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YIH REN

University of San Francisco, yren27@dons.usfca.edu

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Using Language Ideology, Social Positioning and Performativity to Assess Second Language Learning and Identity Transformation: A Qualitative Case Study of Three Chinese Queer Immigrants in the U.S.

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in International and Multicultural Education

by

YICHONG (YIH) REN

May 2021

Using Language Ideology, Social Positioning and Performativity to Assess Second Language Learning and Identity Transformation: A Qualitative Case Study of Three Chinese Queer Immigrants in the US.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree

MASTER OF ARTS
in

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

by **YICHONG (YIH) REN**

May 1, 2021

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

Approved:

Monisha Bajaj

May 1, 2021

Instructor/Chairperson

Date

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Obviously,

To my mom, she taught me to stick to my truth,

To my stepdad, he supports all my decisions and takes me as his own,

And to my husband, he brought his light, silliness, and happiness into my life.

Lastly, to myself, to my passionate spirits, enthusiastic heart, and love for life.

ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to explore the directionality of the relationships between cultural identity, sexuality, ideology, and English learning. My study included three participants, and each represents a specific acculturating and immigrant group in the U.S., namely, international students, permanent residents (green card holders), and naturalized citizens. Language ideology and social positioning theory are employed to examine English hegemony and internalized oppression. I argue that English hegemony is ideological and reinforces further discrimination and social hierarchy; further, performativity provides a new cannon to view language production and acquisition as it shifts the emphasis from the technical processes of language acquisition to the discursive nature of language learning and performing. Through understanding how language is performed, we are able to capture how their cultural identity, sexuality, and beliefs are manifested, negotiated, and transformed. In regard to queering ESL education, queer inquiry and critical pedagogy are highlighted to deconstruct heteronormative assumptions in ESL classrooms and create spaces in which all sexualities and cultures can be engaged and appreciated in solidarity and mutual understanding, and all subjectivities can be self-defined and determined.

The discussion ends by reiterating the purpose of the study, valuing invisibilized Asian and Asian Americans' stories and struggles, challenging dominant and hegemonic discourses, raising awareness, intercultural competence and advocating for adopting queer inquiry-based critical pedagogies and authentic multicultural approaches in ESL and second language education.

Keywords: ESL, Identity, language ideology, queer theory, intercultural competence

摘要

这篇论文主要想要探讨文化认同，性认同，思想意识和英语学习之间的关系和联系。我的研究的对象是三位代表在美国不同的亚裔移民族群的性少数人群，其中，一位是国际留学生，一位是永久居民（绿卡持有者），和一位是已经正式加入美国籍的亚洲移民。语言意识形态理论和社会定位理论被应用在这个研究里去探索英语语言意识上的霸权和内化的歧视和偏见。我的研究表明英语语言上的霸权是存在于我们思想意识上的，同时它的存在也在加深了社会里的歧视，压迫和负面的社会等级排序。另一方面，语言表现理论提供了一个新的看待语言输出的视角。它把纯技术化的语言学习和习得转换成了更强调语言学习者的文化背景和社会关系。通过看到语言学习者的语言运用和表现，我们可以更好的看到和讨论文化认同，性认同和思想意识的体现，影响和转化。对于让英语教育更对性少数人群更友好，酷儿理论和更具有批判性的教学法都非常的重要，特别是它们可以更清楚地指出英语课堂里的不包容的异性恋主流化和唯一化的存在，和它们可以让课堂变成一个具有包容性和理解力的地方。所有的性认同和性取向都会被认可和接纳，所有的观念都可以自我定义。

本论文里的讨论章节从我重申本研究的意义，第一，对于在社会和学术界不被重视的人群，特别是亚裔人群的故事和挣扎是需要被学习和研究的。第二，挑战具有歧视性的主流社会意识。第三，提高我们具有批判性的思想意识，文化的自信。同时，提倡英语课堂引入酷儿理论，批判性教学法，和真实多元文化的教育理念。

关键词：ESL, Identity, language ideology, queer theory, intercultural competence

摘要

呢一篇文章主要係想探討文化認同，性認知，思想意識同埋英語學習之間嘅關聯及聯繫。我研究嘅對象係三位代表嘅美國不同嘅移民嘅性少數人群，其中一位係中國留學生，一位係永久移民（綠卡持有者），同埋一位已經正式加入美國嘅亞洲移民。語言意識形態理論同埋社會定位理論被應用嘅呢個研究到嚟探索英語語言意識上嘅霸權同內化嘅歧視同偏見。我嘅研究表明英語語言嘅霸權係存在於我哋思想意識上，同時亦加深左社會上嘅歧視，壓迫負面嘅社會等級排序。另一方面，語言表現理論提供了一個新嘅看待語言輸出嘅視角，佢將純技術化嘅語言學習與習得轉化成為更強調語言學習者嘅文化背景和社會關係。通過睇到語言學習者嘅語言運用同表現，佢哋可以更好嘅睇到同埋討論文化認同性應同以及思想認識嘅體驗，影響以及轉化。對於令英語教育更對性醒少數人群更友好，酷兒理論和更具有批判性的教法非常重要，特別係佢哋可以更清楚咁指出參與課堂裏異性戀的主流化同唯一化嘅不包容思想，同佢哋可以讓一個課堂變成一個具有包容性同理解力嘅地方，所有嘅性認同和性取向都會被認同和包容，所有嘅觀念都可以俾自我定義。

本論文里的討論章節從我重申本研究的意思講起。第一點，對於社會學和學術界不被重視的人群，特別是亞裔人群的故事和掙扎是被需要研究和學習的。第二點，挑戰具有歧視性的社會主流意識。第三點，提高我們具有批判性的思想意識，文化的自信。同時，提倡英語課堂引入酷兒理論，批判性教育法，以及真實多元文化的教育理念。

关键词：ESL, Identity, language ideology, queer theory, intercultural competence

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Language is more than a tool for communications and learning subjects; it facilitates our sense-making and development through interactions and negotiations within the world where our realities exist. By the same token, learning and acquiring an additional language is also more than a reflection of our ability or competence, it shifts and transforms our beliefs, social and personal identity and ways of thinking, acting and being. Therefore, when researchers conduct studies about the influences of learning a language on individuals' cognitive development and social growth, language learning and acquisition with learners' social contexts and discourses, such as culture, experiences, expectations, identities as well as worldviews must not be neglected (Young, 1999).

With globalization, more and more people from non-English speaking countries now have gained a certain level of proficiency and knowledge in English for different purposes (Arnett, 2002). Not only has this flow resulted in a transfer of language use and ideologies (e.g., Yue, 2012), it has also witnessed the development of a global culture that collectively transforms people's ways of communicating, thinking, identifying and being with or without physical exposure in a new linguistic or/and cultural environment. Further, multilingualism and multiculturalism as by-products of this global trend have opened up various opportunities for people to mix languages and styles to form new literacy practices (e.g., Alim, 2011), construct new social meanings, and critique homogeneous cultures on a global scale (see Farr & Song, 2011). However, it also has negatively led to confusion and anxiety at a cultural, linguistic, and social level among some English language learners (ELLs) (see Benet-Martinez & Haritatos, 2005; Chen Benet-Martinez & Harris Bond, 2008), such as immigrants and lesbian, gay,

bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) persons from non-European countries and/or developing countries. Also, queer perspectives in second language acquisition (SLA) research are considerably inadequate (see Nelson, 2005 and Ellwood, 2006). Consequently, this study aims to examine how language ideology influences U.S.-based Chinese queer ESL (English as a Second Language) learners' cultural and sexual identity transformation through language learning and everyday language performance. Also, this study aims to make the case for the importance to "queer" ESL education for raising learners' cultural capital and language awareness and affirming their status and positions in this society.

Statement of The Problem

English, with its over 1.5 billion speakers, is the most spoken language on earth (Duffin, 2020), and the topics and research around English language are in every direction. Recent studies show an interest in exploring the relationship between learners' sexual identity and desire, and language acquisition (see Nelson, 2008). However, I argue the investigations about LGBTQ ESL learners' language acquisition and learning, and their beliefs remain underdeveloped, and language ideology, social positioning, identity and their intercorrelations with language performance need to be expanded and sufficiently conceptualized. Additionally, the majority of the research around SLA and identity has been focused on immigrants and minorities in or from western cultural contexts, and most of the studies and research assessing issues among Asian English learners are exclusory and problematic (Schwartz, Kashubeck-West & Meyer, 2006). For example, Abdullah and his colleagues (2014) point out that with more international students integrated in American schools, their lived experiences, however, have not been amply explored and assessed in areas other than mobility, cultural shock, and linguistic challenges. The

racialization of diverse Asian populations is often ignored or mistakenly included into either Asian American or international student matters (Glass, 2011). In this manner, it is important to recognize individuals' nuanced racial and cultural experiences, intersecting with their fluid identities and responding to their diverse discursive practices.

Mapping language ideology, social positioning theory and performativity together to examine ESL learners' SLA and learning experiences is not fully conceptualized and utilized at present (e.g., Miller, 2009, De Costa, 2011). With regard to queer perspectives, the research exploring SLA and identity transformation is also inadequate (e.g., Pennycook, 2001). Thus, as Janks (2012) encourages researchers to critique existing knowledge, which offers us the ability to understand formation of certain interests, effects on the present, and possibility to reconstruct for the future, this study brackets them together to examine social positionings of oneself and others in relation to beliefs that are formed and reinforced about a language and its speakers and learners through the performance of language use on both inside and outside the classroom linguistic and social practices

Lastly, in terms of language ideology and subject positions mediated through language performance, English and standard English are still viewed as *right* and *natural* (see Ricento, 2003 for language association with Americanism). English today is the de facto universal language for different purposes such as international communication. Ammon (1992) documents the global spread of English language penetrating in different terrains. For example, English has over 1.5 billion active speakers; English serves as the national language in 62 countries; 70-80 percent of academic publications are written in English; and English is the most frequently taught foreign language globally. Undoubtedly, English has made our communications easier and more convenient, but linguistic and communicative inequalities, discrimination and anxieties

have also accompanied the domination of English in this globalized world. Tsuda's lifetime study (1986, 1990, 1992, 1993a, 1993b, 1994, 1996, 2000) on English hegemony finds that English domination not only disadvantages and discriminates against people who speak other languages and/or are less proficient in English, but it also colonizes their mind and consciousness, leading to them undervaluing their own language and culture, and developing linguistic, cultural and psychological dependency upon English and its speakers and communities. For instance, King's (2008) research illustrates this phenomenon with queer English learners as he found that three Korean gay ESL learners thought English was a necessity in terms of talking about their sexuality and being accepted in Western gay communities, and they socially positioned themselves higher than other Korean LGBTQ members whose English was less fluent or who did not speak English at all.

Background and Need

The dearth of research focusing on immigrants' nuanced racial, sociocultural experiences and identity transformation speaks to the need of this study. Kim (2012) and Accapadi (2012) point out that most of the theoretical models addressing Asian and Asian American identity transformation and reconstruction do not offer a perspective of their intertwined ethnic identities and their lived experience but tell their stories from the binary of people of color and the conformity of Whiteness. Taking a step further, Chowdhury (2017) challenges Kim's (2012) model by stating that most Asian American racial models including Kim's model did not examine those who were not born and raised in the United States with their diverse discourses and socio-cultural experiences. Similarly, the silence of queer perspectives in linguistic-related research and language education not only leaves power relations regarding queers' sexual

identity and desire with language learning and use unexamined, but also it reinforces heteronormativity amongst institutional and social practices. Therefore, I am aware of the importance, need and obligation to explore Asian queer immigrants' voices and experiences in relation to their ideology and identity through English learning, acquisition and interactions within their discourses.

The need to bring language ideology, social positioning and performativity together is also a crucial element in forming this study. Mentioned above, language ideology and subject positions interplay through an assessment of learners' language acquisition and language performance. In connection with my participants' sexual identity and expressions, my study also aims to examine how gender and sexuality manifest in the process of language learning and acquisition. Besides, researching about gender and sexuality needs to avoid being viewed from an essentialist perspective. Instead, identity, gender and sexuality are social constructs, embedded within our social contexts (Sullivan, 2003) and always mutually intersected within (Seidman, 1993, p. 136). However, the use of strategic essentialism can be useful to unravel complex identity situations, as Bucholtz and Hall (2004) state that sometimes it is necessary to "purposefully oversimplify complex situations in order to initiate a discussion that will later become more nuanced" (p. 376). In this study, strategic essentialism helps me to take a closer look into queer ESL learners' cultural and sexual identity transformation in relation to language learning and the performance of language use.

Furthermore, as English hegemony leads to linguistic and communicative anxieties and discrimination and colonization of mentality among English learners all around the world. Insufficient research that assesses the existing reality and its transformative impacts on learners' ideology and identity, and even less advocates of critical pedagogies with a queer perspective in

second language education challenging status quo and homogeneity kindle another reason for this research to tackle hegemonic English ideologies and support critical education.

Purpose of the Study

The intended purpose of this study is to show the relationship among language ideology, language learners' identity, social positioning and their language performance through a qualitative case study of three Chinese queer immigrant ESL learners. The study seeks a better understanding of how learning a second language and interacting with the target language speaking community can facilitate a transfer of learners' cultural identity and sexual identity, and ultimately affect SLA. Also, this study aims to contribute to critical ESL education, highlighting the importance of teaching about LGBTQ issues in classroom practices, incorporating LGBTQ persons' lived experiences, and affirming their positions. Following King's (2008) work, my hope through this research is threefold: (1) valuing Asian immigrants' nuanced lived experiences as queers and English learners to challenge dominant and hegemonic discourses; (2) contributing to the expansion of language-identity frameworks, and raising language awareness and intercultural competence; and (3) documenting the need for adopting queer inquiry based critical pedagogies in ESL and second language education as a whole (for an overview of critical pedagogy, see Kincheloe, 2008).

Research Questions

Informed by De Costa (2011), Miller (2009), King (2008) and Bond (2019), the research questions in this study focus on Chinese queer immigrants in the U.S., and include:

1. How does acquiring English affect queer, U.S.-based Chinese immigrant ESL learners' sexual identity?
2. How are learners' cultural identity and sexual identity negotiated through interactions in the second language (L2) with local gay communities?
3. How do learners position themselves as well as others in accordance with English proficiency?
4. What could ESL educators do to facilitate their SLA and cultivate their social and personal agency?

Overview of Theoretical Framework

Theories and concepts of language ideology, positioning theory and performativity powered by queer theory frame this study. Critical applied linguistics and threshold theory also inform the study. Each theory or concept is described in more detail under Chapter Two, review of the literature. Thus, this section serves as an overview mainly depicting the connections among them.

Language ideologies shape and alter the ways that language learners talk about, think about, engage, study and use a language in relation to their social contexts and socio-cultural experiences (Woolard, 1998; Jaffe, 2009; Kroskrity, 2010; McGroarty, 2010); and this transformation can be reflected through social positionings as learners position themselves as well as others according to hierarchies, meanings, and values that language ideology produces (Davies & Harré, 1990). In addition to the interdependence of language ideology and social positioning, language production provides as an outlet through which ideologies, identities and, social positionings are mediated and performed. In other words, through language performance

and use within learners' social contexts, we can assess how language learning and acquisition influences their cognitive development, and at the same time, how their beliefs could facilitate SLA and language learning outcomes (Pennycook, 2006).

Those who advocate that research is a place to make a change and transform our society would agree that adopting a critical stance in ESL education not only challenges hegemonic English ideologies and affirms learners' cultures and identities, but it can also free queer students from marginalized positions with self-determination. When learners are learning and acquiring a language, they also internalize ideologies from the interests of their particular social positions. This ongoing learning process can impact cognitive development in a negative way. Ortactepe (2013) points out that students connect issues in language learning with other "troublesome" knowledge (e.g., nationality, traditions), which burdens students' emergent identities, confidence, motivation, and of course learning outcomes. Hence, it is beyond meaningful to adopt pedagogies that allow learners, especially those whose home culture rejects their queer identity, to connect their academic learning with social relations and power dynamics with a critical perspective, which enables them to accept their emergent identities, critique dominant powers, and find their meanings and positions within the world without rejecting being themselves (see Freire, 2005 for critical education).

Methodology

Research Methodology

A qualitative case study has been employed in this study. Yin (1994) claims that case study research explains large phenomena through one case or multiple cases; and the objective of this approach is to understand an issue or problem within bounded systems, rather than capture

how culture operates within an entire cultural group, which is what ethnographic research intends to accomplish (Creswell & Poth, 2017). However, they do share similarities among other qualitative research methods. Holiday (2004) asserts the core spirit of qualitative study should be “*thick description*” (p. 732), instead of “*generalization or triangulation*.” The latter conforms to the positivist tradition laying emphasis on data, analysis, and scientific conclusions, but the former underlines the understanding of dynamic social elements and their influences on the research participants within a bounded system or systems. Thus, case study research is not merely concerned with seeing the world in a grain of sand, it is destined for researchers to connect data and realities, cultures and society, and answer critical questions that matter to researchers’ and participants’ lives.

Research Setting

According to Yin (2003), theories and theoretical interests should draw on participant selection as well as bounded system design. Three language learners, Jay, Bob, and Jackson (all pseudonyms) agreed to participate in the study. They are all Chinese immigrants who have been residing in the Bay Area, California for around five years, six years, and over 20 years respectively. Jay is an international student originally from Taiwan, the Republic of China, carrying an F-1 visa; Bob, born and raised in Northern China, has been in the Bay Area for over 5 years on a spouse visa, and he used to study in an adult school in the U.S. as well; while Jackson, born and raised in Hong Kong, China, is a naturalized U.S. citizen, and has spent over 20 years in the U.S. and has actively participated in different gay communities. With the majority of the time that they all spent in Asia before puberty, their first language (L1) is the language they use to communicate with their family and some friends and is not English. Regarding their

second language (L2), English, they all learned English both in their home country and in the U.S. and have reached a certain level of proficiency.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through observations and interviews. Observations were used to see how the participants interacted with their friends in the local gay community. Due to challenges that the COVID-19 has imposed, observations were limited, and only conducted once with Bob through Zoom. Stringer (2017) suggests that the participatory research enables researchers and participants to actively engage within plans and activities in which people can accomplish themselves (p. 38). In other words, the research can be more effective, and produce more sustainable yet inclusive results, if both researchers and participants can actively be involved within their social circumstances with no carefully designed time, space and/or procedures for observations. Interviews and observations were recorded on a MacBook pro. I chose to ask questions and collect answers in English but due to participants' different experiences with speaking a second language, speaking their L1 will not be prohibited or interrupted as I am also fluent in Mandarin Chinese, and my Cantonese is tolerable for daily conversations.

Questions during interviews were related to my research questions, and some notes I made in observations that needed detailed explanations or descriptions. Although being an insider of both the queer community and English learner community seems more trustworthy to participants, my opinions and feelings about being gay, speaking my L1 and English, and relationship to both communities may be different from theirs. Thus, during the data collection and analysis, I constantly reminded myself of my positionality, and avoided putting my assumptions into their stories so as not to misrepresent their narratives (Kong et al., 2003).

Data analysis started with transcriptions of my field notes and interviews. I transcribed all field notes and English dialogues; dialogues in their L1 were translated by themselves as a literacy practice, to make sure their perspectives and characters were being portrayed correctly. Lastly, I put them all in a Google doc to be examined thematically. My assumption, informed by literature and personal experiences, included a “proportional relationship” among my participants’ second language acquisition and investment in second language learning, acceptance and disclosure of their sexuality and sexual orientation, and identification with the broader U.S. culture and queer U.S. subcultures. To elaborate, I speculated that, learning and acquiring English, and interacting within local gay community, would attribute higher motivation in SLA, greater acceptance of sexuality and sexual orientation and closer identification to Western ideology and cultures to my participants. According to Nickerson (1998), a researcher’s existing beliefs, expectations or/and a hypothesis coming out of literature and experiences biasedly affects observation and evaluation. Thus, it was important in this study to treat evidence based on truth, instead of desirability, and remain open to more possibilities of interpretation, and recognize confirmation bias that could obstruct thinking and evaluating throughout the process of data inquiry and analysis. The initial coding process, informed by Strauss and Corbin (1990), began with writing down all ideas and thoughts that I could think of, just based on the raw data. Then, I conceptualized my notes and connected them closely to the theoretical framework as well three themes that help answer my research questions. At the selecting stage, I started to look for patterns, discrepancies and symbols in my conceptualizations and grouped data that enabled me to write up my findings with rich empirical evidence and careful analysis.

Limitations of the Study

This study was limited by several factors: the participants, research length as well as the COVID-19 limitations. The COVID-19 pandemic has imposed challenges and changes onto many fields, economics, education and of course, scholarships, and this global pandemic has impacted ways that people interact with others. Fortunately, Zoom and some other video conferencing software have offered an alternative way for research with many advantages, such as lower cost, less commute times, flexibility on time and so forth (Gray et al., 2020). However, data collection through a screen may have taken away a sense of reflexivity, authenticity, intimacy, and trustworthiness to some extent between the researcher and participants, and ultimately affected the quality of research (Sy et al., 2020). Secondly, due to the scope of the graduate project and the time frame that it had to be completed within, the time for conducting research also may have affected the findings and the conclusion, which can be considered as a drawback. In despite of what has been said, it nonetheless opens an opportunity for readers, fellow graduates at the University of San Francisco, and myself to keep expanding the framework of second language learners' belief systems, and pushing ESL education forward in a more critical direction. Regarding my participants, first of all, I admit that three people's narratives might seem insufficient to generalize such results but as mentioned before, qualitative research especially ethnographic studies and narrative-inspired case studies, is exploratory and concerned more with the "thick description" and "transferability," not generalization of their lived experiences (Holiday, 2004).

Significance of The Project

Mapping language ideology, social positioning theory and performativity together with a focus on three U.S.-based Chinese queers for whom English is not their second language, is significant for ESL educators and students, second language researchers, critical educators, school administrators, school advisers whose advisees are ESL learners as well as students who are interested in linguistics and education. ESL educators and students can benefit from this research by gaining a better understanding of how SLA influences learners' social worlds, identity transformation and language awareness, and classroom teachers can design their lesson plans and include LGBTQ content and queer voices. For researchers interested in SLA related topics, this study can be a tool for them to test, modify and apply to their contexts and interests. For educators who advocate critical pedagogy and its mission to address social inequalities, this study provides a lens of language acquisition and language performance to look into non-American populations' struggles with their cultural and sexual identity negotiation and reconstruction, which leads to the significance of the study for school administrators. By acknowledging their voices and struggles, school policy makers and those at the administration level should show empathy and sympathy by creating programs, providing scholarships and building meaningful dialogues to affirm non-American persons' values, meaning and positions in this society. Finally, for students who are interested in SLA related studies, this research project can help them understand the intricate connections between language and social relations, and the importance of a critical perspective in doing research regarding people's lives.

Definition of Terms

International Students: The term, international students, is not accurate enough, and can be problematic in a general sense. Holiday (2006) points out that putting too much emphasis on

their “non-native speakerism (p. 385)” and “otherness (p.385)” will lead to a “deficit approach,” in which their intelligence and social skills are measured based on their limited exposure in Western social systems and language competence. Thus, I am aware of this problematic and hurtful label, and my usage of this term only refers to those who share common characteristics with other international students; for example, English is not their dominant language and they have not been exposed to American school system before and so forth (also see Bond, 2019). Normally, in the U.S., we refer to international students as those who come from another country, speak a different language, and pay a higher tuition without being able to work. For my study, one of my participants is an international student enrolled in an American higher education institution. In this study, participants all originally come from East Asia, and Mandarin Chinese or Cantonese Chinese are their first language.

Chinese: Measuring one’s ethnicity or classifying one into a particular ethnic group is never one-dimensional and foreordained. Ethnicity is a social construct, encompassed by many factors such as ancestry, geographical origin, cultural tradition, language, social experiences, and so forth (Peoples & Bailey, 2010). Those factors meanwhile serve but not essentially conclude as ethnic markers of similarities and differences (Karner, 2007). With the long history of migration, Chinese as an ethnicity and an ethnic group can go beyond the borders of The People’s Republic of China. Scholars in the past have taken different paths to measure and evaluate how global Chinese populations construct and navigate their ethnicity. Quan and his colleagues (2006) use people’s last name as an alternative source to define Chinese ethnicity, while Wong and Tan (2017) access the role of language played as an important ethnic boundary among three Chinese immigrant communities. In this study, I am aware that it is almost impossible to define someone without taking one’s social and political experiences and discourses, and self-determination into

account. However, in agreement with Wong and Tan's findings, language is perceived as being the most important factor to determine one's ethnicity; therefore, with my participants' consent, I decided to use Chinese to refer them based on their shared attribute—the ability to speak a Chinese language.

First language and Second language: There is also a need to specify the definitions of first language (L1) and second language (L2) for my research population in this study. L1 may have many synonyms as native language, primary language, or mother tongue but the processes and results of L1 acquisition vary based on when L2 comes into play and becomes effective and active (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016). Namely, L1 acquisition operates differently on older learners whose L2 is learned after L1 has been established and young learners who simultaneously acquire two or more languages at the same time. In this vein, SLA varies according to a learner's needs and purposes as a L2 differs from a foreign language, a library language, as well as an auxiliary language. Also, I acknowledge that learning a third or fourth language processes differently both in our cognitive system and social meanings (Saville-Troike & Barto, 2016, p. 4). Thus, I refer L1 in this research as Mandarin Chinese and Cantonese Chinese that the three participants had acquired and learned first growing up among others who spoke the same language. Moreover, they all have learned English (L2) after their L1 has been acquired, and live in a country where English is academically, politically, culturally and socially dominant.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In consonance with Machi and McEvoy (2016), a literature review endeavors to answer the study's research questions with an angular yet comprehensive understanding about the current knowledge of the study. The thesis for this literature review attends closely to the exploration of three U.S.-based Chinese queer ESL learners' second language acquisition (SLA) and identity shift via a mapping of language ideology, social positioning, and performativity. Moreover, in order to best facilitate learning and the transformation of the cultural and sexual identity of queer ESL learners, I argue that it is important to adopt critical approaches to second language education in relation to the workings of power and human agency.

Four sets of evidence make up the body of this review, including 1) social aspects of language and language performance; 2) cross-language processing, bilingualism, and learners' identity; 3) learning English and cultural influence on LGBTQ Asians, and 4) learning, critical literacy and "queering" ESL education. They are all interconnected and serve the purpose of this study. Language ideology, Positioning theory and Queer theory can be found to frame the body of this scholarship; Threshold theory and Critical Applied Linguistic framework as a discipline also contribute to framing the study.

Social Aspect of Language and Language Performance

Giving language a definition that acknowledges its social significance is valuable. Not only because there are so many aspects to explain language as a phenomenon, but also because of the intricate language-and-conscience relationship that unavoidably makes it difficult to generalize (Block, 1995). Research, in this section, looks at language from a socio-cultural approach and performance with a critical stance. This section is particularly important because it

sets up the context for my assumptions that learning a second language does have an impact on queer language learners' beliefs as well as identities, and second language education needs to be “queered” in order to exemplify education as liberating and possible.

To begin with, the research shows that language is not solely a technical matter concerning competences, but is intertwined with social power, norms, policies and relations that are mediated through performance, which transform our ways of thinking, acting, and being. As Wardhaugh (2014) observes, language is a way of viewing the self(s) and world where subjectivity, individual consciousness as well as collective consciousness are negotiated and produced. More importantly to point it out, language production and language learning are not driven by the competences which measure *appropriation* of language; rather *performance* in language is foregrounded. Language performance here is referred to as social acts that produce our new identity and being through day-to-day communications within the reality that is historically situated, ideologically embedded and culturally embodied to oneself individually and collectively. Hooper (1998) concludes, “a language is not a circumscribed object but a confederation of available and overlapping social experiences” (p. 171).

In summary, language is defined as social acts, and language production therefore comes from performance-based models. As stated, language is more than a system and various principles that allow speakers to make meanings (grammatical and communicative competence); language also puts focus on texts in social contexts that concern one's subjectivity and positioning. With regards to performance, language is fluid, and used by social subjects to exercise their understanding of social meanings in connection to their discourses and social relationships (Butler, 1999; cited in Pennycook, 2006, p. 69).

Cross-language Processing, Bilingualism and Learner's Identity

With an increase of research on bilingualism in the past two decades, researchers and educators have come to realize that acquiring a second language (L2) is neither a mere technical process; acquiring a second language not only shapes perceptions and representations on both the L1 and L2, but also affects language learners' cognitive development in response to social-cultural learning experiences and other factors that might influence a learners' cognition and beliefs (Bates, Devescovi & Wulfeck, 2001; Bialystok, 2017; Kroll, Bobb, & Hoshino, 2014). This section aims to review studies that describe the critical role that SLA plays in second language learners' cognition, L1 processing, and evolving social identities.

According to Bates, Devescovi and Wulfeck (2001), language resides in the same part of our brain whether it is L1, L2 or even L3, but the configuration of this mental/neural substrate and the use of this substrate make languages vary qualitatively and quantitatively. Furthermore, learning experiences have potential to modify an individual's brain structure and cognitive system which then shapes language production and performance. For instance, Noble, McCandliss and Farah (2007) examine how different experiences regarding socio-economic status affect brain volume as well as cognitive comprehension. Similarly, Kramer, Bherer and Colcombe (2014) examine the role formal education plays in changing brain structure. Thus, learning and acquiring a second language also contribute to experiences that affect brain functioning, and cross-language exchange between L1 and L2 carries out at every level of processing. Cross-language interaction is conceived as the phenomenon where bilinguals use one language, while the other language(s) is also being accessed (Wu & Thierry, 2010). That is to say that L1 influences L2 production and learning experiences, and L2 also has an impact on L1 development and processing. Further, this ongoing learning experience between two languages is

reflected not only upon daily verbal or non-verbal (e.g. gestures) communications, but also upon conceptualization of the knowledge, cultures, and social relations of the language learner.

Wang, Perfeti and Liu (2005) show cross-language reading acquisition among Chinese and English bilinguals is a joint function of shared phonological processes and orthographic-specific skills with a certain level of knowledge transfer, even though these languages are very much different in writing system as well as spoken forms (p. 83). More pointedly, the study shows that Chinese phonological features (e.g., four tones) assist learning to read English, but orthographic learning seems less to interfere between two languages with two completely different writing systems.

Wu and Thierry (2010) and Chen, Benet-Martinez and Harris-Bond (2008) conclude the same result that there is a bi-directional relationship between L1 and L2. Yet, these two studies shift the scope from “context free” applied linguistic (see Lazard, 2012 about pure linguistics), to language learners and bilinguals’ learning and socio-cultural contexts. The former study claims that the two languages of bilinguals are both activated even when one of the languages is not in use; also, they urge us to take language learners’ contexts in great considerations when doing research about cross-language related studies, as learners’ learning experiences and learning contexts have a huge impact on their language production, language performance, and beliefs and identities.

Supporting this notion, Chen and her colleagues (2008) explore how social contexts influence bilinguals’ (most of them are ESL or EFL (English as a foreign language) learners) bi-cultural identity, and bilingual competence as mediated through second language use and learning. They find that second language learning and proficiency emerge as one of the

important factors that associates with bilinguals' cultural adaption, identity reconstruction, and psychological adaption to dominant discourses.

In conclusion, bilinguals' L1 and L2 are constantly interacting and affecting each other in many dimensions within learners' contexts. As stated before, cross-language exchange between L1 and L2 carries out at every level of processing. This ongoing experience not only impacts L1 and L2 learning and language performance, but also influences speakers' cultural identification and understanding of the world and society in which they exist and interact.

Learning English, and Cultural influences on LGBTQ Asians

A great number of scholars and researchers have criticized the invisibility of LGBTQ people of color in SLA related research. On the top of that, foreign-born or/and raised-Asian immigrants' (such as green card holders, O1 and H1B visa holders) socio-cultural experiences are often ignored or made invisible in either Asian American or international student matters. Thus, it is vital and critical to acknowledge the nuanced cultural experiences that may affect LGBTQ people of color's emergent identities (e.g., Biesckhe et al., 2008), and language use performed through interactions within learners' social contexts (Ohnishi et al., 2006). As my research participants are Chinese immigrants in the U.S., it is necessary to consider their cultural influences on emergent identities while learning and acquiring English (L2) in society where English is dominant in many ways.

Szymanski, Kashubeck-West, and Meyer (2008) capture the complex yet dynamic correlation among heterosexism, Asian cultural values, and sexual orientation disclosure. They argue that Asian cultural values that conform to traditional gender roles and condemn homosexuality may contribute to Asian American LGBTQ persons' negative attitudes towards

their sexuality to internalized heterosexism. These negative attitudes create a dilemma in which Asian American LGBTQ persons feel conflicted with their family and community because of their sexual identity, and at the same time, feel constrained in expressing their sexuality because of their internalized homophobia (see Boulden, 2009 for a qualitative review). Again, socio-cultural experiences and sexual identity experiences of foreign-born LGBTQ Asian diasporas in the U.S. are ignored in Szymanski, Kashubeck-West and Meyer's study. I argue that, for Asian diasporas who just came in contact with American social identities, the term "Asian" sometimes is exclusionary, and the term "American" necessitates citizenship for their experiences as Asian to be included and valued in U.S. research (Ren, 2020).

Additionally, Arnett (2002) argues globalization has imposed many changes and challenges in our society; trade, immigration, media all motivated more and more people from different places to become multilingual and multicultural so psychological consequences such as acculturation, identity crisis, and linguistic anxiety not only occur among people who were born and raised in a multicultural society, but also those who internalize and embody those phenomena through any type of channels. For instance, Seo (2001) finds that most LGBTQ Koreans identifying themselves as "gay" have internalized the western "coming out" paradigm, which also has influenced their attitudes towards Korean culture, learning English, and western lifestyles. The study introduced in the previous section (King, 2008) supports finding that the interpellation of western ideologies has resulted in shifting LGBTQ language learners' identities and increased their investment in learning English.

Overall, for Asian LGBTQ persons, there is a dilemma between Asian cultural values that put homosexuality down and the need to accept one's sexual orientation and expression and disclose to others, mediated through internalized heterosexism. Furthermore, when it comes to

U.S.-based and foreign born and raised Asian LGBTQ persons, their nuanced social-cultural experiences and unique status within the U.S. contexts and the interpellation of western LGBTQ paradigm resulting from globalization, are not fully seen and studied. Thus, it is significant for critical researchers and ESL educators to adopt a “queer” stance into their research as well as classrooms.

Learning, Critical Literacy and “Queering” ESL Education

According to Gee (1994), English teachers deal with the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time (p.190); this section aspires to expand the educational implications of feminist and queer theories in the arena of ESL, EFL, and second language learning/teaching for queer students, teachers, and those whose identities develop as a result of learning a second language and/or interacting with the target language community.

First and foremost, learning is an active and ongoing process of meaning-making, which transforms what we witness, experience, emote, and understand of knowledge and the world through stage-like transitions (Cross, 1999; Perkins, 2007). When learners encounter learning a new language and culture, they are also internalizing ideologies about the language, culture and the status of themselves and others while interacting within their social contexts. This ongoing yet transformational development is both cognitive and emotional and leads to irreversible shifts in identities and subjectivities (Schwartzman, 2010; Timmermans, 2010). Foreign-born and raised queer Asians who navigate their immigration status and sexual identity that are not favorably accepted by their home culture and family might experience a rupture in knowing (e.g., internalized heterosexism, reverse orientalism), as the U.S. culture has more tolerance and acceptance of their sexual orientation and sexuality. In detail, between exposure to new

knowledge and acquisition of it, reflectiveness and defensiveness will be developed as the former promotes “differences” and the latter emphasizes “otherness” (Schwartzman, 2010, pp. 29-31).

This process reflects how individuals negotiate the discrepancy of the old knowledge and integration of the new knowledge through language acquisition and meaning making of the language use within their social contexts. This stage-like development is composed of threshold concepts (TC), with which the goal is to support students’ learning and facilitate student’s development of human agency and identity that allows them to claim their own learning experiences within even unfamiliar social environments (Montgomery, 2010).

To echo the mission that TC intends to accomplish, Pennycook (2008) offers interdisciplinary approaches to enable language learners, educators, and researchers to critically connect their learning experiences with the social and cultural contexts in which they interact with others and make meaning of their relations. In his work, critical literacy study, critical discourse analysis, and critical pedagogy are interpreted to tackle the relationships between texts and social practices concerning questions of power, equity, diversity and social change (p.170). Literacy in this lens is never about only the ability to write and read, but learning some aspects of discourses, and the ability to apply the language into those discourses that inherently form our identities, social relations as well as perceptions and values about the world (Freire, 1970; Gee, 1998; Olson,1995) Building upon this construct, learning a new and unfamiliar language is a social practice that interactively transforms the language (texts) into our ways of thinking and being within our social contexts and experiences. This active, ongoing, and consistent learning experience carries a cultural, political, and social significance that connects our ongoing negotiation of who we are with this world in which we live in (Street, 2001). Pennycook (2008) and Janks (2012), subsequently, pay attention to critique of literacy studies, hegemonic English

imperialism, and the importance of critical pedagogy. Re-contextualization of texts are used to critique pre-existing knowledge and discourses where some learners' cultural wholes (identities) are marginalized and distorted (Janks, 2012, pp. 63-67); moreover, concerning the spread of English, the critique of current ESL education needs to adopt critical pedagogies that aim to challenge neo-colonial English ideologies that discriminate against people who are English learners and/or vernacular English speakers (Morgan & Ramanathan, 2005; Tsuda, 2000); Also the central tenet of critical pedagogy is to cultivate intellectuals who are able to see how his/her/their race, gender and sexuality are produced, and able to engage texts, writing, reading and use of language within their realities, and promote social equalities and transformation (Teitelbaum, 1992).

In addition, “queering” ESL education is not only bound to teaching LGBTQ related subjects, but also to the disruption of dominant discourses and homogeneous cultures, and the static understating of identity formation through actions. To elaborate, “queer” firstly indicates an identity that is used to interrogate both heterosexual and homosexual mainstream. In other words, queer challenges the clear-cut understanding of sexual and identity categories, and at the same time, troubles white, middle class and hetero-imitative ideas of viewing queers (Seidman, 1995). Britzman (1995) points out that “queer” can also be used as a verb. In this manner, “queer” symbolizes processes and actions over properties and actors. Queer theories enacted with a critical perspective in educational practices promote the inclusion of homosexuality as a subject in and out of the classroom (Dally & Campbell, 2006, p. 17), which opens up more opportunities to constructive dialogues that disrupt the common understanding of heterosexual representation, practices, and identities as the normal and natural expression of humanity (p. 13). Furthermore, those dialogues that advocate narratives and lived experiences of queers, especially

minorities, can foreground the desires, resistance and sense of self, which cultivate human agency and social agency that resist oppression and domination (Kumashiro, 2002).

Ultimately, alongside critical pedagogies, queer pedagogies also aim to make education possible for all (see Waite, 2017 for the incorporation of queer theory in a college writing class). It is beyond meaningful for LGBTQ persons to acknowledge their fluid identities and realities, for teachers to create programs and curriculum that teach about diverse LGBTQ content, to address homophobic behavior by recognizing human differences not otherness, and to include LGBTQ voices and lived experiences in classroom conversations. By doing so, not only are LGBTQ ESL learners able to tell stories of their own, but through learning stories of each other, the classroom becomes a safe and respectful place for all to share and be, while linguistic and cultural practices inside and outside the classroom allow LGBTQ students to critique their discourses, heal from exclusion and discrimination, and affirm their subjectivities and positionality within the world (Nelson, 2008; Pavlenko, 2004).

Theoretical Framework

Language Ideology and Identity

Language ideology framework, developed from linguistic anthropology, presents the hierarchies of ideas, values and meanings about a language and particular individuals and/or communities. Language ideologies impact and transform speakers' beliefs, aesthetics, mortality, identities and even epistemology through interactional socio-cultural experiences within different communities (Woolard, 1998; Jaffe, 2009; Kroskrity, 2010; McGroarty, 2010). Language ideology and language learners' identity have always been popular topics in SLA research, and they are important constructs for researchers investigating how multiple social factors and power

dynamics shape language ideology, and how ideologies affect learners' social identification, language use, and ultimately language acquisition. A number of studies regarding language ideology and identity in this section provide context for the study.

Developing from a social-psychological frame of reference, Lane (1999) critically analyzes the complex relations among language, ideology, and social representation, which helps establish the groundwork for further discussion of second language learning in this study. In her judgment, language is an instrument in human development of thinking and being and has made it possible for humankind to build histories, cultures, and society. Yet, social groups determine the meanings of the history, culture, language and society, and social relationships reflects the power, values, knowledge and meanings of words, and social representations with particular ways of talking, performing and being among those social groups. This ongoing, complex process of ideology production and re-production essentially influences our emotions, attitudes, thinking, and positioning about different languages, cultures, ourselves and relationships with others. Lastly, Lane's call for inclusion of emotions as an important part in language production and ideology re-construction inspires me to conduct this research as an artist, an educator, a researcher, and a global citizen.

Building on this foundation, Norton (2013) takes a closer look into language learners' identity negotiation with in-class and out of class language and social practices. Identity in Norton's eye is not a static entity, but rather relational, and helps a person to understand his, her or their relationship to the world and possibilities for the future across time and space (p. 4). As Weedon (1997) centralizes the role of language that serves to construct our sense of selves (p. 21), Norton adds investment and agency in analyzing of the relationship between the learners' language learning and their socio-cultural contexts. Differentiated from motivation, investment

in language learning refers to how much language learners “invest” in the target language in order to gain a wide range of symbolic resources (e.g., language, education, friendship) and material resources (e.g., capital goods, money). Although some language learners are fairly motivated to learn, under some given classrooms or communities in which limited access and opportunities for language learners to participate in language and social practices are provided, low investment in language learning will directly affect SLA, and might result in the failure of increasing the value of learners’ cultural capital and social power (p.6). In other words, investment is tied closely with learners’ learning desire, commitment, outcomes as well as complex identity, which are connected with their social experiences and contexts.

On the other hand, reconciled with what Bourdieu, Passeron and Nice (1990) call *cultural capital*-social assets (e.g., knowledge, behaviors and skills) that a person possesses to navigate society, human agency in the sense of this study refers to language learners’ capacity to claim their subjectivity and position and resist dominant ideologies and power while acquiring a new language and coming in contact with a new culture. Norton’s emphasis on language learners’ investment and learners’ discursive contexts not only provides a means to assess SLA and identity transformation, but also highlights the importance of developing pedagogical practices and qualitative research, aiming to help students exercise human agency, and fundamentally bring the field of language teaching and applied linguistics further to a more critical stance.

Another dimension in this field of thought is represented by Duff (2014) who adopts a sociolinguistic perspective on second language learners’ identity, agency, and ideological worldviews. She points out the influences of social information and social identification on producing and reproducing language learners’ ideologies and identities. Then she goes into historical discussions of the topic, current findings and future directions on how second language

teaching and learning can be transformed. Her understanding of identity is from a sense of self from which coherent, complex, shifting and even contradictory subject positions are (re)negotiated and (re)produced. Echoing Norton's idea (2000), Duff also advocates for critical pedagogy in second language education to counter the way education and scholarship marginalize certain kinds of people and produce social stratification. In addition to Norton's (2013) research on agency, Duff firmly connects learners' strong personal and social agency with the advancement of language learning and SLA, and success in social practices.

Two cases studies (Miller, 2009; De Costa, 2011) that both deploy language ideology and identity framework illustrate how language ideologies and common sense ascribed to English affect ESL learners' beliefs about language, culture, and their social identification through interpersonal interactions with both home (Chinese) and target language (English) communities in Singapore and the U.S. respectively. De Costa (2011) pays attention to an ESL student from China in a Singapore school where standard English is taught. His findings not only address that learner's language ideologies including ideas about language itself and values and meanings related to language use, but also how language ideologies facilitate learners' identity transformation, and potentially impact language learning outcomes. Miller (2019) examines hegemonic English ideologies on Chinese-speaking English learners' beliefs and identity through beyond-classroom interpersonal and mundane interactions within the dominant discourse in which status quo is re-produced and reinforced. Both case studies are in alignment with the framework of language ideology and identity to which many scholars have contributed (e.g., Kroskrity, 2004; Jaffe, 2009 for language ideology; Norton, 2000, 2013; Koven 2007 for language learners' identity).

In summary, language ideology and language learners' identity not only explore *how* language is socially constructed and *how* perceptions about language affect learners' language outcomes, use, and their sociocultural experiences, but also *how* they both coherently and bi-directionally influence each other as language ideology shapes the way language learners talk about, think about, engage, study, and use a language or a particular code, and at the same time, the language and codes that they select to interact within the world, construct their new culture and identities, and sometimes drive as resistance to the dominant power.

Positioning Theory

Positioning theory parses language learners' positioning of themselves and others within their social contexts in relation to language ideology, learner's identity as well as power dynamics, and how subject positions can affect language learning outcomes as well as SLA (Davies & Harré, 1990). Furthermore, positioning theory offers a means to manifest the impacts of language ideology on language learners' day-to-day language use and behavior, and the negotiation of learners' identity through daily interactions within both L1 and L2 speaking communities. As positioning theory has become a critical instrument in assessing the relationship between SLA and learners' belief system and its transformation, many scholars have come forward to examine subject positions under social relations and resistance of power (e.g., Miller, 2009).

Harré and Langenhove (1998) condense positioning theory into a mature and independent ontological paradigm from a social constructionist perspective, concerning social positionings with regard to everyday discursive language use and literacy practices. They describe positioning theory as a "dynamic alternative to the most static concept of role" (p. 14), meaning

understanding social phenomenon should be explored through a persons-acts referential grid, which can put an emphasis on conversations, institutional practices and other discursive activities that produce social meanings in contexts in which individuals and groups take part and interact. It is to say that positioning theory should be viewed as a model that analyzes personal development, cognition as well as psychological phenomenon through everyday communication and learning within social worlds. In addition, positioning theory examines relative positions between people both from their own individual standpoint and as representatives or even exemplars for groups. That is to say that there are two types of self: self and personas. “Self” refers to the self of personal identity, expressed from one’s point of view; and the other self is “personas” performed within day-to-day interactions within discourses. The former indicates that each person is one cultural whole, but one, as the latter conveys, can have many different personas presented for different contexts and social relationships. It is significantly useful when adopted to examine the interplay of one’s identity and discursive positions in relation to learning a second language as well as the interacting in the community with the use of the target language. A number of modes are proposed for researchers to look into how personas are manifested, and identity is transformed: First and second order positioning, performative and accountive positioning, moral and person positioning, self and other positioning and tacit and intentional positioning. With regards to this study, Harré and Langenhove’s (1998) work provides us with a social constructionist framework that can examine closely how language learners’ language ideology and identity are shaped and performed through discursive activities where self-positioning and positioning of others are situated.

Menard-Warwick (2007), De Costa (2011) and Miller (2009) all take positioning theory into the second language learning realm. De Costa (2011) draws a correlation between language

ideology and identity framework, and positioning theory to investigate how language beliefs influence language learning and SLA with an example of a Chinese immigrants' English learning experience as well as social interactions; Miller (2009) uses Chinese speaking immigrants' out of classroom conversations to examine how legitimacy of English dominance impacts recent immigrants' language use, language attitudes, and cultural identity within the U.S. society. On the other hand, Menard-Warwick (2007) examines classroom negotiation and teacher-student dynamic on the topic of the relationship between English learners' positioning of themselves and others in relation to their identities/roles as workers, women, and immigrants, and language learning and learning outcomes. These three case studies all acknowledge the crucial role that social positionings carry in terms of understanding language ideology and language learners' performing identity within discourse where they exist and participate.

On the whole, positioning theory in language learning is a tool to answer *how* language learners position themselves and others according to their emerging ideologies and social identification, and *why* this socially influenced psychological phenomenon impacts language learning outcomes and SLA. It is also a lens that examines individual awareness and consciousness in response to their sociopolitical and cultural experiences and power dynamics. Thus far, this study underscores how learners discursively position themselves and others in ways that display their personas, construct their identity and affect their SLA.

Queer Theory and Performativity

Queer theory is not a singular theory, but a collective of theories that adopt a queer perspective to examine the meaning of socially constructed gender identity and acts that challenge homogeneous social orders and norms (Halperin, 2003). Part of queer theory,

performativity developed by Butler (1990) argues that the ways we present our identities are not through mere expressions of a prior identity, but an ongoing series of social and cultural performances. Pennycook (2006) draws on Butler's ideas and locates popular cultural practices (e.g., hip hop) under the expansion of global English education as an example of performativity. The ideas developed by Pavlenko (2004) center gender identity and sexuality in looking at the implications of critical queer theory in and out of the second language classrooms. Nelson (2008) enriches research and analysis about how language teachers' and learners' gender and sexual identities have been addressed, and the role critical queer theory can play in humanizing second language education, while King (2008) and Bond (2019) conduct comparative case studies with participants' narratives respectively, aiming to capture the effects of ESL learning on influencing queer and international English learners' performative language ideology and identity as well as positioning and self-positioning regarding English acquisition. Including queer theory, especially performativity, as a part of my framework is crucial because it provides an insight into understanding LGBTQ issues in second language education and how learners perform ideology and identity through second language learning.

As mentioned above, Butler (1990) is foundational to the idea of performativity of gender and identity from a non-essentialist perspective. Through her eyes, gender is *doing* not being, and gender is viewed as performative acts, and a matter of reiterating the norms by which one is constituted through language, gestures, and social signs. Performativity is one's ongoing series of performances in response to his/her/their socio-cultural experiences and contexts, rather than free-play or theatrical expressions of one's relatively fixed identities (p.528). Said another way, gender identity or other identities are not a "role" that simply speaks for ourselves, but rather historically embedded and discursively constructed "acts" that continuously form our

subjectivities and being on both an individual and collective level. Butler's contribution has opened up an opportunity to rethink about language use, language performance, identity reconstruction, subjectivity, as well as gender.

Building on this work, the seminal work of Pennycook (2006) lays an emphasis on performative identity, performing language use, and the possibility to "queer" second language education as well as our society. He claims that people constantly constitute their identity through the use of language or particular codes as a response to the social relations they have or/and they want to have within the world, and the performativity of language use reflects our identities and internationalization of social discourses including ideologies, self-positionings, and positioning of others. On the other hand, social identities with histories of former uses are produced and re-produced through repeated and ritualized ideologies, and then are carried as our own features through day-to-day interactions in the language or codes we choose. This work and Pennycook's (2008) advocacy to queer ESL classrooms are critical because he recognizes identities and language are performed through acts related to each other and social interactions, and he embraces critical pedagogies in terms of addressing LGBTQ issues in second language classrooms.

Pavlenko (2004) challenges pre-existing and current gender and sexuality representation and issues raised in and out of the second/foreign language classroom. She first addresses essentialist views and poststructuralist assumptions of gender and sexuality as static entities that do not interact with personal (micro) and social (macro) factors within their realities. She acknowledges the complexity of peoples' social and personal identities that respond to their understanding of the social world and concludes by highlighting three aspects of gender inequalities in relation to normative ideologies of gender and sexuality: access to resources,

classroom interactions, and sexual harassment. Next, she points out three key features to “queer” second/ foreign language education, not only for inclusion and engagement of the authentic selves of LGBTQ learners’ bodies and identities, but also for the cultivation of their human agency and critical awareness in relation to power dynamics. In harmony with Pavlenko’s (2004) work, Nelson (2008) posits the significance of teaching about LGBTQ issues, responding to homophobic behavior, and incorporating queer people’s voices in second language classrooms to create a social place where identities grow and negotiate. Also, she affirms that sexual identity cannot be examined by itself, instead it should be in relation to other aspect of social identities (pp. 1-26).

Two research projects, King (2008) and Bond (2019), both position language performance as a nexus connecting language use and the performance of ESL learner’s identity. Bond (2019) puts her focus on international students’ cultural identity and national identity re-negotiation in a higher education institution in the U.K., and her findings suggest that ESL learning experiences and western academic disciplines have raised language learners’ awareness of complex and developing identities and the *performance* of these emergent identities. She further suggests that language proficiency plays a vital role in facilitating the transformation of learners’ personal and national identity. Thus, through interactions with the local community, international student community, and English language learning, students are influenced on how they identify themselves individually and collectively, and how they negotiate with these emergent identities through day-to-day performative and interactional language use in and out of the classroom. King (2008) directs his scope into how language learners’ socio-cultural experiences in relatively gay friendly countries (the U.K., Australia, and the U.S.) impact gay-identified ESL learners’ performance of cultural identity and sexual identity. The study suggests

that their performance of speaking English over Korean in exploring their sexuality with English speaking communities shows transformations of their identities and internalization of ideologies associated with English in response to their current understanding of the Korean gay community. Their positionality as people who speak relatively better English and have lived in a gay-friendly western country shapes their identity and subjectivities.

To sum up, performativity is a way of re-thinking about the use of language or specific codes and identity construction from a critical angle. Performativity claims that our identities are not given, but rather consistently formed and reformed within social relations in performance through language, gesture, and other social signs, which gives us a new lens to see how our subjectivities are transformed from objects into being. Queer theory challenges the heterosexual and homosexual mainstream, and promotes fluid and non-normative understanding of sex, gender, sexuality as well as language learning. Regarding second language education in this study, it is important to adopt a queer stance in order to promote social equalities that have meanings to all global queer citizens.

Summary

As many scholars in this literature review have stated, the notion of identity is not one-dimensional and different aspects of identity should not be siloed; we cannot examine only one identity without considering other aspects of identity and their complex social contexts and relationships. The literature review claims that learning a second language goes beyond merely acquiring new linguistic features. Through acquiring and learning socially situated knowledge and ideologies, learner's identity, beliefs as well as perceived positions of oneself and others will develop and alter, and this active and ongoing negotiation of knowledge, identity, and

positionality is communicative and performative through both institutional and daily interactional language use and production within learners' diverse discourses.

Moreover, for the reason that Asian cultures set obstacles and challenges for Asian queers to accept, express, and disclose their sexual orientation and sexuality, their identity, personas and the relationship to both English and their L1 will also be affected as a result of the interpellation of western ideologies ascribed to English language as well as English-speaking societies. Because of this transformation of cultural and sexual identity, first language processing, SLA along with socio-cultural experiences are also influenced and reflected through performance of language use within both L1 and L2 communities. Thus, exploring queer English learners' language ideologies and social identity transformation can contribute to the expansion of learner's beliefs framework and queer theory framework, and the adoption of a more heterogeneous and critical perspective in English and second language education, which not only facilitates queer learners' understanding of themselves and their reality, but also informs educators and school administrators about how to create a space with inclusion, acceptance and care. Also, it can challenge hegemonic English ideologies and domination, and essentially reify what multiculturalism really entails-pluralism, equality, respect to cultural, linguistic and simply human differences and self-determination (see Hirabayashi, 2009).

This present study examines three foreign-born and raised Chinese queer ESL learners' narratives and positionalities in San Francisco, California. Understanding the process of language ideology associated with both home and new cultures altering queer learners' sexual and cultural identity transformation and social positioning is crucial because it gives us an opportunity to look in their unique and nuanced socio-cultural experiences along with performative language use. This research allows us to understand discourses that produced us,

and to challenge discrimination and marginalization found in the dominant discourses and reconstruct those discourses in order to humanize ESL education and education as a whole, and ultimately to bring love and care to all students and educators who deserve their place in the world and should be proud for who they are.

CHAPTER III

FINDINGS

Introduction

Organizing data is essential to a study, unfolding not merely the description, but analysis, interpretation and discussion (Ryan, 2006). In other words, data does not speak for itself, but the researcher(s) filters all evidence and decides how the scholarship is organized, analyzed, interpreted, discussed, and lastly presented. Chapter 1 in this study has illustrated the under-investigation of LGBTQ ESL learners' SLA and language use in relation to their sexuality and identity transformation, the importance of recognizing language learners' discourses and beliefs in raising people's language awareness, acceptance, and pushing ESL education to a more critical direction. The literature review in Chapter 2 provided a canon to look into how language is performed through the interpellation of language ideologies and the mediation of social positionings. With taking a stand on my theoretical sensitivity, Chapter 2 also delineated a rationale of cross-language processing, Asian cultural influences and critical literacy in framing the study.

Guided by my research questions, this chapter presents narratives that helped me understand my participants' experiences, and at the same time provides a foundation for further analysis, interpretation and discussion. This chapter is underpinned by three themes: 1) English still divides Americanness and otherness; 2) cultural mobility, balance, and belonging; and 3) English learning and the navigation of their queerness and self-defining. These three themes are inspired by the participants' narratives and sharing. As a filmmaker and education researcher, I have always known and valued the beauty of storytelling not only for its authenticity and being

told by witnesses who share the collective memory and identity (Yudice, 1985), but also for its advocacy to resist oppression and protest of the large discourse (Beverly, 1993).

Participants

Table 1: Summary of Interviewee Information

Name¹	Jay	Jackson	Bob
Age Range	20-25	50-60	55-65
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Ethnicity	Chinese/ Taiwanese	Chinese/ Chinese American	Chinese
Sexuality	Queer Identified gay	Gay	Gay
First Language	Mandarin, Chinese	Cantonese and Mandarin, Chinese	Mandarin, Chinese
Country of Birth*	Republic of China/Taiwan	Hong Kong, the special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China	People's Republic of China
Current Location	The Bay Area, California	The Bay Area, California	The Bay Area, California

Although COVID-19 has curbed the chance to interview and observe my participants in person, the time I spent with all three of them was purely joyful, relatable, and educational. I had an initial phone call with each of them in January, aiming to build rapport, foster friendships, and at the same time allow them to know my study better. Later, a one-hour interview in February and a shorter follow-up phone call in March were conducted with all three of them respectively. During the interviews, I had the privilege to listen to their stories, opinions, be with the narrators, prospect intersubjectivity, and show solidarity by valuing their voices and lived experiences (Sommer, 1991). Solidarity is deemed critical, especially under the time of isolation, violence

¹ Jay, Jackson, and Bob are all pseudonyms

against Asian communities in the U.S. (Ho, 2020), disinformation and fear. Therefore, I am grateful for their contribution and sincerity. Table 1 above shows an overview of three individuals who participated in my study.

Jay

Jay was born in Taiwan, officially the Republic of China and the first country/region in Asia to legalize same-sex marriage in 2019, and Jay is profoundly proud of that. He realized he was attracted to boys when he was in elementary school and kept this secret until his adolescence with feeling more independent and mature to come out to his family. His parents are both educated and hold master's degrees. Because of his father's career, Jay has led a transnational lifestyle. He resided in many different places like Taiwan, the U.S., Singapore, and China. At the age of 18, he finally landed in the Bay Area, pursuing his college degree as an international student. At present, he works in the science field with a working visa and plans to stay in the U.S. His transnational experiences helped Jay grow critical eyes. He is very observant, charismatic, and inquisitive.

Jackson

Jackson is a person with stories and is not afraid to share them. He was born in Hong Kong and attended a British government funded school with curriculum all in English. The only chance that he would speak Mandarin and Cantonese were in Chinese class, Chinese history class and home. His parents are immigrants from mainland China and again immigrants to the U.S. Knowing that the U.S. was a better place for his profession and freedom, Jackson left Hong Kong in 1989. When he was a student in Texas, trying to earn his credits and money, he started to explore his sexuality and identity. He obtained a Green-card three months after his graduation and is a naturalized U.S. citizen. He never initiated coming-out to his parents, rather his parents

found out themselves by questioning his relationship with his “best friend.” Many stage-like transitions have made him diligent, adaptive, and valuing of liberation and freedom.

Bob

Bob and I have become good friends after the initial phone call. He is an active member in the local gay community. According to him, community is where he can truly be himself. Bob was born and raised in mainland China, officially the People’s Republic of China, but now has resided in California for about six years. He completed his college education in China and was not totally aware of his homosexuality until he met his current husband in his early 30s. After they immigrated to the U.S. together, he has been actively involved in the local gay community and his knowledge about identity, sexuality, and equality has transformed and developed. During the interviews and the phone call, he was passionate talking about the importance of recognizing LGBTQ rights and same-sex marriage. Similar to Jackson, although he is out and comfortable sharing his thoughts on LGBTQ related matters, he chooses this “no-one-asks-and-I-say-nothing” method disclosing his sexual orientation and love life to his family and friends in his home country. He is over 50 years old, but I can still see how enthusiastic and absorbed he is towards things that matter to him and others in his community.

Findings: Theme 1: English still divides Americanness and otherness

The overt prestige that English and SAE (Standard American English) have reserved in the U.S. and some Western societies is never a reflection of any intricate linguistic features, but rather a derivative of politics, economics, social relations, and more complex power dynamics (Holmes, 2013). Language ideology as depicted in Chapter 2 is a tricky concept. It can ultimately influence and comparatively determine attitudes to the use of a language and its users on a global

scale but at the same time, it contextually varies, contradicts, and develops resistance. For example, the San Francisco metro area is an undeniably multilingual and diglossic region with approximately 163 languages spoken at home (U.S. Census Bureau, 2015). However, multilingualism is still discerned as inferior, and opportunities are biasedly stratified to those who have knowledge of different languages and speak other varieties of English, especially when it is associated with immigration status and education.

What is more interesting and confusing is our education system. Supported by the state, top-down standards and standardized instructions and tests have made students from diverse backgrounds come to realize that success in school and society means an assimilation to the dominant culture and a rejection to their ethnic values such as language, traditions, beliefs, but at the same time, schools try to teach foreign languages and promote intercultural competence. In addition, ESL education also has faced a dilemma, in which ESL educators juggle between challenging inequitable language policies, standardized materials and tests, and teaching standardized knowledge to help students survive. Hegemonic English ideology has serious consequences manifested on different levels. “Proper” English systematically privileges some and excludes others as it is used to justify social difference and inequalities (Milroy, 2001). As for what this study is concerned about, multiculturalism has not been authentically justified, rather it serves aesthetic purposes and serves to maintain the power and leadership of the dominant groups.

In the interviews with all three of my participants respectively, whether English is a determining factor defining one’s Americanness intriguingly aroused their interests and passion to share their opinions and relatable personal stories. Jackson came to the U.S. back in the 1990s as an international student and ESL student; compared with the other two participants, Jackson

has come in contact with American English ideology and racialization for the longest time. Thus, he is more aware of how speaking English and SAE can privilege a person and his or her social status, and at the same time exclude someone from getting his or her basic rights and full social participation. When I asked him “is English a factor to define someone as an American,” he nodded and said:

I think it (speaking English) is very important, just like my point I just said you need to be Americans. You shouldn't come to a country and not to try to melt and fuse with the people in there... you should (be) in total fusions with the (American) people. (Interview with Jackson, February 7th, 2021)

His response did not surprise me. Immigration acts reflect how legislation throughout U.S. history has shaped the characterization, subjection, and formation of Asian immigrants and Asian Americans; as such, there is an impact on society, as well as the attitudes and culture in which Asian groups' foreignness and position are strengthened inside and outside of Asian communities (Lowe, 2014).

Language together with culture, religion, and history serve as a determining component and a reflection of authenticity and loyalty of to one's American nationality (Fishman, 1973, pp. 44-46). In other words, language has immense power, imposing otherness onto people who do not share the same characteristics and bonds. I questioned Jackson further by asking him what do you think of those who speak “poor” English or who think speaking English is not important in this country?

I don't think they (people who speak poor English) should be here because just like I always say I don't understand the reason why Latinos want to come here, but then they don't speak English, and they don't want to speak English because I find that if you learn

Spanish actually is much easier, because then the words, like I have a problem with the “r” and “l,” but they don't have a problem. I wish I can speak Spanish, that's what one of my obstacles to learn. But anyway, to answer your question, have you watched the Korean movie, the famous movie, Parasite? I'm not saying they're parasites, I am just using the analogy. They want to take advantage of the house because it is fabulous, and they don't have to pay the utility, they don't build or fix anything. It is just not right.

(Interview with Jackson, February 7th, 2021)

Oppression can be unconsciously internalized and cause distressed behaviors that make marginalized people turn against each other and ourselves (Lipsky, 1987). In the conversation with Jackson, he recognized this phenomenon within his gay community as he states:

Maybe I'm a little bit better looking, or my English was ok...and I have a profession...making relatively ok money. Then, I can kind of join this little group where people speak much better English.... (If you don't speak good English) they (people in his group) will bully you, never going to invite you for the birthday (parties). (Interview with Jackson, February 7th, 2021)

Russell, Wilson, and Hall (1992) reveal that internalized racism is dynamical and will benefit racist institutions and practices at the expense of marginalized people and the victims. This phenomenon is not uncommon among middle-class people of color and it is manifested in different ways. Moreover, it is honestly true that internalized racism will cause discomfort and make it harder to admit that this derogatory sentiment does exist within people of color and those in marginalized positions. Jackson's experiences of racism towards himself and his community did not provoke a critique of the system but rather fueled his negative attitudes toward other marginalized groups, in this case, Latino immigrants.

Jay has led a transnational lifestyle and also witnessed and experienced racism and xenophobia before. For example, his close friend has used the term “FOBs” (“Fresh off the Boat”) to draw a boundary between Asian Americans and Asian immigrants who don’t speak English as fluently as the former. When we talked about internalized racism, he stated:

It is just internalized racism, and I feel bad for them. It’s that they have been rejected before. They want to put whatever the American shell they define so they don’t get hurt anymore. One example will be my boyfriend, he is Chinese American, and he is super White, or he is trying to be White, because he doesn’t want to be bullied, but he still was.

Ironic. I understand...it is defense mechanism. (Interview with Jay, February 5th, 2021)

In some cases, in order to gain acceptance and participation among dominant White society, some Asians or Asian Americans would avoid or deny their co-ethnics (Osajima, 1993), including but not limited to denying their first language, history, and cultural traditions.

Schwalbe and his colleagues (2000) call it “defensive othering,” meaning those in subordinate social positions try to disassociate themselves from their ethnic background and cultural forms of knowledge, as a strategy to gain membership to the dominant class. The defensive othering is not merely on a personal level, but rather it systematically changes the way those in subordinate positions define and position themselves and others. Jay is eminently mindful of this concept but fails to reflect upon himself. When I asked Jay if he feels uncomfortable speaking Chinese in a public sphere in the U.S., he said:

I think a bit for me, if people start to talk to me in Mandarin, I would be ok, but I don’t think I am that type of person to initiate talking in Chinese. At this point, I am just more comfortable speaking English. (Interview with Jay, February 5th, 2021)

Different from other ethnic groups, Asian Americans are often seen as foreigners and non-English speakers, and in order to be accepted by the White mainstream, some will avoid and even disguise their “Asian-ness.”

Similar to Jay, Jackson has also internalized this idea that speaking English demonstrates being educated and being more expressive. Further, speaking SAE conveys superiority and makes him more American.

I think Cantonese is not a good language to be a base...Cantonese is flat. When I first came here, people cannot understand the difference when I say “work” and “walk” I don't like Cantonese, because I have a lot of bad memories... (when I go back to Hong Kong) I speak Cantonese to my parents but speak English to my nieces because they are educated in England. So, I speak to young people in English so they will understand what I feel. (Interview with Jackson, February 7th, 2021)

As mentioned above, the defensive othering is not exclusively a personal matter, it is a self-depreciated response to systematic oppression and hegemony.

Freire and Ramos (1993) claim that self-depreciation is another characteristic derived from the internalization of oppression. It normalizes dependency and exploitation of the oppressed by blaming their own unfitness and conforming to dominant ideologies. Bob is a latecomer to this country, and his English is not as fluent as the other two participants. He does not think speaking English is a determining factor in social stratification. However, when I asked his opinion about those who refuse to speak their first language and think only English will be accepted and tolerated both at home and social events, he stated:

那我们套用一个俗语 when in Rome, do what Romans do。大部分人在这里讲英文。

那我很本能的学英文。这个太正常不过了。。。第二肯定是有一部分的人觉得讲中

文不太好，可能有一部分是是偏见，毫无疑问。（但是）我如果要是把这些社会因素剔除出去，你可能就会比较平静的接受说那他不愿意说就不说嘛。那因为我苦于说现在我还没有一个英语的思维。所以你要求一个孩子，比如说从他现在十岁、二十岁、三十岁，他都是在陆续开始学英语。但是他平时他去了学校，没有人跟他讲中文，那他下意识的去讲中文就比较难的情况下，大家都会选择去选择一个容易的。他的父母在家说中文。那他去了社会上去学英文，那逐渐随着他长大，他的英文一定比中文好，他说英文一定更比中文容易。那任何一个人干嘛要选择一个不容易的事情去说呢?这是很正常的。。。你说你 ok 我去华人超市，去华人餐馆。叫华人朋友。那有一天你不能找华人，你去上庭，你去警察那里，你不可能要求警察下意识的给你去讲中文?

There is an old saying “when in Rome, do what Romans do.” Most people speak English here, so it is natural to do so...Secondly, there is no doubt that some people think their Chinese is not good enough or hold biased ideas towards Chinese. However, if you exclude those social factors, you will accept it with more peace. If they don’t want to speak their first language, just let them be. I am struggling to think like native (English) speakers, so for those who speak Chinese at home but learn and speak English growing up, it is natural for them to speak better English; and it is definitely easier for them to speak English. Why people want to choose something difficult...Ok, you can go to Chinese markets, Chinese restaurants, and Chinese friends. What if one day you cannot? Are you going to ask people in the court and police officers to speak Chinese with you? (Interview with Bob, February 5th, 2021)

Throughout history, linguistic hegemony has been created and managed through governmental and institutional actions (e.g., the English only movement in the U.S. in 1984). Pavlenko (2002) points out that English monolingualism is identified as a symbol of Americanism, unity, and superiority. As a result, English is viewed as “natural,” “better,” “educated,” and “normal”—words that my participants used during interviews; other languages and non-standard varieties of the English language become “difficult,” “disadvantaged,” and a marker of the “inability to assimilate.”

It is noticeable that the ideological construction is not primarily constituted and enacted through policies, instructional practices, and “change from above, but rather through internal, mundane, and “change from below” activities. Labov (1966) describes “change from above” as the overt social pressures imposing social hierarchy thereby changing language; while “change from below” is a gradual shift in the low level of consciousness and awareness. Again, language ideology is a slippery concept. It shows how social factors and power dynamics can shape language ideology, and at the same time impact and transform speakers’ beliefs, aesthetics, mortality, identities, and ultimately language acquisition and processing (Woolard, 1998; Jaffe, 2009; Kroskrity, 2010; McGroarty, 2010). Hence, as critical researchers and educators, we need to explore and investigate linguistic minorities and their experiences in relation to the dominance of English language ideologies. Also, their narratives and experiences are extremely valuable for us to address the current ESL dilemma.

Findings: Theme 2: Cultural Mobility, Balance, and Belonging

Cultural mobility is a newly developing field, inviting us to rethink how cultures are created and developed. According to Greenblatt (2009), the traditional understanding of culture

is rooted in place and based on a sense of at-homeness, authenticity, and wholeness. Yet, he views culture as fluid, fragmental, and rests on permanent displacement. In the age of globalization and immigration, there is a particularly urgent need for scholars and the larger public to look beyond national borders and create social and institutional practices to exercise people's belonging and their cultural competence, especially for those who juggle between two or more countries and cultures. For my three participants relocating themselves in a new country, in which everything basically was new to them, the language, the social system, and the education system, their self-knowledge, ways of knowing, identity, and ways of presenting themselves shifted and are continuously transforming in response to the change of their circumstances and socio-cultural experiences (Norton, 2000). As Bob stated,

但是像我们这种年龄很大了，然后出生长大的那个方式和这里都很不一样。然后后来这边，那我想起初的那几年会非常难，你的这个思想观念的改变和碰撞和语言的也不一样，环境也不一样，甚至吃的也不一样啊。然后你会有很多困惑和困扰和障碍。但是好在。我很欣慰的一点就是说在我来美国之前的十年。我几乎每年都有两三次去国外去旅行的经验。然后在这个过程中，我是觉得比如说对于食物。对于大家的这个文化的一些了解和接受。

People at an old age like me have a very different ways of growing up, so the first a few years (residing in the U.S.) were hard. The perception of things, the cultural clash, language barriers, the environment, and even food are just so different. Then you will feel confused, bothered, and challenged. What I am glad is I had almost 10 years before moving to the U.S., travelling at least two or three times a year abroad. During the

process, I think my understanding and acceptance of other food and cultures were exercised in a good way. (Interview with Bob, February 5th, 2021)

Introduced in Chapter 2, threshold theory argues that all journeys begin with leaving familiar spaces and entering the unknown spaces; and learning is a meaning-making process that initiates a rupture in knowing and an irreversible transformation of identity, perception, and worldview (Land, Mayer and Baillie, 2010, p. ix). The life changes and adjustments of immigrants in general in the U.S. is well researched in terms of language shift, integration, and acculturation in the realm of education. However, non-American Asian queers and their epistemological reflection in education and psychology research are still developing. As they enter their transitions and make meaning of these transformative processes, balance is fundamental to guide analysis, interpretation, and discussion (Kegan, 1982). Not only do they need to balance their previous being and their emerging being, but also, they need to achieve equilibrium between their collective identity and individual identity.

All three participants experienced discomfort, dissonance and inconsistency battling between two languages, cultures, two ways of thinking, acting and being, and two existences. For example, Jay feels weird going back to Taiwan and speaking Mandarin in the first few days, and he has a hard time engaging with his gay community because he did not inherit the values, worth, and meaning that those who were born and raised under the American socio-political climate would recognize and embody. In parallel, Bob still has difficulties defusing the tension with his family and friends in China because, compared to his family and friends who grew up in the darkest time in modern Chinese history, his thinking has transformed and grown beyond his homeland. As he stated:

那以前呢,别人不主动来跟我交流, 我是不愿意跟别人去交流这个问题的。因为你交流就意味着一定是分歧, 一定是吵架。你要一点儿一点儿地把他的那个思想观念完全地扭转, 那非常非常大的这个挑战啊。。。在国内对于大家所处的压力之下, 人之间的一些关系有的时候也有点糟糕。

I never initiated conversations with others about this issue (his sexuality) because the communication is going to result in disagreement or arguments. And it is a very big challenge to turn over their mentality and perceptions. Under the climate in China, the relationships among people sometimes are not very good. (Interview with Bob, February 5th, 2021)

As we can see here, a rupture in knowing and identity for people who lead transnational lives having undergone immigration is not idiosyncratic, but relational and dynamical. In Jackson's case, his struggle, in particular, amplifies this relation to the level of structural racism and cultural agency.

Jackson came to this country with a mission to pursue a degree and find out who he is. As many other international students and Asian immigrants do, he worked in a Chinese restaurant and hospital as a waiter and a non-licensed nursing assistant when he first came to the U.S. His previous English skills and resilient quality helped him adapt to American life with more ease, but external forces like stigmatization and stereotypes constrained his individual identity and experiences to grow.

So, I work in the Chinese restaurant, they come in and they expect to see Chinese face Asian faces; and then in the hospital... (they think) because you serve, you serve in a restaurant, and you serve as a CNA (certified nursing assistant). They feel like Asian people are much more obedience... They feel like, oh, you are good, because you are very

obedience, you take my order, and you do it very fast. You know colonialism, and you are a servant; this is what I'm saying. Yeah, I think we have a problem with that; and in fact, I started to explore my sexuality, so I got into the famous group; Asian friends in Dallas. And at the time, I started kind of to confirm my sexuality and what (who) I like. When I started there it's always the older White guy, older White guys looking for younger Asian guys for our skin, we don't have hairs and have smooth skin; and they think that, oh you are feminine, and you must be a bottom; you must be my wife.

(Interview with Jackson, February 7th, 2021)

The U.S. is a much better place for LGBTQ persons as there are policies, legislations, and acts to protect their rights and voices. However, the lack of understanding culture as intersectional and non-unitary will lead LGBTQ persons, especially those of color and/or with foreign status who suffer from prejudice, discrimination, and bigotry, and feel isolated, misunderstood, and estranged from their community. It was unfortunate to hear Jackson does not have a sense of belonging in his gay community because of the long-existing stereotypes and generalizations. This is not his fault; it is the society that fails to acknowledge his individual cultural identity and its pluralistic meaning. This is to say that when viewing immigrants and transnational migrants, we should not come from a place where they either assimilate in the totality to the new dominant culture or recreate in totality of their original culture. Instead, we need to recognize what they do is to continuously and dynamically develop new meanings and relationships with their social and cultural ways of beings in their fluid cultural contexts (Sánchez, 2007; Hirabayashi, 2009). With regard to SLA and ESL education, students' investment in language learning also is influenced by opportunities provided or deprived by society. As highlighted in Chapter 2, Norton's (2013) emphasis on language learners' investment

and learners' discursive contexts gives us a chance to examine SLA and identity shifting; at the same time, Norton urges us to develop institutional practices, not from a "deficit approach" but an approach that affirms their transformation and exercises their cultural flexibility and agency.

Findings: Theme 3: English Learning and Navigation of Their Queerness and Self-Defining

As many scholars have pointed out, while a significant number of studies are dedicated to LGBTQ populations in the West, including ethnic minorities (e.g., Asian Americans) in the West, there is a lack of research on LGBTQ persons' lived experiences and rights in Asia (Hu & Wang, 2013), and even fewer about transnational Asian queers or/and Asian immigrant queers. Thus, research on non-Western queer populations can advance many understudied areas of LGBTQ experiences globally.

Notwithstanding the influence of Western cultures and accessibility to information that has increased public awareness and positive social attitudes towards homosexuality in China (Wei, 2006) and some other East and Southeast Asian regions, the wide spread of traditional values, lack of LGBTQ exposure and advocacy still play a significant role in affecting how global Asian LGBTQ persons perceive their sexuality, and also how they are perceived by their families and societies. When Jay and I were talking about LGBTQ persons' current situations in Taiwan, Jay felt conflicted about the current sociopolitical climate and upcoming changes for the LGBTQ population in Taiwan.

On a big scale, the language surrounding is still homophobic... the most recent voting of the gay marriage in Taiwan. People passes the marriage, but they did not pass the inclusion of LGBTQ in education... they fear of sexualizing people, and will be harmful

in a way? I am not sure... People in Taiwan still have a very straight, masc (masculine) mentality, and I am not really about that. (Interview with Jay, February 5th, 2021)

Confucianism entails a set of sociopolitical principles managing what counts as a good person and a good government (Nguyen & Angelique, 2017); and it includes strict heterosexual concepts and their position in school, family, and all other social spheres. For instance, Jay's mom will want to have a say in the way Jay dresses himself in order to fulfill a male's image. I remember when I was little, my family more than once told me that boys do not cry because crying is weak and is for girls. Not only do these rigid gender norms impose difficulties for LGBTQ persons to navigate their sexuality in society under a set of patriarchal and collectivistic cultural frameworks, but they also diminish social acceptance, support, and advocacy toward LGBTQ persons and those who do not conform to the dominant norms on many levels, whether interpersonal, institutional, governmental, or legal.

The slim inclusion or even prohibition of homosexual-related content on mass media (e.g., film and television shows) and in school education (textbooks, etc.) in Asia has undermined the power of information and its benefits and opportunities to increase the understanding of LGBTQ experiences, awareness of human rights, and social acceptance. Bob experienced the early age of modern China. When I asked him, what is his first memory of being gay, he chuckled and said:

那其实啊从小现在回想起来呢，其实小的时候就已经弄出了很多迹象。但是在我们的那个文化氛围里头就根本没有这件事儿。然后你就根本不知道。。。然后一直到其实我很晚很晚才开始交第一个 boyfriend。当时没有参考的这个 example 或者 model。来给我说，两个男男人，两个男孩还是可以一直在一起生活的。。。我如

果我不是遇到他，他也不是遇到我的话，真的我们俩有可能是各自去迫于压力去结婚。

On the hindsight, there were a lot of gestures that showed my gayness, but under our cultural atmosphere, this didn't exist. Then you never even knew...then, I had my very first boyfriend. At that time, I didn't have any awareness, like an example, or a model to tell me that two guys or two men can live together as a couple...I believe if I have not met him, I might have gotten married to a girl because of the (family and social) pressure. (Interview with Bob, February 5th, 2021)

His feeling is shared by lots of LGBTQ persons in Asia as sexual and gender minorities still lack visibility in the larger social sphere in most Asian countries. A report done in 2016 in China by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) found that although some institutions, organizations, and foreign enterprises perform well in terms of supporting sexual minorities and battling discrimination, China still lacks comprehensive education on sexuality and gender diversity in school, work, hospital, and other public spheres. In Taiwan, starting in 2004, Gender Equity Education Acts (GEEA) were installed in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, aiming to address gender discrimination based on students' gender and sexual orientation and promote gender equality through education resources and the environment (The Republic of China, Taiwan, 2004). However, the lack of systematic and critical training and curriculum has served the purpose of GEEA poorly (Fang& Yu, 2008; Lee, 2011). For instance, Fang and Yu (2008) point out that real LGBTQ persons' lived experiences are not included in classrooms and other institutional practices thus are not regarded as resources for teaching and learning gender equality authentically.

For people whose beliefs, knowledge, and literacy practices have started to transform and develop as they connect and live across different countries and cultures (such as my participants), second language learning, including knowledge, understanding, beliefs, and the actual language use and practice will also facilitate the transformation and development of identity (Gee, 1999), and establishing resistance in different dimensions. Bob gave us a beautiful example of how he started to explore his sexuality and develop his advocacy for gay rights and equality through reading a book in English, his second language.

我跟你举一个我前两天发生的事情，你也可以研究这个，我前几天看到一本书，作者叫 Adam Smith,。他有一天突然发现他的老板就给那个支持传统婚姻的捐了一百多万美元，他们是反对 gay marriage。他就很生气，他就开车，同时开始在录像就去他们那个 Chick-Fil-A。然后他把这一段视频就传到这个网上，结果呢很快就被开除了。。。他最后就是很很久都没有找到工作。当我我看到这个故事的时候，我当时非常激动。我真的非常非常非常的意外。这件事发生在美国，为什么呢？我不意外第一个老板把他辞掉，但是我意外的是，他后面找不到工作，而且他也没去打官司。如果他的随后的几个老板，他是支持 LGBT 婚姻的话，他应该给他机会，让他继续工作。不能总是让他失业啊，所以我就觉得非常的甚至有一点愤怒。还有一件事情是有一个女的大法官，他拒绝给同性做这个婚姻的公正。那然后呢，她又被判入狱吗？然后呢。她的单位就是把她调离了这个工作岗位。那我觉得这就是我刚才跟你讲的是说一个社会有没有这个法案非常重要。那如果你要是当时你根本就不在非法，那像他这样坚持自己做法的人一定会越来越多越来越多。这个事情发生之后呢，至少告诉一些顽固主义分子，你可以不同意。但是这个国家这个法

律是认可的，你不能再做任何更多伤害，对他不公平的事情了。法律是一定要的，但是也要通过教育去告诉所有人尊重和平等。

Here is an example: I came across a book a few days ago. The author is Adam Smith who worked in Chick-Fil-A. When he found out his boss donated over a million dollars to anti-LGBT groups, he was flipped out. He had his camera, filming all the way to his company. When the video got viral, he got fired. I was very surprised. I was not that surprised that he got fired but I was very surprised that he couldn't find a job afterwards. I mean if those companies that he applied support LGBT rights, he should have been hired. I was so angry. Also, there was a female judge, refusing to notarize gay marriage based on her faith. What happened to her? Nothing, she just got a new arrangement. That's what I told you, the importance of legal support. when it is legal, yes, there are some people who are racist and bad, but at least we can tell them, you can disagree, but in this country, it is in the law. Legislative protection is very important, also through education to teach people respect and equality. (Interview with Bob, February 5th, 2021)

Bob is an active member in many local gay groups; he enjoys being with people in the community and helping newer queer-comers to this country and the Bay Area. He understands the exposure to LGBTQ experiences and related information is important for reasons of personal development, educational development, justice, and equity. When we were on the phone for the initial interview, he expressed his interest and objective in creating a YouTube channel to cover more LGBTQ-related topics and his opinions for Chinese-speaking LGBTQ persons all around the world.

Critical gender and sexuality education with a queer perspective is beyond significant and necessary, although sexuality, gender, and queer are still taboo yet controversial concepts in

education systems all around the globe; and mentions of these issues in ESL/EFL (English as a foreign language) classrooms are even more rare (e.g., Pakuła, Pawelczyk, Sunderland, & British Council, 2015). As a case in point, when Jay and I were talking about queer education in both Asia and the U.S., he said he thinks it is a “cultural thing” that there is little information about queer people in the Chinese language; and when he came to the U.S, there was still no mention of queerness and sexuality in both his ESL classes and the science department. He had to take a few elective classes in social studies to understand how power operates in a society and influences individual identity. He and I agree that there are not necessarily a lot of avenues for sexuality, gender, and queer education to bloom and function.

The importance and value of gender and sexuality education with a queer perspective is clear: it can increase the exposure to real and diverse LGBTQ populations’ stories and lived experiences and also result in greater policies and protections for LGBTQ students and teachers. Also, it can support stronger alliance and community building across human differences, and greater emancipation of those from marginalized positions (Garcia & Fields, 2017). Concerning those who were not aware of sexuality and identity formation and just came in contact with English ideology and its social meanings, ESL classes can serve as space for them to tell their stories, critique their discourse, heal from oppression, and affirm their positionality and agency through linguistic and cultural practices inside and outside the classroom (Nelson, 2008; Pavlenko, 2004). Language needs to be aligned within the content, consciousness, and conscience of social justice inspired education. Further, as Barnard (1993) articulates, queer concerns need to infiltrate every aspect of every curriculum (p. 50).

Summary

Storytelling is essential to the understanding of our lived worlds. As Kearney (2002) addresses, existence is inherently storied, and life is pregnant with stories. As Jay, Jackson, and Bob's narratives and opinions have presented above, their shared experience and memories of being "foreign" reflect how hegemonic English ideology is manifested through social and institutional practices. Although some of them are aware of this discriminatory and hurtful phenomenon, they fail to recognize how it has influenced at time when they experience the privileges and gained membership to the dominant class. Moreover, traditional and static understandings of culture inhibit our examinations of identity transformation beyond national borders and creating more social and institutional practices to exercise people's belonging and cultural competence, especially for those who juggle between two or more countries and cultures; further, such myopia also fails to recognize queer Asian immigrant, English language learners' emerging identity, meaning-making and relationships in their fluid social and cultural contexts. Also, Confucian-infused cultural frameworks with strict heterosexual norms still play a heavy part in affecting how global Asian LGBTQ persons perceive their sexuality, and also how they are perceived by their family and society. The lack of gender and sexuality education input with a queer perspective hinders the growing understanding of LGBTQ experiences, awareness of human rights, and social inclusion. Participants' narratives have been shared in Chapter 3. A discussion with more depth follows in Chapter 4 with a focus on multiculturalism, transnationalism, global citizenship, and queering ESL education.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

I have argued that research is a place to make a change in our society intentionally and willfully. With the time we live in now, educational policies and practices are still built and endorsed based on the measurement and comparisons of standardized outcomes; as Biesta (2008) states, “we end up valuing what is measured, rather than that we engage in measurement of what we value” (p. 43). In order to question what constitutes a good education, the narratives of students are critical. The study of their narratives and experiences emphasizes their needs, instead of what statistics and bureaucratic interests decide for us. Based on the data revealed in Chapter 3, I argue that the discursive, cultural, and political nature of language learning and performing are important factors in influencing one’s identity and identity transformation. ESL education as a doorway to welcome newcomers and introduce them to the American society unfortunately, has failed to fully adopt a contextual approach that can critically facilitate learners’ identity transformations and challenge ideological and linguistic domination. In the process of analyzing the transcripts of my three participants, I realized how English hegemony is produced and reproduced in the U.S. and other places. Through globalization and capitalistic reasoning of common senses along with the spread of English, many people outside of the U.S. and Western dimension have already participated in our global world and developed emerging ways of thinking, speaking, and being. For immigrants in the U.S., coming in contact with racialization and cultural immobility perpetuates the legitimacy of English dominance, and creates a hierarchical order that positions SAE as superior. We saw all three participants describe English as an essential factor in determining one’s Americanness, and speaking English,

especially SAE, as practical, natural, normative, and proper. Two of my participants explicitly consider their L1 as a deficiency and a problem that interferes with their language acquisition both rhetorically and ideologically. On the other hand, English language learning serves as a force to navigate my participants' sexuality and queerness and a tool to resist homophobia. Reconciling with the purposes of this study laid out in Chapter 1, this research sought to understand Asian immigrants' nuanced lived experiences as queers and English learners. More specifically, the study sought to examine how English learning and acquisition can facilitate learners' cultural and sexual identity transformation and how the transformation can mediate language performance, use, and acquisition. Furthermore, it also aimed to challenge dominant and hegemonic discourses, contributing to the expansion of language-identity framework, and raising language awareness, human agency, and the need of adopting critical pedagogues that engage students' social identities and make space for sexuality diversity and expression in ESL education (Norton, 2008).

Discussion

My participants' voices are priceless. Through their descriptions and engaged thinking, we as researchers and educators can start to see "the illiberal within the liberal, the intolerant within the tolerant, the discriminatory within the common sense" (Blackledge & Pavlenko, 2002, p. 135); and beyond, we can start to identify, educate, advocate, and reform. The purpose of this narrative-driven case study is to identify how learning a second language and interacting with the target language-speaking community can facilitate a transfer of learners' cultural identity and sexual identity. The discussion focuses on answering the research questions and deepening the interpretation of findings as related to the literature on language ideology, social postponing, and

performativity. Also, this section aims to identify what implications there may be from this research for ESL educators and instructors who may be inclined to adopt or further critical pedagogies in their classrooms.

The relationship between second language learning and learners' identity is multi-dimensional, socially constructed, and culturally embedded. The findings are comprised of three themes: 1) English still divides Americanness and otherness; 2) cultural mobility, balance, and belonging; and 3) English learning and the navigation of their queerness and self-defining. These three themes all help contribute to answering my research questions: 1) How does acquiring English affect queer, U.S.-based Chinese immigrant ESL learners' sexual identity? 2) How are learners' cultural identity and sexual identity negotiated through interactions in the second language (L2) with local gay communities? 3) How do learners position themselves as well as others in accordance with English proficiency? 4) What could ESL educators do to facilitate their SLA and cultivate their social and personal agency?

Language is not an isolated subject, rather its production and performative use communicate with the speakers' discourse and social reality. Social factors such as social power, norms, policies, and relations can influence how language is perceived and spoken; at the same time, language also shapes society's progress and produces new identities and ways of being. Noticeably, this reciprocal relationship is ideological and through not only social and institutional practices, but also through mundane and day-to-day communications (see more in Chapter 2). The ideological nature of language learning and use offers me an opportunity to examine how my participants understand society and their position in it, how their identity is transformed, and how English gives them more exposure to explore their sexuality and develop resistance and self-definition.

Hegemonic English Ideology

As my participants have illustrated, English still plays a very important role in determining one's belonging and assimilating to the American society and culture. Aside from indigenous populations, the U.S. has always been a place of immigrants and a place of diversity. The Diversity Visa Program in operation since 1990 through the present has the goal of keeping the American population vibrant and diverse by attracting people with a low rate of immigration to the United States. However, the U.S. has not met its obligations to recognize immigrants' values, their ethnic worth, and their dignity as full human beings. As Jacoby (2004) puts it, the U.S.'s implicit pact with immigrants does show that the benefits of immigration are felt nationally but its costs are borne locally (pp. 117-118). The relationship of ethnic immigrants to American society and culture is still concerned with total assimilation or a partial blending into dominant ideologies. Multicultural, multilingual, and transnational contexts of American society and culture have not been authentically validated and recognized at all levels. In the area of academic research, most studies focus on the assessment of acculturation as a consequence of globalization and immigration to Western cultural contexts (Schwartz, Montgomery & Briones, 2006). There is less attention paid to non-immigrants and majority groups who come in contact with those who are from other cultures, speak different languages, and/or have different social experiences (Chen, Benet-Martinez & Harris-Bond, 2008).

The majority of public opinions concerning ethnic minorities' relationship to American culture and society is either implicitly or explicitly built upon total assimilation to the mainstream culture with a "middle-class standard" or a "melting pot synthesis." The latter dedicates its attention more to different cultural experiences and traits, but still comes from a unitary position in which people from diverse backgrounds conform to a singular and uniform

American society and culture (Gordon, 1964; Omi, 2014). As mentioned in Chapter 3, language tied together with culture, religion, and history not only determines one's authenticity and loyalty to his/her/their country, but also its hegemonic ideology creates a boundary and hierarchy that segregate people who do share the same bonds, leading them to disfavor their own backgrounds, and position them in society as the "inferior" and "foreign."

Further, through everyday communication and learning within social worlds, the hegemonic English ideology has an impact on people's language use, attitudes as well as beliefs, and identity (Davies & Harré, 1990). For example, Jackson thinks speaking English shows Americanness, and a willingness to assimilate. He does not like speaking his L1 and sharing his Chinese roots; he also thinks some Latino immigrants whose L1 have a better start to learn English, but that those who fail to learn and acquire English do not deserve the chance to live here. As Jay summarized, it is internalized racism; and I argue it is reconstituted and reproduced through English hegemony, which not only disadvantages and discriminates against people who speak other languages and/or are less proficient in English, but also colonizes their mind and consciousness, setting them off towards undervaluing their own language and culture, and developing linguistic, cultural and psychological dependency upon English and its speakers and communities (Tsuda, 2000).

In the context of ESL in bilingual/multilingual classrooms, As Howatt (1984) reflects that the "monolingual principle" with an emphasis on pushing learners to think in L2 with little interference of L1, has long been favored and practiced in many ESL or EFL classrooms (also cited in Yu, 2001), and debated in the SLA realm. Cook (2001) claims that the monolingual approach has been established as axiomatic and especially common-sense. The English-only approach is not supported by empirical evidence and the current understanding of

bilingual/multilingual mind and conforms to English domination. Garcia (2009) asserts that the language processing of all bilinguals is complex and interrelated. Also, in Chapter 2, I highlighted that cross-language interaction is conceived as the phenomenon where bilinguals use one language, while the other language(s) is also being accessed (Wu & Thierry, 2010), and this exchange is carried out at every level of language processing. Although the argument for use of L1 in teaching second and/or foreign language remains open and inconsistent, we should acknowledge that students' L1 and rich cultural and cognitive prior knowledge are essential resources for learning and teaching (Moll & Greenberg, 1990). Further, Cummins and his colleagues' case study (2005) shows that students, especially for those who are socially and culturally marginalized can benefit more from a bilingual approach in ESL classrooms. Bilingual approaches reconceptualize some problematic assumptions in ESL/EFL teaching and learning (e.g., English only policy), promote engagement in academic work and out-of-school literacy in both languages, and encourage investment in identity exploration and cultural competence.

With selected excerpts in theme 1, Chapter 3, and the analysis presented above, I hope to contribute to better understandings and a clearer scope of how English domination as “common sense” is produced and maintained in ESL classrooms as well as in our multicultural societies. Common sense as the incoherence of assumptions and beliefs is different than “good sense,” which is inherently coherent and critical. As Gramsci (1971) notes that a person might hold both perspectives concurrently, this contradictory consciousness is critical to understand hegemony. As English teachers who deal with the most crucial educational, cultural, and political issues of our time (Gee, 1994), we need to embrace multiple roles in developing a social activist teacher persona, aiming to educate and cultivate social agents who are conscientious and aware, and able

to make sense of themselves, others and the world against the grain of the hegemonic inequalities and injustices that have come to be understood as common sense (Davies, 2000).

Intercultural Competence and Triple Discrimination

To understand culture is absolutely critical and has its momentum for making sense of recent hate crimes towards Asian populations in the United States. Six Asian women died of a shooting crime in Atlanta, Georgia; a century-long of sexualizing and fetishizing Asian women has resulted in a culture of violence. As a member of the Asian and Asian American community, I am aware circumstances like this need to be better understood so we can more effectively implement multicultural policies and practice intercultural competence.

Culture consists of explicit and implicit patterns, symbols, and beliefs that constitute the distinctive achievements of human groups (Kroeber and Kluckhohn, 1952). It reflects societal experiences that have been transmitted and shared across generations and geographic boundaries. Also, culture can be self-sufficient, depending on variables like language, sexuality, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and so forth (Eshun & Gurung, 2009). As globalization and migration play a key feature in all aspects of society and humanity, people from diverse backgrounds constantly encounter each other and exchange ideas, values, knowledge, and traditions. At the same time, increasing transnational and multicultural efforts that lack a clear definition have aggravated the issues of cultural diversity. Beck (2011) reports that when there are so many changes in terms of diversity of the social, cultural, and political environment in our society, we de facto lack the most proper language to describe, conceptualize, understand this phenomenon. Simultaneously, multiculturalism has been criticized for having an essentialized idea of culture and a top-down approach concerned with national identity and unity to diversify

the society (Meer & Modood, 2012). Minorities are not given space to share their struggle and lived experiences; and mainstream culture defines their identity for them, instead of they themselves getting the space and agency to do so.

Jackson's story in theme 2, Chapter 2 is a pretty unpleasant yet relatable one. Jackson's tenacious and hard-working elements supported him when he first came to the U.S. as an international student who had no money, no resources, and no nearby support. For a democratic society that is supposed to be accepting, integrating, and allowing, the U.S. has failed to accommodate cultural practices that authentically value cultural differences and create cohesion inside and between ethnic groups and communities. We see a "triple discrimination" causing Jackson to feel alienated, misunderstood, and estranged from his communities. He could not live in his skin comfortably because of his internalization of the Eurocentric and American imperialism views of culture and policies in relation to his foreign-born status and accented English. While his home culture and community reject his homosexuality and question his being, his ethnicity and sexual characters are fetishized and emasculated by the American society and White male dominated gay communities. Orientalism, according to Said (1979), is a theory that people not from the orient, but the occident, created to fulfill their interests and goods in political, economic, religious, and imperial matters. Orientalism has described the East as inferior, exotic, and whose people are submissive, obliging, and romantic. This colonized mentality legitimized by imperialism not only shaped the view that people in the West think of the East, but also impacts how people from there also view their relationships to the West. With media being a strong force, the "Asian fetish," "Yellow fever," or "Rice queen" tropes in the LGBTQ world are born out of a fantasy image of people from/in Asia, especially women and homosexuals. Praso (2005) cites "Madame Butterfly," "Miss Saigon," "M. Butterfly" as stories

of a submissive Asian girl or boy waiting and sacrificing for her/his Western life-savior who is more powerful, superior, stronger, and able to provide them with new experiences, a better life, and/or more money. Jackson witnessed this phenomenon in different gay communities and through different eras. For Asians, investing in orientalism will result in conforming to Western domination, and/or rejecting their home culture and ethnicity. This paradigm of Asian and Asian Americans trying to be White has not only contributed to the silence and invisibility of struggles of Asians and Americans, but also hindered solidarity building between diverse Asian groups. Further, in order to understand the negative identities and differences assigned by the majority to minorities and empower self-definition and determination, cultural competence is a valuable tool. According to Betancourt and his colleagues (2013), cultural competence contains a series of attitudes, behaviors, and policies that recognize the value of culture, cultural differences, the importance of learning about culture, and the provision of services that meet cultural needs. Further, living in a multicultural society, intercultural competence becomes a critical resource to boost transnational communication and exchange and create an integrated and cohesive social environment.

What is more, there is a flourishing number of both domestic and international/transnational students (youth and adults) from linguistically and culturally diverse backgrounds in the United States and other English-speaking Western countries so intercultural competence is relevant and desired in ELL/ESL/EFL education. Intercultural competence reflects one's ability and capacity in understanding cultures of theirs as well as others through communication and dialogue; sometimes, it has also been called cross-cultural awareness, global citizenship, and multicultural competence (Deardorff, 2011). Douglas and Rosvold (2018) synthesize 15 scholarly articles into a coherent literature review. They point out that

miscommunication, ethnocentric understanding and handling of cultural differences, and an emphasis on acculturation are still existing issues in English for academic purposes (EAP) classrooms. Misunderstanding or lack of understanding of other's pragmatic meaning will result in intercultural miscommunication; however, over-stating cultural differences and students' solo responsibility to adapt to the dominant culture might lead to confusion, anxiety, stereotypes, and internalized oppression. On the other hand, a pedagogy that promotes intercultural competence allows classrooms to be a place to foster students' self-awareness of their own culture and awareness of other cultures, to increase acceptance, adaption, and integration when communicating with other cultural perspectives, and to facilitate the navigation of students preserving their identity and understanding other cultures. These forms of understandings and knowledge are not exclusively constructive in EAP classrooms; for all people, not just those who are culturally and linguistically diverse, intercultural competence building can help guide their exploration of identity, culture, and meaning of life, especially in this fast-changing and dynamical world.

“Queering” ESL classrooms

Since 1989, there have been appeals in the second language teaching/learning field to deconstruct heterosexist norms and assumptions, in terms of textbooks and other materials. However, despite these calls for greater diversity, there were only a few mentions of LGBTQ persons' lived experiences and related themes, and this small number of cases often pictured LGBTQ lives as a controversial topic from an essentialist understanding of gender and sexuality, which ultimately can contribute to further marginalization and heterosexist bias (Littlejohn & Windeatt, 1989; De Vincenti, Giovanangeli & Ward, 2007; Norton, 2009 and Norton, 2012).

Classrooms are sites where people learn to make sense of themselves and the world. If classrooms are regulated by heteronormative discourse and heterosexist values, and LGBTQ topics and LGBTQ persons' lived experiences are not included, teachers might fail to guide students to be self-determined and effectively recognize and address problems such as bullying and homophobia in the classrooms and in their communities. Liddicoat (2009) has a great example of how the teacher was incapable of acknowledging a student's performing of his gay identity in a second language learning context. In a classroom activity, when a male student used "boyfriend" to refer his partner and "slim and tall" to describe his partner, instead of using it as a teachable moment to encourage students to bring their identities into the classroom, the teacher corrected him and thought that the student is a deficit learner who could not comprehend instructions and class required content. The heteronormative-governed classroom practices and pedagogies led by unprepared and unconscious teachers not only limit students' engagement and investment in second language learning, but also burden their identity development and community building both inside and outside the classroom. Also, as Gore (1993) explains, pedagogy has institutional meanings as well as implies social visions; thus, the consequences have implications in our society.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2, "queer" challenges both heterosexual and homosexual binaries; also, queer can be a verb emphasizing actions and processes. On the other hand, "queering" something means to build a space where there is firm awareness that all sexualities and their socio-cultural relevance can co-exist, connect, and engage with each other in ways that are free of fear and discrimination, but full of respect and thoughtfulness of individuals (Nelson, 2006, 2009, 2012). TESOL classrooms (e.g., ESL, EFL, ELL) as the "gateway" to most immigrants, international, and transnational people, are salient in terms of preparing their contact

with a new social world and influencing their identity performance; and teachers as the practitioners of emancipatory education are extremely important in facilitating the transformation of students' identities. However, unfortunately the absence of LGBTQ-related topics is still the norm. According to a survey conducted by Greytak, Kosciw, and Villenas (2016), most classrooms lack any LGBTQ-related contributions, and most of the teachers never received any professional development in LGBTQ-related issues neither on their pre-service education nor during their teaching career. The silence and invisibility of LGBTQ content in ESL teacher training and TESOL classrooms leave students no choice but to explore this matter on their own. All three of my participants received no LGBTQ-related knowledge in their ESL classes respectively. Although the internet world and smartphones have helped LGBTQ persons connect with each other and form imagined communities and solidarity (Nelson, 2008; Norton, 2013), the failure of voicing and advocating LGBTQ identities in institutional practices is problematic and needs to be critiqued.

Language is always essential in understanding how we enact, interact, and understand ourselves and the world. At the same time, language serves the purpose to represent sexuality and other identities in different contexts and discourses (Cameron & Kulick, 2003). While language is not purely verbal or/and written codes, any text, like what I addressed in Chapter 2, needs to be analyzed within its social discourses and meanings. To understand the multilayered and multifaceted nature of society through language is also to fathom the meaning-making process about sexuality and identity. There might be a long-established debate over how a second language is learned and acquired but there is no doubt that the SLA process is socially structured and relevant to one's identity, as Gass (1988) urges us to explore the interdependence and interconnection of identity, power, and culture in SLA. For example, Bob has equipped

himself through his English learning process with knowledge and emancipatory power informed by society. He expressed a strong will to explore and perform his sexuality; his contact with English literary practices also nurtured his new culture to emerge and formed his resistance to self-definition and determination (see more in theme 3, Chapter 3). By contrast, power relations also affect language learners' identity and their language acquisition. For instance, through practices in both formal and informal settings of language learning and contact with English-speaking communities, Jackson internalized the idea of how one's foreign status and accented English can be deficient and inadequate to be recognized and accepted by the society; thus, he shows a certain preference on English, disfavors his home language, and sees total assimilation to American culture as natural and right.

As we can see from above, second language learning and acquisition are as comprehensive and integrative of the individual learner as well as the larger social world. Therefore, regarding LGBTQ language learners, ESL classrooms and teachers should take the responsibility to recognize LGBTQ issues and create a space where all identity positions and subjectivities are acknowledged, engaged, and critically examined. Teacher preparation, classroom materials, and practices are often highlighted by scholars and researchers. Grounding ESL teachers' training and classroom practices in queer inquiry and critical pedagogy not only gives teachers an opportunity to interrogate social formation of all identities and establish classroom conversations with students together about it in relation to their social world and discourse (Curran, 2006), but also challenges heterosexual bias and norms in the ESL classroom and empowers students' voices and positions in the larger social world. By the same token, incorporating diverse materials that support queer pedagogies can raise awareness and challenge normativity by critically engaging students with the materials in which their identities are

presented. Queering ESL classrooms is meaningful to scaffold language learning and acquisition processes of all students. For students who identify as members of the LGBTQ community, a meaningful queering of the classroom will address and deconstruct heteronormative bias and provide an environment with opportunities and access for them to invest and engage (Norton, 2013). For those who are heterosexual and binary, queering the ESL classroom will enable them to engage in solidarity and expand their understanding of belonging, culture, and people's lives from a critical and pluralistic outlook.

Recommendations

The recommendations for future studies and research will start with reiterating the purpose of the study. My hope through this research was threefold: valuing Asian immigrants' nuanced lived experiences as queers and English learners to challenge dominant and hegemonic discourses, contributing to the expansion of language-identity frameworks, and raising language awareness, intercultural competence, and documenting the need for adopting queer inquiry-based critical pedagogies in ESL and second language education as a whole.

Given the research questions and narratives explored in this study, the present findings need to be further demonstrated and refined in future research. Future scholars and researchers can examine how the patterns of my findings reflect on other acculturating samples who might or might not share similar socio-cultural, political conditions as well as the relationships with English, their identity, and sexuality with my participants. One of the limitations of the present study is the length of data collection, which conceivably weakens the conclusions and discussions that I made about the directional relationships between identity, sexuality, English learning, and their performative use. On top of that, Covid-19 made observations and in-person

interactions impossible; thus, I lost the opportunity to observe their communications, interactions, and English performance within their communities. On this note, a more coherent longitudinal study with interviews, observation of interactions in ESL classroom and community can expect more salient outcomes as it will monitor greater changes, growth, and transformation over substantial periods (White & Arzi, 2005). Moreover, more SLA related studies and research have investigated the acquisition processes themselves, instead of people who are intaking the learning and acquiring (Kramsch, 2009); in this regard, future studies can put more emphasis on how SLA and learning outcomes (performance and competence) are affected by the construct of language ideology and social positioning.

Furthermore, additional research is also needed to analyze the SLA and educational outcomes in ESL classrooms that employ queer-inquiry based pedagogies. For example, research can measure how the classrooms have been queered and how teachers contributed to students' learning and development, and how students responded to queering pedagogies in relation to SLA, language learning, and intercultural competence exercising. In addition to scholarship, future studies should also pay attention to documenting queered classroom practices and activities in various contexts that will directly benefit ESL teachers and students and uphold further research on further humanizing ESL education.

In closing, I genuinely hope that my study will intrigue fellow researchers and scholars' interests to represent students who are long been invisible and marginalized in our society, which has disregarded the languages they speak and their identities (national, cultural, and sexual). Also, I hope that nationality and language will no longer be borders to determine one's identity and belonging. Lastly, I hope that our multicultural and multilingual society will become more

authentic and live up to its promise of pluralism so that all forms of diversity will be absolutely cheered and appreciated.

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APPENDIXES

Questions for The Interviews

Part 1

- 1, When did you come to the U.S? Why did you come to the U.S. at first?
- 2, How long you have been learning English and how is your experience with learning English in both your home culture and here?
- 3, Do you have a group of friends who speak your home language?
- 4, What do you do for a living?

Part 2

- 1, are you out?
- 2, How do your family and friends in your home country think of your sexuality, if you are out to them?
- 3, were you out when you came to the US?
- 4, what is your first memory of being gay?
- 5, do you think is there any difference of being gay here and your home country, for example?
- 6, Do you feel more comfortable talking about your sexuality to your family or friends who speak your home language?

Part 3

- 1, do you think is there something that you can express in English but not in your first language regarding your identity, sexuality and relationship?
- 2, were you comfortable of being yourself in ESL programs?

3, do you think you prefer to speak English over your home language in here?

4, when you visit your home country, what language do you speak most there? Why?

5, do you want to stay here? What is your definition of being an “American”?

Part 4

1, Do you feel like you belong in the gay community here?

2, I have seen that there are some Asian gay men who speak poor English and do not want to learn English. What do you think of them?

3, I have also seen here in SF foreign born Asian gay men who purposefully deny speaking their home language. What do you think of them?

4, do you think speaking good English makes you more American?

5, Anything else you would like to share with me?