# Chapter 1

# Introduction

"The debate about the native speaker will go on. In this debate it will continue to be necessary to distinguish between the two senses of native speaker, the flesh and blood and the ideal, the reality and the myth; and if others choose to problematise, as I have, the flesh and blood native speaker, I believe they will still have use for the ideal. That indeed is a myth, but a useful myth." Alan Davies (2003, p. 214)

## 1.1 Introduction

The study that served as the foundation of this thesis took place in a TESOL Master's Program at a small Catholic college in New York State. I have worked at this institution since 1998, first teaching ESL in a non-credit adult education program, next teaching English and ESL credit courses and tutoring in the writing center, and finally teaching postgraduate education courses in the TESOL Program. This research seeks to explore the literacy development and advanced language learning of native and nonnative English-speaking teachers of English enrolled in this postgraduate program. It involves analysis of the participants' writing in several contexts during the Program. Qualitative research design is used in the investigation. This chapter serves to introduce the thesis and its purposes, provide an overview of its place in the field of literacy and language research, and discuss its significance to the field. The study is outlined below, as is the chapter structure of the thesis.

## 1.2 Research Focus

This thesis is situated in literacy studies, a broad area of study under the umbrella field of applied linguistics. Literacy studies investigates the development of literacy in individuals or groups from a variety of perspectives (including cognitivist and constructivist), the teaching

and learning of literacy, the role of literacy in society, and the role of society in first and second language and literacy development of teacher learners who are native and nonnative speakers of English, with a focus on the latter, as described in their own writing.

In recent times, nonnative English-speaking teachers (NNESTs) have been maligned and discriminated against in the workplace as inferior to native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) of English (Braine, 1999a, 1999b, 1999c, 2010). Similarly, foreign language teachers who are not native speakers of the target language sometimes experience discrimination in hiring in the US. With a Master's in Russian from one of America's best universities, I went to an interview for a part-time job teaching Elementary and Intermediate Russian at a New York City college. The interviewers were incredulous that a non-native speaker would think herself able to teach an intermediate-level course. Native or not, at the time, I had a full-time job at which I spoke Russian almost exclusively, yet nativeness seemed to be the criterion that I did not have. The many years of studying Russian, a summer at St. Petersburg State University, and a year of temporary foreign service work in Russia were reduced to a single term – nonnativeness. Comparably, many highly trained and English proficient nonnative English-speaking (NNES) professionals around the world find themselves at the same disadvantage even in their own countries, where native speakers of English (NESs), even entirely untrained and inexperienced, are valued more highly and given more opportunities than they are (Braine, 1999a, 1999b; Canagarajah, 1999; Medgyes, 1999; Oda, 1999).

NNESTs are seen as somehow deficient and less desirable than NESTs, but the sole criterion for this view  the sole criterion for this  often seems to be their nonnativeness. their nonnativeness. This is a worldwide phenomenon that has only just begun to get the attention it deserves from TESOL researchers, but concrete descriptions about NNESs' linguistic and cultural proficiency, academic literacy, and pedagogical effectiveness are slow in being investigated. There are many studies on NNESTs' self-perceptions and students' perceptions

of them reviewed below, but these are largely subjective by definition (Kamhi-Stein, Aagard, Ching, Paik & Sasser, 2004; Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; J. Liu, 1999). In an attempt to investigate this issue from a new perspective, this study seeks to explore the academic literacy of NES and NNES teacher learners through a qualitative study within a framework of socioliteracy (Street, 1993, 1995, 2003; Gee, 2007; Johns, 1997), which allows the subjects to be viewed as members of discourse communities (ethnic, student, education, TESOL education, and so on) and products of literacy learning in formal and informal contexts. It is important to view literacy through the framework of socioliteracy (Johns, 1997) because literacy does not exist and is not developed in isolation or within the controlled confines of a classroom study alone. Cognitivist approaches focus on learning but contend the importance of use (Kaspar, 1997; Gass & Selinker, 2001; Skehan, 2003). Language develops in the course of its use and in the greater context of the L2 learners' lives and identities (Firth & Wagner, 1997, 2007a); Dunn & Lantolf, 1998). Any study of academic literacy requires a balanced approach, in which the learners are viewed not only in their classroom but also in their sociocultural context(s). Without the latter, a strictly cognitive perspective "bypasses much of the knowledge that language actually contains. Languages abound in cultural knowledge" (Harrison, 2007). This study proposes to analyze what both the content and the language reveal about the NES and   NNES teacher learners' literacy and their literacy lives.


## 1.2.1 The Background of the Study

In the course of my work with TESOL students, I noticed that the nonnative speakers sometimes expressed their need for additional help, for example, with their writing or understanding cultural differences and parts of popular culture. They did not hesitate to ask for my assistance, and in this process of addressing their needs, I became interested in their situation. As part of my own coursework in Qualitative Approached to Research for this

degree, I conducted a small study on a collaborative activity in the TESOL Methods class that I was teaching, in which I looked at peer-to-peer interaction among NNES students. This became the inspiration for my current research, which builds much more extensively on the insights gained from this earlier small-scale study.

## 1.2.2 The Research Focus

According to Bogdan and Biklen (1998), "questions needed to guide a qualitative study need to be more open-ended and concerned with process and meaning rather than cause and effect" (p. 60). They recommend that to guide data collection, researchers should develop substantive questions that can be changed after the collection is complete to more formal theoretical questions. Questions should not include what the researcher hypothesizes might be the answer or other forms of researcher bias.

The literacy and language development of each individual is unique, and even people who live in the same community and speak the same language have different paths of development and different contributors to that development. The issue of literacy in first and second languages is not one of dichotomy; they are not entirely separate or isolated from one another. A second language does not develop without reference to the first one. Both native English speakers and nonnative speakers talk and write with errors in usage and rhetoric; language errors do not reside solely in the domain of nonnativeness. Both native English speakers and nonnative speakers become successful teachers of languages that are not their first, and much can be learned from the study of language teachers, who are themselves language learners (Braine, 1999b; Connor, 1999). Numerous questions arise: What are the literacy practices and language development of native and nonnative English-speaking teachers? In what ways can these be studied? How is their interest in literacy reflected in their own literacy and their teaching of literacy?

These are broad questions that form an entire realm of research, which extends beyond the scope of this thesis and the environment in which this research is situated. The central research question here is focused on ESL teacher learners (students enrolled in a TESOL master's program) and on text that specifically addresses literacy and language:

> What do NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings and surveys reveal about their literacy development?

Several other questions evolved from this after the data was collected and are discussed subsequently in the methodology chapter (Section 4.2.1).

## 1.2.3 Rationale for the Research Focus

Research in the controversy over nativeness and nonnativeness and over the ways in which people develop literacy and language is not new, but it is also not conclusive, and it is an area that is under-researched. The TESOL Research Agenda (2004) called for the promotion of the ownership of language through research:

> The modern history of English language learning by speakers of other languages has its roots in British and U.S. colonialism. Language learning situations worldwide replicate the inherent socioeconomic imbalance among peoples and nations. Much current research documents this imbalance, which is reflected in valuing the idealized *native speaker* over indigenous norms, importing *foreign* teaching methodologies, and acquiescing to international tests of language ability. Neither the need nor the desire of people around the world to learn English will diminish in the foreseeable future, however. Research is therefore needed that documents language-planning policies as well as approaches to teacher education and teaching that describe localized uses of English. (p.13)

This thesis seeks to answer TESOL's call for research on NES-NNES teacher learners in teacher education.

This thesis will present an emic perspective that emanates from the texts written by the teacher learners themselves. Qualitative research methods were chosen for this thesis because qualitative research seeks to derive theory from systematically collected data, rather than the reverse, thereby creating grounded theory, theory that is built on the data. The surveys and the literacy and linguistic autobiographies provide a rich data set, upon which theory can be built as the meanings from the data emerge. Qualitative research allows for the constant refinement of categories and patterns that the data reveal, creating a dynamic tension essential to the interpretation of this data. This thesis aims to contribute insight into both the controversy and, more importantly, into language development at advanced NNES levels.

## 1.3 Structure of the Thesis

This research is cross-sectional in design; it consists of a study of surveys with open-ended questions and the literacy and linguistic autobiographies of the participants at different points in the TESOL Program. The two autobiographies are also compared longitudinally for characteristics of advanced writing. The research was designed to

(1) Explore the seven participants' views on and history of their literacy and language development in a cross-sectional comparison

(2) Investigate their writing for commonalities through a delicate SFL analysis

(3) Study the social influences on the participants' literacy development

This research design was adopted because it allows for different perspectives on the same data; these various perspectives can help to uncover the deep meanings of the data that is located within the participants' personal literacy and language learning experience. In

addition, the comparison of the texts across participants makes it possible to emphasize the participants' similarities and differences.

## 1.4 Organization of the Thesis

This research is organized into a series of chapters that provide information on the context of the research, the literature pertinent to the research, the methodologies used, the findings of the analyses, the discussion and interpretation of the findings, and the conclusion.

Chapter 2 describes the research context, which is divided into two dimensions: the macro-context and the micro-context. The macro-context describes the broad issues under study, including native versus nonnative English-speaking teachers and teacher preparation programs. The micro-context includes specific information about the tertiary educational institution where the research takes place and a depiction of the TESOL Program, in which the participants were students.

Chapter 3 contains a review of literature on theories of literacy and language development, in particular the paradigm used for this study. Literacy is seen from a historical perspectives, and its most current definitions are examined. This chapter also includes background on the use of narratives and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) in language research.

Chapter 4 explicates the research design and questions. In addition, the selection and characteristics of the participants are described, as are the methodologies that were employed in the collection and analysis of the data.

Chapter 5 is dedicated to the content analysis of the survey, the literacy autobiography, and the linguistic autobiography. It is divided into sections that contain the analysis of each, and it includes tables that provide examples from the data to illustrate each of the themes discovered in the texts.

Chapter 6 presents an SFL analysis of the literacy and linguistic autobiographies. The chapter includes an experiential analysis of the pronominal "I" as Agent that illustrates how the participants construe their experiences with literacy and language learning. Also, it presents data from an interpersonal analysis that reveals the tenor of the text through a study of the Mood elements deployed. The interpersonal analysis additionally explores the social network involved in the participants' literacy development and aspects of the texts that are characteristics of academic writing.

Chapter 7 is a discussion of the broader themes and interpretations that have emerged as the result of the analyses. It combines all three perspectives mentioned above (surveys, thematic content analysis, and SFL analysis), offers a cross-sectional perspective on the participants with a view to finding similarities and differences, and a longitudinal analysis of critical indicators of advanced writing. This chapter places the study in the context of NNEST research and literacy studies.

Chapter 8 is the conclusion of the thesis. It reflects on the contributions of this study and makes recommendations for teacher preparation programs and for the literacy and language development of teachers. It considers how such studies can contribute to a better understanding of the native and nonnative English-speaking teacher issues that arise both in the public mind and in the academic world, and it makes suggestions for future research. This chapter also includes the limitations of the study.

## 1.5 Summary

The intent of this chapter was to introduce the thesis by providing the background for and the focus of the research. The chapter explained that the goal of the research was to explore the literacy and language development of NES and NNES teacher learners as represented in surveys and their literacy and linguistic autobiographies. It also provided an

overview of the qualitative research approach used in this thesis -- the analysis of the texts produced by the participants, which offers an emic perspective on the participants and allows for themes and meanings to emerge.  At the end of this chapter, the organization of the thesis was summarized in a brief outline of each chapter.

# Chapter 2
# Context of the Research

"The native speaker is dead!" Thomas Paikeday (1985, p. 1)

## 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the context of this research. This description of context is essential in a qualitative study because the research and the interpretation of the findings cannot be separated from the social situation in which the study takes place. Fundamentally, the context provides a holistic view both of the research environment and of the participants, and it situates them both in the broader context of the world view of the research. The macro-context of the research is the field of nonnative English-speaking teachers; issues from this field are presented first to give, as it were, the big picture, before moving on to the micro-context, or the local setting of the research. The micro-context is the tertiary institution where the research takes place. Scrutiny of these contexts is necessary for an understanding of the research rationale and methodology.

## 2 .2 The Macro-context of the Research

This section will describe the macro-context of the study in broad terms. It includes definitions of the concepts of the native speaker  and the nonnative speaker, an historical overview of research on native and non-native English-speaking teachers in the TESOL field in general and in the US in particular, and perspectives on ESOL teacher preparation programs. 'Native' and 'nonnative speaker' are contested terms that I have chosen to retain

because of their preeminence in TESOL, but this study explores the nature of these terms further through the review of literature in the field and through the research itself.

## 2.2.1 Definitions of the Native Speaker

Exactly who is a native speaker and who is not has been the subject of extensive debate for a number of decades. Writing in 1933, Bloomfield (1965) provides a fundamental definition:

> What concerns us the most, however, is the fact that the features of a language are not inherited in the biologic sense. A child cries out at birth and would doubtless in any case after a time take to gurgling and babbling, but the particular language he learns is entirely a matter of environment. An infant that gets into a group as a foundling or by adoption, learns the language of the group exactly as does a child of native parentage; as he learns to speak, his language shows no trace of whatever language his parents may have spoken. Whatever hereditary differences there may be in the structure of the larynx, mouth, lips, and so on, of normal human beings, it is certain that these differences are not such as to affect the actions which make up language. The child learns to speak like the persons round him. The first language a human being learns to speak is his *native language*; he is a *native speaker* [author's emphasis] of this language. (p. 43)

Davies (1996) terms Bloomfield's definition the "bio-developmental definition" (p. 156). Cook (1999) adds that "being a native speaker in this sense is an unalterable historic fact; individuals cannot change their native language any more than they can change who brought them up" (p. 186). Bloomfield's bio-developmental characterization of native speaker will serve as the starting point of this study for the classification of the teacher learner participants into NES or NNES. While the term *native speaker* has come to imply power and privilege in contexts that are discussed below, Bloomfield offers his definition unproblematically, and it is used in this study for initial categorization, not as a research construct.

Artificial definitions of what constitutes a native speaker, such as Chomsky's idealized speaker, who is an "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community who knows the language perfectly" (1965, p. 3), have contributed to the debate

over nativeness versus nonnativeness. In his seminal work, Davies (1991) debunks the myth

of the idealized native speaker and discusses what the native speaker knows and does. Davies

refers to the grammar of the first language (L1) as G1 and the grammar of the second

language (L2) as G2 (in the sense of the intuitions a speaker has learnt about the grammar of

a language) and proposes six characteristics of the native speaker:

     (1) The native speaker acquires the L1 of which s/he is native speaker in childhood.
     (2) The native speaker has intuitions (in terms of acceptability and productiveness) about his/her Grammar 1.
     (3) The native speaker has intuitions about those features of the Grammar 2 that are distinct from his/her Grammar 1.
     (4) The native speaker has a distinct capacity to produce fluent, spontaneous discourse, which exhibits pauses mainly at clause boundaries . . . and which is facilitated by a huge memory stock of complete lexical items . . . In both production and comprehension the native speaker exhibits a wide range of communicative competence.
     (5) The native speaker has a unique capacity to write creatively (and this includes, of course, literature at all levels from jokes to epics, metaphors to novels).
     (6) The native speaker has a unique capacity to translate into the L1 of which s/he is a native speaker. (p. 210)

Davies also maintains that there are significant differences among native speakers, especially

with regard to judgment of language (grammaticality) and to the generalizing capacity

acquired early in childhood. He relates these differences to Bernstein's (1990) work on the

differences among speakers of the same language restricted vs. elaborated code distinction:

restricted code as language dependent on shared assumptions vs. elaborated code as explicit

language not requiring insider knowledge. Davies points out that the learner who learns a

language after childhood is likely missing the restricted code, the insider knowledge of

language, the "intimate and non-public uses of language" (p.68).

     Davies (1991) considers the six characteristics above with regard to second and other

language learners. No second language learner develops the second language in early

childhood unless he or she has two first languages learned simultaneously, in which case

neither is a second language. Contingent on this supposition are the five other criteria.

Davies concludes that it is possible for second language learners to develop all of the five

other criteria in the target, but it is difficult because they do not have the block of five or six

years that a NS child has at the beginning of his or her life to be exposed to and focus on the language, and there may be psycholinguistic reasons that an older language learners cannot attain the same level of development.  Davies recognizes the issue of the power that native speaker status bestows, and he argues that membership in the native speaker community can result from the L2 speaker's confidence and identity.

Other researchers reject Chomsky's idealized speaker and support the work of Davies. Phillipson (1992) dispels what he calls the "native speaker fallacy" that native speakers are the best English teachers because they are more fluent, more correct, and more knowledgeable about culture. He convincingly argues that NNESs can also be effective English teachers through training and their own experience with learning English (pp. 192-194). Kaspar (1997) explains that the term "nonnative speaker" is a construct that L2 researchers have invented to describe the objects of their studies and, therefore, an extremely reductionist idea in that it cannot describe the speaker fully because many complex factors comprise a speaker's identity. Thus, the term is used to "focus upon the aspect that is common to the studied agents and relevant in the global research context" (p. 309). In the present study, the term "nonnative English speaker" is used to refer to the teachers who did not learn English as a first language, based on Bloomfield's (1965) biodevelopmental definition of native speaker, and there is no implication of lack of proficiency inherently attached to its use. Kaspar also warns of the comparative fallacy, by which she means that the baseline should be selected carefully to receive accurate results, so NNESs should not be compared with NESs but with bilinguals who are highly competent in both languages. In this study, the biodevelopmental view is expanded by the findings on the language background of the participants that reveal bilingualism and varying degrees of second language learning experience.

Firth and Wagner (1997) present important challenges to the Chomskyan cognitivists with regard to the latter's  NS/NNS construct, which they see as "oversimplified" (p. 757)

and fallacious. Firth and Wagner call for a reconceptualization of second language acquisition (SLA), which they argue is imbalanced in the Cognitivist direction. They propose three essential changes:

(1) A significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use

(2) An increased emic (i.e. participant-relevant) sensitivity towards fundamental concepts, especially "learner," "native," "nonnative," and "interlanguage" (p. 678)

(3) The broadening of the traditional second/foreign (S/FL) acquisition theories, methodologies, and research agenda.

They argue that there must be a balance between the "social and cognitive dimensions of S/FL use and acquisition" (p. 758). To develop a clearer and more comprehensive understanding of NESs and NNESs, researchers must take into account language use and both the social and cognitive processes involved in second or other language development. In their consideration of three fundamental concepts of SLA (the native speaker, interlanguage, and the language learner), Kramsch and Whiteside (2007) support the arguments of Firth and Wagner against the limiting Chomskyan concepts of the native speaker and second language acquisition. Kramsch and Whiteside's study of multilingual exchanges between immigrants reveals findings that counter those concepts and reveal that though native speakers speak their L1 from birth, they also interact with their communities, learn other languages, and speak various dialects (standard or not). Kramsch and Whiteside provide additional evidence, based on Whiteside's (2008) study of Yucatec Mayan migrants in California, that the progression from NNES to NES occurs in a "dynamic, recursive fashion through reconfiguration of the total social, cognitive, and emotional landscape" (p. 918). This view goes well beyond the borders of the cognitive perspective, the language acquisition device (LAD), and grammar rules.

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Halliday notes that the distinction between native and non-native speakers is a difficult concept to pin down (as cited in Paikeday, 1985) and "not clear cut" (Halliday, 2009, p. 8). Halliday describes

> a cline, ranging in terms of the individual speaker, from the completely monolingual person at one end, who never uses anything but his own native language but his own native language or "L1," through bilingual speakers who make use in varying degree of a second language or "L2," to the endpoint where a speaker has complete mastery of two languages and makes use of both in all uses to which he puts either. (p. 7).

He points out that there is no upper limit to learning a second language and that those speakers who move to a new language community permanently may remain perfectly satisfied with a certain amount of the new language, while others may consciously seek a high degree of language development and succeed in using the language's resources to the same degree as some native speakers who also have a heightened awareness of these resources (p. 9). See Figure 1 below.
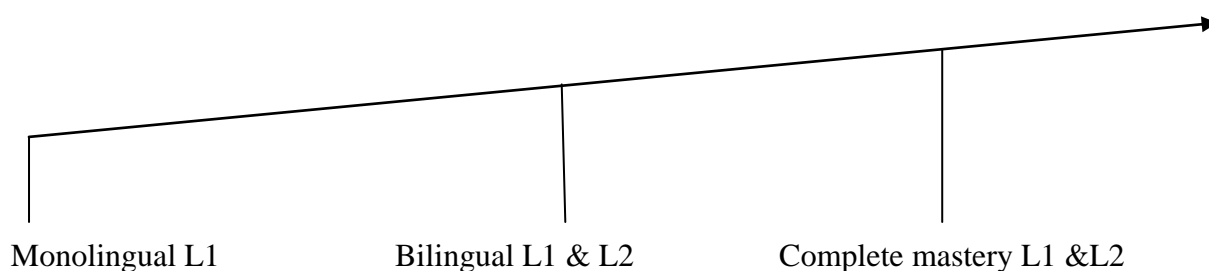


Monolingual L1      Bilingual L1 & L2      Complete mastery L1 &L2

*Figure 2.1* **Cline of Bilingualism**

Speakers of an L1 then learn the L2\ to the degree that they choose for their purposes, and there is no upper limit to which they can aspire. Davies (2003) notes that "native speakers are still always <u>acquiring</u> in an absolute sense, but <u>have acquired</u> [Davies' emphasis] in comparison with non-native speakers" (p. 41).

Thus, the differences between a native speaker and nonnative speaker cannot be discerned simply or connected to an ideal version of a speaker of a language, but are rather the result of ongoing lifelong language development in one or more languages by people who have different socio-cultural backgrounds. The term *native speaker* has taken on meaning not

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intended by Bloomfield, so in qualitative studies of native or nonnative speakers the term has to be problematized to develop a fuller understanding of it. The debate that has sprung up around this dichotomization of nativeness and nonnativeness continues to illuminate the issue.

## 2.2.2 Historical Overview of the Nonnative Speaker Movement

Although the controversy over the issue of nativeness versus nonnativeness has existed for nearly three decades (Kachru, 1982; Smith 1983), it began to take on more prominence in linguistic research with the work of Phillipson (1992), whose comments on the native speaker fallacy are mentioned above in Section 2.2.1, and Medgyes (1994), who was the first to write a book on NNESTs. In the most recent book on the subject, Braine (2010) traces the roots of the movement to Kachru's (1985, 1992) work on World Englishes and his three concentric circles of Englishes – the Inner Circle (e.g., Britain, Canada, the United States, Australia, New Zealand), the Outer Circle (former British colonies, e.g., Hong Kong, Malaysia, India), and the Expanding Circle (e.g., China, Korea, Japan). More recently, Braine (1999a, 2005, 2010) and Davies (2003) (mentioned above in Section 2.2.1) have challenged the narrow constructs of the idealized native speaker, and other linguists and TESOL professionals (E. Ellis, 2002, 2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a, 2006b; Llurda, 2005; J. Liu, 1999; Mahboob, 2010; Nemtchinova, 2010) have added to the growing body of evidence (discussed below in Section 2.2.3) on the successes of NNESTs in the classroom.  The disputes continue; many of them are connected to political issues around the world and in the United States, where nonnativeness is caught up in such highly charged issues as immigration and the English-Only Movement (Lu, 1998). For instance, at the time of this writing, the Arizona Department of Education has been accused of allegedly informing school districts that teachers whose fluency or accent in English is not adequate may be fired or assigned to other

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classrooms where there are no ESL students (Jordan, 2010; Zehr, 2010). This situation raises many questions: How is the fluency of a teacher to be measured? Who decides if a teacher's accent is too intrusive?  If training for language proficiency or accent reduction is offered, how much of it is a teacher required to have?  Is the teacher's prior training and certification as an ESL teacher to be challenged? This latest controversy is disturbing from a number of standpoints, including human rights, and has only one main benefit -- that more research will be conducted, so more definitive answers will be forthcoming.

Fueling this controversy is the unparalleled demand for English. Swales (1997) likens English to Tyrannosaurus Rex and the business of providing English language training to global drug trafficking. With burgeoning demand for teachers of English, many trained teachers of English and some native English speakers without any teacher training are finding jobs in a wide variety of locations around the world, in particular, in countries with large populations such as China. That native status can confer on teachers, even completely untrained ones, greater prestige and opportunities in the teaching of English worldwide has been documented by many researchers (for example, Braine, 1999b; Thomas, 1999; Oda, 1999) and continues to stimulate the current discussion. Worldwide, over 80% of all EFL and ESL teachers have a language other than English as their first language (Rajagopalan, 2006). This study takes place in an Inner Circle country, the US, though not all the participants are from the Inner Circle; two are from the Expanding Circle – China and Colombia (see Section 4.3.3 for more information on the participants), though all of them were seeking New York State Certification because they were planning to teach in New York.

With so many English teachers around the world who do not speak English as their first language, there needed to be professional ways in which they could receive recognition and benefit from enfranchisement as TESOL professionals of an equal status with NESTs. TESOL International, based in the United States, is a fundamental resource for TESOL professionals, especially those in NES countries, and, therefore, a logical place for NNESTs

to find assistance. Braine (2010) describes the beginning of the NNS movement at the 30th

Annual TESOL Convention in 1996, when he organized a colloquium entitled "In Their Own

Voices: Nonnative Speaker Professionals in TESOL," at which Ulla Connor, Suresh

Canagarajah, Kamal Sridhar, Jacinta Thomas, and Devi Chitrapu presented their personal

narratives, stimulating considerable interest in NNS concerns and inspiring a beneficial

discussion during which the TESOL Caucus for NNESTs was proposed. This proposal came

to fruition two years later when the Non-Native English Speakers in TESOL Caucus was

established; it met in 1999 for the first time, with Braine as chairperson. Braine (2010)

explains that its major goals were to:

> (1) create a nondiscriminatory professional environment for all TESOL members regardless of native language and place of birth
> (2) encourage the formal and informal gatherings of NNS at TESOL and affiliate conferences
> (3) encourage research and publications on the role of nonnative speaker teachers in ESL and EFL contexts, and
> (4) promote the role of nonnative speaker members in TESOL and affiliate leadership positions.
> (p. 5)

These noteworthy goals define the modest beginnings of the organized NNS movement.

Since then, the Caucus has grown significantly. By 2008, according to Braine, it had 1,700

members and became an Interest Section of the TESOL organization. Braine views the

success of the movement in meeting the aforementioned objectives as "beyond expectations"

(p. 5), citing the rise in self-esteem, the spread of NNS research and publications, and the

active involvement of NNSs in TESOL leadership, though he points out that the first

objective – a bias-free professional environment – remains an ideal towards which the

Caucus continues to work.

Progress with regard to the third objective – research and publication – listed by

Braine (2010) above is readily measurable by observing the increased presence of research

articles and books on the subject of NNESTs.  Articles on the movement have appeared in

*TESOL Quarterly*, *World Englishes*, *Language Learning*, *Modern Language Journal*,

*Linguistics in Education*, to name a few, and in a number of edited collections of studies.

Several such books dedicated to the NNEST movement have been published in the last

decade or so, including Braine (1999), Kamhi-Stein (2004), Braine (2005), Llurda (2005),

Braine (2010), and Mahboob (2010). From these sources, articles of particular pertinence to

this study are discussed below in Section 2.2.3.


## 2.2.3 Research on NESTs and NNESTs

Braine (2010) attributes the pioneering focus on the problems on NNESTs to the early

work of Medgyes (1992, 1994), who was essentially the first to bring it to the forefront of

second language teacher research. As a learner of English as a second language (with

Hungarian as his first language) and a teacher of English himself, he was able to write from

the first person perspective as well as from the researcher's third person stance. Braine (2010)

calls Medgyes' 1994 book "groundbreaking" (p. 17) in its treatment of topics that remain

controversial to the current day. In this book, Reves and Medgyes (1994) hypothesize that

there are four differences between the NEST and NNEST:

(1) language proficiency

(2) praxis

(3) differences in proficiency as the cause of most differences in praxis

(4) achievable success for both, though for each in a different way

These hypotheses continue to be a focal point for research on this subject, and Braine (2010)

maintains that the findings from the aforementioned study have "stood the test of time" (p.

28).

Medgyes (1999) agrees with Halliday's evaluation of the issue of native speakers (in

Section 2.2.1) and argues that anyone can tell the difference between him, a native Hungarian

speaker fluent in English, and a NES. However, he points out that indeed the differences

between NNESs and NESs need not be interpreted in a negative manner and may work in favor of NNES teachers, who can:

(1) Provide a good learner model for imitation
(2) Teach language and learning strategies more effectively
(3) Supply learners with more information about the English language
(4) Anticipate and prevent language difficulties better
(5) Be more empathetic to the needs and problems of learners, and
(6) Make use of the learners' mother tongue.
(Medgyes, 1999, p. 178)

The NNESs' experiences in learning English can work in their favor in teaching English. Medgyes contends that to be effective teachers of English, NNESs have to speak English close to the way natives would, understand the target culture well, and receive language training while they are receiving pedagogical training. NESs who are bilingual or multilingual may similarly benefit their learners.

Supporting the work of Medgyes, Braine, and others is the doctoral research conducted by E. Ellis[1] (2003), who studied the effect of language learning on ESOL teachers' professional knowledge and beliefs about language teaching and learning. The participants included both NESTs and NNESTs; Ellis was concerned with transcending the most common distinctions between the two because she believed that these distinctions obscure the central question of what knowledge and experience benefit ESOL teachers most. She found that second language learning experience is an important contributor to the professional knowledge and beliefs of ESOL teachers (2006b). NESTs and NNESTs who are bilingual display a rich array of knowledge, experience, and perceptions about learning English that ESOL teachers without significant language learning experience lack (2002). Moreover, her research shows that *bilinguality* [a term that, according to Ellis, originated with Hamers and Blanc, 2000] and experience in learning a second language give teachers the awareness of language that they need for contrastive language analysis, which leads to understanding how English and their students' languages work (2004b, 2006a); this is an important component in

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[1] Elizabeth Ellis is sometimes referred to in articles as Liz Ellis. In this thesis, I refer to her as E. Ellis in all her articles.

the teaching of English because it helps teachers to exploit similarities and address differences among languages. In her investigation of curricula used in teacher education, Ellis (2006b) describes the lack of recognition of the important nature of L2 experience and explicates the advantages of teachers who have a bilingual and bicultural identity (NNESs or NESs), such as the strategic use of code-switching. In Ellis's (2004a) findings derived from the interviews and language biographies in her doctoral research, the NNESs themselves recognized their language learning as a salient resource for enriching their teaching, and monolingual NESs viewed language learning as a difficult, burdensome, and unpleasant task. The strongest affective factor that arose from her research is that bilingual teachers as language learners are models of L2 acquisition and as such serve to motivate their students. Though Ellis's work was with Australian educators of adult ESL students and suggests that further studies are needed with other teacher populations, her findings are significant and support having both bilingual NESTs and NNESTs in the ESL classroom. They also concur with Medgyes's view that NNESTs continue to be language learners, albeit at an advanced level. Ellis calls for further research on how multilingual teachers' language learning affects their students' learning.

A small number of studies focus on the language used by or about NNESTs. In the study of the language that Japanese students used to evaluate their ESL teachers, Lipovsky and Mahboob (2010) conducted an analysis using appraisal theory (Martin & White, 2005; White, 2005), which is an extension of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). Through Appraisal analysis, they were able to study the language that the writers used to encode their emotions and attitudes with regard to the NESTs' and NNESTs' linguistic competences, literacy skills, and teaching methodology, and personal factors. Their findings support previous research that students value qualities in both NESTs and NNESTs (such as NESTs' better pronunciation or NNESTs' knowledge and

teaching of grammar), but the Appraisal analysis offers another perspective and a fine-tuning

of the results in several ways:

(1) It highlighted issues of affect that were not as evident in the thematic analysis

(2) It took into consideration the co-texts of the evaluation, showing how the

students' evaluations of their NESTs and NNESTs recurred throughout the texts,

and were amplified through intensification and/or repetition

(3) It revealed the dual nature of the students' evaluation, for example, in appraising

the advantages and disadvantages of their teachers' ability or lack of ability to

speak the students' L1.

Lipovsky and Mahboob maintain that the use of Appraisal analysis emphasizes "the semantic

prosody" (p. 174) of the students' writing and adds a dimension to the meanings derived from

the texts.  Cots and Diaz (2006) analyzed the teacher talk of NNESTs used text analysis (SFL

in part). Their work complemented other research that was largely dominated by surveys and

questionnaires and added a new dimension for the exploration of interaction (modality) in the

NNEST's classroom. These two studies are exceptional in their focus on language; the

current study draws on their language focus, though the present SFL analysis (described in

detail in Chapters 4 and 6) differs in scope and direction.

Braine (2010) indicates that most NNEST research is oriented in three directions:

teacher self-perceptions (about their practice), students' perceptions of teachers, and teacher

autobiographies. For this study, the third option was most appropriate because the

participants were studied during a teacher preparation program and before they became

student teachers, so neither they nor their future students could comment on their practice.

Autobiography, which is discussed further in Section 4.4.1.2, as a data source, is featured in a

number of works on NNESTs, including the self-narratives of Braine (1999b), Thomas

(1999), Li (1999) and Connor (1999), and the work of Hayes (1996, 2005) on the life

histories of NNESTs. Braine relates his literacy autobiography, teaching experiences, and

challenges as a NNEST. Thomas writes of her experiences with bias in the workplace, for example, of students' negative reactions to her as a NNEST in an American classroom even though she is a native speaker of Singapore English. Li describes her struggles with writing in her graduate work in the US, having had no prior experience with essay writing, and later with professional writing. In recalling how a senior professor criticized her scholarly publication, she reveals that she felt like an imposter who had been hiding and pretending to be a professor and a scholar of English, but was "exposed in public after years of hiding and pretending" (p. 53), her confidence dashed by the senior professor's comments. Li's book went on to achieve critical acclaim, which she feels validated her otherness and nonnativeness. Connor also discusses her development as an academic writer, describing her initial difficulty with and the conventions of academic writing, and her lack of self-confidence because of her nonnative status. She also includes an appendix with a timeline of her writing development and a literacy autobiography writing prompt, which bears some resemblance to the assignment for the literacy autobiography which forms part of the data for this study.

Hayes (1996, 2005) studied NNESTs in their native countries through interviews designed to allow the teachers' voices to emerge. He believes that this type of life history research is necessary to fill the gaps of knowledge about teachers in non-Western parts of the world because not enough is known about them. His study of nine Thai teachers revealed much information about their educational experiences, their reasons for becoming teachers, the socio-cultural context of their teaching, and their feelings about in-service development (1996). His findings about their initial motivation for becoming teachers reveal diverse causes, as is the case among other teachers in other parts of the world, but in Thailand parental influence and family circumstances seem to play a larger role. The findings also provide insight into the circumstances, especially the oligarchic control under which teachers are constrained in Thailand. In the other study, Hayes (2005) interviewed three Sri Lankan

teachers of English about their biographies, starting with their general background, early formal education, and the events and experiences that led up to their becoming teachers. The interviews also included in-depth histories of their teaching careers and their feelings about teaching; despite other more lucrative alternatives, all three have remained teachers throughout their lives, dedicated to their vocation and their students. Both studies point to the potential of life history research, which allows the participants to share their lives and contexts as English learners and teachers, for the expansion of knowledge about NNESTs.

In the case of the present study, the autobiographies were written as part of the participants' coursework in response to writing prompts not written by the researcher but rather by the course teachers, so there was no collaboration between the participants and the researcher in the creation of the life histories. Hayes (2005) notes that trustworthiness in life history research "can in part be assessed against verifiable 'facts' – being engaged as a teacher in specific schools at specific times, attendance on in-service courses and so on can all be verified by written records – and the internal coherence of stories as told can also be checked" (p. 171). (A further discussion of trustworthiness in the current study can be found in Section 4.2.2). As is evidenced in the review of the life histories presented above, the autobiographies of teachers of English reveal not only the teachers' perceptions but also trustworthy information about teachers' sociocultural context, literacy development, and academic challenges and experiences in teacher training programs.

## 2.2.4 ESOL Teacher Education

In this section, there is an overview of ESOL teacher education in the USA and in New York State, where the research took place, because the participants were all enrolled in a teacher preparation program there. Deficiencies that exist in ESOL teacher preparation programs are also discussed with a view to understanding what more is needed with regard to

the training of NNESTs and the possible contributions that this research can make to teacher training.

**2.2.4.1 Overview of ESOL Teacher Education**

In the US, ESOL teacher preparation is regulated by each individual state's department of education. There is a countrywide assessment instrument, the National Teacher Examination (NTE), used by the majority of the states. However, New York State has its own set of assessments, including the qualifying examination for ESOL teachers, which is called the ESOL Content Specialty Test (CST).  In New York State, teacher preparation programs are generally designed to meet state certification requirements, to prepare teacher learners for the state tests, and to compete favorably with neighboring colleges' programs. They are, therefore, compact and limited to the meet the minimum requirements; they may even exclude the possibility of choosing between two classes or taking electives. The needs of teacher learners tend to be secondary, and little attention is paid to the linguistic and cultural needs of NNES teacher learners. These state requirements do not take into consideration the concepts of socioliteracy and do not address the aforementioned needs. The current study is designed to give some insight into these needs and may suggest the need for language training for all teachers, which, Medgyes (1999) notes, is seldom included in TESOL training programs.

**2.2.4.2 Deficiencies in ESOL Teacher Education: Language and Culture Training**

In his presentation to the NNEST Electronic Village Online, Braine (2009) maintains that NNESs as English teachers do not practice language learning themselves and that proficiency is lacking in the program he supervises. He reports that many teacher learners do not use English outside the classroom, do not have English books, and do not even read

English newspapers. This problem, Braine continues, is most pronounced in the EFL context and significantly better in the North American, Australian, and United Kingdom contexts because NNESTs are in an immersion situation. Nonetheless, when in the course of every semester, I survey my teacher learners in the TESOL courses that I teach, many of them have not read a book or a newspaper other than their textbook (if that) in their second language, be it English or Spanish or Chinese, or some other language for years. Braine does point out that NNSs who seek training in an ESL context can avail themselves of the opportunity that the context provides to further develop their proficiency. However, he does not explore if or how anyone takes the opportunity. This research intends to carry out such exploration.

If, as Medgyes suggests, NNES teachers can only "command more respect . . . through the mastery of the English language" (1994, p. 184), then TESOL programs need to consider more extensively the essential question for NNES teacher learners, "Should language learning stop?" − a question that TESOL trainers need the answer to. In the TESOL Program where the present study takes place, there is an emphasis on preparing teachers for lifelong learning, but the only language component is a course on the grammar of American English, which reviews basics such as word classes and sentence-level issues, and offers some methods for teaching grammar, but the course does not provide extended opportunities for language development.

Medgyes (1999) also discusses how in EFL settings NNESTs are the main source of cultural knowledge for their students. However, this perspective is not necessarily true in the case of immigrant teachers in English-speaking countries, where students are surrounded by the target culture and the ESL teacher is but one source of cultural knowledge, albeit an important one. Medgyes does not make any concrete suggestions for the cultural training of NNES teacher learners. In the US, most TESOL programs include a course in multicultural education, although few offer a course on the target culture for NNES teachers. The underlying assumption is that teacher learners already know about American culture, but for

immigrant NNESs and international students this may not be true. Immigrants often live in ethnic neighborhoods, such as Russians and Russian Jews in Brighton Beach in New York or Chinese in the Chinatowns of San Francisco or New York, where it is possible to carry on living within their own culture and minimize contact with Americans and their everyday rituals. International students may likewise be drawn to ethnic communities and to fellow students from the same culture, and their contact with American culture on the whole may be limited by the academic demands of their courses of study and on campus-residency.

Other NNES scholars agree with Medgyes's ideas about supplementing TESOL teacher training programs with language courses. In his review of TESOL teacher preparation programs, D. Liu (1999) explains that although 90% of these programs have a course in English grammar that covers English phonology, morphology, and syntax, his study shows that NNESs need to study usage and writing skills. He defines an excellent command of English as "fluent and idiomatic use of the English language" (p. 225) and notes that a substantial number of NNESTs are not fluent by this definition. He maintains that the coursework should be carefully considered and based on analyses of NNESTs' literacy, analyses which are strangely lacking despite evidence of the need.  After a quantitative analysis of the responses of practicum supervisors about the skills that NNSs need to become effective language teachers, Llurda (2005) calls for a language component in teacher training programs because his study illustrated the effects of inadequate language knowledge on teaching. Braine (1999b) points out, in a discussion of his own difficulties with academic writing when he arrived in the US, that like him, NNES graduate students may not have taken any college composition courses in their countries (which often do not have such courses), so they are not prepared for academic writing when they start Master's in TESOL programs. In her argument for the integration of issues involving NNESs across the curriculum of TESOL programs, Kamhi-Stein (1999) suggests that TESOL programs should include coursework dealing with issues that are vital to NNES teacher learners, in particular coursework that

provides them with a profound understanding of English and that helps them better recognize what they have to offer as teachers.

The observations of these researchers, NNESs themselves, point to a legitimate concern about the scope of the current training of NNESs, though one must be careful to avoid coming to the conclusion that all NNESs require extra academic coursework and/or support, or that NESs do not. The literacy skills in English that NESs and NNESs bring to teacher training programs is a subject that warrants further investigation, which the present study contributes to.

## 2.3 The Micro-Context of the Research

The micro-context describes the particulars of the site the research: the Master's in TESOL Program in the Division of Education at Molloy College. Included in this section is information about the institution, the Graduate Education Program, the TESOL Program, and the researcher's role in the TESOL Program.

### 2.3.1 The Institution: Molloy College

The research is sited in Molloy College, a small Roman Catholic college established in 1955 by Dominican sisters in Rockville Centre, a suburb of New York City. The college grants associate's, bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees, and houses the largest nursing school on the U. S. East Coast. In 2010, Molloy College received a 59th place ranking in the Universities-Master's North category in *U.S. News and World Report* ("Best Colleges 2010") and also a mention as one of the top *218 Best Northeastern Colleges* in the *Princeton Review* (2009). In the 2008-2009 academic year when this study began, it had a student population of 3,879, and there were 124 full-time faculty members. The college has a division structure

with a dean at the head of each division, and in each division with a postgraduate (in American terms, simply graduate) program, an associate dean at the head of the program.

The fundamental mission of the college is expressed in the College's Mission Statement, which indicates that:

Like other colleges and universities, Molloy College is guided by its mission statement:

> Molloy College, an independent, Catholic college, rooted in the Dominican tradition of study, spirituality, service, and community, is committed to academic excellence with respect for each person. Through transformative education, Molloy promotes a lifelong search for truth and development of ethical leadership. (Molloy College, 2009, p. 9)

This Mission Statement forms the central idea of the purpose of the institution, and each individual division has its own mission statement to further define its respective philosophy.

## 2.3.2 The Graduate Education Program

The Division of Education is currently comprised of two programs: the undergraduate or baccalaureate program and the postgraduate or master's program. The Graduate Program began in January 1999.  The College also awards Post-Master's Certificates in TESOL and Special Education. A doctoral program is projected but will not be in operation for a number of years yet, pending its further development and New York State approval.

The college was established on the Four Pillars of the Dominican Tradition: prayer, study, teaching, and community. The Division of Education bases its conceptual framework on these Four Pillars and interprets them in light of teacher preparation as spirituality and reflection, research and teaching, service, and community, which serve as the conceptual framework for the programs in the Division. This framework is the foundation for the exemplification and promotion of certain core values in teacher learners, including the focus on learner-centered teaching, dedication to students and their communities, and respect for

diversity. The primary goals of the education programs are the preparation of teachers who are creative and effective, who manage their classrooms well, who reflect on their teaching practice, and who respond sensitively to diversity in their school settings (Molloy College Division of Education, 2007, p. 3). Molloy College's graduate programs rank in the top 200 graduate education programs in the Northeast ("Best Colleges 2010") and enjoy a good reputation locally that is supported by anecdotal evidence such as testimonies from school superintendents, who express their preference for Molloy teachers, and teachers seeking jobs, who find that they have been shortlisted for vacancies because they are from Molloy.

### 2.3.3 The TESOL Program

The TESOL Program is a master's level program, which offers a 33-credit Master's of Science in Education/TESOL, a 48-credit dual degree MS Ed./TESOL and Childhood, or a 45-credit dual degree MS Ed./TESOL and Adolescent Education. Additionally, there is a 24-credit Post-Master's Advanced Certificate in TESOL. The TESOL Program prepares students for New York State teacher certification through coursework, student teaching, and test preparation. The goals of the Program are to offer teacher learners intensive study in the main areas of TESOL, including second language acquisition (SLA), methods for ESL instruction in English language arts and content areas, assessment, linguistics, grammar, diversity, research, and teaching practice. (See Appendix E "Status Sheets" for the list of courses and additional requirements.)

The dual certification programs in which all but one of the seven participants in the study were enrolled include TESOL and Childhood, TESOL and Spanish for Adolescence, and TESOL and English for Adolescence. One participant was studying for the Post-Master's Advanced Certificate (see Section 4.2). Students may enter the postgraduate program in any semester (fall, spring, or either of the two summer semesters) and may attend on a full- (9 or

more credits) or part-time basis (6 or fewer credits). Most students choose to attend on a part-time basis because of work and family commitments, though they may opt to take nine credits on occasion. All the participants in the study were part-time students, except for one. Because of the flexible program enrollment and the facility with which students may change from part-time to full-time course loads, few students can be said to be aligned with each other or in exactly the same stage of training. Moreover, the courses may also be taken in almost any order, though the literacy methods and the linguistics courses are often taken first or early on. Therefore, it is not surprising that the participants in this study are at different stages in their teacher training. However, any differences that affect the design of the study will be explicated further on.

Student teaching is almost always the final course. In the dual certification programs, it includes 14 weeks in the classroom, half of which are in TESOL and half of which are in either childhood or adolescence education. Summer practicum, which is four weeks long, is for those students who are already certified in either childhood or adolescence and are doing their master's for professional certification in those areas and initial certification in TESOL and for students in the TESOL Post-Master's Advanced Certificate Program.

### 2.3.3.1 The Nature of the Program

Teaching and learning practices vary from faculty member to faculty member and from classroom to classroom; however, throughout the college there is a strong emphasis on small classroom size, low teacher-to-student ratio, student support, differentiation of instruction, and mentoring. There is a college-wide commitment to the development of student writing and communication skills (Communicating across the Curriculum) and to service learning.  In the

TESOL Program, there are three full-time and four part-time professors, all of whom share the college's emphasis on these practices. Additionally, the Division of Education believes in the importance of reflective practice, so teachers encourage the students to reflect on their life experiences and experiences in coursework and during student teaching.

### 2.3.3.2 Program Requirements

The program has a rigorous set of benchmark, attendance, and field requirements. All students must attain a minimum grade of B or 83% (3.0 on a 4-point scale) on all benchmark assignments and as a final grade in all courses. Students who do not attain this grade in any course are put on academic probation and must repeat the course. Students must also have taken 12 credits in a language other than English and received a B or better in them prior to entrance in the Program, or, barring that, during their studies but before student teaching. In addition, New York State sets attendance requirements: students are not permitted more than three absences, and all absences must be made up.

### 2.3.3.3 Diversity in the Program

The student body is primarily from middle class suburban families in Nassau County, where the college is located, and from Queens, the neighboring county and a borough of New York City. The students are predominantly white and come from cultures that are traditionally Roman Catholic, such as Irish, Italian, and, increasingly, Latin American. The Division of Nursing is the most diverse and has the most ESL students (native speakers of Spanish, Russian, Haitian Creole, Thai, Chinese, Japanese, Malayalam, Hindi, and other languages), whereas the Division of Education is not diverse (in conformity with the general trend in America, i.e. white, middle class female teachers), with the exception of the TESOL

program, which attracts nonnative English speakers (NNES), primarily native Spanish speakers and bilinguals, both those who already have New York State certification in teaching Spanish (7-12) and those who do not. In the nursing profession in a multicultural society such as the USA, cultural and linguistic diversity is both an advantage because they have more awareness of diversity and a disadvantage because of possible problems that affect patient-caregiver communication. The lack of diversity in the Division of Education and the limited diversity in the TESOL Program can present a problem in the preparation of multicultural and multilingual educators, in particular in TESOL, and represent an area in which nativeness may put future ESL teachers at a disadvantage because at least some NESTs have limited language learning experience and lack contact with people of diverse cultures (see the work of E. Ellis, 2002-2006b). Similarly, NNESTs, who are bilingual due to circumstances such as immigration, may have the advantage of extensive experience with the learning of language and culture (unlike monolingual NESTs), while possibly having problems with academic literacy in English. Ellis's body of work has gone beyond the NEST/NNEST distinction and deeply probed teachers' language learning experience and binguality as factors affecting their teaching.

**2.3.3.4 Researcher's Role in the TESOL Program**

While I regularly teach Second Language Acquisition, Multicultural Education, Introduction to Linguistics, and Structure and Application of American English, I have taught all of the TESOL courses on campus, and also in the Intensive Teacher Institute (ITI) program (a TESOL certification program for teachers already certified in other academic areas and working in high needs school districts) off campus. I am one of the three full-time TESOL professors. I am the only teacher in the Division of Education certified to teach foreign language (Russian, grades 1-12). In the undergraduate program, I also teach Russian

Literature in translation in the English Department or College Composition and sometimes ESL Advanced Reading and Writing, American Culture, or Pronunciation, the latter two courses designed for NNES Roman Catholic priests, in the Modern Language Department. Moreover, I function as an advisor to one third of the on-campus TESOL majors, who at the start of this study (in the 2008-2009 academic year) totaled 43. (Another 65 students were in ITI programs off campus.) My role in the TESOL Program affords me contact with all of the TESOL students and closer contact with the third who are my advisees, among whom were some of the participants.

An explication of the role of the researcher at the site of the study helps to place the researcher in the micro-context of the research. It affords a perspective on the researcher as stakeholder in the study. In Section 4.3.1, there is a discussion of how my role in the TESOL Program affects my role as researcher and the participants in the study.

## 2.4 Summary

This chapter provides an overview of the macro-context and the micro-context of this research. The macro-context description includes a review of the issues surrounding the nativeness and nonnativeness of English teachers. These issues include definitions of the term native speaker, the controversy over this definition, and an historical overview of the NNS teacher. The bio-developmental definition of native speaker is described because it is used in this study for the purpose of describing and categorizing the participants. An overview of pertinent literature by leading researchers on the NNS movement helps to situate this study in the context of the movement, and relevant research on NNESTs provides support for the present study. The portrayal of the micro-context gives information on this research site, which is Molloy College and its Master's in TESOL Program. The research investigates the literacy development of NESTs and NNESTs in a tertiary institution in an NES country. The

institutional Mission Statement and the focus of the Program are explicated, as is the researcher's role at the site.

This chapter serves to situate the research in its context of the NNS movement. Chapter 3 presents literature that relates to literacy development in first and second languages with a view to establishing a research paradigm, and the methodology employed in the study, including the thematic content analysis and the SFL analysis, are explained in Chapter 4.

# Chapter 3

# Literature Review

"Literacy in a second language develops as in the first – globally, not linearly, and in a variety of rich contexts." Rigg and Allen (1989, p. 2)

## 3.1 Introduction

The literature review is vital to the dissertation in that it establishes both a foundation and direction for the research that follows it. Boote and Beile ( 2005) maintain that:

> A substantive, thorough, sophisticated literature review is a precondition for doing substantive, thorough, sophisticated research. "Good" research is good because it advances our collective understanding. To advance our collective understanding, a researcher or scholar needs to understand what has been done before, the strengths and weaknesses of existing studies, and what they might mean. A researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field. (p. 3)

Boote and Beile argue that educational research, such as this study, which sits at the crossroads of education and linguistics, presents different types of challenges than in most other fields with regard to the literature review. They set forth the following objectives for the literature review: (a) the description of the broad context of the research, (b) the demarcation of the scope of the research, (c) the reasons for the demarcation, (d) the place of the existing literature in its greater context, and (e) the critical discussion and evaluation of the selected literature.

This chapter summarizes the literature on literacy, academic literacy and writing, literacy development, and the application of social networking theory to language and literacy research. Firstly, the section on literacy is necessary to explore the developments in

theories and research, especially current trends, and to explain the paradigm of literacy that is used in this research study. Secondly, a review of the literature on academic literacy with a highlight on writing coordinates with the study of literacy in its advanced stages, processes which are represented in this study of NES and NNES teachers. In addition, the study seeks to highlight what literacy skills and abilities in writing the participants bring to their future roles as second language teachers. Thirdly, a discussion of some salient literature on literacy development and on literacy development in a formal educational setting is presented. Finally, perspectives on social networking theory and the ways it has been used in research on language and social interaction are offered because the autobiographical texts which are part of the data set for this study describe the interactants involved in the participants' literacy development. These sections complete the theoretical framework for the study at hand.

## 3.2 Literacy

Literacy is a complex topic that has been viewed from different theoretical perspectives and whose definitions depend upon the perspective, so a single, simple definition is elusive. Halliday (1996) points out that "literacy" has come to have meanings in today's society that differ drastically from the traditional meaning of "learning and knowing how to read and write" (p. 339) and that becoming literate means a person has taken "over the more elaborated forms that are used in writing -- and the system of social values that go with them" (p. 340). Barton (2007) adds that literacy "has become a code word for the more complex views of what is involved in reading and writing" (p. 5). This section of the literature review presents an overview of the changing theoretical concepts of literacy in society and the ways in which it is viewed, and what these recent changes may mean in relation to the current study. Included are a brief overview of literacy definitions, theories, different types of literacy in practice, and the development of literacy.

### 3.2.1 Definitions and Theories of Literacy

Hasan (1996b) writes that "one problem with the word *Literacy* is that it is semantically saturated" (p. 377). Literacy is an ongoing developmental process, not a fixed state, but some definitions and theories do not take the evolving nature of literacy into account. Hasan also argues that "literacy develops into a specific kind of semiosis" (p. 384), which uses language as its resource" (p. 384). In this sense, literacy is a central term, a core for other more specific forms, such as academic literacy, computer literacy, oral literacy, and so forth. Thus, literacy, as "an inherently variable semiotic process" (Hasan, 1996b, p. 384) can be seen as interfacing with a broad area of social activity and not reading and writing alone.

Governments and international agencies present a variety of definitions of and theories about literacy which guide their policies concerning literacy and express their world view. Educational systems, the vessel by which these policies are implemented, perpetuate these definitions and the world views that gave birth to them. In doing so, school systems contribute positively and negatively to society. Some of the definitions and theories that are prevalent today are explored below.

### 3.2.1.1  Definitions of Literacy

The rate of literacy in a nation is defined by the United Nations (2003) as "the percentage of population aged 15-24 years who can both read and write with understanding a short simple statement on his/her everyday life. The definition of literacy sometimes extends to basic arithmetic and other life skills" (p. 3). In this international view, basic literacy is thus described as the ability to read and write at least a small text relevant to the reader or writer's

life with comprehension, and it is extended to also mean numeracy and the ability to use these skills in everyday life. Literacy has been used as the definition to measure, among other things, a country's economic potential. The United Nations also views literacy as essential for the empowerment of an individual and for positive social change; as Bown (2009) notes, the UN's perspective on literacy is changing and expanding:

> UNESCO, as we know, has moved from an originally rather crude definition of literacy to a more subtle one – that it is: "the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts. Literacy involves a continuum of learning to enable an individual to achieve his or her goals, to develop his or her knowledge and potential, and to participate fully in the wider society". Nowadays, it is accepted *that literacy is not a state but a process* and that there are *many literacies*, depending on learners' contexts, whether in homes, in the local community, the market, the work-place, the religious institution, or in the local, regional or national polity. We also now have global ICT [Information and Communication Technology], so that reading may be from a screen as well as a page.     (p. 3)

The United Nations recognizes both the breadth of literacy that reaches beyond the temporal and spatial planes of the classroom (for children or adults) and the metamorphosis of literacy in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. With the rapid changes that the world is undergoing, definitions and views of literacy have necessarily moved away from the simplistic and narrow paradigms of the past and become increasingly more complex and comprehensive, and more sociolinguistic.

Government agencies are not neutral in the way they define literacy and implement literacy programs. They are controlled by politicians and subject to historical forces that may not have interest in furthering a literacy agenda that benefits people in a meaningful way. Literacy, however, involves language and necessarily falls into the realm of both linguistics and education, and a number of other fields.

A pioneer in literacy work in the slums of Sao Paulo, Brazil, Paolo Freire (1975) recognized how a government's definition and implementation of literacy was, in fact, privileging and empowering some people, while disempowering others − those without it. He also saw that adult literacy programs were failing the poor and disenfranchised because they

were unable to connect what was going on in the classroom with what was going on in their lives. The key issues in Freire's approach to literacy include helping students (a) make the connection between the world (their reality) and the word, (b) become actively involved in the learning process through what is termed a *participatory approach*, and (c) use their literacy as an empowering force to struggle against their oppressors and change society. He called for an end to the 'banking model of education,' in which the students come to school and the teacher provides them with whatever he or she thinks the students need, usually a picture of reality that is static. In this model, students are seen as depositories that the teacher, in the role of an authoritative narrator and depositor, fills with deposits of well-established content. In place of this model, Freire calls for problematization or problem-posing education, in which learners are able to perceive their world with a critical eye, develop a critical consciousness, understand their ability to change the world through literacy, and put their thoughts into action.

Freire's (1975) work, which he carried out in Latin America and Africa (particularly in Mozambique), is the origin of the concept of critical literacy. The influence of Freire's ideas is widespread in the United States, in particular in teacher training programs, including at this research site. They have been taken up by notable educators, such as Elsa Auerbach (1992), who points out that Freire's participatory approach to literacy teaching is the opposite of the ends-means approach that dominates so much of instruction because it allows curriculum to emerge "as a result of ongoing collaborative investigation of critical themes in students' lives" (p. 13). Learners continuously assess their own needs by examining their own contexts and the ways in which they can change their world. Auerbach (1992) confirms that the desired outcome is making literacy meaningful in everyday life (p. 20). The lack of success of literacy instruction in communities where the immigrant population is large, where poverty is endemic, and where the youth are dropping out of high school at high rates (10% in the USA as a whole and 22.1% of Hispanic students according to the U. S. Department of

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Education, National Center of Education Statistics, 2008) underscores the need for problem-posing education that leads to critical literacy. The work of teachers such as Erin Gruwell (1999), using such an instructional approach among disenfranchised youth in the slums of Los Angeles, has met with considerable success that has enabled them to at least change their own futures and, in some cases, the futures of their worlds.

An underlying premise of Freire's (1975) work sets the stage for changes in the way literacy is viewed. He maintains that communication is essential to the spread of literacy because people's lives take on meaning solely through communication. He argues along the lines of Dostoevsky's Underground Man that thought only has meaning when it is acted upon, which in terms of literacy education means that if learners are taught to think critically, then that thinking must be realized by the learners' actions and the teacher's facilitation, not stifled by the teacher's authority and the banking model. If, as Freire suggests, the interrelationship among communication, thought, and action are central to literacy and the literacy learning process, then the traditional view of literacy as written and static is problematized, if not upturned, as a viable paradigm.

In the last thirty years, traditional definitions and theories of literacy have been challenged by researchers from several disciplines, including anthropology (Parry, 1982; Street, 1993), social history (Graff, 1979), psychology (Cole & Scribner, 1981) and linguistics and education  (Heath, 1982; Gee, 1992, 1996; New London Group, 1996). Street (1993) explored two central and opposing models of literacy: the autonomous model and the ideological model. The autonomous model is based on the "Great Divide" theories of literacy, as espoused by Greenfield (1972), Goody (1977), and others, which connects literacy in the form or reading and writing with the logical function of the mind and which privileges this incarnation of literacy (also called logical, modern, or scientific) over oral literacy (also called pre-logical, primitive, or nonscientific). In the autonomous model, people who are not schooled in reading and writing are viewed as "have-nots"; they are seen as

incapable of higher order, objective, or abstract thinking. In contrast, people who can read and write in ways that are valued in Western society are seen as "haves"; they are presumed to be able to think objectively and abstractly. The thrust of schooling in the West, then, is to educate children in what Western society views as the essential literacy skills for their success, whether or not these skills in fact lead to success. Baynham (2004) underscores that such prestige literacies that seem dominant and universal are in fact local. Street (1993) proposes the ideological model of literacy, in which literacy is seen as embedded in a society's culture and ideology and literacy practices as resultant from the society's needs for them. Furthermore, Street cautions against representing any society's literacy practices as " 'restricted' or as a model of intellectual development" (p. 130), avoiding this pitfall himself in his work on literacy in Iran. His views stand in stark contrast to the then prevailing opinion, but they are validated by the work of other researchers. Barton (2007) calls Street's distinction between the autonomous and ideological models "a powerful one" (p. 26) and one that continues to be supported by subsequent research.

Research that has produced similar conclusions as Street's is particularly convincing because it originates independently in other disciplines. For instance, based on their study of the Vai people, Cole and Scribner (1981) conclude that schooling, not literacy, causes significant changes in cognitive skills. Heath's (1982) work in Appalachian communities (described under the pseudonyms of Trackton, Roadville, and Maintown), discussed later in this section in more detail, gives further validation to Street's distinction that people's literacy is steeped in a community's social and cultural practices and is valid within that community. Gee (1992, 1996, 2007) argues that literacy and thinking are not simply achievements of the mind; rather, they are, first and foremost, achievements of a social and cultural nature because reading and writing can be interpreted in different ways by different individuals or by the same individual at different times and for diverse reasons.

Recent research on endangered and moribund languages lends support to the work of New Literacy Studies through ethnographic work on languages without writing systems. Most languages around the world do not have a written form. Of what Harrison (2007) estimates to be 6,912 plus languages in the world, only about a quarter have a written form and some of these only because someone has translated the Bible into the language. He notes that "in our own English-speaking culture, we suffer from a strong literacy bias, assuming writing to be the norm when it is not, and viewing literature as something existing primarily on paper" (p. 146). He adds that many persist in viewing the lack of literacy (in Western terms) as "a social deficiency" (p. 146) though oral traditions and the verbal arts that are maintained through the traditions of storytelling and the epic genres within these societies express the creativity and multimodal abilities of people communicating and passing on their cultural and linguistic heritage, in addition to extensive historical and scientific knowledge (through folk taxonomies, for example). Harrison and others (Dauernhauer & Dauernhauer, 1995; Buck, 1993) argue that the written form of oral literature is indeed an impoverished form of text because it cannot produce the same emotional and enlivened experience of oral literature and it is not part of the same social processes (pp. 145-46). Harrison (2007, 2010) suggests that literacy is not a narrow concept based only on pen and print, that cultures without a written language are not inferior (and, in fact, have developed sophisticated classification systems for animal species, geological processes, and botanical varieties), and that the reevaluation and reformulation of literacy research is imperative in the future study of literacy practices.

New Literacy Studies (NLS) represents a new theoretical lens for looking at the essence of literacy through which researchers focus on literacy as a social practice and all that such practice entails (Street, 1995, 2003). The term NLS refers to "a body of work that argues that reading and writing should be viewed not only as mental achievements going on inside people's heads, but also as social and cultural practices with economic, historical, and

political implications" (Gee, 2007, p. 9) Associated closely with the work of Gee (1992, 1996)  and Street, NLS operates from the premise that literacy should be considered a social practice instead of a neutral technical skill and strives to recognize multiple literacies as they are located temporally and spatially, and in power relations (Street, 2003). In NLS, literacy is always a social act that is embedded in a certain Weltanschauung. The theory and practice of NLS continues to broaden and grow through ongoing inquiry and research.

Street (2003) suggests that research on literacy from the standpoint of the ideological model can best be carried out by using a distinction between "literacy events" and "literacy practices" (p.  2), as seen in Figure 3.1.
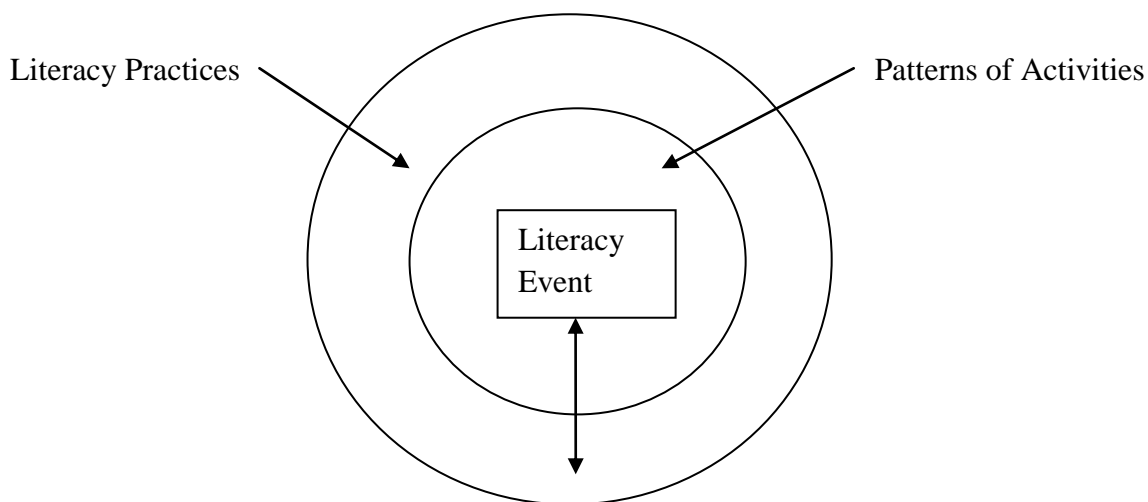
Literacy Practices                                    Patterns of Activities

Literacy
Event

*Figure 3.1:* **Literacy Events and Practices according to Street (2003)**

In this regard, NLS draws on the work of Heath  (1982), who originated these terms and maintains that  for an understanding of literacy forms and functions, researchers should study literacy events, which she defines as "occasions in which written language is integral to the nature of participants' interactions and their interpretive  processes and strategies" (p. 50). Burns and Joyce note that literacy events are frequently "repeated, routine activities, where written texts are central" (2000, p. xii). Street (1998, 2003) refines these definitions of literacy events and practices; he sees literacy events both in Heath's sense and as including "the social models of literacy that participants bring to bear upon these events and that give

meaning to them" (2003, p. 78). Literacy practices embody "the broader cultural conception of particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts" (2003, p. 78). Barton and Hamilton (1998) support this definition of literacy practices, which they describe as "the general cultural ways of utilizing written language which people draw upon in their lives" and more simply as "what people do with literacy" (p. 6). Burns and Joyce (2000) add that literacy practices comprise "people's own perspectives on literacy and its meaning in their daily lives" (p. xii). Thus, a literacy event exists within the broader cultural and social context and is influenced by it and the patterns of activities surrounding the event; the interrelationship is not, however, one way, from the practice to the event, but rather a mutual interchange among practices, activities, and event (see Figure 3.1 above).

Heath (1982), whose work (in sociolinguistics and education) strongly reflects the ideological model, argues that viewing oral and written literacy as being located on a single continuum does not correspond with the actual situational functions of literacy. Rather, Heath urges, that oral and written literacies should be mapped along two separate continua, whose similarities and differences coincide from time to time in accord with the communities in which people live. Thus, people in different cultural groups experience different literacy events; their literacy skills and performance are developed in accordance with these events. She suggests that the way to comprehend the role literacy plays in societies and the manner in which children develop literacy in accordance with their communities' orientations towards it is to acknowledge the following two postulates:

(1) Strict dichotomization between oral and literate traditions is a construct of researchers, not an accurate portrayal of reality across cultures.
(2) A unilinear mode of development in the acquisition of language structures and uses cannot adequately account for culturally diverse ways of acquiring knowledge or developing cognitive styles. (1982, p. 73).

Therefore, research into literacy must move away from the limitations and bias of the autonomous model, and, as Heath proposes, researchers should interpret literacy events in light of the "larger sociocultural patterns which they may exemplify or reflect" (p. 74) to help

achieve a better understanding of the interrelationships between patterns of activities and

social behavior, and the characteristics and kinds of literacy events.

In NLS, literacy is not about what an individual can read or write, but rather, as

Barton and Hamilton (1998) note, how literacy serves as a resource for communities and how

it is realized, commonly through texts, interpersonally. They explain that:

> the study of literacy is partly a study of texts and how they are produced and used.
> These three components, practices, events, and texts, provide the first proposition of a
> social theory of literacy, that: *literacy is best understood as a set of social practices;
> these can be inferred from events that are mediated by written texts* [authors'
> emphasis]. (p. 8)

In the present study, the autobiographies themselves, as texts produced by the participants,

form a crucial part of the literacy event. The event is the participants' use of literacy to

produce their own literacy histories, and the participants' practices are the way they use these

histories to make sense of the learning and teaching of literacy, not only in the light of what

has already occurred, but also in their present and future lives and in the discourse

community of TESOL graduate education and practice.


**3.2.1.2 Socioliteracy as a Paradigm for This Research**

The literacy paradigm in this study is what Johns (1997) terms a socioliterate view of

literacy. Johns' socioliterate perspective originates with the work of Street, Gee, and NLS (as

described above in Section 3.2.1.1) and which Johns refines with regard to academic literacy.

The texts that form the data for this study were produced as part of academic course

requirements for the TESOL's Master's Program in the research site. From the perspective of

socioliteracy and the ideological model, literacy is extended to include a spectrum of

interactions and contacts between the literate person and the social world in which he or she

exists.  In the present study, the participants are seen as individuals, each with her own social

world in which her literacy developed.

Socioliterate theory builds on the existing Traditional and Learner-centered theories (Johns, 1997). Traditional views of language and text can be traced back to the Enlightenment and focus on positivist concepts about correct grammar and rhetoric. Research in the Traditionalist paradigm is based largely on the quantitative study of feature counts, such as a count of the use of passive voice in certain types of text, and in North American composition theory, which it has influenced significantly in recent decades. The Traditionalist focus is on the organization of texts into rhetorical modes (narration, description, exposition, and argument) and organizational patterns (division, comparison-contrast, exemplification, and so on) (Johns, 1997).  The weaknesses of this paradigm include the primacy of form, the overemphasis on drilling and correction, and the passive involvement of the learner. In contrast, Expressivist views on language and text have at their core a primary focus on the creative aspect of writing – people write to express themselves and to develop their voice (see the discussion on writing in Section 3.2.2.1 that follows).  It is essentially Learner-Centered, with the focus shifted away from the Traditionalist teacher-centered model, in which the teacher is the source of correctness (Johns, 1997).  Psycho-cognitive views on language also fall under the Learner-Centered paradigm and include schema theory (people drawing on their past experiences of the content and form of texts), pre-reading exercises, brainstorming and semantic mapping. Weaknesses of this paradigm include a sometimes complete rejection of standard form (in favor of individual meaning) and of academic discourse requirements; moreover, the emphasis on finding one's voice may leave people from cultures in which homogeneity is stressed both offended and lost. Johns points out that despite their undeniably important contributions to language teaching and learning, these paradigms are not adequate and fail, in particular, learners who are "culturally, socially, or linguistically, or culturally distant from English academic languages and discourses" (1997, p. 13).

In the socioliterate paradigm, Johns (1997) explains, learners necessarily make connections between both prior knowledge of, and experience with, the content and form of texts, and the knowledge of the communities in which and for which the texts are produced. Thus, Johns contends that "all literacies are, in fact, social, intertextual, and historical" (p. 16), and literacy development is intricately and intimately linked to "languages, cultures, literacy experiences, roles, and communities of readers and writers" (p. 16) and the context in which each text exists. Teachers of literacy are not literate just because they attended school and do not simply teach literacy based on what they learned in a classroom. Similarly, their students' experiences with acquiring literacy are equally complex and cannot be reduced to what they have learnt through formal schooling. Johns discusses the need to integrate these theories with socioliterate views for a more complete picture of literacy learning and teaching.

Socioliterate views center on the social factors that contribute to literacy development. According to Johns (1997), who is drawing on NLS research, literacies develop through contact with discourses that exist in diverse social context, and academic literacies develop through contact with academic discourses used in communities of practice as well as through contact with the community at large. The socioliterate paradigm is related to Halliday's (1978) views of language as a "social semiotic" (p. 1); the meaning-making process (semiosis) cannot be separated from the cultures, communities, and social situations or contexts in which it exists, and their semiotic practices must be taken into account in any study of language. Language is represented "in the form of options: sets of alternative meanings which collectively account for the total meaning potential" (1997, p. 34). Halliday emphasizes, "Language is as it is because of its function in the social structure, and the organization of behavioural meanings should give some insight into its social foundations" (p. 36). Thus, literacy in the teaching and learning context of a TESOL program must involve the TESOL education faculty and students, the culture of the education department, the

classrooms, and other situations in which they find themselves and in which discourse and text take place. Literacy in this study involves the literacy of NES and NNES teacher learners, their peer relationships in the TESOL Program, the classrooms in which they study and teach, and their homes and communities. This analysis of the participants' texts investigates the various social factors that have contributed to the participants' literacy development and the ways in which these factors have helped them become members of the academic discourse community of TESOL.

The theory of socioliteracy can accommodate the range of literacies that exist today, including academic literacy (the main concern of this paper), critical literacy (described above in the discussion of Freire), and new literacies developing on account of the multimodalities of the Information Age (see Section 3.2.2.3). The participants are all preparing to be Pre-K-12 ESL teachers, so, in addition to emergent literacy, these literacies are central to their profession and their professional development, and consequently to the research at hand.

Johns (1997) makes a number of suggestions about text-based research to be conducted by students in the process of expanding their literacy in English, though these suggestions have implications for any investigative foray into texts for learning about literacy. She recommends looking at the variety of factors that contribute to a text (sociocultural, personal, and textual) and the generic features of texts as they are located in their "broader social context" (p. 93), whether it be the classroom, the academic discipline, or a culture in general. Importantly, Johns maintains that students should analyze literacy in their own lives in order to deepen their understanding of literacy and to ready themselves for the academic and professional literacy that they need. These suggestions provide a model for this study and indeed for the autobiographical writings that form the data.

## 3.2.2 Different Types of Literacy in Practice in Education

Until the printing press was invented, literacy (with the meaning of writing) was the domain of the very few (Bloomfield, 1965). Literacy in this sense, then, experienced a blossoming which continued through the spread of literacy education to the late 20th century, when the advent of word processing and the Internet created a dramatic new course for literacy, which is discussed in Section 3.2.2.3. The ability to write well enjoys a prestigious place in Western society and is broadly associated with power and financial success. The traditional place to acquire this ability to write is in school, where students have the opportunity to extend writing from self-expression to academic writing on a variety of content areas. Success in tertiary education depends largely on this advanced literacy.

This section offers an overview of the range of literacies with which teachers are typically engaged, including academic literacy (see Section 3.2.2.1) and multiliteracies. In the prevalent educational paradigm in the United States, state standards and their accompanying standardized assessments often dictate what literacies are to be taught. In New York State, where this research took place, the focus of literacy teaching has come to include new developments in literacy included under the heading of multiliteracies (see Section 3.2.2.3, including computer literacy (though these multiliteracies also overlap with academic literacy.)

### 3.2.2.1 Academic Literacy

Academic literacy exists within the broader context of literacy and can be generally defined as the literacy, or more accurately literacies, needed to perform effectively in the various settings in which formal education takes place. Students are required to be literate in a wide range of areas in secondary and especially tertiary institutions, where faculty members in various disciplines have their own expectations that may even run counter to one another's.

Johns (1997) explains that a single definition of academic literacy is somewhat elusive because it varies from discipline to discipline, despite teachers' perceptions that there is just one academic literacy. Moreover, academic literacy is "evolving, complex, contextualized, and collaborative" (p. 76). Thus, developing literacy in teachers and students requires an understanding of this complexity and contextualization, and of the role of collaboration in this process.

Academic literacy involves advanced literacy, which is a problematic area of language learning because of the increased complexity of language on the advanced level. Matthiessen (2006) recommends the exploration of the target language's meaning-making resources through Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as the way to educate students for advanced language competence. He notes that

> "'meaning making' includes the process of communication in the exchange of meaning between speaker and addressee, but it is broader than 'communication.' The notion of 'meaning-making' is a constructivist one" (pp. 52-53) that relates to the ideas of Whorf, Vygotsky, and Bakhtin. Matthiessen argues that learners should "learn language trinocularly." (p. 37)

Learning language trinocularly means learning it from above (the resources of meaning in context), from below (through phonology, graphology, or signing), and from within ("the internal organization of a given stratum as a linguistic system") (p. 37).

Writing is central to academic literacy. Bloomfield wrote, "Writing is not language, but merely a way of recording language by means of visible marks," (1965, p. 21). In the case of most languages that use writing today, its practice is quite recent, and as mentioned abovein the case of a large number of smaller languages, it is not practiced at all (Harrison, 2007). Languages have been spoken and transmitted from generation to generation without writing and have enjoyed the same stability, regularity, and richness as languages with writing systems (Bloomfield, 1965). The fact that writing and language are not interchangeable concepts requires linguists studying writing to keep in mind that a written

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passage is a recorded sample of the writer's language use, not the whole of the writer's knowledge of and ability to use language.

In Halliday's (2009) discussion of mode of discourse, which "refers to the medium or mode of the language activity," written and spoken language are not seen as different phenomena (as proponents of the Great Divide theories might) but as language with different situational roles. Halliday maintains:

> The extent of formal differentiation between spoken and written language has varied greatly among different languages at different periods. It reached its widest when, as in medieval Europe, the normal written medium of the community was a classical language which was unintelligible unless learnt by instruction. Latin, Classical Arabic, Sanskrit, and Classical Chinese have all been used in this way. By comparison, spoken and written varieties of most modern languages are extremely close. . . . but spoken and written English are by no means formally identical. They differ both in grammar and in lexis, as anyone by recording and transcribing conversation can find out. (p. 20)

Halliday then divides these primary modes further into more delicate secondary modes and beyond. A sample representation drawing on Halliday and related to this study can be seen in Figure 3.2 below.

Context of situation

Written language (primary mode)

Language of TESOL teacher preparation programs (secondary mode)

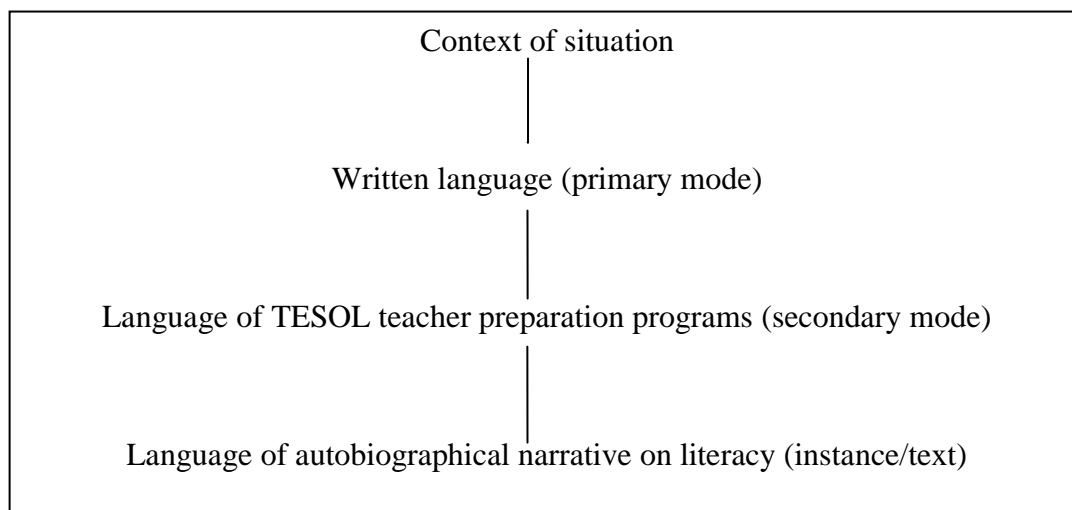Language of autobiographical narrative on literacy (instance/text)

*Figure 3.2:* **Context of Situation and Instance Pole**

The instance pole is where the potential of language is instantiated, and it is at that pole where the analysis in this study takes place.

Halliday (1996) stresses that writing does not do the same thing as talking. It has always done something different and is object-like in that it can be exchanged and owned like a commodity, whereas spoken language cannot. Writing can objectify all experience, "as the written language construes the world synoptically—in its own image" (p. 361), turning events into objects and the participants in those events into the properties of them (through grammatical metaphor). Writing exists in different contexts from speaking, and each written text exists in the context of situation, which Halliday interprets as "the environment of the text" (p. 361), and in the context of culture, which he interprets as "the environment of the linguistic system" (p. 361). Halliday (1985) urges caution with regard to trying to placing too much emphasis on the medium, for spoken and written languages are ultimately "both language: and language is more important than either" (1985, p. 92).

Hyland (2002) describes speaking and writing as existing in a wide range of contexts and uses, some of them overlapping, and warns that one cannot divide them from one another in a simple manner.  Joyce and Burns (1992) recommend viewing language as a continuum, with spoken language on one end and written on the other:
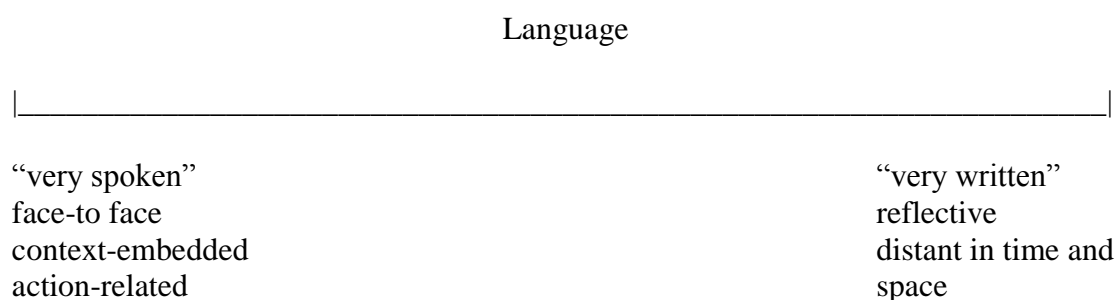
<div align="center">Language</div>

|_____|

"very spoken"                                          "very written"
face-to face                                           reflective
context-embedded                                       distant in time and
action-related                                         space

<div align="center">*Figure 3.3:* **Language Continuum**</div>

Language in its instantiations of use falls somewhere along the continuum and can be discussed with regard to its location on it. Hyland calls for descriptions of speaking and writing that are more refined than an oversimplification that promotes an artificial dichotomy between the two.

The autonomous model of literacy (discussed above in Section 3.2.1.1) subscribes to this dichotomy between speaking and writing and does not address the diversity that exists within each of these areas of language. Hyland (2002) contradicts the arguments of the autonomous model, which also puts forth that speaking is high in personal involvement and rich in interpersonal cues, such as gestures and paralanguage, whereas writing is more objective because of its dependence on lexicogrammar and syntax alone. Hyland points out that in writing there are also ways to indicate the interpersonal and the subjective, so writing is not essentially neutral or objective.

Hyland (2002) identifies three main approaches to researching and teaching writing: text-oriented, writer-oriented, and reader-oriented approaches. Each of these is distinguished by the different paradigms on which they are based and involve different methodologies and pedagogies (see Figure 3.4 below).
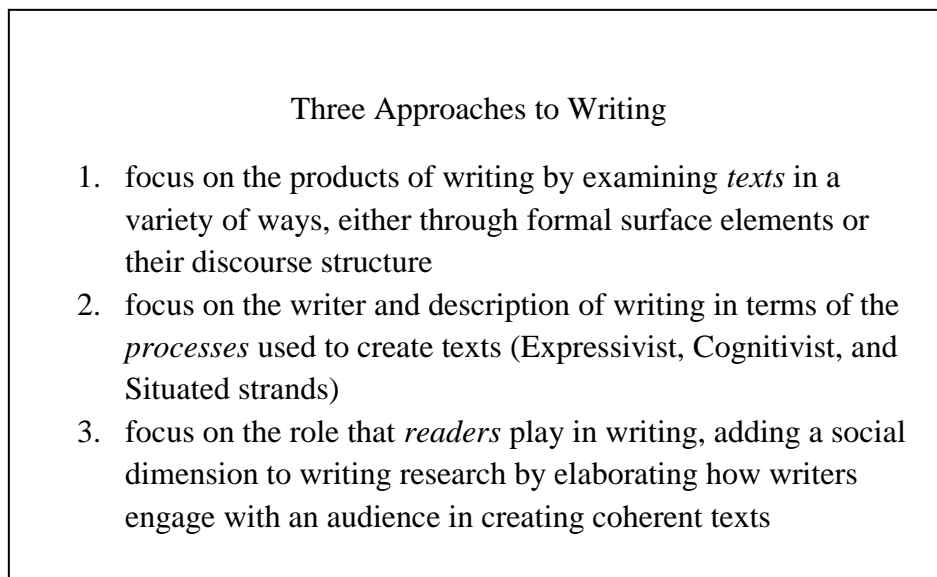
Three Approaches to Writing

1. focus on the products of writing by examining *texts* in a variety of ways, either through formal surface elements or their discourse structure
2. focus on the writer and description of writing in terms of the *processes* used to create texts (Expressivist, Cognitivist, and Situated strands)
3. focus on the role that *readers* play in writing, adding a social dimension to writing research by elaborating how writers engage with an audience in creating coherent texts

*Figure 3.4:* **Three Approaches to Writing.**

**Adapted from Hyland, 2002, p. 5.**

Research and teaching using these aforementioned perspectives continue to contribute to the study of writing, and a closer look at these orientations is warranted in the context of this study.

Text-oriented research and teaching are divided into two broad approaches. The first is the approach to text as an autonomous object, which was the dominant model for many decades. It derives from structuralism, and is connected with the Chomskyan view of text as an autonomous object (Hyland, 2002)).  In this view, writing is not considered with regard to outside influences or audience; instead, it is evaluated for the way it embodies correct form. This view is in keeping with the autonomous paradigm of literacy as a mechanical skill. The other broad text-oriented approach is text as discourse (Hyland, 2002). From this perspective, text is connected to it social contexts and purposes, and in line with the ideological model of literacy. This approach is associated with the work of the Prague and Sydney Schools, in particular with SFL in Halliday's  (e.g. Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Halliday & Hasan, 1989) concept of register and Martin and Rose's (2008) work on genre; with English for Special Purposes (ESP) (Swales, 1990, 2008; Bhatia, 1993; Hyland, 1999), which connects discourse community, genre, and language learning; and with the New Rhetoric School (Miller, 1984; Bazerman, 1988; Freeedman & Medway, 1994), which focuses on the sociocultural aspects of genre over time and has a more ethnographic and less linguistic orientation.

ESP research continues to enjoy currency, and pedagogy based on this type of genre study is used to inform writing instruction on the tertiary level. Leading the way in this area of research is Swales (1990), who, in his seminal genre analysis of 48 articles from sciences (natural and social), presents a model of the generic structure of research articles. This research has resulted in the widely known "Create a Research Space" (p. 141) or CARS model for writing introductions to research articles, and other guidelines for writing in the sciences. Similarly, other researchers continue to add to the body of genre research:

Rothery's (1985) work on the Thesis-Argument-Conclusion structure of expository writing, Bhatia's (1993) work on sales letters and newspaper genres, Hyland (2000) on abstracts, and Ghadessy (1993) on business letters, among others.

New Rhetoricians focus less on form than ESP researchers and more on the ways the texts connect to action. Bazerman's (1988) study of the experimental article in science explores this genre over the course of its development. He argues that text as a form of written knowledge reveals what knowledge is and that writing matters because the different choices that a writer makes results in different meanings (p. 19). Through an analysis of scientific discourse over the course of time (from the Scientific Revolution to the present day), Bazerman comes to the conclusion that while many theories of language fall short, the work of Vygotsky provides the most help in the development of a powerful model of scientific use of language that involves not only shared knowledge of concepts, praxis, and social worlds but also of social interaction, which involves social understanding and competitiveness.

In this study, the SFL text analysis (see Chapter 6) is based on the Hallidayan approach to text as discourse. Hyland (2002, p. 173) explains:

> Text analysis is based on the fact that people employ linguistic forms and constitute meanings for particular purposes as part of their communication, which means we can explore the strategic uses of these forms and meanings to gain insights both about the use of language and particular contexts and relationships. Text analysis therefore involves the social: it sees text, whether written or spoken, as social practice. So while the main emphasis is on the analysis of naturally occurring spoken or written data, text analysts generally seek to avoid concentrating on the text alone, for we cannot isolate the study of writing from the uses it is put to, or those who use it. In contrast to earlier methods which focused on invented examples, text analysis is a perspective from which we can understand writing and observe society, making ideologies, intentions and relationships tangible.

The current study seeks through text analysis to explore how the participants use language in their descriptions of their literacy development, what similarities and differences there are among the texts, and what the texts reveal about their social relationships with regard to this development.

The second approach to the study of writing is focused on the writer and the processes he or she uses to produce text. Hyland (2002) provides an explication of this approach, which is characterized by three main directions, the Expressivist, Cognitivist, and Situated. The Expressivist perspective was originally developed by Elbow (1973) and Murray (1972). Elbow writes, "Instead of a two-step transaction of meaning-into-language, think of writing as an organic, developmental process in which you start writing at the very beginning – before you know your meaning at all – and encourage your words to gradually change and evolve" (p. 15). From this point of view, the process is given pre-eminence, and meaning is a result of the process and only becomes clear in the end, according to Elbow. Murray similarly remarks that teachers should not teach "finished writing" (product) but rather "unfinished writing" (process) (p. 12) and that writing is a process (of discovery) that can be divided into three stages, prewriting, writing, and rewriting. He stresses that the product is not as important as the writer's search for truth in the process of writing and lists ten implications that end with the statement that "there are no rules, no absolutes, just alternatives . . . All writing is experimental" (p. 14). The work of Elbow, Murray, Raimes (1991,1998) and other Expressivists dramatically changed the landscape of writing pedagogy in the United States, moving it away from a focus on rules and product, in some cases to the extent that form was completely removed from writing instruction or taught as incidental to the writing process. Today process writing is still widely taught; however, because of the current focus on high stakes assessment, writing as product continues to play a significant role in American elementary and secondary education.

A Cognitivist view of process writing is presented by Flower and Hayes (1982), who focus their research on the cognitive processes that are employed on writing. Their theory, the cognitive process theory of writing, has at its center four key points. The first is that writers use certain processes for thinking about writing when they are composing. The second is that these processes are organized hierarchically, and it is possible for any of these processes to be

embedded in any other. The third is that a writer's own developing aims in writing guide this thinking process. The final point is that the act of writing itself helps form the writer's purpose and changes the writer's goals in accordance with what the writer is learning during the act of writing. The theory of Flower and Hayes differs from the dominant model of process writing developed by Elbow, Murray, and others and described above, which is sequential in nature (prewriting, writing, revising), and which does not delve into the intellectual processes that underlie composition. Flower and Hayes investigated the writing process through a protocol analysis, in which the participants were recorded thinking aloud as they wrote. In contrast to the above model, their model involves three stages that they call *planning*, *translating*, and *reviewing*, which are not linear or sequential processes, but rather stages that writers use time and again throughout the composing process. They regard this cognitive process as learning taking place and as significantly more complex than the dominant process model used in classrooms.

From a different angle, Horowitz (1986) criticized the dominant process approach for not considering "the many forces outside of an individual writer's control which define, shape, and ultimately judge a piece of writing" (p. 446). His research on the range and nature of university writing tasks complements the work of Swales (1983) on the generic nature of scholarly introductions, whose work provides writers with perspectives on the rhetorical features of texts (see below for further discussion on Swales). Horowitz's research offers ESL and writing pedagogues suggestions about ways to prepare students for the actual tasks that university teachers set them because, as he argues, the process model does not guide students in writing academic texts.

The third main approach discussed by Hyland (2002) centers on the role of the reader in writing, in other words, what the writer does to involve the reader. In this approach, writing is seen as social interaction, social construction, or power and ideology. Several main directions have developed under this overarching approach: social interaction (Nystrand,

1982, 1986,1999; Nystrand,  Gamoran, & Carbonaro, 1998), contrastive rhetoric (Connor, 1996), social constructivist and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) (Johns, 1997; Swales, 2007; Bhatia, 1993; Flowerdew, 1999, 2010 ) and power and ideology as studied through critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Fairclough, 1995, Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996; van Dijk, 1996). The main theories and theorists of each of these directions are discussed below.

The social-interactive model maintains that social interaction in the form of classroom discourse is a significant contributor to writing development (Nystrand, 1982,1986, 1999; Nystrand,  Gamoran, & Carbonaro, 1998). Nystrand (1982, 1986, 1999) stresses the importance of interaction between readers and writers (textual space) in the writing of texts, that is, the social and communicative process during which writers negotiate meaning with readers. In their 1998 year-long study involving both quantitative (tests, surveys) and qualitative (observations, teacher logs, student writing), Nystrand, Gamoran, and Carbonaro designed and implemented an ecological framework for the study of the relationship between classroom discourse and writing. They assessed the data from 2,100 ninth graders in 54 English classes and 48 social studies classes.  The results of regression analyses reveal that students' writing improves when there is classroom talk (cf. Barton, 2007, p. 179, on how "much of schooling involves talk around texts") and that the improvement is greater (a) when the teachers ask open-ended questions that do not have set answers and (b) when they use student responses in their questions. The researchers also found that student writing improved when reading, writing, and talk were thematically connected. The study lends considerable support to the effectiveness of social-interactive model.

Connor (1996) is a proponent of the use of contrastive rhetoric in the teaching of second language writing. In contrastive rhetoric, the learner's native language is compared with the second or other language. The theory is that the rhetoric that the learner knows differs from the new language and may serve as a barrier to the development of second

language writing. She also argues that the differences between any two languages are not simply a matter of features but also of the cultural differences that underlie rhetoric. TESOL programs often use contrastive rhetoric to expose future English teachers to the differences between English writing and writing in other languages, so they can use what they learn when they are teaching writing. The participants in this study, as part of their TESOL coursework, wrote a grammatical analysis of an ESL student's writing, which also included comments from the perspective of contrastive rhetoric (though these texts are not included in the data corpus).

Social constructivism, Barton (2007) explains, is a view in which "people construct a mental model of the external world, with language at the center of the construction" (p. 17). In his discussion of metaphors for literacy, he notes that the verb *talk* is frequently used as a metaphor for *write*. This common metaphor may seem innocuous, but it in fact represents the mixing of modalities in literacy and the underlying nature of writing, which is more interactive and social than it is commonly believed to be (as in the Great Divide theories). Barton and Papen (2010) add that

> writing is an everyday communicative practice which pervades our lives, at the
> individual as well as societal level . . . . A range of new technologies have led people
> to develop extensive new writing practices. These new ways of writing are central to
> how we work and live, to how governments communicate and how economies
> operate. (p. 3)

Written texts play a central role in culture, so writing cannot simple be reduced to a set of skills in the realm of education (p. 8). Barton and Papen call for extensive research into writing to develop more complete understanding of how cultures use writing.

In an overview of the arguments that Elbow (1991), Geertz (1988), and Purves (1990) make about expository academic prose, Johns (1997) points out the difficulties that students experience in such academic writing, and she fine tunes the socioliterate view of literacy, in which academic literacies are developed through contact with the discourses of the communities that use them. She argues that learners are essentially social, so their learning of

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how to read and write texts in genres of specific communities and cultures is accomplished within those communities and cultures. Johns maintains:

> In this view, the role of learners is an active one: Students are constantly involved in research into texts, roles, and contexts, and into the strategies that they employ in completing literacy tasks within specific situations. Teachers provide leadership, for they introduce texts from various genres to students, and they act as mediators within academic contexts. (p. 15)

According to Johns, the basic tenets of the socioliterate classroom include applying genre knowledge to the analysis of familiar and unfamiliar texts; revising theories of genre in recognition that no two texts are exactly alike even within a genre; developing and revising strategies for literacy tasks; researching, critiquing, and reflecting on texts, roles and contexts; and cultivating a metalanguage for discussing texts. Johns presents a comprehensive view of the socioliterate classroom in general and of writing instruction in particular.

These basic tenets are directly applicable to the proposed research context because they underscore that attaining academic literacy in English is not a simple process even for learners whose first language is English, and for those who learn English as a second or other language, developing EAP is complicated by second language acquisition and cultural issues. Academic literacy includes readers/writers/speakers and the academic world of formal education. English for academic purposes (EAP), does not merely comprise the conventions of language but a diverse range of expectations, contexts, and discourse communities (Swales, 2007). These differences may occur in the rhetorical style and in the lexicogrammatical choices that the writer makes. For example, a literary research paper may be written in the historical presence and in the active voice, whereas a scientific research paper is likely to be written in the past tense and to use passive voice. EAP as an approach to writing and teaching writing focuses on the generic features of texts, the discourse communities in which and for which the texts are written, the ways texts in one discipline differ from those in another, and the use of this awareness to teach writing (Johns, 1997). As

such, EAP is related to the work of ESP researchers, many of whom are involved in research in both areas, such as Swales (1990), Bhatia (1993), and Flowerdew (1999, 2010).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) is the study of language and the ways in which it relates to power and ideology (Fairclough, 1995). With regard to literacy and writing in particular, power means writers "unequal capacity to control how texts are produced, distributed and consumed (and hence the shape of texts) in particular sociocultural contexts" (pp. 1-2). Fairclough maintains that people who control discourse have power over people using alternative discursive practices. CDA research on writing in the media, in government, and in the academy reveals the power relations that language produces (Caldas-Coulthard & Coulthard, 1996; Van Dijk, 1996). Wodak (1996) notes that discourse is a type of social action and that CDA is necessarily a paradigm involving social commitment. Paltridge (2006) defines discourse analysis as

> a view of language at the level of text. Discourse analysis is also a view of language in use; that is, how through the use of language people achieve certain communicative goals, perform certain communicative acts, participate in certain communicative events and present themselves to others. Discourse analysis considers how people manage interactions with each other, how people communicate within particular groups and societies, as well as how they communicate with other groups, and other cultures. It also focuses on how people do things beyond language, and the ideas and beliefs that they communicate as they use language. (p. 9)

From the CDA perspective, texts cannot be separated from their social and cultural contexts. Thus, it is important for learners to develop control over the discourses that is necessary to produce texts appropriate to the sociocultural contexts for which they are intended.

These three main approaches to academic writing (text-oriented, writer-oriented, and reader-oriented) are intimately linked to the philosophical underpinnings that support them. Both a text-oriented research approach (in the form of a Hallidayan SFL text analysis that delves into the ways participants construe meaning and color interactions) and a reader-oriented approach (in the form of a thematic content analysis that provides insight into the participants' evolving academic literacy in their social and cultural contexts—their socioliteracy) are used in this study.

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Closely linked to academic literacy is the concept of multiliteracies, which overlap with academic literacy and which reflect the changes in the literacy paradigm (from the autonomous model to the ideological model). A discussion of multiliteracies as a type of literacy in practice follows.

### 3.2.2.2 Academic Literacy and NNES Graduate Students

Braine (2002) provides an overview of the studies on NNS graduate students and their academic literacy, tracing them from the early work of Johns (1981), who used surveys to solicit instructors' opinions on which of the four skills played the most important role in NNS university success. The faculty members ranked reading and listening first in all departments, except English, which gave writing the preeminent position. The findings about the receptive skills indicate, according to Johns, that they should be central to the curriculum, and that writing and speaking should be linked to them. Braine also cited case study research by Belcher (1994), who examined advisor-graduate student relationships; Schneider and Fujishima (1995), who studied a graduate student's writing and speaking over time, and Riazi (1997), who included text analysis in his methodology for studying four Iranian second-year doctoral students in Canada, all of whom achieved success through writing. Based on the literature and his own experiences, Braine argues that the development of academic literacy for NNSs is far from a simple matter:

> Simply stated, a knowledge of one's chosen field of study, research skills, and good reading and writing skills form only the foundation for the acquisition of academic literacy. To build upon this foundation, graduate students must adapt quickly to both the academic and social culture of their host environments, and the personalities and demands of their teachers, academic advisors, and classmates. Graduate students need to acquire advanced academic literacy, and this acquisition only comes, whether these students like it or not, along with complex and often confusing baggage. (p. 60)

What is needed, he points out, in addition to subject knowledge, research skills, and a good command of reading and writing, is the ability to adapt to the academic and social demands

of graduate school, establishing a rapport with and meeting the demands of their professors, advisors, and classmates. Braine calls for  future studies that further expand knowledge about NNSs and the development of academic literacy, and mentions the importance of the students themselves providing information about their "sociocultural and educational backgrounds, previous educational experiences, [and] language learning histories" (p. 66). Though nine years have passed since Braine made these suggestions, this remains an area of need, which this thesis seeks to address.

It is essential for NNES graduate students to acclimatize to the academic demands of a Master's in TESOL programs. Johns (1988) makes an important point in her discussion of academic literacy among university students. She observes that professors should view needs and learning in an ongoing way, instead of as something defined in a course outline before students even enter class, and that it is important to take note of what successful NNES students (students who have already mastered the academic language of the field) do, so the newer students can learn to do it similarly as well. Though her discussion relates specifically to undergraduates, it is also pertinent to graduate students. Schneider and Fujishima (1995) studied one graduate student from Taiwan over four semesters. They obtained data that included his TOEFL scores, in-class writing, journals, and interviews with him and his teachers. His academic success was found to be limited; he seemed unable to improve his proficiency in English significantly, which was detrimental to his graduate studies. Other factors that the researchers studied included motivation, sociolinguistic norms, and learner strategies, all of which figured in his lack of success.

NNESs face a compendium of difficulties in developing academic literacy and becoming a part of the discourse community to which they want to belong. In his discussion of varying pedagogical approaches to acceptance in academic discourse communities. Canagarajah (2002) maintains that "ESOL students face serious conflicts in adopting to academic discourses uncritically" (p. 33), arguing that these discourses may be seen by

multilingual writers as repressive, subjugating, and distant from their sets of values and beliefs. He notes that some scholars have used EAP and contrastive rhetoric successfully to contribute to students' understanding of the discourse community's conventions and to highlight the differences between the students' native languages and English to assist their multilingual undergraduate and graduate students. In her discussion of international teaching assistants, Petro (2000) remarks that NNES students need help not only in language skills but also in acquiring the cultural knowledge necessary for the US classroom. She describes the process of linguistic and culture shock that they experience; they do not understand their professors, the coursework, and the expectations for class participation.

Haneda's (2009) discussion of East Asian graduate students in a TESOL program in Canada explicates the Korean students' initial disorientation due to their lack of knowledge about popular culture, pragmatics, and the sociocultural norms of the classroom. One strategy that they used to overcome the difficulty of group work with NES peers was to form a group of Korean students, so they could work with one another instead of with their NES peers. Haneda also highlights the creative way in which the students developed their own learning paths and voice, their adoption of constructivism as a teaching paradigm, and their exercise of agency in making these changes. The Korean students also had to master academic written genres as part of their enculturation, a process with which Haneda believes they need guidance from their professors.

Most studies on NNESs graduate students and academic literacy relate to international graduate students (cf. Belcher & Braine, 1995). Because they have completed undergraduate degrees in their home countries, they have not had the same advantages as the participants in this study, all of whom experienced years of contact with American culture and with secondary and undergraduate education in the US, which gave them at least some preparation for the academic writing in graduate education.

### 3.2.2.3 Multiliteracies

The work of the New London Group (1996) coined the term "multiliteracies" as a way to describe two main issues surrounding literacy: the expanding range of channels of communication and media, and the new importance that cultural and linguistic diversity is taking on.  The New London Group (NLG) is comprised of a group of 10 educators from the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia: Courtney Cazden, William Cope, Norman Fairclough, James Gee, Mary Kalantzis, Gunther Kress, Allan Luke, Carmen Luke, Sarah Michaels, and Martin Nakata. They maintain that there has been an increase in the multiplicity of   ways of making meaning; the textual is now connected to many other modes, such as the visual, the audio, and the spatial. Using the word *multiliteracies* to center attention on the dramatic increase in diversities and the globalization, which, they argue, is now at the core of people's lives at work, in public, and at home, the NLG points out that these changes require a response from literacy educators, who must view themselves as both inheriting and designing conventions and patterns of meaning. The term *Design* is used because it connects to the concepts of creative intelligence, learning, and productivity that exist in and are necessary components of the complexity of human life, where people, environments, beliefs and technologies are interconnected with one another in and with texts. The NLG equates designers of meaning with designers of social futures – futures of the workplace, public life, and the home. In this regard, the NLG's theoretical basis is connected to the theory of critical literacy with the teachers and students seen as agents of social change. Table 3.1 presents the six design elements in the meaning-making process as explicated by the NLG.

**Table 3.1** *The Six Design Elements and Their Explanations*

| Design Elements | Explanation |
|---|---|
| Linguistic meaning | the potential of language as a meaning- |

| | making system, e.g. transitivity, modality, vocabulary, coherence, information structures |
|---|---|
| Visual meaning | images, page layout, formats on screen |
| Audio meaning | music, sound effects |
| Gestural meaning | non-verbal behavior such as body language |
| Spatial meaning | environmental and architectural spaces |
| Multimodal patterns in the five elements above | the dynamic relationships of the five elements above |

These design elements of literacy must be mastered in order for speakers and writers to attain the multiliteracies that they need to create their social futures in this diverse, global society.

The NLG (1996) argue that to prepare learners for the multiliteracies that they need, teachers should base their literacy pedagogy on four components, which are summarized in Table 3.2 below.

**Table 3.2** *Four Components of Literacy Pedagogy*

| Components | Description |
|---|---|
| Situated Practice | pedagogy based on the experience of making meaning in the workplace, public, and home |
| Overt Instruction | an explicit metalanguage of Design that students develop with the help of instruction |
| Critical Framing | the social context and purpose that derives from Designs of meaning |
| Transformed Practice | as meaning-makers, students themselves acting as Designers of social futures |

*Situated Practice* corresponds to teaching practice in which learners are immersed in communicating through language for authentic purposes in their lives. For instance, they express their opinions about a problem at the local playground in a letter to the mayor of the town, or they create a poster that supports a candidate for student government. In these ways, they are using language for real purposes based on what they have learned in their books, but also reaching beyond the limits of the books.

*Overt Instruction* calls for the use of metalanguage to talk about texts (spoken and written) and the language in them. This type of pedagogy provides learners with insight into how vocabulary and form are used to create meaning and offers them tools to help them expand their language development. Metalanguage is not intended as a straitjacket for language learning with a focus on rules that bind, but rather as a framework for developing language through heightened awareness, so that learners can better understand what they need to do to make meaning and how they need to do it.

*Critical Framing* as a component of literacy pedagogy is the reflective piece, in which learners are asked to look back at their own learning using the metalanguage they have developed in *Overt Instruction* and connect what they have learned about language to

language use and social and cultural contexts. This involves the teacher helping them to make strange what they have already learned, so they can develop a critical view. An example is when students are asked to reflect on their own language development to distinguish at what points they had the most difficulty and to think about the linguistic or cultural reasons for the difficulty. In this sense, the literacy and linguistic autobiographies used in this study are examples of *Critical Framing*.

*Critical Framing* serves as the basis for *Transformed Practice*. Through collaboration with their students, teachers provide pathways for students to reflectively create new practices that are rooted in their individual aims and value systems. Contextualized assessments are an integral part of this pedagogical component. In *Transformed Practice*, learners design new written or multimodal texts based on texts that already exist; in this process, students assign new meaning to a text. For example, learners who have written letters of complaint to a school administrator about unhealthy food in the cafeteria after having read about healthy eating are then able to create a slideshow outlining the basics of good nutrition and the food pyramid or a chart comparing eating habits in their families or cultures.

These multiliteracies involve processing text and audiovisual materials in new ways that are not replicable on paper. Gee (2007) notes that literacy goes beyond print and that literacy has no value unless the social practices in which the text or graphic originated are known and understood. Therefore, teaching and learning multiliteracies involve knowing the social contexts of the words or images. As the use of the Internet grows, so does the number of semiotic domains that learners of multiliteracies come in contact with, making literacy learning more challenging than ever before.

As Internet access, innovative online programs (*Second Life*) and modes of communication (blogs, wikis, chat rooms), computers and other forms of technology such as Ipods, Ipads, and even cell phones become ever more affordable in the USA (and elsewhere),

students from most socioeconomic groups, including immigrant NNESs, are increasingly more likely to have access to them. Both NESs and NNESs must develop these multiliteracies, and in the case of NNESs, either teachers or students, they must develop them in English, which is for them a second or other language. The multimodal nature of literacy today profoundly affects ESL students and their teachers both in the classroom and in the world outside of the classroom. Kajder (2006) points out that the literacies students use outside the classroom are multimodal (textual, video, graphic, audio) and significantly different from those traditionally found in the classroom. She believes that students bring their outside literacy practices to the classroom and that teachers can help them develop academic literacies by exploiting their students' experiences with these multimodalities. Her idea presents both an opportunity and an obstacle to teachers because many teachers do not have the multimodal literacy practices that their students have, what Warschauer (2003) terms *electronic literacies*, including computer, multimedia, and information literacies. Using this technology is no longer a novel way of teaching literacy or other subjects. It is an integral part of 21st century living, essential for education, work, and social life, and as such, it is critical for NES or NNES ESL teachers to acquire these multiliteracies and be able to teach them to their students.

From a linguistic point of view, technology is changing language. Some of the distinctions between spoken and written language are collapsing (Halliday, 1996), with the audio recorder and computer as the main causes. The tape recorder, including its digital counterpart, allows speech to be recorded and thus become more text-like. The word processor allows writing to become more like speech, and now the computer can be used for both recording and writing. The computer and the internet allow for spoken and written language to be easily combined with non-linguistic modes (visual and audio), thereby creating new forms of language and literacy and new ways of meaning making.

### 3.2.3 Literacy Development

Literacy development begins long before a child enters school or even preschool. Children are exposed to language from the moment of their birth. Beginning with the foundational studies by Shirley Brice Heath (1982, 1983) and continuing into the present, a body of research shows that all children do not enjoy the same amount of contact with language and the literacy that is most commonly associated with schooling. Heath (1982), whose work is also discussed earlier in Section 3.2.1.1 with regard to literacy events and practices and oral versus spoken language, conducted ethnographic research into the patterns of language use in three different communities. Her research provides in-depth, emic perspectives on the literacy development of children in these communities and the practices of the communities that contribute to it. Heath explicates the interdependence between children's interactions with their caregivers and the ways that the communities take and use knowledge from the printed word. In Trackton, a black community that has made the transition from farming to textile mill work in the recent past, babies are surrounded by family and the community and do not have cribs or car seats. They are always in the middle of verbal and nonverbal communication, but they are not given any reading materials or tutored in any way. They learn to narrate stories orally and get their audience to identify with their stories. In Roadtown, a tradition-bound white working-class textile mill community, children are exposed to books that usually contain nursery rhymes, Bible stories, or stories about real life (as opposed to fiction). Book reading focuses on the alphabet, numbers, naming objects in the books, and simple retellings of the story. In Maintown, schools reflect the middle-class, mainstream literacy practices, which, in turn, privileges children from the mainstream, regardless of their race, and puts children from other communities at an educational disadvantage. For instance, Heath points to the importance of the bedtime story in a child's literacy development in educational settings because the typical reading of a bedtime story by a caregiver mirrors the process teachers use in teaching reading (initiation,

reply, and evaluation or feedback). She notes that children in Maintown are exposed to books from the age of six months and are expected to engage in conversations about books as soon as they are able to talk. They are also able to tell fictional stories after two years of age and to listen to books attentively at three. These habits fare them well in school, where they are repeated again and again. All three communities connect their children to the spoken and written word, but they all do so in different ways that have far-reaching effects on the children's school experience.

The literacy practices of a community prepare children for life in that community, not for life in some other community. Thus, if children are not from Maintown, where the community literacy practices are most like school, then they are not as prepared for school as the Maintown children. Heath's (1982) findings on how the three communities initiate the children into literacy and how this affects their schooling are summarized in Table 3.3 below.

**Table 3.3**    *The Effects of Home Literacy Practices on*

*Children's Schooling Based on Heath (1982)*

| Community | Home Literacy Practices | Effects on Schooling |
|---|---|---|
| Trackton | • No bedtime stories or reading to children only<br>• Reason explanations, not what-explanations<br>• Familiarity with group literacy events (several people negotiating the meaning of a text orally)<br>• Many kinds of social interactions<br>• Rewards for children who relate events that they witness<br>• Placement of high value on children's use of language to make comparisons between two different things<br>• No labeling procedures or what-explanations | • Unfamiliar questions (asking for what-explanations)<br>• Difficulty with identification and labeling tasks of items that are not real but rather two dimensional<br>• Lack of interest in completing workbook pages or sitting at their desks<br>• Little connection with print or ways to derive meaning from a book<br>• Desire to make comparisons and give affective responses that the teachers do not understand or want (until the higher grades)<br>• Peer socialization seen as more important than school work |
| Roadville | • Early learning of labeling procedures, features, and what-explanations<br>• Learning of correct listening and performing behavior<br>• Reading of real-life texts<br>• Focus on the moral of the story<br>• Construction of their own real-life stories<br>• Limited exposure to books and ways to learn from books | • Familiarity with what-explanations<br>• Familiarity with typical school labeling procedures<br>• Lack of familiarity with the discourse structures of fiction<br>• Passivity in book-reading procedures<br>• Difficulty meeting the school's expectations for learning from books<br>• Lack of connection to fiction |
| Maintown | • Early learning of labeling procedures, features, and what-explanations<br>• From bedtime stories, linking old and new knowledge to derive meaning from the environment<br>• Individual response to books<br>• Contact with nonfiction and fiction<br>• Learning of correct listening and performing behavior | • Familiarity with what-explanations<br>• Familiarity with typical school labeling procedures<br>• Knowledge of ways to get meaning from books<br>• Ability to understand fiction and its relevance<br>• Active participation in book reading |

A review of Table 3.3 shows the literacy practices that are embedded in each community and the ways in which they affect children's learning in school. Since the teachers in the study are from Maintown, their expectations of the students conform to the teachers' own literacy experiences, not their diverse students' experiences. Heath (1982) notes that approaches to teaching children not from the Maintown-type of community can be designed to make use of their literacy practices, and she calls for more research to understand how each social group derives knowledge from its environment:

> For written sources, these ways of taking may be analyzed in terms of *types of literacy events*, such as group negotiation of meaning from written texts, individual "looking things up" in reference books, writing family records in Bibles, and the dozens of other types of occasions when books or written materials are integral to interpretation of an interaction. These events must be analyzed in terms of the specific *features of literacy events*, such as labeling, what-explanation, affective comments, reason-explanations, and many other possibilities. Literacy events must also be interpreted in relation to the *larger sociocultural patterns* which they may exemplify or reflect. (p. 74).

Heath's perspectives on ways to investigate literacy has relevance to this study, in which it is evident that the participants have been more or less successful in schooling because they have proceeded all the way to the master's level, but an analysis of the autobiographical texts can reveal more about the sociocultural patterns that they exemplify.

Recent research lends support to the salient findings of Heath (1982) regarding literacy development. Lonigan (2004, p. 66) relates that there are significant differences in the exposure of children to the types of experiences that provide support for the emergence of literacy skills. Adams (1990) found that a child who comes from a low-income family starts first grade with only about 25 hours of reading picture books, whereas a child from a middle-class family starts with between 1,000 and 1,700 hours These findings are empirical and more generalized than the detailed ethnographic study of Heath, the categorization having been based on economic criteria, rather than on an emic investigation of whole communities. However, the results are consistent with Heath's work. The U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) (1998) shows a clear link (a) between maternal education and the amount that

mothers read to their children and (b) between maternal education and kindergarteners' scores on reading, mathematics, and general knowledge assessments. Mindful of this research, the U.S.'s Even Start (USDOE, n.d.) Family Literacy Program, initiated in 1988 by Congress, works to develop family literacy to benefit pre-school children.

Other contributions to the area of literacy and early development have also built on the work of Heath. For instance, Senéchal and Le-Fevre's (2002) 5-year longitudinal study of the early home literacy experiences of middle and upper middle class children has contributed to the body of research on literacy. They found that exposure to books was linked to vocabulary and listening skills development, which, in turn, was connected to higher reading scores in third grade. Another important finding was that parental tutoring in reading and writing words had an effect on early literacy skills that carried over to better word reading in first grade and higher reading test scores in third grade. Purcell-Gates (1996) investigated the ways in which low-income families use print and the connection between learning that takes place at home and learning that occurs in school. Her findings indicate that the literacy events in the 20 homes she studied varied considerably from one another and that there are some important relationships between home literacy practices and emerging literacy. For instance, she discovered that when literate family members read and write for pleasure on complex levels, their children understand the alphabetic principle. Moreover, when children are more involved in family literacy events, children understand more about the alphabetic principle and written language. She also notes that when children start school, their parents become more involved in their literacy learning and that when parents specifically teach literacy concepts, their children's knowledge of literacy increases significantly. (For related discussions of this issue, cf. Delpit, 1986, 1988). Neuman (1999) undertook a project called Books Aloud over the course of a year to make books more accessible to children who did not have any access to books. The results of this increased exposure to books for children and of the interactions with their caregivers while reading

were that the children developed concepts of print, knowledge of letter names, and understanding of narratives. In some areas of early literacy, such as vocabulary and receptive language, the children did not improve.

This study reports findings on the participants' accounts of their own early literacy experiences that link to these empirical findings. The participants reveal some of their early (and later) contacts with written texts and the people who were involved in their literacy development.

### 3.2.3.1 Literacy Development in a Formal Educational Setting

Literacy develops throughout life and in many and varied settings. The traditional commonsense notion that people become literate in school continues to enjoy popularity among laypeople and educators alike despite the seminal study of Heath (1992, 1993) and others mentioned above. What is behind the commonly held belief is that the type of literacy developed in a formal educational setting does differ from literacy developed elsewhere in a number of ways discussed below, although it never develops in a vacuum, that is, out of the contexts in which the learners find themselves.

In discussing the relationship between literacy and schooling, Hasan (1996b) explains that "literacy in the sense of using language has two simultaneous lines of development" (p. 384): the *quotidian* (the natural or mundane line of language development that takes place from infancy onwards in the life situations of learners) and the *exotic* (the line of literacy development in the contexts of formal schooling). In the quotidian line of literacy learning, the learning takes place, for the most part, unawares, whereas in the exotic line, the learning is self-conscious. The general societal view is that the latter is highly valued and empowering, while the former is not.

According to Hasan (1996b), in schooling, the attention spent on language is largely of a fragmentary nature: There is a focus on teaching sound-shape correspondence, vocabulary out of context, and form, such as verb conjugation. She calls the focus of this type of literacy program *recognition literacy*, which she critiques as being devoid of understanding of the meaning potential of language. This literacy pedagogy dominates formal schooling, so recognition literacy is the form to which most students have been exposed. Hasan argues that this is problematic because students need to learn language that is contextualized and develop a discursive ability that allows them to fully function in the educational register.

Two other forms of literacy are also explored by Hasan's (1996b) discussion. One is *action literacy*, in which language as expression and language as content are central to social processes. An example of this is genre-based pedagogy, for instance, the 1980s work of the "Writing Project" in Sydney school conducted by Martin, Rothery, Eggins, Martinec, and Wignell; the Language and Social Power Project from 1986 to 1990, and the Write It Right Project from 1990-1995 (Martin & Rose, 2008). The other form is *reflection literacy*, which is language's capacity to be reflexive, in other words, to create knowledge through reflection, enquiry, and analysis. The relationship between these forms of literacy and recognition literacy is expressed in Figure 3.2 below:
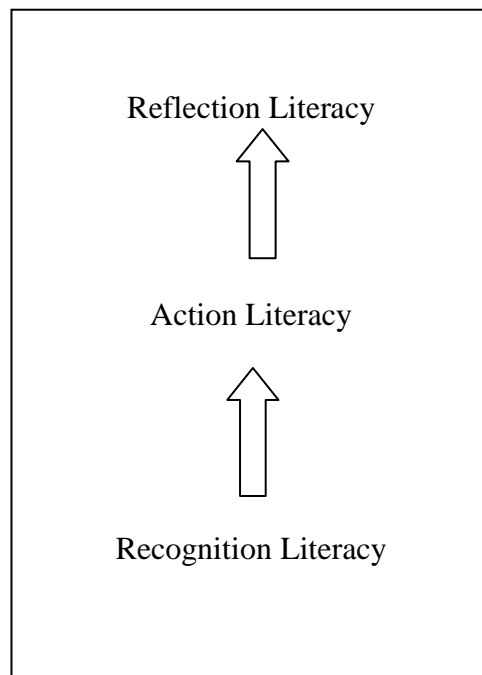
```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│                                 │
│        Reflection Literacy      │
│                                 │
│               ⬆                 │
│                                 │
│        Action Literacy          │
│                                 │
│               ⬆                 │
│                                 │
│        Recognition Literacy     │
│                                 │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

*Figure 3.5:* **Hasan's Types of Literacy**

Pedagogy involving these types of literacy is not to be understood chronologically. Hasan notes that these three literacy perspectives may be taught at the same time, but that the relationship among them is logical. There must be some knowledge of form and understanding of discourse in order for there to be reflection.

According to Halliday (1996),"educational knowledge is **not** [his emphasis] constructed solely out of written language" (p. 353) but is rather the product of the heteroglossia consisting of spoken language (the clausal mode) and written language (the nominal mode). Education is necessarily a multimodal experience that involves not only educational professionals but also parents, siblings, and students. It takes place in the classroom and the library, and involves not only textbooks but also handouts and notes written by teachers. Halliday explains that this heteroglossia creates "the potential for more effective participation in social-semiotic practices than either of the two modes can offer by itself" (p. 353). It would stand to reason then that autobiographical accounts of literacy development, such as those under study here, would, at least potentially, reflect this heteroglossia both in content and in lexicogrammar.

Halliday (1996) regards literacy in the educational context as "the construction of an 'objectified' world through the grammar of the written language" (pp. 353-354). Thus, in an educational context,

> the discourse will actively participate in an ideological construction which is in principle contradictory to that derived from everyday experience. To be literate is, of course, to engage in these practices, for example, as a teacher, and to construe from them a working model to live with, one that does not deny the experience of common sense. (p. 354)

The way language is used in education differs from the way it is used in everyday language, so in order to be a member of the discourse of the community of teachers and learners, one must be able to use language effectively in this ideological construction. Doing so may present a problem to both native and nonnative speakers of a language depending upon the multimodal experiences that they have had.

As students progress through their formal education, what literacy learning entails, either in their first or other languages, changes significantly. Schleppegrell (2008) writes that advanced language learning, conventionally referred to as "literate" language, presents challenges to teachers and students:

> As students move from the early primary years into late primary school, middle school, and high school, and then into college or university, they need to engage in increasingly advanced literacy tasks in which language is typically structured in ways which condense information through lexical choices and clause structures that are different from the way language is typically used in ordinary contexts of everyday interaction. (p. 4)

Schleppegrell argues that the old (Cognitivist) definition of the language of schooling as decontextualized is not correct and that the language is simply unfamiliar. It has its own contexts that students must become familiar with. The problems with developing advanced literacy are not only connected with cognitive abilities; other factors include "social experiences and knowledge about language" (pp. 17).

The current study seeks perspectives on the advanced literacy used by the participants through the analysis of their autobiographical texts. These perspectives include an examination of the social experiences through both the content analysis and the SFL analysis

as explained in Chapter 4. The social experiences of the seven writers in this study can also be viewed, in part, from the perspective of social networking theory (SNT), which together with the interpersonal level of the SFL analysis, can provide a profile of the importance of the interactants in the participants' literacy development. The final section in this chapter offers a brief overview of SNT.

## 3. 3 Literacy Research and Social Network Theory

As already indicated, the construct of socioliteracy provides the major theoretical framework for this study. Socioliteracy is concerned with learners of literacy in their social context. One part of their context is the people with whom they interact, the people who influence the learners' literacy. Hasan (2002) writes that "any story which has for its theme the conditions of human existence is bound to remain incomplete within the bounds of one discipline because the concerns of human life are interconnected" (p. 13). Some literacy researchers desiring a closer look at the interrelationships between learners and the people around them in the development of literacy refer to social network theory (SNT), which is a theory of social science that describes the relationships among nodes (objects or people) in a network. Kadushin (2004) defines a network as "a set of relationships" (p. 3). These nodes may be people or something else, and the relationship may be as simple as people sitting around a kitchen table. Kadushin portrays this relationship graphically as follows in Figure 3.6.
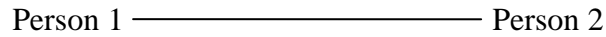
Person 1 ——————————— Person 2

*Figure 3.6:* **A Relationship That Links Two People**

According to Kadushin, relationships may also be *directional* (John loves Sue) or *non-directional/symmetrical/* (John and Sue love each other). If more than one relationship is involved, then the relationship is called *multiplex.* A flow or an exchange between nodes also exists and forms an essential component of network theory. One node can be directly linked to more than one other node.

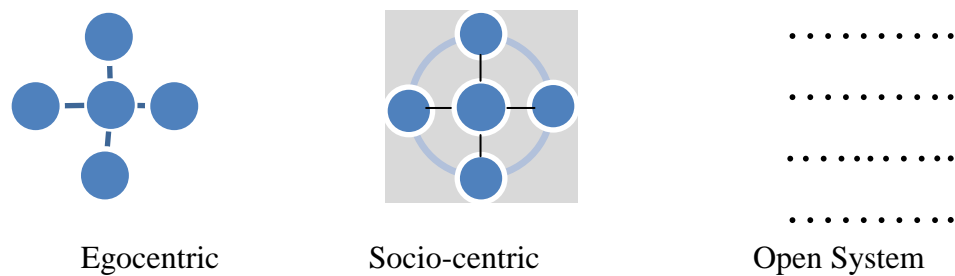Kadushin (2004) explains that there are three types of networks, which he depicts follows (Figure 3.7):



Egocentric                Socio-centric                Open System

*Figure 3.7:* **Three Types of Networks**

In egocentric networks the focus is on a single node, in socio-centric networks it is on connections among networks in a box (within clear boundaries), e.g. a classroom, and in open systems, it is on larger groups with boundaries that are not clearly defined. Any network can be studied as long as there is information about that network, according to Kadushin. The study of an individual and his or her relationships, such as the relationships involved in the literacy and language learning under analysis in this thesis, represents an egocentric network. If the study were of the classroom interaction, the network would be socio-centric, and if it were a study of all the ESL students in a certain country, the network would be an open system.

In his discussion of connections, Kadushin (2004) proposes that "at all levels of analysis nodes are more likely to be connected with one another, other conditions being equal, if they are geographically near to one another" (p. 4), though recent changes in electronic communication may change this point of view. He also puts forth a number of other propositions, including homophily, which means that the more social attributes, such as socio-economic status, are shared, the more likely it is that two nodes will have a connection. All nodes in an interpersonal network are in one of two kinds of relationships: those that have specific names, such as mother or father, and those that have more generic names, such as friend or co-worker. Named roles "specify not only the position but also the content of the relationship" (p. 22). These two propositions in particular and the relationships in an interpersonal network are relevant to this study because the study looks at the relationship between the participants and their family members and friends with regard to literacy.

J. Milroy and L. Milroy (1997) apply SNT to the study of linguistic change in Belfast. Using Granovetter's (1973) work on weak and strong ties as their research paradigm, they discovered that weak ties facilitate linguistic innovation (phonological) in a community, at least in part because people who are less connected to the community tend to be more numerous and more mobile and bring change with them across boundaries. The quantification of their data on language change lends strong support to their conclusions. Relevant to this thesis is their contention that "information relayed through strong ties tends not to be innovatory, since persons linked by strong ties tend to share contacts" (p. 203), and strong ties have a cohesive effect. The nature of developing literacy and language within the family setting would seem to be a stable and traditional undertaking, supported by the close relationships. In the present study, which relationships provide the most support will be discovered in the SFL analysis.

Dodsworth (2005) builds on the aforementioned work in the quantitative study of /l/ vocalization and the phonetic realization of *the* in suburban Worthington, Ohio. The

ethnographic and linguistic data consisted of the participants' description of their perceptions of their social space (their community).   The methodology allowed for the encoding of the way participants described their conceptions of social processes in the community, as well as for phonological variation. Each participant was encoded separately, thus in a single network, and subsequently all the networks were inserted into an aggregate network to create a model of the community. The finding showed that attribute networking clearly revealed the area of residence and community involvement interacted with linguistic variation. Dodsworth maintains that the technique of attribute networking can contribute to research on the relationship between subjective experiences and sociolinguistic variation. Dodsworth's research has implications for the study of social networking and language development.

The ways in which second language learning is connected with social interaction through communication in networks is the subject of several studies, including the research of Cummins (1996), van Lier (1998) and Kurata (2007). Cummins' work on interpersonal space in student-teacher collaboration (after Vygotsky, 1978)  as a factor in the construction of language knowledge shows that interaction can have positive or negative effects on students' learning. Either students improve effectively when there are positive interactions, or they do not when there are negative interactions. Van Lier highlights the importance of social relations in the development of language awareness and opportunities for language learning. In her study of an Australian learning Japanese, Kurata examines the interactions between the learner and his social network interactants through interviews and chat room transcripts. Her conclusions reveal the complex nature of the influence of social networks on the learner's choice to use L1 or L2, specifically the interactants' ability to use the L2 and each one's reaction to the other's use (either positive or negative). In this study, social networking provides a picture of the interactants in students' literacy development

In a social network, participant interaction can be measured by the variety and frequency of interactants. Lam, Matthiessen, Slade, and Herke (2010) studied the socio-

semiotic distance between patients and healthcare practitioners using data from hospital emergency rooms in Australia. The findings on the development of the interactive biography over time reflect the changes in socio-semiotic distance during patients' stays in the emergency room. These changes are mapped onto a network diagram, which serves as a model for the findings in Chapter 6 and the discussion of the participants' texts in Chapter 7.

In SFL, the tenor of social interaction in a social network can be analyzed through the interpersonal metafunction as discussed subsequently in Section 4.4.2.4; therefore, an interpersonal analysis can provide information about social networks. SNT provides an additional dimension to the analysis of the social nature of the participants' literacy.

## 3.4  The Theory-Based Model for the Study

The theory-based model for the study is derived from research that is explored in the literature review. The present study is situated in the field of literacy studies and in the context of NNS research. The model is based on the ideological model set forth by Street (1993, 1995) and NLS (   ), who theorize that literacy is not separable from a society's culture and ideology and cannot be reduced to a set of skills connected with reading, writing, and the logical function of the mind, as suggested by the autonomous model. Literacy is viewed as a complex construct with multiple layers, diverse purposes, and an evolving nature. This research is on academic literacy in particular, so the model draws on the work of Johns, who consolidates the theoretical constructs of NLS in her paradigm of socioliteracy, applies them to academic literacy, and suggests that text-based research on literacy must take into account the sociocultural, personal, generic, and textual features of texts. In addition to the work of Johns, at the center of the model is Heath's work on literacy events and literacy practices; the literacy events are the autobiographical texts that are under study, and the literacy practices are the social and cultural forces that contributed to the creation of the texts and are discussed

by the participants in their writing. Halliday's distinctions between written and spoken language and Hasan's explication of the nature of literacy connected with schooling are also components of the model. Social Network Theory comprises an additional element of the model in that it offers another angle from which to view the social interactional aspects of the teacher learners' literacy development.

In describing the nature and importance of a literature review, Barton & Hamilton (1998) wrote, "Together these studies provide a way of locating our work and a map of the field to which the current study contributes" (p. 14). The location of this study in the discipline of second language literacy studies is depicted in Figure 3.8 below.
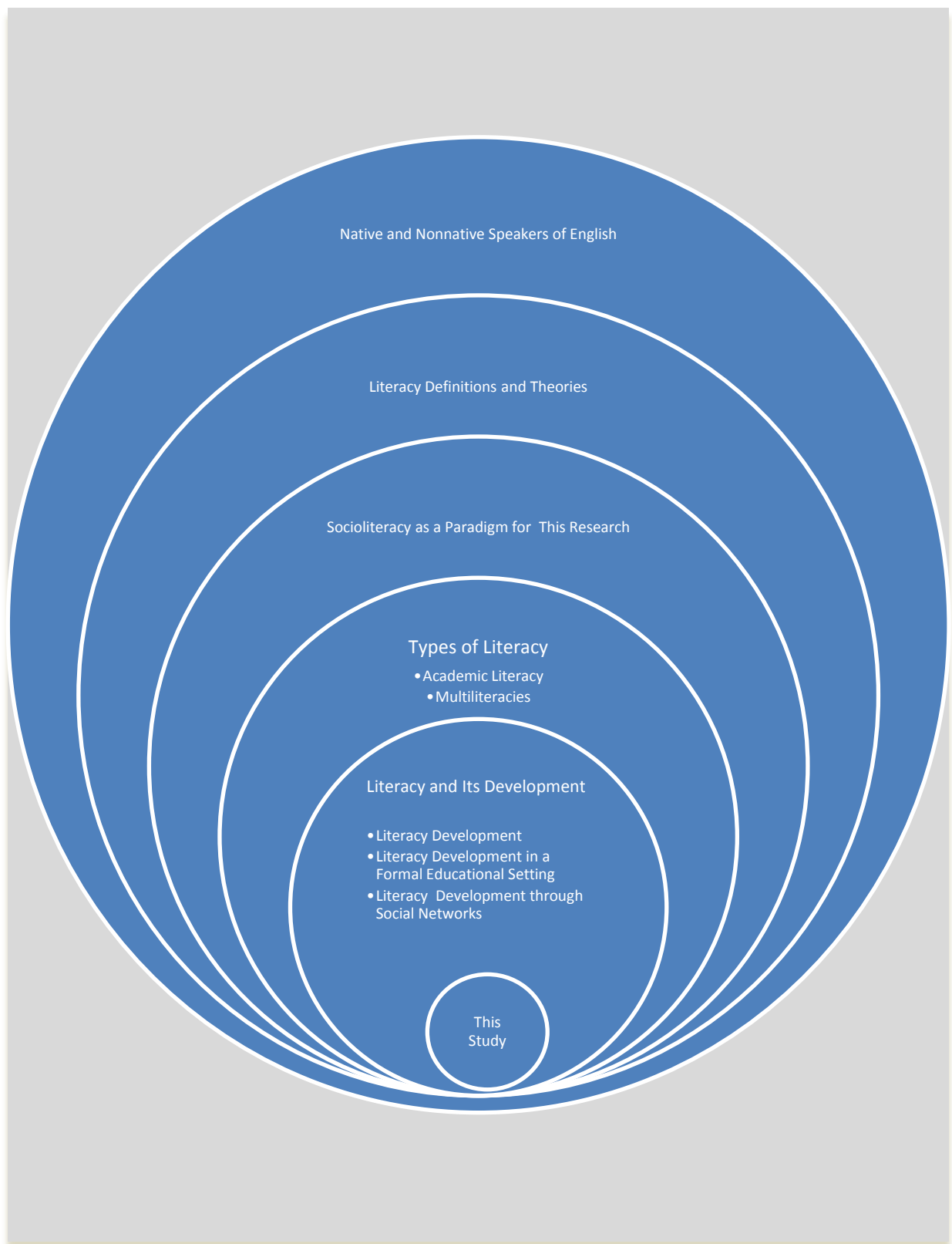
Native and Nonnative Speakers of English

Literacy Definitions and Theories

Socioliteracy as a Paradigm for  This Research

Types of Literacy
- Academic Literacy
- Multiliteracies

Literacy and Its Development

- Literacy Development
- Literacy Development in a Formal Educational Setting
- Literacy  Development through Social Networks

This Study

*Figure 3.8:* **Location of This Study in the Field of Second Language Literacy Studies**

This theory-based research model includes effective methods for conducting the investigation that are supported by the literature reviewed – thematic content analysis and SFL text-analysis, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 4.

## 3.5 Summary

The review of literature in this chapter is intended to offer a theoretical framework for an in-depth study of the academic literacy of seven native and nonnative English-speaking teacher learners. The paradigm of socioliteracy, emanating from the ideological model of literacy, was put forward as the lens for the study, a paradigm taken principally from the work of the researchers of New Literacy Studies (Street, 1993, 1995, 1998, 2003; Gee, 1992, 1996, 2007; Cole and Scribner, 1981; Heath, 1992, 1993) and Johns (1997). An overview of issues concerned with literacy, the difference between written and spoken language, text analysis and academic literacy (especially writing) and literacy development is framed mainly in the work of Halliday (1978,1996, 2009), Hasan (1996b), and Heath (1982, 1983). A review of the possible applications of SNT to the study of socioliteracy is also included.

Chapter 2 points to the gaps in NNEST research, and this chapter points to the theoretical focus of the research on the academic literacy of the teacher learners participating in the study. Taken together, the two chapters create the theoretical foundation for the study, which, in turn, forms the basis for the methodologies in Chapter 4, which follows, and the analyses in Chapters 5 and 6. In addition, the reviews of the context of NNEST research and literacy research are essential to the discussion (in Chapter 7) of the results of this qualitative research because they establish a framework in which to evaluate and interpret the results of the analyses.

# Chapter 4
# Methodology

"Yet there is always more than one way of looking at things; and a sentence, in this respect, is just another thing. It has many sides to it. What is more significant, however, is that different ways of looking at a sentence may reflect different facets of the meaning of that sentence: a text is an act of meaning, and we usually mean more than one thing at a time. Different meanings may, in turn, stand for different modes of reflecting on and acting on reality." M. A. K. Halliday (1976, p. 344)

## 4.1 Introduction

Because of my work in the TESOL Master's Program, I became aware of some of the challenges that teacher preparation poses for the nonnative English-speaking teachers. Furthermore, my interest in teaching writing to both native speakers and nonnative speakers was a major factor in the focus of this study on writing. Researching their literacy and language development through their writing was the best way to understand the academic challenges that they have faced and continue to face. This research has been designed to provide as complete a picture as possible of the participants' literacy that takes into account data from their writing and from their responses to questions about their literacy and language development over the course of their lives and their early ESL teaching experiences.

This chapter explicates the paradigm of the research and the methodologies that I chose  to collect and analyze the data. The literature review has presented the main approaches to research in the area of literacy and language development. This chapter contains a detailed description of the research methodology and procedures used in this thesis.

## 4.2 Research Orientation and Research Questions

In this section, the orientation of the research and the research questions are presented. This study belongs to the anti-positivist approach (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000) to research. The anti-positivist approach was chosen for this research because it is the most appropriate approach for responding to the research questions. This approach is an extension of a philosophical stance on the individual in society that is based on the Existentialist ideas of Soren Kierkegaard and Fyodor Dostoevsky, in which the individual creates his reality through action and choice, and the meaning of life lies beyond the rational. Thus, the anti-positivist approach opposed positivism and the scientific Weltanschauung for its narrow and limiting perspective on mankind and the natural world, and they believed that life becomes meaningless when there is no choice. This thesis assumes that individuals are complex beings who are engaged in social interaction with others and can best be studied from an anti-positivist approach that takes into account their feelings, perceptions, experiences, and relations with those around them.

There are choices to be made in how research is conducted; one orientation is socio-constructivist, whereas the other is positivist. An anti-positivist approach is socio-constructivist in orientation. The anti-positivist conception of social reality is the converse of the positivist conception.  Positivists believe that knowledge is "hard, real, and capable of being transmitted in tangible form" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 6), whereas anti-positivists argue that "knowledge is of a softer, more subjective, spiritual or even transcendental kind, based on experience and insight of a unique and essentially personal nature" (p. 6). Positivists, or objectivists, subscribe to the same quantitative research methods as scientists, in which the researcher is the observer and measurer, analyzing findings from surveys, experimental design, and other quantitative methods to come to conclusions about their subjects that can be generalized to a broader population. Anti-positivists, or subjectivists, employ qualitative methods, such as observation, interviews, and personal narratives, to investigate the "subjective experience of individuals" (p. 7) and understand "the

way in which the individual creates, modifies and interprets the world in which he or she finds himself or herself" (p. 7). Anti-positivists believe that individuals have their own unique way of construing the world and making choices that affect their reality. In the anti-positivist approach, individuals can be studied and compared through an analysis of their language and the meaning that they create (Cohen et al., 2000).

The anti-positivist approach requires the researcher to see each of the participants as individuals who understand the world in their own way and make choices that define them. The anti-positivist approach is associated with the interpretive paradigm, while the normative paradigm is connected with the positivist one. Cohen et al. (2000) note:

> The interpretive paradigm, in contrast to its normative counterpart, is characterized by a concern for the individual. Whereas normative studies are positivist, all theories constructed within the interpretive paradigm tend to be anti-positivist. As we have seen, the central endeavor in the context of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the subjective world of human experience. To retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated, efforts are made to get inside the person and to understand from within. The imposition of external form is resisted, since this reflects the viewpoint of the observer as opposed to that of the actor directly involved. (p. 22)

The interpretive researcher uses methodologies that allow the individuals to express their understandings of the world. The data collected for this research, the surveys with open-ended questions and the autobiographies, represent the participants' subjective interpretations of their literacy and language development. The methodologies of thematic analysis of the content and SFL analysis of the texts were chosen because they allow the meanings that the participants created in their writing to emerge from the data, in sharp contrast to the normative paradigm, which involves using superimposed categories based on theories outside the text. Canon et al. (2000) point out that in this paradigm "theory is emergent" (p. 23) and follows the research. Theory developed in this way is called *grounded* (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). In this study, theory arises from the data (a data-driven approach) rather than theory driving the data analysis.

In interpretive research, theory may not be universalized. Instead, theory is dependent of the diverse contexts and situations that contribute to it, according to Cohen et al. (2000),

and recognizes what they term "the multifaceted images of human behaviour" (p. 23). Thus, the goal of such research is to gain understanding of people's ways of thinking and acting.

Qualitative research is anti-positivist; it is now widely accepted in the field of second language acquisition – alongside quantitative research -- as appropriate for the study of second language development because it is able to provide meaningful insight into the complex nature of language learning. Qualitative research should be balanced, objective, and unbiased, and the choice of methods for the research should reflect a commitment to quality research that is original, according to Lazaraton (1995). Qualitative research from an emic perspective is based on data that emanates from the participants and takes into the views, feelings, experiences, interpretations, and circumstances of the participants (Watson-Gegeo, 1998). It requires thick description and a research approach that is chosen with regard to the purpose of the study (Lazaraton, 1995, p. 467). Dey (1993) notes that "qualitative data deals with meanings" (p. 10), rather than with the numbers that drive quantitative research; "meanings are mediated through language and action" (p. 10) and they "reside in social practice" (p. 11). Dey points out that qualitative data may include anything from text to sounds and pictures, "an enormously rich spectrum of cultural and social artefacts" (p. 12), that "convey meaningful information" (p. 12). This thesis describes the meanings that the participants transmit through their texts and the way they create these meanings through the lexico-grammatical resources that they employ.

Before moving on to a detailed description of the methodology for the study, an overview of the major components of the design is presented. This research has a cross-sectional design in that the participants' writing from a similar time in the TESOL Program is compared. Cross-sectional studies commonly use surveys as their tool, and this study also uses surveys, though the survey's design elicits both quantitative (descriptive statistics) and qualitative data. However, this study also uses narrative data. Both the literacy autobiographies and the linguistic autobiographies are written early in the TESOL Master's

Program, so they provide an early picture of the teacher learners' memories and understanding of their own language and literacy development. The design of the study of the autobiographical texts is primarily cross-sectional, but because the participants composed their two texts at different points in their progression through the teacher training program, the SFL analysis also provides a longitudinal perspective on the texts. Table 4.1 offers an overview of the research.

**Table 4.1** *Summary of the Research*

| Data Source | Type of Data | Data Collection Methods | Research Design |
|---|---|---|---|
| Survey | Answers to open-ended questions | Administered May-June 2009 | Cross-sectional |
| Linguistic Autobiography | Self-narrative primarily focused on second language literacy | Written as part of prior coursework<br><br>Submitted June 2009 | Cross-sectional<br><br>Longitudinal |
| Literacy Autobiography | Self-narrative primarily focused on first language literacy | Written as part of prior coursework<br><br>Submitted June 2009 | Cross-sectional<br><br>Longitudinal |

The surveys as a data source and research tool are discussed in Sections 4.4.1.1 and 4.4.2.1, respectively. The descriptions of the two autobiographies as the data corpus for this study are set forth in Section 4.4.1.2.

## 4.2.1 Research Questions

Two broad questions guided the research:

(1) What do NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings reveal about their literacy development?

(2) How do the NES and NNES teacher learners perceive their literacy development?

The analysis of the data from various perspectives provided answers to these overarching questions. In selecting methods to answer these questions, I was able to further refine the questions:

(3) What does a thematic content analysis reveal about NES and NNES teacher learners' literacy and language development?

(4) What lexicogrammatical resources do the NES and NNES teacher learners use to construe their literacy experiences?

(5) What do the NES and NNES teacher learners' interpersonal choices encode about their literacy and language development?

## 4.2.2 Reliability and Validity

Denzin and Lincoln (1998) explain that in qualitative research using multiple methods is a way to seek an "in-depth understanding of the phenomenon in question" (p. 4) and that there is no way to capture objective reality. They argue that the use of multiple methods, i.e. triangulation, is not a way to achieve validation but rather an alternative to it and a way to add rigor to a study. Triangulation is used in this research through the use of two different types of data and different research tools.

Because qualitative research is essentially different from quantitative research, there are ways of viewing the concept of validity that are appropriate to qualitative research. Wolcott (1994) lists five types of validity in qualitative educational research:

(1) Democratic validity, the involvement of the participants in the research process

(2) Outcome validity (also called trustworthiness), the successful relationship between the research problem and the solution suggested by the research

(3) Process validity, the alignment of the research process and its outcomes

(4) Catalytic validity, the extent to which the research functions as an impetus for the participants to understand the world better and change it

(5) Dialogic validity, a collaborative review of the research

Each of these points can be considered with regard to this research. Democratic validity exists because the participants provided their own data, including responses to open-ended questions and their personal narratives, and because their views were presented through their own words. The study has outcome validity (trustworthiness) in that the outcomes of the research address the original problem that was presented and member checks of the data interpretation indicate participant agreement with the results.  It has process validity because the data collection and methodology suit the problem under study. There is catalytic validity because the participants can benefit from the research by better understanding their literacy and language development and, in turn, by making changes in their ongoing development and in the way they view and teach language. All the participants expressed interest in learning about the results, which I shared with them as they became available.  The research has dialogic validity because my thesis supervisor and co-supervisor provided ongoing feedback on it.

Reliability is also a term associated with quantitative research. According to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), reliability is "the extent to which studies can be replicated. It requires that a researcher using the same methods can obtain the same results as those of a prior study" (p. 35). They point out that qualitative, in particular ethnographic, research cannot be so readily replicated for a number of reasons, including the type of data, the methodology, and the way findings are presented. In qualitative research there is more emphasis on uniqueness of people and of situations, which may not be replicable. Moreover, LeCompte and Goetz note, because of the nature of the research, the researcher's social position takes on different significance than in quantitative research, as does the choice of informants. While they contend that "absolute validity and reliability is an impossible goal

for any research model" (p. 55), they maintain that researchers can enhance the reliability of their research by using a conscientious and multimodal approach to their research problems and objectives.

In seeking reliability, I have chosen to use a survey and autobiographical writings that are common sources of data used in NNEST research. The research tools – content analysis and SFL – are tools that fit the purpose of the research and can be utilized by other researchers using the corresponding data. There is no way to know if the informants in a future study would write about all of the same themes or use the same lexicogrammatical resources. The local context of the research would differ in other tertiary settings, as would the relationship between the researcher and the participants.

## 4.3 Researcher Positioning and the Selection of Participants

In any research, the position of the researcher and the selection of the participants play a crucial role in the research process. In this section, I will describe my position as the researcher and the way in which I selected the participants. This section will also include a description of the participants, including their native language status, their language profile, and their programs of study.

### 4.3.1 The Positioning of the Researcher

The role of the researcher is complicated. The researcher brings his or her background, worldview, social status, and knowledge into the research project. He or she also has preconceptions about research and his or her role in that research. Denzin and Lincoln (1998) problematize the concepts of the objective observer and the subjects who give full

accounts of themselves, arguing that there is no such thing as an objective observation and that no subject can actually give the whole story. Therefore, they note that "qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected interpretive methods, always seeking better ways to make more understandable the worlds of experience that have been studied" (p. 25). In undertaking qualitative research, it is essential for researchers to take a self-inventory that includes a look at themselves and their relationship with the participants.

As a professor in the Graduate TESOL Program, I was, in some cases, the participants' teacher or adviser. In this study, I was not the course instructor of any of the students while they were writing their autobiographies and did not have any input into their grades. I was the adviser of Jasmine and Lily for the duration of their studies and of Jane for the first two years, after which she was assigned to a different adviser because of the reorganization of the faculty advisers' workload. As their adviser, I had a close interest in their success in the Program, but I did not exert any influence over them to participate in the study, as noted in the ethics application and Section 4.4.3 that follows. Neither did I influence the content of their writing in any way.

The relationships between teachers and their students may be quite complex. For some students, a teacher may also be a mentor; for others, a teacher may be an adversary who does not give them the grade they think that they deserve. In the case of the participants, our relationship has been entirely professional and amiable, and there is a well-established trust between me and each of the participants. At times I have agreed to help Jasmine and Susana with their writing and applications upon their request, and I was the field supervisor of Jasmine and Cindy. I have remained in contact with them and the other students since their completion of the TESOL Program.

Because my professional relationship with the participants is multi-layered (teacher, adviser, writing coach, field supervisor, and mentor), I know my participants and their writing well, so it is problematic to describe myself as entirely objective. Therefore, it is

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important for my research methods to be triangulated and for my analyses to be based on the data and not on incidental knowledge of the participants. Knowing the participants well did, however, present certain advantages, such as ease of contact and ready collaboration with them.

## 4.3.2 The Selection of the Participants

I invited 20 male and female postgraduate TESOL students (NESs and NNESs) from two of my colleagues' ESL classes via email to participate and received a consent form from seven. In the email (see Appendix F), I assured them that participation was entirely voluntary, that they could leave the study at any time without giving any excuse, and that neither participation nor non-participation would affect their status in the TESOL Program or grades in any way. The seven participants were enthusiastic about being involved in the study and expressed their interest in learning about the results when they became available. They continued to inquire about this study during the thesis writing process.

## 4.3.3  Description of the Participants

All participants were assigned a pseudonym to protect their identity. Of the seven participants in this study, three are NNESs, and four are NESs. They are all postgraduate students or recent graduates of the TESOL Master's Program at Molloy College. At the start of the study, they ranged in age from 25 to 43, and all are female. In a female-dominated profession, this configuration is typical and thus not a concern in terms of the representativeness of the research sample. However, it would have been valuable for the purpose of this study to have male participants. The participants' status in the Program is summarized in Table 4.2 below:

**Table 4.2.** *Participants' Status in the Program*

| Program | Number of Credits (Units) | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| TESOL/Childhood | 48 | Lily, Jasmine, Cindy, Vivian |
| TESOL/Adolescence Spanish | 45 | Susana |
| TESOL/Adolescence English | 45 | Jane |
| TESOL Post-Master's Advanced Certificate (already certified in Childhood) | 24 | Connie |

The majority of the participants are dual TESOL/Childhood majors, and Connie's previous certification is in Childhood as well. Susana also completed a course in teaching foreign language on the elementary level (FLES), so she is certified to teach Spanish in grades 1-6.

Ellis (2006a) categorizes ESL teachers into 5 categories, which are as follows: Type 1: NS early bilingual, Type 2: NS late bilingual, Type 3: NS monolingual, Type 4: NNS early bilingual, and Type 5: NNS late bilingual. Her categories can be applied to this research with some modifications, which are necessary because all of the NES participants in the current study have undergone some mandatory language study that includes at least 4 college-level language courses and three or more years of language study in high school, so Type 3 would not be an accurate description for any of them because they all have some level of proficiency in second language. Despite this modification, however, it is conceivable that a participant might view herself as monolingual because (a) she does not view her language learning experience as significant enough and/or (b) she may believe that bilingualism is synonymous with balanced bilingualism (see also Ellis, 2006a). The participants who can be designated as 'bilingual' on the Common European Framework would fall between levels three and five in their self-evaluation, with the presumption that they do not have to view themselves as completely proficient (5) to be bilingual.. In this study, the participant's view of their

language proficiency would be indicated on the survey by the participant herself, rather than in these broad categories established for organizing the participants. In the Molloy College TESOL Program and in New York State, all NES teacher learners must have 4 semesters of university-level language study, though the courses need not be in the same language. (Four semesters of one foreign language bring a student through the beginning and intermediate levels and present a more substantial language learning, one that deals with greater complexities of language learning than just a semester or two, but New York State does not require this in-depth experience.) Some students have four semesters of one language, whereas others have, for example, two semesters of one language, one semester each of two other languages. The range of languages among the NES participants is small: Spanish, Italian, French, and American Sign Language (ASL). Only Jasmine took ESL at the university level (2 semesters, 6 credit units). The native language status of the participants can be seen in Table 4.3 below.

**Table 4.3** *Participants' Native Language Status*

| Teacher Learners | Number of Participants | Participants' Names |
|---|---|---|
| NES with early L2 | 2 | Lily, Cindy |
| NES with late L2 | 2 | Connie, Jane |
| NNES with early English | 2 | Susana, Vivian |
| NNES with late English | 1 | Jasmine |

In Table 4.3, the category of early English represents participants who learned English for the first time in preschool or before school at ages 3-4, whereas late English represents students who learned English for the first time in middle school at ages 11-12. The same time frame holds for the NESs with early and late L2. Here, as elsewhere, Bloomfield's (1965) biodevelopmental definition is used for the term "native speaker," while the findings may reveal a more problematized view of the term.

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The language profile of the NNES participants provides some diversity. They include two Spanish speakers, Susana and Vivian, and one Mandarin Chinese speaker, Jasmine. All of them consider themselves to be bilingual and speak their L1 at home and in social circumstances. The Mandarin speaker also knows Cantonese well, which she learned after her arrival in the United States and which she uses in her current place of residence, Hong Kong.

Using Grosjean's (2002) definition of bilingualism, bilingual or multilingual may be the most appropriate descriptor for most of the participants. According to Grosjean, bilinguals use two or more languages in their everyday life, though they do not know them "equally well" (p. 2). As bilinguals, they use their two languages "-- separately or together – for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people" (p. 2). Grosjean notes that these differences in uses also mean that bilinguals are almost never completely fluent in their languages nor are they fluent in them in equal measure. Grosjean's views contrast with commonsense thinking in the U.S., which is that bilingualism means equal fluency in both languages, but resonate with the realities of the diverse, multilingual society that the U.S. is. TESOL teacher training programs across the U.S. include teachers who are bilingual, and many states, like New York, require some degree of bilingualism for ESL teachers.

An in-depth analysis from multiple perspectives offers a close look at the L2 academic writing of the NNES participants and the L1 writing of the NES participants. The former are the focus of the study, but the latter present ground for comparisons, especially between the two NESs who are highly proficient in two languages due to their bilingual upbringing and the NNESs. Such a comparison is in keeping with Kaspar's (1997) aforementioned suggestion that NNESs should be compared with advanced bilinguals, not with NESs, and with Lemke's (1998) suggestions for data collection, which are that covariation is the foundation for aggregation and that it is, therefore, prudent to gather a more extensive and varied corpus of  verbal data than will be utilized in the end to give support to the analysis. Lemke adds that discourse analysis is based on comparison, so researchers

should not only collect the data they are interested in studying, but also the data that present a contrasting perspective.

The autobiographies under study here were written at various times because of the participants' flexible enrollment in and progress through the Program. Table 4.4 below summarizes the stage at which each participant wrote the literacy and linguistic autobiographies.

**Table 4.4** *Chronological Order of Literacy Methods and*

*Linguistic Courses Taken by Participants*

| Participant | Literacy Methods | Linguistics |
|---|---|---|
| Jasmine | $1^{st}$ semester | $2^{nd}$ semester |
| Susana | $2^{nd}$ semester | $3^{rd}$ semester |
| Vivian | $4^{th}$ semester | $2^{nd}$ semester |
| Lily | $4^{th}$ semester | $5^{th}$ semester |
| Cindy | $2^{nd}$ semester | $1^{st}$ semester |
| Jane | $2^{nd}$ semester | $4^{th}$ semester |
| Connie | _____ | $1^{st}$ semester |

As is evident above, most students took the literacy methods class and the linguistics class in their first 2 semesters, though some took them later. The logic behind having students take these classes early on is that they are fundamental to the subsequent classes, providing students with  a good base to build on and basic knowledge of language and literacy. In the case of Lily, her progression through the TESOL Program was intentionally slow for personal reasons, so she spent more years in the Program. Connie did not write the literacy autobiography because she was not required to take the course with which it was associated.

The participants' data were not changed in any way after it was received. Errors were not corrected, no matter how small or large. The participants' autobiographies formed the corpus used in this thesis for linguistic analysis.

## 4.4 Research Methodology

In this section, the data sources and the research tools and steps that were taken to collect and analyze the data are explained. Ethical considerations are also included.  The data consist of three different sources (survey, literacy autobiography, and linguistic autobiography); the former was designed directly for this research, and the latter two are part of the participants' coursework.

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1998), qualitative research, which is used by many disciplines, does not privilege any one methodology or have methods unique unto itself. Rather, it calls for research practices that can best get the job done:

> Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival and phonetic analysis, even statistics. They also draw upon and utilize the approaches, methods, and techniques of ethnomethodology, phenomenology, hermeneutics, feminism, rhizomatics, deconstructionism, ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis, cultural studies, research, and participant observation, among others. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p. 5)

In order to assist the researcher in finding the answers to the research questions, the methods that are chosen must be appropriate to the discipline, the researcher's philosophical stance, the qualitative research paradigm, and the data.

The object of a data analysis is to understand what the given data has to say about the topic under study, in this case, the literacy and language development of the participants. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) explain that

> data analysis is the process of systematically searching and arranging the interview transcripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that you accumulate to increase your own understanding of them and to enable you to present what you have discovered to others. Analysis involved working with data, organizing them, breaking them into manageable units, synthesizing them, searching for patterns, discovering what is important and what is to be learned, and deciding what you will tell others. For most projects, the end products of research are dissertations, books, papers, presentations, or, in the case of applied research, plans for action. Data analysis moves you from the rambling pages of description to those products. (p. 157)

The data analysis for this research is multimethod – content analysis of the surveys, thematic content analysis of the autobiographies, and SFL analysis of the same autobiographies. Both the survey and the software concordancer SYSConc (used in the SFL analysis for a small amount of quantification and explained in more detail in Section 4.4.2.3) supplement and assist in the qualitative analysis of the data. The methods allow the data to be organized and explored for salient patterns that reveal similarities and differences among the participants and that have significance for the field of literacy and language studies.

## 4.4.1 Data Collection and Types

Before the study began, the participants received an email invitation (see Appendix F) to participate in the study. Once they agreed and returned the consent forms, I sent them the survey of participant language use and their perceptions about their own literacy (Appendix A). These surveys were emailed to the participants, who returned them by email. Requests for the autobiographies were also emailed to the participants, who were asked to attach them to an email or send a hard copy as soon as possible but no later than six weeks. I received the surveys and autobiographies from each of the participants. These form the data for the study. When I received the surveys, I checked the answers for clarity, and if I had any questions about them, I sent the participants an email requesting clarification. Their responses are included with the survey data.

The data was collected in May and June 2009 in person and via email, at the convenience of the participants. This time frame fell after the end of the semester. All data collection took place in compliance with the guidelines set forth in the ethics application. No data received a grade from me at any time previous to or following the collection. One participant had not yet taken the class in which the literacy autobiography is written at the time of collection, so she forwarded that to me via email only after the assignment was

graded by her teacher and the course was complete in December 2009. Another participant did not write the literacy autobiography because the class was not required for her.

This research includes three different sources of data. Teacher learners' literacy and linguistic autobiographies provide the texts for the thematic content and the SFL analysis. Surveys of their language use and their perceptions of their academic literacy in English and in other languages offer an overview of the participants. Using different data sources increases the depth and rigor of the study and, in keeping with the socioliterate framework, helps to develop a portrait of each participant's background, education, literacy practices, and contacts with discursive communities.

### 4.4.1.1 Surveys

The survey was designed to explore their literacy and linguistic backgrounds and perceptions of their proficiency in their L1 and L2. It was also intended to be brief, taking from 15-25 minutes to complete. The survey was piloted to twenty male and female postgraduate students in two multicultural education classes, some of whom were enrolled in the TESOL Program and the rest of whom were students in other graduate education programs, and before it was administered to the participants. They had no difficulty understanding or answering the questions, and made no suggestions about the surveys, so no changes were made as a result of the pilot.

The survey elicited the name and age of the participants and consists of 18 questions, all of which are open-ended, allowing the respondents to add whatever they deem necessary to their answers (see Appendix A). Three questions (numbers 10, 11, and 12) utilized a seven-point scale based on the Common European Framework proficiency measure, with zero representing no proficiency and six representing mastery, but each question is also followed by a space for additional comments. It was not my intent to measure their

proficiency in an objective manner, but rather to see how they would measure it subjectively. The focus of the questions is on the participants' L1 and L2, their proficiency, and their literacy interests with regard to writing in particular.

The data from the survey were analyzed to identify the teacher learners' L1 and L2, the age at which formal literacy instruction began, their opinions about their proficiency in each, self-categorization as monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual, and their opinions concerning their strengths, weaknesses, and interests in writing. In some cases when the responses were not entirely clear or contradicted information in the autobiographies, the findings from the survey was supplemented by responses from the participants to my email with a request for clarification (for a further explanation of the email responses, see Section 5.3.1.2).

### 4.4.1.2 Autobiographical Writings

The corpus for this study is composed of self-narratives. Scholars from diverse fields located under the umbrella of social sciences study narrative to derive insight into the human experience. In the analysis of narratives, researchers focus on the narrative itself, and their analysis may focus on the content of the text (oral or written), the global structure of the text, the meaning of the text as it represents a culture or individual, and the way in which the creator of the text construed his or her meaning. Researchers must respect the integrity of narratives and approach the exploration of the narrator's meaning-making with care to avoid imposing their own views.

Riessman (1993) describes five levels of representation in the narrative research process, depicted below in Figure 4.1.
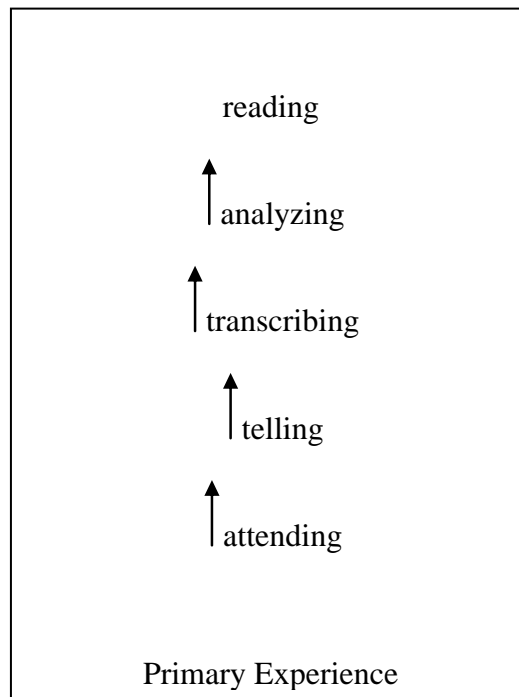
```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│                                 │
│           reading               │
│             ↑                   │
│             │ analyzing         │
│                                 │
│             ↑                   │
│             │ transcribing      │
│                                 │
│             ↑                   │
│             │ telling           │
│                                 │
│             ↑                   │
│             │ attending         │
│                                 │
│        Primary Experience       │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

*Figure 4.1* **Levels of Representation in Narrative Research**

In attending to the narrated experience, the researcher explores what the experience is: what

is seen, heard, felt, and so on. In the telling of the experience, the focus is on how the narrator

expresses his or her relationship with the audience, in other words, how the narrator wants to

be viewed by the audience. On the transcribing level, the researcher decides how to transcribe

the narrative (when it is oral) based on the theoretical basis chosen by the researcher. In

analyzing the experience, the research analyzes the text(s), viewing the form, structure,

content, and deciding what should or should not be included in the analysis based on the

researcher's values and beliefs.  Reading as the final level involves the researcher's

representation of the narrative. Riessman notes, "The meaning of a text is always meaning to

someone" (p.15). Reissman underscores a multi-level approach necessary to explore the

meaning of narratives.

Narratives form an exceptionally rich source of data on a person or a people because

narratives are universal and fundamental to the meaning-making process. Narratives reveal

how people make sense of their life experiences and carry these experiences, culture-laden

and imbued with history, forward in time and outward in space to share with other others.

Reissman (1993) writes that "individuals construct past events and actions in personal narratives to claim identities and construct lives" (p. 2). Ochs and Capps (1996) assert that "narrative and self are inseparable in that narrative is simultaneously born out of experience and gives shape to experience" (p. 19). It is this narrative of self that is under study in this thesis.

The body of literature on what a narrative is extends from at least Aristotle, who believed that a narrative must have a beginning, middle, and end, and whose ideas continue to dominate the teaching of narrative in Western classrooms to the present day work of linguists from a variety of differing perspectives (cf. Labov, 1972; Harrison, 2007; Heath, 1983). Heath (1983) in her discussion of children's narratives, explicates four different genres of narratives: (a) accounts, (b) recounts, (c) eventcasts, and (d) stories. This study involves recounts. Wilkinson, Stillman, Nitzberg, and Aurillo (1993) describe autobiographical narratives as

> characterized by strong empathetic and evaluative features; the theme is presented in a way that shapes the participation of the audience. Autobiographical narratives contain a high degree of affective relationships that create interpersonal involvement between the narrator and the audience (Tannen, 1989). Autobiographical memory encoded in narratives include language that is specific and refers to highly salient events, located in time and place. (p. 196)

They also note that sociocultural difference in language socialization deeply affect narrative recounts.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) view personal narratives as "the opportunity for learners to tell their stories, and the control that they have over those stories is empowering. It changes the learner's role within the research process" (p. 3). Through their personal narratives, the participants are not the subjects of the research but rather collaborators in it.

One of the central problems of narratives is truth: Is the narrator telling the truth? (Riessman, 1993). When relating experiences from the past, no matter how near or distant, narrators may lie, may not remember, may exaggerate or experience confusion, or may simply be wrong; "the truths of personal narratives are neither open to proof nor self-evident"

(Personal Narratives Group, 1989, p. 261). It is the problem of the researcher then to decide how to consider the narrative with regard to truth. In this study, I regard the autobiographical narratives as the writers' best efforts to represent their literacy and language learning experiences as they remember them. The accounts reveal emotional shading and adult perspectives on earlier developmental periods. The accounts may not be entirely true, but that can neither be proven nor disproven. It is hoped that they are trustworthy. Riessman suggests that trustworthiness can be established by looking at the following:

(1) Persuasiveness (reasonability and convincingness)

(2) Correspondence (checking the results with the participants)

(3) Coherence (overall content goals, connections in text, and repetition of themes)

(4) Pragmatic use (the usefulness of this study as a basis of other studies)

In this study, the participants' writings meet the criteria in that the texts are reasonable and convincing; there does not seem to be a sense that the participants are fabricating anything in the texts, and there is repetition of themes in individual texts and shared themes among the participants. The usefulness of this study as a basis for other studies will be discussed later in Chapter 7.

### 4.4.1.3 Autobiographical Writing in Teacher Education

My choice to study personal narratives was motivated by the fact that narratives exist in all cultures, are essential to the relationship between self and society (Ochs & Capps, 1996), and are fundamental to connecting the past, present, and future. Thus, teacher learners who are NESs and NNESs are both familiar with personal narrative, oral and written, though narratives may be structured differently from one culture to another. Ochs and Capps (1996) maintain that narrative is how people come to understand themselves and how they manage their relations with others in society. According to them, the personal narrative is both

historical and reflective; it relates the past in the context of the present, so it does not remain in the past but becomes relevant to the narrators and their audiences in the present and thereby influences their future actions. Dewey (1933) maintains that reflection, the combination of action and thinking, is central to teacher learning. Therefore, an analysis of the participants' autobiographical writing not only offers a portrayal of their literacy development in the past but also at their ongoing views on literacy and themselves.

Moreover, autobiographical writings that portray the literacy and professional development of NNES teachers of English (ESL, EFL, and English Composition) reveal important insights into the relationship between their literacy development and professional challenges. Short literacy autobiographies written by NNES teachers are available in edited books and journals (see Braine, 1999a and Llurda, 2005) have provided valuable insights into NNES' challenges and successes in literacy development. For instance, two autobiographical accounts describe the authors' similarly distressing experiences with writing in English and teaching writing. Braine (1999b) describes how, on his way to English fluency, he developed a voracious appetite for the *Reader's Digest* and spent much of his time haunting libraries to read everything possible in English. He found that his most useful teacher training was in a teacher's college in his native country, Sri Lanka, because it was designed for Sri Lankan classrooms and involved extensive teaching practice. He only began to develop his own academic writing in English when he had to teach a first-year writing course in Texas, at which time he experienced the discomfort of having to teach writing when he was filled with uncertainty about his own writing. Similarly, a multilingual teacher learner from Finland, Connor (1999) depicts the culture shock she experienced when she entered the American academic world. Before her arrival, she had written little in English and was not acquainted with the genres in which she was expected to write. She describes her growth from her master's thesis, largely rewritten by her professor, to the publication of her first solo book, during which she moved away from Finnish to American rhetorical style. Most importantly,

at the end of her personal account, she offers advice to ESL learners in the form of seven

points: They should (a) discover the expectations of their audience before they write, (b)

learn strategies for writing that help them achieve success, (c) set aside time to write and

revise regularly, (d) ask others to read their writing, (e) collaborate with other writers, (f)

understand that writing is invariably a challenge, but one that becomes easier with time, and

(g) persevere. Connor also includes a "Literacy Autobiography" writing assignment, which is

designed to help NNESs explore the sources and habits of their own literacy. This assignment

resembles the two autobiographical assignments that are used in this study.

Autobiography is used in Molloy's TESOL Program in three different incarnations--

literacy, linguistic, and multicultural autobiographies -- to encourage students to examine

their own linguistic and cultural identities and literacy development. These assignments are

invariably required at the beginning of each of the courses. The literacy and linguistic

autobiographies, the subjects of this study, are student-generated narratives that are used in

the TESOL program to encourage students to explore their own experiences with literacy and

language. The literacy autobiography is a requirement of the course "Integrated Language

Arts and Reading for the Inclusive Classroom of Diverse Learners," and the linguistic

autobiography is a requirement of the course "Introduction to Linguistics for TESOL

Professionals." These courses are generally taken at or near the beginning of the TESOL

Program.

The two autobiographical writings differ in content. In the literacy autobiography

assignment, teacher learners are required to write a paper on their personal reading and

writing   development, the types of reading and writing that they like, and their current

literacy practices. The assignment is briefly described as follows:

> Personal edification of individual's reading attitudes affect their actions and personal
> learning and/or teaching of reading and writing, which is partially reliant on
> acknowledging their beginning experiences. Subsequently, starting in primary grades
> to examine and later redefine thoughts, ideas, opinions, judgments and feelings about
> reading and writing, an ongoing and accumulative literacy history is suggested. [sic.]

This description is followed by a list of questions that are found in Appendix B. In the linguistic autobiography assignment, they are asked to write about their own linguistic and cultural backgrounds, including their first, second and other languages and/or their family's linguistic and cultural backgrounds:

> This assignment will give you the opportunity to reflect on the many factors that have influenced your language(s) and how your language has influenced you. You will be thinking and writing about the role of language in your life and the relationship of language to your identity, language acquisition theories, and language policies in the US. Or, if you are writing your linguistic family history, you will be reflecting on how a variety of languages and/or dialects have been used, retained or lost over the decades in your family.

The two autobiographical assignments provide an opportunity for teacher learners to think about literacy development and background that not only reveal the participants' past experiences, but also help them reflect on their current literacy status and their future profession of teaching literacy.

These two types of autobiography form the core of the data for this research. The research tools discussed below are used to explore this narrative data from a number of angles to develop an in-depth picture of the literacy and language development of the participants, both from an ontogenetic (historical) perspective and from a logogenetic (system of choices used to create meaning) perspective.

## 4.4.2 Research Tools

Analysis of text is a recognized qualitative research method that can be used to derive themes and other salient information from spoken or written text. In this study, all of the data was submitted to the researcher in written form. The research tools used to explore the data include surveys (discussed in Section 4.4.1.1), thematic content analysis, SYSConc (concordancing software, which is explained in Section 4.4.2.3), and SFL. This section describes these tools, the rationale for using them, and their use in the research. SFL

ideational and experiential metafunctions are explained to show how they can be employed to look for the insights on the research questions. The research tools are aligned with the purpose of the study and the data.

### 4.4.2.1 Surveys

The survey is traditionally a common tool for quantitative research. It can readily lend itself to quantitative measure and is designed to elicit answers that are presented as a series of choices (a, b, c, d, or yes/no) by the researcher. Results of surveys are distributed widely over local or global media and given various degrees of credence, often depending on the size of the sampling or the leaning of the media presenting it. Large groups of participants may be surveyed, and the statistics derived from the surveys may be quantified and generalized to the larger population; however, the numbers in this study are small, so the findings from the surveys, though quantified, are not generalizable. This study is qualitative and uses the surveys as one source of data, which is supplemented by the autobiographies described in Section 4.4.1.2.

Surveys, however, may vary widely in their content and may not only contain closed-ended questions, but also open-ended ones. Dey (1993) notes that "a method of data collection may produce various types of data" (p. 15). While closed-ended questions are easily quantified, open-ended ones are not. Open-ended questions elicit responses from the participants that contribute qualitative data that are unstructured but "can be classified" (p. 16) by the researcher after the fact. Though the researcher creates both types of questions, the responses to the open-ended ones cannot be limited by the researcher. In this study, the surveys contain both open-ended and closed-ended questions because the two types of questions combined can provide more in-depth perspectives on the participants than either type alone. Therefore, the surveys in this study offer some quantitative data and some

qualitative data. Dey argues that quantitative data always requires some sort of qualitative assessment to make sense of it and that the divide between the two need not be seen as insurmountable. Taken together, the two types of data are complementary. In this study, the responses to both types of questions serve as a basis for an overview of the seven participants as individuals and as a group.

**4.4.2.2 Thematic Content Analysis**

Bogdan and Biklen (1998) list thematic data analysis as a useful method in qualitative research in education. They explain that a list of thematic codes can be created from narrative data, for instance, work, gender, and home. Dey (1993) suggests that a researcher should look for ideas or concepts that the data has in common so that it can be grouped together. In order to do this, the concept has to be described and isolated as something that is stands out from other things in the data. The boundaries between concepts thus singled out must be clear and distinct from one another. This process allows for the categorization of data into themes.

Thematic content analysis has been used by other researchers to study the literacy and language development of L2 learners. Menard Warwick (2005), for example, used thematic data analysis in her study of the literacy development of immigrant women. By employing this method, she discovered themes that were common to the participants and then coded all the data based on these themes. From this process, she discerned larger themes, such as *learning*, that formed a foundation for her identification of learning patterns and what she termed *intergenerational trajectories*. Though her data sources differed from the ones in this research, Menard Warwick's analysis provides a workable model for this study.

After the data collection, I read the surveys and autobiographies several times. I noticed themes that recurred, including actions such as reading and writing, people such as

mother and father, and places such as school and the library.  Unlike Menard Warwick, I also used SYSConc, described below in Section 4.4.2.3, to identify the themes that occurred most frequently. I made a list of these themes, and then coded the texts for these themes. Once all the texts were coded, I extracted representative examples from the participants' writing and organized them into tables. The tables were then further divided into any subthemes that emerged from the analysis (see Table 4.5 below).

**Table 4.5** *Affect*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Positive Affect | Passion, love | |
| | Like, enjoyment | |
| | Success, empowerment, pride | |
| Negative Affect | Ridicule, torture | |
| | Shock, embarrassment | |
| | Frustration, anxiety | |
| | Alienation | |

In creating the tables with the identified themes and subthemes, I was able to make comparisons among the participants and take note of any contrasts evident in the data. The organization of the data also makes further interpretation possible and provides a framework for broader comparisons with the SFL analysis.

**4.4.2.3 SysConc**

In corpus-based research, computational tools can be used to help with the analysis and interpretation of linguistic data. Analyzing large amounts of data without this assistance may be extremely time-consuming. Canzhong Wu (2009) describes the use of SysConc, a

concordancing program, that he and Christian Matthiessen developed in Java, which is a

programming language that works across platforms and internationally. It is a component of

the SysAm system, which has broader functions and capabilities not applicable to the current

study. SYSConc is designed for SFL research.

SysConc can complement manual text analysis by doing simple pattern matching, for

example, finding lexical or grammatical items as they appear in graphological strings. It

facilitates the investigation of "word frequencies, word associations, and some morphological

characteristics by producing concordances, frequency lists, collocational patterns" (Wu,

2009, p. 133). Herke-Couchman (2006) used SysConc in her study of Nigerian scam texts to

facilitate her manual analysis. As a computing research tool, SysConc functions on the lexical

end of analytical possibilities. SysConc works by producing a list of all the lexical items in a

text. It can give a list of the frequency of each lexical item and also show the item with the

words that immediately precede and follow it. In SysConc this is called a KWIC (Key Word

in Context) index, which is also used in other corpora.  An example of the concordance lines

of the pronominal *I* can be seen in Figure 4.2.



When I heard the term □language□, I thought o
heard the term □language□, I thought of communication, and then qu
ct; therefore, as a young child, I had problems communicating with ther
is communicating with them.  I can not recall how I mastered the diale
ith them.  I can not recall how I mastered the dialect when the pronunc
ry different from Mandarin, but I did master it after staying at my grandp
d to me in elementary school.  I learned my ABC song in 1st grade, but
at time.  Later on in 3rd grade, I learned the basic greetings of English;
y speaks English around me, I was confused about the purpose of stu
ed into Mandarin.  By the time I reached 5th grade, I recognized the exis
the time I reached 5th grade, I recognized the existence of various lan
contact with any of them until I came to the United States.
After I came to America, my field of vision was

*Figure 4.2.* **Collocations for the Pronominal *I* (Jasmine)**

*I* is preceded and followed by variety of words that are collocated with it. The KWIC

statistics also give the frequency of that collocation.

In this research, SysConc was used in several different ways. First, it gave a frequency list of lexical items, which helped identify themes for the thematic content analysis. For example, SysConc produces a list of all the words in a text; the list is organized from the most frequent word to the least frequent one. Looking at the list, one can readily see which words appear the most and are playing a significant role in the narrative. Words such as the articles, which are high frequency words in general, may be ignored because they have no thematic role in this context. Second, as part of the investigation into the literacy development of each participant, SysConc listed the frequency of *I* and the words collocated with it. After a manual selection of all the clauses with *I* and literacy words, such as *read*, *write*, *learn*, *study*, *acquire*, and so on, these clauses became the basis for the SFL experiential analysis. KWIC statistics also quantify lexical items, from the most common to the least common collocation,

| Left- | | | Right+ | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Word / | # | | Word | # ▽ | |
| After | 4 | | to | 9 | |
| and | 4 | | the | 8 | |
| as | 1 | | in | 3 | |
| barrier | 1 | | a | 3 | |
| Before | 1 | | back | 2 | |
| but | 2 | | myself | 2 | |
| child | 1 | | be | 2 | |
| China | 2 | | t | 2 | |
| correct | 1 | | an | 1 | |
| cultures | 1 | | most | 1 | |
| difficulty | 1 | | serve | 1 | |
| English | 2 | | Japanese | 1 | |
| five | 1 | | raised | 1 | |
| grade | 2 | | shocked | 1 | |
| how | 1 | | easily | 1 | |
| ideas | 1 | | told | 1 | |
| immigrant | 1 | | confused | 1 | |
| Japanese | 1 | | Newsday | 1 | |
| language | 3 | | then | 1 | |
| later | 1 | | my | 1 | |
| me | 2 | | admire | 1 | |
| more | 1 | | learn | 1 | |

*Figure 4.3:* **KWIC Statistics (Jasmine)**

In Figure 4.3, SysConc offers the collocations of *I*. Third, SysConc quantified the other people mentioned in the autobiographies, such as *mother*, *father*, *parents*, and *sister*, as playing a role in the participants' literacy development. The frequency of these words was used to develop the analysis of the social network involved in the participants' literacy development.

In sum, SysConc assisted in the manual analyses that follow by finding lexical items and  their frequencies and collocations. Without the help of SysConc the analyses would have had to have been done manually, which would have been very time consuming.

#### 4.4.2.4  SFL and Its Use in Literacy Research

Text analysis is a widely accepted method for studying text, in particular writing. Through text analysis, the researcher can describe text and evaluate features of it. Connor (1994) explains that the research orientation of text analysis is different from "traditional text analysis" (p. 682) because it gives analysis new breadth by exploring beyond the grammar at the sentence level and it looks at the situation in which the text was created to add dimensionality. Connor traces the development of text analysis research to the Prague School of Linguistics of the 1920s and to the related approach of SFL.

SFL is a model of language that integrates language with its social context. The term "systemic" means that grammar is viewed as consisting of system networks that contain the patterns of choices through which people make meaning (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). One example of a system is polarity (*He is sick. He is not sick).* The term "functional" means that the practical uses of language in context are the focal point of the model, not rule-based or formal grammar. (For a comparison of rule-based  or formal and functional grammar, see Herke-Couchman, 2006.)

SFL traces its beginnings to the work of Malinowski (1993), in particular for his contributions to the study of meaning from both ethnographic and linguistic perspectives and his ideas about context of culture and  context of situation; Firth (1951, 1957) for his theory of system-structure;  Hjelmslev (1948); and the Prague School of Linguists (Mathesius and others). Hjelmslev (1948) explained  that:

> the real units of language are not sounds, or written characters, or meanings; the real units of language are the relata which these sounds, characters, and meanings

represent. The main thing is not the sounds, characters, and meanings as such, but their mutual relations within the chain of speech and within the paradigms of grammar. These relations make up the system of a language, and it is this interior system which is characteristic of one language as opposed to other languages, whereas the representation by sounds, characters, and meanings is irrelevant to the system and may be changed without affecting the system. (p. 76)

The beginnings of this systemic theory then involve not a phonemic nor a syntagmatic focus but a paradigmatic one, not a narrow view of the sounds, characters and grammar of a language but rather a view of how they are interrelated and create meaning. The theory was more fully developed in England by M.A.K. Halliday in the 1950s originally with regard to Chinese and subsequently with English. He and later Hasan, Martin, and Matthiessen further expanded the theory that is today known as SFL, which is associated with the 'Sydney School of Linguistics.' SFL contends that every language is comprised of three major functions, known as metafunctions: (a) the ideational (with its two components--experiential and logical), which is the construal and logical sequencing of experience, (b) the interpersonal, which is about relationships among people, and (c) the textual, which involves the cohesion and coherence of discourse. The primary text that explicates SFL is *An Introduction to Functional Grammar* (3rd ed.) by Halliday and Matthiessen (2004). In SFL, the focus is on the paradigmatic axis, which means that language is seen as "sets of choices of meaning" (Christie and Unsworth, 2000, p. 2), so the choice of lexicon and grammar is seen as significant and purposeful, not as random or coincidental. Choices include various systems, such as TENSE (present, past, future), POLARITY (positive or negative), VOICE (active and passive), and MOOD (imperative, indicative, modals, and so on). (For a more detailed discussion of these systems, see Section 6.2).

It is essential in SFL to study a whole text, not just an utterance on its own. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) note that "when people speak or write, they produce text" and define text as "an instance of language, in any medium, that makes sense to someone who knows the language" (p. 3). It is through the study of text that a researcher can analyze the meaning-making resources deployed by the speaker or writer. Thus, in this research, written text forms

the data to be analyzed, and SFL provides the means to study it through exploration of the lexical and grammatical resources used by the participants. Halliday (1964) points out that

> even in written registers the individual stands out. His language is distinctive at the level of form. A person's idiolect may be identified through the lens of the various registers by its grammatical and lexical characteristics. This is how we recognize the individual qualities of a particular writer. (p. 25)

An SFL analysis is able to explore the grammatical and lexical characteristics of a narrative or other registers. This thesis is a study of seven writers, thus seven different idiolects. Halliday (1964) notes that "it is a sound principle of descriptive linguistics to postulate heterogeneity until homogeneity is proved" (p. 25), so this methodology allows for the comparison and contrast of the self-narratives to reveal the qualities of each of the participants as a writer.

In SFL, every text exists in two extralinguistic contexts. The first or outer context is the context of culture, which helps to shape the meaning of the clause. For example, in different cultures the politeness requirements differ, so certain choices in forms of address must be made. The second or inner context is the context of situation, which comprises what is happening outside the text that helps shape the text (Butt et al., 2000, pp. 3-4). For instance, a situation might be purchasing cigars in a shop. The words and grammatical patterns used to effect the purchase would be very different in a suburban shop in Virginia than those used in Havana. Malinowski (1923) stresses the connection between language and culture, and argues that an utterance is intelligible only "when it is placed within its *context of situation*" [his italics] (p. 306); this situation, which extends to the all the conditions under which people speak their language, he maintains, is always most relevant to the linguistic expression:

> A statement, spoken in real life, is never detached from the situation in which it has been uttered. For each verbal statement by a human being has the aim and function of expressing some thought or feeling actual at that moment and in that situation, and necessary for some reason or other to be made known to another person or person. . . In each case, therefore, utterance and situation are bound up inextricably with each other and the context of situation is indispensible for the understanding of the words. Exactly as in the reality of spoken or written languages, a word without *linguistic*

*context* is a mere figment and stands for nothing by itself, so in the reality of a spoken living tongue, the utterance has not meaning except  in the *context of situation*. (p. 307)

Malinowski's ideas about context of situation have been carried over to SFL and given a linguistic shape.

From the SFL perspective, the context of situation has three parameters − field, tenor, and mode, which "reflect the three main functions of language" (pp. 4-5), noted above, and seen in Table 4.6 below:

**Table 4.6** *The Parameters of the Context of Situation and the Metafunctions of Language*

| Parameters of the Context of Situation | Metafunctions of Language | | Explanation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Field | Ideational | Experiential | How experience is encoded |
| | | Logical | How experiences are connected |
| Tenor | Interpersonal | | How interaction is encoded |
| Mode | Textual | | How we organize the experiential, logical, and interpersonal meanings into a whole that is coherent and cohesive |

The ideational metafunction shows how speakers and writers construe their experience of their inner and outer world (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2006), that is, clause as representation, and the interpersonal metafunction concerns (a) the type of interaction that is taking place (demanding or giving) and (b) the kind of commodity that is being exchanged (information or goods and services) and (c) the speaker's position in the message (definiteness and adjustment, and positive or negative appraisal) (Butt et al., 2000), that is, clause as exchange.

The ideational metafunction consists of the logical and the experiential (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The logical function is not the focus of this research but is briefly described below and in some of the findings in Chapter 6. It is concerned with how ideas or content are connected. The experiential function is central to this analysis because it is concerned with the content – how the participants express their experience in language – so it is explained below in more detail. The two functions are interrelated, and though they may be separated out for the analysis, in text they work together to create the meaning of the text.

The logical mode is the relation that one clause within a clause complex (one or more clauses) has to another. Butt et al. (2000) remarks that "we can think of the interconnection of clauses as constituting a type of subtle human architecture" (p. 161). The combining of clauses is significant in meaning making because:

> semantically, the effect of combining clauses into a clause complex is one of tighter integration in meaning: the sequences that are realized grammatically in a clause complex are construed as being subsequences within the total sequence of events that make up a whole episode in a narrative. (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 365)

Each individual's clause complexing is unique to the speaker or writer, who makes choices that convey his or her experiences to others. These choices are seen as meaningful, not random, thus contributing to the overall meaning of the text.

Clauses may be combined with other clauses that are of equal status, for instance, an independent clause with an independent clause. This is called parataxis. Clauses may also be combined with other clauses that are unequal in status, for instance, an independent clause with a dependent or nonfinite clause, or hypotaxis. The positioning of the independent clauses within the clause complex is significant though the clauses are all of equal status. The first independent clause is considered the *initiator* and is dominant. The remaining independent clauses are sequent, and not dominant (Butt et al., 2000). In contrast, in clause complexes with an independent clause and a dependent clause or clauses, the independent clause will be dominant no matter where it comes in the sentence.

In SFL, the grammatical unit that has the highest rank is the clause. The clause is "the central processing unit in the lexicogrammar" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 10); in other words, the clause is the most basic message structure in English or any other language that is complete. Meanings can be put into the clause using the three major systems of the clause, which are transitivity, mood, and theme (the introduction of the message of the clause) (p.10). The clause can be seen from three perspectives: from above, the stratum of semantics (meanings are realized or expressed through wordings); from below, the stratum of phonology or graphology (wordings are expresssed through sounds or writing); and from roundabout, the stratum of lexicogrammar (a wording among other wordings) (Matthiessen, Teruya, & Lam, 2010, p. 233). This trinocular perspective allows for grammar to be seen as system and as a resource for making meaning. Halliday and Matthiessen argue that "this perspective is essential if the analysis of grammar is to be an insightful mode of entry to the study of discourse" (IFG3, p. 10).

Independent and dependent clauses are of the same rank on the rank scale. The rank scale is depicted in Figure 4.3 below.
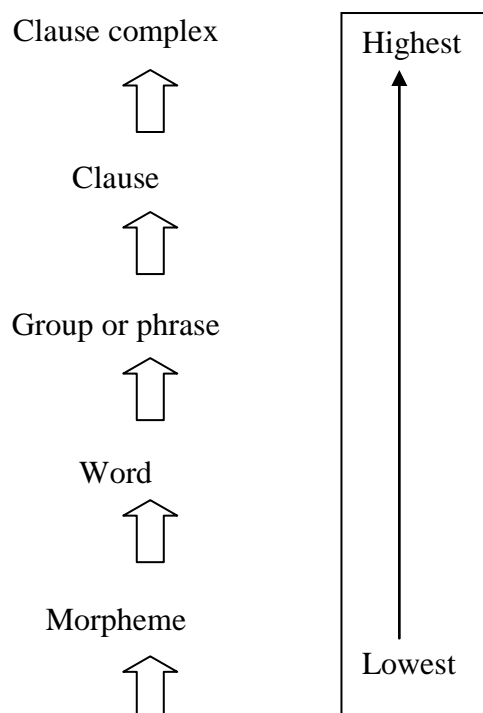


*Figure 4.4* **Rank Scale of Grammatical Units**

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A clause complex is made up of one or more clauses, a clause is made up of one or more groups, a group is made up of one or more words, and a word is made up of one or more morpheme.

Dependent clauses fall into three types: circumstantial, projecting, and embedded. Dependent clauses may provide circumstantial information, for example,

*Before I left China, I was told about the language difficulty I would be encountering.*

(Jasmine)

In this clause complex, the "before" clause gives temporal information. Dependent clauses may be projections of mental and verbal processes, such as,

 *I was counseled that, since I'll be in school, I could easily learn English.* (Jasmine)

In this reporting of indirect speech, *that, since I'll be in school, I could easily learn English* is in a dependent relationship with the projecting clause. However, the third type of clause, dependent clauses that are performing as part of a clause, which are known as defining clauses, are not of the same rank as the other two. For example, in the clause complex,

*The first book I enjoyed reading was a small fiction pocket book*. (Jasmine)

*I enjoyed reading* acts as part of the subject of the clause complex. Such clauses are called embedded clauses, known in traditional grammar as defining or restrictive relative clauses. Embedded clauses are of a lower rank than independent and the other dependent clauses, which are called *ranked* clauses, so embedded clauses are designated as *rankshifted* clauses. Rankshifting is one of the "five principles of constituency in lexicogrammar" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 9).

Embedding as a logical strategy is recognized as a feature of advanced language learning Embedded clauses do not function as a clause but rather as a part of a group constituent structure, such as a nominal group in the example above, or as a constituent of the sentence, that is, as a Participant. Rankshifting can be deployed  in a layered fashion:

*I believe [[that, my ability [ to acquire a second language at that later age] had*

*diminished*

*[from what it may have been in my early childhood.]]]* (Lily)

In the above sentence, the first rankshifted clause contains two other rankshifted clauses.
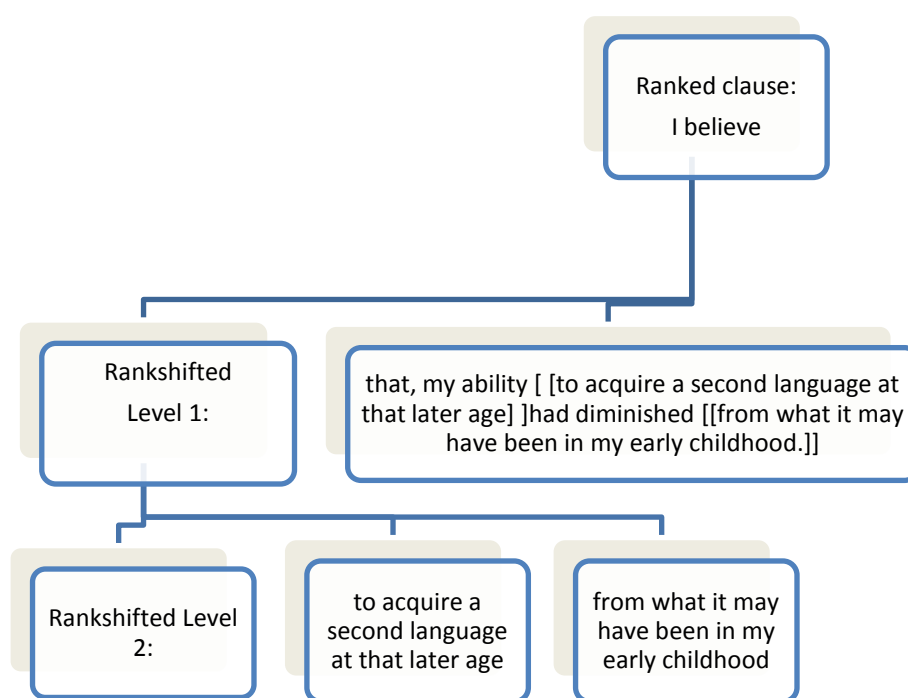


*Figure 4.5:* **Depth in Rankshifting**

Their relationship is represented in Figure 4.5. The findings on the deployment of

rankshifting are included in Chapter 6 and the discussion of it follows in Chapter 7.

The experiential metafunction is at the heart of this analysis because it explores how

the participants construe their experience of literacy and language development through

lexicogrammar. The most important system involved in the experiential metafunction is the

system of TRANSITIVITY. At the center of the system are Process (verb) and Participant

(nominal group). In an experiential analysis, the clause is broken down into its constituents

and given experiential labels:

**Table 4.7.** *Sample Experiential Analysis (Susana)*

|  | At home | I | only | spoke | Spanish | To my parents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Const** | conjg | ng | advg | Vg | ng | pp |
| **Exp** | Circ: loc: spatial | Sayer |  | Pr: Verbal | Verbiage | Receiver |

The second line of the analysis is the sentence constituency, in which the sentence is broken down into word classes and phrases: conjunction group (conjg), nominal group (ng), adverb group (advg), verbal group (vg),and prepositional phrase (pp). This clause, which is in the active voice, has a Verbal Process (*spoke*) at its center, three Participants (*I*, *Spanish*, and *my parents*) involved with the Process, and a Circumstance of place, which sets the Process in a spatial location. *Only* is a MOOD Adjunct with no experiential meaning. Thus, an experiential analysis is a comprehensive analysis of the transitivity structure, Process types (which are more refined in SFL than in traditional grammar, see below), Participant functions, and Circumstances.

**Table 4.8** *Process Types & Their Participants*

| Process Type | Subcategories | Participants |
|---|---|---|
| Material: doing | Creating | Actor/Goal/Beneficiary/Range |
| | Transforming | |
| Behavioral: behaving | | Behaver/Behavior/Range |
| Mental: inner activities | Emotive (feeling) | Senser/Phenomenon |
| | Perceptive (perceiving) | |
| | Desiderative (wanting) | |
| | Cognitive (thinking) | |
| Verbal: saying | | Sayer/Receiver/Verbiage/Target |
| Existential: existing | | Existent |
| Relational: being, having, being located | Attributive (characterizing) | Carrier/Attribute |
| | Possessive (having) | Possessor/Possessed |
| | Circumstantial (locating) | Carrier/Circumstance |

The metalanguage for the Participants differs for each Process and, therefore, offers a fine-tuned perspective on how each clause represents the experiences of the writer. The Circumstances in a clause further illuminate the Process, most commonly by locating it in time and/or space but also by providing other circumstantial information (extent, contingency, cause, accompaniment, matter, role, means, and angle).

The most important system in the interpersonal metafunction is MOOD (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). The MOOD Block of a sentence consists of the subject, the finite form of the verb, and any Mood Adjuncts. The Finite is the core of the expression of interpersonal meaning because it "encodes information about whether an Event has occurred, is presently occurring, or is yet to occur" (Butt et al., 2000, p. 111) and tells whether or not speakers or writers want to signal if they are definite about the messages that they want to convey. Indefiniteness is moderated by the system of MODALITY, which includes a Modal Finite

(*can*, *may*, and so on), a Mood Adjunct (adverbial group or prepositional phrase), and interpersonal grammatical metaphor (for example, *I think…*). The MOOD block also includes positive and negative polarity. This research looks at how the participants use interpersonal systems, particularly MOOD and POLARITY, to encode their descriptions of their literacy and language development.

The SFL model has been used across a broad range of disciplines, from the study of literature (Rothery & Stenglin, 2000) and science writing (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Schleppegrell, 2002) to analysis of language in medical settings (Lam, Matthiessen, Slade, & Herke, 2010) and historical texts (Martin, 2002). It has proven to be an effective tool for critical discourse analysis (CDA) (Martin, 2000). SFL is an appropriate tool for research of diverse discourse communities and social contexts because in SFL language and social context are conceptualized as inseparable. SFL describes social context as existing on two interrelated levels: (a) the context of situation, which is "the immediate context in which the language is used" (Christie & Unsworth, 2000, p. 3) and is described through the three aforementioned metafunctions, and (b) the context of culture, which is a practice of language use that is recognized by a culture and that has its own text structure (pp. 3-4). This two-pronged approach allows researchers to study language within the social context of the text and to study the social context through the language of the text.

SFL can be used to study academic literacy. Halliday (1996) proposes that the conceptual framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics is "a way of understanding it [literacy]" (pp. 339) and that "literacy can be conceived as activity rather than as knowledge" (p. 341). He presents a linguistic interpretation of literacy, arguing that because literacy can be seen as activity, it can be studied through SFL analysis. Being academically literate involves interaction with language generally in its written form, and deriving meaning from and making meaning in that form. Halliday notes:

> In this sense, if we say that someone is literate it means that they are effectively using the lexicogrammatical patterns that are associated with written text. As I said earlier,

this does not imply that they are consciously aware of doing so, or that they could analyse those patterns in grammatical terms, but it does imply that they can understand and use the written wordings, differentiate them from the typical patterns of spoken language, and recognize their functions and their value in the culture. (p. 349)

In this sense then, and in the context of the present study, SFL can be used as a tool to explore the academic literacy of the participants.

Schleppegrell and Colombi argue that literacy can be viewed as a social activity (the theoretical basis for which can be found primarily in Vygostky, 1986) and as a linguistic activity (the theoretical basis for which can be found primarily in the social theory of Bernstein, 1990, 1996). These theories are not mutually exclusive (see Hasan, 1999), and SFL will be used to explore the content of the data (what the participants about relate their literacy development, both experientially and interpersonally) and the lexicogrammar of the data (how the participants construe meaning in their writing).

To Halliday (1996), spoken language and written language are not different phenomena and are, generally speaking, more similar than they are different (see the discussion in Section 3.2.2.1). Halliday maintains that three particular features of lexicogrammar distinguish written language from spoken language. The first is nominalization (the changing of verbal processes into nominal ones). Nominalization is a part of grammatical intricacy; the less grammatically intricate the clause structure, the more nominalization there is and the less spoken-like the clause is. The second is grammatical metaphor (the interstratal relation between semantics and lexicogrammar based on semantic junction/disjunction). Herke-Couchman notes that grammatical metaphor is when the lexicogrammmantical stratum falls out of its typical alignment with the semantic system, resulting in the construal of more layers of meaning. The third is lexical density (the quantity of lexical items or lexemes in a clause); the higher the lexical density, the more written-like the language. Table 4.9 summarizes these features.

**Table  4.9** *Three Features of Lexicogrammar That Distinguish Written Language*

| Feature | What it does | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Nominalization (ideational or experiential grammatical metaphor) | It repackages events (verbal processes ) or whole clauses as a Participant and represents "a shift or transference of meaning" (Butt et al., 2000, p. 74). | Original: Akhmatova wrote the poem "The Sentence." Nominalized: Akhmatova's poem "The Sentence" will be read at the college's poetry reading. |
| Grammatical Metaphor (interpersonal metaphor) | It leads to the expansion of the meaning potential (IFG3, p. 626). It used to "shift meaning from a separate mental process clause to an expression of modality in the projected clause" (Butt et al., 2000, p. 116). | Retire. (imperative) I think that it is time for you to retire. (declarative) ("I think" projects the "that" clause but also expresses modality in the second clause.) |
| Lexical Density | It is the number of lexical items in a clause. Writing is lexically denser than spoken language, which has more clauses but with fewer words in a clause. | Akhmatova's poem "The Sentence" will be read at the college's poetry reading. 7 lexical items/2 clauses = 3.5 (lexical density) |

It is these characteristics that play a key role in literacy and second language development, especially on the advanced level. SFL provides a way to study the features of written language and makes it possible to explore the ways in which the writer uses the resources of language to make meaning.

Halliday (1996) suggests that the measure of lexical density be calculated in this manner: The number of lexemes is divided by the number of clauses. Function words, such as articles, conjunctions, and helping verbs, are not counted.  On the whole, Halliday points out, written language has higher lexical density than spoken language. He also notes that "most of

the lexical material in any clause is located within nominal constructions: nominal groups or nominalized clauses" (p. 348) that occur because of grammatical metaphor. In any study of advanced language development, lexical density and metaphor figure in the analysis.

A wide range of literacy researchers use SFL in their research. According to Christie and Unsworth (2000), SFL serves as a link between theory and real-life applications, especially to literacy (pp. 17-19). As evidence, they cite Hasan's (1996) work on the talk between a mother and her child, .and the New London Group (1996) and their work on multiliteracies and education. SFL is also used as a framework in literacy research involving Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). According to Kern (2006), "SFL offers another framework for CALL research, especially in studies involving advanced learners (p. 187). Christie (2002) studied the development of abstraction in adolescence in the English as a content area. She traced literacy development in NSs and NNSs through an analysis of salient features such as grammatical metaphor. Colombi (2002) analyzed the academic writing development of native Spanish speakers in a bilingual setting. Through an SFL analysis of essays written over time, she was able to trace the written language development in the students under study. Their writing featured improvement in the use of nominalization, grammatical intricacy, and lexical density. Christie's and Colombi's studies provide models of the use of SFL for the study of academic writing that guide the present study.

### 4.4.2.5. Steps in the SFL Analysis

An SFL analysis is done systematically. Because of its delicacy, an SFL analysis is time consuming, and analyzing the experiential metafunction is more time consuming than the other metafunctions. The literacy autobiographies' average length is 1,547 words, and the linguistic autobiographies' average word length is 1,568. Because the study is focused on literacy and language, I decided to focus the experiential and interpersonal analysis on the

clauses with the pronominal "I" and words related to literacy, including *read*, *write*, *listen*, *speak*, *book*, *language*, and *learn*. SysConc, the concordancing tool explained in the Section 4.4.2.3 above, aided in the selection of sentences.

Once the clauses were selected in SysConc, I reviewed them in their context and read through the autobiographies again to make sure that the clauses that were chosen were pertinent and that no clauses had been left out. I began the experiential analysis by doing the clause listing, which involves splitting up the clause complexes into clauses and labeling them (see Figure 4.6 below).

<div style="border:1px solid black; padding:1em;">

Clause Listing

A1. Therefore, as a young child, I had problems communicating with them.

B2. I can not recall [[2.1 how I mastered the dialect]]

B3.1 <<when the pronunciation of it is very different from Mandarin,>>

B4. but I did master it after [[B4.1. staying at my grandparents' house over the summer.]]

C5. English was introduced to me in elementary school.

D6. I learned my ABC song

D7. but ^I had very little concept of the English language at that time.

</div>

*Figure 4.6:* **Sample Clause Listing**

The letters represent clause complexes, and individual clauses retain the letter of the clause complex but also receive a number. Embedded clauses are in brackets and have the number of the ranked clause followed by periods and numbers that represent the level of rankshifting. Ellipsed constituents are preceded by a carat (^) and capitalized. When the clause listing was completed, I created a table for each clause and labeled the clause constituents and the experiential roles. At the bottom of each table, I made note of the taxis – paratactic (independent) or hypotactic (dependent) or nonfinite – and voice – active or passive.

What emerged from the experiential analysis will be presented in Section 6.2, but the preliminary analysis suggested the need for additional exploration of these clauses through an interpersonal analysis, which shows how speakers or writers use language to encode their interaction. Therefore, a row was added at the end of each table to include the interpersonal analysis. For an example see Table 4.10 below:

**Table 4.10** *Sample Experiential & Interpersonal Analysis (Susana)*

|  | At home | I | only | spoke |  | Spanish | to my parents |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Const** | pp | ng | advg | vg |  | ng | pp |
| **Exp** | Circ: loc: spatial | Sayer |  | Pr: Verbal |  | Verbiage | Reciever |
| **Interp**<br><br>**Decl** | Adj | Subject | Modal Adjunct: typicality | Finite+past | Pred | Comp | Comp |
|  | Residue | MOOD |  |  | Residue |  |  |

Taxis:  paratactic

The interpersonal analysis adds information about the clause's meaning as exchange. Exchange refers to the interaction between the speaker or writer, in this case the latter, and the audience. Of the two types of exchanges – goods and services, and information – the autobiographies generally belong to the information category (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004). A clause that exchanges information is called a *proposition*; the role in the exchange of information may be giving (statements) or demanding (questions). In general, narrative texts consist of propositions in which information is given (in statement form). Further explanation of this metafunction and the findings from the interpersonal analysis are included in Section 6.3.

After the experiential and interpersonal analyses were completed, I aggregated the results in summary tables, which were organized into two sections – experiential and interpersonal. The experiential summaries list the clauses under the types of processes, active

or passive voice, and taxis, while the interpersonal summaries categorize the clauses by tense, modality, and polarity. Using the summary tables made it possible to find the lexicogrammatical patterns in each participant's texts and to uncover the meaning-making resources of which the participants avail themselves.

### 4.4.2.6 Summary of Research Tools

This research is multimethod and involves surveys with closed and open-ended questions, a thematic content analysis of the autobiographies, and an SFL analysis of the autobiographies. The SFL analysis involves a delicate exploration of the texts through the ideational (logical and experiential) metafunctions. The multimethod approach is intended to give this research rigor and depth.

## 4.4.3 Ethical Considerations

While any study involving human subjects can have an effect on them, every effort was made to eliminate or ameliorate any risk to the participants. This study received ethics clearance both from the ethics committee at the research site and the ethics committee at Macquarie University. Naming the institutional research site was not seen as problematic by either ethics committee. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the participants were not pressured in any way to agree to participate or to continue participating. They were clearly informed in writing that they could withdraw from the study should they want to without any repercussions. Their grades or status in the postgraduate program were also not affected, and I was not their teacher in the courses for which they wrote the autobiographical texts. The identity of all the participants and information about them have been kept

completely confidential and secure, and each participant is represented in this study under a pseudonym.

Effort was made to not place any undue burden of work on the participants and to keep contact with them to a minimum. That was possible largely because this research investigates already existing writing. Moreover, the survey was designed for this study with time and ease of administration as primary considerations; thus, the survey questions are brief, and their administration only required about a half an hour. Feedback from the pilot revealed that the survey was uncomplicated to take. Also, the surveys were sent to them by email and were returned either in email or by post, so the participants could complete them at their convenience. Any subsequent contact with the participants was brief so as not to impose on them in any way. In addition, the participants were informed at the outset that they could address any concerns that they might have to the ethics officer at the college and they could have recourse to any professors in the TESOL Program or counselors at the college.

The participants were informed of the purpose of the study and continued to maintain an interest in it throughout the research process. They wanted to know what the study reveals about them and their writing, and I informed them of the results by phone and in writing in the hope that the findings will be helpful to them and to future students in the TESOL Program.

## 4.4.4 Limitations

The limitations of the research from a methodological standpoint are several. First, the number of participants is small. Second, though most of the survey questions were open-ended and the participants offered a generous amount of information, one of the participants did not write as much as the others, so it was necessary to elicit more information from her separately. Third, the students received two different sets of instructions for the literacy

autobiography assignment, depending upon their additional area of certification – childhood or adolescence. Nonetheless, they wrote about the same themes. Additional factors in this could be teachers' oral instructions and classroom discussions of the assignments, though the students were not all in the same classes and several different teachers taught the literacy course.

Another limitation is that one participant, Connie, did not write the literacy autobiography. The effect of this missing data is that there is no text to compare with the others. She could have been asked to write it retrospectively, but then it would not have represented what she did during the TESOL Program.

A final limitation is that the study does not include a male participant, as mentioned earlier in Section 4.3.3. A male perspective on his own literacy development is, therefore, absent, so the results of the study do not represent male NESTs or NNESTs.

## 4.5 Summary

This research is based on an anti-positivist orientation. While recognizing the importance of scientific inquiry across the sciences, qualitative research recognizes that human beings and language are exceedingly complex and can best be studied through research based on an anti-positivist, interpretive paradigm. This qualitative research seeks to explore the nature of literacy development among NES and NNES teacher learners, who would soon be teaching English to speakers of other languages. The autobiographical texts were produced early on in their teacher training program, causing the participants to recount their earlier experiences with literacy and language development as a way to prepare them for their future teaching responsibilities.

The use of different data sources and tools is a way of providing an in-depth investigation into the participants' literacy in their first, second, and, in some cases, other

languages. In keeping with the research paradigm the methods are qualitative and offer an emic perspective through the words of the participants themselves. The computational tool SysConc is used to assist the manual analysis in the selection of themes for the content and SFL analyses that follow.

Chapter 5 presents the findings of the thematic content analysis, reporting the themes that emerged from the surveys and autobiographies. The findings of the SFL analysis of the autobiographies follow in Chapter 6.

# Chapter 5

# Thematic Content Analysis of the Data

"It is our inward journey that leads us through time – forward or back, seldom in a straight line, most often spiraling. Each of us is moving, changing with respect to others. As we discover, we remember; remembering we discover; and most intensely do we experience this when our separate journeys converge. Our living experience at those meeting points is one of the charged dramatic fields of fiction." Eudora Welty (1983, p. 71)

## 5.1 Introduction

This study investigates the literacy development of the participants through a qualitative analysis of their surveys and their literacy and linguistic autobiographies. This chapter includes a review of the purpose of the study and the guiding research questions. Then it presents the content analysis of the data that is organized along thematic lines, with each theme and subtheme explained and illustrated by examples from the texts that form the body of data. The methodology for this thematic content analysis is discussed in Section 4.4.2.2.

## 5.2 Purpose of the Thematic Content Analysis of the Data

The purpose of this research is to explore the literacy of the participants in the early stages of their TESOL training and to examine their literacy development through their personal narratives. The aim of the thematic content analysis is to discover salient themes in the participants' surveys and texts that offer insight into the guiding questions of the study:

What do the NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings and surveys

reveal about their literacy development?

How do the NES and NNES teacher learners perceive their language and literacy

development?

The essential information that the surveys supply about the participants and the significant

themes that emerge from the participants' responses to the open-ended survey questions and

from their autobiographical texts constitute the findings, which are primarily descriptive in

nature, though some numerical data assists in indicating common traits among the

participants.


## 5.3 Data Analysis

The data analysis is divided into three sections, corresponding to the three data

sources: the surveys, the literacy autobiographies, and the linguistic autobiographies

(described previously in Section 4.4). First, the analysis of the surveys provides background

on the participants, including the languages that they know and their feelings about and their

relationship to writing, which are expressed in their open-ended responses. Next, the thematic

content analysis of the literacy autobiography looks at the themes that emerge from the

participants' writings. Finally, the thematic content analysis of the linguistic autobiography

offers the participants' perspectives on their first, second, third, and, in some cases, other

languages, and their family's linguistic background. The sources of data that converge to

illuminate the literacy and language development of the participants are summarized below
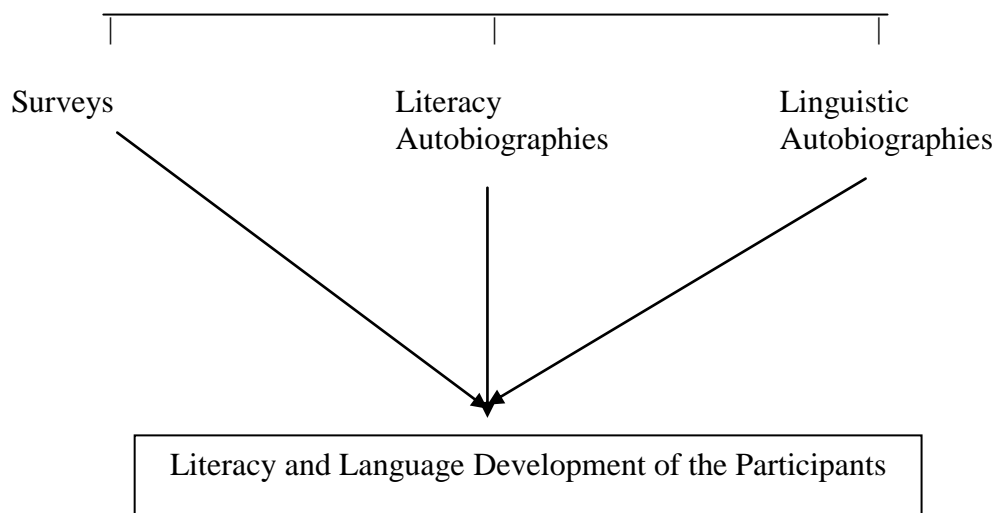
(Figure 5.1).

*Figure 5.1:* **Content Analysis of the Data**

## 5.3.1 Content Analysis of the Surveys

The findings from the analysis of surveys involve both quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data are presented in tables as are some of the qualitative data from the open-ended questions in the overview of findings (Section 5.3.1.1). The rest of the qualitative data viewed through the lens of the surveys are presented subsequently (Section 5.3.1.2) as a portrait of the individual participants' language proficiency and literacy development from their own point of view.

### 5.3.3.1 Cross-sectional Overview of the Participants

The survey (see Appendix A) provides information about the participants' demographics, language profiles, perceptions about their own proficiency in their first and other languages, and their interests in and attitudes towards writing. (As noted in Section 4.3.3, all participants are referred to throughout this study under pseudonyms.) An overview of their age, birthplace, and languages is provided below (Table 5.1).

**Table 5.1 *Participants' Language Profiles***

| Name | Age | Birthplace | L1 | L2 | L3 | Other Languages |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Susana | 32 | Colombia | Spanish | English | | |
| Jasmine | 25 | China | Mandarin | English | Cantonese | French, Japanese |
| Vivian | 43 | NY | Spanish | English | French | |
| Connie | 35 | NY | English | Spanish | American Sign | |
| Cindy | 26 | NY | English | Italian | Spanish | |
| Lily | 41 | NY | English | Spanish | French | Italian |
| Jane | 27 | NY | English | Spanish | Italian | |

Susana, Jasmine, and Vivian spoke a language other than English as their first language. Based on this "bio-developmental definition" (Davies, 1996, p. 156), they are the NNESs in the study (see Section 2.2.1.2 ), whereas Cindy, Connie, Lily, and Jane are the NESs. The mean age of the participants is 32.7 years, and five out of seven were born in NY, including Vivian, whose L1 is Spanish, and all but one have learned more than two languages. Only one has not studied Spanish, and two have learned more than three languages. Despite all of the languages represented in Table 2 above, only the NNESs consider themselves to be bilingual.

In questions 10-12, the participants were asked to rate their own proficiency in their first, second, and third languages on a 7-point scale based on the Common European Framework (Council of Europe, 2006) (see *Figure 5.2* below).

_____

    0   no proficiency

    1   basic user (emergent)

    2   basic user (high beginner)

    3   independent user (low intermediate)

    4   independent user (high intermediate)

    5   proficient user (advanced)

    6   proficient user (mastery)

_____

*Figure 5.2:* **Proficiency Rating Scale**
**(Based on the Common European Framework, 2006)**

This scale represents a widely accepted measure that is designed to form "a basis for the

mutual recognition of language qualifications, thus facilitating educational and occupational

mobility" (Council of Europe, n.d., par. 2) in the diverse European community, but it can be

applied to other countries that are linguistically and culturally diverse. It would be difficult to

measure their proficiency in the various languages objectively, so these questions are an

opportunity for them to express how they perceive their proficiency.

    The results of the teacher learners' self-evaluation is seen below in Table 5.2.

**Table 5.2** *Self-Reported Proficiency Rating*

| Name | Proficiency in L1 on a 6-point scale | Proficiency in L2 on a 6-point scale | Proficiency in L3 on a 6-point scale |
|---|---|---|---|
| Jasmine | 6 (Mandarin) | 5 (English) | 3 (Cantonese) |
| Susana | 6 (Spanish) | 6 (English) | |
| Vivian | 6 (Spanish) | 6 (English) | 5 (French) |
| Connie | 6 (English) | 3 (Spanish) | 1 (ASL) |
| Cindy | 6 (English) | 2 (Italian) | 0 (Spanish) |
| Lily | 6 (English) | 4 (Spanish) | 0 (French) |
| Jane | 6 (English) | 0 (Spanish) | 0 (Italian) |

All participants rated their proficiency in their L1 as 6 or proficient user (mastery), but only the three NNESs (43%) rated their proficiency in their L2 as 5 or 6 proficient (advanced or mastery). Of the remaining four candidates, all NESs, one (14%) rated her L2 proficiency as no proficiency, another (14%) as an emergent user, and two (29%) as intermediate independent users (levels 3 and 4). In terms of L3, one (14%) never studied an L3, three (43 %) rated themselves as not having any proficiency, and the other three (43%) described themselves as users (emergent, independent, and proficient, respectively). In all instances, the NNESs rated their proficiency in their L2 and L3 much higher than the NESs.

The survey asked participants to comment on writing and writing practices. Question 16, which asked if they liked to write in English, required a *Yes/No* response, but the other questions (13, 14, 15, 17, 18) were open-ended and asked for the participants' personal opinions. An abbreviated overview of the participants' responses is given in Table 5.3 below.

**Table 5.3** *Summary of Writing Attitudes and Practices*

| Teacher Learner | Easiest Aspect of Writing (Question 13) | Hardest Aspect of Writing (Question 14) | Likes to Write in English (Question 15) | Mostly Writes (Question 17) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | Expressing self, | Grammar | Yes—but dislikes writing college papers | Letters, email, college papers |
| Connie | Speaking from the heart | Grammar | Yes—reflections, personal journals, letters to friends | Letters, email, college papers |
| Jasmine | Expressing thoughts/ideas | Grammar | No | Email, college papers, lesson plans |
| Lily | Organizing thoughts | Word choice | Yes—creative writing and writing about topics for which she has a passion | Email, college papers, lesson plans |
| Susana | Sentence structure | Grammar | Yes—reflections, opinions on literature | Email, college papers, lesson plans |
| Vivian | All aspects of writing | Vocabulary, finding the right word | Yes – most any-Thing, from birthday cards to stories to poems | Poems, stories, letters, email, college papers, lesson plans, research papers |

Four out of seven participants (57%) find that self-expression is the easiest aspect of writing, while two (29%) refer to more technical local and global aspects of writing (sentence structure and organization, respectively) as the easiest. One (14%) finds all aspects of writing easy, though when asked to point out the hardest aspect of writing, she mentions vocabulary and word choice, as does one other participant. Grammar is viewed as the hardest aspect of writing by four (57%) of the participants.

To explore the participants' use of and feelings about writing, the survey asks the participants what they like to write and what they mostly write in English. All the participants except one (86%) like to write in English, though what they like to write varies from personal journals to essays and poems, and contrasts with what they mostly write; email, college papers, and lesson plans dominate their current writing habits because of their status as postgraduate students. One participant (14%) specifically mentions her dislike for college papers. Thus, these six participants demonstrate that writing plays an important role in their lives through and creative expression, though the writing that they do for their postgraduate academic coursework is not included in what they like to write (except for reflection).

### 5.3.1.2  Individual Participants

Because the survey included some open-ended questions and areas for comments, not all the results can be summarized efficiently in tables. Therefore, I provide a brief narrative about each teacher learner based on the survey responses in order to explore the rich data that the participants added to the surveys. These data provide a more in-depth picture of their literacy development in keeping with the framework of socioliteracy used in this study.

*Cindy*

Born in suburban New York, Cindy is 26 years old and enrolled in the TESOL/Childhood Program. She was in the final semester of her studies at the onset of this study. According to her survey replies, English is her first language, and Italian is her second. She describes her early language learning experiences with Italian:

> It has been spoken in my home throughout my entire life.  My parents often speak to each other and to other relatives in Italian. However, my parents speak to me and my sisters in English a majority of the time.

Cindy reports speaking Italian at preschool age and "definitely" being able to understand more than she can speak.

For Cindy, formal literacy instruction in English began in preschool, but she never received any schooling in Italian:

I never had formal instruction. I just was informally around it at home.

She started to study Spanish in ninth grade and took courses in it in college as well.

Though she describes extensive contact with two other languages, Cindy classifies herself as monolingual, as a proficient user (mastery) of English, and a basic user (high beginner) of Italian. She claims to have no proficiency in Spanish despite years of study. However, Cindy is more confident in her ability to communicate in Italian regardless of no formal schooling in that language.

About writing, Cindy states that the easiest part is "the opportunity to write about anything you want, and the freedom to express yourself" and the hardest is "applying the correct use of grammar." She likes to write in English, though she makes no mention of what she likes to write, and mostly writes email, letters, and lesson plans, but she says:

I do not like to write college papers (e.g. philosophy and research papers).

She also expresses enjoyment in writing English, but concern over her grammar.


*Connie*

Connie is a 35-year-old participant in the Post-Master's TESOL Program and is the only participant who already has her Master's in Childhood Education. At the beginning of this study, Connie was in her penultimate semester in the Program. She was born in a suburb of New York City, and her first language is English. In first grade, she received formal literacy instruction for the first time. She lists Spanish as her second language, which she began to learn in seventh grade and continued to study in high school for three years. American Sign Language (ASL) is her third language, which she studied in college. When

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she entered the TESOL Program, she was required to take two more college language courses, so she took Spanish 1 and 2. Because her reporting in the survey was sparser than the other participants' and differed from her own autobiographical account, I sent Connie an email (mentioned in Section 4.4.1.1) requesting clarification and more information. In her email response, Connie corrected her answer to question 6 about when she started studying an L2. She had written sixth grade in her response, but she replied:

I must have made a mistake on the survey, I started Spanish in 7th grade – after school.

At my request, she also added more information about her language study, which was minimal in comparison to the lengthier answers of the other participants:

> In high school, I took Spanish 1, 2, and 3. In college I took American Sign Language 1, 2, and 3. Last year, I took Spanish 1 and 2 . . . to complete the requirements for TESOL certification (Sign Language in college only counted as 6 credits – 2 per class).

Although she explicated her language study, Connie described herself as monolingual and rated her proficiency in English as proficient user (mastery), while she regarded herself as an independent user (low intermediate) of Spanish and a basic user (emergent) of ASL. She does not comment on these proficiency levels in the survey, though she does write about them further in her linguistic autobiography.

Concerning writing, she considered that "speaking from the heart" is the easiest aspect of writing, and in place of the word "heart" she draws a heart shape. She writes that "making grammar errors" are the most difficult aspect. She expressed her enjoyment of certain types of writing:

Reflections! Personal Journals . . . letters to friends

Connie used the exclamation point and ellipses when conveying her writing tastes. She was the only participant to do so.

*Jane*

Jane, a 27-year-old participant whose first language is English, was born in suburban NY, where she was also doing her graduate studies in TESOL and English/Adolescence. In the survey, she indicated that she does not speak a second language, yet Jane studied Spanish from the 8th grade through the 12th grade and Italian in her first two years of college. She described her proficiency in these languages as "very low" and does not consider them to be languages that she can speak, rating them as zero on the proficiency scale in Table 5.2.

Regarding her formal literacy instruction in English, her L1, Jane portrayed her early contact with schooling:

> I began receiving formal literacy instruction when I began kindergarten at the age of 5. (Note: Although I attended pre-school, I did not receive formal literacy instruction during that time. However, my mother was a kindergarten teacher, so I did know my letter sounds, etc. prior to entering kindergarten).

Despite the fact that Jane described learning Spanish and Italian in school and college, Jane clearly stated in answer to the questions about a second language that she does not speak a second language. In question 9, where she is asked to categorize herself as monolingual, bilingual, multilingual, or other, she chose monolingual. In describing her proficiency in her L1, she wrote that she considers herself fully proficient in her own language and designates herself "proficient user (mastery)." When asked to describe her proficiency in her second and third languages, she reiterated that she does not speak a second or third language.

Questions 13-18 concern the participant's writing. Jane likes to write in English. In discussing what she finds easiest about writing, she notes that she finds it easy to express her ideas through writing:

> I have always been opinionated and talkative, so transforming my thoughts into writing has always been something I enjoy. It is hard to explain, but writing has always been something which did not require too much thought on my part (and there are not many things I can say that about).

She sees writing as a way to express her thoughts and opinions effortlessly. What is challenging for her is "beginning a piece of writing," deciding on what ideas she wants to explore and how to support these ideas:

Once I have organized my thoughts and decided on the direction of the writing piece, the rest seems to flow relatively freely.

However, she also notes that editing her own writing is difficult; she struggles with correcting her own grammatical mistakes and often wants to rewrite again and again until she has to submit what she has written. Thus, Jane's perceives that her problems with writing are related to rhetorical structure initially and to form throughout the writing process.

When asked what she likes to write, Jane explains that her tastes are not the same now as they were:

> When I was younger, I loved to create fictional stories. Before I knew how to write, I would dictate stories to my mother, and she would write them down for me. I would then create miniature books from her handwritten pages and design illustrations to correspond with the stories. Throughout elementary school and middle school, I continued writing fictional stories, mainly mysteries. In high school and college, however, I began to prefer writing critical essays about literature I have read. To this day, I particularly enjoy writing about true events or about literature I have read, although fictional pieces occasionally find their way into my mind!

This self-reporting indicates a high level of engagement in her own writing from an early age. Her writing began with fictional narratives and developed into an involvement with the mystery genre. As Jane moved from high school to college, she began to develop an interest in analytical writing about literature and in nonfiction writing. Since she does not see herself as proficient in other languages, all of her writing is in English, from grocery lists and letters to college papers. In her final comment, she links the enjoyment of and facility with writing to her love for reading:

> I attribute this to my passion for reading which began at a very young age. I have always loved and been influenced by the powerful effect words can have on the mind and body of a reader.

Jane makes a clear correlation between her reading skills and her writing skills, and between her early literacy development and her later literacy practices.

*Jasmine*

At age 25, Jasmine is the youngest of the participants. She is in the TESOL/Childhood Program. When this study began, she was in her last semester of the Program, doing student teaching. Her L1 is Mandarin, and her L2 is English. She came to the United States and started to speak English when she was 13. Her L3 is Cantonese, which she learned after her arrival in New York, where Cantonese is the most widely spoken form of Chinese, through conversation and social contact with friends.

Jasmine started to receive formal literacy instruction in Mandarin when she was 5 years old and in English the year before she left China when she was in fifth grade. She notes that in that class she learned "very basic greetings . . . in British accent." Upon her arrival, after which she was placed in sixth grade, she immediately noticed that American English sounded different. In New York she received formal literacy instruction in English only. She describes herself as bilingual, rating her proficiency in Mandarin as proficient (mastery), in English as proficient (advanced), and in Cantonese as independent user (low intermediate). About Cantonese, she comments,

> I don't speak Cantonese socially unless I really have to. But I understand most conversations spoken by native speaker [sic] of Cantonese.

Because Jasmine went to high school in New York, she had to study three years of a foreign language in high school and pass the New York State Regents Examination in a foreign language. As she did not mention high school language study in the survey (though she did in her linguistic autobiography), I sent her an email (mentioned in Section 4.4.1.1) to discover the language that she studied. In her email response, Jasmine explains that she also studied French in high school and Japanese in college. She describes her proficiency in French as limited to basic greetings and says that she lost interest in it because she had so much difficulty pronouncing it. As for Japanese, Jasmine considers herself a basic user (emergent) and can read and write hiragana (Japanese syllabary), though she has a limited vocabulary. About languages, she declares,

I have a great passion for new languages. Since Asian languages are similar, I could also pick up Korean words easily, even without formal instruction.

Jasmine gives examples of her interest in learning languages and her willingness to do so casually. She also explains that she is able to make connections among languages that help her learn them.

In questions 13-18, Jasmine reveals that she finds it easy to express her thoughts and ideas through writing, but she complains that she still has difficulty with English grammar occasionally. When asked if she likes to write in English, she replied that she does not. Email, college papers, and lesson plans comprise most of her writing in English. She also compares her feelings about writing in English and Mandarin:

I'm more conscious about making grammatical mistakes when I write in English. It's faster and easier to express my thoughts in Chinese. . . . I do like to write in Mandarin. I usually write my diary in Mandarin.

She comments about writing further:

My opinion is that vocabulary is the key element in writing for any language. I sometimes will experience a shortage of words when I write in English. It's easier for me to memorize a new Chinese vocabulary than a new vocabulary in English.

Jasmine's attitude towards writing in English is negative. She does not enjoy it and does not identify anything that she enjoys writing. She expresses concern about her English grammar and vocabulary, with which she feels that she has problems. She finds it more difficult to learn new English words than new Mandarin ones, and she worries about grammatical errors in English.


*Lily*

From suburban New York, Lily is a 41-year-old participant, whose first language is English and second language is Spanish, which was spoken in her home when she was a child between her mother and grandmother. Lily describes her grandmother as trying "to speak to myself and my siblings in Spanish from infancy." She received literacy instruction in English

in the first grade and Spanish in the seventh grade. She also learned some French in elementary school and Italian in college.

Lily describes herself as monolingual. She considers herself a proficient user (mastery) in English and an independent user (high intermediate) in Spanish. In her third and fourth languages, she rates herself as having no proficiency, and she does not comment on these ratings any further.

Concerning writing in English, Lily has a positive attitude. She thinks that the easiest part of writing is organizing her thoughts and the hardest part is "selecting just the right words to most accurately express" herself. She notes,

> I have always loved creative writing, but also enjoy writing about any topic which I feel passionate about.

She writes a great deal and mostly writes daily emails in additions to college papers and lesson plans. She comments on the role of writing in her life:

> Personally, I find writing to be the easiest and most comfortable vehicle of expression. As a shy person, I am usually much more confident in my written expression than in my oral expression. I also enjoy the process of organizing my thoughts on paper, and find that writing affords me the opportunity to be a more effective communicator.

Thus, Lily ascribes to writing the role of a facilitator of effective communication because of her diffidence, which she feels more acutely when speaking.

*Susana*

Susana is a 32-year-old participant whose first language is Spanish. She is a student in the TESOL/Adolescence Spanish Master's Program. At the beginning of the study, she was in her penultimate semester. Susana was born in Cali, Colombia, and when her family moved to the U.S., her parents spoke only Spanish at home. She began to speak English as her second language when she went to nursery school at the age of four and received formal instruction in it in pre-K. She did not start formal literacy instruction in Spanish until she was

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in sixth grade. Thus, Susana's L1 literacy instruction lagged behind her L2 instruction by seven years.

In the survey, Susana describes herself as bilingual and a proficient user of both her L1 and L2.  She does not speak and has not studied any other languages. She measures her proficiency in both English and Spanish as the same; thus, she sees herself as equally proficient in both.

In response to the survey questions about writing, Susana finds "sentence structure" to be the easiest thing about writing and "grammar" the hardest. Nonetheless, she likes to write in English, particularly "reflectional stories and opinions on literature." In order to ascertain what she meant by "reflectional stories," I sent an email (see Section 4.4.1.1) requesting a clarification to which Susana replied that she meant reflections on her "her life, interest, teachings, and experience." (This elucidation is reflected in Table 5.3 in the previous section.) She mostly writes "email, college papers, and lesson plans." Susana's attitude towards writing in English is positive; she states that she likes to write in English. In her comments about writing in English, Susana writes:

> Throughout my college years, graduate and undergraduate, my writing has improved. I hope that after I graduate I do not lose what I've gained in my writing.

Her comments describe her perceived weaknesses in earlier writing and the development of her writing skills in the tertiary educational setting. Moreover, she places importance on writing when she expresses the hope that her writing skills will not decline after the completion of her coursework.

*Vivian*

Vivian is a 43-year-old participant, enrolled in the TESOL/Childhood Program. At the onset of this study, Vivian was in the third semester of the Program. She was born in Elmhurst, Queens, into a Spanish-speaking family from Colombia. Her parents spoke only Spanish at home, though her older sister, who was an ESL student spoke, some English to

her. She considers Spanish to be her first language, English her second, and French her third.

By the age of 4, she was speaking English.

In first grade at the age of six, Vivian started formal literacy instruction in English.

Prior to that, she did not attend pre-school or kindergarten. At 11, she taught herself French

vocabulary words, and at 14 (in ninth grade) she began to take classes in French. She took

native Spanish speaker's grammar and literature classes in college, starting when she was 19

years old.

Vivian described herself as bilingual and rates her proficiency in both Spanish and

English as proficient user (mastery). She added that although she considers herself, to have a

mastery (proficient) of both English and Spanish, she believes that she continues to discover

new aspects of each language on a daily basis. Vivian posed a rhetorical question, "Since

language is always changing, when does one really attain mastery?" In discussing Spanish,

she notes,

> As the years pass and I have less contact with the Spanish speaking world, I notice that my Spanish has become limited in certain areas. Colloquially, I have no problems, but if conversations turn to more technical or specific topics, my Spanish becomes very limited.

She characterizes her proficiency in French as proficient user (advanced) and adds "20 years

ago" and a comment:

> This is a difficult evaluation, since I have not spoken nor read French in about 20 years. At the peak of my French studies, I considered myself to be a proficient user. I was able to communicate with French monolinguals (in France) with ease.

She expresses how hard it is to assess her proficiency in French since she has not had the

occasion to use it in two decades and wonders about her proficiency at the current time.

In her discussion of writing, Vivian says that she finds writing and grammar easy in

both Spanish and English. The hardest thing about writing, she thinks, is making the correct

choice of words or phrases and the fear of choosing the wrong ones. She likes to write in

English and enjoys writing a wide variety of texts, including greeting cards, stories, and

poetry. In connection with course work, she also writes lesson plans and research papers.

Vivian concludes the survey with these feelings about writing:

> Writing for me is just a way of communicating my thoughts. As a child, writing was a way of expressing my ideas. I believe that my fluency in writing stems not just from the formal education I received but also from the reading I pursued. I did not focus on one genre but rather jumped from the classics to modern to comic books in both English and Spanish. This reading fortified my writing and helped me overcome the fears of writing.

Vivian's attitude towards writing is positive. She explicitly links her writing and traces her fluency in writing to the broad selection of reading she has done, both in the formal setting of schooling and in informal settings. Also, she expresses confidence in both her English and Spanish writing, and boasts interests and competence in many different genres, including academic writing in her postgraduate courses.

### 5.3.1.2 Summary

In responding to the survey, the seven participants describe their unique backgrounds and experiences in literacy and language learning. Some of them (e.g., Jane, Jasmine, Vivian) elaborate on their experiences more fully than others (e.g., Connie), who chose to write very little in reply to some of the open-ended questions. The surveys provide information on them as a group for cross-sectional comparison and as individuals for insight into the characteristics of their language development that make them unique. The survey data reflect the participants' evaluation of their own literacy and language development and form a backdrop for the analysis of the literacy and linguistic autobiographies that follows.

### 5.3.2 Thematic Content Analysis of Literacy Autobiographies

The literacy histories (Appendix G) revealed common themes, some of which were suggested by the wording of the assignment, for example, reading habits, library experiences,

and teachers. Others, such as writing and affect towards literacy, emerged on their own. These themes are classified based on the characteristics that distinguish them as suggested by Dey (1993), who notes that common ideas or concepts can be grouped and discussed together (see Section 4.4.2.2). Thus, for example, one category is reading and another is writing. The themes are divided into subthemes, which are also defined by what distinguishes them; for example, reading encompasses reading habits, early memories of books, and interest in literature. This thematic content analysis presents the salient themes and examples from the participants' texts (which were identified with the help of SysConc, which is described in Section 4.4.2.3) provided the frequency and location of terms); for further reference, a more extensive set of analyses can be found in Appendices C and D.

## 5.3.2.1 Earliest Literacy Experiences

The category of early literacy experiences refers to the participants' experiences with literacy before they entered primary school. The texts suggest a number of particular experiences that warrant a closer focus for subthemes: (a) reading in the L1 at bedtime, (b) connections between literacy and school, (c) positive experiences, and (d) negative experiences (see Table 5.4  below).

**Table 5.4 *Earliest Literacy Experiences***

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Earliest Literacy Experiences | Bedtime Stories | "Just as we finish getting ready for bed, my mother walks in our bedroom with a book in her hand and says, "Ready for storytime!" The four of us then climb into one bed to cuddle and read a new book or possibly reread one of our favorite stories. This was the nightly routine for many years of my childhood." Cindy |
| | Connections between Literacy at Home and Early School Experiences | "The earliest memory I have on print-reading draws back to when I was about 7 yr old; it was the night before my first day of school. That evening, my mother pulled out a book of Pinyin (Chinese alphabets) and turned on the tape recorder so I could read along with the cassette." Jasmine |
| | Positive Experiences | "I clearly recollect reading at home. Regardless of which television shows were airing or which games my sister and I were playing, the time of day which I looked forward to the most was bedtime. Each night before going to bed, my mother and I would read together." Jane |
| | Negative Experiences | "My early experiences with literacy were quite challenging. Besides learning to read and write; I had to learn a new language . . . . Learning a new language in the beginning was very difficult, especially since Spanish was the dominant language at home." Susana |

In all but one account, that of Susana, the participants explicitly mention the bedtime story. These memories of first literacy experience as the bedtime story reveal both the excitement and the anticipation with which the participants entered the world of reading. Some of the participants, such as Cindy, shared the experience with their siblings, while others describe bedtime reading alone with either a mother or a father. For Cindy it was a time to be close to her family while enjoying favorite stories. Likewise, Jane recalled the bedtime routine with her mother reading to her:

Each night before going to bed, my mother and I would read together.

In interviewing her parents before writing her literacy autobiography, Vivian noted that her parents recalled how they read to her when she was very young:

According to my parents, they began reading to me as soon as I could sit. I find this hard to believe, yet they were firm in saying that by age three I could recognize letters, numbers, colors and some simple words in Spanish. . . Reading about *Hansel and Gretel* was a great excuse to cuddle into bed at any time of the day

Lily clearly remembered her parents reading to her every night:

As a child my parents read to me each night from a beautifully illustrated and simply written children's Bible.

Moreover, she credited her father with strongly influencing her connection with reading when she wrote:

As I trace back from my first memories to the present day, I have many visions of my father, always with a book in his hands. From an early age I can recall him repeatedly telling my sisters and me, "Always have a book with you; you never know when you might have some free time to read." Through his words and his example, my father cultivated in his children the emergence of three future book lovers. As I grew older, I realized that this incredible gift that he had bestowed upon us was one that had been passed down to him from his mother; my grandmother.

(See also Table 5.7.) Jasmine also wrote about her father reading her bedtime stories:

Every night, my father would read me a bedtime story in a lively tone and fascinating expression which draws me into a wild imagination about those stories.

The bedtime story is a thread that links five of the six participants who wrote the literacy autobiography with one another. In contrast, Susana makes no mention of a bedtime reading routine, and literacy memories of her early childhood are focused on her older sister sharing her knowledge of the "ABCs and 123s." (For further discussion on bedtime readings, see Section 7.2.1.2.)

Usually connected with bedtime stories, positive experiences prevail among the participants when they discuss early L1 reading. Jane writes that she always looked forward to bedtime reading, and Cindy describes awaiting the nightly reading in great detail, from her mother walking into the room to the favorite stories that they read.

Susana had a different and more negative experience than the other participants. She mentions that her early literacy experiences "were quite challenging" because at home Spanish dominated. She does not recall reading in Spanish and describes her first reading

experiences as connected with English in preschool. Thus, the L2 reading that she remembers did not take place at home or involve her parents.

Some of the participants made connections between home and preparedness for school. Jasmine related an early connection between home literacy and school. Her earliest memory of her contact with print literacy involved how her mother played a tape recorder for her with the words written in Pinyin (see Table 5.4). On the eve of Jasmine's first day of school, her mother introduced her to written language and its correspondence to the sounds on the audio recording. Vivian related that her babysitter, Mrs. Hoffman, prepared her for school by reading her books in Vivian's new language:

> Aside from my mother, Mrs. Hoffman was the best educator I had. I learned all my basic reading skills in English from her. When I entered first grade, I was reading and writing in English.

Vivian's parents kept her out of kindergarten but made alternative provisions for her language development, which Vivian recalled as successful. These accounts offer a glimpse into overt connections between school and home.

## 5.3.2.2 Reading

The analysis of reading as a theme reveals several subcategories: reading habits, memories of books, and interest in literature. The subtheme 'reading habits' refers to the participants' descriptions of when, where, what, and how often they read. 'Memories of books' is about books that stand out in their memories from various periods in their lives, and 'interest in literature' relates to the literature as a field of study and the actual books that they read as part of their literature classes. Some of their comments about the subthemes are included in Table 5.5, and more extensive comments can be found in Appendix C.

**Table 5.5 *Reading***

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Reading | Reading Habits | "I typically like to read in peace and quiet and when I am alone, as sometimes I tend to read aloud to myself.  My current favorite books are <u>Love in the Time of Cholera</u>, <u>The Kite Runner</u>, and <u>Night</u> by Elie Wiesel.  I also read newspaper articles online almost every day in an effort to keep abreast of what is going on in the news." Cindy |
| | Early Memories of Books | "We read about Clifford the Big Red Dog, Madeline, Strega Nona, Little Bear, and Lyle the Crocodile.  We even had stuffed animals and dolls of the characters we read about, so that they too could join us during our bedtime reading.  This was a special time for me because I just loved the fact that each night we could travel to a different place or time and into the lives of exciting characters." Cindy |
| | Literature | "During my late teenage years, I was so in love with literature that I started writing stories on my own." Jasmine<br><br>"I still enjoyed English literature and loved Shakespeare novels such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*." Susana<br><br>"In my high school years, I discovered that classical literature also had these themes of adventure, mystery and romance that I enjoyed." Vivian |

Cindy's accounts of her reading habits and early book memories are representative of the

participants. She depicted her reading habits as involving both traditional print material and

online news articles, and she describes the conditions that she prefers for reading: "peace and

quiet" and being "alone."  Vivian also wrote of quiet reading and sometimes the need to read

aloud to help herself understand:

> Most of my reading is done indoors. When I was younger, I enjoyed reading at the
> beach or by the poolside. It was very peaceful and I felt attuned with nature. I enjoyed
> the quiet as I read silently most of the time. I still read quietly unless I do not
> understand something and then I read out loud.

Furthermore, she listed different places and times for different types of reading: "fantasy

books . . . in the bathroom," "detective or mystery books . . . in my bed at night," "textbooks

or classic novels . . .  in my rocking chair by the French doors and only in the afternoon," and

"newspaper and magazines . . . anywhere and at any given time." Jasmine had her favorite

places to read too:

> I love to read on bed or sofa when I am reading for the purpose of entertainment; but I prefer a nice quiet place for textbook reading.

The participants' accounts of their reading spaces and preferences offer a perspective on their

attachment to reading and the personal nature of their reading.

Many of the participants name the books that were their favorites when they were

young children and the characters that they remember from those books. Some describe toys

that were associated with the stories and their excitement in interacting imaginatively with

the characters. Cindy recalled stuffed animals and dolls that embodied the characters in the

books. Vivian mentioned *Hansel and Gretel* as an early book, and Jane wrote about the

*Berenstain Bears* series of books.

Some of the participants, in describing the transition to high school, wrote positively

about their discovery of literature as a subject. Jasmine's love for literature inspired her so

much that she "started writing stories" of her own. Susana liked to read Shakespeare and

particularly listed *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*. Vivian also mentioned Shakespeare, as well

as other authors including the Brontes and Dumas.

### 5.3.2.3 Writing

All the participants focus their histories on reading, and most include very little

information about writing; therefore, the surveys were designed to elicit some information

about the participants' writing. In the literacy autobiographical texts that do mention writing,

two subthemes emerge: writing habits (when, where, what, why, and how often they write)

and writing inspired by reading (explicit mention of reading as a source of inspiration for

writing). Some of the participants describe a link between reading and writing, seeing writing

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as a natural outgrowth of reading (see Table 5.6 below) and Jasmine's comments in Table 5.5 above.

**Table 5.6** *Writing*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Writing | Writing habits | "Since my middle school years, I began to use writing as a form of communication with others and I voice [sic.] my complaints in diary entries." Jasmine |
| | Writing inspired by reading | "My love for reading also filtered into my love for writing. Still struggling with shyness, writing provided me with a safe and comfortable medium of expression. I enjoyed writing about things I had read, as well as doing my own creative writing. When I read I would make note of themes or expressions that left an impression on me, and I would then incorporate those into my own writing." Lily |

For instance, Lily feels that her love for reading led to her love for writing and that it helped to shape and develop her writing. Jasmine similarly wrote:

A well-written book could often trigger my passion for writing.

Vivian also described a link between reading and writing, when she recalled:

The many books that I have read over my life from *Little Red Riding Hood* to *Spiderman* to *Paradise Lost* by John Milton to *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin have all given me a strong background to be able to write my little stories.

These participants found good writing to be an inspiration or impetus to their desire to write.

As for the writing habits of the participants, Jasmine has used writing to keep in touch with others since middle school, and she also keeps a diary in which she chooses to express her dissatisfaction whenever she feels it. Vivian developed an interest in writing after taking a creative writing course:

After taking a creative writing course, I gain confidence and began to write and explore poetry. I will not say I am great at these skills, but there have been moments that I have amazed myself.

She described her writing with some degree of pride. Jasmine portrays the negative changes that technology has had on her writing habits:

> With advanced technology, I don't write as much as I used to . . . . E-cards have replaced regular greeting cards, Emails replaced hand written mails . . . . The joy of typing could not be the same as the joy of writing.

She is the only one to discuss the relationship between writing and technology in the literacy autobiography.

### 5.3.2.4 Family

The role of family in the participants' literacy is another salient theme. Subthemes of this category include parents, grandparents, and siblings. Both parents appear in the literacy histories. Jasmine writes of both her mother and father as contributors to her literacy. Her mother introduced her to reading (See Table 5.4 above), but her father has also played an important role as "the bookworm in the house," who gave lively renditions of bedtime stories nightly (see Table 5.7 below).

**Table 5.7** *Family*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Family | Parents | "My father was the bookworm in the house. . . . Every night my father would read me a bedtime story in a lively tone and fascinating expression which draws me into wild imagination about those stories" Jasmine<br><br>"Although I could not yet read myself, I remember studying the pictures featuring the characters so vividly described by the words my parents read, and feeling as though I knew these characters personally. My mother also read to me during the day from a variety of children's books." Lily |
| | Grandparents | "As I grew older, I realized that this incredible gift that he had bestowed upon us [the love of reading] was one that had been passed down to him from his mother; my grandmother." Lily |
| | Siblings | "I had a small advantage, my sister who had started school before me would come home and teach me what she learned, for example ABC's and 123's." Susana |

Lily too describes the role of her parents, and singles out her mother as the person who read to her in the daytime. Grandparents are mentioned by a few of the participants, generally as the source of the love of literacy in the family. Lily recognizes her grandmother's part as "an incredible gift." Siblings are seen as either teachers of literacy or sharers in it. In the case of Susana, her sister went to school first, so she would come home and teach Susana what she learned in English. According to Susana's account, her sister was the source of English in Susana's preschool years. Cindy noted that her "parents made reading entertaining and it was never forced, so I naturally developed an affinity for books." Vivian wrote of her mother's passion for reading and her father's interest in words and numbers:

> My mother has a passion for reading while my father has an amazing ability for expressing himself with words and numbers. Their passion and their literacy skills were their gift to me and my sister. My reading history quest begins with these gifts.

Vivian attributed her love for reading to these interests of her parents and included her sister as a co-recipient of these literacy benefits. Likewise, Jane mentioned playing with her sister and then dropping what they were doing to enjoy their mother reading to them:

> Regardless of which television shows were airing or which games my sister and I were playing, the time of day which I looked forward to the most was bedtime. Each night before going to bed, my mother and I would read together.

Jane preferred the joy of reading to watching television and playing. All the participants remarked on their family's role in their literacy development.

### 5.3.2.5 Affect

Affect  is another theme expressed throughout the data. It is categorized into three subthemes: literacy as a source of pleasure, entertainment, and enjoyment; literacy as a passion, love, or liking; and literacy as a source of shame, embarrassment, and inadequacy. Participants describe both the positive and negative feelings that they have experienced about their literacy development (see Table 5.8).

**Table 5.8** *Affect*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Affect | Pleasure, entertainment, enjoyment | "I really enjoyed reading the poems, they were funny." Susana<br><br>"But I also must confess that I have read Harlequin Romance novels and other romance novels. I really enjoy these little books." Vivian |
| | Passion, love, like | "In college, my love of literature and reading evolved into a lifelong passion. . . . I acquired an enduring love of eighteenth century literature and gained insight into reading which I had never experienced before." Jane |
| | Shame, embarrassment, inadequacy, fear | "I was not even close to what the sign was saying. I was so embarrassed by my prior arrogance; it has become one of the unforgettable fragments of my memory." Jasmine |

The participants invariably expressed that reading is a source of enjoyment for them. Their accounts depict reading as an enjoyable activity, often part of family time or relaxation. Susana recalled enjoying poetry, and Cindy wrote,

> After high school, I was able to gradually get back into reading for pleasure . . . The summer continues to be a time when I am able to enjoy the opportunity of getting into a good book.

Cindy's enjoyment is shared by Vivian, who, though hesitant to admit it, exposed how much she loves romance novels, when she wrote:

> But I also must confess that I have read Harlequin Romance novels and other romance novels. I really enjoy these little books.

Vivian added to the list of the works she enjoys the novelists Woodiweiss , who is her favorite, Rice, Paterson, and Crichton. Of the classics that Lily read in high school, she derived pleasure from reading: "*Wuthering Heights, Of Mice and Men, Romeo and Juliet, 1984*, and *The Catcher in the Rye.*" Susana recalled enjoying poems, Jane came to understand "the value and pleasure of recreational reading, and Jasmine viewed reading "an important entertainment" since there was only limited access to television in her home.

Some participants revealed a passion for reading that has significantly enhanced their lives and contributed to their ongoing connection to literature and desire to teach it. Jasmine described her passion for both reading and writing:

> His [her father's] habit of reading greatly influenced me and has led my passion to reading. . . . A well-written book could often trigger my passion for writing.

Here Jasmine explicitly connects her father's reading habits and her own, and then she explains how her enthusiasm for writing is directly linked to reading good books. In her description of her love for reading, Susana wrote that she "especially loved books that contained short stories where you were able to choose alternate endings, they were usually mysteries."

However, despite the many positive feelings the participants have about their literacy, they also write about feelings of shame, embarrassment, and inadequacy that they

experienced along the path of their literacy development. In Table 5.8 above, Jasmine told an

anecdote about one of her first attempts to read, which contains her admission of

embarrassment at thinking she was able to read the letters she was seeing but being

completely wrong. Other participants such as Lily also recalled similar feelings; for example,

Lily noted,

> However, it was soon worsened by the embarrassment I felt when I realized all the
> classmates in my new school knew how to read, while I did not.

Generally, these negative comments involve the comparison of the participants with their

peers, as when Jane wrote that she worked "at a slightly slower pace than my peers," though

in the case of Jasmine, her comparison seems to be between her own perception of what she

should be able to read and what she has actually learned.


**5.3.2.6 Difficulties and Challenges Connected with Literacy Development**

In the area of difficulties and challenges with literacy development, two subthemes

emerged: problems with basic literacy and problems with academic literacy. The participants

write extensively about their experiences with literacy learning and the affect involved in the

process as discussed in the previous section. Some specifically use the terms "difficult,"

"challenge," or "challenging" to describe this process (see below).

**Table 5.9** *Difficulties and Challenges Connected with Literacy Development*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulties and challenges | Basic Literacy | "Writing on the other hand was not as easy as reading a book or spelling. Writing has always been a challenge for me." Susana |
| | Academic Literacy | "As I entered the middle and high school, my leisure reading was curtailed. I had to spend more time on schoolwork as the classes were more intense and arduous. I did not have as much time to devote to reading for pleasure and instead I focused on the assigned books for English class. These new books were more challenging and consisted of different |

| | | genres than I was accustomed to reading."  Cindy |
|---|---|---|

Susana refers to writing as something that "has always been a challenge," and though she has learned to write in two languages, she recalls writing as challenging in both cases:

> Another challenge I had with writing was writing in a language that once was the only language I knew but had now become foreign to me.

She is the only participant who discusses writing by comparing her writing skills in her L1 and L2. Another participant who sees writing as challenging is Lily, who comments that she "felt challenged to rise to the level" of Ayn Rand's literary expression.

Other participants used "challenging" to refer to academic reading directly connected with the demands of their secondary schooling and with their contact to new genres. For instance, Cindy noted,

> These new books were more challenging and consisted of different genres than I was accustomed to reading.

Most of the participants concur with Cindy's assessment of the difficulty of academic reading and share her discomfort with unfamiliar types of texts that they were not able to choose for themselves.

### 5.3.2.7 Literacy Education

Another salient theme in the literacy histories is formal literacy education with the subthemes of teachers and schools. Both schoolteachers and university professors appear as important figures in the literacy education of the participants; some are named, some are seen in a positive light and some in a negative one. Schools are also perceived both positively and negatively (see Table 5.10 below).

**Table 5.10 *Literacy Education***

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Literacy ducation | Teachers | "I do not remember my teachers in high school pointing out my weaknesses in writing. I wondered why I was not prepared to write after graduating from high school." Susana<br><br>"One of my most memorable teachers who has greatly influenced by ability to read and critique a book was Mrs. K. She facilitated group discussions that helped me learn how to dissect a story and understand the underlying theme and character conflicts. I remember her reading aloud parts of <u>Catcher in the Rye</u> and asking what Holden Caulfield meant when he said certain things or why he acted out in a specific way." Cindy |
| | School | "I cannot remember much about the process of learning to read at school. . . . As I entered elementary school, my taste in books transformed. I began reading mysteries which introduced me to the suspense and thrill generated by a well-told story. Through reading mysteries, I also began to develop essential reading skills, such as analysis and critique." Jane |

In the example above, Susana expressed her disappointment in her teachers who did not

prepare her for university writing, whereas Cindy named Mrs. K, "one of [her] most

memorable teachers" who strongly influenced Cindy's "ability to read and critique a book"

and taught her "the advanced skills involved in story analysis and inferential reading."

Similarly, Vivian credited her mother and babysitter with teaching her literacy and her eighth

grade teacher with inspiring her to read and choose teaching as a career:

> Even though my mother and Mrs. Hoffman were my childhood mentors, I have to give Ms. Cullen, my eight grade teacher, the honor of being my inspiration to read more and to become a teacher. She taught me that reading was the way to enlightenment. Every piece of literature we read, she bought to life. She had a passionate way of explaining all aspects of language and writing, and she encouraged us to read more and to write in journals. Her encouragement made me want to excel.

Jane also remembered a professor who "inspired" her career choice "to become an English

teacher." Strong mentors had significant effects, primarily positive, on most of the

participants' literacy paths.

Each of the participants touched on these subthemes in their histories, though the evaluation of the roles played by teachers and schools varied widely. Jane's positive comments on school revealed how school facilitated an exposure to different types of reading and a maturation of reading skills; she noted that mystery reading helped her "to develop essential reading skills, such as analysis and critique." Jasmine and Susana mentioned some negative experiences; Jasmine "was obligated to read English learning books and picture books," and Susana was dismayed at having to take a "remedial writing class" when she entered college after having completed primary and secondary schooling without any indication that there was something wrong with her writing.

### 5.3.2.8 The Role of the Library

All of the participants described their visits to the library and the role that the library played in their lives (see Table 5.11).

**Table 5.11** *The Role of the Library*

| Main Themes | Location of Library | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| The Role of the Library | School Library | "I still have a vivid memory of being in the library at my elementary school. I remember being read to by the librarian the following books: *The Giving Tree* and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein." Susana |
| | Public Library | "Early on, I was even able to gain insight into how useful the public library is; the vast variety of literature at your fingertips is wonderful." Cindy |

In the examples above, the participants mention both the school library and the public library as a place that has left a lasting impression in their lives. The other participants' memories are expressed in a similar vein. Jasmine describes the public library as "one of the greatest places I loved." Lily's account resonates with the depth and salience of the experience:

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> As my reading abilities developed, so did my love for books. I remember with pride the day my mother took me to the library to get my own library card. Although I was seven years old, my library card gave me a sense of responsibility and importance; I could select and borrow my own books, using my own library card.

She associates the trips to the library not only with reading but also with maturation and self-confidence.

Jane writes of the anxious anticipation that she felt before going into the library, knowing the attraction it held for her and the opportunities it offered her, such as a reading club that she could enjoy:

> Another fond memory of reading from my childhood involves the anxious anticipation I would experience before walking into a public library or bookstore. I could spend hours in the library pouring over book titles which piqued my interest and intently searching for books I may have missed on a previous visit. Each summer, I would join the public library's reading club which helped me to keep track of each book I read and rewarded me with a prize for every five books I finished.

The literacy histories reveal the strong positive role that the library played in the lives of the participants, from the variety of available books to interactions with librarians and reading groups. There are no negative memories associated with this theme.

### 5.3.2.9 Future Teaching of Literacy

At the end of the literacy histories, most participants wrote about the theme of their future teaching of literacy. Two subthemes emerged – their hopes for their future teaching and their concerns about it (see Table 5.12).

**Table 5.12** *Future Teaching of Literacy*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Future Teaching of Literacy | Hopes | "I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would hopefully be to encourage their own exploration of these rewarding and powerful means of expression." Lily <br><br> "As a teacher, I hope to pass my enjoyment and curiosity of reading onto my students." Vivian |
| | Concerns | "Nonetheless, in the back of my mind is the nagging suspicion that a majority of students dislike reading and why shouldn't they? Today, students have videogames, cell phones, internet websites, iPods, and a hundred other technological gadgets to keep them occupied. How am I supposed to compete for their attention? I struggle to discover innovative ways by which I can teach students the importance of building essential reading skills and inspire them to develop an appreciation for recreational reading." Jane |

Most participants write about their hopes for teaching literacy from a positive point of view. Jasmine expresses optimism about her future ESL students being able to enjoy reading in a second or other language based on her own experience:

> If I'm able to enjoy reading books that are not written in my native language, and I've learned to express my thoughts in a second language; then anyone could enjoy reading and writing.

This link between her language learning and her students' second language learning is not a common theme in the texts; in fact, Jasmine is the only one who specifically connects it. Among the other participants, the comments are more general hopes for their future students to enjoy reading. Cindy hopes to "inspire ELLs to love reading," and Jane remarked that her "goal is to make reading as enjoyable for English language learners." Lily hoped that her own experiences with reading and writing "would hopefully be to encourage their [others'] own exploration of these rewarding and powerful means of expression."

Unlike the other participants, Susana does not write on this theme, though she does discuss past her past experience as a first-grade teaching assistant, in which role she was able

to help struggling readers learn to read better. Her assessment of that work was that more is done now in schools to help children reach important literacy milestones than when she was in school, inferring that she will be able to help ESL students better than she was helped, though she does not say this explicitly.

### 5.3.2.10  Summary

The literacy autobiographies offer valuable insights into the literacy development of the participants, primarily in the L1, but in some instances also in their L2. A critical discussion of these insights can be found in Chapter 7. The content analysis sets forth the salient themes that emerged from the data: (a) earliest literacy experiences, (b) reading, (c) writing, (d) family, (e) affect, (f) difficulties and challenges, (g) literacy education, (h) library, and (i) future teaching. These themes are generally found across the spectrum of participants' data, and the cases in which they are not found are also recorded here. The findings from these autobiographies are discussed and interpreted in Chapter 7. The analysis of the literacy autobiographies provides insight from one angle of the participants' language development; the analysis of the linguistic autobiographies that follow is from another angle.

## 5.3.3 Thematic Content Analysis of the Linguistic Autobiographies

The findings from the thematic content analysis of the linguistic autobiographies reveal seven salient themes, most of which have a number of subthemes. These salient themes mostly relate to second and other languages and include language skills, language, identity, difficulties, affect, languages, and translating for family. For each theme and subtheme, there are explanations and examples. Further examples can be found in Appendix D.

### 5.3.3.1 Language Skills

The theme of language skills includes the four language skills -- reading, writing, listening, and speaking -- as the subthemes. Some of the participants write about their skills in reading and writing or in listening and speaking, separately or as integrated skills (see Table 5.13).

**Table 5.13** *Language Skills*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Language Skills | Reading | "I try to obtain information about my two important cultures (American and Chinese) through the reading of newspapers." Jasmine |
| | Speaking | "We were always expected to speak properly and to use our words wisely. . . . I became passionate about speaking properly. This proved to be a struggle for me living among a household of "accents". When I would return home to my Italian family…I always felt the need to correct their words, pronunciation and sometimes spelling!" Connie |
| | Listening and Speaking | "The pace at which my family in Italy spoke was yet another challenge. At times, I found myself slipping in Spanish vocabulary that I learned in school to help get across what I was trying to say. I often reverted to hand gestures and relied on my father to now act as my translator." Cindy |
| | Reading, Writing, and Speaking | "I am grateful that I am able to speak, read and write fluently in Spanish as well as in English." Vivian |

In some instances, the participants focus on one or the other of the four language skills. Jasmine wrote of reading to find out more about American and Chinese cultures. Jane described herself as always having been "an avid reader." Jasmine noted that it was easier "to comprehend a new language than speaking [sic] it." Cindy focused on speaking when she discussed her inability to keep up with the rate of speech in Italian and her codeswitching between Italian (her L2) and Spanish (her L3). In contrast, others discuss three or all four

language skills together; for instance, Vivian refers to reading, writing, and speaking in Spanish:

> I am grateful that I am able to speak, read and write fluently in Spanish as well as in English.

In addition, when discussing her literacy skills in her L1, Susana noted that by the time she graduated from high school, she "could read, write, and speak Spanish with fluency." These discussions of skills generally involve having or not having enough skills in a language, whether it is an L1, L2, or L3.

### 5.3.3.2 Language

The main theme of language is divided into five subthemes: language development, language barriers, dialect, language learning environment, and language loss. Most participants commented on each of the subthemes with regard to languages spoken by them and/or their family; examples of their comments are found below in Table 5.14.

**Table 5.14.** *Language*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Language | Language development | 'And I was learning English at nursery school through instruction and communication with peers. The next couple of years I attended a bilingual pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class. This was the beginning of second language acquisition." Susana |
| | Language barriers | "My sister and I have overcome language barriers and we are successful women in the United States and their [her grandparents] grandchildren are on the road that will lead them to read and write in Spanish. We are in a bilingual and bicultural circle that will never break." Vivian |
| | Dialect | "My grandparents only speak regional dialect; therefore, as a young child, I had problems communicating with them.  I can not recall how I mastered the dialect when the pronunciation of it is very different from Mandarin, but I did master it after staying at my grandparents' house over the summer." Jasmine |
| | Language learning environment | "I did not realize the seriousness of learning another language until I was in High School. . . I entered my first official foreign language classroom in sophomore year. I can still remember my teacher, Brother Juan.  The first day, he looked at me and said, "dieziseis."  I thought "16"? What does that mean? Then I realized that was my number. I did not have a name anymore, I was a number. I went to my seat and from there, felt lost the entire year. He did not stop to explain his methods or to translate." Connie |
| | Language loss | "In their [her father and his siblings] early childhood, they heard Hungarian being spoken between their mother and grandmother. None of the children acquired this language, and upon their grandmother's death, Hungarian was no longer used in their household." Lily |

*Language Development*

In their descriptions of language development, the participants discussed the development of their L2. Jasmine portrayed "successful learning experiences" as the inspiration for her "future language learning." In Table 5.14 above, Susana describes her contact with English in nursery school as the beginning of the process of her "second

language acquisition." Vivian described her experiences with learning two languages, Spanish and English, as

> in line with the separate system hypothesis. It states that a young child can acquire two languages at the same time because he/she is developing two different language systems that require different lexicon, phonological and semantic systems . . . I remember being in situations, when I did not know how to say something in Spanish or vice versa because that word had never been used in that particular setting.

An early English learner in a Spanish-speaking family, Vivian finds that she was accustomed to using the two languages in different settings; in her discussion of this situation, she refers to theoretical concepts that she has learned in the TESOL program. Cindy recalls learning her family's dialect of Italian over Sunday dinner:

> After our one o'clock Sunday dinner, I remember singing along to Italian songs with my father and sisters in the living room. We learned the lyrics through repetition and rhyme.

Thus, the dialect was transmitted to Cindy in the natural setting of her family through interaction with her family members. Jane remembers learning about "the importance of language and higher education" through the inspiration of her family, though she experienced L2 development in a formal educational setting, and Connie recalls her foreign language experience that started in seventh grade as being easy.


*Language Barriers*

Language barriers have been experienced by most of the participants. The NNESs describe the language barriers they faced in the U.S., whereas the NESs write about language barriers that they encountered while abroad or those that their families overcame when they immigrated to the US. For instance, Vivian writes about the language barriers that she and her sister overcame (in Table 5.14 above), while Cindy describes her experiences in Italy:

> Recently I visited Italy with my family and the language barrier forced me to feel like an outsider.

Jasmine attributed "a lot of . . . early struggles" to "a language barrier," and Jane and Lily recounted language barriers that their grandparents encountered:

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My grandparents had obvious language barriers between them. However, they were able to communicate primarily in Spanish, in which Julio acquired a greater proficiency over the course of their marriage. (Lily)

As she got older, my Nana remembers struggling to communicate with her mother as a result of their language barrier. My Nana understood Italian, but began to experience difficulty producing the language as time went on. (Jane)

Language barriers are seen by the participants as impediments that they and their families had to and did overcome.

## Dialect

Two of the participants mentioned contact with dialects of other languages. Jasmine wrote that her grandparents spoke a dialect that differs from Mandarin and that because of this dialect she had difficulty understanding them when she was little (see Table 5.14). Cindy recalled that her mother, who immigrated to the US from a small town near Naples, called Durazzano, just south of Naples, Italy, when she was four months old, spoke a dialect when she was young:

My mother grew up speaking our dialect at home while learning English in school.

Her family spoke a dialect of Italian, and Cindy's mother was the first in the family to learn English. Cindy and her sisters developed a basic understanding of the dialect by always listening and imitating my parents and relatives.

## Language Learning Environment

The participants discuss the environment in which they learned languages. Some environments are positive, while others are negative, and the environments range from home to school and community.

Three participants reported a negative language learning environment. Regarding her first language, Susana remarked that at home her parents required her to speak Spanish with them, but she was able to use English with her sister:

> She [her mother] never spoke to us in English. It was a constant battle. I concentrated on learning English to succeed in school. At home I only spoke Spanish to my parents. My sister and I would communicate in English.

Susana resented and resisted this enforced home language policy, calling the situation "a constant battle." Connie's description of learning her L2 in a high school Spanish class is entirely negative, and she credits this depersonalization and his unwillingness to explain or translate with her failure to learn any Spanish in his class. Jasmine recalled how she learned English in her ESL classes, but in the immigrant community in which she lived, she spoke Mandarin

> I did learn English in ESL class and in regular classes, but due to the fact that I lived in Queens where a lot of students are also immigrants like me, I didn't have enough chance to practice my English after school.

Though Jasmine had no complaints about the school environment, she set forth a common problem among immigrants, which is that the communities in which they live do support the retention of their L1 but not their L2.

Unlike the negatively perceived situation in which Susana, Connie, and Jasmine found themselves, other participants experienced more positive environmental influences on their language learning. For instance, Vivian's home prepared her for learning English, her L2; she had a babysitter who created this learning environment for her:

> When it was my turn to enter kindergarten in public school, my parents refused to send me. Instead, I stayed home with my babysitter, a lovely German lady who became my first teacher.

This lady, whom she elsewhere identified as Mrs. Hoffman, prepared her for the all-English environment of first grade. Another instance is seen in Lily's memories of her grandmother speaking Spanish portray an early L2 home environment that was important to her language and personal development:

> Growing up, my maternal grandmother was an influential presence in my life. I have distinct memories of Spanish children's songs she would teach us ("ventana-window, puerta-door, lápiz-pencil, y piso-floor"), her greetings and goodbyes in Spanish (¡Hola, mi hija!= hello, my child; dame un beso= give me a kiss), and her commands at the dinner table (¡sientate!= sit!, ¡come!= eat!). She spoke 'broken' English, or

'Spanglish,' to her grandchildren, with a heavy Spanish accent, and we would hear her speaking Spanish with our mother, aunts and uncles.

Lily's early L2 development was infused with her grandmother's Spanish conversation. Also on a positive note, Jane identified her L1 language environment ("Long Island accent" and "certain slang terms") as "vital components of my linguistic identity" affecting how she interprets the people and world around her.

*Language Loss*

All of the participants discuss language loss. The NESs mention the loss of their parents' or grandparents' languages, as in the comment by Lily in Table 5.14, in which Lily expressed regret that "Hungarian was no longer used in their [her father's] household" after the death of his mother. Cindy expressed the wish that her parents, who are fluent in Italian, would have "pushed harder" to teach her Italian, while Jane and Connie commented on the loss of Italian in previous generations:

> As she got older, my Nana remembers struggling to communicate with her mother as a result of their language barrier. My Nana understood Italian, but began to experience difficulty producing the language as time went on. (Jane)

> Soon, the Italian language from my relatives was lost, not only with my [great] Aunts [sic] generation, but with my parents generation as well. (Connie)

> In contrast, the NNESs speak of the loss of their L1. Jasmine found both her L1 and

L2 challenged:

> When I went back to China, I found myself speak less fluently in Mandarin, and when I came back to the states two months later, I found myself faltering when speaking English.

Susana too described how the focus on developing her English literacy caused her Spanish language proficiency to suffer.

> Learning English at such a young age was an advantage. On the other hand, it held me back from acquiring proficiency in my native language.

Vivian did not mention her own language loss but did refer to her children having "a difficult time speaking in the language of my family since English has become their language of

preference." Vivian is the only one to mention the next generation -- how her children's Spanish has suffered as English increased in importance in their lives.

These subthemes span various areas of language in the human experience, from language development to language loss and barriers of communication; the participants share these experiences for the most part, except for contact with dialects, which only Jasmine and Cindy mention.

### 5.3.3.3 Identity

The participants connect language with their identity and heritage and view language as essential in forming a link between the past and present. Table 5.15  below provides a sample of the participants' comments on this theme.

**Table 5.15 *Identity***

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Identity | Culture | "Language is one of the main factors contributing to my cultural identity." Jasmine<br><br>"Spanish is the link that allows me to be a Colombian. Saying that I am Colombian is very daring nowadays yet I am proud of being it. If I did not speak Spanish, I would have no real contact with my aunts and uncles who are Spanish monolinguals and have been my emotional and familiar support during every crisis in my life." Vivian |
| | Heritage, legacy, inheritance | "In addition to opening my eyes to the experiences of English language learners, my linguistic family history motivated me to take Italian language courses for two years while obtaining my undergraduate degree. I wanted to feel a connection with my ancestors, understand my linguistic background, and learn to recognize the influence Italian culture has had on my life." Jane |

*Culture*

Language is seen as an essential component of their cultural identities whether they are NESs or NNESs. Jasmine stated this point most succinctly above and later adds that her cultural identity has changed because of coming to the U.S. as a young teenager and learning about both cultures. She described herself as being "stuck" between two cultures, on the one hand, Chinese culture with the Buddhist ideals of "family unity and harmony" and, on the other hand, American "individualism" that allows one to follow one's dream. Above in Table 5.15, Vivian specifically connected her ability to speak Spanish with her identity as a Columbian. Cindy wrote that her "experience in a multicultural home" and "exposure to various forms of language acquisition" led her on the path "to become an ESL teacher." Lily and Jane wrote that they hope to pass on their cultural identity to future generations; Lily hopes "to recover and preserve this element of our linguistic and cultural identities," and Jane reported that she already studied Italian for two years and as a direct result of writing the linguistic history, she took "Italian cooking courses" to help "maintain aspects of my cultural

identity and pass it on to my children." These participants find their identity linked

inseparably with their cultural and linguistic background.

*Heritage, legacy, inheritance*

Most of the participants referred to the value of their heritage. In Table 5.15 above,

Jane discussed how she wanted to "feel a connection with her ancestors" and understand the

language and culture that is her heritage. Connie added that she hopes to keep "the loving,

everyday phrases" in Italian that were passed down from her family to pass on to her future

children. Vivian's comments concurred:

> I have a legacy to continue. My great grandfather would come back to haunt me if I
> ignored the inheritance he and my grandmother left my family. The power of
> education, the love of reading and learning are their gifts. As my mother before me, I
> have instilled these cultural values into my children.

The deep-seated respect among her Colombian ancestors for literacy and language are the

legacy that she wants to leave her children. Jasmine spoke of a conflict she experiences

between her heritage and her new culture:

> The fact that I came to the U.S. at an older age allows me to be influenced by both
> cultures. I lived in China through out my childhood years; I was raised Buddhist and
> was nurtured by Chinese culture. After I came to the U.S., I often find myself stuck
> in between eastern and western ideas. I understand the importance of family unity
> and individual sacrifice for harmony, but I also admire individualism that one should
> follow his/her own dream.

Thus, the immigration experience has caused Jasmine to reevaluate her cultural inheritance

and find ways to combine the two cultures in her present life.

## 5.3.3.4 Difficulties

When discussing language learning, the participants record some of the difficulties

that they have faced. These difficulties can be classified into two categories: struggles or

challenges and sacrifice (see Table 5.16).

**Table 5.16** *Difficulties*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulties | Struggles, challenges | "English and Mandarin are very different language systems; shuttling between these two languages has been a difficult task for me. Since none of the family members speaks fluent English, I didn't receive academic help from [sic. for] school." Jasmine<br><br>"Although  I had a basic comprehension of Italian, I was still struggling to communicate, as there were words and phrases unfamiliar to me." Cindy<br><br>"In addition, she [her grandmother] often recounts stories from her childhood which depict the challenging tasks her siblings were forced to accomplish."Jane |

*Struggles, challenges*

In writing of their struggles with a second language, some participants mention their own struggle. For instance, Jasmine cites the differences between Chinese and English as the cause of the difficulty, and she also notes that she did not receive any help with her schoolwork because her parents did not speak English. Cindy recalls the challenges that she faced with Italian vocabulary during a visit to her family in Italy (see Table 5.16 above). Other participants write of the struggles that their immigrant family members experienced when trying to communicate. For instance, Vivian notes that her parents had difficulty "integrating" into society because they refused to speak English at home.

**5.3.3.5 Affect**

Affect or the expression of emotion is pervasive in the linguistic autobiographies and takes two forms – positive and negative. Positive affect, as expressed by the participants, is further reflected through three subcategories: (a) passion and love, (b) like and enjoyment, (c) feelings of success, empowerment, and pride. Negative affect includes feelings of (a) ridicule

and torture, (b) shock and embarrassment, (c) frustration and anxiety, and (d) alienation.

Some participants' comments are included in the following table (Table 5.17).

**Table 5.17** *Affect*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Positive Affect | Passion, love | "Books, my first love, are filled with suspense, humor, irony, description, and sarcasm which are all conveyed through the immense power of language. . . . This love of language, in particular the written word, only intensified as I matured. I owe my academic success and ultimate Baccalaureate degree in English and American Literature to my reading addiction." Jane |
| | Like, enjoyment | "The more I enjoy the culture, the easier it is for me to acquire the language." Jasmine |
| | Success, empowerment, pride | "Luckily, my mother had foreseen this problem and had spoken to me enough about my heritage, my family in Colombia and made me feel very special. She empowered me by telling me that I was not lacking in anything." Vivian |
| Negative Affect | Ridicule, torture | "My sister was the target of ridicule and torture from the other children because she could not speak English well. The discrimination was very evident and overwhelming. There were no bilingual or ESL programs available when she arrived in 1963. The educational theory of the time was to learn through assimilation. That is what she did. When it was my turn to enter kindergarten in public school, my parents refused to send me. Instead, I stayed home with my babysitter, a lovely German lady who became my first teacher." Vivian |
| | Shock, embarrassment | "After being retained [held back for an extra year in first grade], I remember feeling embarrassed of my native language. I really believed that because of my Spanish I could not be with the couple of friends I was able to make by the end of that year, This affected my wanting to learn Spanish further. . . .  When my mom tried to teach me how to read and write in Spanish, I rebelled and refused." Susana |
| | Frustration, anxiety | "I can recall the frustration and anxiety of not understanding and feeling helpless. I was officially turned off."  Connie |
| | Alienation | "This was when I realized how different I was because I was the only one in school who spoke Spanish." Vivian |

The participants' revelations about their responses to languages in their lives cover a broad range of emotions, from very positive ones, such as Jane's description of her love for language as "her first love" to Vivian's entirely negative reaction to being ridiculed – the feeling that the family was "overwhelmed" by it and chose not to send her to kindergarten. In Appendix D, the other participants' statements also fall along this continuum of emotion.

Positive affect was expressed by all the participants, usually in their descriptions of liking or loving or having a passion for books, reading, or language. Jasmine wrote:

I became an English lover through cartoon shows and TV shows such as 'Full house. Jasmine also connected culture and language learning with enjoyment ("The more I enjoy the culture, the easier it is for me to acquire the language"), as does Connie, who describes learning American Sign Language (ASL) as "a wonderful experience."

The expression of negative affect is quite widespread in the data. Most of the participants describe embarrassment, frustration, and anxiety experienced during the language learning process. Feelings of alienation or being different because of linguistic and cultural separation from Americans who are not recent immigrants and who speak English as an L1 were shared by other participants. In her comments above (see Table 5.17), Vivian is self-conscious of her first language, which serves as a source of "difference" from her schoolmates. Similarly, Cindy explains how her parents worried about speaking their native language in front of her friends because they did not want Cindy to be singled out as different:

> When my friends were over my house, my parents made an effort to talk to each other in English. They may have thought that we would be embarrassed, but in retrospect I remember not caring either way.

In the data, all of the participants display an array of emotions associated with language and language learning, from Jane's feelings towards books as her "first love" and Connie's "wonderful experience" with American Sign Language to Susana's and Lily's feeling of

being "embarrassed" by Spanish. None of the participants is entirely positive or negative in expressing feelings toward language learning.

### 5.3.3.7 First, Second, and Other Languages

The autobiographies include discussions of the participants' first, second, and third or more languages.

**Table 5.18** *Languages*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Languages | L1 | "My linguistic history begins in my birth country-China.  My primary language was Chinese Mandarin." Jasmine<br><br>"Spanish was the first language I spoke, my L1. I was born in Colombia, South America. . . . For the first couple of years the only language spoken at home was Spanish." Susana |
| | L2 | "My mother would correct my grammar in Spanish and my neighbors would correct my English. In my mind, both languages blend. I just knew when to speak Spanish and when not to." Vivian<br><br>"Although my parents never pushed my sisters and I to learn Italian, as it was more important to master the English language and do well in school, I was able to develop a fairly robust understanding of Italian while my ability to speak was not as strong." Cindy |
| | Other languages | "Being around deaf students in the hallways and cafeteria enhanced my enthusiasm and ultimately my understanding of the language. I am a visual learner by nature and observing the signs and then mimicking them helped me to learn ASL with more confidence than when I was learning Spanish." Connie |

Some participants described their first language and their early life as monolinguals. Jasmine and Susana confirmed that in the first years of their lives they only spoke Mandarin and Spanish, respectively. Vivian wrote about her early bilingualism and her mother's efforts to

correct her Spanish and her neighbors' efforts to correct her English grammar (see Table 5.18). She also confessed to some confusion about which is her native language:

> Since I was born and raised in the United States, it is very hard for me to define whether Spanish or English is my primary language. I am always at a lost [sic.] as to what to say. From my earliest recollection, I have always spoken both languages.

She did, however, list Spanish as her first language on the survey, noting early acquisition of English. Cindy told of her parents making the learning of English a priority for her and her sisters, rather than Italian; she reckons that the emphasis on English caused her to be less fluent in speaking Italian (see Table 5.18). Jasmine emphasized that learning both Mandarin and English "will require a life time of practice."

The participants who consider themselves trilingual or multilingual contemplate the interrelationship among the languages. For instance, Connie had a better experience learning ASL, her third language, than Spanish, her second language. Vivian likewise described a successful third language learning experience and speculated about the causes of her difficulty with French pronunciation:

> Phonology was a bit tricky, but I eventually managed to make use of the back of my throat and make French sounds. Still, my accent in French is Spanish instead of English. Since fossilization of the first language is what gives you an accent, maybe at the time when I was learning French, my dominant language was Spanish instead of English.

As noted above, Vivian expressed some dualism as a bilingual who is uncertain which language – English or Spanish – is her dominant language, but because of her pronunciation difficulties with her third language, she believes that Spanish acted as a dominant language, causing her to have difficulty with French. Jasmine recalled "unexpectedly" learning Cantonese after she came to the United States "by communicating with students from Hong Kong."

### 5.3.3.8 Translating for Family

The NNESs and some of the NESs referred to their role as family translator; this responsibility of bilingual children is referred to by Baker (2011) as 'language brokering.' It is a common experience shared by many immigrant children in the U. S., and the participants in this study are no exceptions. Some of the experiences are recorded below.

**Table 5.19** *Translating for Family*

| Main Theme | Examples |
|---|---|
| Translating for family | "I remember asking my sister to translate for me when I wanted to talk to my mom and vice versa." Susana<br><br>"It was the beginning of my life long job as a translator for my parents." Vivian |

Vivian explained how she was called upon to translate for her parents throughout her life (see the above table), and Cindy recalled a similar situation with her parents:

> Growing up, I would often serve as my father's ESL tutor; I would explain the meaning of something he misunderstood or help to correct his grammar and sentence structure. I also remember having to forge the connections between objects and their English connotations or take time out to explain the meaning of a joke that was lost in translation. Often, during conversations between my father and my friends, I would act as the helpful translator. Although my father was speaking in English, my friends would have trouble deciphering what he was trying to say. I took on the role of relaying the crux of my father's messages and then together we would all break into laughter.

Though Cindy has had to carry a linguistic burden of sorts in having to translate for her father over the course of her lifetime, she wrote about embracing the role and even fulfilling it with merriment.

In contrast, Susana recalled asking her older sister to translate for her when she spoke to her parents because she did not want to speak Spanish to them and because her Spanish fluency suffered as she began to learn English. Jasmine's situation is the exact reverse. As the older sister, she had to (and still has to) translate for her younger sister when the latter wanted (and wants) to communicate with their parents:
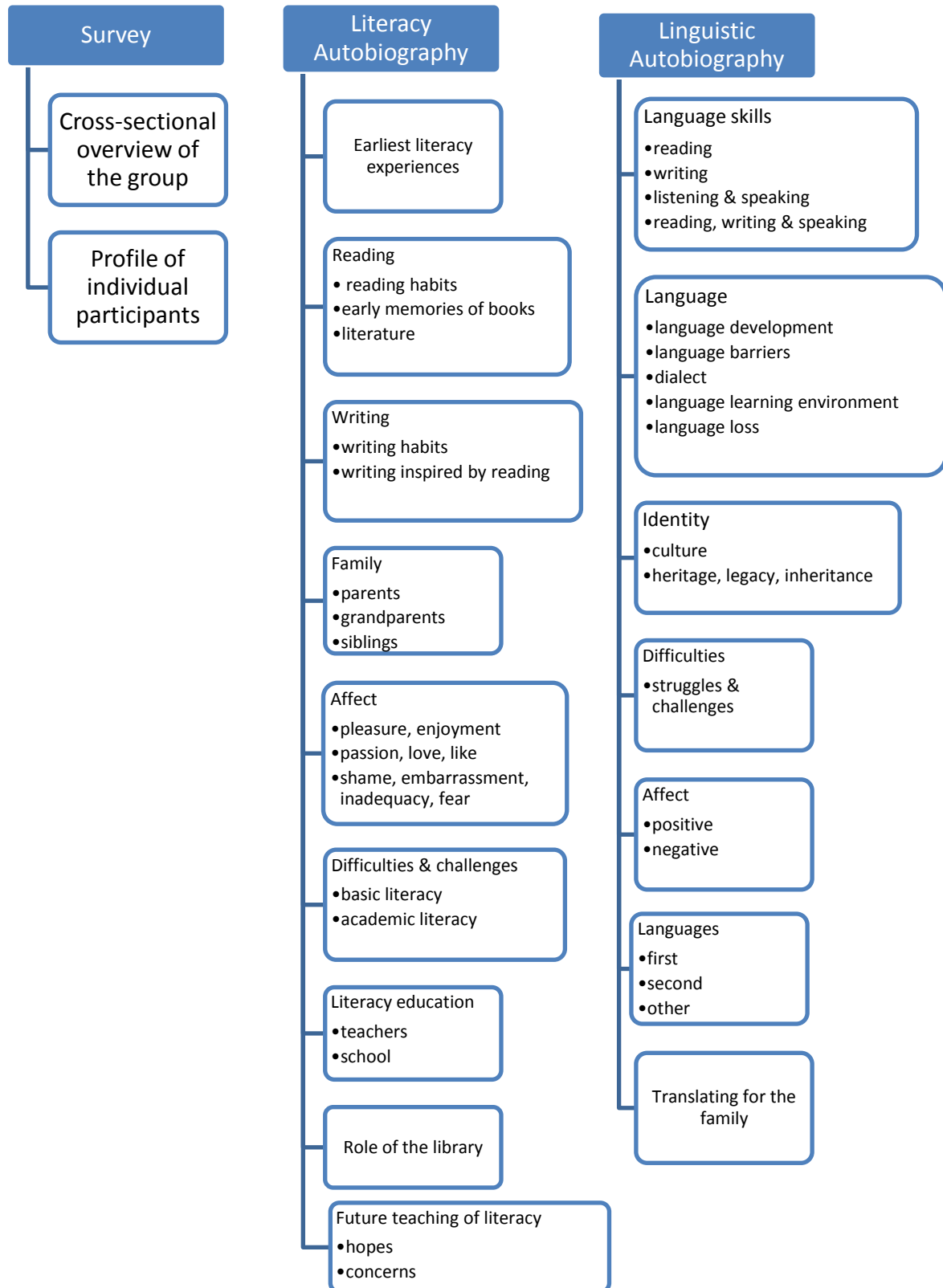
She couldn't communicate properly with my parents because she's not fluent in Chinese and they are not fluent in English.  Therefore, I must serve as a translator in the house.

Jasmine acted as an intermediary, facilitating intergenerational communication, whereas Susana was in much the same role as Jasmine's sister, lacking the necessary language to communicate with her parents.

### 5.3.3.9  Summary

The analysis of the linguistic autobiographies has a different focus from the previous analysis (of the literacy histories) because the texts address the experiences of learning other languages in more depth than L1 literacy learning, the core of the other autobiographies. The same methodology was used for both analyses, and they had some themes in common, such as difficulties and affect. However, differences are also evident in the subthemes and examples, including comments on language barriers, dialects, language loss, listening and speaking skills, and identity. A summary of the analysis of the surveys and the two autobiographical texts can be seen in Figure 5.3 below.

**Figure 5.3.** Summary of Thematic Content Analysis

**Survey**
- Cross-sectional overview of the group
- Profile of individual participants

**Literacy Autobiography**
- Earliest literacy experiences
- Reading
  - reading habits
  - early memories of books
  - literature
- Writing
  - writing habits
  - writing inspired by reading
- Family
  - parents
  - grandparents
  - siblings
- Affect
  - pleasure, enjoyment
  - passion, love, like
  - shame, embarrassment, inadequacy, fear
- Difficulties & challenges
  - basic literacy
  - academic literacy
- Literacy education
  - teachers
  - school
- Role of the library
- Future teaching of literacy
  - hopes
  - concerns

**Linguistic Autobiography**
- Language skills
  - reading
  - writing
  - listening & speaking
  - reading, writing & speaking
- Language
  - language development
  - language barriers
  - dialect
  - language learning environment
  - language loss
- Identity
  - culture
  - heritage, legacy, inheritance
- Difficulties
  - struggles & challenges
- Affect
  - positive
  - negative
- Languages
  - first
  - second
  - other
- Translating for the family

A discussion and interpretation of these themes follow in Chapter 7.

## 5.4 Chapter Summary

The content analysis of the surveys and of the literacy and linguistic autobiographies offers an in-depth look at the literacy and language development of the seven participants grounded in their own words and representing their own perceptions. The themes and subthemes emerged from the data. Thus, as noted earlier in the methodology, the analysis has been carried out from an emic perspective.

The NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings and surveys give a profile of the participants individually and as a group (cross-sectionally), and reveal many of the complexities of their literacy and language development across time and space, from the earliest L1 literacy experiences to the first contact with an L2 to the development of proficiency in other languages, a development that takes place at home, in school, and in the community. This analysis also foregrounds the people who are described by the participants as having played a role in this development.

The surveys and the autobiographical writings are rich in content about the teacher learners' literacy development in first, second, and other languages. The thematic content analysis identified the salient themes in the texts that will be discussed in Chapter 7 along with the findings from the SFL analysis. The main messages from both sets of findings will be correlated with one another and interpreted in light of the theoretical paradigm guiding this study.

In the next chapter, the SFL analysis explores the lexicogrammatical choices that the participants make in their texts to create meaning. The SFL analysis views the texts and the writers, the similarities and differences among them, and the ways in which the lexicogrammatical resources are deployed to relate these personal histories about literacy and language.

# Chapter 6
# SFL Analysis of Data

"The experience of life consists of the experience which the spirit has of itself in matter, in mind, and as mind, in emotion, as emotion, etc." Franz Kafka (n.d.)

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 provided the answers to the third research question (What does a thematic content analysis reveal about NES and NNES teacher learners' literacy and language development?). The present chapter focuses on the SFL analysis of the corpus of literacy and linguistic autobiographies written by the seven participants. In his discussion of the linguistic interpretation of literacy, Halliday (1996) explains that writing comprises a broad spectrum of discourse practices, each of which exhibits distinctive patterns of language use. These practices are effective, and these varied patterns are meaningful "because certain 'syndromes' of lexicogrammatical features regularly appear as a typical characteristic of text that is produced in writing" (p. 350). Thus, one type of text has a set of features that another type does not have in the same configuration. The perspectives that SFL is able to provide about the grammar of written language can be used to analyze texts and to serve as a resource for developing questions about the texts. From the broad questions posed at the start of this research in Section 1.2.2 (What do NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings reveal about their literacy development? How do the NES and NNES teacher learners perceive their literacy and language development?), the SFL analysis led to more specific questions, previously mentioned in Section 4.2.1 above:

(1) What lexicogrammatical resources do the NES and NNES teacher learners use to construe their literacy experiences?

(2) What do the NES and NNES teacher learners' interpersonal choices encode about their literacy and language development?

Halliday (1993) explains that "it is the combination of the experiential and the interpersonal that constitutes an act of meaning. All meaning – and hence all learning – is at once both action and reflection" (p. 101). In this study, the texts are analyzed both from the perspective of action (the ideational metafunction) and from the perspective of reflection (the interpersonal function). These two perspectives are foregrounded, while the textual metafunction remains in the background though it is to be understood that the texts are nonetheless seen as a whole.

This section contains an overview of the texts, including the length of the texts and number of clauses in each of the texts. It also presents an overview of the findings from the analysis.

## 6.1.1 Overview of the Texts

The findings are based on the work of the seven participants, who are seven different writers, and include thirteen autobiographies in total, seven linguistic autobiographies and six literacy autobiographies, the assignments for which are described in more detail in Section 4.4.1.2 and Appendix B.  As mentioned previously, Connie did not write the literacy autobiography because she was not required to do so in the Advanced Certificate Program. The length of the autobiographies varies by assignment and writer. Descriptive statistics on the word lengths and the number of sentences (clause complexes) of the texts as a group is a way of summarizing the data quantitatively.  Table 6.1 presents a comparison of the lengths excluding the title page and references if any.

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**Table 6.1** *Length of the Autobiographies in Words and Clause Complexes*

| Participant | Linguistic Autobiography | | Literacy Autobiography | | Total Number | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Words | Clause Complexes | Words | Clause Complexes | Words | Clause Complexes |
| Cindy | 1,459 | 64 | 1,093 | 57 | 2552 | 121 |
| Connie | 2,198 | 137 | ------ | ----- | 2198 | 137 |
| Jane | 1,795 | 81 | 990 | 47 | 2785 | 128 |
| Jasmine | 1,009 | 56 | 1,563 | 86 | 2572 | 142 |
| Lily | 1,199 | 61 | 1,163 | 50 | 2362 | 111 |
| Susana | 1,070 | 71 | 1,002 | 59 | 2072 | 130 |
| Vivian | 1,983 | 111 | 3,397 | 200 | 5380 | 311 |

The word count reveals that Connie wrote the longest linguistic autobiography and Vivian wrote the longest literacy autobiography, though overall Vivian wrote nearly twice as much as the next most prolific writer Jane, and Vivian's literacy autobiography is nearly three times longer than everyone else's but Jasmine's. Susana has the lowest total. In these measures of quantity, Vivian and Susana are outliers. Vivian also has the most clause complexes, which is not surprising since her word count is the longest. Only some of the clause complexes were chosen for the SFL analysis (see below for the explanation and Table 6.3 for the details).

In a description of appropriate measures for qualitative analysis, Burns (2010) explains that using measures of central tendency can show the point around which the data collects and that measures of dispersion reveal how numbers are spread across the data set. A breakdown of the central tendency numbers and the dispersion measure of range is provided in Table 6.2.

**Table 6.2** *Number of Words for Analysis: Mean, Median, and Range*

|  | Mean | Median | Range |
|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | 1,532.43 | 1,459 | 1189 |
| Literacy Autobiography (excluding Connie) | 1,534.67 | 1,363 | 2407 |

Table 6.2 shows a close mean between the two assignments, but especially in the case of the literacy autobiography, this mean is skewed significantly upwards by Vivian's lengthy text. The median, which shows the middle point among the numbers, indicates which participants are above or below the middle and what typical length in words the autobiographies have. The range displays the difference between the highest number of words (Vivian) and the lowest (Jane). The range of words is quite large, so caution must be taken in the presentation of the descriptive statistics based on the findings to avoid any skewing that this dispersion measure might cause.

An SFL grammatical analysis looks at the lexicogrammar of the text to a great degree of delicacy. Because of the length of the texts, SysConc, the concordancing software tool described in Section 4.4.2.3, was used to pinpoint clause complexes (sentences) that relate directly to the participants' literacy development, so that the analysis could focus on the most pertinent clause complexes. The number of clause complexes chosen for analysis differs for each of the participants and are summarized as follows in Table 6.3.

**Table 6.3**

*Number of Clause Complexes Selected in Each Text*

| Participant | # of Clause Complexes<br><br>Linguistic Autobiographies | # of Clause Complexes<br><br>Literacy Autobiographies | Total # of Clause Complexes per Participant |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | 13 | 30 | 43 |
| Connie | 19 | -- | 19 |
| Jane | 9 | 26 | 35 |
| Jasmine | 15 | 29 | 44 |
| Lily | 6 | 30 | 36 |
| Susana | 31 | 24 | 55 |
| Vivian | 27 | 75 | 102 |

This overview of the number of clause complexes presents a general picture of the texts under study and will be discussed in more detail below in the discussion of rank in Section 6.2.2 because the differences in quantity depend not only on the number of sentences that pertain specifically to literacy and on the overall length of the texts but also on the participants' use of rankshifting.

## 6.1.2 Overview of the Findings

The findings of the SFL analysis are organized into three main sections: the experiential analysis, the interpersonal analysis, and the perspectives that the two analyses offer on the characteristics of the participants' academic writing. First, there is an overview of the experiential analysis, followed by the findings in the experiential analysis that focus on rankshifting, voice, and the peripherization of experience by construing it in a circumstantial

element. Second, the interpersonal analysis is discussed broadly, and the central findings are elaborated, including the areas of polarity, modalization, modulation, and appraisal. The findings on the participants' writing are presented individually and cross-sectionally. In the third section, there is also a longitudinal perspective focused on the development of grammatical intricacy and lexical density across the texts over time.

## 6.2 Experiential Analysis – Collocations of the Pronominal "I" as Agent in the Autobiographical Writings

Autobiography is a self-narrative, and as such, one finds the pronominal "I" as the most commonly and predictably used grammatical subject and experiential Actor of the clause. In the self-telling of their literacy experiences with first, second, and other languages, the participants frequently use "I" to describe what they have learned and how they have learned it. Through the use of SysConc, clause complexes with the pronominal *"I"* and its collocations related to literacy, including *read, write, listen, speak, book, language,* and *learn*, were selected for the SFL analysis. As noted in the previous section, the number of these clause complexes varies for each participant. Likewise, the texts differ in the experiential choices of Process types, Participants, and Circumstances.

An experiential analysis reveals how the participants construe their experiences in each individual clause and, when taken together, in a given text. The clauses are *figures* or configurations of the processes, their participants, and the circumstances that relate to them (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p.169). The clause serves both as "a mode of action, of giving and demanding goods-&-services and information" and as "a mode of reflection, of imposing order on the endless flow of events" (p. 170). The grammatical system that accomplishes this is called TRANSITIVITY, which construes experience through PROCESS

TYPES (p. 170), AGENCY[2] (p. 173), and circumstantial systems (p. 173). The experiential

structure of a clause is represented in Figure 6.1.
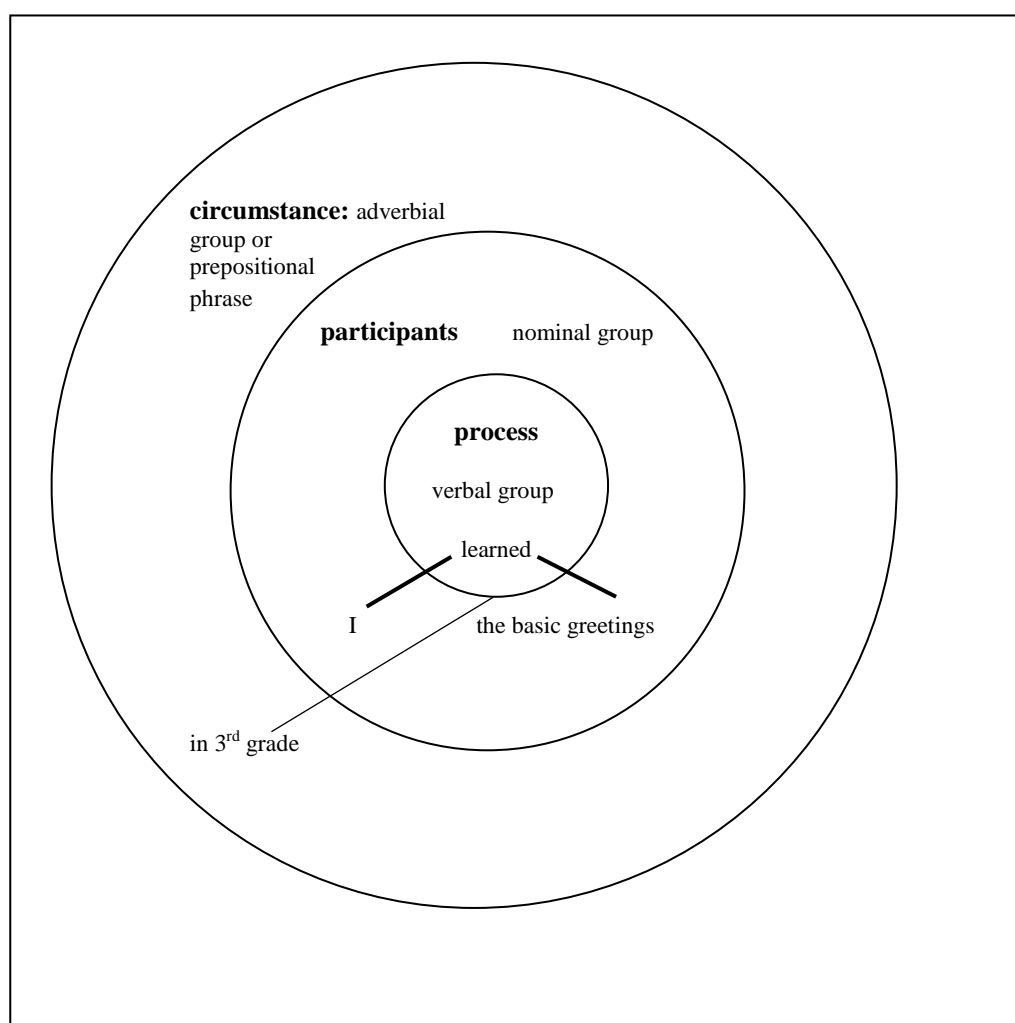


*Figure 6.1:* **Experiential Structure of a Clause**

**(Adapted from Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 176: Fig. 5-4)**

The diagram in Figure 6.1 depicts process as the nucleus of the clause and participants as

involved in the nucleus in a direct relationship; the process and participants "form the domain

of nuclear transitivity" (Herke, 2006, p. 34) and what Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) term

"the "experiential centre of the clause" (p. 176). Circumstances are on the periphery of the

clause.

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[2] The capitalization of these terms is in accordance with Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004.

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) list 6 process types, some of which are refined to a greater level of distinction. Figure 6.2 depicts these process types and the subtypes that are discussed in this study.
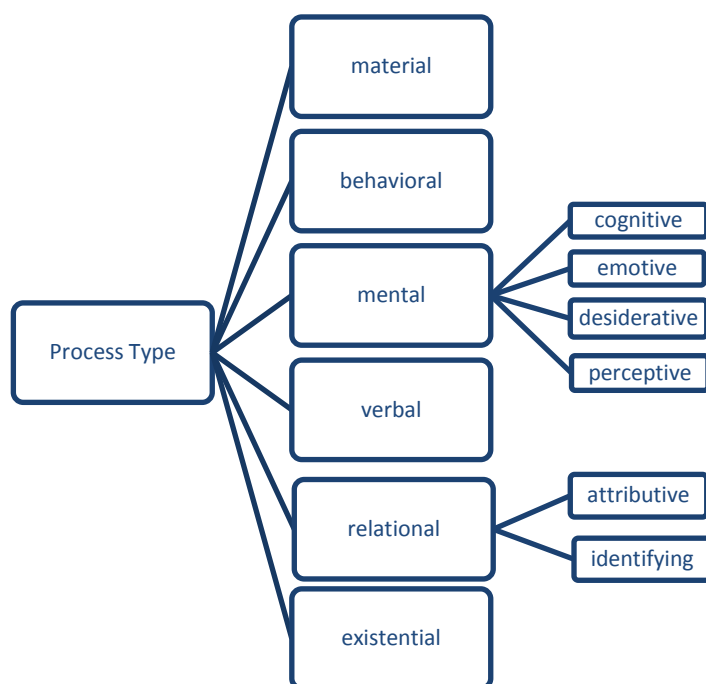


*Figure 6.2:* **Process Types in SFL**

The process types represented in Figure 6.2 are used in different configurations in written and spoken language depending on register.

This analysis explores both the nuclear and the circumstantial transitivity in the autobiographies. For comparison's sake, findings from Matthiessen's (1999) quantitative transitivity study, which examined the transitivity profiles of data from a 12 different registers represented by 21 different texts, is included here to provide a general probability profile for TRANSITIVITY. Though the Matthiessen Corpus does not include self-narrative, it does include four narratives for children (*The Crossing of the Blue Mountains, Noah's Ark, Hansel and Gretel, and Benjamin Goes to Hospital*), two narrative synopses (of *Anna Karenina* and *Carmen*), and two abridged biographies (of Elizabeth Barrett Browning and

Maxim Gorki), which can be utilized to discover registerial similarities and differences with autobiographies.

The mixture of text types makes the Corpus useful for the purpose of comparison to see how these texts may be similar to the general probability profile.
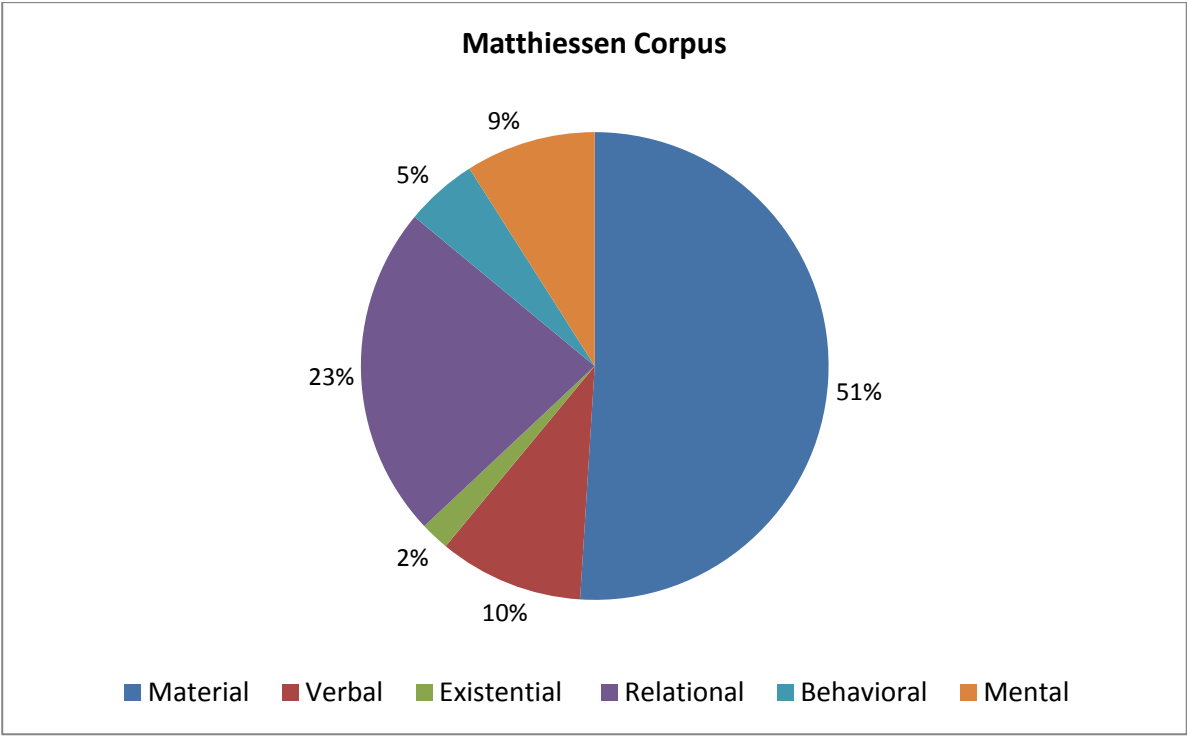


*Figure 6.3:* **Process Type Distribution: Matthiessen's (1999) Study (p. 13)**

The pie chart shows that in Matthiessen's data, material process accounts for just over half of all processes in the texts, followed by relational processes at less than half the material, and then verbal and mental in nearly equal distribution at 9-10%, followed distantly by behavioral and existential processes.

The related texts differ from the general probability profile with the process type distribution in the children's narratives closest to the general.

Table 6.4

*Average Frequency of Process Types in Related Registers from the Matthiessen (1999) Corpus*

| Texts | Material | Mental | Verbal | Relational | Behavioral | Existential |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Narratives for children | 53 | 7 | 12 | 22 | 5 | 1 |
| Synopses of plots | 63 | 8 | 3 | 13 | 3 | 0 |
| Biography of Elizabeth Browning | 72 | 5 | 4 | 15 | 4 | 0 |
| Biography of Gorki | 73 | 0 | 0 | 27 | 0 | 0 |

Material processes are the most frequent followed by relational in all texts. The narratives have a somewhat higher percentage of verbal processes and lower percentage of mental ones than the whole corpus. A comparison with the autobiographies in this study follows in Sections 6.2.1 and 7.2.1.5

The system of AGENCY is part of the system network of TRANSITIVITY, which also includes PROCESS TYPE, with which AGENCY interacts. AGENCY, according to Halliday and Matthiessen (2004), is divided into middle and effective. Of particular pertinence to this study is VOICE (effective), which is subdivided into operative and receptive. The operative represents the active voice, and the receptive represents the passive voice. The passive voice may be non-agentive as in *I was told about the language difficulty* (Jasmine), where the agent is not mentioned, or agentive as in *The note I took home had to be signed by my parents* (Susana), where the agent is in the prepositional phrase (*by my parents*). Halliday and Matthiessen explain that "the Agent is the external agency where there is one" (p. 292). The Agent is named differently in different processes, as Table 6.5 elucidates:

**Table 6.5**

*Agent in Various Processes*

| Type of Process | Agent |
|---|---|
| Material | Actor  (if there is a Goal)<br><br>Initiator (if there is no Goal) |
| Mental | Phenomenon |
| Relational Attributive | Attributor |
| Relational Identifying | Assigner |

AGENCY, which Halliday  and James (1993) describe as a skew system, with approximately 90% of clauses in active voice and 10% in passive voice, is a focus of the experiential analysis.

## 6.2.1 Experiential Overview of the Participants' Text

The experiential overview of the participants' texts includes the findings on first level delicacy, which is the most general level. On this level, the process types are categorized as material, behavioral, mental, relational, verbal, or existential. The relational type is subdivided into identifying, and attributive intensive, possessive, and circumstantial. The Matthiessen (1999) Corpus provides a basis for comparison across text types; such a comparison makes it possible to view the TRANSITIVITY system of the texts under study and how it may agree with or differ from a more general corpus (see Table 6.6).

**Table 6.6**

*Process Type Distribution: Relative Average Frequency*

|  | **Cindy** | **Connie** | **Jane** | **Jasmine** | **Lily** | **Susana** | **Vivian** | **Matthiessen** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Material | 49% | 27% | 53% | 37% | 52% | 49% | 41% | 51% |
| Mental | 23% | 42% | 29% | 27% | 23% | 28% | 24% | 9% |
| Relational | 20% | 24% | 15% | 21% | 18% | 13% | 27% | 23% |
| Verbal | 6% | 7% | 3% | 15% | 5% | 9% | 6% | 10% |
| Behavioral | 0% | 0% | 0% | 0% | 1.5% | 1% | 1% | 5% |
| Existential | 2% | 0% | 0% | 0% | .5% | 0% | 1% | 2% |
| Total # of Clauses | n=131 | n=45 | n=95 | n=121 | n=118 | n=142 | n=269 | n=2072 |

The distribution of the process types in the individual autobiographical texts differs quite significantly from the Matthiessen Corpus. Material processes dominate all texts but Connie's, and in Cindy's, Jane's, and Susana's, they are similar in distribution to the Matthiessen Corpus. In sharp contrast to the Matthiessen Corpus, in all the participants' texts, mental processes are at least twice as frequent, and in more than half, they are at least three times as frequent. Mental clauses play a more significant role in these texts in part because the topic of literacy involves cognition, and clause complexes related to cognition were selected for analysis. Nonetheless, the mental process clauses do not only include cognitive processes and, therefore, require a more delicate level of analysis. Behavioral processes are underrepresented, and in most cases so are existential ones. In Table 6.7, there is a comparison between the autobiographical corpus as a whole and the Matthiessen Corpus.

**Table 6.7** *Relative Average Frequency of Process Types:*

*Autobiographical Corpus Compared to Matthiessen Corpus*

|  | **Autobiographical Corpus** | **Matthiessen Corpus** |
|---|---|---|
| Material | 44% | 51% |
| Mental | 28% | 9% |
| Relational | 20% | 23% |
| Verbal | 7% | 10% |
| Behavioral | .5% | 5% |
| Existential | .5% | 2% |
| Total # of Clauses | n=921 | n=2072 |

Material processes predominate in both corpora, and relational processes are also in similar distribution. In narratives, material processes construe the changes in the physical world, and relational processes characterize and identify. In the autobiographical corpus, mental processes are the second most prevalent process type. Mental processes in these autobiographical texts express the changes in the inner world of the participants.

These mental processes are subdivided into delicate selections of cognitive (e.g. , *think, learn*) emotive (*like, enjoy*), perceptive (*hear, find*), and desiderative processes (*want, hope*), the first two dominant choices among the participants. These processes are categorized as either higher or lower processes: cognitive and desiderative processes are higher, whereas emotive and perceptive are lower (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 209). Because the texts have literacy as their central theme, a close look at mental processes is necessary to provide insight into their literacy development as an inner process. A more detailed discussion of mental processes can be found in Section 6.2.1.2.

### 6.2.1.1 Overview of the Process Types in the Participants' Texts

Each of the participant's texts was analyzed individually for process types. The analysis allows for a comparison between the literacy and the linguistic autobiographies by each participant, except in the case of Connie, who wrote only one text. It also makes it possible to compare the participants with one another and with the Matthiessen Corpus.

Cindy's texts differ from one another with regard to process types. As is evident in Figure 6.4, material processes dominate the texts.
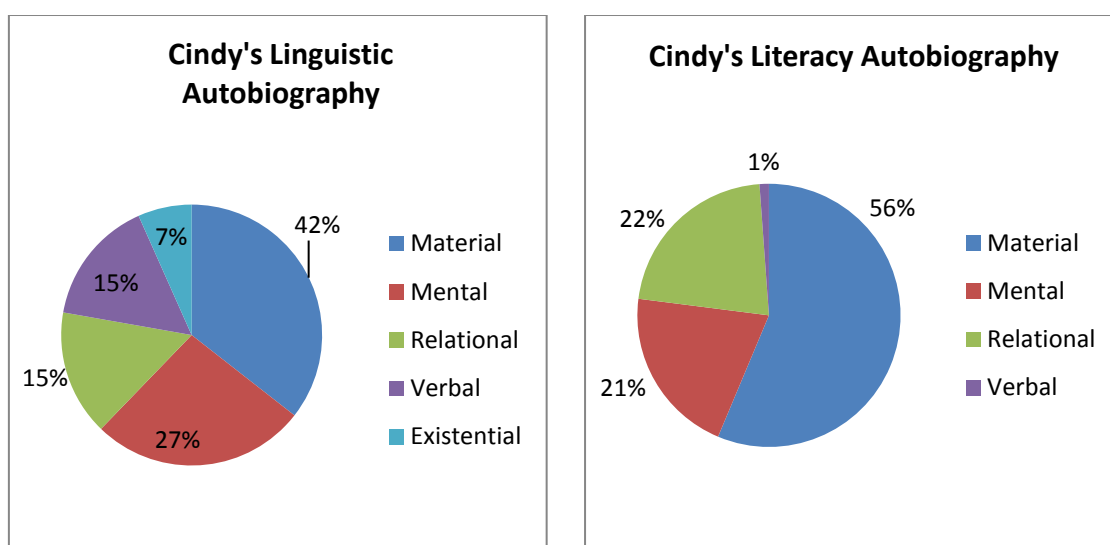


*Figure 6.4:* **Process Types in Cindy's Texts**

Mental processes also play an important role, though a greater one in the linguistic narrative than in the literacy one, where relational clauses are in second place.

Connie only submitted her linguistic autobiography, so there is no literacy autobiography with which to correlate it.
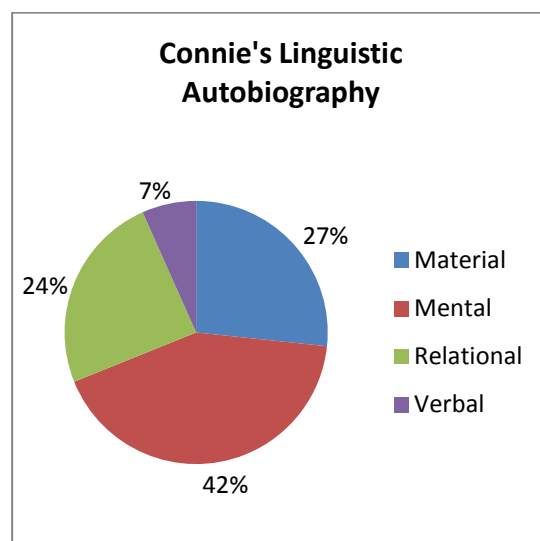
*Figure 6.5:* **Process Types in Connie's Text**

In Connie's text, mental processes dominate, with material and relational processes splitting most of the rest of the clauses in similar quantity followed by a few verbal processes. Figure 6.5 above shows the exact breakdown. The large number of mental clauses is exceptional in the corpus for this study and is more than four and a half times that of the Matthiessen corpus.

Jane's use of processes differs from her fellow participants. The number of material clauses, which dominate, is close to the Matthiessen Corpus, and mental clauses are in second place, as illustrated in Figure 6.6:
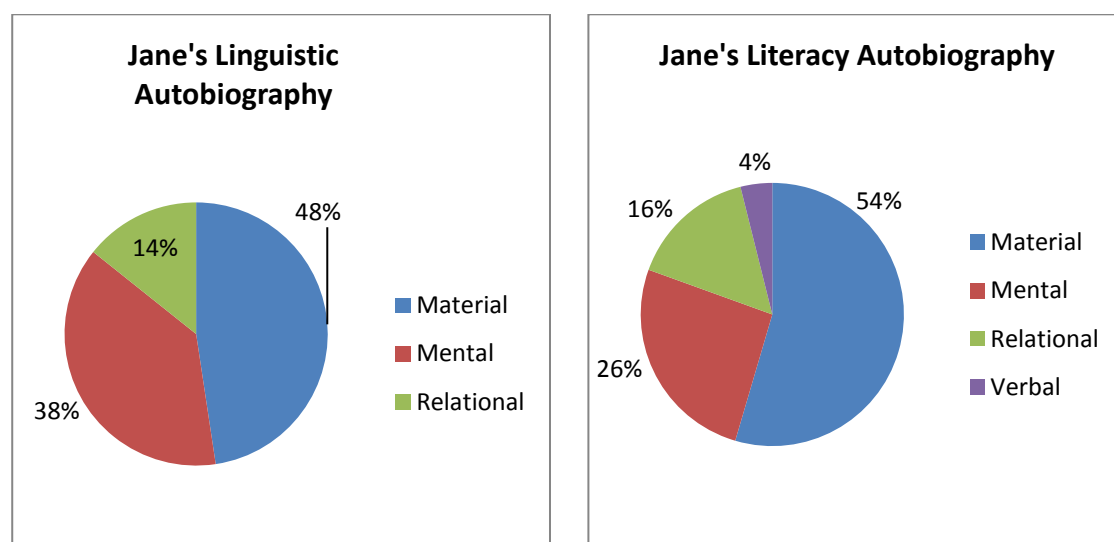


*Figure 6.6:* **Process Types in Jane's Texts**

Jane's literacy autobiography includes verbal processes, whereas the linguistic autobiography does not.

Jasmine's texts vary from one another and also from her classmates' texts. Jasmine makes use of only four process types: material, mental, relational, and verbal. Figure 6.7 shows the distribution of the process types in her texts.

**Jasmine's Linguistic Autobiography**

- Material 25%
- Mental 31%
- Relational 21%
- Verbal 23%

**Jasmine's Literacy Autobiography**

- Material 46%
- Mental 26%
- Relational 18%
- Verbal 10%
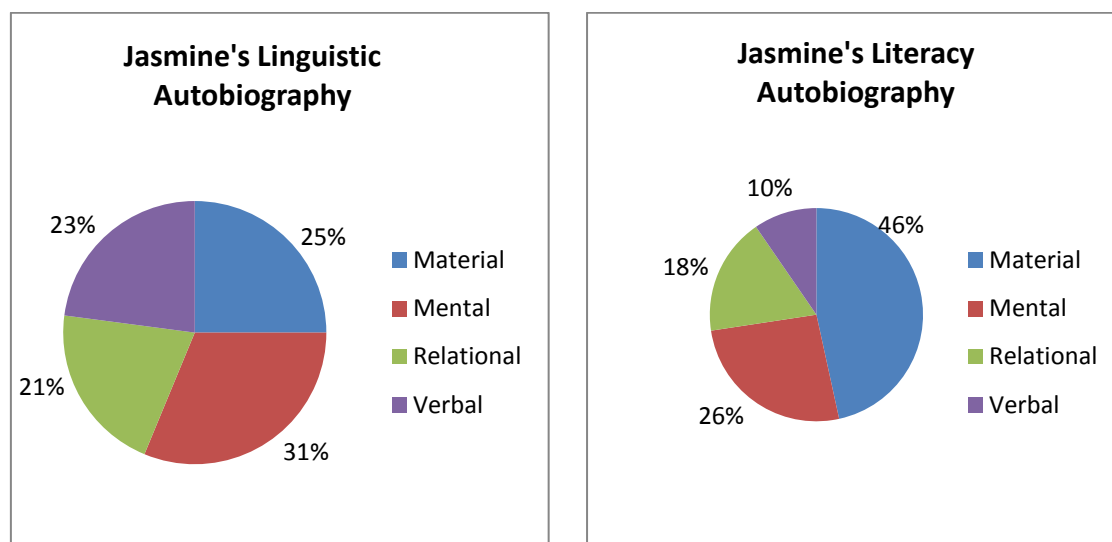
*Figure 6.7:* **Process Types in Jasmine's Texts**

In her linguistic autobiography, mental processes predominate, whereas material processes do in her literacy autobiography. She uses more verbal processes than her classmates, and her linguistic autobiography has more than twice the number of the Matthiessen Corpus, though her literacy autobiography's number equals it.

In Lily's autobiographies, all the process types are used. The processes are distributed quite differently in each, however (see Figure 6.8).
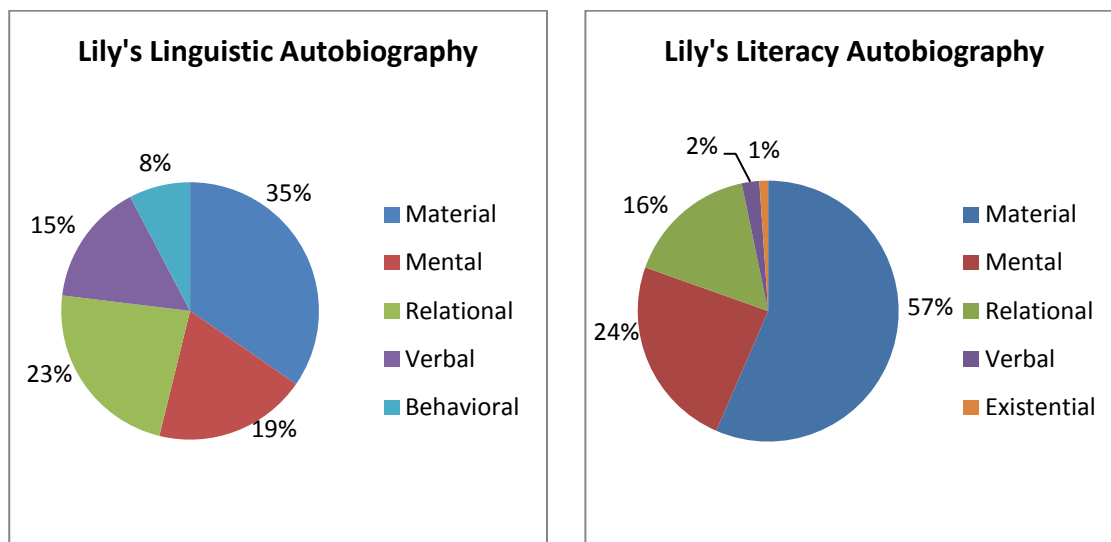
**Figure 6.8:** Process Types in Lily's Texts

Material processes dominate both texts, but play a much larger role in the literacy autobiography, where the texts shows a greater orientation toward material processes than the other texts and the Matthiessen Corpus. Relational processes are more prevalent in the linguistic autobiography, where its percentage is equivalent to the Matthiessen Corpus, than in its counterpart. The frequency of mental processes in both of Lily's texts is more than twice the Matthiessen Corpus.

Susana employs five of the six processes across her two texts, with material processes leading the frequency count and resembling the Matthiessen Corpus. The frequency of these process types can be seen in Figure 6.9.
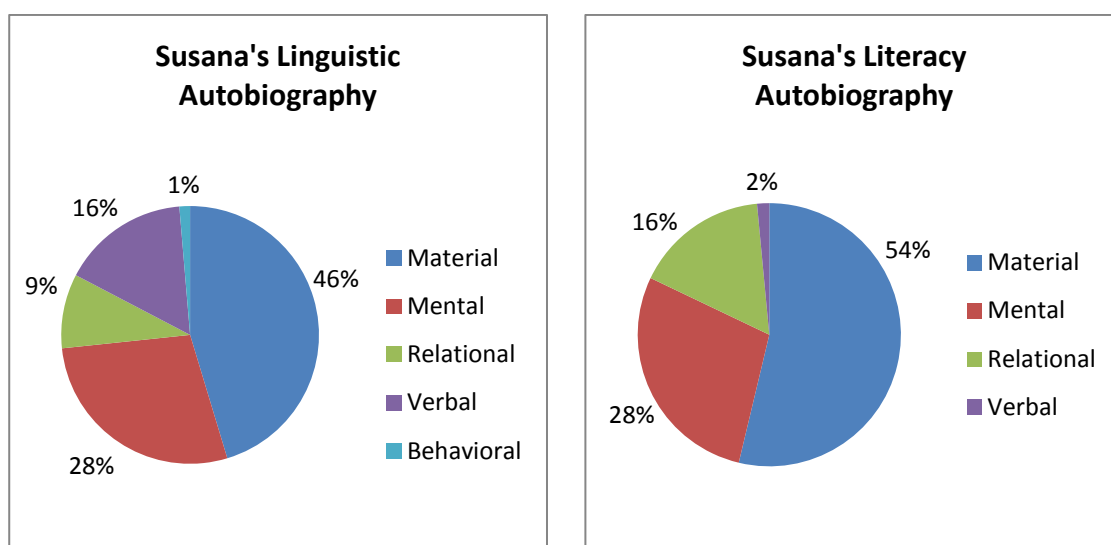


**Figure 6.9:** Process Types in Susana's Texts

Mental processes appear at the same frequency in both of Susana's texts, while verbal processes are more frequent in the linguistic autobiography than in the literacy autobiography. In the former, Susana discusses speaking in her L1 and L2, whereas in the latter, she focuses more on reading and writing skills.

Vivian is the only participant other than Lily who uses all process types. Material processes are also the dominant type, with relational in second place in the linguistic autobiography and in a tie for second place with mental processes in the literacy autobiography (see Figure 6.10).
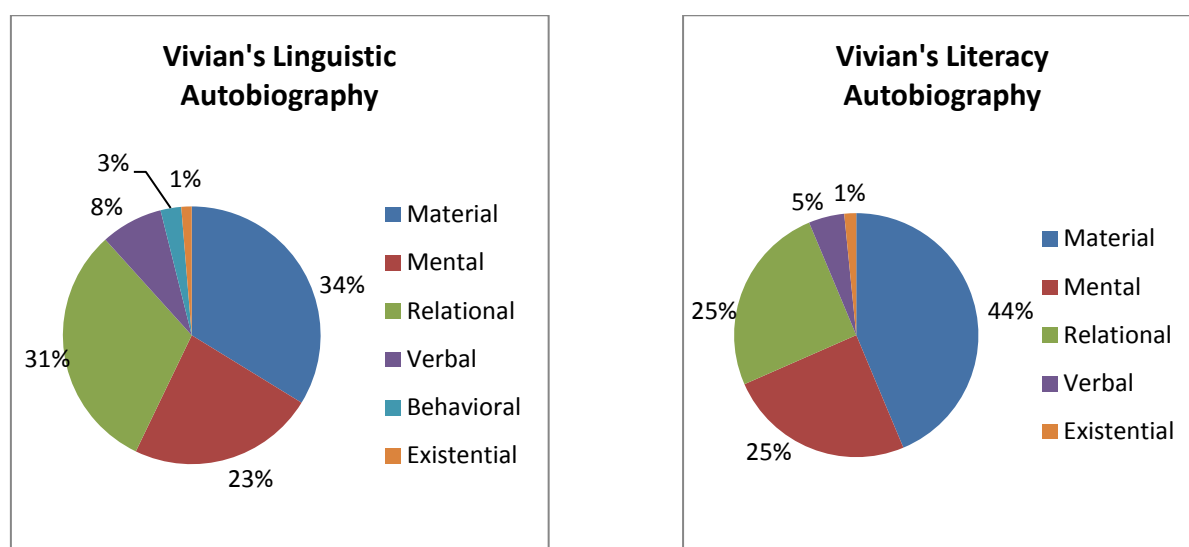


*Figure 6.10::* **Process Types in Vivian's Texts**

Vivian makes greater use of relational processes than the other participants. However, like the other participants' texts, Vivian's process use differs from the Matthiessen Corpus with more mental processes and fewer material processes (though they are still the dominant choices).

**6.2.1.2 Mental Process Choices**

Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) describe mental processes as contrasting with people's experience of the material world and representing instead their experience with the world of their own consciousness; a mental clause "construes a quantum of change in the flow of events taking place in our own consciousness" (p. 197). They describe four sub-types of the process of  sensing -- perceptive, cognitive, desiderative and emotive – which differ in significant ways.  The process of sensing "projects ideas into existence; the projection may take place either through cognition or desideration" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 1999, p.137), which are the higher types of sensing processes (p. 209). In other words, the processes of thinking and wanting create the idea that they project because before the writer or speaker thinks or wants it, it does not exist. This ability to project ideas distinguishes these two sub-types from the other two. The processes of perceiving or feeling are not able to create ideas. Instead, they project facts that already exist. The differences are summarized in Table 6.8 that follows:

**Table 6.8** *Mental Process Sub-types*

| | These subtypes | Ideas projected into existence | Pre-projected fact |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cognitive and desiderative | Create ideas<br><br>(Cognitive) ideas about the truth of information<br><br>(Desiderative) ideas about desired action that has not yet been actualized | Cognitive: *I can not recall how I mastered the dialect.* (Jasmine)<br><br><br>Desiderative: *I hope ^THAT I can inspire young ELLs to love reading.* (Cindy) | --------------------------- |
| Emotive and perceptive | React to facts | --------------------- | Emotive: *… because I just loved the fact that each night we could travel to a different place or time and into the lives of exciting characters* (Cindy)<br><br><br>Perceptive: *I found ^THAT it was very difficult as an adult to grasp the grammar rules and complex sentence structure.* (Cindy) |

Cognitive and desiderative processes can also serve as metaphors for modality, which is part of the interpersonal metafunction. For example, in the clause *I think the emphasis was more on reading than writing at this time* (Vivian), *I think* corresponds to the modal adjunct *probably*. Emotive processes are bidirectional and scalable (*I was <u>so</u> embarrassed by my prior arrogance.*Jasmine) and are connected to interpersonal attitude in that they comment on the information that is presented in the clause. An instance of this can be seen in *The first book I enjoyed reading was a small fiction pocket book* (Jasmine), which is related to *The first book I read happily was a small fiction pocket book*. The sub-types differ in a number of other ways (cf. Halliday and Matthiessen, 1999, for an extensive description of the subtypes), but the above distinctions are the most pertinent to the discussion here.

An overview of the average frequency of each type of mental process is given in Figure 6.11.
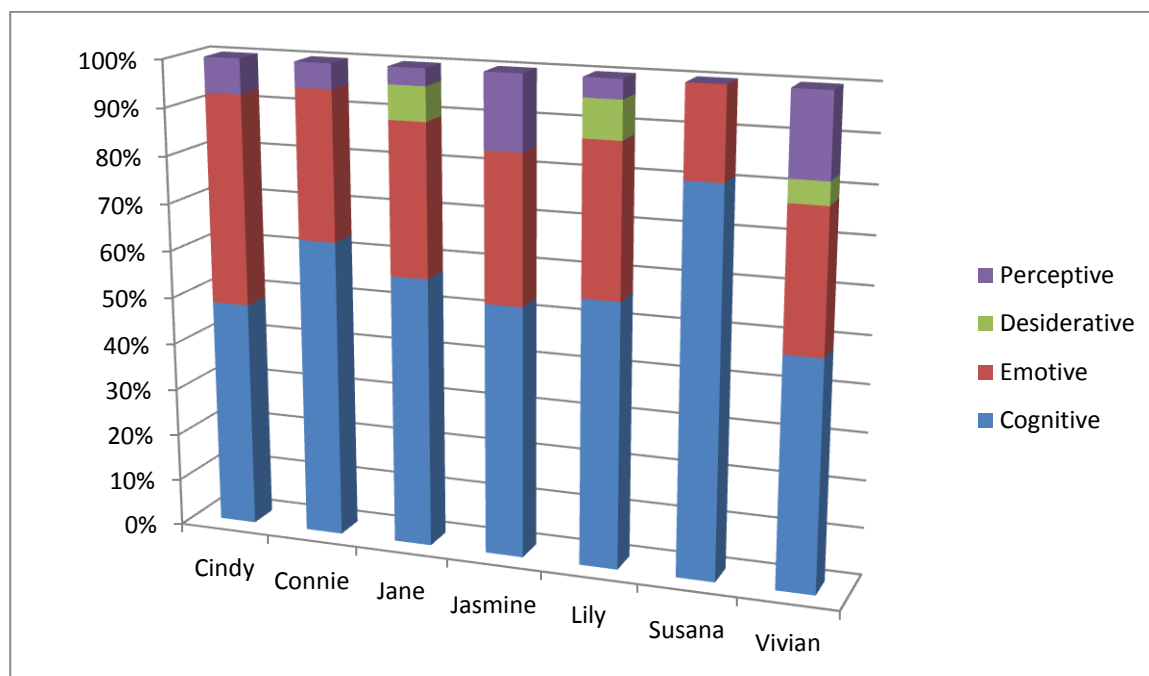


*Figure 6.11:* **Average Frequency of Types of Mental Clauses**

Susana deploys cognitive process clauses at the highest frequency, while Cindy deploys emotive ones at the highest rate. In texts about literacy, cognitive processes are predictably included, but the role that emotive processes play in these autobiographical texts is less predictable.

Each of the participants have a distinctive profile of mental process use as can be seen in the subsequent tables, which show the number and type of mental clauses in both ranked and rankshifted clauses. In all of them, the cognitive subtype of mental processes leads and is followed by emotive processes.

Cindy shows an almost equal preference for cognitive and emotive clauses. Her texts also include a limited use of desiderative and perceptive clauses (see Table 6.9).

**Table 6.9** *Mental Processes in Cindy's Autobiographies*

|  |  | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 5 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
|  | Rankshifted | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | 6 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
|  | Rankshifted | 0 | 3 | 1 | 0 |
| Total |  | 13 | 12 | 2 | 2 |

The mental processes are primarily expressed in Cindy's ranked clauses and are more numerous in her literacy autobiography.

In Connie's sole text, cognitive processes dominate and are followed by half as many emotive processes (see Table 6.10).

**Table 6.10** *Mental Processes in Connie's Autobiography*

|  |  | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 5 | 5 | 0 | 0 |
|  | Rankshifted | 7 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | -- | -- | -- | -- |
|  | Rankshifted | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Total |  | 12 | 6 | 0 | 1 |

One can see that the majority of Connie's cognitive clauses are rankshifted; thus, they are given a lesser status than if they had been in the ranked clauses.

Mental processes in both autobiographies by Jane are predominantly cognitive, with emotive clauses just over half the number of the cognitive (see Table 6.11).

**Table 6.11** *Mental Processes in Janes's Autobiographies*

| | | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 5 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| | Rankshifted | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | 10 | 7 | 1 | 0 |
| | Rankshifted | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total | | 16 | 9 | 2 | 1 |

The cognitive and emotive processes are primarily expressed in the ranked clauses, so they have more semantic prominence.

Jasmine's texts also see the same dominance of the cognitive subtypes, with a similar configuration of the emotive processes in both autobiographies (see Table 6.12 below).

**Table 6.12** *Mental Processes in Jasmine's Autobiographies*

| | | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 9 | 2 | 0 | 2 |
| | Rankshifted | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | 5 | 7 | 0 | 2 |
| | Rankshifted | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Total | | 17 | 10 | 0 | 5 |

These processes are also predominantly in the ranked clauses like Jane's.

Lily's autobiographies follow a similar pattern to Jane's and Jasmine's. In Table 6.13, the subcategories of the mental processes are given.

**Table 6.13** *Mental Processes in Lily's Autobiographies*

|  |  | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
|  | Rankshifted | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | 8 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
|  | Rankshifted | 4 | 3 | 0 | 1 |
| Total |  | 14 | 8 | 2 | 1 |

Lily uses all four subtypes, but again cognitive processes are the dominant choice, followed by emotive processes.

Among the four types of mental processes, Susana employs a large number of cognitive processes in the ranked clauses and some in the rankshifted clauses (see Table 6.13).

**Table 6.14** *Mental Processes in Susana's Autobiographies*

|  |  | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 11 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
|  | Rankshifted | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | 13 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
|  | Rankshifted | 2 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Total |  | 30 | 7 | 0 | 0 |

Emotive processes are also spread through the ranked and rankshifted clauses, but no desiderative or perceptive processes were deployed.

Vivian's autobiographies include all four subcategories of mental processes. Their distribution can be seen in Table 6.15 below.

**Table 6.15** *Mental Processes in Vivian's Autobiographies*

|  |  | Cognitive | Emotive | Desiderative | Perceptive |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linguistic Autobiography | Ranked | 5 | 3 | 0 | 4 |
|  | Rankshifted | 4 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Literacy Autobiography | Ranked | 19 | 11 | 2 | 6 |
|  | Rankshifted | 3 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| Total number |  | 31 | 19 | 3 | 11 |

Vivian's profile of mental clauses is not unlike her fellow participants, though she does employ more perceptive processes than any other participant.

The overall distribution of mental processes shows that most of them occur in ranked clauses, which gives them more semantic prominence. An example of this is in the following clause complex:

I <u>felt</u> embarrassed when I had to speak Spanish, especially in public. (Susana)

In the rankshifted clause below, the mental process is embedded in a post-modifying clause.

I have no reason other than I <u>feel</u> more at home when I hear the preaching in Spanish. (Vivian)

Rather than saying directly in the paratactic clause that she feels more at home hearing preaching in Spanish, Vivian gives prominence to the relational: possessive process in the first clause and places the mental: emotive process as a post-modifying clause in the nominal group. Downranking it (to an embedded clause) makes it less arguable so that only whether or not she had a reason is arguable: *I have no reason . . . , do I?* (See the general discussion on rankshifting below in Section 6.2.2.)

Of all the participants, only Connie, who has a higher percentage of mental process than anyone else, downranks the majority of the mental processes.

## 6.2.2 Rankshifting

Rankshifted, or downranked, clauses only appear in a nominal group or an adverbial group. These clauses are embedded in the clause and function as an essential part of the clause (and in the same tonal group from a phonological perspective), not as an interruptive element. In an SFL analysis, these clauses are set off in doubled square brackets. Rankshifted clauses may function in various participant roles with various types of processes, within a nominal group, and within an adverbial group/prepositional phrase, but they cannot occur within a Process. In this example, *Learning English* is a rankshifted clause that is functioning as a Carrier in a relational process clause:

[[Learning English]] became very important. (Susana)

In the next example, two rankshifted clauses are found within nominal groups:

As a native English speaker [[who has lived in New York her entire life]], I have grown to appreciate the intricacies, repetitions, double-meanings, and slang terms [[ which constitute the English language.]] (Jane)

The *who* clause post-modifies *speaker*, and the *which* clause post-modifies the phenomena *intricacies, repetitions, double-meanings, and slang terms.*

An example of an embedded clause in a prepositional phrase can be found in the following clause complex:

I took on the role [[of relaying the crux of my father's messages.]] (Cindy)

Rankshifting has the effect of downgrading the importance of the clause being embedded.

A profile of the participants' use of rankshifting or embedding can be found in Table 6.16 below:

**Table 6.16** *Rankshifting*

| Participant | Linguistic Autobiographies | | | Literacy Autobiographies | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | # of Clause Complexes | # of Clauses | # of Rankshifted Clauses | # of Clause Complexes | # of Clauses | # of Rankshifted Clauses |
| Cindy | 13 | 45 | 16 | 30 | 86 | 32 |
| Connie | 19 | 44 | 16 | -- | -- | -- |
| Jane | 9 | 16 | 5 | 26 | 74 | 27 |
| Jasmine | 15 | 48 | 12 | 29 | 73 | 20 |
| Lily | 6 | 26 | 8 | 30 | 92 | 40 |
| Susana | 31 | 73 | 24 | 24 | 69 | 23 |
| Vivian | 27 | 77 | 25 | 75 | 192 | 53 |

In Table 6.16 the number of rankshifted clauses for each text can be seen.  This shows that

the participants all use rankshifting in their texts. There is more rankshifting in the literacy

autobiographies, but the total number of clauses is also greater. The rates at which the

participant use it can be seen in Table 6.17 below.

**Table 6.17** *Percentage of Rankshifting among Total Number of Clauses*

| Participant | Linguistic Autobiographies | Literacy Autobiographies | Total |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | 36% | 37% | 37% |
| Connie | 36% | -- | 36% |
| Jane | 31% | 37% | 34% |
| Jasmine | 27% | 27% | 27% |
| Lily | 31% | 43% | 37% |
| Susana | 33% | 33% | 33% |
| Vivian | 32% | 28% | 30% |

Lily and Cindy deploy rankshifting at the highest average frequency and Jasmine at the lowest. Vivian, who is the most prolific and has the largest number of clauses, has the next lowest rate. Susana and Jane are closest to the median. For some of the participants, the percentage of rankshifting is the same in both texts (Jasmine, Susana, and Cindy),whereas others differ considerably (Lily).

A view of the levels of rankshifting provides a closer perspective on its deployment by the participants. In Fig. 6.12, the different levels of rankshifting are presented.

---

**Ranking Clause Level:** This was

    **Rankshifted Level 1:** when I realized

        **Rankshifted Level 2:** how different I was

        **Rankshifted Level 2:** because I was the only one in school

            **Rankshifted Level 3:** who spoke Spanish.

---
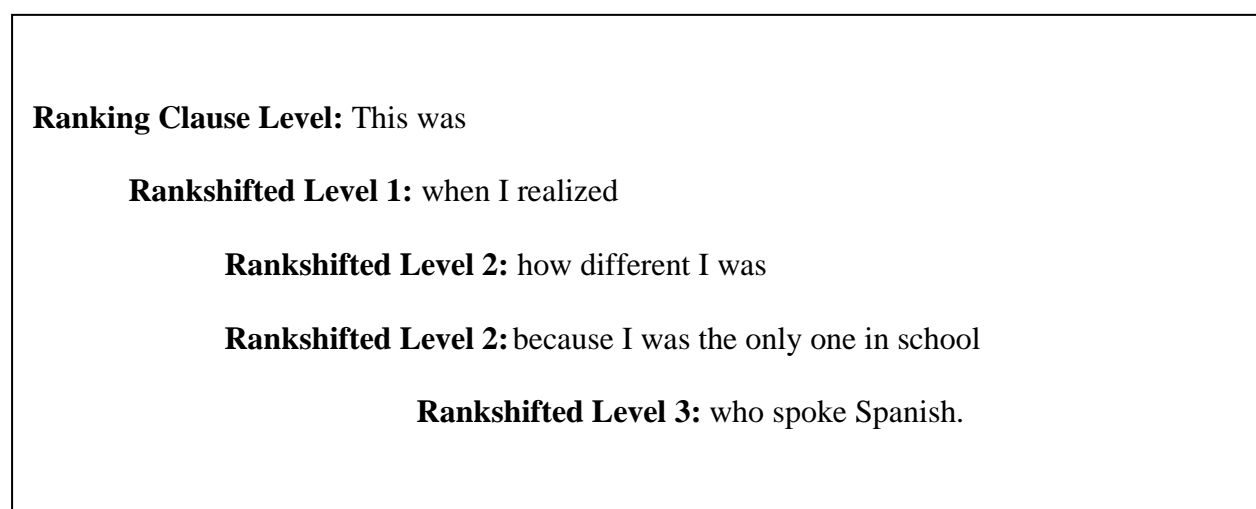
*Figure 6.12* **Levels of Rankshifting: Example from Vivian's Text**

The participants' use of rankshifting is explored from the perspectives of average frequency and process types. In the autobiographies, most rankshifting across the group takes place on the first level, some on the second, and a single instance on the third (see Table 6.18).

**Table 6.18** *Rankshifting Levels among Participants*

| | Level 1 | | Level 2 | | Level 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Linguistic Auto-biography | Literacy Auto-biography | Linguistic Auto-biography | Literacy Auto-biography | Linguistic Auto-biography | Literacy Auto-biography |
| Cindy | 13 | 21 | 3 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Connie | 16 | -- | 0 | -- | 0 | -- |
| Jane | 5 | 27 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 |
| Jasmine | 12 | 17 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Lily | 8 | 28 | 1 | 11 | 0 | 0 |
| Susana | 8 | 20 | 4 | 3 | 0 | 0 |
| Vivian | 17 | 43 | 8 | 10 | 1 | 0 |

The average frequency of rankshifting by level for each participant.is presented in Figure

6.13.
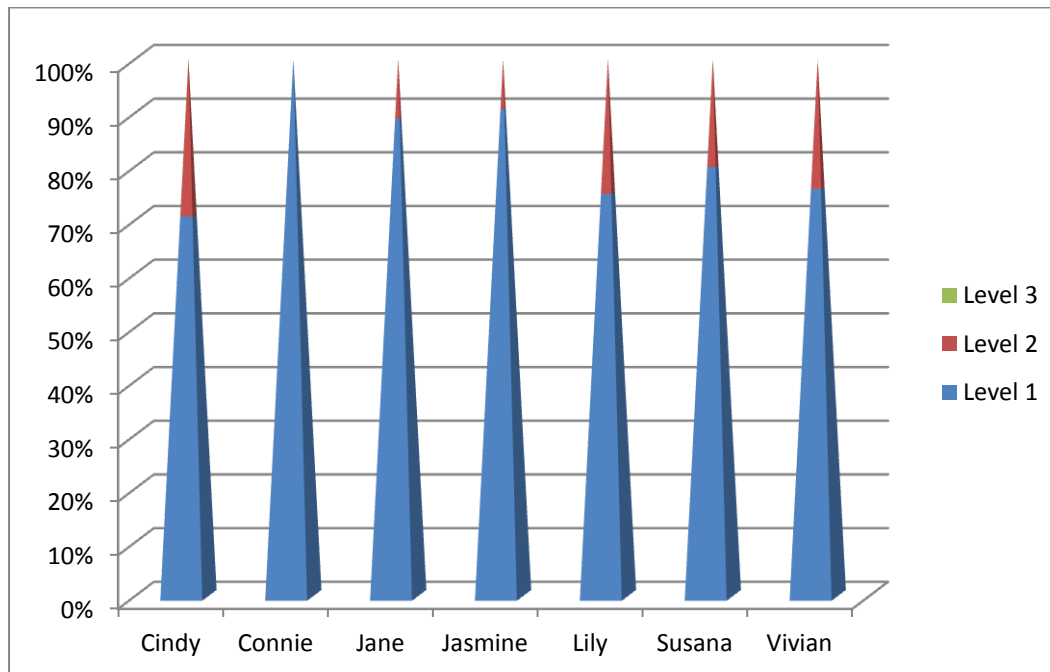


*Figure 6.13* **Average Frequency of Rankshifting Levels**

As is evident in the above figure, the participants did not use rankshifting at an equal rate. Connie downranked clauses only to the first level, whereas all the other participants downranked to the second level, and only Vivian reached the third level and then only once. Cindy had the highest percent of clauses on level two, followed by Lily. Both of them also had the highest rate of rankshifting in general.

Process types are distributed across texts at various levels of rankshifting. Processes in ranked clauses have semantic prominence. In the discussion of mental clauses in Section 6.2.1.2, most of the mental clauses among all subtypes are ranked clauses. A view of the process types in the autobiographical texts reveal the processes that they have foregrounded. An overview of the average frequency of material process across ranks can be seen in Figures 6.14-6.15 below.
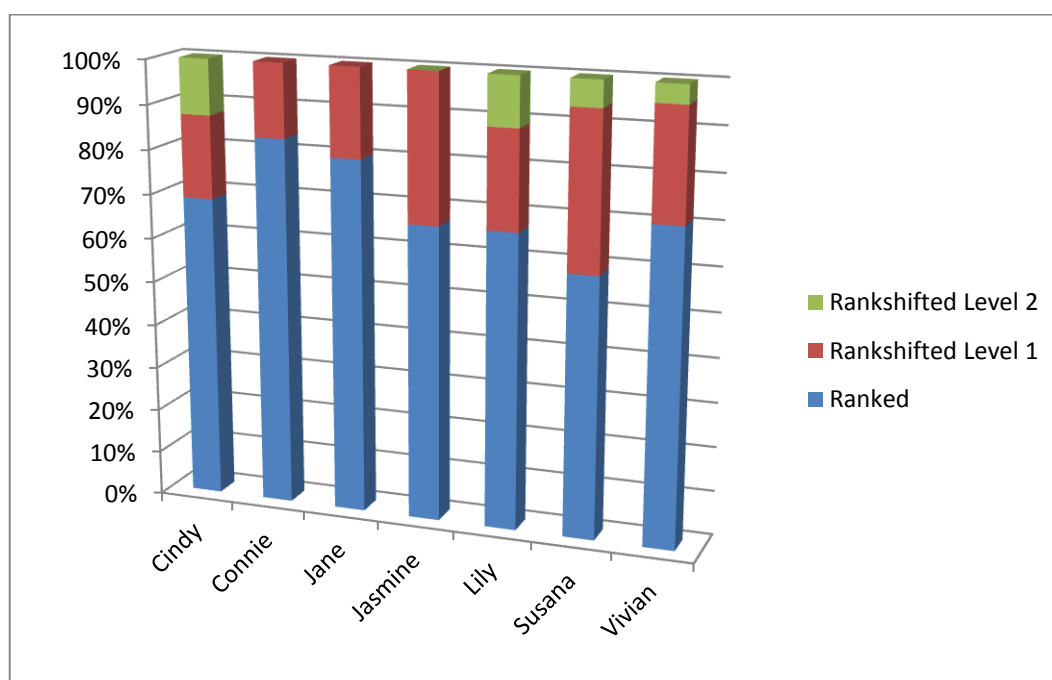


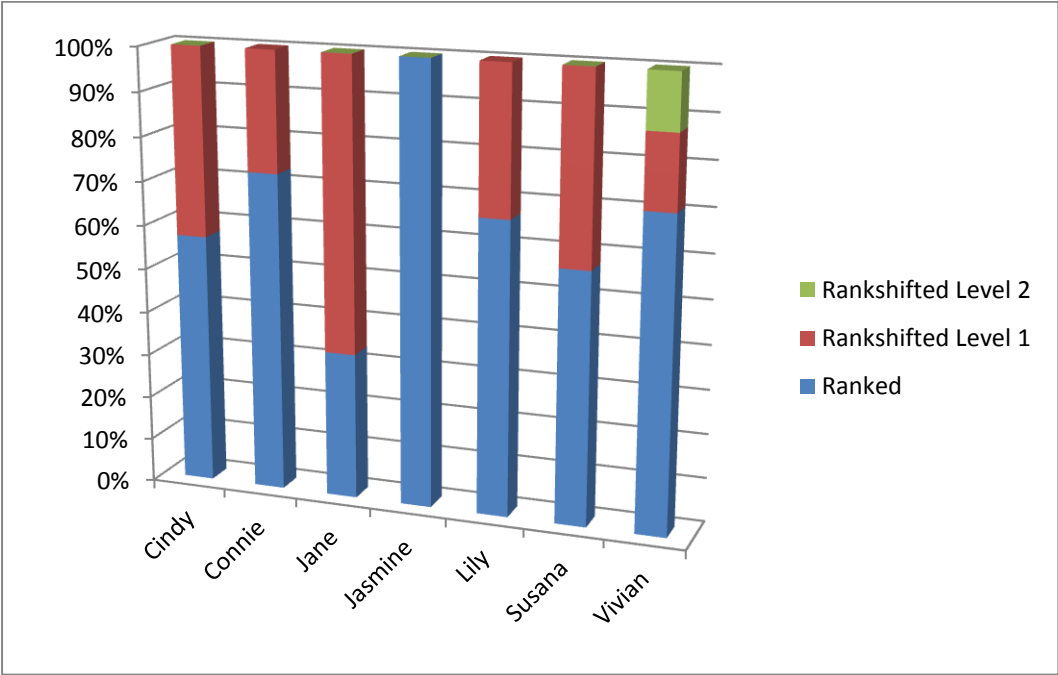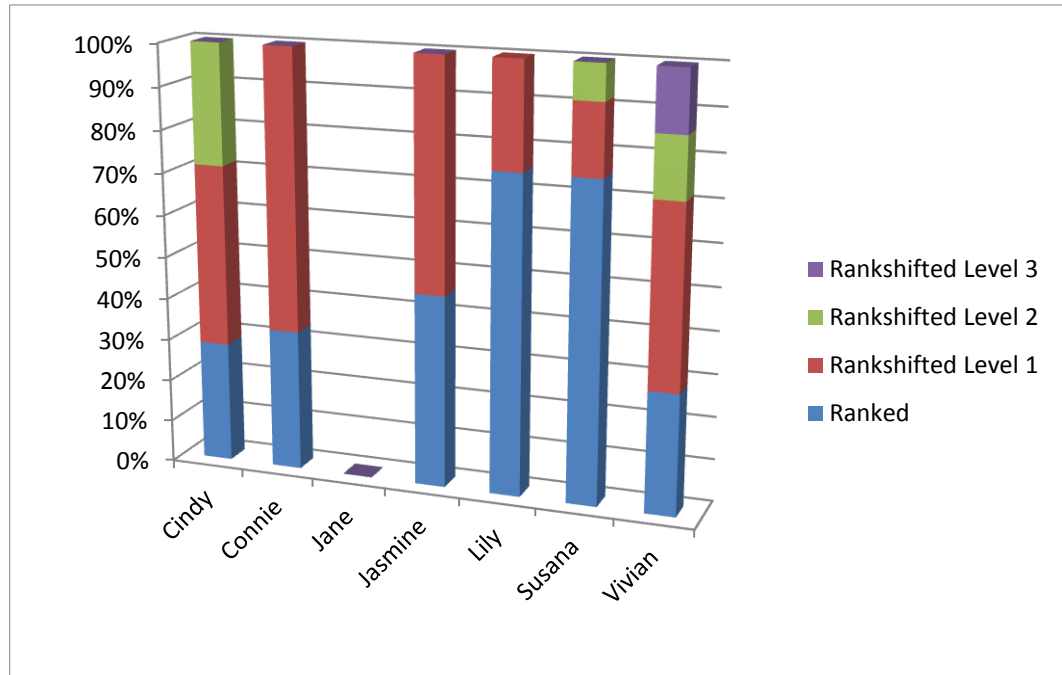*Figure 6.14:* **Average Distribution of Material Processes across Ranks in the Linguistic Autobiographies**
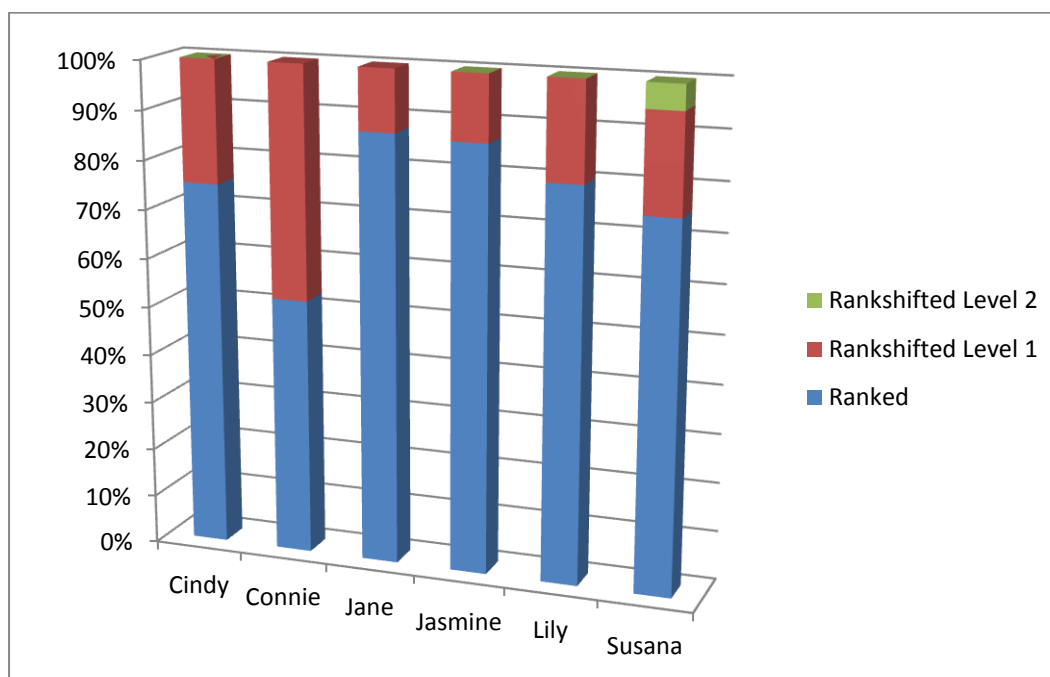
*Figure 6.15:* **Average Distribution of Material Processes across Ranks in the Literacy Autobiographies**

In all the texts, material processes are foregrounded in ranked clauses. Material processes are used at a higher frequency in ranked clauses in the linguistic autobiographies than in the literacy autobiographies by all participants. In the latter, Cindy's average use of rankshifting to level 1 is nearly equal to her ranked clauses, and if levels 1 and 2 are taken together, they form a greater percentage than material processes in ranked clauses. Thus, these material processes have less semantic prominence

Mental processes are frequent in the texts, and as mentioned above, play a larger role than in the Matthiessen (1999) Corpus. In Figures 6.16-6.17, the distribution of rankshifting of mental process clauses is given:
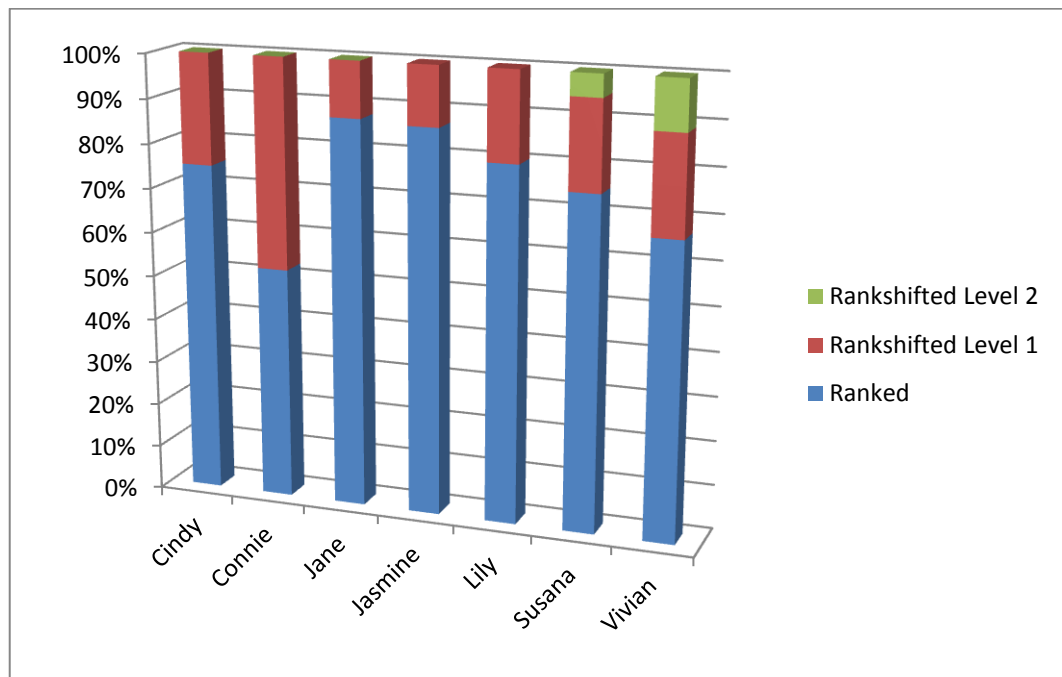
*Figure 6.16:* **Average Distribution of Mental Processes across Ranks in the Linguistic Autobiographies**
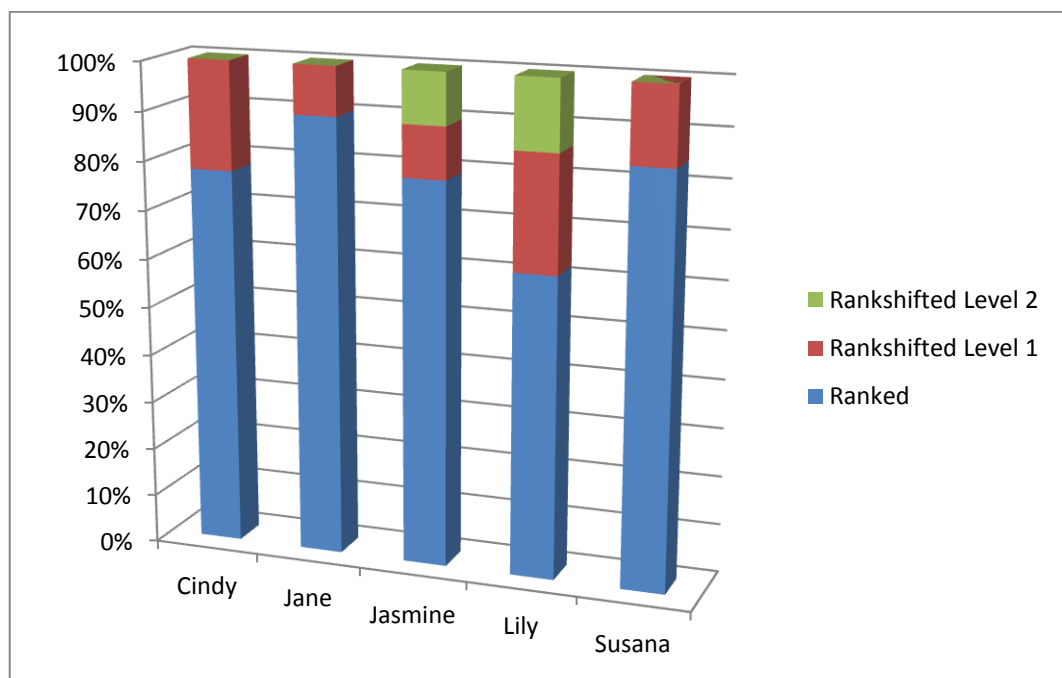


*Figure 6.17:* **Average Distribution of Mental Processes across Ranks in the Literacy Autobiographies**

This is discussed in the previous section under the individual participants, while here Tables 6.16 and 6.17 provide a cross-sectional view of the distribution of mental processes.

In the literacy autobiographies, mental processes are used more frequently in ranked clauses overall than in the linguistic autobiographies. Jane is the only one to downrank them at a frequency greater than half in her linguistic autobiography.

Relational processes are found in all the participants' texts. Figures 6.18 and 6.19 show the average distribution of the levels on which they are found across the corpus.



*Figure 6.18:* **Average Distribution of Relational Processes across Ranks in the Linguistic Autobiographies**
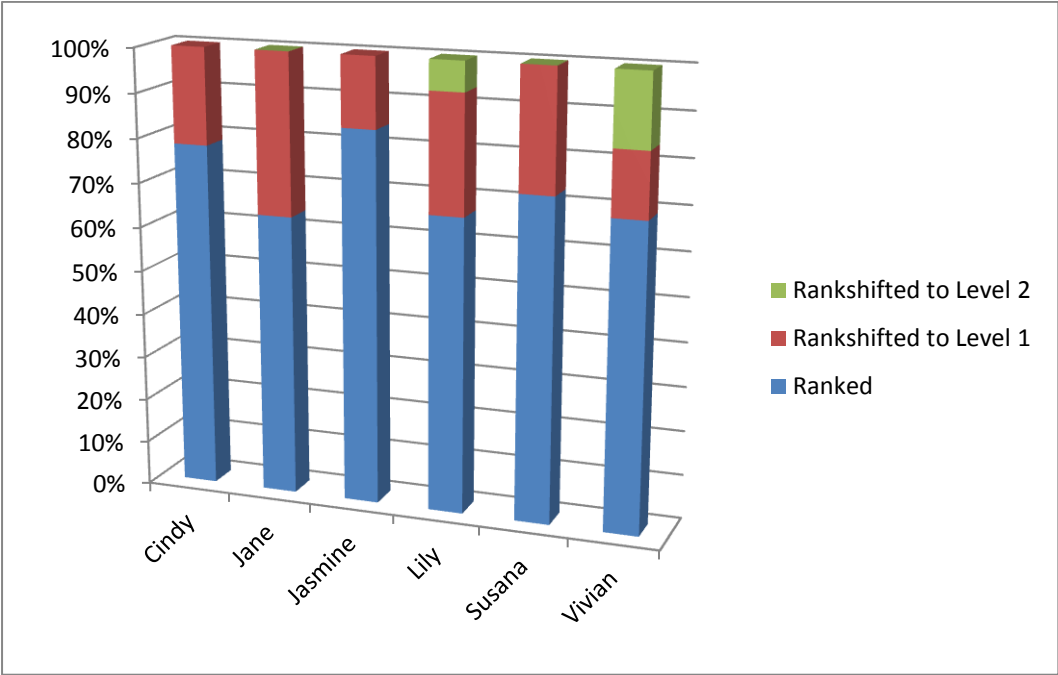
**Figure 6.19:** **Average Distribution of Relational Processes across Ranks in the Literacy Autobiographies**

In the literacy autobiographies (see Figure 6.19), relational processes are found primarily in ranked clauses across all the participants. In contrast, the linguistic autobiographies show a wider variation, with Connie never going beyond the first level of rankshifting.



**Figure 6.20:** **Average Distribution of Verbal Process across Ranks in the Linguistic Autobiographies**

Behavioral and existential clauses will not be summarized in charts as they are quite
infrequent across the corpus and completely absent in many of the texts. Cindy's texts have
three existential processes in ranked clauses; Lily has one in a ranked clause, and Vivian has
one in a ranked clause and one downranked one level. Existential process across the corpus is
predominantly found in ranked clauses. Susana and Vivian included two ranked behavioral
processes, whereas Lily used one behavioral process in a ranked clause and one in a first-
level downranked clause.

## 6.2.3 Voice

The SYSTEM of AGENCY includes VOICE, as noted in Section 6.2. Most clauses in
the texts are in the active voice, which places the doer of the activities (the agent of the
action) at the beginning of the clause. This use of voice is characteristic of recounts and
narratives. The focus in autobiographies is on the experience of the self, and this study
centers around clauses with the pronominal "I."

In the texts, some participants use more passive voice than others. This use is
reflected in Table 6.19, which is an overview of the use of passive in the complete texts.

**Table 6.19** *Frequency of Selected Clauses in the Passive Voice*

|  | Linguistic Autobiography | Literacy Autobiography |
|---|---|---|
| Cindy | 4% | 5% |
| Connie | 16% | -- |
| Jane | 6% | 15% |
| Jasmine | 15% | 15% |
| Lily | 4% | 10% |
| Susana | 7% | 9% |
| Vivian | 9% | 4% |

Connie and Jasmine deploy the passive voice more often than their fellow participants in their linguistic autobiographies, as do Jane and Jasmine in their literacy autobiographies.

Halliday and James (1993) found that VOICE is skew system, which means that 90% of clauses are in the active voice and 10% are in the passive voice. The active clauses are considered unmarked, while the passive clauses are marked. With that general understanding, it is possible to compare the participants' use of passive with the 90:10 ratio. Any given register may vary from this because different registers have different profiles. Science texts, for example, make greater use of the passive than the general average frequency. The findings from the participants' texts do not, for the most part, fit the general pattern. In fact, some texts display an underuse (below the 10%) of the passive, while others reveal an overuse (above the 10%). Overall in both texts, Cindy's writing reveals a marked option within marked options. In her two texts, passive voice is chosen only 4% of the time.

This discrepancy over the deployment of the passive voice warrants a closer look at the participants' clauses. The passive voice involves a shift in agency from the subject to the predicate. The actor in active material clauses, which comprise the bulk of the passive clauses (followed by mental and verbal), becomes the goal, and the agent in the prepositional phrase

becomes the actor. In the texts, the passive voice is often deployed to show an absence of control on the part of the participants:

> We were introduced to the basics and it (sic) came easy to me.  (Connie)
> After being retained, I remember feeling embarrassed of my native language. (Susana)

Connie and Susana describe their school experiences as happening to them. In Connie's case, this is not negative, whereas in Susana's case it is.

The texts can be seen as an unfolding process that reveals the development of language over the participants' lifetime (ontogenesis) from their perspectives. Over the course of the self-narratives, the participants construe their literacy development across time, and they deploy the passive voice in doing so, some more than others. Figures 6.22 and 6.23 represent a total of 31  clause complexes, the maximum number in the texts except for Vivian's literacy autobiography, which, as noted earlier, is much lengthier than the other texts. These figures indicate the use of passive voice in ranking clauses, which are semantically more prominent than rankshifted clauses.
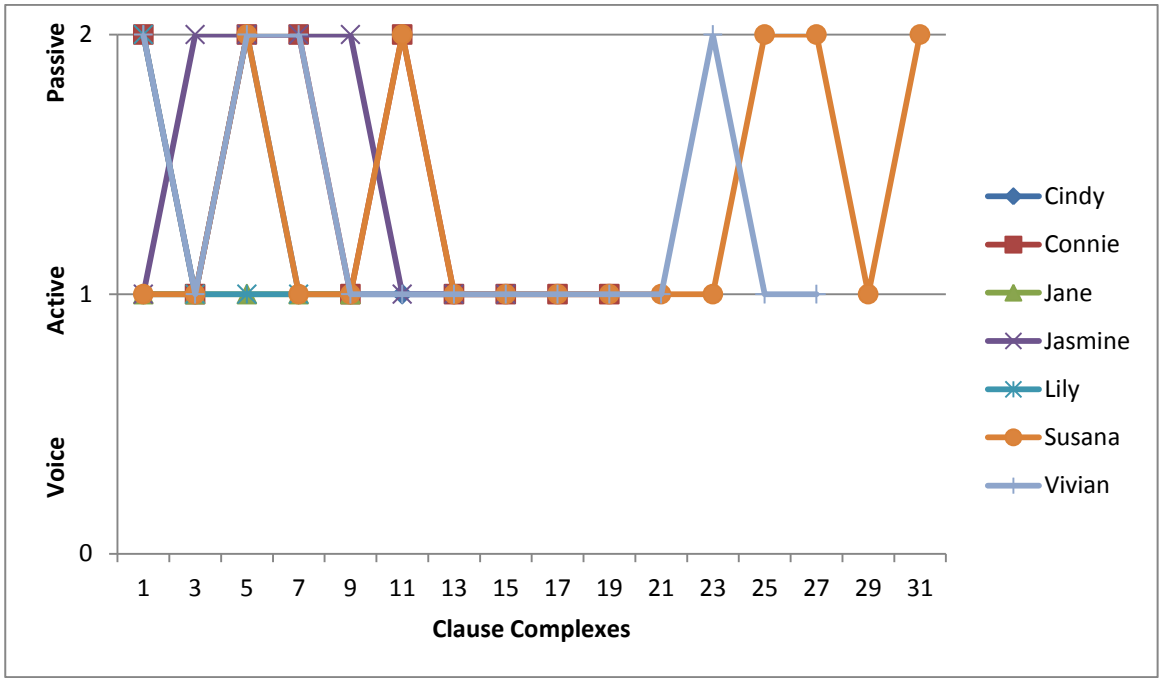


*Figure 6.22:* **Ontogenesis: Use of Passive Voice in the Linguistic Autobiographies**

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In using the passive voice, the writer puts the agency in the hands of someone else. In the linguistic autobiographies, most of the instances of passive voice come in the first 10 clause complexes, but the texts of Susana and Vivian include more clause complexes, so there is some later use of the passive by Susana, in her case up to the penultimate clause complex. In the early parts of the linguistic autobiographies, the participants portray their first contacts with their second languages, sometimes in a family setting, and other times in school. The clearest example of progression from passive involvement to active involvement in the language development process is Jasmine's text; she tells about her early experiences with English:

**Table 6.19** *Jasmine's Ontogenesis*

| Clause Complex | Clause # | Clause |
| --- | --- | --- |
| C (3rd) | 5 | English was introduced to me in elementary school. |
| E (5th) | 9,10 | However, since nobody speaks English around me, I was confused about the purpose of studying English. |
| G (7th) | 14, 15 | Queens was the first town I lived in after I came to America, and I was shocked about the variety of languages being spoken in the community |
| H (8th) | 17, 18,19 | Before I left China, I was told about the language difficulty I would be encountering, I was counseled that since I'll be in school, I could easily learn English. |

After the eighth clause complex, Jasmine no longer uses the passive voice in describing her language learning experience.

The literacy autobiographies recall the participants' literacy development in their first and sometimes other languages.
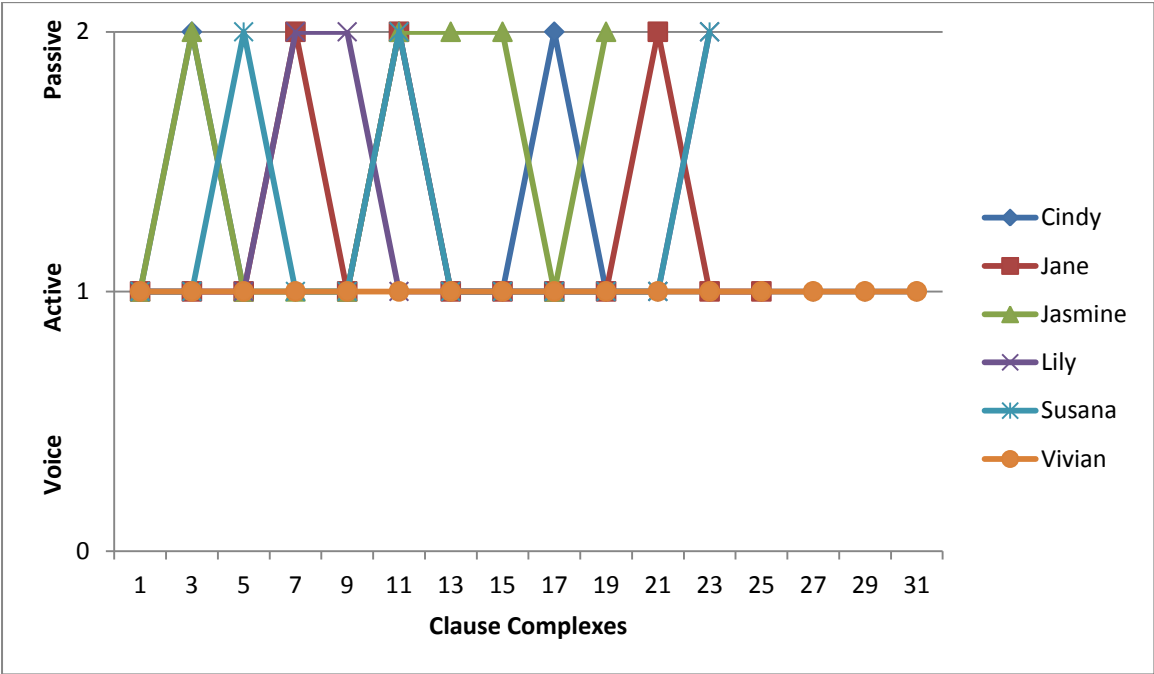


*Figure 6.23:* **Ontogenesis: Use of Passive Voice in the Literacy Autobiographies**

Vivian does not use any passive voice in the first 31 clause complexes of the literacy autobiography. She does use it later in the text in clause complexes 45, 46, 57, and 59. All of the other participants deploy it at some point in their texts. Jane, for example, uses it most frequently to highlight the role of books as a source of inspiration in her literacy development. The only time the passive serves to underscore a negative feeling of powerlessness is when she describes her dread of reading tests:

> The fact that I would be required to read a passage under time-constraint, then answer seemingly irrelevant questions terrified me.

Other participants also deploy the passive voice in describing some of their literacy experiences (required reading and writing, testing, foreign language study) in high school, largely in a negative way.

As noted earlier, in the passive voce, the Agent follows the process and the preposition *by*. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) point out that "prominence in the message means functioning either (i) as marked Theme (i.e. Theme but not Subject) or (ii) as 'late news' – that is, occurring after some other participant, or circumstance, that already follows the Process" (p. 296). Thus, the Agents in the participants' clauses are given prominence. This selection of voice forms part of the syndrome referred to in Section 6.1 and will be discussed subsequently in Chapter 7.

## 6.2.4 Peripherizing Experience by Construing it in a Circumstantial Element

Experience can be peripherized when it is expressed in a circumstantial element, such as a prepositional phrase or other adverbial group. In this study, certain participants peripherize their literacy experiences by construing them as circumstantial elements in a clause. For example, Jasmine writes,

> Before I left China, I was told about the language difficulty I would be encountering, I was counseled that since I'll be in school, I could easily learn English.

This example highlights the closeness between the participant Phenomenon and the peripheral circumstance of matter (*about the language difficulty*). Another example of this is when Jasmine declares*,*

> *I became an English lover through cartoon shows and TV shows such as "Full House."*

Jasmine could have given her active watching more status by using a verbal process, such as *watching*, and giving it full clause status with a nonfinite verb (*By watching cartoon shows and TV shows such as . . .*). Instead here she uses a relational process and a prepositional

phrase that serve to present her learning of English as passive and not as a result of her own actions.

Similarly, Vivian writes about her parents' description of her earliest contacts with the written word:

*I find this hard to believe yet they were firm in saying that by age three I could*

*recognize letters, numbers, colors and some simple words in Spanish.*

Instead of writing *They said firmly*, Vivian provides an alternative in which the manner *firm* is foregrounded by being brought in as a participant (an Attribute) and the *saying* is downranked and peripherized from process to participant modifier.

Such peripherization (a) in the case of Jasmine augments the clause circumstantially but does not construe a figure or enact a proposition and  (b) in the case of Vivian makes a circumstantial element a participant and demotes the process to an embedded modifier. Both of these represent choices available within a clause (internal) and do not augment the clause externally by means of another clause. Thus, the semantic weight assigned to the peripherized unit is less.


## 6.2.5 Summarizing the Ideational Metafunction

In this section (6.2), the findings from the experiential analysis have been explored, including the process types, circumstantial elements, and use of passive voice in the SYSTEM of TRANSITIVITY, and from the logico-semantic perspective, with a view of the participants' use of rankshifting.  The analysis of process types provides perspectives on the ways in which the participants construe their literacy development in their first and other languages. The transitivity profile differs from a more general corpus as represented by the Matthiessen (1999) Corpus. The participants' use of process types, agency, circumstantial elements, and rankshifting reveal a certain semantic syndrome of non-assertiveness,

reticence, and passivity. This syndrome is further supported by the results of the interpersonal analysis that follows in Section 6.3.

## 6.3 Interpersonal Analysis

The analysis of the interpersonal metafunction provides a window on the social roles and relationships that the texts enact. From the interpersonal perspective, the clause incorporates the meanings that are being exchanged among the interactants, which in the case of texts includes the writers and the readers. The analysis shifts away from the study of the processes and to the study of the systems of MOOD, POLARITY, and APPRAISAL. MOOD is embodied in the Mood element (the Subject, the Finite, and Mood Adjuncts). The Subject is a nominal group, and the Finite operator is the part of the verbal group which expresses modality or tense. Attached to the Finite is also polarity, whether the clause is positive or negative. APPRAISAL encompasses the evaluative language used in the texts.

MOOD is the main SYSTEM of the interpersonal metafunction. Clauses may be free (independent), bound (dependent), or minor (nonfinite); a minor clause is moodless because it has no finite operator. The tense of a clause positions the clause in time and allows for the arguability of the propositions that it puts forth. A clause that is arguable is able to be followed by a tag question (*They write letters home, don't they?*). The relationships among clauses may be paratactic or hypotactic. A free clause connected to another free clause is paratactically related to it; a free clause joined to a bound clause is hypotactically related. The independent clause in the clause complex has a primary status, and the dependent clause bound through hypotaxis functions in a secondary or support role. Thus, the free clauses carry the greater semantic weight. An overview of the distribution of free, bound, and minor ranking clauses in the texts is shown in Figure 6.24 below.
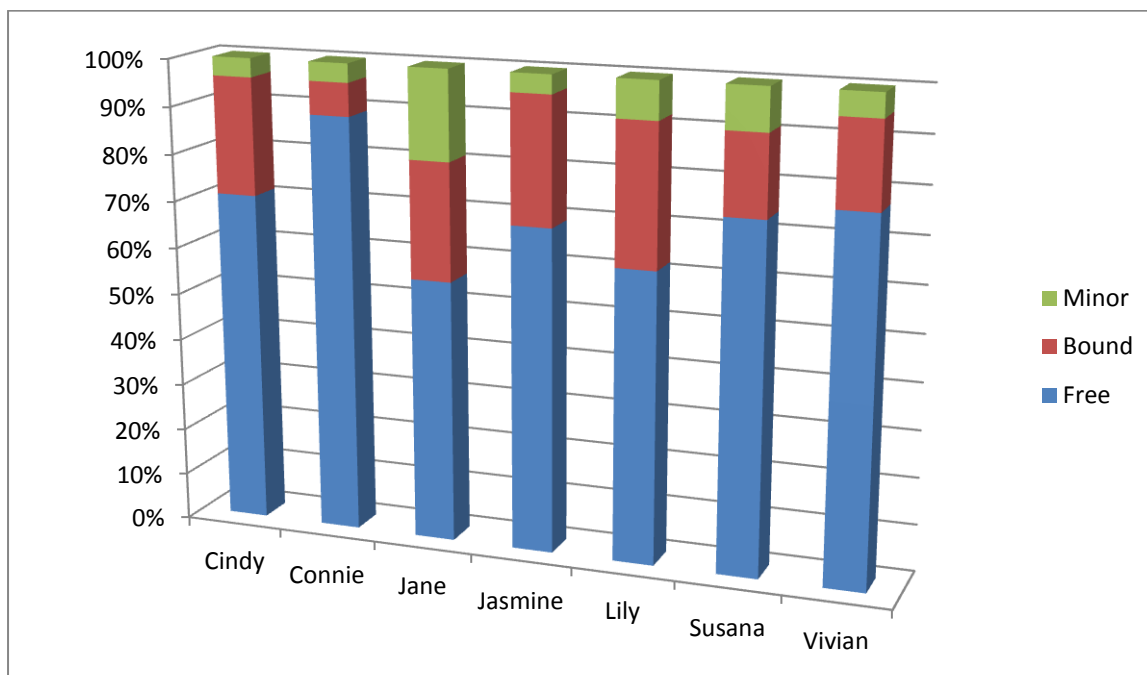
*Figure 6.24:* **Free, Bound and Minor Ranking Clauses Comp**ared

Past tense dominates the clauses with finites. This pattern is congruent with traditional storytelling, in which the recounting of events is naturally done in the past tense. Present tense mental process is primarily used to introduce some of the memories: *I remember, I can recall*, or to express feeling (*I feel*) or inclination (*I hope, I want*) about them or the future.
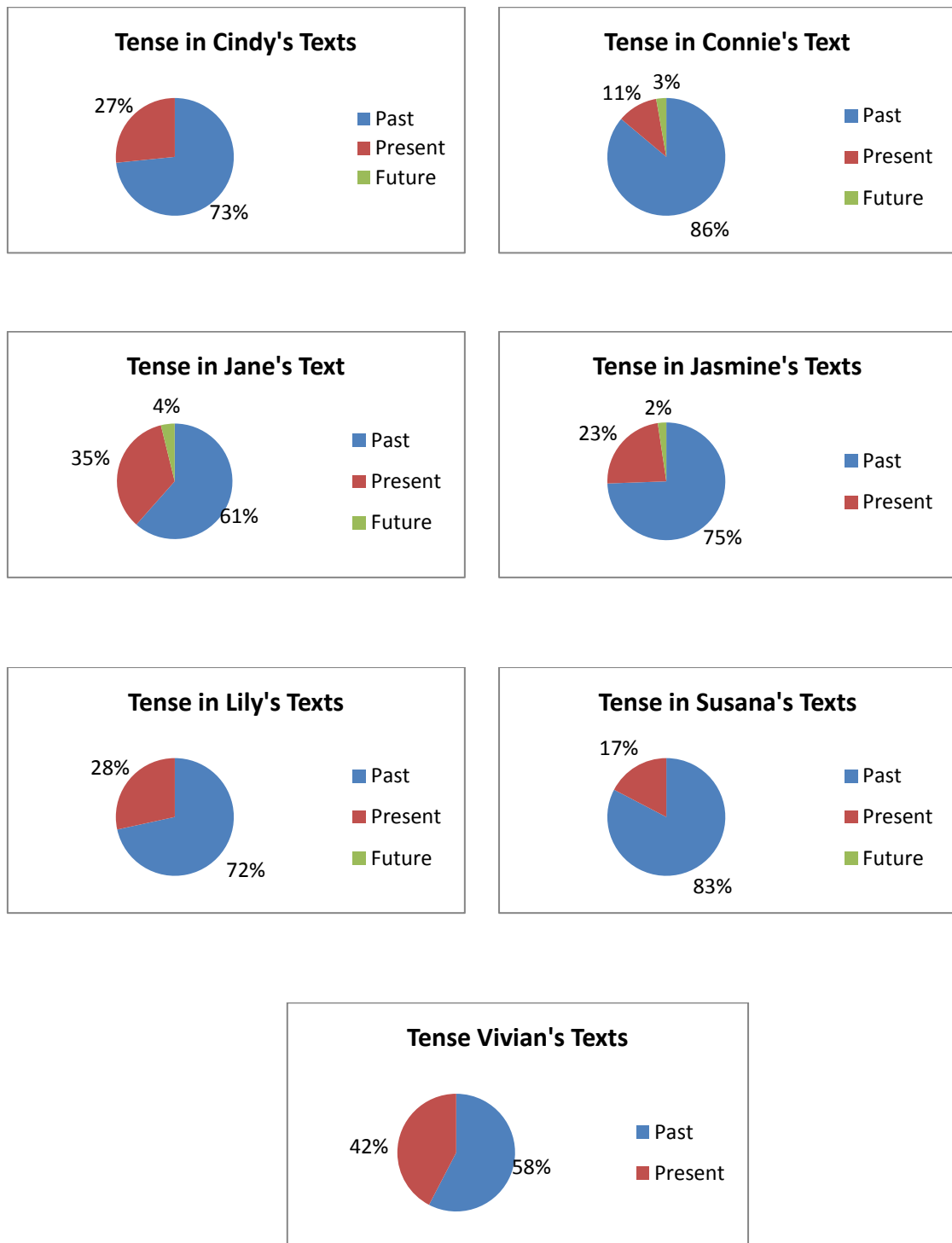
A tense profile of all the texts follows in Figure 6.25:

**Tense in Cindy's Texts**

27%
73%

- Past
- Present
- Future

**Tense in Connie's Text**

11% 3%
86%

- Past
- Present
- Future

**Tense in Jane's Text**

4%
35%
61%

- Past
- Present
- Future

**Tense in Jasmine's Texts**

2%
23%
75%

- Past
- Present

**Tense in Lily's Texts**

28%
72%

- Past
- Present
- Future

**Tense in Susana's Texts**

17%
83%

- Past
- Present
- Future

**Tense Vivian's Texts**

42%
58%

- Past
- Present

*Figure 6.25:* **Comparison of Tense Profiles (Ranking Clauses)**

Though all participants use both the past and present tenses, Vivian uses the present more and

the past less than the other participants. Connie and Susana have the highest percentage of

past tense clauses, and Connie, Jane, and Jasmine use the future tense when writing about their future teaching or literacy development.

## 6.3.1 Polarity

In an early quantitative analysis, Halliday manually counted "2000 instances each of a number of sets of systemic options" (as cited in Halliday & James, 1993) and concluded that there are two types of binary systems, one in which there will be an equal distribution of the choices, which he called an *equi* system (0.5 :0.5) and the other in which the choices will be strongly skewed in one direction, which he called a *skew* system (0.9 : 0.1). Halliday and James (1993) in their quantitative study of a large corpus (COBUILD) on tense and polarity found that for polarity in clauses with a modal finite operator the system was skewed 86.75% positive and 13.25% negative.

In the current study, polarity and modality are of interest in determining the participants' relationship to their literacy development. Polarity is encoded on the Finite element, where it is the main indicator of the clause's positive or negative stance. Nonetheless, outside of the Finite, there are other elements of a clause that can indicate negativity or posititivity, including modal adjuncts, such as *never,* and derivational affixes, such as *un* and *in/im*. The continuum in Figure 6.26 shows the relationship among these possible indicators of polarity:

| Grammaticalized polarity | | Lexicalized polarity |
|---|---|---|
| Positive/negative<br>*yes/no/not* +Finite | Modal adjuncts<br>*never, nothing* | Prefixes<br>*un, in/im* |
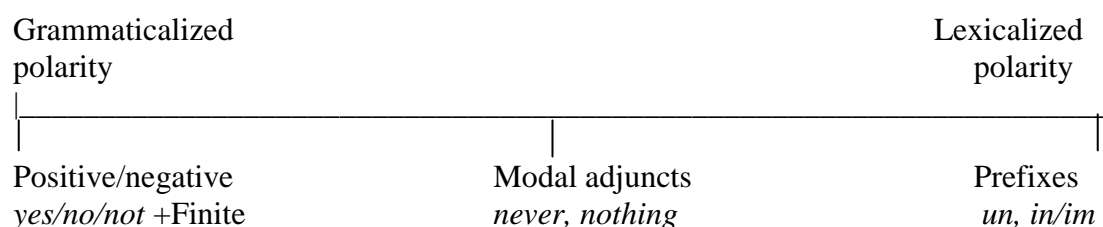
**Figure 6.26:  Continuum of Polarity**

The texts in this study display a range of polarity choices that the participants used in their

autobiographies. Some examples of these are presented in Table 6.21.

**Table 6.21**

***Examples of Degrees of Grammaticalized and Lexicalized Polarity***

| Fully grammaticalized polarity | Semigrammaticalized polarity | Towards lexicalized polarity |
|---|---|---|
| I do*n't* recall any difficulties in learning English. (Susana) | I had *never* learned to read or write  in Spanish until high school. (Susana) | While I have *no* cognizance of my own language acquisition (Lily) |
| I just did *not* make time. (Susana) | I *never* considered myself fluent. (Lily) | as there were words and phrases [[^THAT WERE *un*familiar to me]] (Cindy) |

Susana employs fully grammaticalized polarity in the examples above with regard to her language learning. On the one hand, she writes that she does not recall any difficulties in learning English, but in other areas of her text, she reports not making enough time for reading and having difficulty writing in English. She also uses semigrammaticalized polarity in describing her situation with formal learning of Spanish.

Most instances of fully grammaticalized negative polarity take place in the ranking clauses, giving the negativity more semantic weight. Each participant's texts display different degrees of polarity along the continuum. The participants' use of these degrees of polarity is shown in Table 6.22.

**Table 6.22:** *Instances of Types of Polarity*

| Participant | Fully Grammaticalized Polarity | Semigrammaticalized Polarity | Towards Lexicalized polarity |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | 3 | 2 (never) | |
| Connie | 4 | | |
| Jane | 0 | | |
| Jasmine | 9 | 2 (without) | 1 (no) |
| Lily | 1 | 3 (never) | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Susana | 11 | | |
| Vivian | 10 | 4 (never) | |

Much of the negative polarity centers around their literacy learning. For example, Cindy writes,

> *My parents made reading entertaining and it was never forced, so I naturally developed an affinity for books*.

Here Cindy uses the semigrammaticalized option for negative polarity..

The average number of ranking clauses with fully grammaticalized polarity is seen below in Table 6.23:

**Table 6.23**

*Average Frequency of Negative Polarity in Ranking Clauses and Clause Complexes*

| Participant | Fully Grammaticalized polarity | Frequency in Ranking Clauses | Frequency in Clause Complexes |
|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | 3 | 4% | 7% |
| Connie | 4 | 14% | 21% |
| Jane | 0 | 0% | 0% |
| Jasmine | 9 | 9% | 18% |
| Lily | 1 | 1.5% | 2.8% |
| Susana | 11 | 11.6% | 20% |
| Vivian | 10 | 5% | 10% |

Connie and Susana use fully grammaticalized polarity the most, both more than 10%,
followed closely by Jasmine. The other participants deploy less than half the expected 10%,
thus using a marked option. If one views the fully grammaticalized negative polarity of the
ranked clauses in terms of giving the clause complex a negative meaning, the effects of the
negative polarity are more pervasive in the participants' description of their literacy
development.

Polarity is not the only option in the MOOD system. Modality is another option that
the participants chose in describing their literacy learning.

## 6.3.2 Modalization and Modulation

In addition to polarity, which is the opposition between yes and no, modality is a way
to indicate intermediate degrees between yes and no. In the previous section, Section 6.3.1,
modals such as *never* that involve semigrammaticalized polarity are discussed. Modality is

comprised of two types – modalization and modulation. A continuum of modality is

represented in Figure 6.27 below:

Modalization (probability or usuality of propositions)

it is ⟷ it must be ⟷ it may be ⟷ it isn't

Modulation (obligation or inclination of proposals)

do ⟷ you must do ⟷ you should do ⟷ you may do ⟷ don't
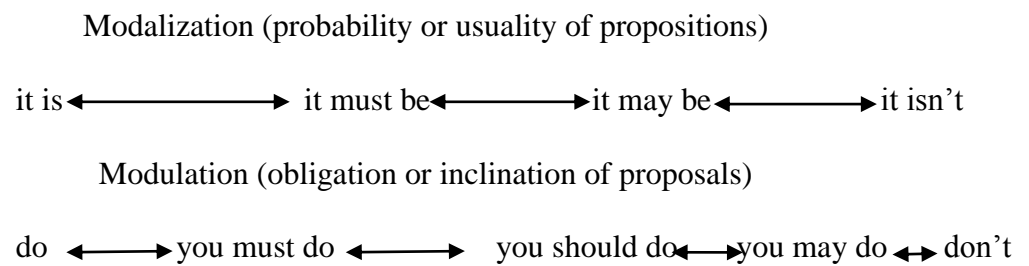
*Figure 6.27:* **Modality: Modalization and Modulation**

In the entire corpus, only one clause is a proposal with a second-person subject (thus, an

imperative); it is when Lily quotes what her father told her when she was a child about the

need to always have a book handy. In all other clauses with modulation, the participants

regularly implicate a third person in statements of obligation and inclination in respect of

others and a first person in respect of themselves. These clauses, then, shift into the indicative

mood, but they are essentially ambiguous in interpretation – somewhere between a proposal

(imperative) and proposition.

Ability/potentiality (*can, be able to/be possible*) stands on the fringe of modality. It

differs from other modal operators because it has past forms and it does not fit directly into

the categories described above, though Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) argue that it is

closest to inclination. Like the modal operators of probability, usuality, inclination, and

obligation, those of ability/potentiality are also found in the texts.

An overview of modality in the texts is given in Figures 6.28 and 6.29. The former

depicts modality in the linguistic autobiographies and the latter in the literacy

autobiographies.
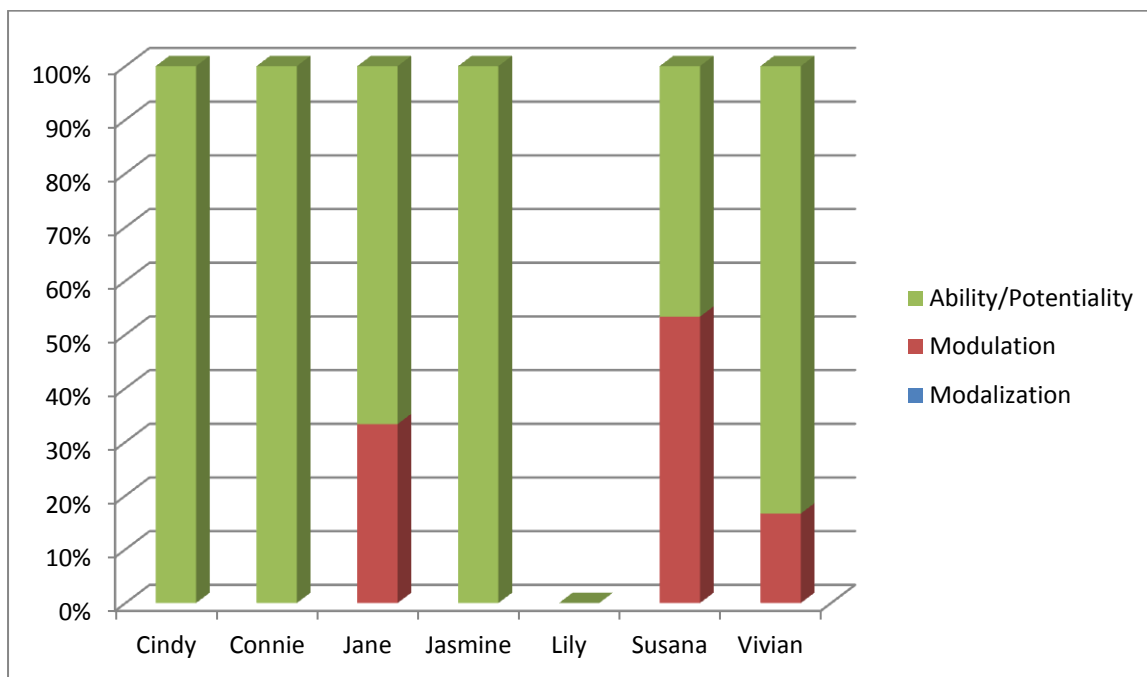
*Figure 6.28:* **Modality in the Linguistic Autobiographies**

The dominant form of modality in the linguistic autobiographies is ability/potentiality; in

general, the participants use this when they discuss their language development:

> I was able to develop a fairly robust understanding of Italian while my ability to speak
> was not as strong. (Cindy)
> I was able to use my Italian background of "animated" speaking with what I was
> learning in the classroom [ASL]. (Connie)

Lily is the only one who does not use any modal operators, though she does use Modal

Adjuncts. The linguistic texts do not contain any modalization.

The modality in the literacy autobiographies have a somewhat different orientation.

See Figure 6.29 below:

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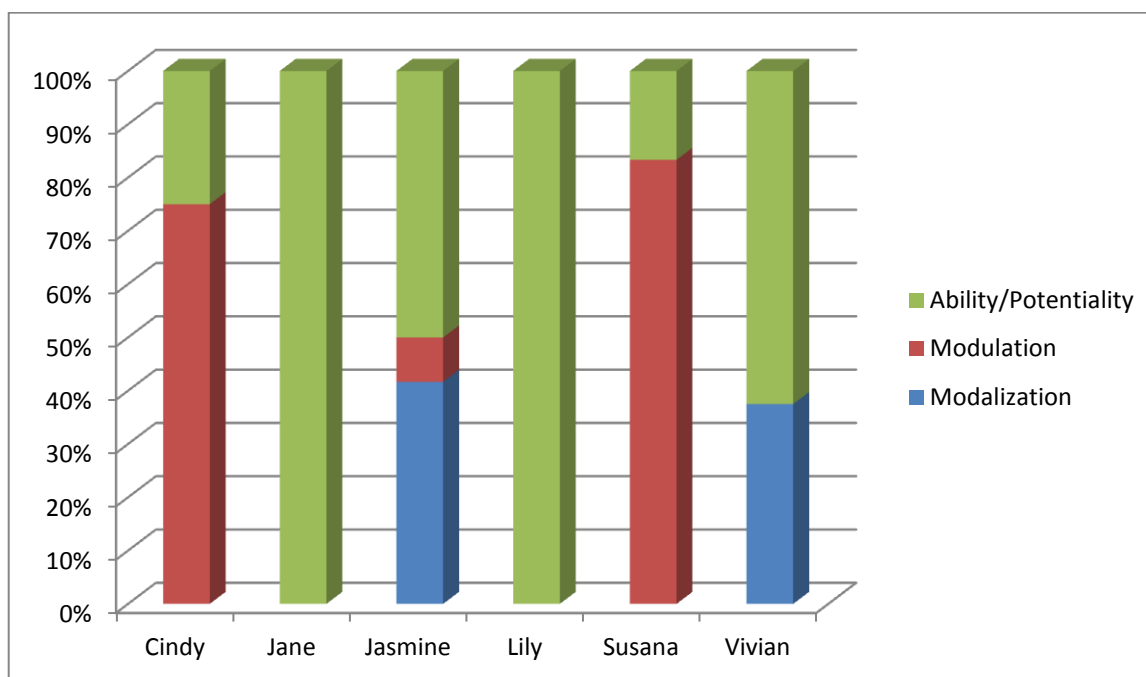
*Figure 6.29:* **Modality in the Literacy Autobiographies**

All participants use modality, and the most widely used type is ability/potentiality. Just as in the linguistic autobiographies, these ability modals are used to describe the language development of the participants.  Nonetheless, the modality profile of these texts differs from the linguistic autobiographies and includes more modulation and some modalization. A closer perspective on the deployment of modulation in these texts is provided in Section 6.3.3.1.

## 6.3.3 Expanding a Process through Modulation and Conation

A process can be expanded through hypotactic verbal group complexing (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004).  This expansion can be achieved through modulation as a way to enhance the process and through conation as a way to extend the process. Modulation and conation change the process in various ways (explained in 6.3.3.1 and 6.3.3.2) from a simple verb group such as *I read* to a  verbal group complex such as I began to read (modulation: time) or I struggle to read (conation). All of the participants use verbal group complexes, though some use them more than others, or they deploy certain types and not others.

### 6.3.3.1 Enhancing a Process through Modulation

One form of expansion used by the participants, some more than others, to enhance a process is the use of hypotactic verbal group complexes in which the first verb modulates the second. An example of this is when Cindy writes:

I typically like to read in peace and quiet and when I am alone, as sometimes I <u>tend to read </u>aloud to myself.

The main verb *read* carries the semantic weight, but it is modulated by the verb *tend*, which changes the time of the process and indicates typicality (cf. . . . *I read aloud to myself*).

Processes can be enhanced through the addition of a verbal group that introduces a circumstantial element: time, manner, cause, contingency, and accompaniment (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p. 504). The types of modulation that the participants use in verbal group complexes can be seen in Table 6.25 below.

**Table 6.25 *Types of Modulation in Hypotactic Verbal Group Complexes***

| Participant | Time | Manner: quality | Cause: reason | Cause: purpose | Contingency: concession | Accompani-ment |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | began tend | | pushed | hope | | |
| Connie | | | | hope hope | | |
| Jane | grown began began began continue | beg | motivate | | | help |
| Jasmine | began began continue | | | | | |
| Lily | continue | | | hope hope | | |
| Susana | began | | need | | prepare | |
| Vivian | came began began began plan began began started continue | | need | hope | encouraged encouraged managed managed | helped |

In the texts, the most common form of modulation through this type of extension is time-phase. The time-phase system in these texts is that of duration/inception; duration means that the process is going on, while inception means that the process is starting. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) note that "phase is interpreted as a hypotactic relation between two processes: a general one of becoming, that is then elaborated by the specific action, event, mental process or relation that is being phased in or phased out" (p. 501). The participants use the inception category of time-phase modulation commonly in clauses about reading or learning:

I also <u>began to develop</u> essential reading skills, such as analysis and critique. (Jane)

I <u>began to study</u> Spanish for proficiency. (Susana)

I <u>began to read</u> not just in English but also in French and of course in Spanish. (Vivian)

Everyone but Connie and Lily uses it at some point in the texts, and it is to be remembered that Connie only submitted the linguistic autobiography.

The duration category of the time-phase system appears in texts written by all the participants except Connie and Susana.

> I was amazed and <u>continue to be</u>, amazed that an author's words could have such a lasting impression on me. (Jane)
> I should <u>continue to enhance</u> my reading and writing skills. (Jasmine)
> I never considered myself fluent and I <u>continue to be</u> hesitant to speak Spanish with my relatives. (Lily)

In the clauses above, *continue* is the general process of becoming, and *be* and *enhance* are the processes that are going on over an unspecified period of time. Jasmine's and Lily's comments relate to their second language skills and express some feelings of inadequacy or lack of confidence in them.

Quality is another circumstance that can be construed through verbal group complexing. Jane describes her desire to go to the library:

> As a child, I would <u>beg to make</u> weekly trips to the library, so that I could peruse the shelves  looking for the next world into which I wanted to escape.

*Using beg* with *to make* modulates the process, enhancing it as very important to her (cf. *I would make*).

There is  a special set of  modulations "that exist only as causatives, where the meaning is that of agency – *make, cause, force, require, let, allow, permit*, etc." (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 513).  These causatives are connected with the transitivity system of AGENCY and related to the circumstance of manner (by which means). In these clauses, there are three participants.  One example found in the texts is when Cindy explains that her parents did not coerce her to speak their native language at home:

> Although my parents never <u>pushed</u> my sisters and I to learn Italian, as it was more important to master the English language and do well in school, I was able to develop a fairly robust understanding of Italian while my ability to speak was not as strong.

These causatives appear in three degrees of modulation: high, median, and low; *pushed* is of a high degree. *Need* is of a median degree, and *motivate* is of a low degree. The parents are the causative Agents, in this case not forcing the learning of Italian.

Verbal group complexes of purpose are related to the circumstantial of purpose. *Hope* is an example of this. Such complexes carry the circumstantial meaning *in the hope of*. For instance, Lily writes,

> While I have no cognizance of my own language acquisition, I <u>hope</u>  to recover and ^I <u>HOPE</u> TO preserve this element of our linguistic and cultural identities.

The second *hope* is recovered and included above. Lily expresses the hope that she will be able to recover the language (Spanish) that she heard as a child. Cindy, Connie, and Vivian also employ this form of modulation:

> <u>I hope</u> I can inspire young ELLs to love reading. (Cindy)
> I can only <u>hope to keep</u> the loving, everyday phrases I have learned  as part of my vocabulary, for the kids  I <u>hope to have</u> in the future.(Connie)
> As a teacher, I <u>hope *to pass*</u> *my enjoyment and curiosity of reading onto my student.* (Vivian)

They use these verbal group complexes of purpose to express their expectations for the future in their personal and professional lives.

Susana and Vivian are the only participants who employ concession (*encouraged, prepared, managed*).  Susana writes,

> I wondered why I was not <u>prepared to write</u> after graduating from high school.

She expresses her uncertainty about her writing and the reasons that she was unable to write well enough to satisfy the academic demands she experienced in college. Vivian uses *managed* to and *encourage* to describe the process of learning

> Phonology was a bit tricky, but I eventually <u>managed to make </u>use of the back of my throat and ^I <u>MANAGED TO make</u> French sounds.
> She would take me to the library and ^SHE <u>encouraged </u>me<u> to read</u>
> and ^ SHE <u>ENCOURAGED</u> ME <u>TO do</u> crafts.

In both cases, the recovered processes and participants are included. In concession, the semantic relationship is a circumstantial one with the sense of performing contrary to expectation.

Verbal group complexes with *help* are related to the circumstance of accompaniment. Both Jane and Vivian construe their language learning experiences with the circumstantial element *help*. Jane explains how the process of writing the linguistic autobiography affects her views on language:

> However, from a very young age, my family history helped me to recognize the importance of language and higher education.

Vivian uses this type of modulation to depict how reading stories contributed to the development of her imagination:

> I believe ^THAT all these adventurous stories helped foster my imagination and creativity.

The circumstance of accompaniment is equivalent to the comitative *with* and indicates joint participation in a process.

Enhancing a process through modulation is a common practice among the participants, though some favor one type over the other. Most use temporal modulation, the other choices are less common across the participants.

### 6.3.3.2 Extending a Process through Conation

Some of the participants use conation (trying and succeeding) to extend a process. Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) explain that a conative verb does not constitute a "separate happening" (p. 506), though it does represent a behavioral process. Thus, the process is extended to a two-part process. This results in the Subject playing a dual participant role; it is the Behaver with the conative part of the complex and it is the Actor/Senser/Sayer/Carrier in

the happening. Thus, in the clause complex below, Cindy uses the conative *was . . .*

*struggling*. *I* is the Behaver of the conative process.

> Although I had a basic comprehension of Italian, I <u>was</u> still <u>struggling to communicate</u>
> as there were words and phrases unfamiliar to me. (Cindy)

*Communicate*, a verbal process, carries the semantic weight, so *I* is also the Sayer.

An overview of participant use of conation can be seen in Table 6.26.

**Table 6.26** *Conation*

| Participant | Conation |
|---|---|
| Cindy | struggle |
| Connie | --- |
| Jane | attempt struggle |
| Jasmine | try |
| Lily | attempt |
| Susana | tried |
| Vivian | ---- |

In the clause complex above, Cindy describes struggling to communicate in Italian when her

family took her to Italy. She had been brought up speaking Italian alongside English, but

when she entered a different type of setting, she experienced difficulty. Jane uses conation to

depict difficulties that she has in remembering early literacy experiences and also in figuring

out the best way to teach literacy skills.

> As I <u>attempt to recall</u> learning to read, glimpses of simple sentences, reading circles,
> and books with large print flash before my eyes. (Jane)
> I <u>struggle to discover</u> innovative ways by which I can teach students the importance of
> building essential reading skills and inspire them to develop an appreciation for
> recreational reading. (Jane)

Jasmine uses conation to relate how she learns about American and Chinese cultures.

> I <u>try to obtain</u> information about my two important cultures (American and Chinese)
> through the reading of newspaper. (Jasmine)

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Lily expresses regrets that she was not taught Spanish earlier so that she would not have to *attempt* acquiring it later on:

> I wish that my grandmother and my mother would have made more of an effort to immerse me in Spanish while I was growing up, so that I would have been naturally bilingual, rather than <u>attempting to acquire</u> it as a second language later in life. (Lily)

This expresses her uncertainty about her current abilities in Spanish. Susana notes that her mother *tried to teach* her Spanish:

> *When my mom <u>tried to teach</u> me how to read and write in Spanish, I rebelled and*
>
> *refused.* (Susana)

However, her mother was unsuccessful (though Susana later achieves success through her own formal study). Connie and Vivian do not use conation at all.

Conation expresses potentiality. *Try* is usually followed by the perfective form of the secondary verbal group (try to + process), and in this data, all of the conatives are in this form.

## 6.3.4 Participants' Descriptions of the Social Networks Connected to Their Literacy and Language Development

In order to provide a perspective on the social relationships among the participants and those who contributed to their literacy development in each of the texts, the frequency at which the participants mentioned people involved in their literacy learning was tabulated through Syscon, which provides a list of the frequency of each word in a text. Through this list, the participants were identified and mapped onto a social network diagram (for every mention, the line is increased by one font point):
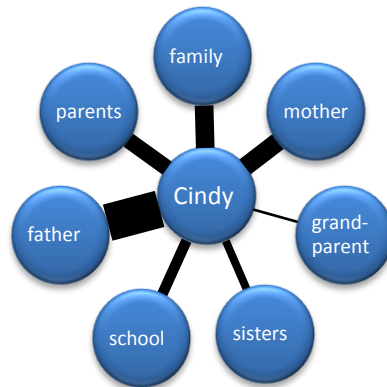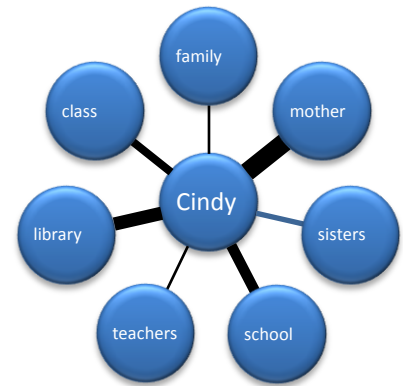
**Figure 6.30: Cindy's Social Network for Literacy Development**

In Cindy's texts, her family members appear as the main interactants in her social network of literacy development. Other interactants include teachers, school, and the library.
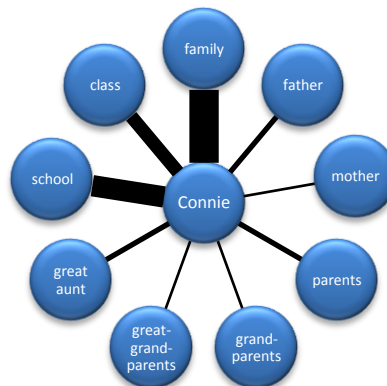


**Figure 6.31: Connie's Social Network for Literacy Development**

Connie's social network includes a wide variety of family members of different generations and school. The strongest ties are with family as a whole.
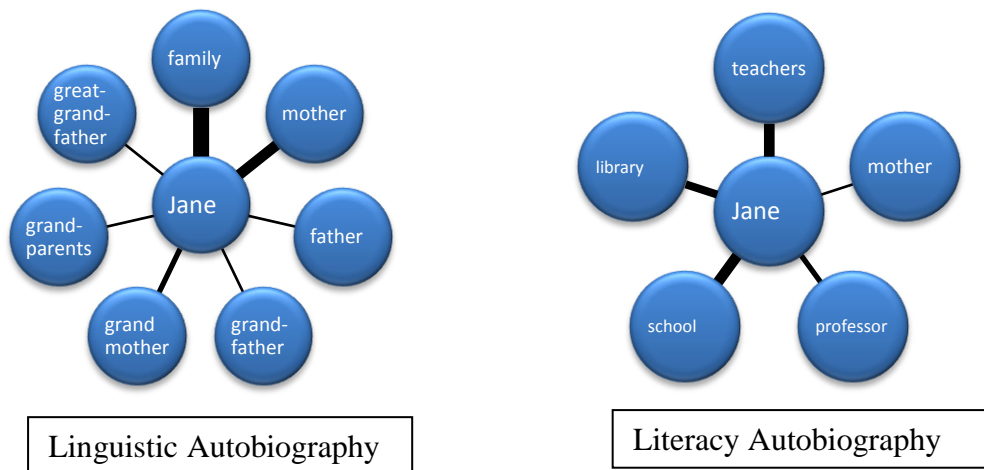
Linguistic Autobiography

Literacy Autobiography

*Figure 6.32*: **Jane's Social Network for Literacy Development**

In Jane's social network, her multigenerational family ties are the only interactants in the linguistic autobiography, while in the other text Jane writes of her mother only once, but of the other interactants -- teachers, professor, school, and library – more frequently.



Linguistic Autobiography

Literacy Autobiography
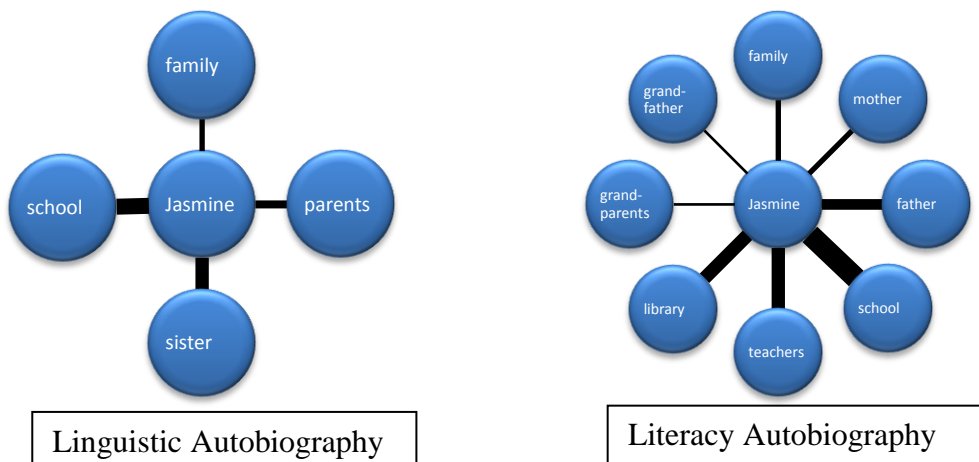
*Figure 6.33*: **Jasmine's Social Network for Literacy Development**

Jasmine has her strongest ties to school in both depictions of her literacy interactants. The linguistic autobiography depicts her strong ties to her sister, who is younger and dependent on her for help with language development and schoolwork. Her literacy autobiography shows ties to multiple generations of her family but stronger ties still to school, teachers, and the library.
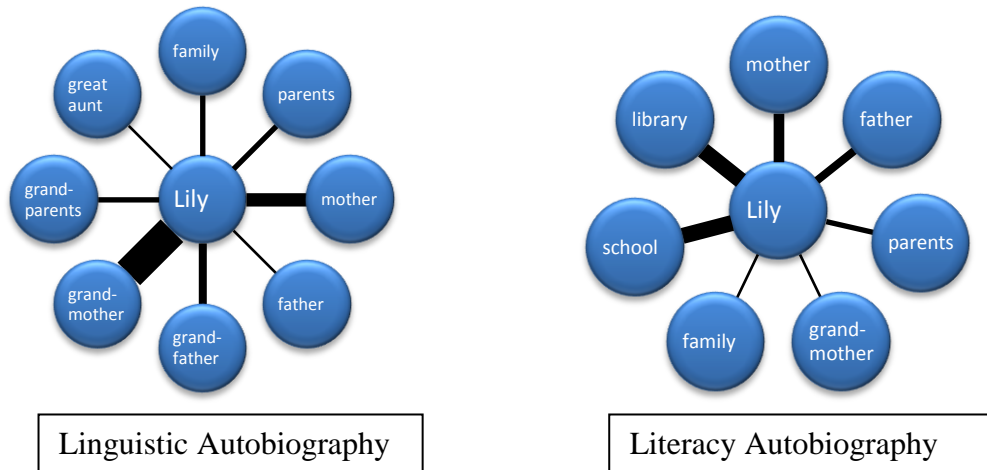
*Figure 6.34:* **Lily's Social Network for Literacy Development**

Lily's social network only involves her multigenerational family in the linguistic text, but her literacy autobiography also includes school and the library. In the former text, her mother and grandmother have the strongest ties, whereas in the latter text, the ties between Lily and the school and library are stronger that the ties with members of her family.
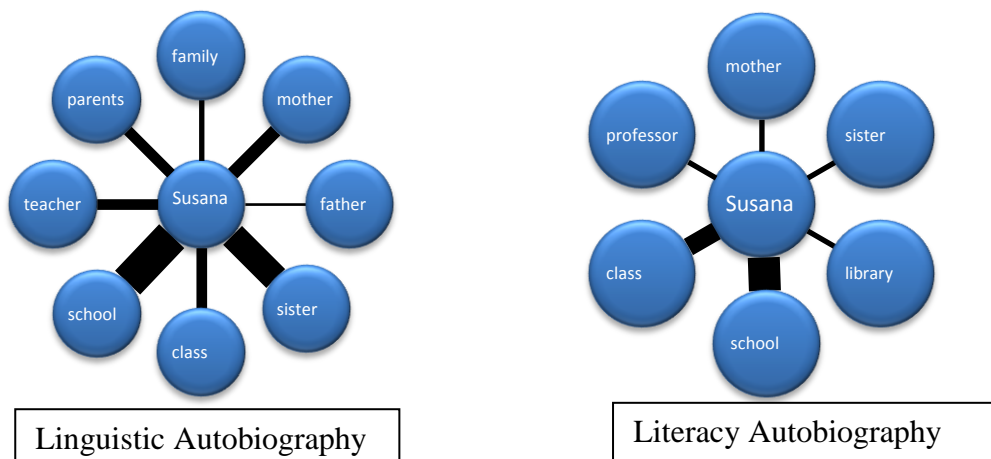


*Figure 6.35:* **Susana's Social Network for Literacy Development**

In Susana's linguistic autobiography, school and her sister have the strongest ties to her language development. Susana mentions her older sister in the role of a teacher of the ABCs and school as the source of her language learning. In the literacy autobiography, Susana's ties with school and class are the strongest.
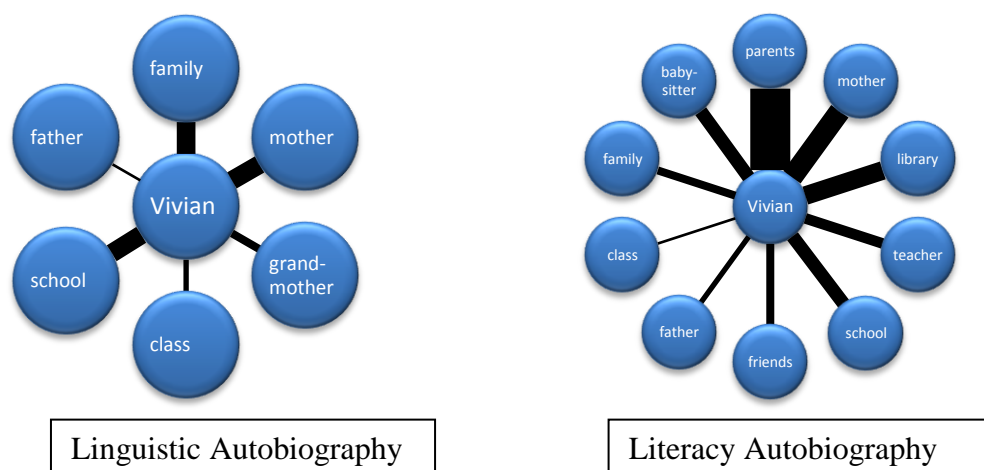
255

| Linguistic Autobiography | Literacy Autobiography |

*Figure 6.36:* **Vivian's Social Network for Literacy Development**

Vivian's family members are the main interactants in her linguistic autobiography along with school, which is as strong a tie as her mother is. The literacy autobiography features ten interactants and is the only one to include a babysitter, whom Vivian describes as introducing her to different aspects of literacy, including reading. Vivian has the strongest tie with her parents and quite strong ties with school.

Each of the participants demonstrates a somewhat different social networking profile with regard to her literacy development. It is clear in the figures in this section that family and school form strong ties with the participants during their literacy learning. In some cases, the participant includes multigenerational family ties and teachers among the interactants.

## 6.3.5 Summary of the Interpersonal Analysis

This section explored the meanings construed in the autobiographical texts from the view of the interpersonal metafunction. The texts displayed some similarities and some differences in selection patterns for mood, polarity, modality, and interaction in social networks.

## 6.4 Characteristics of Academic Writing Evident in the Participants' Texts

As discussed in Section 4.4, academic writing is characterized by low grammatical intricacy and high lexical density. Each of the texts is analyzed for grammatical intricacy and lexical density as a basis for comparison with the other participants' texts and for a comparison between the two texts of each participant, excluding Connie.

## 6.4.1 Grammatical Intricacy

As previously discussed in Sections 3.2.2.1 and 4.4, Halliday (1978, 2009) maintains that spoken and written language both complex but not in the same way. He points out that written language is more lexically dense than spoken language, whereas spoken language is more grammatically intricate. This intricacy results from the number of ranking clauses connected by hypotaxis and parataxis to create elaborate clause complexes. If, for example, a clause complex has six ranking clauses, it is more grammatically intricate than a clause complex that has two ranking clauses. An analysis of grammatical intricacy reveals where the texts stand along the continuum of grammatical intricacy, in other words, which texts are closer to spoken language and which are closer to written language.

An analysis of the participants' texts for grammatical intricacy can be done by dividing the number of clauses connected paratactically and hypotactically by the number of clause complexes. The grammatical intricacy of the participants' linguistic and literacy autobiographies is presented in Table 6.27, which also shows when the participants wrote each text. Some wrote the linguistic autobiography first, whereas others wrote the literacy autobiography first.

**Table 6.27** *Grammatical Intricacy in the Corpus:*

*Average Number of Ranking Clauses per Clause Complex*

| Participant | Linguistic Autobiography | | Literacy Autobiography | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Average # of Ranking Clauses** | **Semester Written** | **Average # of Ranking Clauses** | **Semester Written** |
| Cindy | 2.23 | Fall 2007 | 1.93 | Spring 2008 |
| Connie | 1.47 | Spring 2007 | ----- | ---- |
| Jane | 1.22 | Fall 2008 | 1.66 | Fall 2007 |
| Jasmine | 2.33 | Fall 2007 | 2.02 | Spring 2007 |
| Lily | 3.00 | Fall 2008 | 1.92 | Spring 2007 |
| Susana | 1.58 | Fall 2008 | 2.09 | Spring 2008 |
| Vivian | 1.93 | Fall 2008 | 1.85 | Fall 2009 |
| Average for each text type | 1.97 | | 1.87 | |

The average for the two types of text is very close at nearly two ranking clauses per clause complex. This number is typical for written language; the ideational content is packed into just a couple of clauses. In spoken language, the ideational content is loosely spread out across a string of clauses (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004). Lily's writing exhibits the least intricacy of all the participants in the first text and the most in the second text.

With the exception of Connie, who only produced one text, the participants' linguistic texts can compared with their literacy texts for a look at any changes in grammatical intricacy chronologically (see Table 6.27). In Figure 6.36 these changes are graphed based on the order in which the texts were written, rather than by the name of the text, which has already been presented in Table 6.27. In four cases, the participants' grammatical intricacy decreased, but in two it increased. Three participants (Cindy, Jasmine, and Susana) wrote them one semester apart, two (Jane and Vivian) wrote them two semesters apart, and one (Lily) wrote them three semesters apart.
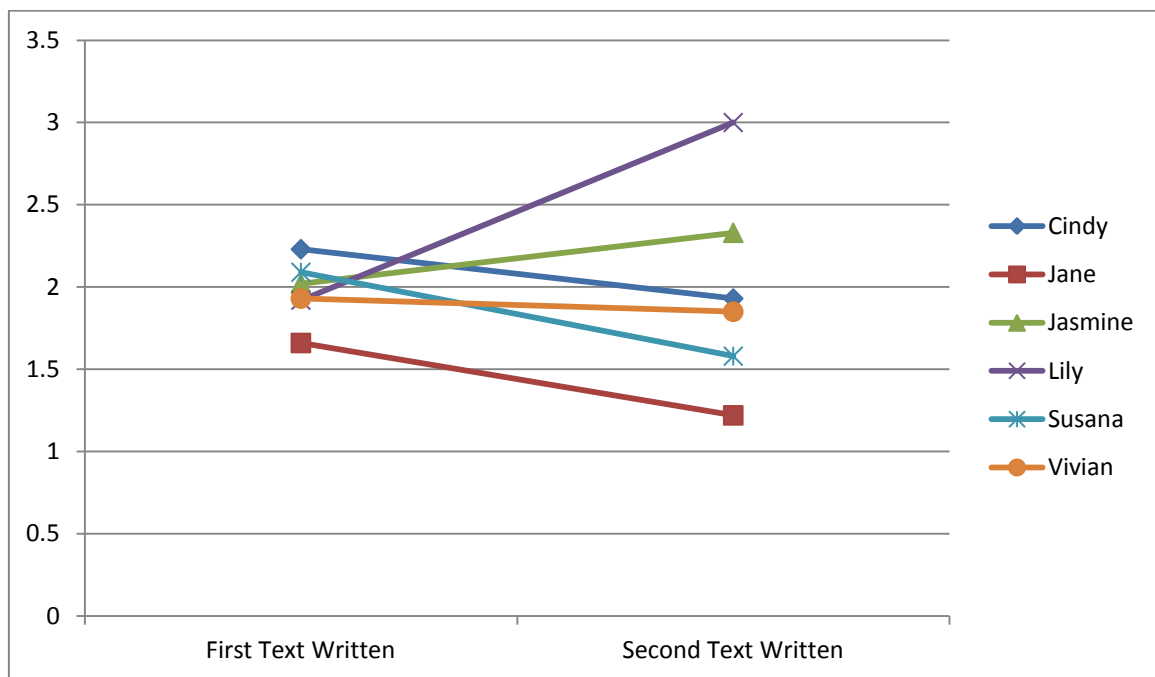
*Figure 6.37:* **Changes in Grammatical Intricacy over Time**

Only Jasmine's and Lily's texts became more grammatically intricate, whereas the others followed the pattern of decreasing grammatical intricacy with increased exposure to academic coursework. Lily adds an average of an entire clause per clause complex, while Jasmine averages a smaller increase of less than a third of a clause.

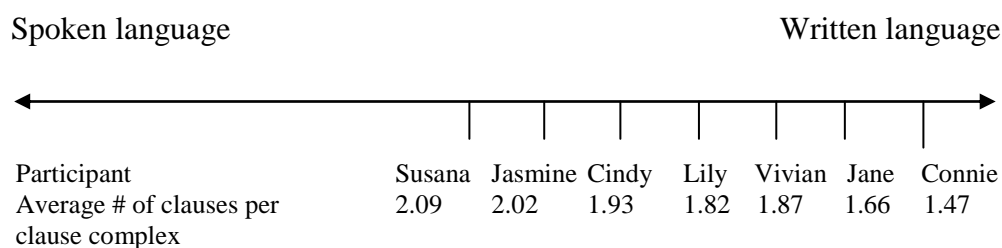The texts are arranged along a continuum from most like spoken to most like written English (see Figure 6.38):

Spoken language                                    Written language



| Participant | Susana | Jasmine | Cindy | Lily | Vivian | Jane | Connie |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average # of clauses per clause complex | 2.09 | 2.02 | 1.93 | 1.82 | 1.87 | 1.66 | 1.47 |

*Figure 6.38:* **Continuum of Grammatical Intricacy in Participants' Texts**

The participants are ordered in descending order from most grammatically intricate to least, with Susana and Jasmine nearest the spoken end and Connie, who, it is important to remember, only submitted one text, at the written end. Her average would likely have been different had there been two texts, though her single text was longer than Susana's two texts combined.

## 6.4.2 Lexical Density

As explained in Section 4.4, lexical density is a characteristic of text. The greater the lexical density, the more the text is written-like, and the less the lexical density, the more the text is spoken-like. Lexical density then stands in an inverse relationship to grammatical intricacy. In the participants' texts, the number of lexical items was divided by the number of ranking clauses to determine the lexical density. Grammatical words such as articles, prepositions, and conjunctions were excluded by subtracting 20% of the words (the average frequency of these words according to Natural Language Processing) (Herke, personal communication, February 13, 2011) from the number of words per clause complex, which were then divided by the average number of clauses per clause complex. For example, in her linguistic autobiography, Jane averages 21 words per clause complex. The lexical density is calculated as follows:

21-4.2=17.8  and 17.8/1.22=14.59.

**Table 6.28** *Lexical Density in the Corpus*

| Participant | Linguistic Autobiography | | Literacy Autobiography | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Average Lexical Density | Semester Written | Average Lexical Density | Semester Written |
| Cindy | 8.16 | Fall 2007 | 7.93 | Spring 2008 |
| Connie | 8.70 | Spring 2007 | ----- | ---- |
| Jane | 14.59 | Fall 2008 | 10.60 | Fall 2007 |
| Jasmine | 6.35 | Fall 2007 | 7.57 | Spring 2007 |
| Lily | 5.33 | Fall 2008 | 9.69 | Spring 2007 |
| Susana | 7.59 | Fall 2008 | 6.41 | Spring 2008 |
| Vivian | 7.30 | Fall 2008 | 7.35 | Fall 2009 |
| Average for each text type | 8.29 | | 8.25 | |

In the linguistic autobiographies, the highest lexical density is Jane's at 14.59 lexemes per clause, and the lowest is Lily's at 5.33. The range is 9.26, and the median is 7.59. In the literacy autobiographies, Jane again has the highest lexical density, while Susana has the lowest. The range is 4.19, and the median is 7.75.

In Figure 6.38 below, the changes in lexical density from the first text written to the second are mapped out.
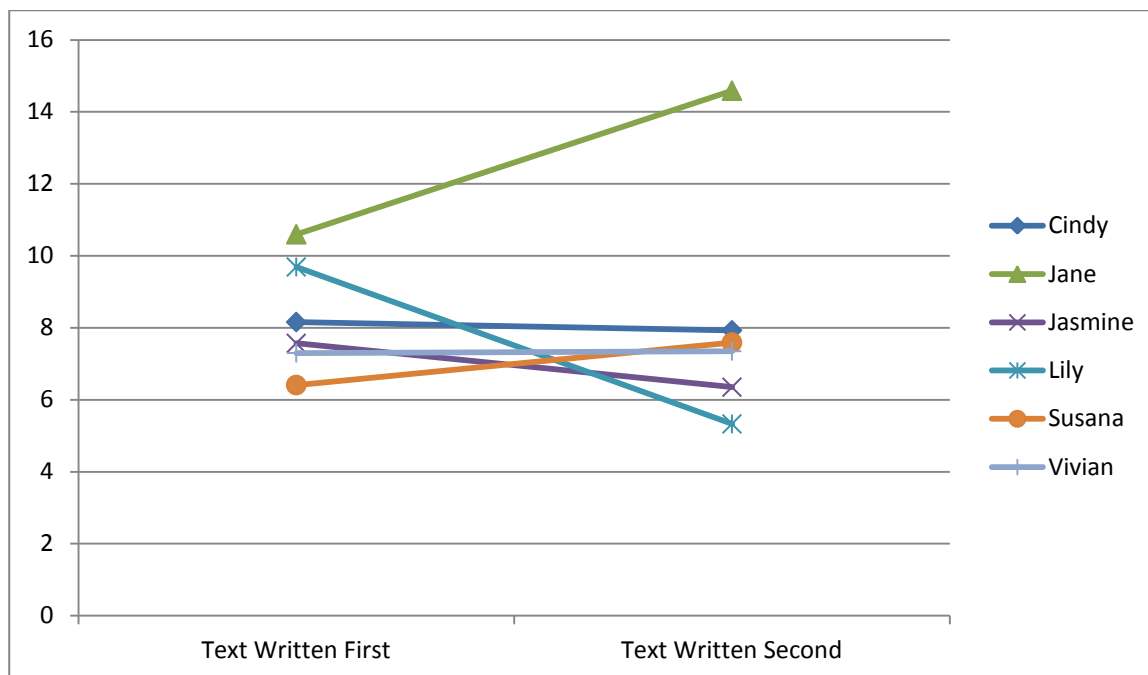
*Figure 6.39:* **Changes in Lexical Density over Time**

Figure 6.39 shows the changes in lexical density from the first written text to the second. The lexical density of Jane's, Susana's and Vivian's writing increases, whereas the lexical density of the others' texts decreases. (No change is measurable for Connie because she only wrote one autobiography.)

When the participants' lexical density measurements are averaged, they fall along the continuum of lexical density for the corpus as follows in Figure 6.40.

Spoken language                                    Written language



Participant                 Jasmine Susana Vivian  Lily  Cindy Connie      Jane
Average # of lexemes        6.96    7      7.33    7.51  8.05  8.70        12.60
per ranking clause
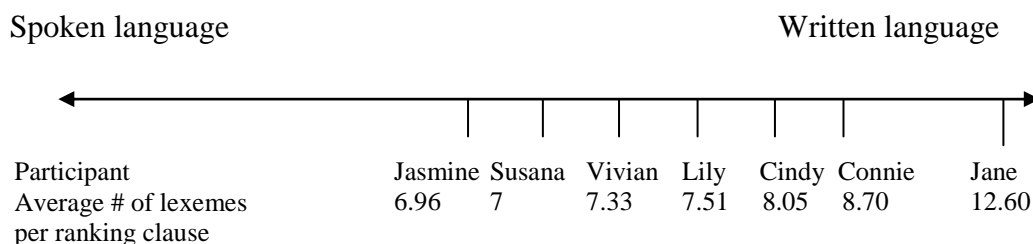
*Figure 6.40:* **Continuum of Lexical Density in Participants' Texts**

Jane's writing has the highest lexical density overall, and Jasmine has the lowest, closely

followed by Susana. The range is 5,.96, the mean is 8.31,and the median is 7.51.

## 6.4.3 Errors

The focus of this research is on what the participants wrote about their literacy

development and how they wrote it from an SFL perspective. Whether or not they make

errors in their writing is not central to this study, nor is whether or not NNESTs make more

errors than the NESTs. Errors in correct grammar and usage were made by most NNES and

NES participants somewhere in their texts. Nonetheless, from the standpoint of evaluating

academic writing, there is some value in looking at the errors that the participants made with

a view towards developing teacher training programs that better support the literacy skills of

their students.

### 6.4.3.1 Pronominals: Case and Reference

In the writing of a couple of the participants, there are pronoun case and reference

errors. For instance, Luci writes,

> Although my parents never pushed my sisters and I to learn Italian, as it was more
> important to master the English language and do well in school,  I was able to develop
> a fairly robust understanding of Italian while my ability to speak was not as strong.

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Here Luci has written the wrong form of the first person pronoun in *my sisters and I* instead of using the objective case *my sisters and me*. In this clause complex, *my parents* are in the experiential role of the Initiator of the learning process, and *my sisters and I* are in the role of the Senser; they are the direct Participants in the mental:cognitive process *learn*. In clauses such as this one that have three participants, a writer may confuse the case needed for the Senser, which might be mistaken for the subject although it is really functioning as the complement.

There are also a couple of errors in pronoun reference. One occurs when Connie discusses her experiences in learning some Spanish in middle school:

We were introduced to the <u>basics</u> and <u>it</u> came easy to me.

*Basics* is plural, yet Connie uses the singular third person pronoun. Another instance is when Vivian notes,

*I remember sitting in class, doing phonics <u>exercises</u> and thinking that <u>it</u> was boring.* Here, the word *exercises* is a plural antecedent, but Vivian uses the pronominal *it*, which is singular. A pronoun must agree with its referent. There is a possibility that she is referring back to *class*, in which case it would be the correct pronominal; however, such a scenario would result in *it* having a vague antecedent.

### 6.4.3.2 Tense

The TENSE system is the most common area of errors among the participants. Some of the participants chose the wrong tense. Jasmine makes a number of tense errors in her texts:

Before I left China, I was told about the language difficulty I would be encountering, I was counseled that since <u>I'll</u> be in school, I could easily learn English.

I was thrilled when I <u>find</u> out that I could read as many books as I want, for as long as I want and even borrow them  home, for free!

I read  and <u>write</u> a lot more when I was younger.

If I'm able to enjoy reading books that are not written in my native language, and I've learned to express my thoughts in a second language; then anyone could enjoy reading and writing .

The first error is using *will* instead of *would*, although she uses it correctly earlier in the clause complex.

Jasmine is not alone in having this difficulty. Vivian also uses the incorrect verb tense in the following clause:

Without it, I could not have really understood Cien Anos de Soledad and other novels by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a Colombian literary Nobel Peace prize recipient, <u>listen</u> or  even <u>see</u> the novelas my mother loves.

Here Vivian has not put the predicators *listen* and *see* in the past participle forms *listened* and *seen*. This is necessary because the finite *have* and the first process *understood* indicate that the tense here is past in present (present perfect). Another example from her writing is as follows:

I actually enjoy going and searching for a book just <u>sit </u>in a corner and <u>read </u>but I also must confess that I have read Harlequin Romance novels and other romance novels.

The process here *enjoy* is a mental: emotive one, and the verbs *going* and *searching* are macrophenomena in the present participle form. The subsequent processes should also be in the same form. An alternative analysis would be *enjoy + going* and *enjoy + searching* as hypotactic verbal group complexes. Nonetheless, the subsequent process should still have been changed to the *-ing* form. This clause complex is also missing a conjunction after *book*, so there is a problem with cohesion here.

Lily also has a tense error that affects sentence structure in the following sentence:

I now stock up on James Patterson books,  which provide quick, easy and enjoyable reading after the children are in bed, or <u>while waiting</u> in a doctor's office.

For the two hypotactic clauses to have parallel structure, the finite operator should be in the same tense, *while they <u>wait </u>in a doctor's office*. Alternatively, the process and conjunction

*while* could be left out and the clause could be downranked to a prepositional phrase, thereby allowing the relational process *are* to do the work.

### 6.4.3.3 Cohesion

There are a few errors in cohesion, including the Vivian's clause complex above. In addition to Lily's sentence (quoted and discussed above), Jasmine does not join her clauses correctly. In joining clauses into a clause complex, she misuses the semicolon on two occasions:

> Just as I began to blame the teacher for not teaching me any "useful" words that can be easily found; I saw a gate sign in front of a factory that has two characters I would be able to decode!

> I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would be; at some point, everybody had once enjoyed  reading and writing.

In the first case, the semicolon should be replaced by a comma. In the second case, the meaning of the sentence is not clear, and the thoughts do not logically follow. This is not simply a punctuation error. This also involves a problem with tense and meaning.

Cohesion through conjunction presents an additional problem for some of the participants. For example, Cindy had difficulty with cohesion in one sentence. She wrote,

> Reading has always been an important part of my life <u>since</u> I can remember.

Her choice of *since* is incorrect. Though *since* is a conjunction with a temporal sense, she needs *for as long as*. Jane uses the temporal conjunctive adjunct *then*, but neglects to add the conjunction *and* in the following sentence:

> The fact that I would be required to read a passage under time constraint, then answer seemingly irrelevant questions terrified me. (Jane)

It is not unusual to mistake *then* for a linker (coordinating conjunction) used in the expansion of the sentence.

### 6.4.3.4 Prepositions

Preposition errors were not common in the texts. However, Susana's texts include a few problems with prepositions:

After being retained I remember feeling embarrassed <u>of </u>my native language.

Boy was I excited, that day at school I raved <u>with</u> my friends about learning French. In the first of the two sentences, *of* should be replaced with *by*, and in the second sentence, *with* should be replaced with *to* because it is Susana who is doing the raving, not she and her friends.

### 6.4.3.5 Summary of Errors

The errors found in the participants' papers include pronominals, tense, cohesion, and preposition choice. There are more errors in tense than in the other categories, though only three participants (both NS and NNS) commit these errors. On the whole, the errors that exist in the texts do not hamper understanding of the participants' meaning.

## 6.5 Summary

This chapter has provided the findings of the SFL analysis of the corpus for this study. First, the results of the analysis on the experiential level were given with particular attention to transitivity, voice, and rankshifting (a characteristic of advanced writing). Next, the interpersonal analysis offered a perspective on the interpersonal resources used by the participants in their texts. Then, two other features of advanced literacy – grammatical intricacy and lexical density -- were explored, and finally a section on the participants' errors rounded out the chapter.

A discussion of these findings and the findings from the content analysis reported in Chapter 5 will follow in Chapter 7.

# Chapter 7

# Discussion

"Reading does not consist merely of decoding the written word or language; rather, it is preceded by and intertwined with knowledge of the world. Language and reality are dynamically interconnected. The understanding attained by critical reading of a text implies perceiving the relationship between text and context." Paolo Freire (1987, p. 29)

## 7.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a commentary on the study's findings from the thematic content analysis and the SFL analysis of the participants' self-narratives. The commentary includes a discussion of the ways in which the findings from both analyses combined provide in-depth perspectives on the literacy development of the participants. The findings are placed within the context of research on nonnative English-speaking teachers and in the field of second language literacy studies.

## 7.2 Discussion of the Findings

The surveys and autobiographical writings together form the data for this study, which set out to investigate the academic literacy experiences of the seven NES and NNES participants, all of whom were preparing to be ESL teachers. The thematic content analysis and the SFL analysis, when taken together, reveal the meanings created by the participants. A number of salient themes, often classifiable into more finely-tuned subthemes, emerged from the NES and NNES teacher learners' surveys and autobiographical texts. Through the SFL

analysis, a semantic syndrome realized by different grammatical strategies was evident in the texts. The ways in which the thematic strands and semantic syndrome connected with the participants' literacy development are presented in the findings in Chapters 5 and 6 and synthesized in this section. The analysis also facilitated cross-sectional and longitudinal comparisons of the language of the texts, providing a unique view of the characteristics of the participants' advanced academic writing.

Through the categorization of the data, the meaning created by the participants can be viewed both within the study itself and within the context of the NNS movement and the field of literacy studies. First, the findings are discussed within the study, and then they are discussed in light of prior research.

## 7.2.1 Discussion of the Major Findings within the Study

Within the study, the major findings from the analyses of the surveys and the linguistic and literacy autobiographies include:

(1) the participants' perceptions on their language proficiency

(2) the prevalence of reading together in the participants' early literacy development

(3) revelations of powerlessness and empowerment in the participants'literacy development

(4) literacy as cognition and emotion

(5) the role of literacy connections with literature,  and

(6) the lexicogrammatical characteristics of the academic writing of the participants.

Each of the findings is explicated in Sections 7.2.2.1-6 that follow. Section 7.2.2.7 includes an explanation of the impact of the body of results on the aim of the study.

### 7.2.1.1 Language Proficiency

The surveys provided essential information on the participants and their language learning and use. The participant base represents a spectrum of languages that includes English (spoken by 100% of the participants), Spanish (86%), Italian (42%), French (42%), and the rest   --American Sign Language, Mandarin, Cantonese, and Japanese – spoken by just one participant (14%), the last three by the same participant. According to their own descriptions, three of the seven teacher learners are NNESs, and all three consider themselves highly proficient in both their native language and English. Based on Bloomfield's (1965) bio-developmental definition, they can be considered to be NNESs. Utilizing definitions in the Common European Framework, the NESs, in sharp contrast, do not rate themselves as proficient in a second language, despite, in some cases, many years of study and use of the second language in their homes. This rating would suggest one, or possibly two, of three explanations: (a) the NESs in fact have the limited proficiency that they record, (b) they underestimate their language proficiency, possibly based on a widespread commonsense notion that bilingualism refers only to balanced bilingualism (that they are equally proficient in both languages), and (c) they lack self-confidence in their second language proficiency or are otherwise hesitant to be assertive in reporting their language proficiency. The first explanation is plausible, though not measurable within the framework of this study, because the participants may lack the opportunity to practice their other languages. However, this explanation would also include those participants who in their autobiographies refer to speaking their second languages at home and report demonstrating some competency in translating. The second explanation is also plausible since the notion of balanced bilingualism is commonly accepted in the US. The third explanation, also plausible, receives some support not only from the participants' discussions of their second language learning experiences in their autobiographies, but also from the SFL analysis findings that reveal a semantic syndrome of non-assertiveness and reticence in the participants' writings about their literacy

development. Therefore, the third explanation seems to be most closely aligned with the findings of this thesis.

Several salient findings support the third explanation, findings derived from both the thematic content analysis and the SFL analysis. In the autobiographies, the participants describe perceptions of their second language proficiency (see Table 7.1 below).

**Table 7.1**

*Two Perspectives on Perceptions of Second Language Proficiency*

| Parti-cipants | From the autobiographical texts | From the thematic analysis | From the SFL analysis | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **Text** | **SFL interpretation** |
| NESs | Although I had a basic comprehension of Italian, I was still struggling to communicate, as there were words and phrases unfamiliar to me. (Cindy) | Difficulties: struggles, challenges | *was struggling to communicate* | -use of conation |
| | I can recall the frustration and anxiety of not understanding and feeling helpless. I was officially turned off. (Connie) | Negative affect: frustration, anxiety | *was officially turned off* | - modulation with the Mood adjunct of probability *officially* -use of passive voice |
| | Although I did study Spanish for several years in middle and high schools, as well as college, I never considered myself fluent, and continue to be hesitant to speak Spanish with my relatives. (Lily) | Languages: L2 | *I never considered myself fluent, and continue to be hesitant to speak Spanish* | -Mood adjunct of usuality *never* -rankshifting of processes describing fluency and speaking - modulation for time – *continue* |
| NNESs | I should continue to enhance my reading and writing skills. (Jasmine) | Language skills: reading and writing | *-should continue to enhance* | -modalization - modulation for time |
| | I don't recall having any difficulties in learning English. (Susana) | Difficulties: struggles, challenges | *in learning English* | - rankshifting of learning process to postmodifier |
| | I am grateful that I am able to speak, read and write fluently in Spanish as well as English. (Vivian) | Language skills: reading, writing, and speaking | *am able to speak, read and write fluently* | -use of modulation for ability |

In Table 7.1 above, the NESs modulate their claims about their second language ability in a number of ways. Conation is one way to be less definite about one's success (see Section 6.3.3.1). In the example above, Cindy shies away from saying that she was able to communicate in Italian, her L2, portraying her proficiency as lacking and communication as a struggle. The conative verb *struggle* is combined with the perfective form (to + verb) of the secondary verb *communicate* to imply an attempt that leads to success (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), though the success is downplayed (modulated) and the focus is on the attempt. Connie's Mood adjunct of probability (degree: high) *officially* stresses the definiteness of her negative experience with learning Spanish, and her use of the agentless passive reflects her lack of agency in the second language learning process. In her account of her Spanish proficiency, Lily downranks the processes connected with her fluency and speaking ability, putting the mental process of *considering* in the main clause, thus the proposition that can be argued (*I never considered*, did I?) is what she thinks about her fluency, not her being *fluent* or *hesitant to speak*. Thus, the modal assessment is upgraded to full clause status, representing "an expansion of meaning potential" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 626). This lexicogrammatical strategy suffuses interpersonal meaning into the text. Additionally, the use of *continue* to enhance the processes through modulation introduces a circumstantial element to the clause that has the effect of underscoring the participants' view that their proficiency or language development is not complete. These types of experiential and interpersonal choices support the themes of difficulties and affect in the participants' development of L2 literacy.

While the NNESs speak of their abilities more positively from a lexical standpoint than the NESs, the former's writing about their second language also shows some of the semantic syndrome of non-assertiveness. For instance, Jasmine, using *continue* as Lily did above, modulates the process of *enhancing*, which is itself a lexical modulation of the skills of speaking and writing, thereby adding to the portrayal of proficiency as an ongoing process.

Susana downranks the process of *learning*, rather than expressing her proficiency more directly in a clause such as *I learned English easily*. Vivian uses modulation of ability/potentiality in *am able to*, rather than writing *I speak, read and write fluently*.

Proficiency in a third or other language is discussed in the autobiographies by Cindy, Connie, Jasmine, and Vivian. Jane andnow but they do in the autobiographies. and Susana does not know a third language. Cindy describes how she resorted to Spanish, her L3, when she was visiting family in Italy:

> The pace at which my family in Italy spoke was yet another challenge. At times I found myself slipping in Spanish vocabulary that I learned in school to help get across what I was trying to say.

Like Lily's example in Table 7.1, Cindy downranks the process of using language *slipping in Spanish vocabulary* and foregrounds the cognitive mental process *found*, which is likely a subconscious process. As in Lily's example in Table 7.1, she downranks the process involving language *slipping in Spanish vocabulary* and foregrounds the cognitive mental process *found*, which is likely reflecting an unconscious act. For Connie, learning American Sign Language was a more positive experience than learning Spanish:

> I am a visual learner by nature and observing the signs and then mimicking them helped me to learn ASL with more confidence than when I was learning Spanish.

Her acts of *observing* and *mimicking* directly impacted her learning of ASL, and although there is circumstantial (accompaniment) modulation *help* (enhancement of the secondary verbal group *to learn*), it is her own actions that are helping her learn and that are the agents of that learning. Somewhat differently, Jasmine learned her third language, Cantonese, *unexpectedly*.

> I've unexpectedly learned Cantonese by communicating with students from Hong Kong.

Her use of this Comment adjunct indicating prediction implies that she learned it incidentally or against expectations; this usage has the effect of self-effacement about her language learning or at least about her acknowledging her language learning.

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Vivian's description of her learning of and proficiency in French combines both direct lexicogrammatical strategies, such as in the first clause complex, and nonassertive ones, such as conation in the second clause complex.

> I stumbled over the grammar but did well in my vocabulary through a series of repetition and memorization. Phonology was a bit tricky, but I eventually managed to make use of the back of my throat and make French sounds.

She *stumbled* and *did well*, and the means by which she succeeded are the nominalized processes of repeating and memorizing. However, when she describes having difficulty with phonology, she uses modulation *managed* (contingency: concession) and *eventually*, a conjunctive adjunct of temporality (future: remote).

The themes that permeate comments about language proficiency are difficulties and challenges, negative affect, the four language skills, and indirectness in reporting language learning. The thematic and lexicogrammatical choices evident in the participants' descriptions of their language proficiency vary according to the writer, yet overall these choices create a general pattern of non-assertiveness and reticence. The participants display a lack of confidence in their proficiency and a sense of L2, and in some cases L1, learning as an unfinished process (*struggle, continue*). This tendency to describe one's proficiency or lack thereof in an indirect way grammatically carries over to other passages in the autobiographies, generally those that discuss literacy development (see Section 7.2.2.3 below).

**7.2.1.2 Early Literacy Development: Reading Together**

The accounts of the early literacy development of the seven participants revolve around interactions with their caregivers and texts. Scollon (1998) maintains that

> the act of reading  -- as opposed to the cognitive act of reading – is a kind of social interaction, a way of being socially present in the here and now, which places

participants in quite specific webs of mutual obligation to others who are socially present. This social-interactive aspect of reading is quite apart from (and in addition to) the cognitive aspects of decoding text, the cultural and historical; aspects of where and how literacy is embedded in society as a whole, and the ideological aspects of the interpretive stance taken by the reader or implied by the writer. (p. 281)

The participants' social-interactive reading experiences are revealed in both the content and the SFL analyses.

The thematic content analysis reveals that in discussing their early literacy experiences in L1 and L2 (see Section 5.3.2.1), the participants invariably include their parents, grandparents, siblings, and other family members and caregivers in their narratives. The interactants in the literacy development of the participants – their social networks -- are summarized in Section 6.3.4 (the social network analysis through the interpersonal metafunction). Each participant has a unique profile of literacy interactants, though the commonalities are striking: the strong ties with family, in some cases several generations, in early childhood and beyond, and strong ties with school once they were old enough to attend. Though they may differ in language background, it is possible that the participants share a similar socio-economic background, which could account for some of the similarities in their profiles. These profiles when combined with the thematic content analysis present a multidimensional perspective on the participants' literacy development. One significant finding is that for all of the participants except Susana, family members represent the strongest ties; for her, school is the strongest. Another finding of importance is the role of the father in the participants' literacy development, which is particularly pronounced in the social networks and narratives of Jasmine and Lily (for a discussion on the role of fathers in literacy development, see Section 7.2.2.1). In Jasmine's case, her father is mentioned more frequently than her mother. Also, the participants, except for Susana, credit their ancestors, particularly their grandmothers, with contributing to family literacy.

The bedtime story is the main site of the interactive act of reading that is described by Scollon (1998) above and the thread that runs through five of the six literacy autobiographies.

A discussion of the bedtime story in the light of the literature on literacy will follow in Section 7.2.3.1, but here it is relevant to discuss the intersection of the two analyses with regard to bedtime stories and the interactants. The SFL analysis shows a number of insights into the participants' writing about bedtime stories. In the texts as a whole, there are very few examples of verbal process projecting direct speech as a separate clause, but most of them are attached to the bedtime story and interactive reading (see Table 7.2 below):

**Table 7.2**

*Verbal Process and Direct Speech in Early Literacy Memories*

|  | Clause Complexes Projecting Direct Speech | Verbal process of the projecting clause | Participants | Mood |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cindy | Just as we finish getting ready for bed, my mother walks in our bedroom with a book in her hand and says, "Ready for story time!" | *says* | Sayer – Cindy's mother<br><br>Receiver – Cindy and her sister (implied) | Interrogative *(^ARE YOU ready for story time?)* or Imperative *(^YOU GET ready for story time!)* or Indicative *(^WE ARE ready for story time.)* |
| Lily | From an early age I can recall him repeatedly telling my sisters and me, "Always have a book with you; you never know when you might have some free time to read." | *telling* | Sayer – Lily's father<br><br>Receiver – my sisters and me (Lily) | *Imperative (^YOU always have a book with you)* |

In using direct speech, the writers present the wording (locution) used by the Sayer:

> This is not to suggest, of course, that when a speaker uses the paratactic, 'direct' form he is always repeating the exact words; far from it. The idealized function of the paratactic structure is to represent the wording; whereas with hypotaxis the idealized function is to represent the sense, or gist. (Halliday and Matthiessen, 2004, p. 454)

Cindy and Lily choose to quote their parents; in doing so, they preserve the status of the proposition or proposal as independent, including the mood. This quoting has the effect of keeping the speech function as explicit as it is in the original. Both Cindy and Lily deemed the quotes worthy of being included, perhaps because the quotes were repeated often (*each night*, *repeatedly*) and were so important to them. The other participants did not use direct quotes about their early literacy experiences, except for Jasmine who quotes herself reading a Chinese letter "Yi Gong" erroneously when she was just learning to read.

Reading together in early childhood is a pervasive theme for all the participants but Susana, though she records interaction with her older sister, who shared her newly learned knowledge of numbers and the alphabet. The memories of reading together are particularly salient and described by some of the participants using direct speech. The strength of the ties with the interactants in the participants' literacy development differs for each participant, and the ties with their fathers are particularly strong for two of the participants. As the participants progress through the educational system, their literacy development moves along a different trajectory.

**7.2.2.3 Literacy Development as Powerlessness and Empowerment: Schools and the Peripherization of Learners**

The semantic syndrome mentioned above in Section 7.2 with regard to the participants' language proficiency can be seen in other parts of their texts. The transitivity profile of and the logico-semantic perspective on the texts reveal several characteristics that relate to the peripherization of the participants as literacy learners: use of passive voice,

construal of experience in a circumstantial element (instead of as process/verbal group),

rankshifting, modulation, and conation, already described in detail in Chapter 6.

The interface between the thematic content analysis and the SFL analysis

demonstrates in what ways and contexts the participants peripherize their learning (see Table

7.3).

**Table 7.3**

*Types and Contexts of Peripherization*

| Clause | Type (from SFL analysis) | Context (from thematic analysis) |
|---|---|---|
| When I came to America as a young teenager, I was obligated to read English learning books and picture books. (Jasmine) | Passive voice <br> *was obligated* | middle school ESL |
| The fact that I would be required to read a passage under time constraint, then answer seemingly irrelevant questions terrified me. (Jane) | *would be required* | high school English |
| I was officially turned off. (Connie) | *was . . . turned off* | high school Spanish |
| As I entered middle school and high school, my leisure reading was curtailed. (Cindy) | *was curtailed* | middle and high school |
| From the first day, I was excited and intrigued with the idea of learning about another culture. (Connie) | Rankshifting <br> *learning* <br> (also passive) | middle school Spanish |
| I became an English lover through cartoon shows and TV shows such as "Full House." (Jasmine) | Circumstantial element (prepositional phrase *through cartoon shows and TV shows* instead of process, e.g. *watching cartoon shows...*) | home learning |
| I also began to develop essential reading skills, such as analysis and critique. (Jane) | Modulation <br> *began to develop* | high school |
| I wondered why I was not prepared to write after graduating from high school. (Susana) | *was not prepared to write* (also passive) | high school/college |
| I wish that my grandmother and my mother would have made more of an effort to immerse me in Spanish while I was growing up, so that I would have been naturally bilingual, rather than attempting to acquire it as a second language later in life. (Lily) | Conation <br> *attempting to acquire* | home/high school |

Commonly, the participants peripherize their middle school and high school literacy experiences in L1 and L2. Both in their content and their lexicogrammatical choices, the seven writers express their powerlessness over some aspects of their literacy development, particularly with regard to the academic demands of high school, including academic reading, second language learning, and standardized testing. Other-agentiveness, expressed through the passive voice and often agentless (with no agent or an implied agent), is common in their descriptions of early literacy, possibly because they do not yet know how to read or write and must at least perceive themselves in a receptive role, but even when they have achieved proficiency in reading and writing, they express that their lack of power.

Ontogenesis, or the development of language over a lifetime, is explored in the cases of the participants through analysis of the passive voice usage across the texts (see Section 6.2.3). The texts represent the participants' views of their literacy development along their path to academic literacy. Most instances of passive voice occur in ranked clauses, and some are associated with negative emotions and experiences, while others are more positive:

> That year I was held back for reasons that had nothing to do with my academic or language proficiency. (Susana)

> We were introduced to the basics, and it came easy to me. (Connie)

> However, since nobody speaks English around me, I was confused about the purpose of studying English. (Jasmine)

> I was so embarrassed by my prior arrogance [thinking she could already read]. (Jasmine)

Jasmine's ontogenesis can be traced through her writing from a lack of agency at the beginning to her eventual self-agency or empowerment. The other participants underwent a similar ontogenesis (see Figure 6.23 in Section 6.2.3), though not all participants deployed passive voice as extensively as Jasmine and Connie, who had a marked usage of it (marked as determined by Halliday and James, 1993, as more than 10%).

The participants may also choose these lexicogrammatical strategies, some subconsciously, to reflect their shyness and self-effacement when writing about their literacy development. Though it is difficult to say with absolute certainty that the participants intended this interpretation, the pervasive commonality of these structures in the texts suggest this meaning. These strategic choices contribute to the overall tenor of the texts as a corpus.

### 7.2.1.3  Literacy as Cognition and Emotion

The findings show that the participants depict literacy development as both a cognitive and emotive process. In SFL, mental processes are a semantic category that construes the inner world of the writer or speaker. In the participants' texts, mental processes play a larger role (28% of all clauses) than in the Matthiessen (1999) Corpus (9% of all clauses), which was used as a basis for comparison and included narratives and biographies (see Section 6.2).   The autobiographies are based on content about the participants' literacy development, which involves cognition. Thus, mental processes such as *acquire* and *learn* are quite common throughout the texts:

> We learned the lyrics through repetition and rhyme. (Cindy)

> And I was learning English at nursery school through instruction and communication with peers. (Susana)

> I acquired an enduring love of eighteenth century literature and gained insight into reading which I had never experienced before. (Jane)

The participants focus on some of the cognitive aspects of their literacy development with these processes. Also, mental processes of cognition connected with memory are distributed throughout the texts: *remember*, *recall*, and *recollect*:

> I remember I used to love to read. (Susana)

> I still can recall the colorful and vivid illustrations. (Cindy)

> I clearly recollect reading at home. (Jane)

These cognitive processes have the thematic effect of organizing the memories and moving the texts backward and forward in time.

As important as the cognitive processes are in the texts, the distribution of the mental: emotive processes has a greater prominence because their frequency lends support to notions about the social and affective nature of the participants' literacy development. The findings of the SFL analysis show that emotive processes appear in the texts as the second most frequent type of mental process overall, and most often they appear in ranked clauses, which gives the emotion more semantic weight (see Sections 6.2.1.2 and 6.2.2). The findings on the individual participants' deployment of mental processes are presented in Section 6.2.1.2. Emotive processes have a connection to interpersonal attitude because they comment on the information in the clause.  The fact that these emotions are foregrounded by their placement in ranking clauses complements the prevalence of emotive themes and subthemes in the thematic content analysis (see Table 7.4).

Table **7.4**

***Emotive Themes and Processes***

| Theme/Subtheme | Clause | Mental Process: Emotive |
|---|---|---|
| Enjoyment | During my High School years I enjoyed such books as *Wuthering Heights, Of Mice and Men, Romeo and Juliet, 1984*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*. (Lily) | *enjoyed* |
| Love | I also loved the idea of being able to speak "in code" with my friends. (Connie) | *loved* |
| Embarrassment | I was so embarrassed by my prior arrogance. . . (Jasmine) | *was embarrassed* |
| | I felt embarrassed when I had to speak Spanish, especially in public. (Susana) | *felt* |

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| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Fear | I dreaded having to read anything. (Jane) | *dreaded* |

The assignments that the participants were completing did not call for any discussion of emotions connected with literacy; thus, the affective themes emerged on their own.

The findings point to an inseparable relationship between literacy learning in L1 and L2 and emotions. Cognitive processes are intertwined with emotive processes throughout the texts, whether the process is learning to speak an L2 or developing literacy through reading. These emotive processes are positive and negative, sometimes expressing strong emotions such as love and dread, and reflect an important dimension of literacy learning.

## 7.2.2.5 Literacy Connections with Literature across Time and the Transition to Teaching

The findings include the participants' connections (a) to past and present readings, (b) between reading and writing texts, and (c) between literature and teaching. In this area, the participants shared many similarities, and though each recalled particular favorite books or writers, they all expressed a love for reading, and many of them described a routine for reading that included what, when, and where they read.

In their explications of their reading, the participants use mainly mental verbs focusing on their emotional connections to the books (e.g. *I still enjoyed English literature and loved Shakespeare novels such as Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet.* Susana) or the reading processes that they describe (e.g. *This was a special time for me because I just loved the fact that each night we could travel to a different place or time and into the lives of exciting characters.* Cindy) and relational verbs, categorizing books as favorites (e.g. *My favorite was Where the Sidewalk Ends.* Susana).

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In the corpus, reading literature takes on the powerful role of an inspiration for writing and even an inspiration for future teaching. Both NES and NNES participants refer to these connections (see Table 7.5).

**Table 7.5**

*Reading Connections*

| Type of Connection | Examples |
|---|---|
| Connection to Writing | A well-written book could often trigger my passion for writing. (Jasmine) |
| | My love for reading also filtered into my love for writing . . . I enjoyed writing about things I had read, as well as doing my own creative writing. When I read I would make note of themes or expressions that left an impression on me, and I would then incorporate those into my own writing. (Lily) |
| | I feel the more I read, the more my writing has developed. (Susana) |
| | The many books that I have read over my life from *Little Red Riding Hood* to *Spiderman* to *Paradise Lost* by John Milton to *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin have all given me a strong background to be able to write my little stories. (Vivian) |
| Connection to Teaching | As I enter the TESOL field, I hope I can inspire ELLs to love reading. I would like to again build my own personal library and fill it with books from various genres, so that I am able to peek (sic) the interests of all the students in my class. (Cindy) |
| | If I'm able to enjoy reading books that are not written in my native language, and I've learned to express my thoughts in a second language; then anyone [her future students] could enjoy reading and writing. (Jasmine) |

Four of the participants make an explicit connection between reading and writing, crediting

the reading of literature with either the desire to write or improvement in writing. In making

the connections between reading and writing, these participants display a strong foundation

for future literacy teaching because they understand the integral connection between the two;

reading not only provides the opportunity for students to consider what they have read more

profoundly but it also "supplies meaningful content for writing" (Hedgcock & Ferris, 2009, p. 188) and "rhetorical and linguistic models for students to follow" (p. 188).

Because the teacher learners are future teachers of literacy, their academic writing warrants a close examination with a view towards possible changes in teacher training programs to address any deficits or concerns. Through the SFL analysis, it is possible to gain perspectives on important aspects of their writing.

### 7.2.1.4 This Corpus and the Lexicogrammatical Characteristics of the Participants' Academic Writing

This study is the first to evaluate the autobiographies of NESs and NNESTs through both thematic content analysis and SFL analyses. The autobiographical corpus for this study consists of one type of academic genre, which is derived from a more general genre of autobiography. In terms of academic genres, a literacy or linguistic autobiography is just one of several types of academic writing assignments in the TESOL Master's Program. Autobiography is, by definition, a personal type of text and comparatively less formal than a research paper, an article critique, or an analysis. In the literacy autobiography assignment, there is no requirement for research or citations, whereas the rubric for linguistic autobiography assignment contains one dimension that refers to making connections between the autobiographical information and linguistic theory. Five of the participants (71%) made an explicit connection, whereas two (Jasmine and Susana, both NNESs) (29%) did not. This omission would have affected their grade on the assignment, but not significantly. The SFL experiential and interpersonal analyses provide a picture of the texts that help define their subgenre.

When compared to the Matthiessen (1999) Corpus (described in Section 6.2) and the biographical and narrative texts in it, this study's corpus, which is a little less than half the size of the Matthiessen Corpus, reveals a higher frequency of mental processes, which

construe the inner world of the participants. This finding is not surprising because of the autobiographies' focus on literacy learning, but it is salient in distinguishing this corpus from Matthiessen's, in particular from the biographical texts and the narratives. The closest text types from the Matthiessen Corpus are compared to this autobiographical corpus below in Table 7.6:

**Table 7.6**

*Process Type Distribution:*

*Relative Average Frequency in the Autobiographies and Other Text Types*

|  | Autobiographies | Narratives for Children | Book Review | Gossip |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Material | 44 | 53 | 48 | 31 |
| Mental | 28 | 7 | 22 | 20 |
| Relational | 20 | 22 | 32 | 40 |
| Verbal | 7 | 12 | 6 | 2 |
| Behavioral | .5 | 5 | 0 | 5 |
| Existential | .5 | 1 | 1 | 2 |

The distribution of material and mental processes is closest between the autobiographies and the book review, and the distribution of the relational processes is nearly identical in the autobiographies and the narratives for children. Gossip, which is a text of casual conversation, also has a relatively high distribution of mental processes, yet mental processes are more widely distributed in the autobiographies for the reasons discussed above and in some detail in Section 7.2.2.4. As Matthiessen (1999) notes, his clause sample is "not representative of English in general, but it is wide enough to display a considerable degree of variation" (p. 11). That the relative frequencies of processes in this corpus vary from those of other text types in the Matthiessen Corpus means that this variation is noteworthy and

definitive, and as Matthiessen adds, "the variation illustrates that registers show up as skewing in systemic probabilities" (p. 12).

The autobiographical corpus is distinguished by (a) material clauses to record the participants' experience of event lines related to their literacy development, and (b) a combination of mental and relational clauses (jointly in greater frequency than material) that construe classification, interpretation, and evaluation. Thus, the TRANSITIVITY profile reveals much about the uniqueness of the literacy and linguistic autobiographies

The autobiographical writings can be viewed from the SFL perspective as either more written-like or more spoken-like (see Section 6.4). As noted above, autobiography is personal and less formal than some other academic writing. An exploration of the grammatical intricacy and lexical density in the texts permits both a cross-sectional and a longitudinal view of the corpus as a whole and of the individual writers. The average grammatical intricacy for the linguistic autobiography is 1.97 ranking clauses per clause complex, and the median is 1.93. For the literacy autobiographies, the average is 1.87 and the median is 1.925. The NNES teacher learners' texts have neither the lowest nor the highest grammatical intricacy in the linguistic autobiographies, though in the literacy autobiographies Jasmine and Susana have the highest two. Jane, the NES who considers herself monolingual with no proficiency in other languages, has the lowest grammatical intricacy. In other words, her texts are more written-like than all of the other texts.

That said, it is fallacious to compare NSs and NNSs since native speaker is a construct developed by researchers (Kaspar, 1997), and this study uses the bio-developmental definition only as an initial classification without the socio-political implications the term carries. If a comparison is to be made, Kaspar suggests a comparison with bilinguals with proficiency in two languages, but even this suggestion is not unproblematic, as the grammatical intricacy results demonstrate (see Table 7.7).

**Table 7.7**

***Grammatical Intricacy among Bilingual NESs and NNESs:***

***Average Number of Ranking Clauses per Clause Complex***

|  | **Linguistic Autobiography** | **Literacy Autobiography** |
|---|---|---|
| NESs (Cindy, Connie, & Lily, who claim proficiency in Spanish or Italian as their L2) | 2.23 | 1.92 (only Cindy & Lily) |
| NNESs (Jasmine, Susan, & Vivian, who claim proficiency in English as their L2) | 1.94 | 1.98 |

If Jane is eliminated from the comparison on the grounds that she believes herself to be just monolingual and the NESs who rate themselves with greater or lesser degrees of proficiency in Spanish or Italian are included, the results do not support the premise that the writing of NNESs has greater grammatical intricacy than that of bilingual NESs and is, therefore, more like spoken and less like written English (see Section 7.2.2.3). In the linguistic autobiographies, the NESs' texts display greater grammatical intricacy, whereas in the literacy autobiographies they show less, but only slightly less.

At the university level, it is widely assumed that with more exposure to academic writing, teacher learners would, theoretically at least, become more proficient at writing in academic registers (see Section 7.3 for a discussion of this point with regard to the literature in the field), Viewed longitudinally, the data suggest that this assumption is not upheld for two of the six participants (excluding Connie, who did not write a second paper). Jasmine's and Lily's second papers were more grammatically intricate, thus more spoken-like. Jasmine's two texts were written only one semester apart, while Lily's were written three semesters apart.

Lexical density is another characteristic of text that differentiates spoken and written language. Written language is more lexically dense than spoken language. High lexical density is associated with native speakers of a language because of vocabulary acquisition issues, such as the difficulty a language learner has in developing a lexicon that can compare with that of a speaker of a language who has been exposed to that language since birth. In this study, the calculation of average lexical density of both texts places the NNESs at the low end and the NESs above them. As the self-named monolingual, Jane has the highest lexical density overall, nearly double the median. Excluding Jane, the lexical density of the NES's writing is shown below in Table 7.8.

**Table 7.8**

*Lexical Density among Bilingual NESs and NNESs:*

*Average Lexical Density*

|  | **Linguistic Autobiography** | **Literacy Autobiography** |
|---|---|---|
| NESs<br>(Cindy, Connie, & Lily, who claim proficiency in Spanish or Italian as their L2) | 7.4 | 8.81<br>(only Cindy & Lily) |
| NNESs<br>(Jasmine, Susan, & Vivian, who claim proficiency in English as their L2) | 7 | 7 |

For the NNESs, there is no difference in lexical density between the two autobiographies. The NNESs' average lexical density is slightly lower than the NESs in the linguistic autobiographies, but there is a larger gap between them in the literacy autobiographies. Lexical density may be linked with the development of lexicon, which would be generally found at a lower level in second language learners.

From the longitudinal perspective, only three texts increase in lexical density -- those of Jane, Susana, and Vivian. The texts by Jasmine and Lily again showed a decrease, which represents a tendency towards more spoken-like language.

Rankshifting is also more common in written language than in spoken and a characteristic of formal academic writing. All of the participants use rankshifting. In the corpus, rankshifting spans from one level down to three, but there is only one instance of it on the third level, which was in Vivian's text (see Section 6.2.2). A continuum of the participants's use of rankshifting maps the relationship between rankshifting and the participating speakers of English an L1 or L2 (see Figure 7.1):
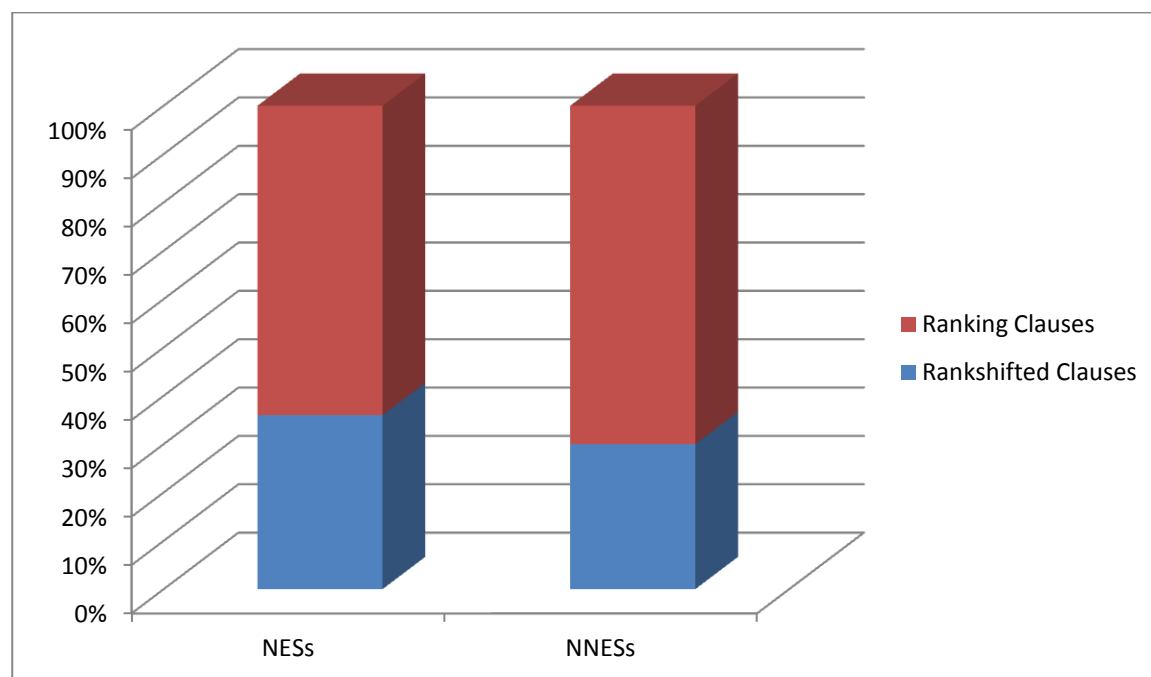


*Figure 7.1:* **Average Frequency of Rankshifted Clauses among NESs and NNESs**

The three NNESs place lowest on the continuum of rankshifting (see Section 6.2.2) and average 30%, whereas the NESs, excluding Jane, average nearly 37% and with Jane 36%. Rankshifting is an advanced writing skill that moves the writer away from grammatical intricacy (the high rate of combination of paratactic/independent and hypotactic/dependent) and towards greater intricacy at the clause level. Therefore, in these results, the NESs as a group exhibit the most intricacy in their logico-semantic choices, though individually two of the participants, Susana (NNES) and Jane (NES), have nearly the same frequency of use (see Section 6.2.2).

**7.2.1.5 Impact of the Body of Findings on the Aim of the Study**

In keeping with the intent of a qualitative, emic study to obtain in-depth results that emanate from the participants, this study has sought to listen to the writers' voices and to view their writing holistically from the perspective of emerging themes and lexicogrammatical choices. The findings of the study are in accord with the aim of the study, which was to discover what NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings reveal about how they perceive their literacy development. The thematic content analysis reveals salient themes about the NES and NNES teacher learners' literacy and language development that are shared by most or all of them, including early literacy experiences, interaction with family and others who influenced their literacy, emotion-charged accounts of literacy learning, feelings of disempowerment, the connection of reading to writing, and devotion to reading literature.  The SFL analysis reveals the lexicogrammatical resources of which the participants avail themselves to express these themes; the participants' lack of agency in their literacy development and self-effacement in their recording of it are confirmed through the grammatical analysis. Though it is not possible to eliminate humility (unwillingness to seem to be bragging about their own literacy achievements) as the cause for not writing about their literacy with more direct language, it seems unlikely that all of them would be equally reticent. In the case of Jasmine, cultural differences also contribute to her description of her literacy when she relates that she was "too proud" to listen to her parents' exhortations to modesty and writes of her "prior arrogance," thereby reflecting the high value placed on self-effacement in Chinese culture and Buddhist spirituality. In exploring the academic literacy of the participants, the SFL analysis also contributes to an understanding of academic writing in the form of literacy/linguistic autobiography by investigating the characteristics of that writing as a corpus and as individual product. The two-pronged

analysis meets the aim of the study in a multidimensional way to provide a fuller perspective on the teacher learners' literacy development than either analysis would have on its own.

## 7.2.2 The Findings and Recent Developments in Literacy Studies

This study supports the tenets of socioliteracy and confirms its usefulness as a paradigm for literacy research. Socioliteracy theory, which finds its origins in the work of Street (1993, 1995, 2003), Gee (1992, 1996, 2007), Barton and Hamilton (1998), and Heath (1982, 1983), is further applied by Johns (1999) to academic literacy and is fundamental to this study. The findings from this study validate socioliteracy theory. They are based on the participants' literacy events, that is, the literacy that the participants use to create their literacy histories, and on the literacy practices, which is the ways that they employ their autobiographies to make sense of the learning and teaching of literacy, across time and in the context of the discourse community of TESOL graduate education.

The findings illustrate that the participants were initiated into literacy in a variety of ways. Following Street (1993), some ways reflect the traditional (autonomous) concept of literacy with its focus on print, form, and the passivity of the learner. In the corpus, the participants connect their literacy development with reading and writing (e.g., Jasmine's mother introducing her to Pinyin on the eve of her first day of school or Cindy's mother announcing story time) and reveal the importance that their families place upon them (e.g., Jane's mother calling her away from play and television to read). Enhancing the thematic analysis, the SFL analysis uncovers the passivity with which the participants construe some of their literacy development (e.g., Jasmine's embarrassment at reading incorrectly, Susana's feelings of powerlessness over her language studies and her ability to write, or Connie's dehumanization in her high school Spanish class). Other ways that the participants developed literacy go beyond the narrow autonomous view and reflect the ideological concepts of literacy with its emphasis on multiliteracies and on the role of culture and interaction. Some

of the participants recount the oral language that was important to them and their family (e.g., Lily's memories of her grandmother speaking Spanish or Jane's story of her grandfather singing songs and reciting rhymes), and most recall someone reading aloud to them (Vivian's parents reading to her as soon as she could sit up or Jasmine's father giving an exciting rendition of stories). The important effects of culture on their literacy development is an overarching theme in the findings, whether it is in Susana rediscovering her first language and culture, or Jane studying Italian language and Italian cooking. These findings accord with the work of Vygotsky (1978), Cummins (1996), van Lier (1998) and Kurata (2007) on the interface between second language learning and social interaction. Through Social Network Theory (Kadushin, 2004; J.Milroy & L. Milroy, 2007; Dodsworth, 2005)  and the SFL interpersonal analysis (cf. Lam, Matthiessen, Slade, and Herke 2010), a perspective on the interactants in the participants' literacy development revealed the saliency of family members, who usurp teachers as the bearers of literacy in the findings. The complex nature of literacy spans broad areas of the participants' lives, and not just their reading and writing practices, as the evidence from the study shows.

The data show, too, that the classroom is not the major locus of literacy development, as so many of the events recorded in the literacy autobiographies occur elsewhere – reading at home, reading for pleasure, reading at various times and places (in the library, in the summer, and so on), and, most of all, reading with someone other than teachers. These findings concur with Johns (1997), who emphasizes that neither teachers nor students are literate just because they attended school. The literacy practices in the culture of the participants' families and communities account for a large part of their literacy development, which echoes the research findings from Heath's (1982, 1983) study. Her study of families in three different communities resonates with the findings from this study, in particular with the various early literacy experiences and the bedtime story. The ways in which Heath's study is linked with this study are explored in the next section.

### 7.2.2.1 Bedtime Stories

Five of the six participants who wrote their literacy histories describe their memories of bedtime stories, which they recall as a pleasant nightly routine that continued over a span of years during their childhood and that involved in most cases one or both parents. Two participants especially recount their fathers as the main participants. A number of studies (Lamb, 1997; Pruett, 2000; Marsiglio, Amato, Day, and Lamb, 2000) have examined the role of fathers in their children's lives. Green (2002) maintains that fathers play a significant role in the academic success of their children. Upholding this assertion, the US Department of Education (USDOE) (1997) in a large-scale study of 16,910 children, report that in the US, 27% of fathers in two-parent families – less than half the number of mothers -- are involved in their children's schools. However, when fathers were actively involved with their children's education, the children were more likely to receive high grades, enjoy school, and avoid retention (being held back in a grade). Moreover, the father's involvement was more likely to be longer-lasting than the mother's as the children progress through school (USDOE, 1997).

In this study, two of the participants (28%) write specifically about their father reading to them at bedtime, and a third (14%) recalls both parents reading to her. Two (28%) write only about their mothers reading them bedtime stories, and two (Connie and Susana) do not mention bedtime stories, Connie because she did not write the literacy autobiography. Thus, half of the students were read to by their fathers, which is unusual because the number of fathers who read to their children is reported to be relatively small, as noted above. The participants' community is largely middle class; many commute to New York City to work in white collar jobs, while others work closer to home. Like the NES participants in this study, many Long Island families have been in the US for several generations. The immigrant

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families lived in this community when the participants came to the US, except for Jasmine, who lived in Queens, a borough of New York City and the most culturally diverse county in the United States when she attended school. Like Heath's Maintown, the Long Island community as a whole highly values book reading and interaction with fiction (as is exemplified by Cindy's comments on the stuffed toys she played with, who were based on characters from the stories, and by Jane's captivation by the stories of the Berenstain Bears). Lily recalls hearing Bible stories as her nightly reading from both parents, as in Heath's Roadtown, but in the daytime Lily's mother read her other books. The only mention Susana makes of early contact with literacy is of her sister teaching her the letters and numbers that she learned in school. The reading of bedtime stories is, according to Heath, a preparation for the literacy practices of schooling and often a predictor of success. All seven participants successfully negotiated schooling and university to arrive in the TESOL Master's Program, though their paths were varied and not entirely smooth, according to their own accounts.

Upon completion of the TESOL Program, the participants will have the challenging task of teaching literacy in their L1 or L2. The findings provide a glimpse at their expectations for their future work as teachers.

**7.2.2.2 Literacy and the Future**

The literacy and linguistic autobiographies represent the component of literacy pedagogy that the New London Group (1996) calls *Critical Framing*; they are reflective texts in which learners look back critically on what they have learned to make sense of the present and future. In the TESOL Master's Program, the goal is to help the participants view themselves as literacy and language learners in the past and the present, so they can become sensitized to aspects of literacy development in L1 and L2 that may affect their future students and themselves. The autobiographies are the bridges between their past and future,

helping the participants to make sense of their past -- their literacy learning experiences,

including both successes and failures -- and to create a future that builds on the past.

How the participants envision that future is expressed at the end of the literacy

histories when they relate their hopes for their teaching and their students. The participants

use the interpersonal choices of modality (modulation and modalization) to accomplish their

reflections: *hope, would, be able to, can, could, will*, and *hopefully*.  Their reflections on their

own reading and writing development and their second language learning suggests a

framework for moving forward based not only on what they learn in the teacher preparation

program but also on what worked for them and what did not. This retrospective helps them

draw on their own past pain and joy to move forward as literacy learners and teachers:

> As I enter the TESOL field, I hope I can inspire ELLs to love reading.  I would like to again build my own personal library and fill it with books from various genres, so that I am able to peek (sic) the interests of all the students in my class. (Cindy)

> I hope that by the time I stand in front of my own classroom, I will have a handful of strategies which will help me to make reading engaging and interactive, in other words, a worthy adversary to an increasingly technological world. [In other parts of her text, she views technology as an obstacle to reading and literacy development.] In addition, as a potential TESOL educator, my goal is to make reading as enjoyable for English language learners as it has been for me. (Jane)

> I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would be; at some point, everybody had once enjoyed reading and writing. If I'm able to enjoy reading books that are not written in my native language, and I've learned to express my thoughts in a second language; then anyone could enjoy reading and writing. (Jasmine)

> Looking at this reflection of my literacy history and synthesizing the important aspects of my history, I would make the following statement: one's literacy history is ever evolving; it grows and changes with you reflective of the influences and circumstances of your life.  I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would hopefully be to encourage their own exploration of these rewarding and powerful means of expression. (Lily)

> As a future teacher, my literacy history will be an asset to my classroom. My love of reading will be seen throughout the classroom library and it will also guide me to help the child who does not receive a positive attitude towards learning from home. As reading once helped me during a difficult moment, it can also assist someone else.  I hope to be able to give a child the spark to want to continue learning as I continue to learn each day. (Vivian)

An SFL analysis of the texts reveals the use of modulation in these accounts. In the texts, the *hope* clauses belong to the mental process subcategory of desideration and "bring… wishes into existence" (Thompson, 2004, p. 118) grammatically. In other words, *I hope* projects the wish. *Will* and *would* modulate the processes (to a median degree) and encode willingness or inclination to connect their literacy experiences to their future roles as ESL teachers. However, one of the participants, Susana, did not include any hope clauses and did not write about her inclinations for her future role. The Mood Adjunct *hopefully* is a circumstantial element instead of a modal operator, thereby further modulating the inclination expressed by *would*. Other modal operators deployed above express ability (*can, be able to*), which modulates the process (to a low degree), and there are several verbal group complexes that enhance the processes through modulation: accompaniment (*help*), contingency: concession, and temporality (*continue*).

This modulation enhances the process by the effect of self-effacement or reticence in their plans for the future. As Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) note that "the importance of modal features in the grammar and interpersonal exchanges lies in an apparent paradox on which the entire system rests – the fact that we only say that we are certain when we are not" (pp. 624-625). For example, when Lily writes, "I <u>would</u> speculate," she is speaking less certainly than if she were to simply write, "I speculate." Therefore, in connecting their literacy experiences across time, the five NES and NNEs participants alike present their hopes for their future roles as teachers, but they do not write with complete confidence.

### 7.2.2.3 The Literacy and Linguistic Autobiographies as Academic Writing

Johns (1997) maintains that academic literacies develop through contact with the discourses of the communities that use them. She explains that learning the genres that are accepted in these communities is a social process, an explanation that receives support from

this study. In TESOL master's programs, students are frequently required to write their literacy/linguistic histories as one type of academic text. Hitherto, the language of NNES autobiographies has remained mostly unexplored, although they have been explored thematically by Braine (1999c), Thomas (1999), Li (1999) and Connor (1999), to name a few. In the current study, by writing their autobiographies, the participants are engaging in the literacy practices of the discourse community of a TESOL teacher preparation program; it is a community that is both social and academic. In this study, the thematic analysis exploits the themes that emerge, while the SFL analysis investigated the lexicogrammatical choices of the participants. The literacy and linguistic autobiographies in this study have their own unique generic characteristics, which are discussed above in Section 7.2.2.6. These characteristics represent a skewing from the general pattern of variation in English, as is represented in this study by the Matthiessen (1999) Corpus.

Several other studies indicate differences between NSs and NNSs in lexicogrammatical choices associated with advanced language development, in particular with formal, written-like registers. In researching native Spanish speakers (second-generation Latino immigrants in the US) learning academic writing in Spanish, Colombi (1997) analyzes their texts over time for grammatical intricacy, lexical density, and nominal structures. Her findings show that the students fall back on informal, spoken-like registers, so their writing appears immature and not in the appropriate register. The findings also demonstrate that the students move towards more written or formal academic register over time. In a study of three undergraduate ESL students' lab report writing, Schleppegrell (1996) found that the NNESs did not have the lexicogrammatical resources that they needed to successfully write the reports and demonstrated a tendency to write too succinctly, thereby risking the omission of necessary information. Celce-Murcia (1996) described three grammatical structures that function in academic discourse – voice, existential *there* constructions, and contrastive logical connectors – discussing the problems they present for NNESs. In the current study,

the SFL analysis of grammatical intricacy, lexical density, and rankshifting of the participants' texts show which are more like spoken English and which are more written-like and formal (in an academic register). In this study, the NNESs did measure lower than the NESs in lexical density and rankshifting, but not as a group in grammatical intricacy. However, when the NNES results are compared with the bilingual NESs, factoring out the self-described monolingual, the results are quite close. Thus, the characteristics of the NNESs' writing are similar to their multilingual NES peers, with the greatest difference in the distribution of rankshifting.

### 7.2.3 The Findings and the NNEST Issue

The aims of the study were to discover what future NESTs and NNESTs recount about their literacy development in first and second or other languages and how they use the lexicogrammatical resources of English to recount it. Hitherto, most studies on NNESTs' autobiographies have involved the first objective but not the second, as the following examples indicate.

The NNEST issue is complicated by issues of language proficiency and identity. Like the current study, other studies of NNEST autobiographies show confusion about these issues. For instance, in her in-depth discursive analysis, Pavlenko (2003) studied a corpus of autobiographies through a framework of discursive positioning, analyzing lexical choices, and tense and aspect choices to explore the identity of preservice and in-service NES/NNES ESL and EFL teachers. The findings show that NNESs are able to reconceptualize themselves as multilingual and move beyond what Pavlenko calls the "lay discourses of bilingualism [that] confer the status of bilinguals only on individuals who have grown up with two languages from birth" (p. 261). She argues that they can view themselves as a bilingual person defined as "anyone who uses more than one language for particular purposes at some

point in their daily lives" (p. 262). In the current study, the NNESs perceive themselves as bilingual, whereas the NESs do not. The latter's perceptions are in accordance with these lay notions about bilingualism, but not aligned with their own practices of L2 or L3 use, which includes traveling, talking to relatives, and translating. Thus, it can be asserted that the idea that bilinguals use both languages in exactly the same way is idealized at best. Current SLA scholarship on multilingualism (Cook, 1999; Grosjean, 2002) supports a broad understanding of bilinguals/multilinguals as being able to use more than one language for various purposes and situations. The findings from this study show L1 and L2 or L3 being used in a variety of ways, most clearly not the same as the other. All but one participant describe using their L2 or L3 for specific purposes even though the NESs do not view themselves as bilingual.

The findings from this study support the ideological model of literacy (Street, 1993). Hyland (2002) comments on the nature of writing as not objective (as portrayed in the autonomous model) but rather as imbued with emotion and other subjective aspects of interpersonal relations. Hyland's claim is supported by the findings from this study through the interpersonal SFL analysis, which reveals how the participants encoded interpersonal meanings.

The cross-sectional comparison of NES and NNEs teacher learners in this study demonstrates more similarities than differences despite quite significant cultural differences among the group. That the comparison produces results that show similarities in academic writing between NNESs and bilingual NESs is significant and underscores the unfairness of comparing bilingual NNESs with monolingual NESs. The participants have all learned more than one other language, and some have learned two or more. Their literacy development has been mostly positive, but they have also had negative experiences that they recall with clarity using emotive language. They are book lovers; they have different places and times for different types of reading. Each participant mentions interactants in their literacy learning, though the interactants and the strength of the participants' ties with them vary according to

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the participants. The NESs, except for Jane, developed proficiency in a second or third language (by their own reckoning) from early childhood or later, but all of the NNESs have studied and learned their second language in great depth, having completed high school and a bachelor's degree in the US. However, the all-encompassing learning experience of being immersed in another language and culture for over half of their lives has no correspondence among the NESs, though Cindy's experiences are likely the closest of the NESs. Ellis (2003, 2004a, 2004b, 2006a) maintains that this experience of learning a second language has a profound impact on the' effectiveness of ESOL teachers, whether NEST or NNEST, in that they are models of L2 acquisition, they have more awareness of language and the differences among languages, and they have both the ability to code-switch strategically and a bilingual and bicultural identity to serve as a resource. In the current study, Jasmine writes of language "as one of the main factors contributing to my cultural identity" and Vivian describes Spanish as "the link that allows me to be a Colombian." In contrast, Susana recounts more conflict over her bilingualism and biculturalism, rejecting Spanish and "battling" with her mother when she was in primary school, being forced by her mother into taking Spanish in secondary school, and finally deciding to major in it in university. The experiences, both positive and negative, involved in the formation of their identity have the potential of helping them in their future career as teachers. The NES participants' experiences as L2 learners of other languages and their family literacy and biculturalism can also serve as a resource when they teach ESL.

## 7.3 Summary

This chapter combines the findings of the two analyses to evaluate the ways in which they complement and enhance one another. It also brings the discussion of the findings into the broader context of the NNS movement and the field of literacy studies. The next chapter concludes the thesis with a summary of the contributions. It also includes the limitations of

the study, and its implications and their applicability to the global TESOL community.

Suggestions for further research are also presented.

# Chapter 8
# Conclusions

" 'Native speaker' seems to me to be one of a large number of useful terms for talking about language as an institution; it is precisely because it isn't too closely defined."
Halliday (in an interview with Paikeday, 1985, p. 76)

## 8.1 Introduction

This chapter brings the study to a close with a summary of the research questions and an interpretation of the findings from a theoretical standpoint. An overview of the contributions of the study broadens the discussion, connecting the study to the body of research on NNEST issues and literacy development. The study's limitations and suggestions for future research conclude the thesis.

## 8.2 Findings

This section begins with a consideration of the research questions that guided the study. These questions are followed by an overview of the theory-based model that served as a foundation for the research; a representation of the model portrays the study in light of socioliteracy and the ideological model of literacy. Following the model, there is a brief overview of the major findings and an explanation of how the findings address a gap in the research on NNESTs.

## 8.2.1 The Research Questions Revisited

A re-examination of the research questions provides a focus for the discussion that is to follow:

*Research Questions:*

1. What do NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings reveal about their literacy development?

2. How do the NES and NNES teacher learners perceive their literacy development?

3. What does a thematic content analysis reveal about NES and NNES teacher learners' literacy and language development?

4. What lexicogrammatical resources do the NES and NNES teacher learners use to construe their literacy experiences?

5. What do the NES and NNES teacher learners' interpersonal choices encode about their literacy and language development?

Questions 1 and 2 were the guiding research questions developed at the outset of the research, and questions 3-5 represent a fine-tuning of the first two questions and a reflection of the methods used to explore the texts. The guiding research questions and the supporting questions were open ended, and the answers to them derive from the themes that emerged and from the lexicogrammatical resources that were used by the participants.

Using three sources of data (surveys, literacy autobiographies, and linguistic autobiographies) from seven teacher learners in a TESOL master's program, the study sought to investigate the research questions through qualitative study. In accordance with an interpretive research paradigm, a multimethod approach -- a content analysis of the surveys and a thematic content analysis and SFL analysis of the autobiographies – was used to explore the research questions. The primary design of the study was cross-sectional, but the autobiographies were also analyzed (longitudinally over one to three semesters) for three characteristics of advanced writing.

The theory-based model that served as a foundation for the study is derived from the ideological model of literacy (Street, 1993, 1995, 1998; Gee, 1992, 1996), refined as socioliteracy (with regard to academic literacy) by Johns (1997) and as literacy events and practices by Heath (1982, 1983). The model below summarizes the findings in light of the theory-based model (see Figure 8.1):
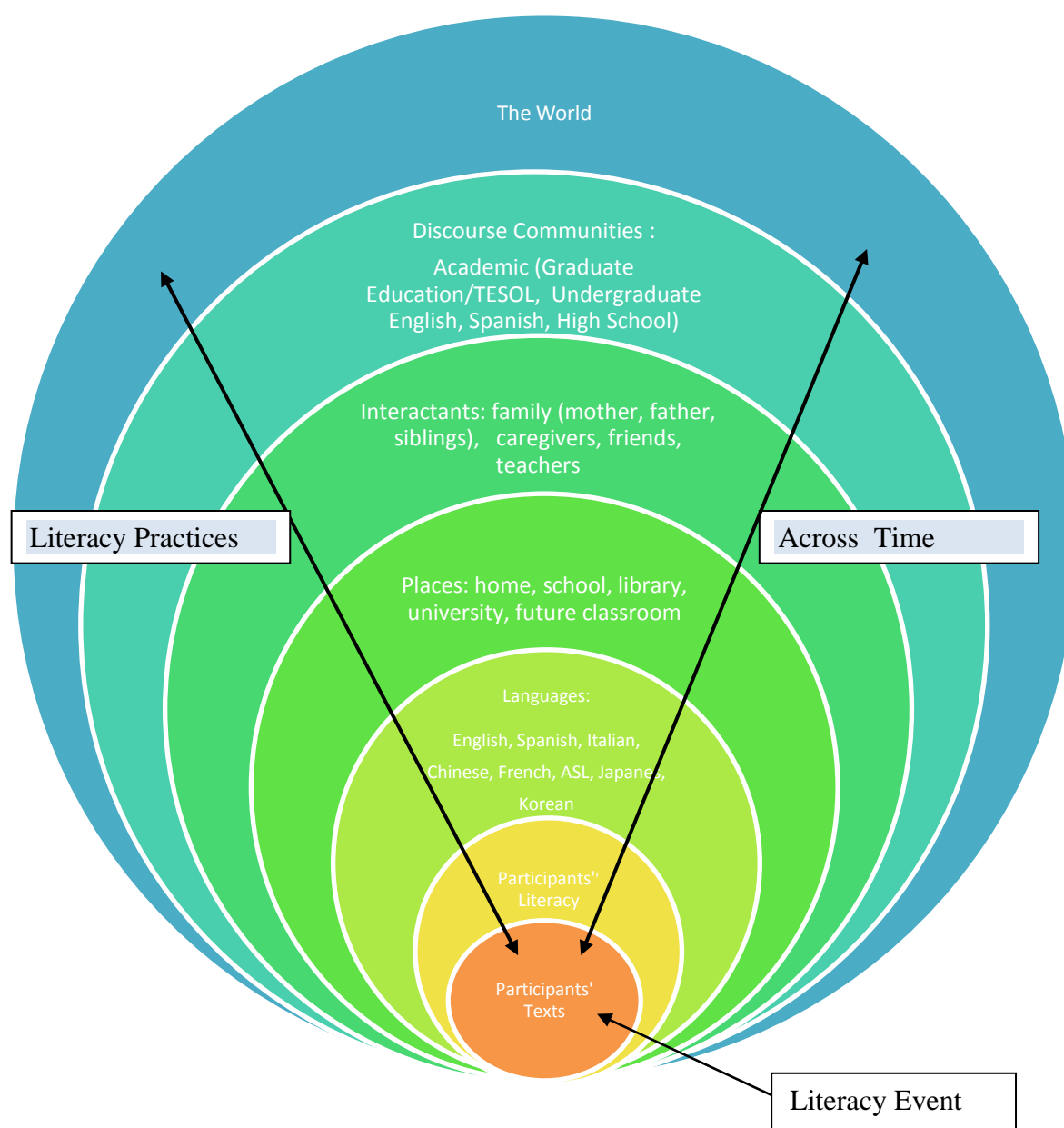
The World

Discourse Communities :
Academic (Graduate Education/TESOL, Undergraduate English, Spanish, High School)

Interactants: family (mother, father, siblings), caregivers, friends, teachers

Literacy Practices

Across Time

Places: home, school, library, university, future classroom

Languages:
English, Spanish, Italian, Chinese, French, ASL, Japanese, Korean

Participants'' Literacy

Participants' Texts

Literacy Event

*Figure 8.1*: **Theory-Based Model of Socioliteracy in This Study**

The model portrays the interaction among the many dimensions of literacy that are represented in the study and depicts the dynamism among all dimensions of literacy. Thus, there is not just movement downwards from the community to the text, but also movement to the community and points in between. Through their texts, the participants demonstrate what Hasan (1996b) terms *reflection literacy* (see Section 3.2.3.1): they use language's capacity for reflexivity in writing the texts, thereby creating new knowledge through analysis of and reflection on past events.

There were six major findings, the first five of which emanate from the combined thematic content and SFL analyses, and the last of which is evident in the SFL analysis alone.

- First, the NNESs and the NESs view their L2 proficiency differently, with the former regarding themselves as bilingual and the latter regarding their L2 proficiency as low, despite many years of study or contact in the home. Their views are challenged by research (Grosjean, 2002; Cook, 1999) and the reality of other language use around the world.

- Second, the findings show the prevalence of reading together in the participants' early literacy development, with salient roles played by family members especially fathers, and with bedtime stories as a locus of interaction. This research shows that the NESTs and NNESTs alike have similar early literacy experiences and concurs with the findings of Heath (1982, 1983).  Though Heath did not study immigrant teachers, her research shows the power of initiation into literacy. In this case, the teacher learners are initiated into the type of literacy that is most closely associated with schooling.

- The third finding is that the participants' texts reveal their powerlessness and empowerment in their literacy development across time.

- Another of the findings is the intricate connection between language learning and emotion, which is infused throughout the texts. These two findings point to the highly emotive nature of literacy development.

- The strong connections between reading literature and writing, and between reading and future teaching that is evident in most of the teacher learners' self-narratives is the fifth major finding. As the participants describe their literacy development over time, the study shows a progression from the early love of interactive reading to an abiding interest in reading and eventually teaching.

- Based on the SFL analysis, the final major finding relates to the comparison of the lexicogrammatical characteristics of the participants' texts cross-sectionally and longitudinally. The NESs and NNESs displayed characteristics of more written-like academic language. In the comparison among them, the two groups were mostly similar, a finding that challenges most critics of NNESTs.

The present study supports other studies that explored the literacy backgrounds of NNESTs through autobiography (E. Ellis, 2003; Hayes, 1996, 2005; Braine, 2010). The bio-developmental definition provides a clear and unambiguous answer to the question of who is a native speaker and who is not, but the findings do not offer a similarly unproblematic solution to this linguistic quandary. At the beginning of this study, the NNESTs wondered which language was their native language. It is clear from their own accounts and from the accounts of the other participants that they have various uses for their L1 and L2, from praying in Spanish and translating from Italian or Chinese to writing master's level papers. All of them use English, the language of their academic literacy, in the TESOL Master's

Program, the research site. This study recognized from the onset the sensitive nature of the NNEST controversy and intended to address a gap in the research on this issue.

## 8.2.2 Addressing a Gap

Hitherto, the great majority of studies on NNESTs have involved their self-perceptions, students' evaluations, and classroom observations, but the theory-based model for the research is unique in its exploration of the memories and perceptions of NESTs and NNESTs literacy development. Socioliteracy as a paradigm for studying NNESTs was supported by the findings. The socioliteracy model allowed the data to be viewed as a dynamic and multilayered expression of the participants' literacy development across their lifespan.

In terms of the analyses that produced the findings, the combination of thematic content analysis and SFL analysis contributes to the uniqueness of the study. Lipovsky and Mahboob (2010) point out that "missing from the current literature is an analysis of the actual language used to comment on NESTs and NNESTs in interview and other qualitative data" (p. 154), a gap which they fill in their study with regard to the language that students use to comment on their NESTS and NNESTs. Through the SFL analysis (of the experiential/logical and interpersonal metafunctions of language) in Chapter 6, this thesis presents the first SFL analysis of the actual language used by NESTs and NNESTs in their autobiographies; through the thematic content analysis in Chapter 5, this thesis records emerging themes that represent fresh perspectives on the literacy development of the participants. Thus, the thesis supports and expands prior research on NESTs and NNESTs.

The findings make a modest contribution to the NNEST research and to the field of literacy research. Their place in these research areas is discussed in the following section (Section 8.3).

## 8.3 Contributions of the Study

Qualitative research contributes to research on NNESTs and literacy by offering a greater depth of understanding about and a holistic view of the participants. As qualitative research, this study used an unusual analytical design (see above) that included varied data sources and multiple methods to ensure that the research had the necessary rigor. Because this study is rich in data emanating directly from the participants, the findings can contribute to the body of NNEST and literacy research.

### 8.3.1 Contributions to NNEST Research

Literacy/linguistic autobiographies have been the subject of some studies and chapters about NNSs (Braine, 1999b; Connor, 1999) and, in some cases, analyzed for salient themes (Samimy & Brutt-Griffler, 1999; Braine, 2010). However, close discursive analysis of the language of NNEST writing has hitherto been extremely limited (Pavlenko, 2003; Lipovsky & Mahboob, 2010) and the use of SFL for exploring language to levels of great delicacy is rarer still (cf. Lipovsky & Mahboob's use of Appraisal). In this sense, the study is valuable because it traverses a new path for literacy and NNEST research. When combined with the literature on NNESTs and literacy, the study contributes to an enhanced understanding of the literacy practices and advanced writing of NES and NNES teacher learners by demonstrating the ways in which the themes that emerged from the data are expressed in the lexicogrammar. Understanding the tenor of the texts, that is, the ways in which the participants express interpersonal meanings, and the field, that is, the ways in which the participants encode experiences, provides a deeper understanding of the texts than a thematic analysis alone would offer..

At the research site, reflective practice is a central paradigm of teacher preparation, and the literacy and linguistic autobiographies embody that paradigm because by exploring

their past, the teacher learners develop a better understanding of their own language learning processes. Through recounting their experiences, they are better able to exploit their own literacy strengths and interests when teaching their students. Safford and Kelly (2010), in their large-scale study at the tertiary level, sought to discover the nature and level of expertise (proficiency) of NNES teacher learners. They argue that more information on these undergraduate and graduate students' language skills is needed earlier on in their course of study, so teacher training programs can develop a more profound understanding of the resources that the NNESs bring to their teaching, what Safford and Kelly (after Bourdieu, 1991) term their "linguistic capital" (p. 401). Echoing these points, E. Ellis (2003, 2004a, 2006a) reminds teacher educators that teachers who have extensive language learning experience – both NESTS and NNESTs -- bring considerable resources with them to the classroom including:

(1) a metalinguistic knowledge of English, empathy towards their language learners

(2) insight into the differences between L1 and L2

(3) beliefs that L2 language learning can be achieved (whereas the monolingual participants in her study viewed language learning as a difficult and onerous process)

(4) L1 can be used judiciously to help in L2 development, and

(5) the ability to model successful second language learning.

The current study confirms much of Ellis's and Safford and Kelly's findings about the valuable backgrounds of NESTs and NNESTs, and it offers some new insights into their linguistic resources, such as shared experiences in early reading together with family (especially fathers), diffidence or lack of confidence in their second language proficiency, and NNESTs' use of the characteristics of advanced language similar to that of bilingual NESs. In order for teacher learners to rely on these linguistic resources, it is important for

them to know what the resources are, if and how they can be enhanced, and how they can best be deployed in the teacher learners' pedagogy.

The autobiographies in this study display the participants' lack of assertiveness and a type of reticence on their part, the causes of which cannot be definitively determined within the scope of the research. However, there is an echo of uncertainty about their language proficiency, whether it is about English or another language as the L2, that resonates with existing literature revealing the insecurities that NNESTs experience about their use of English and knowledge of the target English-speaking culture (Braine, 1999, 2010; Connor, 1999; Kamhi-Stein, 2004; Llurda, 2005; Ellis, 2003, 2004, 2006; Bernat, 2008).

## 8.3.2 Contributions to Literacy Studies

Several contributions of this study relate to the teaching and learning of L1 and L2 literacy. One is that the experiences the participants recount confirm that literacy is a highly interactive, emotional, and complex process, and it is the result of many different contexts and interactants. The findings from both analyses are supportive of the views on the ideological model of literacy proposed by New Literacy Studies (Street, 1993; Heath, 1982; Gee, 1992, 1996; New London Group, 1996) and the socioliteracy paradigm (Johns, 1997) used for the study. Freire's views on communication, thought, and action as central to literacy and the literacy learning process are also supported by the findings. Another contribution is that the study's findings supports aspects of Heath's (1982, 1983) research on early literacy development and the home, and contributes the important dimension of the participants' fathers' influence on their literacy. These findings on fathers are unique among the published autobiographies in the edited volumes of Braine (1999), Llurda (2005), and Mahboob (2010).

### 8.3.3 SFL for Literacy and NNS Research

Firth and Wagner (2007) have argued that the field of SLA continues to develop along two separate paths—one in the cognitive direction and the other in the "sociocultural/socio-interactional" p. 804) direction, one relying on etic research and the other on emic, and as the latter becomes more widely accepted, the explanatory power of SFL as a tool for studying language is likely to increase. This study supports the use of SFL in this way because it offers a linguistic framework that "sees language as a strategic, meaning making resource, allowing us to  relate lexicogrammatical forms to specific functions in certain contexts that achieve particular purposes" (Colombi, 2002, p. 68). SFL makes social contexts more transparent (Colombi, 2002).   As discussed in Chapter 3, literacy in this study is seen as a social process, or in John's (1997) terms a socioliteracy process, so it was fitting that an expansive theory of language that takes into account the social, interpersonal aspects of language was used as a tool for the analysis of the lexicogrammatical resources of the autobiographical texts. The SFL analysis facilitated a delicate perspective on the academic language of the NES and NNES participants under study, at times (and with the added dimension of the thematic content analysis) revealing a close kinship between the texts of the NES and NNES participants, and at other times illuminating differences. As in Lipovsky and Mahboob (2010), this approach offers fresh and in-depth perspectives on NNESTs. The lexicogrammatical choices that writers make are viewed as significant because these choices create the meaning of the text.

Arguments against NNESTS have long revolved around language  proficiency, but as little of the literature actually analyzes language, the argument stands on a shaky foundation. Moreover, as is evident in Section 6.4.3.5, both NESs and NNEs make grammatical errors, raising the question why NESTs with errors in usage are not viewed in the same way as NNESTs. Using SFL, it is possible to determine critical aspects of language use, such as grammatical intricacy, lexical density, and rankshifting, which present more meaningful

perspectives on advanced literacy. In the findings, there is not only variation between NESTs and NNESTs, but also among the participants in each of the groups. Paikeday's declaration "The native speaker is dead" (1985, p. 1) appears to reflect the reality of language in use. Ultimately, the term *native speaker* remains at least somewhat inconclusive even in a delicate grammatical analysis. The analysis in this study showed more similarities between NSs and NNSs than critics might expect.

## 8.4 Limitations

There are several limitations to the present study, some of which are discussed in Section 4.4.4 with regard to the methodology. One of these is that the number of the participants in the study is small, being limited to seven only. However, in qualitative studies, the number of participants may typically be small because of the intricacy and depth at which the phenomena are studied. Additional participants would have added strength to the results of the study. Another is that all the participants are female, and although this is a realistic reflection of the Master's in TESOL Program at the research site, it leaves the male NES and NNES teacher learners unrepresented. Follow-up studies including male participants would serve to round the findings out and to see whether differences in experiences are reported. Also, one of the participants, Connie, did not write a literacy autobiography, so there are no data on her early literacy experiences, reading habits, and other topics covered. However, there is an overlap with her linguistic autobiography, which provides some information on that area. She also wrote less in response to the open-ended questions on the survey, so it was necessary to elicit additional information via email. Though the missing literacy history is a limitation, including Connie positively impacted the study because she added a further dimension to the study as a post-Master's student and because her experiences in developing literacy in a second and third language enhanced the findings.

A limitation that affected the thematic content analysis is connected to the writing assignment for both autobiographies. For the literacy autobiography, there were two different sets of instructions, depending on the participants' additional area of certification – childhood or adolescence, and a few different teachers. None of the participants were in the same class; therefore, the participants did not have the same class discussion about the assignment, and it is not clear how much class interaction influenced the writing of the papers. For the linguistic autobiography, the participants received the same set of instructions and had the same teacher, but they were not all enrolled in the course in the same semester. Despite this limitation, however, the students did write about many of the same themes, even ones that were not mentioned in the assignment. This aspect of the study could have been strengthened (a) if all the participants had been from a single class, (b) if the teachers' oral instructions had been recorded, or (c) if the writing had been undertaken solely for this study, and thus researcher controlled. That said, the fact that the autobiographies were not written for the study but as part of the coursework in the TESOL Program lends authenticity of purpose and distances the researcher from the writing process and the participants.

## 8.5 Implications

The findings in this study have several implications. First, TESOL Master's Programs can prepare future teachers more effectively by addressing both the cognitive and emotive aspects of literacy teaching and learning. As noted in Section 7.2.13, emotion is intricately connected with the process of learning language (L1, L2 and others) and with reading and writing.  Assigning autobiographies as part of teacher education is an excellent and already widespread practice, but this process of reflecting on the past and applying those experiences to future teaching can be made even more meaningful by the writers viewing their autobiographies as part of the wider discourse of TESOL and literacy studies through post-

assignment readings and discussions, which can help them to see themselves as part of a wider community of professional practice. Understanding the emotional aspects of literacy learning can help teacher learners in the refinement of their own literacy skills, while they prepare to teach their future students. Also, if they share their experiences, teacher learners can see that their experiences are common and can share ideas for addressing them. This implication is closely linked to the next implication, which is. based on the thematic and SFL findings concerning the participants' disempowerment (see Section 7.2.2.3) on the secondary level.

The self-narratives in this study provide an intimate perspective on the positive and negative aspects of secondary-level language pedagogy. In the participants' accounts, literacy teaching (in L1, L2 , or L3) at times, particularly in secondary education, left the teacher learners feeling disenfranchised from the learning process. They recalled being unable to choose their own reading, as is evidenced by their accounts of reading in middle school and especially high school, and often being forced to completely put aside their own reading interests until they completed high school. Though some of the participants remembered readings of the classics in positive ways (Susana's love for Shakespeare and Vivian's favorite novels *Wuthering Heights*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and *The Three Musketeers*), others recalled the choices being made for them. Some of the NES participants did not have good experiences studying their second or third language. These findings point to necessary improvements in the foreign language classroom. The participants cite examples of poor pedagogy and learning environment, such the teacher addressing their students by numbers, not addressing students' needs, and not explaining or translating; in contrast, they also offer examples of good pedagogy, such as a language-rich environment on the tertiary level. The participants in the study succeeded in negotiating that period of their lives and were able to complete tertiary-level education, but given the high dropout rate in the US (see section 3.2.1.1), their literacy successes are not shared by all students, especially the ESL population.

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A reevaluation of academic literacy learning and second language pedagogy on the high school level may be warranted to help students remain engaged in reading and language learning, and empowered in the learning process. Teacher learners in TESOL programs, such as the research site, should develop their pedagogical approach to teaching literacy on the secondary level fully cognizant of the disengagement and challenges experienced by secondary students.

A third implication, based on findings from SFL analysis of three characteristics of academic writing (see Section 7.2.1.4), is that TESOL teacher preparation programs should not assume that NNES students' literacy will improve because of exposure to the discourse community alone. In the longitudinal review of three aspects of formal academic writing, the study does not show substantial indications of progress, and, in some cases, there is either no progress towards more formal academic writing over the course of one to three semesters, or there is regression. This implication supports the research of Nemtchinova, Mahboob, Eslami and Dogancay-Aktuna (2010). Firstly, they note that instructors in TESOL training programs do not believe that it is in their purview to help graduate students to improve their English language skills. Secondly, they maintain that some instructors think that engaging in the course readings, discussions, and assignments alone will perform this function. Nemtchinova et al. argue that such assumptions are not supported by evidence and discuss strategies that teacher educators can employ to support the language and cultural needs of NNES teacher learners. The errors (Section 6.4.3.5) in the writings of the NES and NNES teacher learners and the findings on rankshifting (Section 6.2.2) also indicate that they would benefit from further attention to their literacy skills, through course work in grammar and usage.

The teacher preparation program at the research site trains teachers for the ESL settings in which they are most likely to teach, that is, in New York City and Long Island public and  private pre-K through 12 schools. The participants as a group are from the community and are representative of the female students that attend the TESOL Program.

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There are almost no international students at the institution at any given time because there are no dormitories to house them (though one is currently being built). The participants are immigrants and were not planning to return to their home country to teach, yet there are similarities between them and international students: proficiency in two or more languages, feelings of alienation from the target culture and affinity for the home culture, and primary socialization in an ethnic community (even on campus, where students from the same culture gravitate towards one another as a buffer against the unfamiliar new environment and people). Such similarities make it possible to apply these findings to international students preparing to be teachers. Also, though the differences between the ESL and EFL settings from both the teaching and learning perspectives are extensive, this study provides perspectives on teacher learners' academic literacy, which is relevant in any setting.

The findings from the SFL analysis also imply that there is a generic profile of literacy/linguistic autobiographies. This subtype of autobiography is characterized by material processes that move along the sequence of events and a large percentage of mental processes combined with relational processes. The texts as a corpus exhibit a semantic syndrome of peripherization of self through modulation, circumstantiation, and lack of agency (passive voice), which may reflect the disempowerment of the learners.

## 8.5 Further Research

This study suggests the need to continue research on the context of NNESTs' literacy learning to take into account the many cultural and linguistic factors that contribute to their development as language learners and teachers. An expanded investigation of early literacy experiences and the ways in which they are implicated both in literacy development, success in school and in learning an L2 or other language, and in teacher biography, is necessary to further illuminate how these impact NNESTs on both personal and professional levels.

Further studies that delve into the language of the NESTs and NNESTS are called for in order to develop better teacher training programs that focus not only on methodology and theory, but also on the language development and cultural awareness of the teacher learners, whether it be enhanced metalinguistic knowledge, improved grammar and pragmatic usage, or better understanding of the academic genres that represent the discourse of the community. Future text analyses using SFL (including the three metafunctions, which represent the levels of grammatical delicacy, and appraisal, which is the language of evaluation) can help to inform instruction in teacher preparation courses and highlight the linguistic needs of all teacher learners.

Additional studies of teacher learners' academic literacy should include a broader participant base. Male teacher learners should be included, as should international students. Studies should also investigate both future EFL and ESL teachers.

To provide a broader perspective on NNEST s' academic literacy, future studies should include other types of academic writing prevalent in TESOL programs, including research papers, article critiques, linguistic analyses, and student teaching reflections. Findings from studying these types of texts would be helpful in developing academic language training sessions or coursework that assists students in the process of joining the academic discourse community of TESOL.

## 8.6 Summary

The aim of the research presented in this thesis was to discover what NES and NNES teacher learners' autobiographical writings and surveys reveal about their literacy development and their perceptions of their literacy development. The data for the study were obtained from the seven participants' answers to closed- and open-ended questions on the surveys and from their literacy and linguistic autobiographies previously submitted as part of

their coursework. The context of the NNS movement and the paradigm of socioliteracy provided the foundation for the thematic content and SFL analyses. The main findings from these analyses are that (a) the NES and NNES participants share similar early literacy experiences, including the bedtime story and the development of lifelong reading habits, and strong ties with family members in the literacy learning process, in several cases with their fathers, (b) the participants recount many emotionally charged experiences connected with their L1 and L2 language development, some positive, e.g. and others negative, e.g. high school literacy experiences, (c) the texts display a semantic syndrome of self-effacement and lack of agency, even disempowerment, in the participants' literacy development. Two important findings resulting from the SFL analysis is that the autobiographies have certain lexicogrammatical generic characteristics marked by higher than average distribution of mental processes, passive voice, modulation, and peripherization of experience, and that the participants' texts display the characteristics of academic writing to varying degrees, with the NNES not scoring definitively lower on all measures. These results contribute to the growing body of research on NNESTs and their academic literacy.

The motivation for this research project was to better understand and meet the needs of the NNES teacher learners in the Master's in TESOL Program by learning what they depict about their literacy development and how they depict it. Several NES teacher learners who have achieved various degrees of proficiency in other languages were included, along with one participant who categorized herself as monolingual. Among the needs that were discovered are affective needs for a safe and stimulating learning environment, social needs for interaction during literacy learning based on the salient role of social networks in the literacy learning process, and linguistic needs for the improvement of academic literacy skills. Adapting the teacher preparation program at the research site through the addition of coursework that targets literacy teaching and learning, and that promotes academic literacy is

the first step towards helping both NESTs and NNESTs become more successful literacy teachers.

Beyond the specific research site, the research offers other teacher preparation programs information about the depth and breadth of  students' literacy backgrounds in L1, L2, and other languages, and evidence of academic, linguistic, and personal needs that NESTs and NNESTs may experience. Increased attention to teacher learners' linguistic needs is called for as they progress through TESOL programs. Also, for teacher learners, an understanding of their own and others' lifelong experiences of literacy learning is essential in their preparation as future literacy teachers, whether they will be teaching in an ESL context or an EFL context; therefore, the use of autobiography should be expanded and studied extensively. Immigrant NNESTs were the focus of the study, but much of what is presented in the study is applicable to NNESTs in the US and abroad because it is about language learning. Sapir (1921) declared that "language is the most massive and inclusive art we know"; this study contributes to a better understanding of some aspects of language – academic literacy and literacy development. Understanding teacher learners' development as artists and preparing them to be accomplished artists of language and literacy are the ultimate aims of this study.

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# Appendices

Appendix A

Survey of Participants

Name:_____          Age:_____

1. Where were you born?

2. What is your first language?

3. What is your second language? Was it spoken at home during your preschool years?

4. How old were you when you began to speak your second language?

5. What other languages do you speak?

6. When did you start to learn them?

7. How old were you when you started to have formal literacy instruction (in preschool or school) in your first language?

8. How old were you when you started to have formal literacy instruction (in preschool or school) in your second language?

9. How would you describe yourself? (Please circle.)

    a. Monolingual

b.  Bilingual

c.  Multilingual

d.  Other _____

10. On the scale of 0-6, with 0 having no proficiency at all and 6 being proficient, evaluate your overall proficiency in your first language? Circle your response.

0      no proficiency

1      basic user (emergent)

2      basic user (high beginner)

3      independent user (low intermediate)

4      independent user (high intermediate)

5      proficient user (advanced)

6      proficient user (mastery)


Please add any comments that you may have.

11. On the scale of 0-6, with 0 having no proficiency at all and 6 being proficient, evaluate your overall proficiency in your second language? Circle your response.

7   no proficiency

8   basic user (emergent)

9   basic user (high beginner)

10  independent user (low intermediate)

11  independent user (high intermediate)

12  proficient user (advanced)

13  proficient user (mastery)

Please add any comments that you may have.

12. On the scale of 0-6, with 0 having no proficiency at all and 6 being proficient Evaluate your overall proficiency in your third or other languages? Circle your response.

0   no proficiency

1   basic user (emergent)

2   basic user (high beginner)

3   independent user (low intermediate)

4    independent user (high intermediate)

5    proficient user (advanced)

6    proficient user (mastery)

Please add any comments that you may have.

13. What do you find easiest about writing?

14. What do you find hardest about writing?

15. Do you like to write in English?  Circle your response.      Yes            No

16. If yes, what do you like to write? If no, why don't you like to write?

17. What do you mostly write (poems, stories, letters, email, college papers, lesson plans, and so on) in English?

18. Please add any further comments you might have about writing in English.

Appendix B

Literacy History Assignments

EDU 506A Childhood

Personal edification of individual's reading attitudes affect their actions and personal learning and/or teaching of reading and writing, which is partially reliant on acknowledging their beginning experiences. Subsequently, starting in primary grades to examine and later redefine thoughts, ideas, opinions, judgments and feelings about reading and writing, an ongoing and accumulative literacy history is suggested.[sic.] Each of the following questions are [sic.] provided for creating this narrative and are specifically addressed regarding reading, but are [sic.] to include writing when applicable:

1. What were the first books read to you and what were the genres? Who did this reading?

2. When is the first time you recall reading on your own, and what was it you read?

3. What influence do you think this has on your present reading attitude?

3. Why do you suppose you selected particular books to read and has this changed over the years? What were your favorite books during ages two through five, six through eight, nine through twelve, thirteen through eighteen, young adult through the present time?

4. What type of reading was and is now done in your home by parents, siblings, relatives? Does this include newspapers and magazines? Do you read these forms of writing, presently? Did you read these in the past? How do you think these have influenced you today?

5. How did the reading in school influence you? How and/did reading habits of your friends impact on you? Does this happen today? Why or why not?

6. Did you own a library card and/or go to the library to select books? At what age did this occur? Do you go to the library now? Why or why not?

7. What type of reading did you do in high school? What is your preferred genre of books, presently?

8. Do you read for pleasure and if so what?

9. Where is your favorite place to read for pleasure? How long has this been the case? Why do you suppose you prefer this location?

10. When is your preferred time of day for reading and do you read silently or aloud? Explain your answer.

11. Do you like being read to at present? If not, when did reading aloud to you occur and end?

12. Do you read to others? If so what type of book(s)?

13. What teacher, if any, had the greatest influence on your literacy history? How do you think this impacted your attitudes today?

14. What influence do you think your literacy history will have on the continuance of your reading as a learner and teacher?

Appendix C

Literacy Autobiography Tables

Table 1. *Earliest Literacy Experiences*

| Main Theme | Example |
|---|---|
| Earliest Literacy Experiences | "The earliest memory I have on print-reading draws back to when I was about 7yr old; it was the night before my first day of school. That evening, my mother pulled out a book of Pinyin (Chinese alphabets) and turned on the tape recorder so I could read along with the cassette." Jasmine

"My early experiences with literacy were quite challenging. Besides learning to read and write; I had to learn a new language . . . . Learning a new language in the beginning was very difficult, especially since Spanish was the dominant language at home." Susana

"According to my parents, they began reading to me as soon as I could sit. I find this hard to believe, yet they were firm in saying that by age three I could recognize letters, numbers, colors and some simple words in Spanish." Vivian

"As I trace back from my first memories to the present day, I have many visions of my father, always with a book in his hands.  From an early age I can recall him repeatedly telling my sisters and me, "Always have a book with you; you never know when you might have some free time to read."  Through his words and his example, my father cultivated in his children the emergence of three future book lovers." Lily

"Just as we finish getting ready for bed, my mother walks in our bedroom with a book in her hand and says, "Ready for storytime!"  The four of us then climb into one bed to cuddle and read a new book or possibly reread one of our favorite stories. This was the nightly routine for many years of my childhood."  Cindy

"I clearly recollect reading at home. Regardless of which television shows were airing or which games my sister and I were playing, the time of day which I looked forward to the most was bedtime. Each night before going to bed, my mother and I would read together. Depending on the length of the book, we would alternate the role of narrator, switching every few pages. I can still remember the pride I felt as I accurately pronounced each word and read, as I believed, with inflection and proper emotion." Jane |

Table 2. *Reading and Writing in the Literacy Autobiography*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Reading | Reading Habits | "I love to read on bed or sofa when I am reading for the purpose of entertainment; but I prefer a nice quiet place for textbook reading." Jasmine<br><br>"I did not do much recreational reading at this point [middle school and high school]. It's not that I did not want to. I just did not make time. I would either be doing school work or hanging out with my friends." Susana<br><br>"Most of my reading is done indoors. When I was younger, I enjoyed reading at the beach or by the poolside. It was very peaceful and I felt attuned with nature. I enjoyed the quiet as I read silently most of the time. I still read quietly unless I do not understand something and then I read out loud." Vivian<br><br>"I still spend countless hours at my local library and bookstores, and I do a tremendous amount of reading. The difference is that most of the reading I do now is reading aloud to my children." Lily<br><br>"I typically like to read in peace and quiet and when I am alone, as sometimes I tend to read aloud to myself. My current favorite books are Love in the Time of Cholera, The Kite Runner, and Night by Elie Wiesel. I also read newspaper articles online almost everyday in an effort to keep abreast of what is going on in the news." Cindy |
| | Early Memories of Books | "The first book I enjoyed reading alone was a small fiction pocket-book." Jasmine<br><br>"My favorite was *Where the Sidewalk Ends*." Susana<br><br>"Reading about *Hansel and Gretel* was a great excuse to cuddle into bed at any time of the day." Vivian<br><br>"As a child my parents read to me each night from a beautifully illustrated and simply written children's Bible. This is one of the first books that I remember." Lily<br><br>"We read about Clifford the Big Red Dog, Madeline, Strega Nona, Little Bear, and Lyle the Crocodile. We even had stuffed animals and dolls of the characters we read about, so that they too could join us during our bedtime reading. This was a special time for me because I just loved the fact that each night we could travel to a different place or time and into the lives of exciting characters." Cindy<br><br>"As a young girl, *The Berenstain Bears* was one of my favorite series. Rather than recognizing the clichéd storylines and always present morals, I became captivated by a family of bears who experienced problems similar to my own and who lived in an envy-inducing tree house." Jane |
| | Literature | "During my late teenage years, O was so in love with literature that I started writing stories on my own." Jasmine<br><br>"I still enjoyed English literature and loved Shakespeare novels such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*." Susana<br><br>"In my high school years, I discovered that classical literature also had these themes of adventure, mystery and romance that I enjoyed. My high school reading list influenced my choice of reading. Shakespeare and his plays enthralled me, as did the writing of the Bronte sisters, Alexandre Dumas, and others. My favorite novels during this time were *Wuthering Heights*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Three Musketeers* and others." Vivian |

Table 3. *Writing*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Writing | Writing habits | "Since my middle school years, I began to use writing as a form of communication with others and I voice my complaints in diary entries." Jasmine<br><br>"I was able to accomplish the task of writing a thesis in Spanish. During this time, I once again became interested in reading for my own purposes. I feel the more I read, the more my writing has developed." Susana |
| | Writing inspired by reading | "My love for reading also filtered into my love for writing. Still struggling with shyness, writing provided me with a safe and comfortable medium of expression. I enjoyed writing about things I had read, as well as doing my own creative writing. When I read I would make note of themes or expressions that left an impression on me, and I would then incorporate those into my own writing." Lily<br><br>"A well-written book could often trigger my passion for writing." Jasmine |
| | Writing and technology | "With advanced technology, I don't write as much as I used to . . . . E-cards have replaced regular greeting cards, Emails replaced hand written mails . . . . The joy of typing could not be the same as the joy of writing." Jasmine |

Table 4. *Family*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Family | Parents | "My father was the bookworm in the house. . . . Every night my father would read me a bedtime story in a lively  tone and fascinating expression which draws me into wild imagination about those stories" Jasmine<br><br>"My parents emigrated from Colombia, South America with my sister and I. When we came to the US, Spanish was the only language we spoke at home." Susana<br><br>"My mother has a passion for reading while my father has an amazing ability for expressing himself with words and numbers. Their passion and their literacy skills were their gift to me and my sister. My reading history quest begins with these gifts." Vivian<br><br>"Although I could not yet read myself, I remember studying the pictures featuring the characters so vividly described by the words my parents read, and feeling as though I knew these characters personally.  My mother also read to me during the day from a variety of children's books." Lily<br><br>"My parents made reading entertaining and it was never forced, so I naturally developed an affinity for books."  Cindy<br><br>"Each night before going to bed, my mother and I would read together." Jane |
| | Grandparents | "As I grew older, I realized that this incredible gift that he had bestowed upon us [the love of reading] was one that had been passed down to him from his mother; my grandmother." Lily |
| | Siblings | "I had a small advantage, my sister who had started school before me would come home and teach me what she learned, for example ABC's and 123's." Susana<br><br>"I round up my two little sisters, so I don't have to waste time waiting for them.  Just as we finish getting ready for bed, my mother walks in our bedroom with a book in her hand and says, "Ready for storytime!"" Cindy |

Table 5. *Affect*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Affect | Pleasure, entertainment, enjoyment | "This [limited access to television broadcasts] makes reading an important entertainment during my family's leisure time." Jasmine<br><br>"I really enjoyed reading the poems, they were funny." Susana<br><br>"But I also must confess that I have read Harlequin Romance novels and other romance novels. I really enjoy these little books. I have a favorite historical romance novelist. She is Kathleen Woodiweiss. I was introduced to her writings as a teenager and I have read every single book she has published. Fantasy and romance novels have taken the place of my comic books. I enjoy escaping into a world that does not exist and appeals to my fantasies. In this same area, I categorize the novels by Anne Rice, James Patterson, Michael Crichton and others. These books I enjoy reading in the bathroom or on my bed surrounded by pillows after the kids are asleep." Vivian<br><br>"During my High School years I enjoyed such books as *Wuthering Heights, Of Mice and Men, Romeo and Juliet, 1984*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*." Lily<br><br>"After high school, I was able to gradually get back into reading for pleasure. . . . . The summer continues to be a time when I am able to enjoy the opportunity of getting into a good book." Cindy<br><br>"By developing my reading skills at home, in addition to at school, I began to understand the value and pleasure of recreational reading at a young age." Jane |
| | Passion, love, like | ""His [her father's] habit of reading greatly influenced me and has led my passion to reading." Jasmine<br><br>"A well-written book could often trigger my passion for writing." Jasmine<br><br>"I remember I used to love to read. As I learned English, I developed a liking to reading books. I especially loved books that contained short stories where you were able to choose alternate endings, they were usually mysteries." Susana<br><br>"As my reading abilities developed, so did my love for books." Lily |

| | | "I love relaxing and reading in my backyard on my hammock or on the beach." Cindy "In college, my love of literature and reading evolved into a lifelong passion. . . . I acquired an enduring love of eighteenth century literature and gained insight into reading which I had never experienced before." Jane |
|---|---|---|
| | Shame, embarrassment, inadequacy | "I was not even close to what the sign was saying. I was so embarrassed by my prior arrogance; it has become one of the unforgettable fragments of my memory." Jasmine "I feel that kids like me fell through the cracks and were expected to catch up without the proper training or were held back a grade, as had occurred to me in the first grade." Susana "However, it was soon worsened by the embarrassment I felt when I realized all the classmates in my new school knew how to read, while I did not.  My embarrassment eventually served as my motivation to catch up to the other students, and by the second grade I was an accomplished reader with an entire new world opening before me." Lily "I have always worked at a slightly slower pace than my peers and to this day, I am apprehensive about timed exams. I like to feel as though I truly comprehend a passage before I attempt to answer corresponding questions." Jane |

Table 6. *Difficulties and Challenges Connected with Literacy Development*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulties and challenges | Basic Literacy | "Writing on the other hand was not as easy as reading a book or spelling. Writing has always been a challenge for me." Susana<br><br>"Another challenge I had with writing was writing in a language that once was the only language I knew but had now become foreign to me." Susana<br><br>"Writing at this point in my life was not my specialty. I remember not too long ago, finding my first grade phonics workbook and some written book reports from second grade. The workbooks had Excellent! written everywhere, yet I saw a lot of grammar errors on my book reports. I know that the time I was processing a lot of information in two languages, so I believe that is why my writing was not too sharp." Vivian |
| | Academic Literacy | "This appreciation was taken to a new level when, as an adult, I read *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand. . . . While reading her books I felt challenged to rise to the level of her literary expression." Lily<br><br>"As I entered the middle and high school, my leisure reading was curtailed.  I had to spend more time on schoolwork as the classes were more intense and arduous. I did not have as much time to devote to reading for pleasure and instead I focused on the assigned books for English class.  These new books were more challenging and consisted of different genres than I was accustomed to reading."  Cindy<br><br>"Nevertheless, when it came to standardized testing, I dreaded having to read anything. The fact that I would be required to read a passage under time-constraint, and then answer seemingly irrelevant questions terrified me. How was I supposed to comprehend a reading passage when all I could think about was whether I was reading fast enough? Was I leaving enough time to write my essay?" Jane |

Table 7. *Literacy Education*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| | Teachers | "There was one English Professor . . . who had helped to raise my interest in English writing. I enjoyed writing in her class because students were encouraged to not be afraid of making mistakes on first drafts." Jasmine<br><br>"I do not remember my teachers in high school pointing out my weaknesses in writing. I wondered why I was not prepared to write after graduating from high school." Susana<br><br>"Even though my mother and Mrs. Hoffman were my childhood mentors, I have to give Ms. Cullen, my eight grade teacher, the honor of being my inspiration to read more and to become a teacher. She taught me that reading was the way to enlightenment. Every piece of literature we read, she bought to life. She had a passionate way of explaining all aspects of language and writing, and she encouraged us to read more and to write in journals. Her encouragement made me want to excel." Vivian<br><br>"One of my most memorable teachers who has greatly influenced by ability to read and critique a book was Mrs. K.  She facilitated group discussions that helped me learn how to dissect a story and understand the underlying theme and character conflicts.  I remember her reading aloud parts of <u>Catcher in the Rye</u> and asking what Holden Caulfield meant when he said certain things or why he acted out in a specific way." Cindy<br><br>"With the guidance of an extraordinary professor, I was inspired to become an English teacher. She changed my life not only by introducing me to the captivating world of Jane Austen, Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, and many more eighteenth century women writers, but also by demonstrating how influential teachers can be in the lives of their students." Jane |
| | School | "When I came to America as a young teenager, I was obligated to read English learning books and picture books." Jasmine<br><br>"My first year at a local community college, I had to take a remedial writing class after submitting a writing sample. It was hard to imagine how for the last twelve years of my education I could not write well." Susana<br><br>"When I entered first grade, I was reading and writing in English. I remember sitting in class, doing phonics exercises and thinking that it was boring. I also could not understand why the other children were having a difficult time sounding out words. I never felt inferior or insecure in the classroom and I owe that to Mrs. Hoffman's patience and effort." Vivian<br><br>"I had the fortunate experience of attending an Elementary school whose principal, Mr. Gewirtz, was also an avid book lover.  Because of his efforts, by the time I reached the fourth grade, each classroom had its own set of classic novels." Lily |

| | | "In elementary school, I also remember reading numerous Eric Carle books.  My favorite was <u>The Very Hungry Caterpillar</u>; I still can recall the colorful and vivid illustrations.  By the time I was seven years old, I was able to read on my own and I began to read a lot during the summer time." Cindy<br><br>"I cannot remember much about the process of learning to read at school. . . . As I entered elementary school, my taste in books transformed. I began reading mysteries which introduced me to the suspense and thrill generated by a well-told story. Through reading mysteries, I also began to develop essential reading skills, such as analysis and critique." Jane |
|---|---|---|

Table 8. *The Role of the Library*

| Main Themes | Examples |
|---|---|
| Library | "One of the greatest places I loved when I first entered the states was the library." Jasmine |
| | "I still have a vivid memory of being in the library at my elementary school. I remember being read to by the librarian the following books: *The Giving Tree* and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein." Susana |
| | "After dropping her children off at school, she would take me to the library and read me books. Unfortunately, I cannot remember titles; I only have the image of being in the Corona Library, looking for books in the children's section." Vivian |
| | "As my reading abilities developed, so did my love for books. I remember with pride the day my mother took me to the library to get my own library card. Although I was seven years old, my library card gave me a sense of responsibility and importance; I could select and borrow my own books, using my own library card." Lily |
| | "Early on, I was even able to gain insight into how useful the public library is; the vast variety of literature at your fingertips is wonderful." Cindy |
| | "Another fond memory of reading from my childhood involves the anxious anticipation I would experience before walking into a public library or bookstore. I could spend hours in the library pouring over book titles which piqued my interest and intently searching for books I may have missed on a previous visit. Each summer, I would join the public library's reading club which helped me to keep track of each book I read and rewarded me with a prize for every five books I finished." Jane |

Table 9. *Future Teaching of Literacy*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Future Teaching of Literacy | Hopes | "If I'm able to enjoy reading books that are not written in my native language, and I've learned to express my thoughts in a second language; then anyone could enjoy reading and writing." Jasmine<br><br>"As a teacher, I hope to pass my enjoyment and curiosity of reading onto my students." Vivian<br><br>"As I enter the TESOL field, I hope I can inspire ELLs to love reading. I would like to again build my own personal library and fill it with books from various genres, so that I am able to peek the interests of all the students in my class. " Cindy<br><br>"I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would hopefully be to encourage their own exploration of these rewarding and powerful means of expression." Lily<br><br>"As a potential TESOL educator, my goal is to make reading as enjoyable for English language learners as it has been for me." Jane |
| | Concerns | "Nonetheless, in the back of my mind is the nagging suspicion that a majority of students dislike reading and why shouldn't they? Today, students have videogames, cell phones, internet websites, iPods, and a hundred other technological gadgets to keep them occupied. How am I supposed to compete for their attention? I struggle to discover innovative ways by which I can teach students the importance of building essential reading skills and inspire them to develop an appreciation for recreational reading." Jane |

Appendix D

Linguistic Autobiographies

Table 1. *Language Skills*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Language Skills | Reading | "I try to obtain information about my two important cultures (American and Chinese) through the reading of newspapers." Jasmine<br><br>"For as long as I can recall, I have been an avid reader. The emotions and thoughts evoked by a skilled writer or charismatic orator often leave me speechless." Jane |
| | Speaking | "We were always expected to speak properly and to use our words wisely. . . . I became passionate about speaking properly. This proved to be a struggle for me living among a household of "accents". When I would return home to my Italian family…I always felt the need to correct their words, pronunciation and sometimes spelling!" Connie |
| | Listening and Speaking | "I've realized that it's easier for me to comprehend a new language than speaking it.' Jasmine<br><br>"The pace at which my family in Italy spoke was yet another challenge. At times, I found myself slipping in Spanish vocabulary that I learned in school to help get across what I was trying to say. I often reverted to hand gestures and relied on my father to now act as my translator." Cindy |
| | Reading and Writing | I should continue to enhance my reading and writing skills. (Jasmine) |
| | Reading, Writing, and Speaking | "By the end of high school, I could read, write, and speak Spanish with fluency."<br><br>"I am grateful that I am able to speak, read and write fluently in Spanish as well as in English." Vivian |

Table 2. *Language*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Language | Language acquisition | "Some successful learning experiences are essential in inspiring my passion for future language learning." Jasmine<br><br>'And I was learning English at nursery school through instruction and communication with peers. The next couple of years I attended a bilingual pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class. This was the beginning of second language acquisition." Susana<br><br>"I believe that my first language acquisition falls in line with the separate system hypothesis. It states that a young child can acquire two languages at the same time because he/she is developing two different language systems that require different lexicon, phonological and semantic systems . . . . I remember being in situations, when I did not know how to say something in Spanish or vice versa because that word had never been used in that particular setting." Vivian<br><br>"Growing up my sisters and I learned the basics of our dialect by always listening and imitating by parents and relatives. After our one o'clock Sunday dinner, I remember singing along to Italian songs with my father and sisters in the living room. We learned the lyrics through repetition and rhyme." Cindy<br><br>"From a very young age, my family history helped me to recognize the importance of language and higher education." Jane<br><br>My first experience with foreign language was in seventh grade. . . . From the first day, I was excited and intrigued with the idea of learning about another culture. I also loved the idea of being able to speak "in code" with my friends. We were introduced to the basics and it came easy to me." Connie |
| | Language barriers | "A lot of my early struggles came from a language barrier." Jasmine<br><br>"As I graduated to the first grade, I was mainstreamed into a native English monolingual classroom. My teacher did not speak Spanish; there was one other student who spoke very little Spanish. It was as if I had entered a new world. Learning English became very important. I needed to acquire an L2 in order to succeed in school." Susana |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | "My sister and I have overcome language barriers and we are successful women in the United States and their grandchildren are on the road that will lead them to read and write in Spanish. We are in a bilingual and bicultural circle that will never break." Vivian

"My grandparents had obvious language barriers between them. However, they were able to communicate primarily in Spanish, in which Julio acquired a greater proficiency over the course of their marriage." Lily

"Recently I visited Italy with my family and the language barrier forced me to feel like an outsider." Cindy

"As she got older, my Nana remembers struggling to communicate with her mother as a result of their language barrier. My Nana understood Italian, but began to experience difficulty producing the language as time went on." Jane |
| | Dialect | "My grandparents only speak regional dialect; therefore, as a young child, I had problems communicating with them. I can not recall how I mastered the dialect when the pronunciation of it is very different from Mandarin, but I did master it after staying at my grandparents' house over the summer." Jasmine

"My mother grew up speaking our dialect at home while learning English in school." Cindy |
| | Language learning environment | "I did learn English in ESL class and in regular classes, but due to the fact that I lived in Queens where a lot of students are also immigrants like me, I didn't have enough chance to practice my English after school. Most ESL students tend to communicate with others who speak the same native language as them. " Jasmine

"She [her mother] never spoke to us in English. It was a constant battle. I concentrated on learning English to succeed in school. At home I only spoke Spanish to my parents. My sister and I would communicate in English." Susana

"When it was my turn to enter kindergarten in public school, my parents refused to send me. Instead, I stayed home with my babysitter, a lovely German lady who became my first teacher. She would take me to the library and encouraged me to read and do crafts so I would not feel so left out when I went to first grade." Vivian |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | "Growing up, my maternal grandmother was an influential presence in my life. I have distinct memories of Spanish children's songs she would teach us ("ventana-window, puerta-door, lápiz-pencil, y piso-floor"), her greetings and goodbyes in Spanish (¡Hola, mi hija!= hello, my child; dame un beso= give me a kiss), and her commands at the dinner table (¡sientate!= sit!, ¡come!= eat!).  She spoke 'broken' English, or 'Spanglish,' to her grandchildren, with a heavy Spanish accent, and we would hear her speaking Spanish with our mother, aunts and uncles."Connie

"My Long Island accent as well as certain slang terms have become vital components of my linguistic identity as they affect the way in which I interpret both the people and the world around me." Jane

"I did not realize the seriousness of learning another language until I was in High School. . . I entered my first official foreign language classroom in sophomore year. I can still remember my teacher, Brother Juan.  The first day, he looked at me and said, "dieziseis."  I thought "16"? What does that mean? Then I realized that was my number. I did not have a name anymore, I was a number. I went to my seat and from there, felt lost the entire year. He did not stop to explain his methods or to translate." Connie |
| | Language loss | "When I went back to China, I found myself speak less fluently in Mandarin, and when I came back to the states two months later, I found myself faltering when speaking English." Jasmine

"My experiences with learning Spanish and English were both positive and negative. Learning English at such a young age was an advantage. On the other hand, it held me back from acquiring proficiency in my native language." Susana

"They [her children] have a difficult time speaking in the language of my family since English has become their language of preference, but they are not giving up.  As they are maturing, they are being exposed to other languages in school and are slowly realizing how important it is for their future to speak Spanish. They are speaking and reading now more than ever." Vivian

"In their early childhood, they heard Hungarian being spoken between their mother and grandmother. None of the children acquired this language, and upon their grandmother's death, Hungarian was no longer used in |

| | | their household." Lily<br><br>"Looking back, I wish my parents pushed harder to teach us Italian so that I could be speak fluently." Cindy<br><br>"As she got older, my Nana remembers struggling to communicate with her mother as a result of their language barrier. My Nana understood Italian, but began to experience difficulty producing the language as time went on." Jane<br><br>"Soon, the Italian language from my relatives was lost, not only with my [great] Aunts generation, but with my parents generation as well." Connie |
|---|---|---|

Table 3. *Identity*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Identity | Culture | "Language is one of the main factors contributing to my cultural identity." Jasmine<br><br>"Spanish is the link that allows me to be a Colombian. Saying that I am Colombian is very daring nowadays yet I am proud of being it. If I did not speak Spanish, I would have no real contact with my aunts and uncles who are Spanish monolinguals and have been my emotional and familiar support during every crisis in my life."  Vivian<br><br>"My six- and eight-year-olds are currently studying Spanish in school, and are receiving reinforcement at home through their Grandmother and Great-Auntie Alice. I hope to recover and preserve this element of our linguistic and cultural identities." Lily<br><br>"My experience of living in a multicultural home and my exposure to various forms of language acquisition has led me on my path to become an ESL teacher." Cindy<br><br>"It [her linguistic family history] also encouraged me to take Italian cooking classes with friends, so that I could maintain aspects of my cultural identity and pass it on to my children." Jane |
|  | Heritage, legacy, inheritance | The fact that I came to the U.S. at an older age allows me to be influenced by both cultures.  I lived in China through out my childhood years; I was raised Buddhist and was nurtured by Chinese culture.  After I came to the U.S., I often find myself stuck in between eastern and western ideas.  I understand the importance of family unity and individual sacrifice for harmony, but I also admire individualism that one should follow his/her own dream." Jasmine<br><br>"I have a legacy to continue. My great grandfather would come back to haunt me if I ignored the inheritance he and my grandmother left my family.  The power of education, the love of reading and learning are their gifts. As my mother before me, I have instilled these cultural values into my children." Vivian<br><br>"In addition to opening my eyes to the experiences of English language learners, my linguistic family history motivated me to take Italian language courses for two years while obtaining my undergraduate degree. I wanted to feel a connection with my ancestors, understand my linguistic |

| | | background, and learn to recognize the influence Italian culture has had on my life." Jane

"They [her parents] can recall a few choice Italian words (expletives) as well as loving and everyday phrases that have been passed down to my siblings and I. . . . I can only hope to keep the loving, everyday phrases I have learned as part of my vocabulary, for the kids I hope to have in the future." Connie |
|---|---|---|

Table 4. *Difficulties*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Difficulties | Struggles, challenges | "English and Mandarin are very different language systems; shuttling between these two languages has been a difficult task for me.  Since none of the family members speaks fluent English, I didn't receive academic help from school." Jasmine<br><br>"As a second generation immigrant, I realized how challenging life can be, and how strong I can be to overcome those difficulties." Jasmine<br><br>"My sister, who was two grades above me in the same school, was in the only bilingual program the school offered. . . . I wanted to be in her classroom, the teachers spoke Spanish, and they seemed so familiar to me. I stayed in my monolingual classroom. It was a very traumatic year for me." Susana<br><br>"I don't recall having any difficulties in learning English. On the contrary, learning Spanish to read and write Spanish in middle school and high school presented challenges. Mostly, the difficulties were with grammar." Susana<br><br>"My parents tried hard to integrate into the English speaking society. Unfortunately they had a hard time, especially since they refused to speak English at home." Vivian<br><br>"Although  I had a basic comprehension of Italian, I was still struggling to communicate, as there were words and phrases unfamiliar to me." Cindy<br><br>"In addition, she [her grandmother] often recounts stories from her childhood which depict the challenging tasks her siblings were forced to accomplish."Jane |
|  | Sacrifice, lack | I have a little sister who was born in the U.S., but was sent back to China after birth. . . . [after her return]  I was then responsible for both of our academic developments." Jasmine |

Table 5. *Affect*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Positive Affect | Passion, love | "I became an English lover through cartoon shows and TV shows such as 'Full house.'" Jasmine<br><br>"Books, my first love, are filled with suspense, humor, irony, description, and sarcasm which are all conveyed through the immense power of language. . . . This love of language, in particular the written word, only intensified as I matured. I owe my academic success and ultimate Baccalaureate degree in English and American Literature to my reading addiction." Jane |
| | Like, enjoyment | "The more I enjoy the culture, the easier it is for me to acquire the language." Jasmine<br><br>"I decided to enroll in American Sign Language to meet my foreign language credit requirements. This was a wonderful experience for me." Connie |
| | Success, empowerment, pride | "Luckily, my mother had foreseen this problem and had spoken to me enough about my heritage, my family in Colombia and made me feel very special. She empowered me by telling me that I was not lacking in anything." Vivian |
| Negative Affect | Ridiculed, tortured, | "My sister was the target of ridicule and torture from the other children because she could not speak English well. The discrimination was very evident and overwhelming. There were no bilingual or ESL programs available when she arrived in 1963. The educational theory of the time was to learn through assimilation. That is what she did. When it was my turn to enter kindergarten in public school, my parents refused to send me. Instead, I stayed home with my babysitter, a lovely German lady who became my first teacher." Vivian |
| | Shock, embarrassment | "After being retained, I remember feeling embarrassed of my native language. I really believed that because of my Spanish I could not be with the couple of friends I was able to make by the end of that year, This affected my wanting to learn Spanish further. . . . When my mom tried to teach me how to read and write in Spanish, I rebelled and refused." Susana<br><br>"I felt embarrassed when I had to speak Spanish, especially in public." Susana<br><br>"As a child, I was often embarrassed if my |

| | | grandmother spoke Spanish in front of my friends; this made me different, when all I wanted was to fit in with everyone else." Lily<br><br>"They [her parents] may have thought that we would be embarrassed [by their speaking Italian], but in retrospect I remember not caring either way." Cindy |
|---|---|---|
| | Frustration, anxiety | "I can recall the frustration and anxiety of not understanding and feeling helpless. I was officially turned off." Connie |
| | Alienation | "I had a hard time mastering English grammar because Mandarin used a very different grammatical system." Jasmine<br><br>"This was when I realized how different I was because I was the only one in school who spoke Spanish." Vivian<br><br>"My friends came from more Americanized cultural backgrounds and I truly feel that my parents did not want to make me feel different or out of place. When my friends were over my house, my parents made an effort to talk to each other in English." Cindy |

Table 6. *Languages*

| Main Theme | Subthemes | Examples |
|---|---|---|
| Languages | L1 | "My linguistic history begins in my birth country-China. My primary language was Chinese Mandarin."<br><br>"Spanish was the first language I spoke, my L1. I was born in Colombia, South America. . . . For the first couple of years the only language Spoken at home was Spanish." Susana<br><br>"Since I was born and raised in the United States, it is very hard for me to define whether Spanish or English is my primary language. I am always at a lost as to what to say. From my earliest recollection, I have always spoken both languages." Vivian<br><br>"While I have no cognizance of my own language acquisition in English, I am now continually amazed as I watch my young children progress through the stages of mastering their native language." Lily<br><br>"As a native English speaker who has lived in New York her entire life, I have grown to appreciate the intricacies, repetitions, double-meanings, and slang terms which constitute the English language." Jane |
|  | L2 | "Mastering both English and Mandarin will require a life time of practice." Jasmine<br><br>"My first experience with English happened when I was three years old. . . . I was sent to nursery school." Susana<br><br>"My mother would correct my grammar in Spanish and my neighbors would correct my English. In my mind, both languages blend. I just knew when to speak Spanish and when not to." Vivian<br><br>"I wish that my grandmother and my mother would have made more of an effort to immerse me in Spanish while I was growing up, so that I would have been naturally bilingual, rather than attempting to acquire it as a second language later in life. Although I did study Spanish for several years in middle and high schools, as well as college, I never considered myself fluent, and continue to be hesitant to speak Spanish with my relatives." Lily<br><br>"Although my parents never pushed my sisters and I to learn Italian, as it was more important to master the English language and do well in school, I was able to develop a fairly robust understanding of Italian while my ability to speak was not as strong." Cindy |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Other languages | "During my first year in the United States, I've learned that not all Chinese children will understand Mandarin because they were born and raised in America.  I've unexpectedly learned Cantonese by communicating with students from Hong Kong." Jasmine<br><br>"For six years, I submitted myself to the task of learning all I could about the French language and culture.  I stumbled over the grammar but did well in my vocabulary through a series of repetition and memorization. Phonology was a bit tricky, but I eventually managed to make use of the back of my throat and make French sounds. Still, my accent in French is Spanish instead of English. Since fossilization of the first language is what gives you an accent, maybe at the time when I was learning French, my dominant language was Spanish instead of English." Vivian<br><br>"Being around deaf students in the hallways and cafeteria enhanced my enthusiasm and ultimately my understanding of the language. I am a visual learner by nature and observing the signs and then mimicking them helped me to learn ASL with more confidence than when I was learning Spanish." Connie |

Table 7. *Translating for Family*

| Main Theme | Examples |
|---|---|
| Translating for family | "She couldn't communicate properly with my parents because she's not fluent in Chinese and they are not fluent in English. Therefore, I must serve as a translator in the house." Jasmine

"I remember asking my sister to translate for me when I wanted to talk to my mom and vice versa." Susana

"It was the beginning of my life long job as a translator for my parents." Vivian

"I also remember having to forge the connections between objects and their English connotations or take time out to explain the meaning of a joke that was lost in translation. Often, during conversations between my father and my friends, I would act as the helpful translator. Although my father was speaking in English, my friends would have trouble deciphering what he was trying to say. I took on the role of relaying the crux of my father's messages and then together we would all break into laughter." Cindy |

Appendix E

Email Invitation to Participate in the Study

Dear Teacher Candidates,

I will be conducting a study of academic writing, and I would like to invite you to participate in the study. It will involve the completion of a survey and the submission of your literacy autobiography. You are NOT under any obligation to participate in this study, and your participation or nonparticipation will NOT affect your status in the TESOL program or your grades in any way.

Please see the attached consent form. If you are interested in participating, please read the form thoroughly, sign it, and send it back to me as soon as possible.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Jackie Nenchin

Appendix F

Literacy Autobiographies

Literacy History

By Cindy

It is seven o'clock at night and it's time to wash up, brush my teeth, and change into my pajamas. I round up my two little sisters, so I don't have to waste time waiting for them. Just as we finish getting ready for bed, my mother walks in our bedroom with a book in her hand and says, "Ready for storytime!" The four of us then climb into one bed to cuddle and read a new book or possibly reread one of our favorite stories. This was the nightly routine for many years of my childhood. We read about Clifford the Big Red Dog, Madeline, Strega Nona, Little Bear, and Lyle the Crocodile. We even had stuffed animals and dolls of the characters we read about, so that they too could join us during our bedtime reading. This was a special time for me because I just loved the fact that each night we could travel to a different place or time and into the lives of exciting characters. My parents made reading entertaining and it was never forced, so I naturally developed an affinity for books. Each Christmas and for many other occasions, I received new books, which I made sure I took care of as I enjoyed building my own personal library. In elementary school, I also remember reading numerous Eric Carle books. My favorite was The Very Hungry Caterpillar; I still can recall the colorful and vivid illustrations. ***By the time I was seven years old, I was able to read on my own and I began to read a lot during the summer time. Each year, soon after the last day of school, my mother would take my sisters and I to Barnes and Nobles, so we could each pick out a couple of books and a math workbook. In my home, it was emphasized that learning did not stop during the summer. I specifically remember reading my first chapter books, which were part of the American Girl collection. My favorite character was Samantha as I thought she was an adventurous and generous child. My family also took advantage of the public library. We would make an event of it and go for lunch and then to the library to pick out books and tapes. This occurred from about third grade through sixth grade. During this time, I read a lot of Goosebumps and Nancy Drew books. However, this did not compare to my obsession with the Baby-sitter's Club series. I was determined and came close to reading all the books in this collection. I was so interested in the storylines that I flew through the books quickly. I collected the figurine dolls and loved watching the videotapes as well. My friends were just as interested in the Baby-sitter's Club books, so it was fun to be able to share our opinions, talk about the books, and relate to the characters.

As I entered the middle and high school, my leisure reading was curtailed. I had to spend more time on schoolwork as the classes were more intense and arduous. I did not have as much time to devote to reading for pleasure and instead I focused on the assigned books for English class. These new books were more challenging and consisted of different genres than I was accustomed to reading. We read classics like The Hobbit, Animal Farm, and The Outsiders, all of which I remember enjoying a great deal. I was also introduced into reading poetry and plays written by Shakespeare. I wasn't particularly fond of analyzing poems and writing my own poetry then and that sentiment has carried over to the present. One of my most memorable teachers who has greatly influenced by her ability to read and critique a book was Mrs. Klatsky. She facilitated group discussions that helped me learn how to dissect a story and understand the underlying theme and character conflicts. I remember her reading aloud parts of Catcher in the Rye and asking what Holden Caulfield meant when he said certain things or why he acted out in a specific way. Despite the time I dedicated to schoolwork, I did enjoy reading magazines as a means to relax and escape scholarly reading. I subscribed to several teen magazines such as YM and Elle Girl. The articles were an easy and fun read, as well as a break from assigned reading.

After high school, I was able to gradually get back into reading for pleasure. During

college, my seven roommates and I started a book club.  We read an eclectic mix of genres including fiction, non-fiction, romance, and murder mysteries.  It usually took us several weeks to finish a book and get together to discuss since everyone had extremely busy schedules.  The summer continues to be a time when I am able to enjoy the opportunity of getting into a good book.  I love relaxing and reading in my backyard on my hammock or on the beach.  I typically like to read in peace and quiet and when I am alone, as sometimes I tend to read aloud to myself.  My current favorite books are <u>Love in the Time of Cholera</u>, <u>The Kite Runner</u>, and <u>Night</u> by Elie Wiesel.  I also read newspaper articles online almost everyday in an effort to keep abreast of what is going on in the news.  This semester I also have joined the Topics International group, which is like a reading club of graduate students and ELLs here on Molloy Campus.  I am excited, as it is an opportunity to meet with other graduate and ESL students to discuss different pieces of writing.  It will be interesting to see how ELLs interpret the same articles and books I will read.

Reading has always been an important part of my life since I can remember.  When I was young, reading for pleasure was never mandated, which I think took the pressure off.  Since I was given the opportunity to read whatever I wanted and my parents' involvement provided the resources to so many types of books, I learned the value of literacy.  Early on, I was even able to gain insight into how useful the public library is; the vast variety of literature at your fingertips is wonderful.  As I enter the TESOL field, I hope I can inspire ELLs to love reading.  I would like to again build my own personal library and fill it with books from various genres, so that I am able to peek the interests of all the students in my class.

Literacy Experiences

By Jane

 For as long as I can remember, I have loved to read. I am continually amazed by the power and allure of the written word and by the impact a piece of literature can have on the world. To me, reading is more than a method by which to gain information; reading offers the opportunity to experience life through someone else's voice. Novels, short stories, poems, and letters conjure up a world into which I can escape for hours on end. I can travel back to where propriety and familial rank are of the utmost importance, to where magic truly exists, and to where mistakes are easily corrected. The simple act of reading has given me immense pleasure throughout most of my life.

 I cannot remember much about the process of learning to read at school. As I attempt to recall learning to read, glimpses of simple sentences, reading circles, and books with large print flash before my eyes. On the other hand, I clearly recollect reading at home. Regardless of which television shows were airing or which games my sister and I were playing, the time of day which I looked forward to the most was bedtime. Each night before going to bed, my mother and I would read together. Depending on the length of the book, we would alternate the role of narrator, switching every few pages. I can still remember the pride I felt as I accurately pronounced each word and read, as I believed, with inflection and proper emotion. As a young girl, *The Berenstain Bears* was one of my favorite series. Rather than recognizing the clichéd storylines and always present morals, I became captivated by a family of bears who experienced problems similar to my own and who lived in an envy-inducing tree house.

 As I entered elementary school, my taste in books transformed. I began reading mysteries which introduced me to the suspense and thrill generated by a well-told story. Through reading mysteries, I also began to develop essential reading skills, such as analysis and critique. I would often analyze characters' actions as well as search for clues hidden in the text in order to solve the mystery before the solution was revealed. By developing my reading skills at home, in addition to at school, I began to understand the value and pleasure of recreational reading at a young age.

 Another fond memory of reading from my childhood involves the anxious anticipation I would experience before walking into a public library or bookstore. I could spend hours in the library pouring over book titles which piqued my interest and intently searching for books I may have missed on a previous visit. Each summer, I would join the public library's reading club which helped me to keep track of each book I read and rewarded me with a prize for every five books I finished. As a future English teacher, I see the necessity of ensuring that similar reading programs continue. They help to generate excitement about recreational reading as well as give students a chance to identify what genres interest them.

 As I advanced in school, my affection for literature and reading progressed. English was my favorite subject and unlike a majority of my classmates, I did not find class tedious. Even when I was assigned a book which held little interest for me, I was able to appreciate aspects of the writing as well as our class analysis and discussion. Nevertheless, when it came to standardized testing, I dreaded having to read anything. The fact that I would be required to read a passage under time-constraint, and then answer seemingly irrelevant questions terrified me. How was I supposed to comprehend a reading passage when all I could think about was whether I was reading fast enough? Was I leaving enough time to write my essay? I have always worked at a slightly slower pace than my peers and to this day, I am apprehensive about timed exams.

Who is to say that reading quickly is a more highly-valued skill than reading leisurely?

In college, my love of literature and reading evolved into a lifelong passion. With the guidance of an extraordinary professor, I was inspired to become an English teacher. She changed my life not only by introducing me to the captivating world of Jane Austen, Aphra Behn, Eliza Haywood, Ann Radcliffe, Charlotte Smith, and many more eighteenth century women writers, but also by demonstrating how influential teachers can be in the lives of their students. Through my college professor, I acquired an enduring love of eighteenth century literature and gained insight into reading which I had never experienced before. I was, and continue to be, amazed that an author's words could have such a lasting impression on me. In addition, I was astonished that someone I had never met, and who lived in a different time period, could put my exact emotions into words.

As a future English teacher, I have many idealistic beliefs as to how my students will react to reading assignments. Nonetheless, in the back of my mind is the nagging suspicion that a majority of students dislike reading and why shouldn't they? Today, students have videogames, cell phones, internet websites, iPods, and a hundred other technological gadgets to keep them occupied. How am I supposed to compete for their attention? I struggle to discover innovative ways by which I can teach students the importance of building essential reading skills and inspire them to develop an appreciation for recreational reading. I hope that by the time I stand in front of my own classroom, I will have a handful of strategies which will help me to make reading engaging and interactive, in other words, a worthy adversary to an increasingly technological world. In addition, as a potential TESOL educator, my goal is to make reading as enjoyable for English language learners as it has been for me.

<center>Literacy History</center>

<center>By Jasmine</center>

The earliest memory I have on print-reading draws back to when I was about 7 yr old; it was the night before my very first day of school. That evening, my mother pulled out a book of Pinyin (Chinese alphabets) and turned on the tape recorder so I could read along with the cassette. I was so excited when I had my hands on the thin book with large prints and simple picture illustrations. I listened to the tape recorder and proudly read along. Nevertheless, as a young child my patience got quickly ebbed away by the slow and repetitive reading exercise. Moments later, even though I was staring at the book and reading it out loud, I've lost my track on the alphabets.When my mom gave me a short quiz before I went to bed, I was able to recognize the first few alphabets by reading, and then recited the rest of them without knowing how they look like.

After school starts, I gradually developed my reading ability and had mastered the Pinyin. It was towards the end of first grade when my teacher finally introduced character reading to the class. I was thrilled by the feeling of being able to read the "real stuff" that grown-ups are reading. It was an ordinary weekend on the way back from my grandparents' house. I was sitting on my "reserved" seat at the rear of my father's bicycle. My mother was riding hers in parallel with my father. They were telling me that I should not be complacent about what I've learned so far and that I should always be modest when it comes to learning. However, I was too proud to pay attention to the lecture. My eyes were busy scanning through street signs and looking for the words I've learned. The search didn't go smoothly; I had trouble finding "my characters". Just as I began to blame the teacher for not teaching me any "useful" words that can be easily found; I saw a gate sign in front of a factory that has two characters I would be able to decode! Without holding back, I quickly read the words out loud as I skipped the rest of the characters" "…Yi …Gong!" Fortuitously, the word had the same pronunciation as grandfather in my regional dialect. My volume was so high that my parents had stopped their conversation and turned towards my reading source. Seconds later, they burst out a series of laughing. It turns out that the paint on the prints got faded away, therefore I was reading the top part of one character and the right side of another character. I was not even close to what the sign was saying. I was so embarrass by my prior arrogance; it has become one of the unforgettable fragments of my memory. After that incident, dictionary was on top of my book list for years.

Technology back then was far less advanced than nowadays. A color television, a radio, and an old fashion tape recorder was all the electronic entertainments we had in the house. The broadcasting station only works eight hours a day, six days a week. This makes reading an important entertainment during my family's leisure time. My father was the bookworm in the house. His habit of reading had greatly influenced me and has led to my passion to reading. Every night, my father would read me a bedtime story in a lively tone and fascinating expression which draws me into a wild imagination about those stories.

The first book I enjoyed reading was a small fiction "pocket-book". The "pocket-book" I am referring to here in not the little bag that ladies carry with their cosmetics in. It was a pocket-sized book with pictures on top of each page and prints on the bottom. The "pocket-book" was considered as adult reading, but it contains just enough text before the readers ran out of patience. I was around the age of 9 when I've discovered those little ones. I found a ton of pocket-books at a friend's house after school, and start reading it due to boredom. The first pocket-book I read was an episode of a Chinese classic called: Journey to the west. This particular literary work was well-known in China, and the broadcasting company has a teleplay for it. The pocket-book made me experienced the difference between

reading a story and watching it. I was so engaged in the story and had finally discovered the true joy of text reading.

By recollecting my memories on literacy history, I was surprised by the images that rushed into my mind. I read pictorials during preschool years, which were books with mainly pictures and very little or no prints. I became a fan of comic and funnies during middle childhood. Afterwards I began to read novels and fictions. When I came to America as a young teenager, I was obligated to read English learning books and English picture books. Biography, newspaper and magazines were never my interest of reading as a teenager. It was the college years that brought me in to the world of "serious", informational readings.

One of the greatest places I loved when I first entered the states was the library. I was thrilled when I find out that I could read as many books as I want, for as long as I want and even borrow them  home, for free! I was also amazed by the variety of books they carry in the library. I've been relocated several times in the US. Everywhere I went, obtaining  a library there was always  the priority. I like to read in local library during leisure times, and have my studies done in school library. My reading environment changes when I read different books. I love to read on bed or sofa when I am reading for the purpose of entertainment; but I prefer a nice quiet place for textbook reading.

I couldn't recall any particular teacher that has great influence on my reading skills; but there was one English Professor  at Nassau Community College who had helped to raise my interest in English writing. I enjoyed writing in her class because students were encouraged to not be afraid of making mistakes on first drafts. My grammatical skill has improved  a lot from her class. The achievement gave me a great confidence on English writing.

Similar to my reading history, my earliest memory on writing also draws back to elementary school. I did well in Pinyin writing, but when it comes to Chinese character handwriting, handwriting becomes an important issue. Since strokes are the basis for Chinese characters, a stroke less/more could change the meaning of the character. Therefore, obtaining a neat and unmistaken writing is crucial. In order to ensure that we take writing seriously, teachers would often read aloud students' essays in class and discuss about the errors. I love to write an essay when the topics are interesting and are related to my life. The every first essay I wrote was something about the family. All I could remember from the experience was that the good comments I received on the essay had given me great confidence on writing because it represents approval from my teacher.

Gradually, I learned to express my thoughts in writing. Since my middle childhood years, I began to use writing as a form of communication with others and I voice my complaints in diary entries. In my teenage years, it is common to see girls exchanging their diaries or notes written on colorful stationaries. Everyone's school bag will be filled with cards during holiday  season; and on those cards could have the most beautiful, humorous, touch greetings from friends.

A well written book could often trigger my passion for writing. During my late teenage years, I was so in love with literature that I started writing  stories on my own. None of them was published, the feeling of accomplishment was great.

With advanced technology, I don't write as m\uch as I used to be. E-cards have replaced regular greeting cards, E-mails replaces had written mails. Just as reading through a screen could never be the same as holding the  book in hand; the joy of typing could not be the same as the joy of writing. Sometimes I would pull out my old diaries and laughed at the

past; and I could always tell the type of mood I had by examining the handwriting on the pages.

Looking at this reflection of my literacy history and synthesizing the important aspects of my history I could make the following statement: Reading and writing can not be apart from one another. I read what I wrote, and I write what I read. I read and write a lot more  when I was younger.  Reading and writing are essential to our daily life; I should continue to enhance my reading and writing skills. I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would be; at some point, everybody had  once enjoyed reading and writing. If I'm able to enjoy reading books that are not written in my native language, and I've learned to express my thoughts in a second language; then anyone could enjoy reading and writing.

Personal Literacy History

By Lily

As I trace back from my first memories to the present day, I have many visions of my father, always with a book in his hands. From an early age I can recall him repeatedly telling my sisters and me, "Always have a book with you; you never know when you might have some free time to read." Through his words and his example, my father cultivated in his children the emergence of three future book lovers. As I grew older, I realized that this incredible gift that he had bestowed upon us was one that had been passed down to him from his mother; my grandmother.

As a child my parents read to me each night from a beautifully illustrated and simply written children's Bible. This is one of the first books that I remember. Although I could not yet read myself, I remember studying the pictures featuring the characters so vividly described by the words my parents read, and feeling as though I knew these characters personally. My mother also read to me during the day from a variety of children's books. One of my favorites that I recall hearing over and over again was a Little Golden Book called *The good little, bad little girl*. Although the lesson of her story was never lost on me, I know I was always entertained by her "bad little girl" behavior.

In January of my first grade school year my family moved to a new town, and a new school. As an extremely shy child, this was a difficult transition for me. However, it was soon worsened by the embarrassment I felt when I realized all the classmates in my new school knew how to read, while I did not. My embarrassment eventually served as my motivation to catch up to the other students, and by the second grade I was an accomplished reader with an entire new world opening before me.

As my reading abilities developed, so did my love for books. I remember with pride the day my mother took me to the library to get my own library card. Although I was seven years old, my library card gave me a sense of responsibility and importance; I could select and borrow my own books, using my own library card. My tastes ranged from Dr. Seuss staples such as *Green Eggs and Ham* to one of my all time favorites, *Frog and Toad are Friends*.

I had the fortunate experience of attending an Elementary school whose principal, Mr. Gewirtz, was also an avid book lover. Because of his efforts, by the time I reached the fourth grade, each classroom had its own set of classic novels. I eagerly read through *Silas Marner*, *The House of Seven Gables, The Man with the Iron Mask, Pride and Prejudice,* and *Jane Eyre* among others. If there was something written by Edgar Allan Poe, I would find it and read it. I also still made time for lighter reading such as *The Island of the Blue Dolphins* and *Are you There God? It's Me, Margaret,* both of which I excitedly saved my allowance to purchase through the Scholastic Books flier distributed in class.

My love for reading also filtered into my love for writing. Still struggling with shyness, writing provided me with a safe and comfortable medium of expression. I enjoyed writing about things I had read, as well as doing my own creative writing. When I read I would make note of themes or expressions that left an impression on me, and I would then incorporate those into my own writing.

During my High School years I enjoyed such books as *Wuthering Heights, Of Mice and Men, Romeo and Juliet, 1984*, and *The Catcher in the Rye*. While these books were required school reading, I welcomed the introduction to these new authors and their works, which I soon added to my personal favorites. Additionally, I thrived on the book discussion

and analysis which would follow each of these readings.  Through these sessions I further developed my appreciation of the written word; not merely the language, but the artistic expertise with which each author skillfully chose the words which would most accurately and vividly tell their stories.

This appreciation was taken to a new level when, as an adult, I read *Atlas Shrugged* and *The Fountainhead* by Ayn Rand.  I found the philosophies and ideas expressed through her novels to be both interesting and thought provoking.  However, the more dramatic impression left on me after reading her work was a sense of awe at her command of the English language.  She writes with such efficiency that each of her carefully chosen words is totally necessary to the expression of her thoughts.  There is no fluff or wordiness; no single word can be eliminated from her writing without altering the meaning and effectiveness of the text.  While reading her books I felt challenged to rise to the level of her literary expression.

Other authors I have enjoyed over the years include Ken Follett, Wally Lamb and Dan Brown.  Unfortunately, most of the works by these authors are too time consuming to incorporate into my current lifestyle as the mother of three young children.  I now stock up on James Patterson books, which provide quick, easy and enjoyable reading after the children are in bed, or while waiting in a doctor's office.

I still spend countless hours at my local library and bookstores, and I do a tremendous amount of reading.  The difference is that most of the reading I do now is reading aloud to my children.  I have rediscovered some old favorites, such as *Good Night Moon*, and have acquired some new favorites, such as the *Arthur* books by Marc Brown, and any children's story written or retold by James Marshall.  I am proud to say that my 4 and 6 year old children already have and use their own library cards, and my 2 year old is eager to follow in their footsteps.

As I watch my 6 year old son's reading skills gradually emerging, I hear myself encouraging his enthusiastic leap into the world of books.  I hope to instill in him and my two younger children the same gift that I received long ago; a love of reading and written expression.  I will also pass along the advice my father so wisely gave me time and time again, "Always have a book with you; you never know when you might have some free time to read."

Looking at this reflection of my literacy history and synthesizing the important aspects of my history, I would make the following statement: one's literacy history is ever evolving; it grows and changes with you reflective of the influences and circumstances of your life.  I would speculate that the influence of my reading and writing experience on others would hopefully be to encourage their own exploration of these rewarding and powerful means of expression.

Literacy Autobiography

By Susana

My early experiences with literacy were quite challenging. Besides learning to read and write; I had to learn a new language. The first language I learned was Spanish. My parents emigrated from Colombia, South America, with my sister and I. At the time, I was a year old. When we came to the U.S., Spanish was the only language we spoke at home, and then when I started school I had to learn English. I had a small advantage, my sister who had started school before me would come home and teach me what she learned, for example ABC's and 123's.

Learning a new language in the beginning was very difficult, especially since Spanish was still the dominant language at home. I remember learning to read the alphabet in Kindergarten; I was given a large, colorful booklet for each letter of the alphabet. Each booklet had pages of pictures that represented the specific letter being learned, e.g. C is for cat, and it also included a page that taught you how to handwrite a letter by tracing a sample given.

I still have a vivid memory of being in the library at my elementary school. I remember being read to by the librarian the following books: *The Giving Tree* and *Where the Sidewalk Ends* by Shel Silverstein. My favorite was *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. I really enjoyed reading the poems, they were funny. I also remember receiving Weekly Readers, classroom newspapers that were provided for supplemental reading. The weekly readers provide information about Science, global issue and educational activities. I remember I used to love to read. As I learned English, I developed a liking to reading books. I especially loved books that contained short stories where you were able to choose alternate endings, they were usually mysteries.

When I started middle school I still enjoyed reading but I also had more work to do for school and less time for recreational reading. Then in high school, I would read books that were required such as *To Kill a Mockingbird, The Great Gatsby, The Scarlett letter* etc. I did not do much recreational reading at this point. It's not that I did not want to. I just did not make time. I would either be doing school work or hanging out with my friends. I still enjoyed English literature and loved Shakespeare novels such as *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*.

Writing on the other hand was not as easy as reading a book or spelling. Writing has always been a challenge for me. My first year at a local community college, I had to take a remedial writing class after submitting a writing sample. It was hard to imagine how for the last twelve years of my education I could not write well. I do not remember my teachers in high school pointing out my weaknesses in writing. I wondered why I was not prepared to write after graduating from high school. The remedial writing class resulted becoming a better writer. I remember the professor encouraging us to write about our personal experiences and teaching the class how to organize our writing. The class helped me a great deal but it was only the beginning of a long journey on becoming a better writer. It would take many years of college writing, and even then I still consider writing my weakness.

When I first came to Molloy for my undergrad I took a few education courses. My first writing assignment for one of the courses, I took to the writing lab, as instructed by the professor. I did not think that I would have to make so many corrections I did plenty of writing as an undergrad student and I feel that this has definitely made writing less of a challenge for me.

Another challenge I had with writing was writing in a language that once was the only language I knew but had now become foreign to me. My undergrad major at Molloy was Spanish History/Literature. I had never learned to read or write in Spanish until high school and it was also not one of my strengths. Learning English was more important at that time;

bilingual education was not what it has become. There was no dual language and students were not encouraged to learn or speak in their native tongue. Being a Spanish major I had to learn to write a little in Spanish. I was a little confused on how I was going to accomplish this, when in fact, my writing in English, which was now my dominant language, was by far good quality writing. In order to attain a degree I had to \write a twenty page paper on Simon Bolivar, a Spanish Liberator. This was an obstacle for me. I was able to accomplish the task of writing a thesis in Spanish. During this time, I once again became interested in reading for my own purposes. I feel the more I read, the more my writing has developed.

My experiences with literacy in my career make me look back to my days as a grade school student. As a first grade bilingual teacher's assistant, I was responsible for working with a small group of students who were struggling with English Language Arts. Working cooperatively with the classroom teacher and reading specialist, we were able to break up into groups of three. The reading specialist took the students at the lowest level, the classroom teachers and I alternated with the students who were at the grade level and students who needed a little extra help. We worked in these groups three times a week. It was great how students were challenged  and expected to reach their reading level. I don't ever remember it being this way when I went to school. I feel that kids like me fell through the cracks and were expected to catch up without the proper training or were held back a grade, as had occurred to me in the first grade.

A Journey Through My Literacy History: Does It Ever End?

By Vivian

In order to begin the journey of my literacy history, I needed to collect some essential information about the events that happened early in my toddler years. So armed with a large yellow legal pad and several sharpened pencils, I went to the one and only main source of information, my elderly parents. Since my earliest recollection of reading and writing start at around age six, I was curious to know what happened during my toddler years. At the same time, I was fearful that they would not remember. It has been a long time, over forty years, since I was a little one. To my surprise, my parents immediately started telling me stories of my childhood and I was amazed at the clarity of their memories. Actually, it was a bit embarrassing to know that their memories of my childhood are sharper than mine. Still it was very tender to see how the memories transformed their faces, making them look not so much younger but happier. Apparently I was quite a character as a little one, and the look of affection and respect that passed between them as they spoke was not lost to me.

Before commencing this literacy journey, my family history should be clarified. I am a woman of two cultures. My parents and my sister are Colombian, while I am one of the first born and raised in the United States. My parents' belief is that to succeed in life, one has to be educated, be informed, possess good manners and have high values. Their education was limited because of poverty, teenage rebellion and political unrest, still if given more opportunity and guidance; they would have finished their schooling. My mother has a passion for reading while my father has an amazing ability for expressing himself with words and numbers. Their passion and their literacy skills were their gift to me and my sister. My reading history quest begins with these gifts.

According to my parents, they began reading to me as soon as I could sit. I find this hard to believe, yet they were firm in saying that by age three I could recognize letters, numbers, colors and some simple words in Spanish. Fairy tale books and coloring books were sent from Colombia expressively for me. My mother's goal was for me to be fluent in Spanish, so I would not forget my heritage. Reading about *Hansel and Gretel* was a great excuse to cuddle into bed at any time of the day. This must be true since I loved to cuddle with my girls at any time of the day to read to them. My mother also says that our favorite pastime was coloring and drawing. She would give me homework, like copy the letters to spell *'g-a-t-o'* (cat in Spanish) and color in the picture of a cat. I would do this as she attended to her housework. These habits never changed. The context of the homework changed, but the habit of sitting at the table while she did her chores remained well into my teenager years. Even now, when I visit and need to finish a reading or writing, I sit at her kitchen table while she putters around me cooking or washing.

By the age of five, I was reading and writing in Spanish and learning to do the same in English. Around this age, my mother had to return to full time work and I met my guardian angel, Mrs. Hoffman. She was our neighbor and my babysitter. Since my parents refused to allow me to go to the public school for kindergarten, Mrs. Hoffman became my mentor. After dropping her children off at school, she would take me to the library and read me books. Unfortunately, I cannot remember titles; I only have the image of being in the Corona Library, looking for books in the children's section. We would also do arts and crafts together at home and talk all the time. She had four children of her own and treated me just like one of them. Aside from my mother, Mrs. Hoffman was the best educator I had. I learned all my basic reading skills in English from her. When I entered first grade, I was reading and writing in English. I remember sitting in class, doing phonics exercises and thinking that it was boring. I also could not understand why the other children were having a difficult time

sounding out words. I never felt inferior or insecure in the classroom and I owe that to Mrs. Hoffman's patience and effort.

Writing at this point in my life was not my specialty. I remember not too long ago, finding my first grade phonics workbook and some written book reports from second grade. The workbooks had Excellent! written everywhere, yet I saw a lot of grammar errors on my book reports. I know that the time I was processing a lot of information in two languages, so I believe that is why my writing was not too sharp. I think the emphasis was more on reading than writing at this time. I again cannot name titles, but I do remember being chastised because I took Mrs. Hoffman's daughter's books to read without asking first. As I mentioned before, I was treated as a family member, so I got the lecture from Mrs. Hoffman, but Carol, her daughter, also got one for un-sisterly conduct.

Meanwhile at my own home, I was rapidly discovering the world of a Spanish comic magazine called *Condorito*. This was about a funny looking condor that was always getting into trouble. I enjoyed reading about his adventures. There was, also in Spanish, a small magazine dedicated to retelling the adventures of *The Lone Ranger*. These were my favorites, as well as, the funnies, or comic strips, in the paper. My father never left the house without reading the *Daily News*. I never left the kitchen table on Sunday morning without reading about the Peanut gang or Dick Tracy. This is another reading habit that has not changed over the years. At my home, we read the newspaper every morning. Unfortunately the *New York Times* does not have any comic strips, so this small part of my reading history has not been passed on to my children. Still the importance of reading for both current events and pleasure are modeled through the newspaper and my comic books.

In the third grade, I discovered the world of comic books. I have read from the *Archie* comics to *Superman*, from Marvel comics to DC Comics. Marvel Comics were my favorite. Their characters seem more personable and the story lines were more realistic and believable. The language was not difficult to understand and the artwork was amazingly real. The storylines touched upon social issues that in the mainstream seemed unwilling to or unable to approach. I learned quite a bit about these issues, like prostitution, drugs and crime, which I did not find in other books. This was my pleasure and forbidden reading that lasted well into my twenties. I say forbidden since my parents were against them. They did not believe this to be literature, therefore it was garbage and unfit for a young girl to read. Because of their disapproval and with the help of my friends, I became quite creative in hiding my comics and in finding places to read them; hence the beginning of the bathroom being my favorite place to read. To this day I still hide in the bathroom if I really want to have peace while I read. Unfortunately, my children have a way of disturbing me even in this sanctuary, so most of my reading is now done after they go to bed.

When I was thirteen, I found my soul mate. He was a young boy like me who loved comic books. He was my best friend. Together we would read and exchange comics. With him as my partner, we discovered the world of science fiction. He introduced me to many fantasy books, which I still have at my parent's house. My favorite was Stephen Kings, *The Stand*. It was the scariest modern epic I had read at the time. Other favorites at the time were *Dune*, and the *Children of Dune* by Frank Herbert. This has been the only time in my life that someone has influenced what genre to read. He will always have a special place in my heart for introducing me to theses fantasies and for accepting me because I enjoyed them and the comics.

Comic books and science fiction novels were not my only source of entertainment. When I was a young reader, I read many stories from the Little Golden Books, *Frog and Toad*, *Curious George*, *Make Way for Ducklings*, and others. As I got older, I discovered that

I enjoyed adventure and mysteries, so I read many of The Hardy Boys Book Series, and some Agatha Christie mysteries and *Sherlock Holmes*. Books on King Arthur and The Round Table, Sinbad and the Arabian Nights, Greek and Norse mythology were my passion from the time I was nine until I was about thirteen. I believe all these adventurous stories helped foster my imagination and creativity.

In my high school years, I discovered that classical literature also had these themes of adventure, mystery and romance that I enjoyed. My high school reading list influenced my choice of reading. Shakespeare and his plays enthralled me, as did the writing of the Bronte sisters, Alexandre Dumas, and others. My favorite novels during this time were *Wuthering Heights*, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, *The Three Musketeers* and others. Language and how it is used became important for me. I was fascinated with how words were manipulated to point out a social injustice or a criticism of a time period or just to have fun with the hidden meanings of words, as Oscar Wilde masterly demonstrated in the *Importance of Being Ernest.*

As I reminisce on this journey, I realize that a lot of the novels I read more than twice can be considered dark and pessimistic to a point. But during my teenage years, I had a personal event occur that did not let me see many things in a light carefree way. My mother had an accident and almost died. I became her at- home- nurse and had a very different teenage period when compared to others. Socializing was a non-event, so I lived vicariously through my books. I identified with the main characters especially if they had to overcome dire obstacles to find their happiness. Reading about them gave me strength and hope that I, too, would find my peace. During this difficult time, reading about different worlds or different time periods was my escape.

As a young adult, my journey to reading jumped international lines. I began to read not just in English, but also in French, and of course in Spanish. I enjoyed reading novels by Victor Hugo, Emile Zola and Cervantes, Garcia Lorca and others in their native languages. This period of reading just pushed me further into wanting to know more about linguistics. It also made me realize that each culture has it unique beauty and that I could not say which was more beautiful or easier to learn. Sadly, my ability to speak French is now dormant and my reading skills are very primitive, but when given the opportunity I plan to take refresher courses so I can once again read and speak as I once did.  My Spanish is very alive but my reading is limited to newspapers and magazine, mostly because I lack the time to read the latest books on the market.

During my college years, I discovered my writing talent. After taking a creative writing course, I gain confidence and began to write and explore poetry. I will not say I am great at these skills, but there have been moments that I have amazed myself. Unfortunately, being a technology novice, I lost all of my writings, short stories and poems when my computer crashed many years ago. My writing has been minimal since then mostly because I started to have a family, but recently I have begun to write again. This time I know how to backup my computer. The many books that I have read over my life from *Little Red Riding Hood* to *Spiderman* to *Paradise Lost* by John Milton to *The Awakening* by Kate Chopin have all given me a strong background to be able to write my little stories.

Time seems to have always been a big issue in my life. As a young child, my parent's time was limited, so visits to museums, libraries and other outings were scarce. I did have a library card and when my parents were able to they would take me. Safety was a big concern for them, so I was not allowed to walk to the library. As a young adult in college, the library was my second home. I actually enjoy going and searching for a book or just sit in a corner and read. It made me late for dinner more than once, but if the context is interesting, I will

lose track of time. My children say I am a nerd, yet, I do not hear them complain when I find the perfect resource for their project or the missing book of the series they are reading.

The moment of confession has arrived. I have delineated some, not all, of the literature that I have read over my forty years as a reader. Most of it has been classic and modern literature written by literary eminences. But I also must confess that I have read Harlequin Romance novels and other romance novels. I really enjoy these little books. I have a favorite historical romance novelist. She is Kathleen Woodiweiss. I was introduced to her writings as a teenager and I have read every single book she has published. Fantasy and romance novels have taken the place of my comic books. I enjoy escaping into a world that does not exist and appeals to my fantasies. In this same area, I categorize the novels by Anne Rice, James Patterson, Michael Crichton and others. These books I enjoy reading in the bathroom or on my bed surrounded by pillows after the kids are asleep. Over the years, I have amassed quite a number of books, ranging from children's ABC's to Shakespeare to Anne Rice, history books to cooking books and more. We can never say in our house that we are bored. There is a book or a magazine for everyone.

As I continue on my literacy expedition, I realize that for each genre of books I read, I have a different place to read.  I need to be comfortable when I read which is why I prefer the big, soft and cushiony, comfortable rocking chair or my soft bed to the stiff and formal dining room chair. My fantasy books are read mostly in the bathroom, at any time of day. I think I still see them as a forbidden read like my comic books were to my parents. My detective or mystery books, I generally read in my bed at night. This way if I get sleepy, I am in the right place to go to sleep. My textbooks or classic novels I read in my rocking chair by the French doors and only in the afternoon. Reading for school requires all my energy and attention, so nighttime is out of the question. Reading then would make me sleepy. If I must do work at night, then I sit at the dining room table which has uncomfortable chairs that help keep me awake. Newspaper and magazines have no single place in the house. I read them anywhere and at any given time.

Most of my reading is done indoors. When I was younger, I enjoyed reading at the beach or by the poolside. It was very peaceful and I felt attuned with nature. I enjoyed the quiet as I read silently most of the time. I still read quietly unless I do not understand something and then I read out loud. The only other time I have read aloud was when my children were young. I miss reading to them. Recently, I tried to read *Romeo and Juliet*, a Shakespeare for Children book, but they were not enjoying it, so I stopped. I do not want them to develop a disdain for reading or listening to stories. They do listen to my little stories and poems, so maybe it was just this particular book that had them ignoring me. We have at other times shared our written work. They read to me their creative stories and I read to them mine. I am always amazed at how we learn from each other. It could be a new word, a new idea or thought. Those moments I treasure, especially when I hear how their writing has improved. Moments like these are what I hope to experience once I begin teaching.

As a teacher, I hope to pass my enjoyment and curiosity of reading onto my students. Even though my mother and Mrs. Hoffman were my childhood mentors, I have to give Ms. Cullen, my eight grade teacher, the honor of being my inspiration to read more and to become a teacher. She taught me that reading was the way to enlightenment. Every piece of literature we read, she bought to life. She had a passionate way of explaining all aspects of language and writing, and she encouraged us to read more and to write in journals. Her encouragement made me want to excel. As I follow her advice, I learn that reading is the base to learning more in any subject or any issue.

As I complete this trip through my literacy history, I can conclude with this thought: reading is fun and enlightening. It has the power to take you places you have never seen, power to inform you of issues occurring all over the world, power to clarify and power to make you feel emotions. As a young toddler, I had the greatest gift bestowed upon me by my parents, the skills to read and write. As a young reader, I had the gift of acceptance by my friend, who did not think I was weird because I enjoyed books meant for a boy audience. As a young adult, reading was my avenue to becoming worldly and learning more about others. As a parent, reading allowed me the opportunity to form a close bond with my girls that we still share today. As a future teacher, my literacy history will be an asset to my classroom. My love of reading will be seen throughout the classroom library and it will also guide me to help the child who does not receive a positive attitude towards learning from home. As reading once helped me during a difficult moment, it can also assist someone else. I hope to be able to give a child the spark to want to continue learning as I continue to learn each day.

My literary history trip does not end here because it has no end. History is continuous and always in flux. Tomorrow, new ideas will emerge and new books will be read. New ideas will be discussed and opinions formed. Old ideas will re-emerge and reach across gender or any bias that exist. Stories will be written as more will be read. So, this is not the end of my history literacy, it is just a pause, as more reading and writing events occur, and I continue to learn. Ignoring reading or writing would be a negative affront to the precious gifts given to me by my parents. Instead I want to share these skills with other little ones or with parents who need a helping hand. Reading is very important in my life and I want my children (at home and in the classroom) to have the same appreciation for it. This was my mother's gift to me and I will do my best to continue passing it on to little ones or young adults or even adults who need it.

Appendix G

Linguistic Autobiographies

Linguistic Autobiography

By Cindy

Experience. I feel like I have been an ESL teacher for twenty-four years. Both my mother and father were born in a small town called Durazzano, just south of Naples, Italy. My mother immigrated to the United States when she was four months old and my father when he was seventeen years old. My mother grew up speaking our dialect at home while learning English at school. Throughout the years she has maintained her fluency in both languages, as my grandparents tend to only speak Italian. Unlike my mother who had the opportunity to attend school here and become proficient in English, my father had to work hard to learn the language on his own. Growing up, I would often serve as my father's ESL tutor; I would explain the meaning of something he misunderstood or help to correct his grammar and sentence structure. I also remember having to forge the connections between objects and their English connotations or take time out to explain the meaning of a joke that was lost in translation. Often, during conversations between my father and my friends, I would act as the helpful translator. Although my father was speaking in English, my friends would have trouble deciphering what he was trying to say. I took on the role of relaying the crux of my father's messages and then together we would all break into laughter. Early on I was able to grasp the fundamentals of teaching as well as be exposed to a second language. Although my parents never pushed my sisters and I to learn Italian, as it was more important to master the English language and do well in school, I was able to develop a fairly robust understanding of Italian while my ability to speak was not as strong.

Recently I visited Italy with my family and the language barrier forced me to feel like an outsider. Conversely, my father was now able to speak in his native language without fearing anyone misunderstanding him. I was walking in shoes similar to my father's in the United States. Although I had a basic comprehension of Italian, I was still struggling to communicate, as there were words and phrases unfamiliar to me. The pace at which my family in Italy spoke was yet another challenge. At times I found myself slipping in Spanish vocabulary that I learned in school to help get across what I was trying to say. I often reverted to hand gestures and relied on my father to now act as my translator. This experience provided me with clear insight into the importance and value of being bilingual to communicate effectively in the world we live in today.

There are theories and concepts that help explain how my family has developed their level of language competency. Noam Chomsky and Eric Lenneberg were linguists who believed in the "innateness hypothesis" that proposed that children have an innate capacity to differentiate phonemes, extract words fro the stream of language, and process grammar (Levine & Rowe, 2006). They proposed that children's brains are hardwired to acquire languages and do so by using the language acquisition device. Lenneberg also believed in the critical period hypothesis where the age of puberty, the language acquisition device ceases to function and the ability to learn language with fluency significantly diminishes (Levine & Rowe, 2006). These ideas abolut language acquisition help to explain how my mother was able to achieve native fluency in both English and Italian because her acquisition began as an infant and was completed before the critical period. My father, on the other hand, immigrated to the United States after puberty, which created a language acquisition hurdle. He worked

hard to learn a second language and did so by constant contact and interaction with English speakers. He memorized vocabulary, practiced pronunciation of words and always questioned terms or phrases unfamiliar to him. Although he learned English, he has yet to achieve native fluency and still speaks with a thick accent. There are often grammatical errors in his speech and writing which is in part due to the fact that lexical and grammatical knowledge is stored in a different part of the brain than the first language (Levine & Rowe, 2006). My family is a prime example of how the beliefs of an era along with cultural identity implicated language acquisition.

During the sixties, when my mother's family immigrated to the United States, there was a surge to embrace the country's multiculturalism. Racial restrictions were removed and there was a fight for equal education for everyone (Crawford, 1998). My mother used her cultural identity of belonging to two ethnic groups to her advantage and learned to speak fluently in Italian and English. This enabled her to successfully communicate to live within both cultures. In 1980, when my father immigrated to the United States to obtain a better quality of life, the country's perspective on language policies was changing as the growth of the foreign-born population rose. Anti-bilingual education trends manifested ideas that bilingualism would threaten national identity and ethnically divide the country (Crawford, 1998). With this my father understood the value of learning English in order to succeed. As this English Only movement developed, I believe my parents embodied this notion to focus on learning English.

Growing up my sisters and I learned the basics of our dialect by always listening and imitating my parents and relatives. After our one o'clock Sunday dinner, I remember singing along to Italian songs with my father and sisters in the living room. We learned the lyrics through repetition and rhyme. Looking back, I wish my parents pushed harder to teach us Italian so that I could be speak fluently. Aside from the political notions of the English only mentality, my family was also influenced by the neighborhood we lived in on Long Island. Although many of our family members from Durrazzano had relocated to the same town of Carle Place, the majority of people were a mix of Italian and Irish Descents. My friends came from more Americanized cultural backgrounds and I truly feel that my parents did not want to make me feel different or out of place. When my friends were over my house, my parents made an effort to talk to each other in English. They may have thought that we would be embarrassed, but in retrospect I remember not caring either way. I am proud of my nationality and even took Italian courses this summer. I found it was very difficult as an adult to grasp the grammar rules and complex sentence structure. As a result, I agree with those language policy advocates who find value in an early bilingual education, as it not only benefits the students but the country.

Some of our language policy makers inadvertently put ELL students in a compromising situation where they experience a struggle between their cultural identity and language education in the classroom. Although the students need to be accustomed to American culture and norms, they are at the same time influenced by their native culture, which is a large component of their own identity. According to Kushner's identity circle, there are various elements that can influence one's cultural identity such as ethnicity, religion, race and language (Kushner, 2006). It is important to constructively recognize those students with

various cultural  backgrounds in the classroom so that all children are taught to have an open mindset about different cultures and beliefs. This in turn provides an inviting and stable environment for ELL students to be proud of their heritage rather than have their heritage inhibit their learning. There should be a balance between ELL students' own sense of themselves, the communities they belong to and the languages they speak in order for them to have a positive learning potential. ELL students will have a better chance to reach their intellectual potential when they feel that  their native culture is not being threatened and that they are given the knowledge and tools to persevere. Moreover, the idea is to create a nurturing environment that respects and values both cultures in a positive light so that ELL students can maintain their cultural identity as well as learn how to effectively live in a complex society.

My experience of living in a multicultural home and my exposure to various forms of language acquisition has led me on my path to become and ESL teacher. I feel I will be able emotionally connect and foster success for every student regardless of their personal history and individual language. I believe in the institution of bilingual programs and want to be a part of this progressive move to help those children who need that extra attention and necessary skill set to make a difference.

Linguistic Family History and Autobiography

By Connie

Ever since I was a little girl, I can remember the stories of my Italian heritage. While my grandparents were all born in America, their parents, my great-grandparents were born in Italy. The cultural and linguistic history traveled from Italy to America with my ancestors. I decided to interview my eldest and only living Great-Aunt. My Great-Aunt Mamie became a centurion this past August and is blessed with a fabulous memory. While interviewing her, she expressed what it was like to be living in a household where Italian was used all of the time. Even though she and her siblings spoke Italian at home, the adults wanted their children to learn and assimilate easily into the American culture. Although she spoke to her parents in Italian, like most young children, she was able to learn English with great proficiency through her American schooling. Rowe and Levine state, "for a child, language learning is almost effortless...it happens with no formal training and can happen with very little input." (2006, p.225) Soon, the Italian language from my relatives was lost, not only with my Aunts generation, but with my parents generation as well.

My parent's experiences are different from the memories of Aunt Mamie. They can recall a few choice Italian words (expletives) as well as loving and everyday phrases that have been passed down to my siblings and I. My parents explained that the Italian conversations that took place among the adults did not involve the children. As they grew up, they knew that when Italian was spoken at the kitchen table, that was their cue to find something else to do. As this behavior was passed down through the generations, I can only hope to keep the loving, everyday phrases I have learned as part of my vocabulary, for the kids I hope to have in the future.

My fondest memories involve family get-togethers. The room was filled with conversation at a high decibel and always animated! It is interesting, no matter what language you are speaking, one can always feel the amount of love behind words spoken, based on observation and being present. In my home, everyone spoke their mind and with great enthusiasm. I can recall much love, hugging and kissing going on. While this was the norm for my family, I realized at an early age, this behavior was different from the behavior I witnessed in my friends homes.

It seemed that while growing up, we, my friends and I always gravitated to spend time at my parent's home. My friends often commented on the way my family spoke as well as their distinct "accents". My father's family originated from Brooklyn while my mother's family came from Queens. We often found ourselves at the kitchen table, talking until the wee hours of the night. My parents were always there, enjoying the conversation and being a part of our childhood memories. Sometimes my family was perceived as yelling. This was not yelling, this was survival in a family where one individual was more boisterous than the next!

I believe another aspect of my linguistic history comes from attending Catholic elementary school. We were always expected to speak properly and to use our words wisely. I remember quotes such as "your only as good as your word" and "first impressions are the most lasting" often being said. I became passionate about speaking properly. This proved to be a struggle for me living among a household of "accents". When I would return home to my Italian family…I always felt the need to correct their words, pronunciation and sometimes spelling! I suppose that I was a teacher at an early age. This type of behavior bothered my father and brother the most. They felt that I was always trying to "fix" them. I couldn't help but notice gender roles in my family and it seems I had gone against the societal grains of "women's use indirect language" as spoken of in our textbook, A Concise Introduction to

Linguistics. (Rowe & Levine, p.209) I had become a strong, Italian woman on a "grammatically correct" mission at an early age.

My first experience with foreign language was in seventh grade. Looking back on it now, a new teacher, with progressive ideas for the time, decided to offer a Spanish class after school.  From the first day, I was excited and intrigued with the idea of learning about another culture.  I also loved the idea of being able to speak "in code" with my friends. We were introduced to the basics and it came easy to me.

I did not realize the seriousness of learning another language until I was in High School. "Learning another language after the age of puberty, either as a result of immigration to a new country, as an academic requirement for a diploma or degree program, or as an educational goal for self-improvement, is a somewhat different process than first-language acquisition." (Rowe & Levine, p. 245) I learned this the hard way. I entered my first official foreign language classroom in sophomore year. I can still remember my teacher, Brother Juan.  The first day, he looked at me and said, "dieziseis." I thought "16"? What does that mean? Then I realized that was my number. I did not have a name anymore, I was a number. I went to my seat and from there, felt lost the entire year. He did not stop to explain his methods or to translate. He did not use pronunciation practice, grammar exercises and vocabulary memorization" as Rowe and Levine speak about. (p. 245) I can recall the frustration and anxiety of not understanding and feeling helpless. I was officially turned off. Collier explains that students do not do as well when treated as a "passive recipient of knowledge." (1995)

As I set off for college in 1991, eight hours away from my family, friends, and the familiarity of my surroundings, I was nervous.  I had heard about college life, but I was not sure what to expect.  I had no idea what a sheltered life I had been living through my Catholic School, Long Island upbringing.  Arriving on campus, I realized quickly I was going to be "different".  I can remember being teased when I first arrived at SUNY Brockport, most people new where I was from the minute I opened my mouth!  I could not understand this and I certainly did not appreciate the stereotyping that followed.  One of the most important aspects of my linguistic culture was being identified with the dreaded "Long Island" accent. I can identify with Rowe and Levine's discussion about the social meaning of regional dialects. They state, Regional dialects have come to have a social meaning, in that people make assumptions about the speaker based on the dialect that he or she speaks. (2006, p. 204)  The new awareness of this stereotype lead me back into the passion I had in earlier years of speaking "properly".

With the realization that the formalized setting stunted my early excitement of Spanish in High School, I decided to wait on fulfilling my foreign language requirements at Brockport. Coordinating my love for people, travel and culture, I decided to pursue a degree in Anthropology.  I enjoyed my Cultural Anthropology classes and was required to choose a society that I could immerse myself in for a field report. I chose the Deaf Culture. I visited schools and local cafes in Rochester and completed hours of observation. With this experience, I decided to enroll in American Sign Language to meet my foreign language credit requirements. This was a wonderful experience for me.  I was on of the first students at SUNY College at Brockport to be granted foreign language credits in American Sign Language. I traveled to the campus of Rochester Institute of Technology weekly. It was then that my role of participant observer changed to being an active participant.  The professors at RIT were approachable and knowledgeable of the different aspects of second language acquisition.  Although they signed most of the class, I felt more at home. I was able to use my Italian background of "animated" speaking with what I was learning in the classroom. Being around deaf students in the hallways and cafeteria enhanced my enthusiasm and ultimately

my understanding of the language. I am a visual learner by nature and observing the signs and then mimicking them helped me to learn ASL with more confidence than when I was learning Spanish.

After assimilating into the upstate society for five years, I must have lost part or the entire typically stereotyped accent most Long Islanders acquire. I remember coming home and feeling like I was in a different place. My family sounded strange, as did the friends who did not go away to college. Even the locals seemed "foreign" to me. I suppose I was stereotyping, making the same assumptions I was previously ostracized for. Perhaps my aversion to the Long Island accent stemmed from the challenges I faced in order to fit into the culture of upstate New York. It is only now; I can see that the dialect I was speaking was "proper" from a linguistics point of view. Long Islanders speak with a distinct phonological variation.

When I was 25, I studied abroad for six months. Living in England was a humbling experience. I completed my student teaching experience for my Masters Degree in Elementary Education. When I arrived, I never dreamed of the diversity that I would be a part of. I figured, I am in England, they speak English here. One variable changed my life and the way I view language. Living in a hostel, in what I thought was an "English speaking" country turned out to be a life lesson. I soon came to realize that aside from the owner of this hostel, I was the only other individual whose first language was English. Many of the individuals I met, had learned some English, but felt more comfortable with their first language or another language they had acquired. I started to realize first hand, the disservice the American school system had imparted on its students. Rowe and Levine state, "The United States has a history of isolationism; the emphasis on monolingualism is a reflection of this attitude." (2006, p. 243) We as American students are not truly required to become efficient in another language. We have academic credits to fulfill, but they do not require fluency. Across the "pond" the students I had the pleasure of meeting, had learned three and four languages each! They attributed this to the close proximity of the borders and the fact that people find travel from one country to another an easier task. Learning the neighboring countries languages is a sign of respect as well as a necessity. I felt a bit resentful, a little ignorant and to some degree the isolation that I spoke of earlier. It was then that I made a promise to myself, against the odds of learning a language as an adult, that someday, I would master a second language with confidence. I am still working toward this goal.

After receiving my Masters in Elementary Education, I set out into the world of interviews. I was young, naïve and inexperienced with educational "jargon". Reflecting on the interview process now, I realize that this plays a part of my linguistic history. Rowe and Levine explain that jargon is "the in-group expressions of a profession." (2006, p. 204) They also state that "people in the field respect those who are knowledgeable in that field, and knowledge is often demonstrated by the correct use of jargon." (2006, p. 204) After seven years of classroom experience as well as attending countless professional workshops, I can relate to the use of and the knowledge associated with the linguistics term "jargon". We as educators often reference "jargon" as "buzz words."

One of the most current variables related to my linguistic culture would involve working as an Elementary Education teacher. Besides working with this younger generation daily, I can also make reference to my nieces and even my friend's children. With technology booming, this younger generation has a language of their own, they combine computer "lingo" in with text messaging. With this, I see their speech, writing and spelling suffering as a direct result. Rowe and Levine say, the use of typical slang expressions indicates social identity and promotes group solidarity. (2006, p. 204) I agree with this statement, however, I believe there is a fine line between using this type of language in

formal vs. informal situations.  It is my experience that many children do not understand when and where informal speaking and/or writing are acceptable.

Many instances in my life have influenced my linguistic history.  I feel blessed with the experiences I have encountered.  Each language trial and triumph has brought me to where I am today. I am thoroughly enjoying my first semester at Molloy College, working towards my TESOL certificate.  In just a few short weeks I already feel more knowledgeable and efficient as an educator.   I look forward to incorporating all the lessons learned into my new endeavor as an ESL teacher.

An Analysis of My Linguistic History

By Jane


Language is a vital component of one's cultural identity. It guides our communication with others, helps us to interpret the ideas expressed by those around us, influences our perception of society, and shapes the way we experience life. In exploring my language development, I discovered that my linguistic identity is strongly influenced by my family history, my environmental surroundings, and my educational background. I also realized that in order to become a more successful and effective ESL educator, it is imperative that I analyze and acknowledge my linguistic history as it impacts all aspects of my life, including the expectations I place on my students and my methods of teaching.

For as long as I can recall, I have been an avid reader. The emotions and thoughts evoked by a skilled writer or charismatic orator often leave me speechless. As a native English speaker who has lived in New York her entire life, I have grown to appreciate the intricacies, repetitions, double-meanings, and slang terms which constitute the English language. Books, my first love, are filled with suspense, humor, irony, description, and sarcasm which are all conveyed through the immense power of language. As a child, I would beg to make weekly trips to the library, so that I could peruse the shelves looking for the next world into which I wanted to escape. This love of language, in particular the written word, only intensified as I matured. I owe my academic success and ultimate Baccalaureate degree in English and American Literature to my reading addiction. However, from a very young age, my family history helped me to recognize the importance of language and higher education.

In 1913, my great grandparents moved from the east coast of Italy to Glen Cove, New York where there was, and still is, a very large Italian population. Speaking minimal English at the time, my great grandfather, Paolo, was fortunate to become the manager of a large estate in Oyster Bay. Through his position, my great grandfather slowly learned enough English to become successful in conversing with native speakers and to handle household responsibilities. My great grandmother, on the other hand, never learned much English as she spent most of her time in the house raising her eight children. My grandmother, fondly referred to as Nana, was born in Glen Cove in 1918. As she got older, my Nana remembers struggling to communicate with her mother as a result of their language barrier. My Nana understood Italian, but began to experience difficulty producing the language as time went on. In addition, she often recounts stories from her childhood which depict the challenging tasks her siblings were forced to accomplish.

While attending middle school at St. Patrick's, a private Catholic school, my great Uncle Tony was reprimanded by one of the nuns for misbehaving. Feeling that she was being unjust and refusing to endure her punishment, Tony told the nun that he was permanently leaving the school and taking all of his sisters with him. He then proceeded to collect his sisters from their respective classrooms and left the school. The next day, Tony enrolled his siblings in the local public school and notified his mother that her children were no longer attending St. Patrick's.

This story has always amused my family. The idea that a middle school student would not only be successful at pulling his siblings out of school, but also at enrolling them in public school seems preposterous. However, their father was preoccupied with supporting his large family and their mother only spoke Italian. This true story emphasizes the responsibility

that was placed on children of immigrant families, and it is important to remember that it was not always the oldest children who were expected to take on tasks beyond their years.

Although a native English speaker, my Nana was forced to leave her education behind in sixth grade in order to help her sister and her mother at home. She remembers crying every day for weeks because she loved attending school and was devastated at having to relinquish her studies. However, her familial obligations took precedent over her education. During the Great Depression, my Nana began working at a local clothing store as she refused to get a job working in the factories with the rest of her siblings. To this day, my Nana regrets having never finished high school and has continually encouraged me to engage in lifelong learning. As a future educator, I cannot begin to imagine the pressure English language learners face. When parents of students do not speak English, many adult responsibilities often fall to young children. It is essential that educators understand the outside expectations placed on students, and learn to recognize the impact these obligations have on students' education.

In addition to opening my eyes to the experiences of English language learners, my linguistic family history motivated me to take Italian language courses for two years while obtaining my undergraduate degree. I wanted to feel a connection with my ancestors, understand my linguistic background, and learn to recognize the influence Italian culture has had on my life. It also encouraged me to take Italian cooking classes with friends, so that I could maintain aspects of my cultural identity and pass it on to my children.

Songs, thanks to my Poppop, were also a significant part of my language development. In particular, my grandfather would sing ridiculous songs that often featured a play on words, such as "a chicken in the car, and the car won't go, that's how you spell Chicago" and "a knife and a fork, and a bottle and a cork, that's how you spell New York." Although the songs were mostly nonsense, I cannot help but sing them to myself whenever I hear the words Chicago or New York. The songs have become a family expression and I imagine that I will be singing the same lyrics to my own children.

Not surprisingly, my linguistic development has also been strongly influenced by my environmental surroundings, in particular, Long Island. As a Long Island resident, there are several key phrases which have been integrated into my vocabulary, such as referring to traveling to any section of the Hamptons as "going out east" or to Manhattan as "the city." As I have experienced first hand, a majority of these phrases only hold significance to those residing in Nassau and Suffolk Counties. Furthermore, I tend to speak uncontrollably quickly, loudly, and with an accent which forces the word "dog" to be pronounced /d ]g/. My Long Island accent as well as certain slang terms have become vital components of my linguistic identity as they affect the way in which I interpret both the people and the world around me.

My education has also served a fundamental role in the development of my unique cultural and linguistic background. As a native English speaker born to native English speakers, I had no difficulty conversing with my teachers at school or with the majority of the American population. My school, as with many students, acted as my primary socializing agent to the English language. In addition to learning the correct pronunciation and grammar of English, I also acquired many non-verbal communication skills in school. From my teachers, I discerned the meaning behind rolling your eyes, putting your hands on your hips, raising your hand, standing in line, making a thumbs up, holding your pointer finger to your lips, and shaking your head. All of these verbal and non-verbal language clues automatically became part of my linguistic background.

Even as a native English speaker, my education was imperative in helping me to become a successful and contributing member of society. Therefore, it continues to

disappoint me when I review No Child Left Behind's (NCLB) regulations regarding English language learners. The United States Department of Education (2006) defines a recently arrived Limited English Proficient (LEP) student as a student who has "attended schools in the United States for 12 months or less" and permits the "exemption of recently arrived LEP students from one administration of the State's reading/language arts assessment" (para. 4). It is difficult to comprehend that ESL students, who may have entered school without any English language skills, are expected to take state-wide examinations after only one year of language instruction. These examinations, which determine budgetary and hiring decisions for schools, are acknowledged to be biased towards native English speakers in multiple ways. Not only are English language learners unable to speak the language fluently, but many are also unfamiliar with American assessment procedures and examination formats. Since English language learners' scores must be included in assessment numbers reported by schools, Crawford (2007) states that:

> English-language learners…are being fed a steady diet of test-prep, worksheets, and other 'skill building' exercises from a menu mostly reduced to reading and math. Their language-learning needs are increasingly neglected…to make time for English language arts items likely to be on the test. Meanwhile, more-advantaged students are studying music, art, foreign languages, physical education, science, history, and civics, getting to read literature rather than endure phonics drills, and participating in field trips, plays, chess clubs, and debate tournaments—all 'frills' that are routinely denied to children whose test scores have become life-or-death matters for educators' careers (p. 31).

As the theorist Vygotsky (1978) states, social interaction and cooperative learning play a crucial role in language development. Students must actively engage with language material and make the information their own. Through social interaction with others, English language learners are given the opportunity to create and share meaningful learning experiences as well as to anchor new information to existing knowledge. As mentioned earlier, I gained much insight into American culture from my social interactions in school. I learned slang terms, popular culture references, pronunciation techniques, social behaviors, social expectations, and informal conversation skills. As pointed out by Crawford (2007), if English language learners are not receiving an all inclusive educational experience, then we are not providing them with an equal opportunity to succeed in life.

As a future ESL educator, it is imperative that I uncover and analyze the significant factors which led to my own language development. By acknowledging my linguistic and cultural identity, I can begin to understand the many elements which influence the language development of my students. As I learn to recognize both my verbal and non-verbal language traits, I can become better prepared to differentiate my instruction and to meet the needs of my diverse students. It is essential that I appreciate the variety of knowledge and experiences with which my students come to school, and that I utilize these personal experiences to create meaningful and fulfilling educational opportunities for all of my students regardless of their language backgrounds.

Linguistic History

By Jasmine

When I heard the term "language", I thought of communication, and then quite a few words came to my mind: English, Mandarin, Japanese, Korean, French, Spanish, Greek, etc. Language is one of the main factors contributing to my cultural identity. My linguistic history begins in my birth country-China. My primary language was Chinese Mandarin. Although it is the standard language of the country, there are many different dialects spoken by people living in different parts of China. My grandparents only speak regional dialect; therefore, as a young child, I had problems communicating with themI can not recall how I mastered the dialect when the pronunciation of it is very different from Mandarin, but I did master it after staying at my grandparents' house over the summer.

There are 26 alphabetic symbols in simplified Chinese (pin-yin), and they are the same as the English alphabet, but are pronounced differently (the letter "V" is replaced by"U" covered with two dots on top). English was introduced to me in elementary school. I learned my ABC song in 1$^{st}$ grade, but had very little concept of the English language at that time. Later on in 3rd grade, I learned the basic greetings of English; however, since nobody speaks English around me, I was confused about the purpose of studying English. Fifteen years ago, it was extremely rare to see a TV show in any foreign language in China. Although there were foreign cartoon shows and Hollywood movies, they would be dubbed into Mandarin. By the time I reached 5$^{th}$ grade, I recognized the existence of various languages, but didn't have the chance to be in contact with any of them until I came to the United States.

After I came to America, my field of vision was broadened; I've been exposed to different cultures and people of different ethnicities. Language is the most significant characteristic of a culture. A lot of my early struggles came from a language barrier. I learned to speak more than two languages after I came to the United States, and English and Mandarin are the ones I use most frequently. As a second generation immigrant, I realized how challenging life can be, and how strong I can be to overcome those difficulties. Queens was the first town I lived in after I came to America, and I was shocked about the variety of languages being spoken in the community! Before I left China, I was told about the language difficulty I would be encountering, I was counseled that since I'll be in school, I could easily learn English. The idea was only partially correct. I did learn English in ESL class and in regular classes, but due to the fact that I lived in Queens where a lot of students are also immigrants like me, I didn't have enough chance to practice my English after school. Most ESL students tend to communicate with others who speak the same native language as them. During my first year in the United States, I've learned that not all Chinese children will understand Mandarin because they were born and raised in America. I've unexpectedly learned Cantonese by communicating with students from Hong Kong. I've realized that it's easier for me to comprehend a new language than speaking it. Some successful learning experiences are essential in inspiring my passion for future language learning.

English and Mandarin are very different language systems; shuttling between these two languages has been a difficult task for me. Since none of the family members speaks fluent English, I didn't receive academic help from school. I have a little sister who was born in the U.S., but was sent back to China after birth. She came back to the U.S. at the age of five. I was then responsible for both of our academic developments. Now she is a high school freshman; English has become her dominant language. She couldn't communicate properly with my parents because she's not fluent in Chinese and they are not fluent in English. Therefore, I must serve as a translator in the house. The fact that I came to the U.S.

at an older age allows me to be influenced by both cultures. I lived in China through out my childhood years; I was raised Buddhist and was nurtured by Chinese culture. After I came to the U.S., I often find myself stuck in between eastern and western ideas. I understand the importance of family unity and individual sacrifice for harmony, but I also admire individualism that one should follow his/her own dream.

I try to obtain information about my two important cultures (American and Chinese) through the reading of newspapers. I read Newsday for information about the American community and I read the World Journal for attaining information about the Chinese community. In addition to all of the above, electronic media, which is TV and radio and advanced technology, such as the internet, also helps me to garner my cultural learning process. Media can be a great motivation for learning a new language. I became an English lover through cartoon shows and TV shows such as "Full house." The more I enjoy the culture, the easier it is for me to acquire the language. I am a big fan of music; I listen to songs in any language as long as I like the melody. This habit allows me to accept and become acquaintant with many languages such as Korean and Japanese. I used to work in the flower shop and my Greek boss used to share Greek songs with me at work. I studied French in high school and I studied Japanese in college.

Environment is an essential factor when learning a new language. When I went back to China, I found myself speak less fluently in Mandarin, and when I came back to the states two months later, I found myself faltering when speaking English. I had a hard time mastering English grammar because Mandarin used a very different grammatical system. Mastering both English and Mandarin will require a life time of practice.

A Linguistic Journey Through My Family

By Lily

I am an English speaker; my husband and my three children are English speakers. Our speech is free of foreign accents or any other traits which may be indicative of the rich cultural tapestry from which we have descended; a history which reaches back to different centuries, different countries, and different languages.

My maternal grandmother, Isabel Adorno, was born and raised in Puerto Rico. Her formal education was sporadic and did not extend beyond the sixth grade level, so although she was a native Spanish speaker, she spoke primarily in dialect and slang customary to her family and region. To another Spanish speaker, the level of grammar and lexicon evident in her speech would be clear indicators of her socio-economic background, as well as her education level. Isabel came to America as a teenager in the early 1900's, and was exposed for the first time to the English language. By the age of 18, she had met and married my maternal grandfather, Julio Fairchild.

Julio was born and raised in the Philippines, to a Philippine mother and an English father. His first language was Tagalog, but he was formally educated in English starting in early childhood through the high school level, and was proficient in this second language. Through his studies he was also exposed to a lesser extent to the Spanish language, and acquired an intermediate proficiency. He came to America in his early 20s, and joined the American Navy, giving him the opportunity to further hone his English skills. He married my grandmother at the age of 28.

My grandparents had obvious language barriers between them. However, they were able to communicate primarily in Spanish, in which Julio acquired a greater proficiency over the course of their marriage. His success in learning Spanish through conversation and necessity may be attributed to the following observation made by linguist Stephen Krashen: "Acquisition requires meaningful interaction in the target language - natural communication - in which speakers are concerned not with the form of their utterances but with the messages they are conveying and understanding" (Krashen, n.d.). At the same time, my grandmother was gaining additional exposure to English.

Together Isabel and Julio had five children before Julio died at the age of 45. The first three children, Henry, Louis and Gladys, were close in age, and spoke informal Spanish in the home with my grandparents. They never learned Tagalog, but would often hear my grandfather speaking this language with his friends. They also used English with my grandfather, as well as outside the home and in their neighborhood. This was a common practice at the time among children of immigrant parents; speaking English outside the home helped them to socially assimilate in their vastly diverse community.

Once they began school, they quickly increased their fluency as English speakers. This was critical to their achievement in school, where all general instruction was conducted in English. By the time their two younger siblings, Alice and Norma, were born, the primary language the children spoke in the house was English, although my grandmother continued to speak to them only in Spanish. For this reason, Alice and Norma, who fully understood Spanish, were not fluent speakers in this language while growing up, but did acquire speaking fluency after studying formal Spanish in high school and college. To this day, the five siblings notice a difference in the informal dialect learned and used by the three older children, and the proper Spanish used by the two youngest. For Gladys and Louis in particular, who never studied formal Spanish, these differences often resulted in

embarrassment over not using the 'correct' Spanish, and made them hesitant to use it in public situations.

Meanwhile, in another section of Brooklyn, my paternal grandmother, Mary Matika, was a first-generation English-speaking American, from a Hungarian family. She married Donald Alger, also an English speaker. They raised three children, Don, Arthur and Mary, whose accents reveal their Brooklyn upbringing. In their early childhood, they heard Hungarian being spoken between their mother and grandmother. None of the children acquired this language, and upon their grandmother's death, Hungarian was no longer used in their household.

My parents are Norma Fairchild and Don Alger. They raised my two sisters and myself in Queens, where my mother worked, and continues to work to spare us from succumbing to a Queens accent; continuously correcting our diction, grammar and pronunciation. She has had varied success over the years, and has now focused her attention on saving her grandchildren.

Growing up, my maternal grandmother was an influential presence in my life. I have distinct memories of Spanish children's songs she would teach us ("ventana-window, puerta-door, lápiz-pencil, y piso-floor"), her greetings and goodbyes in Spanish (¡Hola, mi hija!= hello, my child; dame un beso= give me a kiss), and her commands at the dinner table (¡sientate!= sit!, ¡come!= eat!). She spoke 'broken' English, or 'Spanglish,' to her grandchildren, with a heavy Spanish accent, and we would hear her speaking Spanish with our mother, aunts and uncles. Another phrase often entwined in her speech was, "¿Cómo se dice...?," or, "How do you say...?" She struggled constantly to speak to us in English, and did increase her proficiency through the years by working at various factories and jobs.

As a child, I was often embarrassed if my grandmother spoke Spanish in front of my friends; this made me different, when all I wanted was to fit in with everyone else. Looking back as an adult, I wish that my grandmother and my mother would have made more of an effort to immerse me in Spanish while I was growing up, so that I would have been naturally bilingual, rather than attempting to acquire it as a second language later in life. Although I did study Spanish for several years in middle and high schools, as well as college, I never considered myself fluent, and continue to be hesitant to speak Spanish with my relatives. I believe that, as stated in Lenneberg's critical period hypothesis (as cited in Rowe & Levine, 2009), my ability to acquire a second language at that later age had diminished from what it may have been in my early childhood. This also explains my grandmother's inability to learn English with native fluency. Even though she lived in America and was exposed to English for nearly eighty years, the fact that she immigrated in her teen years meant that her language acquisition devices were already functioning at a decreased level.

While I have no cognizance of my own language acquisition in English, I am now continually amazed as I watch my young children progress through the stages of mastering their native language. From the babbling of their pre-linguistic stages to the utterance of their first words, and then sentences, I think it is proof positive of Chomsky's theory of the innate 'Universal Grammar' which enables us to learn our native language with such ease. (Chomsky, n.d.).

My six- and eight-year-olds are currently studying Spanish in school, and are receiving reinforcement at home through their Grandmother and Great-Auntie Alice. I hope to recover and preserve this element of our linguistic and cultural identities.

Linguistic Autobiography

By Susana

Language has always played a major role in my language acquisition experience. Spanish was the first language I spoke, my L1. I was born in Colombia, South America. My parents decided to move to the United States.  My father had been living in the U.S. for several years and saw an opportunity for a better economic life for his family, and we moved to Brooklyn, New York. My father managed with the little English he knew to get by at work and learned more with time. On the other hand, when my mother arrived with my sister and me, she did not speak a word of English and taught my sister and me Spanish, our first language.

For the first couple of years the only language spoken at home was Spanish. My mom stayed home with my sister and I. Learning a new language in a new country was not a priority  for my mom who stayed home to take care of us, while my dad worked a double shift to provide an adequate living for us.

My first experience with English happened when I was three years old. My parents had decided to move to a better neighborhood to raise my sister and me. We moved to Long Beach, a town on the South Shore of Long Island. The cost of living was a little bit more than Brooklyn. My sister started Kindergarten and my mom decided to work as a housekeeper to provide  a better living for the family. I was sent to nursery school.

This was a language learning experience for my mom, my sister, and me. My mother had to learn basic English to communicate with her employers, my sister was learning English at school and she would come home and teach me what she learned such as ABC's and 123's. And I was learning English at nursery school through instruction and communication with my peers. The next couple of years I attended a bilingual pre-kindergarten and kindergarten class. This was the beginning of second language acquisition. I vividly remember learning the sounds of the alphabet and words I knew from my L1. My peers were just like me they spoke Spanish at home and learned English at school. As I graduated to the first grade, I was mainstreamed into a native English monolingual classroom. My teacher did not speak Spanish; there was one other student who spoke very little Spanish. It was as if I had entered a new world. Learning English became very important. I needed to acquire an L2 in order to succeed in school.

During this time, my sister who was two grades above me, in the same school, was in the only bilingual program the school offered. There were three teachers and the students were between first and third grade. I remember wanting to be with her, even going as far as crying, which gave me a ticket to go visit her. I wanted to be in her classroom, the teachers spoke Spanish and they seemed familiar to me.  I stayed in my monolingual classroom. It was a very traumatic year for me. That year I was held back for reasons that had nothing to do with my academic or language proficiency. My first grade teacher  thought it would be a good idea to have me repeat the first grade for maturity reasons and convinced my mom it would benefit me  academically.

After being retained, I remember feeling embarrassed of my native language. I really believed that because of my Spanish I could not be with the couple of friends I was able to make by the end of that year. This affected my wanting to learn Spanish further. At that point, the extent of my Spanish was social conversation. I had no academic language knowledge. When my mom tried to teach me how to read and write in Spanish, I rebelled and refused. I remember asking my sister to translate for me when I wanted to talk to my mom and vice versa. I felt embarrassed when I had to speak Spanish, especially in public. I remember begging my mom to learn English and  not to speak Spanish any longer. My mother would take no part in my foolish desires. She always encouraged us to learn English but she also made sure we maintained our mother tongue, Spanish. She never spoke to us in English. It was a constant battle. I concentrated on learning English to succeed in school. At home I only spoke Spanish to my parents. My sister and I would communicate only in English. Most of my friends only spoke English and the ones who spoke Spanish, were able to communicate in English.

Towards the end of my elementary education, I remember receiving a letter about choosing a language to learn in middle school. Boy was I excited, that day at school I raved with my friends about learning French. Well to my recollection, that dream was crushed when I got home. My mom took that opportunity to continue her unsuccessful attempts of teaching me to read and write in Spanish. This time I had lost the battle. The note I took home had to be signed by my parents along with the language I was electing to learn.

I began to study Spanish for proficiency. By the end of high school and taking Spanish for seven years I could read, write, and speak Spanish with fluency. After all those years of battling with my mother, I pursued to major in Spanish towards my college undergraduate degree. I learned more in depth about history, different cultures, literature and I was even able to travel abroad to Spain to enhance my Spanish speaking skills by taking grammar, language courses, and being completely immersed in the way of life in Spain.

My experiences with learning Spanish and English were both positive and negative. Learning English at such a young age was an advantage. On the other hand, it held me back from acquiring proficiency in my native language. I don't recall having any difficulties in learning English. On the contrary, learning Spanish to read and write Spanish in middle school and high school presented challenges. Mostly, the difficulties were with grammar. Cognates were a positive example in learning both languages. Being able to associate words in both languages really helped. The language transfer issues were both positive and negative.

How I Came To Be a Bilingual and Bicultural Individual

By Vivian

Sometime in the mid 18th century, five brothers from Spain, most probably from the Andalusia area, traveled to the coast of Colombia in search of wealth. They settled in different areas of the country and integrated very nicely into the emerging social class of the time.  One of these brothers, Ricardo Bernal, found his fortune in the emerald mines and eventually became a General in the national army. His youngest daughter was my grandmother. According to the family lore, the surname of Bernal can be traced back to many generations in Spain. My grandmother was raised in a privileged world that later disowned her when she eloped and married a local police officer.  She strove to make her children understand the importance of work and education. The best gift she gave them was her love of language and literature. My mother learned her lesson well. To this day she is an avid advocate for education and reading. She claims to have inherited the best of the Bernal family, love of Spanish language and its literature.

When my parents traveled to the United States with my sister, little did they know that their language was at risk of being lost and with it, the love of Spanish literature.  My parents tried hard to integrate into the English speaking society. Unfortunately they had a hard time, especially since they refused to speak English at home.  They did not want my sister or me to forget our language or our heritage. Still they insisted that we learn English and excel in school. They believed that the more we knew of both English and Spanish, the better opportunities we would have as adults. To this day, I am sorry they have a hard time communicating with English speakers, but I am grateful that I am able to speak, read and write fluently in Spanish as well as in English. Their sacrifice has allowed me to become not just bilingual and bicultural but also appreciate the struggles of other foreign born people have when they arrive in this country.

Since I was born and raised in the United States, it is very hard for me to define whether Spanish or English is my primary language.  I am always at a lost as to what to say. From my earliest recollection, I have always spoken both languages.  I cannot say that one day I realized I only spoke Spanish or that I could not communicate with the neighborhood Italian, German and Irish kids. My mother would correct my grammar in Spanish and my neighbors would correct my English. In my mind, both languages blend. I just knew when to speak Spanish and when not to.  I knew that Nana, an old polish woman, who lived in the little house next door, only spoke English. So that is what I spoke to her, just as I knew that my mother and my father only responded to Spanish. I never questioned or felt less than others because of my ability to communicate in both languages until I entered first grade.

My parent's experience with the public school system was very negative. My sister was the target of ridicule and torture from the other children because she could not speak English well. The discrimination was very evident and overwhelming. There were no bilingual or ESL programs available when she arrived in 1963.  The educational theory of the time was to learn through assimilation. That is what she did. When it was my turn to enter kindergarten in public school, my parents refused to send me. Instead, I stayed home with my babysitter, a lovely German lady who became my first teacher. She would take me to the library and encouraged me to read and do crafts so I would not feel so left out when I went to first grade.  Her efforts were commendable, but I was still an outsider when I arrived in parochial school in 1970. Socially I was shunned, since I physically looked different (petite, black hair, dark eyes, and olive skin), and had no friends. Matters got worse when the administrators of the school pulled me out of class and send me to the principal's office so I could translate whatever financial, religious or social problem they had to torture my poor

mother. I was very embarrassed.  It was the beginning of my life long job as a translator for my parents. This was when I realized how different I was because I was the only one in school who spoke Spanish. Luckily, my mother had foreseen this problem and had spoken to me enough about my heritage, my family in Colombia and made me feel very special. She empowered me by telling me that I was not lacking in anything. If anyone was lacking, it was those who laughed at me. They lacked compassion and open mindedness.  She also said that by speaking and reading Spanish and knowing about our culture, I could some day learn other languages, like French, with less difficulty than those who only spoke English.  And she was right.

After learning about first and second language acquisition theories, I believe that my first language acquisition falls in line with the separate system hypothesis. It states that a young child can acquire two languages at the same time because he/she is developing two different language systems that require different lexicon, phonological and semantic systems. These children may seem to have limited vocabulary in each language, but as the child develops and acquires more, his/her level of vocabulary then doubles.  Now instead of having just one word for dog, the child had two, one in English  (dog) and one in Spanish (*perro*).  I remember being in situations, when I did not know how to say something in Spanish or vice versa because that word had never been used in that particular setting. A perfect example is green beans, my favorite vegetable. I know it as *habichuela*. It was when sharing a recipe with an Italian friend, that I realized I did not know how to say *habichuela* in English.  This also happened as a child when my Dad was trying to help me with homework.  I would have to translate the English text so he could help me and there were word about math, history or science that I had no translation. This is how I came to appreciate the importance of having a dictionary.  It was double work but it did help build my vocabulary in both languages.

As my mother had predicted years before, when I reached high school I was able to choose French as my foreign language. By this time, the world at large had ceased seeing French as the second most dominate language.  Spanish was now being advertised as the new second most important language in every aspect of the business industry, diplomatic services, and economy. Since I already knew it, I was able to learn a new language mostly as self-improvement, not a necessity. This second language acquisition actually was not difficult for me. For six years, I submitted myself to the task of learning all I could about the French language and culture.  I stumbled over the grammar but did well in my vocabulary through a series of repetition and memorization. Phonology was a bit tricky, but I eventually managed to make use of the back of my throat and make French sounds. Still, my accent in French is Spanish instead of English. Since fossilization of the first language is what gives you an accent, maybe at the time when I was learning French, my dominant language was Spanish instead of English.

Language, whether it is Spanish, English or French, has always been an integral part of my life.  Each one has played an important role in my life. English is the language that allows me to  explore, learn and be part of the larger world. It is the language that will help me reach my greatest dream of being an educator. It is the language of my friends and the common ground between my husband and me. It is the language of the country that I was born into and love to speak. It is the one that inspires me when I write. I find myself as an adult speaking and reading more.  I realize nowadays that English is the stronger of the languages in my brain. I find it easier to write and read it. Still when I get emotional, Spanish is the language that explodes in my brain and makes me part of the misconception that all Latinos are hot-tempered.

Spanish is the link that allows me to be a Colombian. Saying that I am Colombian is very daring nowadays yet I am proud of being it. If I did not speak Spanish, I would have no real contact with my aunts and uncles who are Spanish monolinguals and have been my emotional and familiar support during every crisis in my life.  Without it, I could not have really understood *Cien Anos de Soledad* and other novels by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a

Colombian literary Nobel Peace prize recipient, listen to music of heritage country or even see the *novelas* my mother loves. Spanish has kept my childhood nuclear family together and this is very important me. It is also the language I relate to religion. Even though I teach CCD in English, I prefer to listen to mass in Spanish.  I feel a greater connection to the Word of the Lord when it is spoken in Spanish. I have no reason other than I feel more at home when I hear the preaching in Spanish.  Spanish language, music and literature seem to have a greater influence in my childhood and young adult years.

Having been exposed to both of these languages at an early age and then French as a young adult has motivated me to achieve more in school and do better in my work.  I do not believe my having acquired two languages or been raised in a Colombian home environment as a child hindered me in any way.  There were moments of difficulty, especially in the social arena, but with the positive reinforcement from my family, these moments were surpassed. I find that my background has given me an insight that others lack and made me more compassionate to the needs of others.

I have a legacy to continue. My great grandfather would come back to haunt me if I ignored the inheritance he and my grandmother left my family.  The power of education, the love of reading and learning are their gifts. As my mother before me, I have instilled these cultural values into my children. They have a difficult time speaking in the language of my family since English has become their language of preference, but they are not giving up.  As they are maturing, they are being exposed to other languages in school and are slowly realizing how important it is for their future to speak Spanish. They are speaking and reading now more than ever. The Internet has become my favorite tool of language acquisition in the last months. My girls are now writing to their cousins in South America. What a perfect way to make mistakes and not be embarrassed. My parents have nothing to worry about anymore. My sister and I have overcome language barriers and we are successful women in the United States and their grandchildren are on the road that will lead them to read and write in Spanish. We are in a bilingual and bicultural circle that will never break.  My grandmother and her relatives from Spain would be so proud of us.

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