talked about the benefits of speaking another language. Her rationale for the regret about not being fluent in any language other than English confirmed her belief that bilinguals tend to be better off than people who are monolingual, and that is mostly due to their higher intelligence.

Heidi's explanation of her spouse's home language choices suggested that in their family language was a symbol of emotional connectedness (Wong-Fillmore, 2001). Heidi admitted that language brought her immediate family (her spouse and her sons) closer when her husband decided to switch to English; paradoxically, because of her sons' inability to communicate with their relatives back in Germany, language, or rather a certain linguistic choice, ultimately separated their family members.

Tess had a complex relationship with foreign languages. The sound of a language she did not understand brought her comfort and joy. At the same time, however, it made her feel sad and deficient because it reminded her that it was not hers; she neither spoke nor understood it. With the comfort of listening to the words she could not understand usually came the realization that there was a disconnect between her and the speakers of the foreign language. The complex emotions she felt in the presence of foreign languages were bringing memories of Tess's childhood home, in which her loved ones spoke the language she felt connected with but could not speak herself. Ultimately, language was a symbol of intimacy, but it also served as a reminder that its loss can hurt relationships (Wong-Fillmore, 1991).

### **Preparedness for the Setting**

All but one teacher (Blythe) talked about their lack of preparedness to work with linguistically diverse children upon starting their work at the Busy Bees Nursery School. Although these four women had completed four-year bachelor programs in either Early Childhood Education or Elementary Education, none of them recalled attending any courses specific to linguistic or cultural diversity. They admitted that they learnt strategies helpful in working with language learners while on the job, not in their teacher preparation programs. This finding is consistent with the existing research that notes that novice teachers do not feel prepared to teach linguistically diverse children (Medina, Hathaway & Pilonieta, 2015; O'Neal, Ringler & Rodriguez, 2008; Sullivan-Hewett, Ballard, Hedge & Ticknor, 2014), and that they typically learn specific strategies of working with English Language Learners only when they are already in the classroom (Faez & Valeo, 2012; Hedge, Hewett & Terrell, 2016). Interestingly, Medina et al. (2015) point to the fact that although preservice teachers do not feel prepared to work with diverse students upon completion of their teacher preparation programs, their study abroad experiences may lead to greater understanding of their future English Language Learners. Medina et al. (2015) write:

Upon their return, the PSTs [Preservice Teachers] were able to empathize with their future ELLs based on specific experiences they had as “others” as they encountered cultural differences. One PST related, “This experience has made me realize just how hard it could be to not know the culture and language of a country and to feel like a complete outsider.”

(p. 84)

The words of this preservice teacher mirror Emily's comments about her school language trips, in which she credited these visits with “with helping her to understand how people feel when they step into a completely different culture.”

The feeling of unpreparedness to work in linguistically and culturally diverse classrooms also echoes Anthony-Stevens, Gehlken, Jones, Day and Gussenhoven (2017), who suggest that there is a pervasive discourse of denying diversity in certain (mostly rural) parts of the United States. As mentioned, the Busy Bees is located in the college town of a Midwestern state that is portrayed as a homogeneous and non-diverse. Consequently, the participants of my study repeatedly stated that linguistic and cultural diversity of the Busy Bees was surprising to them. Their feeling of lack of preparedness also resonates with Nieto's (2000), in which the author points out that there is a general assumption in teacher education programs that the job of these programs is to prepare teacher candidates to work in "regular" classrooms, that is, classrooms filled with White, middle-class, monolingual English speakers. I suggest that this image of a "regular" student erases the existence and experiences of Indigenous students and students of color, as well as ignores the fact that due to recent socio-political changes linguistically, culturally and ethnically diverse students are becoming the norm in North American classrooms (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010). The observations emerging from my study are consistent with Anthony-Stevens et al. (2017) and show that the student population becomes more and more linguistically and culturally diverse not only in the classroom of large, metropolitan areas, but this pattern affects various communities across the continent.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **RETURN TO THE QUESTIONS AND THE IMPLICATIONS OF MY RESEARCH**

In this study, I drew upon research on language teacher cognition, with an understanding of cognition as dynamic, situated in a particular context, and in an interdependent relationship with emotion (Cross, 2010; Golombek, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). This way of exploring teachers' beliefs pushes a researcher to look at various factors influencing teachers' lives, in and out of their workplace. Accordingly, I learnt that my participants' understandings were influenced by both their prior experiences with language learning and use, and their current work context, that is, their personal and professional biographies. My findings confirm the current research in language teacher cognition that has shown that teachers' beliefs and practices are shaped by "the invisible dimension of teachers' mental lives that have emerged from teachers' diverse personal and language learning histories, language teacher education experiences, and the specific contexts in which they do or learn to do their work" (Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015, p. 435).

#### **Overview of My Study**

The first two chapters of my dissertation serve as a theoretical context of my study. I introduce and briefly discuss major issues arising in the current sociolinguistic scholarship, the area of language learning and the field of teacher cognition. I also signal the importance of the relationship between cognition and emotion in teachers' personal and professional lives. In Chapter 3 of my work, I discuss the methodology of my research, its design and analysis. I also

introduce the setting and the participants of my study. In chapter 4, I create the five teachers' unique profiles to illuminate their individual understandings of language learning and language use. In Chapter 5, I examine these understandings, focusing on patterns emerging from my participants' stories. In my discussion, I emphasize the interrelationship between these teachers' beliefs and their rational and emotional experiencing, or, to put it differently, their *perezhivanie* (Vygotsky, 1994) of certain events in their lives.

The goal of this concluding chapter is to answer the research questions that guided my work, identify limitations of my study, its implications and directions for further research.

### **Connection to the Research Questions**

My study was guided by the following research question and two subquestions stemming from it:

***Q1:** How do teachers who work with young students who have facility in more than one language understand language learning and language use?*

***SQ1:** How does this understanding of language learning and use affect teachers' beliefs about their linguistically diverse students?*

***SQ2:** How does this understanding of language learning and use affect teachers' practices in a linguistically diverse classroom?*

When I initially asked these questions, I was not fully aware of how much my participants' own language learning and language use experiences would be discussed during our interviews and informal conversations. I also did not realize that these teachers' understandings and beliefs would be so closely intertwined with their emotional lives. Only after a close analysis of my participants' interviews did I realize that it would be impossible to talk about these teachers' views on language learning and language use referring only to the immediate context of their work.

Instead, it became clear to me that it was necessary to make connections to my participants' personal, often very private, experiences. The answer to each research question has two levels – one is a surface level and it consists of what these five women explicitly told me during our interviews and conversations. The other level goes a bit deeper and ties together these teachers' professional and personal selves.

### **How Do Teachers Understand Language Learning and Language Use**

As discussed in the previous chapter, for all of the five teachers, language represented more than just means of communication between people. Naturally, when I asked the question: “*What does it mean to be bilingual?*” first and most intuitive answer in all of the cases was: “*It means that they speak more than one language.*” It was only when I probed a bit deeper, that the participants told me their most personal associations with bilingualism, language learning and its use.

All of the five women viewed bilingualism as a positive phenomenon. This was evident in their description of young language learners, whom they saw as more confident, independent, flexible and resilient than their monolingual counterparts. I suggest that the participants' positive association with speaking more than one language was highly influenced by the setting in which they worked. As noted, the bilingual families of the Busy Bees Nursery School consist of university faculty and staff members, or international graduate students. Thus, for my participants the ability to speak more than one language was associated with success and certain kind of privilege. This type of association is consistent with existing literature in the field of bilingual education and language learning. For example, Baker (2011), Cummins (2001) or Cummins and Hornberger (2008) suggest that bilingualism is more often seen as an asset in case of already privileged groups, while it might be seen as a challenge in case of marginalized population. Of

course, I can only speculate what my participants' views on bilingualism would be if children in their classrooms were coming from, for example, poor involuntary migrant families, but it is possible that these understandings would be very different.

Despite looking at people's facility in more than one language as a positive practice, the participants held unrealistic views of bilingualism. Even though they all had numerous interactions with bilinguals on a daily basis, each of the teachers expressed the belief that a bilingual person is "two monolinguals in one" (Cummins, 2007). They equated bilingualism with complete fluency in each of one's languages – a view that is drastically different from the plurilingual approach to language use (The Council of Europe, 2001, 2018). I suggest that in the case of each teacher, this belief was connected to their own language learning experiences – none of the five women saw themselves as a successful language learner or a foreign language user, namely because of these unrealistic expectations from bilingualism.

One important aspect of these five teachers' understandings and beliefs about language learning and language use manifested itself during my interviews with them. That aspect is the contextual and dynamic quality of teacher cognition (Cross, 2010; Golombek, 2015; Kubanyiova & Feryok, 2015). Despite their teaching experience (in 4 out of 5 cases more than a decade-long), the teachers had not thought deeply about some of the issues I asked them about. Furthermore, the participants seemed to realize that some of their opinions came only as they started talking about them; in other words; in the process of answering my questions, the teachers were making sense of their beliefs. This finding is consistent with Kubanyiova and Feryok (2015) who note:

When teachers describe their emotional struggles, passions, motivations, values, or beliefs, they do not simply put words to pre-existing mental mechanisms that reside, fully developed and ready to be coherently articulated, in their heads. When they tell, they tell

with a particular purpose, to a particular audience. What and how they tell is shaped by the context of the telling which influences what can, should, or even must be told about their selves, their students, and their teaching worlds. (p. 439)

For example, this was illustrated when at the end of our second interview, Blythe, who was rather confident in expressing her views, seemed to consider a possibility of re-evaluating some of her beliefs. She said:

*I realize there is benefit to just pondering these things, even if there are no answers, or whatever. To think about it, and also to remain open-minded. And even you ask me all these questions, I realize that maybe in some ways I am close-minded about certain things, and I should be more open-minded (...) Also, I think sometimes teachers, especially if they are as old as me, and have been through so many experiences as me, they don't really realize that they don't know anything about a certain thing. You know, you just kind of assume you know about things. Then, when you ask me these questions, I realize I have no idea...*

Similarly, when Heidi was talking about differences between teaching young language learners and children who were native speakers of English, she initially told me she did not think that there were any differences in teaching these two groups of preschoolers. However, when she thought about it for a little longer, she questioned herself and could not tell me if she used those strategies because of the presence of language learners in her classroom, or if she would be behaving in the same manner in a setting where all children were native speakers of English. She hesitated, reconsidered the answer and admitted her uncertainty.

In a similar manner, at the end of our second interview, Tess admitted that she never thought about some of the issues we were talking about and she enjoyed the questions because

they were thought-provoking. She stated that as a result of our conversations, she became “more mindful of the languages” in her classroom. Her beliefs were being affected by our discussions, and in the process, by her own self-reflection and self-questioning.

### **How Does this Understanding Affect Teachers’ Beliefs about Their Linguistically Diverse Students**

On one hand, each of the teachers expressed a belief that their young language learners do not differ much from their monolingual peers. On the other hand, the teachers talked about their linguistically diverse preschoolers as more confident, independent, flexible and resilient than the rest of the children in their classrooms. I suggest that these two contradictory beliefs were related to my participants’ thinking about diversity. As previously discussed, the teachers working in Busy Bees both denied difference of their young language learners and wanted to celebrate their linguistically diverse preschoolers for their unique qualities (Ajodhia-Andrews, 2013; Alismail, 2016; Banks, 1995; Chan, 2011; Gérin-Lajoie, 2008; Harper, 1997; Kymlicka, 2010). Both of these approaches failed to acknowledge challenges that linguistically diverse children and their families may possibly face on daily basis.

The participants held a belief that children learn languages easier and faster than adults – a misconception often identified by the existing research (e.g., Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013; Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Cummins, 2001; Espinoza, 2013). I propose that these beliefs were, at least in some part, informed by the teachers’ circular *perezhivanie* (Blunden, 2016; Vygotsky, 1994) of their own language learning experiences and their work with linguistically diverse children. To be more specific, none of these women saw themselves as capable of successfully learning another language; yet, in their every day work with language learners they witnessed these children “magically” do very well. In the light of their current work in preschool

classroom, their prior experiences were telling them that there must be some differences between learning languages in the early childhood and later on in life.

### **How does this Understanding Affect Teachers' Practices in a Linguistically Diverse Classroom**

All of the five teachers told me that they did not differentiate between language learners and children who were native speakers of English in their every-day practices. There are several reasons for this lack of differentiated teaching strategies in my participants' treatment of linguistically diverse children and their monolingual peers. First, all of the teachers explicitly emphasized the crucial aspect of socio-emotional development in preschool years (a finding widely confirmed by the existing research, e.g., Konold & Pianta, 2005; Shala, 2003), regardless of ethnic or linguistic background of their children. This ties back to my participants' understanding of difference and diversity in their preschool classroom. To be more specific, I suggest that my participants' failure to acknowledge challenges that language learners face is the main factor influencing their teaching practices. While the teachers stressed the importance of socio-emotional development in preschool years, they seemed not to recognize how the challenges that language learners encounter on daily basis (e.g., lack of understanding of the classroom language, social exclusion, or possible attrition of home language) may negatively affect these children's socio-emotional development (e.g., Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010; Kirova, 2001).

Second, none of the teachers saw themselves as successful language speakers. As a result, they felt that inclusion of children's home languages in their daily classroom activities was a practice they were not capable of doing. This observation is consistent with the existing research (Chumak-Horbatsch, 2012; Garcia & Kleifgen, 2010), which suggests that teachers often assume

that they have to have at least a working knowledge of children's languages to be able to implement them in their classrooms.

### **The Limitations of My Study**

The findings emerging from this study are bound by certain limitations. First, the interviews were limited only to the lead teachers working in the Busy Bees Nursery School. By including the administration of the centre, that is, its director and the administrative assistant, I might have gathered more information regarding a broader perspective of the centre's practices regarding linguistically diverse families. Furthermore, by including parents of linguistically diverse children in the interview process, I could have gained information regarding their accounts of teachers' classroom practices, parents' own perceptions of their relationship with teachers, and their motivation for choosing this specific preschool centre for their child. Although I planned to include the teachers in the process of interpreting the data, none of them showed interest, most likely due to their busy schedules. By engaging the participants in the research process in a more rigorous way (for example, asking them to write a reflective journal or edit the first version of their individual stories), I could have gathered more understanding of their past and present experiences. Needless to say, the findings of the study are specific only to the local context of the setting in which it was conducted.

### **Implications of My Study**

My research study has significant implications for the field of language learning and teacher education.

The findings emerging from this study suggest that the way language learning and teaching is conceptualized by teachers of young children is still founded on monolingual assumptions (e.g.,

Cummins, 2007; Ippolito, 2010), in which languages are taught in isolation. This approach leads to a belief that a bilingual speaker is “two monolinguals in one” (Cummins, 2007) – a person that has complete fluency in each of their languages, regardless of the context in which these languages are being used. In order to raise competent language speakers and users who will fluidly use their various linguistic repertoires depending on their needs, our language teaching practices must change. The first step would be to modify language teaching pedagogies to acknowledge the constantly changing and evolving global context of language learning and language use (e.g., Moore & Gajo, 2009; The Council of Europe, 2001, 2018).

While the evidence stemming from my study confirms existing literature (Hargreaves 1998, 2000, 2001; Imai, 2010; Nias, 1996; Noddings, 1996; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007) suggesting that teachers’ emotional lives are of crucial importance when discussing teachers’ work, I propose that this finding is particularly significant in the context of early childhood educators. Pruitt (2019) writes:

[T]here is an implicit agreement between preschool teachers and the rest of the society: preschool teachers will always love, care, go to the extra mile, sublimate their feelings, and so on to benefit children ... Although an outsider’s view constantly naturalizes preschool teachers as kind, considerate, and loving, the truth is that working with young children can be frustrating. (p. 156)

Because early childhood educators have to constantly attend to children’s developing socio-emotional needs and, what is more, control and model their own emotional responses, it is crucial for these teachers to recognize and acknowledge their own feelings, regardless if they are positive or negative. However, in order to encourage teachers to care for their emotional well-being, the discussion around the profession of teaching must expand to view it not only as knowing, planning,

and organizing, but also as feeling (Hargreaves 1998, 2000, 2001; Imai, 2010; Nias, 1996; Noddings, 1996; Shapiro, 2010; Zembylas, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2007).

### **Directions for Future Research**

The study has important suggestions for further research in language learning, language teacher cognition, and language teacher education. First, the possibility of conducting a research study that would include other stakeholders, such as parents and administrators, would allow for a more holistic exploration of teachers' beliefs in the context of young language learners. A longitudinal action research study that would engage preschool practitioners in collaborative plurilingual curriculum planning and implementation would also be a fruitful extension of the current study. It could provide teachers, who often do not feel competent enough to foster children's emerging bilingualism, with tangible ways of employing children's home languages in the daily lives of their classrooms. Furthermore, an examination of language teachers' beliefs in the context of the lower grades of public school, in which the pressure of standardized tests affects teachers' work on daily basis, would benefit the field of language teacher cognition. Additionally, a thorough examination of the relationship between teacher education programs and professional development courses and teachers' feeling of readiness for working in diverse settings could be productive for research in language teacher education, and provide feedback as to how to prepare educators for the reality of the present-day classroom. Finally, additional exploration of the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their emotional lives could be useful to language teacher education and language teacher cognition research. In this context, further examination of the concept of *perezhivanie* – the concept that recognizes the unity of human consciousness and interdependence of each of its units, without prioritizing either of them – could be particularly fruitful. Such exploration would allow researchers to look at both cognitive and affective aspects

of language teaching. It would allow them to see a teacher not only as the one who understands, thinks, knows and plans but also the one who feels.

### **Concluding Remarks**

The present study examined five preschool teachers' beliefs regarding language learning and language use in the context of their professional and personal biographies. The study employed a theoretical framework and methodological approach that recognizes cognition as "neither static nor fixed," (Cross, 2010, p. 437). The study went beyond descriptive accounts of teachers' understandings and beliefs, attempting to explore why these beliefs have come to exist in the present form. Accordingly, the findings emerging from my study show that teachers' beliefs regarding language learning and language use are closely intertwined with their personal, and often very intimate, associations and experiences, and these two cannot be analyzed in separation of each other.

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## Appendix A

Joanna Cichocka

The purpose of my research study is to examine how teachers of young students who know and use more than one language understand language learning and language use. The main question of the study is:

Q1: How do teachers who work with young students who have facility in more than one language understand language learning and language use?

There are two sub-questions that stem from this main question. These are:

SQ1: How does this understanding of language learning and use affect teachers' beliefs about their linguistically diverse students?

SQ2: How does this understanding of language learning and use affect teachers' practices in a linguistically diverse classroom?

To answer these questions, the study focuses on 3-4 participants who are teachers in preschool classrooms. Before the study begins, I will ask you to sign informed consent forms. I will also ask you to distribute letters to parents and parental consent forms in your classrooms. You will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, and take part in a 60-75 minute individual interview conducted by me. I will audio-record this interview. Next, I will ask you for a permission to conduct around 5 classroom observations in each classroom. My focus during these observations will be your teaching practices and your interactions with children who are linguistically diverse. I may ask you to take photos of the classroom environment when the students are absent. Any student work displayed with a name on it, will have the name digitally removed to ensure confidentiality. After the observations, I will meet with each of you again to discuss these observations.

This is the outline of the study. What I was hoping for today is to meet each of you and, perhaps, individually talk about the timeline and the next steps of the study.

## Appendix B

### Consent Form Teachers

**Date:**

**Study Name:** Language Learning and Language Use in Preschool Classrooms: Teachers' Understandings

**Researcher:** Joanna Cichocka

**Sponsor(s):** York University

**Purpose of the Research:** The purpose of the research is to examine how teachers of young students who know and use more than one language understand language learning and language use.

**What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:**

As a participant, you will be asked to fill out a brief questionnaire, and take part in a 60-75 minute audio-recorded interview conducted by me. Additionally, I will ask you to invite me to your classroom to conduct 5 separate observations of your teaching practices. I will ask for your permission to photograph the physical layout of the classroom. I will then discuss these observations with you. It is my hope that during this process you will engage with me in an interpretation of the data collected thus far.

**Risks and Discomforts:**

We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from your participation in the research.

**Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:**

There is no direct benefit to you. However, the results of the study will be a valuable contribution to the existing literature on teacher cognition and linguistic diversity. Additionally, by engaging in the research process, you will have a chance to reflect on your teaching practices.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer will not influence the relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.

**Withdrawal from the Study:**

You can stop participating in the study at any time, for any reason, if you so decide. Your decision to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions, will not affect your relationship with the researchers, York University, or any other group associated with this project. In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed.

**Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. The collected data will be treated with complete confidentiality, and no identifying features of the institution or the participants will be used. The collected data will be securely stored in a password protected file, kept in a locked cabinet, and only the researcher will have access to it. The anticipated duration of the data storage is 3 years, and after this time the data will be destroyed.

**Questions About the Research?**

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact myself at joanna\_cichocka@edu.yorku.ca My direct supervisor in this research is Dr. Sharon Murphy, and she can be contacted at 416-736-2100 ext. 66120, or smurphy@edu.yorku.ca This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Graduate Program Office, Faculty of Education, York University, telephone 416-736-5018 or e-mail gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca. You may also contact Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

**Legal Rights and Signatures:**

I \_\_\_\_\_, consent to participate in **Language Learning and Language Use in  
Preschool Classrooms: Teachers' Understandings study** conducted by **Joanna Cichocka**. I have understood  
the nature of this project and wish to participate. My signature below indicates my consent.

*Please check the box*

\_\_\_\_ I agree to being audio-recorded during my interviews with the researcher.

*Signature of the Participant*

*Date*

*Signature of the Principal Investigator*

*Date*

## Appendix C

January 10, 2018

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Joanna Cichocka, and I am a PhD student at the York University in Toronto, Canada. I am writing this letter to inform you that I will be conducting my doctoral research data collection in your child's classroom.

The purpose of the research is to examine how teachers of young students who know and use more than one language understand language learning and language use. I am planning to conduct the study during the months of January, February and March, 2018. During this time, I will visit your child's classroom on five separate days and conduct observations of your child's teacher's practices. I will record my data by note taking. I will not engage in any direct contact with your child. I will take photos of the classroom environment when the students are absent. Any student work displayed with a name on it, will have the name digitally removed to ensure confidentiality. I intend to present the results of the study as my doctoral dissertation. I also hope to publish the results in academic and professional journals. In addition, I plan to present the findings of the study at academic and professional conferences and workshops. The results of the study will be a valuable contribution to the existing literature on teacher cognition and linguistic diversity.

Only I will have access to the data. I will keep all the information that would allow to identify your child, your child's school or teacher, confidential, by using code numbers and general descriptions.

Participation in my study is completely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time for any reason without any negative consequences.

If you agree to my presence in your child's classroom, please sign the consent form below and keep a copy for yourself.

Thank you for your consideration. Please contact me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or by email [joanna\\_cichocka@edu.yorku.ca](mailto:joanna_cichocka@edu.yorku.ca) with any concerns you may have.

Sincerely,

Joanna Cichocka

## Consent Form Parents or Guardians

**Date:**

**Study Name:** Language Learning and Language Use in Preschool Classrooms: Teachers' Understandings

**Researcher:** Joanna Cichocka

**Sponsor(s):** York University

**Purpose of the Research:** The purpose of the research is to examine how teachers of young students who know and use more than one language understand language learning and language use.

**What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:**

Your child will not be a participant of the study. No involvement is required. The researcher will take photos of the classroom environment when the students are absent. Any student work displayed with a name on it, will have the name digitally removed to ensure confidentiality.

**Risks and Discomforts:**

We do not foresee any risks or discomfort from the researcher's presence in the classroom.

**Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:**

There is no direct benefit to your child. However, the results of the study will be a valuable contribution to the existing literature on teacher cognition and linguistic diversity.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Your permission for the observation of the classroom activities is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw your permission at any time.

**Withdrawal from the Study:**

Your permission for the observation of the classroom activities is completely voluntary and you may choose to withdraw your permission at any time.

**Confidentiality:**

Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law. The collected data will be treated with complete confidentiality, and no identifying features of the institution or the participants will be used. The collected data will be securely stored in a password protected file, kept in a locked cabinet, and only the researcher will have access to it. The anticipated duration of the data storage is 3 years, and after this time the data will be destroyed.

**Questions About the Research?**

If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact myself at joanna\_cichocka@edu.yorku.ca My direct supervisor in this research is Dr. Sharon Murphy, and she can be contacted at 416-736-2100 ext. 66120, or smurphy@edu.yorku.ca This research has been reviewed and approved by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, you may contact the Graduate Program Office, Faculty of Education, York University, telephone 416-736-5018 or e-mail gradprogram@edu.yorku.ca. You may also contact Senior Manager and Policy Advisor for the Office of Research Ethics, 5th Floor, York Research Tower, York University, telephone 416-736-5914 or e-mail ore@yorku.ca

**Legal Rights and Signatures:**

I \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/guardian (*circle applicable*) of \_\_\_\_\_, consent to *Joanna Cichocka's* presence in his/her classroom for the purpose of observation of teacher's practices. I have understood the nature of this project. My signature below indicates my consent.

*Signature of the Parent/Guardian*

*Date*

*Signature of the Principal Investigator*

*Date*

## Appendix D

### Teacher Background Questionnaire

1. How long have you been working as a teacher? \_\_\_\_\_
2. How many years have you been teaching in this nursery?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. What age group are you currently teaching? \_\_\_\_\_
4. What age groups have you taught previously? \_\_\_\_\_
5. How many children do you have in your classroom this year? \_\_\_\_\_
6. How do you identify your ethnic background? \_\_\_\_\_
7. Were you born in the US or abroad? If abroad, how long have you lived in the US?  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. What is your native language? \_\_\_\_\_
9. If you are a non-native English speaker, at what age did you begin learning English?  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you know any other language than English (even minimally)? If yes, please indicate your proficiency on the chart below (beginner, intermediate, advanced):

Language	Understand	Read	Speak	Write

11. Education:

-Bachelor's: \_\_\_\_\_

-Master's: \_\_\_\_\_

-Additional Qualifications: \_\_\_\_\_

11. Have you ever taken any courses or workshops in second language education, multicultural education, or multilingual education? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, what kind? \_\_\_\_\_

If yes, was it mandated by university or school district or did you seek them on your own?

## Appendix E

### Interview Questions

#### Warm-up questions:

1. From what you know, how many of your students use languages other than English at home and learn English at school?
2. Is this number similar to previous years, or is it higher or lower?

#### Open-ended questions:

1. In your opinion, what are some challenges that students who use more than one language on a daily basis face in school?
2. If you had to point to the biggest challenge of working with these students, what would it be?
3. In your opinion, how is teaching a student who use more than language on a daily basis different from teaching other students?
4. Now, I will ask you to think about linguistically diverse students in your classroom this year. How are they doing (you may compare them to other students, but you do not have to)?
5. When you think about these students, what are their biggest strengths? You may want to focus on a particular student as an example.
6. What do you think are the most important things students who use more than one language should know in order to do well in school?
7. Can you think of the last time when you had a newly arrived student who could not speak or understand English (or spoke it very little)? Describe to me how you approached working with this student, please.

8. With regard to students who speak more than one language, how do you expect parents to support their children's education?
9. Now, I will ask you to think of all of your students, not only linguistically diverse children. How, if at all, do you engage parents in their children's education?  
How do you engage parents of linguistically diverse students?
10. What do you think of the idea of incorporating students' home languages in the classroom?
11. Do you ever talk to your linguistically diverse students' parents about using languages other than English in your classroom?  
If yes – what do they think of it?  
If not – why not?
12. With regard to cultural and linguistic diversity of your students, in what ways is the administration of your center supportive (or not supportive) to you as a teacher?
13. Now, I would like you to think about the time when you started working at this center. How well did your teacher education/early childhood education program prepare you for working in this kind of multilingual environment?
14. With regard to students who use more than one language on a daily basis, have you changed your teaching since you started working at this centre?  
If yes, how?  
If not, why not?
15. Now I will ask you to think about your own language learning experiences. Can you tell me about these experiences?
16. Can you tell me about yourself as a language learner?

17. There are many definitions of bilingualism and multilingualism. I'm, however, interested in your own understanding of this concept. What does it mean for you when someone says they are bilingual or multilingual?
18. There are many definitions of bilingual or multilingual education. Again, I'm interested in your own understanding of this concept. What, for you, is bilingual/multilingual education and what are its basic principles?