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(Be)coming Intercultural through Critical Reflexivity: The Exploration of Three Black ESOL Teachers' Life Experiences

Gyewon Jang

ACCEPTANCE

This dissertation, (BE)COMING INTERCULTURAL THROUGH CRITICAL REFLEXIVITY: THE EXPLORATION OF THREE BLACK ESOL TEACHERS' LIFE EXPERIENCES, by GYEWON JANG, was prepared under the direction of the candidate's Dissertation Advisory Committee. It is accepted by the committee members in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Doctor of Philosophy, in the College of Education & Human Development, Georgia State University.

The Dissertation Advisory Committee and the student's Department Chairperson, as representatives of the faculty, certify that this dissertation has met all standards of excellence and scholarship as determined by the faculty.

_____
Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Committee Chair

_____   _____
Janice Fournillier, Ph.D.   Sue Kasun, Ph.D.
Committee Member   Committee Member

_____
Hakyoon Lee, Ph.D.
Committee Member

_____
Date

_____
Gertrude Tinker Sachs, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Department of Middle and
Secondary Education

_____
Paul A. Alberto, Ph.D.
Dean, College of Education &
Human Development

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GYEWON JANG

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Gyewon Jang
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University

The director of this dissertation is:

Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs
Department of Middle and Secondary Education
College of Education & Human Development
Georgia State University
Atlanta, GA 30303

CURRICULUM VITAE

Gyewon Jang

ADDRESS: 30 Pryor Street SW
Atlanta, GA 30303

EDUCATION:

Ph.D.	2023	Georgia State University Teaching and Learning Concentration: Language and Literacy Education	
M.Ed.	2012	Salisbury University Curriculum and Instruction	
B.A.	2008	Duksung Women's University English, German, Secondary Education	

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE:

2018-2023	Graduate Research Assistant Middle and Secondary Education/World Languages and Cultures Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
2018-2022	Instructor/Graduate Teaching Assistant Middle and Secondary Education/World Languages and Cultures Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

HONORS AND AWARDS:

2023 *Provost's Dissertation Fellowship* – Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
2023 *The Martha Allexsaht-Snider Award, Outstanding Scholarship in Multilingual and Transnational Education* – Society of Professors of Education
2023 *Dr. Beverly J. Armento Endowed Doctoral Award* – Department of Middle and Secondary Education, Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA
2023 *Graduate Teaching Assistant Pedagogy Award* – Center for Excellence in Teaching, Learning and Online Education (CETLOE), Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA

PUBLICATIONS:

Jang, G., Tinker Sachs, G., & Park, J. H. (2023). Conflicting understandings of multicultural society, global world, and English: Multimodal content analysis of 5 Korean elementary EFL textbooks, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*.

Lee, H., & **Jang, G.** (2022). Native English teachers' construction of professional identities in

teaching abroad: Challenges and conflicts in the context of Korea. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *122*.

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PRESENTATIONS:

Lee, H., & **Jang, G.** (2023, March 18-21). "*There was nothing I could do in the U.S.": Korean pre-service teachers' beliefs and identities*. American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL). Portland, Oregon.

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Jang, G. (2022, April 30-May 1). *Exploring language, culture, and interculturality in Korean EFL education through mediated discourse analysis*. [Paper presentation]. 2022 Korea TESOL (KOTESOL) International Conference, South Korea, Virtual conference.

PROFESSIONAL SOCIETIES AND ORGANIZATIONS:

2020 – Current	American Educational Research Association
2019 – Current	American Association for Applied Linguistics

(BE)COMING INTERCULTURAL THROUGH CRITICAL REFLEXIVITY:

THE EXPLORATION OF THREE BLACK ESOL TEACHERS' LIFE EXPERIENCES

by

GYEWON JANG

Under the Direction of Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs

ABSTRACT

Language teaching and learning can be a force for good if it serves to break down cultural barriers. However, many interdisciplinary studies have identified pedagogical, epistemological, and methodological shortcomings in conceptualizing and assessing interculturality in language education (Collins, 2018; Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Kubota & Austin, 2007). To gain a critical and contextualized understanding of interculturality and its realization in language education, this qualitative case study delved into the lived experiences of three in-service ESOL teachers from birth to the present. Drawing upon theories of interculturality (Dervin et al., 2020) and intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016), the study addressed the following research questions: I) How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their life and profession? 2) What are in-service ESOL teachers' beliefs about their interculturality in

teaching? 3) What aspects of in-service ESOL teachers' life experiences contribute to their interculturality? Various data resources, including three individual interviews, one focus group interview, artifacts, field notes, and researcher's journal, were collected and analyzed using interpretative phenomenological analysis (Smith, 1996; Tuffour, 2017). The findings unveiled the significant impact of intercultural experiences and relationships across different times, spaces, and contexts on the teachers' intersectional understanding and actions in support of historically marginalized ESOL students and parents. The study further identified seven interconnecting factors contributing to the teachers' evolving critical interculturality. This research underscores the urgent need for teachers to engage in critical reflexivity concerning their privilege and marginalization and pedagogical knowledge and practice. It also magnifies the urgency for cultivating interculturality among not only language teachers and their students specifically, but also generally within schools, communities, and societies at large for a better world.

INDEX WORDS: Critical interculturality, Intersectionality, ESOL, Black female teachers, Life histories, Critical reflexivity, Case study, Interpretative phenomenology analysis, Intercultural language education

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my loving family in South Korea—엄마, 아빠, and 동생. Especially to 엄마 and 아빠, I could not have completed this degree by myself alone in the U.S. without your endless support, understanding, and belief in me. You gave me the strength to overcome challenges and encouraged me to bring this journey to its conclusion. I am also aware of the sacrifices you have made to ensure my success, and I am deeply grateful for your selflessness. I love you all with all my heart.

이 논문을 한국에 있는 나의 사랑하는 가족에게 바칩니다. 특히 부모님이 주신 저에 대한 무한한 지지와 이해, 그리고 믿음이 없었다면, 혼자 미국에서 여기까지 올 수 없었을 것입니다. 저에게 어려움을 극복해나갈 수 있는 힘과 지혜, 그리고 이 여정을 잘 마칠 수 있도록 끊임없는 격려를 주셨음에 감사합니다. 저의 성공을 위해 많은 희생과 인내하셨음을 압니다. 깊이 감사드립니다. 진심으로 존경하고 사랑합니다.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Explanation
ESOL	English for Speaker of Other Languages
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
KFL	Korean as a Foreign Language
IC	Intercultural Competence
ICC	Intercultural Communicative Competence
SL	Second Language
WL	World Language

LIST OF EXCERPTS

1 INTRODUCTION

Contextualizing the Study

"Where are you from?"

"Down the street, Georgia State University."

It was a conversation with a scholar who spoke to me during the closing ceremony at the 2019 TESOL (Teaching English for Speakers of Other Languages) International Convention. I was at the dinner table, being excited about my first time attending the largest academic conference in my discipline and surrounded by scholars and teachers from around the world. A White lady, whom I assume to be an English language teacher, sitting next to me, asked where I was from. In a fleeing moment, I strived to find an answer to what may appear to be a simple, straightforward question. An answer that could well represent who I was then—a Korean immigrant, transnational, second-year doctoral student who was (and still am) highly inspired by critical scholars across diverse fields of language education, applied linguistics, and educational sociology. After a few seconds of hesitation, I said with a smile, "Down the street, Georgia State University." Then, she never talked to me again, and that was the end of our conversation.

The sense of disconnection in interpersonal and intercultural communication is not new to me. Living in the U.S. as a transnational researcher and a Korean as a foreign language (KFL) teacher at a large urban public university in a southeast region, I constantly encounter moments where someone is asking for self-identification in and out of the classroom. It is such an irritating and exhausting process in which I need to justify my being by explaining the myriad of my life trajectories with simple but comprehensible words. It is also weary but necessary for me to fight against social, institutional, and ideological practice of simplifying my identity as one single category or label (e.g., nationality, race/ethnicity, gender, language, culture, (dis)ability, religion,

etc.). Considering the ever-increasing human mobility in the current transnational era, the components of my identity have not made who I am right now in a sequential way, but as a more entangled and complex transnational being (Anzaldúa, 2012). In this regard, I have strived to confront people who ask my "home-home" to equate me with my place of origin or those who consider me as a representative of my county, South Korea, in the U.S.-based intercultural interactions. It gets intense if and only if I am positioned as an Asian Other due to my different appearance, English use, and/or national, and racial/ethnic background, among many other labels and attributes.

According to Collins (2018), the identification of others with their national, geographical, racial, and/or ethnic backgrounds is a practice of "imaginations of Self and Other" (p. 178). It only reinforces (and is reinforced by) the universal cultural process of how people see each other (Holliday, 2011) and is rooted in the hierarchical and colonial mindset objectifying the Other. It further results in particularizing and dividing the Other into fixed parts or qualities that are often considered 'reality' (Said, 2003). I do not believe that my answer to the lady's question was absurd or meaningless. However, the White scholar's question is considered problematic and insensitive. Her behavior—stopping the talk—reveals her inability to deemphasize dualistic thinking of *us* and *them*, (re)imagine one's border-crossing practices, and establish a mutual intercultural relationship with the Other. If she was a language teacher, as I assumed, she could not be told to be an intercultural teacher.

Language teaching and learning is cultural learning. However, there remains a long-standing question about the role of culture and its peripheral status in language education (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Byram et al., 2013; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018). The dearth of attention to cultural components in language education often reinforces learners' pre-existing stereotypes

of a particular cultural group rather than intercultural understandings (Sercu, 2005). Such concerns are still pervasive in many language classrooms, even in my own classroom. Working for four years as an instructor of KFL at the current institution, I have taught two major courses, an elementary-level language course and a content course about Korean language, culture, and society. Some of my students are hardly seen as true beginners in learning the language and culture due to their previous exposure to Korean drama, entertainment shows, pop music, movies, online games, and more. It is not surprising that a considerable number of students have brought their prior knowledge of basic Korean language and culture into my classroom when considering the local context in which the college is located, which has a third largest community of Korean immigrant (Pew Research Center, 2017) and the global spread of Korean pop culture (Joo, 2011; Lee, 2018).

The interest and passion of my students in learning Korean as their foreign language is truly a motivation and inspiration for my teaching. At the same time, I have, however, experienced the issues of language-focused curriculum that does not (or cannot) provide students with opportunities to explore different cultures, compare and contrast those cultures with their own, and develop an interculturality through adequate and effective critical intercultural content in the curriculum. Furthermore, I have witnessed that the particular assignments designed to enhance students' cultural understanding of Korean cultures often function to reaffirm the students' pre-existing knowledge, rather than challenge and transcend it to unlearn and relearn diverse aspects of the cultures. Having such experiences has led me to have an ultimate question of how I can help language teachers and students develop intercultural perspective of different language, culture, and people that they study with a hope to be interconnected.

In the era of globalization where constant movements among human beings, materials,

values, and beliefs take place, culture in language education needs to be reconceptualized and reexamined through which language teachers and students can challenge power in diverse social relations from a new intercultural perspective of language(s) of the Other and their culture(s). Also, the teachers are required to become competent to present to students what it means to be a speaker of language(s) in the 21st century through intercultural teaching practices. My study is thus motivated by the desire to find theoretical and empirical answers to my personal and professional experiences described above.

Recognizing the Problems

In the current postmodern era, individuals make constant intercultural contacts, either physically or virtually, with interlocutors within and across their local, regional, and national boundaries. To be able to (co)construct and (re)negotiate intercultural communication, people should be able to understand and perform complex social and cultural practices that are personalized, localized, and socially constructed. Given its intertwined nature with culture, language is an undoubtedly significant vehicle that can help people to be aware of and understand distinctive cultural inheritance in intercultural communication with others. Accordingly, learning a language(s) of the Other no longer means one's acquisition of communicative competence from the modernist perspective. It should, instead, recognize and incorporate his or her interculturality—intersectional understandings and practices of Self and Other in intercultural communication and social relationships—in addition to language proficiency, not to become a "fluent fool" in the interconnected world (Bennett, 1997, p. 16).

Consequently, there are increasing demands on teachers to be intercultural and employ teaching materials with an intercultural dimension (Sercu, 2006). Language teachers are now asked to adjust their view on what it means to teach and learn the language and adopt their

teaching approaches accordingly. With interculturality, language teaching and learning can find its foundation for the co-existence and humanistic enlargement of horizons, not for the domination or control of the knowledge about the Other that is historically and materially constructed based on the Western discourse (Said, 2003). However, most teachers' teaching practices attend to learners' low-demand tasks like simplistic descriptions, examinations, and/or comparisons of cultural differences between us and them, not developing critical capacities and higher-order learning afforded by intercultural education (Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019; Lowe & Yunkaporta, 2013; Sercu, 2006). It might be because of a packed language curriculum (Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Mughan, 1999), teachers' inadequate knowledge of other cultures or lack of training in teaching different cultures (Hong, 2014), or limited cultural content or its formulaic descriptions of other cultures in teaching materials (Coperías Aguilar, 2007).

In particular, culture in language education has been used as means to distinguish and classify people of nation, language, race/ethnicity, class, gender, history, and activities and practices rooted in geographical separation (Irani & Dourish, 2009; Kramsch, 2002, 2014). It has been shown in language textbooks with the racialized portrayals of English-speaking figures (Holliday, 2015; Kiss & Weninger, 2013; Setyono & Widodo, 2019; Song, 2013; Thomas, 2017; Xiong, 2012), gender biases (Amini & Birjandi, 2012; Hall, 2014), lack of linguistic diversities (Joo et al., 2020; Xiong & Qian, 2012), and neoliberal discourses or ideologies (Babaii & Sheikhi, 2018; Lee, 2011). Such problematic descriptions of language, culture, and people of that language and culture are found in the modernist and comparativist understanding of culture as a nation-state that is stable, not interacting with other cultures, and often stereotypical (Bayart, 2005). These conceptualizations need to be destabilized, but many language teachers still rely on

the ready-made cultural content and activities in textbooks (Casto et al., 2004; Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Larzen-Östermark, 2008). Thus, it is required for teachers to make language learning more meaningful and critical, challenging students' unwillingness to learn different cultural perspectives and developing the awareness of their own culture(s) (Chappelle, 2010; Fonseca-Greber, 2010).

Accordingly, intercultural teaching and learning in language classrooms can be significantly affected by the degree of teachers' understanding and practice of interculturality. Numerous studies have focused on measuring language teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes of different cultures and related skills through the large-scale surveys or questionnaires (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Sercu, 2006). Such approaches might result from the belief that the degree of language teachers' interculturality and its practice in teaching highly affect that of students' interculturality as an objective of language education (Sercu, 2004). However, individual's intercultural knowledge does not guarantee their successful intercultural communication in social relationships (Bennett, 2009). In addition, understanding interculturality as a quantifiable and discrete ability to develop is problematic for several reasons. Epistemologically, it reflects the Euro-centric, Western pragmatic and neoliberal perspective that frames interculturality as a key to increased employability or a necessary skill for competing in a globalized world (Collins, 2018; Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019; Kubota & Austin, 2007).

More problematic is that some assessment models are designed in the belief of interculturality as to be continuously evolving (see Bennett, 2004; Fantini, 2009, 2012). If so, how can one's interculturality be determined on a static scale? Would measuring and assessing teachers' interculturality ever be efficient work? Furthermore, there is no concrete agreement on

what attributes need to be measured, what tools or methods measure with accuracy and solid theoretical grounds, and what interculturality looks like. These methodological issues might be due to no definition of interculturality that is yet widely accepted or agreed upon (Deardorff, 2009; Fantifni, 2009, 2012; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009) or because interculturality is a relatively recent emerging field of study with few or no cross-references and theoretical backgrounds (Fantini, 2001; Nielsen et al., 2019).

Concerning a necessity for intercultural language teachers (Cushner & Mahon, 2009), previous studies have focused on international studying or teaching programs for pre- and in-service teachers as a way to develop their interculturality and beliefs and practices of intercultural pedagogy (Fang & Baker, 2018; He et al., 2017; Marx & Moss, 2011; Vogt, 2016). Such programs seem to have provided a working solution for promoting those teachers' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity while developing respect for the Other in different cultural contexts. However, many studies were done in such a short-term period from a couple of weeks to six months (e.g., Allen, 2010; Cushner & Chang, 2015; Shin & Jeon, 2018) or do not provide follow-up observations for the impact of such experiences on their actual teaching practice, except for DeVillar and Jiang (2012) and Hauerwas et al. (2017). Without consideration of sociopolitical and ideological issues underlying power and diversity, such approaches to studying or teaching abroad tend to remain superficial for celebrating diversity endorsed by educational or cultural tourism (Quezada, 2004) or reinforce teachers' ethnocentric mindset (Hauerwas et al., 2017; Vogt, 2016).

As discussed previously, culture in language education has been taught with the focus on the 'differences' between *us* and *them*. Despite the necessity for developing interculturality among not only students but also teachers, many interdisciplinary studies have revealed the

epistemological and methodological issues in conceptualizing and measuring interculturality grounded on modernist, Euro-centric and Western perspectives. The problems might derive from perceiving interculturality from neoliberal, hegemonic, or institutionalized perspectives, not from the perspectives of language teachers or students (Collins, 2018). It is, thus, significant to pay attention to language teachers as social actors who may have different conceptualizations, experiences, or adaptations of interculturality in teaching while challenging the essentialist approaches to culture and interculturality.

Consequently, this study examined interculturality from language teachers, especially ESOL teachers' perspectives for three reasons. First, it is to recognize the significance of ESOL teachers' awareness and interrogation of diverse institutionalized and systemic issues embedded in intercultural language education. As social actors, ESOL teachers are asked to perform a more reflective, interpretive, integrated, and socio-politically engaged pedagogy through which language learners (re)examine their ways of thinking, learning, and knowing (Kramsch, 2014). The teachers are thus needed to have an in-depth understanding of social issues and transform such knowledge into action in teaching. Second, it is in need to (re)discover ESOL teachers who might be performing different ways of thinking and knowing as an interculturalist in their everyday practice in life and teaching. This study could expect to glean from the teachers' experiences to deepen the knowledge of interculturality and its attributes. Third, the study expected that interculturality might look different in the context of ESOL education and from teachers' perspectives in relation to their own personal, educational, and professional experiences. It also concerned conditions and characteristics that might affect ESOL teachers' interculturality and intercultural language teaching practices, such as the language they teach or the regional contexts where they have lived and worked. Hence, this study attempted to describe

and understand ESOL teachers' ways of knowing and practicing interculturality in teaching from their own experiences and perspectives.

Purpose Statement and Research Questions

Given that interculturality takes learning, unlearning, and relearning one's own and their interlocutor's cultures, it should not be considered an end-product, but an on-going process of learning, expanding, and developing the Self as being intercultural (Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2009). In this sense, learning a language(s) of others should also be reconceptualized as for "learning to live together" (UNESCO, 2013, P. 5) with people from diverse backgrounds by developing learners' interculturality with a critical and in-depth understanding of themselves in relation to the Other. This claim may sound idealistic, but it is challenging to realize in actual language teaching and learning contexts. Exploring the teachers' interculturality may help illuminate how ESOL teachers perceive what ESOL education is (and could be) to develop students' interculturality.

Thus, this study sought to gain a detailed and contextualized understanding of interculturality and its realization in language education. In order to do so, it explored how ESOL teachers perceive and practice interculturality in and out of classrooms. Specifically, this study examined ESOL teachers' narratives about their intercultural experiences in personal and professional life and how those experiences (re)shape their teaching practices with interculturality. The following research questions guided this study:

1. How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their daily life and profession?

2. What are in-service ESOL teachers' beliefs about their interculturality in teaching?

3. What features in their lived experiences contribute to ESOL teachers' interculturality?

Theoretical Framework

From the beginning of human history, people have met, interacted, communicated, constructed relationships, and created cultures together. At the same time, people identify, compare, and distinguish one another regarding 'categories' that influence our personal, social, and institutional identification processes. It can be, then, said that the very nature of human beings is to pursue intercultural relationships through examining who they themselves and others are. This study took interculturality and intersectionality as theoretical frameworks that serve in learning how ESOL and WL teachers perceive and exercise interculturality, concerning diverse identities in social relations with others. Here, I briefly described the two theories and explained how they would support this study in detail.

Interculturality

Following Holliday (2010) and Dervin et al. (2020), this study took a critical approach to perceiving interculturality as theory and praxis to deemphasize the practice of stereotypes and homogenizing cultures in education. Interculturality is not just about *a* culture or *other* cultures; instead, it is and could be more about how each individual identifies and becomes aware of self in relation to others regarding social contexts and power relations that are fluid, unsettled, and changeable within and across various kinds of borders (Dervin et al., 2020). Interculturality thus requires different ways of knowing the various conditions that construct one's existence in interaction and doing the practice of positioning others in interpersonal and intercultural relationships within social systems (Collins, 2018). In other words, individuals are expected to challenge their perceptions and practices in developing their relationships with others and rethink what interculturality is or could be beyond simply knowing *the differences*.

Having the above critical understanding of interculturality is imperative for language

teachers. An aparadigmatic and essentialist view of culture gives students a wrongful assumption that culture is predicted and categorized by difference (e.g., Hofstede, 1984). The emphasis on cultural differences only leads to students' misconception of culture as a national culture or a system of signs and meanings (Frame, 2012), not developing their interculturality. From the functionalist and sociocultural perspectives, interculturality is seen as discrete cognitive, affective, and behavioral competences or skills to perform effectively and appropriately in intercultural communications (e.g., Bennett, 2009; Byram, 1997, 2009; Deardorff, 2009; Fantini, 2000, 2009; UNESCO, 2013). Such perception has not only produced models and methods to evaluate individuals' interculturality by creating interculturally ideal situations in educational content (Dervin, 2016), but also led to a merely additive understanding of different cultures as the sum of objectified entities for social harmony, tolerance, human rights, and/or democracy in education (Dietz, 2018). If a goal of language education is believed to cultivate interculturality for social justice and equity, language teachers need to teach cultures within macro and micro perspectives to examine discrimination, hegemonies, and hierarchies in power difference.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is a theoretical and analytic tool that helps researchers understand and investigate the complexity of social issues, people, experiences, and the world (Collins & Bilge, 2016). First coined by Crenshaw (1989, 1991), a Black feminist legal scholar, it accounts for the simultaneous operations of institutionalized political and cultural systems, such as race, gender, and class, against black women to understand nuanced particularities of their everyday experiences. Collins (1993) extended the notion to the matrix of domination with six core ideas and four distinctive domains of power (Collin & Bilge, 2016). The four power domains—interpersonal, disciplinary, cultural, and structural—help criticize social, economic, or

ethnoracial inequality that exists in power relationships among institutions and organizations. On the other hand, the core ideas—social inequality, relationality, power, social contexts, complexity, social justice—provide a multilayered lens when thinking of "major axes of social divisions" (Collins & Bilge, 2016, p. 4) in society.

Intersectionality is widely perceived by many scholars as a concept of understanding ways that intersecting systems of oppression and privilege in various aspects of identity—race/ethnicity, class, language, gender/sexuality, religion, dis/ability, and age—frame individuals' personal, political, and social world (Carey et al., 2018; Cho et al., 2013; Collins, 2013; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Liang & Peters-Hawkins, 2017). Intersectional ways of knowing and thinking are critical to analyzing the matrix of power in a given society constructed by many intersecting axes, not by a discrete axis of social division. That is, intersectionality provides a conceptual space "to identify the gaps and silence of single-category analyses and approaches as well as the mutually constructive relationships between categories" (Tefera et al., 2018, viii). It reveals the dynamic, interrelated, and interconnectional nature of identity and power that work together in diverse and mutually influencing ways, not discrete, independent ways.

In educational settings, intersectionality is vital for researchers and educators to become aware of conventional policies and practices that disenfranchise individuals with diverse backgrounds or identities (Carey et al., 2018). When thinking of diversity among students at the intersections, social justice, equity, and (inter)cultural competency are the words that are often addressed in the documents, such as curriculum and national or organizational standards of teachers, that specify the objectives of education or teachers' qualifications (Pantic & Florian, 2015). Those notions are, however, presented much less through actions in teaching practices, practical curriculum, or professional development interventions. Thus, effective teachers can be

said to be effective for all students, no matter their identities (Grant & Gillette, 2006). It does not mean that they need a one-size-fits-all-purpose educational method. Instead, they need to become able to critically perceive "what is valued, who is privileged, and simultaneously what is shunned and who is penalized across academic and social outcomes" in a larger social context (Carey et al., 2018). In order to do so, intersectionality as a critical praxis would empower teachers to be proactive to respond to diverse needs and struggles of students by connecting their professional and scholarly knowledge to that of their everyday life experiences.

According to Chávez (2012), intersectionality has not been widely used in intercultural studies or within the purview of intercultural communication, although some scholars implicitly situate their work within intersectional frameworks or examine the multiplicity of intersecting dimensions of race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexuality, (dis)ability, nation, and culture in a particular case (e.g., Dervin, 2016, 2020). However, it has potential as a theoretical resource for researchers to understand and extend the definition of culture to more adequately address the power dynamics, ideologies, and complexities that construct a culture. Intersectionality also enables researchers to recognize the multiplicity and complexity of individuals' experiences based on varying identities and relationships to power in a heuristic way of analyzing and solving problems. Thus, it was expected in this study that an intersectional approach would help the researcher to recognize and highlight culture-specific, localized, contextualized, and nuanced knowledge and teaching practices of participating teachers regarding interculturality, culture, and language (Calafell et al., 2020; Chávez, 2012; Durham, 2020; Tefera et al., 2018).

Such socially situated knowledge and experiences of language teachers would shed light on analyzing the complex interplay of culture, identity, and power and highlight the possibilities and difficulties for intercultural language education in a given local context. It would help the

researcher investigate how language teachers manage and negotiate simplistic, static, one-dimensional, and additive approaches to teaching culture in their language classrooms. If so, to what extent do they present and practice comprehensive and nuanced understandings of culture and language from intersectional perspectives. The intersectional approach to this study would help decentering White, Euro-, Western-centric, patriarchal, and heteronormative practices of intercultural research studies and theories and generate embodied, critical interpretive approaches to interculturality (Calafell et al., 2020; Durham, 2020).

Significance of Study

This study would extend current research in the fields of interculturality and education for critical understandings of intercultural language education in several ways. First, this study was in an effort to expand our knowledge and understanding in those areas for intercultural language teaching, focusing on language teachers' personal and professional experiences. In particular, little is known about teachers' perceptions, beliefs, and reflections on their practice of intercultural teaching (Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Sercu, 2006). Second, this study would provide pedagogical insights for teachers, educators, and researchers concerned about the effective implementation of culture in teaching languages. With the belief that teachers' interculturality influences language learners' interculturality development (Sercu, 2004), this study may shed light on how intercultural language teaching could look in education, including teacher education, through the accounts of ESOL teachers on their intercultural teaching experience. Last but not least, this study would contribute to the literature on intercultural language teaching and learning by demonstrating the significance of teachers' critical reflection of Self as an intercultural being in intercultural language education (Menard-Warwick, 2008). The findings of this study would contribute to the field's understanding of how to afford

teachers' understanding and practice of interculturality in constructing critical knowledge of Self and Other among teachers and students in language education.

Limitations of Study

This study may have certain limitations concerning research contexts and conditions, and the researcher's background. First, the researcher lacked prior firsthand experience as a student and teacher in the U.S. K-12 schools, which at times presented challenges. This unfamiliarity with the educational system and the specialized jargons (e.g., TPC) used by the teachers occasionally created a noticeable gap between the researcher and the participating teachers. Moreover, since this study primarily focused on ESOL teachers in a major southeastern urban region of the U.S., it is essential to acknowledge that the experiences and perceptions of these teachers may differ from those of teachers in suburban or rural areas, regarding intercultural interactions with diverse individuals. Furthermore, this study did not have the opportunity to observe how the participating teachers applied their understanding of interculturality over an extended period of time and in various environments. Due to limited access to their classrooms and restricted opportunities for in-depth observations of their out-of-school activities, the study relied heavily on the teachers' narratives concerning their life experiences with diverse individuals. However, delving into the detailed descriptions on their lived experiences from birth to the present allowed for a fresh perspective on interculturality, revealing how each meaningful intercultural experience influenced the teachers' current selves as ESOL teachers and intercultural beings.

Summary

Chapter 1 provided an overview of the study, including the rationale of the study, the purpose of the study, and theoretical frameworks. It also explored the various issues in the

teaching of culture in language education and epistemological and methodological conflicts in understanding the interculturality of language teachers. Thus, this study aimed to explore ESOL teachers' own perception and practice of interculturality in their classroom teaching and the description of interculturality through their narratives. It also attempted to contribute to the literature of interculturality in ESOL education by linking it to the significance of intersectional understanding and practice of interculturality in language education.

The following chapter provided a review of the literature on ESOL education from sociohistorical perspectives, theoretical developments of interculturality, intercultural language education in various educational contexts in and out of the U.S., and language teachers' interculturality with a specific focus on professional and personal settings.

Key Terms and Definitions

- Culture: a fluid, dynamic, and constantly changing symbolic system of interpretations through which people encounter the world and (re)produce and (re)frame their everyday experiences and practices (Irani & Dourish, 2009). In this study, culture is not fixed in geographical, racial, language, civilization, and communal and professional interest boundaries.

- Interculturality: the theoretical lens to understand the dynamics of intersubjectivity and intrasubjectivity in social relationships in regard to the hybrid and contextual aspects of culture. Dietz (2018) specifies that it concerns inter-, intra-, and transcultural processes of self and external ascriptions, of identifying, and of othering within society. With the acknowledgment of multiple variants and their mobilization in different fields, interculturality, as an umbrella term, embraces the notions of the intercultural, intercultural communication, and intercultural competence in this study (Collins, 2018).

- Language: a verbal and non-verbal method with which people (re)construct, (re)produce, (re)negotiate cultural, political, ideological, and generational interests in different forms of communication. Thus, it functions as a mediator moving between people and (re)shapes itself as a living mechanism.

- Second language: a language taught and learned after one's acquisition of mother tongue. Considering the phenomenon that English is taught as a primary second or foreign language in many non-English speaking countries (Devlin, 2015), this study situates English as to refer to second language.

- ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages): English that is taught and learned as a second or additional language for immigrant students in the context of the U.S. ESOL is distinguished from world languages for its target students, purpose, and sociocultural and sociopolitical status power.

2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this study was to develop a critical and contextualized understanding of interculturality and its implementation and impact in second language (SL) education through ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teachers' intercultural experiences in and out of classrooms. The following research questions guided this study: 1) How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their daily life and profession? 2) What are in-service ESOL teachers' beliefs about their interculturality in teaching? 3) What features in their lived experiences contribute to ESOL teachers' interculturality?

As this study intended to expand the knowledge of ESOL teachers' conceptualization and teaching of interculturality by examining their lived experiences, I limited my review of the literature to four key areas: 1) ESOL education in the U.S. and global contexts, 2) the theoretical evolvement of interculturality, 3) intercultural language teaching in K-16 settings, and 4) ESOL teachers' interculturality. Examining previous studies in these areas helped contextualize the proposed study and provided insight into the existing theory, research and practice, and even data analysis.

In the first section, I briefly discuss various issues and conflicts in the history of ESOL education in relation to world language (WL) education in the U.S. The historical knowledge enhanced the situatedness of participants and their teaching practices at institutional and national levels, as well as provided a global perspective in suggesting ways forward to a more effective ESOL education.

The second section of this chapter provided the theoretical overview of interculturality, looking into its varying definitions along with the emergence of paradigm shifts through the decades. A solid theoretical understanding was needed to have a more holistic and inclusive

approach to exploring and analyzing how interculturality operates in ESOL teachers' personal and professional life practices in relation to others concerning social, cultural, institutional, and political ideologies and power. I thus discussed a need to focus on critical approaches to interculturality and intercultural studies, connecting to other aspects of this study.

The third section explored the concept of culture as it strongly relates to language education. Against the modernist perspective of culture as shared products, practices, and perspectives or dualistic categorization of culture as "Big C" (formal) and "little c" (daily life) cultures by geographical boundaries (National Standards in Foreign Language Education Project, 1999), this section took a critical examination on culture in relation to the power that produces contextual constraints, such as race/ethnicity, gender, religion, and/or dis/ability, in intercultural communication. To this point, an in-depth discussion on implementing intercultural language teaching in K-16 settings was provided from a global perspective.

The final section of this literature review explored the literature about ESOL teachers' interculturality in professional and personal contexts. A discussion on this population and the related topics to the teachers' conceptualization and implementation of interculturality was essential in understanding the context in which the exploratory questions of this study occupy.

ESOL Education

Are we working in the service of the national state, a domain in which the dominant ideology of the modern period is an equation of the tripartite entity, state, language, and culture, or are we working in the service of ordinary people throughout the world for whom language and culture are diverse, multifarious, complex, continuous, semiotic resources which do not parse out into neat formal and structural entities? (Scollon, 2004, p. 271)

Language has never been apolitical. Various national and international circumstances related to economic and political affairs have significant influence on individuals' language practices and learning at personal, social, institutional levels. Language education, especially ESOL education, in the U.S. has also followed the ebb and flow of social and political forces more than any other issues in pedagogical and educational developments (Berbeco, 2016; Pavlenko, 2003). Accordingly, this first section of the literature review focused on sociohistorical and sociopolitical contexts that have affected ESOL education in the U.S. It further discussed related issues and ways to move forward to more equitable and socially just language education.

Understanding Sociohistorical and Sociopolitical Issues

There had been relative tolerance of languages other than English with the increasing number of European immigrants in the U.S. society until World War I. For theological reasons, world language (WL) education in the 19th century primarily focused on classical languages, such as Latin and Greek, and was more accessible to middle- and upper-middle-class American students in secondary and post-secondary schools (Berbeco, 2016; Pavlenko, 2003). However, German was widely taught in the U.S. public schools due to the continuing increase of German immigrants in the 19th and 20th centuries, even though non-English-speaking immigrant students' learning WL was considered unfavorable.

With World Wars I and II, such relatively tolerable and positive climates for WL education changed. Anti-German sentiment soared between and after the two wars, leading to a drastic drop in enrollment rates for WL courses, especially German (Berbeco, 2016; Chastain, 1980; Hahn, 2010). It further resulted in patriotic discourses by which WL study was (and might still be) perceived as a waste of time for American students. Language of the Other, such as Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, and Russian, was even seen as "the language of the enemy"

(Pavlenko, 2003, p. 314), and its learning was discouraged. On the other hand, immigrant students' effort for language maintenance was considered a threat to national identity, unity, and future, and foreign-born language instructors struggled with getting a job or had to ensure their ideological purity in classroom instructions (Pavlenko, 2003).

After the second world war, the U.S. society has had significant demographic changes and educational policies for civil rights and diversity supported by a series of legal acts, including the Immigration Act of 1952, *Brown v. Board of Education* in 1954, Bilingual Education Act of 1968, and *Lau v. Nichols* court case in 1974. In addition to the domestic sociopolitical movements, global affairs (e.g., Soviet Union's Sputnik in 1957) have shifted and diversified the aim of WL education. Within the new discourses of language tolerance and language rights from the early 1950s to the 1980s (Hornberger, 2005), WL study was promoted for national security and defense, individuals' cognitive, commercial, and vocational advantages, and varied needs of the pluralistic society (Kramsch, 2019; Reagan & Osborn, 2019).

However, such justifications of WL education seem to have failed. Reagan and Osborn (2019) pointed out an ideological and implementational gap in WL education. Specifically speaking, most languages promoted for national defense by U.S. State Department (e.g., Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Hindi, and Russian, to name a few) are, as less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), not widely provided for students to study. Although learning WL is often encouraged for students' bilingual ability development, the presupposed benefit or outcome is just an illusion when considering the reality in which most Anglo-American students are monolingual and at the same time immigrant and indigenous students' bilingualism is yet perceived as a problem or deficit in the U.S. society (Kubota et al., 2003; Reagan & Osborn, 2019). Kramsch (2019) also added that advertising humanistic cultural aspects of ethnic communities in WL learning has not

been a successful strategy since the teaching of cultures is not emphasized much in classroom teaching.

Conflicts over Language Ideologies

As discussed in the previous section, marginalized students' WL learning has not received much support throughout the history of the U.S., and their English either. English education in the U.S. has pursued bilingualism and further multilingualism with pedagogical advancements, but it has not been what it meant to be. In 1950, English literacy skills were the requirement for the naturalization of postwar immigrants and refugees. More recently, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 and anti-immigration sentiment have also reflected the political and ideological practices of differentiation—English-speaking *us* from non-English-speaking *them*. Prioritization of English over immigrant and indigenous students' everyday language and WL learning is the cultural constructions of colonialism and linguistic imperialism with the belief of monolingualism as an ideal for national unity and "American Democracy" (Boggs, 1974, p. 62). Indeed, current English language teaching has contributed to "the colonial construction of Self and Other, of the 'TE' and 'SOL' of TESOL" (Pennycook, 1998, p. 22).

On the contrary, WL education has had a different approach for monolingual American students. It has been more accessible to national elites and students from advanced socioeconomic backgrounds and promoted for their bilingual ability and economic prosperity (Kramsch, 2019). Analyzing the availability of WL classes by school districts in North Carolina, Baggett (2016) found that various languages and advanced-level courses are offered in high schools in districts with more than 50% of the students being White. Baggett also examined the intersection of race and gender, showing that Black and Latino male students are underrepresented. This result is in line with Finn's study (1998). Finn indicated that schools in

urban areas, which often have more racial diversity in student population and are located in low-socioeconomic neighborhoods, tend to offer only one language and introductory-level courses. Moreover, Black students are significantly below White students in WL courses, and most Latinx students are enrolled in Spanish classes. In addition, García (2014) focused on why Spanish language education has failed in the U.S. from local and global perspectives. Compared to Spanish spoken in Spain and Latin America, positioned as the language with global influence, she argued that Spanish practiced by bilingual Latinx students is considered not legitimate or a problem in the U.S. society due to negative attitudes toward bilingualism of nonnative English-speaking students. García further indicated that with the support of neocolonial and neoliberal discourses under globalization, White Anglo-American students' learning Spanish is differentiated as learning the 'foreign' language of Spain and Latin America.

After all, ESOL and WL education in the U.S. has (re)produced not only colonial and nationalistic but also neocolonial and neoliberal discourses in its history. It has further led to unequal and inequitable distribution of educational quality and opportunities depending on students' ethnoracial and socioeconomic status. It correspondingly reflects the racialized practice of bilingualism based on one's ethnonational and linguistic identity, which, in turn, promotes monolingual ideology and privileges White, native English-speaking students.

The Way Forward: Implication for Research and Praxis

While most European students are required to learn multiple languages even before becoming a teen, there is no national requirement for students to study a WL at any level of education in the U.S. (Devlin, 2015). In the Asian context, especially in South Korea, where my cultural and linguistic identity is rooted, students are taught an additional foreign language to study for one to two years in high school, compared to English being learned as a primary

foreign language since the third grade. No matter point of time when students start to learn WLs within the education system, however, WLs other than English have been "at margins, if not in the shadows, as neutral and objective transmitters of the code and culture of a particular target group, devoid of ideological implications (Pavlenko, 2003, p. 314). Since WL education was designed in tradition to (re)produce "cultural homogeneity rather than authentic cultural democracy" (Macedo, 2014, p. 344), cultures have been objectified, normalized, and stereotyped as part of the process of colonizing the Other in language classrooms (Tochon, 2019).

As Kubota et al. (2003) indicated, the aims of language education should not be limited to broadening language learners' worldviews and developing their intercultural communication but also take into account domestic diversity and sociopolitical issues. In order to do so, the binary distinction between the native Self and the foreign Other that has been long held in WL as well as ESOL education now needs to be decolonized. Teachers and educators are asked to rethink the meaning of 'foreign', which is an imagined difference between Self and Other constructed through a common language of an imagined nation-state community (Anderson, 1991; Pavlenko, 2003). Instead, understanding self in relation to others should be part of teaching culture and language, through which students and teachers can expand their identity. In other words, learning a language of Other needs to pursue one's development of a more expansive and inclusive understanding of us, not an ideological choice of one identity over the other (Hahn, 2010). That way, our students' bilingual or multilingual abilities can be recognized as authentic language practices in the U.S. and global society.

As pedagogical suggestions, Hahn (2010) and Tochon (2019) argue that language teachers need to look beyond classroom contexts to provide students with intercultural interactions. By engaging in intercultural dialogues on local and global scales, language learners

will be able to examine their beliefs, social positionings, and realities and experience identity

expansion. In particular, monolingual English-speaking students learning WLs might be given

opportunities to be aware of their inherent language power or capital in interpersonal and

intercultural contacts and recognize related issues of social justice and fairness (Reagan &

Osborn, 2019). Moreover, language teachers are asked to explore their own identities from

multiple perspectives regarding time, space, and context. Critical examination of their teaching

practices within their institutional and broader sociopolitical contexts will help them

problematize pedagogies, teaching methods, school cultures and policies, and social discourses

surrounding ESOL and WL (Motha, 2006b). By doing so, language teachers might be able to

deconstruct monolingual ideology, challenge the dichotomy between ESOL and WL, and

transform the peripheral status of ESOL and WL education in the current school system into

fundamental education for all students (Ortega, 1999; Motha, 2006a, 2006b).

This first section of the literature review examined the complex intertwined issues in

ESOL and WL education from the sociohistorical and sociopolitical perspectives. It found

ideological implementations of language education rooted in monolingualism and ethnoracial

differentiations of the U.S. society. To reconceptualize ESOL and WL education, this study

suggests intercultural language education with which language learners and teachers can develop

a critical understanding of their own identities in relationship with others. In the next section, I

will delve into interculturality. In particular, I will discuss theoretical shifts in the theory of

interculturality and how it is understood in this study.

Defining Interculturality

In the second section of the literature review, I describe paradigmatic shifts from

postpositivistic to critical in the theory of interculturality, focusing on key contributors to the

literature, such as Bennett (2009), Byram (1997, 2009), Deardorff (2009a, 2009b), Fantini (2000, 2009), and Dervin (2015), among many others. Examining the discussion by navigating critical social issues that recent intercultural studies have focused on, including identity, language, race, gender, and intercultural education, I discuss how interculturality is understood in this study.

Functional/Postpositivistic Turn

Many scholars have attempted to define intercultural competence (IC); however, no definition is yet widely accepted or agreed upon (Deardorff, 2009b; Fantini, 2009, 2012; Van de Vijver & Leung, 2009). It might be because IC research has been a relatively recent emergence as a field of study or built on different disciplinary foundations, including anthropology, applied linguistics, communication, and sociology (Fantini, 2001; Nielsen et al., 2019). According to Martin et al. (2012), the study of IC first started during the mid-1930s and 1940s in the United States. During this time, (inter)cultural studies were mainly based on psychology and sociology that viewed culture as a variable that can be measured (Matin & Nakayama, 2010). Culture was subsequently equated to a nation-state or a core characteristic or personality of a group of people, which has led to the taxonomies of cultural differences, such as individualistic/collectivistic or masculine/feminine (e.g., Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2004).

This aparadigmatic view of culture was further developed in the fields of applied linguistics and communication within the postpositive and functionalist paradigm until the 1980s (Holliday, 2012; Martin et al., 2012). The basic assumption of postpositivistic research is that society is the sum of small functioning parts working for equilibrium and that human behaviors can be predicted and assessed by scientific methods (Holliday, 2012; Martin et al., 2012). One scholar who was influenced by this paradigm is Milton J. Bennett. Bennett (2009) defines IC as a "set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that support effective and

appropriate interaction in a variety of cultural contexts" (p. 122). His understanding of IC is firmly grounded in the idea that IC develops following a linear but tentative sequence from ethnocentricism to ethnorelativism. In other words, a profound prerequisite for IC development is an individual's ability to differentiate cultures and accommodate cultural differences (Bennett, 1993, 1998, 2004). Bennett (2004) named such ability as intercultural sensitivity and further developed it into an assessment model, the Developmental Model of Intercultural Sensitivity (DMIS), to identify one's cultural attitudes and positioning of self in relation to cultural others. Although it is noticeable that Bennett (2009) recognizes that one's intercultural knowledge does not guarantee their successful intercultural communication, his substantial focus on cultural differences seems to fail to provide suggestions for ways to enhance and practice interculturality to discover or develop shared values and perspectives across such differences through a critical reflection on one's culture with historical, sociocultural, and interrelational understandings.

In a similar vein, a U.S.-based interculturalist, Fantini (2000, 2009), underscores cultural differences and similarities between nation-state boundaries. Contrary to Bennett, he is attentive to getting emic and etic perspectives toward a different culture, placing particular emphasis on language learning as a foundation for intercultural 'communicative' competence (ICC) development. Condemning little effort made for a widely agreed definition of ICC across disciplines, he proposed a definition as "complex abilities that are required to perform effectively and appropriately when interacting with others who are linguistically and culturally different from oneself" (Fantini, 2009, p. 458). Regarding the phrase 'effective and appropriate' which is commonly used in other scholarly work to describe particular behavioral or cognitive abilities, such as interaction, management, communication, or performance (Bennett, 2009; Deardorff, 2009b; Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009), Fantini (2009) further explained that the construct of

effective refers to one's outsider view of their own cultural activity in the target culture, while appropriate refers to an insider view of such activity. In addition, he conceptualized ICC with four dimensions—attitudes, skill, knowledge, and awareness. The first three dimensions foster enhanced awareness, which, in turn, promotes the development of the other three dimensions (Fantini, 2000, 2009). Although the emic-etic approach is a valuable contribution to the field, it is grounded in a naïve, simplistic perspective that assumes ICC is a combination of one's native and second language communicative competence and develops through intercultural contact where one can gain insights into cultural differences and similarities from another interlocutor (Fantitni, 2009). Fantini's perception of ICC seems to reduce intercultural interaction to a mere encounter that does not fully consider the complex nature of cultures within sociocultural, political, and historical contexts.

Another important contribution that Fantini makes is the development of ICC assessment tools that include a target language proficiency which is often overlooked in other ICC assessment instruments (Fantini, 2009). With the belief that ICC needs to be evaluated from multiple perspectives due to its complex, multidimensional characteristics, he has made a number of external instruments that educators and trainers can utilize in his publications (Fantini, 2009, 2012). Moreover, Fantini (2000) has devised his own assessment tool, Assessment of Intercultural Competence (AIC), in a questionnaire format on a Likert scale. The instrument intends to assess the four dimensions of ICC—attitudes, knowledge, skills, awareness— regarding one's period of being a sojourner in a foreign country, professional experience, and language proficiency based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) Language Proficiency Scale. Fantini (2000) displays solid assertions for ongoing, intentional, and multidimensional ICC assessment as firmly as he believes that ICC is a

developmental process. If so, it should be deliberated whether such ICC assessment is efficient, what and how inter-relational aspects can be examined rather than knowledge and skills, and most importantly, how an assessment can determine one's competence on a scale if it continuously develops. Also, his assessment model does not account for one's ICC in the current transformative, digital communication contexts since it only considers an in-person interaction within a country.

Sociocultural/Interpretive Turn

According to Martin et al. (2012), intercultural communication research has taken a different path in Europe in the early 1990s due to the influx of immigrant population that do not speak host countries' mainstream language. This social context has motivated IC research toward a sociocultural, interpretive paradigm that emphasizes the meanings of social practices produced by social actors. Within the paradigm, Geertz (1973) reconceptualized culture as "a historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbols, a system of inherited conceptions expressed in symbolic forms by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life" (p. 89). Such understanding of culture as emerging and socially constructed has altered the primary inquiry of IC research to the role of language in intercultural communication and language education for ICC development (Martin et al., 2012).

Michael Byram, a British scholar from the foreign language education discipline, is in this sociocultural turn. Byram (1997, 2009) suggested a conceptual model of ICC, extended from Hyme's notion of communicative competence (Hymes, 1972), which he thinks overlooked the cultural situatedness nature of cross-cultural communication. His model comprises the cultural knowledge, interaction skills, interpretation skills, attitudes, and critical cultural awareness,

combined with linguistic, sociolinguistic, and discourse competence in language (Byram, 1997; Byram et al., 2013). Among the five competences, he is most concerned about critical cultural awareness— "an ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices, and products in one's own and other cultures and countries" (Byram, 1997, p. 53). Byram (1997, 2009) and his colleagues (Byram et al., 2013) argue that language learners' capability to critique cultures should be the goal of language education to prepare them to become competent in communication with speakers of different languages and speakers of a lingua franca. However, Hoff (2020) critiqued his model for its instrumental and performance-based approach to intercultural education, the lack of consideration of changing contexts of 21st century intercultural communication, and Eurocentric, Western-based theoretical understanding of intercultural communication. However, it cannot be denied that Byram's (1997) model of ICC has had considerable influence on curriculum and teaching materials development in classrooms and schools concerning intercultural education. The changing perspectives of issues related to power and social position are found in his recent studies (see Byram et al., 2021).

Byram's ICC model has evolved into the notion of an intercultural speaker, and later, intercultural citizenship and its education. His early study (1997, 2009) simply perceived intercultural speakers as those who have some or all of the five components of ICC or the ability to act as a mediator between interlocutors who are unable to understand each other because of language differences. However, Porto et al. (2018) refined the idea with the advent of digital media. An intercultural speaker is an individual who can critically read, compare, and analyze the meanings of spoken, written, digital, visual, and multimodal texts from his/her own context and know how those meanings can be interpreted in another context to resolve possible misunderstanding and conflict.

The concept of intercultural speaker has further developed into a theory of intercultural citizenship. As an educational philosophy for building an international community of intercultural speakers, intercultural citizenship aims to make language teaching more relevant to students' lives while engaging them in language learning and developing and practicing their ICC (Byram et al., 2008, 2013, 2021). As a way to practice the theory, Byram and his colleges (2013) and Porto et al. (2018) indicate a need for implementing intercultural citizenship education (ICE) that highlights critical thoughts in action for personal and social transformation. Framed within educational and political dimensions of (foreign) language education, ICE requires language learners' ICC development through critical analysis of self and other cultures in a language classroom and political activities beyond their national boundary (Byram, 2009, 2013).

Another important study was made by UNESCO (2013) that recognized growing cultural diversity in the globalization era. Deardorff (2020) stated that it is the first work that provides a comprehensive overview of key concepts related to IC that have emerged from different regions across the globe. The definition proposed by UNESCO (2013) pluralizes IC to account for the complex interrelations of multiple elements, as following:

> ... having adequate knowledge about particular cultures, as well as general knowledge about the sorts of issues arising when members of different cultures interact, holding receptive attitudes that encourage establishing and maintaining contact with diverse others, as well as having the skills required to draw upon both knowledge and attitudes when interacting with others from different cultures. (p. 16)

To implement IC, UNESCO (2013) suggests five steps—clarifying, teaching, promoting, enacting, and supporting—for the organizational and societal levels of actions.

Culture also takes on a more robust meaning, referring to "the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of a society or social group" (UNESCO, 1982, p, 62), encompassing all the ways of being in that society, including art, literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions, and beliefs. If Bennett (1993) understands IC as learning to differentiate a culture of the 'other,' UNESCO (2013) notes that IC starts from "learning to live together" (p. 5). In other words, IC offers opportunities to rediscover one's identity in interaction with the 'other' (UNESCO, 2013), in contrast with Fantini (2000, 2009), who identifies ICC as having the emic and etic perspectives of a different culture. This fundamental change in the perspective from the long-held functional paradigm has resulted in promoting human rights and cultural diversity for peaceful and harmonious coexistence of the human community through ICC development (UNESCO, 2013).

Deardorff is another interculturalist whose work has contributed to advancing the field of IC research. After reviewing scholarly work that defined IC, Deardorff (2009b) suggested that a consensus definition of IC entails effective and appropriate communication and behavior in intercultural interaction, which results in a desired external outcome of IC development with enhanced attitudes, knowledge, comprehension, and skills. Her review (2009a, 2009b) also found that critical thinking skills to understand diverse perspectives and worldviews are crucial for IC development, but few studies have investigated intercultural communication that concern interactant relationships and involvement or non-Western perspectives.

Following the work of UNESCO (2013), Deardorff (2020) established an individual-level ICC development program that utilizes storytelling methods to embrace diverse regional, non-Western perspectives. In the study, she presented her broadened understanding of culture and ICC. Considering that cultures are heterogeneous within each group, but the shared sum of

assumptions and practices of the group members, she demonstrated that the essence of ICC is to improve human interaction across differences (Deardorff, 2020). Noticeable is that she specified differences within a society and across borders, such as age, gender, class, political affiliation, ethnicity, and other attributes. Given that previous studies related to ICC have dealt with individual participants' cognitive knowledge or psychological characteristics, such as empathy or adaptability (Kim, 2009; Stier, 2006), her claim seems meaningful and practical for recent research focusing on multifaceted aspects of identity, societal and/or global problems, or non-western perspectives.

Even though intercultural communication studies within the sociocultural perspective have focused on diverse social issues, including language use, cultures, and human rights, there has been a lack of a critical dimension and limited research that examine actual instances of intercultural interactions as data for analysis except for studies in study or teaching abroad contexts (Martin et al., 2012). However, this approach to an inquiry has led to studies that explore and challenge social conflicts and tensions at the macro and micro levels of contexts to obtain an in-depth understanding of the situated meanings of intercultural communication (e.g., Chesebro et al., 2014; Kramsch, 2011; Langman & Shi, 2020; Mendoza et al., 2002).

Critical/Poststructural Turn

It is evident that traditional IC research has ignored historical and contextual backgrounds since value-ladened discussion and "purely ideological analyses yield little light and much heat" (Bennett, 1993, p. 7). Even though interculturalists who follow the conventional perspective acknowledged the impact of power relations on communication practices (Bennett, 1993), much more attention was made to discover communication behavior patterns as strategies for successful cultural adaptation to another culture. Jackson's study (2014) that reviewed more

than 150 articles on culture and communication published between 1953 and 2005 also reflects that the field of intercultural communication is still imbued with Eurocentric epistemologies and racially biased and hegemonic interpretations of cultural experiences. His finding aligns with the discussion of other scholars that stresses the lack of a critical dimension in intercultural communication research (Deardorff, 2009a; Halualani et al., 2009; Martin et al., 2012).

Away from the initial scholarship dominated by functional tradition, there have been more interpretive and critical approaches to intercultural research across different countries since the 1990s (Martin et al., 2012). Lieberman and Gamst (2015) found that the significant trends in intercultural studies over the past 25 years include intercultural contexts and social justice initiatives. As such, many scholars (Chesebro et al., 2014; Kramsch, 2011; Langman & Shi, 2020; Mendoza et al., 2002) have focused on issues of race/ethnicity, language, gender, identity, or education in macro and micro cultural contexts "to understand the role of power and contextual constraints on communication in order ultimately to achieve a more equitable society" (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p. 8). Foucault (1978) defined power as "not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategical situation in a particular society" (p. 93). Since power is purposeful, omnipresent, relational, and often invisible, issues of power have inevitably come to the center of intercultural studies (Yep, 2014). Halualani et al. (2009) indicated that critical perspectives could yield discussions on differences regarding national boundaries, cultural identity, gendered experiences, and many other topics in intercultural dialogues.

The Way Forward: Implications for Research and Praxis

From birth to now, the studies that regard intercultural communication and intercultural competence have followed the traditional postpositivistic approach. However, more and more

attention has turned toward critical intercultural research over the last couple of decades. Critical intercultural studies are scholarly efforts highly pertinent to the current local and global communities concerning a surge of nationalism, anti-immigration, and ethnocentric ideologies. This critical turn has guided scholars to focus on the complex social issues related to (im)balanced power, social hierarchies, and multifaceted aspects of individuals' identities. It has, moreover, provided a critical lens to explore and analyze how intercultural communication and interactions between individuals, societies, and countries constrain and are constrained by historical, institutional, and/or political ideologies and power relations.

Nevertheless, there are two critical issues that should receive careful attention in future intercultural research. First, intercultural research should adopt a more holistic approach to address what interculturality is. Interculturality is a deconstructive and decolonizing practice that involves shedding one's essentialism of the Other through critical self-awareness, or critical reflexivity. This understanding involves recognizing the impact of one's capital and positions in various social contexts and relationships on their current practices of being and knowing (Dean, 2017). According to UNESCO (2006), interculturality represents the dynamic nature of evolving relations between cultural groups based on equitable interactions and generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect. UNESCO (2006) further describes that "interculturality presupposes multiculturalism and results from 'intercultural' exchange and dialogue on the local, regional, national, or international level" (p. 17). Given the inherent complexity, fluidity, and mutability of human relations under various conditions and circumstances, a holistic and comprehensive understanding is thus required to grasp how one's intercultural understanding in relations to others are formed, changed, and influence perspectives and practices.

While the description of interculturality by this international organization is potent, it requires careful interpretation and implementation within educational settings. A deep understanding of human relations and their subsequent outcomes is a fundamental element of intercultural work. However, it goes beyond mere facilitation of individuals getting along better with one another and appreciating their diverse backgrounds. Instead, it aims to critically analyze and challenge the underlying social structural inequalities, power dynamics, and ideologies in our thoughts, perceptions, and practices.

In this context, interculturality aligns closely with critical multiculturalism, which addresses local and global struggles for equity and human rights by challenging dominant forms of knowledge in various social domains (Sleeter, 2014). Multicultural education, born out of the Civil Rights movement in the early 1970s, is envisioned by Sleeter and Grant (1987) as preparing students to take social action with a better understanding of the structural forces of oppression, inequalities, and injustices. This critical educational approach is reiterated by hooks (1994), who advocates for educators to recognize not only "the narrow boundaries that have shaped the way knowledge is shred in the classroom" but also "complicity in accepting and perpetuating biases of any kind" (p. 44). Thus, critical multicultural education takes the form of a pedagogical practice that embraces the ideals of critical pedagogy and antiracism. It involves a comprehensive movement and process that requires school reform, encompassing changes in curriculum, instruction, and teaching materials (Gorski 2010; Petrovic & Caddell, 2020).

As critical intercultural research shares its core value—recognizing unequal power relations in human relations—with critical multicultural scholarship, both can mutually enrich each other. Especially in the face of rapid globalization, intercultural researchers can bring global perspectives to question the structural forces that perpetuate and support the existing societal

status quo. This perspective can help avoid essentializing cultural differences and individuals' subjectivities and identities (Tinker Sachs, 2014). Researchers can also assess the impact of globalization on individuals' identities and subjectivities at the local, national, and global levels. Furthermore, they should strive to understand how people preserve their localized cultural identities, create multiple identities in a global context through social, personal, and professional activities, and manage local and global identities with cultural hybridity (Angay-Crowder, Choi, & Tinker Sachs, 2021; Martin et al., 2012).

Culture is a product of social relationships and interactions in which meanings and interpretations are created and exchanged within an intersubjective context (Mata-Benito, 2013). Accordingly, intercultural interaction does not occur only between two nations but also involves local cultural relationships between different identities regarding race, ethnicity (inter- and intra-ethnic relationships), gender, sexuality, region, class, and/or generation. An intercultural experience across personal, regional, national, and international boundaries often generates more tensions, breaks, divides even as the world becomes more interconnected.

Such problems in unequal power relations at every level of intercultural interaction bring us back to the essential question of intercultural research—how can we help people better understand one another from different cultural backgrounds? In order to answer the question, future intercultural research should problematize the notion of IC being used as a principle of democracy and human rights (Hoff, 2020). Although the ultimate goal of intercultural studies is to achieve social and global harmony (UNESCO, 2013), it should be approached with much greater attention to the needs to decenter White, Western epistemologies. In that way, intercultural scholars can make an in-depth understanding of subjective cultural values, attitudes, and practices of different cultural groups in the world.

In addition, future studies can explore individuals' reflexivity and identity transformation in local, institutional, national, and global intercultural interactions. Given that one's identity cannot stand by itself but is influenced by and influences social structures and hierarchies, identity needs to be at the center of intercultural studies to explain questions, such as 'Why and how people construct different representations of self and others?' 'Who has power to identify others in certain ways?' (Dervin, 2015). In this regard, Block (2013) elaborated that reflexivity can function as a mediator between agency and structure. Reflexivity can help individuals develop subjective and objective understandings of issues and circumstances within their own social and global communities. In the development of a broader and critical perspective of the local and world, people can confront "necessary humility" (Kramsch, 2002, p. 284), which will fundamentally empower and emancipate them with a new intercultural identity and agency (Byram et al., 2021).

In this second section of the literature review, I provided the theoretical developments of interculturality in the fields of intercultural studies and language education. Following the key contributors of functional, sociocultural, and critical theories of interculturality, I discussed various issues in understanding culture and its significance in intercultural interactions. By doing so, I unfolded why this study adopts critical interculturality as a theoretical framework. The following section will examine how interculturality is implemented in language education in various educational contexts in the U.S. and other countries.

Intercultural Language Education

This third literature review section explores how intercultural language education has been understood and implemented in diverse educational and cultural settings. In particular, I discuss language education that takes intercultural approaches to how (inter-, intra-) culture is

related to issues of power, such as race/ethnicity, language, or gender. This discussion is followed by an attempt to position the concept of culture in intercultural language education that pursues equity and social justice.

Positioning Culture in Language Education

In 1999, the National Standard in Foreign Language Education Project conceptualized culture as tangible and intangible products, behavioral practices, and philosophical perspectives shared by a group of people. It further introduced the dualistic perspective of culture, "Big C" (formal culture—e.g., literature, fine arts, and sciences) and "little c" (informal culture—e.g., food, housing, clothing). These interpretations reflect a modernist understanding of culture that perceives, categorizes, and essentializes individuals based on certain features and characteristics by geographical boundaries. It has led to little attention to the diversity of cultures within and across borders and further made a particular culture dominant to "teach culture" (Muirhead, 2009, p. 260).

On the contrary, Holliday (2016) suggested the concepts of cultural threads and cultural blocks to explain how people make sense of culture from a non-essentialist perspective. The term cultural threads refers to one's practice of sharing cultural experiences, crossing cultural boundaries, and engaging in new cultural domains with creativity and criticality. On the other hand, the notion of cultural blocks indicates one's uncrossable cultural boundaries even with the acknowledgment of cultural diversity. The two concepts not only reflect the tensions between the modernist and postmodern perspectives of culture but also emphasize a greater need for student engagement in new cultural experiences to build shared understanding and interculturality in language education.

Culture is no longer considered a static entity bounded to the territory of a nation-state

and its history. From a postmodern and poststructural perspective, culture is dynamic and (re)constructed by people engaged in a discursive process of perceiving the world. Culture creates, is created by, and moves with language practices between interlocutors. Language is at the core of culture and a vehicle of culture. Through language learning, individuals learn how to understand the world not only through metaphors, idioms, and grammatical patterns practiced by others but also through a filter of their own subjectivity and historicity developed in their mother tongue (Kramsch, 2013). In other words, people do not learn a language as it is structured or conceptualized. Instead, individuals develop symbolic competence in language learning, which refers to an ability to understand different cultures from emic and etic perspectives (Kramsch, 2013). Learning language and culture can be, thus, considered learners' struggles for symbolic meaning and understanding interlocutors' subjectivity and historicity by reflecting on their own (Dervin, 2015; Kramsch, 2013).

Culture is also inseparable from issues of power often utilized to marginalize or privilege particular people. Culture is needed to interrogate issues of race/ethnicity, language, gender, identity, and/or other identity markers in intercultural language education "to understand the role of power and contextual constraints on communication in order ultimately to achieve a more equitable society" (Martin & Nakayama, 2000, p. 8). Conceptualizing culture in relation to power, Muirhead (2009) argued that teaching culture in language classrooms is needed to challenge inequalities and injustices. In a similar vein, Kim (2020) indicated that language teaching and learning is in need to envision intercultural communication through which our learners can bridge social, cultural, and geographic divides with empathy and immersive experience into others' worlds.

The current era of globalization and pluralism has shifted the goal of language teaching

and learning from communicative competence with native-like proficiency to intercultural capabilities that enable language learners to interact with people from different cultures (Bennett, 1997; Byram, 1997; Kohler, 2020). Such a shift has led to critical intercultural approaches to language teaching and intercultural education for its potential to contribute to overarching educational objective—"working against inequality and inhumanity linked to system of domination and to foreground social justice" in every subject and content at all levels of education (Shim, 2012, p. 209). In this sense, intercultural education is distinguished from multicultural education which has been criticized for its naïve pluralistic practice without critical examination of underlying cultural, political, social, and economic forces that interrupt human relations (Coulby, 2006; Kubota & Austin, 2007). There is, subsequently, a strong need for critical intercultural approaches to language education that prepare our learners to engage in the complex and ever increasingly intercultural world with more critical and sensitive understandings of their own realities and intercultural encounters (Siqueira, 2017). It is also expected for teachers, staff, administrators, policymakers, and other stakeholders of intercultural education to have global perspectives for more comprehensive and contextualized understandings. To be able to do so, intercultural language education is required with specific methodologies and actions.

Intercultural Language Teaching in Practice

Thinking of our future generations living in global digital communities, no one can dispute that intercultural education is profoundly pertinent and needed to develop our interculturality more than ever before. Interculturality is essential for intercultural interaction and communication, but simply knowing the concept of interculturality does not ensure adequate and appropriate intercultural communication practices in various cultural contexts, as Bennett (2009)

asserted. Hence, intercultural education that can bridge a gap between the knowledge and action of interculturality is strongly needed to raise students' attention and understanding of social, cultural, and geopolitical issues in the world. In this section, I will discuss how intercultural language teaching has been implemented in K-16 settings in different educational contexts and countries.

In traditional classroom contexts

Previous studies on intercultural language education have indicated that language learners' target language proficiency is a prerequisite to successful intercultural communication or strongly related to the degree of one's interculturality (Park, 2021). From critical, poststructural perspectives that consider language and culture emergent and dynamic, such an understanding, however, bolsters the simplistic correlation between language, culture, and nation. Considering that the boundaries between a language and culture and another get blurred, intercultural language education needs to consider how language is used in global settings. In this regard, Baker (2011) focused on the role of English as a lingua franca (ELF) in intercultural communication in a Thai college classroom. His examination of classroom discussions held by Thai English speakers, other non-native speakers of English, and native speakers of English revealed that the use of ELF has the potential to transcend the conceptualization of national culture, native speakers of a target language, and a target culture.

Schreiber (2019) provided online intercultural learning activities as part of critical teacher training for Sri Lankan college students in a MA TESL program. The pre-service teacher students conducted a Language Landscape project in which they discussed language differences with undergraduates in New York City through digital platforms. The Sri Lankan students confronted linguistic and racial diversity and challenged their belief on imagined native speakers

and "proper" English with greater confidence in international and intercultural communication. In a similar vein, Jon (2009) examined Korean college students' intercultural learning with international students from diverse racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds in an international summer program at a Korean university. The Korean students realized English as a tool for accomplishing their intercultural understandings and interculturality, not as an end goal for higher English test scores or a significant factor in making friends or logical thinking and speaking. The studies of Baker (2011), Schreiber (2019), and Jon (2009) share the perspective of intercultural language education that has strong potential to challenge the language-culture-national relationship inherent in previous conceptions of interculturality.

Moreover, intercultural language education creates an interpersonal space where societal power relations are determined by historical and contemporary realities, such as status, rules, structure, or agency (Block, 2013; Cummins, 2000; Kramsch, 2011; Mendoza et al., 2002). In other words, one's identity affects and is affected by social structures and power relations in the interpersonal space. Identity is no longer considered from critical perspectives an apolitical, determined, and fixed construct that explains who an individual is. Rather, it is a social process in which people position themselves and are positioned through social interactions to make sense of themselves in the local and global contexts. Identity is thus an inseparable matter to consider in intercultural language education. As an exemplary study, Jin (2017) conducted a longitudinal study on the identity perceptions of 26 college students of Mandarin at U.K. universities. She found the significant impact of the students' varied lived experiences on their understanding of self in learning the language in classrooms. As diverse as their learning purposes and prior intercultural experiences, the degree of their awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness to cultural characteristics and features of Chinese-speaking people was also varying. From the

pluralistic and processual perspective of interculturality, this study captures the significance of language learners' inherent interculturality and intercultural identities brought into the classroom, which should be considered in language curriculum development and teaching practices. Thus, more intercultural studies are needed to explore how an individual's subjectivity functions in the sense-making process of identity (Block, 2013).

Incorporating real-life matters into intercultural teaching can be a valuable strategy to enhance language learners' intercultural understandings at the global level. For instance, Porto et al. (2016) explored an online transnational environment project in elementary EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms in Argentina and Denmark. Having virtual discussions about wasteful uses of resources in English, Spanish, and Danish, the young learners developed critical language awareness and internationalist perspectives about environmental issues. A new international identification was also created by which the students share commonalities as global citizens, abandoning their national identity during the project. The study demonstrates that language learning and practice open up possibilities for new identities (Noel et al., 2012) and that fostering students' knowledge and respect for diverse cultures is critical in intercultural education for social cohesion, equality, and human rights across cultural groups (Cummins, 2015). On the other hand, Svarstad (2021) adopted a celebrity Miley Cyrus and her intersectional identities to investigate how Grade 8 students engage in broader issues of interculturality, such as identity, celebrity, identity, gender and sexuality, in a U.S. English classroom. Having the students analyze a letter sent from an Irish singer Sinead O'Connor via Facebook, the author found that many students engaged in exploring the ideas of processes, agency, and empowerment in which culture is constructed in social discourses. This study points out the necessity of teachers' professional development for promoting intercultural education through which students and teachers examine

intersectional dimensions of identity in intercultural communication.

With the increasing emphasis on developing language learners' intercultural capabilities in language education, more schools worldwide have been adopting various intercultural approaches in curricula and activities in language classrooms. However, many studies have reported struggles and challenges in promoting and integrating the extent of interculturality in language classrooms (Gonen & Saglam, 2012). According to Kaikkonen (1997), schools in Finland have included interculturality as an objective of language education for decades. In her two-year action research with 30 Finnish high school students studying French and German as foreign languages, the author examined the students' perception of interculturally oriented language learning. The students were given immersed cultural experiences studying abroad living with a host family while using reflective journals, observations, and text, pictorial, and video materials. However, findings revealed conflicting perspectives of intercultural learning between the students and teachers. Some students criticized the lack of traditional language education concerning grammatical and vocabulary knowledge for their standardized tests. Based on the results, Kaikkonen (1997) asserted the need for explicit intercultural language education, which aligns with recent studies.

For instance, Kennedy (2020) conducted a case study of two secondary-school learners of Chinese as a foreign language in New Zealand. The observations of their Chinese classroom affirmed that the lack of explicit intercultural pedagogies contributes to creating stereotypes and cultural misunderstandings of Chinese people and culture, failing to develop the students' interculturality through processes of generating intercultural ideas and opinions in discussions. Such prejudicial views toward Others are also found in Ladegaard (2020), whose study concerned language practices between local and non-local students at a Hong Kong university.

Examining discussions of the two groups' perceptions toward each other, he found that prejudiced talk toward the cultural Other created shared stereotypes in each group, reinforced us-and-them dichotomies between the groups, and made salient ingroup identity. In this regard, Liddicoat (2008) and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) contend that explicit teaching of interculturality draws language learners' attention to culture and understanding of how different cultures work. Moreover, scholarly efforts are also needed concerning ways to challenge the conceptualization of foreignness or the process of Othering through intercultural language education.

The previous studies discussed here evidence that intercultural language education enables language learners to realize how identity is constructed, negotiated, and transformed in intercultural communication (Mendoza et al., 2002). With that being said, studies on intercultural language education are required to focus on the role of language, rather than one's language proficiency, in intercultural communication. No language is a neutral medium of communication. It carries out individuals' attitudes, beliefs, and values constructed through social practices and interactions. Language is also "the real stuff of culture" (Freire & Macedo, 1987, p. 8) and is inextricably intertwined with power, concerning local, national, and global perspectives of history, society, and/or politics. In other words, individuals construct, deconstruct, negotiate, reconstruct, and reinforce the meaning of self and their existence using language in intercultural communication.

However, little or no contextual knowledge of how language functions in such communication might cause unforeseen tensions or conflicts between interactants. An instance is seen in Martinez's (2014) case study that investigated a Pueblo-English bilingual program in a school district in Northern New Mexico. She reported that teachers and officers from the school

district failed to understand the role of the Pueblo language as governance and sovereignty from the perspective of the Pueblo people, and it caused tension with the community members. Her study reveals a need for different ways to understand language and its education regarding cultural heritage embedded in language that has been maintained throughout generations by its speech community. Tinker Sachs and Li (2007) scrutinized the reasons behind local Chinese Hongkongers' unwillingness to be receptive to the non-locals even though those 'foreigners' learn and speak Cantonese for daily intercultural interactions. The authors found that the non-locals' Cantonese proficiency was not accepted as a symbolic act for intercultural communication. Rather, the cultural concept of foreignness constructed upon the non-locals' racial identity and socioeconomic status deepens social division between Hongkongers and the non-locals.

It is, thus, required for teachers, educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders of language education to have knowledge of local communities and become aware of their intercultural experiences by getting familiar with their immigration histories and ethnolinguistic identity that contextualize their language use and practice (Kagan, 2012; Tinker Sachs & Li, 2007). In particular, teachers and schools transform language classrooms into a space where students can learn how to perform and practice their identity construction and negotiation in relationships with teachers and classmates. Language classrooms are expected to become intercultural interpersonal spaces where students' racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic identities are validated, knowledge is generated, and societal power structures are challenged (Cummins, 2000).

In overseas contexts

Regarding the increased human mobility, studies on intercultural language learning have

concerned language learners' interculturality in study abroad contexts where they can have more

immersive and diverse intercultural experiences. However, simply sojourning in a host country

does not ensure students enhanced target language fluency or cultural understanding. The effects

of study abroad also seem insistent depending on multiple variables, such as features of study

abroad programs (e.g., duration, mode of housing, degree of cultural immersion), individuals'

characteristics (e.g., language proficiency and fluency, pragmatic or communicative abilities, the

degree of openness and adaptation to new cultural environments), or environmental aspects (e.g.,

cultural distance, host receptivity) (Jackson, 2012). Criticizing quantifying practices of those

factors in previous studies, Jackson (2012, 2020) and Kinginger (2015) called for scholarly

efforts that highlight the complex relationship between target language proficiency,

interculturality, and intercultural engagement.

For instance, Holliday (2016) focused on how three students at a U.K. university

negotiate cultural differences and awareness during their study abroad. As cultural travelers, they

strived to make sense of conflicting cultural experiences, moving between cultural blocks (i.e.,

uncrossable cultural boundaries) and cultural threads (i.e., creative and critical engagement in

new cultural domains). On the other hand, Harvey (2016) examined the intercultural identity

development of an Italian student at a U.K. university. His analysis of her narratives of English

practices and learning experiences as an international student revealed a process of her

ideological becoming in relation to others through intercultural language learning. The two

studies exemplify that intercultural language learning is situated in intercultural interaction and

possible through negotiation and co-construction of new ways of being together (Dervin &

Layne, 2013; Noel et al., 2012). In that sense, interculturality is understood as an ongoing

learning process through which individuals become aware of differences and are able to act upon

such awareness (Beaven & Borghetti, 2016).

In addition to language abilities, language learners' identities also significantly impact intercultural encounters or interactions in the context of study abroad. Brown (2013) examined how four male students from different countries (Austria, Germany, Japan, and the UK) utilize the Korean honorific system in interactions with local Korean people. The students found themselves outsiders and even experienced identity clashes as Westerners who are reluctant to adapt to the hierarchical language practices in the Korean honorific system. In the study of Kasun and Saavedra (2016), eight students in a teacher education program shifted in understanding of their identities during and after a four-week study abroad program in Mexico. In tensions with former identities constructed upon Eurocentric knowledge and experience, the student teachers of English, most of whom were middle-class White women, developed different ways of knowing others and a new teacher identity as a creator of learning space with love. Six Latinx students in Kaneria et al. (2021) also experienced personal shifts and transformation, recollecting their heritage and culture during a short-term study abroad in Mexico.

There are studies on a discrete identity category in language learning abroad, such as nationality (Kinginger, 2008; Jackson, 2008), age (Spenader, 2011; Tan & Kinginger, 2013), ethnicity (Anya, 2011), or gender (Isabelli-García, 2006). However, language learning in overseas environments requires close attention to the influences of intercultural interaction on students' sense of self in more comprehensive ways. Considering that individuals can realize the versatility of their power, positioning, and identity regarding social relations and geopolitical spaces, more studies on interculturality in education abroad settings are needed to provide language learners with intentional decolonization experiences examining self in local and global contexts.

In online contexts

With the development of digital technology and media resources, language teaching and learning have become easier, accessible, and affordable for students to relate to the communities they are studying. Traditional classrooms have moved to digital spaces where intercultural exchanges are possible between learners of different language and cultures in the form of collaborative work. Lee and Song (2019) compared three different learning conditions (i.e., study abroad, telecollaboration, and traditional language classroom) to investigate college-level foreign language learners' perceived ICC development. Following the study abroad group, the telecollaboration group of Korean and American students using mobile-based calls and text messages exhibited significant improvement in their ICC. In the study of Jin (2015), Korean EFL learners in a university classroom successfully engaged in intercultural communication with their counterparts in a U.S. university for a semester via Facebook.

Moreover, Carel (2001) had 23 American high school students of French do a virtual ethnography activity. Despite being given video materials about pragmatic features in French and its people, a few students were not able to understand and recognize different realities embedded in the target culture and language. This result indicates that a key to developing language learners' intercultural perspective is the extent to recognize multiple perspectives within and across their own cultural boundaries. On the other hand, Peck and Wagner (2017) observed how Korean undergraduates and American graduate students develop their conceptual understanding of intercultural citizenship through online intercultural interaction over a semester. Following Byram et al. (2008), intercultural citizenship was defined in this study as a shared experience and act of civic or political activity between people from different cultural affiliations. The result shows that both groups did not achieve substantial knowledge of intercultural citizenship nor

skills to implement it in their education, but only naïve, simplistic attitudes of cultural diversity. The authors thus asserted criticality as an essential condition for students' creation of a community of democratic action based on reflection on intercultural experience.

Myers and Eberfors (2010) also adopted a web forum in which American and Swedish college students were provided with an immersive interactive experience through critical literacy practice. Despite their analysis and reflection on the cultural beliefs, values, and ideologies that frame the meanings of given literacy texts, the students emphasized cultural differences within and across their cultural identities. It is not uncommon that foreign language or literacy education often reinforces learners' pre-existing stereotypes of a particular cultural group rather than intercultural understandings (Sercu, 2005). Acknowledging the issue, Garrett-Rucks (2013a, 2013b) designed a computer-mediated environment outside a beginning-level French classroom to explore the target language learners' intercultural understanding development. She highlighted the significance of providing diverse French perspectives through multimedia learning materials and opportunities for learners to reflect on their thoughts and impressions of the insider perspectives in developing intercultural understanding.

The studies discussed here share the effectiveness of telecollaboration in providing and developing intercultural communication beyond traditional classroom settings. However, similar to the concerns found in study abroad studies, intercultural interactions using social technology do not necessarily result in intercultural learning or engagement in intercultural communication with others. Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) suggest the goals of intercultural language learning tasks as follows:

> to participate in communication to exchange meanings and to discover, in and
>
> through experiences of interacting in communication with others, the variability

in meaning-making, the linguistic and cultural assumptions made in constructing

knowledge and, ultimately, to develop self-awareness of their own interpretative

system (p. 64).

Cultural learning in both virtual and traditional education spaces needs to be carefully designed

to be experiential with the explicit guidance of teachers as intercultural partners who can ensure

learners' appropriate knowledge and critical cultural awareness (Jin, 2015; Lee & Song, 2019;

Lim & Lee, 2015). Especially teachers, educators, and scholars concerning intercultural learning

in virtual environments need to take into account not only 'inter'cultural but also 'intra'cultural

work in the classroom by giving students sufficient opportunities to reflect on and learn from

their experiences (O'Dowd, 2016).

The Way Forward: Implication for Research and Praxis

In the third section of literature review, a variety of studies on intercultural language

education have been discussed regarding educational settings (i.e., traditional, virtual, study

abroad), languages and cultures, identity, and institutional levels across the world. However, they

reveal three significant issues concerning pedagogical approaches to implementing intercultural

language teaching and learning.

First of all, there is no systematic inclusion of culture in intercultural language

education, as Driscoll et al. (2013) pointed out. This issue was observed regardless of modes of

instruction (i.e., traditional and digital learning) in the studies of Kaikkonen (1997), Kennedy

(2020), Liddicoat (2008), and Liddicoat and Scarino (2013). Those studies point to a need for

explicit approaches to intercultural language teaching and learning as a way to address students'

possible prejudicial and stereotypical viewpoints of others. However, there has been a lack of

discussion and theoretical attention to developing pedagogical models or activities that can be

adopted in classroom teaching. Although some scholars have suggested teaching models, they rely on either ICC models (Tran & Duong, 2018), task designs focusing on linguistic, pragmatic, and/or differences between languages (Lamb, 2011; Moeller & Nugent, 2014), or particular learning environments, such as computer-mediated learning (Lawrence, 2013). As Liddicoat and Scarino (2013) and O'Dowd (2016) asserted, thoughtful task designs are necessary to elevate students' critical reflection on intercultural and intracultural experiences and achieve specific goals of intercultural learning.

In addition, more scholarly efforts are requested to develop intercultural language education that integrates language learners' language, culture, and life matters. Given the current hostile situations in the world, such as mass shootings, nationalistic, ethnocentric, and postcolonial discourses, and Russian invasion of Ukraine, intercultural language education is strongly needed to contextualize cultural, economic, and geopolitical affairs at different levels including regional, national, and global (Coulby, 2006). In order to implement critical integrative intercultural language teaching, it is necessary that teachers recognize and reflect on how they have understood and positioned teaching and learning culture in the classroom. Teachers themselves might not have confronted their own understandings of diversity and interculturality and often do not fully understand their role in developing students' intercultural perspectives (Moloney, 2008; Tolosa et al., 2018). Accordingly, it is an underpinning of their actions as teachers, intercultural partners of students, and intercultural beings to mediate cultural assumptions in their professional and personal work. Without such efforts, intercultural language education would remain in a parallel relationship with language education and fail to enhance students' motivation and situated understanding of diverse social issues at local, national, and global levels.

Related to the second issue, language teachers, researchers, and other stakeholders need to develop critical pedagogical approaches to intercultural language education that concern various social issues related to power and diversity. According to Liddicoat (2008), intercultural language teaching and learning is fundamentally based on recognizing diversity and involves intercultural communication within and across languages and cultures. However, not much research reviewed in the previous section has dealt with such issues regarding injustice, inequalities, and intersectional identity makers of individuals, but focused on differences in nation-state cultures and languages (see Svarstad, 2021). Dervin (2016) asserts that the analysis of inequality intersecting various dimensions of identity, such as race/ethnicity, gender/sexuality, and religion, would help teachers and students examine the impact of power differences from multifaceted perspectives. The critical analyses of intercultural encounters in those regards would also assist them to individualize one's cultural and ethnic identity, not generalizing cultural Other or practicing Otherness. Svarstad (2021) is in alignment with his argument of teaching broader issues of intersectionality, which has not been explicitly addressed for its need or been practiced in intercultural language education.

This section reviewed the research on intercultural language teaching and learning in various contexts and discussed pedagogical issues that have not been widely addressed in the related fields. The review of the literature has found gaps in enacting theories of interculturality in teaching practices in K-16 settings. In order to recommend possible solutions for this void, teachers' interculturality in professional and personal settings will be further discussed next.

Teachers' Interculturality

A recent shift to intercultural language education is noticeable, and interculturality is widely required in school curricula as a general humanistic education goal (Sercu, 2010). As the

main objective of language education is no longer defined strictly in terms of the acquisition of communicative competence, language teachers are now asked to become able to teach interculturality in consideration of the complexity of today's globalized world. To do so, teachers are also in need of developing their own interculturality with critical understandings of diversity brought by students into the classroom. In this section, I discuss the understanding and practice of interculturality of language teachers across the world.

In Teaching

Numerous international studies have investigated language teachers' beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes of cultural diversity and interculturality (Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Sercu, 2002, 2006) and shared three significant obstacles that challenge the actual implementation of intercultural language education (Elena, 2014). The first obstacle is language teachers' insufficient knowledge or cultural experiences in different countries that they teach about (Georgieva, 2012). To examine the relationship between teachers' intercultural communicative competence (ICC) and intercultural sensitivity (IS), Alaei and Nosrati (2018) analyzed 167 Iranian EFL teachers' self-report type of three surveys on the two constructs. The results show that the teachers have the least confidence in intercultural interaction and little respect for other cultures despite the overall high level of their perceived ICC and IS. Fernández-Agüero and Garrote (2019) focused on the intercultural identity of 63 Spanish pre-service teachers of EFL and how they envision themselves as teaching professionals in relation to interculturality. The student teachers displayed an insufficient understanding of interculturality and insignificant intercultural identity development. These empirical studies reveal that the limitations of teachers' intercultural knowledge result in their avoidance of actual English language practices (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018) and the lack of their confidence and agency in

teaching interculturality (Fernández-Agüero & Garrote, 2019).

In addition to language teachers' weak cultural and linguistic knowledge, there still is a strong emphasis on students' acquisition of linguistic competence in language teaching practice. For example, Fungchomchoei and Kardkarnklai (2016) explored 61 Thai EFL teachers' perceptions of interculturality and how they integrate it into their secondary-level classrooms. From the multiple data resources (i.e., a questionnaire, interviews, journal entries), the study revealed the tendency to prioritize English language proficiency in the teachers' teaching practices. The result is similar to the study of Castro et al. (2004) that explored how 35 Spanish EFL teachers support and implement integrated teaching of language and culture. The Spanish teachers also prioritized language teaching with a greater focus on students' English proficiency and motivation, although they have a willingness to incorporate cultural learning objectives. Moreover, they had weak support for their students' own identity and culture in teaching practices. These results seem to connect to the teachers' lack of understanding of the concept of interculturality, as it has not been broadly introduced or discussed yet in the national education system (Castro et al., 2004; Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnklai, 2016).

Last but not least, another primary concern is that language teachers do not know how and what to do to implement intercultural language education despite their willingness and recognition of the significance of interculturality. In order to test their belief that most language teachers are favorable to intercultural language education, Oranje (2021) conducted a mixed-method study by exploring the degree of secondary school language teachers' intercultural awareness and practice of intercultural language teaching in the context of New Zealand. The author found that the teachers do not model, practice, and teach students how to reflect on one's own culture, which is a fundamental element of intercultural education. On the other hand, Sercu

(2002) was concerned about teachers' self-concepts as intercultural language teachers and teaching practices in a survey study. The analysis of the result from 78 Flemish English, French, and German teachers showed that the teachers are willing to support intercultural objectives but take little account of students' abilities, needs, and interests in learning cultures and interculturality, adopting teacher-centered approaches. A similar result was found in her later study that involved a variety of teachers from Belgium, Bulgaria, Greece, Mexico, Poland, Spain, and Sweden (Sercu, 2006). Another survey result showed that the teachers lack knowledge and skills to implement intercultural language teaching and focus on teacher-centered, traditional teaching of foreign culture, despite their positive attitude and strong desire to be intercultural language teachers.

Unlike the studies that involved language teachers from different cultural and language backgrounds, Gonen and Saglam (2012) compared the understanding of cultural diversity and its integration into the classroom teaching among 60 Turkish EFL teachers from different educational backgrounds (i.e., ELT and non-ELT graduates). The results from a questionnaire and interviews showed the teachers' awareness of the significance of teaching and integrating culture, but lack of practice due to the perceived limitations in curricula. Similar to the teachers in Sercu (2006), the Turkish teachers revealed traditional understanding of foreign culture as traditions, values, and norms, rather than recognizing the importance of developing students' global identities in the language classroom. On the other hand, Fernández-Agüero and Chancay-Cedeño (2019) focused on the intercultural teaching practice of 68 EFL teachers in Ecuadorian universities through a questionnaire. The findings exhibited the teachers' acknowledgment of the importance of interculturality, but a considerable need to improve their teaching practice that concerns more about intercultural attitudes than knowledge and skills. Furthermore, the

Ecuadorian teachers demonstrated a monolithic Western stance on interculturality affected by the overwhelming influence of the U.S. in EFL education, which indicates their little account for students' local cultures and identities (Castro et al., 2004; Gonen & Saglam, 2012).

Given the pluralism and heterogeneity of our global society, there is a strong need for intercultural language teachers who can practice inclusive and equitable teaching practice for all students. In this regard, Dusi et al. (2017) investigated intercultural teaching skills and educational experiences of 50 Italian primary school teachers with more than five years of teaching experience in multicultural classroom settings. Their interview data presented that very few teachers have the capabilities to deal with the complexity of multicultural encounters in and out of the classroom. Instead, a large portion of the teachers showed a lack of interculturality and felt ill-prepared to teach it adequately. This study indicates that teaching experiences in multicultural settings do not guarantee the natural development of language teachers' interculturality; rather, it could reinforce their prejudices to socio-linguistic, economic, and political issues in education and society (Dusi et al., 2017). Accordingly, intercultural language teaching needs to be distinguished from multicultural education. While multicultural education focuses on learning for acceptance or tolerance of different cultures, intercultural education aims beyond such passive coexistence, but "to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of understanding of, respect for and dialogue between the different cultural groups" (UNESCO, 2006, p. 18). Intercultural education thus requires new forms of sensitivity toward diverse cultural components based on a rigid conceptual understanding of interculturality in language teaching practice.

In Life

As discussed in the above section, most studies on language teachers' interculturality

have heavily attended to their perceptions, beliefs, and practice of intercultural teaching in classrooms or profiling the traits of "effective" intercultural teachers (e.g., Elena, 2014; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Sercu, 2004, 2006). Within the framework of a critical complex epistemology, Kincheloe (2004) asserted that how teachers see themselves is strongly connected to their pedagogical principles and actions regarding interculturality. There is, accordingly, a need to examine how language teachers perceive and question their own identity and lived experiences in relation to the sociocultural, geopolitical, economic, and historical world around them (Kincheloe, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2008). Nevertheless, few studies have recognized or investigated the importance of teachers' own intercultural experiences in out-of-school environments.

There is a tendency that teachers' intercultural experiences have been broadly discussed as part of developing their professional persona in the context of teaching abroad. It has led to the internationalization of teacher development programs for developing globally aware and culturally sensitive teachers and their students (Walters et al., 2009). In this regard, Menard-Warwick (2008) addressed the significance of language teachers' self-perception of life experiences and intercultural identity in developing their own interculturality and its application to teaching culture. Examining two long-time transnational ESL/EFL teachers in the U.S. revealed their different approaches to teaching cultural issues; one teacher took traditional comparative teaching of national cultures, and the other strived to address cultural changes as a result of globalization in an effort to relate to her and students' reality. Despite the different teaching approaches, both teachers were seen as multilingual and intercultural teachers whose teaching reflects their biographical experiences and institutional contexts (Duff & Uchida, 1997).

In the case study of Shin and Jeon (2018), Korean teacher candidates participated in a

short-term community-based service learning program in Canada to foster their intercultural competence and self-efficacy. How the teachers develop intercultural understandings engaging in various learning activities was examined, and the analysis indicated limited transformation in the teachers' worldviews from ethnocentric to ethnorelative. Similarly, Tang and Choi (2004) compared four Hong Kong pre-service teachers' teaching abroad experiences in different linguistic and cultural settings of Australia, Canada, and China. The impact of cross-cultural experiences on their personal and intercultural competence development was examined, and revealed the participants' different meaning-making practices of dissonance generated in cross-cultural experiences. Specifically, the extent of the student teachers' participation in cross-cultural encounters and reflection on various cultural identities affected their sophisticated understanding of cultural differences regardless of familiar or unfamiliar cultural settings they had. The two studies (Shin & Jeon, 2018; Tang & Choi, 2004) suggest the implications of teachers' active engagement in intercultural experiences and in-depth reflection on the cultural identity of self in relation to others.

Concerning language teachers' identity, some studies have focused on the relationship between personal and professional experiences. For instance, Park (2012) examined a Chinese pre-service teacher's academic and professional experiences in a TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) program. The participant's narratives of lived educational experiences in China and the U.S. revealed the disconnectedness between her EFL learning experience in China and her TESOL program and student teaching experiences in the U.S. The sociolinguistic ideologies in the two different societies affected the (re)construction of her linguistic identity as a non-native English speaker in various educational experiences. In a similar vein, Peck and Yates (2019) also explored both professional and personal aspects of the

intercultural experiences of three Korean women from different educational and professional backgrounds. As EFL speakers, those instructors experienced a sense of liberty and new identification of self, but at the same time, a sense of limitation in intercultural relationships and encounters in lived experiences in English-speaking countries. Highlighting the participants' emotions in navigating intercultural experiences as non-native English speakers, the authors suggested the valuable argument for more studies concerning identity and learning experiences in one's developing interculturality.

As Park (2021) argued, numerous studies have highlighted one's language proficiency as a prerequisite for successful intercultural communication. Such a dualistic practice to perceive language teachers' identity, either native speaker or non-native speaker, is problematic in intercultural studies. Without thoughtful and critical consideration of the complexity of interculturality, it could lead to reinforcing language hegemony or marginalization of language learners who are considered to master target language proficiency for enhanced interculturality. Instead, it needs to be further discussed as the issue of power and dichotomous practice of self and the other in intercultural language studies. In addition, language teachers' identity and intercultural experiences have not been widely discussed, despite their usefulness as teaching resources for both teachers and students to challenge misconceptions and stereotypes of others and make sense of their intersecting identities in intercultural relations (Tang & Choi, 2004; Walters et al., 2009).

The Way Forward: Implication for Research and Praxis

The last section of this literature review examined how language teachers understand the concept of interculturality and implement their intercultural understandings in everyday life and professional environments. Most studies have concerned the teachers' knowledge, beliefs, and

attitudes toward interculturality or intercultural teaching approaches through large scale surveys or the narratives of the teachers. Despite language teachers' positive attitudes toward cultural diversity (Castro et al., 2004; Oranje, 2021), the core issue shared in the reviewed studies reveals their limited knowledge and action of interculturality. It further affects their teaching practices, either not knowing how to do intercultural language teaching or repeating the traditional, teacher-centered teaching through comparison of cultures. Sercu (2002, 2006) found the problem from the teachers' uncertainty about the possibility in implementing effective intercultural teaching approaches that integrate language and culture within the constraints in the current language curriculum (e.g., time, focus on language, etc.) (see Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnklai, 2016; Gonen & Saglam, 2012). Another reason might be the teachers' perception of teaching interculturality as the work of other teachers or authorities. Moreover, a conflicting argument in the literature is found about the significance of teachers' knowledge of interculturality over skills or attitudes (Georgieva, 2012) or attitudes over knowledge or skills (Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2018).

On the other hand, relatively little attention has been made to language teachers' interculturality in personal contexts. A few studies have investigated their intercultural encounters or experiences overseas, especially during teaching abroad, and how such experiences affected the teachers' interculturality and intercultural identity development (Menard-Warwick, 2008; Park, 2012; Peck & Yates, 2019; Tang & Choi, 2004). Even though those studies did not clearly describe the notion of intercultural identity, Kim (1996, 2008) defined it as a process of individuals' sense of self that is open-ended, adaptive, dynamic, and transformational in nature. Intercultural identity is not a product of intercultural communication but "a human mechanism that operates in the whole process of intercultural communication"

(Dai, 2009, p. 2). Thus, an intercultural language teacher can be seen as the one who negotiates, integrates, and internalizes different cultural elements with the potential for mutual growth to develop their broader and extended identity (Dai, 2009; Kim, 2001).

There is an evident necessity for further studies that can answer such questions, 'What makes language teachers intercultural?' 'What are the characteristics of intercultural language teaches?' 'So what does language teachers' interculturality look like?' The answers might shed light on teacher qualities or teacher development programs for intercultural teachers. Nielsen et al. (2019) call for teachers' critical understanding of diversity, socio-emotional learning for relationality, and navigating the complexity of interculturality. Those are considered foundational teacher qualities for creating inclusive language learning environments to overcome the pervasive binary distinction between self and others. Especially, language teachers' (in)adequacy in managing the complex nature of intercultural experience has a significant impact on performing other capabilities; for example, pedagogical approaches (e.g., designing tasks and curriculum), awareness of their own prejudices toward social issues, and understanding marginalized students (Dusi et al., 2017).

In addition, language teachers are asked to examine and challenge their beliefs, emotions, and attitudes toward different cultures to make conscious of their stereotypes and worldviews (Walters et al., 2009). Many teachers of students of color are reported as not being knowledgeable about those students' histories, values, and traditions that are distant from the mainstream culture of the U.S. (Yeh et al., 2005). More problematic is that those teachers' ill-preparedness and negative attitudes and beliefs of different cultures make them unwilling to teach in inner-city, urban schools with more students from diverse backgrounds (Hollins & Guzman, 2005). Consequently, the disparity between teachers' identities and lived experiences

and those of their students is seen as another reason for teachers' limited knowledge of and action in interculturality. Dervin (2015) suggests as one way to develop teachers' interculturality using materials (e.g., documentary videos) that contain real-life intercultural dialogues in which interlocutors create tensions and conflicting perspectives toward each other to problematize such intercultural communication. Experiencing new intercultural learning experiences, language teachers might be able to make their own innovations for students in intercultural language education.

As Kincheloe (2004) and Siqueira (2017) argued, teachers' personal thoughts, beliefs, and awareness of self are significant to the development and implementation of an intercultural language curriculum that entails certain issues, such as race, gender, class, human rights, and hegemonic discourses. That intercultural language curriculum can help students and teachers relativize, personalize, and problematize lived experiences to enhance intercultural understanding (Candlin, 1989). In other words, language teachers need to become able to create a classroom environment in which students seek social and cultural meanings of language use and extend the knowledge and awareness to their real-life issues to address interculturality in action in the broader social and global contexts.

According to Amsler et al. (2020), interculturality in 21st-century language education needs to concern issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion in global contexts. However, there has been neither in-depth consideration of those issues nor sufficient support for intercultural education that "acknowledges teachers' discomfort and responds to it pedagogically" (Zembylas & Papamichael, 2017, p. 1). Future studies on intercultural education for teachers and students are required to deconstruct the ways in which interculturality is understood, researched, and implemented in various fields.

Summary

Chapter 2 reviewed theories and studies to understand how the concept of interculturality has been developed and implemented in language education. It also discussed the historical overview of ESOL and WL education and how language teachers conceptualize and adopt interculturality in their teaching and life practices. The literature revealed the complex interplay of discourses and ideologies that have constructed the dichotomy between the native Self and the foreign Other in ESOL and WL education. As one way to challenge the issues, this study suggests critical intercultural language teaching that calls for language teachers' awareness of intersecting issues of inequality and power differences inherited in intercultural interactions. Thus, it seeks to describe the extent to which ESOL teachers understand and adopt interculturality in classroom teaching.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology. In addition to the description of my epistemological and theoretical considerations of the methodology, it provides detailed information on how this study will be conducted.

3 METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, I outline and discuss the research design of the proposed study. I begin by restating the research purpose and guiding questions, and discuss the researcher's positionality and epistemological framework that underpins the entire process of this study. The rationale for conducting a case study is followed by the description of data collection, participant recruitment, and methods for data analysis. I conclude the chapter with how I have ensured trustworthiness.

Purpose of Study and Questions

Researchers are required to clearly delineate research purposes and questions to justify decisions on methodologies and methods adopted in a study along with theoretical perspectives (Crotty, 1998). Without an explicit verbalization of research questions, a study easily loses its guidance for readers and the researcher to understand what the intended foci is and what has influenced the series of decisions made by the researcher during the research process. With this in mind, this study aimed to explore how in-service ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) teachers perceive the idea of interculturality and their practice of interculturality in teaching. At this stage in the research, interculturality as the major construct was understood as individuals' intersectional understandings and practices of self and others in intercultural communication and social relationships. In order to examine the teachers' conceptualization and perceived practice of interculturality in teaching, I delved into their intercultural experiences in personal and professional life and how such experiences (re)shape their teaching practices that embrace the idea of interculturality.

The following research questions guided the process of the study design, data collection, and analysis: 1) How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their daily life and profession? 2) What are in-service ESOL teachers' beliefs about their

interculturality in teaching? 3) What features in their lived experiences contribute to ESOL teachers' interculturality? In order to investigate these questions, I employed a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2018). Methods that I used include semi-structured individual interviews, focus group interviews, and a researcher journal and field notes. In investigating the proposed questions, I hoped to be able to arrive at or discover new insights into what interculturality looks like from the teachers' experiences in personal and professional settings.

Epistemological Research Framework

Researcher Positionality

I am a Korean and cisgender woman without visible disabilities. I am also a first-generation U.S. immigrant pursuing a Ph.D. in my family. I have lived and practiced a transnational and global lifestyle, although most of my life is found in South Korea in a geographic and geopolitical sense. I grew up in a multicultural family with close relatives living in different countries like Germany and Japan. From the time I was a very young child, multilingual and intercultural interactions were commonplace. My close proximity to transnational ways of being taught me about racism, ethnocentrism, and other issues, such as bullying, distrust, and social exclusion, early in my life, and I remain keenly aware of how they have impacted my family members and me. This personal background has become a strong inspiration for my academic journey in the U.S., which is in an effort to contribute to diversity, equity, and social justice for a global society, especially multilingual and transnational populations like me.

However, pursuing interculturality without conflict and for diversity, equity, and social justice is not easy and simple. It oftentimes brings negative and obstructive results in all forms of human relationships, which are derived from different perspectives and understandings

constructed upon individuals' social, cultural, political, historical, educational, and institutional experiences. Even though we, my extended family, love and care for one another with respect, it has been tabooed to talk about *sensitive* issues, such as colonial histories and postcolonial political debates between Korea and Japan (e.g., Bong, 2013; Soh, 2008) or cultural and political events in each other's country. To prevent any possible quarrels and conflicts, we have implicitly agreed to be *silent* and *avoid* such difficult talks. Even though it is undesirable to become mute on *difficult* topics and issues, it is an easy, common, and peaceful practice to keep the good face of interculturality in our daily communication (Lawless & Chen, 2020).

Growing up experiencing the unstoppable impact of globalization and neoliberalism, Koreans currently in their 30s and 40s, such as myself, are the first generation who were exposed to the massive foreign cultural products (e.g., western movies, music genres, fashion, food, etc.). From an early age, we were taught White American English as the most important foreign language for our milestones in life. We also had chances to study abroad in English-speaking countries thanks to the internationalization of higher education and affordable costs of flights (see Park, 2009). That way, the word *foreign* has come to imply White English-speaking Americans or Europeans in the discourse practice among Koreans. I still remember that I was not able to understand a clerk's question, "White or Black?" at a fried chicken restaurant when I first came to the U.S. for a research project in 2009. I could not understand the accent of the clerk, who seemed of Indian descent. I knew neither the history behind such a cultural and color-based binary reference to chicken.

Now I have better knowledge of the U.S. history and contemporary U.S. society thanks to my graduate studies, living experiences, and interpersonal exchanges with diverse groups of people in the U.S. However, it does not mean that I am not guilty of stereotypes, assumptions,

and discriminations against Others that exist inside me as a product of my learning and living experiences. It is my confession that I used to, and am still, but to a lesser degree, afraid of walking by a group of Black males in public. I get upset and frustrated when listening to news about Asian Hate crimes caused by non-Asian Others. However, in reflecting on my schooling, none of the schools I have attended in Korea and the U.S. have ever taught me how to talk about such thorny issues, including racism, discrimination, power, injustice, and inequity, with people from different backgrounds. They did not teach me how to react and protect myself when I get racial and sexual harassment. What schools have taught us is to be friendly and get along with people, which seems didactical and universal. However, is it enough? Given that conflicts and disagreements are unavoidable in human interaction, is it a desirable teaching approach for our students living in the global society?

Most of my experiences in the U.S. are school-based, but I have never had "American" friends who are like-minded. I have never enjoyed going to the classrooms where I was seen as the only foreigner most of the times. In the physical and virtual square learning space, I was not approached with interest or willingness to learn who I am by White and Black classmates. It might be because I have been othered or imagined as Other by the judgmental process of categorization that put me in the box of Asian. I have always wanted to be accepted just as who I am, not losing my identity and "without becoming acceptable" (Fournillier, 2011, p. 560). However, it does not mean that I am upset or complain about such treatment. I also admit the lack of effort to cross over to their psychological and metaphysical land to become a friend. I often play my double consciousness (Du Bois, 1903; Fanon, 2008) to be the Asian to fulfill their imagination and comfort myself in my own space. Thinking of my classrooms, I do not want my students to feel the same way that I had due to their culture, language, race, ethnicity, and/or

social status.

Now, I teach Korean language and culture to undergraduate students at my current institution. It has been an eye-opening teaching experience differing from my previous teaching of English as a foreign language (EFL) in Korean public middle schools. Unlike English, teaching Korean has had me realize my privilege with greater ownership and authenticity as a native speaker of Korean. However, the more I have developed criticality in the doctoral program, the more I have questioned my Korean teaching. Now I question, "Didn't I say, 'we don't say like that' or 'your pronunciation is comprehensive enough as a non-native speaker of Korean' during the class?" "Isn't my teaching of Korean culture too patriotic or nationalistic?" "Don't I provide only positive aspects of Korean culture and society?" I have constantly asked myself how I can teach Korean language and culture in a way that is more realistic and connected to my students' culture and society. Through my transnational experiences, I have come to realize that the essence of many social issues has commonalities shared across physical borders despite their different realizations and approaches to solving the problems.

According to critical scholars (Dean, 2017; Finlay, 2002; Mao et al., 2016), being reflexive not only prioritizes a critical self-awareness but also perceive one's knowledge as socially constructed with others, acknowledging the influence of subjective experience on knowledge creation. For example, in her new challenge with Chicana feminism as a white woman scholar, Kasun (2018) shared her experience of being reflexive that involves the process of (un)learning and ultimately decolonizing her sense of self toward liberation. Her reflexive work echoes D'Cruz et al. (2007), who argue that reflexivity is an emancipatory process through the examination of the impact of sociopolitical conditions and life choices on one's disadvantage and privilege.

While examining my personal and professional experiences, I aimed to be reflexive, open, and honest (Dean, 2017). However, as I engaged in this research, I felt vulnerable to open myself through academic writing. There might be two reasons for this. Firstly, critical reflexivity is not an easy task by itself, requiring a lot of practice, skill, and time to contemplate, confront, and delve into my personal values, biases, assumptions, knowledge, and intentions that are brought to my researcher self. This type of work also requires deep learning about the Other— learning the group and individual histories as well as unlearning what I know and learning new knowledge (see Tinker Sachs et al., 2017). For this reflexive work, however, I found that I have so much to learn and unlearn to be able to do the work that I have not done before, such as articulating about my own self with analytical and objective eyes. Additionally, looking back on my life, being open about myself was not a value instilled in me since I was young. It is not my intention to attribute it to being an 'Asian' cultural trait, but rather a result of my home environment that does not consider it desirable to reveal oneself to others. I grew up in a space that encouraged me to keep aspects of myself private as a means of self-protection against those who might not be entirely trustworthy. This upbringing might be another reason why I feel apprehensive about opening up myself in the public academic space where I am uncertain about who would read my work and how it would be received. However, despite my fears, I am open to facing myself and growing in reflexivity. I know that overtime, as I continue to engage in this work, I will grow in confidence (Austin et. Al, 2016).

Especially, as an Asian woman, I questioned my eligibility as a non-member of the Black community, as well as my ability to articulate three Black women teachers and their racialized identities and experiences without any distortion. Throughout my doctoral studies, I have had the privilege of learning from wonderful scholars including my committee chair and committee

members comprising Black and South Korean immigrant and White American women who shared their criticality with me and introduced me to critical voices in the fields of language and literacy education, cultural studies, educational sociology, and methodologies. With deep gratitude for their work, I decided to engage in this intercultural study both for my growth as a researcher pushing my theoretical and methodological boundaries and for my role as a critical intercultural researcher and as an individual learning with and from the participants.

Being reflexive, I have understood that interculturality requires courageous and visible action-based efforts to create and continue a respectful human relationship with an intersectional consideration of self and others. Tinker Sachs (2002) said that "a good starting point for growth and development is to continue being a learner" (p. 535). As the researcher of this study, I was cognizant that I am in the consistent practice of *be-coming* intercultural by listening to my participants' life stories and learning from them and with them. I tried to be reflexive by examining my power, privilege, and biases and deconstructing my assumptions and beliefs in the intercultural relationship with my participants and the data collection, analysis, and interpretation process. Thus, in doing this work, I envisioned myself having an emancipatory learning experience by the end of this research process (and afterwards), hoping that my readers would share in the feelings, knowledge, and experiences of both myself and my participants. At this point in my writing, I can honestly say, that this process has been difficult because I am still learning about myself and my participants. This is the work of interculturality, learning about self, alongside, learning about others. This process never ends.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality was adopted as a methodology that governs this study, especially the researcher's ways of understanding and operating the entire procedure of data collection,

analysis, and interpretation. More than a theory, intersectionality is a powerful and heuristic analytic framework that helps to clarify the complexity of social relations and the mutual interdependency of social divisions through the analysis of the interlocking system of oppression (Anthias, 2012; Collins & Bilge, 2016; Crenshaw, 1991; Lutz, 2015). It further enables researchers and individuals to become aware of differences that produce hegemony and exclusivity in social relations and undo boundaries or hierarchies at the micro- and macro-level of their social life.

There has, however, been objection to intersectionality for its inappropriateness to be used as a research methodology. Nash (2008) viewed intersectionality as unpromising and complex due to its lack of clear definition and agreement on a methodology. She further criticized that intersectional scholars tend to overrepresent black women as a prototype of intersectional subjects. Because of its heavy reliance on black women to claim the complexity of identity, intersectionality has them perceived as a "theoretical value-added" (p. 8). The criticism is further reflected in other studies by Anthias (2012) and Cooper (2016) that concern the seeming impossibility of intersectionality in analyzing the complex layers of social division. The two authors pointed out the pervasive practice in studies that focus on the most distinctive factors of systematic oppression and discrimination, such as race or gender.

Such narrow approaches to intersectionality not only limit the boundary of the theory but also fail to embrace people who are marginalized in areas, such as citizenship, class, dis/ability, religion, education, and age (Okolosie, 2014). Cho et al. (2013) asserted the researcher's intersectional ways of thinking about the dynamics within and across identity categories and the issue of inequalities in relation to power. Moreover, Matsuda (1991) suggested practicing "the other question" (p. 1189) for the researcher to expand the range of intersectionality to embrace

diverse ideas and experiences, which is also echoed in Collins and Bilge (2016). With those suggestions in mind, this study will employ Collins and Bilge's (2016) intersectional framework to capture how participants as social actors or interlocutors (re)construct socially constituted everyday subjective meanings of self and others in the context of intercultural experience and interaction. As other scholars have claimed a need for different levels of analysis (Cho et al., 2013; Lutz, 2015), Collins and Bilge (2016) provide different ways to have intersectional analyses. Accordingly, this study visualized and modified their intersectional framework to systematically examine how participants "engage with identity facets, adopting them to anticipate and interpret encounters, negotiating self and others' views about them" (Atewologun et al., 2016, p. 239). Doing so, the study could scrutinize how participants (and I myself as a researcher and intercultural being) position themselves and others, either equally or unequally, within societal structures.

As shown in Figure 1, the framework takes the three layers of circles that can shift regarding time, space, and context. Each circle has different entities interconnected to each other, but not every entity necessarily operates always nor is more important than the other. The outer layer provides the categories of analysis to understand the major axes of social divisions, such as race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation, dis/ability, and age (Collins & Bilge, 2016). Considering the open-ended nature of one's social positioning within the oppressive social system, this study added language and spiritual practices that constitute individuals' cultural practice in daily life. Those social divisions are not discrete and mutually exclusive, but the entities built upon each other. Thus, I tried to have a holistic viewpoint to understand the complexity of intersectionality as a situated and embodied phenomenon (Atewologun & Mahalingam, 2018).

Figure 1

The Framework of Intersectionality (Collins & Bilge, 2016)
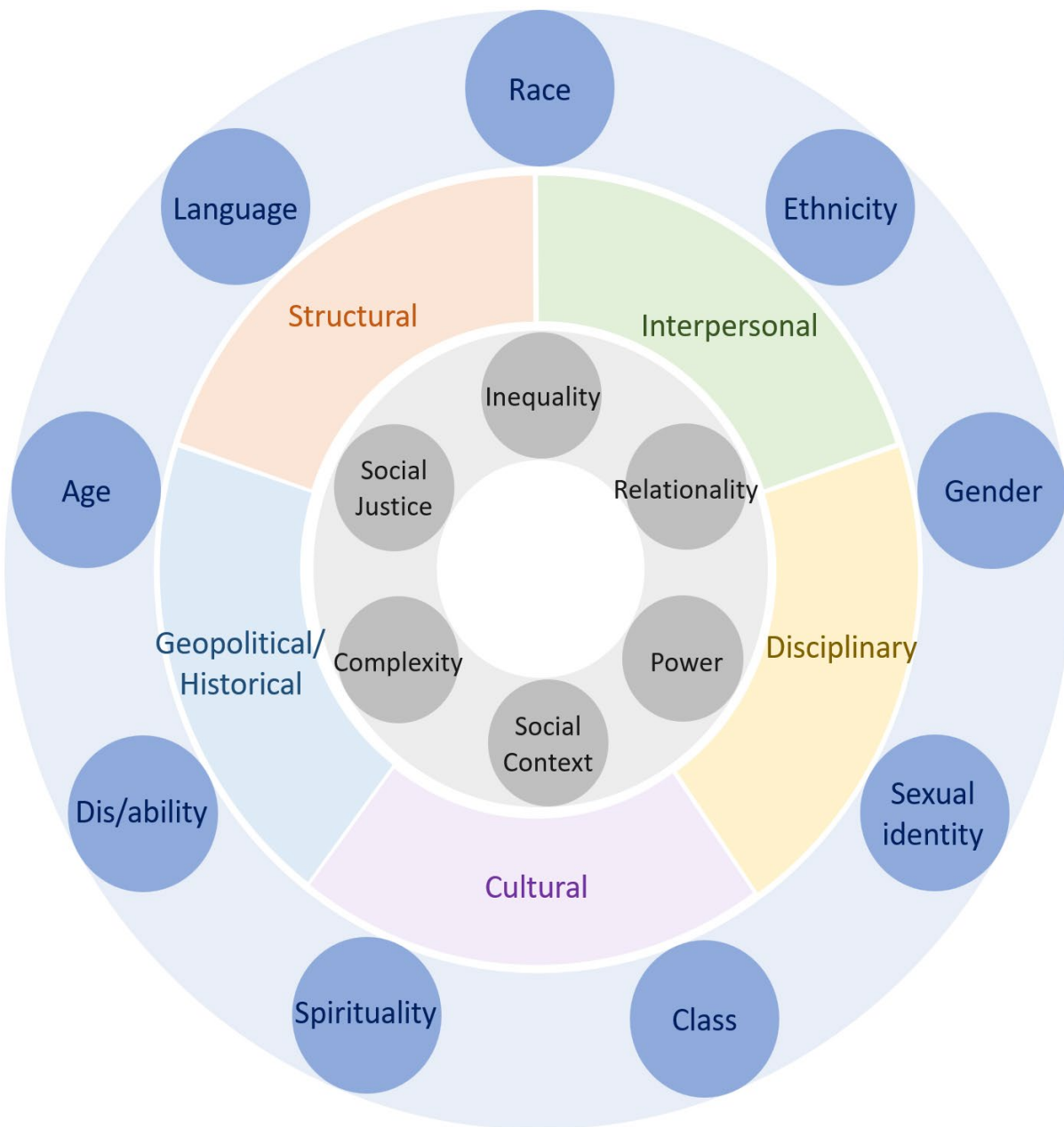
The second layer in the middle includes the four domains of power—interpersonal, disciplinary, structural, and cultural—that examine how social divisions and power relations are understood in different contexts. According to Collins and Bilge (2016), the interpersonal

domain of power reveals power differences in the way that people relate to one another in social interactions (p. 7). On the other hand, structural power refers to how organizations or institutions are organized and structured on account of intersecting power relations of social divisions (p. 12). The disciplinary domain concerns the implementation of rules or treatments applied differently depending on one's social divisions (p. 9), and the cultural domain of power involves ideas, messages, or ideologies that shape individuals' worldviews (p. 11). The last but not least domain of power is geopolitical and historical, which was added in this study to explore the impact of transnational movements on power relations among people. These five domains explain the dynamics of social phenomena with a better and deeper understanding of how power works in each domain from local, national, and global perspectives.

The core layer contains six core ideas that are the guideposts of intersectional analysis: social inequality, relationality, power, social context, complexity, and social justice. Social inequality is not caused by a single factor but rather a result of interactions among various social categories. The idea of social inequality helps to understand multiple layers and forms of inequalities constructed upon systems of power (p. 26). Power is relational, mutually constructed, and intersecting across individuals' lives and identities shaped by many factors in different ways (p. 27). Accordingly, the domains of power are required to examine how power relations are constructed. The idea of social context attends to one's awareness of particular historical, intellectual, and political contexts that shape what and how we think and do. Contextualizing one's life stories or arguments enhances an understanding of social inequality, power relations, and relationality (p. 28). With the emphasis of both/and thinking, relationality reveals interconnections between the entities of social division. Collins and Bilge (2016) perceive the idea of relationality as a core idea that makes possible intersectional inquiry and

practice and intellectual and political movements through dialog, conversation, interaction, and coalition (p. 28). On the other hand, complexity and social justice are conceptual that describe what intersectionality is like and for. As both a theoretical and analytical framework, intersectionality is complex and difficult to utilize but needs to be addressed consistently and collaboratively to challenge the status quo in society and make society more just and equitable.

Levon (2015) clarified that "lived experience is ultimately intersectional in nature" (p. 297). Considering the working definition of interculturality, I focused on the complex nature of intercultural experiences and interactions in which participants make meanings of self and others through the socially constructed, value-laden process of identification. Recognizing that every form of human interaction is intercultural, dynamic, complex, and shifting regarding time, space, and power, I practiced self-reflexivity by being conscious of my roles, positions, identities, and involvement throughout the research process. My Korean identity, my experience of being an immigrant to the U.S., and my role as a KFL teacher, doctoral student, and previous EFL teacher, which all have made me intercultural, were implicated in interactions with participants. The practice of self-reflexivity enhanced the depth and breadth of intersectional analysis of this study that concerns.

The Design of Study

Qualitative Case Study

I adopted a qualitative case study as a method to gain a detailed understanding of how in-service ESOL teachers conceptualize and adopt interculturality to their own teaching practices. In particular, I highlighted distinguishing phenomena in which those teachers' lived experiences in education, profession, and daily intercultural interaction impact their perceptions and adaptation of interculturality in classroom-based activities.

Qualitative research seeks to uncover the meaning of a phenomenon that can lead to new insights into human behavior and experience, contrary to quantitative research, whose purpose is to find causal relations, predict, or discover an objective truth (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Sherman & Webb, 2005). Highlighting the ever-changing nature of a qualitative inquiry, Denzin and Lincoln (2018) define qualitative research as a situated activity in natural settings in which researchers attempt to "make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings of people bring to them" (p. 43). Qualitative research begins with assumptions or emerging questions and aims to "understand how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 6). Qualitative researchers' insights and ways of looking at phenomena are perceived as a primary instrument of qualitative research.

Along with the distinctive characteristic of a qualitative study that highlights interpretation, a qualitative case study allowed me to be immersed in the field to observe what I intend to describe, explore, and analyze—the case. Stake (1995) describes that a case study captures the particularity and complexity of a single or collective case. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) and Creswell and Poth (2013) are in agreement that a case study is an in-depth investigation and analysis of a bounded system, case. In particular, Merriam and Tisdell (2016) further identify four defining characteristics of a qualitative case study: "the search for meaning and understanding, the researcher as the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, and inductive investigative strategy, and the end product being richly descriptive" (p. 37). These understandings perceive a case study as "an end-product of field-oriented research" (Wolcott, 1992, p. 36).

On the other hand, Yin (2018) defines a case study as "an empirical method that

investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-life context"

(p. 15). By his definition, the case is situated in a context intricately related to a phenomenon.

Yin also suggests five core components of case study research: questions, propositions, case(s), a

logical linking of the data to the propositions, and the criteria for interpreting the findings. Thus,

case study research needs to be designed to describe what is to be done after the data is collected

in alignment with theoretical propositions related to the topic of study.

Despite the varying definitions of a case study or a case across different disciplines

(Schwandt & Gates, 2018), the fundamental purpose of a case study is to gain a deeper

understanding of the case, which is the phenomena of interest being investigated within a natural

setting. The study I conducted aimed to explore ESOL teachers' experiences in understanding

and performing interculturality. As human experience is complex and multifaceted, this study

was specifically interested in investigating the unique characteristics of this population: ESOL

teachers' linguistic, intercultural, and educational experiences and the impact of those

experiences on their teaching practices concerning interculturality. Thus, the case study was the

most suitable approach to the case investigation.

Multiple Holistic Case Study

Contrary to Stake (1995), who argues for a flexible design, Yin (2018) highlights an

importance of a structured design for the case study method to establish a logical connection

between the empirical data, a study's research questions, and its conclusions. Yin suggests four

types of case study design: single holistic design, single embedded design, multiple holistic

design, and multiple embedded design. In light of the research questions, this study employed the

multiple holistic case study design to examine the interculturality in perception and practice

among in-service ESOL teachers. The multiple case study design is a compelling and robust

approach because it enables the researcher to explore similarities and differences within and between cases (Yin, 2018). Therefore, the goal of the multiple case study is to replicate findings across cases that can predict similar results or contrasting results. Yin (2018) suggests that two to three cases are the simplest and most suitable if the researcher wishes to determine the prevalence of a particular phenomenon.

Accordingly, a multiple holistic case study design was selected for this study because the primary focus was on the experiences of three in-service ESOL teachers and how these experiences shape their understanding and practice of interculturality in teaching. Each participant's distinctive experiences and trajectories were considered and analyzed as individual cases, even though the three cases were presented holistically as one unit of analysis.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis is a bounded system that characterizes a case study, such as a particular program, a group, an institution, a community, a policy, or a phenomenon (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). It is significant to delineate the boundary for what will not be studied or how finite the data collection would be to maintain the focus of the study. Yin (2018) suggests two steps to consider when identifying the case, the unit of analysis. First, the researcher needs to define the case. The case is determined regarding research questions or propositions. Then, bounding the case needs to be clarified to determine the scope of data collection, particularly to distinguish the phenomenon from the context.

This study focused on investigating the experiences of in-service ESOL teachers and the possible influence of those experiences on the teachers' understanding of interculturality and intercultural teaching approaches. Thus, the case was bounded by those who work as an ESOL teacher to focus on their teaching practices. Moreover, the boundary of the case further narrowed

down to in-service ESOL teachers in K-12 schools to examine their intercultural interactions with students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in detail. The context of this study was also limited to K-12 schools in a southeastern state of the U.S. due to the proximity of the researcher to the research site. As the boundary of a case and context were clarified, the unit of the case was defined as in-service ESOL teachers working for and with students from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds in K-12 schools.

Life histories as a research method

Life histories is a qualitative method based on the narratives of memories and experiences that illuminate one's attitudes, values, and behaviors, tracing their progression and changes across the lifespan (White et al., 2010). The primary focus on the life histories method is not on a specific event or moment in a research participant's life, but rather on how they perceive and interpret their experiences, events, and changes across the entire life span within the broader context of social, cultural, and political developments. Consequently, this method necessitates the researcher's comprehensive and holistic examination of the complexity of participants' real-life experiences.

Becker (1970) argues that life histories method provides "this kind of [sic] voice from a culture and situation that are ordinarily not known to intellectuals … and to sociologists" (p. 71). In other words, it has the strong potential to disrupt taken-for-granted assumptions and knowledge by challenging other's subjective perspective of society and by stimulating social discussion that can lead to change. For example, Goodson (2014) found very few studies on teachers' life and work, exploring how teaching influences and is influenced by various social and historical conditions over the last 50 years. As Bullough (1998) notes, "public and private cannot … be separated in teaching" (p. 20-21). Therefore, teachers' life histories need to be

understood as socially constructed, shedding light on the sociopolitical construction of teaching and offering insights into possibilities and changes in the practice of schooling, curriculum, and teaching.

This study, therefore, examined how the participating teachers' knowledge and practice of interculturality has developed in life and teaching, concerning various aspects of their social backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, language, culture, education, and more, across their life span. Such a holistic ecological perspective allowed the researcher to explore the teachers' life histories and their impact on understanding who they are and how they made their sense of self as a whole person through interactions with diverse others with full complexity.

Study Procedure

I began recruiting participants upon the completion of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval in October 2022. As shown in Table 1, the data collection started in October 2022. Below, I described the detailed information on the study procedure.

Table 1

Study Procedures

	Procedures	Timeline
1	IRB Approval	Approved in October 2022
2	Participant Recruitment	October 2022 through January 2023
3	Individual Interviews	October through December 2022
4	Focus group Interview	January 2023
5	Artifacts, Field notes, & Research journal Collection	October 2022 through March 2023

Participant Selection and Rationale

The primary participants for this study were in-service teachers who teach ESOL in K-12 school settings in the southeastern state of the U.S. In order to select and recruit the participants, this study employed purposive sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Yin, 2016). As the most common and appropriate sampling strategy for qualitative research, purposive sampling is practical to "obtain the broadest range of information and perspectives on the subject of study" (Kuzel, 1992, p. 37). It thus enables researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of specific and information-rich cases drawn from participants' unique experiences, knowledge, and competence (Etikan et al., 2016; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Moreover, purposive sampling aligns with the poststructural understanding of knowledge and truths specific to the particular group of individuals under investigation (Delucio & Villicana, 2022). As such, this study could better understand and interpret how the participants define or conceptualize interculturality.

Among several strategies of purposive sampling, I utilized snowball or networking sampling (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In order to select and recruit possible participants, I established the inclusion criteria below:

1. Primary participants must be working as ESOL teachers in K-12 schools in the U.S.

2. Primary participants must be in-service teachers with at least three years of teaching experience.

Applying the criteria anticipated accumulating new information-rich cases from key informants with particular experience and knowledge of interculturality (Patton, 2015).

There were two significant reasons that I set up the boundary of participants to in-service ESOL teachers with three-year-long teaching experiences at a minimum. First of all, the study intended to include ESOL teachers as participants due to their pivotal role in working with

historically marginalized student populations. By involving ESOL teachers in this study, it was anticipated that their insights would shed light on their understanding and approach towards interculturality, particularly in relation to the diverse student population within their classrooms. Second, the study sought to include participants who have experienced a variety of curricula, students, school systems, and teaching practices. No additional requirements or criteria were imposed, as each participant was expected to bring forth their individuality and distinctive lived experiences which would allow the researcher to explore both contradictory and complementary perspectives among the participants.

Participant Recruitment Procedures

Upon receiving IRB approval in October 2022, the recruitment process began using the inclusion criteria and the networking sampling technique, as previously described. Firstly, I contacted individuals who knew teachers who met the inclusion criteria or who met the criteria themselves, using my personal network. I asked my friends and classmates to refer other potential participants if they knew any. I created and shared a recruitment flyer that outlined general information about the study, such as research topic and purpose, recruitment criteria, time required for participation, and contact information (see Appendix A). Based on this sampling process, I was introduced to three ESOL women teachers. Teacher A was a former classmate of my friend, Teacher B was a colleague of my classmate, and Teacher C was a graduate of my doctoral program.

Initially, Teachers A and B expressed interest in the research topic, and I sent them an email with detailed information about the study procedures. However, once their workload and service at school intensified during the semester, they informed me that they were no longer available to participate in the study. Although Teacher C expressed eagerness to participate,

communication delays arose between us due to technical issues. Teacher C's cell phone could not receive my text messages or phone calls, and email was not a reliable method of communication. I even visited her school on a scheduled day and time, but I could not talk and discuss future plans with her. Subsequently, I determined that it would not be efficient to continue with her and decided not to recruit her.

In addition to using my personal network, I requested a classroom visit to one of the faculty members in my doctoral program. The professor, who taught a seminar class for in-service teachers on Saturdays, approved my visit for three to five minutes during her class. I visited her class, which was held in a recreational facility of the university, and briefly explained the study with the flyer. Fortunately, it was lunch time after my presentation, so I was able to spend a little more time connecting and speaking with some interested students. Some students took extra flyers to share with their colleagues at school, and others decided to participate on site. Although there were very few ESOL teachers in the class, one ESOL woman teacher agreed to participate after I explained the study procedure to her. The ESOL teacher further helped with recruitment and introduced me to her colleague, who ultimately joined the study. A week after my classroom visit, another ESOL teacher signed up for the study via an online website provided in the flyer. When asked about how she learned about the study, she explained that one of her colleagues gave her the flyer because the colleague knew she would be interested in the research topic.

Once I recruited three in-service ESOL teachers, I ceased recruitment and began informed consent procedures (see Appendix B). I explained the study and its possible impacts to each participant while they were participating in this study. I also informed them that they could withdraw from the study at any time and for any reason. Once the informed consents were signed

and returned, I started data collection interviewing each participant. I provided detailed

descriptions of each participant in the following section.

Participants

Table 2

Background Information of Participants

	Jade	Kiana	Yolanda
Age	In 30s	In 20s	In 50s
Education	In Ph.D.	Master's	In Ph.D.
Gender	Woman	Woman	Woman
Language	English, Spanish	English, Somali	English, Yoruba
Race	Black (African American)	Black (African American)	Black (African)
Religion	Christianity	Islam	Christianity
Teaching grade	K-5	1st	5th
Teaching experience	13 years	4 years	9 years

I recruited three participants who are in-service ESOL teachers—Jade, Yolanda, and

Kiana (all pseudonyms). All the participants were elementary school teachers at different urban

public schools in a southeastern state of the U.S. I included Kiana, even though she is a second-

year ESOL teacher, since she previously worked as a homeroom teacher for two years at a public

school, 71% of whose entire student population were ESOL.

Jade

Jade is an African American, Christian, cis-gender woman in her 30s. Growing up in a

middle-class family, her father ran a business and mother was a nurse, providing Jade with many

opportunities to travel to different places in the country. Moreover, her parents kept her and her

siblings busy with various sports activities, such as ballet, cheerleading, gymnastics, and karate.

Even in high school and college, she played on volleyball teams. Engaging in different activities is so ingrained in her that she has volunteered at a museum and aquarium and worked as a yoga instructor, in addition to her teaching.

Jade's hometown is Bright Future (pseudonym), a city well known for its racial and ethnic diversity and home to immigrant and refugee families. Thanks to the community environment, it has been natural for Jade to get along with people from diverse backgrounds since she was young. However, she had marginalized experiences in her secondary schools and college, which were placed in predominantly white communities. The college Jade attended was a predominantly white institutions (PWI) located in the "deep south" of the U.S. During her college years, while striving to balance her studies and athletic achievement as a volleyball player, she experienced a lot of "eye gazes" from white people, as well as encountering the "interesting sub culture" of black community that she had not experienced before in her urban life. Overall, she feels "fortunate" about her lived experience in such a diverse social and geographic setting, which opened her "eyes to a lot of things" and inspired her to pursue ESOL teaching as her career path.

Jade earned her B.A. in early childhood education and master's degree in elementary education with an ESOL certificate. Recently, she started her Ph.D. in educational leadership in 2022. She has been teaching ESOL for 13 years and currently teaches K-5 ESOL at Excellent Elementary School (pseudonym). The size of her school is relatively small, with approximately 400 students in total. Sixty percent of the student population is white, and 15% receive special education. The school also provides a gifted education program. In addition, 8% of the entire student population are ESOL students, whose number increased from 33 to 51 in the year 2022-2023. According to Jade, the ESOL program and ESOL students have not been the school's

focus, but rather "secondary to everything." However, she has observed a change in perspective among her colleagues and principal with the consistent increase in the ESOL student population.

Kiana

Kiana is identified as a cis-gender woman Somali American who was born in the U.S. and practices the Muslim faith. Her parents were refugees who fled their unstable and unsafe domestic situations from the Somali civil war. They settled in a community with a high number of immigrants and refugees in an urban city in Tennessee, which became Kiana's hometown, and worked at factories and supermarkets to support their family. Although English is her first language, Kiana often speaks Somali in communication with her parents. During her youth, Kiana spent most of her time with her family, staying in their neighborhood and city and not venturing out of Tennessee. However, as her family became more settled in their new life, they experienced upward mobility, moving to a bigger apartment and then a townhome in a more affluent neighborhood.

During middle school, Kiana had the opportunity to live in a Somali community in Nairobi, Kenya for a year. Her parents wanted Kiana and her siblings to learn more about their language, culture, and religion, and the three children, including Kiana, stayed in an apartment under the guidance and care of her grandaunt and cousins. Kiana's one-year life in Kenya was "a culture shock" and had an impact on her adolescent experiences and later her teaching. Being "outnumbered" as an American was her challenge in Kenya, but at the same time, being a Muslim was another challenge upon her arrival in the U.S. Kiana was bullied due to her spiritual practice during middle school, which was a predominantly black urban school. This experience taught her the importance of standing up for herself in unjust situations. Once she started high school, she reunited with her previous peers from elementary school and was able to make new,

strong friendships with peers from the same spiritual backgrounds.

After graduating from college with a B.A. in history, she reflected on her schooling experience and decided to become a teacher. She received her master's degree in teacher education with an ESOL certificate. At the time of data collection, she had two years of ESOL teaching experience. At the beginning of her teaching career, she was a homeroom teacher for two years at an urban public elementary school in Tennessee. Since 71% of the student population at that school was ESOL, she worked very closely with ESOL students and their parents. This experience transformed her career into an ESOL teacher, and she currently works at Greater Diversity Elementary School (pseudonym). Compared to the other participants, Kiana is a novice and eager to develop but often feels helpless due to the lack of systematic support in her country.

Yolanda

Yolanda is a cis-gender woman in her 50s who immigrated from Nigeria to the U.S. with her family in 2011 "to start a new life." She is an African, Christian and a mother of two young adults. Proficient in both English, the official language of Nigeria, and Yoruba, her native ethnic language, Yolanda possesses bilingual abilities. She grew up in an affluent, middle-class family in a southern area of the country where her father owned a business in multiple places and her mother provided loving care for her children. However, Yolanda's parents were very protective and did not enjoy going out or traveling away from home. This "sheltered life" not only narrowed her experiences and relationships with peers during school years but also affected her understanding of students from different family backgrounds than hers at the beginning of her teaching career in the U.S.

Despite majoring in English education at one of the top universities in Nigeria, Yolanda

initially did not want to teach because she believed that teachers were not well paid and respected in Nigerian society. Instead, she worked at financial and oil companies until she immigrated to the U.S. Upon arriving in the U.S., she decided to continue her studies and earned a master's degree in secondary education with an ESL certificate. While studying for the master's degree she worked as a substitute teacher for two years to support her family, which provided her with "a window to see how (American) education is like" for her own young children.

Yolanda, now a ninth year ESOL teacher, works at Greater Diversity Elementary School with Kiana. This school is larger with approximately 1,000 students, two assistant principals, and two counselors, compared to Jade's school. About one-third of the student population is ESOL, and almost 100% of the students receive free or reduced lunch. During the group interview, the participants learned that they all work in the same county, and Jade shared that she graduated from Greater Diversity Elementary School, where she remembered more than 40 languages being spoken during her time there. This highlights the developed understanding and appreciation of linguistic and racial diversity brought by students over the years at Greater Diversity Elementary School and its nearby neighborhoods.

Recognizing the distinct racial identities of these three Black women teachers is crucial for developing a rich contextualized understanding of their perspectives on ESOL students and families, disciplinary practices, and broader society of the U.S. In one of his early essays, Du Bois (1903) said that "the problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line; the relation of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asian and Africa, in America and the islands of the sea" (p. 13). More than a hundred years later, we continue to grapple with and combat anti-black racism (and anti-brown and anti-Asian racism). In the face of racism towards Black

individuals in the U.S. and globally, anti-blackness is deeply ingrained, stemming from the legacy of enslavement and dehumanization of people of African descent, colonial history, and contemporary neo-colonial relations (Du Bois, 1903; King, 2005; UN Human Rights, 2017). Despite a powerful history of resistance to white supremacy led by anti-racist and civil rights activists, including Sojourner Truth, Harriet Tubman, Malcolm X, Martin Luther King Jr., Fannie Lou Hammer, John Lewis, bell hooks, and Alicia Garza, the co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, aimed at promoting and protecting the human rights and dignity of Black people, anti-blackness remains pervasive (Asante, 2003; Khan-Cullors & bandele, 2017). It is a permanent ideological and structural construct within U.S. society (Brown & Brown, 2020), dismissing and dehumanizing Black individuals as the Other, regarding them as subhuman or less than human, and erasing their culture, value, and contributions to the prosperity and advancement of society (Dumas & Nelson, 2016; Dumas & ross, 2016).

From the participants of this study, how anti-black racism may have been experienced can be manifested in different forms and ways depending on multiple background factors and how they see themselves as Black women. While Yolanda is a post-1965 Black immigrant, Jade and Kiana are African American. But Kiana identifies her Somali ethnicity inherited from her refugee parents. Pierre (2004) emphasized the importance of recognizing the heterogeneity of the U.S. Black population while rejecting scholarship that reinforces structural racism and the cultural inferiority of African Americans by highlighting ethnic identities of African immigrants. For instance, Showers (2015) discovered in their study on racial and ethnic identities of African women nurses' lives in the U.S. that their racial and ethnic identities are sources of discrimination. However, their ethnic identities are used as a marker of difference among Black immigrants but often disregarded for upward mobility and assimilation into White U.S. society.

This result somewhat echoes Gregory (1993) who argues both similarity and difference of the racialized experiences between Black immigrants and U.S.—born Black people. Even though it is not the scope of this study, analyzing power relations and racialized practices is necessary to comprehend the sociohistorical juncture among Black populations, their varying identities and their distinctiveness.

Anti-blackness infiltrates various aspects of our society, with education being a notable arena of its influence. Scholars, such as Brown and Brown (2020), have examined racialized discourses and practices within school curricula. Similarly, investigations into teachers' attitudes and behaviors (Alim et al., 2020; Baker-Bell, 2020), school discipline (Sobti & Welsh, 2023), textbooks (King, 2016; Seeger et al., 2023; Woodson, 1933), housing, zoning and educational policies (Ewing, 2018; Rothstein, 2017) have uncovered the pervasive nature of anti-black racist practices. These systemic issues become palpable in the daily struggles faced by Black youth in school settings, leading to detrimental consequences such as oppression, marginalization, and the perpetuation of internationalized racism (Kolluri & Tichavakunda, 2023; Sobti & Welsh, 2023). Beyond the experiences of Black students, research on Black teachers shed light on their knowledge of Black history and culture, as well as their dedication to teaching Black children (Brown et al., 2018; Farinde et al., 2016; Ladson-Billings, 2009; Walker; 1996). A study by Dillard (2016) delved into the study abroad experience of an African American woman pre-service teacher. Employing an endarkened feminist standpoint—an approach to understanding diasporic Black women's identities, lives, and work, Dillard's work explored the teacher's spiritual connection to her Ghanaian heritage, revealing a potent source of radical activism infused into her educational practices. This transformative process involved a recognition, revisioning, and reclamation of her heritage and role as a Black teacher, culminating in a

powerful form of resistance against oppressions (Collins, 2000).

However, Kolluri and Tichavakunda (2023) argue that the majority of studies tend to conceptualize anti-black racism in education as ideological rather than structural problems. This perspective may limit or hinder our capacity to envision and enact systematic changes for educational equity. Therefore, this study expected that the personal and professional intercultural experiences of the participating teachers as Black women may shed light on how they navigated their racialized identities in their encounters.

Research Context

This study was conducted in a metropolitan area of a southern state in the U.S., which includes a state capital city and its nearby cities in five different counties. With a population of nearly 6.1 million people, this area is the ninth largest metro area in the nation. The demographic makeup of the area includes 38.5% White, 36% Black, 13% Latinx, and 8% Asian residents (Pascual, 2021). The participants in this study lived in an urban or suburban area that experiences a growing number of racially diverse populations. In particular, the participants worked in Mountain County (pseudonym), which saw a population growth of 9.4% from 692,536 in 2010 to 757,718 in 2021 (USA Facts, n.d.). The largest racial population in this county is Black (53.4%), followed by White (29.5%), Latinx (8.6%), and Asian (6.4%). The racial composition of the county's population is evident among the participants and within their classrooms, where Black ESOL students are the most prominent.

Data Collection

Given that previous literature has used extensive survey data to evaluate language teachers' interculturality (Alaei & Nosrati, 2018; Fernández-Agüero & Chancay-Cedeño, 2019; Hinojosa Pareja & López López, 2018; Sercu, 2006), there is a need for scholarly efforts to

closely examine the teachers' intercultural experiences and their influence on teaching. In particular, teachers' perception of how they integrate interculturality into their teaching practices is vital to understanding the extent to which their knowledge is translated into action. Considering the purpose of the study and the gap found in the literature, I collected a set of descriptive data, such as interview transcripts, artifacts, field notes, and a research journal. Please refer to Table 3 for further details. Using multiple data sources provided a more convincing and accurate case study (Houghton et al., 2013; Yin, 2018). In addition, the richness of data allowed the researcher to have detailed descriptions of the participants and their thoughts, perceptions, and environments (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007).

Table 3

Research Questions Aligned with Data Source

Research questions	Data sources	Investigation of each question using data	Theoretical and methodological alignment between the data and question
1. How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their daily life and profession?	· Individual interview · Focus group interview · Artifacts · Field notes	· Interviews will help how the participants make sense of interculturality based on their experience in life and profession and through interactions with one another.	· Interculturality evolves and changes depending on contexts and social relations (UNESCO, 2006).
2. How do in-service ESOL teachers employ interculturality in teaching?	· Individual interview · Focus group interview · Artifacts · Field notes	· Interviews and artifacts will illustrate how the participants have practiced interculturality in teaching.	· The praxis of interculturality is significant in developing critical cultural awareness of both teachers and learners in language education (Dervin et al., 2020)

3. What features in their experiences contribute to ESOL teachers' interculturality?	· Individual interview · Focus group interview · Artifacts · Field notes · Research journal (Reflection and analytic memo)	· Interviews, artifacts, and a research journal may reveal specific and shared factors that would affect the participants' development of interculturality.	· Language teachers' adequacy in managing intercultural experience affects their performing other capabilities in teaching (Dusi et al., 2017)

Individual Interviews

I conducted three semi-structured interviews with each participant over a period of three months, from October 2022 to December 2022. Interviewing for research is a systematic "process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study" (deMarrais, 2004, p. 55). Research interviews are, thus, distinctive in structure and purpose from everyday conversations (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). The interviews in this study were semi-structured with a protocol as a guide (Roulston, 2010). As a phenomenological interview to examine the detailed and in-depth descriptions of the participants' lived experiences regarding interculturality (Bolderston, 2012; Roulston, 2010), most interview questions consisted of open-ended questions asking their personal, educational, and professional experiences and activities and relationships with various people. Aligned with the research purpose and topic, probes were also used to elicit in-depth details of the participants' responses (Roulston et al., 2003).

For example, I asked open-ended questions, such as "Tell me about your high school experience" and "Describe your hometown." If a participant stated, "It was normal," I gave a follow-up question saying, "How was it normal?" "Can you describe with more details to help me imagine it?" I adjusted my questions and probes based on the participants' responses and

follow-up on interesting points that emerged during the conversation. This flexibility allowed me

to delve deeper into topics that were most relevant to the participants' experiences and

perspectives, leading to rich and nuanced data. I also took detailed notes during each interview

and transcribed them afterward to ensure that I captured all the important details accurately. In

this way, the interviews allowed me to engage in the emerging worldview of the participants,

discover new ideas on the topics, and co-construct data and its meaning with my participants

(Merriam & Tisdell, 2016; Roulston, 2010).

Each interview had a distinct focus and lasted about 90 minutes (see Appendix C).

Interviewing was necessary and appropriate since this study also focused on the participants' past

events or experiences that I could not observe (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). The first interview

aimed to obtain general information about the participants, including years of teaching,

workplace, self-identification, and their early life experiences from birth to grade 5. Specifically,

the first interview focused on how various aspects of their early childhood, such as family

backgrounds, interpersonal interactions, and living environments, affected their ways of

interacting with people, as well as their disposition and teaching approaches as ESOL teachers.

As "unearned trust raises questions about ethics" (Charmaz, 2016, p. 45), I also provided detailed

information on the study purpose and process, a consent form, and assurance of confidentiality.

In addition to learning about the participants' own expectations and questions, I also explained

my expectations about them, such as the time required for their voluntary involvement and the

schedule of the interviews.

The second interview highlighted the participants' critical intercultural experiences

during their secondary school years. The interview protocol included recurring questions from

the first interview in order to ensure consistency in the participants' responses and identify any

events or occasions that crystalize the participants' development of intersectional understandings of themselves and others through intercultural interactions. On the other hand, the last interview focused on the participants' experiences in higher education and profession, delving into their motivations, beliefs, and social positions as ESOL teachers in relation to diverse groups of people, such as ESOL students, parents, colleagues, and staff in their school community.

Considering that I did not have prior knowledge and interaction with each participant and vice versa, I decided to have all individual interviews in face-to-face settings. I made sure to respect the participants' time and schedules by scheduling the interviews at a time and place that was convenient for them. As I visited the participants' neighborhoods, which were unfamiliar to me, I asked them to choose a location where they could feel convenient, comfortable, and free to talk, while also allowing me to keep a clear record of the conversation without loud noise. Consequently, the interviews were conducted in different places, such as a local public library, a coffee shop, a restaurant, and a classroom, which were all close to each participant's home or workplace. The in-person interaction with the participants provided me with the opportunity to develop some degree of rapport and get to know each other (DeWalt & DeWalt, 2011).

Each individual interview provided an opportunity for intercultural interactions to develop between the researcher and the participants. I made an effort to be honest, open, and caring, creating a comfortable and familiar atmosphere by exchanging informal conversations before, during, and after each interview. I also maintained an attentive attitude with empathy when listening to their stories. Immersing myself in the participants' stories, I often shared my family background, teaching and learning experiences, and struggles as an Asian immigrant in the U.S., which created a space where the participants and I could build shared emotions, experiences, and understandings. For example, since Yolanda was educated in Nigeria and I was

from Korea, we shared insights about each country's educational system to better understand each other's learning experiences. The interviews became where both the participants and the researcher could learn from their experiences.

Focus Group Interview

After conducting the three individual interviews with each participant, one focus group interview was conducted to gather further insights. A focus group interview was chosen due to its ability to generate social construction of data within the dynamic interaction of the group (Merriam & Tidsell, 2016; Robinson, 2012; Yin, 2016). This type of interview provides participants with a social space to interact with one another and (re)generate data and new insights that researchers cannot obtain through individual interviews (Robinson, 2012). Therefore, it was expected that the group interview would allow for participants to express their opinions, share their perspectives, and refine their own views and understandings by listening to others (Hennink, 2014; Yin, 2016).

The aim of the focus group interview was to explore dynamic interactions between the participants in learning how they perceive their job and social position as an ESOL teacher. The focus group interview focused on the participants' experiences, challenges, and conflicts in teaching ESOL at school. The questions asked mainly revolved around the participants' perceptions of their own teaching practices, ESOL students, and conflicts and challenges, as well as their efforts to make their teaching related to students' lives and cultures (see Appendix D). Open-ended questions were used to initiate the conversation, such as "What efforts have you made to make your teaching ESOL related to students' life and culture?" and "What successes have you experienced teaching ESOL?" Each participant took turns naturally, sharing their working experiences at different schools in different counties and states. They also sought

insights and advice on certain issues regarding their teaching. For example, Jade asked for knowledge and experience with ESOL students transferred from international schools. As she was having more of those students, she did not know about how international schools implement English language learning programs. Yolanda took the role of a more experienced teacher, helping other participants understand circumstances better when they shared their frustrations with the lack of professional development opportunities provided by the county. As she had worked in the same country for nine years, she could provide valuable insights.

According to Krueger and Casey (2014), a focus group interview can be beneficial for researchers to involve themselves in the conversation with participants to create a sociable environment. As such, I positioned myself as a participant sharing my intercultural language teaching experience in the college-level classroom and as an intercultural learner who has no prior experience teaching and learning in the U.S. public education system. This allowed me to immerse myself in the conversation and act as a moderator or facilitator, eliciting interview questions, discussions, and interactions in which every participant actively engages and expresses their thoughts and opinions (Robinson, 2012; Yin, 2016).

Due to their busy schedules, the participants requested to have the group interview online. The interview took place for 90 minutes on the researcher's Webex online meeting room and was video recorded. Despite Krueger and Casey's suggestion for having an observer (2014), I, as the sole researcher, had a strategy of taking retrospective notes on non-verbal actions and interactions during the interviews. While engaging in the conversation as a teacher participant and intercultural learner, I recognized my role as a researcher not to lose focus and manage the conversation by taking care of those who might be overtalkative or stay silent without biasing how the group discusses. I also used my skills to know when to skip certain topics, include new

ideas, follow leads, recognize what is not discussed and who remains quiet, and even close down discussions (Robinson, 2012). Being immersed in the discussion, I could keep the foci of interviews and research purposes.

Artifacts

Various artifacts were collected during the individual interviews to explore the participants' experiences and their impact on intercultural teaching. Artifacts were necessary to understand how each participant reflected on their identities and experiences, and how they contributed to the dynamic performance of identity. As Prior (2003) notes, artifacts "actively structure the nature of subjects," making them valuable sources of information. To facilitate the collection of artifacts, each participant was asked to bring two items for each interview, totaling six artifacts for the three individual interviews. The participants were requested to choose items that demonstrated pivotal moments from different periods of their life, (1) from their birth to age five, (2) pre-K to grade 5, (3) middle school, (4) high school, (5) college, and (6) being a teacher. Artifacts could be in the form of drawings, toys, writings, photos, books, lesson plans, clothing (e.g., fashion accessories, school uniforms), or other objects based on the participants' preferences.

During the interviews, the participants were asked to show and describe their artifacts in detail. Most of the artifacts shared were photos and documents (e.g., lesson plans, college assignments, etc.), which contained personal information about the participants, including their name, family, schools attended, and peers or students. By asking the participants to bring artifacts, I hoped to uncover the contextual and latent meanings behind their selection, as well as what was included or excluded in the photo frame, as Banks (2007) suggests. Having a variety of artifacts allowed for the identification of diverse characteristics of the participants' identities that

are depended on other factors, such as social relations (families, colleagues, friends, or community), situation in which artifacts were produced, and factors like gender, race, ethnicity, language, class, or lifestyle (Prior, 2003). The participants' descriptions of the artifacts and related stories made their narrative more vivid and engaging during the interviews, but to protect their anonymity, the artifacts were presented to a minimal extent in the analysis.

Field Notes and Research Journal

Table 4

Field notes

Date / Time	Settings	Memo
12/14/2022, 12 pm	Yolanda's classroom	• Last interview with Yolanda on a rainy, chilly day, had to wait for Yolanda to come out and pick me up for 10 minutes in the parking lot
		• A lot of construction for new houses on the way to her school
		• So many portables, maybe more than 10, in the back of the main school building; it shows the size of the school
		• Her classroom was one of the portables, which reminded me of the classroom that I visited for my master's course
		• Excited to see her classroom decorated with objects that show Yolanda's identity and activities at school, such as her Nigerian scarves on the bulletin board.

Field notes are a means of documenting rich, contextual information that aids the researcher's deeper reflection and understanding of individual interviews, focus groups, and in-learning sessions. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2018) further indicate that field notes are essential for ethical and rigorous qualitative research. I wrote down the notes when observing the research environment and interactions between the researcher and participants and between participants

(see Table 4). The collected field notes facilitated preliminary data analysis and iterative research processes in which I reflected on my impressions and identified any biases. They also provided contextual information that supports readers' detailed understandings.

Table 5

Researcher's Journal

Date / Time	Settings	Researcher reflection / Analytic memo
11/30/2022, 5:30 pm	A coffeeshop	• Even though we were the only customers in the coffee shop, Kiana lowered her voice volume while talking about her conflicts with her white classmates during the college years. She did the same last week when she talked about the Kenyan kids' bad behaviors in school. It might show her concern to be in a public space or share any negative stories with others. Plus, I need to check the recording file to see if I can clearly listen and transcribe.

Writing a research journal is a primary method of developing the researcher's understanding of all aspects of the research processes (Borg, 2001). As Chan (2017) argues for the researcher's reflexivity as a key component of research, I tried to be reflexive with the awareness of my privilege and challenges in writing the journal. I recorded my roles, involvements, and subjectivities, positioning myself not only as a researcher, but also as a collaborator and an intercultural learner throughout the research process. Doing so, I hoped to be able to actively construct interpretations of my own experiences in the field and constantly converse with the data, asking how those interpretations came about (Hertz, 1997). Being aware of my reactions to data and my roles and positions in relation to the participants, I wrote about my struggles in navigating the research process as much as I could (see Table 5). In keeping the

journal about unexpected and undocumented aspects of the research process beyond simple descriptions of events, I developed my own knowledge and insight in addition to existing forms of knowledge about research in the literature.

Data Analysis

In this study, I employed interpretative phenomenological analysis (Eatough & Smith, 2017) to explore the experiences of participating teachers with various individuals in both their personal and professional lives. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a qualitative approach that examines individuals' lived experience in detail and interprets how they make sense of those experiences (Smith, 1996; Tuffour, 2017). Assuming that people are self-interpreting beings (Taylor, 1985), IPA perceives their subjective experiences as scientific data. Individuals reflect and make sense of their experiences based on how an experience (or a phenomenon) is given and matters to them. As such, humans encounter "the events of their experiences as mattering" (Yancher, 2015, p. 109) and participate as agents in a world by making judgments, taking positions, and engaging in cultural practices. They construct their knowledge of the world based on both their lived subjective knowledge and objective knowledge of scientific abstractions, and both types of knowledge (re)construct the lifeworld (Eatough & Smith, 2017). Given the aim of this study, IPA was a suitable approach to explore the unique intercultural experiences of each participant and how those experiences manifest themselves in different social roles and teaching contexts.

Although IPA has been criticized for its ambiguities and lack of a standardized process of data analysis (Tomkins, 2017; Tuffour, 2017), Noon (2018) argues that it allows for fluid, iterative, and multidirectional analyses, with flexibility and creativity in a researcher's thinking. Therefore, I took several analytic stages, including (1) immersing myself in the data while

transcribing, (2) conducting several close and detailed readings of the data, (3) generating and applying codes, and (4) identifying themes.

As an initial and crucial step in the data analysis process, I transcribed the audio-recorded interviews. Immersing myself in the participants' narratives, I tried to recall the interview settings, interactions between the participants, myself, and other environmental elements (e.g., a restaurant server, an announcement of public library, or a hitting system in the classroom), as well as the verbal (i.e., spoken words), prosodic (i.e., pitch, voice volume, etc.), and paralinguistic components (i.e., gestures, eye gazes, body movements) of our dialogical interactions. During the transcription process, I made colored highlights, notes, and memos, and wrote down my initial impressions, interpretations, and questions of data segments using the annotation functions on MS Words. Table 6 provides an example of the initial process of transcribing and interpreting data.

After completing the transcriptions, I iteratively read through them. As most phenomenological research studies do not focus on why certain experiences occur, but on how to understand them, Tuffour (2017) insists that an authentic research inquiry needs to "explore the conditions that triggered the experiences which are located in past events, histories or social-cultural domain" (p. 52). Therefore, I took a retrospective process of initial data analysis, tracing each participant's most recent lived experiences as an ESOL teacher back to their early childhood experience from birth to 5th grade. This retrospective analysis enabled me to follow the participants' life trajectories, connect different events and experiences, and highlight the impact of their lived experiences on their past and current teaching practices. Additionally, I created line charts on which dots indicated major events, changes, and trajectories in each participant's life to better understand them in an organized and detailed manner. However, to protect the participants

and their identifiable, detailed information, I decided not to include the charts in the dissertation.

Table 6

Example of Transcribing

Response of Participant	Notes
Jade: I can't remember his name but he was Ethiopian and so smart. He was so smart and I remember like going up again him like doing multiplication. We were getting so competitively into it. Hahaha (laughing out loud). And he finally did end up beating me but I was distraught like it was the end of my world. I was like 'NO!!!!!!!!' (grabbing her face with the two hands and yelling, like Macaulay Culkin in Home Alone) And that 4th grade was also the year that I was in my school spelling bee. And I remember the word that I'd gotten to put out. My word was 'jeer.' Jang: Geer, g-e-e-r? Jade: So THAT'S how I spelled it (pointing at me with the index finger), but it was actually 'j-e-e-r.' Jang: Oh!!!!! Jade: (Giggling) I was eliminated and I was SOOOOO upset. I started to cry.	• 4th grade • Multiplication & spelling bee contest against an Ethiopian boy classmate • Competitive personality → a lot of awards (artifacts) • Seemed excited when talking about the episode, remembering very vividly

To gain a better understanding of the specific phenomenon of interest—intercultural experience and its impact on language teaching, a systematic coding process was necessary. The coding aimed to investigate each participant's unique life trajectories that let to intercultural experiences in various social contexts and to explore the aspects of intercultural experiences that affected the participants' behaviors, attitudes, perspectives, and teaching. To achieve this, I adopted Saldaña's (2016) two-cycle coding procedures, which involve the first cycle of coding to assign codes to chunks of data and the second cycle to group initial codes into categories, themes, or explanations as a meaningful unit of analysis.

For the first coding process, I employed the descriptive coding method since it is effective analyzing multiple data types and allows readers to see what the researcher saw and

heard (Saldaña, 2016). Saldaña (2016) defines a code as "a word or short phrase that symbolically assigns a summative, salient, essence-capturing, and/or evocative attribute for a portion of language-based or visual data" (p. 4). I began the first coding by manually assigning a code to data segment—a word or short phrase that identifies the topic discussed during the interviews (see Table 7).

Table 7

Example of First Coding Cycle

Response of Participant	Codes	Thoughts
This was like in the early 90s like 91 around there, between 1991 to that time [1] I came to America. Well, my parents I mean. So what happened was so my parents, there was still a war around that 1991, early 1990s, so my parents they fled to Tanzania, a refugee camp and then they were sponsored by the United States. That's how they came to the United States.	• Relationship with refugee parents • Family's immigration process	• [1] She equates herself to her parents. It might be the reason why she strongly identifies herself as a refugee and relates to refuges students and parents

After completing the first round of coding, I conducted coding mapping as a transition to a second cycle of coding by categorizing, recategorizing, and conceptualizing the initial codes (Saldaña, 2016). Due to the large number of codes that emerged, merged, and diverged during the initial coding process, I used NVivo 12, a qualitative data analysis software, to manage the coding procedures and improve the rigor of research (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Hilal & Alabri, 2013). Compared to other software packages, NVivo is user-friendly and allows the researcher to map codes and write memos about particular pieces of data (Welsh, 2002). Using the software, I grouped the initial codes by sorting and relabeling them into conceptual categories and developed a codebook (see Appendix E).

Table 8

Example of Second Coding Cycle

Initial codes	Axial codes	Finding statement
• Conflicts with colleagues with deficit perspectives of ESOL students • Challenges for co-teaching • ESOL as not a primary focus in school	• Relationship with colleagues and school • Professional experiences in school contexts • Perception of self	• Challenges and conflicts in relation to colleagues and school system help to reaffirm their role and responsibility as ESOL teachers.
• Concerning monolingual colleagues with a lack of understanding of ESOL students' struggles • ESOL teachers as a guide for homeroom teachers	• Relationship with colleagues • Professional experiences in school contexts • Perception of self	

For the second cycle of coding, I applied the codebook to the data set and conducted axial coding "to develop a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organization" from my initial codes (Saldaña, 2013, p. 207). Axial coding allows the researcher to reassemble fragmented data from the initial coding process and determine salient and dominant codes (Boeije, 2010; Saldaña, 2013). I identified the most distinctive codes, which were (1) Experiences, (2) Relationships, and (3) Actions, and conducted axial coding to describe and explore how those major codes and their subcodes relate to each other. I focused on how specific types of relationships and experiences are understood and affect the participants' interculturality in living and teaching (see Table 8). By doing so, I highlighted the interrelatedness of the participants' experiences and relationships and their impact on the participants' understandings, actions and related strategies for intercultural teaching in various social contexts. I then started writing as I constructed several major categories, themes, or

concepts.

Analysis of Artifacts

In addition to analyzing the narrative data, I also examined artifacts shared by the participants. This involved attentive listening not only to what each participant said about the artifacts but also how they described them during the interviews. The artifacts were instrumental in enabling the participants to elaborate on specific events, interactions, and relationships that they were involved in. Since all the participants shared additional artifacts with me after the completion of the individual interviews, I followed up with them via emails or phone to obtain detailed information. However, given the personal nature of most of the artifacts, only a selected few were included in the analysis. These artifacts served as supporting evidence or provided supplementary details to enrich the participants' accounts.

<center>**Rigor of the Study**</center>

Qualitative researchers are asked to maintain the rigor of their studies by using appropriate methods that can answer formulated research questions appropriately (Ezzy, 2002). To establish the rigor and quality of qualitative studies, Lincoln and Guba (1985) suggest four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

To increase credibility, methodological triangulation was employed by using multiple data sources, including interviews with each participant, a focus group interview, artifacts, field notes, and the researcher's journal (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These data sources provided multiple ways to cross-examine the integrity of the participants' accounts and helped reduce the researcher's bias or misinterpretation of data. Member-checking was also conducted during the data collection and at the end of data collection and analysis to ensure the credibility and dependability of the study. The participants were asked to clarify their verbal

descriptions and artifacts and verify if the researcher's interpretation of the data illuminated the intention and meaning of their responses in the analysis via emails or phone calls.

Additionally, I made an effort to develop rapport and trust between myself as the researcher and the participants. I positioned myself not only as the researcher of this study but also as an intercultural learner and teacher by sharing my own experiences in the interactions with the participants. I tried to connect with the participants, build mutual understanding, and facilitate conversations. Fournillier (2009a) found her selves in tensions and challenges as a native-born Trinidadian, a mas' player, and an ethnographer with Eurocentric academic frameworks in the study on her research experience with mas' makers in Trinidad Carnival mas' camps. Her critical and in-depth reflection on interactions with the members of mas' makers community revealed the significance of the researcher's "self-awareness and consciousness of the need for ongoing and open-ended dialogue with text and the Other" (p. 741).

As a Korean immigrant, nonnative English speaker, and a researcher with no K-12 school experience in the U.S., many of my identities positioned me as the Other from the participants' perspective. Nevertheless, I strived to document and analyze my concerns about "imagined possibilities" (Fournillier, 2009b, p. 81), including what I could do with the participants, intercultural interactions with them, and what I come to know, learn, and become throughout the entire research process. For instance, during the interviews, the participants and I share d our frustration and anger, shedding tears together, as we discussed our teaching experiences with immigrant ESOL students who faced linguistic and cultural marginalization in academic and social settings. The interviews became a social space where the researcher could learn from the participants. Listening to the participants' experiences evoked the researcher's reflection of self by comparing their personalities and actions for others and asking questions

such as "Can I stand up and speak up for myself if I am in a situation where my participants were to advocate themselves?" or "Should I change my personality to be more outgoing in approaching other people?" Such reflections from the interpersonal and intercultural interactions with the participants turned into a learning moment for the researcher's development.

On the other hand, the researcher's foreign background and lack of U.S. K-12 education experience often created a psychological distance between me and the participants. This sometimes required the participants to clarify certain terms or acronyms and systems commonly used in their cultural context, such as a push-in or pull-out model in ESOL programs, AP (assistant principal), or TPC (teacher preparation committee). To establish a comfortable and mutual relationship with the participants, I had to be strategic and take their individual characteristics into account. For example, Yolanda was a challenging participant as she had difficulty remembering much of her prior experience and provided short answers such as "No, I didn't" or "I don't remember." To overcome this, I rephrased interview questions, provided specific probes, and used my experiences in Korea as an example to elicit detailed descriptions of her transnational lived experiences. Consequently, during the second and third interviews, Yolanda began to respond more elaborately, comparing her experiences in Nigeria and the U.S. to help me better understand her perspective and experience.

Regarding transferability, it is worth noting that qualitative studies do not aim to generalize findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). In this study, I made every effort to provide a thick description of the dataset, taking responsibility for clarifying all the research processes from data collection, analysis, and research context to the final report of findings. Furthermore, to ensure confirmability, I employed peer-debriefing with a colleague who holds a doctoral degree in language and literacy education and was not involved in the study. I provided her with random

samples of transcripts and the codebook I used and requested her to cross-code the data. I then

checked the intercoder agreement between us, and the result showed a consistency of 0.80,

indicating the reliability of the coding between the researcher and the peer (Coladarci & Cobb,

2013).

Ethical Consideration

Ezzy (2002) indicated that ethical conduct of qualitative study requires "a weighed

consideration of both how data collection is conducted and how analyzed data are presented" (p.

51). With this in mind, this study was conducted after IRB approval was made and followed the

guidelines provided by the dissertation committee. The information that is sensitive, personal,

and related to the participants' identities was protected if gained in the data collection procedure.

Their anonymity was also kept in the written and verbal reports. Any interview and conversation

were recorded after it was notified and permitted.

As a researcher, I sought cooperation from the participants throughout the course of the

research, such as getting a written consent, recording the interviews and conversations, and

collecting additional data when needed. When negotiating their permission to conduct this study,

I clearly explained and provided specific and correct information. In the series of negotiations

and conversations, the participants were treated with respect, and the researcher endeavored to

explain my identity, background, and experience.

Writing the report of a research study also required the researcher's ethical awareness. I

was honest with any problems or struggles that were made while conducting the study in

collecting and analyzing data and writing, not fabricating or distorting the data. As this study

intended to contribute to the in-depth understanding of interculturality from the perspectives of

ESOL teachers' lived experiences, the researcher sought to find a chance to make an impact on

future theory and relevant policy and intercultural practices in language education, teacher

education, and intercultural living of readers.

Summary

In this chapter, I provided the rationale for this qualitative case study and described its

design. I also discussed the participants, the instrument and process of data collection, and the

method of data analysis. In addition, the ways to secure the rigor of the study, including ethical

consideration.

4 FINDINGS

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine how in-service ESOL teachers understand and practice interculturality in teaching. Specifically, this study aimed to delve into the teachers' intercultural experiences in their personal and professional lives and the impact of these experiences on their teaching practices.

The focal participants of this study were three ESOL women teachers working at different public elementary schools in a southeastern state of the U.S.: Jade, Yolanda, and Kiana. Jade is an African American teacher with seven years of teaching experience, currently teaching K-5 grades at Excellence Elementary School. Yolanda is a Nigerian immigrant with U.S. citizenship and a mother of two grown-up children. She has taught ESOL for nine years at Greater Diversity Elementary School. Kiana is a Somali American novice teacher with two years of ESOL teaching experience. Her parents are first-generation refugees of the Somali civil war and made the U.S. their new home a year before Kiana was born in the U.S. Kiana and Yolanda are colleagues working at the same school, teaching 1st and 5th grade, respectively. All three participants have earned master's degrees in education from U.S. universities. Particularly noteworthy, Jade and Yolanda are currently engaged in pursuing their doctoral degrees. The pursuit of advanced graduate studies may be a significant factor contributing to the development of critical perspectives in their thinking. Given that the participating teachers have had the myriads of interactions with different individuals, both positive and negative, the teachers were perceived to have constructed transnational and intercultural experiences in diverse social settings. These experiences were critical in this study to investigate in what ways they have affected and been affected by their understanding of self and others and practice of teaching.

In this chapter, the findings of this study are presented, guided by the following research

questions: (1) How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their daily life and profession? (2) What are in-service ESOL teachers' beliefs about their interculturality in teaching? (3) What features in their lived experiences contribute to ESOL teachers' interculturality?

Even through the participants have lived in different times and places, the narratives of both the participants' personal and professional experiences unfolded the unique and dynamic, yet common features in understanding and practice of interculturality. From the cross-analysis of data of all three participants, four key findings emerged: (1) Intercultural experiences in diverse sociocultural environments, (2) Intercultural relationships in school, (3) Actions for advocacy, (4) Perspectives toward culture and the Other. Each finding is described in detail below.

Finding 1. Intercultural experiences in diverse sociocultural environments

The data analysis of this study has revealed that each participant had a wide range of intercultural experiences in different sociocultural environments. Interestingly, the early-life experiences of the participating ESOL teachers, from birth to high school, had the most influence on their intercultural relationships with diverse groups of others, particularly with family members, peer groups, and teachers. These experiences have further shaped their self-perception as an individual and ESOL teacher and perception of diversity. This section elaborates on how the three participants understand their sense of self through intercultural experiences and relationships.

1.1 Realizing privileges and struggles

During the individual interviews, the three ESOL teachers described their houses, neighborhoods, schools, and cities and their relationships with the people that they have encountered in those places, as they were asked to reflect on their living environments at

different periods of their lives. The most significant sociocultural environments included family backgrounds and friends and peer groups in neighborhoods where the teachers lived during their youth. Family, in particular, is the first social and cultural environment in which an individual can develop a sense of self and society. Each household has unique cultural practices and perspectives about society, and it affects how young children interact and relate to others beyond their family's boundary. The participating teachers' family background also revealed how they perceive themselves with privileges and struggles and construct interpersonal and intercultural relationships.

Yolanda grew up in a middle-class family in Nigeria that provided her with "a happy childhood" in a stable, caring, and supportive environment. Her parents were "very protective," and her father, in particular, did not like her and her siblings going to other people's houses and traveling far from home. Yolanda described her family environment as "sheltered," where she was "privileged" for being loved without any economic difficulties. However, this upbringing affected her relationship with peers at schools and later her teaching. Although she had the opportunity to meet classmates from different towns and regions, which could have enriched her socialization and intercultural experiences, she did not have many opportunities to associate with a diverse range of peer groups and develop friendships outside of school settings.

This home-bound early childhood experience presented a challenge at the beginning of her teaching career in the U.S. When the researcher asked for an example of how her early childhood has influenced her teaching, Yolanda described her interactions with African American students during her time as a substitute teacher about 10 years ago in Oklahoma:

Excerpt 1. "That's not something I'm used to."

1   Yolanda: For instance, I mean when I first started working a lot of the … I was even
2   substituting. I wasn't a teacher at there. And I would have episodes with African

3	Americans who were from single home. No, don't let me say from single
4	because I don't know their homes at this point. Let me just say I see African
5	American and they are disrespectful. Or I tell me it as disrespectful because of
6	my cultural lens, because that's not what I'm used to like a child talking back to
7	me on something and I look at the child like this child is disrespectful because
8	of my lens. So until I could understand how their home was or how they were
9	socialized, then I could understand if it was disrespectful or if that was just who
10	they were. Do you understand? So cultural lens. That's the example I am giving
11	you. Now with the background also then maybe get even getting to know that
12	child. And then I realized 'Oh, this child is, doesn't have a dad.' I mean I
13	remember one time when I was still substituting, one of these kids, and the dad
14	was in prison, I was shocked. I was shocked like I didn't think that that would
15	be a thing that you would even want to tell your child if you were in prison like
16	that. I'm not going to be proud to say that. Why would I tell your child in the
17	elementary that my dad is in prison? I was so shocked, and I felt traumatized for
18	that child. But I guess it's not something that is changed in this country. And
19	they don't feel like it might affect the child to think that your father is
20	incarcerated and cannot come out. I don't know. So, for me sometimes things
21	like that it throws me off because that's not something I'm used to. Like if you
22	are in a bad situation in Nigeria, you don't want your kids to know. You want to
23	protect them.

(1st interview with Yolanda, 10/29/2022)

Excerpt 1 highlights Yolanda's initial struggle to understand African American students who grew up in home environments different from hers, particularly those where a father is incarcerated and unable to provide rules and disciplines for life. Lines 21-23 show that Yolanda's cultural understanding of Nigerian parenting, which prioritizes protecting (or hiding negative situations from) a child, was how she was raised and had become "a cultural lens" through which she was "very very judgmental" at the start of her teaching career. Before learning about the "shocking" and "traumatic" circumstances some of her students faced at home, Yolanda could not comprehend her African American students' behaviors and attitudes (lines 4-8). Later in the interview, Yolanda acknowledged that her background "had a negative effect" and gave her "a single story" of a happy family. However, she still appeared to struggle to grasp why African American parents might (have to) choose to inform their children about such situations (lines 18-19). As an experienced teacher who has developed a better understanding of students from

different backgrounds, Yolanda practiced suspending her judgement (lines 3-5) and recognized

the importance of learning about the unique circumstances of each student, including their home

environments and socialization (lines 8-12). She noted that her ability to do so has given her "a

lot of reflection and learning to be able to see kids in different spaces and be able to help it."

When asked about her efforts to understand students with different backgrounds, she responded

as follows:

Excerpt 2. "How can I change myself?"

1	Jang:	What kind of efforts did you make to understand the students coming from a
2		different family background from yours?
3	Yolanda:	That was a lot of reflection, also wanting to change and thinking, well, I mean
4		what, what, what must be behind this? So, a self-reflection on what can I do to
5		change this situation? How can I change myself? How can I become less critical
6		and more accepting all kids who are not exactly like me or people who,
7		everybody is not going to be like me. And so, things needed to change. And
8		then I started reading and trying to understand more about the culture, started
9		asking questions and then observing also and removing any critical lens coming
10		from. I tried to be objective so that I could watch and see what is behind the
11		behavior or what is behind me.

(1st interview with Yolanda, 10/29/2022)

The answer indicates her endeavor for the self-reflection by questioning, observing, and

reading "to understand more about the culture" of her students, parents, and the U.S. society

(lines 8-10). What is most distinctive is, however, her realization of a need to "change" her

perspective toward students to be more accepting, less critical, and able to think from multiple

points of view (lines 3-7). Her awareness was followed by the actual actions that made a

difference in her teaching and relationships with students, which are discussed further in this

study.

Unlike Yolanda, Jade grew up in a family that was highly involved and active in

socializing with people. Although her parents did not have a college degree, they established

economic stability that allowed Jade to have diverse social and cultural experiences through

traveling, local events, and sports activities since she was a young child, in which she was able to learn how to interact with diverse groups of people and develop her interpersonal and "self-promoting" skills.

In addition to her family background, Jade's local environment also had a great influence on her intercultural experiences. For the first 12 years of her life, Jade grew up in an urban town with racial and ethnic diversity in its population. In our first interview, Jade described herself, saying, "I was a friend with everyone." She had best friends from different cultural backgrounds, such as Ethiopia, India, and Japan, and visited their homes and learned the values that each household runs on, which were different from her family's. Jade attended an elementary school where more than 20 languages were spoken, with the huge number of immigrant students. She was one of the designated students who guided new students as "a student ambassador." Even though there were many awkward moments where she could not communicate with immigrant students but simply sat and smiled at each other, Jade still remembered that "I always tried to make people feel as welcome as I could, just to make them feel comfortable. You hate to be the new, you know, hate to be a new kid."

The environmental benefit that allowed Jade to develop intercultural relationships was no longer available when she moved to another county around the time of her middle school due to her parents' work. She experienced a "very visible lack of diversity," which was evident in her new surroundings, as follows:

Excerpt 3. "You want somebody to be able to relate to you."

1	Jade: When I went to that new school, it was like all white kids and there were maybe
2	like two black kids and I was, I was going to…
3	Jang: That was in Rainbow County (pseudonym)?
4	Jade: Yeah, that was in Rainbow County. And I remember we maybe had one Asian
5	student, so that was a shock for me. I remember going home and being like 'Mom, I
6	am the only black kid in the class. There are a bunch of white kids.' It kind of made

7	me a little uncomfortable and not because I wasn't used to being around white
8	people because we did have white people at my old school, but I think just seeing
9	so many of the same, it was just kind of like, 'What is this?' you know. I guess I just
10	felt like it was kind of different from me, right? Umm I was worried, I was worried
11	about it honestly. … Because even one of the things I do remember, as I remember,
12	walking into the classroom and I saw that other little black boy. And when I walked
13	in and he kind of looked like 'Thank goodness!' you know, like 'Finally somebody
14	else!' I couldn't imagine how uncomfortable he might have felt being alone. Yeah,
15	so like, and it's not even anything of like where you feel outnumbered, but it's just
16	like you want somebody to be able to relate to you right?

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/2022)

The above excerpt illustrates the impact of student racial demographics on Jade's experiences in school. Jade was "the only black" student in her new school class, which came as a big "shock" to her (lines 4-6). The sameness in the appearance of her classmates was something she never experienced before, and it even made her feel "a little uncomfortable" and "worried" (lines 6-11). These emotions emphasize the unfamiliarity and discomfort that came with being in an environment where her racial identity was underrepresented. However, Jade's empathy toward another black student who she assumed was feeling "alone" and "outnumbered" indicates her relatability with others as a strategy to navigate a predominantly white space (lines 13-16).

However, her school context changed very quickly due to the influence of national and international events, which also affected the racial diversity of her town and her friend groups. In our second interview, Jade mentioned "a great migration" that started in her community during her secondary school years. When she was in fifth grade, there were only "two Black kids maybe out of the whole class," which represented "less than 5% of the (student) population." However, by the time when she graduated middle school, the student demographics were almost "50% (white) 50% (black)." The change in student demographics continued and accelerated in high school. Jade said, "we had a lot of kids coming in from Hurricane Katrina when it happened. A lot of transplants from New Orleans." In addition to the domestic situation, she further described

how an international event influenced the representation of her classmates and friend groups, as

follows:

Excerpt 4. "The diversity changed."

1	Jade: I'm thinking about like my friend group or one of my friend groups. Anyway,
2	because like I said, I kind of was all over the place. But my best friends, two of
3	them were Eastern European, umm twins, and three of them were black, and
4	actually I talked to them today, one of them white, one of them Asian. So, it was
5	pretty, I guess within our group, it is pretty diverse. But I mean I think like at that
6	point too, because the demographics changing like the accessibility for other people
7	started to become evident. Like there was, there was an INFLUX (strong emphasis)
8	of eastern European immigrants and specifically like in that area of Longville
9	(pseudonym) right up to I-75 like the whole neighborhood is like made up of
10	Bosnian people. But an influx of Vietnamese, influx of more black people, and
11	influx of Hispanic people from Central America, so I think, like I said, the diversity
12	changed. When the diversity changes and who you are surrounded by changes your
13	friend group. Because you know these are the people that you go to school with
14	every day. So it's like you learn about these people, and you become used to these
15	people, and it is just what it is with. But umm I have friends like the friends were
16	very diverse. I just never had one type of friends. You wouldn't see me with just
17	black kids, you wouldn't see me with just white kids, you wouldn't see me with
18	(inaudible). Like it was always very diverse friend group that I was in myself with,
19	and not for any glamorous reason, but it was just because just because that's who I
20	was. And you know I could always find something in common with anybody.

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/2022)

As a result of Bosnian War from 1992 to 1995, Jade had many new classmates and neighbors

from Bosnia, in addition to an increasing number of Southeast Asian, Black, and Latinx students

from across borders. The "influx" of immigrant students in her school and community

contributed to her "accessibility" to other people. Jade seemed to clearly understand that such a

change in the student demographics represented racial, ethnic, and cultural diversity, which

transformed whom she interacted with, how she socialized with them, and eventually what kind

of person she became (lines 11-15). Afforded such intercultural experiences since a young age,

Jade was able to have "very diverse friend group(s)" and naturally learn to relate to different

people by finding commonalities (lines 17-20).

Not only did migration come into her community, but Jade also observed the migration away from her school and community. A lot of people left her town due to the influx of immigrant students and their families, which she referred to as "white flight." She clarified that many white residents, including teachers at her school, "started moving away from the minorities." When asked if she noticed any adjustments or changes in teachers' ways of teaching for the new students, Jade responded "A lot of them left the community. Some of them stayed because they were like 'I loved this school.' But I think in that mode a lot of them weren't willing to change the way that they taught." Her reflection implies negative attitudes of white residents and teachers towards immigrants, subsequent changes in demographics, and diversity in school and community. Most of her teachers did not see the necessity of making their teaching methods relevant to immigrant students' heritage and life or developing their intercultural interactions with those students. Nevertheless, Jade seemed to consider her exposure to peers from different cultural backgrounds as having opened her eyes to a lot of things that she would not have experienced otherwise. She feels "very fortunate" for this experience, which was even one of the reasons why she "chose to go into teaching students that speak (a) second language." Jade further reflected on how her intercultural experiences at an early age have influenced her current teaching:

Excerpt 5. "You value those things that you have experienced."

1	Jade: I think it kind of increased my propensity to want to be a teacher to diverse
2	populations, maybe. Just because like the only way that I know, I only know being
3	around different kinds of people I only know being around people that have
4	different cultures and understanding and having like opportunities to find things in
5	common. But yeah so I think like growing up around a lot of cultures just made me
6	have appreciation for because I do like to travel and something like that. I think it is
7	just something that actually take with you because you see the value in it, you see
8	the beauty in it, you see what can be learned from other people, immersing yourself
9	into other cultures. So I think that that was probably one of the main reasons to why
10	I wanted to start teaching kids in general because I know as a teacher you can't, you

11		can't pick who you want to be in your class, right?
12	Jang:	Yeah. (laughing out loud together)
13	Jade:	You get kids from everywhere, but specifically with going into ESOL, I think that
14		was one of the reasons too, because you get to also have them bring whatever they
15		have culture into what you're doing to let other children experience that too. That's
16		something that I've got too. And I feel like there's value in that so I want to bring
17		that to my children that I teach. So I think that growing up how I did certainly did
18		impact me in that way because like I said you value those things that you have
19		experienced, then you can take it into what I am doing now as an adult.

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/2022)

In Excerpt 5, Jade indicated that her intercultural interactions with diverse populations have become the foundation of her way of being, understanding, and teaching (lines 17-19). She has been naturally inclined to seek out experiences that allow her to learn about the values and beauty of people from diverse cultural backgrounds (lines 1-9). As a result, Jade enjoys teaching and learning from ESOL students and the cultural diversity they bring to the classroom.

Similar to Jade, Kiana grew up in an urban city with a "predominantly black" population in Tennessee. But her neighborhood was "like a melting pot" with numerous immigrants and refugees from Middle East, Eastern Europe, and Somalia, and Kiana's family was one of them. The racial diversity of her neighborhood was also reflected in her elementary schools, where she formed "good friendships" with classmates from racially and culturally different backgrounds, such as white-black biracial, Cambodian, and Jewish students. These experiences impacted how Kiana felt about school and perceived herself as a person at a young age and her social skills. They taught her that "everyone is not the same and has their own differences" but also has "commonalities" that can make you "forget about those differences." Kiana considered her early childhood experiences "pretty cool!" and reflected that "I am just, I am very thankful that I was near kind people. I did not have to deal with any type of racism at that moment in my life. … I didn't feel like I was left out or I was different."

However, the positive intercultural experiences were no longer available to her. During her middle school years, Kiana was sent with her siblings to Nairobi, Kenya, for a year. Her parents wanted them to learn more about their religion of Islam and the language and culture while staying in a Somali community in Kenya, which was relatively safer than Somalia politically. Kiana and her siblings stayed in a rented home under the guidance of her great-aunt and cousins. She illustrated her school experience in Kenya as "a culture shock" in different ways, simply from the British-style education system to the behaviors and attitudes of the students towards her.

Excerpt 6. "Oh, you must be foreign."

1	Kiana:	So yeah, it's just a lot of things like the culture shock to me like the first time
2		being around people who looked like me, you know. So there are a lot of more...
3		and I kind of like regret that time period in my life. I kind of regret because that
4		moment like people notice something different like the way I speak, saying 'Oh,
5		you're from America.' And it is funnily enough like you go there, and I wear
6		glasses, you know. I started wearing glasses like a year before I went to Kenya.
7		And so, you go over there, a lot of people don't wear glasses. And they look at
8		you, and they're like 'Oh, you're American.' You (Kenyans) don't wear glasses.
9		So they say 'Oh, you must be foreign, because you're wearing glasses.' And then
10		they hear me talking, like 'Oh, you're definitely from not here.'

| 11 | Jang: | Because of your accent and then the way you speak |

12	Kiana:	I would get teased a lot, because it's like 'Oh, your Somali is kind of... you can
13		tell us you're American from your accent,' you know. At that point I'm just like 'I
14		don't want to learn Somali.' So I actually kind of regret. At that point I began like
15		'I don't want to do it.

(2nd interview with Kiana, 11/16/2022)

Growing up bilingual, Kiana had (and still has) stronger listening skills in Somali than writing and speaking. While living in Kenya, she tried to improve her Somali proficiency and was excited to be "around people who looked like" her for the first time in her life (lines 1-2). However, as shown in Excerpt 6, Kiana was ridiculed for being "different" due to her glasses and American English-accented Somali. This unexpected and unwelcoming situation made 12-

year-old Kiana "hesitant" to learn and practice her mother tongue, as such: "I didn't see the importance of focusing on learning the language as I do now. … I kind of retrospect that I should have not done this, and just ignored them." From her relationship with Somali people in and out of school in Kenya, Kiana experienced alienation and loneliness.

When Kiana returned to her hometown a year later, unfortunately things got worse. She went to a public middle school where she could not reunite with her elementary school friends. Getting to "meet new people and make more friends" upon her return to the U.S. in the 8th grade was a "hard, hard, hard experience" for her. In particular, she was still suffered from being "outnumbered" due to the lack of diversity and intercultural understanding in the student body. The majority of students was Black, including herself, but Kiana's religious identity as a Muslim woman wearing hijab became a challenge. When asked for detailed description of her struggles, Kiana answered:

Excerpt 7. "I have to say something that stands up for myself."

1	Kiana: … the behavior is still like way too many black. And I tell you, all of my
2	experiences that years with behavior in the classroom was horrible. … the
3	behavior of students was like, there's no respect for teachers. … And some point
4	like the kids in the class, they are very rude to me because I wear hijab like I was
5	like one of the only kids was, yeah, I think I was the only Muslim girl who wears
6	hijab. It was very hard for me. They were like looking at me, 'Oh, look at that rag
7	on your head!' And then but that's okay because I went off, on them too. … One
8	more I remember specifically for this kid said something to me ... He says
9	something bad about my hijab or something. And then I went off on him. I said 'I
10	know you don't talk blah blah blah (rising tone, pointing her finger)' I don't
11	remember exactly what I said. But then he looked at the teacher and the teacher
12	was like 'Well, you shouldn't have said things like that to her.' So, the teacher was
13	backing me up. That's what I remember specifically because the teacher was
14	shocked, because I am very quiet, and I was at that point yelling something to the
15	kid blah blah blah. To that point I was like 'I can't do this anymore. I have to say
16	something that stands up for myself.' And then after that, that kid stopped talking
17	about me. I knew everyone was shocked, like 'Oh, my God' because I really said
18	that. And when the teacher looked at me like this (well, there's nothing I can do,
19	she did what she needs to do in her facial expression), and my teacher, the teacher
20	had my back, which I appreciated.

Kiana's middle school experience in the U.S. "sucked" like "a mess." After having the positive

relationship and education at the elementary school with students from diverse background,

Kiana was able to "see the difference of how majority Black school is like and diverse school is

like." Her classmates' behaviors, including disrespect towards teachers, were "way too many

black" which she could not accept. When an African American male student ridiculed her hijab,

calling it "that rag on your head," it was the moment for Kiana to "stand up" for herself.

Throughout our interviews, Kiana's spiritual and gender identity as a Muslim woman seemed the

most distinctive. When the September 11 attack occurred in 2001, Kiana observed her mother get

harassed and discriminated, but not her father and younger brother who do not wear a hijab.

Differentiating herself as a Muslim woman, who is more visibly identifiable with a hijab than

Muslim males like her father and brother, Kiana remembered what her mother and sisters taught

her – If someone attacks you, defend yourself. Later in the interview, she said "it was like

bullying, I didn't want it to continue, and they (would) think that's okay." This was "a turning

point" for Kiana, as it taught her how to advocate for herself as "the only Muslim girl" at school

and in her life.

1.2 Constructing self as an ESOL teacher

In addition to the relationships with family members and peers, the participants had

supportive and encouraging teachers who had a significant impact on their educational

experiences, perspectives of self, and attitudes toward current teaching practices. Notably, all of

the teachers described themselves as being good kids or teachers' kids who loved going to school

and helping their teachers.

The diverse environment in which Jade grew up from birth to elementary school provided

opportunities for her to learn from teachers from different backgrounds, including white, black, and Asian teachers, as well as teachers she assumed were "lesbian." In our first interview, Jade named every single teacher that she had from daycare to fifth grade and referred them as "more than anything, from every single person that I had as a teacher I learned different, I guess, skills to take on as a teacher." She delineated her learning about "the importance of confidence" from her kindergarten teacher, "compassion" from the first-grade teacher, "self-assuredness" from the second-grade teacher, "stretching" herself from the fourth-grade teacher, and "being welcoming" from the fifth-grade teacher.

When asked about the most outstanding person during her elementary school years, Jade specified her interaction with the second-grade teacher, Ms. Williams (pseudonym). Ms. Williams always provided positive affirmation and reinforcement whenever Jade doubted herself and her schoolwork, which helped Jade develop a positive sense of herself as an individual.

Excerpt 8. "You need someone like that to help keep you motivated."

1	Jade: … I think that's important especially as an elementary school teacher, I'm sure she
2	like, when you're in second grade that's when you start to kind of learn whether or
3	not you like school or you kind of start to develop your sense of self, right? And
4	you start to understand relationship with your peers, and you just become more
5	aware of your ability and how that ability compares to the ability of everybody else.
6	So I think like it's really pivotal time before you get into third grade and upper
7	elementary years, you need someone like that to help keep you motivated if that
8	makes sense.

(1st interview with Jade, 10/27/2022)

As seen in Excerpt 8, Ms. Williams was a "pivotal" figure in Jade's life. In lines 2-6, Jade, now an elementary school teacher, explained how crucial the second-grade period is for students to understand their identity, social skills, and abilities regarding the positive influence Ms. Williams had on her. In other words, Jade described the beneficial impact of Ms. Williams on her by identifying herself with the teacher. Thanks to their encouraging relationship, Jade was able to

construct a strong and positive self-perception, as well as develop strong social skills and

motivation, which are still evident in her relationships and work both in and out of school. When

reflecting on her time with Ms. Williams, Jade realized the impact her teacher had on how she

positions herself in relation to others in her current school community:

Excerpt 9. "That's kind of how I strive to be in my school."

1	Jade: So, she was probably in her may be like in 30s, young black woman. And I think
2	another thing that kind of stood out about her is like she's, I've always been tall, but
3	like, she was maybe about this tall (using her hand), a tiny little lady. You wouldn't
4	think like that big boisterous personality will come out of her, and I think that's
5	probably another reason why she's so stern too because she was so tiny. So she had
6	to serve herself as like a big personality to make sure actually kids respect her
7	because she was so small but she demanded respect when she entered her room.
8	You can just kind of see how people responded to her and the respect. And she was
9	the grade chair, she was the team leader, she was somebody that was very like well-
10	respected within the school community, and she cared herself in that way. And I
11	think like thinking back on it now like that's kind of how I strive to be in my school,
12	I want to be somebody that like other colleagues and staff can depend on and they
13	can come to me if they have questions. She was very much like that pillar for that
14	person who helps others, not only just the kids but also like her peers and the staff.

(1st interview with Jade, 10/27/2022)

In Excerpt 9, Jade provided a vivid description of Ms. Williams as a young, little black

woman teacher with a big boisterous personality who was widely respected as a leader (lines 1-

8). Jade mirrored herself in the portrayal of Ms. Williams, as a passionate teacher in her 30s who

strives to become a colleague who can be a pillar of the school community whom students,

teachers, and staff members can rely on (lines 10-14). During our second interview, Jade

emphasized how important "outside validation" is to her in doing things. She could not verbalize

a reason, but it can be inferred that she values the validation and recognition of others as a way to

affirm her own abilities and contributions. This may stem from her own positive learning

experiences with Ms. Williams and academic achievements shown in her numerous awards and

certificates that she shared with me, which provided her with the validation and encouragement

she needed to build a strong sense of self and belief in her own abilities.

In a similar vein, Kiana had teachers who were supportive and caring towards her. While in Kenya, her teachers perceived her as a "mature" and "very opinionated" student, which allowed Kiana to have more mutual relationships with the teachers than her peers who teased Kiana for her Somali proficiency and being American. Kiana's experience of being "only" and "outnumbered" continued, as she was "the only black student" in both her bachelor's and master's programs at college. Reflecting on her overall higher education experience, she stated, "It was kind of depressing. I really didn't like my bachelor's, I really didn't like it even my master's. It was really hard getting through. It was really a hard time." Particularly, during her study for a master's degree in teacher education, "everybody was white" except Kiana. When asked about her self-perception in college years, Kiana responded as an "engaging" student who contributed to classroom discussions.

Excerpt 10. "It's tiring to be the only black person to share the experience."

1	Jang:	And then also you came with the urban education background. I mean your life is
2		grounded in the urban education system. Actually, then you could understand
3		readings easily and lead the class, right?
4	Kiana:	Most definitely, yeah yeah yeah. There's moments where I'm just like I don't want
5		to talk first, but yeah I tried to contribute to the most part, trying to be expressive
6		but you can't. But at the same time, it's kind of tired, tiring to be like the only
7		black person to share the experience. It's tiring because you're like the only
8		person. And then they will come to you, you know. And the black professor knew
9		that though. She's like 'God damn', so I wish there was like more diversity in our
10		program so yeah I wish that there was like at least two more black or somebody
11		else in different races, like Asian or Hispanic, somebody that's different. All of
12		them were white. They're sweet girls but (shaking her head)…

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

Kiana chose an urban education track "to serve urban kids to make a difference in their life," based on her experience growing up in Memphis, an urban city. As part of an urban education cohort in her program, most course content on critical issues of "racial injustice and historical

events" "was not new" to her, as she had observed and experienced as "a black person" from an inner-city neighborhood. Kiana found herself in a position where she contributed the most to the class by sharing her lived experiences (lines 4-5), while her white classmates, who she considered "naïve," were not knowing or aware of social injustices. This experience was "tiring," "nerve wrecking," and "mind bothering" for Kiana. During the interview, the researcher shared her educational experience as the only foreign and non-white student in her own master's program in the U.S. Kiana empathized with the researcher, saying:

Excerpt 11. "Because you're the outside perspective."

1	Kiana: Of course, you didn't know if you don't step out. Isn't it tiring, though? Like
2	everyone is like 'Oh what is that? What is that Asian person, black person, or any
3	person of color saying?' you know. You're always expected to share because
4	you're the outside perspective or like you're the, if they experience this, we
5	obviously experience something but possibly different, you know.

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

Both Kiana and the researcher shared the challenges of being the only person of color in an academic program. It is tiring because your contribution becomes an "exotic" story of the Other with "the outside perspective" and you often feel like "a sprinkle" in a homogenous group. Luckily, Kiana had a black professor who was her academic advisor and could understand psychological and mental burden she faced, as mentioned in Excerpt 9.

Excerpt 12. "She was a shoulder to me."

1	Kiana: Yeah, she always checked in with us and asked us 'How are you feeling?' and you
2	know… easily talk to her. Umm… oh, here's the thing, the reason why she, I
3	think, she really cared was because I was the only black person. … she can
4	understand because she understood like how I already feel in the class. … So, she
5	was kind of like 'How you feel about the class? I have noticed that you do all and
6	all that. How do you feel? Are you comfortable with others like classmates, blah
7	blah blah.' You know she always cared and she was always caring, she seemed to
8	care, and that made me feel okay. You know feel like ease, she'll always help me.
9	She encouraged me to do my ESOL endorsement and my urban education
10	certificate, specifically taking more classes umm focused on culturally relevant
11	teaching, working in an urban school. She was the head of the urban department.

12	She was the head of teaching those classes. … I just remember her just talking to
13	me, I had to go to her office she was just being you know 'I understand what
14	you're going through you know umm I didn't know about your situation, thank
15	you for letting me know.' … She was very understanding. I was lucky, she was a
16	shoulder to me.

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

As described in Excerpt 12, Kiana's advisor demonstrated an intuitive understanding of her unspoken feelings and discomfort in the classroom (lines 2-5). Given that her advisor as a black professor, it is plausible that she had encountered similar experiences in her own life. Not only did the advisor offer emotional support, but she also provided academic guidance, which encouraged Kiana's interest in urban education and ESOL certification (lines 5-12). This, in turn, helped Kiana to become an ESOL teacher. Furthermore, her recommendation for the course on culturally relevant teaching had Kiana realize "some of the things that my (her) high school teachers did" and became an invaluable resource for her current teaching. Kiana repeatedly mentioned her use of culturally relevant teaching in our interviews. As such, Kiana's advisor had a profound impact on both her emotional well-being and academic progress within the program.

Unlike the other two teachers, Yolanda was educated in Nigeria about 35-40 years ago where she was born and raised. In the schools where teachers were "authoritative" and could give physical punishment to students, Yolanda described that she was a "good, quiet, and obedient" but also "very talented" student. She received awards and medals for her artwork in elementary school. It was something that Yolanda still clearly remembered because giving an award was unusual in the social context of Nigeria. She explained "Nigeria is very competitive and they expect you to do well. So I don't think they necessarily rewarded at that time." Growing up with such high expectations on students and individuals in Nigerian society, Yolanda used to consider the U.S. school system "a whole lot of rubbish" when she started working at schools:

Excerpt 13. "I didn't understand that there are kids that struggle."

1 2	Jang:	How do you feel about American schools nowadays? Here they give you everything.
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Yolanda:	Yeah! I just look at them like 'I don't know why they are doing all that.' It's just to me it was a whole lot of rubbish. But you know after a while, I think I understand that they're trying to encourage the kids. So, you see that's part of where I was critical at the beginning, but I think I understand it. And then also I used to be really mad when they would say that, after you give a child a test or something that they failed, 'You should give them another opportunity.' I was like 'What rubbish is this? Why would they fail in the first place?' But you see that's privilege. Because I did not struggle when I was younger because I was intelligent, I was smart. I didn't have to struggle. So I didn't understand that there are kids that struggle. But now I know better and I don't think there's anything wrong. If a child fails, if you let them do it again, you're only helping that child to understand better. It's not, it's, the school should not be because but schools should not be like punishment. If you say a child is failed and that's it, that's punishment.

(1st interview with Yolanda, 10/29/2022)

Excerpt 13 shows Yolanda's change in perception of the education systems in the two countries. When she started teaching in the U.S., she could not understand and criticized why schools provided additional opportunities for students who had already failed in tests and exams, which seemed to indicate lower educational standards of the country (lines 3-9). However, upon reflection on herself as a "smart" and "intelligent" student from an affluent family, Yolanda realized that her negative perspective stemmed from her "privilege," which prevented her from understanding the academic struggles that her students encounter (lines 10-12). Now, as an experienced teacher who "knows better," she believes that not providing additional opportunities is rather a form of punishment (lines 12-16).

Yolanda's understanding of the U.S. education system and students has improved since her master's program in the U.S. She earned a bachelor's degree in English education from one of the top universities in Nigeria, but courses intended to develop cultural understandings and approaches in education were not provided at all. Upon immigrating with her family to the U.S. in 2011, she decided to pursue a higher degree in education to become an English language

teacher. In her master's program, Yolanda took courses, such as multiculturalism and

bilingualism, that helped her "to understand how to teach students with a second language."

However, when asked about her opinion on those courses, she responded as follows:

Excerpt 14. "It's good as knowledge but you need experience."

1	Yolanda: They were good but I mean, it's just, I don't think that they actually prepare you
2	enough for what you get when you actually (teach). It's good for, it's good for,
3	as knowledge, but you need experience to put them together. So, you have
4	umm, you have to have that experience yourself yes!

(3rd interview with Yolanda, 12/14/2022)

Despite being equipped with theoretical knowledge about teaching students from diverse

backgrounds, Yolanda realized that it was not sufficient when she started working as a substitute

teacher during her master's program. Later in the interview, she added that "It does not become

real until you actually start to teach your own class." Her experience highlighted a disconnect

between her knowledge and practical realities of teaching. It denotes the need for teacher

education courses that provide intercultural experiences with diverse groups of people in and out

of the classroom. Such courses would enable teachers to gain firsthand experience in dealing

with diverse student populations and develop the necessary skills to create an inclusive learning

environment that caters to the needs of all students.

Finding 2. Intercultural relationships in school

The narratives of the participating teachers indicated how the teachers have considered

and constructed various intercultural experiences and relationships with others in school

contexts. Each of the participants has developed a strong bond with their ESOL students and

their parents through examining their personal backgrounds and experiences. Conflicts and

tensions were also found in the teachers' relationships with colleagues and staff members, some

of which were systematic at the school and county levels. By reflecting on the different aspects

of their identity and intercultural experiences in school, the teachers discussed their roles and responsibilities as ESOL teachers in school and society during the interviews.

2.1 Putting self in the shoes of ESOL parents

The interview questions asked the participants about the perceptions of their current selves based on their past experiences and relationships with various people in life. Through these interviews, teachers were able to reflect on themselves and discuss different aspects of their identities. In particular, teachers discussed how their identities affected building their relationships with parents of ESOL students, which in turn influenced their understanding of their role and responsibilities as ESOL teachers.

In contrast to the other participants, Jade's narratives highlighted various challenges she encountered when interacting with non-ESOL student parents. Her school is located in a "very affluent neighborhood," where the surrounding houses are priced between $600,000 and $700,000, and "some of the parents are stay-at-home moms." While some immigrant ESOL students and their families tend to arrive late for school, according to Jade's observation and interaction, because they have moved out to a more affordable residential area due to the expensive housing costs around school. The parents of non-ESOL students in her school are generally "very involved" in different events and meetings, but their demands are often "very entitled" and "incredibly overwhelming." According to Jade, "they expect you to only be able to cater to them." Moreover, when asked about non-ESOL parents' reactions to the increasing number of ESOL students, Jade responded as follows:

Excerpt 15. "It's a weird dynamic."

1   Jade: It, it's a strange environment like it's welcoming but at the same time, as you know,
2   that those things in the back of their heads it's like, well, if there's more black
3   students moving here if there's a more Hispanic student moving there, that means,
4   you know, it's a weird dynamic. I don't think they're, some parents are fine but I'm

5	sure that there are a lot of parents that are not fine. So, I think, I think that gauge is
6	probably somewhere in the middle of how they feel about the diversity coming in.

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

In Excerpt 15, Jade discussed the ambivalent attitudes or "weird dynamic" she felt from the parents of non-ESOL students towards "diversity." While she anticipated that the majority of them would be unwelcoming and uncomfortable with the changing demographics of the student population, particularly with the increasing number of ESOL, Latinx and Black students, her experiences with ESOL families have been very different. From our first conversation, Jade consistently noted the deep appreciation for teachers' work expressed by the parents of ESOL students. According to Jade, "they just have a very different outlook on what we do and the value that we bring to their children's lives whereas the entitled parents are kind of just like 'This is what you're supposed to do.'" She continued by saying, "parents bring a different perspective to the schooling experience which makes it different for the teachers."

Excerpt 16. "That is what the fate of me being a teacher."

1	Jade: I really think that that is what the fate of me being a teacher. I genuinely think that I
2	was put on this earth to help people and it just so happens that it comes in the form
3	of being an ESOL teacher but just with the responsibility of being an ESOL teacher.
4	It also means building a relationship with these parents. That was some, in a lot of
5	cases… the not necessarily opposed to being a part of the school community but
6	maybe like frightened to be a part of the school community or overwhelmed with
7	being a part of the school community. So I think, I think the biggest thing is not for
8	me, or like want to or like the pivotal moment that you speak of or a memorable
9	moment that you were asking me about is not even a moment where I'm teaching
10	the child but where I'm making sure that I'm being inclusive and just doing
11	something for somebody that I will want them for me if I was in the same position.
12	It's literally just basic human principle, right?

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

Excerpt 16 highlights Jade's understanding of herself and her role and responsibility as an ESOL teacher. She perceived herself as someone who has been "put on this earth to help people" and viewed her work and relationships with ESOL students and their parents as her "fate," as

stated in lines 1-4. This appears to be as an extension or realization of her Christian identity into her teaching. Jade understood that ESOL families' absences in engagement with the school community result from challenges they face, such as being undocumented and fear, rather than from their reluctance or opposition to school (lines 4-7). Thus, her efforts to be inclusive for ESOL parents are considered "pivotal" and reflect her belief in the "basic human principle" of treating others as she would like to be treated if she were in their position as newcomers to a society, place, or social group (lines 7-12). Jade' specific endeavors for building mutual relationships with ESOL parents will be further specified in Finding 3.1.

In contrast, when asked about her relationship with students' parents, Yolanda reflected on her immigrant identity. She discussed her struggles with understanding the U.S. society and culture, describing it as "a journey" that "took (her) a while," despite her ability to speak English compared to most of her ESOL students and their families with limited English proficiency. Yolanda empathized with her students and their families, imagining their difficulties in learning and understanding both the language and culture. She stated, "Being an immigrant helps me to have that empathy to put myself in my students' and parents' shoes at times." Yolanda also shared an example of her relationship with an ESOL student family, as follows:

Excerpt 17. "I can put myself in their shoes and just feel helpless."

1	Yolanda: I mean I've cried sometimes when things happen because … I know how that
2	parent might be feeling, because I can put myself in the in their shoes and just
3	feel helpless. I remember last year one of our students who died in my school.
4	She got hit by a vehicle. Her brother was holding her. They were walking. And
5	then a car hit her, she died. And when they told me at school, I taught two of her
6	older siblings. So, I didn't really know the girl, because she was second grade. I
7	knew the siblings. One of them was apparently my student at that time. … And
8	I used to go to their house to give them, you know, I'll buy books I'll gone into
9	the older brother. So, I kept the relationship then I cried so much I cried because
10	I was seeing myself. This parents must be thinking 'We came to America
11	because we would have a better life.' So how do you explain that? Child being
12	hit by car in a country like this, you know so like feeling might be feeling

13	guilty, there might all kinds of emotions. And I was just crying. I was crying.
14	So, I kind of helped with that. I told my counsellor in my school that we should,
15	I asked my principal if we could do it GoFundMe account for them. And so
16	eventually I told the counsellor and she created that. So, we were able to raise
17	some money towards the funeral for the girl.

(1st interview with Yolanda, 10/29/2022)

In our third interview, Yolanda shared her immigration story. She and her husband, along with their two teenage children, came to the U.S. seeking a better life almost 12 years ago. During our first conversation, she mentioned the tragic car accident that had occurred to the family of one of her ESOL students. Repeating "I was seeing myself," Yolanda seemed to deeply empathize with them who lost their youngest daughter and sister (lines 1-3). As an immigrant mother, she could relate to the family's sorrow, imagining the feeling of guilt that the student's parents might have, as stated in lines 10-14. Yolanda's empathy went beyond her shared emotions, and she took action by setting up a GoFundMe account to raise funds for the family (lines 14-18). Despite facing resistance from the school principal, Yolanda led the fundraising effort with the help of her staff members. She posted the GoFundMe account on the school website and Facebook, as well as her own personal Facebook page. Yolanda's empathy did not remain as an emotion but was transformed into an action that helped her students and their families.

Similar to Yolanda, Kiana mirrored her identity and experience as a Muslim woman and a child of Somali refugee parents in describing her interaction with ESOL students and their parents. In our first interview, Kiana brought two photos herself with which she illustrated her family's settlement journey as poor refugees in the U.S. society. As the answer to the question about the influence of her early childhood experience on herself as an individual and ESOL teacher, Kiana responded as follows:

Excerpt 18. "I'm more empathetic, because I know."

1   Kiana: I think it plays a big role because I'm more empathetic, because I know. I deal
2   with a lot of refugee student, so and when parents see me, they can kind of relate
3   to me and you can understand because you're, you're East African and a lot of our
4   families come from East Africa or, and you know, they're refugees and I can relate
5   to them. I could be more empathetic because my family, my parents, they're
6   refugees. So that gives me that empathetic piece to it. I can relate more, growing
7   up as a Muslim too. Their religion plays a big role and how I interact with families
8   and they're more comfortable. I'm just lucky that I have a community where you
9   know people look like me (laughs with smiles), so they feel more comfortable. I
10   felt like that wasn't really the case when I was in Nashville though, because
11   everyone was like Hispanic or like white, yeah.

(1st interview with Kiana, 11/09/2022)

Excerpt 18 indicates the importance of Kiana's identity as an East African Muslim whose

parents were Somali refugee in fostering connection, empathy, and understanding for her ESOL

students, especially refugee students and their parents. Kiana expressed her happiness and

satisfaction with working at her current school where she can serve more students and parents

who look like her, unlike her previous school (lines 8-11). Throughout the interviews, Kiana

reiterated the significance of being around individuals who look like her. She also recalled

feeling lonely and isolated in both American and Kenyan schools but being "gravitated" to

peers who shared her racial or religious background in high school and college. Therefore,

Kiana's current school appears to have a more significant impact on her perceived ability to

support African and Muslim families as well as her sense of belonging to the school

community.

Same as Jade in Excerpt 16, Kiana also acknowledged that some immigrant or refugee

parents "feel scared" about visiting school to discuss issues and problems due to their social

status. When asked about her experience standing up for those parents, Kiana shared an incident

with a mother of a Latinx student at her previous school in Nashville:

Excerpt 19. "They're scared to advocate for their child."

1   Kiana: Yeah, like you know some parents feel scared to come to report topics when their

2   child isn't getting enough support in the school like intervention. And we know
3   some parents don't feel that they can come talk to the school about certain issues
4   because some of them at our old school in Nashville, a lot of them, how should I
5   say, like some of the parents and families are undocumented. So sometimes
6   they're scared to advocate for their child (inaudible) they don't want to rock the
7   boat, you know, or they notice like some teacher isn't really supporting the child
8   in right ways. If they have any sort of things to say, 'My child is saying this,
9   you're not listening to them,' something that makes the teacher look bad. They
10   kind of don't want to take anything. So just there are moments where I know this
11   parent feels very uncomfortable but she knew me from the ESOL reading club that
12   I was one of the teachers. She told me because her child was part of the reading
13   club, she was telling me she felt uncomfortable about the teacher and all that. And
14   I told her 'It's okay, you can tell us. I'm not going to defend this teacher,' acting to
15   be on both sides to listen to their story and all that. And so yeah, I just I let her tell
16   me the side of the story. And I was like 'Okay look, you had issues. Don't think
17   that you should be scared. Let the admin know.' So just that, you helping parents
18   not feel afraid to talk.

19   Jang: So, do you remember the mother was from which country?

20   Kiana: Hispanic, I don't know exactly which country.

21   Jang: Did you have many teachers who… how should I say… who mistreat those
22   children or who do not understand their situation well?

23   Kiana: The thing is, I told you about the school I came from. The staff members do not
24   reflect the demographics of the student population.

(2nd interview with Kiana, 11/16/2022)

During the interaction with the parent, Kiana noticed that the mother had an issue with

her child's teacher but felt uncomfortable discussing it directly with them (lines 10-14). Kiana

positioned herself as a trustworthy teacher who could empathize with the feelings of uncertainty,

insecurity, and worry that the mother was experiencing (lines 14-18). When asked if she had

frequent incidents arising from teachers' lack of understanding of ESOL students and their

parents, Kiana reiterated that teacher demographics did not reflect those of the students and

parents at her previous school in Nashville (lines 23-24). She mentioned in our first interview

that she was one of only two Black certified teachers, and all the other teachers were white,

despite "a very high Hispanic population." Based on her observations and experience, Kiana

seemed to perceive that any issues of misunderstanding and mistreatment towards ESOL

students, which were derived from the lack of diversity in the teaching force, could create

communication problems and further hinder mutual understanding and relationships among all

stakeholders, including students, parents, teachers, and staff members. This understanding led

Kiana to believe that her identity as a non-white teacher encouraged the mother to contact her to

ask for help in building trust, in contrast to other teachers.

2.2 Microaggressions, conflicts, and challenges

Among the participating teachers, it was evident that they experienced racism in the form

of microaggressions toward ESOL students during their daily interactions with colleagues.

Particularly, Jade, one of the participants, had encountered such experiences with other teachers

who expressed stereotypical and deficit perspectives of ESOL students without hesitation. From

our very first interview, Jade indicated that some of her colleagues were unable to engage in or

perform intersectional thinking regarding the backgrounds and academic abilities of ESOL

students. Jade shared her thought, stating, "I think one of the things that I have seen as an ESOL

teacher in dealing with general education teachers is that somehow a lack of language equates to

a lack of ability for some teachers." She went on to describe an interaction with one of her

colleagues as follows:

Excerpt 20. "A lot of teachers haven't had experience teaching ESOL."

1	Jade: I had a teacher come up to me the other day. I had just finished testing one of our
2	kiddos, and she ended up being classified as an English learner because her family,
3	their first language is Amharic, and they also speak … an African language of
4	Ethiopia, Somalia. So anyway, I was walking down the hallway, and then she
5	stopped me, and she was like in a panic. I was like 'Umm, hey! What's wrong?'
6	And she was like 'You know that friend that you tested in our class. Are you sure
7	she is ESOL?' Now I was just 'Yeah~ I did this test to her, and her family speaks so
8	and so language, and they speak another language at home. So, we do this and that
9	(tests).' And she said 'Well, the reason I asked is because she is VE-RY smart.' And
10	I was like 'What do you mean?' She was like 'I think she is gifted.' … and then she
11	said something like 'If she's gifted, she can't be ESOL too.' And I was like
12	(laughing) 'Yes, she can.' So, it's interesting to see how other people view second

13 language students because it's like they have to be low or they have to be deficient
14 in some way, which of course not, it is not the truth. But I feel like a lot of people or
15 a lot of teachers haven't had experience teaching ESOL or haven't had experience
16 as an ESOL student or whatever umm approach those students in a way of a deficit
17 approach like, 'What can you do?' You know, like before even looking at 'Okay,
18 what background knowledge do you have?' You know, thinking that like concepts
19 no matter what they are, they can still transfer cross languages. It's like if a student
20 understands main idea in Spanish, it's going to be able to understand main idea in
21 English. It's just being able to, to use the right words and terminology to express
22 that.

(1st interview with Jade, 10/27/2022)

In Excerpt 20, it become evident that there is a prevalent deficit perspective towards

ESOL students, as they are automatically assumed to be less intelligent or gifted based on their

developing English proficiency. During the same interview, Jade shared another incident where a

teacher made the assumption that ESOL students must be foreign born. However, according to

the official definition of English Learners (ELs) provided by her country (Dekalb County School

District, n.d.), any students whose first or primary language is a language other than English is

eligible to receive ESOL education. This deficit, exclusive, and stereotypical view of ESOL

students held by teachers exposes the monolingual mindset that is prevalent the U.S. society

(Motha, 2006a; Walker et al., 2004). As Jade mentioned in lines 15-19, such deficit perspectives

may result from teachers' lacking experience with ESOL students. This point is further supported

by Yolanda, who made a similar argument when asked about her colleagues who may not

comprehend the struggles faced by ESOL students.

Excerpt 21. "Homeroom teachers don't come from a different culture."

1 Yolanda: That's normal. They cannot, because they don't have experience with that. And
2 that's what I told you about being in the classroom, a practical thing. For me, it
3 has three ways: It's being somebody who has, who comes from a different
4 culture myself, so I understand what those kids go through. And there is
5 learning from school and there now teaching them. Homeroom teachers don't
6 come from a different culture. If you are not from a different culture, you
7 cannot understand what it is to go to a different country and struggle.

It is concerning to note that the lack of understanding among teachers regarding ESOL students and their struggles is considered as "normal." Yolanda highlighted that monolingual American teachers often lack first-hand cross-cultural experiences, such as living abroad, which may contribute to their limited comprehension of the challenges that ESOL students face (lines 5-7). Later in the interview, Yolanda drew a contrast between herself and monolingual teachers who "do not know how to teach the kids" in ESOL. By stating "That's why you have ESOL teachers to help. The ESOL teachers are supposed to help to guide the homeroom teachers. This is what you need to do," she reaffirmed her position and role as an ESOL teacher in relation to her non-ESOL, monolingual colleagues.

During the second interview, Jade expressed strong anger when discussing her colleagues who made assumptions about a student's racial identity and academic abilities based solely on their name, Princess. Jade deeply empathized with the student and was even more upset and saddened by the fact that the teachers seemed oblivious to the inappropriateness of their behavior. As she criticized the teachers' action of "creating a whole persona" for the student, not allowing her to express true self, based on the racialized assumption derived from her parents' naming choice, Jade's emotion became evident as she tapped the table with her fingertips in anger. These incidents resonated with Jade, as she personally experienced having her name mispronounced or misrecognized due to its perceived "difference." These personal experiences have made her keenly aware of the negative assumptions and subsequent microaggressions, whether overt or subtle, that occur in teachers' daily social interactions at school. However, microaggressions are not limited to Jade's observations within the school environment; they are also something she has experienced in her personal life. Shortly after, Jade shared an incident

involving uncomfortable stares from white "boomers" in the broader school community, as

follows:

Excerpt 22. "I try to make sure that I don't do it because I know how it feels."

1	Jade: But, because even me the other day, ha! I have a lot of tattoos, I have 25 tattoos.
2	Jang: Who? You? Yeah, I can see some of them now, but did not know you have a lot.

3   Jade: Yeah, right? Long nails, braids… you know what I am saying? So I am a very
4   distinct look. If somebody would just say, 'You know what? If I have to guess what
5   you are, I would not think teacher.' Fair! Right? Because I don't look like what
6   somebody's maybe traditional idea of what a teacher is. But … on Tuesday, it was a
7   voting day. So our school was the polling place. And there were people in line, and
8   the line was like wrapped around the gym. So we were walking in to go to work, we
9   still had to go to work on the day. And there were a lot of white people, and we
10   walked up with our book bags and computers and stuff. And the way that these
11   people are looking when we were passing by to go into the building was like 'These
12   ladies work here?' It was so uncomfortable, right? You know it was just for their
13   community that they live in and … I guess the demographics isn't what the
14   population looks like. But they didn't seem like they would think that black
15   teachers work at that school or maybe black teachers that look like me work in that
16   school. It was really bizarre, and you always have to take a step back and be like
17   'You know what? They are boomers. (giggling) They're going to think and feel a
18   certain way about things.' But, again, when they saw me they had an assumption.
19   Fair! Because they all do but it's a complete misfire from what they probably were
20   thinking. Umm so I … try to make sure that I don't do it because I know how it
21   feels.

22   Jang: Uh-huh, uh-huh (nodding)

23   Jade: So I think your approach is really different if you're on the other side of it, because
24   you know it makes you uncomfy, it makes you feel like you're not welcome and
25   stuff like that. And it's much as people like to write off children, they're very
26   intuitive and they understand a lot more than we give them credit for. And they
27   know when someone has certain feelings about them. So I try to make everybody
28   feel like I appreciate them for who they are. That's what I'm looking for.

29   Jang: So did you just walk away from the people in the line at the polling station?

30   Jade: So like this is the gym and there is a little lamp that we have (showing me what is
31   where with her hand). So the people are kind of here, so we had to walk through the
32   line (uh huh) and literally they were just like (showing me their eyeballing).

33   Jang: Oh my… the eyeballs…

34   Jade: YES!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! WHAT is wrong with you all? (with a high note) This is…. You
35   know it's, it's … stupid and it is … (shaking her head) But you know it happens so,
36   it is what it is. But in that two minutes not even two minutes, that was probably 30

37	seconds that I had to experience, I liked to kill everybody, so… I just try to make
38	sure that I am putting out the practices, the love, and the feelings that I want to be
39	reciprocated right? So yeah… Bizarre, so pathetic.

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/2022)

On the day for voting, Jade and her black colleagues were walking into the school building while "white boomers" waiting in line outside glanced at them with a sense of exclusion, as if the teachers did not belong there (Excerpt 22, lines 6-18). The subtle non-verbal message of doubt or denial directed at Jade and her colleagues was evident, leaving them feeling unsettled and out of place. At the beginning of the excerpt, Jade tried to convince herself that it is "fair" for people to assume that she is not (or must not be) a teacher due to her "very distinctive look" with many tattoos, long nails, and braids (lines 3-6). However, in lines 13-16, she highlighted the complex interplay between her racial identity and her apparent difference or uniqueness, which deviated from the traditional idea of what a teacher should look like. This contributed to her discomfort and unwelcome feelings. It was also intriguing to note that Jade attributed such behavior of the boomers to the generational gap, reflecting her perspective on older generations (lines 16-18). While acknowledging that individuals tend to hold and oftentimes reveal assumptions or stereotypes, Jade emphasized her personal commitment to avoiding such behaviors by reflecting on her own experience of microaggressions and her emotions. This is clearly described in lines 38-41 where Jade strongly expressed her rage but also her efforts to transform such emotions into a practice of love and mutual respect. When asked about her efforts to avoid being trapped in the box of thinking that perpetuates detrimental "built-in knowledge, preconceived notions, and stereotypes" regarding students of color, Jade further responded as follows:

Excerpt 23. "That's always going to be a hard battle to fight."

1	Jade: Yeah, … that's always going to be a hard battle to fight, because unfortunately, it

2	happens right? Like just because you've heard these things drilled over and over.
3	You really have to think, you really have to sit and consciously suspend them,
4	right? Because I find myself even sometimes like 'Oh okay, so this kid's name is
5	Ramirez or whatever, they're probably going to be an ESOL student!' right? Even
6	though it doesn't seem harmful, that kid may not be an ESOL student, that kid just
7	might have a last name, Ramirez, and that's it. Like it's just the end of it, you know.
8	So, I have to like physically stop myself, because I'm just feeding into (inaudible).
9	She said to me, there was a girl, and her name is Mila Rodriguez (pseudonym). And
10	she said to me 'Oh, she's going to be one of yours.' I am like (shaking her head)
11	'Maybe!! (smashing the table with her fist), but let's not assume,' right? So, I even
12	like combatting other people, I feel like that makes me more aware of what I do. So,
13	I don't want to say assertive but make sure that I am aware enough to be able to be
14	like 'Don't' do that. Let's let the kid get here first. Let's let the kid show up.' You
15	know what I mean? Like let her walk through the door. But and she was right, like
16	she did in the ESOL, and her parents only speak Spanish. But the thing is that
17	didn't have to be the case, you know what I am saying? So, I think by trying to put
18	out these little fires as it happening in front of me, it makes me more of an advocate
19	for those children and making sure that I'm not doing it, because I know how
20	harmful those things are, because I'm sure that you know some of those same
21	things is not necessarily the same exact stereotypes or preconceived notions or
22	assumptions or whatever. Because it varies based on what you (inaudible) right?

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/2022)

In Excerpt 23, Jade candidly acknowledged that individuals, including herself, possess

unconscious or conscious assumptions, stereotypes, or predetermined perspectives towards

others (lines 3-8). However, she emphasized her personal effort to "combat other people" who

"feed" into the predetermined assumptions that pervade social discourse (lines 1-3). Engaging in

such a challenging "battle to fight" is not an easy task, as it requires her to "physically stop"

herself by "sitting and consciously suspending" those thoughts. Nonetheless, this endeavor has

enabled her to become "more aware of what she does" and reaffirm her role as "an advocate for"

historically marginalized students (lines 18-20). To illustrate her point, Jade shared an anecdote

involving a colleague who assumed that a student with a Spanish family name, Rodriguez, would

be placed in Jade's ESOL class (lines 9-17). Taking into account Jade's argument for the

importance of embracing new possibilities that may defy stereotypes (lines 20-22), it becomes

evident that there is a crucial necessity to help teachers recognize and challenge their own

preconceived perspectives and assumptions. This can be achieved through the promotion of critical self-reflection and open-mindedness in both teacher education programs and teaching practices.

On the other hand, Yolanda and Kiana have been working at the same school that has served a high population of immigrant and refugee ESOL for years. This work environment has fostered a shared understanding of the necessity and significance of co-teaching ESOL students, involving both homeroom and ESOL teachers. During the group interview, Kiana expressed that her school does not encounter the same issues of biases imposed on ESOL students as Jade has experienced with her colleagues, stating, "collaboration is a big key role because we co-teach. I have 50 first graders to serve… so I have to collaborate with the teacher … we kind of share the responsibility. I'm lucky I have a good team." However, Yolanda described her co-teaching journey in the following excerpt:

Excerpt 24. "We don't have access to enough information."

1	Yolanda:	You know co-teaching is not something that is easy. It takes a while to trust each
2		other and to be able to work together. I have all the teachers in 5th grade I've
3		been teaching with them now for like four or five years, so we've kind of,
4		we've built a routine over time. We build a rapport and there's more trust and so
5		it's easy for them to trust me with co-teaching the whole class. So, they might
6		not mind so much if you work with some of the ESOL students, but teachers
7		generally like to be umm, the domination. Like they want to be 'It's my class.'
8		And they have that territorialized what I'm looking for they kind of feel
9		territorial. But after a while they understand that 'Look, we can work together'
10		and they can trust you and so they start to like you start to have that better of
11		you are just going for the same purpose—it's to let the students to grow. So why
12		can't we just work together? You know, but what I find frustrating is just the
13		idea that we don't have access to enough information like homeroom teachers
14		do, that's what I don't like about.
15	Jade:	I agree. I 100% agree with it.

<div align="right">(Focus group interview, 1/27/2023)</div>

In the above excerpt, Yolanda pointed out that some teachers tend to "territorialize" or

"dominate" their classroom, students, and teaching against ESOL teachers (lines 6-9). For Yolanda, building trust and rapport with homeroom teachers is a gradual "process" in order to achieve the shared goal of helping ESOL students grow (lines 1-5, 9-11). This shared goal is particularly important when ESOL and homeroom teachers work together in the same classroom. All the participants in this study worked in a push-in model, where the ESOL teacher enters the content classroom to provide linguistic support for ESOL students in understanding the learning materials. However, the participants agreed that while the push-in model is favorable for ESOL students' parents who do not want their children to miss content classes, it can become overwhelming when there are many ESOL students in need of support in one classroom. Additionally, teaching in a noisy classroom where the homeroom teacher continues working with non-ESOL students or sharing class time with the teacher presents another challenge that the participating teachers have faced. They often unintentionally become idle when homeroom teachers teach language arts or phonetics, resulting in overlaps in teaching content. Moreover, the participants found it difficult to teach different levels of ESOL students together. Kiana, a first-grade teacher, expressed, "It will just be nice to apply for like Tier A kids or Tier B, C kids like it just be nice," which Jade also agreed with.

In lines 12-15 of Excerpt 24, Yolanda expressed her frustration with the limited access to student information, such as test results, compared to homeroom teachers, which is strongly agreed upon by Jade. All the participants echoed that they do not have "real-time access" to data and "have to work with whatever [they] have" or "constantly find people to get things" they need. When asked about the reasons for such an information gap, they attributed it to a systematic issue at the county level, suggesting that the reasons why ESOL teachers are not granted or authorized real-time access to data remain unknown. They continued to discuss their

struggles, such as an increasing caseload with a lack of support, redundant paperwork, and inefficient communication with country-level officers. Notably, all the teachers expressed dissatisfaction with the limited guidance and professional development opportunities available. In the county where they work, there are no ESOL coaches to observe classroom teaching and provide constructive feedback to improve ESOL teachers' teaching skills at the time of data collection. Furthermore, professional development sessions are either offered after school or do not provide instruction-based "go-to strategies" that ESOL teachers can directly apply in their classrooms.

In Excerpt 24, Yolanda expressed feeling excluded from the "territory" of homeroom teachers. In contrast, Jade was forced to "take full responsibility for these (ESOL) children rather than collaborating" with homeroom teachers, as shown below:

Excerpt 25. "They're not ready to take that responsibility yet."

1	Jade: … Unfortunately some of them are just like, 'when is your segment time again?'
2	'when would you be here'? … I don't want to say push off but for lack of a bitter
3	phrase like it's one of those situations where they're kind of forcing me into a
4	position to take full responsibility for these children rather than like collaborating
5	with me and like working together and figure out those students' needs. So I'm still
6	kind of like fighting for that positioning as far as how I want ESOL looked at my
7	school, but you know I mean it comes (cough) with time and of course I'm glad that
8	I'm there because they're seeing like the changes in the demographic with me, the
9	demographics as I'm there too. So like, we're getting like, this is probably one of
10	the years where we've had the most ESOL students that we've ever had. So they're
11	starting to see the impact and importance in …learning these strategies or maybe I
12	should know what the TPC is or you know so like, ... they are kind of getting the
13	hint but it's still very much in the position of you know they're not ready to take
14	that responsibility yet.

(Focus group interview, 1/27/2023)

Jade expressed that the ESOL program and its students are "not a primary focus," but "secondary to everything else" at her school. Most non-ESOL teachers refer to ESOL students as "your kids," implying that they do not consider them their own students and do not take responsibility

for their needs or collaborate with Jade (lines 15-16). Nonetheless, Jade considered it as her duty to challenge those teachers' perceptions and maintain a positive attitude in the face of adversity. She hoped that the increasing number of ESOL students would gradually lead teachers to realize the importance of learning how to effectively teach ESOL students and collaborate with ESOL teachers, including herself (lines 8-15).

During the interviews, the participating teachers shared their conflicts and struggles in working with colleagues who hold microaggressions and preconceived assumptions about ESOL students, as well as their lack of knowledge in teaching them. However, experiencing these conflicts and struggles in their relationships with non-ESOL teachers has functioned to reaffirm the participants' understanding of their identity, roles, and responsibilities as ESOL teachers. While collaboration in teaching is essential for the academic success of ESOL students, they agreed that it takes time to build trust and rapport with colleagues. In addition to the challenges of classroom teaching, the teachers also expressed their concerns about the lack of systemic support and guidance to improve their teaching skills and professional development. It is crucial to acknowledge that ESOL students have unique needs, and teachers need to be equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively teach and support them. To foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment for all students, regardless of their linguistic backgrounds, continuous investment in teacher education and training programs would be imperative.

2.3 ESOL students as a mirror of self

As the interviews aimed to explore the influence of the participating teachers' lived experiences on their teaching practices, the teachers consistently engaged in self-reflection, using their ESOL students as a reflective mirror. Through this process, the teachers (re)constructed and

(re)affirmed their sense of self and their roles and responsibilities as ESOL teachers in intercultural relationships with their students.

When asked about the impact of her secondary school experiences, Jade specifically emphasized the influence of her "outgoing personality" on initiating conversations and establishing connections with students. Interestingly, Jade's background as a former volleyball player from high school to college provided her with opportunities to travel and interact with diverse individuals both within and beyond the school environment nationwide. This experience significantly contributed to the development of her self-promoting skills and abilities to "thrive in the environments where you [I] would probably be seen comfortable" when interacting with others.

Excerpt 26. "Who I am today as a human but also who I am today as a teacher."

1	Jade: I think that outgoing personality definitely influenced teaching. Umm, the ability to
2	connect lenses (? Inaudible) to teaching, because you can I always try to find
3	something in common with my children. Even today, I love sneakers and one of my
4	kids had this really nice pair of shoes, and I was like 'Oh~~ Where did you get?'
5	And you know, we just started talking about that like just, just finding something
6	that you have in common with them to make them feel comfortable and open up to
7	you in a way that they probably wouldn't have, otherwise. But I think that outgoing
8	personality is a (inaudible) lean this up teaching, because I feel like as a teacher you
9	always have very thing on. (inaudible) It's very performative and like 'Good
10	morning!!!!! How are you!!!' You know, so I think like that definitely makes
11	(inaudible) and that a lot of that was built in high school is like trying to get people
12	to come to volleyball games even, or you know, being a part of all these different
13	clubs and having your face to be out there and like being in front of people a large
14	majority of the time. So I think everything that that was kind of like the catalyst on,
15	you know, who I am today as a human but also who I am today as a teacher.

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/202)

In Excerpt 26, Jade shared a brief and informal interaction with one of her students, demonstrating her ability to create a space where they could explore their shared interest or commonality—sneakers. Although this particular example may appear insignificant, it highlights Jade's conscious effort to build relationships with her students, fostering an atmosphere of

comfort and openness (lines 2-6). Jade seemed to recognize that such personal moments might

be uncommon for students within the school environment, where a hierarchical dynamic

typically exists between teachers and students exists (lines 6-7). Moreover, these actions aimed at

connecting with her students are an integral part of Jade's teaching practice, which she described

as "performative." This approach is deeply influenced by her high school experiences and her

extroverted nature, both of which serve as "catalyst(s)" that has shaped who she is in both her

personal life and profession (lines 11-15).

During the last individual interview, Jade was given a question about the influence of her

teaching experiences on her perception of self as an individual and a teacher. She started to

describe what she has learned from teaching as follows:

Excerpt 27. "I 100% learn a lot from these kids every single day."

1	Jade: I think you learn patience. I think you learn compassion. I think you learn tolerance
2	… I hate that word tolerance it just sounds so like 'I gotta tolerate.' But you know
3	what I mean?
4	Jang: Yes, I know.
5	Jade: You learn humility, umm… yeah.
6	Jang: What do you mean by humility?
7	Jade: I mean I think it's kind of humble to you because everything in life just seems so
8	innate. … when you grow up in a situation where you are, particularly myself as an
9	English speaker, I've grown up always in a country where I have access to
10	communication because I know how to communicate. But think about it from a
11	different standpoint like if I went to Korea for instance, I wouldn't know what is
12	going on, right? You know what I mean? … it just humbles you to see these brave
13	little adults … come into a situation and face it so bravely … It just feels so proud
14	of them for even just showing up and coming to school, and trying and putting their
15	best pouring in and it's just beautiful to see. I would literally fall apart if somebody
16	set me in another country where I didn't know how to communicate like 'What's
17	going on? (pretending crying)' But these five year olds, these six year olds, these
18	seven year olds being able to pick up on cultural nuances and being able to
19	understand how to fit in, and then like making friends even. And like they might not
20	have all of the tools to be able to communicate effectively but they can just enough
21	to be able to fit into a friend group or to ask for what they want or like. It blows me
22	away with what they are able to do. And like it just kind of humbles you because

23	it's like 'As an adult, could I do that?' I don't know~, you know so it's just
24	interesting to see how they're able to combat those challenges every single day and
25	just do it with a smile, right? You know, but I 100% learn a lot from these kids
26	every single day. EVERY SINGLE DAY.

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

Excerpt 27 crystallizes how Jade feels and perceives her young ESOL students who as "brave little adults" who face and overcome challenges while developing in their learning, communication, and socialization every day at school (lines 13-26). Being in close proximity to her students' new schooling experience as an ESOL teacher has allowed her to "be a better human" by learning patience, compassion, and humility. Humility, in particular, has played a significant role in this process as it enables her to reexamine her "innate" privilege as a L1 English speaker without communication issues, living in an English-dominant country, the U.S., and empathize with the difficulties and struggles her ESOL students face (lines 7-12). For Jade, tolerance is viewed as "such a negative word" that implies simply putting up with someone who is different. Jade further explained her perspective as follows:

Excerpt 28. "You can learn that it's okay for people to be different."

1	Jade: I just think, more than anything I just think beyond getting maybe tolerant?!
2	Tolerance is such a, I feel like tolerance is like a negative word. I never wanted to
3	tolerate somebody because I have to. But I think you learn that it's okay for people
4	to be different. Somebody doesn't have be exactly like you in order to find a
5	common ground. You don't have to do the same things or like the same things, but
6	as far as looking at somebody's culture and being able to see how they experience
7	what are some things that they do in their everyday life like how can you learn from
8	that, but also like learn to not think if somebody else's culture is like negative or
9	things are weird, you know what I mean? To look beyond that, even though
10	somebody is different or somebody practices things in a different way than you, it
11	doesn't mean that that is negative.

(1st interview with Jade, 10/27/2022)

Jade seemed to believe that tolerance implies a sense of obligation, but she instead emphasized the acceptance of difference by examining the roots of these differences and

understanding how different cultural practices shape one's daily life (lines 2-9). Excerpts 27 and 28 exemplify how Jade, as an ESOL teacher, has gained valuable insights from her interactions with students representing various cultures and lifestyles. Specifically, her daily interactions with ESOL students have influenced her perception and interactions with others, resulting in improved listening skills, a greater appreciation for different perspectives, and a deeper understanding of intercultural relationships in her own life. Both excerpts illustrate the essence of intercultural education, urging us to go beyond an exclusive focus on cultural differences that can lead to tokenizing cultural others, and instead, emphasizes how to comprehend and reflect upon these differences as a means of personal growth and becoming a better human being.

In a similar vein, Kiana also expressed deep gratitude for the opportunity to teach ESOL students. When asked about the meaning of teaching ESOL to her, she described her relationship with the students as below:

Excerpt 29. "We learn from each other."

1	Kiana: I feel like I'm very thankful that I get an opportunity to teach these students
2	because they have a lot of potential and, for me, their soul… They make a lot of
3	connections you know, to the real world and where they are from. That's what I
4	appreciate about them about. They aren't just listening, they all welcome my
5	culture, you know. And they relate to this, while we do this, so it is a very
6	fulfilling job because it's not just like me just teaching, you know, it's kind of like
7	both we learn from each other and that's what I appreciate. We learn from each
8	other. And it's not to say that we don't, I don't learn when I was like in non ESOL
9	population, but I felt like I learn more about the world and we learn more about
10	each other, more, every day. So that's what I think.

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

By praising ESOL students' strong potential and efforts to reconnect with their roots and embrace Kiana's culture, Kiana expressed her sincere "appreciation" (lines 1-5). Throughout the interviews, she emphasized her encouragement for students to share their identities by sharing the meanings behind their names and participating in activities, such as the 'I am' poem. As

described in lines 7-10, Kiana and her students "learn from each other," creating a positive cycle

of intercultural learning and growth that brings great fulfillment to her job. The following excerpt

provides an example of this dynamic interaction:

Excerpt 30. "I'm honored."

1	Jang:	So, I guess you actively share your background with your students.
2 3 4	Kiana:	Yeah, you have to, because first of all, my students are very curious. And then they look at me, like 'Oh Ms. Kiana, you look different, you don't look like anybody else.'
5	Jang:	What do you mean by 'anybody else?' Like most students and teachers…
6 7 8	Kiana:	Like the teachers don't really reflect the student body. I mean I did it, because my kids are Hispanic, … most students are Catholic. So, they would be very curious, 'Oh Ms. Kiana, are you fasting? Why are you fasting?' So, I tell them.
9	Jang:	Very interesting. How do they react when you share your …
10 11	Kiana:	Oh, they just loved it. Like 'Oh, I want to do that too.' I am just like 'No, you can't.'
12	Jang:	Hahahahaha, interesting!
13 14 15	Kiana:	I think I am honored too. I share that because my students are like, …This is like the first time they're seeing a Muslim person. So, like when they see a Muslim person, they are like 'Oh, I know my teacher is,' you know.
16 17	Jang:	So, they don't have like, what should I say, they also get open-mindedness to people like you.
18 19 20 21 22 23	Kiana:	Yes, yes, yes! And when they see horrible things in the media about Muslim people, now they're gonna 'Oh, my teacher is not like that,' 'I know Ms. Kiana. She is my 4th grade teacher, blah blah blah, she wasn't like that.' So, that's kind of you know, as you said, open mindedness, and they would realize 'Wow, don't believe everything that you see.' And I mean they can … choose to learn things but not everybody like generalizing a whole group of people, that's not like that.

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

Most ESOL students in Kiana's previous school were Catholic Latinx. As described in

the above excerpt, those students noticed Kiana's "different" appearance from other teachers,

who were mostly white, and became "very curious" about her spiritual practice of fasting, asking

"why" (lines 1-12). The students' question regarding why Kiana fasts created a moment for

intercultural learning, where they could understand each other's cultural practices and meanings behind them. When they asked her about it, Kiana happily shared information about herself, turning it into a learning moment for her students and a way for her to be "honored" by sharing a part of herself. Moreover, she seemed to believe that sharing her identity with her students would help them develop open-mindedness, gain a critical understanding of cultural differences, and avoid generalizing culturally different Others. Kiana hoped that her students would learn to critically analyze how the media portrays racial, ethnic, cultural groups, including Muslims, based on their intercultural interactions with her at school (lines 19-20).

On the other hand, Yolanda's experience as an immigrant informs her approach to teaching ESOL students, as she empathizes with their struggles with English and social norms. When asked about her thoughts on language and its relationship with her students, she explained:

Excerpt 31. "If I can manage to be here, you can also do something with yourself."

1	Yolanda:	Yeah, but they know I'm Nigerian and they know I cannot speak like a native
2		speaker because I'm not American and I'm a Nigerian, so they know. The first
3		thing I tell them, if you look up there, you'll see I have the wall where all of my
4		students' names are and where they come from and mine is included and I put
5		Nigeria.
6	Jang:	Oh, over there? (Pointing the wall on the opposite side in her classroom)
7	Yolanda:	Uh huh. So, my students know that I'm from Nigeria. That's the first thing
8		when I introduce myself. I tell them I'm from Nigeria, I speak another language
9		just like you, and if I can manage to be here, you can also do something with
10		yourself. So, the fact that you don't speak English now doesn't mean that
11		you're not going to succeed.

(3rd interview with Yolanda, 12/14/2022)

Yolanda, who identified herself as a Nigerian with U.S. citizenship, emphasized her strong affiliation with her home country in Excerpt 31. Considering herself as "someone who has another language, who comes from a different culture," her immigrant identity appears to influence her perspective on teaching and her teaching practice. Yolanda believes that her

immigrant background serves as a bridge or catalyst for her students to gain confidence and better understand the U.S. society, as described in lines 7-11. This could be the reason why Yolanda openly shares her identities and utilizes them as teaching resources right from the beginning of each school year. During my last interview at her trailer, Yolanda explained various decorations, such as scarves and writings, that represent her identities (see Figures 2 and 3). For example, the scarves displayed on the bulletin boards are made in Nigeria and feature the green color found in the national flag. The writing describes Nigerian food culture, which Yolanda prepares at home, and serve as an example for her student to write about themselves. Yolanda's integration of her identities in teaching demonstrates that a teacher's personal experience and identity significantly impact their teaching approaches and further development of teacher identity (Park, 2011; Tsui, 2007).
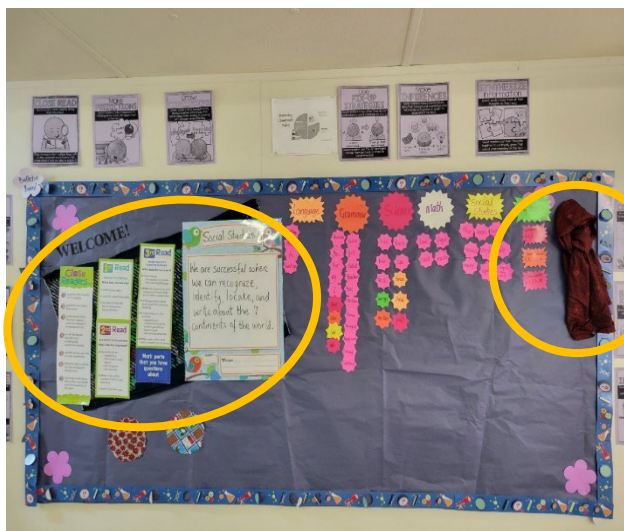
Figure 2. Yolanda's Nigerian Scarves   Figure 3. A writing sample about cultural selves
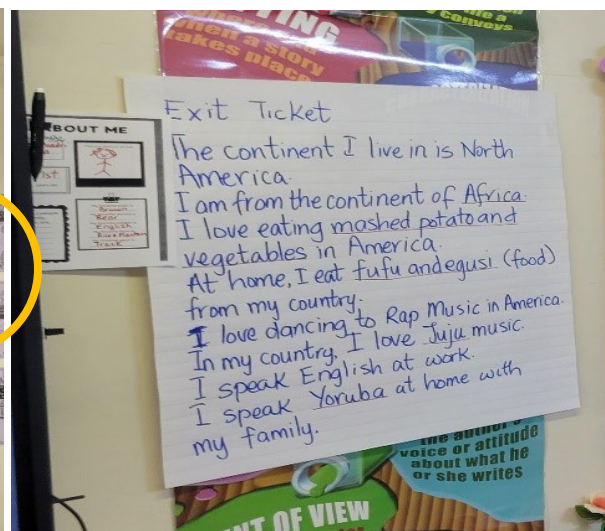
When I further inquired about how she helps ESOL students succeed in U.S. society, Yolanda provided the following response:

Excerpt 32. "By talking to them about my success."

1   Yolanda: Yeah well, by talking to them about my success, I show them how they can be

2	successful in society. … because they come from a different culture, and so I
3	explain to them about the culture here and things that might be acceptable in
4	their culture that are not acceptable here. And I watched them, I watched their
5	behavior in the classroom, in the hallway, in different places and I call them
6	every time to say, 'Look. No, you can't do that here. This is not acceptable.
7	Here if you do that, they're going to think this whereas it might be acceptable
8	like in Nigeria. We don't care about personal space all these, there's a bubble,
9	you know, everybody is close to each other people who are shoving and all that
10	but if you do that, excuse you, maybe like all right whatever.' I mean they do it
11	with me because I just walk and do my own thing and somebody would be
12	looking at me like, 'Excuse you.' And I'm like, 'Are you okay? Did I touch
13	you? I didn't touch you. Maybe I walked close to you. If you want a bubble,
14	then just go to space.' But I mean, I still do that as an adult, but I tried to help
15	them just to at least they know that this is not acceptable. Some things that
16	might be totally unacceptable yes for some things, you know like (inaudible)
17	play. They don't see it as any big deal like touching each other, pushing each
18	other. They just play, but here you can't do that in school. No touching, no this
19	and all that. I am like 'Okay, you can do that when you get home. You can play
20	rough, but when you're in school, don't touch, don't do anything.' That's the
21	hope you have to survive.

(3rd interview with Yolanda, 12/14/2022)

In Excerpt 32, Yolanda appeared to view herself as a successful immigrant, who pursues a Ph.D. and maintains a stable job and family life in the U.S. (lines 1-2). Drawing on her knowledge of U.S. culture and society, including personal space norms, Yolanda seemed to strive to help her ESOL students understand cultural differences and acceptable behaviors in U.S. society (lines 2-11). Though she has not fully embodied the practice of personal space, Yolanda helps her students learn and adopt cultural norms and develop social fluency, using her own experiences of trial and error as examples (line 13-16). In this way, Yolanda models successful immigration, while teaching her students how to navigate their new social environment through social literacy.

Finding 3. Actions for advocacy

In the previous sections, this study examined how the participating ESOL teachers understood their intercultural experiences and relationships with others within diverse sociocultural and educational settings. The analysis of the data was further made to gain insight

into the approaches and motivations of each teacher as they endeavored to cultivate intercultural relationships with diverse groups across various rimes, situations, and social contexts. The findings revealed that all three teachers took specific actions, each in their own unique manner, to advocate for their ESOL students, their parents, and the broader school community, both within and outside of the classroom.

3.1 Ways to communicate with parents

All three participants had a shared understanding that the parents of their ESOL students are the key players in the success of the students and the teachers themselves in teaching. Thus, they made endeavors to be able to have effective communication with parents in and out of school and discussed different ways to be connected with the parents and make an action. For instance, Kiana shared her experience of home visits when asked how she has approached people from different backgrounds to start a relationship during the first interview.

Excerpt 33. "I'm here to advocate for you and your child."

1	Kiana: How I started… well, I always started my school year communicating with
2	parents and moved through apps and things like that. I know when I was ESOL in
3	my first year as an ESOL teacher when they changed our position, you know, I
4	took it upon myself to be like 'Okay, I need to communicate with these parents.'
5	Because these parents, they're more, they're from Hispanic populations and
6	they're less likely to say something and stand up for themselves or advocate for
7	themselves. Because some of them are, you know, undocumented. And so for me,
8	it was important for me to like communicate with parents. And so that's what I
9	did. I communicated with them. If that, I mean they didn't answer the phone, I
10	would have to do a home visit, you know. I would get someone who actually
11	speak Spanish to come with me, and I'll talk to the parents. And let them know
12	that 'Here I'm here for you. I'm here to advocate for you and your child. Please
13	let me know if you need any things.' So right after that, I am very comfortable
14	going, communicating with parents. I feel like because I came from diverse
15	communities, I understand. Like my parents were refugees, and even though my
16	parents came to this country as sponsored, I mean they had right to be you know,
17	like not to say but let me rephrase that not to say like they're right to be here, but
18	they're came here with sponsors, not like they were undocumented.

(1st interview with Kiana, 11/9/2022)

The above excerpt highlights Kiana's awareness of the parents' concerns and challenges within her school community. During her first year of teaching ESOL at her previous school, the majority of ESOL parents were undocumented Latinx immigrants, who felt unsafe visiting the school to address their concerns and needs due to their vulnerable social position (lines 2-7). In a later part of the interview, Kiana mentioned the presence of U.S. Citizenship & Immigration Services officers "right at the door … everywhere at that time … waiting for people to take." Consequently, Kiana's understanding of the social situation, in which the immigrant parents were at risk, coupled with her empathy for their fear and apprehension, motivated her to take action by conducting home visits. Furthermore, Kiana's family background with Somali refugee parents played a significant role in shaping her understanding of the struggles faced by those immigrant parents. She recognized that these parents might encounter even greater difficulties without the social support that her own refugee parents had received as supported immigrants (lines 14-18). In addition, lines 8-13 indicate that her empathetic approach and proactive efforts for home visits with the assistance of a Spanish translator were not only aimed at supporting and connecting with parents but also advocating for them and their children who are her students.

However, it is worth questioning what precisely ignited Kiana's actions and what underlying reasons drove her to go above and beyond others. Conducting home visits is demanding and time-consuming work for teachers. This holds true not only for L1 English-speaking teachers but also for bilingual teachers or teachers from the same or similar cultural backgrounds as their ESOL students and parents, especially if they are unfamiliar with the neighborhoods where their students reside (e.g., Córdova, 2019). When the researcher inquired about Kiana's specific approach to home visits, she provided the following response:

Excerpt 34. "What am I going to do if I want to talk to them?"

1 2	Kiana: But we have people, the translators in our school. So what I would do is like, take my lunch time to do it or is my planning time to do it.
3	Jang: What?? (With surprising voice and reaction)
4	Kiana: I mean what am I going to do if I want to talk to them?
5	Jang: But it's a very short lunch time.
6	Kiana: I mean they live so close. It is like what, two-minute drive.
7 8	Jang: Sometimes you know the parents are very busy with their work, right? Some immigrant parents might work from morning to night.
9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17	Kiana: So sometimes I'd go and they are not going to be there. So it's like 'Okay, now I have to go after school.' But sometimes you know some parents or one parent works and the other stays at home. Because they have kids, other kids they need to take care of. But yeah, so it is difficult, what can I do in that situation where if the parents are not answering the phone or I need to talk to them about their child or what am I going do? This year like I did like after school. We couldn't get in contact with the parent, and this is like a newcomer. So, I wandered in lunch and talked to the parent and that was good because we gave them the resources that they needed. And now the student is doing better.

(1st interview with Kiana, 11/9/2022)

The above conversation between Kiana and I reveals that Kiana conducts home visits every year

and whenever she deems it necessary to provide appropriate learning resources for students and

parents. It also clarifies Kiana's motivation for engaging in home visits, which is her desire to

have conversations with parents (line 4). From Excerpts 33 and 34, it becomes evident that

Kiana's situational understanding, empathy, and action are fueled by a complex interplay of

factors. These factors include her personal background as the daughter of Somali refugee parents,

her early childhood experiences in communities with a high number of immigrants and refugees,

and her genuine desire to communicate, assist, and establish connections with parents who can

support her ESOL students' successful learning beyond her classroom. Kiana prioritized the

needs of her students and parents over her own comfort, by sacrificing lunchtime or breaks after

work (lines 1-2, 7-14). Moreover, it is crucial to acknowledge that Kiana's decision to conduct

home visits is not made solely by herself, but with the assistance of translators at her school. This

highlights the understanding that one's action can be more successful when supported and accompanied with systematic support and solidarity.

On the other hand, Yolanda distinctly described how she represents and utilizes her identity as a Nigerian immigrant in communication and interaction. In particular, Yolanda seemed to think that her immigrant identity is beneficial in helping the parents of ESOL students better understand about the ESOL program at school. According to the teachers in this study, parents often misunderstand or are misinformed about ESOL programs. Jade said that "some of them are very receptive to the ESOL program" and "have a very skewed idea of what it is like." They often asked her questions that display a label or stigma attached to ESOL program, such as "my child is going to be on the small bus?" "Oh, is this special Ed?"

Below shows Yolanda's description of an incident with an Ethiopian parent who disliked the fact that his child was placed in an ESOL program.

Excerpt 35. "The good thing is I'm ESOL teacher myself."

1	Yolanda: for me I also am African … in December, one parents from uhh, he's from
2	Ethiopia. He came, he was saying, he came to the front of (school), he said, 'I
3	want to see the principal.' I said, 'The principal is busy right now but if you
4	want to… Wait. Well, is there something I can help you?' And he's speaking. He
5	cannot speak clear English like you can know. He said, 'My son came home
6	with a form. He said he is ESOL. I don't want him to be in ESOL. His sister is
7	this, his brother is this, he's doing this, she's doing that.' So, after he finished, I
8	said, 'The good thing is I'm ESOL teacher myself.' He said, 'Oh you are?' I
9	said 'Yes!' And I said, 'Do you know what ESOL is? ESOL is nothing, it's just
10	to help him with his language development in class. A teacher will be there in
11	class that will assist him as they work and other that.' And I said, 'Look, look at
12	me. I'm from Nigeria and my students, my children had to take the test and all
13	that.' You know by the time I finished explaining, he was like, 'Oh, you're okay.
14	I'm good. I'm good with that. Thank you so much.' And he left. Or like if it was
15	a white teacher that was speaking to him, I don't think she would be able to sell
16	anything to him. It would be resistance. So, I think sometimes minority or how
17	do they call us? Not minority, it's not the right word that they use now, but
18	people of color and immigrants also, or whatever way that we classify ourselves
19	helps when we are involved in the decisions or in interfacing with parents.

(Focus group interview, 1/27/2023)

Drawing upon the achievements of his older children, the Ethiopian parent did not seem to understand why his younger child required language support (lines 5-7). During the interaction with the parent, Yolanda initially responded in a formal manner as a teacher, but quickly adjusted her approach, building an interpersonal connection with him (lines 2-14). As she mentioned in the initial interview, Nigerian society is "very competitive" with high expectations for students. This personal experience likely contributed to her understanding of the parent's dissatisfaction with his child diagnosed for ESOL, especially when compared to his accomplished siblings. By positioning herself both as an ESOL teacher and a Nigerian immigrant mother who had undergone ESOL testing for her own children, Yolanda was able to calm the parent and provide detailed and accurate information about the ESOL program and the available services for his child. By opening and sharing her identities as a fellow African parent, an experienced ESOL teacher, and an immigrant mother of two children, she not only alleviated potential tension or conflicts but also fostered an intercultural relationship.

What is intriguing about Yolanda's account is her supposition regarding how the parent's situation might have been different with a white teacher (lines 14-20 in Excerpt 35). Yolanda seemed to believe that her being as a Black immigrant ESOL teacher could influence parents' decision-making process. Furthermore, she argued that her "minority" social position or racial identity could serve as the representative "face" of the ESOL program, offering an element of "authenticity" and instilling "confidence" in both the program and parents, as described below.

Excerpt 36. "Somebody who can be one of your students."

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1    Yolanda: See when we, I was thinking this morning when I was talking to someone that
2              when you have ESOL population, and if you can imagine in a school, you have
3              a lot of ESOL population, and then the face of your ESOL is someone who
4              doesn't look like them at all. It's not going to be easy to sell that kind of
5              program to them. But where you have somebody who is, who can be one of
6              your students that you're talking about, then it's more authentic. Yes, that's what
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| 7 | I was looking for, it's the authentic, authenticity of your program. It gives them |
| 8 | more confidence, it gives parents more confidence. |

<p style="text-align: right">(Focus group interview, 1/27/203)</p>

While Kiana and Yolanda practiced self-reflection on their identities and lived

experiences to relate to ESOL parents and promote conversation and cooperation with them, Jade

played a role of communication channel as English-Spanish bilingual between the parents of her

ESOL students and her colleagues. When asked about her most memorable teaching experience

during the last individual interview, Jade shared an incident with the mother of a fifth-grade

ESOL student who called her crying after school.

Excerpt 37. "They send everything in English."

1	Jade:	… she called me after school. I was thinking it was urgent because she knows that I
2		am not at work. So she got on her phone crying, and I was like, 'Hey, what's going
3		on, why are you crying, what's happening?' She's like, 'I just wish that somebody
4		would be able or I just wish that somebody would take, or other teacher and people
5		that worked at the school would take the time to communicate with me properly.'
6		And I was like, 'What do you mean?' She was saying, 'They sent me pages and
7		pages of emails that I don't understand.' And I was like 'What do you mean?' She
8		was like 'They send everything in English, … It's long, and I don't understand, and
9		I don't want my kids,' because at this point, she had a 5th grader that was
10		graduating and they were getting the yard signs and all of the graduation gear and
11		everything. So, he was going home and saying, 'Mom, so and so got a cap and
12		gown, so and so got a yard sign and so and so got this balloon and whatever.' So she
13		felt bad because her son was coming home and explaining to her all of these things
14		that were happening in the class, not doing the same experiences. But it's not that
15		she couldn't provide him with those, she just didn't get the proper information to be
16		able to provide him with those experiences. So, she was in chamber crying like, 'I
17		don't want my kids think that I'm not doing what I need to do for him. I don't want
18		him to think that I don't care but this is a big moment for him.' And I was like,
19		'Okay, you know I understand.' I'm like (shaking her head and taking her emotion)
20		… so anyway we had to end up having a conference with the teacher and I was like
21		'anything that needs to go home, send it to me and I could make that even
22		translated. You know, when we can make sure that she gets phone calls, we can
23		make sure that she gets these messages in Spanish and we can make sure all of
24		these things for her.' That was during my COVID year when I first started working
25		at that school, so we had never met each other in person.

<p style="text-align: right">(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)</p>

In Excerpt 37, Jade provided a detailed account of her conversation with the mother, expressing

her emotions throughout. Despite the fact that Jade and the mother never had the opportunity to meet due to the COVID-19 pandemic (lines 25-26), the mother reached out to Jade for linguistic support to ensure that her son could have "the same experiences" as other students for his graduation, as mentioned in lines 15-17. After recounting this conversation with the parent, Jade went on to discuss the tension she experienced with the fifth-grade student's homeroom teacher. One day, the teacher approached Jade, expressing frustration over no responses from the student's mother to her "pages and pages of" emails. In response, Jade conveyed to the teacher that "You can send emails a thousand times to someone, but if it's in a language they don't understand, you're not going to get a response, no matter what." This instance revealed the teacher's inequitable communication practice, as it failed to recipients' characteristics or the challenges they may face in understanding the information (lines 3-7). Without Jade's intervention, such improper communication could have resulted in the exclusion of the mother and her son from the graduation event. Recognizing the communication problem between the homeroom teacher and the parent, Jade took it upon herself to make "a small gesture" by becoming a communication channel, sending out information in Spanish through applications that provide automatic translation for ESOL students' various home languages (lines 21-25). Reflecting on her such action, Jade expressed the following thoughts:

Excerpt 38. "It's all about partnerships."

1	Jade: So to have all of that communication happen and a time when we weren't even able
2	to be face to face anyway, but I'm sure it feel good for her to have somebody to
3	advocate for her even when I didn't know her, right? Never met this woman before,
4	never seen her before all of these things. I just know that I wanted what was best for
5	a child and through that I wanted what was best for her. It's because parents can
6	make a break a teacher's experience and can make a break each a child's experience
7	with that teacher because just as much as they rely on us, we rely on them. And it's
8	all about partnerships and how we can make sure that we are working together to
9	ensure that these kids are doing what they need to do. So from that standpoint, I
10	think it was just so powerful to see how some things that may have been like a

11	small gesture for me because it would only take a second to translate this, a second
12	to pick up the phone and talk to her. But it meant so much more than that to her
13	because it was not just me wanting what was best for a child, it was her to be
14	included in that too.

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

Excerpt 38 crystalizes Jade's understanding of an ideal relationship between teachers and parents, emphasizing the importance of a partnership for student success (lines 2-9). It also highlights Jade's perception of her role as an ESOL teacher in advocating for the inclusion of both ESOL students and parents within the school community.

Similar to Kiana and Yolanda, Jade made dedicated efforts to provide ESOL students and their parents with information that was previously unavailable or inaccessible to them. The narratives of these three participants shed light on the power imbalance that exists between ESOL students' parents, teachers, and the school system, specifically in terms of limited access to information. One could argue that this issue is simply due to miscommunication. However, the mother of Jade's ESOL student was only informed in English by the English monolingual homeroom teacher. Similarly, the father whom Yolanda encountered did not receive appropriate information about the ESOL program or how his child was placed in it, as the registrar's office failed to provide it. Additionally, the parents visited by Kiana felt unsafe to come to school due to their social status. From the perspective of intersectionality, these examples illustrate power dynamics relating to language and citizenship in both interpersonal and structural contexts. The participating teachers employed diverse strategies to communicate and establish mutual relationships with the parents of their ESOL students, drawing on reflection of their identities, experiences, and conflicts and tensions with colleagues. They took actions that may appear "small" but were significant in advocating for their students and parents. By taking a role of communication channels, they broke or levelled the power imbalance that existed. Ultimately,

their actions came to life, not in words, driven by a genuine desire for the well-being and success

of their students and families, which is arguably the ultimate goal of education.

3.2 Ways to support the success of ESOL students

In addition to supporting the parents of ESOL students, the participating teachers

illustrated their diverse efforts in providing support for their ESOL students. This support

encompassed both academic and emotional aspects, with the goal of fostering their students'

success in learning and adapting to their new society. Throughout the interviews, the teachers

shared various teaching episodes, highlighting successful strategies for creating more inclusive

classrooms. Each teacher described how they facilitated ESOL students' expression of their sense

of identity through a range of activities. These pedagogical efforts were rooted in culturally

relevant teaching, a theoretical pedagogy that they had all learned during their master's

programs. When asked to provide an example of implementing culturally relevant teaching in her

classroom, Kiana detailed several activities as follows:

Excerpt 39. "They're scared to advocate for their child."

1 2	Jang:	Can you share any examples of implementing culturally relevant teaching in your classroom or when you approach the students and their parents?
3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Kiana:	So, I start the school year, asking students like 'What does your name mean?' 'What is your name supposed to mean?' (inaudible) and exactly where they are from. And I always have this huge map on the door. I put my name on Somalia, East Africa… so they all know 'Oh, Ms. Kiana is from East Africa, she's Somali, but she's also American' you know, so the two different… places I come … and then I always ask them where they are from, and a lot of times some of them can't tell me. That's why I ask them and tell them 'Ask your parents, interview your parents and talk about it.' So, they ask like 'Mom, where am I from? My teacher asked me.' And surprisingly, they go tell them and when they come back and they're excited, saying 'I am from this country' and then I said 'Okay, where is this county on the map?' You know, that's a good way for us to connect and see where I am from and show them where Somalia is, it's in east Africa, where I lived in, I am from Tennessee, you know. We live in (inaudible) Tennessee. I also do a lot of writing, you know. I think I told you that I did 'I am' poem.
17	Jang:	No, you didn't.

18	Kiana: Oh I didn't? I thought I did. That's another thing I like to do, 'I am' poem. Talk
19	about who I am. I am, you know, I am a daughter of first refugee, I love the ocean,
20	the water, the nature, and things like that, so they know about me and where I
21	come from, what I love, what interests me, what I am proud of, who my family
22	is… and I model that, and they get a chance to talk about them. They kind of
23	understand their identity, that's one thing that I learned about in my program. You
24	need to make sure you work, first of all, for you yourself, you need to know what
25	your identity is in order to really help your student understand who they are. So,
26	yeah. That's one thing I try to do every year for my students.

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

Figure 4. A sample of Kiana's 'I am' poem activity

From her experiences in the master's program, Kiana appeared to understand the

significance of nurturing and valuing positive self-understanding among ESOL students. As she

mentioned in lines 8-9, some of her ESOL students have limited knowledge about their heritage

or family history. To address this, at the beginning of each school year, Kiana encouraged them

to explore their identities by interviewing their parents (lines 9-13) and engaging in an 'I am'

poem activity (lines 19-23). These activities (see Figure 4) not only benefit her students but also

enable Kiana to learn about herself, her own family stories, and life trajectories, which, in turn,

enhances her understanding of her students and helps her support their positive sense of self

(lines 24-28). Kiana also seemed to believe that these activities connect all members of her

classroom, including herself, and enable students to proudly acknowledge, affirm, and share their

identities. Moreover, the activities are her way of creating a sense of community by conveying

the message that despite our diverse origins, we are all members of the school, the local

community, the state, and the U.S. and global society (lines 14-16).

  While listening to Kiana's success stories of implementing culturally relevant teaching

approaches, I became curious about how she addressed situations where students displayed

negative attitudes towards their peers based on race, language, and/or appearance. When asked

about such experiences, Kiana described her implementation of a Social-Emotional Learning

(SEL) strategy, as follows:

Excerpt 40. "You want to make sure you cultivate the family in the classroom."

1 2 3	Jang:	Even though they are young, they come up with some kind of stereotypes and make fun of each other... I don't know if you had that kind of situation. Even though you don't have, if you had such experience, how would you manage it?
4	Kiana:	Oh someone gives them tease? They make fun of them?
5	Jang:	Yeah, like 'Oh, you sound weird.' Or, you know, racially or language…
6 7	Kiana:	… that's one of the good things about sharing your stories about you know. … I got teased when I first started wearing the scarf, you know all that.
8	Jang:	(nodding)
9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	Kiana:	And it's okay to be different, that's why I like about picture books because you can read a story to students. For example, *The Skin I'm In* was a good one about this girl who has a dark skin, and especially young girls, how she get (inaudible) she doesn't like having dark skin, and that's a good way when we start our conversation. That's why I like about SEL, Social-Emotional Learning. They are a great way of having those time for students to share and having those stories circled. That's one thing I learned in the master's. Having that quality time every morning to talk to students about how their weekend was, if there are any

17	concerns that they have. Doing that in the morning or afternoon to wrap it up.
18	Just little thing, but I always address it if something is a case, because I don't
19	want my students to feel like they're not family. You want to make sure you
20	cultivate the family in the classroom. That's how classroom management goes.
21	Crazy!

(3rd interview with Kiana, 11/30/2022)

The above excerpt exemplifies Kiana's use of a story circle with picture books as a means to openly discuss any issues or conflicts among students in her classroom. Drawing attention to the power of storytelling, Deardorff (2020) advocates for story circles as a practical tool for cultivating and practicing interculturality, as they encompass essential elements such as respect, active listening, curiosity, self-other awareness, reflection, sharing, empathy, and relationship building. Reflecting on her personal experience in middle school, where she felt marginalized due to her religious identity (lines 7-8), Kiana seemed to clearly understand her role as a teacher in fostering a sense of acceptance and belonging within the learning community (lines 19-21). During the group interview, Kiana also emphasized that her own identity as an East African Muslim, combined with her use of culturally relevant stories, enables her students to establish connections with one another.

On the other hand, Yolanda's approach appeared to focus on addressing the emotional and psychological well-being of ESOL students in their relationships with peers in the classroom. When questioned about how her own secondary education experience influenced her, Yolanda talked about her endeavors to create "an inclusive classroom."

Excerpt 41. "Nobody feels left out."

1	Yolanda: Well, I've always been like kind of reserved in myself. In the school, I had a
2	few friends but not too much friends. Sometimes I look at kids here, and those
3	that seem to not have too many friends or who are who I might think lonely, I
4	try to talk to them and match them with other kids, especially you know if
5	you're an English language learner like they could be like. I have a student
6	who is actually from Vietnam, she just came, she doesn't speak and English or
7	anything. And I have a student in my class who was always helping her and

8		other and I like that. So, if she didn't have anybody out, I always and then
9		there's another girl who is from Africa and I always make sure that they help
10		her and include her so that she's not feeling left out. She feels a part of the
11		class even though she doesn't need to speak English. So that's one way that I
12		try to like make my classroom an inclusive classroom so that nobody feels left
13		out.

<div align="right">(2nd interview with Yolanda, 11/12/2022)</div>

Excerpt 41 demonstrates Yolanda's recognition of the challenges new ESOL students face when it comes to building friendships due to their limited English proficiency. Drawing from her own experience of being reserved and having a few friends during her school year (lines 1-5), Yolanda appeared to have made efforts to foster a sense of belonging among ESOL students in her classroom by encouraging the presence of students who are willing to assist and include newcomers (lines 6-11). As she believed that students need to "learn to be a team," she emphasized the inclusion of ESOL students in peer groups and collaborative classroom activities, regardless of their English proficiency. Furthermore, Yolanda reflected on her own learning experience during her master's program, where she often felt left out "even as an adult" as follows:

Excerpt 42. "I don't know what Jeopardy is. I couldn't play the game."

1	Jang:	Learn to be a team. I like that. How did you learn that from your experience?
2	Yolanda:	Yeah. I mean sometimes you feel left out, right? Even as an adult like you know
3		being in America sometimes, you're going in a place and you're probably the
4		only one who is different.
5	Jang:	I never like being in the classroom in the United States, so yeah, to just say
6		being one in there.
7	Yolanda:	So that makes you sensitive to things like that in the classroom. So you care
8		(inaudible) because I can see that they feel different but they feel like I don't
9		belong here. And that's why, you see me. Now that is where culture or helping
10		them bringing something from their own culture might help because that makes
11		them feel like 'Oh yeah, I have a part in this classroom' instead of using
12		America as an example that might further alienate them and make them feel
13		like I don't know, because when I started school here when I went, used to live
14		in Oklahoma and I was in my master's program. The teacher was using

15	Jeopardy as an example. And I don't know what Jeopardy is. I couldn't play the
16	game. They were playing the game and I did not play. I didn't know what it
17	was, so I couldn't play the game. And I felt so sad and I was over 40 years old.
18	So if at that age I could feel like that, what would a child feel like if you play a
19	game that they cannot participate? So in that sense that's where I try to bring in
20	things that they are familiar with so that they feel. But for content you just have
21	to teach content. But where if I'm bringing games play use culture in there.

(2nd interview with Yolanda, 11/12/2022)

During the conversation, Yolanda attempted to evoke a shared sense of feeling "left out" with the researcher, who is also an immigrant (lines 2-4). As I reflected on my schooling experience as the only foreign student who looked different in U.S. classrooms (lines 5-6), Yolanda shared a similar experience she had during her higher education. Despite being a 40-year-old adult, Yolanda found it disheartening not to be fully included and engaged in the classroom, especially when the teacher used Jeopardy as an activity (lines 13-17). Yolanda's educational reflections, which her teacher did not (or was unable to) take into account the diverse cultural knowledge of students, have made her acutely "sensitive" to instances where students feel different or excluded. It is evident that her transnational learning experience has become a fundamental principle in her teaching for fostering an inclusive classroom (lines 18-19). However, Yolanda seemed to perceive culture as a means of providing students with a sense of belonging rather than something she can explicitly teach as content or through language instruction (lines 19-21). This point will be further discussed in the section of Finding 4.

While Yolanda and Kiana made pedagogical efforts to create inclusive classrooms, Jade utilized her bilingual abilities in English and Spanish to support the learning of her ESOL students, as she did for ESOL parents (see Finding 3.1). Jade has been studying Spanish since childhood and even plans to take a college-level Spanish for Educators course. During our conversation about each other's language learning experiences, Jade reflected on her realization of complex English grammar rules that many English language learners, including her ESOL

students, find difficult and challenging. She further shared her use of Spanish in her teaching

practices. One day, her Spanish language proficiency and its application were praised as "a great

strategy" by her Spanish-speaking colleague who observed her classroom teaching. Upon

examining photos of Jade's classroom, I noticed bilingual English-Spanish labels attached to

objects and furniture in her classroom (see Figure 5). Jade explained that her Spanish skills allow

her to implement "an asset-based approach" for her ESOL students, enabling them to make

"cognate connections" when they encounter "some vocabulary that they can't quite conjure"

during classroom activities or interactions with her.

Figure 5. Examples of English-Spanish bilingual labels in Jade's classroom

Furthermore, Jade emphasized her efforts to nurture positive spirits and confidence in her ESOL students, despite facing deficit perspectives and attitudes from her colleagues. Right from the first interview, she recounted incidents involving these colleagues, as described below:

Excerpt 43. "I don't think that they think the students are capable."

1	Jade: … I know we've had this conversation before or at least I've talked to you about it
2	before, where they have those preconceived notions of 'This is an ESOL student,
3	they won't be able to get so much out of them. They don't do anything. They're so
4	low.' It's a very… defeated attitude that I think a lot of the teachers have. And it's
5	not because, I don't think that they think the students are capable. I don't think that
6	they probably, they don't feel acquaint, right? To work with those students. Since
7	I've been out doing test, doing gifted testing or doing other things. That kind of take
8	me away from the classroom. Teachers are like 'What would I do with them? What
9	am I supposed to do?' And I'm like (chuckle) 'Anything that you would do for any
10	other child!' you know.

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

According to Jade, many teachers tend to associate ESOL students' limited English proficiency with their overall academic or cognitive capabilities, resulting in a lack of understanding in how to teach or interact with these students (lines 2-6). This deficit perspective is further exemplified in lines 8-10, where Jade recounted an incident involving a non-ESOL colleague who demonstrated a lack of knowledge and practice in teaching ESOL students when Jade was absent from the classroom due to her additional responsibilities as a gifted education program liaison. However, throughout her 13-year-long teaching career, Jade has recognized the strong potential that that many of her ESOL students possess in various areas. She has also come to understand that ESOL students have an "innate feeling of knowing how their teacher feels about them," which can have detrimental effects on their emotions and educational progress. Based on her observations of ESOL students and conflicts with her colleagues, Jade has adopted the attitude that "you can do anything you want to do" when working with her students. An example of this approach is as follows:

Excerpt 44. "Who told you that you don't know this?"

1   Jade: One of the girls today had to give her a make-up test in math or reading. And she's
2   one of my Level 1 kids who still kind of speaking Spanish in class and she was
3   clicking through her test today. And I was like, and it paused her because when they
4   start to click too fast, it will stop the test. And I said to her, I was like, 'Why are you
5   going so quickly?' And she was like, 'Just because I don't know it.' And I'm like
6   (holding the tears), and she said it in Spanish. And I said, 'Yes you do! Who told
7   you that you didn't know this? I know that we've done this together and you know I
8   want you to take your time so we could see what's really in their brain, right?' And
9   she just, you know she, she was going through it as if she were with another teacher
10   because that's what they allowed her to do like, 'Just get it, we just want you to get
11   it done and see where you are blah, blah, blah.' I talked to her about, like, 'Try our
12   best even if we don't know' like, 'Let's pick out some things that we do know.' And
13   like, 'Let's have some strategies where we can make sure that we are eliminating
14   the things that don't make sense or…' I don't know, it just, I just felt so bad for.

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

In Excerpt 44, Jade noticed that her Spanish-speaking ESOL student appeared disengaged

and rushed through her make-up test, "as if she were with another teacher" who wanted the

student to quickly "get it done" (lines 9-11). This other teacher's attitude, that prioritized test

results over the student's learning process, discouraged the student's confidence and active

engagement in the academic activity. In contrast, Jade made efforts to encourage the student and

facilitated her engagement in the test by reinforcing what she had learned. During our

conversation, Jade became emotional and momentarily paused to hold back her tears while

recounting a moment she had with the student (lines 4-9). Her narrative deeply resonated with

myself. I also shared my own teaching experience teaching at a summer academic camp in a

local Korean church in 2019. I recounted a moment when a fifth-grade girl, who had arrived in

the U.S. just a week prior, became overwhelmed while taking a diagnostic math test. The girl

suddenly realized that her academic environment would be solely in English, which came as a

horror-filled shock to her, and she started crying over the test paper. When Jade heard my

experience, she expressed empathy for the student and remarked, "I'm sure if that paper were

given to her in Korean, she should be able to go right thought it. It makes me so sad." It was a moment when both of us, without exchanging a word, acknowledged the immense emotional and psychological challenges our ESOL students face in an English monolingual education environment in the U.S.

In the face of her colleagues' deficit attitudes and perspectives, Jade emphasized the importance of fostering belief in ESOL students, stating that "anything outside of teaching… the biggest thing is just making sure that they [ESOL students] know that you believe in them." Perceiving herself as "a motivator," Jade seemed to believe that "motivation is important and in all forms," including compliments or simple gestures even like a pat on the back. Through her narrative, it becomes evident that Jade is dedicated to providing linguistic and emotional support to promote the success of ESOL students in their learning journey. Similarly, Yolanda and Kiana also made pedagogical efforts to cultivate inclusive classrooms, each employing various approaches. Each teacher's commitment to supporting ESOL students' academic, emotional, and social success is influenced by their personal, educational, and professional experiences. In turn, these experiences appear to have shaped their teaching practices, attitudes, and beliefs, enabling them to effectively address the diverse needs of ESOL students.

3.3 Ways to engage in a greater school community

As part of the individual interviews, the participants were asked about their involvement in various events, activities, or services throughout their personal and professional lives in order to gain insight into their interculturality. This study discovered that the participating teachers have engaged in diverse activities and services to establish strong connections within their broader school communities, not just their ESOL classrooms. Building upon the previous section (see Finding 1.1) Jade's active and enthusiastic participation in various social activities and

events began at a young age. During her time in high school, she became a member of a student

club that facilitated interactions with peers who had special needs, engaging in shared activities

and crafts. When asked about her decision to join this club, Jade expressed, "I always had that

thing like 'Oh, you know I wonder what it would be like to sit with those kids for a day." She

further elaborated, stating, "I always felt disconnected like if you were in general education

classes, you would never see those other kids, and it was just like I don't know I guess I was just

curious about it." Her genuine curiosity regarding peers with disabilities, whom she limited

knowledge of or opportunities to get to know and interact with, motivated her to join the club

and establish connections. When questioned about the impact of her involvement in such

activities during her secondary school years on her current teaching, Jade responded as follows:

Excerpt 45. "I'd like to become a well-rounded teacher."

1	Jade: Yeah, I think it has broadened my level of interest in certain things. So, for instance,
2	like being a spelling bee coordinator or being the robotics coordinator, I would have
3	never been interested in robotics when I was in school. It was just not my name,
4	right? But I think like wanting to be a part of my school community and involved in
5	many different ways comes from that same interest and things that they like to do
6	because my ESOL kids, none of them are in robotics or you know for anything like
7	that. But I think it's important for me not to just be comfortable with and/or know
8	one type of students, right? Like I want to get to know all of the kiddos, and
9	working with those kids too, because generally the kids who are in robotics, they're
10	more like gifted. Well, a lot of, I think, most of them are gifted and talented, but I
11	don't know what's going with that. But yeah I mean I think having the drive to want
12	to get to know people's experiences makes my experiences richer, because I'm
13	open to trying to see other things, and I've learned so much from these robotics kids
14	about coding and all that kind of stuff. I'm like I would have never or even like
15	doing the spelling bee, it opens that door. I was telling you before, like it's an
16	equalizer, right? You don't have to be a genius to know how to spell. Or, you could
17	be a genius, you just aren't a great speller. It opens the door for a lot of children.
18	But then also it's not just one type. So I'd like to involve myself in a lot of different
19	things and just (inaudible) become well-rounded teacher because I'm able to
20	navigate through those spaces, understand these children, and because they're all so
21	different. Oh my gosh, they are all so different. But I think that is related to
22	(unclear) like how I choose to spend a lot of my time at work.

(2nd interview with Jade, 11/10/2022)

Although Jade's primary role at school is to teach K-5 ESOL students, she has been involved in various student groups and services. She has taken on responsibilities as a coordinator for the Spelling Bee Contest and the Robotics Program, as well as a Gifted Education Liaison. As mentioned in lines 21-22, Jade has made a conscious decision to engage and interact with students who are not part of the ESOL program. This deliberate action is a strategy for her to step outside of her comfort zone and familiarize herself with different types of students and their learning experience (lines 4-11). By doing so, Jade has learned new things from students, such as coding, and become a more "well-rounded teacher" capable of connecting with a wider range of student groups in different contexts (lines 11-20). Jade seemed to recognize that her dedication to participating in various school activities and services acts as "an equalizer," enhancing her overall experience and expanding her level of interest and knowledge in different student populations, extending beyond ESOL students.

On the other hand, Yolanda has taken on the role of PTA (Parent Teacher Association) treasurer at her school. Initially, she was asked to be the treasurer, but over time, she has become "very passionate" for the position and work. Her dedication and hard work were even recognized by the school principal at the Fall Festival event. Yolanda perceived her involvement as a treasure as an opportunity to "have a relationship with everyone" at school. During our conversation, Yolanda pointed to a corner of her classroom where boxes of snacks, candies, and water bottles were stacked. She explained that she sells these items to all members of the school community in order to raise funds, and this endeavor has allowed her to interact with many students who come to purchase the items and get to know her. Furthermore, she emphasized how her role as a treasurer has positively impacted her teaching:

Excerpt 46. "It's been learning about working with people."

Yolanda: I think every day I learn. My experience with people generally because it's not just teachers as we teachers teach with the administrator administrations, with the custodians and the staff. So it's been learning about working with people, learning about managing people, because not everybody has the same work ethics, not everybody has the same perspective. So you have to, you have to look at things from multiple perspective so not just only my own perspective 'Okay, how why are they doing this way?', 'How I did work in this way?' So I would say that also just having, coming from two different cultures, you know, is being… it's made me a better person because I have, I can look at things from different perspective. I'm not just narrow minded, African minded, but I look at things from all this multiple perspective that I have encountered along the way. So I think it's made me more a forward looking more, more rounded person, more objective and more accepting of people.

(3rd interview with Yolanda, 11/30/2022)

In Excerpt 46, Yolanda demonstrated a clear understanding that her role as a teacher extends beyond solely teaching ESOL students in the classroom. According to her perspective, teaching involves collaborating with individuals from diverse backgrounds, including administrators, custodians, and staff members (lines 1-3). Engaging in such collaborative work experiences has provided her with valuable insights into working with and managing individuals who possess different perspectives (lines 3-5). Through her interactions and collaborations within the school community members, Yolanda has learned the significance of understanding "multiple perspectives" rather than only relying on her own perspective (lines 5-7). Especially, she seemed to acknowledge the influence of her transnational experience, having immigrated from Nigeria and being exposed to two distinct cultures. This experience has contributed to her personal growth, enabling her to become a "more rounded," "objective," and "accepting" individual (lines 7-13).

Despite being a novice and new to the current school, Kiana has actively engaged in various activities. Since the previous school year, Kiana has dedicated her time as a tutor in the EL (English learners) Reading Club. She "chose to do" this work to provide additional support to students who need assistance in reading and math and completing their homework twice a week.

On the day of our group interview, Kiana arrived just in time, wearing a red t-shirt decorated

with her school's mascot, having rushed from her tutoring service. In our subsequent email

exchange, she reflected on her experience as follows:

Excerpt 47. "That gave me a lot of motivation to see him succeed."

1   Kiana: It (EL Reading Club) motivated me more because my students needed extra
2   support. (Last year) I had one student named Lucas (pseudonym) who could not
3   write legibly in the 4th grade. I had to work with him every day after school to
4   give him the necessary support he needed. That gave me a lot of motivation to see
5   him succeed and as I worked with him daily, he showed progress.

(An email exchange with Kiana, 03/16/2023)

Kiana's commitment to volunteering for various academic activities exemplifies her dedication

to supporting students in need of additional assistance and her passion for students' success (lines

1-5). Furthermore, she participated in various cultural events in school, including International

Night, where she worked with students to showcase "a traditional Ethiopian dance to the school

community." Kiana vividly recalled the positive response from many families who expressed

their delight in seeing their children perform the dance. Her involvement in the event filled her

with a sense of pride as her students displayed their heritage. It also highlighted her appreciation

for diversity and her willingness to actively engage with the school community. In the email, she

further emphasized that "being part of the school community and being involved with parents

has allowed me [her] to become an ally who hopes for a successful future for my [her] students."

This remark exemplifies Kiana's strong recognition and commitment to fostering a supportive

environment for diversity and inclusion in her school, through active engagement and

collaboration with students and parents as their ally.

Finding 4. Perspectives toward culture and the Other

Culture is a dynamic and ever-evolving system of meaning-making and interpretation,

facilitating intercultural contact and interaction within and across diverse social and cultural

contexts (Bhabha, 1994; Irani & Dourish, 2009). In the process of culture, individuals develop beliefs, values, and worldviews based on their intercultural experiences. Each participating teacher in this study also expressed their own perspectives on culture, diversity, and racial others during the interviews. As these interviews aimed to explore the participants' lived experiences with people from diverse backgrounds across various times and settings, it became apparent that the narratives shared by the participants often conveyed their negative perspectives towards others.

4.1 Unconscious practice of stereotypes toward the Other

In Excerpt 7 (in Finding 1.1), Kiana revealed her negative attitudes toward her African American classmates during her time in middle school. She observed that their classroom behavior had "no respect for teachers." Additionally, those black students bullied Kiana, derogatorily referring to her hijab as a "rag," which deeply offended her spiritual identity. From this experience, Kiana demonstrated how she learned to protect and "stand up" for herself. However, in describing such undesirable behaviors, Kiana made a statement that generalized them by saying, "the behavior is still like way too many black." In validating her action of defending herself, Kiana perpetuated racial stereotypes and engaged in discriminatory social discourse.

Furthermore, during the same interview, Kiana exhibited a stereotypical perspective toward Asians, which follows the discourse of model minority myth that portrays Asians as smart, intelligent, and skilled in math and science (Lee, 1996; Lew, 2006; Ngo & Lee, 2007). The following excerpt is from the second interview with Kiana, where she discussed her learning experiences with racially diverse teachers at schools.

Excerpt 48. "I feel like there's more of science, right?"

1	Jang:	You didn't have any Asian or Hispanic teachers?
2 3	Kiana:	No, we didn't have. Wait, well I think the Asian teachers were AP teachers like chemistry or physics. But I rarely saw them because I wasn't in those class.
4	Jang:	Only one Asian teacher, but the person didn't teach you.
5	Kiana:	No, he was like, yeah he's the Asian guy.
6	Jang:	Wow.
7	Kiana:	But yeah, this isn't crazy?
8 9 10	Jang:	Well, I think there are a really small number of Asian teachers in general in America, in K-12 and colleges too. Have you ever had any Asian college professors?
11 12 13 14 15	Kiana:	They're probably smart and they realize teaching is crazy?! (giggling) Yeah, I think I've seen more Asian teachers at my college than in high school, which is kind of you know sad. In elementary, 'cause kids do really do need. There's like you know high population of Asian students. But then again this is Georgia. I don't, I haven't been to where Asian (students are)…
16 17	Jang:	But we have, in Georgia here especially for Koreans. Georgia has the third biggest Korean immigrant population in the country.
18	Kiana:	So I wonder the schools, do they have like Asian teachers?
19	Jang:	(nodding)
20	Kiana:	Umm okay. It's interesting.
21 22	Jang:	Yeah. But I guess especially with Koreans and Chineses, we live in (mostly) Gravenshire and Delphine counties (all pseudonyms)…
23 24 25 26 27 28	Kiana:	But think about it though. I don't know Asian parents. Do they want, like I don't... Do they really push for their child to go into the teaching field? I feel like there's more of like science, right? 'Cause you're coming from like you know, I don't know. My friends like I mean they're not East Asian, but they're Malaysian and Indonesian. Just they always their parents want them to focus on science, so I see why they're not teaching. So I see why they are not in the teaching field.

(2nd interview with Kiana, 11/16/2022)

In Excerpt 48, Kiana perpetuated her stereotypes by assuming that Asians are "smart" and

therefore realize how "teaching is crazy" (line 11). Drawing from her experience with Southeast

Asian peers, which might have formed the basis of her understanding of the population, she also

seemed to believe that Asians and their parents are less inclined to pursue teaching as a

professional career, which in turn contributes to the scarcity of Asian teachers at schools (lines

23-28). As observed in lines 11 and 23-28, Kiana's giggling and hesitance repeatedly saying "I

don't know" suggest that she approached these assumptions in a lighthearted or casual manner. It

appeared that she did not intend to generalize the entire Asian population or cause any offense to

the researcher, who is East Asian. However, despite feeling "sad" for Asian students who "really

do need" Asian teachers as role models who can understanding and support their struggles,

Kiana's perpetuation of stereotypes demonstrates a limited level of criticality and sensitivity in

understanding individuals of different races.

4.2 Subculture and cultural experience

Among the participants, Jade stood out as having the most extensive and positive

intercultural experiences from an early age. However, her time in college exposed her to a

different kind of encounters—"cultural shock." Jade attended a small public university with

approximately 5,000 students, located in "one of the poorest counties" in Alabama. Although the

university was officially classified served as a predominantly white institution (PWI), it

maintained a balanced ratio of white and black student populations. Given the limited racial

diversity in the small rural environment, the college served as one of the few places where

individuals from different races could come together and interact. When asked to describe the

environment of her college, Jade illustrated as below:

Excerpt 49. "It was interesting how things were really segregated."

1	Jade: I went to Riverside University (pseudonym). A ve-----ry small town compared to
2	here. … But it was interesting going to school in such a small town after being in
3	Oceania (pseudonym) for so long. So it was definitely a culture shock as far as
4	convenience and what was around this, but then also the relation between black and
5	white people?! (in a rising tone) It was very interesting. I found out that in that
6	particular county, they had a private school …, oh Christ, just price at a price point
7	…, the right amounts of money to make it too expensive for black kids to go and
8	then, I guess within a range where like even higher class white kids, middle class

9	white kids, and lower class white kids with all attend. So it was weird because it
10	was still weirdly segregated and this is in 2006. So it wasn't like, we're not talking
11	in 1950s. It was strange and it was everything that they pretty much had going on in
12	the city was segregated. So yeah, it was interesting how things were really
13	segregated. And then also there was really no mixing of people unless it was at the
14	college. So we all of course get along and everything, but just in general the people
15	who lived there, like black people pretty much stayed on one side of town and white
16	people pretty much stay on one side of town. So, it was very strange just to see that.
17	But I guess how you know small rural areas like, that is something that is so
18	normalized. But if you live there, you don't think anything is wrong with it. But
19	coming from here I was like, 'What is going on?' 'Why don't all the kids go to
20	school to get,' you know, so it was weird.

(3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2023)

In the above excerpt, Jade described her observation of racial "segregation" between white and black populations in the local environment surrounding her college. Specifically, lines 8-16 highlight the strong connection between the practice of racial segregation and the socioeconomic gap that only allows white students to enroll in private schools. This experience felt "weird" and "strange" for Jade, as she grew up in a metropolitan city with racial and cultural diversity. It was disturbing for her to witness that racial segregation was "something that is so normalized" for people in small rural areas in the year of 2006. Even within her volleyball team, where Jade dedicated herself as a scholarship player, she was one of only three black players. She further recalled an incident with a white teammate who exclaimed, "Oh, I've never had any black girls on my team before." Jade's surprised reaction and feeling of strangeness were evident in her description as she responded with, "For real? Oh, okay." This encounter highlights the cultural divide in which some individuals never had interactions with others from different backgrounds.

Moreover, Jade also experienced the distinct "subculture" of the black community in the "deep south," which was another culture shock for her during college.

Excerpt 50. "They had pig tails as a thing."

1   Jang: So you were the kid from a big city. Hahaha!

2   Jade: Seriously, like 'Oh you're from Apple City?' (pseudonym, in a surprising tone) And
3   I am like 'Yeah~.' I didn't realize when your scope is, so I don't even want to say
4   limited because to people from small towns, that scope isn't limited to them. That's
5   just all that they're used to. But it's very interesting when it's like, 'Oh, have you
6   ever been to so and so?' Then like 'Oh, I have never been out of the state before' or
7   'I've never been out of the country.' It's just like 'This is all that you've seen
8   before?' And they were just like 'Uh, yeah.' You know, there was a lot of that and a
9   lot of interesting exchanges of culture I get, because you know even within black
10   culture, Asian culture, white culture, there's always another sub culture within all of
11   those. So even just learning about black culture from a deep south country kind of
12   perspective. We went to one of my friends' house and he was like, "Nobody wants
13   to eat?" I'm thinking like we will have chicken or something. They had pig tails as
14   a thing and I was like 'I'm not eating that.' And I was like 'I love you, but I am not
15   eating it.' Just like the thing that they found to be delicacy, all that kind of stuff. I
16   am just like 'This is strange.' It was strange to me, you know, because that's not
17   what I was used to, but it was really, really interesting.

                                                        (3rd interview with Jade, 12/13/2022)

During her visit to her friend's house, Jade encountered the deep southern black culture (e.g.,

eating pig tails), which she found both "strange" and "really interesting" (lines 12-17). This

experience was unexpected for Jade, but it helped her recognize the cultural diversity within the

black community and highlighted the importance of expanding one's scope of cultural

experiences beyond geographic boundaries (lines 3-7). This excerpt reflects Jade's first interview

on the U.S. and its people that are "very isolated" when it comes to "access to other cultures."

She responded as follows, when asked to provide values that she have found from her experience

of cultural differences:

Excerpt 51. "We're very isolated in terms of access to other cultures."

1   Jade: Because I think that we run into that a lot (giggling) with people who are
2   Americans, right? When you think of America and where it's positioned and all of
3   that, we have Canada to the north, Mexico to the south. It's really only three
4   countries that we have in North America essentially. I know there are some other
5   countries in Central America, but when you think about countries in Europe or
6   countries in Africa, you are surrounded by so many other countries and there's so
7   much access to other languages and other cultures and things like that. We're very
8   isolated in terms of what we have access to other cultures (inaudible). So I think,
9   I've heard this statistics years ago. I think maybe like less than 3% of Americans

10	have a passport and then less than half of that percentage of people use it for travel.
11	So it is like, I don't understand. But I mean I should like, if we were to see beyond
12	that, using the passport as identification, we would not get so many misconceptions
13	and ways that we interpret people could be changed or some things that we might
14	be afraid of, or some things we might be confused by. All of that could be alleviated
15	when you take the opportunity to learn.

(1st interview with Jade, 10/27/2022)

In the excerpt, Jade emphasized the importance of first-hand cultural experience abroad as a means to address misconceptions and negative perspectives towards others (lines 11-15). This belief aligns with previous studies (Sobkowiak, 2019), but it requires careful consideration. It is crucial to acknowledge that not everyone has the financial means to afford international travel for the purpose of gaining diverse cultural experiences. In Jade's case, she was fortunate to have been provided with such experiences due to the support of her middle-class parents and international friends since her early years (see Findings 1.1). Additionally, it is worth noting that travel or overseas experience alone can often reinforce cultural stereotypes unless individuals actively take the time and effort to reflect, observe, and genuinely engage with cultural differences (Kennedy, 2020; Ladegaard, 2020). Therefore, limitations and potential pitfalls associated with oversimplified ideas of travel as a means to gain first-hand cultural experiences should be recognized. Instead, alternative and more sustainable avenues should be considered, such as engaging with diverse local ethnic communities or participating in virtual exchanges, for meaningful intercultural experiences and understanding.

4.3 Teaching culture is not my job

English is the only official language in Nigeria, Yolanda's home country, which was colonized by Great Britain. Yolanda speaks Nigerian British English. Nonetheless, Yolanda strongly considers herself as 'non-native' English speaker since "it is still not exactly the same." Moreover, she constantly positioned herself as someone "coming from a different culture, a

different language, a different background, and a different generation" throughout the interviews.

During our second interview, Yolanda claimed that her "job is not to teach them about culture"

when asked how she has helped her ESOL students use their background knowledge to

understand U.S. society. When the researcher asked if language is part of culture, Yolanda agreed

but insisted that she cannot teach about U.S. culture that she does not know.

Excerpt 52. "I cannot take up teaching culture."

1	Yolanda:	Sometimes their background knowledge will not apply here because it doesn't
2		transfer. Some things don't transfer from your culture to here, right? Same way,
3		some things cannot transfer from American culture to your culture. So, you
4		have to understand the difference. So part of my job is not to teach them about
5		culture. My job is to teach them about language. So I cannot take up teaching
6		culture but I can help them to understand a bit of the culture here. I cannot help
7		them with their own culture because if I had 10, 10 different cultures, how am I
8		going to and I don't understand their culture but I can help them … if I'm
9		teaching a skill on inference I can tell them this. 'Oh I can use their own culture
10		to do a compare and contrast and see in your culture this is how it is here in
11		America.' This is how it is. Now let's see if there's anything that is similar
12		between both. And let's look at how it's different so that you can understand
13		what's happening. Just you have to use what you have to teach you. I can't
14		teach from where I don't know but I can teach from what I know to bridge for
15		them to understand well what's happening here. My focus is on language.

16	Jang:	Yeah. But then don't you think language is also part of culture?

17	Yolanda:	Yes, it is. But I cannot teach. I don't know what you were saying about culture,
18		but I cannot teach some things that I do not know. So I can only try to if we are
19		making an inference in the classroom and they make a wrong judgment because
20		of their experience or background knowledge, then I can correct them and say
21		'Oh no, this is not what is happening here, because it happened to me too.' Me
22		making, I can see a picture and I can say 'oh no.' This is for instance this week I
23		still looked at the picture and I said 'I think this is hurricane.' And another
24		person said 'It's a tornado.' Okay? Some other people can say 'Oh, this person
25		is doing something else.' We're all talking based on a personal experience, but
26		who is right? We can go and look at what exactly happens in the picture and
27		then we can talk about it and say 'Oh well, this is right, because we see this this
28		this is there.'

29	Jang:	So, can I understand that your point? You cannot teach culture because your
30		personal experiences in the United States are also not everything that …

31	Yolanda:	My experience is in Nigeria and some in the United States. My experience is
32		more from Nigeria. So I cannot teach. I cannot even teach American culture,

33		hundred percent because I don't even know American culture hundred percent.
34	Jang:	Then do you share your Nigerian culture with your students?
35	Yolanda:	Yes, of course I do. I tell them this is what happens in Nigeria. We talk about
36		and they tell me this is what happens in their country. We talk about different
37		things and talk about 'Oh well, so how does this happen? This is how we do
38		this. This is how you do yours.' We talk about it.
39	Jang:	What kind of what aspect of a Nigerian culture have you shared with your
40		students?
41	Yolanda:	Food, movie.

(2nd interview with Yolanda, 11/12/2022)

Excerpt 52 illustrates Yolanda's firm belief that her teaching focuses primarily on language rather than culture. Given that most of her experiences are from Nigeria and her knowledge of U.S. culture is not "100 percent" (lines 32-34), Yolanda has adopted alternative approaches to develop her ESOL students' inference skills, which would "help them to understand a bit of the culture here" (lines 6-10). Using her own experience and knowledge of U.S. culture as a bridge, she appears to have guided students in comparing and discussing cultural similarities and differences, ensuring they do not make "a wrong judgment" (lines 10-16, 19-22). During our conversation, it became evident that Yolanda and I had differing understandings of culture (line 18). When asked if she shares her Nigerian culture, Yolanda mentioned engaging in conversations about her country, including topics like food and movies (lines 35-41). Particularly noteworthy is her statement, "This is how we do this. This is how you do yours" (lines 38-39), which emphasizes Yolanda's perception of culture as a national identity confined within geographic boundaries.

Furthermore, Yolanda expressed her concern about multiple cultures brought by ESOL students that she does not fully understand (lines 6-8). Throughout the interviews, Yolanda conveyed positive attitudes and thoughts about embracing the identities and cultures of ESOL students. She also discussed her engagements in various activities to advocates for their struggles and challenges both in and out of school. However, Yolanda appeared confused or even upset

when interview questions distinguished teaching culture from language. The following excerpts

provides a deeper insight into Yolanda's understanding of teaching culture:

Excerpt 53. "It's not about culture, it's about teaching language and the curriculum."

1	Jang:	You mentioned most of your personal experiences are based in your home
2		country, right? So but now in the United States, you're working as an ESOL
3		teacher, right? So how do you manage or how do you think about your role as
4		an ESOL teacher?
5	Yolanda:	I don't understand your question. As an ESOL teacher I have, my job
6		responsibility is to teach them.
7	Jang:	Teach the language, English?
8	Yolanda:	So my experience as a Nigerian has nothing to do with that. If I'm following
9		curriculum, you people bring in their own personal experience. Sometimes if
10		it's going to help with things, but if it's not going to help, that has nothing to do
11		with it. Because we have a curriculum. So with the curriculum, it's kind of you
12		have what you're supposed to teach. I can try to look at my students and
13		background and see if I used examples from their culture. That could help them
14		to understand what I'm teaching. But my focus is not on that, because like I said
15		I have multiples students. So how many examples of the same thing am I going
16		to do? I need to teach them in a way that is best for everyone. If the focus is on
17		phonics. Phonics has nothing to do with culture. If I'm teaching them about
18		alphabets and sounds, that has nothing to do with culture, they want to learn
19		how to speak English. I'm not talking about anything to do with my experience.
20		If I'm teaching them how to read, we're going to be looking at the different
21		sounds. So maybe this time we're looking at a sound /ah/ we're looking at
22		vowels. That's not going to be I'm not going to be talking to them about
23		experiences. Now there are some other kids who are much higher who speak
24		close to native language speakers, those ones are reading at a higher level.
25		They're doing things at a higher level. So those ones when I teach them in class
26		we already have pins that we're using. We have curriculum. We have texts that
27		we use with them. But sometimes when I'm talking to them just talking
28		generally like when you are off script, so you are not necessarily teaching, but
29		you are talking to them about life then you can bring your own personal
30		experience. Except if your child is not a, if you are teaching social studies you
31		have to teach social studies. You teach the curriculum. You're not teaching
32		about culture. So don't focus about culture now so just focus about the language
33		or the job of what an ESOL teacher is. It's not about culture. It's about teaching
34		language and teaching the curriculum.

(2nd interview with Yolanda, 11/12/2022)

When I inquired about Yolanda's perception of her role as an ESOL teacher with lived

experiences in two countries, it appeared that she did not fully interpret the question (lines 1-6).

Instead, she explicitly stated, "my experience as a Nigerian has nothing to do" with teaching

specific aspects of the English language, such as phonics, alphabets, sounds, and reading (lines

8-27). Furthermore, she firmly asserted that her responsibility is to adhere to the given

curriculum and teach "in a way that is best for everyone." According to her, the only possibility

for her and her students to discuss their diverse cultures and relevant personal experiences in the

classroom arises "when you are off script" or when "you are not necessarily teaching but talking

about life" (lines 27-30). Yolanda's perception indicates that the ESOL curriculum itself lacks

inclusion of multicultural perspectives or cultural elements in language education. This

perception further echoes prevailing narratives found in previous studies, which prioritize

language instruction while relegating culture to a peripheral role in language education (Alaei &

Nosrati, 2018; Byram et al., 2013; Gonen & Saglam, 2012; Kusumaningputri & Widodo, 2018).

Furthermore, Yolanda reiterated her concern about the multiple cultures brought by ESOL

students that she does not fully understand (lines 6-8 in Excerpt 52, lines 14-16 in Excerpt 53).

Later in the same interview, when discussing her intensive English program in school, she posed

a question, "How many cultures are you going to reflect in a (text) book that you don't know?

Who is going to be reading it?" She then continued by saying, "But they (teachers) tried to be at

least a little bit multicultural like bringing different voices into it." This concern is likely not

unique to Yolanda alone, as many other language teachers may grapple with the dilemma of

effectively addressing 'diversities' within their classrooms. Yolanda further revealed her beliefs

that teaching culture might be more suitable for students with advanced language proficiency or

for adults whose curriculum is more flexible. In her elementary classroom, addressing diverse

cultures appears to be an impractical or impossible endeavor; instead, the primary focus remains

on language acquisition since "the kids need to learn how to speak." Yolanda's narrative unveils her contemplation of adopting an all-encompassing multicultural approach. Simultaneously, her apprehension about the feasibility of introducing a wide spectrum of cultures and cultural content, while ensuring inclusivity for all students, is also evident. This contrast emphasizes the urgency for language educators to envision the transformative prospects of a language classroom into an authentically multicultural learning environment, which can be accomplished through a deliberate deconstruction of the conventional perception of culture tied solely to nation-states.

Summary

The findings of this study revealed that all participants have had a wide range of intercultural experiences throughout their lives. These experiences have proven to be particularly pivotal, as each participant was raised in a distinct family, home, and local environment that had a huge impact on their intercultural journey from an early age. Notably, the profound influence of their early childhood and educational backgrounds has served as a bedrock, shaping how the participants navigate social dynamics and perceive their roles as ESOL teachers dedicated to fostering diverse and inclusive learning environments.

These rich intercultural experiences have also developed the participants' ability to meaningfully engage with individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, as well as their adeptness at advocating for themselves and others. Specifically, the participants' interactions with ESOL students, parents, and colleagues at school have played an influential role in deepening their understanding of professional responsibilities and in forging their own identities within their roles. These lived encounters were further significant in heightening the participants' empathy for the struggles and challenges faced by their ESOL students and parents. This empathy, in turn, positioned them to provide a well-rounded support system encompassing both

emotional reassurance and robust academic guidance.

However, the participants' experiences have revealed certain complexities within intercultural interactions. While the participants gained a wealth of insights from their intercultural experiences, it was discerned that they held stereotypical perspectives toward individuals of different racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds. Furthermore, a palpable concern emerged regarding the integration of cultural teachings within their language classrooms.

5 DISCUSSION

This qualitative case study aimed to enhance our understanding of interculturality and its manifestation in language education. Specifically, it explored the life trajectories of three in-service ESOL teachers to examine how their personal and professional experiences have influenced their intercultural teaching practices. The study was guided by the following research questions: (1) How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their life and profession? (2) What are in-service ESOL teachers' beliefs about their interculturality in teaching? (3) What aspects of in-service ESOL teachers' lived experiences contribute to their interculturality? The study conducted three individual and one group interviews with the participants and artifacts that demonstrated the participants' teaching practices were also collected for analysis. The cross-analysis of data from all three participants revealed four key findings: (1) Intercultural experiences in diverse sociocultural environments, (2) Intercultural relationships in school, (3) Actions for advocacy, (4) Perspectives toward culture and the Other.

In this chapter, I explain and discuss the findings, guided by the research questions. In particular, I emphasize the significance of self-awareness and critical reflection of privilege and marginalization for the embodied practice of interculturality. I then delve into the characteristics of the teachers' interculturality and its implementation in their teaching practices. Lastly, I conclude this chapter by outlining implications for research and practice, highlighting a pressing need to cultivate intercultural language teaching approaches that can contribute to a more accepting, diverse, and inclusive school, society, and world.

Interculturality through critical reflexivity

As teachers' personal life is strongly related to their professional life, it is important to

examine how they understand their lived experiences and the impact on their teaching (Kincheloe, 2004; Menard-Warwick, 2008). After analyzing the data from the in-depth interviews with the three ESOL teachers, regarding their experiences from birth to the present, the findings revealed that these teachers have encountered intercultural experiences in diverse sociocultural settings, including family, school, and community from a young age. These experiences have contributed to the cultivation of their sensitivity to diversity and provided opportunities for critical reflections on their sense of self and social positions, both as individuals and ESOL teachers. As each teacher has their own unique lived experiences and histories, here I discuss each participant's distinct ways of being and understanding their interculturality in relation to others. Thereafter, I expand the discussion to argue that interculturality is an ongoing process in which the participants are asked to problematize social discourses and further their criticality and sensitivity towards the Other.

Jade

Born and raised in a middle-class black family, Jade had numerous educational and intercultural experiences through travels, sport events, and other social activities. Notably, her K-12 schools and local communities, enriched by a substantial immigrant population, played a crucial role in facilitating her intercultural exchanges and relationships with peers, friends, and teachers from different racial and language backgrounds. Her college education further provided Jade with intra- and intercultural exchanges, while exposing her to the ongoing systemic practices of racism and segregation prevalent in the deep southern part of the country.

As an able-bodied, native English-speaking individual with strong academic skills and proficiency in Spanish, Jade has actively participated in cross-cultural events both within and outside school. During her school years, she supported peers with disabilities and served as a

student ambassador who aided newcomer students in their settlement and adjustment to school. Reflecting on her intercultural relationships with the immigrant peers from the Bosnian War, Hurricane Katrina, and other parts of the world, Jade became aware of the complex and relational impact of geopolitical issues on her everyday life, encompassing interpersonal, cultural, and disciplinary domains of power. These issues transformed the landscape of diversity in her community, school, and even her peer groups. At the same time, she observed the migration of her White peers and teachers away from the influx of immigrants in school and community. Unfortunately, her school did not provide adequate academic support for immigrant students, and teachers were not accommodating or proactive in their teaching methods for these students.

Despite the privileges in many aspects of her social identity, Jade reflected on her marginalized experiences as a black teacher who has a non-traditional appearance with tattoos. Her qualification as a skilled teacher and her unique name have been undermined or disregarded due to her race and appearance, which Jade seemed to attribute to intergenerational issues rather than structural racism and discrimination in society.

As she had gained various intercultural experiences by actively engaging in different events in early life, Jade has taken a similar strategy in the current workplace. She has been strategic in taking on various roles and responsibilities (e.g., a coordinator for the Spelling Bee Contest and Robotics Program, Gifted Education Liaison), which is a way to expand her scope of intercultural knowledge and experience through interactions with students with different skills and from diverse backgrounds. If her peers from all over the world were key contributors of her interculturality in the past, her ESOL students are the current primary resource that expands her understanding of others, social relationships, society, and the world.

In her relationship with colleagues, Jade experienced conflicts and challenges due to their stereotypical and predetermined perspectives and lack of teaching experience of ESOL students. Those issues have become the fuel or alerts for Jade to become critically aware of her own reservoirs of thinking and behaviors, as well as her self as an ESOL teacher who endeavors to broaden her intercultural knowledge of *ALL* students. Moreover, she strived to develop the colleagues' intersectional thinking and understanding about not only ESOL students' challenges but also their potentials and abilities. In doing so, she is trying to make a change, hoping to be the pillar of the school that colleagues can trust and depend on.

Kiana

Kiana grew up in a working-class family, with parents who were Somali refugees starting a new life in the U.S. Growing up in an inner-city area with large immigrant communities, she had the advantage of living in a diverse environment. This allowed her to interact with friends and peers from different backgrounds in schools and apartment complexes. Kiana experienced upward socioeconomic mobility due to her parents' financial stability, which enabled her to have a study abroad in Kenya for a year during seventh grade. The purpose of this study abroad experience was to enhance and enrich her linguistic, cultural, and spiritual practices within the Somali community.

This intercultural experience fundamentally transformed her understanding of self in more critical ways. Despite her expectations of excitement and belonging among people who shared her racial, ethnic, and spiritual identities for the first time, she was Othered due to her American English and her appearance with eyeglasses. However, upon returning to her hometown and attending a middle school, Jade experienced a double Othering from African American peers who mocked her for wearing a hijab, which made her distinctly noticeable. It

was at this moment that Kiana realized the significance of protecting and advocating for herself as a Muslim woman. Such experiences of being differentiated and Othered persisted even during her college years. Kiana's lived experiences as a Black Muslim woman from an urban city were often tokenized by her white classmates, adding to her psychological and emotional burdens.

Reflecting on her experiences of being marginalized, as well as those of her refugee parents, Kiana became able to recognize the impact of geopolitical and disciplinary power on the experiences of not only her but also her ESOL students and their parents. She further integrated those lived experiences into her teaching practices with a deeper understanding of systematic oppression against her ESOL students and parents and addressed their needs and struggles within the schooling system. She also provided academic and emotional support through home visits and advocated on their behalf. Moreover, understanding the importance of self-awareness in helping students comprehend their own identities, Kiana has actively assisted ESOL students in questioning and exploring their roots, histories, and sense of self through various learning activities. Additionally, her work as a tutor allowed Kiana to extend her support to students in need of extra academic support. Teaching ESOL has, thus, become a site where Kiana can foster mutual growth and intercultural understanding, learning about herself and from her ESOL students and parents.

Yolanda

Yolanda, born and raised in a middle-class family in Nigeria, led an affluent, protected, and confined lifestyle. Despite the country's multi-ethnic, multi-cultural, and multi-lingual setting, Yolanda lived within her own ethnic community and had limited cultural exchanges with others. As an obedient and intelligent student, she did not experience many academic struggles or challenges in her life. However, her life changed when she immigrated to the U.S. in her middle

age.

In the U.S., Yolanda made the decision to further her education to be an English language teacher. Entering a master's program and working as a substitute teacher became a significant turning point in her life. Throughout her graduate school years, Yolanda faced marginalization due to her limited cultural knowledge of the U.S. In addition, her experience as a substitute teacher challenged her socioeconomic privilege and altered her perspective on U.S. education system, particularly regarding African American students who struggle with schooling. Coming from a highly competitive society where physical punishment of students is considered normal, Yolanda found it difficult to fully comprehend U.S. schools, which often prioritize excessive awards and provide multiple opportunities for students to pass exams and tests.

However, Yolanda recognized the need to learn about the new society and school system. Through critical self-reflection and the search for cultural knowledge on U.S. society, she was able to gain a better understanding of her students and accept their struggles and challenges. Teaching ESOL for 9 years has thus provided Yolanda with opportunities to enhance her sense of self and positionality in the workplace. Drawing on her experiences as an immigrant and a mother of two immigrant children, Yolanda has empathized with her ESOL students and parents. In interpersonal and intercultural interactions with them, Yolanda has perceived herself to be a model of a successful immigrant, as well as a representative of ESOL program, bridging the communication gap between the school and ESOL parents.

According to Sorrells and Sekimoto (2016), interculturality "necessitates critical awareness of the kind of world we inherited from the past" (p. xviii). From the examination of the participants' description of their experiences, this study found evidence that interculturality develops through a myriad of interpersonal relationships in daily life. It also revealed the

significance of examining social interactions at the micro level to understand how interculturality develops and affects ways that people think, behave, perform, and present themselves (Dervin, 2016). The participants engaged in the exchange, sharing, and learning of cultural knowledge, values, and beliefs through interpersonal interactions with various individuals, including family members, peers, friends, teachers, students and their parents, and colleagues. These individuals were not necessarily from different national backgrounds, but had their own unique personhoods, experiences, and histories that contributed to various aspects of the participants' identity and worldviews.

Interculturality cannot develop with one's essentialized knowledge of a particular culture and/or its people. However, numerous intercultural and language studies still perceive culture as strongly tied to nation-states or essentialized characteristics of a particular group of people (e.g., Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2004). Cultural difference is also seen simply as derived from social categories of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, age, gender, language, culture, citizenship, spiritual practices and/or dis/ability. This "roster- like approach" to social categories as a component of one's identity tends to homogenize individuals with seemingly identical categories, erasing their subjectivity and individuality (Yep, 2010, p. 173). This study thus solidifies the idea of culture as a meaning-making process in which our everyday experiences and practices are interpreted, exchanged, and negotiated (Bhabha, 1994; Irani & Dourish, 2009; Mata-Benito, 2013). In this sense, culture can be considered a product of individuals' accumulated intercultural experiences with the Other across different times, spaces, and contexts. Also, cultural difference needs to be interrogated from political perspectives to understand how individuals perceive and experience the complex interplay of their social identities, positions, and distinct life trajectories in relation to others. This study, thus, argues that

culture and cultural difference need to be examined at an individual level, and subsequently, that one's interculturality depends on how individuals perceive self and the Other in interpersonal interactions.

Gallagher (2012) insisted that 'self-in-the-other' and the 'other in-the-self' occur in any human interactions, which leads to the possibility of taking a critical perspective on self (p. 492). In alignment with his understanding, the findings showed that the participants' interpersonal exchanges and interactions throughout the course of their life and profession created opportunities for building intercultural relationships with others and enriched their critical and profound understanding of who they are, what they do, and what they hope to do for what and whom. This observation is supported by the study of UNESCO (2006), which emphasizes the dynamic nature of interculturality that evolves among cultural groups. Such interactions laid the foundation for the development of the participants' alternative, multiple perspectives, leading to a greater reflexivity, and ultimately broadened the scope of their interculturality throughout their lives. This study further clarifies that interculturality evolves through interactions within and between both intra- and intercultural groups that facilitate dialogues at local, regional, national, and global levels. In essence, interpersonal relations establish a realm of inter-culture in which interculturality can flourish, contingent upon one's readiness to listen, accept, and respect the lived experience of others.

In the context of interpersonal relations throughout the research process, it can be said that the research afforded the researcher a space where I could strengthen my interculturality by engaging in learning experiences from and with my participants. At the outset of this research, I had some knowledge of Black history and societal as well as educational discrimination against Black people in the U.S. Additionally, I had research and teaching experience involving Black

students and teachers. Despite acknowledging my position as an outsider as not being a Black person but armed with the knowledge and experience gained during my doctoral studies, I assumed unwittingly a sense of confidence, in working with the participating teachers, who turned out to be of African descent. My assumption of "knowing" taught me that knowing superficially is not enough and that learning to know another culture, group, or individual "deeply" is an ongoing investment and commitment over time.

Upon learning the distinctiveness of the three teachers during the interviews— Jade as an African American, Yolanda as a post-1965 Black immigrant, and Kiana as an African American with a refugee family background — I realized that I had to and need to unlearn and relearn about the diversity within the Black community in the U.S. This was crucial for understanding how these 'distinctive' identities and life experiences influenced their interculturality and dispositions in teaching. It became clear that this study is not the final destination of my learning about the Black community; instead, it serves as a stepping-stone for ongoing exploration through my teaching and research as an intercultural scholar. Thus, one's interculturality evolves not only through direct intercultural relations but also through additional efforts to gain knowledge of the Other throughout the course of life.

Given that our world is increasingly complex and interconnected, it is essential to consider globalization and its impact on interculturality (Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016). The narratives of the participants indicated the influence and consequences of globalization on how they have lived, felt, and related to others. Wars, im/migration, and even natural disasters shaped the participants' intercultural relationships and altered the dynamics of diversity in their peer groups, schools, and local communities. Specifically, in the case of Yolanda and Kiana, their moves to a new country for an extended period (i.e., the U.S. and Kenya, respectively) affected

the (de/re)construction of their sense of self, prompting them to question what they consider valuable and oppressive. For Jade, she did not have first-hand international immigration experience, but her migration to the rural southern area helped reaffirm her vigilance of diversity and her desire to serve historically marginalized student populations through her teaching. Additionally, her intercultural relationships with immigrant peers, friends, and ESOL students provided her with second-hand knowledge about their struggles and challenges, which became the foundation of her self-awareness as a teacher advocate. Similar to the experiences of Indigenous Mexicans in Mercado's study (2016), these teachers' im/migration made them aware that their encounters with privilege, marginalization, and discrimination could be repeated or changed in other contexts and forms. This study thus puts an emphasis of the role of space, time, and social context as they mutually influence each other in (de/re)construction of identity (Yep, 2016).

In brief, it is obvious that the transnational experiences facilitated by globalization have prompted the participants to become more aware of discrimination, social division, and inequalities. Simultaneously, they have been exposed to a greater intercultural understanding and interaction. Through these interactions, all three ESOL teachers were presented with opportunities to critically reflect on their understanding of self in relation to others and actively engage in the process of evolving into emergent, adaptable, and global individuals (Martin et al., 2012; Sorrells & Sekimoto, 2016). That is, the teachers practiced reflexivity in understanding the social position of self and others, and how social structures and hierarchies influenced their local and global communities. Building on the words of Sorrells (2013) and Sorrells and Nakagawa (2008), it can be argued that the teachers underwent transformative experiences of self by engaging in "intercultural praxis" (Sorrells, 2013, p. 42). This involved problematizing,

questioning, and reflecting on their lived realities and day-to-day practices, recognizing the

interconnectedness between their personal and professional lives, and their interactions and

interrelatedness with other people, places, and worlds.

This finding highlights a strong theoretical connection among intersectionality, critical

reflexivity, and interculturality, as evidenced by the participants' relationships with diverse

individuals in their life histories. With a profound understanding of their social identities and the

ways these identities are either privileged or marginalized in various social domains, the teachers

engaged in reflexive practices, cultivating awareness of their sense of self and shaping their

teaching approaches and advocacy efforts. In other words, the intersectional comprehension and

analysis of self in different social contexts forms the foundation of critical reflexive practice.

This becomes the cornerstone for developing critical interculturality, operating as a propelling

force steering ongoing practices toward personal development and the cultivation of a profound

understanding of others and self.

Interculturality as a tool for 'good' action

How [do] we protect ourselves and the other in interaction?

(Dervin, 2016, p. 72)

Numerous studies have emphasized the significance of the knowledge, skills, attitudes,

and behaviors for the development of one's intercultural competencies (e.g., Bennett, 2009;

Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009b; Fantini, 2009). While this approach has had a broad impact on

various fields of study, including education, it appears to overlook the foundational nature of

interculturality, which requires *inter*-action between individuals. In other words, previous

research has primarily focused on unilaterality and individuality—one's sole development and

performance of interculturality—neglecting the crucial aspect of reciprocity in interactions.

Without considering mutual engagement, from whose perspective can one be evaluated as interculturally effective and appropriate? In this regard, this study delved into how the three ESOL teachers perceived their teaching practices concerning interactions with ESOL students and their parents, colleagues, and other members of the school community. A further examination was also conducted to see how and in what ways the teachers enacted interculturality in their teaching.

The narratives provided by each teacher revealed that a deep reflection on their multifaceted identities and accumulated intercultural experiences with diverse others formed the foundation of their teaching practices that promote diversity and inclusion. For instance, Jade's intercultural experiences, cultivated through interactions and friendships with peers and friends in K-16 schools, enabled her to better understand the struggles and challenges faced by her ESOL students and their families. Her being a Black woman in U.S. society also played a significant role in challenging her colleagues' deficit perspectives towards the students. Furthermore, her lifelong commitment to learning Spanish facilitated her action as a communication channel between her monolingual colleagues and Spanish-speaking ESOL students and parents. The language support that Jade provided went beyond mere message delivery; it fostered interaction, inclusion, and a sense of belonging for ESOL students and their families who are often neglected and marginalized in the school community.

On the other hand, Kiana stood out as the sole participant who explicitly identified herself as an ally and advocator for ESOL students and parents. Drawing on her refugee parents' experiences in the U.S., Kiana gained valuable insights into the concerns and struggles of ESOL students and parents, especially those with undocumented social status. Her personal reflection, comparing her parents' legal status to that of undocumented ESOL families, highlighted the

potential of drawing on similar experience to enhance one's empathy and understanding of others. Moreover, Kiana's sociopolitical and contextual knowledge of the local community played a crucial role in navigating resources and finding effective ways to support ESOL students and families. Her commitment to home visits demonstrated a genuine desire for interaction and collaboration with parents to ensure the success of ESOL students. Additionally, Kiana's implementation of culturally responsive pedagogy and social-emotional learning reflected her efforts to foster a sense of belonging and acceptance among ESOL students. Her engagement in various cultural events furthered her intercultural experiences and sense of belonging as a new member of the school community.

Unlike Jade and Kiana, Yolanda was the only participant who immigrated to the U.S. with her family. Consequently, her own experience as an immigrant had the most significant impact on her teaching practices that prioritize ESOL students' involvement and sense of belonging. Perceiving herself as a model of being a successful immigrant, Yolanda emphasized developing ESOL students' confidence and belief in themselves and their potential. When interacting with ESOL parents, Yolanda actively represented herself as an African immigrant mother and ESOL teacher. It was her intention to successfully create a zone of mutual understanding with lower tension, provide correct information about the ESOL program and its services, intervene in the parents' decision-making process, and prevent possible conflicts arising from misunderstanding of the program. In other words, her perception of self as the authentic face of the ESOL program contributed to its promotion and success. Like the other teachers, Yolanda advocated for ESOL students and their families, especially those who suffered from the loss of their child, by promoting fundraising to help with funeral expenses with a greater empathy as an immigrant parent. Yolanda's personal experiences were a strong trigger for her

teaching practices both within and beyond the classroom that concerned students' belonging and effective and appropriate communication with parents.

Each teacher in this study crystalized their unique life trajectories and experiences, which shared certain similarities (e.g., Jade and Yolanda being bilingual, Kiana and Jade growing up in inner-city with diverse immigrant populations, Kiana and Yolanda sharing a strong sense of African descent). However, the core of their teaching practices lay in their reflexivity and commitment to advocating for their ESOL students and their families. This reveals the teachers' understanding of the relational and complex interplay of social constructs of their identities. The activism of the teachers derived from such intersectional thinking was also prominent as they took the initiative to respond ESOL students and their parents' varying needs and struggles based on their pedagogical and everyday knowledge. Although their actions required political stances and subsequent decisions, they stood up for those historically marginalized students, and these actions deserve to be widely recognized and appreciated. They clearly demonstrated their "intercultural wisdom" in supporting students from diverse backgrounds and served as "intercultural mediators" who facilitated those students' learning, success, and belonging in the school and society, by fostering a just, caring, and supportive learning environment (Dervin, 2016, p. 86).

However, we need to carefully consider whether the teachers' teaching practices remained simply as 'good practices' or provoked ESOL students' critical interculturality. The goal of language education is not only to enhance students' language proficiency and intercultural competence but also to encourage their understanding of sociopolitical issues that can arise from their interaction with diverse others in society and the world (Kubota et al., 2003). Thus, language teachers, including ESOL teachers, are called upon to assist students in

developing a critical sense of self and a broader sense of belonging to global communities.

Although the teachers in this study acknowledged that teaching ESOL involved more than

imparting linguistic and cultural knowledge, their teaching practices primarily focused on ESOL

students' language acquisition as well as recognizing and celebrating their background and

linguistic and cultural identity. They fell short in fostering ESOL students' deeper understanding

of their role and responsibility as a mature member of the school, local community, nation, and

global society.

Tinker Sachs (2002) and Hahn (2010) both argued that learning a language of the Other is

an excellent way for students to expand their identity while developing a more inclusive

understanding of 'us' in global society. However, the teachers did not describe any examples of

their teaching practices that offered ESOL students opportunities to engage in intercultural

dialogues on local and global levels beyond the classroom context. While Yolanda and Kiana

shared teaching episodes involving their own cultural practices with students, such as eating fufu

or fasting during Ramadan, respectively, these intercultural teaching moments remained

somewhat superficial and peripheral. It revealed that creating intercultural dialogues that could

provoke the students' critical thinking was not the primary focus of their teaching. Critical

thinking is the process of discovering the meaning of self and the world, as well as the search for

ways to utilize that knowledge for improvement and betterment (hooks, 2010). It thus requires an

interactive approach through which students and teachers engage in conversations by thinking,

questioning, and (un)learning to find new knowledge. However, the teachers did not actively

envision the possibility of having such critical intercultural dialogues or opening a space for

discussions using intercultural incidents. Yolanda, in particular, did not consider teaching culture

as her main job, as it was neither explicitly mentioned nor encouraged in the given curriculum,

and she felt limited to teach 'a' culture by her identity as an immigrant teacher. Her thinking of 'American culture' as solely possessed by 'Americans' raises important questions—Whose culture are we teaching in ESOL education? Who has the power to claim ownership of 'American' culture? How can we teach students ways to negotiate their identity, language, culture, and more, if ESOL education delivers a certain story, value, and belief?

Subsequently, the teachers' enactment of interculturality in language education seems to reflect the problems discussed in previous studies (Castro et al., 2004; Elena, 2014; Fungchomchoei & Kardkarnklai, 2016; Georgieva, 2012). The teachers put a strong emphasis on students' English learning and had a lack of understanding of interculturality in teaching as it is not widely discussed or taught in the national education system. Despite their 'good' teaching practice and support for ESOL students' identity and culture, the teachers seem to have a lack of confidence and knowledge of implementing intercultural language education. These obstacles thus led to the ESOL students' limited opportunities to examine their realities and expand their sense of self. The absence of substantial intercultural dialogues in their teaching practices hindered the development of students' interculturality, critical understanding of themselves in relation to a broader global community.

In summary, the three ESOL teachers acted out interculturality in teaching through inter-actions with diverse groups of people, mainly with and for ESOL students and their parents. The analysis of their socially situated knowledge and intercultural experience revealed how the teachers' identities intersected with their current positioning, teaching practices, and power relations within the school context. However, their embodied interculturality has not yet translated into intercultural language teaching that encourages students' critical understanding of self in relation to others, and ultimately, 'us' with a sense of membership in global communities.

Although their verbalized teaching practices showcased remarkable examples of 'good' teaching, they also revealed a lack of imagination or understanding of and experience in intercultural language education. As Motha (2006b) argued, these teachers need to engage in more reflection to problematize their own pedagogies, teaching methods, as well as sociopolitical discourses surrounding ESOL programs and students. However, it does not mean that these teachers are not intercultural or have limited interculturality in their living and teaching. As interculturality is not an end-product, but is in the process of evolving, the teachers need to be understood as in the *becoming* status of critical intercultural teachers. They are called upon to envision and implement critical intercultural language education that fosters discussions about diversities and intersecting cultural identities, involving students in civil discourse within the classroom (Lawless & Chen, 2020). In this manner, ESOL students can explore the vital roles of language in intercultural communication and their potential contributions to bridging social, cultural, geographic, and political divides in our world (Kim, 2020).

(Re)Imagining interculturality

Previous research has predominantly employed functional or sociocultural paradigms to investigate the factors contributing to an individual's interculturality (Martin et al., 2012). The functional perspective, rooted in postpositivist thought, views culture as a shared attribute of a particular group, amenable to categorization and differentiation. This viewpoint underscores the significance of understanding cultural distinctions between 'us' and 'them' as pivotal for cultivating interculturality (e.g., Hofstede, 1984; Hofstede & Hofstede, 2004). Building upon this foundation, assessment models have been devised to gauge an individuals' cognitive, affective, and behavioral competence for effective and appropriate intercultural interactions (e.g., Bennett, 2009; Fantini, 2009). However, an overemphasis on dissimilarities coupled with a superficial

grasp of diversity often propagates oversimplified stereotypes and discriminatory attitudes towards the Other, perpetuating power imbalances that fuel social inequalities.

Conversely, an alternate line of scholarship has underscored sociocultural perspectives concerning interculturality. Despite emphasizing critical cultural awareness and identity (Byram, 1997; Deardorff, 2009b), these scholars still consider knowledge, skills, and behaviors as prerequisites for interculturality. Both conventional approaches have placed undue emphasis on individuals' communication strategies and skills for cultural adaptation during intercultural encounters. As a consequence, a comprehensive exploration of the effects of genuine intercultural instances has remained incomplete, with insufficient attention given to inter-relational dynamics of interculturality within diverse social contexts.

In response to these limitations, this study adopted a critical stance, aiming to probe into the factors shaping the development of one's interculturality. This inquiry aligns with Nielsen et al.'s (2019) call to discern key elements fostering language teachers' interculturality. From the analyses of the reflections of three ESOL teachers on intercultural interactions and relationships across their lifetimes, a set of shared characteristics emerged that contributed to their adeptness in practicing interculturality both personally and in teaching. These facilitating factors encompass the following seven distinct traits:

1. A genuine desire to engage with diverse individuals

2. Learning from self and the Other

3. An awareness of social disparities and inequalities

4. A disposition of reflexivity and acceptance

5. Openness to new possibilities

6. Motivation for change

7. Actions for the betterment of the Other

All three teachers exhibited an ardent eagerness to connect and engage with diverse individuals in diverse spaces, spanning from their peers and friends during school years to their present ESOL students and parents. Jade and Kiana's immersion in community environments significantly informed their comprehension of cultural differences AND similarities and deepened their appreciation of diversity, cultivated through interactions with their immigrant and international classmates. These interactions fostered personal growth and enriched cultural knowledge through close observations and experiences facilitated by these friendships. Yolanda, hailing from a closely-knit ethnic community, deliberately endeavored to understand cultural disparities, particularly between herself and her African American students. This endeavor stemmed from her recognition of limited sociohistorical awareness in U.S. society, prompting her active pursuit of knowledge regarding African American histories.

These teachers' inclination toward exploring new avenues of human interactions and cultures not only enabled learning from others but also offered insights into their own social positions, privileges, and disadvantages. For instance, Kiana's experience of being targeted both as a Muslim girl with a hijab in the U.S. and as an American in Kenya, Jade's othering as a Black teacher by white millennials despite her middle-class background and academic prowess, and Yolanda's sense of being an outsider as an immigrant student unfamiliar with Jeopardy in her American master's classroom. These privileged/marginalized encounters across varying contexts enhanced their awareness of social structures driving disparities and inequalities. Moreover, these experiences heightened their recognition of power differentials in relation to ESOL students, parents, colleagues, and global communities.

Consequently, learning from diverse social contexts became pivotal in fostering a genuine

understanding and acceptance of the Other, coupled with introspection into the teachers' own identities. This equipped the teachers to navigate tensions, conflicts, or potential hostilities that may arise in human interactions. Through an intersectional grasp of social constructs and disparities, these ESOL teachers actively explored new possibilities, extending their influence within their schools and communities. For instance, Jade played various roles at her school, expanding her outreach and understanding of diverse student groups; Yolanda learned how to collaborate harmoniously from school staff members, seeking to bridge cultural gaps; Kiana tutored students from different grades, broadening her pedagogical skills and relationships.

Across the descriptions provided by the three participating teachers regarding their relationships at school, this study found a common theme, 'putting self in the shoes of ESOL parents' (see Finding 2.1). The practice of adopting someone else's point of view, or having empathy, is known as one of the most significant elements of interculturality (Deardorff, 2000; DeTurk, 2001). However, it is unrealistic to claim that an individual is capable of having both physical and emotional empathy perfectly to understand the myriad life experiences of the Other, as explained by Dean (2017):

> Empathy as an end goal is a noble aim, but being empathetic is always more a journey than a destination. It is something we strive as best we can to achieve, with the understanding that actually achieving it is beyond us. In empathy, as with reflexivity, *trying* [italicized as original] is the point. (p. 144)

If empathy surpasses one's capability, the focus should be on one's constant efforts to remain awoke and reflexive, fostering the ability to imagine the situated knowledge and practice of the Other. This goes beyond merely tolerating or empathizing with the Other, contrary to what previous studies argued (e.g., Deardorff, 2000; Fantini, 2012). Instead, this study posits that

being reflexive is a way to strengthen one's tolerance of self, acknowledging their own

ambiguity, embracing the unknown, and being vulnerable to different ways of seeing and

thinking (Anzaldúa, 2012). The life experiences of the three Black women teachers underscore

that their practice of interculturality in both life and teaching emanated from a critical awareness

of their ambiguous situations and relationships with the Other. This awareness triggered inner

changes in their thinking and knowing, leading to their quest for personal and professional

growth. The teachers further developed a strong motivation to effect changes in their teaching

practices and challenge predetermined, stereotypical perceptions colleagues held toward ESOL

students. This motivation translated into a spectrum of initiatives, propelling the teachers to

advocate for ESOL students and parents and facilitate their academic and social success.

Moreover, these efforts contributed to fostering an inclusive and harmonious environment,

including classrooms, schools, and communities. Ultimately, their endeavors and actions for the

betterment of the Other converged with self-improvement, becoming an interculturalist teacher

with a developed sense of critical awareness.

It is important to note that the seven identified characteristics do not emerge in a linear

progression; rather, they intricately intertwine and influence one another, creating a dynamic

interplay that fuels the deeper development of interculturality. The genuine desire to engage with

diverse individuals acts as a catalyst, fostering an environment conducive to reciprocal learning

from both self and others. This mutual exchange of insights enhances an individual's awareness

of social disparities and inequalities, prompting a disposition of reflexivity and acceptance. This

introspective stance further nurtures openness to novel possibilities, catalyzing a motivation for

change. As individuals actively seek out new avenues of engagement and broaden their horizons,

they become better equipped to take proactive steps toward the betterment of others. These

proactive efforts, in turn, enhance the initial desire to engage, thereby forming a continuous cycle of growth and refinement. This interconnectedness not only amplifies the impact of each characteristic but also reinforces their collective influence, ultimately culminating in a more profound and holistic manifestation of interculturality.

Implications

Based on the findings, this study suggests significant implications, highlighting the imperative of cultivating interculturality among not only teachers and students, but also within schools and communities and societies at large. Furthermore, this section also delves into the implications for future research endeavors.

For research

This study investigated the interculturality of three in-service ESOL teachers across various aspects of their lives, examining how this interculturality influenced their perception of intercultural teaching practices. In doing so, the study unveiled the intricate and dynamic interplay between their past intercultural experiences and their current understanding of self and roles and responsibilities as ESOL teachers within society. Yep (2010, 2016) advocated for the exploration of "thick intersectionalities" as a means to comprehend how individuals embody and engage with their own bodies while navigating different social spheres. This involves delving into their life experiences, biographies, and personhoods within the context of time and space. Consequently, this study underscores the importance of perceiving interculturality as intrinsically tied to one's multifaceted identities, which emerge at the intersections of social constructs and evolve through ongoing and evolving processes of de- and re-construction of understanding of self. Just as our understanding of self undergoes continual and fluid transformations, interculturality also evolves—forever incomplete and generating possibilities for growth, rather

than existing as a static state (Yep, 2016).

Future research endeavors could adopt a longitudinal approach to trace the enduring effects of interculturality and intercultural education on teachers, students, and/or even the broader school communities. It is worth noting, however, that the current study was unable to directly observe intercultural interactions among the teachers, ESOL students, families, and other stakeholders. Instead, it relied on the teachers' own narratives of their experiences and accompanying artifacts. Given this limitation, the study highlights the pressing need for close observations of intercultural interactions and teaching within and beyond classroom settings. Additionally, it calls for a discourse on innovative and critical pedagogical strategies that nurture intercultural understanding and interaction within diverse educational settings. Interculturality, inherently dependent upon interactions between human beings, can flourish within any context. Therefore, scholars are encouraged to embark on research encompassing a wide range of individuals, institutions, organizations, and communities, spanning various sociocultural landscapes. Such an inclusive approach would enable future research to illuminate the ecological dimensions of interculturality and provide comprehensive insights into its dynamics.

For policy

Critical interculturality remains a relatively recent field of study, still lacking widespread discussion and adaptation in educational practices, programs, and policies. This absence is especially found in certain areas, such as foreign or world language education, where the persistent us-and-them dichotomy continues to be a challenge (Fantini, 2001; Nielsen et al., 2019). In contrast, multiculturalism has dominated academic and social discourses as a way to recognize and appreciate culturally diverse nature of a society, particularly in the U.S. However, UNESCO (2006) clarified that multiculturalism is, in fact, an outcome of interculturality through

equitable interactions among cultural groups with dialogues and respect. In other words, multicultural societies presuppose discussions on how to develop sustainable ways of living together beyond passive coexistence. This assertion thus implies a prerequisite for education and policies that wholeheartedly embrace and enact interculturality within school curricular across all levels. To achieve this, a crucial step is the design of courses and learning materials that not only acknowledge but also explicitly address critical discussions and reflections on intercultural experiences, relationships, and communication.

For teachers, classrooms, and schools

Schools are urged to take proactive actions by creating institutional support systems that promote intercultural learning throughout all subjects and levels. In line with this endeavor, teachers should be encouraged to continually pursue professional development opportunities that enhance their pedagogical understanding and practice of interculturality. While the participating ESOL teachers did highlight culturally relevant pedagogy as a primary approach, it predominantly remained as a means to acknowledge and celebrate students' linguistic and cultural identities, rather than fostering critical examination of self and others. Thus, this study underscores the compelling necessity for the development of comprehensive teacher training and education programs. These programs would enable educators to grasp and effectively implement intercultural education, which addresses the interconnected and interdependent nature of human relations. This, in turn, would help teachers and educators develop critical insights into local, national, and global issues and cultivate a global sense of identity among students.

In particular, higher education institutions should be able to integrate intercultural content across disciplines, including language/teacher education programs, to foster pre-service teachers' cultural awareness and global mindedness. Encouraging engagement with global issues and

diverse worldviews can prepare them for an interconnected world with an enhanced sensitivity to diversity, inclusion, and social justice. The participating teachers revealed challenges and misconceptions in teaching culture within ESOL classrooms. They felt burdened by the need to understand and adopt each student's unique cultural background, viewing teaching culture as an impractical addition to their already demanding ESOL education (Coperías Aguilar, 2007; Hong, 2004; Karabinar & Guler, 2013; Mughan, 1999). This perspective often arises from a narrow perception of culture as bound to national identity, rather than as a dynamic outcome of human interaction. Therefore language/teacher education programs should acknowledge this reality and equip teachers with a critical understanding of culture, enabling its meaningful integration into their teaching methodologies. By doing so, teachers can effectively promote critical intercultural language education and adapt their approaches to accommodate the diversity of their classrooms.

To address this, pre-service teachers should engage with diverse communities and partake in reflective practices to identify and address their own cultural biases. These reflective exercises facilitate the development of a nuanced perspective on culture and its role in education. Implementing these training sessions virtually, through community resources, or via collaborative partnerships with universities or professional organizations overseas can be instrumental in fostering comprehensive intercultural education initiatives. The establishment of partnerships and exchange programs between educational institutions from diverse regional and inter/national backgrounds is strongly recommended. Such programs hold the potential to nurture intercultural understandings and catalyze multilingualism among teachers, schools, and institutions. Language serves as not only a mode of communication but also a means to deepen intercultural connections, interactions, and global awareness (Tinker Sachs, 2002). These initiatives are expected to facilitate collaboration and meaningful engagement among teachers,

students, and professionals from various backgrounds, thereby enabling a reciprocal exchange of intercultural knowledge and wisdom.

Incorporating these implications into policy, higher education, language education, and teacher training can prepare teachers for an interconnected world. Integrating intercultural content and fostering proactive engagement with global issues equips teachers with tools for diversity, inclusion, and social justice. This forward-looking approach empowers educators to cultivate students' critical thinking and intercultural competence, contributing to a more harmonious and globally connected society.

For students, families, and communities

A noteworthy emphasis of this study is the amplification of the voices of ESOL students and their parents, whose perspectives, stories, and experiences came to the forefront through the narratives of the participating teachers. Acknowledging the co-constructive and negotiable nature of interculturality in human interactions (Dervin, 2006), it becomes evident that ESOL students and parents played a pivotal role in shaping the interculturality of the three teachers. Their active participation and dynamic engagement in interrelationships with the teachers facilitated a deeper understanding of diverse perspectives, underscoring the symbiotic nature of intercultural growth. Consequently, this study advocates for further research that embraces the rich array of voices, experiences, and stories of ESOL students and parents, thereby investigating the intricate ways in which their interculturality intertwines with a diverse array of individuals, including teachers, peers, friends, neighbors, and others. The insights gleaned from ESOL students and parents can furnish additional dimensions to the discourse on interculturality.

From the teachers' interactions with ESOL students, the students appear to be highly interested in engaging in learning different cultural practices and related activities and

exchanges. Thus, students should be able to learn with inclusive curricula that reflect the diversity of the student body of the school and promote their sense of belonging to the school, community, society, and global society. Also, students are encouraged to have intercultural interactions with peers and friends and reflect on their relationships and cultural exchanges in order to facilitate deeper understanding of self, their own cultural assumptions and biases to promote their self-awareness and intercultural sensitivity.

Also, ESOL students and parents and others with immigrant backgrounds are encouraged to consider themselves as great resources and agents of intercultural learning of others. Also, schools and communities need to recognize their intercultural insights and experiences as valuable resources for intercultural dialogues. That way, they can organize intercultural dialogues that can facilitate communication and better understandings among different cultural and ethnic groups. They can further establish support networks for ESOL/immigrant children and families to ease their integration into the local communities.

Concluding remarks

This study delved into the interculturality of three in-service ESOL teachers in both personal and professional lives. Through an in-depth examination of their life experiences from birth until the present day, the study underscored the vital role of critical reflexivity in developing the teachers' critical interculturality by broaden their understanding of self in interactions with others and within diverse sociocultural contexts. The findings unveiled a dynamic interplay between the teachers' identities, privileges, and experiences of marginalization in intercultural interactions. A significant aspect of this exploration was the teachers' profound consideration of their social positions, which exhibited a fluidity across time, space, and context. This introspection contributed significantly to the teachers' development of intersectional

insights into the conflicts, tensions, struggles, and challenges confronted by their ESOL students and parents within educational and social settings. Moreover, the study identified seven factors that propelled the teachers towards becoming critical interculturalists, actively striving to promote inclusivity and create positive learning environments.

The intercultural interactions, experiences, and relationships that each teacher engaged in throughout their lives showcased distinctive characteristics shaped by their individual life paths. The reflective narratives captured the reciprocal nature of interculturality and its tangible manifestations in the teachers' real-world actions—a dimension that previous research often overlooked. However, this study also revealed instances where the teachers encountered difficulties in practicing and cultivating critical interculturality, particularly in situations where they faced negative biases from others or imagined impossibilities to teach culture in ESOL class. This suggests that an individual's interculturality is not a fixed and perfected outcome of intercultural experiences, but an ongoing developmental process that deepens through profound and critical self-reflection and engagements with others.

In closing, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the three dedicated teachers who actively participated in this study. Their enthusiastic engagement and unwavering commitment exemplify profound intercultural action as they embarked on a journey of exploration with open-mindedness—establishing a connection with me and uncovering layers of their past, present, and future. Coming from a multilingual and multicultural family and a higher education with some knowledge of Black history in the U.S., I initially anticipated that establishing rapport and interaction with the teachers would not be a challenge. However, I soon realized that this presumption required me to exercise careful consideration of my words, behaviors, and actions during interactions with the teachers. This realization prompted me to

adopt varying approaches and dispositions tailored to each teacher's unique personality and characteristics. As our interactions unfolded through a series of meetings, I had the privilege of exploring diverse cultures, regions, and countries, all following in the footsteps of the teachers. In the process, I absorbed invaluable lessons from the teachers' dedication to the educational and social well-being of ESOL students.

Deeply listening to the teachers' personal and professional journeys, which involved courageous actions, raised several questions for me. When I heard that Kiana raised her voice to protect herself from Kenyan students who bullied her, I asked myself, "Could I ever be as brave as her if I were in the same situation?" Yolanda's anecdote about leading a fundraising effort for the ESOL family who lost a daughter due to a car accident made me ponder, "Would I be able to do the same?" "What would I do if my students faced such hardships?" When I listened to Jade's proactive approaches to creating intercultural interactions with diverse individuals, I questioned myself, "I cannot be like her. Should I change my introverted personality to become more proactive in interacting with others?" In comparison to the participating teachers, I found myself focusing on the differences between us, contemplating what I lack or cannot do. Through this study, I realized that I cannot and do not even want to change, and learned this fundamental lesson that I need to accept and appreciate who I am. Additionally, I cultivated an intersectional awareness, delving into the roots of thought development for both my participants and myself. I further deepened my reflexivity while working with the teachers, recognizing it as a vital component in the critical inquiry of interculturality. The magnitude of this endeavor, unraveling the complex web of the theories, was immense, and I found myself in a position of vulnerability as a researcher. Initially approaching the work with confidence based on my 'bit' of knowledge, I soon realized the imperative to delve deeper into the field, understanding my participants, and,

most importantly, myself.

Figure 6

The map of intersectionality, critical reflexivity, and critical interculturality
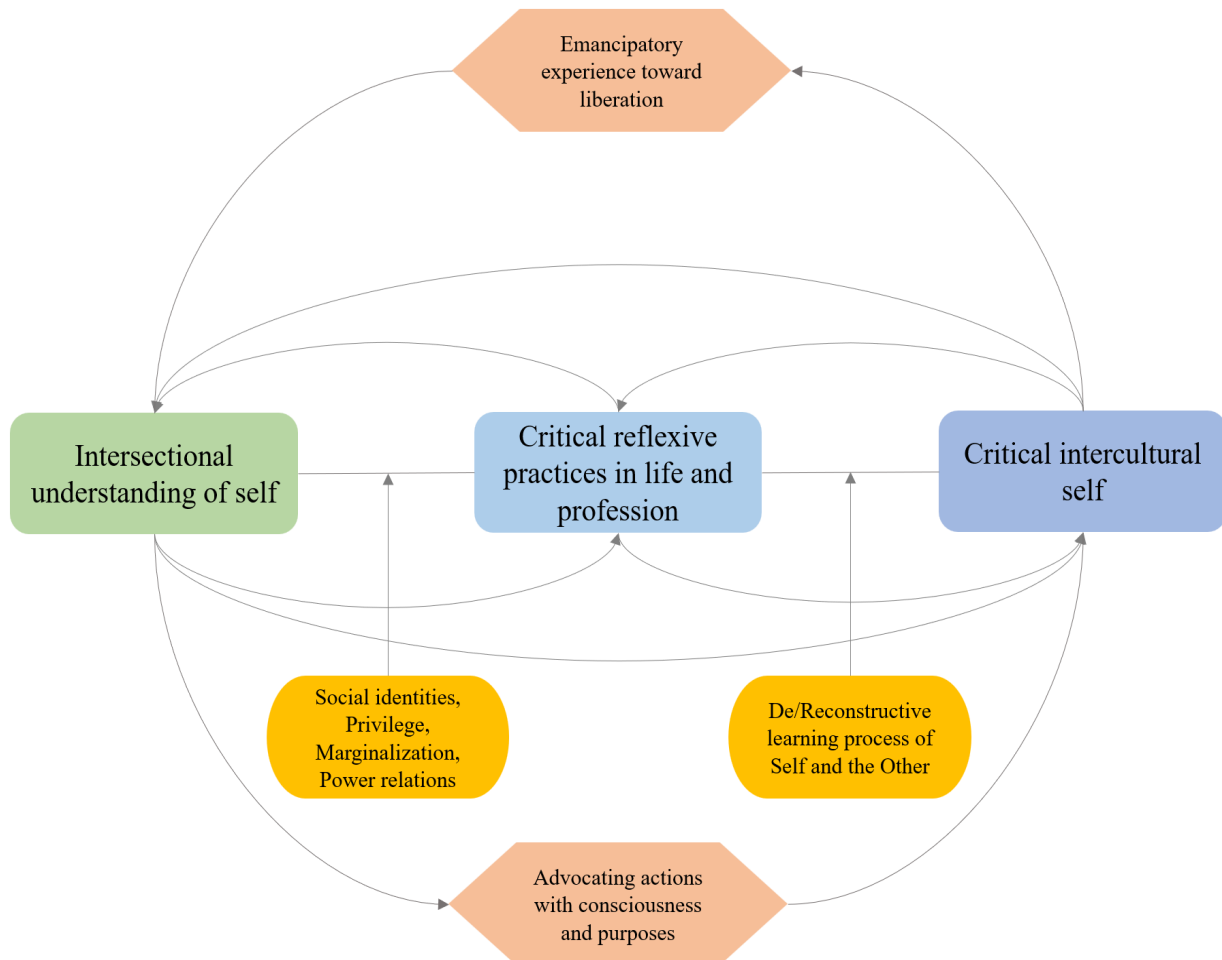
Learning from the three Black women teachers became a transformative experience, teaching me the importance of resilience, exploring new perspectives, and purposeful actions at a profound level. From this learning process, it has become clear that an intersectional understanding of self, considering the complexity of one's identities in power relations opens up the possibility of critical reflexive practices that helps individuals de- and re-construct the meaning of their sense of self and others. This process further leads to the development of a critical intercultural self who can contribute to the betterment of self and others with purposeful

actions (see Figure 6). This entire process of (be)coming critical intercultural is both an intercultural and emancipatory journey toward new knowledge, transformative praxis, and liberation, fostering a profound sense of freedom and empowerment of self. The research process prompted the development of my self as a researcher and an Asian immigrant woman in the U.S., compelling me to confront my vulnerability, acknowledge my strengths, and solidify my commitment to intercultural work for the betterment of society.

Each individual walks their own unique paths in life, constructing their sense of who they are and their understanding of the world. Understanding and accepting each other's lived experiences, which give rise to 'differences' among us, constitute the foremost condition of interculturality. Once individuals embrace this knowledge, they can begin to contemplate what they need to do for their own improvement and for the betterment of others. Through this research, I as an intercultural educator, underscore the importance of viewing interculturality through the lens of critical reflection and micro-level human interactions, rather than through divisive notions often associated with factors like nationality, language, culture, race, ethnicity, ability, spirituality, and the like. This perspective allows shared values and commonalities among us as human beings to emerge as a catalyst that fosters a more interconnected and humane world.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix A. Recruitment Flyer

Research Participants Needed

Interculturality: Through In-service ESOL Teachers' Lived Experiences

My name is Gyewon Jang, and I am a doctoral student at Georgia State University. I plan to do a research study about language teachers' understanding of the concept of interculturality and its adaptation into classroom teaching.

The purpose of this research study is to learn about how language teachers' lived experiences impact their perceptions and practices of interculturality. In this research study, language teachers refer to those who are currently teaching ESOL for more than three years in K12 schools in the United States.

A total of 15 participants are invited to participate in the research study. To qualify, you must:

> • Have at least 3 years of teaching experiences in K-12 setting
>
> • Currently teach ESOL

The research study will take approximately 8 hours of your time. If you are interested in participating in this study, please complete the form below and I will contact you. You can also call us at 404-643-5811 or send an email to gjang2@student.gsu.edu. Thank you for your time and consideration. We look forward to hearing from you.

Your name: _____

Your phone number: _____

<center>**Appendix B. Consent Form**</center>

<center>Georgia State university</center>

<center>**Informed Consent**</center>

Title: Interculturality: Through in-service ESOL teachers' lived experiences

Principal Investigator: Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs

Student Principal Investigator: Ms. Gyewon Jang

Introduction and Key Information

You are invited to take part in a research study. It is up to you to decide if you would like to take part in the study. The purpose of the study is to gain a detailed and contextualized understanding of interculturality and its realization in ESOL education. The study focuses on language teachers' intercultural experiences in personal and professional life and its impact on their teaching practice and perception of interculturality.

Your role in the study will last 6 hours over 3 months. You will be asked to do the following: being interviewed individually and in a group with other language teachers with an audio record for in-person meetings or video record for online meetings, being participated in learning sessions, and being performed teaching an intercultural language class.

Participating in this study will not expose you to any more risks than you would experience in a typical day. This study is not designed to benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain useful knowledge in the field of language education and teacher education.

Purpose

The purpose of the study is to gain a nuanced understanding of how interculturality is perceived and realized in second and world language education and, ultimately, to deepen the knowledge of interculturality. The study will focus on how ESOL teachers' intercultural experiences in various contexts affect their ways of understanding and teaching interculturality. You are invited to take part in this research study because you, as an in-service ESOL teacher, have more than three years of teaching experience in K-12 schools in the U.S. A total of 5 people will be invited to participate in this study.

Procedures

If you decide to take part, you will be asked to be interviewed with an audio or video record. There will be three individual and one focus group interviews. The individual interviews will be about your basic information and lived experiences in teaching, learning, and having intercultural

interactions through the course of your life. Each interview will require a total of six artifacts demonstrating pivotal moments in different periods of your life that have contributed to your sense of self and teaching practices. Each individual interview will take about 90 minutes and be done in a safe and quiet place on a comprised schedule and location. The focus group interview will ask about your intercultural teaching experiences and related issues. These will also be done in a safe and quiet place on a comprised schedule and location, lasting about 90 minutes.

Future Research

Researchers will remove information that may identify you and may use your data for future research. If we do so, we will not ask for any additional consent from you.

Risks

In this study, you will not have any more risks than you would in a normal day of life. No injury is expected from this study, but if you believe you have been harmed, contact the research team as soon as possible. Georgia State University and the research team have not set aside funds to compensate for any injury.

Benefits

This study is not designed to benefit you personally. Overall, we hope to gain information about the knowledge and practice of world language teachers' interculturality in and out of school contexts.

Alternatives

The alternative to taking part in this study is to not take part in the study.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal

Participation in research is voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to continue. If you decide to be in the study and change your mind, you have the right to drop out at any time. You may skip questions or stop participating at any time.

Confidentiality

We will keep your records private to the extent allowed by law. The following people and entities will have access to the information you provide:

- Dr. Gertrude Tinker Sachs and Ms. Gyewon Jang

- GSU Institutional Review Board (IRB)

- Office for Human Research Protection (OHRP)

We will use a number or pseudonym of your choice for any relevant information from you rather than your name on study records. The information you provide will be stored on the student investigator's personal computer locked with password. If you withdraw, we will immediately destroy all the information or data you provided unless you give your permission otherwise.

Contact Information

Contact Ms. Gyewon Jang (404-643-5811 or gjang2@student.gsu.edu) or Dr. Tinker Sachs (404-413-8384),

- If you have questions about the study or your part in it

- If you have questions, concerns, or complaints about the study

The IRB at Georgia State University reviews all research that involves human participants. You can contact the IRB if you would like to speak to someone who is not involved directly with the study. You can contact the IRB for questions, concerns, problems, information, input, or questions about your rights as a research participant. Contact the IRB at 404-413-3500 or irb@gsu.edu.

Consent

We will give you a copy of this consent form to keep.

If you are willing to volunteer for this research, please sign below.

_____

Printed Name of Participant

_____   _____

Signature of Participant   Date

_____   _____

Principal Investigator or Researcher Obtaining Consent   Date

Appendix C. Individual Interview Protocols

The interview is part of the research, Interculturality: In-service ESOL teachers' lived experiences, to explore second language teachers' intercultural experiences in personal and professional life and its impact on their teaching practice and perception of interculturality. The research questions are: 1) How do in-service ESOL teachers understand and experience interculturality in their daily life and profession? 2) How do in-service ESOL teachers employ interculturality in teaching? 3) What features in their lived experiences contribute to ESOL teachers' interculturality? Each interview will last about 90 minutes and will be recorded.

Date: _____ Interviewee #: _____ Place: _____

Time started: _____ Time ended: _____

Introduction

I appreciate your taking the time to talk with me. I'm interested in your thoughts and experiences and please share your responses. All of your responses will be recorded but remain confidential.

Please bring an artefact from the 6 periods of your life to our conversation – (1) from birth to five, (2) pre-K-5, (3) middle school, (4) high school, (5) college, and (6) being a teacher. The artefacts (e.g., drawings, toys, writings, photos, clothing (e.g., fashion accessories, school uniform), books, lesson plans, etc.) should help to demonstrate pivotal moments in your life that have contributed to one or more of the following:

1. Your identification of self (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class, language, culture, spiritual practices, age, (dis)ability, and other aspects of who you are)
2. Your ways of interacting with diverse students, colleagues, family members
3. Your understandings of social structures such as policies, rules and legislations at home and in the world
4. Your ways of thinking and teaching about language/global/social issues (e.g., immigration, racism, hatred and discriminations, LGBTQ+, wealth gap, climate changes, environment etc.)
5. Your actions as a human being and a teacher to make a difference in life, society, and the world

Individual Interview #1: From birth to grade 5

1. General questions

   a. How do you identify yourself? (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, class, language, culture, spiritual practices, age, (dis)ability, citizenship or immigration status, and other aspects of who you are)
   b. Which school do you work? How far is it from your house?
   c. How long have you taught ESOL?

2. From birth to age five

   a. Describe your hometown, where you were born, regarding your family, friends, people in the neighborhood, schools, stores, facilities, environments, and else.
   b. Describe yourself as what kind of a child (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.), and why?
      i. What did people say about you, and who were the people saying so?
   c. Tell me about your early childhood experiences as you identify yourself.
      i. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?
      ii. Describe your experience with diverse groups of people (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.)
   d. What was your daily routine?
      i. What did you normally do on the weekends/summer breaks/holidays?
   e. What language(s) did you learn to speak?
      i. If you learned a language(s) other than your mother tongue, what motivated you to learn?
      ii. How were you taught the language(s) and related culture?
      iii. What possibilities did you see from learning the language(s) and related cultures?
   f. Tell me about a person(s) who have the most impact on your early childhood.
      i. What reason do you think the person stands out to you the most?
      ii. In what ways the person impacted your early life?
   g. What major local, national, or international historical events did you have in your early childhood?
      i. What are your memories or opinions about those events?
   h. Tell me about the artefact in as much detail as possible.
      i. What does it say about yourself, your students, and your teaching?
   i. In what ways do you think your early childhood experiences have influenced you overall?
      i. What about your ways of thinking and performing as a teacher?
      ii. What about your relationship with your family, friends, students, colleagues, and parents?

3. From Pre-K to grade 5

   a. Describe the place you lived during this period of time, regarding your family, friends, people in the neighborhood, schools, stores, facilities, environments, and else.
      i. If it is same as your hometown, what changes did you witness in neighborhood and environment?
   b. Describe yourself as what kind of a child (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.), and why?

          i. What did people say about you, and who were the people saying so?

   c. Tell me about your childhood experiences as you identify yourself.

          i. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?

   d. What was your daily routine?

          i. What did you normally do on the weekends/summer breaks/holidays?

   e. Did you learn any other languages during this time?

          i. If so, what motivated you to learn?

          ii. How were you taught the language(s) and related culture?

          iii. What possibilities did you see from learning the language(s) and related cultures?

   f. Tell me a person(s) who stands out to you the most during this time?

          i. What reason do you think the person stands out to you the most?

          ii. In what ways the person impacted your early life?

   g. Tell me about your schooling experience.

          i. Describe the school you went to (e.g., student and teacher demographics, location, commute mode, lunch, activities, programs, etc.)

          ii. Describe your experience with diverse groups of people (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.)

          iii. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?

   h. What major local, national, or international historical events did you have in your childhood?

          i. What are your memories or opinions about those events?

   i. Tell me about the artefact in as much detail as possible.

          i. What does it say about yourself, your students, and your teaching?

   j. In what ways do you think your childhood experiences have influenced you overall?

          i. What about your ways of thinking and performing as a teacher?

          ii. What about your relationship with your family, friends, students, colleagues, and parents?

Individual Interview #2: From middle school to high school

1. Middle school

   a. Describe the place you lived during this period of time, regarding your family, friends, people in the neighborhood, schools, stores, facilities, environments, and else.

          i. If it is same as your previous place, what changes did you witness in neighborhood and environment?

b. Describe yourself as what kind of a student (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.), and why?
   i. What did people say about you, and who were the people saying so?
c. Tell me about your early adolescent experiences as you identify yourself.
   i. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?
d. What was your daily routine?
   i. What did you normally do on the weekends/summer breaks/holidays?
e. Did you learn any other languages during this time?
   i. If so, what motivated you to learn?
   ii. How were you taught the language(s) and related culture?
   iii. What possibilities did you see from learning the language(s) and related cultures?
f. Tell me a person(s) who stands out to you the most?
   i. What reason do you think the person stands out to you the most?
   ii. In what ways the person impacted your early adolescent life?
g. Tell me about your middle school experience.
   i. Describe the school you went to (e.g., student and teacher demographics, location, commute mode, lunch, activities, programs, etc.)
   ii. Describe your experience with diverse groups of people (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.)
   iii. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?
h. What major local, national, or international historical events did you have during this period?
   i. What are your memories or opinions about those events?
i. Tell me about the artefact in as much detail as possible.
   i. What does it say about yourself, your students, and your teaching?
j. In what ways do you think your early adolescent experiences have influenced you overall?
   i. What about your ways of thinking and performing as a teacher?
   ii. What about your relationship with your family, friends, students, colleagues, and parents?

2. High school

a. Describe the place you lived during this period of time, regarding your family, friends, people in the neighborhood, schools, stores, facilities, environments, and else.
   i. If it is same as your previous place, what changes did you witness in neighborhood and environment?
b. Describe yourself as what kind of a student (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.), and why?

        i. What did people say about you, and who were the people saying so?

c. Tell me about your adolescent experiences as you identify yourself.

        i. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?

d. What was your daily routine?

        i. What did you normally do on the weekends/summer breaks/holidays?

e. Did you learn any other languages during this time?

        i. If so, what motivated you to learn?

        ii. How were you taught the language(s) and related culture?

        iii. What possibilities did you see from learning the language(s) and related cultures?

f. Tell me a person(s) who stands out to you the most?

        i. What reason do you think the person stands out to you the most?

        ii. In what ways the person impacted your adolescent life?

g. Tell me about your high school experience.

        i. Describe the school you went to (e.g., student and teacher demographics, location, commute mode, lunch, activities, programs, etc.)

        ii. Describe your experience with diverse groups of people (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.)

        iii. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?

h. What major local, national, or international historical events did you have during this period?

        i. What are your memories or opinions about those events?

i. Tell me about the artefact in as much detail as possible.

        i. What does it say about yourself, your students, and your teaching?

j. In what ways do you think your early adolescent experiences have influenced you overall?

        i. What about your ways of thinking and performing as a teacher?

        ii. What about your relationship with your family, friends, students, colleagues, and parents?

Individual Interview #3: From college to being a teacher

1. College

a. Describe the place you lived during this period of time, regarding your family, friends, people in the neighborhood, schools, stores, facilities, environments, and else.

        i. If it is same as your previous place, what changes did you witness in neighborhood and environment?

b. Describe yourself as what kind of a student (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.), and why?
   i. What did people say about you, and who were the people saying so?
c. Tell me about your young adult experiences as you identify yourself.
   i. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?
d. What was your daily routine?
   i. What did you normally do on the weekends/summer breaks/holidays?
e. Did you learn any other languages during this time?
   i. If so, what motivated you to learn?
   ii. How were you taught the language(s) and related culture?
   iii. What possibilities did you see from learning the language(s) and related cultures?
f. Tell me a person(s) who stands out to you the most?
   i. What reason do you think the person stands out to you the most?
   ii. In what ways the person impacted your young adult life?
g. Tell me about your college experience.
   i. Describe the school you went to (e.g., student and teacher demographics, location, commute mode, lunch, activities, programs, etc.)
   ii. Describe your experience with diverse groups of people (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.)
   iii. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this stands out to you the most?
h. What is your major and degree? What courses did you take to be an ESOL teacher?
   i. Did you take any courses related to multiculturalism, bi/multilingualism, cultures, and/or diversity?
   ii. What are your opinions and thoughts about those courses?
   iii. In what ways have those courses impacted your current teaching approaches?
i. What major local, national, or international historical events did you have during this period?
   i. What are your memories or opinions about those events?
j. Tell me about the artefact in as much detail as possible.
   i. What does it say about yourself, your students, and your teaching?
k. In what ways do you think your early adolescent experiences have influenced you overall?
   i. What about your ways of thinking and performing as a teacher?
   ii. What about your relationship with your family, friends, students, colleagues, and parents?

2. Being a teacher

a. Describe the place you currently live, regarding your family, friends, people in the neighborhood, schools, stores, facilities, environments, and else.
   i. If it is same as your previous place, what changes did you witness in neighborhood and environment?
b. What motivated you to become an ESOL teacher?
c. Describe yourself as what kind of an ESOL teacher (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.), and why?
   i. What did people say about you, and who were the people saying so?
d. What is your daily routine?
   i. What do you normally do on the weekends/summer breaks/holidays?
e. Have you learned any other languages while working as a teacher?
   i. If so, what motivated you to learn?
   ii. How were you taught the language(s) and related culture?
   iii. What possibilities did you see from learning the language(s) and related cultures?
f. Tell me a person(s) who stands out to you the most?
   i. What reason do you think the person stands out to you the most?
   ii. In what ways the person impacted your professional life?
g. Tell me about your teaching experience.
   i. Describe the school you are working. (e.g., student and teacher demographics, location, commute mode, lunch, activities, programs, etc.)
   ii. Describe your experience with diverse groups of people (e.g., race/ethnicity, class, gender/sexual identity, language, culture, religion, (dis)ability, etc.)
   iii. Which of these experiences, if any, stand out to you the most? What reason do you think this strands out to you the most?
h. How do you see yourself in teaching ESOL?
   i. How do you see your position as an ESOL teacher in the school and society?
   ii. Describe your relationship with current, former students you have taught, other students in the school.
i. How do you see your students learning ESOL?
   i. What do you know about their lives and their cultures; where they live, their families, communities?
   ii. How do you see their relationship with other students, teachers, staff, and the community?
   iii. How do you see their future in the society? Talk about the futures of your students – given the society in which we live, how would you describe the future for your students?
j. What is the meaning of teaching ESOL and cultures for you?
   i. What efforts have you made in your teaching ESOL related to students' lives and cultures (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class, language, culture, spiritual practice, disability, and more)?

k. What major local, national, or international historical events did you have during this period?
    i.   What are your memories or opinions about those events?
l. Tell me about the artefact in as much detail as possible.
    i.   What does it say about yourself, your students, and your teaching?
m. In what ways do you think your professional experiences have influenced you overall?
    i.   What about your ways of thinking and performing as a person?
    ii. What about your relationship with your family, friends, students, colleagues, and parents?

Appendix D. Focus Group Interview Protocol

Date: _____ Interviewee #: _____ Place: _____

Time started: _____ Time ended: _____

<u>Introduction</u>

I appreciate your taking the time to talk with me. Please introduce each other, and then we will have a conversation together. This interview will last about 90 minutes, and all of your responses will be recorded but remain confidential.

1. What does it mean to you to teach ESOL?
2. How do you see yourself in teaching ESOL?
    a. How do you see your position as an ESOL teacher in school and society?
3. How do you see your students learning ESOL?
    a. How do you see their future in the society in which we live?
4. What efforts have you made to make your teaching ESOL related to students' lives and cultures (e.g., race, ethnicity, gender, class, language, culture, spiritual practice, disability, and more)?
5. What challenges and struggles have you experienced teaching ESOL in such ways?
    a. Relationship with students, parents, colleagues, and staff
    b. School community, district, state, federal department of education
6. What successes have you experienced teaching ESOL in such ways?
    a. What made possible such successes?
7. Anything else that you want to add?

Appendix E. Codebook

Name	Description
A. Experiences	Lived experiences in different periods of each participant's life
a. Life	General lived experiences
b. Teaching	Teaching-related lived experiences
c. Language learning	Language-learning-related lived experiences
d. Education	Education-related lived experiences (e.g., learning in K-16 schools)
e. Sociocultural	Social and cultural experiences (e.g., racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, etc.)
f. Political	Political experiences
g. Services or Other activities	Different activities or services that each participant has done or has been doing at schools or in communities
B. Relationships	Various social, interpersonal, and intercultural relationships with others
a. Colleagues	Relationships with colleagues at workplaces
b. Students	Relationships with students at schools
c. Parents	Relationships with students' parents at schools and in communities
d. Teachers	Relationships with each participant's teachers in K-16 schools
e. Family	Relationships with each participant's own family members
f. Others	Relationships with others (e.g., friends, classmates, etc.)
C. Environments	Environments with specific characteristics that may impact participants' intercultural and interpersonal relationships and understandings
a. Living	Living environments (e.g., hometown, communities, dormitories, etc.)
b. Working	Working environments (e.g., schools)
c. Learning	Learning environments (e.g., day care, K-16 schools, etc.)
D. Reported Practices	Certain practices for teaching and inter/intra-cultural relationships with others
a. Teaching	Teaching practices in and out of school
b. Relationship	Personal and professional practices to develop intercultural, interpersonal relationships with others
E. Actions	Certain actions to advocate
a. Self	Actions to advocate the self
b. Others	Actions to advocate others
F. Characteristics	Distinct personal characteristics of each participant

a. Personality	Personality
b. Attitudes	Certain attitudes or perceptions
c. Behaviors	
G. Conflicts and Challenges	
a. Teaching	Conflicts and challenges in teaching
b. Life	Conflicts and challenges in life
c. Relationship	Conflicts and challenges in relationship with others
d. Learning	Conflicts and challenges in learning
H. Perceptions	
a. Self	Perception of the self
b. Language	Perception of languages or language learning
c. Education	Perception of education or educational system and policies
d. Diversity	Perception of diversity
e. Culture	Perception of different cultures
f. Students	
g. Colleagues	
I. Researcher	How the researcher tries to make relationships with participants
a. Making jokes	
b. Making connections	Connecting with the researcher's own concern or question
c. Sharing experiences	
d. Trying to understand	
e. Trying to learn	