CONSTRUCTING MULTILINGUAL SELVES

SUBJECTIVE PERSPECTIVES ON LEARNING AND LIVING WITH GERMAN AS A

'HERITAGE' LANGUAGE IN CANADA

by

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Author's declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

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Abstract

Based on the perception that language students who have a family background in the target language differ from 'typical' foreign language learners in important ways, the phenomenon of what has been termed *heritage language learner* has attracted increasing interest over the past three decades. Traditionally, heritage learners have been characterized as falling in between foreign language learners and native speakers with respect to their proficiency in the 'heritage' language, and been further distinguished from foreign language learners with reference to identity needs in light of their family connection to the language.

This dissertation argues that traditional conceptions of the phenomenon cast a monolingual, monocentric view on heritage learners, failing to capture important dimensions of what learning and living with a 'heritage' language means to multilingual people who navigate complex cultural and linguistic spaces in today's world. Drawing on contemporary models of multilingualism and the self, it discusses and empirically demonstrates the extended perspective on heritage learners that comes to light when approaching the phenomenon through a theoretical lens of multilingual subjectivity.

Applying a multimodal narrative inquiry approach, I investigate the perspectives and experiences of adults who grew up in (partly) German-speaking families in anglophone Canada. I examine how individual participants construct their sense of self as multilinguals in relation to narrated processes of learning German in institutional settings and beyond, showing how learning and living with German as a 'heritage' language figures into their development and perspective as multilingual language users. Data sources include individual interviews, written reflection, and participants' creation of a drawing that reflects their sense of self in

relation to language. Analyses comprise three in-depth studies and a cross-case analytic approach.

Implications are derived at the levels of theory and pedagogical practice. I suggest the incorporation of biography-centred modules in heritage language education and call to seize the emergence of the phenomenon of heritage learner as an opportunity to rethink language education more in general.

Keywords: Heritage language learner, multilingual turn, monolingual paradigm, subjectivity, positioning

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Dedication

For Jakob and David

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List of Abbreviations

ELT   English language teaching

HC   Heritage culture

HL   Heritage language

L1   First language(s)

L2   Second language(s), used as an umbrella term to refer to second and foreign languages

SLA   Second language acquisition

Chapter 1   Introduction

1.1 Thematic background of the present study and research objective

The following image is a so-called language portrait (see Busch, 2012; Krumm & Jenkins, 2001), created by a participant of the present study, whom I will call Laura. Asked to visualize who she is in terms of language by adding colours to an empty body silhouette, she depicts herself as follows:
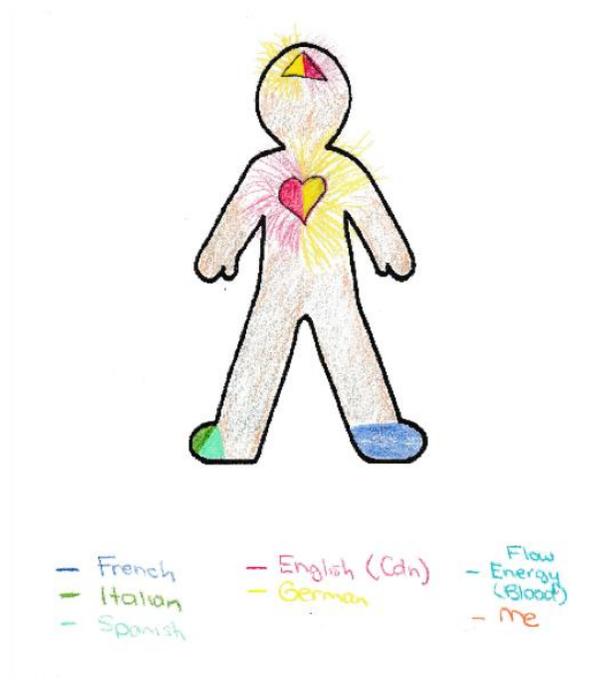
Figure 1. Language portrait created by a study participant. This figure illustrates how the participant envisions her sense of self in relation to language

Using the language portrait as a point of reference, Laura elaborates how she perceives language(s) in her life, how linguistic experiences 'feel' in her body, and how experiencing the world through the lens of language(s) has given her joy, as much as it involves specific challenges and struggles. She explains, for example, how the triangle located in the centre of the forehead reflects her sense of having to find a balance between what she calls "the logic of

German and the language of English" – an aspect she deems crucial to her experience of living with more than one language.

Like all participants of the present study, Laura grew up in anglophone Canada in a family where German was spoken – in her case, because her parents had emigrated from Germany to Canada before she was born. Like in many of such families, learning German and 'preventing it from getting rusty' while living in an English-dominated society has been a recurring theme and a normal part of Laura's life. Hence, besides speaking the language at home and with friends and relatives in Germany, she also spent several hours of her life attending German language classes (such as German-as-a-foreign-language classes in high-school and in post-secondary educational institutions). Because of her family's immigration history and the extent to which she was already able to speak German before she studied the language in class, as a language student Laura meets the criteria by which many researchers and teachers define what has become known as *heritage (language) learner* – the concept that is at the heart of this project.

Situated within the field of language education, the present study aims to contribute to an extended understanding of the notion of *heritage learner*. My work is based on the critique that conventional understandings of the notion cast a monolingual perspective on the learners in question, failing to generate a nuanced view of what learning and living with a heritage language[1] means to multilingual people who navigate complex cultural and linguistic spaces in today's societies. In this dissertation, I argue for the need to more explicitly reconceptualize heritage learners as *multilingual* subjects, and demonstrate empirically what comes to view

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[1] The term *heritage language* has been defined in different ways (Duff, 2008b; Fishman, 2001b; Cummins, 2005). According to Duff (2008b), "in Canada the term *heritage language* refers to languages other than the *official* languages (English and French) or the *aboriginal* (indigenous or 'First Nations') languages" (p. 72, emphases in original). I adopt this understanding in this dissertation.

when approaching the phenomenon in light of contemporary concepts of multilingualism and the self. In brief, my objective is to problematize the notion of *heritage learner* within a framework of multilingual subjectivity. The following section defines my research problem more precisely.

1.2 Theoretical background and research problem

Language students with a home background in the target language have attracted increasing attention in research and educational circles since the 1990s, based on the perception that these learners differ from 'typical' foreign language students in ways that warrant specialized forms of instruction. Over the past decades, course offerings designed for this target group have increased drastically (Lynch, 2014) as a response to challenges involved in teaching the students in question, for which many language practitioners did not feel prepared (Valdés, 1995). How, for instance, were teachers to deal with students' difficulties in learning "grammar rules" (Valdés, 1995, p. 304) when the target language had been acquired incidentally at home? How were teachers to deal with 'unpredictable gaps' in students' knowledge of the heritage language system, given that their language trajectories do not follow the hierarchical progression of foreign language curricula? It is on the basis of these issues that the field of heritage language teaching and learning established itself as a subdiscipline of SLA, pioneered in particular by researchers surrounding Guadalupe Valdés who focused on the teaching of Spanish as a heritage language in the U.S. (see Carreira & Kagan, 2018).

Largely, research in the field has been driven by the objective to gain knowledge about heritage learners' linguistic abilities, goals, and needs, so as to develop specialized forms of language instruction for what was soon considered a new type of learner. Inspired by the vision

to help these students "develop a variety of functional strengths for use across a lifetime as well as a deep commitment to maintaining the language for another generation" (Valdés, 2008, p. 22), research and educational practice have focused on the aim of expanding heritage learners' proficiency in (varieties of) the heritage language, and of so enabling them to communicate more effectively in contexts of monolingual heritage language use. In addition, heritage learners' "identity needs" (Carreira, 2004) have been deemed important, which have been associated with students' desire to reconnect with their 'linguistic and cultural roots' through language learning, as well as with the aim to strengthen students' ties to a local community.

Recently, resonating with a so-called "social turn" (Block, 2003) and "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) across Applied Linguistics, scholars have begun to point out that existing approaches and discussions surrounding heritage language education do not adequately address the challenges and possibilities that students encounter in their everyday lives (e.g. Gounari, 2014; Scarino, 2014b). More precisely, conventional perspectives fail to capture the complexities involved when people draw on their language repertoires as they relate to others in the world of the 21st century – a world that is characterized by diversity, increased mobility, mobile communication technologies, and rapid change. It has become a normality that people with different language trajectories come together in linguistically and culturally complex spaces, and that people participate in several social networks simultaneously, including deterritorialized ones (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Busch, 2012). Participating in such environments does not only require language users to know how to speak X languages correctly. It also requires them to communicate in the face of minimal common ground; to align divergent perspectives; to translate meanings across linguistic borders; and to

reframe and mediate perspectives as they shuttle between different contexts (Scarino, 2014a; Canagarajah, 2013; Kramsch, 2009). In light of these changes, new questions are relevant. How does learning and living with a 'heritage' language shape students' (perceived) possibilities as multilingual speakers who move between diverse contexts and who navigate through semiotic complexity? What does it mean to 'find a balance,' as Laura might say, in encounters with speakers whose language biographies differ from their own? How do the students in question perceive themselves in relation to language and culture, in a world where diversity is constructed as a norm in more and more discursive, political, and institutional contexts? Consequently, some scholars have called to reconceptualize heritage language education within a perspective that gives attention to the linguistic, cultural, and spatial plurality and complexity marking students' experience (Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Gounari, 2014; Piccardo, 2014; Scarino, 2014b).

1.3 Research contribution, epistemological orientation, and relevance of this study

This dissertation follows these calls. It argues that reframing heritage language education in the proposed way requires us to reconceptualize the HERITAGE LEARNER[2] as a *multilingual* speaker. In light of the newly emerging questions outlined above, it is vital to understand how heritage language learning is relevant to students' development as *multilingual* language users, and conversely, how their positionality as multilingual speakers impacts what is relevant to them in their use and investment in 'heritage' languages. In order to gain a nuanced understanding of these points, it is important to recognize, in a first step, that traditional conceptions of heritage learners have relied on a simplified notion of multilingualism, which is rooted within a *monolingual* framework.

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[2] My use of small caps is explained in chapter 2.

More precisely, I will argue that traditional understandings of the HERITAGE LEARNER have been based on (and perpetuate) a "monolingual paradigm" (Canagarajah, 2013; Gogolin, 1994), resulting in a simplified view on the links between language, culture, and the self, and by extension, on the subjectivities of the learners in question. Put simply, the monolingual paradigm can be imagined as a web of intersecting discourses that rely on essentialist views of language, culture, and the self (such as the idea that languages are separate, autonomous, reified entities that should be kept 'pure'). Within the paradigm, any given phenomenon (e.g. culture, the self, and even language) is viewed in relation to only one language at a time, positing the self-contained language system as the central unit of analysis and organizing principle. For instance, one culture is by default associated with only one language, one identity, one geographical space, etc. according to this perspective. Another example is that multilingualism is conceived as the ability to function like a monolingual person in X separate languages.

Research contributions across different areas of Applied Linguistics have recently challenged the paradigm, giving rise to 'dynamic' models of multilingualism (among other developments). As I will elaborate in chapter 3, these models foreground that languages are not separated in different compartments of the mind of a multilingual speaker, but are seen as always being in a dynamic relationship – i.e., these models bring into focus that speakers constantly compare and shift between distinct ways of making meaning as they draw on language(s), and consider what it means to perceive the world through diverse linguistic lenses simultaneously (García & Li Wei, 2014; Kramsch, 2009).

While some scholars have stressed the relevance of adopting this paradigm shift in heritage language education (e.g. Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Gounari, 2014; Piccardo, 2014),

the ways in which dynamic models of multilingualism relate to the construct of *heritage learner* and how such models can inform our understanding of connections between heritage language learning and self-formation has not been profoundly discussed. Above all, empirical research is lacking that targets how heritage learners conceive of their multilingual subjectivities explicitly in relation to processes of heritage language learning.

The empirical part of this project sets out to investigate this underexplored terrain. Drawing on the notion of *subjectivity* (Weedon, 1997; Kramsch, 2009) as well as subject-centered and dynamic models of multilingualism (Busch, 2017; Kramsch, 2009), I will examine how adults from German-speaking families in anglophone Canada construct their multilingual selves in relation to narrated processes of learning German in institutional contexts and beyond, using a multimodal narrative inquiry approach (Riessman, 2008).

Epistemologically, my work is rooted within a social-constructionist paradigm, according to which social realities are discursively constructed rather than given. From this perspective, the label HERITAGE LEARNER is not an objective educational classification, but a notion (and presumed identity) constructed in different socio-political contexts by researchers, institutions, and students themselves (Doerr & Lee, 2013; see also Leeman, 2015). Based on this understanding, my aim is explicitly not to add more knowledge towards an accurate characterization of the prototypical HERITAGE LEARNER, but rather to contribute to an extended understanding of the notion itself, in two (interrelated) ways: First, by shedding light on the ways in which learning German as a 'heritage' language relates to and is part of German-Canadian participants' experience as multilingual subjects, my work aims to illuminate dimensions that have largely been ignored in debates surrounding heritage learners' subjectivities, but that are vital to their development as language users, as I will argue. Second,

by focusing on learners as multilingual subjects rather than members of cultural groups or people with a certain proficiency level, the study will contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the complexities that make for the heterogeneity among learners grouped into the category. As such, while my study is empirical in nature, my contribution is also a conceptual one.

With this contribution, I hope to inspire researchers and language practitioners to open their views beyond a monolingual perspective and engage with the phenomenon of HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNER in new ways. For language practitioners, my work is relevant in that it points to new avenues that can be explored in the enterprise of developing teaching approaches that are more meaningful to the individuals who embark on the project of engaging with what we call 'heritage' languages in the world of the 21st century. It is also relevant in that it points to new directions in how educators may think about and deal with commonalities and differences between language students as they seek out ways of coming to terms with the complex phenomenon of learner diversity. Finally, I aim to make a contribution to the study of multilingualism. In illustrating how the monolingual paradigm manifests itself in peoples' ideas, ideals, treatments, affective experiences, and actions, the study illuminates how multilinguals actively deal with monolingualism as a principle that structures many of the social realities they inhabit. Rather than aiming to work against a 'monolingual bias,' as it were, the present project seeks to promote an awareness of the ways in which the monolingual paradigm instantiates itself within different realms of linguistic experience, as well as an awareness of ensuing effects, and of individuals' possibilities to respond to them.

1.4 Chapter outline

Chapter 2 reviews how the notion of HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNER has traditionally been conceived in publications on heritage language teaching and learning. The chapter serves to critically discuss how heritage learners have typically been represented, researched, and constructed in scholarship and educational circles.

In chapter 3, I outline the theoretical framework of the study. I explain what constitutes the monolingual paradigm, how the paradigm has recently been challenged in Applied Linguistics, and how ensuing developments associated with the terms "social turn" (Block, 2003) and "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) have shaped contemporary perspectives on language education. In light of my objective, I focus on the emergence of 'dynamic' models of multilingualism and the self, on the basis of which I define my understanding of *multilingual subjectivity* – the lens I use to reframe the notion of HERITAGE LEARNER.

Chapter 4 discusses the picture that emerges when the concept of HERITAGE LEARNER is re-examined through the lens of *multilingual subjectivity* and relates this view to recent calls to reconceptualize heritage language education within a "multilingual perspective" (Scarino, 2014b). On this basis, I more closely specify my research objective, leading up to the precise formulation of research questions.

Chapter 5 presents the methodological design and procedure of the study, which is informed by a multi-modal narrative inquiry approach following Riessman (2008).

Chapter 6 comprises in-depth studies of three participants' narratives, which were elicited through individual interviews, written reflections, as well as a drawing. Based on the findings derived from the in-depth analyses, as well as informed by theoretical considerations,

chapter 7 presents a cross-case analytic approach (Duff, 2008a). The results of the three in-depth studies are examined in relation to each other, and with reference to the narratives of five further participants who took part in the study. Key findings are discussed more concisely in light of the theoretical framework of the study.

In chapter 8 the overall findings from the empirical study are concluded. Implications are then derived at the levels of theory and pedagogical practice. Finally, limitations of the present study and suggestions for further research are addressed.

Chapter 2 Traditional Perspectives on Heritage Language Learners

This chapter outlines how heritage learners have typically been defined and constructed among researchers and language practitioners. Specifically, I will critically discuss how mainstream discourse on heritage learners has foregrounded a monolingual perspective on their subjectivities. I begin with a short comment on (my usage of) the term *heritage language learner*, specifying how my approach is situated within the social-constructionist paradigm underpinning the theoretical framework of the present study. Next, I consider how heritage learners have been explicitly defined, before I discuss how the category has been constructed more implicitly in the literature.

2.1 A word on the term *heritage language learner*

While separate classes for language students with a home background in the target language were offered already in the 1930s (Valdés-Fallis, 1978), it was only around the turn of the new millennium that research on the instruction of such learners gained momentum and established itself as a subfield of SLA in its own right (Carreira & Kagan, 2018). Hand in hand with the emergence of the field of heritage language teaching and learning, the term *heritage language learner* (alternatively *heritage learner*) gained currency as a descriptor for the students in question.

It is vital to understand that the term did not, however, simply replace other descriptors that had previously been used, such as *bilingual speakers*, *residual speakers*, *native speakers*, *quasi native speakers* (Valdés, 1995). Rather, the term *heritage learner* came to delineate a new *type* of language student that did not exist before – as Montrul (2010) phrases it, "a

different breed of learners whose partial knowledge of the [heritage] language presents a unique set of challenges to language practitioners" (Montrul, 2010, p. 3). In other words, the term indexes a new conceptual construct – a learner *prototype* that features certain attributes (e.g. early exposure to the heritage language, dominance in a language other than the heritage language, etc.), while individual learners will naturally differ in the extent to which these attributes correspond to their case (Zyzik, 2016).

Importantly, distinct epistemological traditions bear distinct implications for researchers' understandings concerning a) the emergence of and b) the purpose of empirical investigations into the newly conceived phenomenon. Within a realist tradition,[3] the emergence of the heritage learner phenomenon is seen in terms of a discovery of a pre-existing reality – another 'learner species' if you wish – waiting to be explored. For researchers whose work is informed by this perspective, the interest, then, is to capture as precisely as possible what features characterize the heritage learner prototype.

By contrast, my work is situated within a social-constructionist paradigm, where the interest is in understanding how common conceptions of realities are discursively constructed through social activity (Burr, 2015, Norton, 2013; Weedon, 1997). Social constructionism is a movement that developed in opposition to the understanding that realities are pre-given and in particular, that they pre-exist language. From a social-constructionist stance, language does not simply express what would be seen as existing independently of our representations of reality, but instead the focus is on the role that language plays in bringing realities into being and shaping peoples' perceptions of reality. Central to social constructionism is a critical stance towards taken for granted views on social phenomena (e.g. on mental illness, on sexuality, or

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[3] According to Burr (2015), *realism* is "an ontological theory which states that the external world exists independently of being thought of or perceived" (p. 279).

on what it means to be a child in a particular society). Instead of searching for universal explanations for human behaviour (e.g. personality traits that reside within the person), or for hidden structures underlying social phenomena as people perceive them (e.g. class affiliation), researchers taking a social-constructionist approach are concerned with identifying the conditions and processes that render possible and create particular understandings of reality in a given place, time, and socio-political context. [4] (For a more detailed introduction and overview of the emergence, main tenets, and implications of social constructionism, see Burr, 2015).

Informed by this perspective, my interest lies in identifying taken-for-granted assumptions underpinning common ways of looking at heritage learners, as well as in exploring alternative ways of seeing the phenomenon. This is what I meant when I said in the previous chapter that my aim is not to add to the body of knowledge about the prototypical heritage learner, but to problematize how the notion has traditionally been constructed.

In order to reflect my understanding that the term *heritage learner* refers to a discursively constituted phenomenon, I will use small caps when I am talking *about* (i.e., looking *at*) the construct(ion) of HERITAGE LEARNER. On the other hand, I will myself use the term to refer to (imagined) flesh-and-blood students (without using small caps), while I acknowledge that the usage of the term is not without problems – the illustration of which is, after all, at the crux of this thesis.

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[4] Historically, the social-constructionist paradigm emerged through developments in several disciplines and intellectual traditions. While the works of French intellectuals such as Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida (and the rise of post-structuralism more generally) were seminal to the movement, social constructionism has its roots in earlier publications in Sociology (e.g. Berger & Luckmann, 1966) and Social Psychology (e.g. Gergen, 1973). In Linguistics, Norman Fairclough (1995) has been particularly influential to the ascendancy of social-constructionist approaches. On this basis, and drawing on Weedon's (1997) seminal publication on poststructuralist theory, gender and subjectivity, Norton (2000, 2013) has introduced post-structuralist theory into Applied Linguistics debates about language education.

2.2 Defining heritage language learners

How to define heritage learners has been debated at length, and in fact been identified as one of the key concerns in the field of heritage language education (Lynch, 2014). As observed by many, existing definitions vary considerably with respect to who is and who is not included in the category (Leeman, 2015; Xiao & Wong, 2014; Carreira, 2004; Wiley, 2001). Typically, definitions have been classified as either 'narrow' or 'broad,' depending on whether the primary focus is on the learners' proficiency in the heritage language (narrow definition) or on what Fishman (2001b) has termed the "particular family relevance" (p. 81) that the language has to the learner (broad definition).

'Broad' definitions have often been associated with contexts of revitalizing minority languages and reversing language shift (Fishman, 2001a; 1991), where the act of defining the term serves to identify (potential) members of a circumscribed language community who have a conceivable ability, right, or putative responsibility to contribute to the maintenance of the language in question. It has been pointed out that in such contexts, it would be counterproductive to adopt a definition that excludes individuals who do not (yet) speak the language (e.g. Wilson & Martínez, 2011; Wiley, 2001), hence for those whose focus is on language maintenance, it is "the historical or personal connection to the language that is salient and not the actual proficiency of individual speakers" (Valdés, 2001, p. 38).

By contrast, in contexts where the aim is to gain an understanding of what characterizes heritage learners as a unique language learner type, the primary function of definitions has been to differentiate them from 'typical' foreign language learners. According to the most widely accepted definition used by those with an interest in pedagogical concerns specifically, the term *heritage language learner* refers to "a language student who is raised in a home where

a non-English language[5] is spoken, who speaks or at least understands the language, and who is to some degree bilingual in that language and in English" (Valdés, 2001, p. 38).

It is important to note that Valdés' (1995; 2001, 2005) seminal work in the field was based on the understanding that heritage learners are "not simply imperfect speakers of [the heritage language] who have fallen short of the monolingual norm [...but rather...] complex individuals who are fundamentally different from monolinguals" (Valdés, 1995, p. 316). In this light, it is striking that a number of definitions include references to bilingualism like the above one proposed by Valdés herself, yet in debates surrounding definitions, the notion of bilingualism has been discursively linked first and foremost to the idea that heritage learners possess, to a degree, what Valdés (2001) calls "developed functional proficiencies" (p. 38) specifically in *one* language, namely the heritage language. As Valdés (2001) clarifies, her definition aims to foreground how heritage learners differ from "the traditional foreign language student" based on the "developed functional proficiencies" in the target language (p. 38). In short, while heritage learners are designated bilinguals per definition, a monolingual orientation, focused on defining the learner with reference to the heritage language system, has prevailed within scholarly discussions.

For example, discussing the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER with reference to 'broad' and 'narrow' definitions of *heritage language*, Carreira and Kagan (2011) draw on Polinsky and Kagan's (2007) distinction, according to which

> a broadly defined HL is part of [a] person's family or cultural heritage, the language may not have been spoken in the home, and the person has no functional proficiency in the language and would most likely have to study that language as an L2 learner (Carreira & Kagan, 2011, p. 41).

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[5] Valdés' proposals pertain to the context of Spanish as a heritage language in the U.S.

By contrast, the authors contend that narrowly defined, the heritage language "was first in the order of acquisition but was not completely acquired because of the individual's switch to another dominant language" (Polinsky & Kagan, 2007, p. 369, as cited in Carreira & Kagan, 2011, p. 41). Besides being differentiated from foreign language learners based on the order of language acquisition, heritage learners are here primarily distinguished as 'incomplete acquirers' of their first language. As such, in this example the connection between bilingualism and incomplete first language acquisition is implicitly accentuated, while other aspects of bilingualism are not brought to attention.

Similarly, heritage learners have been distinguished from foreign language learners based on the primary context of heritage language acquisition and use. The original steering committee of the National Heritage Language Resource Center at UCLA, for example, states: "A defining distinction between heritage language and foreign language acquisition is that heritage language acquisition begins in the home, as opposed to foreign language acquisition which, at least initially, usually begins in a classroom setting." (UCLA Steering Committee, 2000, p. 481). At the crux of this distinction is the idea that heritage learners differ from foreign language learners in having implicit (procedural) knowledge (Ellis, 2008; Ellis, 1993) of the target language, while they often lack metalinguistic knowledge – what we call 'rules of grammar' in lay terms. Accordingly, some authors have argued to include students in the category who have no family connection to the language in question, but "have had an extensive exposure to the language because they have lived in a country where the heritage language was spoken during their childhood, or they have been in other situations of contact with speakers of that language" (Beaudrie & Ducar, 2005, p. 13). The argument is aimed towards including all students in the category who "are expected to follow a similar acquisition

process that will differ, to a greater or lesser degree, from that of the regular foreign language learner" (Beaudrie & Ducar 2005, p. 14). In brief, the main point of reference in discussions on defining criteria related to language acquisition (such as 'implicit knowledge of the heritage language' or 'exposure to the heritage language') has been the heritage language as an enclosed system, promoting a monolingual orientation in the task of defining heritage students.

While features concerning heritage language proficiency, exposure and use have been most salient in defining heritage learners vis-à-vis foreign language learners, scholars have argued that definitions must also distinguish them on the basis of identity and socio-affective needs. Van Deusen-Scholl (2003) for example, stresses that "in addition to linguistic and ethnic criteria, attention must be given to the role of attitudes and motivation on the part of the student seeking heritage instruction" (p. 222). In this context, she distinguishes heritage learners from learners with a "heritage motivation." According to her distinction, the term *heritage learner* is reserved for "students who have been exposed to another language in the home and have either attained some degree of bilingual proficiency or have been raised with a strong cultural connection to a particular language through family interaction" (p. 222). In contrast, she suggests that *learners with a heritage motivation* "seek to reconnect with their family's heritage through language even though the linguistic evidence of that connection may have been lost for generations" (van Deusen-Scholl (p. 222).

Carreira (2004) has made a particularly strong case to move beyond a focus on linguistic criteria, offering a detailed argument for a "dual approach to the understanding of the term [heritage language learner]" (p. 1) that takes on board what she calls "identity needs" (p. 14). She argues that definitions of heritage learners must achieve "explanatory adequacy," that is, they must be defined in "a pedagogically valuable way," that offers "a roadmap for meeting

the needs of [heritage language learners] with regard to language learning" (p. 1). Striving towards this goal, she maps out four categories of heritage learners with distinct identity needs based on the student's a) membership status in a certain community, b) personal connection to the heritage language and culture, and c) proficiency in the heritage language.

In short, debates surrounding identity-related defining criteria have foregrounded the idea that heritage learners are rooted in a certain cultural tradition that is essential to who they are. This perspective is problematic for mainly two (interrelated) reasons. First, it has been critiqued that existing debates on how to define heritage learners have ignored how learners conceive of themselves or their relationship with the language in question, hence failing to acknowledge their agency in constructing their identities. Hornberger and Wang (2008), who were the first to address this point, define heritage learners as "individuals with family or ancestral ties to a language other than [the majority language] who exert their *agency* in determining if they are [heritage language learners] of that language" (p. 6, my emphasis). Second, scholars have critiqued that assigning heritage learners to a pre-given, supposedly static culture homogenizes individuals who differ on a number of dimensions pertaining to their identity and sense of self (Potowski, 2012). Relatedly, it has been argued that traditional definitions do "not pay enough attention to [heritage learners'] cultural and socio-psychological struggles" (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 4), which highlights the need to consider who heritage learners are more explicitly in relation to different contexts that they navigate (see Gounari, 2014). I will discuss these objections more in depth in the next section.

To summarize, existing definitions typically reflect an outside view on heritage learners: Who or what is regarded a HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNER is determined by the presence of properties attributed to the learner (most importantly proficiency in the heritage

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language, the degree and context of exposure to the heritage language, and motivational substrates linked to the learners' posited sense of cultural identity). Although bilingualism is sometimes mentioned in explicit definitions, the focus has remained on features that characterize heritage learners within a monolingual frame of orientation that focuses on the heritage language in isolation from other languages. The fact that heritage students have extensive additional language resources and whether and how these shape what they can or aspire to do with the heritage language has been neglected in discussions surrounding the question how to define them.

2.3 Constructing the notion of HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNER

Understandings of the concept HERITAGE LEARNER are not only shaped through explicit definitions, but also through ways in which people talk about and study the phenomenon. More precisely, my work is informed by the idea that social realities are shaped by discourses – sets of meanings, metaphors, images, narratives, statements and so forth that provide conceptual frames that organize our understanding of reality. Since the notion of *discourse* is at the heart of my work, I will clarify my conception of the term in some detail before I proceed to examine mainstream discourses shaping the construct of HERITAGE LEARNER.

2.3.1 A short aside: What is a discourse?

Broadly, discourses can be seen as historically and culturally specific, emergent understandings on the basis of which people make sense of the world. Discourses are like conceptual lenses that lead us to see things in one way rather than another. In the words of Vivien Burr (2015), a discourse refers to

a particular picture that is painted of an event, person or class of persons, a particular way of representing it in a certain light. If we accept the view [...] that a multitude of alternative versions of events are potentially available through language, this means that, surrounding any one object, event, person, etc., there may be a variety of different discourses, each with a different story to tell about the object in question, a different way of representing it to the world. (p. 93)

In other words, each discourse draws attention to different aspects and raises different questions, consequently bearing different implications for action. What people say or write, then, can be seen as instances of discourses (Burr, 2015, p. 95). For example, a parent citing a discourse of *adolescence as moral maturation* might say things such as "Ben is 14 now, so I expect him to start showing more responsibility," whereas saying things like "Ben is going through a lot, emotionally, so currently he's having a hard time showing responsibility" can be seen as an instance of a discourse of *adolescence as emotional upheaval*. While both utterances may be inspired by the same behaviour, the reality of 'being a teenager' is considered against the backdrop of different frames of interpretation, creating different expectations, possibilities, and consequences.

Since the term *discourse* has been used in different ways depending on the research tradition and epistemological pre-suppositions, it is important to clarify my understanding in relation with alternative readings. In order to do so, I will borrow from Alastair Pennycook (1994), who discusses three opposing usages of the term.

In Applied Linguistics, as he explains, the term has been traditionally used to refer to language-in-use or to larger units of language that go beyond one sentence, such as paragraphs or conversations. The notion of discourse in this sense is helpful in that it draws attention to the need to see beyond the level of syntax if we want to understand how meaning is created through language in interaction. However, as Pennycook points out, this usage can be critiqued for casting a limited view on the *context* shaping language use, and by extension, on how social

realities are shaped through language in context: While contexts such as genre, a speakers' intention, or general conversation rules are taken into account within this tradition, socio-political contexts – including ways in which language ties into power dynamics – are typically ignored. This first understanding of discourse has hence been criticized for positing a completely free-willed subject and language use that seems free of ideological conditions (p. 121).

Citing Fairclough (1989), Pennycook explains that by contrast, in the context of critical discourse analysis, discourse refers to "language as social practice" (p. 121). From this view point, social acts of language use are "not the individualistic acts of language users in cognitive isolation, but rather are determined by the larger social and ideological conditions of society" (p. 121). While this usage of the term acknowledges that language use and subjectivities are situated "within particular social and cultural contexts [...] in which ideological forms and social inequalities abound" (p. 123), Pennycook also points to limitations of this perspective: While it is granted that language is ideological, it is assumed that the ideological positions *misrepresent* social reality. This is problematic, as he argues with reference to Fowler (1991), insofar as anything that is uttered is always articulated from a specific ideological position. Vivien Burr (1995) addresses the same issue when problematizing the idea of "ideology as false consciousness" (p. 79). This version of ideology, she argues, enables a critical stance on discourses that prevail in society, but it also brings the following difficulty:

> If we say that people are living in a false consciousness, we are assuming that there is a 'reality' [...] which lies outside of their understanding of the world, i.e. it is a version of events that is more valid [...]. But the idea that there is one version of events that is true (making all others false) is also in direct opposition to the central idea of social constructionism, i.e. that there exists not 'truth' but only numerous constructions of the world, and which ones receive the stamp of 'truth' depends upon culturally and historically specific factors. (p. 81)

Consequently, in the third usage of the term *discourse* that Pennycook discusses, the notion is used in a Foucauldian sense to refer to ways of organizing meaning. From this perspective, "Discourses are about the creation and limitation of possibilities, they are systems of power/knowledge (*pouvoir/savoir*) within which we take up subject positions" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 128, emphasis in original). Here, the term discourse comes to replace the notion of ideology as truth-obscuring, instead emphasizing how interpretations of reality are produced within discourses which are neither true nor false (p. 128).

My work is based on this last understanding, according to which a discourse refers to sets of ideas that shape what people consider possibilities of being, acting, and belonging – interpretational frames, against the backdrop of which people give meaning to themselves, events, and others. Informed by this understanding, I will now discuss how the HERITAGE LEARNER has been discursively constructed in the literature.

2.3.2 Discursive constructions of heritage learners

The following outline serves to show how the HERITAGE LEARNER has typically been represented in research contributions. In light of my purposes, I will focus on ways in which the notion has been constructed vis-à-vis discourses of monolingual normativity.

Largely, research in the field of heritage language teaching and learning has been driven by the goal of identifying typical characteristics of heritage learners, so as to acquire an accurate understanding of needs that uniquely characterize the student type. Following this goal, research has targeted two main areas, which correspond with the two salient factors highlighted in discussions surrounding explicit definitions: a) students' acquisition, control,

and use of the heritage language, and b) issues related to identity and cultural belonging. I will discuss how heritage learners have been portrayed within these areas, consecutively.

2.3.2.1 Language and the HERITAGE LEARNER

Research on heritage learners' linguistic abilities typically takes as its starting point the above-mentioned view that the students in question are "a different breed of learners whose partial knowledge of the [heritage] language presents a unique set of challenges to language practitioners" (Montrul, 2010, p. 3). Proceeding from this perspective, a major goal in the field has been to determine language profiles so as to pinpoint specific linguistic 'strengths and weaknesses' that are typical among (subgroups of) heritage learners of a given language, as well as to identify factors that bear on "the development of HL grammars" (Carreira & Kagan, 2018, p. 155).

In an attempt to carve out such profiles, learners' abilities in the heritage language have been examined with respect to a wide range of linguistic features[6] (e.g. Peirce, 2018; Wolski-Moskoff, 2018; Zamora, 2017; Swender, Marin, Rivera-Martinez & Kagan, 2014; Montrul & Bowles, 2010; Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009; Douglas, 2008; Friedman & Kagan, 2008; Kanno, Hasegawa, Ikeda, Ito & Long, 2008; Polinski, 2008; Kondo-Brown, 2005; for overviews, see Lynch, 2014; Montrul, 2010). In order to determine their abilities within the respective areas, research has largely relied on quasi-experimental quantitative methods, using measures such as cloze tests, speech rate, error frequency rate, grammaticality judgement tasks, elicited oral and written narratives, oral proficiency interviews, self-assessment, among others. In so doing, researchers have mostly drawn on contrastive approaches that compare heritage

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[6] These include, for instance, features across different language *domains* (e.g. grammar, lexis, phonology, pragmatics), *modalities* (e.g. reading, writing, speaking, listening), *genres* (e.g. academic writing versus personal communication), and *registers* (e.g. formal versus informal forms of address).

learners' performance on these measures with those of foreign language learners on the one hand, and native speakers on the other (see Lynch, 2014).

The prevalence of contrastive approaches is striking insofar as the idea that heritage learners are a different kind of language student, which helped establish the field, was initially undergirded by the argument that these students are profoundly different from monolinguals and that hence, "the specific competencies of these speakers […] cannot be easily compared with those of either monolingual English or monolingual Spanish speakers" (Valdés, 1995, p. 316). The importance of drawing on insights from bilingualism research rather than blindly applying existing knowledge about L2 acquisition to the new target group was explicitly addressed in the early stage of the fields' emergence (Valdés, 2005, 2001, 1995). Yet, in the attempt to develop a more accurate understanding of what characterizes the prototypical HERITAGE LEARNER from a linguistic standpoint, scholarship has relied precisely – and in fact, primarily – on comparisons with foreign language students and native speakers (Lynch, 2014). These comparisons have focused narrowly on linguistic features of the heritage language system, contributing to an understanding of HERITAGE LEARNER that does not transcend the conceptual realm of monolingualism.

Specifically, approaches that contrast heritage learners with foreign language learners and/or native speakers of the target language are related to the wide-spread idea that students fall along a *proficiency continuum* ranging from 'no proficiency' to 'full command' of the heritage language. Polinsky and Kagan (2007) have argued for the utility of continuum-based views as follows: "Despite the appearance of great variation among heritage speakers, they fall along a continuum based upon the speakers' distance from the baseline language. Such a

continuum-based model enables researchers and instructors to classify heritage speakers more accurately and readily" (p. 368).

Correspondingly, in contrastive studies native speakers are typically labelled 'baseline' speakers, 'controls,' 'full' speakers, and even 'competent speakers' (e.g. Polinsky, 2008, p. 151; p. 162). The concept of *native speaker* has as such served as a standard-setting framework against the backdrop of which the notion of HERITAGE LEARNER has been constructed, with a native speaker ideal marking one pole of the implied monolingual language continuum. On the one hand, contrastive studies specify (and accentuate) how the prototypical HERITAGE LEARNER falls short of native speaker norms. To give an example, Polinsky (2008), who compares elicited narratives of heritage speakers of Russian with those of "Full Russian speakers" (p. 151), identifies "characteristic features of heritage narratives" such as "lack of embedding" and "short utterances," demonstrating what she refers to as a "limited mental representation of the heritage language" (p. 162). Similarly, Montrul (2010), who summarizes findings stemming from contrastive designs, concludes that "under reduced input and output conditions, heritage speakers seem to develop some core aspects of their family language, but their grammatical systems show a marked tendency toward simplification and overregularization of complex morphological patterns and restricted word order" (p. 9).

On the other hand, contrastive designs have highlighted heritage learners' 'near-native abilities' in the heritage language – notably as compared to the abilities of the average foreign language learner. To give an example, Douglas (2008) concludes his contrastive study by remarking that "the emerging profiles of these heritage learners [students enrolled for an intermediate Japanese for heritage speakers course] is that their competence in basic interpersonal communication skills is remarkably higher than that of students who studied

Japanese as a foreign language for several years" (p. 219). Based on the growing body of research, condensed characterizations, such as the following, are frequent in research publications: "[Heritage learners] possess global but imperfect and incomplete knowledge of the language. Many of them sound (almost) like native speakers, and they can produce natural sounding chunks of speech [...] but the language disintegrates at the level of lexicon and pragmatics" (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 164).

These are only few citations, but they serve well to exemplify how heritage learners have been positioned vis-à-vis a native speaker ideal within a referential framework of monolingual norms, and as competing with foreign language learners to reach this ideal. In this context, Lynch (2014) has pointed to a "spatial metaphor" (p. 231) frequently employed within contrastive study approaches, which frames the linguistic abilities of heritage learners as falling *in between* those of foreign language learners and native speakers. Offering evidence, he cites Isurin and Ivanova-Sullivan (2008), who use a contrastive design to examine the linguistic performance of Russian heritage learners, which leads them to the following conclusion:

> Russian heritage speakers may indeed be 'lost in between' in the continuum of language speakers. They outperform English-speaking learners of Russian in such linguistic areas as the correct use of aspect/tense and cases, but they fall well behind the native speakers in these same areas. (p. 100)

As reflected in this quote, the spatial metaphor is closely related to a competition metaphor, which is common in the presentation of findings: The use of verbs and wordings such as *outperform* and *fall well behind*, as apparent in the last quote, are a typical way of presenting differences between the groups in contrastive research designs. The two metaphors corroborate the continuum-based perspective, and with it, a view of language acquisition as a linear progression towards the native speaker ideal, thus contributing to a monolingual view on the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER.

Corresponding with these ways of researching and talking about heritage learner profiles, teaching objectives have predominantly hinged on and given priority to the goal of approximating educated monolingual native speaker proficiency in the heritage language. Abbas Benmamoun, for instance, reporting on his experience of teaching heritage learners, envisions the following goal:

> Their heritage language knowledge should be seen as a resource that can be built upon in order to help them learn the standard variety or strengthen their mastery of their heritage language in all its registers. The aim is for [their] knowledge to approximate that of native speakers in its rich repertoire and cultural and pragmatic sophistication. (Benmamoun & Kagan, 2013, p. 288)

In line with this vision, Valdés (1995) observes, "The primary aim of the language division of many Spanish departments […] is to produce students who come very close to monolingual speakers of Spanish" (p. 316). In an empirical study that surveyed 43 members of a Spanish language department about their experiences and views pertaining to the acquisition of academic Spanish, the researchers found that "[e]veryday interactions in the department transmitted consistent messages to students: Monolingual-like behavior in Spanish is the ideal and few students not natively born to the language achieve this standard. U.S. Latinos [i.e., heritage learners], if they are to be valued in such departments, must be reconstituted as imitation monolingual native speakers of Spanish" (Valdés, González, López García, & Márquez, 2008). Together, the stances reflected in these quotes illustrate how the mainstream discourse on heritage learners uses monolingual (standard) norms, reified in an idealized native (standard) speaker, as a key frame of reference not only in defining what heritage learners are able to do with language, but also in envisaging their ideal development as language users.

As I will elaborate at more length in chapter 3, the orientation towards a native speaker ideal has become a point of heated debate across the broader area of Applied Linguistics over

the past decades. The more general dispute behind these debates concerns the extent to which language acquisition ought to be treated as a cognitive (individual) or a social activity. This is most famously reflected in what is known as the Firth and Wagner debate. Picking up a growing sentiment of that time, Firth and Wagner (1997) lament the ascendancy of the mentalistic tradition in SLA, calling to reconsider fundamental concepts that have emanated from this tradition, in particular the notion of *learner*, *interlanguage*, and the *native/non-native* distinction.

In the context of this ongoing dispute, the reliance on the native speaker ideal as the primary organizing principle in language education has been sharply critiqued for a number of reasons, the two most prominent of which are as follows. Firstly, the orientation to the ideal has been attacked for casting a deficit view on learners and their learning, insofar as learners are portrayed in terms of linguistic abilities they *lack* as compared to an idealized native speaker. The idealized native speaker is elevated above a stereotypicalized nonnative, as Firth and Wagner (1997) put it, while the latter is viewed as a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence (p. 285). Secondly, scholars have critically pointed out that the concept of *native speaker* implies a stable monolingual entity speaking a homogeneous standard language, hence glossing over the variation among native speakers "with regard to their adherence to any (standard) language or language use" (Kramsch & Whiteside, 2007, p. 910). These objections are crucial to heritage learner conceptualizations, as will become clearer as the discussion progresses. In the remainder of this section, I will hence discuss traditional views on heritage learners explicitly in relation to these points of criticism.

The native speaker ideal and the problem of deficit-centred perspectives in the context of heritage learner constructions. While people tend to believe that they easily recognize who

is a native speaker by intuition, at closer examination the concept proves elusive (Davies, 2003). It hosts a bundle of assumptions (defining criteria if you wish), which cannot stand empirically, especially not in combination. For instance, the notion of native ability is not only associated with the capability to produce 'target-like' forms of language use with ease; native speakers are also commonly imagined to be exposed to the language from birth and to have grown up speaking the language (Montrul, 2013, p. 16). In combination, these two assumptions put the HERITAGE LEARNER in a peculiar position (rather than simply an 'in-between' place): The notion of *family language* (or *first language*) evokes a conceptual association with 'nativity' at the same time as 'nativity' is discursively linked with the idea of 'full proficiency' in a language. As a result, the HERITAGE LEARNER runs a comparatively high risk of being conceived as a 'deficient (native) speaker' of the heritage language. Indeed, wordings such as "they can produce natural sounding chunks of speech [...] but the language disintegrates at the level of lexicon and pragmatics" (see above), which are seen as a perfectly acceptable way to describe heritage learners, invoke the image of a "defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence," resonating with Firth and Wagner's (1997) critique.

Accordingly, an oft-cited observation is that heritage learners experience feelings of insecurity, confidence issues, and "language shyness" (Krashen, 1998) resulting from a fear of being seen as incompetent when the student "knows the HL fairly well, but not perfectly" (Krashen, 1998, p. 41; Potowski, 2002; Cho, Cho, & Tse, 1997). In response to these observations, scholars have stressed the need to steer away from deficit-oriented approaches that focus on learners' problems and correction, instead calling to use students' existing

knowledge as a starting point (e.g. Beaudrie, 2016, Kagan & Dillon, 2009; Potowski, 2002).

Polinsky and Kagan (2007) argue:

> The discrepancies between [heritage learners'] spoken language and the educated norm taught in the classroom may lead some instructors to discount their knowledge rather than value it. Language instructors tend to look for gaps in knowledge (which are, of course, plentiful in these cases) rather than assign value to the rich and varied linguistic backgrounds that these learners bring with them. This often unintentional difference in approaches to second language learners vs. heritage speakers reminds us of *the glass half-full/half-empty metaphor*. With second language learners, every small step towards attainment is celebrated and accepted, and the necessary gaps in knowledge are viewed as part of the course. In the assessment of heritage speakers, however, the glass is perpetually half empty: it is hard to ignore what they do not know [...] and that they do not speak like true native speakers. [...T]he heritage learner's competence is always suspect, and both instructors and curriculum designers tend to take stock only of their deficiencies. To establish an adequate curriculum for these learners, we need to adopt the 'the glass is half full' approach, that is, a more optimistic outlook based on how much heritage speakers already know. (pp. 373-374, my emphasis)

The "glass half-full/half-empty"-metaphor is useful in addressing how continuum-based views hinging on the native speaker ideal tend to cast a deficit view on the learner. I would argue, however, that while explicit in rejecting a devaluating view on the learner, existing pleas to abandon a deficit-orientation such as this one have typically not challenged the underlying monolingual continuum-based model itself, nor have they seriously challenged the primacy given to the goal of approximating native speaker proficiency. The HERITAGE LEARNER – whether 'half full' or 'half empty' – is, in fact, (re)positioned on the same continuum, and remains, between the lines, a less than perfect speaker of the heritage language by monolingual standard. In order to seriously counter a deficit-perspective, I claim that we must better understand how this perspective feeds on discourses of monolingual normativity (such as the native speaker ideal); as well as to consider alternative frames of interpretation that allow us to transgress the conceptual realm of monolingualism. This dissertation takes a step in this direction.

The native speaker ideal and the problem of homogenization/standardization in the context of heritage learner constructions. Another problem with the chief orientation towards native (standard) ability is that the concept of *native speaker* renders invisible the language variation that occurs between individuals who are considered to be native speakers of the same language. The native speaker is, as Kramsch (1998) points out,

> a *monolingual, monocultural abstraction*; he/she is one who speaks only his/her (standardized) native tongue and lives by one (standardized) national culture. In reality, most people partake of various languages or language varieties and live by various cultures and subcultures […]. (pp. 79-80, my emphasis)

That people partake of various languages or varieties is particularly salient in the case of heritage learners, because many do not speak what is labelled the standard variety of a given heritage language, such that "there can be a mismatch between what the individual knows and identifies with as [the heritage language], and what institutional and educational powers-that-be ascribe to the individual" (Lynch, 2014, p. 233). It follows, as Leeman (2015) has remarked, that constructs such as *Chinese* or *Spanish* do not adequately describe the language repertoires and practices of heritage learners, since they erase the variation they encompass.

Consider the construct of Chinese, a cover term for several varieties, some of which are mutually unintelligible to their respective speakers – Cantonese and Mandarin, for example, are both considered *Chinese*. The presence of Cantonese-speaking students in courses of Chinese as a heritage language that, in effect, teach Mandarin (Wong & Xiao, 2010; He, 2008) is only a paradigmatic instance that indicates the more general need to scrutinize the relations between heritage learners' language use, their ambitions as language users, their learning processes, and their sense of self.

Discussion surrounding the divergence between the "home/community resources of the learner" (Wiley, 2008, p. 98) and the teaching of standard varieties have been fuelled, in

particular, by the observation that "many [heritage] students come to the classroom with poor linguistic self-esteem, either because they speak a language variety judged to be non-standard or because they lack the fluency of a native speaker" (Beaudrie, 2016, p. 86; see also Fairclough, 2016; Henshaw, 2016; Xiao & Wong, 2014; Coryell, Clark, & Pomerantz, 2010; Tallon, 2009; Valdés et al., 2008).

In light of this observation, mainly two views have circulated in the field. The first holds that students should be 'empowered' by granting them access to so-called genres of power and prestige (see Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 192), well in line with the mainstream discourse and its orientation towards the approximation of native (standard) ability. There seems to be broad consensus that this view continues to dominate approaches to teaching heritage learners. As Fairclough (2016) puts it:

> It cannot be denied that the goal of most HL classes at academic institutions is acquisition of the idealized language variety labeled 'the standard' (which can hide under different labels such as academic or high register, prestigious or general variety, formal style, etc. (p. 159)

On the other hand, scholars have warned "that an exclusive focus on academic and professional registers of the public sphere may erode HL speakers' pride in their own vernacular uses of the heritage language and the specific sociocultural heritage that these index" (Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 191). This second view challenges mainstream discourse. It has mostly been promoted by scholars working within a critical pedagogy tradition, who foreground the need to counter feelings of low self-esteem by explicitly valuing the varieties spoken by students in a specific class, and so instilling a sense of self-confidence or even pride in the student (e.g. Fairclough, 2016; Parra, 2016a; Potowski, 2012; Tallon, 2009). This approach questions the monolingual view conferred on the HERITAGE LEARNER in that it brings into focus the linguistic heterogeneity among learners grouped into the category.

It is important to note, however, that in most of such contributions, the HERITAGE LEARNER is yet constructed vis-à-vis implied self-contained pre-existing language systems (varieties), which are understood to represent a corresponding minority. In other words, alternative attempts to deal with the fact that students' home language may not correspond to the standardized variety usually taught in language programs have mostly been discussed with reference to the discrimination of *groups*, promoting the general idea that learners should be enabled to acquire a standard variety while maintaining and valuing 'their own' variety.

At a closer look, what has in this sense been discussed under headings of discrimination, stigmatization, empowerment, etc. brings to light a more general problem: Our attention is steered to the fact that traditional understandings of HERITAGE LEARNER place a discrete (abstract) language system at the centre, failing to consider students' *lived experiences* as language users. Many students do not only speak 'a different variety.' The notion that their language trajectories may include living (or having lived) with further languages, for instance because of migration, cross-linguistic marriages, etc. (Wiley, 2008) is central to conceptualizing heritage learners.

This is vividly demonstrated in Wiley's (2008) case study of a heritage learner of 'Chinese.' The study illustrates how the informant, Devin, a naturalized U.S. citizen of Chinese/Taiwanese heritage, who had learned and lived with several languages by the time of his study participation, experiences his enrolment in a 'Chinese for native speakers' course. Wiley's findings reveal that Devin was not able to draw benefit from the course, ultimately dropping out, which Wiley attributes to the circumstance that the course was not designed for the needs of students with a multilingual background. In conclusion, he raises the question to what extent Devin ought to be considered a heritage language learner of Chinese. He reasons:

"Mandarin was one of the languages used in [Devin's] family. However, it was used to a lesser extent than, and code-mixed with, Taiwanese, which more accurately implies that *he was a native 'multilingual'*" (p. 101, my emphasis). That is, Wiley's findings mark the relevance of considering heritage learners' positionality as multilingual people and gaining greater sensitivity to their idiosyncratic paths as developing language users – both in relation to, as well as beyond potential group memberships. Similarly, Hornberger and Wang (2008) call attention to the fact that heritage learners "draw on existing resources in various bi(multi)lingual and bi(multi)cultural contexts in their daily lives" in order to use the heritage language in [different] communicative modes [...]" (p. 26). I concur with the authors that "Assisting [heritage learners] to advance their language expertise requires understanding what these learners *can do with*, instead of what they *do not know about*, the HL" (p. 26, emphasis in original). My point is that the general picture of what they can do with heritage language resources is extended when the notion of HERITAGE LEARNER is no longer constructed on the basis of discourses of monolingual normativity – a point that we will take with us and gradually develop across chapter 3 and 4.

Having examined how the HERITAGE LEARNER has been constructed in relation to language, I will now address the second realm of focal interest, the issue of identity.

2.3.2.2 Identity and the HERITAGE LEARNER

While a proficiency-oriented focus has prevailed in the field, heritage students' "identity-needs" (Carreira, 2004) have also been deemed important, as noted earlier. Specifically, scholars have called to "ground[] HL teaching and learning in the socioaffective needs of learners and their reasons for studying their heritage language" (Carreira, 2016b, p. 131; see

also He, 2006; Schwarzer & Petrón, 2005). Though empirical inquiry explicitly targeting identity in heritage language education research constitutes a relatively recent development, issues concerning identity politics and cultural identity have always played a role within heritage language educational policy and pedagogy (Leeman, 2015). It is hence not surprising that heritage language instruction has been viewed as an "optimal site to address broader identity challenges that uniquely characterize HL students" (Martínez, 2016, p. 39). This section serves to critically discuss how identity-related issues have been typically presented in the literature on heritage language teaching and learning, adding to the understanding of HERITAGE LEARNER.

As shown in 2.1, one key factor used to define heritage learners is the family connection to the heritage language. Correspondingly, 'identity needs' of heritage learners have been discussed predominantly with reference to a 'roots metaphor': The metaphor frames the HERITAGE LEARNER as rooted in a specific culture, and as being (to some extent) cut off from these 'cultural roots.' The heritage classroom, then, is pictured as a site where heritage learners can "re-connect with their heritage" (Beaudrie, 2011, p. 334) and gain a deeper understanding of who they are. As elaborated by Leeman (2015), the assumption that ethnic identity is embodied in the heritage language is, as such, taken for granted in many models of heritage language teaching, framing heritage learning as a process where the learner reclaims or consolidates a particular ethnic or national identity.

Arguments to support this perspective have been taken from research into students' motives for studying their home language formally (e.g. Carreira & Kagan, 2011; Noels, 2005). Large-scale surveys, for instance, have been interpreted to support the view that heritage learners bring to the classroom a desire "to learn about their cultural and linguistic

roots and to strengthen their connections to their families and communities" (Kagan & Dillon, 2009, p. 160). In light of such findings, a focal idea has been to foster students' deeper understanding of 'their' culture, so as to strengthen their "heritage identity" (Carreira, 2004, p. 16). In consequence, scholars have argued for a strong focus on cultural content in heritage language classes, including engagement with cultural products such as literature, as well as cultural practices such as traditions and customs (e.g. Burgo, 2017; Beaudrie, Ducar, & Relaño-Pastor, 2009; Parodi, 2008).

A salient theme circulating in the literature is that it is important to foster a "sense of cultural and ethnic pride" (Beaudrie, 2016, p. 85) in heritage learners. Resonating with the strongly-felt need to enhance students' appreciation and pride of vernacular varieties, teaching students about cultural traditions and customs has been seen as another means of countering feelings of insecurity, which are often associated with heritage learners, as mentioned. Parodi (2008), for instance, recommends a cultural studies component for learners of Spanish as a heritage language in the U.S., arguing as follows:

> Habits shape the identity of the people who practice them. Learning both the local Hispanic culture in the United States and other Hispanic cultures [...] deepens heritage speakers' self-knowledge and broadens their perspective of the Hispanic world. Such knowledge empowers them, makes them proud of their roots, and helps them overcome their insecurities. (p. 212)

Similarly, Fairclough (2016) maintains:

> Being part of a community where the heritage language is spoken and traditions are maintained contributes to a feeling of belonging to the group, which in turn promotes the consolidation of an identity [...]. These connections often help mitigate negative issues related to minority identity formation, such as lack of self-confidence, linguistic insecurity, and anxiety [...]. (p. 153)

Likewise, Carreira (2004) advises to revise foreign language courses "so as to make them identity-affirming and empowering experiences" (p. 16) for heritage learners who may have

experienced what she calls "identity negation" – i.e., not being viewed as members of 'their heritage culture' by others because they lack a certain level of heritage language proficiency and/or are unfamiliar with the history and traditions associated with that culture.

In sum, scholarship with a focus on the role of identity in heritage language teaching has traditionally foregrounded an understanding of HERITAGE LEARNER that builds on essentialist framings of language, culture, and the self. The assumption of essentialism – that there are 'essences' inside objects or people that make them what they are (Burr, 2015) – manifests itself in the view that *heritage language*, *heritage culture*, and *heritage identity* are properties that heritage learners *have* (or do not have). Heritage learners are seen as having 'inherited' a fixed identity that corresponds with a given, seemingly unchanging culture, from which they are to some extent disconnected, i.e., the heritage culture/identity prefigures as a monolithic element of who they are. Culture, in turn, is imagined as a closed entity comprising a discrete body of artefacts and conventions – a 'package' containing the cultural 'essences' that allegedly make up the 'heritage identity,' which is to be (more fully) acquired by the learner.

Similar to how the concept of native speaker has been critiqued for glossing over linguistic variation, "assuming an intimate link between the development and maintenance of an HL and a core sense of identity is a kind of essentialization that runs the risk of homogenizing heritage speakers, who vary on this and a number of other identity constructs" (Potowski, 2012, p. 193). In chapter 3 it will become clearer how both critiques relate to one another. For now we may hold onto the thought that a theoretical frame which conceives of language, culture, and the self as separate entities fails to capture the complexities shaping peoples' sense of self and belonging (see He, 2014, 2006).

2.4 Conclusion: (Shortcomings of) mainstream discourse on the HERITAGE LEARNER

To synthesize, the outline illustrates how the construction of HERITAGE LEARNER has relied on discourses promoting essentialist understandings of language, culture, and the self, most importantly the notion that heritage learners are rooted in a core culture and the idea that they fall between foreign language learners and native speakers along a unidimensional proficiency continuum. According to this view, who they are is chiefly determined by their distance from/proximity to monolingual (standard) native norms and a pertinent culture. Implicit in this view is that the heritage language will merely be relevant to learners in contexts of monolingual heritage language use. In short, traditional understandings cast a monolingual, monocentric perspective on heritage learners as well as on the social environments in which they participate.

From a social-constructionist stance, these understandings are problematic in a number of ways. Above all, they do not consider how social realities are *created* through linguistic practice, nor do they consider learners as social beings whose sense of self is shaped in interactions with others, as they participate in diverse social realities. As Hornberger and Wang (2008) state:

> The notion that there are multiple selves/identities, which are situated and contextually defined, regulated by self and others, and constantly negotiated, contested, shaped and reshaped becomes central in the learning of a HL and HC. (p. 7)

That is, the narrow focus on heritage learners' posited rootedness in a pre-conceived culture leaves out of sight how students relate to and are positioned by others in relation to a presumed heritage language and culture. As Gounari (2014) maintains, the notion of 'heritage' must be reinvented as a living relevant category rather than a rigid guideline for identifying with a

particular ethnic group (p. 266). In order to do so, it is necessary, however, to move beyond the idea that heritage languages are "tightly closed within ethnic communities" (p. 266), especially because in a world of increasing mobility, migration, and virtual communication, speakers partake in spaces marked by linguistic diversity and semiotic complexity (see Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kramsch, 2014; Scarino, 2014a; Blommaert, 2013). With its focus on consolidating a core ethnic identity, the traditional perspective on heritage learners' 'identity needs' does not adequately address the challenges and possibilities that heritage learners may encounter within such spaces. Furthermore, I agree with Samaniego and Warner (2016) that the tendency to overemphasize the role that collective identities play in the shaping of heritage learners' sense of self runs the risk of limiting the scope of what is relevant to individual students (p. 199). To be precise, the monolingual monocentric framework within which the HERITAGE LEARNER has been constructed obscures that the individuals in question move and mediate across linguistic worlds, aligning their perspectives and engaging in reciprocal meaning-making with speakers who have diverse language biographies.

This dissertation seeks to shed light on this obscured dimension of the heritage learner phenomenon by developing a more nuanced perspective on heritage learners' positionality as multilingual subjects. Towards this end, the next chapter outlines the theoretical framework of my research. Against the background of this framework, the conventional views outlined in the present chapter should emerge more clearly as instances of discourses of a monolingual paradigm. Furthermore, I will introduce the notion of *multilingual subjectivity* as a theoretical lens that I will use to reframe the concept of HERITAGE LEARNER in my attempt of opening the view on the phenomenon beyond the conceptual realm of monolingualism.

Chapter 3 Theoretical Framework of the Study
From the Monolingual Paradigm to Multilingual Subjectivity

As mentioned earlier, the argumentative starting point underlying the present thesis is that traditional conceptions of HERITAGE LEARNER are based on a simplistic notion of bi/multilingualism, which, in turn, is rooted in a monolingual paradigm (Canagarajah, 2013; Gogolin, 1994). Therefore, I begin this chapter by specifying central tenets of this paradigm, before I discuss how these have come under critical scrutiny within a so-called "social turn" (Block, 2003) and "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014). I will focus on three strands of scholarship, gradually developing my understanding of *multilingual subjectivity,* the theoretical lens through which I will re-examine the concept of HERITAGE LEARNER in subsequent chapters. These strands include: a) the investigation of language as social practice and of selfhood as discursively constituted, b) the critical discussion of the *native speaker* concept and its key role within language education, and c) re-framings of multilingualism that point beyond a monolingual orientation which have gained particular relevance in light of changes that characterize communication in the 21st century. Given my objective, I focus on ways in which these perspectives have informed and been informed by scholarship on language education.

3.1 The monolingual paradigm

In chapter one, I introduced the monolingual paradigm broadly as a web of intersecting discourses that promote essentialist views of language, culture, and the self and that perpetuate monolingualism as the chief referential framework in educational institutions and beyond. In

this section, I will look at these points more closely, and outline how they have come under scrutiny in Applied Linguistics research.

According to Canagarajah (2013, p. 20), the paradigm circulates (at least) the following interrelated main ideas:

- Language = Community = Place.
- 1 language = 1 identity.
- Language as a self-standing system.
- Languages as pure and separated from each other.
- The locus of language as cognition rather than social context [...]
- Communication as based on grammar rather than practice, and form isolated from its ecological embeddedness.

One of the main challenges in grasping what is meant by *monolingual paradigm* is that the views encompassed therein are commonly taken for granted not only in research, but also in society at large. The idea that language is a self-contained system, for instance, seems so obvious that it does not easily show up *as* a view (among alternative views); it seems to be an irrevocable natural reality. Scholarship suggests, however, that the views listed above are not objective realities but have rather emerged historically in Western Europe from different kinds of developments, including (but not limited to) political dynamics, technical innovations, philosophical movements, and ideological processes (Yildiz, 2012, Makoni & Pennycook, 2007, Irvine & Gal 2000; Gogolin, 1994; for a brief overview of the rise of the monolingual paradigm, see Canagarajah, 2013). It is only by making an effort to identify particular historical conditions and processes that have brought these views into being that they become discernible as one particular way of looking at language, culture, and the self – more precisely, these views are ways of constructing reality that serve(d) the interests of particular historical projects in a given place and time.

The notion of monolingualism itself emerged at the confluence of political, philosophical, and cultural changes in Europe, notably across the eighteenth century,[7] coming to replace previously unquestioned practices of living and writing in multiple languages (Yildiz, 2012, p. 6). Most prominently, its emergence has been linked to the rise of nationalism, which was marked by concerted efforts to promote a 'common' national language that would ensure and symbolize cohesion within the borders of the nation-state, unlike pre-modern forms of political organization (see May, 2012). While empires, for instance, were "quite happy for the most part to leave unmolested the plethora of cultures and languages subsumed within them" (May, 2012, p. 6; see also Piccardo, 2018), the political order within the nation-state model involved processes of *legitimation* and *institutionalization* of a chosen national language (May, 2012).[8] It is important to understand that monolingualism is, as such,

> much more than a simple quantitative term designating the presence of just one language. Instead, it constitutes a key structuring principle that organizes the entire range of modern social life from the construction of individuals [...] to the formation of disciplines and institutions, as well as of imagined collectives such as cultures and nations. According to this paradigm, individuals and social formations are imagined to possess one 'true' language only, their 'mother tongue,' and through this possession to be organically linked to an exclusive, clearly demarcated ethnicity, culture, and nation. (Yildiz, 2012, p. 2)

As a legacy of nation-building processes, educational systems have not only been grounded on this structuring principle, but have played a significant role in maintaining it, notably by "implementing standard languages while repressing other varieties, codes, or languages" (Busch, 2011, p. 545). The historical emergence and naturalization of the

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[7] The rise of monolingualism had its roots in earlier developments such as the standardization of language through the translation of the bible, the invention of printing, and the publication of dictionaries, while "[t]his movement reached its highest point in the nineteenth century with the final definition of nation-states and their nationalistic ideology" (Piccardo, 2014, p. 191)

[8] According to May (2012), *legitimation* refers to "the formal recognition accorded to the language by the nation-state" (p. 6). *Institutionalization*, then, refers to "the process by which the language comes to be accepted, or 'taken for granted' in a wide range of social, cultural and linguistic domains or contexts, both formal and informal" (p. 6).

monolingual paradigm in educational institutions has been thoroughly analyzed, for instance, in Ingrid Gogolin's (1994) seminal monograph. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1979) notion of *habitus*, she provides an elaborate account of how the German educational system came to acquire a "monolingual habitus," as the school system originated and developed across the 19th and 20th century, and how in consequence, German schools are ill-prepared to serve the needs of students in a linguistically diverse immigration society. She rigorously traces how philosophical and political movements (e.g. the rise of nationalism in the early 19th century or of national socialism in the 20th century) have shaped a monolingual orientation that promotes the central position of German as a (standardized) national language in the German school system, noting how this monolingual orientation became all the more entrenched as the process of its formation itself fell into oblivion.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to provide a comprehensive overview of the developments that have led to the rise of the monolingual paradigm, or to discuss how ideas underpinning the paradigm became popularized, naturalized, and normative over time in specific contexts. What is important for the current purpose is to hold onto the point that common sense understandings of language, culture, and identity rely on the above-mentioned (and further, related) ideas, and that these, in turn, perpetuate what I will refer to as "monolingual normativity" in this dissertation – the tendency to posit monolingualism as a norm-setting principle, particularly in the context of language teaching and learning.

As indicated above, the views underpinning the monolingual paradigm have come under particular scrutiny within a so-called "social turn" (Block, 2003) and, more recently, the "multilingual turn" (Conteh & Meier, 2014; May, 2014) occurring across different areas of Applied Linguistics. In broad strokes, developments subsumed under the term *social turn* are

rooted in the ambition to question and expand the conceptual and epistemological foundations of the discipline, notably by giving increased attention to the socio-cultural dimension of language learning and language use. Resonating with the monolingual paradigm, historically dominant approaches in SLA have relied on a structuralist view of language as an abstract, autonomous system, in which language is isolated from other domains such as culture, individuals, and politics (Canagarajah, 2013, p. 23). The hallmark of the so-called social turn, then, has been the aim to reconceptualize SLA "as a more theoretically and methodologically balanced enterprise that endeavours to explore in more equal measures and, where possible, in integrated ways, both the social and cognitive dimensions of [second/foreign language] use and acquisition" (Firth & Wagner, 1997, p. 286). Proponents of this perspective have stressed the need to examine the implications of viewing *language as social practice* rather than relying exclusively on the Chomskyan view of language as an enclosed system of abstract structures residing in an idealized speaker-listener's mind[9] (Canagarajah, 2013; Kasper & Wagner, 2011; Talmy & Duff, 2011; Canagarajah, 2007; Pennycook, 2004; Block, 2003; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000; Firth & Wagner, 1998, 1997; Hall, 1997; Liddicoat, 1997). As elaborated by Pennycook (2010), "To look at language as practice is to view language as an activity rather than a structure, as something we do rather than a system we draw on, as a material part of social and cultural life rather than an abstract entity" (Pennycook, 2010, p. 2). This attentional shift towards the ongoing process by which people act through language in sensitivity to the local demands for social action in a particular context is reflected in the wide adoption of the term

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[9] Noam Chomsky's (1965) focus is on language as a single system of abstract structures located in the mind of an "ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech community" (p. 3). In postulating that the human capacity for language is hard-wired in the brain and that all languages have a universal grammar stemming from human's innate dispositions, Chomsky's perspective has been instrumental in promoting a view of language as an abstract structural system that foregrounds individual cognition over social contexts of interaction (see Canagarajah, 2013; Pennycook, 2004).

languaging (Swain, 2009), which refers to "the process of making meaning and shaping knowledge and experience through language" (p. 98). The ensuing emphasis on active meaning making in interaction also brings into focus that the meanings carried by language are never fixed. Words change their meanings across context and time, depending on who uses them and to what end. Rather than conceiving of language as a system of signs with agreed-upon *fixed* meanings, as postulated in structural linguistics, proposals put forth in the spirit of the social turn have brought to attention that meanings are always temporary and contestable. Viewed from this angle, language is a site of conflict and struggle for power, and a site of social and personal change (Weedon, 1997; Norton Peirce, 1995), as I will elaborate in the next section.

Following the calls for socially attuned approaches to language learning and teaching that were put forth in the 1990s, research has branched out into a number of directions,[10] three interrelated strands of which are particularly relevant to my purposes: a) research venturing into the complex dynamics that characterize the links between language (learning) and people's sense of who they are, b) the critical discussion of the *native speaker* concept and its role in language education, and c) the re-examination of language learning and multilingual practice in light of increasing linguistic and cultural diversity. I will consider each in turn, showing how the monolingual paradigm has been challenged within these realms of interest, as I gradually stake out key points that shape my understanding of multilingual subjectivity.

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[10] For example, a range of conceptual frameworks have been adopted to highlight the complex dynamics that constitute language acquisition and use in social interaction, including but not limited to complexity theory (Larsen-Freeman, 1997), conversation analysis (Hall, 2004), socio-cultural theory (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), and usage based linguistics (Ortega, 2014).

3.2 Language (learning) and self-formation

As noted in 3.1, common understandings of the relation between language and the self have been governed by a monocentric order establishing that one language directly corresponds to one identity and one place. In chapter 2, I touched on some of the problems that are associated with ascribing a certain identity to people by virtue of 'their' language – specifically, that such an ascription fails to recognize their agency in defining themselves in relation to language and culture, and that it glosses over the differences between people who are assigned to the same identity or language category. Canagarajah (2013) addresses further problems with positing a direct correspondence of language, identity, and place. This triad, as he elaborates,

> defines a person a native of a single language. There is one language, belonging uniquely to one's speech community, which defines one's identity. It also roots a person to a community and a place. Furthermore, it gives legitimacy to the so-called native speaker, and gives him/her authority to define how the language is to be used […] One's identity is thus inextricably tied to one language, one place, and one community. The identity and authority we develop in a native language come with a price, however. Individuals are fixed as belonging to this or that identity. (p. 22)

The problem is that if language and identity are seen as two monolithic elements that correspond to one another, but that are considered *separate* features that characterize human beings, language and identity are unchangeable and, as Canagarajah points out in the quote, the idea of linking multiple languages or identities to one self, does not sit well with this monocentric framework.

The notion of *language as social practice* as promoted in scholarship signaling the aforementioned social turn radically shakes up this order. If we look at language as something that people *do* rather than as an abstract detached structure, it is no longer by *having* a specific language that people come to be who they are; rather they construct and enact who they are *through* language. Language is "the place where identities are built, maintained and

challenged" (Burr, 2015, p. 81). In short, the view of language as social practice is symbiotic with a view of language and the self as mutually constitutive. Processes of (additional) language acquisition, then, potentially impact people's sense of self – not in the sense that they acquire one additional monolithic identity, but in the sense that learning another language yields new ways of being and making meaning through the (creative) use of symbolic forms such as words, as I will further detail in 3.4.

In light of these shifting understandings, there has been a blossoming of empirical studies targeting how individuals re-organize their sense of self and how they relate to the social world as they invest in learning a new language (Higgins, 2015; Norton, 2013; Kinginger, 2004a; Lam, 2004; Morita, 2004; Lantolf & Genung, 2002; Teutsch-Dwyer, 2001; Norton Peirce, 1995; for reviews concerning the study of identity and language teaching and learning in connection with the social turn, see Leeman, 2015; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Block, 2007). The ensuing body of research demonstrates how language acquisition is tightly intertwined with processes in which speakers (are forced to) take up new positions within (novel as well as familiar) social settings as they present and come to know themselves in new ways in the course of acquiring new symbolic forms and ways of making meaning. The picture that emerges is one of identity as a positioning rather than an essence (Hall, 1990, p. 226).

Accordingly, *positioning theory* (Harré & Langenhove, 1999) has been adopted to demonstrate how language users construct and 'negotiate' identities through language, both within contexts of language education and beyond (e.g. Kampen-Robinson, 2017; Liebscher, 2013; Liebscher & Dailey-O'Cain, 2013; Abdi, 2011). Davies and Harré (1990), who were first to explicitly frame *position* as "the central organizing concept for analysing how it is that people do being a person" (p. 62), defined positioning as "the discursive process whereby

selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced story lines" (p. 48). The concept was introduced as a dynamic alternative to the concept of *role* in the attempt to shift away from "thinking of people as occupying pre-ordained societal 'slots' that come with a pre-written script or set of expected behaviours, which people somehow 'slip on', like an overcoat, over their real selves" Burr (1995, p. 140). *Positioning* is useful to language scholars who seek to move past the essentialist framings of identity, because instead of 'fixating' people to one way of being or the other, it focuses on how people *relate* themselves to moral or normative frames of reference. As such, the idea that people take up positions through language also accommodates the possibility that identities are multi-layered and may change over time. It allows us to see people as engaged in processes of simultaneously positioning themselves at multiple levels, including intrapersonal, interpersonal, and intergroup levels as well as with reference to different discourses.

The idea of positioning within discourses is also central to the notion of *subjectivity* (Weedon, 1997), which has recently been adopted by scholars in language education to investigate students' self-constructions (e.g. Mueller & Schmenk, 2017; Doerr & Lee, 2013; Kramsch, 2009), and which is also core to my own study. With its origin in the poststructuralist tradition (see Block, 2007), this notion provides a dynamic conception of selfhood as a process. Specifically, subjectivity emerges in continuous acts of positioning that occur with reference to societal discourses. Drawing on the work of the feminist Chris Weedon, Kramsch (2013, 2009) defines subjectivity as "our conscious or unconscious sense of self as mediated through symbolic forms" (2009, p.18). Who we feel we are, she explains, is "produced discursively, that is, we are formed as subjects through the symbols we create, the chains of signification we construct, and the meanings we exchange with others" (2013, p. 1). From this point of view,

people are seen as having agency to the extent that they are considered capable of drawing on, resisting, and subverting discourses, while at the same time discourses restrict the (perceived) possibilities of people, as I already mentioned in chapter 2. That is, on the one hand discourses make possible as well as limit how subjects can present and represent themselves discursively, psychologically, socially, and culturally (Kramsch, 2013, p. 2), while on the other hand, the notion of *subjectivity* underscores "the power that subjects have to resignify dominant discourses and thus to subvert the established order" (Kramsch, 2013, p. 3). In contrast with the view that the subject is called into being by discourse in a deterministic sense that views subject positions as fixed a priori of language, *subjectivity*, "inscribed in discourse, lies at the intersection of the individual and the social" (Kramsch, 2013, p. 2). Looking at language learners as subjects, then, highlights how they are "at the same time the subject and author of their experience and meaning-making processes, as well as subjected to experiences that impact on them" (Mueller & Schmenk, 2017, p. 136).

In the present project, I investigate participants' sense of self in relation to language (learning) and culture on the basis of the outlined understanding of subjectivity, paying special attention to discourses related to the monolingual paradigm. Having outlined how the relation between language and the self has been reframed from a social-constructionist perspective, the next section looks at critical discussions of the *native speaker* concept.

3.3 The *native speaker* – a central concept and target of criticism

There is broad consensus that the native speaker concept is the dominant frame for understanding and evaluating language, language use, and its users (Aneja, 2017). It has also become one of the most prominent targets of criticism, in fact, perhaps it is the most prominent

target in the debates surrounding the described social turn. The critiques that have been levelled against the native speaker concept are relevant to my purposes in particular because they debunk the (non)native speaker as a "monolingual, monocultural abstraction" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 80) and call into question the notion that monolingual subjectivity constitutes the norm. They can be seen as one precursor that set the stage for the developments that have been interpreted in terms of a "multilingual turn" (May, 2014) and that lie at the heart of my work. This section outlines how debates surrounding the native speaker concept and its underlying monocentric order have paved the way for alternative framings of speakership and language competence. I begin with a review of key problems associated with the concept. Next I address how on the basis of these observations, the concept has been discussed and empirically investigated as a discursive construction that carries ideological baggage. I then identify how these developments have led to alternative perspectives on speakers and language learners, as well as how they have inspired debates on issues of language/ing competence in our present times.

3.3.1 (Criticizing) the *native speaker* concept: A natural category of language user?

As mentioned earlier, most lay persons would arguably agree that it is easy to identify a (non)native speaker by intuition. Similarly, as Ortega (2014) points out, the labels *native speaker* and *non-native speaker* continue to be used in SLA research "as if their meanings were objective and neutral, denoting two natural categories of language users" (p. 34). According to her, native speakers are commonly imagined "to possess a superior kind of linguistic competence, one whose purity proves itself in the absence of detectable traces of any other languages during […] language use" (p. 35). Conversely, non-native speakers are imagined to

have "a derivative and approximative kind of linguistic competence, one that betrays itself in detectable traces of other languages during […] language use" (p. 35). The task of pinning down precisely what defines a native speaker, however, proves to be problematic, as briefly addressed in the previous chapter.

To recapitulate, one problem is that the concept combines several assumptions that cannot easily be applied to all those people who might be classified as native speakers of a language. Rampton (1990), for instance argues that the concept links together the following ideas that ought to be separated in his view:

1 A particular language is inherited, either through genetic endowment or through birth into the social group stereotypically associated with it.
2 Inheriting a language means being able to speak it well.
3 People either are or are not native/mother-tongue speakers.
4 Being a native speaker involves the comprehensive grasp of a language.
5 Just as people are usually citizens of one country, people are native speakers of one mother tongue. (p. 97)

As noted in the previous chapter, the linking of these assumptions has problematic consequences. To reiterate, the native speaker concept has been critiqued for foregrounding a view of L2 users as deficient communicators who are inferior to native speakers in their competence, and who are struggling to overcome their deficiency by reaching an idealized native speaker norm (e.g. Kramsch, 1998; Byram, 1997; Firth & Wagner, 1997, Cook, 1991). Critics have pointed out that this view clashes with the observation that speakers successfully adopt strategies in 'natural' settings of L2 use to align understandings and establish meaning, along with the observation that in these settings, speakers do not seem to communicate primarily *as* a native or non-native speaker, but rather make other positionalities relevant to the course of their interactions (e.g. Canagarajah 2013, 2007; Firth & Wagner, 2007, 1997). Consequently, discussions have highlighted the need to rethink what constitutes success in

instances of L2 language use and to develop alternative framings of language use and language users, as well as implications for language education (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Scarino, 2014a; Canagarajah, 2013, 2011, 2007; Cook, 1999, 1991; Kramsch, 1998; Byram, 1997).

Another focal point of criticism, as mentioned, concerns the implied homogeneity among alleged native speaker populations. While the label implies that native speakers of a given language constitute an internally homogeneous group of language users, empirical evidence demonstrates that there is vast variation in the language practices of people who qualify as native speakers of the 'same' language, depending on factors such as socio-economic status, the geographical region, community of practice, the interaction of contextual factors, among others (Aneja, 2017, p. 13). This problem is particularly salient in discussions surrounding the issue of marginalization as it relates to speakers of less-valued varieties. Consider the case of Cantonese speaking students who enrol in a class for Chinese as a heritage language, or 'Chicanas' enrolled in a class for Spanish as a heritage language. If language practitioners convey that the only Chinese that matters is Mandarin, or that only 'Standard Castilian Spanish' is accepted as correct, the linguistic abilities of these individuals are not only devaluated, but may lead students to resign from further investing in, or speaking a language (Fairclough 2016; Coryell, 2010; Wiley, 2008).

Another problem is that the concept of native speaker cannot account for variation and change in an individual speakers' status over time. For example, the concept does not clearly define whether language users retain native speaker status in their childhood language(s) regardless of proficiency or fluency, in contexts where their primary usage of specific languages shifts, say through experiences of migration (see Aneja, 2017). Imagine a monolingual German-speaking girl who emigrates to anglophone Canada from Germany at the

age of nine. While doubtlessly a native speaker of German until the move, in the years that follow, the question whether she would be considered a native speaker of German, of English, of both, or of neither of the two languages may be difficult to answer. It would be much in the eye of the beholder and depend on how she herself responds to social pressures that arise from dominant discourses such as the idea that people have one mother tongue only.

Together, these considerations suggest that the native speaker concept fails to capture important dimensions of the social and subjective linguistic realities that many speakers experience. It is a theoretical abstraction rather than a natural category of language user – an abstraction, which is securely rooted in the monolingual paradigm, as I will further elaborate in the following section. It is important to note that the concept is not merely an 'inaccurate' model that fails to adequately reflect social reality. From a social-constructionist point of view, it also shapes social reality. It is a discursive construction, which emerged and is kept alive by ideological processes, is infused with symbolic power, and has a strong impact on language users' experiences and actions.

3.3.2 The native speaker concept as a discursive construction and social positionality

Recent scholarship has emphasized that rather than being objective and neutral, the labels *native speaker* and *non-native speaker* carry heavy ideological baggage (Aneja, 2017; Holliday, 2015; Doerr, 2009a, Train, 2009). Looking at the native speaker concept as a discursive construction draws attention to a) discursive processes that have brought it into being and keep it alive, and b) what Doerr (2009a) calls "native speaker effects" – broadly, how the notion itself brings about social conditions that shape speakers' self-perception and positionality. I will address both points in turn.

With respect to the first point, for my purposes it is most important to note that the notion of *native speaker* instantiates the ideas that constitute the monolingual paradigm (which are then perpetuated through the usage of the concept as a principle frame of reference). For instance, the idea that people inherit *one* native language and that it will depend on the speakers' place of birth which language this is, supports the notion that one language maps onto one place and one identity. Similarly, the idea that native speakers have a comprehensive grasp of their native language reinforces the notion that language is an enclosed system. Similar to how Yildiz (2012) has characterized the *mother tongue* as "the affective knot at the center of the monolingual paradigm," (p. 10) one could say that the *native speaker* embodies the monolingual paradigm.

The assumptions that are in this sense incorporated and maintained in the concept, are brought about (and at the same time obscured and thus naturalized) by ideological processes (Doerr, 2009a). Ortega (2014), for instance, discusses how the concepts of *native speaker* and *non-native speaker* are infused by an ideology of monolingualism. According to Ortega, the labels of native and non-native speaker "undergo a process of *synecdoche* (where a part stands for a whole)" (p. 35, emphasis in original). Through this process, she explains, the archetype construct of native speaker comes to stand for a *monolingual* speaker, and the archetype construct of non-native speaker comes to stand for a late *bi/multilingual* speaker, thus supporting what Irvine and Gal (2000) call "erasure"[11] – namely, it is "the number of languages issue" (Ortega, 2014, p. 35) that is erased from these two central constructs. Ortega identifies two consequences of this process: a) monolingualism is taken as the implicit norm, and b) the reality of bi/multilingualism is made invisible.

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[11] According to Irvine and Gal, erasure is "the process in which ideology [...] renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible. Facts that are inconsistent with the ideological scheme either go unnoticed or get explained away" (p. 38).

By paying close attention to the processes that bring about and perpetuate the "ideological premises" (Doerr, 2009a, p. 17) of the native speaker concept, scholarship has produced a deeper understanding of what it means to see native speaker status as a social positionality rather than a real-world precondition (see Aneja, 2017, Doerr, 2009a; Holliday, 2006). This understanding has important implications, which brings me to the second focal point of this section: how the native/non-native distinction shapes language users' (perceived) possibilities, actions, their positionality.

First, it is important to note that viewing the *native speaker* as a discursive construction does not imply that the native/non-native distinction is not 'real.' Language users are recurrently – in fact predominantly – described, classified, and evaluated on the premise that this distinction is crucial to who they are and to their possibilities as social actors within institutional, economic, or other societal structures, hence it has symbolic power in that it heavily impacts on individuals' positionality. Job descriptions that favour native speakers over non-natives of a particular language are but one example (Holliday, 2015, 2006). Holliday (2006) coined the term *native speakerism*[12] to refer to the systematic preference for native speakers, stressing that the terms *native speaker* and *non-native speaker* have "a very real currency within the popular discourse of ELT" (p. 385).

Consequently, empirical research has examined how language learners are constructed and how they position themselves with respect to the native/non-native distinction. The authors in Doerr's (2009b) volume explore what she calls "native speaker effects" – i.e., the "workings and effects of the ideologies of the 'native speaker' in daily life and how individuals comply, utilize, counter, and contest such an ideology in diverse institutional and socio-cultural

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[12] Holliday (2006) defines native speakerism as "a pervasive ideology within ELT, characterized by the belief that 'native-speaker' teachers represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of the English language and of English language teaching methodology" (p. 385).

settings" (p. 15). Likewise, Aneja (2017) has introduced the notion of "(non)native speakering," which she conceptualizes as "a complex process that can reify and resist (non)native speakered subjectivities in different ways depending on the discourses mobilized in a local interaction [...]" (p. 11). In sum, this line of research recasts the (non)native speaker concept as *a point of reference* that people use in order to give meaning to themselves and others. It illuminates how language users' and learners' social positionalities are shaped as they relate themselves to the native speaker ideal and its underlying frame of monolingual normativity.

3.3.3 Looking beyond the native speaker ideal in language education

In light of the outlined critical discussions, the native speaker ideal has been questioned as the chief goal and key organizing principle in language education, leading to proposals of alternative conceptions of speakership, language practice, and extended understandings of competence.

An early example is Byram's (1997) *intercultural speaker*, a concept proposed in response to the criticism that the native speaker model creates "an impossible target and consequently inevitable failure" (p. 11). His proposal was also informed by the insight that the native speaker model would create "the wrong kind of competence. It would imply that a learner should be linguistically schizophrenic, abandoning one language in order to blend into another linguistic environment" (p. 11). Rather than experiencing the world as double native speakers, so the argument, the (developing) intercultural speaker is characterized by the ability to view frames of interpretation embodied in one language from the perspective of another language and culture. Acknowledging that people belong to more than one discourse

community, Kramsch (1998), who further developed Byram's notion, points out in an earlier publication how

> it would make more sense to view speakers acquiring over their lifetime a whole range of rules of interpretation that they use knowingly and judiciously according to the various social contexts in which they live and with which they make sense of the world around them. That, one could argue, is the characteristic of a 'competent language user': not the ability to speak and write according to the rules of the academy and the social etiquette of one social group, but the adaptability to select those forms of accuracy and those forms of appropriateness that are called for in a given social context of use. This form of competence is precisely the competence of the 'intercultural' speaker, operating at the border between several languages or language varieties […]. (p. 27)

Supporting students' development as intercultural speakers, then, is oriented towards fostering flexibility and the ability to question and modify one's perspectives, as well as towards increasing students' "responsibility in the use of words and in the ownership of their meanings" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 31). The privilege of the intercultural speaker, as Kramsch (1998) phrases it in her discussion about foreign language learners, is that they are in the "unique position to notice the gaps, the ruptures of expectation in the foreign cultural phenomena they encounter," and that they are hence "able to offer a 're-reading' of habitual signs, a new perception of the familiar and the unfamiliar" (p. 30).

While this perspective was quite innovative at the time, changes resulting from globalization and digitalization, increased mobility and migration have spurred the further development of these ideas. Consequently, concerted efforts have been made to a) "foreground multilingualism rather than monolingualism as the new norm of applied linguistics" and b) to arrive at more complex understandings of bi/multilingualism (May, 2014, p. 1) – two hallmarks of the so-called 'multilingual turn.' The final section outlines how language learning and multilingualism have been reframed within this movement.

3.4 Reframing language learning and multilingualism within a 'multilingual turn'

While linguistic diversity is as old as language, globalization has altered the reality of multilingualism in Western societies. Increased mobility has created socially, linguistically, and culturally diverse communities, at the same time as mobile and digital technologies have transformed how people interact with each other and how they need and want to use language (Douglas Fir Group, 2016). In light of these changes, scholars have expressed a dire need for perspectives on multilingualism and language education that are in tune with the semiotic complexity marking peoples' lives in contemporary societies (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kramsch, 2014; May, 2014), signalling a so-called "multilingual turn" (May, 2014) in Applied Linguistics. In what follows, I outline how this movement has brought forth 'dynamic' as well as subject-centred perspectives on bi/multilingualism, before I review recent proposals to foster new dimensions of competence in language education.

3.4.1 Towards dynamic views on bi/multilingualism[13]

As the prefixes *bi* and *multi* imply, individual bi/multilingualism has traditionally been conceived as the ability to understand or use more than one language. Bloomfield (1933) for instance defined bilingualism as the "native like control of two languages" (p. 56). According to Weinreich's (1979) definition, bilingualism is "the practice of alternately using two

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[13] In the North American tradition, the term *multilingualism* is commonly used to refer to societal and individual multilingualism, whereas in Europe it is customary to distinguish between individual *plurilingualism* and societal *multilingualism* (for a recent discussion of this terminological debate see e.g. Marshall & Moore, 2018). My usage of the term *multilingualism* follows the anglophone North American tradition and is inspired by Kramsch's (2009) understanding of the term in particular. In this dissertation, *multilingualism* refers to an individual capacity, sensibility, and experience that emerges biographically from reciprocal social and intersubjective meaning making processes. I acknowledge that pre-fixes such as bi-, multi-, pluri, etc. are problematic in that they suggest the countability of languages, and are hence subject to the criticism that they reproduce essentialist views of language as clearly-bounded systems, as the present section will detail. It is thus important to note that my usage of the term *multilingualism* explicitly does not refer to a multitude of separate language systems residing side by side in the minds of speakers, but to complex and heteroglossic repertoires of diverse language resources, as I will further explain as the discussion progresses.

languages" (p. 1). In short, in early definitions bi/multilingualism is conceived as the alternate monolingual use of single languages, implying that "bilingualism and multilingualism are *additive*, that is, speakers are said to 'add up' whole autonomous languages" (García & Li Wei, 2014, p. 12, emphasis in original). As such, the monolingual paradigm somewhat ironically manifests itself even in the notion of bi/multilingualism, foregrounding what Grosjean (1989) identified as a "monolingual view of bilingualism" (p. 6) several years ago.

Over the past few decades, this "fractional view on bilingualism" (Grosjean, 1989, p. 4) has been contested, at first giving way to so-called 'holistic' views, and more recently bringing about 'dynamic' perspectives on the phenomenon of bi/multilingualism, as I will further explain (Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; May, 2014; Cenoz, 2013; Herdina & Jessner, 2002). Grosjean was instrumental in insisting that "the bilingual is an integrated whole who cannot easily be decomposed into two separate parts" (Grosjean, 2010, p. 75). He states:

> The bilingual is not the sum of two (or more) complete or incomplete monolinguals; rather, he or she has a unique and specific configuration. The coexistence and constant interaction of the languages in the bilingual have produced a different but complete language system. (Grosjean, 2010, p. 75)

Accordingly, he debunked "balanced bilingualism" – the idea that bilinguals are "equally or completely fluent in the two languages" (Grosjean, 1989, p. 6) – as a myth. Similarly, Vivian Cook (1991) introduced the notion of *multi-competence*, "the compound state of the mind with two grammars" (p. 112). The concept highlights that this compound "yields more than the sum of its parts, L1 and L2" (Cook, 1992, p. 565), calling to recognize L2 users as speakers in their own right rather than imitation monolinguals. While these earlier works were clearly oriented towards overcoming a "monolingual bias" (Grosjean, 1989, p. 4), the language system remains a central unit of analysis in both Grosjean's and Cook's views. More recent proposals – which I will refer to as 'dynamic' models (see García, 2011, pp. 102-106) – highlight that moving

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beyond monolingualist framings on multilingualism requires a more radical departure from placing the language system at the centre (see Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García & Li Wei, 2014).[14]

The attempt to abandon discrete languages as the key unit of analysis and theoretical modelling has led to the adoption of feature-based perspectives, which postulate *one linguistic repertoire* consisting of mobile semiotic features, instead of treating multilingualism as a series of accumulated systems. Jørgensen, Karrebæk, Madsen, and Møller (2011) contend:

> Speakers use features not languages. Features may be associated with specific languages […]. Such an association may be an important quality of any given feature, and one which speakers may know and use […]. However, what speakers actually use are linguistic features as semiotic resources, not languages, varieties, or lects. (pp. 28-29)

Similarly, García & Li Wei (2014) posit that bilinguals draw on "one linguistic repertoire with features that have been societally constructed as belonging to two separate languages" (p. 2).[15]

It is not surprising that the notion of language *repertoire* has become popular among those who seek to move beyond an additive view on multilingualism (Busch, 2017, 2013, 2012; García & Li Wei, 2014; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014; Blommaert & Backus, 2013; Blommaert, 2009), because it breaks with two central assumptions of the monolingual paradigm: a) the idea that language is a self-standing system, and b) the equivalence of language, identity, and place. Before I further elaborate on contemporary views on multilingualism, I will briefly expand on this point and consider how the notion of repertoire

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[14] I use 'dynamic models of multilingualism' as an umbrella term to include different proposals that point beyond an additive view where language systems are conceptualized as clearly-bounded entities, as will become increasingly clear in the outline that follows. In my understanding, 'dynamic' refers not only to dynamics between the language resources acquired and used by individuals, or to the ways in which the language repertoires of individuals continuously change over time, but also to the dynamics involved in the ongoing process of (re)shaping the relation between language and people's sense of self as well as the related dynamics that come into focus when viewing language practice as positioning within discourses.

[15] For an elaborate account of the (de)construction of the notion of discrete languages see Makoni & Pennycook (2007)

has recently been adapted in light of ways in which communication has changed in the 21st century.

Firstly, the notion of repertoire, which has its origin in John Gumperz's (1964) notion of *verbal repertoire* lends itself to moving beyond a monolingual view on multilingualism insofar as it allows to conceptualize language without having to rely on closed language systems as the central referential framework. As elaborated in more detail by Busch (2017, 2012), Gumperz framed the *verbal repertoire*[16] as emergent from social practice within speech communities, hence allowing for a conception that considers how language users' repertoires develop biographically and dynamically from their communicative encounters with others. As such, the notion of repertoire highlights that *all* semiotic resources acquired in whatever language are potentially relevant to any context of interaction or interpretation, insofar as they will always impact how the language user will make sense of a given event. This repertoire of resources spans the range of possible ways in which the individual can interpret and act on social reality (see Busch, 2017, 2013; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014).

Importantly, to the extent that the notion of repertoire allows to take on board how all semiotic resources potentially impact particular instances of language use or a language user's perception of a specific experience, it can be imagined as multi-layered – a point elaborated in some detail by Busch (2017, 2013). Specifically, she conceptualizes the language repertoire in Bakhtinian terms as a "heteroglossic realm of constraints and potentialities" (2017, p. 356), which means that multiple interpretative lenses come to bear *simultaneously* on the ways in which language users give meaning to events, themselves, and others. Within this realm, she explains, diverse ways of speaking alternately "come to the fore, then return to the background,

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[16] According to Gumperz (1964), the *verbal repertoire* "contains all the accepted ways of formulating messages. It provides the weapons of everyday communication. Speakers choose among this arsenal in accordance with the meanings they wish to convey" (pp. 137-138)

they observe each other, keep their distance from each other, intervene or interweave into something new, but in one form or another they are always there" (2017, p. 356). The language user's repertoire reflects the co-existence of meanings, or put differently, the synchronism of embodied social realities within which the individual participates or has participated in the past.

Secondly, the concept of repertoire breaks with the equivalence of language, identity, and community, namely to the extent that it is conceived as emergent from, and continuously developed through social practice. As pointed out by Busch (2017, 2012), Gumperz's (1964) idea about the emergence of verbal repertoires from social practice was grounded on a non-essentialist view of speech communities as principally open to change, yet nonetheless as fairly stable. Current adoptions of the concept of repertoire (e.g. Busch, 2017; Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014, Blommaert & Backus, 2013) take into account that constellations of social participation in today's world are subject to more rapid and extensive fluctuation, and that it has become a normality that people participate in several social networks simultaneously, including deterritorialized ones (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Kramsch, 2014; Blommaert, 2013). From this perspective, repertoire is no longer seen as a reservoir containing multiple sets of pre-fabricated tools for appropriate use in predictable contexts. As the Douglas Fir Group (2016) notes, repertoires must be seen as in a constant state of construction, dynamically developing as language learners "navigate their way through their multilingual contexts of perception" (p. 37). It is more importantly *complexity* rather than the sheer multitude of semiotic resources that defines the repertoires of speakers who engage in the new forms of communication that have become possible (and sometimes inescapable) in today's world (see Blommaert, 2013).

It follows from this view that models of multilingualism must pay attention to the ways in which the repertoires of individual language users develop biographically and dynamically from their participation in multiple and intersecting spaces of social activity and experience. These models must be sensitive to the increased semiotic, social, spatial, and cultural complexity that characterizes contemporary social constellations.

Accordingly, researchers have paid increased attention to the ways in which language users flexibly draw on the semiotic resources of their repertoires in particular instances of language use, giving rise to dynamic and complex perspectives on bi- and multilingualism. Instead of focusing on speakers' abilities to apply ready-made meanings within the boundaries of (a number of) fairly stable communities, these models take on board how language users compare, transport, translate, re-interpret, transform, mediate, and play with ways of meaning-making within and across different contexts (see Creese & Blackledge, 2015; García & Li Wei, 2014; May, 2014; Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010; Kramsch, 2009). A myriad terms and concepts have emerged, which accentuate different aspect of, and collectively shape this 'dynamic' vision of multilingualism, including but not limited to *plurilingualism* (CEFR, 2001; Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 1997/2009), *polylingualism* (Jørgensen, 2008; Møller, 2008), *translanguaging* (García, 2011), *metrolingualism* (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010), *flexible bilingualism* (Blackledge & Creese, 2010) and *translingual practice* (Canagarajah, 2013). They have in common that, unlike system-based accounts, which look at language and language use against the background of norms and regularity, these concepts foreground the relevance of flexibility and creativity in meaning making practices (e.g. Piccardo, 2017; Canagarajah, 2013; Li-Wei, 2011; Kramsch, 2009). From this perspective, the language user (not language) is

(re)located at the centre. Blackledge, Creese, and Takhi (2014), for instance, characterize flexible bilingualism (Blackledge & Creese, 2010) as

> a view of language as a social resource without clear boundaries, which places the speaker at the heart of the interaction. This leads us away from a focus on languages as distinct codes to a focus on the agency of individuals engaging in using, creating, and interpreting signs for communication. (pp. 192-193)

With the language user at the centre, the outlined perspective points beyond the instrumental use of language, bringing to view how "people of different and mixed backgrounds use, play with and negotiate identities through language" (Otsuji & Pennycook, 2010, p. 246). Hand in hand with the growing importance assigned to language users' agency to act through language practice, subject-centered perspectives have gained attention, which illuminate the experiential sides of multilingualism and frame language learning as a lived experience.

3.4.2 Subject-centred perspectives: Multilingualism as a lived experience

With the focus on competence and measurable linguistic performance, traditional conceptions of multilingualism do not pay much attention to the question how people *experience* multilingualism in their daily lives, and how people's sense of self is shaped through the experience of learning and living with more than one language (Busch, 2013). The shift towards social-constructionist approaches has come along with a growing interest in *Spracherleben* in multilingualism research – i.e., the examination of multilingualism as a lived experience. This is reflected, for instance, in the mounting literature targeting links between emotions and multilingualism, the ways in which speakers perceive themselves and others in relation to language(s) and language-related discourses, as well as biographic approaches to the study of multilingual experience (Resnik, 2018; Koven, 2017, 2007; Busch, 2013; Dewaele 2010; Kramsch, 2009; Pavlenko, 2006; Panayiotou, 2004; Kinginger, 2004b).

Experience-oriented approaches to multilingualism highlight that language is not a neutral tool that people use in order to get things done but rather inseparable from *affective resonances* that are fundamental to people's self-perception and to how they experience the world around them. Foregrounding this view, Busch (2013) has extended the understanding of language repertoire to include its affective dimension. Based on analyses of autobiographical accounts of migratory experience (*translokale Sprachbiographien*, p. 63), she discusses how multilinguals' feelings are intimately bound into cultural narratives that impact which norms and discourses these individuals use as central points of reference in the narrative constructions of their multilingual experience. She explains how the feeling of shame, for example, is tied to the perceived transgression of cultural norms. According to her, shame arises as a result of undertaking a change of perspective such that the individual experiencing shame comes to see him/herself from an outside perspective, from which his/her action is (re)interpreted as a breach with a norm, a standard, or ideal (Busch, 2017, p. 353; 2013, p. 26). From this point of view, emotionally charged experiences of interaction "inscribe themselves into the linguistic memory" (Busch, 2017, p. 343), and discourses are considered part of language users' repertoire.

Similarly, Claire Kramsch (2009) sheds light on the affective/perceptual dimension in her rigorous analyses of multilingual speakers' experiences. Specifically, her analyses of language testimonies and language learning memoirs offers a microscopic view on the ways in which people's perception and use of symbolic forms such as words trigger bodily sensations through all senses, as well as affect-laden memories, associations, and future imaginings. She places at the centre what she calls the "symbolic self" – a symbolic entity that is constantly (re)constructed in the process of creating meaning through the use of symbolic forms.

Importantly, for Kramsch, words are linked to embodied experience, memories, associations, and future imaginings that are not only imbued with socially shared, but also with highly idiosyncratic meanings. In her view, language use is symbolic in two ways: it mediates our experience through symbols that are conventional and that represent shared realities; but symbols also construct subjective realities by triggering subjective resonances such as perceptions and emotions (p. 7). She illustrates how for multilingual subjects, cross-linguistic associations come to bear on these subjective realities, at times yielding new kinds of meanings that are non-conventional. In light of this understanding, she suggests that the experience of learning and living with more than one language entails tensions between the "obligation to use conventional symbols, icons, and indexicalities and [the] desire to make meaning on [one's] own terms" (p. 44). According to Kramsch, the multilingual self gets constructed "in a constant tension between language's conventional and subjective ways of making meaning" (p. 103). In line with Busch's (2017, 2013) conception of repertoire as a heteroglossic realm of possibility, Kramsch gives extensive attention to the implications of the potential to experience the world through a multi-layered lens. It allows the multilingual subject, as she explains, to look at seemingly self-evident views from a distance from which it can manipulate and play with meanings. Thus, multilingual subjectivity bears the potential to imbue symbolic forms with new meanings by reading them against the backdrop of other meanings and expanding the realm of the sayable beyond the constraints of conventional symbolic orders.

This perspective has important implications for people's sense of cultural belonging. Questions concerning social identification and belonging are not as much a matter of how well the multilingual subject matches pre-established moulds that index certain identities, such as 'German' or 'native speaker.' Instead, the central question becomes "[w]hat different […]

modalities of belonging are possible in the contemporary milieu" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 93). Put simply, the issue of whether, where, or how well people fit into a particular social constellation rather becomes a question of *how* one may fit into different environments. From this angle, as illustrated in Kramsch's analyses, multilingual subjects are in the ongoing process of finding comfortable subject positions, which may even entail finding forms of expression that allow them to take up multiple, sometimes conflicting subject positions *simultaneously*.

In light of the dynamic and subject-centred perspectives described in the present section, there is growing consensus that language education "must now be particularly responsive to the pressing needs of people who learn to live – and in fact do live – with more than one language at various points in their lives" (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 20; Kramsch, 2014). Specifically, a "reimagined SLA that addresses the realities of L2 learning in a multilingual world necessitates a reconceptualized understanding of linguistic competence" (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 26). The final subsection briefly reviews how competence has been reconsidered on the basis of the outlined concerns.

3.4.3 Rethinking competence for language education in a complex world

The search for notions of competence that take linguistic diversity as a norm and governing principle has yielded a number of concepts that promote ideas that are to some extent already inherent in the aforementioned notion of *intercultural speaker* (Kramsch, 1998; Byram, 1997). In order to specify how the points addressed in 3.3 have been further developed and become more nuanced, I will briefly outline three oft-cited notions and some of their educational implications: *plurilingual and pluricultural competence*, *translingual/transcultural competence,* and *symbolic competence*.

The notion of *plurilingual and pluricultural competence* originated in the work that informed the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001) in response to European linguistic and cultural diversity (Coste, Moore, & Zarate, 1997/2009). The CEFR defines plurilingual and pluricultural competence as

> the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social agent has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures. This is not seen as the superposition or juxtaposition of distinct competences, but rather as the existence of a complex or even composite competence on which the user may draw. (p. 168)

Clearly revolutionary at the time, this notion relies on a biographically emergent, encompassing view of language repertoires, according to which the individual

> does not keep [...] languages and cultures in strictly separated compartments, but rather builds up a communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contribute and in which languages interrelate and interact. In different situations, a person can draw flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor. (CEFR, 2001, p. 4)

Competence is here conceived as "idiosyncratic, involving different personal trajectories, representations and relationships" (Piccardo, 2013, p. 609). "Uneven and changing competence" (CEFR, 2001, p. 133) in different languages are viewed as a normality, and *partial* knowledge of a language is, in fact, valued. 'Partial competences' are seen as being "in a dynamic relationship, capable of creating links between linguistic and cultural elements, but also of adapting to situations and interlocutors" (Piccardo, 2013, p. 609). For instance, the concept stresses the potential of speakers to exploit the whole range of their language resources to interpret meanings in any language, including languages that are completely 'unknown' to them. Furthermore, it stresses speakers' potential to mediate and enable mutual understanding across language barriers (see Piccardo, 2018; North & Piccardo, 2016). Importantly, the individual is conceptualized as the locus of cultural and linguistic contact. As elaborated by

Coste and Simon (2009), the individual is seen as a social agent who bears the onus to establish social cohesion in the face of linguistic and cultural differences. Based on the vision of a shared European relationship with languages that is rooted in positive acceptance of diversity, as the authors elaborate, "a social actor's *plurilingualism* is vital, not so much in terms of meeting functional needs […] but more essentially in terms of the crucial issue of creating harmonious conditions for living together and exercising democracy in contemporary societies" (p. 169). In sum, the perspective signals "a radical departure from the ideal of native speaker competence in each of the languages" (pp. 173-174), instead promoting adaptability, the embracing of distinct perspectives, and the ability to mediate between views as crucial new targets in language education.

The second concept, *translingual/transcultural competence* was introduced by the Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages of the Modern Languages Association (MLA, 2007) as the desired goal of foreign language teaching. It places particular value on "the ability to operate between languages" (p. 237) as well as the capacity to mediate between different linguistic and cultural realities. Included in this notion is the ability to connect and contrast familiar and foreign words, constructions, and concepts; to circulate meanings, values, beliefs, and identities across borders, hence making them meaningful in new ways; and to translate categories of thought and defamiliarize seemingly objective constructions of reality (for a detailed discussion of translingual/transcultural competence, see Kramsch, 2011).

Furthermore, *symbolic competence* was proposed by Kramsch (2006) in order to "resignify the notion of communicative or intercultural competence and place it within [a] multilingual perspective" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 199). Rather than teaching learners how to speak as correctly, fluently, or eloquently as possible within a particular community of practice,

symbolic competence targets the ability to "find appropriate subject positions within and across the languages at hand" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 200). Importance is given to the vision of fostering students' sensibility for the (existence and power of the) symbolic value/discourses behind words. This includes the ability to grasp cultural memories and emotional resonances evoked by symbols, as well as the capacity to not only interpret familiar events in a new way, but to look both through and *at* linguistic lenses in order to understand the possibilities and constraints that shape one's own and other people's actions within a given environment (Kramsch, 2009, p. 201).

Based on the outline in this chapter, my understanding of multilingual subjectivity can be summarized as follows. *Multilingual subjectivity* as a conceptual frame theorizes

- language as the practice of meaning-making rather than a structural system
- language acquisition, learning, and use as a lived experience
- language repertoires as constantly developing, heteroglossic, complex, affectively charged, and imbued with ideological resonances
- symbolic activity as a process that signifies, creates, and transforms meanings
- the relation between language and the self as mutually constitutive
- the self as a subject-in-process, emerging from ongoing discursive positionings in potentially intersecting, deterritorialized, fast-changing, and thus complex spaces
- discourses of monolingual normativity such as the native speaker ideal as key points of reference that are central to the positionality of multilingual subjects

In the next chapter, I use this notion of *multilingual subjectivity* as a conceptual lens to reframe the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER as I gradually work to open the view on heritage students beyond the dominant monolingual, monocentric order.

Chapter 4 Towards an Extended Understanding of HERITAGE LEARNER

Together, the previous chapters set the stage for re-examining the notion of HERITAGE LEARNER within a framework of multilingual subjectivity. To recapitulate, chapter 2 outlined how heritage learners have traditionally been constructed in relation to their proficiency in the heritage language on the one hand, and in relation to their rootedness within a clearly bounded heritage culture on the other. While chapter 2 addressed how traditional constructions cast a 'monocentric' view on these two realms of heritage learners' subjectivities, we can now recognize more clearly how these understandings resonate with the monolingual paradigm outlined in chapter 3. Specifically, the traditional focus on the partial acquisition of the heritage language as compared to a native speaker ideal, and the attendant goal of approximating native speaker proficiency in the heritage language can now be seen as reflecting a system-based, additive view of multilingualism. Accordingly, the prevalent discourse of heritage language education as consolidating a pre-existing 'heritage identity' that is assumedly indexed by the 'heritage' language reflects the assumption that one language system neatly maps onto one culture and one identity (see Leeman, 2015).

In this chapter, I examine the picture of HERITAGE LEARNER that emerges when replacing these essentialist notions of language and identity with the alternative concepts of *subjectivity* and dynamic multilingualism introduced in chapter 3 and specify how this is relevant to my work. In 4.1, I discuss implications of reconceptualizing the HERITAGE LEARNER in light of these concepts. In 4.2, I specify how my work extends existing efforts to move beyond a monolingual perspective in heritage language education and articulate precisely how the theoretical-conceptual considerations outlined in 4.1 inform my approach to studying the

phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER empirically, leading to a precise formulation of research questions.

4.1 Reconceptualizing the HERITAGE LEARNER

In order to systematically discuss what it means to reconceptualize the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER within a framework of multilingual subjectivity, I will structure this section into two parts. In the first, I look at implications of viewing the HERITAGE LEARNER through the lens of *subjectivity* at a general level. Moving on to look at implications of viewing heritage learners as *multilingual* subjects specifically, I discuss how subject-centred and dynamic models of multilingualism can extend our understanding of the phenomenon.

4.1.1 Subjectivity, positioning, discourse and the HERITAGE LANGUAGE LEARNER

In chapter 3, I introduced *subjectivity* as a dynamic conception of the self that focuses on the ways in which our sense of self and our perceived possibilities to act are continuously shaped as we position ourselves and are positioned by others through language. I outlined how the notion emphasizes the importance of discourses as frames of reference in light of which people interpret their experience. I explained that these frames of reference are not seen as deterministic – people are not 'doomed,' once and for all, to be what a certain discourse suggests. Discourses do not dictate positionings and subjectivity, but offer people certain ways of seeing themselves and others. I discussed how, as such, the notion of subjectivity marks peoples' potential to exercise their agency as social beings. As *utilizers* of discourses, they can relativize or subvert a particular frame of interpretation by drawing on counter-discourses, or they can challenge the relevance of a specific discourse in a particular encounter. In short, from

this view, being a person entails continuously (re)defining oneself through acts of discursive positioning in particular social contexts and interpersonal encounters.

Looking at the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER from this perspective has a number of implications. First, it expands the realm of what is relevant to examining the HERITAGE LEARNER in relation to language. From this perspective, heritage learners' sense of self, their perceived possibilities and aspirations as language users, as well as their experiences and behaviours as language learners do not merely depend on how well they master the heritage language (recall the half-full/empty glass) and on their ties to the heritage culture (recall the roots metaphor). How they experience themselves and are perceived by others, and to what extent they can use language towards intended purposes in a specific situation, is not merely shaped by their control of the heritage language as a system or their knowledge of cultural traditions. A subjectivity-based perspective rather forefronts how their sense of self and the way they relate to others depends on societal discourses, hence a very general implication is to pay attention to how their subjectivities are shaped, at the very least, through discourses surrounding heritage, language, and learning. New questions arise: What discourses are relevant to heritage learners' experiences as speakers and language students in different environments they traverse? How do specific frames of reference shape individuals' (perceived) possibilities to act in different contexts of language use? How do specific referential frames relate to their aspirations with the 'heritage' language?

Secondly and relatedly, the shift from viewing heritage learners as users of the heritage language system to viewing them as subjects, not only inscribed in, but also as *utilizers* of discourse, implies an agentive view on the HERITAGE LEARNER, echoing Hornberger and Wang's (2008) perspective mentioned in chapter 2. It implies that we consider not only, how

heritage learners are constructed vis-à-vis particular discourses, but also how they draw on and act on specific discourses with which they are confronted or which they can make relevant in particular discursive environments in ways that serve their immediate purposes (see Doerr & Lee, 2013). In other words, the question arises how heritage learners *position* themselves vis-à-vis particular frames of reference, and with what effects (Makoni, 2018; Doerr & Lee, 2013; Kang, 2013; Abdi, 2011; Park, 2011; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Jeon, 2010; He, 2006). One might consider, for instance, the native speaker ideal, given its central role in shaping how language users perceive and evaluate each other (see chapter 3). How do individual heritage learners utilize, challenge, or subvert the native speaker ideal? How do they deal with or perhaps also take advantage of being positioned as incomplete speakers of what is constructed as their own language in different situations?

Third, the notion that subjectivity emerges biographically from ongoing acts of positioning *in the different contexts that we navigate* does not only call for a closer examination of discourses vis-à-vis which heritage learners' subjectivities are constructed. It also calls for a more sophisticated understanding of the different *social spaces of interaction* within which the heritage language is potentially relevant to the individual, and *how* respective language resources are made relevant in distinct spaces of interaction. I will further elaborate on this point in the two following sections that discuss the implications of viewing heritage learner subjectivity in light of dynamic, subject-centred models of multilingualism.

4.1.2 Reconceptualizing heritage learners as multilingual subjects

Chapter 3 discussed how dynamic models of multilingualism bring into focus that the language repertoire develops over time from individuals' participation in multiple, changing spaces of

social activity. I explained how these models highlight the complexity of such spaces, especially in light of developments such as increased mobility, migration, and deterritorialized communication through digital media and mobile technologies. I explained how dynamic models differ from system-based, additive views of multilingualism in that they bring into focus what it means to experience the world through multiple symbolic lenses simultaneously, and how from this perspective, the notion that multilinguals transport, transform and mediate meanings across different linguistic and cultural environments is core to multilingual experience.

Looking at the HERITAGE LEARNER through this lens sheds light on aspects that have been neglected in traditional constructions of the phenomenon, but that are vital to heritage learners' subjectivities, as I will argue. In the following, I will look at some of these aspects, beginning with implications of re-examining the phenomenon in light of dynamic multilingualism and the extended notion of language repertoire outlined in chapter 3.

4.1.2.1 Heritage learners as multilingual subjects I: From system-based to dynamic, subject-centred views. If we consider 'the heritage language' part of a repertoire of mobile semiotic resources, our attention shifts to the ways in which heritage learners are able, and in fact compelled to compare, transport and mediate ways of meaning making within and across the contexts they navigate. In fact, a radically dynamic view implies that comparison, translation, mediation, etc. are *always* taking place in the language user's mind and practices. The perspective suggests that people with complex language repertoires are always engaged in probing, relating, re-interpreting, reconciling, and mediating alternative ways of organizing social practice and intersubjectivity through language and other symbolic forms. They do not

automatically lean back and simply 'function according to pre-existing linguistic and cultural programming,' so to speak, as soon as they are in a context where they know common customs and conventions or where they can safely assume that they know what is considered to be socially accepted. From this perspective, heritage learners are not merely (re)acquiring a 'language of the home.' They must be seen as constantly engaged in finding ways of being at home in translingual practice in a whole range of contexts, including discursive environments that foreground tradition and loyalty with a perceived community, as well as in environments that foreground diversity, change, internationalism, and so on.

Accordingly, and in line with the developments occurring across the broader area of Applied Linguistics that I outlined in the previous chapter, some scholars have marked the need to reframe heritage language education within a 'multilingual perspective.' Holguín Mendoza (2018) points to the need for heritage language curricula that "correspond to practices in the existing translingual communities" (p. 71). Toribio and Durán (2018) call to include the study and exercise of bilingual practices as a component in heritage language pedagogies. Drawing on García's (2009) work, Gounari (2014) advocates for approaching heritage learners through a translanguaging framework, stressing that "'[h]eritage' language must come alive in the multiple translanguaging practices of bilingual and multilingual students and their communities." (p. 266). She elaborates:

> '[H]eritage language' [...] must be reinvented to include a more fluid understanding of bilingualism/multilingualism, one that includes not just home languages and translanguaging but also the ways in which this translanguaging breaks the continuity and tradition of existing cultural norms. (p. 266)

In line with this, Scarino (2014b) argues for a need to conceptualize the teaching and learning of heritage languages "within a multilingual perspective that reflects and builds upon the learners' language practices as they live in diversity" (p. 84). She insists that heritage language

education must assist learners in becoming "linguistic and cultural mediators, moving between […] linguistic and cultural systems, developing understanding and explaining different perspectives, reactions and responses to themselves and others" (p. 77). Similarly, Leeman und Serafini (2016) propose that instead of imposing one particular variety, approaches to heritage language teaching should "seek to prepare students to understand variation and to interact with speakers of familiar and unfamiliar varieties and styles […]" (p. 65).

It is worth noting that while these calls generally resemble the arguments that have been evolving across SLA, the endeavour of taking the 'multilingual turn' in *heritage* language education is further complicated by the impact of heritage-related discourses that promote linguistic purity and unity, for instance the idea that heritage communities must be "protected by hallowed and conscious sociocultural boundaries: values, rituals, traditions, belief-systems and a unifying […] vision of being an 'Xman-via-Xish', i.e. of using the traditional own-ethnicity-associated language for purposes of ethnic self-definition and association" (Fishman, 1991, p. 5). The idea that the 'survival' of heritage languages is threatened by the 'dominance' of English continues to be much alive, further supporting the view that heritage languages must be 'kept pure' and that 'contamination' must be avoided. In short, visions of dynamic multilingualism compete with heritage-related discourses that provide an ideal climate for the monolingual paradigm to thrive.

Another aspect that comes into focus when viewing the HERITAGE LEARNER through the lens of multilingual subjectivity concerns the experiential dimension of language repertoire. The understanding of multilingualism-as-lived-experience introduced in chapter 3 highlights the affective dimension of linguistic repertoire. More specifically, the outline established that ways of speaking in specific contexts are not only always associated with feelings, but that

these sensations are bound to discourses that impact which norms and ideas shape individuals' experience of living with language(s). This aspect allows us to think about affective experiences that have been associated with heritage learners in an extended way. As elaborated in chapter 2, the literature on heritage learners highlights a strongly-felt need to help them overcome feelings of insecurity. To reiterate, two ideas have prevailed: the idea that feelings of insecurity and "language shyness" (Krashen, 1998) should be countered by fostering knowledge of and pride in what is portrayed as students' 'heritage' identity and culture on the one hand, and the idea that teaching the more prestigious standard variety, the correct use of formal registers etc. will enhance students' self-confidence as users of the heritage language on the other. While much could be said about these ideas, I will limit the discussion to one aspect only, for the sake of staying focused: Implicit in these ideas is that the described negative feelings (insecurity, lack of self-confidence, etc.) largely result from not being a 'full' native speaker of the heritage language or of its most prestigious variety; not being a 'full' member of 'the' heritage community (and to some extent, from not being a 'normal' member of the 'dominant' society). The considerations outlined in chapter 3 allow for a more differentiated view of affective experience. It is not a direct result of an assumedly objective status quo, but rather mediated by discourses. Instead of discussing affective experience in terms of lack and pride of something the HERITAGE LEARNER does or does not *have*, we can ask and empirically investigate how individual learners relate their affective experiences to particular acts of positioning and of being positioned with respect to specific discourses.

Having addressed what comes into view when system-based perspectives on heritage learners' language repertoires are replaced by dynamic and subject-centered models of

multilingualism, I will now discuss the implications concerning the conceptualization of linguistic and cultural spaces that heritage learners navigate.

4.1.2.2 Heritage learners as multilingual subjects II: From ancestral ties to lived experience. Conceptualizing heritage learners as multilingual subjects does not only shed new light on how heritage learners perceive and act on the world through language within and across linguistic and cultural spaces. It also has implications for how these spaces are conceived. Traditionally, the HERITAGE LEARNER has been positioned within two kinds of contexts, both of which have been treated as though they were purely monolingual and clearly definable: 'heritage' contexts on the one hand – the family, community, country of origin, etc. – and 'mainstream society' on the other. Typically, the heritage language has been considered seriously relevant only to the former. However, if the semiotic resources in heritage learners' repertoires are seen as mobile, we cannot assume that the only spaces in which the heritage language shapes the experiences and actions of an individual learner, are clearly defined spaces of monolingual heritage language use. At a very general level, this raises the question how heritage learners themselves define and construct different interactional spaces and discursive environments in which the heritage language plays a role, including larger and smaller groups, as well as relationships with single others; public and more intimate spaces; spaces of varying linguistic diversity, and so on. In short, the focus shifts from rooted identity in linguistically pure and bounded spaces to the lived experiences of heritage learners and to how the heritage language shapes who they can be, how they relate to others, or how they perceive the world around them in particular encounters. This would compel us to examine not only how heritage learners position themselves vis-à-vis what is constructed as their heritage language and culture, but to pay

attention to particular relationships and interactions that heritage learners make relevant to their sense of self in connection with language and culture – interactions, in which people with similar or divergent language biographies may come together.

The outlined considerations are in line with and informed by recent proposals that seek to promote the idea that heritage learners should be defined less by fixed ties to a heritage language and culture rather than through "the ways in which they shape their agency as they mediate 'heritage' in the 'here and now' […]" (Gounari, 2014, pp. 260-261; see also Makoni, 2018; Wong & Xiao, 2010; He, 2006). However, how heritage learners construct the 'heres and nows' in which the heritage language or background is relevant to their lives has not been extensively addressed, even in the body of research that aims to challenge traditional perspectives on heritage learners' identities.

Another striking point regarding the 'contexts' that have been made relevant to heritage learners' positionality concerns how they are often distinguished from what is referred to as 'mainstream society,' both within traditional and critical perspectives on heritage language education. Implicit in this construction of HERITAGE LEARNER is that variation among people is conceptualized in terms of the relation between subordinate groups to a dominant norm. I would argue that a paradigm shift in the interest of a 'multilingual turn' would focus on promoting variation itself *as* the norm. Put differently, focusing on the learner as a multilingual rather than a 'heritage' person promotes the view that it is normal to 'have a heritage language' as a member of what we then can picture as an inclusive society. I will return to this point in the next section.

To synthesize, from the view point of subject-centred, dynamic multilingualism, the horizon of questions with which we can approach the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER is broadened. In particular, if we accept that heritage learners' language repertoires are 'dynamic,' that the spaces they navigate are linguistically complex rather than 'pure,' and if we see them as mediators of meaning rather than users of a heritage language system, the focus is no longer exclusively on 'how full the glass is' – i.e. how close heritage learners fall to the native speaker ideal, or how much they know about what is considered 'their' culture. A whole set of questions emerges: How does the heritage language become relevant to the individual's sense of self, perceived possibilities, and behaviours

- in distinct and idiosyncratic ways that go beyond its conventional usage?
- in concert with other languages?
- in encounters with people who have diverse language biographies?
- in spaces where nobody else is familiar with the heritage language, where some people are and others are not, or where everyone is, but based on very different trajectories and environments of acquiring 'the' language?
- in encounters in which it is not clear how others have been socialized?
- in diverse social constellations, including groups of varying size, as well as relationships with specific others such as friends?
- across a range of spaces dominated by distinct political interests and societal discourses surrounding language and culture (such as different institutions)?
- in interactions in public spaces, as well as in environments that may shape the most intimate relationships, such as with parents, partners, offspring?
- …

It is by exploring questions such as these that we can gain an understanding of how learning and living with a 'heritage' language or background figures into the broader experience of being multilingual, and so derive a more differentiated conceptualization of HERITAGE LEARNER.

4.2 The present study: Multilinguals' perspectives on the experience of learning and living with German as a 'heritage' language in Canada

In light of the theoretical framework and the questions outlined, the task of more explicitly and systematically reconceptualizing the notion of HERITAGE LEARNER requires shifts at the theoretical-conceptual level as well as at the level of empirical enquiry.

At the theoretical-conceptual level, it is essential to, first of all, recognize that the concept of HERITAGE LEARNER is rooted in a *monolingual* paradigm and to gain a profound understanding of the implications of this point. It is essential to grasp how the paradigm manifests itself in how people look at, speak about, research, address, and teach heritage learners. The theoretical-conceptual considerations outlined in chapters 2 – 4 served to establish a fine-grained understanding of this point. In particular, using *multilingual subjectivity* as a theoretical lens has allowed us to generate an alternative view on heritage learners' language repertoires and the relation between language and the self, against the backdrop of which we can identify and defamiliarize the taken-for-granted views that cast a monolingual monocentric perspective on heritage learners' subjectivities. For instance, before looking through the lens, it was already clear that contrastive research designs and the continuum-based proficiency models outlined in chapter 2 take the heritage language system as a key unit of analysis, but it is only in light of the dynamic perspectives on language and the self introduced in chapter 3 that we could develop a closer idea of what is left out or rendered invisible in traditional perspectives – e.g., how language users actively position themselves through language, how they draw on their entire repertoire flexibly as they relate to others and give meaning to themselves, and so on. In short, the theoretical lens of multilingual subjectivity has a) allowed us to develop a fine-grained view of the ways in which common understandings

relate to the monolingual paradigm, and b) it has allowed us to derive a new conception of HERITAGE LEARNER as explicated in 4.1.

Based on these understandings at the conceptual level, the second step towards reframing heritage learners as multilingual subjects entails empirically investigating the phenomenon in new ways. Specifically, empirical studies are needed that explicitly approach heritage learners as multilingual subjects rather than seeing them merely as people with a connection to a 'heritage' culture and a specific level of heritage language proficiency on a one-dimensional continuum. In order to reframe heritage language education within a (dynamic) multilingual perspective, it is crucial to gain insight into ways in which students' positionality as multilingual speakers affects what is relevant to them in their use and investment in 'heritage' languages – how it impacts their (perceived) possibilities, desires, and (how they deal with and experience) challenges that relate to living with a 'heritage' language as multilinguals. Conversely, it is vital to understand how processes of heritage language education potentially figure into students' development and sense of self as multilingual speakers.

How heritage learners conceive of their multilingual subjectivities in relation with processes of language learning, has not been systematically analyzed through empirical enquiry. The present study sets out to investigate this underexplored terrain. I explore how individual participants' constructions of what it means to be multilingual relate to their constructions of acquiring and learning German as a 'heritage' language in Canada, guided by the following considerations.

Rather than starting from the point that 'mastery of the heritage language' and 'belonging to a heritage culture' (local or abroad) are the single most important dimensions to

heritage learners' sense of self, their language use, and their investment in the heritage language, I approach participants in this study more openly: What themes and discourses do *they* make relevant to different realms of their experience of living and learning with German as a 'heritage' language in Canada? Where and when and how has German or having a 'German background' played a role in their lives? In what kinds of social constellations? What meanings – memories, feelings, ambitions, hopes, fears, expectations, and so on – do individual participants associate with German or having a German background?

While approaching participants openly in the described sense, I yet approach them with a specific focus – as *multilingual* language users – seeking insight into dimensions of multilingual experience that remain invisible within the traditional monolingual, monocentric framework. Put differently, one could say that I set out to *contextualize* the experience of learning a 'heritage' language in a new way, namely, explicitly situating and examining it in the broader context 'being multilingual' rather than against the backdrop of 'being native' or being a 'traditional' language learner.

In so doing, I will aim to provide a subject-centred view that illuminates the experiential, affective dimensions of participants' experiences and that pays attention to aspects associated with 'dynamic' views on multilingualism, such as specific challenges and thrills that they associate with experiencing the world through a multilingual lens.

Furthermore, drawing on the notion of *subjectivity* (Weedon, 1997, Kramsch 2009), I attend to the ways in which participants differentially position themselves vis-à-vis language-related discourses, as well as how they differ with respect to marking their *awareness* of such discourses and perceived effects – an aspect that has thus far not received much attention. In particular, I will consider how participants' positionings stand in relation to the monolingual

paradigm, for instance how their constructions are based on, address, and perpetuate the views constituting the paradigm on the one hand, and how they resonate with dynamic framings of multilingual experience on the other.

Moreover, based on the considerations in 4.1, my aim is to provide a perspective that de-emphasizes how heritage learners differ from 'mainstream' society. In placing multilingual subjectivity at the centre, I envision heritage learners within an inclusive framework of diversity. From this perspective, group identities are still considered potentially important to participants' sense of self. However, I approach participants based on the understanding that group identity is not the only point of reference in people's self-constructions, and for some, perhaps not even among the most important ones. Rather than assuming up-front that group identities are particularly relevant to heritage learners' sense of who they are in relation with language(s) and culture(s), I explore whether, to what extent, and how individual participants use presumed group identities as reference points, as well as what other aspects, if any, they make relevant to their self-constructions beyond the group-level. In particular, I will pay attention to the ways in which they may refer to small-scale groups such as family cultures, as well as singular intersubjective relationships.

In examining participants' self-constructions in the light of experience-based and dynamic models of multilingualism, my objective is not only to illuminate previously neglected dimensions of heritage learners' subjectivities. My aim is also to complement the development of an ever-more precise image of the heritage learner *prototype* (Zyzik, 2016) by contributing to a more nuanced understanding of what constitutes (heritage) learner diversity and to consider implications for heritage language teaching and learning. I concur with Parra (2016b) that it is important to avoid a view that "assumes commonalities to be stronger than

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the differences. By not paying attention to individual differences, we run the risk of disregarding the sometimes subtle, but nevertheless important, differences among our students" (p. 188).

Before I articulate the research questions that will guide my process of investigation, a word on how I define heritage learners for the sake of empirical inquiry is in order. Given my aim to problematize the notion and gain a nuanced perspective into the complexity of the phenomenon, the task of providing an adequate working definition is tricky. Acknowledging that the clarity we gain through definitions comes with the price of simplification, and in awareness that I am rather 'operationalizing' than identifying what constitutes the phenomenon, I will treat heritage learners as developing multilinguals whose family history relates to German language,[17] or who have grown up speaking and/or hearing German in their daily lives. Like those who follow Hornberger and Wang (2008), I place importance on heritage learners' agency in the shaping of their subjectivities. However, rather than viewing them as individuals who exert their agency in determining *if* they are heritage learners of German, as Hornberger and Wang phrase it, my perspective on their agency is informed by Kramsch's (2009) understanding of subjectivity: As users and creators of symbolic forms, heritage learners are social agents whose subjectivity arises from the ways in which they position themselves and how they are positioned within discourses related to language, heritage, culture, and learning.

On this basis, and in light of the considerations put forth in this chapter, I investigate how adults from German-speaking families in anglophone Canada construct their sense of self

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[17] including Austrian, Swiss, Plautdietsch, High-German, or any other variety of German

as multilingual speakers in relation to narrated processes of learning German, guided by the following questions:

- How do individual participants construct their sense of self in relation to German, to (German) culture(s), and to heritage-related discourses?

- How do they differentially construct their experiences of learning German in institutional settings and beyond, as well as their positionalities as learners?

- How do individual participants construct their experience of being multilingual?

- How do participants' self-constructions, their accounts of learning German, and of being multilingual relate to each other in their narratives?

Chapter 5   Methodological Approach and Considerations

In order to investigate these questions, I apply a narrative inquiry approach, which I describe in this chapter. I will first introduce narrative inquiry, clarify how it serves my purposes, and outline approaches to narrative analysis that inform my work (5.1). Next, I describe the study design and procedures of data collection (5.2), before I describe the steps I took in the process of data analysis and interpretation (5.3). The chapter closes with a short commentary on quality of qualitative interpretative research (5.4).

5.1 The present study: A narrative inquiry approach

As argued by Pavlenko (2002), personal narratives are "excellent instruments for the study of language socialization, for inquiries into emotional expression and narrative construction of bilinguals' selves" (p. 318) – all three aspects of which are central to this project. In what follows, I review how *narrative* has been defined, deriving my own definition for the purpose of this study. I then outline characteristics of narrative inquiry, before I present narrative analytic methods that guide my approach.

5.1.1 Defining narrative

The term *narrative* can refer to a range of meanings. In the introduction of "Narrative methods for the human sciences," Riessman (2008) cautions the reader not to expect a simple, clear definition of narrative. At the same time, she laments that "specificity has been lost with popularization," stressing that all talk and text is not necessarily narrative (p. 5). An essential ingredient, in her view, is the *contingency* of sequences, i.e. a consequential linking of events or ideas, by means of which a meaningful pattern is imposed on what would otherwise be

haphazard or disjointed (p. 5). Beyond this commonality, she contends, conceptualizations of narrative differ vastly.

In restrictive definitions, narrative refers to a discrete unit of spoken or written text that is topically centered and temporally organized around characters, setting, and a plot. This understanding goes back to Labov and Waletzky's (1967) view of personal narrative as units of discourse that have a predictable structure. According to the authors, the overall structure of narratives encompasses the following components: an *orientation* (which introduces the characters and indicates when and where the action took place), a *complicating action* (presenting what happened in chronological order), an *evaluation* (indicating the speaker's attitude to the narrated events), a *resolution* (specifying the outcome of the story) and a *coda* (which establishes a connection back to the present).

While the approach is still helpful to language scholars in a number of ways, it does not consider how narratives are situated in interactional contexts (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012). With the increasing interest in context-sensitive approaches to examining how people construct themselves and their experiences, definitions of narrative have become more flexible. In a less restrictive meaning, narrative can refer to

> long sections of talk – extended accounts of lives in context that develop over the course of single or multiple research interviews […]. The discrete story that is the unit of analysis in Labov's definition gives way to an evolving series of stories that are framed in and through interaction. (Riessman, 2008, p. 6)

Conceived this way, narrative can refer to entire life stories, "woven from threads of interviews, observations, and documents" (Riessman, 2008, p. 5).

Conversely, *small stories* have been treated as narrative. According to De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012), the term captures "under-represented narrative activities, such as tellings of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, shared (known) events, but also

allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings and refusals to tell" (p. 116). In this definition, "fleeting moments of narrative orientation to the world" receive attention that are easily missed in the study of "full-blown" narratives (p. 116).

This broad range in understandings indicates how "narrativity has been redefined not as a property of texts, but as something that is attributed to text by readers" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 8). A case in point is Riessman's (2008) description of a participant who "spoke at breakneck speed about his emotions" (p. 96). While this stretch of utterances was not organized temporally and lacked other typical features such as a plot, she reports that to her, it "felt like narrative," leading her to find ways to "present the segment as narrative, and to understand its organization, rather than fragment it into thematic categories" (p. 96). Another example are conceptions of narrative that include not only words, but visual representations such as images (Riessman, 2008).

Based on the outlined considerations, I define narrative as the aggregate of accounts collected from each participant, including spoken and written accounts as well as a drawing. The verbal accounts comprise shorter stories, key themes, and sections of talk that may lack aspects such as plot or temporal order but that serve as sense-making elements that participants use to give meaning to their experience.

5.1.2 What is narrative inquiry and how does it serve my purposes?

Central to narrative inquiry is the notion that narrative is not merely a type of text but a "mode of thought, communication and apprehension of reality" (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 15). According to this view, narratives do not simply describe phenomena. When people talk about themselves and tell stories, they make sense of their experiences, give meaning to their

lives, and enact their selves. As De Fina and Georgakopoulou (2012) explain, "the narrative mode imposes order on the heterogeneity of experience and therefore does not merely reflect it, but constructs it" (p. 17). Based on this view, narrative inquiry has become a legitimate and popular way of investigating human experience across the social sciences, including fields of language education – and a particularly useful way of studying complex phenomena from a social-constructionist, context-sensitive perspective (Pavlenko, 2002; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

Precisely, it is by preserving sequences in the process of analysis that narrative analytic approaches afford a contextualizing, case-centred reading of experience – a feature that distinguishes narrative approaches most fundamentally from other qualitative interpretive methods, according to Riessman (2008). When people narrate experiences, they arrange aspects in a specific order that is consequential for the meaning they want the particular audience to take away. Instead of fracturing these sequences in the process of data analysis – as typically done, for instance, in content analyses [18] in the attempt to generate categories – narrative inquiry is sensitive to "how a speaker or writer assembles and sequences events and uses language and/or visual images to […] make particular points to an audience" (Riessman, 2008, p. 11). The interest is not simply in *what* is said, but also in *how* and *why* incidents are narrated *at a particular point* and *in a specific way*. (Riessman, 2008; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2002).

It is not surprising that narrative approaches have gained momentum in studies that target links between language (education) and the self, as they can shed light on facets of linguistic experience that cannot be easily captured with large-scale quantitative methods or

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[18] According to Merriam (2009), content analysis involves "the simultaneous coding of raw data and the construction of categories that capture relevant characteristics of the document's content" (p. 205).

even qualitative approaches such as content analysis. Because of "the […] value that the informant inherently assigns to the various episodes by placing them in the whole life sequence and outlining their consequences and corollaries," narratives can show "how language learning fits into and (possibly) changes the lives of learners" (Cotterall, 2008, pp. 126-127). Narrative approaches are hence a popular means among those whose aim is to expand the understanding of what language learning entails (e.g. Kramsch, 2009; Cotterall, 2008; Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000).

Three advantages of narrative inquiry are of particular importance to my project. First, because narrative approaches aim to "tell [learners'] stories in all their complexity, imprecision, and idiosyncrasy" (Cotterall, 2008, p. 127), they lend themselves to the objective of gaining a better understanding of language development as a *subjective experience,* (see Kalaja, Menezes & Barcelos, 2008). In the present context, it will serve as tool to 'zoom in' on experiential sides of being multilingual and of learning and living with German in Canada, for instance by examining how participants narrate and perform emotions in association with narrated instances of language learning and use.

Second, narrative approaches enable the researcher to situate the personal narrative within broader contexts, such as societal discourses. As pointed out by Pavlenko (2002), narrative inquiry does not only yield insight into learners' investments, struggles, losses, and gains but also "into language ideologies that guide their learning trajectories" (p. 214). Narrative approaches can thus enlighten the links between different realms of subjective experience and the socio-political circumstances under which experiences become subjectively meaningful. In my study, the approach can serve as a tool to examine how discourses surrounding language(s), learning, and heritage shape individual participants' self-

constructions, their perceived possibilities as language users, and their experiences of learning German.

Thirdly, unlike other interpretive methods that generally eschew prior knowledge in the early stages of data analysis – paradigmatic in grounded theory – narrative inquiry is explicitly guided by theory (Riessman, 2008, p. 74).[19] Rather than viewing pre-existing knowledge as something to be eliminated because it produces 'biased' perspectives, as it were, "prior theory serves as a resource for interpretation of spoken and written narratives" (Riessman, p. 73). Since the objective of my study is to view participants' self-constructions through the lens of multilingual subjectivity, I require an approach that allows me to build on theoretical concepts rather than approach my data "intellectually empty-handed," as Geertz (1973, p. 27) wittily puts it. Having discussed how narrative inquiry serves my goals, I now present the methods I will use in order to analyze my data.

5.1.3 Approaches to narrative analysis

There is no one-fit-for-all method of narrative analysis, and methodological choices are often eclectic, as many have noted. Moreover, though typologies of narrative approaches have been proposed, these distinctions do not so much represent clear-cut divisions but point to parameters that may vary between research approaches (De Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012, p. 24). Accordingly, Riessman (2008), who introduces four types of narrative analyses – thematic, structural, dialogic/performance, and visual – encourages researchers to transgress the borders between the approaches and to adapt them to the research objective at hand (p. 18). Informed by her typology as well as this advice, my approach combines these four methods, hallmarks of which I will briefly summarize as described by Riessman (2008).

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[19] This is not to suggest that narrative inquiry is not *data-driven* as I will discuss below.

Thematic narrative analysis. Thematic analysis has in common with content analysis that the focus is on *what* is said. The researcher may work with one interview at a time, ordering relevant episodes chronologically into a biographical account and subsequently "zoom[] in, identifying the underlying assumptions in each account and naming (coding) them" (p. 57). According to Riessman, of the four approaches, thematic analysis is most similar to grounded theory, with which narrative inquiry is most often confused. Yet, she goes on, there are differences. While thematic analysis continues the tradition of theorizing across cases by identifying common themes across participants, narrative scholars theorize "from the case rather than from component themes (categories) across cases" (p. 53), most importantly by keeping the story intact, as she puts it. Furthermore, scholars draw on their theoretical knowledge rather than approaching the process of interpretation purely from the bottom up, as mentioned earlier.

Structural analysis. Moving beyond the focus on content, structural analysis takes into account *how* narrators use language, evoking certain effects. By paying close attention to narrators' word choices, metaphors, performative features of speech, etc., structural analysis "can generate insights that are easily missed when interpretation concentrates narrowly on 'what' is said" (pp. 100-101). For instance, it can reveal "differences in meaning of the 'same' event for different participants" (p. 90) – which is vital to my goal of illuminating (heritage) learner diversity from new angles.

In structural analysis, the text is taken on its own terms, "respecting how it ask[s] to be interpreted by the way it [is] spoken, paying close attention to its formal features" (p. 100). That is, data analysis is organized around units of text/talk (such as series of lines that sound as if they go together) rather than content alone. One effect of this approach, Riessman explains,

is that it can facilitate the understanding of how singular parts fit into the whole, and what topic shifts contribute to overarching effects (p. 94).

Furthermore, structural analysis enables the researcher to examine how acts of telling emerge within dialogic and discursive contexts. By analyzing grammatical and other communicative choices of narrators, such as personal pronouns, it can pinpoint means by which participants position themselves and others in a conversation. It offers "tools for investigators who want to interrogate how participants use speech to construct themselves and their histories" (p. 24). While the local, interactional context of the emerging narrative is crucial to this approach in the view of Riessman, the "[s]ocietal context is often not given too much attention" (pp. 102-103).

Dialogic/performance analysis. In dialogic/performance analysis, by contrast, the perspective is extended, performing a reading of the narrative in relation to macro-contexts, such as the historical, institutional, discursive. The focus

> expands from detailed attention to a narrator's speech – what is said and/or how it is said – to the dialogic environment in all its complexity. Historical and cultural context, audiences for the narrative, and shifts in the interpreter's positioning over time are brought into interpretation. (pp. 136-137)

This task requires the researcher to "openly speculate [ ] about the meaning of a participant's utterance" (p. 137) in relation to selected macro-contexts, such as a certain discourse. By situating the individual narrative in this way, close narrative study of single cases can identify "how larger social structures insinuate their way into individual consciousness and identity, and how these socially constructed 'selves' are then performed for (and with) an audience, in this case the listener/interpreter" (p. 116). I will use this approach to investigate how participants' constructions relate to language-, heritage-, and learning-related discourses that resonate with or transgress the monolingual paradigm. Not only is it possible to identify how

individual participants make specific discourses relevant to their experience. It is also possible to illuminate how they simultaneously give voice to conflicting perspectives (p. 118) – an advantage, given my objective to interrogate their accounts in light of dynamic visions of multilingualism, where mediation and the integration of multiple perspectives are key issues.

Moreover, interrogating performative features (e.g. direct speech, creative language use, expressive sounds, etc.), which I would locate at the junction between dialogic/performative analysis and structural analysis, is conducive to illuminating experiential sides of being multilingual and of growing up with German in Canada. In this context, Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann's (2002) approach to analyzing "narrative identities" productively complements Riessman's (2008) account. The authors underline that narrations are not merely cognitive constructs or communicative strategies, but *evoke* affective sensations in audiences (such as feelings of empathy, amusement, pity, etc.). They elaborate how emotional experience manifests itself at different levels: the narrator can describe or address emotions, but also express, perform, and enact them (e.g. through mime, word choice, tone of voice). I will consider how affect-laden sequences relate and contribute to the overall constructions of participants' multilingual subjectivities and their learning experiences, as well as how they relate to relevant discourses.

Visual analysis. Finally, my analysis is inspired by visual analysis, an approach that treats images as texts. Working at the intersection between visual and textual data, the researcher "draw[s] connections between an image and some kind of text: a caption, written or spoken commentary, and/or letters of the image-maker that provide contexts for interpreting the image" (Riessman, p. 145). Visual analysis has not only been applied to archived images but also to compositions created by participants, where the researcher is part of the

construction process (e.g. Prasad, 2018; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015; Kalaja, Alanen, & Dufva, 2008). (For a review and meta-analysis of the recently increasing use of visual methods in the inquiry on multilingual experience, see Kalaja & Pitkänen-Huhta, 2018). Inspired by this approach, my study includes analyses of language portraits, which I introduce closely in 5.2.

Following Riessman, I "do not see the methods as a set of disciplining practices" (p. 18) but use them as a guiding framework, on the basis of which I adapt and combine the described approaches, developing my own concrete steps so as to meet my research objective, which I describe in the following two sections.

5.2 Study design and data collection

The study[20] is based on a multimodal, multiple-case design, comprising in-depth analyses of three participants' accounts, as well as a cross-case analysis that examines the three in relation to each other, as well as in relation to five further participants. This section presents the participants, recruitment and selection, as well as data sources and the procedures of data collection that took place between September 2014 and January 2015.

5.2.1 Recruitment of study participants

The study was conducted in an urban area in Ontario, Canada, which is known for its large population of German-speaking immigrants and their descendants, including not only immigrants from Germany, but also from German-speaking enclaves in Eastern Europe. The rural area surrounding the urban area is settled by German-speaking Mennonites. While many of the descendants of early German immigration to the region do not speak German (Liebscher

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[20] Ethics clearance was received for this project: ORE # 20019

& Dailey-O'Cain, 2013), the area is still well-known for its 'German heritage,' reflected in activities organized by local German clubs, such as *Oktoberfest* and traditional dances. Furthermore, German language courses are offered in after-school programs known as 'Saturday schools.' Not all participants who signed up for this study grew up in the region, but all of those whose accounts were selected for analysis (see below) were living in or near the region at the time of their participation.

Participants were recruited on the basis of my working definition of heritage language learners as developing multilinguals whose family history relates to German language, or who have grown up speaking and/or hearing German in their daily lives (see 4.2). I recruited 16 adults from (partly) German-speaking families in anglophone Canada, who had taken steps to further develop their German during their adulthood.

For recruitment, I decided to open the study not only to people currently enrolled in German language classes, but also to those who had done so in the past. This decision was based on practical as well as strategic reasons. On the practical side, it may otherwise have been difficult to recruit enough participants, since the department where the recruitment took place is comparatively small, the number of students from German-speaking families with the time and commitment to participate being even smaller.

The strategic reasons, on the other hand, were two-fold: Firstly, I was interested in the *reconstruction* of participants' subjectivities in relation to processes of language learning. Looking at incidents of learning German that lie in the past has the advantage that the participant can reflect on how those incidents relate to subsequent developments in their biography. In other words, I hoped that including participants who were currently not enrolled would facilitate narrations that situate experiences of learning German in the broader context of

their language trajectories and lives *as multilinguals* (rather than eliciting narratives with a narrow focus on aspects of language learner identity). Secondly, rather than classifying participants as *learners* or *speakers* upfront, I was interested in whether and how *they* (differentially) construct themselves, that is, what aspects they make relevant to their subjectivities in relation to learning and living with 'their' languages. In particular, I wanted to open the study to those whose voices and experiences are typically bracketed out in research on heritage learners and heritage language learning, but who, in my assessment, are potentially able to contribute intriguing insights pertaining to the phenomenon. For instance, I assumed that those who had disliked experiences of learning German in an institution and who consequently decided to discontinue their studies would provide thought-provoking perspectives. In short, I hoped that the inclusion of "negative cases" (Riessman, 2008, p. 191) might allow me to develop an extended understanding of what is potentially relevant to (heritage) language learners.

Participants were recruited by convenience sampling, in three ways: the study was announced in on-campus German language and linguistics classes offered by the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Waterloo and a detailed study information letter was given to interested students. Second, the same letter was emailed to all undergraduates enrolled in on-campus German courses, forwarded to members of institutions such as the *Waterloo Centre for German Studies,* and attached to web-postings such as on Facebook, the departmental website, and in three online German language courses. Thirdly, the information was spread by word of mouth.[21]

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[21] see appendix B for the study information letter, the wording used during verbal in-class recruitment, and the wording used in emails sent out to potential participants. For further information about the *Waterloo Centre for German Studies* see https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-german-studies/

People with an interest in participating were emailed an initial questionnaire with questions related to their language biography and demographic data (see appendix B). In total, 43 people contacted me, 16 of whom took part in the study. As I detail below, the study included three components – individual interviewing, written reflection, and the creation of a language portrait. For reasons of comparability, I only included the accounts of those participants for final analysis, whose participation included interview data and a language portrait. The table below gives an overview of the resulting data set, comprising eight accounts (for more details about the participants see appendix C).[22]

Table 1			
Pseudonym (age)	**Written reflection**	**Oral interviews**	**Language portrait**
Henning (22)	1	2	1
Marianne (53)	-	2	1
Anaya (25)	-	2	1
Gina (19)	-	2	1
Hanna (30)	-	2	1
Laura (43)	-	3	1
Nadja (24)	-	2	1
Ryan (22)	-	2	1

Table 1. Overview of participants/data selected for analysis

While all eight participants confirmed having grown up in a family where German had been or continued to be spoken by some family members, the extent to which and the contexts in which German had been used varied: some had grown up speaking German on a daily basis with many people across their whole lives, others had spoken German only occasionally, and two had become able to converse in German as young adults through formal instruction. Moreover, participants had grown up under diverse historical and political conditions in different times and places. Participants also self-identified with a range of cultural categories, including Russian-Mennonite, German, Austrian, and Swiss 'backgrounds.' While all eight had

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[22] If it was not clear to me, I asked the participant to confirm that they had taken steps to develop their German as adults, and those who denied were excluded from further data collection.

taken at least one German language class in their adulthood, the contexts and nature of the steps they had taken to develop their German also varied.[23] Finally, I realized in the initial stage of analysis (after data collection had been completed) that it is important to bear in mind the potential effects on study results stemming from the fact that some participants were familiar with theories in Applied Linguistics.

5.2.2 Data sources and process of data collection

Triangulating data from multiple sources allows researchers to "investigate the research problem from different perspectives in order to provide possibly more complex and ideally more valid insights" into phenomena of interest (Duff, 2008a, p. 144). Firstly, evidence can be corroborated and augmented, as similar instances are identified across various data sources. Conversely, contradictions and disjunctions emerging from different kinds of data are equally important findings, as they are often conducive to generating new perspectives and understandings (Duff, 2008a). Based on these insights my project includes three data sources: semi-structured individual interviews, written reflections, and a creative drawing. I will describe my reasons for choosing these sources, as well as the procedures of data collection for each source in turn.

5.2.2.1 Interviews. In defining the purpose of interviewing, authors frequently stress the potential that lies in gaining access to dimensions of experience that are otherwise not easily observable (Merriam, 2009). Since exploring realms such as memories, thoughts, imaginations, feelings, and bodily perceptions is essential to my intention of investigating multilingualism

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[23] For instance, some had been sent to German Saturday schools run by local communities during their childhood, while others had not; some had been enrolled in bilingual schools, while others had not; some had travelled more than others, etc.

and processes of learning German as subjective experience, I chose the individual research interview as a main data source.

It is important that from a social-constructionist viewpoint, research interviewing has been reconceptualized as a discursive accomplishment, where participants and researchers "render events and experiences meaningful – collaboratively" (Riessman, 2008, p. 23). Referring to Mishler (1986), Riessman (2008) points out how, in this view, "The model of a 'facilitating' interviewer who asks questions, and a vessel-like 'respondent' who gives answers, is replaced by two active *participants* who jointly construct narrative and meaning" (p. 23, emphasis in original). The narratives that are elicited through research interviews are a product of *co-construction*: "Through our presence, and by listening and questioning in particular ways, we critically shape the stories participants choose to tell" (Riessman, 2008, p. 50). I chose a semi-structured interview format as it allowed me to flexibly follow participants' trails of thought, while at the same time, the interview guide served to ensure that topics relevant to the theoretical frame of the study would not be missed.

Between one and three interviews were conducted with each participant, ranging from 45 to 120 minutes for the first, and 20 minutes to three hours for follow-up interviews, depending on participants' time and talkativeness. Interviewing generally took place in offices or multi-purpose rooms in the department, in the absence of others and free of distractions, recorded with an unobtrusive digital voice recorder. Prior to the first interview, participants indicated on the electronic questionnaire whether they had a preference to be interviewed in English or German, while the form indicated that the use of any language(s) was welcome at any time (see appendix B).

The initial interview served to inquire about participants' general experience of learning and growing up with German, living with more than one language, and what their 'background' meant to them. As no similar study was known to me, from which I could have derived a set of interview questions, I designed my own interview guide of open-ended questions (see appendix D), inspired by the perspectives associated with the so-called 'multilingual turn' outlined in chapter 3. It targeted three main areas: a) questions related to the personal history, contexts, and future imaginings concerning participants' language(s) use; b) questions targeting experiences of learning, growing up, and living with more than one language with a focus on participants' sense of self; and c) questions aiming at participants' construction of their 'heritage,' and linguistic/cultural spaces.[24]

As narrative interviews are characterized through a broad, yet topic-specific introductory question, which is meant to elicit the participant's key narrative (Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2002), I opened the first interview by asking participants how they had learned and developed the languages they had specified as languages they can "currently speak to some extent" in the electronic questionnaire. Follow-up questions, then, were inspired by the participants' narrative and the interview guide.

Based on participants' availability and preliminary analyses of minimally transcribed initial interviews, I conducted follow-up interviews with eight participants, which comprised follow-up questions resulting from the first interview, the creation of the language portrait (see below), and a final question on how the participant would likely feel about being referred to as a *heritage speaker* or *heritage language learner* of German (for more details about interview procedures, see appendix D).

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[24] The interview guide was piloted with an English/Spanish speaker who grew up in Canada in a (Mexican) Spanish speaking family and amended only slightly so as to create a shorter version.

5.2.2.2 Language Portraits. As part of follow-up interviewing, participants were invited to create a language portrait – an invitation that all accepted readily. They were given an empty body silhouette, which they were asked to modify using coloured pencils, in order to represent 'who they are in terms of language' (see appendix F for details).

My use of the language portrait was inspired by Busch's (2012) promotion of language portraits as a multimodal "means of eliciting explanations regarding language practices, resources, and attitudes […which] acts at the same time as a point of reference" (p. 511). She elaborates: "The visual mode steers one's vision toward the whole (the *Gestalt*) and towards the relationality of the parts" (p. 518). Furthermore, "in the visual mode contradiction, fractures, overlappings, and ambiguities can also remain unresolved" (p. 518), i.e., this mode of expression allows the narrator to convey meanings in a non-sequential manner and capture tensions and contradictions in ways that words cannot.

In this study, the portrait offered an alternative way of pinpointing connections between different aspects of individual participants' development as language users on the one hand, and their perception of self, others, and intimate relationships across different phases of their biography. Targeting the shifting nature of subjectivities, I asked them to imagine what alternate versions of their portrait may look like that would reflect different phases of their lives (for a description of the exact procedure of creating the portrait, see appendix F). Given how the portrait can make things "seeable" that are not "sayable," as Riessman (2008, p. 143) puts it, rather than merely using it as a point of reference in interviewing, I considered the portrait as part of participants' narratives – i.e., as data – in the process of analysis.

5.2.2.3 Written reflection. Like interviews, written reflections can provide insight into subjective experience. As compared to interviews, written accounts sometimes yield "quite

different insights, and much more affectively charged ones, than the same [participants']

interview comments did in a case study of teachers' beliefs and experiences […]" (Duff,

2008a, p. 79). Thus, the written component in the present project was mainly chosen to

facilitate my exploration of links between language phenomena and the comparatively personal

aspects concerning self-perception, emotions, desires, and dynamics in intimate relationships.[25]

Furthermore, I opted for a written component because this format gives participants

more time for reflection before they provide their perspective on specific issues. This allows

insights to mature that may not have evolved under the pressure of having to respond

immediately during and audio-recorded interview session. It also allows the researcher to study

participants' 'full account' on a specific issue without interfering with further questions. In

sum, it offers an alternative mode of jointly constructing meanings that operates on a

decelerated time-scale, potentially resulting in more carefully considered propositions on the

sides of participant and researcher.

Initially, I had planned to ask only those individuals for written reflections who had

been selected for in-depth study, hence questions in this component did not overlap with the

interview questions but were aimed at gaining *in-depth* insight into certain aspects of

participants' experience. Empirical work being notoriously messy, I soon opted for a more

flexible approach. For practical reasons,[26] I opened the component to all participants, allowing

them to submit reflections before, after, or independently of oral interviewing. They chose one

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[25] Since people were contacting me from across Canada and even Europe, those from outside of the region were informed, however, that participating by creating written reflections was possible from the distance. Though many people conveyed an interest in this form of distant participation, the number of submitted written reflections was ultimately limited to three participants, as my efforts were not focused on following up with the comparatively large number of potential distant participants, given my priority to obtain high quality data through the multimodal interview.

[26] e.g. the possibility to include participants who could only take part from a distance; the need to align my requests with participants' time schedules; etc.

of three questions for reflection (see appendix E). Of the eight participants included for analysis only one submitted a written account.

5.3 Data organization, analysis, and interpretation

In 5.1, I emphasized how narrative analysis differs from grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in that it builds on theory. Nonetheless, narrative inquiry is *data-driven* inasmuch as it seeks to generate theoretical propositions rather than test pre-formulated hypothesis. While adhering to the tenets of narrative inquiry – case-centred commitment, preservation of sequences, guidance by theory – my analytic procedure overlaps with some central characteristics of grounded theory. This includes the *open coding*[27] of themes that emerge from the data, the relevance of serendipity, and the iterative process within which preliminary interpretations of gathered data informs subsequent approaches to data collection (such as in the process of developing questions for follow-up interviews and the procedure of composing the language portrait[28]).

5.3.1 Transcribing and organizing data

I produced a minimal transcription of interviews within a few days after their recording and transcribed relevant sections more accurately over the months that followed, using GAT 2 transcription conventions (Selting et al., 2009) with slight adaptations (see appendix A). As Riessman (2008) stresses, "[d]ifferent transcription conventions lead to and support different

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[27] Strauss & Corbin (1998) define open coding as the "analytic process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in data" (p. 101). In open coding, data are examined line by line, guided by the question 'what is this about?' with the goal of approaching the data flexibly, i.e. noting any ideas and associations triggered by the data and assigning preliminary codes to emerging rough categories (see also Aguado, 2016, p. 247).

[28] I approached second and third interviews openly, yet partly with the aim of 'probing assumptions' based on my preliminary interpretations, such as: 'Participant X sees her process of learning German in terms of verifying that she has a German identity'

interpretations and theoretical positions, and they ultimately create different narratives" (p. 50). In my case, finding an adequate form of transcription required compromise, since I am interested not only in presenting a nuanced perspective of participants' narrated experience that considers the co-constructive nature of interviewing, but also in identifying connections with broad societal discourses. For the presentation of evidence, I focused on finding a format that is legible to those unfamiliar with transcripts produced for sociolinguistic analysis (see chapter 6), but for the purpose of analysis, I transcribed both participants' and my own utterances precisely, assigning an own line to each speakers' contribution. I included details such as intonation, pauses, hesitations, repetition, etc., as well as gestures and mime (which I had jotted down directly after the interviews).

After listening to each interview while reading the transcript, and after examining in combination all data sources gathered from one participant, I created synopses of each case, documenting the following aspects on the basis of which I compared participants' accounts: the participant's narrated language biography in chronological order; the key narrative(s) (e.g. 'I missed out on learning German' or 'I went on a French instead of a German path'); other emergent themes; main characters; hidden and overt metaphors of language learning and of living with languages; relevant positionings vis-à-vis languages, cultures, and other categories; the yield, role, and unique aspects of the language portrait; the "thickness" (Geertz, 1973) of the data; and my assessment of the interpretability of the narrative modes (e.g. argumentative, performative, reflective, summarizing, etc.).

The selection was somewhat constrained by practical considerations, above all the varying scope of data-material and the text-types elicited (some participants more readily responded with lengthy, narrative accounts than others). Beyond these restrictions, my main

concern in selecting focal narratives was to maximize variation, while at the same time allowing for comparability along key dimensions. Selection was therefore based on "maximum variation sampling" (Duff, 2008a, p. 115) with the aim of selecting narratives that differ, notably in how participants construct their institutional learning experiences, in the meanings they associate with 'heritage' and their 'cultural background,' in their aspirations with German, and in the themes that they make relevant to their experience of being multilingual.[29] On this basis, I chose the narratives of three participants, whom I call Marianne, Henning, and Anaya, and whom I introduce in detail in chapter 6.

5.3.2 In-depth analysis of single cases

The three in-depth studies aim to provide a microscopic view of participants' experience. They 'delve into' the subjective perspectives of individual participants and illuminate idiosyncratic connections the individuals draw between different meanings as they construct their sense of self and their experiences of using language(s) and learning German. Drawing on the described four narrative analytic approaches, the analysis of each of the three focal participants' narratives entailed the following six steps:[30]

Step 1: Examine overall structure and sequences. I consider the identification of sequences as the first step of analysis, since making decisions about what constitutes a segment within the stream of telling and conversation "are interpretive acts that are shaped in major ways by the investigator's theoretical interests" (Riessman, 2003, p. 335). In order to identify

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[29] While these were the main dimensions for examining similarities and differences between participants, I also paid attention to other aspects (e.g. participants who were currently enrolled and who were not; or participants with and without a background in Applied Linguistics)

[30] In the process of analyzing my data, I discussed interpretations of selected passages with other language scholars during regular meetings organized through the department for 'Anglistik und Amerikanistik' at the Humboldt University in Berlin, Germany, where I lived when analyzing my data. This served as a 'plausibility check' to my readings of the data and extended my perspective.

sequences, I went through each interview transcript line by line as I listened to the audio recording, paying attention to shifts in topic, as well as 'atmosphere,' noting how and by whom they were initiated.

Step 2: Describe corpus of data. In order to get an overview of the individual narrative, I listened and read each account several times before I compiled a summary of the progression of each interview conversation, already marking themes and observations that stood out to me.

Step 3: Derive key themes. Next, I deployed thematic analysis, deriving and coding focal themes that stood out in my view (including frequently re-occurring, avoided, or emotionally charged themes), such as 'I learned German because I had to' or 'I have a German core identity.' In so doing, I gradually gained a clearer understanding of what the narrative was about overall, as well as a sense of how focal themes relate and contribute to my overall impression. I probed: What does X tell me about? What stories does s/he tell? What is important to the participant? What does s/he want me to see? How does s/he want to be known to me? Approaching the text with these questions, I considered how single sequences function within the larger scheme, and identified narrative contexts within which the participant made the specific themes relevant.

Step 4: Examine language portrait. I then considered how the language portrait relates to the identified themes. On the one hand, I examined whether identified themes were visible in the portrait, while on the other, I used the portrait as a lens through which to view the entire narrative. For instance, do metaphors yielded by the portrait allow for alternative readings or illuminate new aspects that are important to the individual?

Step 5: Re-examine narrative in light of research questions. In this step, I looked at the emerging key themes more explicitly in light of my research questions, now including

structural and dialogic/performance analysis, which allowed for additional observations to come to the fore. One could say that I projected the general set of questions that guide narrative inquiry through the lens of my research questions, e.g.: why does X tell *this* story *now*, in this *particular way* and how does X thereby construct his/her multilingual subjectivity / experience of learning German / cultural background? While at the first level of analysis (steps $1 - 4$), themes and story lines were at the centre, at this second level of analysis, I considered more systematically how tellings emerge in connection with particular frames of reference, and how they resonate with and contradict each other with respect to the conceptions they bring about.

Step 6: Synthesize emerging perspectives. Converging the insights stemming from the bottom-up and top-down perspectives, I finally constructed a condensed reading of participants' narratives, interpreting my findings in light of my research objective and with references to the theoretical background of my work (e.g. by identifying how participants position themselves vis-à-vis discourses related to the monolingual paradigm and with what effects). This step moves the analysis to a higher level of abstraction. I present my findings accordingly: Each chapter that is dedicated to the in-depth study of one focal narrative is divided into three parts corresponding to my research questions.

While these steps provide a decent summary of my approach, analysis was of course not a strictly linear process, but involved revisiting earlier steps (e.g. when new interpretations emerged as I re-examined the narratives in light of the theoretical background, I would also return to re-examine the language portrait from a new angle).

5.3.3 Cross-case analysis

Cross-case analyses were performed in order to examine the findings resulting from each in-depth study in relation to each other, as well as against the backdrop of the remaining five participants' perspectives. While the in-depth studies aim to provide a microscopic view on single cases, the analysis across cases allows me to examine my findings more concisely in light of my research objective. The cross-case analysis included these steps:

Step 1. Identify similarities and differences between the three narratives studied in depth for each realm corresponding to my research questions.

Step 2. Articulate how the findings resulting from step 1 relate to my research objective in order to derive focal points for cross-case analysis. I probed: How do the insights stemming from the comparison provide answers to the content questions that emerged in chapter 4 when viewing the construct of HERITAGE LEARNER through the theoretical lens of my study? On this basis, I derived three components for cross-case comparison, which I outline below.

Step 3. Examine the additional five narratives in relation to the insights gained in steps 1 – 2. The accounts of the remaining five participants were viewed with a focus on the themes that had emerged as relevant to the three derived components (see below). I asked: What do the additional participants' perspectives have in common with those of the three focal participants? What perspectives are added? What commonalities emerge across the entire data base? Do new disparities emerge? Keeping these questions in mind, I marked and coded passages that would potentially allow me to illustrate selected findings more clearly, or that could add further insights.

Step 4. Integrate and structure observations along the following three components: The first component focuses on similarities and differences regarding participants' positionings

within language and heritage discourses. I identify discourses of the monolingual paradigm that re-emerge as shared points of reference across the three in-depth studies, and examine how participants distinctly make relevant and position themselves with respect to these discourses and with what effects.

Since my aim is to open the view on heritage learners beyond a (double) monolingual perspective, the second component functions to enhance the insights on participants' lived experiences as multilingual people and illuminate facets of multilingual experience emerging across narratives that resonate with dynamic models of multilingualism. I approached the data pool with the following questions: What facets of narrated multilingual experience in my data point beyond the ability to function in X separate languages? What thematic commonalities are most salient across participants' accounts of being multilingual? In this component, I paid special attention to the additional five narratives, because the purpose was to shed light on an extended range of phenomena that participants associate with multilingual experience.

The third component examines from a comparative angle how participants' self-constructions as multilingual subjects relate to their accounts of learning German in class. Keeping in mind the commonalities and differences that emerged in step 1, I examined the following questions: How do participants differ in the value they assign to their institutional learning experiences? How does the way in which they conceive of their positionality as multilingual subjects and as learners factor into their assessments? How do narratives of learning German in class relate to accounts of being multilingual at the collective level?

Having outlined the procedures of data organization, analysis, and interpretation, I will conclude with considerations concerning the quality of my research.

5.4 Evaluating the quality of narrative inquiry research

According to Riessman (2003), there is "no canonical approach to validation in interpretive work, no recipes or formulas" (p. 342). The traditional criteria used for evaluating positivist research – objectivity, reliability, and validity – cannot be applied in the same way for evaluating a qualitative interpretive method rooted in a social-constructionist paradigm. Social-constructionist, interpretive research is not about identifying, explaining, and predicting general tendencies in human behaviour and experience; it is not about uncovering what some scholars somewhat disparagingly refer to as 'the truth' about human realities. Its value lies in broadening the repertoire of *possible* interpretations of reality, in illustrating how "multiple and even conflicting versions of the same event or object can be true at the same time" (Rubin & Rubin, 2005, p. 27), and in gaining more nuanced understandings of complex processes and phenomena. In short, interpretive research in the tradition of social constructionism is not meant to be objective, reliable, or valid in the traditional sense of these terms.

Yet, the lack of objectivity in interpretive research is a point of major controversy and continues to serve as a key point of reference in debates on how to evaluate interpretive research. While objectivity is deemed important in positivist research traditions, those adhering to a social-constructionist approach do not see subjectivity[31] as "something that can or should be eliminated [but rather] as an inevitable engagement with the world in which meanings and realities are constructed (not just discovered) and in which the researcher is very much present" (Duff, 2008a, p. 56). From this view, research need not and cannot be objective; but it still "needs to be credible and trustworthy, and those traits must be apparent" (Duff, 2008a, p. 57).

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[31] Here, the term *subjectivity* does not refer to a fluid notion of the self in Weedon's (1997) sense, but rather is in opposition to what is meant by *objectivity* in positivist research paradigms.

Consequently, *coherence*, *plausibility*, and *persuasiveness* have been suggested, yet, these proposals are not without problems (see Duff, 2008a; Holliday, 2008; Riessman, 2008).[32]

With respect to *coherence*, Geertz (1973) remarks pointedly: "There is nothing so coherent as a paranoid's delusion or a swindler's story" (p. 18). In narrative inquiry, the situation is further complicated by the fact that the meaning of coherence is two-fold: Whether coherence refers to participants' narratives or to the contribution of the researcher is not always clearly distinguished in discussions surrounding quality criteria. In light of my ambition to venture into the multi-layered perspectives of multilingual speakers and to explore how they deal with potential ambiguities and inherent contradictions, this distinction is relevant, however. In this respect, Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann's (2002) elaboration on coherence in the reconstruction of "narrative identities" is helpful. While they suggest that interpretation would not be possible without assuming that there is coherence in participants' narratives, they stress that making this assumption does not imply that the connections a narrator establishes between different incidents must be completely consistent, without contradiction, or free of ambivalences (pp. 102-103). In their view, it is the analyst's task, then, to identify where and how narrators indicate ruptures, make distinctions, or evoke competing perspectives. Informed by this insight, I am cautious not to 'bend' participants' narratives in an attempt to create a presentation of internally consistent accounts, while I do aim for consistency in my own chain of reasoning.

Relatedly, with respect to *persuasiveness*, Riessman (2008) cautions: "There is an inherent problem […] in using persuasiveness alone as an argument for trustworthiness […]. Rhetorical style alone – good writing – can convince a reader of the 'truth' of findings, without

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[32] According to Riessman (2008), with narrative inquiry, scholars have even argued for "emotional and aesthetic criteria" based on whether an account can "move us or get us to think differently about a phenomenon" (p. 192).

offering a clue as to how an investigator got there" (p. 192). While acknowledging this caveat, she suggests that "persuasiveness is strengthened when the investigator's theoretical claims are supported with evidence from informants' accounts, negative cases are included, and alternative interpretations considered" (p. 191). Though I dislike the term *persuasiveness* for the reason indicated in Riessman's critical remark, my approach is certainly oriented toward clearly "demonstrate[ing] how [I] developed and/or used methods appropriate to [my] research questions, epistemologies, and situated perspectives" (Riessman, 2008, p. 188). The detailed description in 5.3 of the methodological steps I followed in order to gather, prepare, analyze, and present my data are oriented towards this end. Furthermore, I make an effort to provide rich detail about the assumptions and findings that impact my decisions throughout the phases of the study; to make transparent my chains of reasoning with reference to the theoretical background of my study; and to support my claims with evidence, triangulating findings from multiple sources where possible (see Duff, 2008a; Holliday, 2008; Riessman, 2008).

Besides debates on quality criteria evolving from the objectivity issue, a second major point of criticism that has challenged the trustworthiness of narrative inquiries concerns generalizability (Riessman, 2008; for a discussion of the issue in case-study research more in general, see Duff, 2008a). Generalizability "aims to establish the relevance, significance, and external validity of findings for situations or people beyond the immediate research project" (Duff, 2008a, p. 48). While small-sample studies are advantageous in that they can pay attention to details and reveal new facets of phenomena, they are subject to the criticism that it is impossible to generalize from a sample of n=1 (or a small number of cases). *Transferability* has been suggested as an alternative concept that can be applied to qualitative research. The term aims to capture how insights derived from single case-studies can "speak to others in

similar conditions, and may empower them to reenvisage their experience" (West, 2001, p. 40, as cited in Holliday, 2008, p. 110). This notion has, however, rightly been criticized for its similarity to generalizability (Duff, 2008a, pp. 51-52).

The crux is that unlike with large-scale quantitative studies, it is not the purpose of small-sample studies to generalize from a sample to a population. While transferability may apply in some contexts, I see the greater value of case-centred research in its potential to generate (new understandings of) *concepts*. In the words of Crouch and McKenzie (2006), these studies do not sample individuals of a kind, but *variants of experience* that can arise under a particular set of circumstances (see also Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015).

Rooted in this understanding, the present study does not serve to generalize findings to any sort of a population of German heritage language learners. I apply narrative analysis to the systematic study of participants' personal experiences and understandings in order to stage learning and living with German in Canada as part of *multilingual experience*. Rather than generating knowledge about a general *type* of learner, my contribution is to derive conceptual inferences.

Chapter 6   In-depth Studies

In this chapter, I analyze the narratives of three participants whose pseudonyms are Marianne, Henning, and Anaya. I chose their narratives for in-depth study because they differ substantially in how they construct their experiences of learning German, as well as in how they define themselves in relation to language and to living with a German background. At the same time, their accounts yield sufficient similarities to allow for an insightful comparison. Besides the fact that all three individuals would classify as heritage speakers of German based on their family histories, they all position themselves to discourses of monolingual normativity (such as the native speaker ideal), and draw attention to facets of being multilingual that resonate with the contemporary models of multilingualism outlined in chapter 3 – albeit in different ways and to varying degrees. I also made sure to include at least one participant who was a) currently not enrolled at a German department and b) unfamiliar with linguistic theory. Henning meets both criteria.

For each in-depth study, I will structure the presentation of findings as follows. After introducing the individual participant, I give a brief thematic overview of the data resulting from the study components in which s/he took part. In so doing, I identify salient and unique features of the narrative, on the basis of which I derive focal points for subsequent analyses that I consider most relevant in light of my research objective. Thereafter, analyses are structured according to my research questions, targeting how participants construct their experience of and perspectives on a) living with a German background, b) learning German, and c) being multilingual.

As noted, within each of these three realms the analyses will focus on points that are unique to the individual narrative, yet there are certain aspects to which I will give attention

across all cases, for reasons of comparability. Within the first realm – participants' accounts of living with a German background – I will take into account how each narrative relates to the idea of 'German language as heritage.' With respect to the realm of learning German, I will pay attention to the following points across all narratives: how individual participants construct their agency and how they orient themselves to investing in German; whether they articulate learning goals and how they depict their aspirations as language users; how they define success; and what meanings they associate with particular instances of learning German. The analyses of narrations on multilingualism will pay attention to whether and how individual participants' accounts relate to the dynamic, subject-centered perspective on multilingualism outlined in chapter 3. While I will attend to these points across all three narratives, the hallmarks of my methodological approach – case-centeredness and preserving sequences – require me to address them in a different order in each individual case.

Before I proceed, a note on my use of labels, terms, as well as on the presentation of excerpts is in order. By 'labels' I mean classifying words and phrases applied to social categories, such as 'learner,' 'German,' 'Canadian,' etc. In presenting the analyses, I will make an effort to use labels in a way that reflects each individual's perspective (as I understand it) as closely as possible. For instance, I avoid the use of the word 'learner' in Anaya's case, because she explicitly rejects being labelled as such.

By 'terms' I mean words commonly used to denote concepts in SLA. In my research context, the (often limited usefulness of the) widely used distinction between language *acquisition* and language *learning* is relevant. According to Krashen (1981, 1978), language acquisition is a subconscious process that occurs in informal settings, while language learning is a conscious process that results from a formal language learning situation or a self-study

program. This distinction is problematic, as many have noted. For instance, Block (2003) points out that both types of processing occur in both contexts: "an individual in a naturalistic context may engage in self-directed study [...], while an individual in a classroom setting might not engage at all with the activities organized by her/his teacher" (p. 94). In the case of heritage learners, it is quite obvious that it is impossible to draw a clear line, since they are learners in a formal context who have by definition acquired the target language in informal settings. I will speak of *learning* when discussing narrated instances of learning German in class and narrations on conscious learning processes, while I will speak of *acquisition* when referring to narrated processes of language development outside of institutional contexts. In contexts where a clear division is not feasible (e.g. when referring to participants' acquisition of German over their entire life time), I will use the terms language *acquisition* and language *development* interchangeably.

When presenting excerpts in which I do not contribute much more than backchannels as an interviewer, the transcript will be presented as a paragraph for reasons of limited space. In these cases, I will mark the interviewer contribution with a double slash: //mhm//. In excerpts that include other kinds of interviewer contributions, I will assign separate lines to participant and interviewer contributions. For a list of transcription conventions, see appendix A.

I will use quotation marks to cite the voices of participants and other authors, such as in this example: "This is the voice of participant X." In contrast, I use inverted commas to indicate my own stance towards the issue in question, such as to indicate that I am using a word with some reservation. My use of inverted commas when referring to 'typical' foreign language learners for instance indicates that I see this as a construct rather than an objectively existing reality.

6.1 Marianne's narrative

Introduction

Marianne is a third year German Honor's student in her early fifties who speaks High German, English, and Plattdeutsch,[33] and understands some Spanish. Her mother is a Russian Mennonite from Paraguay. Her father was German and immigrated to Canada from Germany before she was born. She recalls that in the first years of her life, during which she lived in anglophone Canada, she exclusively communicated in High German with both of her parents and their friends, until her parents decided to speak English with her when she entered school, to support her acquisition of the language. When she was twelve, her family moved to Paraguay for two years, where her maternal relatives live. The school program she attended during that time was reportedly taught in High German, while her extended family communicated in Plattdeutsch. She recalls that she soon became able to converse fluently in High German and Plattdeutsch and acquired some Spanish during her stay. Back in Canada, she chose German classes as part of her high school program. She reports that she tried to maintain her German language abilities by reading German books as a young adult, but that she did not come into much contact with German in the decades after she left home and married a Canadian man who is a monolingual English speaker, as she reports. In her forties, this changed: Firstly she hired a German language tutor for three months in preparation for temporary work as a translator related to her career. Somewhat later, she enrolled in university to complete a liberal arts degree and soon declared a German major. Hand in hand with these steps, she also reverted back to speaking German with her parents upon her initiative. When we met, she had taken several advanced German as a foreign language courses (starting at the 201 level), as well as

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[33] Marianne uses the word "Plattdeutsch" to refer to the variety spoken by her maternal relatives, who are Mennonites. By contrast, she refers to the German spoken in her home (by her mother and father) as "Hochdeutsch" (High German). In presenting my findings, I will adopt her usage of labels.

courses in German literature, culture, and Applied Linguistics offered at the department. She also took part in an exchange to Germany six months prior to her study participation, which she discontinued after the first six weeks owing to the sudden passing of her father.

Marianne's participation included two interviews (conducted in Fall 2014) and the creation of a language portrait. Though I had not known her earlier, she shared her stories and reflections openly. She initiated many themes, also showing interest in my experience of growing up in a Canadian family in Germany,[34] leading me to bring in my perspective quite extensively in some passages. Before I turn to the actual analysis, I will provide a brief (thematic) overview of the data resulting from both data sources and derive focal points for analysis.

Language Portrait.[35] Marianne chooses two colours to represent her linguistic self: red for English and blue for German. She adds a brain to the image, half blue, half red, remarking: "the analytical side of me says i'm part english and part german and i learn in both english and in german." (M_Int2, 2772).[36] She assigns red to her left arm and blue to her right arm, associating German with her right-handedness and explaining that this reflects that her life *began* in German. Likewise, she colours the feet blue in order to associate German with learning how to walk. She uses the legs and torso as a timeline: Starting at the feet, she assigns red, blue, or both to different body segments to represent how language shaped her sense of

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[34] I grew up in Germany in an English-speaking family, as my parents immigrated to Germany from Canada before I was born. I moved to Canada as an adult, and the interviewing procedures took place after I had lived in Canada for four years. Participants were told during the introduction to the first interview that I had grown up in a 'perhaps in some ways similar, but perhaps also opposite kind of way,' namely, in a Canadian, English-speaking family in Germany (for details see appendix D).

[35] For Marianne's language portrait, see appendix F

[36] Citations follow the format: initial of pseudonym_data source_page/line, while data sources are abbreviated "Writ" (written reflection) and "Int" (Interview) followed by the interview number. For example "M_Int2, 2234" indicates *M*arianne's utterance beginning in line 2234 in the transcript of the second interview.

self in consecutive phases of her life. She leaves the chest blank to indicate an open future and adds a heart, three quarters red (English) and one quarter blue (German).

Oral Accounts. Marianne portrays her experience of learning and living with German and of being multilingual very positively. She recurrently states that she has always felt proud of being and speaking German, and that she deeply cherishes having more than one language. Moreover, she uniquely emphasizes how much she enjoys learning in general, marking how to her, learning is not simply a means to an end, but a value to which she orients herself and from which she derives fulfilment.

Narrating how speaking and being German have shaped her sense of self, she illuminates her experience from different angles. On the one hand, she traces how her sense of self in relation to language has shifted over time, depending on several factors, such as her participation in distinct cultural spaces, or relationships and themes that dominated in given phases of her life. On the other, she relates herself to different social and linguistic categories. A unique aspect in her case is that she defines herself vis-à-vis two cultural identities that she associates with her 'heritage' – 'German' and 'Russian Mennonite.'

Three points stand out in her narrated language trajectory: a) the 'emergence' of her sense of self in her early childhood, in which German reportedly had a formative and lasting influence on her self-perception, b) the decline of her German in her early adulthood, and c) her re-engagement with German language and culture in her forties, which she associates with different kinds of changes, including linguistic advances, changes in her views on language, as well as changes in how she sees herself and how she relates to others.

Narrating her experiences of learning German, she gives most weight to this third and most recent turning point in her trajectory, telling me about different ways in which she has

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invested in German in the past years. In particular she talks about her German studies, her exchange to Germany, and about deliberately shifting back to using German with her parents. A striking point is that in telling me about reverting back to German with her parents, she narrates how her father sometimes showed critical reactions to her German speech, and how she dealt with this. Her account is also unique in how she relates her recent German studies to a larger process, during which she has reportedly been preoccupied with the question how different episodes in her life have contributed to her current sense of self. Pondering how her studies tie into this process, she elaborates how studying German has gone hand in hand with changes in how she conceives of herself, how her classes triggered memories of her past, and how this relates to insights she derived about the relation between language and the self.

Finally, she provides an elaborate account of what being multilingual has meant to her, articulating how and why she appreciates her multilingual experience, and how multilinguals differ from monolingual people in her view. Moreover, she considers how her personal experience of being multilingual figures into and is shaped by communications with her partner, as well as the relationship at large.

Building on this brief overview, I will now derive focal points for my analyses within the three main sections that correspond to my research questions:

Living with a German background. Marianne's account of what speaking and being German has meant to her is unique in that she associates her heritage with more than one cultural identity, hence I will focus on this point, showing how she positions herself in relation to meanings she associates with the two identities in order to define herself. Another point that strikes me in particular is how she points to lasting effects she associates with having grown up

'in' German, thereby complementing the culture-oriented perspective on her subjectivity with a biographical perspective. This unique aspect is a second focal point in the analysis.

Perspectives on learning German. Since she gives particular attention to her most recent investment in German, the analysis will focus largely on her portrayal of this phase. Her case is exceptional in that she considers learning as a key value to which she orients herself. Hence, I will examine how this relates to her self-construction as a learner of German. One particularly intriguing point concerns her portrayal of emotionally challenging moments in which she faced her father's critical evaluation of her speech. I will focus on this aspect and identify strategies she makes relevant to staying focused on her learning when confronted with critical evaluation. When recalling processes of learning German, her account is exceptional in how she deems relevant memories of her past that were reportedly triggered by her class participation, and how she relates this aspect to changes in her views on language and her sense of self. Given my interest in the impact of language discourses, this is crucial, hence this is another point to which I give close attention.

Multilingual subjectivity. A distinctive feature in her narrations on multilingualism is her illustration of what aligning her own perspectives with her husband's has meant to her as a multilingual person. This is clearly relevant in light of my interest in dynamic views on multilingualism, hence the first part of the analysis will focus on this aspect. Another feature that is central to my interests is the extent to which her reflections *on* multilingual experience resonate with such views. The analysis will detail this further.

6.1.1 Living with a 'German background' in Canada

In examining how Marianne defines herself in relation to language and culture, I first focus on how she relates herself to the two identities she associates with her heritage, 'Russian Mennonite' and 'German.' Next, I show how in addition to this 'cultural identities' perspective, she illuminates the links between German and her sense of self from a biographical angle.

6.1.1.1 German and Russian Mennonite heritage: a cultural identities perspective

Marianne leaves no doubt that she "was always very happy and very proud of who [she] was" (M_Int1, 1706). Invited to describe her relation with German, she states:

M: uhm a very close relationship that- (2 sec) uhm (--) from a LANGuage perspective that i left behind. but bec- (1 sec) but i was always aware of the fact that i was german. and i was actually proud of the german heritage, i was always proud of the german heritage, //mhm,// also very proud of the russian mennonite heritage, so never shied away from saying- (---) <low voice<that i'm german>> or that i can SPEAK german. or any of those things. so it was always known, and it was always there; (Excerpt 6.1.1, M_Int1, 381)

The excerpt shows that what Marianne refers to as "heritage" has always been crucial to her sense of self. At this early point of the first interview, she mentions both German and Russian Mennonite 'heritage' in the same breath, associating both of these realms with a sense of pride. In the course of our conversation(s), she develops a more differentiated perspective, as she distinguishes between the two and portrays them in relation to each other. The next excerpt illustrates this. At this point of our conversation, I have just asked her what associations the word *German community* triggers in her. Her response begins as follows:

M: the german community to me are those people who speak- who speak german but also- not just speak german; but who who have a cultural relationship to german ( ) in one form or in another; and i guess that's where it's interesting because i also have that russian mennonite side. //mhm.// and they sometimes consider themselves GERman; actually i have more issues with the russian mennonite side; because they're kind of

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german and they're kind of NOT, ((laughs)) //mhm,// so it's nice to be able to identify myself with german, germany and germans, uhm (1 sec) [she returns to reflect on my question]   (Excerpt 6.1.2, M_Int1, 2194)

For my purposes the most important point illustrated in this quote is how Marianne brings to view the complexity in defining herself vis-à-vis language, culture, heritage. For one, she addresses the imprecision of social categories, noting how it is debatable whether Russian Mennonites are included in the 'German community' ("they're kind of german and they're kind of not"). Moreover, now distinguishing Russian Mennonite identity from a national German identity she associates with "german, germany, and germans," she positions herself distinctly vis-à-vis the two. While she seems mindful not to devaluate any identity, she dissociates herself from Russian Mennonites to some extent by using deictic expressions and personal pronouns that create a distance ("*that* russian mennonite side; *they* sometimes consider *themselves* german"). In contrast, she clearly affiliates herself with the imagined community (Anderson, 1991) she associates with German national identity ("it's nice to be able to identify myself with german, germany, and germans"). It is also worth imagining how her choice of words may have differed had the interviewer, me, not grown up in Germany but rather would have been somebody with a Russian Mennonite background. In short, the quote shows how defining herself depends on how she *positions* herself to meanings associated with her heritage, rather than casting her experience of living with German in terms of simply 'inheriting' an identity.

With respect to this point, it is insightful to look at one sequence in which she brings to attention how language plays into her positionality vis-à-vis the two identities. In this sequence, she stresses that her father was "REAL german" as opposed to being a Russian Mennonite, subsequently identifying how this has been relevant to her experience as a German

speaker. The excerpt is taken from the end of our second conversation. I had indicated that I

have no further questions and asked if she wanted to add anything, whereupon she begins to

inquire about my experience of growing up in a Canadian English-speaking family in

Germany. In response, I tell her how I perceived attending mandatory English as a foreign

language classes in high school, foregrounding specific assumptions teachers held about my

English language abilities based on their perception of me as being a native speaker of English.

Comparing my stories to her experience, Marianne narrates:

M: i think you and i are very fortunate with the experience we have- it allows us to
     develop the strength of adaptability;
Int: mhm.
M: [...] we have a different way of maneuvering through HOW to be; and it's interesting- t
     see my father was (-) REAL german. and my rest of my family; my mother's side of the
     family are all mennonite; so they're (.) not (.) real (.) german.
Int: mhm-
M: <smile<my FAther s a REAL german. so I was->> ((gestures: raises one hand
     slightly above her eyes parallel to the ground and looks up to it))
Int: mhm. also.[37]
M: <English pronunciation<also.>> ach du hast doch so ein schönes deutsch. du sprichst so
     schön. das kannst du gut sagen. ach. (.) horch mal.[38] [...] the higher expectation placed
     on me TOO.
Int: mhm. yeah.
M: <slight whisper<because my father was ECHT deutscher[39]>>
Int: but you never rejected it?
M: no. (---) no it was something i want(ed) to live up to.
Int: ach! [translation: oh!]
((laughter))
Int: ach [oh] is the best german word.
M: but all those little mennonite things. and i i didn't realize that i was using
     mennonite words.
[…]
M: and those [mennonite words] were the things that used to bother my FAther. so
     he was very happy that i was learning german. //mhm.// cause now i was
     actually learning proper GERman. //mhm.// and my mother was always critical
     of her siblings about not having proper GERman; […] (Excerpt 6.1.3, 3479)

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[37] The word *also* (English pronunciation) refers to parallels with my own preceding story of being addressed as 'the native speaker' by instructors during English classes.

[38] translation: oh you do have such a beautiful german. you speak beautifully. you can say things so well. oh (.) just listen to you

[39] translation: REAL german

It is striking how she here identifies her "strength of adaptability" in "maneuvering through HOW to be" as a key point in defining herself with reference to the two cultural identities she associates with her heritage (and as a benefit that we share as multilinguals). Her story serves to exemplify what it is, in her view, that has allowed her to develop this strength, namely, her confrontation with distinct ways of speaking and with interpretational frames that shape the status of language practices and language users (indicated by her raised hand and gaze).

Specifically, she here makes relevant what I will call a 'proper GERman ideal' shaping her positionality in relation to the two mentioned identities – an ideal arising from a contrast between language practices she associates with her Russian Mennonite relatives and the German she associates with her father. It is plausible that this ideal resonates with a whole set of discourses, yet the most evident in this quote is a discourse of purity. Specifically, her wording "those little mennonite things," invokes a view of her speech as 'contaminated' by linguistic practices she associates with the maternal side of her family, implying that ideally "proper GERman" would be 'pure.' Furthermore, her remark that her father was "happy that she was learning German cause now she was actually learning proper GERman" suggests the underlying assumption that only standardized German counts as correct, "proper" German. Importantly, Marianne does not only make her confrontation with the discussed discursive frames relevant to her status and positionality, but also to her aspirations as a German speaker, evident in her remark "it was something i want(ed) to live up to."

It is noteworthy, however, that while she thereby clearly adheres to the implied ideal, it is only in response to my direct question – whether she 'never rejected it' – that she positions herself clearly. Apart from this elicited positioning she applies narrative strategies that obscure the extent to which she subscribes to discourses underlying notions such as "proper GERman"

and "REAL german." By citing views of others, she invokes certain ideas (e.g. the idea that Mennonite language practices do not really count as 'a' language) without explicitly contesting or endorsing these views. This in itself is an act of (complex) positioning, which I interpret in light of diversity discourses that she makes relevant to her sense of self as a Canadian in other parts of her account: As mentioned, she seems cautious more in general across her narrative, not to stigmatize Russian Mennonites or the language practices she associates with them. The following excerpt marks her awareness of an inclusivity discourse that rejects discrimination based on language, ethnicity, etc., and that instead promotes linguistic and cultural variation as 'normal.' Reflecting on her identity, she self-identifies as "Canadian with a German twist" (M_Int1, 429) and elaborates:

M: i would identify myself first and foremost as a canadian. just having grown up here- having a (-) yeah. first and foremost a caNAdian. but i think being a canadian is such a- (-) such a hard thing to pin down anyway. //mhm,// because we have canadians with so many different backgrounds and so many different ideas. //mhm.// that you need that idea of being german canadian only because we have so many types of canadians. and i like it. //mhm, mhm,//but the canadian tag just (.) means to me (.) more embracing of different people. //okay,// okay so- (3 sec) that's for ME. (Excerpt 6.1.4, M_Int1, 434)

Marianne here links 'being Canadian' with inclusivity (being "more embracing" of different people, different backgrounds, different ideas). By self-identifying "first and foremost as a canadian" and favouring a view of Canadian society in which diversity is the norm ("we have so many types of Canadians and i like it") she marks the relevance that inclusivity discourses have to how she defines herself and others.

In sum, she here once more foregrounds how defining herself in relation to language and culture requires her to *position* herself vis-à-vis interpretational frames rather than inheriting an identity (or two) – and in complex ways that align her position with multiple discourses simultaneously, e.g. a 'proper GERman ideal' *and* a discourse of diversity. Having

examined how she portrays herself in relation to social categories and societal discourses, I will now show how she complements this culture-based view by illuminating her sense of self from a biographical perspective.

6.1.1.2 German and Marianne's sense of self – a biographical perspective

One of the most striking features in Marianne's narrative is the attention she gives to embodied memories in portraying her sense of self. More precisely, she indicates that having experienced the world through the lens of the German language during her formative years is essential to how she conceives of herself today, using her language portrait to visualize this. Specifically, she draws on two analogies to express what it means to her that her life began 'in German.' For one, she colours the feet blue (German), explaining that she associates the language with learning how to walk. Secondly, she assigns blue (German) to her right hand, as she explains how the perception of being right-handed compares to embodied memories she associates with growing up 'in' German. She adds a mouth to show that the body is facing us, thereby clarifying that the blue hand in the image is the right hand. She elaborates:

M: because i'm a right-handed person; so that's-
Int: o:::: okay. {so it has to be the right side.=mhm.}
M: {so ( ) because that's} where i've started. ((refers to the right hand)) it sort of mirrors what THIS is, ((points to the feet)) in the sense tha:t (.) it's the start that was the dominant- this is where it beGAN; that's where the greatest MUScles started; that's where- (-) my awareness of SELF, began with my awareness of self in german LANGuage, and german- (.) so began with an ICH, (.) anstatt[40] an i,
Int: mhm,
M: so (-) and i'm right-handed; so that's why that (-) that was there.

(Excerpt 6.1.5, M_Int2, 2848)

By perceptually linking the feeling of right-handedness to her memory of how her sense of self 'emerged' in German, she seems to mark how *self-evident* it feels to her that German is an

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[40] 'Ich' is the German word for 'I'; 'anstatt' is the German word for 'instead of'

integral part of her. Importantly, she makes these comments as she works on the task of visualizing her *current* linguistic self. As such, her image highlights how embodied memories of the past, notably of how her "awareness of self began in German," shape who she feels she is today.

While the analysis in the previous section showed how her self-perception in relation to German has been shaped by heritage-related discourses ("my father was REAL German"), she uses her portrait to illuminate the relation between German and her sense of self from a biographical angle. As we will see, this point is important to how she conceives of her experiences of learning German.

Central findings arising from the analysis in 6.1.1 can be summarized as follows: Firstly, Marianne constructs 'heritage' as a key point in defining her sense of self. She uses 'Russian Mennonite' and 'German' identity as reference points in order to define her positionality with regard to her heritage, foregrounding her affiliation with the latter. Secondly, she constructs German language and culture as 'heritage,' at the same time as her narrative brings to light how defining herself in relation to her cultural heritage is a complex and dynamic process – an ongoing positioning governed by the idea(l)s that others and herself associate with language, culture, and identity, as well as her responses to such idea(l)s. Thirdly, her sense of self in relation to German is not merely shaped by her social positionality, but also by embodied memories of her past.

6.1.2 Marianne's construction of learning German and of herself as a learner

As noted, the analysis of Marianne's accounts of learning German will focus largely on her portrayal of the most recent years. The first subsection investigates her self-portrayal as a learner and her perspectives on learning German. The second section examines how she *interprets* her recent learning in relation to her sense of self.

6.1.2.1 Self-construction as a learner and perspectives on learning German

In examining Marianne's account of learning German, it is important to consider that she presents the "idea about taking time to learn as MUCH as you could about everything" (M_Int1, 822) as an ideal that shaped her upbringing, and as a value to which she continues to orient herself. In a first step, I analyze how she constructs learning as a key value and how this relates to her self-construction as a learner of German, particularly to how she constructs her aspirations and her success. Thereafter, I examine how she presents herself in her account of shifting back to speaking German with her parents, where she points to 'strategies' that allowed her to stay focused on the progression of her learning, even in the face of emotional challenges. As explained in chapter 4, I will pay special attention to how her self-construal as a learner relates to the monolingual paradigm.

 Learning as a key value - 'Learner' as a preferred identity. Marianne recurrently expresses how deeply she values learning. This aspect, and how it relates to her self-understanding vis-à-vis her German studies is most salient in her reflections on whether, how, and to what extent she can relate herself to the labels *heritage speaker* and *heritage language learner*. While she rejects being identified with the former, she has no qualms self-identifying

as a heritage *learner*. The following excerpts stem from a stretch where she elaborates how she

perceives this difference.

M: uhm heritage language learner (--) see for me the word learning is such a- such
    an empowering, uhm (---) it's forward movement; it's it's thinking; it's it's
    moving forward into what you wanna do; so if you wanted to learn about your
    heritage; and you're a heritage language learner; that works-
Int: that works;
M: but a heritage language SPEAker suggests that- you don't KNOW much; you
    don't CARE that much; just whatever dribs and drabs you still remember from
    your childhood
Int: mhm. mhm.
M: but it's the lear- it's the word learner that changes it for me; (Excerpt 6.1.6, M_Int2, 3225)

Marianne here expresses what learning means to her (caring, empowerment, actively moving

toward a goal), at the same time as she constructs 'learner' as a preferred identity. Giving more

detail to her perception, she explains:

M: so when you take ON things that you want to learn; there's a sense of (-)
    <smilevoice<PRIDE behind it,>> so now we're getting into really bare bo- you'll
    learn more about me than you ever wanted to know. ((laughs))
Int: <laughing<oh! (-) i don't think we could ever get there.>>
M: but there's a sense of PRIDE and accomplishment and WORking for it; and part
    of that, (-) s- so THAT's that whole idea of LEARning, that's what the word
    LEARning means to me,
[...]
M: so i- and as you can tell that's a very high value for ME.
Int: mhm;
M: that whole learning- uhm embracing (-) experience; embracing learning;
    intelligence; those are all really high values for me.
Int: mhm.
M: and things i (.) strive for; so things i GIVE value to. so heritage language
    LEARner works.   (Excerpt 6.1.7, M_Int2, 3374)

Together, these quotes mark the extent to which deliberately engaging with her heritage gives

Marianne a sense of value and self-appreciation in light of the value she more generally assigns

to learning. Correspondingly, she explains that her rejection of the label *heritage speaker* is

based on her perception that it fails to acknowledge how she is "embracing and wanting to be

or moving towards (---) taking on; encompassing; growing that german part of [her] identity"

(M_Int2, 3170). As such, for her, German classes provide a site where she can perform and satisfy a desired *Learner* identity as she actively pursues aspects she associates with her heritage.

Accordingly, she consistently foregrounds an agentive view on herself in relation to learning and using German. To begin with, she marks her responsibility for maintaining and fostering her German language abilities. She portrays the narrated decline as well as advances in her ability to use German in particular life phases as resulting from her own choices and actions – an effect she achieves through what she says and how. Note the active voice construction, for instance, as she characterizes her relation with German as "a very close relationship that- (2 sec) uhm (--) from a LANGuage perspective that *i left behind*." (M_Int1, 381). Likewise, describing how her use of German decreased after she left home, she states: "and then *i let* it A:::LL drift away; ((laughs)) so *i married* a man who is [...] unilingual english? *so we- i never did* speak (-) german with my children, which (.) is a- (.) i *regret* now;" (M_Int1, 88). By using active voice constructions and stating her regret, she frames the reported decline of her German as a result of her decisions and (lack of) action, thereby assuming responsibility for her language development. Similarly, she stresses her conscious efforts to develop her German (e.g. initiating the shift back to speaking German with her parents). Again, she uses an active voice to mark the intentionality of her actions, e.g. "i chose this as major" (M_Int1, 114) or "i went and had it- went and got TUtoring; to upgrade my german skills;" (M_Int1, 965).

Furthermore, she presents herself as goal-oriented. Elaborating on her antithetical conceptions of the terms *heritage speaker* versus *heritage learner*, she highlights the relevance she assigns to pursuing a language-related goal:

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M: it's a whole piece in there ['heritage language learner'] that says LEARner. //okay,// that's because heritage language speaker suggests that's IT; that's as far as you're going- you're not- [...] there's a fiNAlity to that, //a:::h okay;// so i want to get to the point where i sound- i wanna get to the point where i'm confused for a native speaker. //mhm;// and to some respect i wAs when i was a kid; that was my native language. but (-) but THAT's where i want to go. so as a heritage language LEARner, i have a goal and i have an objective, //mhm;// and i can GET there. (Excerpt 6.1.8, M_Int2, 3269)

Marianne's main aim here is to mark the distinction between stagnation (there's a fiNAlity to that") versus progression ("that's where i wanna go…and i can GET there") and associate herself with the latter. To achieve this effect, she draws on the notion of 'native speaker,' which provides her with a benchmark against which she can measure her successful progression. That is, she constructs the implied native speaker ideal as a point of reference that gives her an orientation in defining her overarching goal of moving forward, striving, progressing. A close look at her wording indicates that she actively opposes the potential conclusion that she may not view herself as a native speaker, indicated in her brief struggle for suitable words – especially her discontinuation of the phrase "i want to get to the point where i sound- [*like* a native speaker]" – as well as indicated by her remark that German "wAs" her native language growing up. As such, she uses a native speaker ideal to construct herself as successfully progressing as a learner, at the same time as she counters a potential depreciation of her status as a user of German. In sum, she here draws on a discourse of monolingual normativity in order to present herself as goal-oriented, while also subtly indicating that some of the assumptions underlying this framework (such as the idea that being a native speaker is to speak 'perfectly') clash with her understanding of herself as a German language user.

Similarly, Marianne marks her orientation towards monolingual norms to present herself as forward-moving in a sequence where she construes becoming more "intuitive about the [German] language" (M_Int2, 2617) as a learning goal and marker of her success. It is

intriguing to note the context in which she makes this aspect relevant, namely, as part of an argument for the relevance of learning what constitutes *correct* German in class. In order to illustrate this point, it is necessary to consider the context leading up to this point with some detail.

The respective sequence follows Marianne's response to the question what she gained from her German language, culture, and linguistics courses. In this response, she identifies "a greater sense of accomplishment in terms of [her] own german speech" (M_Int2, 2385), as well as aspects at the social level as positive outcomes. For instance, she recounts that her grown familiarity with German idioms allows her to relate more closely to German-speaking friends of her father's, who, in turn, teach her further expressions. Coming to a conclusion, she states: "all these (.) Other things that i'm learning. that's FUN for me. <whispers<a lot of fun.>> ((laughs))" (M_Int2, 2547), upon which I remark, tongue-in-cheek:

Int: well looks like you're getting quite a bit from these courses.
((shared laughter))
Int: *yeah that's nice because i mean for other people it's it's just well yeah,*
    i improved my grammar, and- right?
M: yeah; that's part of (--) that's PART of it, that's part of what you want to
    LEARN,=and- i know that i still make mistakes when i speak german, but it's
    interesting; because i now find myself- particularly when i'm speaking with my
    mother (-) et cetera, i'll stop myself- cause WAIT a minute; that wasn't right;
Int: mhm.
M: because i'm starting to hear it,
Int: mhm.
M: and so it's it's- i want to beco::me (-) that inTUitive now about the language,
    that i hear it. that's nice.   (Excerpt 6.1.9, M_Int2, 2597)

While my contribution aims to positively evaluate that Marianne has reportedly been able to benefit from her classes in many ways, she chooses not to reinforce this point. Instead, she contests the potential implication that improving the grammatical accuracy of her German is a comparatively insignificant learning goal and less valuable learning outcome than changes in

how she relates to others. Her following account of how she catches herself making errors, then, functions as an argument *for* the relevance of learning what constitutes 'correct' German as per standardized norms ("that's part of what you want to LEARN"). She constructs her awareness of errors in her German speech as an indicator of her progress (as a learner) rather than of her shortcomings (as a speaker), by foregrounding her *increased ability* to perform grammaticality judgements. In order to do so, she relies on a discourse of correctness according to which speaking German well is to speak correctly as per standardized norms. Based on this discourse, she constructs her ability to classify the deviances of her speech from this norm ("WAIT a minute; that wasn't right") as a step on the way to speaking more correctly, at the same time as she constructs adapting her speech to standard norms as a central learning goal ("i want to become that intuitive about the language now"). In line with the above findings, she again uses a framework of monolingual normativity to define a goal against the background of which she marks her advancement.

Like in the previous example, she also opposes a deficit-oriented view on herself as a German speaker by foregrounding a process-oriented perspective – put simply, rather than portraying herself as a speaker who makes mistakes, she presents herself as a speaker who is, by and by, successfully reducing the errors in her speech. The analysis in the remainder of this part will examine in more detail how she uses strategies that allow her to reject a deficit-oriented view on herself and to stay focused on the pursuit of her language learning endeavours.

Learning through (and dealing with) criticism. As mentioned, an intriguing point in Marianne's narrative is how she sheds light on the affective sides of her investment in German, for instance in her account of how she perceived and dealt with critical reactions to her German

speech expressed by her father. As an interviewer, I invite her to describe in detail how she managed to re-customize the use of German with her parents after decades of communicating mostly in English. I target how this played out linguistically as well as at the level of relationship. In this context, she volunteers a story displaying how her father showed critical reactions to her German speech, and how she dealt with and accepted his reactions to the benefit of her linguistic advances. Asked whether the shift had felt natural, she maintains:

M: <laughing<it didn't initially feel natural;=no.>
Int: it it did NOT? [tone of voice signals need for clarification rather than disbelief]
M: no. but it's be- i wanted to do this (-) because i wanted to go to germany with
    [name of organization] so i said i need to practice.
Int: so it was con- {conscious.}
M: {so it was very conscious.} very conscious and very- i need to DO this, and-
    and then i would watch <screwing up her face and cringing<my poor father in
    particular sometimes CRINGE>> and i'm thinking (.) okay apparently i've got
    that WRONG. (Excerpt 6.1.10, M_Int1, 1235)

Hereafter, Marianne specifies which grammatical domains are more challenging and less challenging to her, before she shifts the focus back to her father's reactions:

M: but i couldn't remember the cases and the prepositions would sometimes (.) not-
    so i wouldn't always hit the right words; and i could see my- i could just see that
    happening with my dad; where he was- ((inhales audibly through clenched
    teeth)) sort of screw up his face a little bit, and he'd go err! that hurts.
                                                        (Excerpt 6.1.11, M_Int1, 1284)

Marianne here constructs her commitment to shifting back to German as an *investment* in her German language abilities as indicated by her explanation "*no. but ...* i wanted to do this *because ...* i need to practice." It is clear from her portrayal that at the affective-perceptive level, she conceives her father's negative reactions as a 'natural consequence' of the grammatical inaccuracy of her speech, holding herself accountable. To be precise, she constructs herself as agentive while she portrays her father as passively enduring the situation, using active voice constructions to mark her own actions (e.g. "apparently *i got* that

WRONG") as well as by foregrounding her father's 'suffering,' referring to him as her "poor"

father, drawing on a pain metaphor ("err! that hurts"), and stressing his lack of control ("i

could just *see that happening with* my dad"). Given that Marianne followed through with her

plan to speak German with her parents, the question arises how she dealt with these situations

in order to 'survive emotionally' and maintain her learning. Accordingly, I probe:

Int: so- it didn't- it didn't bother you.
(-)
Int: y- you kept on going-
M: but i kept on going. i a WELL, (-) i rea- (---) i have this philosophy that it
     doesn't have to be PERfect, i know- (-) ya know my father still came i guess
     from that period in time where the idea was that if you- ya know- you needed to
     know how to spell properly- and you should always speak properly-
Int: mhm-
M: and that shows how intelligent you are-
Int: mhm;
M: and all those things. uhm my position was that as long as i can make myself
     underSTOOD (-) i'm happy. and i was- i (.) much more reLAtional- so it was
     much more important for me to be able to SPEAK to you, and i don't CARE
     what it sounds like, because i also don't care if people come and speak to me
     and their ENGlish is (-) not great.
Int: mhm. mhm.
M: because i figured that's (.) irrelevant. so i just jumped in anyway. (2 sec) and
     then- and for the most part most people were fine with it.
Int: <smiling<yeah.>>
M: i think my father was more concerned. i think that's partly that-
((Marianne and interviewer cringe and laugh))
M: like hoawww! i'm SURE she knows better than tha- yeah. she used to do that
     better. but anyway (--) he was very good; and they [her parents] were very
     helpful as i progressed and learned and (-) moved forward.

(Excerpt 6.1.12, M_Int1, 1294)

Marianne's wordings "*but* i kept on going. i a *WELL?* (-)..." and "*but* i jumped in anyway"

suggest that the described incidents did emotionally affect her to an extent, at the same time as

she maintains the focus on the successful progression of her learning. Accordingly, her final

resumé in the quote stresses her successful advancement, acknowledging how her parents

supported her investment in German ("they were very helpful as i progressed and learned and moved forward").

Most importantly, Marianne constructs what she terms her "philosophy" as a *strategy* that allowed her to deal with the described emotional repercussions, again framing them as an investment in her learning. In order to explain her strategy, she now construes her father's reactions as mediated by societal discourses that associate correct speech and spelling with favourable attributes such as intelligence that imply a privileged social status. Marianne's "philosophy" in contrast, relies on a counter-discourse that gives priority to communicative abilities ("it doesn't have to be perfect"; "as long as i can make myself understood, i'm happy"). Her story suggests that she did not use this counter-discourse as a means to *overtly* contest her father's perspective, but rather as a 'private' strategy that allowed her to deal with negative affect and further pursue her overarching goal of progressing. In short, she constructs her 'private citation' of the discourse as a means that enabled her to exploit her father's critique as a learning opportunity.

Taken together, the findings in 6.1.2.1 show how Marianne positions herself distinctly within discourses of monolingual normativity (notably discourses of correctness) in different thematic contexts related to learning German. When defining her goals in narrations on learning German, she adheres to ideals resonating with the monolingual paradigm. By contrast, she draws on counter-discourses that de-emphasize the relevance of grammatical accuracy as a *strategy* that enables her to uphold her commitment to investing in her German language abilities, and to survive emotionally in the face of criticism.

Two findings emerge at a superordinate level: Firstly, her account suggests that her ability to identify discourses of correctness and their effects is central to her perceptions of herself and others, her potential to deal with evaluative commentary, and her ability to steer her process of learning German. Secondly, she exploits her potential to distinctly use and position herself with respect to discourses of correctness in ways that serve her purposes in particular contexts. I take up the latter point in the next part, which targets how Marianne *interprets* her recent experiences of learning German in relation to her sense of self.

6.1.2.2 Revisiting past selves and re-cognizing language and the self

As mentioned in the introduction, Marianne gives special attention to the point that her process of (re)learning German over the past years brought back memories of her past. During my initial readings of her narrative, it struck me that she recurrently spoke of "going back," often leaving vague what this phrase refers to. A systematic investigation of her use of this phrase revealed that it often serves to indicate her involvement with her past. A close look at these instances shows how she associates the experience of revisiting her past with changes in how she perceives herself at *present*. The following two excerpts exemplify this point. The first is from a sequence in which she responds to the question how her language portrait may differ had she created it earlier in her life:

M: if i hadn't come back to school now, then i wouldn't have- would have
    appreciated how much of my (.) initial learning and my additional identity and
    additional- iNItial! (.) piece was all done in the german language cognition; that
    piece; ((she points to the blue/german arm in her picture)).
Int: mhm,
M: because that was all a very german thing.
Int: so and you're talking about- not (.) necessarily way back when, but uh just
    before you: decided to come back and {learn german;}
M: {learn-} yeah.
Int: it probably would have looked different because of the-

M: it sti- i don't think i would have recognized THIS piece ((points to right
    blue/german arm))
[...]
M: because being here has taught me about that; as you- *as you go back*; and it has
    awoken- different feelings and different thoughts; and different (-) pieces about
    who i am; things that ya'd forgotten about.   (Excerpt 6.1.13, M_Int2, 2916)

Marianne's metaphoric use of "going back" in the last lines invokes the idea of travelling back

in time – an idea which she connects with further metaphors. Drawing on a 'sleep metaphor,'

she links her engagement with her past to changes in her present sense of self ("it has *awoken*

different feelings and different thoughts"). Moreover, her self-construction here hinges on a

'puzzle metaphor' ("different pieces about who i am"). Combining these perspectives, she

frames her process of learning and studying German as a journey during which she has

revisited perceptions from her past. She foregrounds the transformative nature of this 'journey'

by bringing into focus her re-interpretation of her *present* sense of self in light of her

engagement with the past ("being here has taught me about that"; "it has *awoken* pieces about

who i *am*").

Reinforcing these findings, she highlights her perception of having *integrated* her past

with her present during her studies. The next excerpt stems from a passage where we talk about

how Marianne perceives herself when she speaks different languages. In this context, I inquire

whether she can relate to the idea of having a 'mixed' or 'integrated' self, whereupon she

indicates that her studies have resulted in her perceived integration of past and present

experience:

M: as i continue with the studies here i feel more INtegrated; my past is becoming
    integrated with my current (--) in a in a in a different WAY.
Int: mhm,
M: so i like- i like that. an an and the cultural (-) aspects of my life are becoming
    integrated. so it is (-) mo:re integrated; and i think- it's because it's CONscious.
    (-) and that's why i think- it's- i would call it integrated.
Int: wh- WHAT is conscious?

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M: the pulling (---) the cultural pieces- the pulling the language together; pulling everything IN. and Using it. i think it was always THERE. but i guess it's the using it; it's actively ACcessing those pieces of my self // mhm.// <smiling<now that i didn't have before.>>
(2 sec)
M: <whispers<YEAH!>> (---)
((shared laughter))
M: so so e so i'm studying german- and i'm studying [her other field of study] or i'm studying french history; i'm studying whatever. those are all interesting pieces. and i'm learning them, and they become PART of me; because once i LEARN it, ya know, (-) but when i learn the GERman, (--) it is INtegrated. because it's bringing something- it's it's it's also meeting something that's deep inside myself. that's part of my history.
Int: mhm;
M: so it's not just learning, it's actually PULLing it in.
(6 sec) [...]   (Excerpt 6.1.14, M_Int1, 1641)

Marianne's affective performance – marked by her tone of voice, her long pauses, her whispers, her smile – indicate that she has arrived at a key insight ("YEAH!") about the outcome of her recent learning: it has allowed her to "actively access pieces of her self," and literally re-cognize and experience herself in a new way, as she revisits embodied memories of her past and makes them relevant to her present. In other words, she links her learning ("as i continue the studies here") to a process of merging perceptions from her present and past, as she "consciously" examines how they relate to each other. In her concluding words she reiterates this from another angle: She makes relevant how learning and studying German differs from learning other subjects in her perception, namely in that it is a *self-transformative* experience ("it's not just learning; it's actually PULLing it in"). She attributes this to her perception that in learning German, she is able to "meet something that's deep inside her and part of her history." In sum, she brings to view how her studies have not only taught her aspects about German language and culture, but also allowed her to learn something about her *herself* by consulting her past.

In association with this, she narrates how the described developments have gone hand in hand with changes in how she conceives of (speaking) German. Her portrayal of these changes is crucial to my purposes, hence it is worth looking at this point closely.

In the sequence following the last excerpt (6.1.14), Marianne mentions how her perceptions with respect to speaking German have shifted over time: "when i was thirty (.) and forty (.) [speaking german] just seemed like something from long agO. //mhm;// (---) and now i'm seeing it a little bit differently; it IS still from long ago but it's also now PREsent. it's it's (---) not just HIStory. (---) it's who i AM." (M_Int1, 1781). As an interviewer, I show particular interest in how she has come to see German as "who i AM." In her response, she elaborates how her views on language have shifted, recounting that she has come to realize that "german isn't just a skill" (M_Int1, 1900). She explains that unlike skills such as knitting, "the LANGuage becomes part of who you ARE." (M_Int1, 1871) and proceeds: "it's SO hard to explain; but it's NOT just a skill; i think, as a younger person i looked at it as just a skill; it was just another thing that i could- ye know- yes i can ADD- yes i can do THIS, i can do THAT; that's all language was." (M_Int1, 1874). The quotes indicate that she has come to see language as self-constitutive, and as such to reconceptualize the relation between language and the self. Intriguingly, her narrative also indicates that her newly acquired understanding of language and the self as mutually constitutive has led to changes in how she conceives herself as a German speaker. She indicates, for instance, that ways in which she defines and positions herself vis-à-vis the notion of 'native speaker' have shifted. Inspired by her elaborations on her altered understanding of the relation between language and the self, I inquire:

Int: would you consider yourself a NAtive speaker of german then?
(3 sec)
M: yeah. i think i would now. yeah.
Int: but it wasn't ALways that way?

M: no:::. because it- a a again it's that- it's that time when you think it's just a SKILL,
and you look at it; and you say i don't speak it WELL enough; i'm not-
a a it was part of (-) why i didn't teach my CHILdren; cause i didn't consider myself- (-)
//mhm,// i had this idea that to be a native speaker, i should be- (--) virtually PERfect,
((short laugh)) in my speech, ((short laugh)) and the recognition that- (--) no i don't have
to be perfect; an nya ya- [...]   (Excerpt 6.1.15, M_Int1, 1932)

Marianne here identifies how her newly gained view of language as self-constitutive enables her to redefine her understanding of 'native speaker' along with her position as a German speaker. She explicitly points out that her previous definition of 'native speaker' hinged on a discourse of correctness according to which being a native speaker entails speaking a language perfectly ("i had *this idea* that to be a native speaker i should be virtually perfect in my speech"). By laughing about this and by indicating what she identifies as her "recognition" that she does not have to be perfect she contests the discourse, marking her legitimacy to self-identify with the label regardless of whether her speech is perfect.

Importantly, she here also points to ways in which her previous adherence to the implied ideal of 'perfect German' impinged on her decisions and actions, evident in her remark "it was part of why i didn't teach my children." That is, she exposes how this discourse governed the realm of her self-perceived agency as a German language user, and how her acceptance of the discourse restricted her in the past.

As mentioned in 6.1.2.1, she states her regret about not having spoken German with her children – no later than in her response to the opening question. Albeit more subtly than in the above excerpt (6.1.15), she there already marks her awareness of the correctness discourse underlying her decision by attributing this choice to the "misguided belief (---) that (-) [her] german wasn't good enough" (M_Int1, 290).

Taken together, she constructs her awareness of this discourse as a key point in her development as a language user. Moreover, her narrative suggests that she has acquired new

ways of responding to this discourse regulating her possibilities. For instance, she stresses her determination to speak German with potential grandchildren. In short, she discursively links her altered understanding of language and her sense of self with newly perceived possibilities of positioning herself within discourses of correctness, expanding the scope of her agency as a language user.

In light of my purposes, it is worth keeping in mind the following findings arising from the analyses in 6.1.2.: Ideas resonating with the monolingual paradigm emerge as central points of reference in Marianne's account of learning and studying German, in particular a discourse of correctness according to which speaking well is to speak correctly as measured against a monolingual (standard) norm. Taken together, the analyses show that she positions herself *distinctly* vis-à-vis this discourse at different points, as she highlights different aspects she deems pivotal to her experience: On the one hand, I illustrated how she uses a 'native speaker ideal' as a benchmark against which she defines herself as a striving, successful, invested learner. We also saw how she presents herself as gradually 'perfecting' her German speech by marking her increasing ability to perform grammaticality judgements as an indicator for her success. On the other hand, the analysis illustrated that she de-emphasizes the importance of speaking German perfectly in order to reject a deficit-oriented perspective on herself, a) by drawing on a counter-discourse that gives priority to communicative abilities, and b) by exposing shortcomings of a view that defines language narrowly as a skill, instead reframing German as an integral part of her. In short, she constructs ideals relying on monolingual norms as central to her enactment of a preferred *learner* identity, while she stresses that she no longer gives primacy to these ideals in defining herself as a language *user*.

It is crucial that she constructs her awareness of this point as a valuable outcome of her learning and as important to her development as a German language user. This finding suggests that changes in how she consciously relates herself to ideas constituting the monolingual paradigm are relevant to her sense of self, her development, and her actions as a language user. Her narrative urges us to consider her process of studying German not exclusively in terms of expanding her German language abilities and learning about German culture. It urges us to consider the value she attributes to gaining awareness of language discourses and their effects. Moreover, it invites us to look at her class participation from a biographical perspective that highlights what she learned about *herself*.

6.1.3 Subjective perspectives on and experiences of being multilingual

The first part of this section targets how living with more than one language has played out across Marianne's adulthood, particularly in light of her marriage to a monolingual man. Next, I focus on how she conceives of (her) multilingualism from a more self-reflexive stance.

6.1.3.1 Multilingualism as a lived experience

Narrating how living with more than one language and culture has played out across her adulthood, Marianne marks how her choices, goals, and perceived possibilities have been shaped by her bond with her husband, whom she characterizes as "unilingual, unilingual english" (M_Int1, 90). Talking about her past, she associates her marriage to him with her entry into a phase in which she largely communicated in English and in which her German language abilities declined. Talking about the present and future, she points out that it is important to her to share formative experiences with her partner, and describes how attuning

her interests with those of her husband shapes how she perceives and lives her life as a multilingual person. In so doing, she depicts how her commitment to her husband continues to regulate the degree to which she integrates German into her current life and how this mediates the relation between German and her sense of self.

This is reflected, for instance, in her commentary on her language portrait. While she adds the outline of a heart into the body silhouette she remarks: "<soft whisper<i don't know, (2 sec) i don't know>> how much of that is GERman, and how much of that is ENGlish; [...] but probably a little bit more canadian than german, mostly because i live here, because my husband's here, because my family is here, because of all of THAT." (M_Int2, 2828). Likewise, her later reflections on how she believes that the heart section may look in the future bring to sight how her aspirations as a language user are shaped by her relationship. She states: "it will never be one colour or the other. I'LL never be one colour or the other." (M_Int2, 2967). Asked whether her heart will never be purple, she first responds: "uh=that would be the ultimate goal i think (-) is to make it purple;" (M_Int2, 2973). However, the next follow-up question leads her to reframe this goal as a dream that she will likely never live, in light of her relationship:

Int: do you think that that is something that (-) is uhm (.) well- so- realistic in a sense that that's something you're TRYing to do? or is that sort of like a a a an ideal dream that lives WITH you; or something like that;

M: it's an ideal that- dream that lives with me; recognizing that (---) the way my life is constituted right now; which sounds weird; (.) it won't happen. //mhm,// because in order for e- i think in order for it to grow more purple, i'd have to go back to germany for a while, and i'd need to be able to bring my husband into this part of my life WITH me. //mhm.// uhm (---) he is not interested (---) in in moving- in moving to germany with me; //mhm.// so i don't think it will become purple that way- //mhm.// because i can't- i cannot negate THAT part of my life to fulfill THIS part, //mhm.// and that's not a blame or ac- accusatory thing; //no. no.// so the purple is more of a dream, //mhm.// and that's okay. dreams are good too. (Excerpt 6.1.16, M_Int2, 2978)

In these comments, Marianne marks the importance she assigns to aligning her life trajectory with her husband's, thereby relaying how her commitment to him restricts the fuller integration of her languages in her present life to some extent. At the same time, she stresses her acceptance of this circumstance ("it's not an accusatory thing"), thus portraying the balancing acts underlying this alignment (weighing "that" against "this part") as a normal aspect of her subjectivity.

Other passages of her narrative reinforce this point. For instance, in one sequence, she emphasizes how extensively she differs from her husband with respect to the fascination she finds in experiencing cultural differences. She narrates how it thrills her to explore such differences during simple events such as shopping in different places of the world and trying "to nail down what it is that's different" (M_Int2, 3063). She reports that in contrast, her husband finds such cultural differences annoying. On the one hand, she expresses her frustration about this point, narrating, for instance that it "drives [her] NUTS" (M_Int2, 3031) that he doesn't like to travel. On the other hand, she emphasizes how supportive he has been with respect to her recent endeavors such as her sojourn, although he does not share her enthusiasm about comparing different cultures. In short, this part of her account brings into focus how, for Marianne, being multilingual entails balancing acts and negotiations concerning the extent to which and how to engage with language(s) and culture(s) in her life and in what she and her husband share as a couple. This includes the question how (far) to engage with German specifically, but also with the plurality of languages and cultures more in general.

It is important to note that overall, she foregrounds her ability to translate and mediate meanings in communications with her husband, as she introduces him to understandings that are assumedly unfamiliar to him. The following excerpt provides an example. Asked whether

the way Marianne wants to express herself in a particular language is sometimes influenced by

her other languages, she notes:

M: sometimes i think aw::! especially when speaking to my hus- aw::! wish you KNEW this
      (-) concept this WORD this iDEa this (--) because (-) well n whenever you speak more
      than one language you know this; certain certain languages have great words. //mhm,//
      and they have one word that describes a complex idea. //mhm.// english or german.
      //mhm.// and sometimes you just wish- your partner knew- if i'm speaking in english- i
      wish the partner knew the german word. [...] so yes every once in a while that does- that
      does cloud- it doesn't cloud- it just- you're aware of the fact that this would- this concept
      is //aha,// better explained in one word.   (Excerpt 6.1.17, M_Int1, 1111)

She here points to aspects of her multilingual experience that result from having what Kramsch

(2009) terms "multiply embodied understandings of social reality":

> If, according to Foley, culture is symbolic action, that is, 'a system of public meanings
> encoded in symbols and articulated in social action in particular places and with
> particular histories and times' (Foley 1997: 16-17), *then multilingual subjects have
> multiply embodied understandings of social reality and a broader and more varied
> range of options than others to act on these understandings.* Ultimately, they have the
> choice of foregrounding either their familiarity with the dominant language, or their
> multilingual sensibility. If they focus on the latter, their broader and more complex
> understandings of people and events can increase their opportunities for reflection on
> self and others and for a reappraisal of commonly held assumptions and beliefs. (pp.
> 124-125, emphasis added)

In line with this, Marianne does not frame the described experiences in encounters with

her partner as an insuperable problem. While the above excerpt 6.1.17 does indicate her

occasional desire for a closer 'match' between his and her own language repertoires ("aw::!

...wish you KNEW..."), she subsequently forefronts her facility in dealing with the issue.

Asked how she acts in the described situations, she recounts:

M: oh then i tell him i wish you speak german; i wish you could speak german sweetheart-
      but (--) since you can't let me TELL you ((laughs))
Int: ((chuckles)) so it- then you describe it?=or;
M: sometimes; it depends on what we're talking about; most a time- i assu- i mean
      my english vocabulary is quite extensive- so i can usually find-
Int: right. yeah.
M: find my way around that; that's not a problem.   (Excerpt 6.1.18, M_Int1, 1143)

It is clear from Marianne's response that dealing with perceived discrepancies between her own and her partner's repertoire is not a problem for her. Rather, she foregrounds her ability to a) identify and b) mediate semantic concepts for which she cannot find a satisfying 'compact' equivalent in English. Her account of mediating meanings to her husband indexes what Kramsch calls the ability to "act on understandings of social reality" in the above quote. Marianne indeed highlights her *multilingual sensibility* instead of casting the described phenomenon in terms of a compulsion to express only what the English language would lead her to say. As such, her narrative does not only illuminate how living with a partner who is "firmly rooted in being a Canadian" (M_Int2, 3463) restricts the scope of her actions as a multilingual person. It also shows how she transgresses the realm of monolingualism as she translates meanings to him in her everyday life.

Having presented how Marianne depicts the experiential side of living with more than one language and culture, I turn to her reflections on multilingualism.

6.1.3.2 Marianne's perspectives on multilingualism

Marianne's narrative includes extended stretches in which she takes a self-reflexive stance on what it means to be multilingual, and on what she values about being multilingual. Her reflections highlight three points: a) how she values what she describes as a heightened sense of language awareness that she associates with being multilingual; b) the pleasure she derives from moving back and forth between different linguistic worlds; and c) cognitive advantages she associates with living with more than one language. I will consider these points in turn.

In order to illustrate how she values her awareness of ways in which language impacts her perception of the world, she tells me a short story:

M: i went to the museum to see diego rivera [...] with my parents. //mhm,// and- because we
all know a little bit of spanish; [...] and i remember my parents saying- oh i love the
spanish the way they- so many of the verbs are reflective- reFLEXive. //mhm,// and they
bring it back to- see? look at lis- look at this sense; you see how different that is; it just
doesn't translate correctly; and and it's being aware of those things that i really love.

(Excerpt 6.1.19, M_Int1,1459)

In this story, Marianne centers on the pleasure she gains from viewing one language world in
light of another – how she enjoys her awareness of linguistic relativity and of the fact that
human experience is linguistically constituted.

Relatedly, she foregrounds how she enjoys moving between language worlds. For
instance, in the larger context of telling me about situations in which she thinks in German, she
recounts how she listens to German audio books during her commutes to the university, noting
how she 'delves into' the German language, no longer having to translate what she is hearing.
In this context, she remarks:

M: i love being in school right now because i find i i spend so much time moving
back and forth; and actually i find that fun.
Int: between the worlds?
M: ya! (---) it tickles my brain a little bit; i really like it.
((shared laughter))
M: so i love i love the drives home, i love listening to the- k- i love listening to the-
Int: hörspiele [audio books]
M: mhm;   (Excerpt 6.1.20, M_Int2, 2023)

Moreover, she addresses cognitive advantages she links to multilingualism. When
asked what she considers most important or interesting about "growing up that way language-
wise" she maintains:

M: I truly believe. (--) that having (.) a SEcond language (.) regardless of which one it is
(---) is SO great for your BRAIN. (--) ((laughs)) i LIKE my brain.=ya know, ((short
shared laughter)) that because when- what happens is you you learn how to th::ink
differently. because language does help- how you think and process things. //mhm,// and
you PROcess ideas differently in german than you do in english. //mhm,// so i don't care
which two languages you you speak. when- as soon as you have a second language
you've you've learned- there's skills that you have acquired that you don't even realize
you've acquired; //mhm,// in terms of being able to think things through. //mhm,// and

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(---) i think a second language is (-) SO:: (-) brilliant. //mhm,// and i would never want to give that up. (Excerpt 6.1.21, M_Int1, 1342)

Resonating with dynamic models of multilingualism, her reply points to cognitive advantages ("skills...to think things through") arising from the capacity to conceptualize events in multiple ways, looking through alternate language lenses ("you PROcess ideas differently in german than you do in english"). To stake out in more detail what she associates with this capacity, she then *contrasts* multilingual against monolingual cognition, using her husband's family as a point of reference:

M: [...] i see the difference. and i understand the difference; and i watch that in (-) my husband's family (-) where it's all unilingual.//mhm, m.// versus any family where you're multilingual. and (2 sec) just THAT facility that you have to think differently is HUGE. //mhm,// i think we take it so for granted here in this (.) program[41]; uh ((laughs)) i think in germany they take it very for granted- very much for granted, because so many people speak a sicond- second language, //mhm,// in europe in many places they speak a second language. //mhm.// and i don't think- that's something i noticed being married to a u-unilingual man in a unilingual family. (--) is that LACK.   (Excerpt 6.1.22 M_Int1, 1374)

Asked to specify what she associates with this 'lack,' she explains:

M: i think it's it's sometimes the appr- the approach to a problem, or the approach to an idea, or the approach to something; (2 sec) uhm because i would find sometimes (2 sec) especially if the solution came to me; or a word came to me in german; and that happened all the way through; so even though i wasn't speaking it, it some- every once in a while a word would pop up- or something would pop up- and beCAUSE of that idea of different words being able to encapsulate complex meanings, //mhm,// it also sometimes pointed into a different direction for a solution or a direction for the conversation. //mhm.// and that's something they don't HAVE.

(Excerpt 6.1.23, M_Int1, 1402)

Two points are noteworthy. First, she deems important how words that "pop up" extend her possibilities of approaching challenges ("a solution to a problem") and of taking influence on how social dynamics unfold ("a direction for the conversation"). That is, she constructs her ability to view events from distinct perspectives *simultaneously* as a core aspect of her multilingual experience and an aspect that she deeply values. Here, her account echoes the

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[41] She is referring to the German program in which she is enrolled

notion that multilingual people have a wider range of options to act on understandings of social reality expressed by Kramsch (2009) in the above-cited quote.

Second, it is worth noting how she here emphasizes the *contrast* between what she depicts as monolingual and multilingual abilities and realities ("i see the difference. and i understand the difference"). She contrasts social spaces in which the capacities she associates with being multilingual are "taken for granted" (multilingual families; the German department; Germany; Europe) with monolingual families, who "lack" these capacities in her view. In this particular context, she does not detail what it means to her as a multilingual language user to navigate between spaces that differ in the extent to which 'multilingual perspectives' can be taken for granted. Yet, her remark indicates that this point is relevant to her experience as a multilingual person – a point I will come back to when examining her narrative in relation to other participants' accounts in chapter 7.

In sum, Marianne's account resonates with dynamic views on multilingualism in how it foregrounds her ability to shift between perspectives and the circulation of meanings across contexts. Moreover, her narrative shows that the way in which she has lived her life as a multilingual person, and how and to what degree she has engaged with German depends on how she and her husband approach life as a couple. It provides us with a clearer picture of what it means to look at heritage learners not in terms of fixed ties to a community, but in terms of how they "shape their agency as they mediate heritage in the here and now," as demanded by Gounari (2014) and others (see chapter 4). We come to see how, for her, German is not only relevant in 'heritage contexts,' but chiefly shapes her perspectives in all sorts of social constellations (such as in communications with her husband). Her situation

indeed requires her to be at home in translingual/transcultural practice (see chapter 4). In short, her narrative illustrates how speaking and living with German as a 'heritage' language in Canada is not merely a matter of *maintaining* language and culture. It suggests that the extent to which 'heritage' can "come alive" (Gounari, 2014) depends on her performance of balancing acts, as she engages with significant others who are *not* necessarily part of her core family or a 'heritage' community.

6.1.4 Conclusion

Having examined how Marianne constructs her family background, her experience of learning and living with German, and her multilingual subjectivity, it is now possible to condense the findings from these three realms, and briefly consider them in light of the theoretical background of this study, specifically: How does Marianne's self-portrayal as a language user and learner relate to the construct of HERITAGE LEARNER, and how does it add to our understanding of her case to take into account her multilingual subjectivity?

In some ways, Marianne's self-construction as a user and learner of German is in sync with traditional views on heritage learners. Her account suggests her investment in an identity that she links to an imagined community she associates with her father and as such, her 'German heritage.' She conceives of German language and culture as part of her heritage, which she deems important to her sense of self and which she associates with a sense of pride. Her desire to live up to what I termed a 'proper GERman ideal' also resonates with mainstream views on heritage learners.

Beyond this, the analysis identified a number of aspects relevant to her experience and learning processes that are not captured in traditional understandings of HERITAGE LEARNER.

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First, she illuminates how defining herself vis-à-vis 'heritage' entails complex positionings in the process of "maneuvering through HOW to be," as she puts it. Second, she points to facets that are important to her experience that resonate with models of dynamic multilingualism – challenges, thrills, and desires that arise from the comparison and plurality of perspectives shaping her perceptions. Third, her account illustrates that to her, learning and studying German is not only about gaining knowledge about German language and culture, but also about integrating memories of the past into the present, converging different feelings about who she is, thereby transforming her sense of self. Fourth, the findings show how her affective experience, her perceived possibilities, and her actions as a German speaker are mediated by language-related discourses and her ability to position herself in relation to the meanings they transport, such as ideals of correctness or the idea that language is a skill.

Finally, the following finding that emerges when viewing the results from 6.1.1 – 6.1.3 in relation to each other is worth retaining for discussion in chapter 7: At no point does Marianne relate the desires, perspectives, and abilities she deems crucial to her experience as a multilingual speaker to the theme of learning and studying German. Overall, her narrative suggests that the aspect she most values about 'having and being German' is her ability to take on a translingual/transcultural perspective. The goals and experiences she associates with investing in German, however, rely on the premise of monolingual normativity.

6.2 Henning's narrative

Introduction

Henning is a young man in his early twenties, who speaks English, German, and French to varying degrees. He has resided in English-dominated parts of Canada his entire life, but holds Canadian and German citizenship, since his mother is German. In the first years of his life he reportedly communicated in German with her, however he recalls that English became the language predominantly used among all members of his core family once he entered school. He attended an English-French bilingual school for 12 years, but has not become involved with French outside of the immersion program, apart from short interactions during trips to Québec, as he recounts. Though he remembers that he rarely spoke German at home after he reached school age, he continued to practice and develop his German in different contexts. Apart from occasionally using German in conversations with his mother, he travelled to Germany nearly every year of his life to visit his extended family and friends. As a young adult, he has also become involved with German in the home of his girlfriend who I will call Jenny. Jenny moved from Germany to Canada when she was ten, and her family continues to communicate in German, as Henning recounts. At the age of nineteen, he completed one elementary German as a foreign language university course – the only incident of learning German through formal instruction in his biography.

Henning's participation included two interviews, one written reflection, and the creation of a language portrait. Owing to his time schedule, he began with the written component. A few weeks after he had completed his reflection, we met for the initial interview. Although we did not know each other before the study, we quickly created rapport, resulting in what I perceived to be a relaxed atmosphere during our conversations. He volunteered several

short stories and openly shared self-reflexive thoughts, but did not engage in extensive narrative. After another month, we met for a follow-up interview, during which he also created his language portrait. As with the previous case, I will provide a brief (thematic) overview of the data resulting from the three sources and derive focal points for analysis.

Written component. In his written reflection, Henning chose to respond to the question: *Please describe an instance/instances of developing your German that you consider particularly valuable (including formal and/or informal learning). Why do you think these instances stand out to you?* [42] In his response, he singles out three trips to Germany he took at the ages of sixteen, seventeen, and twenty, specifying how his language abilities progressed during each trip and identifying factors to which he attributes his progress.

Language Portrait. Creating his portrait (see appendix F), Henning selects red for English, blue for French, and yellow for German based on associations with the Canadian, German, French, and Quebecois flags. He subdivides the head into a larger red (English) section in the centre, and two smaller sections of equal size at the sides, one blue (French), and one yellow (German), in order to reflect that English is his dominant language, as he explains. He colours his arms blue (French), remarking that he associates French with "hands-on" activities in school, fills the torso red, and colours one leg yellow (German) and the other red (English), comparing them to roots.

Oral accounts. Overall, Henning gives a very positive account of learning and living with German in Canada and of being multilingual. He expresses gratefulness for having grown up with German, foregrounding the usefulness and value in being able to draw on three languages – English, German, and French. Responding to the opening question (see chapter 5), he recounts how he acquired these languages, alluding to French and English only briefly,

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[42] For Henning's choice of questions, see appendix E

while giving more attention to how he acquired German in communicating with his mother as well as during his annual visits to Germany.

He repeatedly notes that it was always beyond question whether he learn German, given the connection with his extended family in Germany – as Henning puts it, he was more "forced" to learn the language rather than having invested great efforts to intentionally develop his German. In this context, a recurring point in his narrative concerns his perception that his German language abilities are limited. He returns to this theme several times, though none of my questions target his linguistic abilities. In particular, he re-states in different contexts that his "knowledge of german grammar is pretty slim" (e.g. H_Int1, 131). Based on this perception, he does not consider himself a native speaker of German. Accordingly, he does not conceive of German as a native language, which he relates to his sense that he "only knows a little bit of german" (Int_1, 1246). At the same time, he recurrently emphasizes that he is content with his German language abilities and sees no need to improve them, unless his situation changed, for example if he decided to move to Germany temporarily.

A striking feature in his narrative is how he compares and juxtaposes his experiences of learning German inside versus outside the classroom. When asked to tell me more about the trips he singled out as valuable instances of developing his German in his written reflection, he recounts in detail how he perceived the increase in his German language abilities during communicative encounters abroad. When recounting how he learned German in class, he gives most attention to perceptions concerning the question whether he "should have been in that class" (H_Int1, 469) based on his mastery of some domains of the language. Later taking a self-reflexive stance, he compares and evaluates his progress in both of the two contexts.

In his account of what it has meant to him to be multilingual, he talks about challenges (e.g. keeping apart German and French words in what he implicitly constructs as monolingual spaces), as well as about thrills of being multilingual. With respect to the latter, he specifies both instrumental advantages (e.g. facilitated travel) and non-instrumental advantages (e.g. how he values comparing and playing with languages).

While speaking German and travelling to Germany stand out as aspects that have clearly shaped Henning's biography and his perspectives, he does not give much attention to other aspects potentially associated with having a 'German background' on his own accord (e.g. cultural traditions, etc.). Only when asked whether he would be the same person had he not grown up "that way[43]" does he narrate how other aspects he associates with his background have shaped his sense of self in a unique way.

As with Marianne's case, I will now derive focal points for my analyses within the three main sections that correspond to my research questions on the basis of the themes here identified as unique to Henning's narrative.

Living with a German background. In Henning's case, I at first found it difficult to identify points that stand out in his account of what living with a German background has meant to him, until I realized that it is precisely how he de-emphasizes the relevance of German identities in defining himself that make his account unique. The analysis will hence target how he achieves this effect by examining how he positions himself with respect to different social categories – 'Canadian,' 'German,' and 'local German community.'

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[43] In my attempt to approach participants as openly as possible (i.e. without implying the relevance of a 'heritage identity' upfront) as explained in chapter 4, the exact wording of my question was: "do you think you would be the same person without (--) having grown up that way?" (H_Int1, 1393). The word *that* does here not refer to anything specific from the immediate conversational context, but rather stands in a broad sense for the unique way in which Henning grew up with respect to language and culture. Though this wording is not conventional and rather imprecise, Henning had no problems interpreting it. In fact, he sets out to answer before I can finish it: "no I don't think so." (H_Int1, 1397).

Perspectives on learning German. With respect to learning-related themes, Henning's account yields a number of striking features for closer examination. Firstly, given his emphasis of how he was "forced" to learn German, as he puts it, and how he juxtaposes experiences of learning German in and outside the classroom, I will examine subjective learning theories underlying his narrations on both contexts. Secondly, it is intriguing how he accentuates the imperfection of his German language abilities, while at the same time he stresses that he is content with his level of German. I will examine how these points stand in relation to each other in order to gain insight into Henning's self-understanding and aspirations as a language user and of his orientation toward learning-related actions.

Multilingual subjectivity. The way in which Henning constructs non-instrumental advantages is a particularly striking feature of his narrative, specifically with respect to how he enjoys playing with languages together with others, and how this has shaped interactions with his girlfriend, hence the analysis will concentrate on this point.

6.2.1 Living with German and a German background in Canada

Henning frames his experience of growing up with a German background in Canada in very positive terms. He expresses his deep appreciation for having learnt the German language, for traditions practiced in his home that he associates with German culture, and above all, for having been able to travel to Germany regularly during his entire life. As noted, he identifies how his background has uniquely shaped his life in Canada, yet he does not overly emphasize this point, nor does he give relevance to any kind of a German identity in narrations on his sense of self. To illustrate this, I will first analyze how Henning positions himself in relation to three social categories – 'Canadian,' the 'local German community,' and 'German' – as he

narrates how his background has shaped his position within different spaces of social activity. Second, I examine how he constructs his sense of self in relation to the German *language*, considering, in particular, how these constructions relate to the discourse of 'language as heritage.'

6.2.1.1. Social categories and sense of self – Canadian, local German, German

Asked whether he believes that he would be the same person had he not grown up 'that way' Henning tells me about what he refers to as "German customs" that he practices at home, and which, in his view, set him apart from peers who grew up without a German background. For instance, he talks about several Christmas traditions practiced in his family. He also recalls that as a child, he possessed wooden toys from Germany and watched TV shows that were not known to his peers in Canada. According to Henning, his peers did not comment on these aspects during his youth. However, he recounts that meanwhile, it has become a joke among his friends that he engaged in "strange" (H_Int1, 1477) activities as a child – an aspect that he laughs about whole-heartedly, as he re-enacts how his friends sometimes playfully exclude him:

H: they don't make fun of me, but they're just like- you wou-- <smilevoice<like like you wouldn't understand it- it's canadian;>> <high-pitch smilevoice<i AM canadian(.) guys;>> em like no no no. you're not <laughing<canadian in the same way WE are;>> [...] i mean they didn't [...] think much of it when we were ACtually kids; but now it's kind of a funny joke amongst our friends.   (Excerpt 6.2.1, H_Int1, 1469)

By framing the interaction as a joke, Henning here indicates that he is generally accepted as "Canadian" by his friends in Canada. Instead of portraying himself as seriously offended by the reported comments of his peers, he re-enacts in a self-confident and entertaining manner how he opposes being denied the status of 'true' Canadian, hence presenting himself as 'Canadian

in his own right.' While he thereby sets himself apart from non-German Canadians, his story is ultimately not as much about how he unalterably *differs* from mainstream Canadian society. Rather, he constructs his background as a feature that has earned him (positive) attention within what he construes as 'Canadian' context – that is, a feature that uniquely characterizes his position *as* a member of Canadian society.

One point that stands out in Henning's construction of his background is how he positions himself vis-à-vis social groups associated with a 'German' identity, local or abroad. He de-emphasizes the relevance of such identities in defining his sense of self, as I will illustrate with two examples.

The first concerns his stance towards the local German community in the area where he lives, which is well-known for its German heritage. Henning does not make any reference to the community during the entire first interview, hence in the second, I inquire what associations the phrase *German community* triggers in him. In his response, he talks about activities organized by the local German clubs, such as *Oktoberfest* or *Christkindl Market*. As he is listing the names of some of the German clubs, his focus suddenly shifts. Rather than continuing to generate associations with the phrase, he tells me that he has not been involved in these kinds of circles, subsequently using 'German community' as a point of reference with respect to which he positions himself. After further elaborating that he has not participated in the kinds of activities mentioned, he arrives at the following conclusion: "yeah i'm german and i'm here; but i don't need other germans and to<smilevoice<yeah celebrate being german with them.>>" (H_Int2, 2137). Through this remark, he does not only distance himself from the particular German community in the region. The notion that he *does not need other Germans to celebrate being German*, as he puts it, indicates that affiliating himself with a 'German'

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group is not among the aspects that he deems relevant to how his German background has shaped his life. On the whole, by choosing to position himself in relation to the label (rather than continuing to generate associations with the phrase 'German community'), he rejects an implied heritage-related discourse, namely the notion that having a cultural background entails being a member of a matching cultural community.

The second example concerns how Henning positions himself vis-à-vis the notion of national German identity. In parallel with the first, he does not address whether or to what degree he self-identifies as 'German' on his own accord. It is me who leads us to talk about this topic towards the end of the first interview, by bringing up his German citizenship:[44]

Int: you actually do have german cititzenship as well.
H: yeah.
Int: and do you feel GERman?
H: uhm (-) not really. it's nice going to airports cause you can go in the european
     union line and the NON european union line […]   (Excerpt 6.2.2, H_Int1, 1507)

Subsequently he tells stories about airport experiences, foregrounding how having dual citizenship can facilitate (and sometimes complicate) travel. He does not link his German citizenship to feelings such as pride at any point, but focuses on instrumental advantages of holding dual citizenship. As in the first example, he constructs the German identity reflected in his citizenship as fairly insignificant to his sense of self.

Accordingly, as an interviewer, I subsequently inquire whether Henning feels German *independent* of his official citizenship status, to which he replies: "not really [...] i guess i feel german but i've never lived there so i am kind of missing a bit of the cultural aspect of being german" (H_Int, 1519). Further supporting the above line of interpretation, he here indicates how his sense of self emerges from lived experience ("I never lived there") rather than foregrounding his affiliation with or his inheritance of a national (or any other 'fixed') identity.

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[44] Henning had indicated in the initial questionnaire that he has dual (Canadian- German) citizenship.

6.2.1.2 German language and Henning's sense of self

In defining his sense of self in relation to German language, Henning foregrounds perceptions he associates with his use of German and his language expertise. He depicts how his self-perception as a language user shifts across context and time, depending on aspects such as the extent to which he uses German, the ease with which he speaks different languages at a given time, as well as his own and others' assessment of his German. For instance, asked whether the extent to which he feels German varies depending on whether he is in Germany or in Canada, he draws attention to the mediating role of language:

H: it's all relative; cause i'm more german than canadians; but less german than germans; //mhm.// so and with the language barrier i can impress canadians with my small knowledge of german, //ah// but ((chuckles)) a german will easily tell that i'm NOT german; //aha// based on my accent. //aha.// and just how i speak and stuff.

(Excerpt 6.2.3, H_Int1, 1529)

Henning here indicates that the degree to which he feels German depends on how (well) he supposedly speaks German in the eyes of others who are present in a particular context. While he here constructs his German language abilities as 'objectively substandard' – a point to which I will return – he addresses how his sense of self arises from what he can do with German language as compared to others present in a given context, as well as from their assessment of his German speech and expertise.

In accordance, being asked whether he considers himself a native speaker of German, he notes: "well n:ot r:eally;=no; since (---) i (-) i don't think my- (-) my capabilities in german are really that high; or high enough to be considered that." (H_Int1, 1847). His slight initial hesitance (well, n:ot r:eally) suggests that he is aware that he could justifiably portray himself as a native speaker based on factors other than expertise (e.g. because his mother communicated in German with him since his birth). By rejecting this view, he gives priority to

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defining native speakership on the basis of linguistic expertise rather than invoking a discourse that frames language as heritage.

In his language portrait, Henning reconciles the conflict between defining himself in relation to German either on the basis of inheritance *or* on expertise. On the one hand, he emphasizes that English is his "dominant language [...and] still the biggest language in [his] life" (H_Int2, 2218), as he assigns red (English) to his entire torso and to the largest section in the centre of his head, while he places blue (French) and yellow (German) into his head "equally, but to the side" (H_Int2, 2207). He leaves open whether the notion of language dominance here refers primarily to the ease with which he is able to converse in his different languages or whether he is referring to the extent to which he uses them. It is clear, however, that his reference to and his artistic representation of language dominance marks the importance that *using* his languages has to his self-perception. On the other hand, he creates one yellow (German) and one red (English) leg, and comments: "the legs are kind of like *roots*; so half my roots come from german, and the other half are canadian. (--) english." (H_Int2, 2223). Here he draws on the discourse of rooted identities and the related notion that languages index identities, thereby integrating into his self-portrayal the idea that he 'inherited' German – *and* English!

To summarize, while Henning cherishes having grown up with German and while he appreciates the cultural customs practiced in his home, he does not express his loyalty to a local group that claims to represent a German cultural tradition, nor does he foreground a deep affiliation with any other German group or identity. It is clear from his language portrait and from his unrequested positioning vis-à-vis the local 'German community' that he is aware of

heritage-related discourses (such as the notion that living with a cultural background means being a member of an attendant community), yet he chooses not to foreground these discourses on his own accord in narrating what his background has meant to him. Specifically, the analysis identified means by which he relativizes (and to some extent opposes) such discourses, e.g. by disconfirming potential ties to the local German community and by eclipsing the conception of German language as part of a 'heritage package.' Instead, he portrays his German background primarily with reference to lived experiences that have shaped who he is and how he relates to others in different spaces, such as in his family or among his circle of friends in Canada.

6.2.2 Henning's narrations on learning German

As noted, one salient aspect of Henning's narrative concerns the importance and close attention he gives to instances of acquiring German outside of the classroom. He is the only participant who explicitly contrasts his experiences of institutional learning with learning processes outside of the classroom. Thus, I will begin by examining how Henning conceives of his language learning/acquisition process and of himself as a learner-acquirer of German within these two contexts as well as how he juxtaposes them, before I analyze his language aspirations and orientation towards investing in German.

6.2.2.1 Developing German language abilities outside of the classroom

A salient theme in Henning's narrative is his sense that he "was kind of *forced* into having to learn it [German]" (H_Int1, 38). He begins his written reflection by stating: "I learned German basically *because I had to*, with my mom being a German immigrant and all of her family

living in Germany not speaking much or any English" (H_writ, p.1, emphasis added). Similarly, he introduces his account of visiting Germany without his mother for the first time as follows: "After never really trying to improve upon my German, *I was eventually forced to* when I visited Germany with just my sister." (H_writ, p.1, emphasis added). In these quotes, Henning constructs his acquisition of German as an integral and unalterable aspect of growing up. He clarifies, however, that he does not associate negative feelings with his perception: "forced into it [learning German] sounds negative, but (.) it wasn't a negative experience at all; it was just- i HAD to." (H_Int1, 789). As such, rather than emphasizing his initiative in advancing his German language abilities, he stresses the impact that external forces have had on his linguistic development.

Yet, Henning gives meticulous attention to the ways in which his ability to use German developed in non-institutional settings. Specifically, he depicts his progress as a process of *adapting* to new communicative conditions. In the following excerpt, he portrays his linguistic advances as an effect of his adaptation to changing circumstances that resulted from the fact that he was travelling independently for the first time.

H: i went there when i was- i was seventeen [...] by myself for the first time, and i spent a lot of time with my friend there, //mhm,// and (--) uhm (-) and THAT was kind of when i was first like- wow; this is what it's like to have a real german converSAtion; not- with like my family would always speak slower with me; and use words- //okay// that i always- knew i- like i underSTOOD. //mhm.// but then like with my friend and all of HIS friends- uh <smilevoice<i dunno. i guess they just didn't really CARE about that>> [...] so i found i had to sort of (.) understand it better. [...] i just kind of had to THINK faster, //mhm,// and so once i got the- the THINking faster in german part; //hhm,// then (.) i could understand- (-) i dunno more (.) sentence structure; and- (-) and then i started being like- (.) i dunno just you put the (-) d'you put the subject before the VERB? or the verb for the- (.) like yeah; //mhm,// just like i dunno; it was just the way that things go like that; and (.) //mhm,// and then i found myself actually (-) i could speak (-) BETter.

(Excerpt 6.2.4, H_Int1, 215)

Recalling this incident, he traces the process of his learning by a) identifying changed circumstances in communicative situations he encountered (his peers didn't simplify their speech); b) identifying specific challenges afforded by these changes ("i just kind of had to THINK faster"); c) identifying his own reaction ("i started being like..."); and d) linking the process to a successful outcome ("i could understand more sentence structure"; "i could speak BETter"). By framing his learning as a *reaction* to new conditions in his communicative surroundings, he locates his agency in the *interaction* with his linguistic environment.

The same perspective is reflected in his comments on his language portrait. Being asked how he believes that the portrait would differ had he created it to reflect his sense of self at different points in time, he describes how the *proportions* of the colours would shift, depending on the degree to which he actively participated in settings where the according languages were used. For instance, while he anticipates that the French (blue) section in the head area might decrease in future, with respect to German, he speculates: "the yellow side;=the german side would GROW, //mhm,// yeah *just cause (-) where i am (-) now-*" (H_Int2, 2345). In light of the broader conversational context, I interpret the phrase "just cause where i am now" to refer to his current regular engagement with circles where German is spoken.[45]

Furthermore, the same underlying view is reflected in his belief that, even at present, "[he's] always LEARning it [German]" (H_Int1, 1873), given his contact with people who speak German, particularly surrounding his girlfriend Jenny. Illustrating this point, he recounts how he has learned to spell German words correctly in Facebook conversations with Jenny's cousin, arriving at the conclusion: "i dunno i'm still- i'm still learning all the time" (H_Int1,

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[45] For instance, he points out that being able to speak German with his girlfriend's and his own family and friends in Germany motivates him "to keep german and (.) even improve on it" (H_Int2, 2386).

1018). As such, instead of drawing a clear line between instances of learning and instances of using German, he gives primacy to a view where learner and speaker constructions merge.

Accordingly, his accounts of developing his German in non-institutional settings illuminate how narrated linguistic advances have gone hand in hand with changes in Henning's perception of himself as a speaker. For instance, in order to illustrate how the development of his language abilities allowed him to "become more casual around people" (H_Int1, 804) he notes: "at that point in my life when i was seventeen and after that now i feel i can (.) sort of make jokes (.) and people underSTAND them" (H_Int1, 816).

To summarize, Henning conceives of his development of German as a constant (non-teleological, non-linear) process of expanding what he can do with German by embracing learning opportunities that evolve from his engagement in particular contexts where he uses the language. In order to give meaning to his process of acquiring German in non-institutional settings, he invokes a 'quasi-organic' metaphor by foregrounding his successful adaptation to circumstances afforded by the language environments he navigates: From this point of view, the development of his German evolves 'naturally,' as it were, from his 'exposure' to conditions in his surroundings, as reflected in the wording "the German side would GROW" (H_Int2, 2345) quoted above. I will subsequently refer to this perspective underlying his account as a 'developmental view' on his linguistic progress.

6.2.2.2 Learning German in the classroom
In order to present how Henning constructs his experience of and perspectives on learning German in the classroom, the analysis first targets how Henning portrays himself as a student, what aspects he makes relevant to his in-class experience, and how he thereby conceptualizes

learning German in class. Second, I discuss how he evaluates his classroom experience and how it figures into his development as a language user.

How does Henning portray his experience of learning German in class? In narrating his classroom experience, Henning stresses his perception of having a unique position in the class. More precisely, he compares his German language abilities with those of his classmates, who "had NO understanding of German" (H_Int1, 465) according to Henning. In light of the fact that it was an elementary course, he repeatedly states that on the one hand, he "probably shouldn't have been in that class" (e.g. H_Int1, 575) given his advanced German language abilities, while on the other, he believes that "[he] would've completely FAILED one level up" (H_Int1, 549). Illustrating these conflicting perceptions, he oscillates back and forth between two poles: on the one side, he narrates stories that set him apart from his peers, who were reportedly challenged by tasks that he completed with ease. On the other, he describes tasks such as grammatical exercises, which he reportedly "wasn't very good at" (H_Int1, 479), thereby explaining (and potentially justifying) his decision to remain in the course. He portrays his unique position from a humorous perspective, such as in this example:

H: i remember on every test (.) had just like a listening part; //mhm,// where you would
    be given a paragraph with blanks in it, //mhm,// and just had to fill in the words that
    they would say; and the teacher would play that maybe three times; (.) and i'd have
    it (.) done the first time. //mhm.// and the others were like- yeah they were like
    <cries out<one more time; one more time PLEASE;>> and i was just- well this is-
    maybe i'll read it over aGAIN just to make sure i got it right;=but- //((shared
    laughter))// after three times i'm like i'm pretty sure; and i- yeah i would always (.)
    get a perfect on that part and then- (-) but then some of the more simple parts,
    //mhm,// uhm- (-) i would have to STUdy for them; (Excerpt 6.2.5, H_Int1, 483)

The quote exemplifies how Henning compares his *mastery* of German to his classmates' language abilities across different linguistic domains in an extended passage, in a way that closely resembles how heritage learners have been constructed in the literature as falling in

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between the 'typical' foreign language student and 'native controls' with respect to implied proficiency continua (see chapter 2).

His mastery of different aspects of the German language system is also at the centre of Henning's response to the question what he was able to gain from the class. Specifying how he conceives of the outcome of his class participation, he mentions enhanced literacy skills and the acquisition of new words, and notes that he "did improve (-) improve [his] grammar" (H_Int1, 564). Similarly, he volunteers the following explanation as to why he remained in the beginners' class despite his advanced German language abilities, yet again placing what he refers to as "grammar" at the centre: "<smilevoice<i probably shouldn't have BEEN in that class;>> it was pretty easy for me; *but (-) they were doing (.) grammar and stuff; (.) that i didn't know about*; uhm (-) so (.) and like <smilevoice<der die DAS[46]>> […]" (H_Int1, 468).

It is noteworthy that he associates institutional language learning with the notion of 'grammar' not only in his narrations on the specific language course he took, but in several other thematic contexts related to institutional language instruction. To give but one example, in one passage he is comparing his German language abilities to his abilities in French, when he notes: "i can probably speak [...] german better than i can speak french now just cause i use german more than french //mhm,// but *grammatically i can (.) i'm better in french* than in german //mhm,// *cause i took it in school* [...]" (H_Int1, 1039). He here attributes his more pronounced ability to produce grammatically correct structures in French to the fact that he learned French in school. This statement reflects the idea that learning a language in an institution is (largely) centered on learning how to speak it (more) correctly as defined by standardized norms.

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[46] *Der*, *die*, and *das* are the three definite articles in German. Henning is here referring to the task of assigning the correct gender to a lexical item.

In sum, the mastery of German – and in particular, what Henning calls "grammar" – is a key point of reference in his narrations on learning German in class. While he uses the word *grammar* to refer to different aspects in different conversational contexts and mostly does not specify what he means by "grammar" altogether, as a point of reference the notion clearly serves two narrative effects. First, it consistently stands for those aspects that Henning self-reportedly *lacks* as a German speaker, as measured against an implied standard. This finding is particularly evident when he states (upon my inquiry) that he does not consider himself a native speaker of German and elaborates: "like i've been saying- (.) it's just grammar (.) really i'm (.) lacking. //mhm,// and (.) and even reading and writing; //mhm.// it's like i- (.) i can do it at a- at a CHILD'S level; [...]" (H_Int1, 1846). Second, he constructs the language classroom, in turn, as a site that functions to compensate for this self-declared lack – a place to expand and perfect his knowledge of the German language system.

How does Henning evaluate his classroom experience? One of the most intriguing aspects in Henning's narrative is that he does not mention the language class in his response to the opening question on how he learned and developed German across his life, nor does he bring it up in his written reflection on instances he deems specifically valuable to his language development. That is, he does not construct learning German in class as an integral part of his (German) language trajectory.

While the subjective value that he assigns to the course remains vague in his first and most extensive portrayal of his enrolment, he later evaluates the outcome of the class explicitly. Somewhat unexpectedly, he brings up the class in the context of reflecting on whether German feels like a *native* language to him. In order to provide a closer understanding of his evaluation of the class in this particular context, it is worth quoting the passage that leads

up to his assessment of the class at some length. In this stretch, he relays that German has never felt like a native language to him, because he has reportedly never overcome the sense that his German is incomplete, despite his awareness of advances:

H: uhm so i've always kind of felt the same way as- like oh i- i know a little bit of german; and when people ask me; like oh- like oh you can speak german; i always tell them like ya i can i can speak it and understand it but i can't read or write- and (-) and even my speaking like isn't the best; //aha,// uhm (--) so and i've told the people that my entire life even though it HAS been improving […]
(Excerpt 6.2.6, H_Int1, 1245)

Henning here implicitly equates nativity with the complete acquisition of a language, at the same time constructing himself as an incomplete speaker of German against the background of this nativity discourse. He then sets out to make the point that he "never takes his German to the next step," yet breaks, now bringing up the language class:

H: *i never-* well except for that one university course, which (-) wasn't the most helpful- in (-) in a sense in (-) i mean i learned some- i learned BAsic things; but i found (-) it kind of ga- it added to my BASE of knowledge, rather than helped me move forward. //mhm,// uhm (.) so i dunno *i never really (-) m: like take my german to the next (.) step*, until- (--) until the POINT; (Excerpt 6.2.7, H_Int1, 1271)

Here situating his classroom experience within his whole trajectory of learning German, he evaluates the course as relatively insignificant to his development as a language user. According to this perspective, the classroom is a site of "taking his German to the next step" on the journey headed toward the 'full' acquisition of the language. Then turning to evaluate his classroom experience, he equates learning German in class with the accumulation of linguistic knowledge (it added to his base of knowledge), pointing out that what he gained was not sufficiently relevant to what he considers progress as a language user (it didn't help him move forward). Upon my inquiry what he means by "moving forward," he associates the phrase with a set of interrelated processes such as becoming able to think faster, form sentences faster, and speak in a more adult-like manner, which he relates to an enhanced ability to "be more

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involved in conversation" (H_Int1, 1327) – aspects he then associates with his trips to Germany. In conclusion, he states: "it helped going to university cause i got more of the base that i COULD do that [move forward in the described sense]; but it didn't really move me forward- as like in the same way that GOING to germany and speaking and everything like that did does." (H_Int1, 1332). In short, here he uses his narrated classroom experience as a contrastive point of reference: By bringing to light what he found *lacking* in the classroom context, he marks the advancement of communicative abilities as indispensable to what he subjectively conceives as success.

A comparative view reveals that Henning's account of learning German in the institutional setting differs substantially from his narrations on developing his German outside of the classroom. His narrations on learning in the classroom focus on *the German language* per se. At no point does he refer to his linguistic advances made in the classroom in association with changes in other realms of his life. In contrast, he associates instances of incidental learning not only with changes in his language, but with changes in how he perceives *himself* as he interacts with others *through language.* In short, his accounts of incidental learning feature how he develops his agency and sense of self as a German speaker, while he frames in-class-learning solely from the perspective of knowledge accumulation oriented toward the complete acquisition of the German language as a system. While thus far, the analysis concentrated on Henning's narrated past, the remainder of this section targets how he construes his aspirations and orientation to investing in German.

6.2.2.3 Henning's language aspirations and investment in German

With respect to Henning's aspirations as a language user and his potential investment in German I mentioned how one aspects stands out: While he foregrounds self-declared limitations of his German speech, he also recurrently emphasizes that he feels satisfied with his ability to use German and that he currently does not feel a need to invest in developing his German. For instance, in the context of reflecting on his relation with German, he states: "it's pretty good i'm happy with- i'm really happy that i learnt german. or that i cAn speak german; [...] yeah so- i find i don't need to learn- (-) right now i don't need to learn more- (.) i'm happy with where i am" (H_Int1, 991). The following analysis targets how these two salient features of his narrative relate to each other and how this can contribute to our understanding of Henning's language-related goals and investments. First, I examine more closely how he *positions* himself in respect of the self-perceived shortcomings of his speech. Next, I discuss how this relates to his narrated aspirations as a speaker of German and to his potential investment in German.

Construal of self-declared shortcomings and speaker aspirations. As reflected in some of the presented excerpts, Henning portrays his German speech as flawed and incomplete across several thematic contexts. A closer look at respective sequences reveals, however, that he contests the idea that the narrated imperfections of his speech ought to be rectified. I will provide two examples to illustrate this point, discussing how he makes relevant language discourses that underlie his appraisal of his speech as limited, and discussing how he positions himself with reference to these interpretational frames.

The first is taken from a sequence in which he is responding to the question whether he is aware of ways in which he uses his languages together. In this context, he points out that his German speech bears traces of the English language:

H: [...] sometimes i'll use- (--) like i think like i find it's- i don't really understand
      german sentence structure that well,//mhm// so i'll- i'll speak german, but just like
      use <smilevoice<the english grammar.>> or like english sentence structure and
      uhm- that kind of thing;=so; (Excerpt 6.2.8, Int1, 424)

In stating that he does not "understand German sentence structure that well" Henning frames his German language abilities as substandard. I interpret his smile to indicate his awareness that the particularities of his German break with a language norm and will hence impact how he is seen by others. Accordingly, as an interviewer I probe:

Int: have people commented on that, or how is it that you KNOW that. (.) i mean you wouldn't
      have to be necessarily aware of it.
H: yeah; (.) i dunno some people just like- (--) i dunno not LAUGH at me,
      but they'll be like (.) that sounds funny,
Int: mhm-
H: cause of the way you're saying it; n stuff like that.
Int: mhm.
H: and and also a bit with my accent when i speak german;
Int: okay-
H: they'll always be like oh (-) we can tell that you're not german (.) when you speak.
      we can underSTAND it, but we can tell you're not german.
Int: okay;
H: so;
Int: is that something that has mattered to you?
H: no, i find that as long as (-) i can- i can hold out a conversation fairly well in   german,=so;
      that's all i really need.   (Excerpt 6.2.9, H_Int1, 431)

It is noteworthy that it is the interviewer (me), not Henning, who raises the idea that deviating from the implied norm could potentially be connected to negative effects. In his response, he rejects this idea and the implied supposition that he may aspire to remain undetected as a speaker of other languages and fully conform to the implied norms. He further reinforces his position by foregrounding his communicative abilities ("i can hold out a conversation fairly

well"). By adding that this is "all he really needs," he gives primacy to communicative goals, foregrounding a view of himself as a successful communicator rather than a deficient speaker of German. In so doing, he establishes that his priorities with German are focused on successfully relating to others in particular relationships rather than on investing in a social identity (being recognized as German).

The second example follows a similar pattern. Henning here volunteers a small story within a longer passage in which he speculates that he would consider taking another class if he decided to move to Germany. In this passage, the story has the function to illustrate how his German speech is flawed and thereby demonstrate how taking a class would be beneficial. Specifically, he narrates how he has been criticized by his girlfriend for making errors when he assigns genders to lexical items. He has just stated that he would consider a language course to "improve [his] grammar" (H_Int1, 610), when he states:

H: and improve (.) like the uh the gender stuff is- (.) i always get that wrong;
Int: mhm.
H: and then (.) yeah jenny she corrects me (.) all the time.
Int: jenny?
H: yeah.
Int: yeah,
H: <smilevoice<yeah like HOW am i supposed to know that.
     and then she can't even explain the rules to me. she's like (-) i dunno WHY it's this,>>
Int: i just know it.
H: yes it IS.
Int: {((laughs)) aha::.}
H: {like well YOU grew up there.} that's not fair, you can't tell me THAT, ((laughs))
                                                        (Excerpt 6.2.10, H_Int1, 612)

Parallel to the first example, Henning points to another way in which his speech, in his impression, fails to meet implied standards ("i always get that *wrong*"; "jenny *corrects* me all the time"). This time, Henning positions himself to the self-declared imperfection of his speech on his own accord, humorously criticizing that his girlfriend's corrections hinge on an unfair

comparison, given his specific language biography. By jokingly accusing her of treating him unjustly ("that's not fair, you can't tell me that"; "HOW am i supposed to know that"), he rejects the inherent expectation that his speech ought to be grammatically correct. In drawing attention to the fact that his girlfriend grew up in Germany, he brings into focus how the two of them differ in terms of their (primary) language socialization, and subtly contests the idea that his speech ought to comply more closely with a native speaker ideal. Through the affective re-enactment of his reactions towards his girlfriend, he puts the relevance of his reported errors into perspective, laughing off what he construes as unfair expectations held up to him. In so doing, he presents himself as a self-confident (multilingual) speaker who views his linguistic abilities in light of his particular experience.

In sum, the examples bring to light means by which Henning re-interprets deficiency-oriented framings in light of his communicative abilities (example 1) and in light of his position as a multilingual speaker (example 2). He contests the view that his speech *ought* to be completely correct or conform closely to conventional uses of German (e.g. with respect to pronunciation, collocations, inflections, etc.). Both examples illustrate how his experience has been shaped by discourses that give primacy to a monolingual order. While he here portrays his German language abilities against the backdrop of monolingual norms, he subtly contests these norms, indicating that they are not an adequate measure to evaluate his speech.

Having illustrated how Henning positions himself as a competent multilingual speaker rather than a deficient speaker of German, the next section examines how this finding relates to his aspirations as a speaker and his perspectives on his investment in the German language.

Henning's language ambitions and orientation towards investing in German. Thus far, the discussion showed how Henning compels us to interpret his German language abilities and

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ambitions explicitly in light of his idiosyncratic positionality as a speaker. In this section, I illustrate how he more specifically frames his *investment* in the German language in relation to his position as a (multilingual) speaker. In this regard it is noteworthy that he consistently stresses that he does not aspire to take another language course, while often adding that this would likely change if he decided to move to Germany. He reiterates that in the hypothetical case of moving, he would consider taking another class, above all because he "would want to improve [his] grammar" (H_Int1, 610). Hence, I give particular attention to the effects that Henning establishes by invoking this hypothetical scenario.

Henning brings up this scenario at multiple points in his narrative, notably after expressing that he feels content with his German language abilities and has not considered taking another language course. The following three excerpts provide examples. The first is taken from a stretch following his narrations on how he learned German in class. Upon my inquiry, he explains that he never considered taking a second German class, and adds:

H: i find uhm for what i have right now, i'm happy with (.) my level of german so (-)
    yeah i don't need de to improve on it too much. //mhm,// i mean if i- if i were to get
    into something where (.) languages are useful or even going to germany n (.) living
    there for a while, i probably WOULD take a course or two just- just to i don't know
    (.) improve my grammar- [...] (Excerpt 6.2.11, H_Int1, 603)

By positing the "improvement of his grammar" as an important goal within the imagined scenario, he implicitly constructs this goal as irrelevant to his present situation. Here, *grammar* does not only index what Henning lacks, but also comes to stand for those aspects of language that he subjectively does not need in his present situation. The same pattern can be found in the next excerpt. He has just explained that he has no desire to learn German formally, when he adds:

H: [...] like i said- if i was mOving there [to Germany] maybe- i would want- i dunno-
    want to improve my GRAMmar; so that i don't just make a FOOL of myself every

day; //mhm,// uhm (.) and (.) but Other than that; i don't see any REAson to do it-
and i'm at a level where i'm (.) i'm comfortable; [...]   (Excerpt 6.2.12, H_Int1, 1890)

In both quotes, the hypothetical scenario serves as a contrast against the backdrop of which Henning defines aspects marking his present situation more precisely. That is, in contrasting what *is* and what *could* be, he requires us to consider his desires and ambitions as a speaker in light of the specific circumstances he deems relevant to his current positionality. In the following quote, he details this point further. When asked what he believes would be the most effective means to advance his German if he ever did opt to develop the language intentionally, he reasons:

H: i think that [taking a course] would just be the best way to do it; //yeah// because there's only so much you can learn from listening to it;=right? [...] i wouldn't get the GRAMmar i feel; //mhm-// that would just be- (.) be one aspect that would always be missing unless i took a course;//mhm//on german grammar; [...] especially if i were to get a job where i'd need to speak german, then knowing grammar and proper spelling of words and stuff like that- //mhm// [...at this point Henning breaks and returns to characterize his German speech] (Excerpt 6.2.13, H_Int2, 2073)

Here, Henning brings into focus *responsibilities* he associates with the imagined position of being an active member of German society, in particular the obligation to perform a professional identity. He now constructs the "improvement of his grammar" as crucial to fulfilling the obligations he associates with these responsibilities. By drawing the contrast in these examples, he marks the significance of viewing his priorities with German, as well as his (current lack of) learning-related goals and behaviours more explicitly in light of the particular positions he takes up in spaces where he uses German. Subtly, he calls to consider the degree to which he exploits possibilities, exercises his agency, assumes responsibilities, etc. in languages *other* than German, notably in English. He brings to attention how German constitutes only part of this language repertoire, and that in order to understand his orientation towards investing in the language, it is necessary to look at the 'bigger picture' of how he acts

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through language. Expressing this explicitly, he states: "i'm definitely happy to have LEARNT it [german]. but- [...] since i live in canada i don't really feel the need to make it to a professional level or to yeah completely fluent." (H_Int2, 2053). This echoes the previous findings concerning how he positions himself with regard to monolingual norms, yet here, he establishes how his positioning relates to language goals, expressing that he currently has no aspirations to approximate 'perfectly correct' German speech or native speaker standards. By pointing out that he lives in Canada, he indexes the importance of viewing his stance towards these standards in light of his possibilities as a *multilingual* speaker, who primarily enacts his subjectivity in Canadian society.

It is important how Henning implicitly conceptualizes his multilingualism in this context: He establishes that he does not aspire to become 'double monolingual' (see chapter 3), but rather constructs (the extent to which he can use) German as an *asset* that he draws on *in addition to and in combination with his other language resources*. His subtle call to interpret his abilities and priorities with German from the standpoint of his particular language biography and current place in the world indicates a 'holistic' view that brings into focus the broader scope of his entire language repertoire. This is further supported by the following quote, taken from the passage in which he elaborates that he does not consider himself a native speaker of German: "for me it [german] is good to have- uhm- and i really enjoy- (--) i enjoy SPEAking german even, and LEARning it- but i wouldn't want to learn it FORmally really; unless i HAD to, and (-) yeah i'm (-) i'm first and foremost an ENGlish speaker." (H_Int1, 1858). Viewed in context, his self-portrayal as "first and foremost an English speaker" is not a matter of devaluating his abilities to speak German. It is a means of marking the importance he assigns to viewing his languages in relation to and in combination with each other. Supporting

this perspective, his language portrait is fundamentally based on the theme of proportionality, and his comments on how he would alter the portrait to reflect his sense of self at different points in time foreground the theme of shifting relations of language dominance, as mentioned earlier in 6.2.2.1.

In sum, Henning invites us to consider his language-related ambitions and his orientation towards investing in German in a context-sensitive way that takes into account his positionality as a language user. In light of the present position he carves out for himself, he rejects a monolingual native-speaker ideal as a subjective learning goal. Instead invoking a 'holistic' view on his multilingual subjectivity, he constructs German as an asset that adds to his possibilities as a language user rather than defining his interests and aspirations against the backdrop of monolingual norms.

6.2.2.4 Summary and interim conclusion

The most important overarching finding emerging from the analyses in this section can be synthesized as follows: How Henning conceives of learning German in institutional settings is not in sync with how he defines success in developing his agency as a speaker of German, nor is it in sync with what he values as a language user in general.

Specifically, the analysis shows how he conceptualizes his classroom experience with respect to interrelated discourses that rely on a monolingual order: a) a discourse of correctness, which holds that learning German is learning to speak 'correctly' as defined by standardized norms; and b) a discourse of nativity, according to which learning the language is approximating a (monolingual) native speaker ideal. Drawing on these discourses, Henning constructs the German language classroom as a place where he was prompted to hone the

accuracy of his speech, 'taking his German to the next step' in what he portrays as a linear progression toward the 'full' acquisition of the language.

These purposes stand in sharp contrast with Henning's self-construction as a language user and with his priorities with German. Firstly, he constructs communicative abilities, above all the *ability to adapt* to the affordances of particular spaces of German language use, as a key point in successfully 'moving forward' – i.e. developing his agency as a speaker of German. Secondly, he debunks the 'monolingual bias' underlying the native speaker ideal, constructing the approximation of native-speaker abilities as irrelevant to his positionality and current aspirations as a (multilingual) speaker. In the next section, I examine how he constructs his *multilingual* subjectivity in more detail.

6.2.3 Henning's (perspectives on) multilingual experience

It is clear from the preceding results that in Henning's case, it is not useful (or feasible) to separate analyses of his self-construction as a multilingual speaker from analyses of his account of learning German, because he makes his multilingual subjectivity relevant to his perspectives on learning-related issues. As such, the analysis has already established how he draws on a holistic rather than an additive, segregating view on multilingualism – a view that marks continuous adaptation as a central aspect of multilingual experience. Other passages of his narrative that do not revolve around learning-related themes, yield further evidence for how he construes flexibility and adaptability as a key facet of being multilingual. However, since his account of what being multilingual has meant to him offers another unique feature that is central to my purposes, I will use the remaining space to examine this point: how Henning constructs non-instrumental benefits of being multilingual, notably language play.

Reflecting on aspects he finds particularly important or interesting with respect to growing up with multiple languages, Henning stresses the pleasure he derives from comparing languages, for instance with regard to syntactic and semantic features:

H: like especially sentence structure i find is the most different part. or even that
    there's three genders for their words. well i guess same thing in- in english. but just
    say like the table or the chair or the door. it's- it doesn't matter what gender it is.
Int: mhm, so comparing those things would-
H: mhm. ya. i find that interesting.   (Excerpt 6.2.14, H_Int1, 1379)

Henning's use of the pronoun *their* ("there's three genders for *their* words") indicates the outside perspective from which he examines the German language, as he increases his meta-awareness of both English and German. Similarly, he brings into focus how he has exploited his ability to view one language through the lens of the other in order to amuse himself and entertain others. For instance, he narrates how he has engaged in language play with friends:

H: when i went to germany with jenny, it was one thing we all found quite funny,
    was taking german sayings, and translating them literally into english. //yeah// so
    like (.) for instance like ich glaub ich spinne,[47]//mhm// like u i don't even believe it.
    (.) like i think i spider?//<chuckling<yeah>>//it's like it just doesn't make any
    SENSE in english. [...] we just laughed at stuff like that- //mhm.// just cause- it's
    completely nonsensical. //mhm.// but (-) yeah n but if you didn't know that for
    instance; //mhm// so i kind of like having the two to- you can compare them and
    laugh [...] always get a good laugh out of comparing languages.
                                                            (Excerpt 6.2.15, H_Int1, 1799)

Henning here brings to attention how his capacity to navigate between languages does not only bear instrumental advantages. He constructs his ability to view the world through a multilingual lens and to play with linguistic relativity as a source of shared pleasure, hence illuminating experiential and intersubjective sides of his multilingual experience. Resonating

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[47] While the meaning of 'ich glaub ich spinne' roughly corresponds to 'I can't believe my eyes,' the literal translation would be either 'I think I am crazy' (meaning 'I must be crazy') or 'I think I am spinning.' However, since the German noun for spider (*Spinne*) is equivalent with the first person singular form of 'I spin' (ich *spinne*), people have found amusement in translating the phrase into 'I think I spider.' (In fact, this literal translation has been exploited for commercial purposes and can be found on textiles, mugs, etc.)

with dynamic perspectives on multilingualism (see chapter 3) he here marks the plurality of perspectives shaping his perceptions as a core facet of his multilingual experience.

It is particularly striking how he constructs his ability to speak multiple languages as a source of shared amusement in interactions with his girlfriend. He recounts how occasionally, he speaks French to Jenny "for fun" (H_Int2, 2414), fully aware that she will not understand him. According to Henning, Jenny's ability to comprehend French is limited to a set of simple utterances she learned in school. He reports that, regardless of what he says to her, she will resort to reply "my name is Jenny" in French, joining his little game before they revert back to English in amusement.

In illustrating this point, Henning delineates how he creatively draws on his entire language repertoire, as he shapes his interactions with his girlfriend. It is noteworthy how he here frames the short interaction as an activity from which he and Jenny gain satisfaction, as opposed to a conversational breakdown – a point he reinforces through statements such as "it's just a joke" (H_Int1, 2423), "it's kind of funny" (H_Int1, 2438), while he chuckles and laughs. Instead of accentuating that it is not possible for him to seriously converse with his girlfriend in French, his portrayal foregrounds her ability to play along with his joke despite her inability to decode his utterance. Through the way in which he portrays his playful invitation to communicate in French along with Jenny's creative response, he indicates how he playfully enacts his *multilingual* subjectivity with others with whom he shares the experience of living with more than one language. In this small story, he constructs the relation with his girlfriend as a space where multilingualism is treated as 'normal,' implications of which I take up in the cross-case analysis in chapter 7.

In sum, besides casting a 'holistic' yet system-based view on (his) multilingualism, Henning also draws attention to facets of his experience that resonate with dynamic models of multilingualism. The examples show how he constructs the ability to "operate between languages" (MLA, 2007) as a central component of living with more than one language. Furthermore, they show how he construes the plurality of perspectives that open up to him simultaneously as one of the aspects that he values most about being multilingual. Overall, the significance of adaptability and flexibility emerge as key themes across different narrated realms of Henning's experience of living with more than one language.

6.2.4 Conclusion

As in Marianne's case, I will now condense the findings from the three sections that correspond with my research questions, briefly considering how they relate to the construct of HERITAGE LEARNER, and (how) our understanding of Henning's case is extended when we take into account his positionality as a multilingual subject.

In many sequences, his self-portrayal resembles the image of the prototypical HERITAGE LEARNER. This is most salient in how he constructs his unique position in the German language class as compared to his classmates. The way in which he recurrently stresses how his German language abilities fail to live up to native speaker standards is also paradigmatic for how heritage learners have typically been defined (see chapter 2).

In other parts of his narrative, his self-construction clearly deviates from the features and visions commonly associated with the construct of HERITAGE LEARNER. For instance, the ways in which he positions himself with respect to his German background clearly clash with ideas such as fostering pride in 'the' heritage identity. Though he indicates that he lacks certain

aspects he sees as prerequisites to claiming a German identity (such as "missing the cultural aspect of being German because he never lived there"), he indicates no need to compensate for this 'lack.' Rather, he prioritizes a view of himself as 'Canadian in his own right.'

Likewise, while he defines his German language abilities against the backdrop of monolingual norms and indeed stresses his 'deficit' as measured against a native speaker ideal, he clearly rejects the approximation of native-like abilities and the 'full' acquisition of the language as a subjective learning goal. In particular, Henning presents himself as a self-confident language user *despite* the self-declared imperfection of his German.[48] The analysis identified how he achieves this through acts of positioning, by means of which he unearths and subverts the monolingual order underlying the evaluation of his German as deficient. As such, in Henning's narrative, the performance of self-confidence is not linked to knowing how to speak correctly, as promoted in the literature on heritage learners (see chapter 2). His narrative demonstrates his ability to establish self-confidence by debunking and contesting discourses of correctness and monolingual norms as a central frame for evaluation.

Finally, the investigation brought to light the importance Henning assigns to adaptability and flexibility; how he values and exploits the multiplicity of perspectives through which he experiences the world; and how he derives pleasure from using language in unconventional ways, even how he plays with the tensions arising from *not understanding* in his interactions with Jenny – dimensions he makes relevant to his linguistic self that would remain obscure if we approached him through the lens of HERITAGE LEARNER.

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[48] In fact, he occasionally makes me laugh by inserting comments in German during the conversation to achieve an entertaining effect, fully aware that I grew up in Germany.

6.3 Anaya's narrative

Introduction

Anaya is a fourth-year German student in her mid-twenties, pursuing a double major in German and a technical mathematical field of study at a university in (anglophone) Southern Ontario. She was born in a small city in (anglophone) Northern Ontario, where being of German descent carried negative connotations, according to Anaya – a circumstance largely stemming from Germany's role in World War II, as she implies. Both her parents have ancestors who emigrated from Germany – her mother belonging to the first, and her father to the second generation born and raised in Canada. Anaya reports that her parents did not acquire much German owing to the stigma attached to the language in their home town at the time. She recounts that while she learned a few phrases in German from her grandfather during her childhood, she was unable to converse in the language before she enrolled in German language classes in university. When we met for the interviews, she had taken a number of German as a foreign language classes (beginning at the 101 level), as well as German culture and Applied Linguistics courses. Furthermore, she had only recently returned from a six month exchange to central western Germany. While she mentions during the interview that she learned French in high school, she does not give much attention to this theme, nor does she indicate that she speaks or understands the language on the initial questionnaire.

Prior to her participation, I had known Anaya only briefly from conversations during coincidental encounters in the department. Her participation in my study included two interviews conducted in October and December 2014, and the creation of a language portrait. She responds to most interview questions with extensive narrations, telling stories of varying length, and offering detailed reflections on a broad range of themes related to her biographical

experience, socio-political dynamics, and sociolinguistic phenomena, to name the most salient. Her narrations often branch out into neighboring themes, before she typically comes back to the initial question, often providing a synthesizing 'bottom line' conclusion. As such, besides asking key questions, my contributions as an interviewer are largely limited to reactions such as backchannels, laughter, etc. As in the previous cases, I will give a brief thematic overview of the data and derive focal points for the analyses.

Language Portrait. Explaining that she associates 'blue' with her personality, she chooses two shades of blue: pale blue for German, and dark blue for English (see appendix F). She draws a part that splits the head into two equal sections that frame the face, assigning pale blue (German) to the left side and dark blue (English) to the right. She explains that she does this to associate German with being creative, and English with logical thinking processes that she connects with her technical/mathematical studies. She assigns dark blue (English) to the arms, which, to her, reflects "the doing the job, the getting the money, the sitting at the keyboard click click click click" (A_Int2, 2663). She colours the legs pale blue (German), indicating that she associates her legs with 'getting around,' above all during her sojourn. Remarking that she wants to avoid associations with sexuality, she leaves the abdomen blank and begins to work on the chest section: She traces the chest with a pale blue (German) outer line. Next, she creates a dark blue (English) circle in the middle of the chest, at the centre of which she draws a pale blue (German) drop shape. After adding a pale blue (German) ring between the pale blue outer lining of the chest and the dark blue inner circle, she shades the interstices, alternating between the two blue tones as she fills each ring (see appendix F). She comments on this part in detail, linking the pale blue (German) centre piece with the "core" (A_Int2, 2774) of her identity and with her family. She refers to the alternating blue shades as

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"layers of [her] everyday life" (A_Int2, 2766) and explains that the outer pale blue lining reflects the "edge of society" (A_Int2, 2866), while "the closer you get to the CENtre it's more your intimate family, how you think about things, your mentality, what's important to you;" (A_Int2, 2876). She adds a pale blue (German) face to reflect that she carries what she considers to be typical German physical features such as blond hair and blue eyes.

Oral accounts. As Anaya recounts what living with a German background in Canada has meant to her, she foregrounds her sense of having (grown up with) a "German identity" (A_Int1, 1263). She identifies a number of conditions that have contributed to this feeling in her assessment. For example, she lists properties of her family that she considers typically German (e.g. bluntness, a dark sense of humor, physical features, their last name). Moreover, she draws attention to ways in which her sense of 'being German' has been shaped by views on (the links between) language, culture, and identity circulating in different social environments where she has participated. For instance, she narrates that in her home town it was commonplace to define people chiefly by ethnic identity, while she also recounts that (elsewhere) some people have questioned her self-identification as German. Her narrative is exceptional in how she explicitly points out and self-reflexively discusses how discursive dynamics have impacted her sense of self in relation to her family background over time.

In narrating her trajectory of learning German, she recounts how her interest in learning German emerged, what concrete steps she has taken to develop her German language abilities (both inside the classroom and beyond), and how her investment in the language has gone hand in hand with "acquiring a sense of self" (A_Int1, 1990). Largely, she attributes her increased interest in German to the relevance that the language has to her family's history. Specifically, she narrates that she felt motivated to continue her studies when she realized that learning

German allowed her to gain knowledge about her family's past (e.g. by deciphering letters remaining from her ancestors that other family members were unable to decode). In portraying ways in which she has invested in German, she gives special attention to her recent exchange to Germany, which she depicts as a positive experience. She stresses how she quickly created rapport with and felt accepted by local German speakers abroad. She returns to this point repeatedly, often contrasting her perceptions with the experiences of other exchange students from North America, who had more difficulty connecting with the local people, according to Anaya – a difference she attributes to her socialization in a German family. Narrating what learning German has meant to her, she links her investment in the language to a number of changes, e.g. concerning her position in her family, her communication with her mother and grandfather, and above all changes in how she conceives of herself with respect to her German background. A unique point in her narrations on learning German is the extent to which she foregrounds her aspirations, in particular her ambition to "get to a native level" (A_Int1, 138). Her narrative is also unique in the attention she devotes to how she conceives of herself in relation to her learning, stressing her agency as a learner. Particularly striking in this respect is that the final question – how she would feel if she were referred to as a 'heritage language learner' – triggers a 58 minute monologue, during which I contribute hardly more than backchannels. She firmly rejects the label, expressing aggression and disgust as she stresses her objection to being defined by others.

Anaya does not foreground what living with more than one language has meant to her. She talks about ways in which English and German come together in her mind at two points during our conversations, and how she often feels an urge to think in German when

communicating in English, yet overall, she remains focused on the importance she currently gives to maintaining her *German* language abilities.

The analyses in 6.3.1-6.3.3 will concentrate on the following focal points:

Living with a German background. In light of my purposes, the most intriguing point is how Anaya pinpoints discursive dynamics that have shaped her sense of self with regard to her family background. I will focus on this point, showing how she demonstrates her ongoing struggle with a German identity within particular discursive dynamics.

Perspectives on learning German. Anaya's narrative is unparalleled in how firmly she emphasizes her agency in shaping her learning processes. How she achieves this will be a focal point in my analysis of her self-construction as a learner of German and of her perspectives on learning German. It is also central to my research objective that she stresses her determination to reach "a native level" (A_Int1, 138) in speaking German, hence the analysis will pay close attention to this point. The connections she establishes between her institutional learning experiences and her family history are also important to my interests, especially in light of the discussions on "identity needs" of heritage learners (see chapter 2). I will give special attention to the links she draws between her investment in German and changes in how she conceives of herself in relation to her family background.

Multilingual subjectivity. While overall, Anaya does not foreground that she is multilingual, it is intriguing how she plays with perspectives in many parts of her narrative. The analysis will concentrate on this point, showing how she thereby presents herself as an 'intercultural speaker' (see chapter 3).

6.3.1 Anaya's experience of living with a German background in Canada

As noted, Anaya gives particular attention to ways in which her family's self-identification as 'German,' and being positioned as German by others have shaped her experience. In the following, I examine her account of what it has meant to her to associate herself with what she conceives as a 'German' identity – in particular, how her narrative highlights her ongoing struggle in defining herself in light of this identity. Subsequently, I examine her self-construal in relation with German language.

6.3.1.1 (Struggling with) 'German' identity

Anaya's emphasis of her sense of having a "German identity" (e.g. A_Int1, 1263; 2076; 2136; 2993) is the most salient theme in her narrative. She brings it up in many contexts. As early as in her response to the opening question she tells me how she gained a new awareness of her "family's identity and their actual culture" (A_Int1, 142) through her exchange:

A: going to germany and then of course living in CAnada and comparing to how my
   FAMily is, it's kind of like Oh! i now understand where all my- where my family get's
   all these quirks from. it's not caNAdian stuff. it's not NORthern stuff, it's GERman stuff.
                                                                    (Excerpt 6.3.1, A_Int1, 146)

She goes on to narrate how this insight resulted from her perception that in Germany, people's ways of communicating were more in sync with her own than this is the case in Canada – a phenomenon she attributes to her upbringing in a German family. Asked to give an example of an instance in which she perceived this difference, she states:

A: one of the things was being blunt. ye know? they talk about the stereotypical the
   german's blunt bla bla bla. //mhm,// at least with my family it's bloody well true, and
   with a lot of the people when i went over and i was talking to them, i did find that- that
   bluntness, that willing to (-) i'm gonna say maybe not be as p:c:,
                                                                    (Excerpt 6.3.2, A_Int1,183)

In the course of our conversation(s), she describes further features of her family that she associates with being German, such as eating certain foods, her German last name, and features of her relatives' physical appearance (being tall, blue eyes, blond hair). She leaves no doubt that her sense of 'being German' is crucial to her self-understanding. This is particularly evident in her (commentary on her) language portrait. In the next two excerpts, for instance, she talks about the pale blue (German) drop shape in the chest, which she associates with "the concept of like identity, soul core" (A_Int2, 2758):

A: it's like the core, the kernel, the little teardrop or water droplet actually uh is (.)
    german in the sense of like it's the family; it's the core; it's what i grew up with;
    it's that kernel right, //mhm-// even if it's like the smallest part of the entire thing, it
    will be the hardest thing to freakin rip out of my dead dying corpse kind of thing.
                                                              (Excerpt 6.3.3, A_Int2, 2774)

Returning to this point a little later, she similarly remarks:

A: so it's just- it's yeah it's definitely that- what what is important is that core- that
    core identity, and i think yeah; as i mentioned before i think a lot of it's been
    flavoured by that german culture; //mhm,// german (-) i dunno; i guess even to say
    german identity sort of thing;   (Excerpt 6.3.4, A_Int2, 2946)

Intriguingly, while she consistently foregrounds her self-identification as 'German,' her narrative demonstrates her struggle with a consistent 'German' identity. Specifically, she draws attention to ways in which her self-understanding in relation to her family background has been shaped by conflicting discourses, two of which deserve particular attention.

As for the first, she indicates that her self-identification as 'German' has resulted partly from a discourse circulating in her home town that normalizes and prioritizes the categorization of people by ethnicity. Informing me of this discourse, she narrates:

A: in MY hometown in parTIcular *you recognize bloodline before CItizenship*. like if
    you go up to someone and you say well what ARE you;=right? <laughing<they're
    not gonna say caNAdian,>> they're gonna say oh i'm italian; [...] oh i'm german;
    oh i'm ukranian; oh i'm finnish.=right? //okay,// so [...] it was definitely ye know
    like <deep breathless voice<what is your family where did you COME from. and

then you tack on canadian.>> [...] and *that's just how you kind of SAW it*. [...] we LIVE in canada. [...] as CItizens of canada we have certain [...] i guess group dyNAmics; BUT! everyone still has that little CORE of where they came from; what their ye know their bloodline is or where ever [...] the family originally hailed from;   (Excerpt 6.3.5, A_Int1, 833)

Anaya reiterates many times that the idea that people are defined primarily by what she refers to as "bloodline" has chiefly shaped her experience, her personal views, and her self-perception as 'German.' Accordingly, she often *uses* this discourse to characterize herself and her family as 'German' (e.g. by associating 'German' identity with certain genetic dispositions such as being tall). As such, she oscillates between *using* the discourse to position herself as German on the one hand, and *looking at* it on the other, marking her awareness of how it has shaped her subjectivity and perspective. For instance, reflecting on aspects that contributed to her sense of being German, she notes:

A: it's also a bit of a ( ) self-fulfilling prophecy right? if you're always being told that you're [...] german or you have german blood, or and your family does things whether it be german humor; german food; german cultural things; even if it's the stereotype stuff [...] with THAT machinery i think you do come out kind of having this german iDENtity; that's kind of more at the core [...] (Excerpt 6.3.6, A_Int1, 1210)

She here brings into view her subjectivity as (partly) socially constructed, by pointing out how her sense of self has been shaped by heritage-related discourses ("it's a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy"; "*being told* that you have german blood"). As she further carves out this image of herself as (in part) discursively constituted, she highlights her agency in defining herself. In the same stretch in which she is reflecting on conditions that have contributed to her sense of being German, she draws the following conclusion:

A: just over the years you you essentially you get this identity built- not necessarily FOR you; because *you can always choose to accept or reject it*; //mhm.// but you get kind of- this led- and i guess in a certain way to- a certain way of thinking about your your family and about things;   (Excerpt 6.3.7, A_Int1, 1172)

While her main point here is that her subjectivity has been impacted by social dynamics ("you get this identity built"), she interrupts herself to insert that "you can always accept or reject" identities, thereby marking her understanding of the self as agentive.

While she reports how in Northern Ontario, she has been exposed, in the described way, to the idea that she has inherited a 'German' identity, she recounts how in other contexts, her legitimacy to self-identify as 'German' has been disputed. For instance, concluding her reflection on how her sense of being German emerged and developed over the years of her youth, she notes: "so yeah. it was definitely- yeah. it was definitely the internalness in the sense of the family kind of identifying itself as being german- german heritage- german descent- whatever-" (A_ 1249). At this point she breaks. Her search for a suitable label to characterize her family indicates a subtle uncertainty about how to define them. Subsequently, she links this uncertainty to her experience of what Carreira (2004) calls "identity negation" (see chapter 2) – i.e. the experience that others have questioned her legitimacy to claim the identity with which she associates herself:

A: some people say oh you're german descent you're not GERman. //mhm,// like
    that's what a lot of people say; especially in CAnada. it's like- or in the south i
    would say- [she is referring to Southern Ontario] ye know you're not GERman.
    you're german desCENT. and i'm just sitting here going- well technically i can be
    whatever i WANna be; whatever MY opinion leads me to believe i am or i'm NOT.
    uhm ye know, you don't underSTAND me, because i have certain things that
    clearly come from GERmany, not from CAnada. //mhm;// it's not because i'm from
    [place of her birth]; it's not because i have a blue collar family; it's because these
    are cultural things and historical things that are from the OLD country. not from
    here.   (Excerpt 6.3.8, A_Int1, 1256)

Echoing the previous excerpt, Anaya here demonstrates how she has exercised her agency in defining herself. Taken together, the excerpts bring to light how she has reportedly been positioned with reference to her family background in contradicting ways: On the one hand, she has been assigned a 'German' identity with attendant attributes; on the other, she has been

denied the legitimacy to self-identify as German. By making relevant and juxtaposing both of these perspectives in her narrative, she demonstrates how her subjectivity emerges in an ongoing struggle as she is positioned and positions herself in relation to (partly conflicting) ideas about identity, culture, and ethnic heritage in encounters with others.

A closer look at the above excerpt '6.3.8' suggests, for instance, that she has used (at least) two strategies to defend her self-identification as 'German' in the described incidents of "identity negation" (Carreira, 2004). First, she indicates how she has contested the underlying idea that in order to be German, you must have been born in Germany, by instead making relevant the intergenerational transmission of German cultural practices in her family ("i have certain things that come from GERmany ... cultural things"). Second, she indicates that she has defended her legitimacy to claim a German identity by contesting essentialist, deterministic framings of identity and instead holding up concepts of selfhood that emphasize her agency in defining herself ("i can be whatever i WANna be...").

Anaya returns to this theme frequently, reinforcing her ongoing struggle as well as her agency in defining herself. In each instance, she quotes voices of others who denied her authority to self-identify as German, only to contest them. In the following excerpt, she does so by linking the above notion of an agentive self to the idea of world citizenry:

A: you always have people that yeah once again you're german descent you're not GERman. but i::: i guess i'm a bit of a RAdical. in the sense I think *you can be whatever you WANT to be*. if you WANT to be this identity you can go aHEAD and HAVE it. [...] if being german or italian or recognize yourself as that group works out well and you feel comfortable in it; and the group acCEPTS you for having that identity- why the hell NOT. [...] i don't think it's really up to Other people to say- oh you're not THIS; your THIS descent. //mhm, mhm.// or you can't be that because you're not this that or the other thing. //mhm,// and it's like- okay we've totally moved beyond that, //m,// we live in a global world [...]

(Excerpt 6.3.9, A_Int1, 1384)

Besides rejecting a deterministic model of identity ("you can be whatever you want to be") and emphasizing her agency in defining herself ("it is not up to Other people to say- oh you're not THIS") she here draws on the idea of 'global citizenship' ("we live in a global world"). In so doing, she demonstrates her ability to contest acts of "identity negation" (Carreira, 2004), yet it is interesting to note that there are subtle contradictions underlying the position she here carves out for herself. For instance, the notion that it is "not up to other people to say you're not this" conflicts with the idea that claiming an identity requires the acceptance of a pre-given group supposedly associated with the identity, which she also cites. The question arises how she reconciles her perception of being "a *radical* in the sense that you can be whatever you want to be," with her reliance on pre-determined group identities evident in this remark as well as many others ("if being *german* or *italian* or recognize yourself as *that* group works well...and *that* group acCEPTS you for having *that* identity..."). Her narrative does not clearly indicate whether her perceived agency goes beyond choosing among pre-given group identities; whether she implies that she has the potential to resignify what it means to be 'German.' It rather foregrounds the very processes of grappling with different ways of envisioning cultural diversity and of envisioning her agency as she (re)defines her positionality. Anaya denies a simple answer to who she is, rather presenting herself as, indeed, a "subject-in-process" (Kramsch, 2009) – that is, as constantly engaged in presenting and redefining herself in light of ever-new frames of interpretation.

In line with this, she explicitly expresses that "i DON'T want to *settle* particularly for someone TELling me what i am" (A_Int2, 3956). This stance is most salient in her long response to the question how she would feel being referred to as a 'heritage language learner.' Expressing negative feelings such as aggression in her reflections about the term, she clarifies

that she "DREAD[s] having these labels put on [her]" (A_Int2, 3566) more generally. She

states: "when i hear a lot of these terms [...] the technical part of me is like yeah alright, it's a

label let's move on, but (-) the (.) the i guess emotional component of it is like shut up. like (.)

mer. like like i will overCOME you; you are not the defining characteristic." (A_Int2, 3591).

Similarly, she states:

A: when you HEAR these terms it's like [...] if we went by definition (-) su:re but it
   doesn't feel right to- if someone was to lay a bunch of flippin tape with labels on it,
   i wouldn't want to pick one of those up [...] i'd be like- talk to me; figure out for
   yourself; make your own bloody opinion.   (Excerpt 6.3.10, A_Int2, 3712)

Anaya's call to "talk to her and figure out" who she is in dialogue signals her request not to be

conceived in a pre-determined way, but to acknowledge her as a unique person and, once

again, her agency in defining herself. Thus overall, she does not merely emphasize her self-

identification as *German* – in fact, the most consistent positioning in her narrative is her

positioning as an agentive, reflected, complex, and unique social being, who consciously defies

categorization in the ongoing process of self-interpretation and self-presentation.

6.3.1.2 German language and Anaya's sense of self

Anaya constructs her sense of self in relation to German language notably with reference to

two (intertwined) recurring themes: a) the relation between (German) language and (German)

identity, and b) her German language proficiency. I will attend to both themes in turn.

   Language and identity. While she reports that she hardly acquired any German during

her childhood owing to the negative connotations associated with being German in her town,

she constructs the German language as part and parcel of the identity with which she associates

her family and herself. This perspective can be identified in a number of conversational

contexts, but it is most obvious in a passage where she reflects on how she conceives of the German language. For example, she states:

A: i don't wanna call it [German] a FOReign language, cause to ME- i guess to a certain extent- *having and growing up with this identity of ye know you're a GERman canadian. you're GERman. [...] i don't really want to call it like a FOReign*- i obviously i can't call it [...] my mother tongue, cause i don't have that proficiency when we look at it in a technical sense, //mhm,// but i also don't want to call it a FOReign language [...] it's my second LANguage. [...]

(Excerpt 6.3.11, A_Int1, 1024)

By attributing her feeling that German is not a foreign language to "having and growing up with this identity of you're German," she makes relevant a discourse that constructs languages as embodying ethnic identity. This monocentric view is reflected in many of her constructions, even within single utterances. For instance, she notes that people "always say well- you understand *a language* if you can understand *their* humor" (A_Int1, 1064), hence linking 'the' language to one group identity ("*their* humor"). The next quote, which is taken from the same passage, shows how this understanding relates to her sense of self, specifically in light of the fact that she did not acquire much German before she was an adult.

A: it [German] isn't a FOReign language; cause foreign to me- yeah it's so distant;=so- not unattainable; but it's just- not applied to me in a cultural self-identity sort of way //mhm,// where GERman i don't think- uh::: i would wanna put it that far away. because it felt- to me it just felt like ye know- you *you have this german iDENtity; you have this kind of MIND set; now you're just missing the LANguage.* //aha, okay;// like- GO and GET it. [...] you feel like you're *seventy five percent there* and you're just like- alright now you've gotta actually like <laughing<speak the LANguage;>>=so: (Excerpt 6.3.12, A_Int1, 1071)

Anaya here constructs the German language as a constitutive part of German culture and identity, which, in turn, she associates with her family ("German ... applies to me in a cultural self-identity sort of way"). At the same time, she constructs *her* German identity as incomplete ("you're seventy five percent there"; you're just *missing* the LANguage"). Subtly, she implies that she ought to speak the language in order to legitimately self-identify as 'German' ("like

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GO and GET it...alright now you've gotta *actually* like speak *the LAN*guage"). While the above quotes leave open whether and to what degree she conceives the 'German' identity she associates with the language as inherited (or ascribed to her), in other sequences, she clearly forefronts a view of the German language as part of her heritage. For instance, she remarks on her accord that she would expect her potential children to learn German, even if she had to "bribe" them, as she puts it, stressing the importance she assigns to "*passing (.) that (.) down*" (A_Int2, 3132).

However, in line with the findings in 6.3.1.1, she does not consistently adhere to one single position across her narrative. While in excerpt 6.3.12 above, she constructs languages as an essential part of the identities to which they seemingly belong, in one of the instances of defending her legitimacy to identify herself as German she invokes an opposing view. Having cited the voices of anonymous others who have questioned her German identity, she marks her authority to self-identify as German with the following argument: "my last name is [common German last name]; my family came over from germany; we have the german traditions; i don't SPEAK the language, (-) but because you speak english- does that make you an ENGlishman." (A_Int2, 3855). She here contests the underlying discourse that 'being German means being able to speak German.' While this is inconsistent with the view put forth in the foregoing quotes, there is consistency in *that* she assigns relevance to the identified discourse itself. Put differently, her narrative highlights that the very question whether she speaks German and whether she ought to speak German has been central to defining herself in light of her family's history. Her account demonstrates that her experience does not only depend on her ability to speak German, but also on her ability to deal with views vis-à-vis which she is positioned by others in relation to language and culture.

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Language proficiency. Excerpt 6.3.11 also shows that she makes relevant her language proficiency. She returns to state that she lacks perfect fluency in German across different conversational contexts, noting more than once that she "feels like an idiot" (A_Int1, 1524) when she speaks German, for instance because she occasionally uses "the wrong word," (A_Int1, 1529) or uses unconventional syntax. Along these lines, she constructs her German skills as less than perfect as measured against a monolingual norm. Correspondingly, her construction of her relation with German indicates her orientation to a 'double monolingual native speaker ideal,' as shown in the next quote, where she further elaborates why she does not conceive of German as a foreign language.

A: [german is] closer to me than a FOReign language is; [...] but clearly i just don't
    have the technical fluency for it to be a mother lang- uh a mother tongue. would i
    LIKE it to be essentially at that same level; because (-) ye know at the end i wanna
    say you know, well this might be my l: two language [second language], but as far as I'M
    concerned, it's also my- my mother tongue as WELL;=because- ye know i'm proficient
    in BOTH of them- i treat them equally- and i can use them and express myself the way i
    want to in either language. (Excerpt 6.3.13, A_Int1, 1051)

The quote implies that the way in which Anaya conceives her relation to German language is grounded on a system-based, additive view on multilingualism (see chapter 3), reflected in her desire to become "proficient in *BOTH* languages" and "express herself the way she wants in either language." Her remark "i wanna say... i treat them equally" indicates her desire to achieve 'balanced bilingualism' (see chapter 3).

It is noteworthy that while she recurrently associates the self-declared imperfection of her German speech with feelings of anxiety, she actively works against a view of herself as a deficient language user or as lacking self-confidence. She achieves this by different means. The strategy she most often uses to this end is her emphasis of the point that locals in Germany

"didn't think anything of it [the imperfection of her German speech]" (A_Int1, 1375), which she supports with several stories that illustrate how she was readily accepted into their circles.

Overall, in constructing her sense of self in relation to German language, Anaya foregrounds a view of the language as part of a German identity and (to an extent) of her heritage. Accordingly, she marks her desire to 'overcome' this self-perceived lack, while making sure to clarify that she is not a deficient communicator.

To summarize, narrating what living with a German family history has meant to her, Anaya gives major importance to what she depicts as her family's 'German identity.' She constructs this identity as being both inherited and ascribed to her, identifying particular discourses that, in her perception, have shaped her subjectivity. One thread underlying her self-construal that runs through her narrative is the question whether, to what extent, and in what ways she is entitled to self-identify as German, given her place of birth and her limited understanding and use of German during her youth. This point is also central to her experience of learning German – the focus of the next section.

6.3.2 Anaya's narrations on learning German

The analysis of Anaya's narrations on learning German will first focus on her self-construal as a 'learner' and her perspectives on learning German, before I analyze how she conceptualizes and interprets her learning in light of her family history.

6.3.2.1 Self-construction as a 'learner' of German and perspectives on learning German

As mentioned, Anaya's account of her present investment in German is unparalleled in how she foregrounds her agency, and in how she emphasizes the goal to reach "a native level"

(A_Int1, 138) in speaking German, hence I structure this section as follows. After briefly

outlining how Anaya depicts her trajectory of learning German, I first focus on the narrative

means by which she establishes an agentive view on her investment in the language. Second, I

illustrate how she presents her goal of reaching native speaker abilities in German. As with the

previous cases, I identify how her self-presentation in the examined sequences relates to the

monolingual paradigm.

Trajectory of learning German. In narrating her trajectory of learning German, Anaya

depicts how she was gradually 'drawn into' learning the language, noting how her engagement

with German was initially inspired by external forces, but over time became an essential aspect

of her daily life. Specifically, she narrates that she took German 101 because she was unable to

enroll in Japanese language classes, but that she soon developed a keen interest in learning

German, which she mainly attributes to the "family relevance" (Fishman, 2001) of the

language:

A: when my family started hearing that i was learning GERman, (---) it seemed a lot of
    family history was coming out of the woodwork [...] and from then i was like oh
    okay well i get to learn (-) more about my FAMily which is really cool, and of
    course having this <smilevoice<interesting mix of- (-) oh here's the darker side of
    the family; and oh here're some really quirky things you found out about your
    drunken great grandfather; [...] you're just kind of like (-) oh okay; so THAT's kind
    of how i started getting more and more INto it.   (Excerpt 6.3.14, A_Int1, 53)

She recounts that she was persuaded by professors to continue her German studies in the terms

that followed, leading to what she depicts as a turning point in her trajectory "where it just- it

became so entrenched in daily life" (A_Int2, 58) that she began to "find [herself] actually

looking for it [German]; because there is that fear of losing it and not wanting to continue"

(A_Int2, 2326). She concludes that she has "gone past the threshold of not caring; where it's

like you- too late sucker, you have to continue it to the end sort of thing; and that's kind of the feeling of it NOW." (A_Int2, 2340).

Agentive view on learning German. In depicting her learning process, Anaya foregrounds her agency by a number of narrative means. In the following, I illustrate three means that contribute to this effect. To begin with, she demonstrates her initiative in maintaining and expanding her German language abilities, telling me about several steps she has deliberately taken to enhance her use of German. She recounts that outside of her classes, she makes an effort to think in German, as well as to look for opportunities to read, speak, rehearse and generally integrate German into her everyday life. She illustrates these aspects with entertaining anecdotes, such as the following:

A: when i got bored during the summer when i was working in my part time job [...] i'd sit in the break room and i'd have my little german book out and i'd be doing my grammar; and people are like- are you seriously doing grammar in the fifteen minutes that you have OFF? i'm like- yup. you guys smoke, and i do GRAmmar. (Excerpt 6.3.15, A_Int2, 2364)

Above all, she illustrates how she deliberately took influence on the development of her German language abilities through her decision to take part in an exchange to Germany, explaining that she wanted to put herself in a position that would force her to speak German on a daily basis. She highlights how she went out to meet her fears, and links this to a successful outcome, as evident in the following example:

A: as much as part of me wanted to tuck my tail between my legs and run, ((shared chuckles)) i decided well::: okay let's go. <smilevoice<let's just do the utmost UNcomfortable thing we could ever do to ourselves; //okay,// and alright let's get on a plane.>> and then i went on a plane and <smilevoice<slowly but surely tortured myself [...] with the german language for six months, and i loved it. (-) clearly sadomasochistic right here.>>
(Excerpt 6.3.16, A_Int1, 116)

In short, Anaya marks her self-initiative in her portrayal of concrete measures she has taken to develop her German. Her portrayal of different ways in which she has invested in the language

inside and especially outside of the classroom foregrounds the extent to which she actively takes control and shapes her learning process.

A second way in which she supports an agentive view of herself is that she contests non-agentive views on language learning in her self-reflexive commentary on the labels *heritage language learner* and *language learner*. In the broader context of consulting her feelings about the former label, she clarifies that the word *language learner* in general does not capture what her involvement with German means to her. Instead, she coins the phrase "enthusiast" to describe herself in relation to learning German, explaining that "learning a language is one thing. but really engrossing and entrenching yourself in (.) wanting to learn the culture and the mind set; [...] that's a whol:::le new level of like pai:::n suffering; [...] i'm one of THOSE nut jobs;" (A_Int2, 3831). She reinforces this with a story about how she "drains herself out" (A_Int2, 3793) informing herself online about topics such as German folklore until late at night upon her own initiative. This does not only indicate that she feels engaged in more than merely internalizing the German language as a system and that to her, learning German has been an emotionally intense experience (reflected in the notion of "enthusiasm" and affectively charged utterances such as "who:::le new level of like pai:::n suffering"). Her narrations on this point also imply that her participation in German classes is part of a larger developmental process that is under *her* direction. As such, her invention of herself as an "enthusiast" also marks her agency in defining the very process in which she is involved. From this perspective, her process of learning German comes closer to an open 'quest for meaning' rather than an act of following a step-by-step path mapped out for her.

The importance Anaya assigns to an agentive view on her learning is even more salient in her comments on the label *heritage language learner*. As mentioned, she firmly rejects

being associated with the label. In the following quote, she describes what she associates with

the concept, showing how it diverges from her view of herself in relation to learning German.

She states that her investment in German "goes way beyond just heritage" (A_Int2, 3793),

which she elaborates as follows:

A: heritage learner is like- i learned it cause GRANDma speaks it; like to me when i
    hear that i'm just like- great so:: grandma's bribing me with cookies so i can TALK
    to her. i am now sitting in a classroom with a bunch of old people yelling at me and
    probably hitting me with a ruler; telling me that i don't say things perfectly. that is-
    that is not FUN; but that to me is like- when you said essentially heritage language
    learner that is like- instantly the thing that came to my mind; i'm like
    <whispers<great no!>>   (Excerpt 6.3.17, Int2, 3796)

Anaya here creates a vivid image of how she does *not* want her process of learning German to

be understood. Drawing on ideas such as "bribing with cookies" and "hitting with a ruler" she

invokes an exaggerated behaviorist perspective on the language learning process marked by

incentives and punishment – a view that foregrounds the learner's lack of agency. Moreover,

by associating the potential imperfection of her German speech with an image of "old people

hitting her with a ruler" she alludes to outdated teaching practices that involve physical

punishment. In addition, the image she creates links the notion of 'heritage' with an ancient

past – an oft-cited disadvantage addressed in critical discussions of the label in academic

publications (see e.g. Gounari, 2014). In sum, she here links the notion of *heritage learner* with

a product-oriented view of language learning that highlights heteronomy, technicality, rigidity

and strict adherence to pre-established norms. This portrayal serves as a contrast which she

uses to mark the importance she assigns to her agency in the process of learning German.

Thirdly, her agentive view on herself is reflected in the relevance she gives to the theme

of creative self-expression in her narrated trajectory of learning German. More precisely, she

recounts that one of the aspects she has most enjoyed about her German classes – especially as

a student from the mathematics faculty – is her perception that learning a language is a fundamentally creative process (rather than a matter of learning the formulae needed to solve logical problems). I will provide two excerpts to illustrate this point. In the first, she constructs the opportunity to express her creative potential during German language classes as a chief reason for having continued her German studies:

A: i was still debating whether or not to switch into japanese, but (-) i liked the ATmosphere in the department, that was kind of a big factor for me, because it was really different from what i'm studying uh with [technical class] [...] i continued to do it [study German], because (-) for me it was nice to (--) ((exhales)) practice a different section of my brain, [...] because you're always sitting there looking at math formulas and all this other con- super concrete things; with LANguage you know- they exPECT you to make mistakes, <smilevoice<thank god,>> uhm and sometimes even making a mistake isn't WRONG, sometimes it's actually more of a personAlity thing, which is kind of nice, so: [...]   (Excerpt 6.3.18, A_Int1, 36)

In the second excerpt, she similarly associates her experience of learning German in class and her use of German with creativity in commenting on her language portrait. Explaining why she assigns pale blue (German) to the right side of the head, and dark blue (English) to the left side, she states:

A: the way that i sort of think about uhm this is- [...] one theory of how the brain is split;=right? [...] so your more like logical thinking component and your more like creative thinking component; //mhm,// so [...] the creative side should be kind of like the GERman side; //mhm,// right? cause it's- it's not necessarily always corRECT; like in the sense of like ye know- you don't get the RIGHT answer, uhm but it's more along the lines of like- you get to be creative, you have to try new words like you have to be creative in order to learn the language, so for me ye know using german classes is like an escape, right? was because like in german classes i could BE creative. (Excerpt 6.3.19, A_Int2, 2598)

In these quotes, Anaya brings into focus her creative potential as a language user and learner. Her re-interpretation of linguistic errors as "a personality thing" establishes her legitimacy to make meaning on her own terms as a German language learner and a (multilingual) speaker ("they *expect* you to make mistakes"; "a mistake *isn't WRONG*"). In order to foreground her

agency as a meaning maker rather than an (uncreative) 'end user' of pre-fabricated language

formulae, she here makes relevant and subtly thwarts a set of overlapping discourses that are

rooted in the monolingual paradigm: a) the idea of language as a self-contained system

consisting of 'rules;' b) the idea that deviations from such 'rules' constitute incorrect or

illegitimate acts of language use and ought to be avoided; c) the idea that language learning is

chiefly about adopting the 'rules' underlying the target system. While overall, she does not

radically dismiss these views (as I will elaborate later), Anaya here indicates that to her, the

language classroom is not merely a place where she learns how to follow 'rules' associated

with the German language ("right" versus "wrong"), but a place that she exploits to satisfy her

desire for creative self-expression ("you *get to* be creative"; *using* german classes is like an

escape"). In other words, she frames her experience of learning German as a process that

allows her to explore new ways of being through creative language use, rather than a process of

submissively adopting a target language system. While she here subtly subverts a monolingual

order by constructing errors as unconventional yet legitimate instances of second language use,

she positions herself quite distinctly to monolingual norms in her construction of learning

goals, to which I now turn.

Language learning goals. Anaya addresses the theme of language goals and her

ambitions with German early on and on her own accord, in her response to the initial question.

Arriving at the present in narrating her language trajectory, she states:

A: when it comes to learning and continuing the language- i definitely want to do that
    [...] there's german communities, german clubs et cetera, and i want to get involved
    in that and continue that and better; i really want to get to a native (-) level. which-
    yeah that's kind of become a goal. both- i guess to a certain extent because of my
    FAMily's past, my family's iDENtidy, //mhm,// and their actual CULture [...]

(Excerpt 6.3.20, A_Int1, 131)

Similarly, after Anaya states, as mentioned above, that she has gone past the "threshold of not caring" and now feels driven to "continue to the end sort of thing," I follow up inquiring how she envisions that "end." In her response, she expresses her desire to become indistinguishable from German speakers who were born in Germany, constructing a native speaker ideal as a subjective learning goal:

A: i want to- and obviously this is perfectionism at its greatest. but it's [...] like- i want to be able to speak to native speakers (.) and read like high level literature, [...] you want to be able to go in there and people think you're from germany; or you're from- like essentially THAT level. i can walk in and completely blend in with everyone else; [...] so it's yeah it's definitely to the point where essentially i want to be able to walk in, blend in, and there will be no difference between me and someone who was born in germany. //mhm-// and that's the l- the level that i WANT.   (Excerpt 6.3.21, A_Int1, 2391)

In line with the findings in 6.3.1, both excerpts suggest that Anaya conceives of her process of learning German as an investment in a 'native German' identity ("someone born in germany"; "it has become a goal... because of ...my family's identity and their actual culture"). Like in the excerpts presented in 6.3.1, her perspective is based on the premise that 'the' (German) language embodies, reifies, and partially constitutes 'native (German) identity,' in tune with the monolingual paradigm. The analysis in 6.3.1 identified that Anaya's elaborations on her relation with German imply an underlying view of herself as 'aspiring double monolingual.' In the present excerpts, she more clearly articulates the implications of this view for her ambitions with German, namely her determination to eliminate any traces of other languages in her German speech ("... able to walk in, blend in, and there will be *no difference* between me and someone who was born in germany").

Accordingly, she lists several concrete steps she has taken in pursuing her goal. For instance, she narrates how she once asked a professor who is a native speaker of German to allow her to audio record his enunciation of German words in his office, so she could later

practice their pronunciation at home. Similarly, talking about learning German in class, she remarks: "if i'm saying something wrong, i will be the first person to say it five times and drive everyone in the room nuts" (A_Int1, 2486). Here, she clearly establishes her goals (and behaviour towards their attainment) based on a monolingual framework of orientation, and foregrounds a view of German classes as a site that she uses to 'perfect' her German, as measured against a native speaker ideal.

In sum, Anaya's narrations on learning German yield varying positionings vis-à-vis monolingual norms. In expressing how much she cherishes the opportunity to act out her creative potential as she makes meaning on her own terms in class, she interprets deviations from monolingual norms as unconventional but valid idiosyncratic uses of German ("a personality thing"). On the other hand, in defining her ambitions, she emphasizes her investment in eliminating features in her speech that expose her as a non-native speaker of German, using monolingual norms as a governing principle.

Having analyzed Anaya's self-construal in accounts of learning German, I now investigate how she interprets her experience of investing in German in relation to her sense of self, notably in light of her family background.

6.3.2.2 Investing in German as connecting with an ancestral culture

As indicated, Anaya gives great importance to her family background in her narrated trajectory of learning German, largely attributing her increasing interest in German studies to her perception that "a lot of family history was coming out of the woodwork" (see above). Conversely, she constructs her investment in German as a process of connecting to what she

presents as her family's culture, suggesting that she was able to complete, consolidate, and validate her 'German identity' through this process to a degree. I will present four excerpts in order to illustrate how she achieves this effect.

First, it is insightful to consider how she constructs her sense of self in relation to Germany as the country of her ancestors' origin, and how she makes this relevant to the meanings she attaches to her investment in German, especially to her sojourn. The following excerpt points to perceptions she recalls having experienced during her youth that highlight her sense of being 'disconnected' from her family's country of origin:

A: as a kid, ye know; when your parents are sitting there; or your grandparents are sitting there; and they make these c- these comparisons; and you know things are connected- TO that country; you feel like there's that CHUNK missing. cause ye know- [...] you have (.) essentially your core BEING. and then you have these strings; ye know if you're trying to visualize it; you have these strings coming off; they lead to this other country; but you can't SEE it. //mhm;// so it's like these strings that just kind of END in the DARK. //mhm,// and you're ye know you're pulling on them furiously to be like- i wanna figure out where the hell this string ends sort of thing. (Excerpt 6.3.22, A_Int1, 1912)

Pointing to perceptions of her past, Anaya here makes relevant her perceived rootedness in a culture she associates with Germany as her ancestors' country of origin, echoing the discussion in 6.3.1. In particular, she places at the centre her feeling of *lack* ("there's that CHUNK missing") and a sense of *insecurity* as to where her 'core being' has its origin ("strings that end in the dark"). Subsequently, she goes on to tell me that visiting Germany and realizing that she was easily able to connect with local people abroad was "really cool in THAT sense that i actually finally got to (.) even just *TASTE the end of it*.=right? like to get there to see WHERE it all came from" (A_Int1, 1977). Taken together, in these remarks she frames her investment in German in terms of a process of connecting to the place and people she associates with her identity, in sync with the idea that 'connecting to cultural roots' and 'strengthening ancestral

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ties' are central to heritage language learning and heritage learners' developing sense of self (see chapter 2).

In line with this, drawing a résumé of what learning German has meant to her at the end of the first interview, she highlights how her investment in the language has been relevant to "acquiring an identity, or acquiring ((sighs)) a sense of self [...] in the GRANder scheme of things" (A_Int1, 2031). She notes how unlike with her experience of learning French, the process of learning German has heavily impacted how she conceives of herself, which she attributes to the relevance she assigns to German in light of her family history. She feels that in learning German, she has been "adding onto [her] oRIginal identity" (A_Int1, 2074), which she elaborates as follows:

A: so it becomes this strange hybrid of ye know this is your *home-grown german identity*, and then this is kind of the- now we're just going to just take it from germany; and cram it on in there too; we've already started the process [...] now it's just *time to freakin finish it*. (Excerpt 6.3.23, A_Int1, 2075)

The notion of "finishing the process," which here refers to developing her 'German' identity is in line with the previous excerpt in that it implies 'incompleteness.' Anaya frames her investment in German as a process of moving towards a (more) 'complete' German identity. She reinforces this view as she expresses how learning German has felt "fulfilling" to her:

A: it feels very fulfilling, because- you're always [...] like well- if i recognize as this [identity...] ye know we like having this identity or this this feature at least (to our) identity; and to a certain extent too part of me is also like- and the amount of SHIT that i've gotten for it as WELL,[49] //mhm-// ye know you're just kind of sitting there going- well i wanna HAVE the language; and it's- yeah *it IS very fulfilling. it's like finding that last piece; and being like ah::: i can finally complete (.) ye know the puzzle, and not feel like this bumbling idiot; or sometimes you feel a bit of an impostor;=right?* //mhm-// because you're [...] like well i FEEL like i have a german identity. *but then everyone's like- well you've never BEEN to germany; you don't even speak GERman; dadadadadadada.* and then i can't sit there in good conscience and say- well (.) i don't feel- like what does a canadia- and i ask a lot of

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[49] Anaya is referring to occasional discriminatory incidents she reportedly experienced during her youth based on her German origin, such as being called 'Hitlerette' or 'Jew Killer.'

my friends; like what does a caNAdian feel like.   (Excerpt 6.3.24, A_Int2, 2076)

Echoing the excerpts in 6.3.1, Anaya here again addresses her experience of what Carreira (2004) calls "identity negation" ("but then everyone's like- well you've never BEEN to germany; you don't even speak GERman"). Here, she identifies how this is relevant to how she conceives of her process of learning German. Specifically, drawing on a puzzle metaphor, she frames her 'German' identity as (previously having been more) incomplete, at the same time as she constructs her investment in German as a process of 'consolidating' her sense of 'being German,' and of reducing her insecurity with respect to her authority to claim a 'German identity' ("finally i can complete the puzzle, and not feel like this bumbling idiot; or ... impostor"). Accordingly, she portrays her sojourn in terms of a process of receiving what she calls "verification" of her German identity:

A: i was a little bit worried that if i went to germany [...] i was actually worried that i would feel LESS- like i would feel that the identity that MY family has- is this old school- ye know 1950 post identity, and you are MORE of an island. [...] but when i WENT to germany- and i found (.) people were SO accepting and SO willing, [...] yeah they were like- you look GERman; you ACT german; you speak like a GERman. //mhm.// so coming back i was like- oh okay; i've had verification; //<chuckling<okay,>> // ((laughs)) to a ( ) extent. i got my CHECKmark. i PASSED. (Excerpt 6.3.25, A_Int1, 1356)

In short, in these examples, Anaya constructs her investment in German as what Carreira (2004) calls an "identity affirming experience" (see chapter 2).

Interim conclusion. An intriguing finding emerging from the analyses in 6.3.2 is that there is an inherent tension arising from conflicting views and needs indexed in Anaya's narrations on learning German. In defining her goals and in interpreting her investment in German, she draws on monocentric views on the relation between language and the self, placing at the centre her desire to acquire aspects she associates with her 'heritage' identity, in line with traditional perspectives on 'identity needs' of heritage learners (see chapter 2). However, her

apparent need to exert her agency in defining herself and to design her learning process clearly clashes with the idea of acquiring a 'pre-fabricated' fixed identity. As much as her narrative indicates her desire to strengthen her sense of having a 'German identity' and to reach native speaker German language abilities, her self-presentation as an agentive subject-in-process (see 6.3.1) brings to light that her 'needs' are not only defined by the degree of her German language proficiency or by her perceived affiliation with (or distance from) a German identity and culture. Her account suggests her longing to explore, develop, and perhaps even decline modalities of being and belonging in relation to her family's origin.

6.3.3 Self-construction as a multilingual, intercultural speaker

In the introduction I mentioned that Anaya does not foreground what it has meant to her to live with more than one language. Yet, a systematic examination of ways in which she presents herself as a *multilingual* subject yields two interesting findings. First, albeit briefly, she draws attention to desires that point beyond a (double) monolingual perspective. Second, while she stresses her self-identification as German, she subtly plays with perspectives in a way that resonates with the notion of *intercultural speaker* (see chapter 3). I will discuss these points consecutively.

6.3.3.1 Anaya's desires and aspirations as a multilingual language user

While Anaya's narrations on learning German highlight her ambition to achieve native speaker abilities in German, her comments on her language portrait shed light on additional aspirations she holds as a language user. Compelled to consider how *all* her language resources contribute to her linguistic self through the task of creating the portrait, she articulates the following desire, as she thinks about her future in connection with her drawing:

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A: i would really like in particular- not so much for the inner- the inner english to get smaller, but what would be really cool would be to have kind of the the inner english and i guess the the middle german (-) BLEED.[50]//mhm,// [...] if ye know we're talking more of like a art- //mhm// hypothetical hybrid- because to a certain extent like- i know my parents aren't going to learn german; //mhm,// and as much as [...] i like teaching my parents things, i like sharing it with them; and i like ye know sharing it and kind of bringing the past to the present and shedding on a new light, //mhm,// particularly because ye know in north america they have such a <sarcastic voice<very particular way of LOOking at things when it comes to germany and german culture; //mhm=mhm,// ye know if it's not lederhosen it's gas chambers.>>   (Excerpt 6.3.26, A_Int2, 2985)

Anaya goes on to recount how she has enjoyed sharing what she has learned in her studies with her parents and grandparents, as she notes how they have "become a little more open with it" (A_Int2, 3024), but then adds: "looking back at it, it's kind of weird. it's like the more i learn about german, the sadder i am that i can't share it on an equal level with my family;" (A_Int2, 3031). The sequence shows how Anaya's perceived needs and desires as a multilingual person go beyond reaching a native speaker ideal in her use of German. She here indicates a desire to share and *mediate* newly gained perspectives to her family, highlighting how for her, this entails transforming existing ideas and juggling partially incompatible perspectives about what it means to be German and ("bringing the past into the present and shedding on new light").

It is clear from this sequence how for Anaya, learning about German language and culture is by no means merely relevant within spaces of monolingual German language use. In fact, she here envisions the space she defines as most relevant to her sense of having a 'German identity' – her family – as a 'multilingual' space in the sense that it requires her to transform meanings across cultural and linguistic borders and to resignify prevailing discourses, cultural memories, and stereotypes.

The way in which she here implies a positive correlation between learning German and feeling sad ("the more i learn... the sadder i am") challenges the notion that acquiring a

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[50] She is referring to the smallest dark blue ring and the adjacent pale blue ring in the chest area (see appendix F)

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'heritage' language more fully will automatically strengthen family ties. It invites us to re-imagine the notion of 'family relevance' (see chapter 2) in ways that break with key assumptions underlying the monolingual paradigm (such as the idea that the family is a monolingual space where monolingual language abilities suffice).

The discussed sequence of Anaya's narrative subtly implies that she would benefit from strengthening abilities that have been associated with 'translingual/transcultural competence' (see chapter 3) – that is, abilities that are central to her challenge as a multilingual speaker to translate and mediate meanings across linguistic borders and spaces in which diverging views abound. The next subsection targets how she demonstrates abilities that have been associated with the notion of 'intercultural speaker' (see chapter 3).

6.3.3.2 'Intercultural speaker' positionality

The previous discussion illustrates that Anaya consistently foregrounds her self-identification as 'German.' Examining sequences in which she achieves this effect through the lens of multilingual subjectivity reveals an intriguing finding: It brings into view that she often portrays and/or comments on the very aspects she associates with 'being German' from an outside perspective. I will provide two examples. The first is from the sequence where she considers factors that contributed to her self-perception as being German across her youth.

A: as a kid. ye know- it would be really *weird* things that my- my parents would say or
    whatever- do or (.) or things my grandparents would say or do; and it would be like
    my mom would cook some (.) DISH or something; right like ye know like sour
    crout. and she'd be like- ye know and most *like stereotypical things*; //mhm.// but
    over the years it gets ingrained and then expands; it would be like ye know *eat your
    sour crout like a good GERman*.   (Excerpt 6.3.27, Int1, 1092)

While Anaya's main aim in telling this story is to offer evidence for aspects of her life that characterize her family as German, she at the same time de-familiarizes the 'German' feature

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that she uses in order to present her family as German. For example, she here introduces habits of her family as "*weird*" things that her family would say or do, hence commenting on allegedly 'German' features 'through Canadian eyes.' At the same time, she marks her awareness of the fact that she is drawing on a *stereotype* that Canadians associate with Germans, adding a dash of self-irony as she cites her mother's order to eat her sour crout like a "good German." In so doing, she distances herself from what could be misunderstood as an ignorant 'Canadian' perspective on Germans. In short, she demonstrates her ability to look at cultural phenomena from different angles and to "offer a 're-reading' of habitual signs, a new perception of the familiar and the unfamiliar" (Kramsch, 1998, p. 30) – what Kramsch (1998) calls the privilege of the intercultural speaker (see chapter 3).[51]

Further evidence for ways in which she promotes an intercultural perspective can be found in her account of her exchange to Germany. As mentioned earlier, she feels that she "actually got along better [...] in GERmany than (-) in CAnada." (A_Int, 141). In particular, she highlights that she easily created rapport with German speakers abroad as compared to other North American exchange students. She repeatedly states that based on her upbringing in a German family, she "wasn't very surprised when [she] got certain responses" (A_Int1, 160) during interactions in Germany. Specifically, she maintains that she did not feel "surprised by a lot of things that were culturally different than [...] what you would think of the quote unquote typical canadian or the typical north american" (A_Int1, 1894). She reiterates several

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[51] I interpret Anaya's account in terms of an *intercultural* rather than a *transcultural* perspective for the following reasons. While Anaya highlights her ability to look at and defamiliarize what she considers 'German' ways of communicating in light of what she constructs as 'North American' conventions and vice versa, she does not highlight 'dynamic' aspects in presenting this dual perspective, such as her ability (or struggle) to *mediate* between linguistic and cultural realities and to circulate or transform meanings across borders (with very few exceptions such as in excerpt 6.3.26, see previous section). Rather, her narrative foregrounds a view of cultures as clear-cut entities that correspond to a particular language, identity, and way of being. Her focus is on how well she fits into 'Canadian'/North American' versus 'German' culture rather than on modalities of being and belonging that are possible in different social spaces. This inevitably leads to a monolithic view of language and culture that appear to be polarized (i.e., she creates a binary between 'English' and 'German').

times that she "was more open to having these very frank and for some people, ye know, what a lot of people would recognize as uncomfortable conversations" (A_Int1, 1946). Contrasting her experience with the experiences of other exchange students, she narrates:

A: when THEY talked to the germans i saw [...] they always didn't get on certain topics, [...] but i found personally for myself like i could GET on those; [...] there wasn't this giant wall that all of a sudden went up; [...] like for instance [...] i DID talk to people about my family DUring the war. //mhm,// because i wanted to know MORE; and i did not have a SINgle person get uncomfortable with it. [...] and i had a lot of people share stories with what THEIR family was involved in; [...] ye know like [...] what sides each person was on; even like things that i'm like (-) *should you be telling me this? ((chuckles))*
Int: <slight smilevoice<//aha,//>>
A: uh- which i KNOW- that wasn't the case for a lot of the exCHANGE students.

<div align="right">(Excerpt 6.3.28, A_Int1, 249)</div>

While Anaya here aims to foreground her affinity to discursive norms she encountered abroad, she does not simply portray herself as 'one of the Germans.' She positions herself as a (unique) North American by constructing herself as part of, yet different from, the group of North American exchange students. More precisely, she marks her alignment with Germans abroad, whose ancestors, like Anaya's, experienced World War II in Germany, and who, like herself have no qualms sharing their ideas about this matter, according to her. Yet her account indicates that she monitors the described encounters through what she depicts as 'Canadian' frames of interpretation, most evident in her remark "i'm like should you be telling me this?" and her chuckle.

In this context, it is relevant to take into account that I am her direct audience – a Canadian who grew up in Germany and who was living in Canada when the interview took place. She cannot be sure whether and how my family was involved in the war; nor is it easy to assess whether or to what extent addressing the topic might potentially make *us* uncomfortable – a point supported by her chuckle and my (somewhat 'cautious') smilevoice. From this

perspective, the way in which she here puts forth an 'intercultural' perspective can be seen as a communicative strategy that provides a 'potential escape route' for our conversation should we substantially differ in how open we are to having what she calls "these very frank conversations." My own remark "aha," has a similar function, inasmuch as its intonation is on the border between expressing surprise and a response particle that indexes understanding. In short, Anaya here demonstrates her ability to play with perspectives in a way that allows us to maneuver through moments of uncertainty, narratively positioning herself as someone with a dual perspective and literally making herself understood to me as an intercultural speaker.

In line with the findings stemming from these two examples, Anaya clarifies that her preference to identify as "german first canadian SEcond" (A_Int1, 2129), does not indicate her denial of what she calls a "canadian aspect" in defining herself. In the final sequence of the first interview, she once more addresses how her legitimacy to self-identify as German has been challenged and how she contests such challenges (see 6.3.1), before she concludes:

A: it's not like i'm saying ye know i'm not canadian, i'm completely german; [...] it's
    like ye know yeah there's this canadian aspect [...] that i have [...] but i think [...]
    it's more of uhm- it's like an additional FEAture; or it's like a MODE. it's like you
    are in canadian MODE. //mhm,// but your CO::RE is still very different.
                                                                    (Excerpt 6.3.29, A_Int1, 2162)

In sum, while Anaya focuses on her sense of being German, her narrative clearly reveals how she makes sense of herself and of the world from an intercultural perspective. She demonstrates her ability to de-familiarize the very ways of being with which she identifies herself. In other words, instead of positioning herself as 'ordinary' German or 'ordinary' Canadian, she uses her ability to shed on an intercultural perspective to present herself as a unique, far from simple-minded person, who is not easy to see through.

6.3.4 Conclusion

Synthesizing the findings from the sections in this chapter, I will consider them in light of the same questions as applied to the previous cases – how Anaya's perspectives relate to the construct of HERITAGE LEARNER, and how examining her narrative through the lens of multilingual subjectivity brings to light aspects relevant to her engagement with German that would otherwise remain obscure.

Anaya's portrayal of learning German matches traditional understandings of heritage learners in many ways. She portrays herself as rooted in a German identity and culture. She foregrounds a view of this identity as inherited, builds on the notion that German language embodies German identity, and highlights the 'family relevance' of German in her learning trajectory. Above all, she constructs her investment in German as a process of connecting to her 'cultural roots,' during which she was able to mitigate feelings of insecurity and affirm her sense of having a 'German' identity.

By contrast, her self-presentation as an "enthusiast" and agentive discourse user diverges from traditional views on heritage learner identity. Her account illustrates the significance of the critique discussed in chapters 2 and 4 that existing framings fail to consider "who [heritage learners] are in various contexts and how they see, perceive, interpret, present, and represent themselves in those contexts" (Hornberger & Wang, 2008, p. 6). The analysis of Anaya's portrayal of her confrontation with and her reactions to contradicting views on whether she is 'German' identified her ongoing struggle involved in her self-presentation in relation to language and culture. From this perspective, she is invested in more than acquiring a pre-defined 'German identity' and attendant cultural practices (including language) 'more fully.' She is engaged in a constant search of ever-new ways of understanding and positioning

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herself in light of her family background. Her narrations suggest that the development of her ability to identify, draw on, and counter discourses shaping her positionality (such as the idea that 'being German involves speaking German well') has been central to her self-understanding and to her self-representation in specific encounters with others.

As a developing multilingual subject she is not merely coming to terms with a self-perceived lack, or with feelings of insecurity related to a 'heritage' identity. She is also testing the ways and limits of implementing the idea that she 'can be whoever she wants to be.' In this respect, it is vital to consider how her views stand in relation to the monolingual paradigm. Her self-perception and her aspirations as a language user are largely grounded in a monocentric framework: She gives priority to an additive view on languages and cultures, on the basis of which she envisions herself as a double-monolingual speaker and on the basis of which she foregrounds whether and to what extent she fits into given social environments (rather than *how*). At the same time, her self-portrayal indicates her search for alternative ways of imagining the relation between language, culture, and the self, as reflected precisely in her quest for "radical" ways of being "whoever she wants to be," as she puts it. In other words, in constructing her sense of self in relation to language and culture and in articulating her goals as a language user, she heavily relies on ideas underlying the monolingual paradigm, yet these ideas clash with her strongly-felt need to escape fixed categories and to give meaning to herself on her own terms.

In sum, while at the surface her language trajectory and motives to learn German match the concept of HERITAGE LEARNER, her narrative challenges ideas typically associated with heritage learners' 'identity needs.' In particular, it raises the issue of how such ideas can be reconciled with an agentive view on the individuals in question.

Chapter 7   Cross-Case Analysis

Having analyzed in depth how Marianne, Henning, and Anaya construct their experience of learning and living with German in Canada, it is now possible to examine the resulting findings more concisely in light of the theoretical background of the present study. Towards this end, I will analyze the results emerging from the three in-depth studies in relation to each other, against the backdrop of the theoretical discussion outlined in chapter 4. The discussion of similarities and differences across participants' narratives serves to demonstrate at a higher level of abstraction how looking through the lens of multilingual subjectivity can extend our understanding of the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER and illuminate the heterogeneity among students grouped into the category from new angles. In order to specify selected points more clearly, as well as to illuminate a broader range of what constitutes multilingual experience, I will also include additional perspectives put forth by the remaining participants, whom I call Laura, Nadia, Hanna, Gina, and Ryan, as announced in chapter 5.

I will use key questions raised in chapter 4 to structure the discussion. I explained in chapter 4 how approaching heritage learners from a subjectivity-based angle leads us to consider how their experience and sense of self are shaped by societal discourses (rather than merely by language proficiency and/or ties to a certain group). The in-depth analyses in chapter 6 identified discourses related to language, heritage, and learning shaping the three focal-participants' perspectives. In the first part of this chapter (7.1), I will analyze from a cross-case angle how the participants in this study make relevant and position themselves within heritage and language-related discourses as they give meaning to themselves and their experiences as language users. As announced in chapter 4, I will pay special attention to how they

differentially address, perpetuate, and contest views resonating with the monolingual paradigm, to what ends, and with what effects.

Another question raised in chapter 4 is how participants construct spaces of social interaction in which the 'heritage' language is potentially relevant, and relatedly, what challenges and thrills they associate with their experience and language practices as multilinguals who inhabit different linguistic and cultural spaces. In the second subsection (7.2), the cross-case analysis will focus on these questions so as to work towards a more nuanced understanding of the complex linguistic and cultural realities that heritage learners navigate, and what they (collectively and differentially) deem relevant to their participation and their sense of self in different spaces.

Finally, the overarching question derived from the discussion in chapter 4 is how participants' experiences of learning German figure into their experience of being multilingual. The third subjection (7.3) addresses this point. Building on the discussion in 7.1 and 7.2, I will examine from a cross-case perspective how participants' self-constructions as multilingual language users relate to their accounts of learning German in institutional settings.

7.1 Living with German in Canada – a subjectivity-based perspective

In chapter 4, I established that a subjectivity-based perspective can extend our understanding of HERITAGE LEARNER by bringing into focus how societal discourses are relevant to students' sense of self. On this basis, the in-depth studies in chapter 6 identified how Marianne, Henning, and Anaya relate to heritage- and language-related discourses that resonate with the monolingual paradigm as they give meaning to their experience of living with a German background in Canada. I will now examine their narratives in relation to each other in order to

stake out more clearly how the findings allow us to develop a view on heritage learners that goes beyond the two traditional defining characteristics and their underlying monocentric framings of language, culture, and the self – 'heritage language proficiency' and 'family ties to a heritage culture/identity.' First, I examine how the focal participants[52] define themselves in relation to German *language*, with a focus on commonalities and differences in how they relate to and deal with monolingual norms. Next, I compare how their self-constructions relate to the idea of 'rooted identity' and the extent to which they make relevant German group identities in defining themselves.

7.1.1 Using, contesting, and dealing with monolingual norms

Looking at the three in-depth studies in relation to each other, the following commonality is striking: Though my interview questions did not target participants' self-appraisal of their language proficiency, Marianne, Henning, and Anaya all point to self-declared imperfections in their German speech, albeit in different ways and to varying degrees.

Most intriguingly, they each volunteer small stories about how they experience *making errors* when speaking German. Recall, for instance, Henning's account of being corrected by his girlfriend when he "gets the gender wrong" (H_Int1, 612, see excerpt 6.2.10). Consider Marianne's story about how she could infer from her father's physical reactions that she "got prepositions WRONG" (see excerpts 6.1.10 and 6.1.11), as well as the importance she gives to her increased ability to identify mistakes in her German speech. Recall Anaya's remarks about sometimes feeling "like an idiot" when she "makes the wrong word" (A_Int1, 1570), as well as

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[52] I will refer to Marianne, Henning, and Anaya as 'focal' participants and to their narratives as 'focal' narratives in order to index whether I am referring to the entire data base / all participants or just to these three.

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how, conversely, she cherishes that in language learning, "sometimes even making a mistake isn't WRONG" (A_Int1, 49, see excerpt 6.3.18) in her perception.

I identified how in these instances, the participants call upon a discourse of correctness, according to which speaking well is to speak accurately as per monolingual (standardized) norms. Taken together, the results emerging from the in-depth studies indicate that this discourse serves as a dominant interpretational frame within which the participants characterize and evaluate their German speech – a finding that is further corroborated by the additional five narratives. Nearly all participants address the theme of errors or correction, and all indicate that their German speech is 'less than perfect.'

Relatedly, all narratives gathered in this study include references to a native speaker ideal. A cross-case comparison yields that participants differ in the extent to which they make relevant the ideal and to what ends. Marianne, for instance, uses it to create a benchmark against which she can measure her successful progression as a learner (see excerpt 6.1.8), and Anaya uses it to set up language goals (see excerpt 6.3.20), whereas Henning subtly debunks native speaker norms as an inadequate measure for conceptualizing his German language abilities (see excerpt 6.2.10). Yet, all three construct their German speech as falling short of native speaker norms in parts of their narratives – another finding that is supported through the additional narratives.

Participants' references to both discourses casts a view on their German speech as substandard as compared to the monolingual norms on which the correctness discourse and the native speaker ideal are grounded. Intriguingly, the focal participants do not only establish monolingual norms as the dominant referential framework with respect to which they evaluate their German speech. They also have in common that they actively counteract deficit-oriented

views of themselves as language users that are potentially connected to measuring their German language abilities within a monolingual framework of reference. In light of the discussions on "language shyness" (Krashen, 1998) and feelings of linguistic insecurity that have been associated with heritage learners (see chapter 2), this finding warrants close attention. In the following, I will compare how participants differentially conceive and position themselves in light of self-declared deviations of their speech from the monolingual norms underlying the correctness discourse and the native speaker ideal, which emerge as common points of reference across all narratives.

The analysis in 6.2 identified how Henning maintains his integrity as a language user by a) debunking the monolingual norms underlying the correctness discourse as inadequate for evaluating his German language abilities in light of his positionality as a *multilingual* speaker who lives and works in Canada, and b) by giving priority to his communicative abilities over linguistic correctness – e.g. he asserts that he is happy as long as he can "hold out a conversation fairly well" (H_Int1, 449, see excerpt 6.2.9). I interpreted his positionings in terms of a 'holistic' view underlying his conception of multilingual subjectivity – a view that foregrounds the fact that he has language abilities in two additional languages besides German; a view that frames German as an asset within his extensive repertoire. That is, in constructing himself vis-à-vis German language, he places his entire language repertoire – rather than the German language system – at the centre, making his lived experiences as a multilingual relevant to how he conceives the 'deviances' in his German speech from monolingual norms.

In some parts of her narrative, Marianne's means to counter a deficit-centered view on herself are similar to Henning's. She draws on a discourse that prioritizes communicative abilities over perfect linguistic accuracy, stressing her realization that it "doesn't have to be

perfect," as long as she can "make herself understood" (see excerpt 6.1.12). As compared to Henning, who draws on this discourse implicitly, she indicates that she consciously uses this discourse as a *strategy* that allows her to come to terms with critical evaluations of her German speech and uphold her investment in the language. While Henning's positioning accentuates his multicompetence (Cook, 1991), I interpreted Marianne's positionings in light of the importance she assigns to *learning as a subjective value*. Specifically, I found that she situates the alleged 'deficit' in her German speech within a key narrative of successful learning, pointing to the satisfaction and self-appreciation she gains from her perception that the 'gap' between her speech and the implied monolingual norms is constantly decreasing as a result of her efforts. Rather than making relevant her multilingual subjectivity like Henning, she accentuates her orientation to a preferred learner identity in depicting how she conceives deviations of her German speech from monolingual norms.

In addition, she gives priority to a view of language and the self as mutually constitutive rather than treating language exclusively as a system, separate from the self ("german isn't just a skill" – "it's who i am"). We saw that her awareness of the correctness discourse ('it has to be perfect'), its effects, and her newly gained view on language as self-constitutive allow her to dissociate her self-appreciation and perceived status as a German speaker from her mastery of German (reflected in the reported changes in her perceived legitimacy to speak German with her offspring that she attributes to her changed views on the links between language and the self). In foregrounding the significance she assigns to her newly gained understanding of language and the self, she achieves a similar effect as Henning: She places lived experience (rather than the German language system) at the centre of her self-conception as a (multilingual) language user.

In line with Marianne and Henning's perspectives, Anaya also resists a deficit view by marking her communicative abilities in encounters with locals in Germany. Moreover, like Marianne, she relies on a view of language and the self as mutually constitutive when she re-interprets errors as unconventional yet legitimate, creative instances of *her* German language use – "a *personality* thing," as she puts it. Anaya frames the perceived 'deficit' in her German speech within a narrative of 'agentive selfhood,' accomplishing a unique effect: She explicitly addresses her *legitimacy to transgress* monolingual norms in the act of exploring new ways of being through language. While Marianne's and Henning's approaches expand the perspective beyond 'German as a language system' by bringing into focus 'lived experience' and 'language repertoire,' Anaya's approach relies on her legitimacy to 'bend' the norms underlying the German language system, and exercising her agency in defining what is 'correct.'

Other participants demonstrate similar means to offset a potential deficit-oriented view on themselves. Laura, for instance, closely resembles Marianne's perspective in the following remark:

L: that's what i realized- it doesn't have to be perfect; that's where a lot of
    people get caught up. i have to say it right. i said no you don't have to say it right;
    you just have to SAY it. [...] i guess a lot of times that has been my philosophy in
    ALL my languages. is i'm just going to SAY it. (L_Int1, 788)

The cross-case perspective demonstrates three (related) points. First, while the two identified discourses emerge as key interpretational frames with reference to which the participants evaluate their German speech, all three make clear that the monolingual, system-based framework underpinning the correctness discourse and native speaker ideal does not suffice to capture how they conceive of themselves as language users, not even as *German* language users. The outline indicates that participants' sense of self emerges in relation to their entire

language repertoire (Henning), their views on the links between language and the self (Marianne), and their perceived agency to break with norms (Anaya).

Secondly, all narratives demonstrate concrete possibilities for multilingual subjects to deal with the implied 'deficit' resulting from being measured against monolingual norms. How they conceive of themselves as (German) language users and how they assess whether, where, and in what positions to use German does not depend exclusively on how fully they have acquired the language as a system, on the accuracy of their speech, or on the extent to which they have acquired a prestige variety. It is clear from the comparison that participants' perceived agency, perceptions, and actions as (German) speakers also depend on their awareness of and ability to respond to language discourses, as well as on what they make relevant to their (multilingual) subjectivities (e.g. the value of learning in Marianne's case, or agency in Anaya's). Above all, the ability to detect and position themselves in relation to monolingual norms and system-based views on the relation between language and the self emerges as important to the subjectivities of these multilingual language users.

Thirdly, the comparison sheds light on *differences* between language users from a new angle. It follows from the discussion that participants differ in ways that go beyond distinct proficiency levels or degrees of exposure to the German language. They demonstrate differences in a) how they position themselves with respect to measuring their speech against monolingual norms, b) the extent to which they are aware of monolingual norms and how these impact their experience, and c) how they conceptualize (the relation between) language and the self more generally.

While this section focused on participants' positionings in relation to monolingual norms as they work against a deficit-oriented perspective, it remains to be discussed how they

position themselves to monolingual norms more broadly across their narratives. For instance, participants differ considerably with respect to the *consistency* with which they challenge or adhere to monolingual norms. Since this has implications for how they conceive processes of learning German as multilingual subjects, I will return to this point in 7.3 – the section that focuses on accounts of learning German.

7.1.2 The question of 'rooted identity' and cultural belonging

When looking at the three in-depth studies in relation to each other we see that all focal participants construct their families' cultural backgrounds as central to their sense of self. All three construct Germany as their families' country of origin and as a place that has played an important role in their lives. Furthermore, they all point to practices shaping their experiences that they associate with 'being' German (such as eating certain foods or playing with certain toys). It is obvious, however, that they create very distinct narratives of what having a family connection with German language and culture has meant to them, and they differ considerably in how they conceive of themselves in light of their families' histories. In order to examine how their narratives align with and point beyond the idea of being 'rooted' in a German culture, and how the three accounts differ in this respect, I will review and compare key findings from each in-depth study.

Henning subtly contests the idea that having a German background and being German implies being a member of a German culture. The analysis showed how he de-emphasizes the relevance that German group identities have in shaping his sense of self ("i don't need other germans to celebrate being german with me"). Rather than relying on social group identities in defining himself, he gives primacy to his lived experiences within individual relationships and small circles of people. He associates having a German background with specific practices that

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have shaped his experience, such as Christmas traditions, playing with certain toys, travelling to Germany every summer, and speaking German with particular people, but 'feeling German' has reportedly not been central to how he conceives of himself. While he attributes this to his perception that he "misses a bit of the cultural aspect of living in Germany," he does not construct this point in terms of a 'lack' that ought to be compensated. He does not construct himself as 'incomplete' with reference to a German identity (like Anaya), nor does he associate being German with feelings such as pride (like Marianne). Henning's account features how he fits and is accepted 'in his own right' in different social spaces, including spaces in Germany and in Canada.

In Anaya's narrative, the idea that 'having a German background means belonging to a German culture' emerges as a key point of reference. We saw how in many parts of her narrative, she draws on the notion of a pre-given (genetically constituted) German identity in order to give meaning to herself. She stresses her sense of 'fitting in' when she travelled to Germany, and constructs 'Germany' as an imagined community (Anderson, 1991) to which she has felt connected, which is most salient in her reference to imagined strings leading to "that country" (A_Int1, 1924). She constructs Germany as a *cultural* space inhabited by people whom she associates with the tendency to display certain features (e.g. being blunt, having frank conversations, having a dark sense of humor, physical features etc.), working to demonstrate that she and her family share those tendencies. The analysis established that she depicts these attributes as key characteristics of her "core" (e.g. evident in the 'German' kernel at the centre of her language portrait), while she also depicts her German identity as 'incomplete' in light of features she 'lacks,' particularly near-native abilities in speaking German and living in Germany for a longer period of time.

Anaya's sense of having a German identity is paramount to how she defines herself, yet her narrative also demonstrates her ongoing struggle with a consistent German identity – a struggle emerging in light of conflicting understandings related to the discourse of 'rooted' identity. This was obvious, for instance, in the incongruency between the idea that ethnic 'roots' are inherited "by bloodline" and the idea that identities are 'rooted' in a certain *place* – two understandings that have reportedly been crucial to her sense of self. The analysis identified how she cites the voices of others in order to show how she has been positioned in light of these understandings, and to demonstrate how she contests the latter, for instance by drawing on agentive notions of selfhood ("i can be whoever i wanna be").

The overall finding resulting from the analysis in 6.3.1 was that her narrative features her *sense of self as emerging from an ongoing process* of positioning herself within distinct discursive frameworks. As much as she stresses her strong affiliation with a German culture and identity, her narrative foregrounds her ongoing search for ways of viewing and presenting herself in relation to language and culture that allow her to exercise her agency in defining herself in unique ways. In short, while to some extent she uses the discourse of 'rooted' identity to make sense of who she is, her narrative also demonstrates that this referential frame fails to capture how her sense of self emerges in ongoing processes of (re)interpretation.

Like Anaya, and in contrast with Henning, Marianne marks her belonging to a German culture as relevant. She associates her sense of being German with feelings of pride and expresses her affiliation with a 'German identity.' However, rather than foregrounding a view of heritage identity as genetically constituted, she uses the Russian Mennonite identity she associates with the maternal side of her family as a contrast in light of which she depicts what being German has meant to her. Like Anaya, she cites the voices of others to pinpoint

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expectations and idea(l)s that have reportedly been expressed to her as a descendent of what she calls a "REAL german," and positions herself with respect to these understandings. The analysis identified her positioning as multi-layered and complex: As she adheres to what I termed the 'proper GERman ideal,' she marks her affiliation with the German identity she associates with her father, subtly distancing herself from the Russian Mennonite identity she associates with her maternal relatives, yet simultaneously she makes sure to align her positioning with a discourse of inclusivity that condemns discrimination of any ethnic identity. As in Anaya's case, the overall finding is that Marianne constructs her *sense of self as evolving from processes of positioning* herself within discursive frames of reference that she associates with social and linguistic categories such as 'REAL german,' 'proper GERman,' 'Russian Mennonite.' Similar to the finding that Anaya shifts between (partly contradictory) positions as she presents herself as an agentive and complex social being, Marianne highlights adaptability and flexibility in maneuvering through different possibilities of being as one of the most important aspects in defining herself.

Taken together, though Marianne, Henning, and Anaya all deem their connection to German and Germany central to who they are, defining the three as (potential) members of the 'same culture' by virtue of their 'ancestral ties' seems inaccurate in light of the outlined differences and complexities marking their individual perspectives. Clearly, their understandings of who they are and how they belong are impacted by distinct expectational and interpretational frameworks. The differences between the three participants' self-constructions do not merely arise from each individual's 'distance' from the culture of their ancestors' origin, but in how they position themselves with respect to expectations and meanings that others associate with being a descendent of German ancestors – that is, the

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participants differ markedly in how they "maneuver through HOW to be," to borrow from Marianne.

In sum, the picture emerging from the comparison in 7.1 allows us to imagine more vividly what it means to reconceptualize heritage learners as agentive subjects-in-process (Kramsch, 2009), who are not only using a heritage language X and identifying with an attendant culture. We have gained a glimpse into concrete ways in which the participants in this study use discourses such as the discourse of correctness to make sense of themselves and their experiences as language users and to make themselves known in specific ways. As such, the comparison allows us to rethink the heterogeneity among students grouped into the category of HERITAGE LEARNER. Heritage learners have been described as a notoriously heterogeneous group (e.g. Carreira & Kagan, 2018; Hendryx, 2008), above all based on the perception that they bring with them 'unpredictable' gaps in their knowledge of the heritage language. The discussion in this section sheds light on heterogeneity from a different angle. It illuminates how participants do not only differ with respect to their place on a presumed monolingual proficiency continuum, but also in how they position themselves towards being measured along such a continuum. Likewise, they do not only differ with respect to their status or active participation in a German community, but also in how they conceptualize cultural diversity, and how they envision ways of belonging.

Before I discuss how participants' distinct positionings within discourses of the monolingual paradigm relate to their experiences of learning German, I examine how the eight participants in this study construct their multilingual subjectivities and the social spaces they navigate as multilingual people.

7.2 Living with German in Canada – looking beyond a (double) monolingual perspective

While in the previous section, the focus was on ways in which participants (distinctly) deal with views that resonate with the monolingual paradigm, the following analysis serves to gain a more detailed understanding of participants' *lived experiences* as multilingual people. A key concern addressed in chapter 4 is how participants construct the social realities they navigate, in what kinds of spaces German plays a role in their views, and what aspects they deem relevant to their experience as language users. The results of the in-depth studies yield intriguing findings for comparative analysis and further discussion. To begin with, all focal participants challenge the assumption that 'heritage' languages are only relevant to contexts of monolingual heritage language use. Relatedly, they all point to facets of their multilingual experience that resonate with the dynamic models of multilingualism outlined in chapter 3. I will expand on these (intersecting) points in turn, seeking out how German factors into participants' experiences as multilinguals.

7.2.1 German and the multilingual self I: Moving beyond 'pure' heritage contexts

As discussed in chapter 4, a view often implied in the literature on heritage language education is that heritage learners move between 'heritage circles' on the one hand, and 'mainstream society' on the other. Rather than taking this understanding for granted, my aim was to explore how participants define interactional spaces in which German plays a role. The in-depth studies show that Marianne, Henning, and Anaya do not only make German relevant to 'pure heritage contexts.' This is evident in Henning's account of using German in playful translation activities with which he entertained friends, some of whom do not understand the language. It is evident in how Anaya expresses her need to mediate new understandings acquired in her

German classes to her family members, who do not understand German to the same degree that she does. Marianne's account illustrates most clearly how to her, the German language is relevant in realms of her life that are all but 'pure' heritage contexts, above all her relationship with her husband, in which acts of mediating meanings are commonplace, as we have seen.

Several other participants in this study give close attention to the ways in which German has played a role in shaping (the communication in) their relationships with their partners and other individuals – individuals who do not only differ with respect to their language trajectories and the complexity of their language repertoires, but who are also unique in whether, to what extent, and how they respond to the possibility of engaging with a new language and with new ways of being and acting. (Comparing Marianne's and Henning's accounts suggests, for instance, that their partners differ extensively in this respect).

The accounts gathered in this study demonstrate that participants' constructions of the 'here and now' in which German has been relevant to their perceptions and actions point beyond 'pure' German-speaking communities, local or abroad. They point to diverse social constellations that shape and that are shaped by participants' German language abilities and repertoire. As the next section will show in more detail, the individuals who took part in this study associate their experience of living with German with social spaces that they construct as *multilingual* realities, even if they do not always explicitly refer to them as such. Moreover, their accounts suggest that how their repertoires have been shaped by German language is relevant to their perceptions and actions in what would commonly be seen as the English-dominated 'majority culture' in traditional conceptions of heritage learners. This point will become clear in the next section, where I look closely at perceptions and practices participants deem important to their sense of self as multilinguals across different spaces they inhabit.

7.2.2 German and the multilingual self II: Facets of multilingual experience

Working towards an understanding of HERITAGE LEARNER that breaks with an additive, system-based view of multilingualism (see chapter 3), the following analysis serves to shed light on thrills, perceptions, abilities, and challenges that emerge as central facets of multilingual experience from the narratives gathered in this study. In this section, I will give increased attention to perspectives of the remaining five participants – Gina, Hanna, Laura, Ryan, and Nadia – since my aim is to illuminate a broader range of phenomena that point beyond 'double monolingualism.'

I will examine three facets specifically. First, I discuss the theme of 'living with a plural perspective,' since this emerges as the most salient commonality across all accounts. Second, the theme of 'operating and mediating between language worlds' emerges as relevant across all in-depth studies, hence I will focus on this point, paying special attention to struggles associated with this theme as addressed by further participants. Third, I will attend to an intriguing finding that only stood out to me when viewing all narratives in relation to each other: The relevance participants collectively assign to assessing the extent to which monolingual, monocentric views prevail in the spaces they navigate, and to assessing specific individuals' views and flexibility concerning language norms and norm violations.

7.2.2.1 Plurality of perspectives. As illustrated in chapter 6, all focal participants construct the plurality of perspectives that simultaneously open up to them through their complex linguistic repertoires as a crucial aspect of living with more than one language. In particular, each in-depth study identified the ability to view familiar events from an outside perspective as a key point characterizing the three participants' multilingual subjectivities. I

found evidence for this in Henning's and Marianne's fascination with comparing languages and the pleasure they reportedly derive from their awareness of linguistic relativity. I found that Henning constructs his ability to play with linguistic relativity as a source of shared amusement in interactions with his friends, and how Marianne gains pleasure from examining cultural differences as she tries to "nail down what it is that's different." (M_Int2, 3063). Similarly, the analysis identified how Anaya monitors interactions through multiple interpretational frameworks simultaneously, which was particularly evident in her account of talking with locals in Germany about potentially face threatening topics such as World War II. In sum, the focal participants' acquisition of German as a 'heritage' language in Canada does not merely appear as a 'key' that opens a door to one additional world and culture. In line with contemporary views on multilingualism, their narratives rather foreground how having acquired German allows them to approach, perceive, and re-interpret social realities in manifold ways and to question the universality of cultural conventions.

Correspondingly, nearly all participants associate their experience of growing up with German in Canada with a heightened sense of tolerance, flexibility, and an interest in exploring and making sense of cultural differences. For instance, narrating what her experience of growing up with more than one language has meant to her, one participant, Nadia notes: "i find i'm more open MINded because i have that. because [...] you're exposed to people when you're little; with accents or- who speak something else that you don't understand all the time" (N_Int1, 1061). She further specifies that she feels "more open and more willing to think about things differently, or to try and understand them from a different perSPECtive" (N_Int1, 1090), subsequently noting how this facilitated her adaptation to unfamiliar customs during her one-year exchange to France. Later reflecting on whether she feels that she has a 'German self,' she

returns to the theme of open-mindedness, concluding that "being open and trying to understand things is my german self" (N_Int1, 1123). Similarly, another participant, Gina, states as she reflects on her relation with the German language: "i think that i have maybe a broader mind or i am able to look at things from different perspectives sometimes, just because i i guess i have a little bit more experience living with different people" (G_Int1, 637). Likewise, invited to reflect on her relation with German, a third participant, Laura recounts: "i think i've gotten so much MORE out of my german. uhm- a whole international outlook in life; i really do; [...] i'm very proud of that." (L_Int1, 493). She further expresses that growing up with German has spurred a "desire to exPErience different cultures, and languages, and (.) different people," and proceeds: "i think- that's one thing- i have an acceptance to different cultures and and and different people, which (.) not always everyone has, coming from a canadian- a full canadian family" (L_Int1, 574).

In all of these examples, participants place the *plurality* of perspectives on social experience – notably how they define and deal with different understandings of 'normality' – at the heart of who they are as language users and as social beings. What these individuals value most about living with German as a 'heritage' language is their possibility to question taken for granted views, think outside the box, and to have developed the strength of adaptability as they *compare* different ways of interpreting, speaking, and being.

7.2.2.2 Operating and mediating between language worlds. In line with dynamic perspectives on multilingual practice, participants construct the ability to translate and mediate meanings across different linguistic and cultural spaces as a core aspect – and challenge – in their lives as multilingual speakers. As shown in 6.1, Marianne for instance depicts how she introduces her husband to concepts that are unfamiliar to him on a routinely basis. Moving

between language worlds and performing 'balancing acts' as she shares and aligns her perspective with her husband's, evolved as key facets characterizing her experience as a multilingual person.

Resonating with Marianne's stories, other participants also highlight the necessity to recurrently translate and mediate meanings, for instance (but not only) when friends and family members from Germany and Canada come together during visits. For example, one participant tells a series of small stories on how she was required to translate her German relatives' fast stream of talk to her monolingual English-speaking husband during trips to Germany. In so doing, she imitates the 'concert' of voices that came together in her head as she was making an effort to include her husband in the conversation, while her aunt, whom she characterizes as monolingual German-speaking, reportedly did not even see a need to provide translations.

Along these lines, nearly all narratives address challenges involved in translating and mediating meanings across different social realms to some extent, while some participants give more attention to struggles than others. Laura, for instance, places the theme of 'finding a balance' at the heart of her experience as a multilingual speaker. In her language portrait (see appendix F), she visualizes this by drawing a triangle into the forehead, half English, half German, which she explains as follows:

L: it's my mind's eye [...] it's the struggle between the logic of german and the- because my mind, i think english, but then i've got the [...] logic of german. so then it's that conflict between; so you're always finding that balance- between mind- the logic of german and the (-) language of english; and trying to find that balance because- a life struggle or finding that balance; because it's not easy. (L_Int3, 1540)

The fact that she invents the 'mind's eye' in her portrait marks the centrality that the theme of "finding a balance" has to her sense of self as a language user. It suggests that she is *constantly* engaged in comparing and re-interpreting different ways of making meaning in relation to each

other, and that her use of her language resources typically occurs against the backdrop of her *entire* language repertoire.

Accordingly, her oral account includes several stories that show what her struggle of 'finding a balance' has entailed. Corresponding to how she depicts the 'mind's eye' in her image, she recounts that her perceptions, thoughts, and her word choices are constantly influenced and often 'censored' by what she depicts as multiple, sometimes conflicting 'inner voices' telling her how to speak in a given encounter. Humorously, she notes that "there is like a whole little demon inside of you; telling you what to say; and you're like sh:::. and it CAN get a little crazy sometimes in there." (L_Int1, 897). She reports that in many contexts, she has an "internal little conversation" (L_Int1, 894) before she makes an utterance, both while using English or German. She recounts that this little fellow, whom she describes as a translator, a judge and a jury (L_Int2, 1115) helps her, for instance, when she makes an effort during visits in Germany not to embarrass her German relatives by "not speaking correctly" (L_Int1, 1066). In turn, she recounts that in Canada, she sometimes struggles to settle for what she frames as either a German or Canadian pronunciation of certain words such as 'Mercedes,' 'Gouda,' or 'Volkswagen' – an uncertainty that reportedly makes her feel vulnerable. I will look at this point in detail in the next segment. For now, it is important to record the following finding: Laura's account clearly demonstrates how her self-conception goes beyond the notion of 'double monolingual' in that she highlights the ongoing processes of weighing different ways of making meaning against each other as she acts through language.

7.2.2.3 Aligning language trajectories, operating between discourses, and assessing others' flexibility. The findings presented in chapter 6 show that as multilinguals, all three participants give attention to the issue of whether and to what degree their linguistic repertoires

are in sync with those of significant others. Marianne demonstrates how she mediates 'German' concepts to her husband in order to compensate for mismatches between their language repertoires. Henning reports to play with mismatches between his own and his girlfriend's repertoire by intentionally talking to her in French in ways that she will not understand. Anaya expresses that she is sad that her parents will never understand German to the same extent that she does. Taken together, their stories draw attention to how monitoring the degree to which their semiotic resources overlap with those of others in specific interactions is a core aspect of multilingual experience.

Intriguingly, however, the narratives collected in this study suggest that multilinguals are engaged in far more than merely assessing the overlap of linguistic resources and of aligning them when they relate to people with other language trajectories. As I will detail, the ability to assess a) other people's stances towards language-related views and norms as well as b) assessing other people's flexibility in dealing with norm-violations play an important role in participants' constructions of multilingual experience. I will briefly expand on both of these interrelated aspects, before considering how they manifest themselves in my data.

Firstly, one could say that participants collectively bring into focus the relevance of their sensitivity to what Busch (2017) calls "language regimes." According to Busch, speakers participate in several spaces[53] that are "socially and linguistically constituted in different ways. Each of these spaces has its own language regime – its own set of rules, orders of discourse, and language ideologies – *in which linguistic resources are assessed differently*" (p. 343, my emphasis). In other words, what people feel they can(not) say or how they ought to speak in a particular space will depend on their assessment of what norms and views will likely be taken

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[53] Following Lefebvre (1991), Busch understands space not as given, but as constantly (re)produced through repeated social and linguistic practice (p. 343).

for granted by others who participate in (and hence co-construct) that space. More specifically, the participants in my study indicate that, as multilinguals, it is important for them to assess whether and to what degree people in a particular context will rely on a monolingual, monocentric order in making sense of linguistic behaviour and of language users.

Interestingly, my data indicate, however, that it is not only important for participants to assess what norms may dominate in a certain space, but also to assess how particular interlocutors will interpret and react to transgressions of those norms and with what potential effects and implications. To put it more generally, *assessing others' flexibility* as language users emerges as an important facet of multilingual experience. Let us consider how the addressed points emerge from the data.

In 6.1, I noted that it is worth keeping in mind how Marianne marks the contrast between 'multilingual' and 'monolingual' spaces, such as the German department versus monolingual families – spaces that differ in whether the capacities and perspectives she associates with being multilingual are *taken for granted*, as she puts it. A comparison of all narratives reveals that the distinction between 'monolingual' versus 'multilingual' realities re-emerges as relevant across different participants' accounts. I will return to Laura's account, in order to shed more light on the *experiential* side of participating in spaces that differ with respect to what views on language(s) are 'taken for granted' – notably the extent to which monolingualism and multilingualism are treated as normal.

As mentioned, Laura recounts that she sometimes feels uncertain about how to pronounce certain words such as 'Mercedes,' 'Gouda,' or 'Volkswagen' in Canada. She narrates that her husband sometimes "makes fun of" her (L_Int1, 902), cautioning her not to deviate from what he reportedly treats as the conventional Canadian pronunciation of words

(e.g. proper names). Re-enacting their exchanges, she quotes him, as well as her response, as follows: "why do you always have to put that german accent on it. i'm like well it's GERman." (L_Int1, 903). She further elaborates:

L: when the word is the same in english as in german, i put that ON it; and i don't
    CONsciously do it. but then- [name of husband] says you gotta be CAREful with that
    because sometimes people might feel that you're (-) not being arrogant, but you're
    putting on airs. so you've gotta be careful with that. because you ARE (-) you are
    canadian. why are you putting a spin on it.=right? so i have to then be aware- i have
    to be careful now; (L_Int1, 905)

Laura here brings into focus how her positionality as a multilingual speaker has been shaped by her confrontation with a loyalty discourse that perpetuates monocentric views of language and the self, in particular the notion that one language equals one identity and one place. According to this discourse, as a Canadian, she ought to adhere to 'pure' English speech ("why do you put that spin on it ... you gotta be careful with that because you ARE ... canadian"). Importantly, she knows what is considered the unmarked, conventional pronunciation of the words in the described contexts, yet her narrative indicates that she feels uncertain about what is the 'right' way *for her* to speak as a multilingual language user. Though she is physically well capable of producing a 'conventional' Canadian English pronunciation of the words in question, her account suggests that subjectively none of the conventional ways of pronouncing them *feels* completely adequate to her as a multilingual person in the described contexts.

Reinforcing this view, she tells me that she avoids certain words and that at times, it bothers her to resort to the Canadian pronunciation in such situations, recounting that she sometimes purposefully adheres to the German pronunciation when she speaks with her husband and his children in their home.[54] While she reports to have established that "now <'German' pronunciation<gouda>> is a word in [their] household" (L_Int1, 938), she reports

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[54] Laura met her husband and his two children when they were about eight years old. She states that she exclusively speaks English with them.

to lack the confidence to consciously deviate from the conventional 'Canadian pronunciation' of words outside of her home. She explains: "i do feel sometimes (.) in work (.) self-conscious [...] i have to be careful around certain people. cause they might say oh are you trying to show off or be ostentatious cause you know another language, or what have you, and it's like- no, if you knew me that's not me [...]" (L_Int1, 963). Her remark indicates that she adapts her linguistic behaviour according to her assessment of how closely others who are present in a given encounter adhere to monolingual norms and of how they will react to violations of such norms. Her narrations on this facet of her experience invite us to pay attention to struggles of the multilingual subject that are in fact contrary to struggling to become 'double monolingual' – namely, the search for comfortable ways of *not* being (double) monolingual in encounters with others who likely adhere to monocentric views on language, culture, and the self (or in spaces where a monolingual imperative can be assumed to prevail).

Strikingly, Laura subsequently creates a contrast that resonates with Marianne's contrast between the German department as a place where 'multilingual perspectives' are taken for granted versus monolingual families. Having expressed her sense that she has to "be careful around certain people," who she fears, may consider her a show-off if she transgresses monolingual English norms, Laura points to spaces where the described kinds of transgressions are considered normal, namely, her family and language departments:

L: if my parents didn't know the german word they'd say the english word, if they don't
    know the english word they say the german word. it's just- that's how you grow up
    with languages. when you're in *an environment where that IS*, that wouldn't be such
    a big deal. i'm sure in these offices [offices belonging to the department] if- that's
    something it's not a big DEAL. [...] like in a language- people studying languages that's a
    common THING. but if you're in an engineering environment that may not be the case that
    much, depends on where you are. so sometimes you do have to slow down and be aware of
    that. (L_Int1, 970)

Laura here constructs her multilingual core family as well as language departments as spaces where breaking with a monolingual order is considered normal. Her reference to these spaces serves to create a contrast against the backdrop of which she highlights how she perceives her options and her actions as a speaker to be regulated by monocentric views pervading other spaces such as her work environment ("depends on where you are. so sometimes you have to slow down and be aware of that").

The discussion suggests that Laura's struggle with 'finding a balance' includes constantly weighing up whether and to what extent she should adhere to a monolingual order or expose herself as a multilingual person – in particular, when she is in the presence of people who will likely interpret her actions against the backdrop of a monolingual order. In short, as a multilingual subject, she presents herself as constantly gauging how particular transgressions of particular norms in a particular encounter will be interpreted by the particular people who are present and with what potential effects (e.g. being seen as ostentatious).

We can gain a deeper understanding of this point by considering these findings against the backdrop of Henning's account of how he playfully addresses his girlfriend in French. The analysis in 6.2 identified his construction of the relation with his girlfriend as a space where multilingualism is considered normal. To recapitulate, Henning intentionally plays with the mismatch of Jenny's and his own language repertoire. In speaking French to her, he is fully aware that she will not understand the words he is *saying*, but he also knows that she will (find a way to) understand what he is *doing*. Namely, he challenges her ability to play along with his game in the face of uncertainty about what exactly he said in French, her ability to find a creative response, and to demonstrate flexibility in moments of *not* understanding – a 'test' that she reportedly passes with ease. He leaves no doubt that he is confident that she will not

consider him ostentatious because he is demonstrating his ability to speak a third language besides English and German.

Reading Laura's struggle to find a balance against the backdrop of Henning's small story, we see more clearly how for multilingual subjects, relating to others is not merely a matter of assessing what particular language resources are shared or must be translated in order to align understandings. What comes into focus is how the participants assess norms and perspectives by which people in their surroundings will judge their linguistic behaviour and how they will deal with norm violations. Moreover, reconsidering Laura's narrations in light of Henning's suggests that as multilingual speakers, they do not only seek to assess the extent to which the violations of monolingual norms will be accepted. It also suggests that multilinguals' interactions with others entail the question *how far to confront particular others with 'uncertainty'* by breaking with a convention or by using words or concepts that are unfamiliar to their interlocutor. From this perspective, drawing flexibly on a language repertoire containing 'mobile language resources' as proposed in dynamic models of multilingualism (see chapter 3) includes the ability to assess not only others' linguistic 'knowledge,' but also to assess and adapt to the flexibility of specific other speakers. Marianne's narrations on the extent to which it has (not) been possible to integrate German language and culture into her husband's and her shared life as a couple family resonate with this point.

Taken together, the cross-case analysis allows us to gain a more sophisticated understanding of different kinds of spaces multilingual people navigate. We can now imagine the differences between what I have somewhat simplistically referred to as 'monolingual' versus 'multilingual' realities in an extended way: These spaces are not simply spaces where either one or more languages are commonly used. My findings suggest that participants define

the difference between these spaces in terms of the (perceived) extent to which a monolingual monocentric order prevails/can be transgressed in a certain space. In other words, spaces do not simply differ in the number of languages used, but also in how participants in a space interpret and react to transgressions of monolingual norms and to breaches that threaten monocentric views on cultural belonging. The discussion leads us to envision the multilingual subject not merely as 'operating between *languages*,' but also as 'operating between discourses,' constantly assessing what *views* on language others will take for granted, how they will relate to (the transgression of) language norms, and with what potentials and consequences.

To conclude, the participants in the present study shed light on several facets of their experience as multilingual language users that open the perspective on heritage learners beyond defining them as aspiring double monolinguals participating in 'heritage contexts' on the one hand, and 'mainstream society' on the other. Having examined how participants' experience as language users is shaped by and points beyond the monolingual paradigm, I will now consider how the findings discussed in 7.1 and 7.2 relate to their narrations on the theme of learning German.

7.3 Learning German in Canada as a developing multilingual language user

In chapter 4, I raised the overall question how learning and living with a heritage language or heritage background figures into the broader experience of being multilingual. In 7.1 and 7.2 I identified ways in which the participants in this study construct their experience of living with German and of being multilingual. It is now possible to examine how these findings relate to their accounts of learning German. Two questions are pivotal. First, how do they (distinctly)

experience and evaluate instances of learning German in institutional settings, and how does this relate to the positions they carve out for themselves as learners of German and as multilinguals? Second, how do their accounts of learning German in institutional settings align with the thrills, abilities, challenges, desires, and perspectives they make relevant to their experiences as multilingual subjects? I will attend to these questions consecutively.

7.3.1 Subjective perspectives on learning German in class: A cross-case comparison

Comparing Marianne, Henning, and Anaya's accounts of what learning German in university courses has meant to them shows that they make reference to similar themes (e.g. making errors), but the ways in which they conceive, interpret, and evaluate their participation in German language classes differs considerably. Most importantly, Henning ultimately deems his participation in the German class negligible to his overall development as a language user, while Marianne and Anaya construct their enrolment in German classes as a forward-moving, even self-transformative experience. In other words, Henning foregrounds the *discrepancy* between his 'needs' as a developing language user on the one hand and what he was able to gain from his class participation on the other, while Marianne's and Anaya's accounts do not indicate any such discrepancy. Rather, they construct their participation in German classes as a (valuable) *part of* larger developmental processes.

In light of my research objective this fundamental difference between the focal narratives raises the question how participants' constructions of classroom procedures and their underlying objectives align with a) their self-constructions as multilingual language users who live in Canada, and b) their self-constructions in relation to the theme of (language) learning. In order to examine how these constructions relate to each other, I will first briefly review how

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the focal participants construct themselves as learners (7.3.1.1) and multilingual speakers (7.3.1.2), before I analyze how their accounts of learning German in university relate to their understandings of themselves as multilinguals and learners (7.3.1.3).

7.3.1.1 Self-presentations in relation to the theme of learning German. All three make relevant their views on learning German and how they conceive themselves in relation to learning German on their own accord, staking out positions that differ considerably.

As shown in 6.2, Henning de-emphasizes his agency in processes of learning German, accentuating the priority he gives to what I called a 'developmental view' on his progress as a language user that marks the importance he assigns to his ability to adapt flexibly to linguistic surroundings. As such, he implicitly rejects attributes associated with traditional understandings of 'learner,' such as goal-directedness.

Marianne, by contrast accentuates the value she assigns to learning, explicitly framing 'learner' as a preferred identity and foregrounding the relevance she assigns to pursuing learning goals and 'monitoring' her accomplishments. I interpreted her engagement with German as an opportunity to indulge herself in the activity of learning and identified her self-identification as a 'learner' as pivotal to her self-construction.

Anaya, in turn, explicitly rejects being associated with the label *learner*, in particular in light of the importance she assigns to her agency in defining herself and in shaping her goals and learning processes. She suggests the label *enthusiast* as an alternative to describe how she conceives her process of engaging with German, highlighting how she goes beyond following a step-by-step language learning curriculum.

Comparing how the three relate to the theme of learning, one salient difference worth recording for the following analysis is that Marianne's and Anaya's accounts differ from

Henning's in how they foreground an *agentive* approach to learning German. While Marianne's perspective is more compatible with following a 'step-by-step' curriculum than Anaya's, both narratives suggest that the individuals integrate their narrated experiences of learning German into their own 'private' quests – in Anaya's case, the quest of 'acquiring a sense of self' as she puts it, and in Marianne's, the quest of figuring out how different 'pieces' of who she has been contribute to who she is today. That is, their narratives suggest that they actively relate procedures and contents of their German classes with subjective goals and pursuits in their lives to which the classes were not explicitly tailored.

    7.3.1.2 Self-presentations as multilingual subjects. Marianne's, Henning's, and Anaya's self-constructions as multilingual subjects cannot be easily summarized in a way that maintains the complexity that characterizes their positionalities, hence I will limit the review to main differences that strike me as relevant in connection with their accounts of learning German.

    I interpreted Henning's positionings in terms of a 'holistic' view on multilingualism that brings into focus how he draws on his entire linguistic repertoire – not just German – as he enacts his self through language. This was evident in his references to the imagined scenario of moving to Germany, in which case he believes that he would work to improve the grammatical accuracy of his speech – references he makes, in my interpretation, in order to foreground that perfecting his German speech is not relevant to the position that he presently occupies as a multilingual speaker living in Canada. The relevance he assigns to his positionality as a *multilingual* speaker coincides with a *consistent* rejection of monolingual norms as a yardstick to define his abilities, needs, and ambitions as a German language user. With respect to German, he *consistently overrides* discourses that establish the normativity of monolingualism (such as the discourse of correctness discussed in 7.1), i.e., he uses narrative means to render

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(German) monolingual norms irrelevant in light of his position as a multilingual speaker (who holds a native speaker status in English and also speaks French).

Marianne and Anaya, in contrast, position themselves distinctly vis-à-vis monolingual norms in different conversational contexts. In some contexts, they challenge the universal validity of monolingual norms – such as in the examples of how they counter a deficit-oriented view discussed in 7.1. In other parts of their narratives, they adhere to a correctness discourse and native speaker ideal and the underlying monolingual norms.

In Marianne's case, the analysis identified how she uses the notion of *native speaker* as a benchmark towards which she can strive as she enacts a preferred learner identity. We saw how she uses monolingual norms in order to establish learning goals and measure her success as a learner. Overall, she deems her orientation to monolingual norms important to her sense of self as a learner and subject-in-process, at the same time as her account of what it has meant to her to be multilingual points beyond the conceptual realm of double monolingualism, highlighting the value she gives to experiencing the world from a translingual/transcultural perspective (see 6.1.3 and 7.2).

In Anaya's narrative, in turn, the vision of 'double monolingualism' is at the heart of her self-presentation. Her determination to achieve a native speaker status in speaking German clearly relies on monolingual norms, while on the other hand, the importance she places on her agency clashes with the idea of strict adherence to any norm. The analysis showed how, as a result, her narrative displays subtle inconsistencies. I interpreted these in terms of a search for ways to view the relation between language, culture, and the self that allow her to maintain an agentive view on herself. While Anaya demonstrates her awareness of how specific discourses have shaped her subjectivity (e.g. the idea that identities are 'passed down by bloodline'), her

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narrative does not indicate her awareness of ways in which discourses of monolingual normativity factor into her perspective. The analysis showed how she presents herself as an *intercultural speaker* in many parts of her narrative, although she does not reflect on this point explicitly. In sum, while her apparent need to define herself pushes beyond the conceptual boundaries of monolingualism, her orientations towards investing in German hinge on her vision of herself as a double monolingual, clearly relying on discourses that establish monolingualism as the norm.

7.3.1.3 How do these self-understandings relate to the three participants' constructions of the German language classroom and with what effects? Having reviewed how the three participants distinctly construct themselves in relation to multilingualism and to the theme of learning (German), I will now examine how their self-constructions relate to their accounts of learning German in class, with a focus on the above-mentioned key difference between the three accounts.

Section 6.2 showed that the classroom activities and their goals as Henning constructs them, do not align well with the positions he makes relevant to his needs as a language user. He creates a one-sided view of the language class as a place where he engaged in different kinds of exercises oriented toward the perfection of his grammatical accuracy and his fuller acquisition of the German language as a system – activities he constructs as clearly disjoined from his perceptions and experiences outside of the classroom.

To begin with, his construction of classroom procedures and their underlying aims do not match his priorities with German as a multilingual living in Canada. Henning remained in the class because he was defined chiefly by what he refers to as his "slim knowledge of grammar." By approaching him as a multilingual subject, it was possible to gain insight,

however, into ways in which he conceives of himself in relation to (German) language more in terms of a flexible language user with pronounced communicative abilities, to whom the grammatical accuracy of his German speech is fairly irrelevant. Furthermore, the 'rigidity' of classroom procedures oriented towards the fuller acquisition of the German language system appear humorous (and somewhat absurd) in light of his 'developmental' view on learning, which highlights the importance he assigns to the ability to adapt flexibly to different language environments. He depicts himself as slightly 'out of place' in the class, not only because some of the exercises were 'too easy' as he puts it, but also because the technical approach to learning German that he associates with the classroom is neither in sync with how he likes to relate to language, nor does it align well with his subjective theories of learning.

This becomes more evident when looking at the discrepancy between his perceived 'needs' as a language user and what he could gain from his class against the background of Marianne's narrative. While her overall self-construction as a multilingual subject is quite similar to Henning's in how they both foreground the value they assign to perceptions and possibilities stemming from their ability to interpret social realities through multi-layered lenses, the ways in which they each relate to the theme of learning differ considerably. The above outline identified how as a learner, Marianne a) uses monolingual norms to orient her learning and mark her success b) embraces a goal-oriented approach to learning, and c) demonstrates her agency in relating herself to classroom procedures in ways that are not intended as per syllabus. The latter is reflected in how she links her learning process to a broader process of engaging with her past. The objectives of her German classes as she constructs them are a) in line with the position she takes up as a learner and b) 'rendered flexible' through her agentive approach to learning.

A similar pattern emerges in Anaya's case. She draws on monolingual norms when defining her goals. Furthermore, her self-presentation as what she calls "enthusiast" foregrounds her potential to 'look beyond' and even act on the 'traditional' order of the language classroom (Schmenk, 2015). In particular, she demonstrates her agency in shaping her learning process, ultimately interpreting her classroom learning experiences as conducive to the pursuit of a larger, partly self-directed process – a personal journey of "acquiring a sense of self," as she puts it. In other words, Anaya's narrative foregrounds her potential to make the institutional 'offer' fit her subjective needs.

While the discrepancy between Henning's self-perceived priorities and of what he was able to take away from the language course offer stands out as unique against the backdrop of the other two focal narratives, further accounts feature disparities similar to those found in Henning's case. Laura for instance consistently foregrounds that she was never able to relate to the classroom procedures that she associates with her experience of learning German in institutional settings.[55] She remarks: "so learning it in school and do- der apfel, die birne,[56] all that's- the rules and the rules and the rules and writing it- didn't work for me" (L_Int1, 845). She makes clear that she perceived the classroom activities and their presumable objectives as incompatible with her priorities, foregrounding the 'rigidity' of procedures oriented towards the fuller acquisition of the German language system in a similar way as Henning, and with a similar humorous effect. She recounts:

L: we DID go to german school and high school, but we never really took it seriously.
   [the teacher] always used to get mad at the german kids; cause we would never study.
   if we had to read a chapter and he says i want you to spell the word carrot. and some

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[55] Laura attended Saturday school during her youth, took German classes in high school, and a German as a foreign language class at the Goethe Institute during her adulthood (mainly to obtain a certificate that documents the level of her German language abilities)

[56] *der* apfel, *die* birne means 'the apple, the pear,' and Laura is here referring to the challenge of assigning different genders to nouns in German

would do karotte some would do mohrrübe,[57] and he's like- that's not the WORD. but it IS the word. yes that's the word and it's spelled correctly but that's not the word that was in the CHAPter. we'd walk out of there eighty-six percent not making an effort, meanwhile the person who got the honour's award was english. (L_Int1, 788)

This portrayal reads almost like a parody on the 'traditional' language classroom, vividly illustrating the same discrepancy found in Henning's narrative.

Another participant, Gina illuminates the same point from the opposite side: She expresses her appreciation for the classroom procedures she experienced in an integrative German class (which was not specifically designed for heritage learners) that provided space for participants to share experiences related to German language and culture in addition to grammatical exercises, according to Gina – an experience she contrasts with her memories of her participation in French classes where "it was always just grammar, and it didn't help me at all" (G_Int1, 672).

Taken together, an overall finding emerging from the comparison concerns the relevance participants assign to engaging with German in ways that go beyond a system-based approach. While Henning, Laura and Gina link negative evaluations of particular learning instances to their perception that classroom procedures were exclusively oriented towards more fully acquiring the language as a system, Marianne and Anaya value the ways in which engaging with German language and culture in university courses allowed them to learn about *themselves* in addition to language and culture, each in their own ways.

Furthermore, the discussion suggests that how well individual participants can relate to specific classroom procedures and to what extent they perceive these as meaningful to their development as language users does not merely depend on the degree to which their language abilities match the course offer at the linguistic level. Rather, the ways in which these

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[57] 'Karotte' and 'Mohrrübe' are different German words for 'carrot'

individuals respond to and evaluate certain classroom procedures and their class participation, appear to be shaped by a number of other factors, particularly the ways in which they position themselves with respect to monolingual (standard) norms; the responses that discourses such as the correctness discourse and native speaker ideal discussed in 7.1 elicit in them; the possibilities they see to explore and engage with the ways in which language has shaped their sense of self; how they construct themselves as learners and what learning means to them in general; and to what extent they are able to align classroom routines and perceived learning objectives with their own purposes.

Having discussed how participants distinctly experience and evaluate instances of learning German in institutional settings, I move on to present a striking finding that emerges when examining participants' accounts of benefits and challenges of being multilingual in relation to their accounts of learning German: the 'invisibility' of the multilingual self in the accounts of learning German in the classroom.

7.3.2 The invisibility of the multilingual self in accounts of learning German

In light of my objective to problematize traditional understandings of HERITAGE LEARNER within a framework of multilingual subjectivity, one of my main goals is to shed light on how participants portray their experiences of learning German *as multilingual subjects* – i.e., to examine how their narratives of learning German in institutional settings relate to their self-construal as developing multilingual language users and to their accounts of what living with more than one language has meant to them. The cross-case comparison of the eight narratives yields a striking result: Collectively, the narratives suggest that it is central to participants' experience as language users that they perceive and approach social dynamics through diverse

semiotic lenses simultaneously; they illuminate myriad facets that highlight how their experience goes beyond 'double monolingualism;' and they point to abilities they deem crucial to their agency as multilingual speakers which go far beyond knowing how to speak X languages correctly. Yet, the fact that they are multilingual is hardly audible in their accounts of learning German in institutional settings. This point deserves closer attention.

Section 7.2 identified thrills and challenges that participants deem important to their experience as multilinguals. They make relevant the ability to mediate concepts across language borders and illuminate familiar understandings in a new light; the ability to adapt to distinct discursive environments of varying semiotic complexity in which different language-related views (e.g. on multilingualism) prevail; the ability to maneuver through moments of uncertainty in interactions with others who may have been socialized differently than oneself; and the ability to take up multiple subject positions simultaneously. Furthermore, they collectively demonstrate how they value their ability to play with perspectives, explore the phenomenon of linguistic relativity, and how they cherish their tolerance for diverse ways of being and viewing social reality.

Strikingly, participants portray these described abilities, challenges, and thrills as '*by-products*' of their multilingualism that are (by and large) not associated with the theme of learning German in their narratives. Overall, they do not treat these aspects as something in which they have systematically invested or as something that could be intentionally enhanced as part of their development as language users. The idea of fostering or discussing the kinds of abilities associated with notions such as *translingual/transcultural competence* (see chapter 3) are generally not seen as part of what happens in a language classroom by the participants in this study, nor do they consider the possibility that it potentially *could* be. Rather, they

collectively foreground a view according to which the development of their sense of self and their agency as multilingual language users occurs incidentally, as they oscillate between different social, linguistic, cultural, and discursive spaces outside of the classroom.[58]

Accordingly, it is often only when prompted to consider how their language portraits might differ if they visualized how they envision their linguistic self in the future, that participants bring into focus their goals, desires, and aspirations as *multilingual* language users. For instance, it is only when creating her portrait that Anaya comes to speak about her hope that the colours she chose to reflect English and German will eventually 'bleed' (see 6.3.3) – a hope she associates with her perceived need to find ways of sharing the insights opening up to her through her engagement with German language and culture. Similarly, in the corresponding part of her narrative Marianne arrives at the conclusion that she will never be "one colour or the other" and that "the ultimate goal" would be for her heart to become purple (a mix between red and blue, the colours she chose to reflect English and German).

It is crucial that participants state additional goals and desires that they hold as language users only when explicitly prompted to consider their sense of self in relation to *all* their language resources and linguistic experiences – goals and desires that would otherwise remain unseen in their narrations on investing in German. This further supports the above interpretation that together, the participants in this study foreground a view according to which the multilingual self has no place in the German language classroom, while they clearly do articulate aspirations *as* multilingual speakers.

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[58] There is one participant who presents an exception. Hanna explicitly comments that it would be important in language teaching to "problematize the mixed space more than just in a theoretical sort of way that students don't really get" (Hanna_Int2, 1666). I attribute her exceptional perspective to the fact that unlike the other participants, she has studied Applied Linguistics for many years and has taught several German language classes. Above all, it can be expected that her perspective has been shaped by publications supporting the so-called 'multilingual turn.'

It is noteworthy in this respect that several participants commented on their experience of participating in this study, suggesting that they cherished this opportunity to reflect on the relations between language, culture, and the self and how this relates to their positionality as multilingual subjects. For example, reflecting on her study participation at the end of our third interview meeting, Laura states:

L: i've found this a very enjoyable experience and kind of makes sense of everything and maybe even helps that it's okay that i am who i am [...] like even doing that diagram of who i am [she is referring to the language portrait] it's okay to be that. you know that you don't have to have one label or another, that- you're unique in itself, so i think (--) that it's okay to be different; cause- everyone's a little different. or odd. or unique. [...] it's okay not to be hundred percent one or hundred percent the other too. (L_Int3, 1803)

Laura here points out her developing self-understanding as a linguistic and cultural being, interpreting it as a result of her reflections during her creation of the language portrait. Specifically, she indicates how creating the portrait opened up a perspective that allows her to move beyond a view of herself as 'doubly incomplete' (not "hundred percent one or hundred percent the other too"). It is merely through the task and the interview questions that she arrives at this conclusion about the relation between language, culture, and the self, in light of which she finds temporary peace with her position of neither being fully X nor Y ("it's okay that i am who i am"). Precisely, she comes to see herself within an inclusive perspective that frames diversity as the norm ("it's okay to be different cause everyone's different").

Similarly, Marianne expresses her fascination with the awareness she has gained about her sense of self in relation to language and culture through her participation, remarking how "it causes you to articulate [...] what it is that you are thinking or feeling or holding dear" (M_Int2, 3473). She suggests that "we ALL should be doing- taking part in this sort of whatEver it is- a sur- a survey of some sort;" (M_Int2, 3475). These comments of participants

indicate the value they associate with gaining an enhanced awareness of who they are in light of their experiences with language(s) and culture(s).

In sum, while participants' accounts of learning German in institutional contexts bracket out the perspectives and desires of the multilingual self, these comments on participants' experience of taking part in my study suggest that it would be important to create a place for the multilingual self in language classrooms (as well as research designs) – a point expanded in the final step, namely deriving implications of my findings.

Chapter 8   Conclusions and Outlook

The findings derived from this study provide a more fine-grained understanding of what it means to conceptualize 'heritage' learners as multilingual subjects. After briefly summarizing the key findings resulting from my research, I will discuss conclusions at the theoretical-conceptual level as well as derive implications for (heritage) language education. The chapter closes with a discussion of limitations and suggestions for future research.

8.1 The HERITAGE LEARNER as a multilingual subject: Main findings of this study

The analyses of my data and the discussions in chapter 6 and 7 illustrate points that are central to the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER, but which are not captured in 'traditional' understandings of the concept. Key findings can be summarized as follows.

1. Learning and living with a 'heritage' language entails more than mastering a language system and being part of an attendant culture. At a very basic level, my findings illustrate that participants' sense of self, their development as language users, and learning-related goals and behaviours depend on much more than on their German language proficiency and on their knowledge about a 'heritage' culture related to the German language. Subjective views *on* (the relations between) language, culture, and the self, the ability to recognize, draw on, and contest language and heritage-related discourses, as well as the ability to assess and flexibly adapt to others' perspectives emerged as central to participants' subjectivities. Furthermore, while group identities are important to many participants, my findings demonstrate the relevance that lived experiences and embodied memories have to their sense of self in relation to German language and culture.

2. Learning and living with a 'heritage' language entails actively dealing with a monolingual order. In particular, the study brings to the surface that if we take for granted monolingual norms in (heritage) language education, we overlook how students actively wrestle with such norms. By approaching the participants in this study as multilingual subjects, it was possible to expose their confrontations with and responses to monolingual norms in educational settings and beyond. My findings illustrate how individuals distinctly confront, override, embrace, exploit, and struggle with a monolingual order as they make sense of their place in the world, present themselves, and relate to others. Within a monolingual frame, we remain blind to the point that there are different ways for multilingual people to deal with and define themselves as language users vis-à-vis monolingual norms and that individual ways of relating to such norms vary depending on situation-specific desires, goals, and needs as language users.

3. Living with a 'heritage' language means constantly grappling with linguistic complexity. When looking at the HERITAGE LEARNER within a monolingual framework, we cannot capture the complexities that the participants in this study associate with their experiences as language users. Several participants construct their perceptions within communicative spaces as complex. Specifically, we saw how their experiences go beyond moving back and forth between different 'purely' monolingual environments. The findings illustrate how their perceptions, meaning-making practices, and ways of relating to others are shaped by ongoing acts of comparing and translating different ways of speaking; by a sensitivity to and an active engagement with linguistic relativity – even within what at the surface may appear to be spaces of 'monolingual' language use. In addition, my data suggest that the complexity the multilingual subject deals with does not only require a sensitivity for

what others will consider 'appropriate' ways of speaking in a given space. We saw that it can entail finding comfortable positionings when no 'conventional' ways of speaking feel appropriate subjectively – the very struggle of how *not* to be double-monolingual. We also saw how 'finding a balance' can go beyond mediating meanings themselves: For multilingual subjects, finding comfortable subject positions involves seeking ways to make the plurality that marks their experience intelligible to others who take a monolingual order for granted in their interpretations of linguistic behaviour. Multilingual subjectivity arguably requires a sensitivity for linguistic relativity and for the discourses behind words (Kramsch, 2009), but importantly, "find[ing] appropriate subject positions within and across the languages at hand" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 200) also sometimes requires people to find ways of *promoting this kind of sensitivity in others* as they "bring their own trajectories into relation with the people and objects around them" (Pennycook & Otsuji, 2014, p. 165).

These observations highlight how concepts such as *heritage community* and *majority culture* gloss over the complex dynamics that the participants in this study make relevant to their experiences, possibilities and challenges as language users. The collected narratives provide a microscopic view of perceptions and challenges that the individuals who took part associate with their diverse possibilities of speaking and of interpreting social reality. The narratives feature participants as discourse utilizers, mediators, and translators who routinely operate not only between languages, but also between distinct 'discursive worlds' in which different premises surrounding language are taken for granted.

4. 'Heritage' learners' self-perceived 'needs, and what they can gain from particular institutional learning experiences depends on more than their place on a monolingual proficiency continuum and their 'distance' from communities associated with the 'heritage'

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language. My data suggest that whether and to what degree participants value specific institutional language learning experiences does not only depend on whether the course offer 'matches' their proficiency level. Whether they regard classroom procedures as meaningful to their development as language users also depends on the extent to which they feel able to align activities in class with their priorities as multilinguals, as well as with their views on language learning and their conception of themselves as subjects-in-process (Kramsch, 2009). In particular, the data bring into focus the significance that participants collectively assign to the possibility of relating course contents to their own experience – i.e., the opportunity to learn something about themselves, not only as 'cultural beings' but as people with specific biographies.

5. Language students are not necessarily aware that expanding their agency and sensitivity as multilingual people could potentially be a learning goal pursued in institutional settings of language education. The discussion in chapter 7 identified that narrated abilities, desires, and challenges that participants' deem central to their perceived agency and experience as multilingual subjects are not reflected in their narratives on learning German in institutional settings. It was only by addressing participants in this study explicitly *as* multilingual people that they articulated goals and desires that resonate with subject-centered, dynamic models of multilingualism. Taken together, they largely construct the language classroom as a site where activities are governed by the monolingual paradigm.

6. The (heterogeneity underneath the) label 'heritage learner' is multidimensional and complex. Finally, my findings shed new light on the diversity and the complexity behind the label *heritage learner*. Students who qualify for the designation of *heritage learner* do not merely "present a wide range of proficiency levels, giving rise to the challenge of student

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heterogeneity associated with HL teaching" (Carreira & Kagan, 2018, p. 155) – which is the way in which heterogeneity among heritage learners has typically been discussed in the field. As my findings show, the individuals in question differ in many other ways as well that are relevant to language learning processes. This also goes far beyond differences related to individuals' membership status in a certain community. In shedding light on facets that are relevant to *multilingual* experience and on the complex positionings participants establish in defining themselves with respect to language, culture, and the theme of learning, the present study illuminates additional dimensions that further contribute to the diversity among (heritage) learners. Most importantly, my analyses suggest that ultimately, the label *heritage learner* says little about the individuals grouped together in the category (just picture Henning in a class designed to foster his pride in a 'German identity'). In other words, my data reveal specific ways in which the *label* glosses over myriad variations. When using this label, and when dealing with so-called 'heritage' learners, it is thus important to keep in mind that *heritage learner* is a designation with a 'grouping effect' – i.e. it groups people based on a specific list of criteria, while ignoring a whole range of other aspects that are potentially relevant to the development of language users – implications of which will be discussed in the subsequent sections.

8.2 Deriving implications

I will discuss the implications of these findings at two levels. I derive considerations at the theoretical-conceptual level before I turn to implications for educational practice.

8.2.1 Theoretical-conceptual considerations

Chapter 2 outlined how the term *heritage learner* gained currency in defining what came to be seen as a unique type of language learner based on the perception that students with a home background in the target language differ from 'typical' foreign language learners in important ways. I showed how the HERITAGE LEARNER has traditionally been constructed as falling in between foreign language learners and native speakers along a proficiency continuum, arguing that the monolingual framework underlying these continuum-based models fails to capture important dimensions of students' experience as language (and discourse) users. Based on this critique, the present study set out to contextualize the phenomenon in a new way, namely, by using contemporary models of multilingualism and the self – rather than the *'typical' foreign language learner* and the *native speaker* – as a backdrop against which to examine the phenomenon. The summary of findings in 8.1 specifies how conceptualizing the learners in question as multilingual subjects extends conventional understandings denoted by term *heritage learner*. Based on this more complex understanding, it is now possible to rethink how the concept of HERITAGE LEARNER relates to the notion of *native speaker* and *foreign language learner*, which continue to serve as dominant reference frames in conceptualizing heritage learners.

HERITAGE LEARNER – NATIVE SPEAKER. One important finding is that the participants in this study do not construct themselves as 'failed' native speakers of German. The discussion in chapter 7 detailed how they effectively counter deficit-oriented views of themselves as language users that potentially result from assessing their German language abilities with reference to native speaker norms. This point is vital to reconceptualizing the HERITAGE LEARNER, particularly because it allows us to re-envision the oft-cited phenomenon of

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linguistic insecurities and language shyness (Krashen, 1998) commonly associated with the target group in new ways.

As mentioned earlier, the most common response to this phenomenon has been the idea to assist students in increasing their "developed functional proficiency" (Valdés, 2001) in (varieties of) the 'heritage' language. The findings resulting from the present project reinforce, however, that feelings of linguistic insecurity ought to be seen not only as an effect of lacking language proficiency per se, but also of an implied monolingual imperative underlying proficiency measurement. If we conceive the HERITAGE LEARNER as a *discourse* user rather than merely as a user of a self-contained language system who can fully function only by adhering to monolingual native speaker norms, new possibilities come to the surface. This perspective allows for a shift in focus, towards learners' potential to (re)interpret evaluative commentary that relies on a monolingual order – the potential to mediate feelings of insecurity or insufficiency by looking *at* the monolingual frame and by drawing on (counter) discourses, privately and/or overtly (as, e.g., evident in different participants' reported ways to deliberately draw on the idea that 'it doesn't have to be perfect'). In other words, we ought to take more seriously that students' agency and sense of self as language users is shaped by their ability to (re)interpret themselves in light of monolingual norms as much as it is shaped by their ability to speak according to such norms.

HERITAGE LEARNER – FOREIGN LANGUAGE LEARNER. While the term and concept *heritage learner* emerged from a much-felt need to gain a deeper understanding of how the students in question differ from 'typical' foreign language learners, examining the phenomenon through the lens of *multilingual subjectivity* allows us to see commonalities of learners across these two categories. From this perspective, all language students are 'developing multilingual subjects'

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engaged in the process of acquiring and comparing ways of interpreting social reality through symbolic forms as they relate what they are learning to the understandings they have already acquired in past linguistic experiences. Furthermore, the lens brings into focus the commonality that their linguistic actions are situated within language-related discourses that shape their (perceived) possibilities and self-perceptions. Seen as developing multilingual subjects, nobody enters a class as an 'empty slate,' from a linguistic point of view. All students bring a language trajectory as well as what could be called a 'discourse biography' – i.e. their subjectivities have been shaped by language-related discourses, some of which will have (had) a greater impact than others in each individual case, depending on the spaces and relationships in which the individual has participated. It is on the basis of their linguistic and discourse biographies that they relate to and make sense of new interpretational frames introduced to them in a language class.

Focusing on commonalities in addition to differences between heritage and foreign language learners is important (Parra, 2013) because it has the potential to broaden our understanding of language learning and use, and because so-called 'mixed classes' – classes attended by 'heritage' and 'foreign' language learners – constitute a central issue in heritage language education (e.g. Carreira & Kagan, 2018; Carreira, 2016a; Valentín-Rivera, 2016; Dones-Herrera, 2015; Xiao & Wong, 2014; Friedman & Kagan, 2008). As many have noted, for some language departments it is not possible to offer separate tracks for 'heritage' learners, for instance in smaller departments with comparatively low enrolment numbers. Scholars have attested the need for inclusive and flexible approaches that can accommodate diverse learners (Beaudrie, 2016; Carreira, 2016a; Lacorte, 2016; Kagan & Dillon, 2009).

Because the HERITAGE LEARNER has come into focus and subsequently been defined precisely on the basis of *differences* when compared to the 'typical' foreign language learner, the commonalities among learners-as-developing-multilinguals have thus far not sufficiently been explored. Within a monolingual framework, we are 'stuck' with the focus on differences between these two groups – on the one hand, with reference to their places on continuum-based models of language acquisition, and with respect to a pre-defined relationship to a cultural identity ('one's own' versus 'a foreign' culture) on the other. The theoretical framework proposed in this study, however, allows us to approach difference on the basis of commonalities: Both 'heritage' and 'foreign' language learners' subjectivities are shaped by language discourses, while individual learners will differ with respect to the particular frames of interpretation that have been pre-dominantly held up to them, and they will differ in *how* they have been positioned and positioned themselves with reference to such frames.

Paying closer attention to this point in dealing with the diversity among language learners bears potential, especially in discussions surrounding affective dynamics within so-called 'mixed' classrooms. 'Foreign' language learners have been reported to feel intimidated by the presence of 'heritage' learners because of their high levels of oral proficiency, while conversely, 'heritage' learners have been reported to feel shy to speak or ask questions because they feel that they do not meet the presumed expectation that they would demonstrate perfect language proficiency (Shinbo, 2004; Potowski, 2002; Krashen, 1998). In light of the theoretical framework of this dissertation, it is clear that these affective dynamics are not merely an effect of 'different proficiency levels' coming together in one classroom, but ought to be seen as mediated through discourses that shape students' (and teachers') perceptions and expectations of them(selves) and others as language users and learners.

In sum, an important impetus resulting from my data at the conceptual level is to explore the potential of the commonalities language learners share as developing multilingual subjects. If we adopt a view of language education as the teaching of meaning-making and of discursive positioning through symbolic forms (see Kramsch, 2011; Kramsch, 2009; Scarino, 2014a), the above-mentioned potential to problematize differences based on commonalities bears obvious advantages: The language classroom can be conceptualized as a site where students gain awareness of the beliefs and assumptions that underlie affective reactions such as 'feeling intimidated' by the presence of others with different learning trajectories, and students' re-interpretation of such beliefs may potentially lead to changes in their affective experiences. From this point of view, the classroom becomes a site where learners can develop a deeper understanding of the particularities of, and differences between, individual multilingual language users on the basis of the more general discursive conditions and dynamics that impact on all of them.

The HERITAGE LEARNER *– a unique type of language student?* If looking through the theoretical lens of multilingual subjectivity to some extent blurs the division between 'heritage' and 'foreign' language learners, the question arises whether the distinction – and so the category of HERITAGE LEARNER – is obsolete from a social-constructionist point of view, especially in times of increased linguistic, spatial, and cultural complexity. It makes sense to group students who share similar interests, who are dealing with similar issues, or who arrive in class with similar 'starting conditions.' My findings underline the importance of keeping in mind that the label *heritage learner* has little to say about the individuals who are grouped together in this category, as elaborated in 8.1. A group of students who qualify for the designation of *heritage learner* may or may not be composed of individuals who closely

resemble the heritage learner prototype (Zyzik, 2016). This implies that it is important to problematize the notion in contexts of research and educational practice – including with students themselves. My work is not a call to abandon courses for the target group called 'heritage' learners per se. It is a call to engage with the phenomenon in new ways.

At the most general level, it is important to be vigilant of the potential effects of unconsciously *ascribing* aspects that emerge as central at the group level, to individuals classified as 'heritage' learners. Language practitioners must remain alert to the risk of reducing students (and their struggles, interests, potentials, etc.) to heritage-related categories, such as belonging to a certain community (see Samaniego & Warner, 2016, p. 199). For researchers, teachers, and lay persons alike, it seems important to address and critically reflect on questions such as: To which aspects is our attention drawn when we see learners *as* 'heritage' learners? What do we miss because our attention is drawn to these points (e.g. 'community ties')? In what specific ways does the category gloss over the heterogeneity among those to which it is ascribed?

It is evident now how the notion of HERITAGE LEARNER is rooted in a monolingual paradigm, and how, as a result, approaching learners through the conceptual lens of HERITAGE LEARNER a) conceals how the individuals in question (differ in how they) grapple with the premises that constitute this paradigm and b) turns a blind eye on ways in which the 'heritage' language is relevant to their experience as multilinguals beyond monolingual heritage language proficiency. Moreover, my findings indicate the importance of developing a heightened sensitivity to the fact that language learners are people with linguistic and discourse biographies – a point that easily gets out of sight in attempts to define more accurately what characterizes the HERITAGE LEARNER as a *type* of language student.

Finally, if *heritage learner* is a label ascribed to individuals and hence a social positionality with reference to which individuals are constructed and construct themselves, it ought to be problematized and discussed with students themselves. As Dressler (2010) reminds us, several putative 'heritage' learners resist being classified as such. My findings also show that there is great variation in whether, to what degree and why individuals embrace, resist, tolerate, or otherwise relate themselves to the label and with what effects. In addition, it is clear that individuals may willingly self-identify as a *heritage speaker/learner* in one situation or context and reject this position in another, depending on their immediate goals. Moreover, the findings show that the label can evoke strong emotional reactions in some individuals. In brief, language students who may qualify for the designation *heritage learner* ought to be given opportunities to reflect on the label, on potential effects of being associated with it, as well as on the idea that *heritage learner* is not a fixed group or identity; i.e., to come to see it as a positionality and to explore how they may benefit from either drawing on or resisting the position in different contexts.

While thus far, the discussion concentrated on considerations at the theoretical-conceptual level, the following section focuses on implications for pedagogical practice. I articulate these implications with the HERITAGE LEARNER in mind, yet most of the arguments apply to language learners in general as well – owing to the softened boundaries between types of language learners resulting from the reframing of (heritage) language learners as multilingual subjects.

8.2.2 Implications for (heritage) language education

In this section, I offer suggestions towards translating the vision of reframing heritage language education "within a multilingual perspective" (Scarino, 2014b) into practice. My proposal is inspired by the following general considerations. First, my findings support the view that students may assign high relevance to learning about *themselves* through their class participation – not only in terms of their rootedness in a tradition, but in terms of revisiting and re-interpreting past experience, perceptions, and views in ways that nurture self-transformative processes. My data also suggest that learners may differ considerably in how living with a 'heritage' language has shaped their sense of self, even when their family history may be associated with the 'same' imagined rooted identity. Third, my data indicate that the subjective value assigned to institutional language learning experiences also depends on how well learners can align classroom activities with their priorities as multilingual speakers. Taken together, these findings call for pedagogies that are sensitive to students' individual trajectories, experiences, and aspirations as multilingual subjects rather than addressing them as representatives of particular social collectives or linguistic traditions. Based on these considerations, I will argue for teaching approaches that are sensitive to learners' positionality as multilinguals, and that allow them to actively engage with their own language biography – including how their subjectivities have been shaped by discourses (such as the native speaker ideal and the discourses of correctness discussed in chapter 6 and 7). In the sections that follow, I elaborate how this idea may manifest itself at different levels.

8.2.2.1 Addressing and supporting the multilingual self – a new component in heritage language education. My findings illustrate that teaching for monolingual heritage language use in pre-conceived 'heritage contexts' neglects many ways in which the language may

become relevant to students' perceptions and actions as language users in their daily lives. Approaches are needed that more explicitly address and support learners as multilingual subjects (see Melo-Pfeifer, 2015), allowing them to better understand and prepare for the symbolic complexity they encounter and to which they contribute as they relate to others in distinct social constellations. Such approaches would not only prepare them for communication in different contexts, or foster awareness of and legitimize variations of linguistic practice, but more systematically support students in their individual quests when maneuvering through different modalities of being in intersubjective encounters.

This kind of support would target challenges and potentials that arise in processes of comparing and re-interpreting different ways of making meaning against the backdrop of their entire repertoire. This view extends what students ought to be able to gain from their learning process. In addition to learning how meanings are conventionally conveyed through (varieties of) the 'heritage' language, students would gain a deeper understanding of what the process of relating to others through language entails. Teaching them as multilingual subjects means enhancing their understanding of communication as an act of reciprocal interpretation of symbolic forms that carry socially shared as well as subjective resonances (Kramsch, 2009). It also means creating an awareness of the ways in which meaning making processes occur against the backdrop of societal language-related discourses (Parra, 2016a). And it implies allowing students to sharpen their sensitivity for potential challenges and possibilities in different spaces where the 'heritage' language plays into subjective perceptions and interpretations – both in obvious and more hidden ways.

There is wide agreement that teaching multilingual subjects requires, above all, engaging students in reflection on the process of meaning making itself (e.g. Piccardo, 2018;

Cenoz & Gorter, 2017; Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Melo-Pfeifer, 2015; Scarino, 2014a, Kramsch, 2014, 2011, 2009). As Kramsch (2014) puts it, taking the multilingual individual as the model of instruction means that "the focus is no longer on discrete and testable skills but on processes: Awareness of Language with a capital L, cognitive flexibility, metaphoric imagination, symbolic competence" (p. 306). Similarly, Scarino (2014b) elaborates how "reflecting on communication, comparing one's own interpretations, perspectives and reactions with others', respecting the different linguistic and cultural worlds that exist in the classroom and in the community, and gradually coming to understand why [...] interlocutors see things as they do" (p. 77) is central to rethinking approaches to heritage language teaching within a multilingual frame.

My results show that the intersubjective spaces where the 'heritage' language may become relevant to the individual student's experience vary widely, ranging from the extended family living overseas, to the local German club, the relationship with a husband who has his own unique views on language, the multilingual girlfriend, a parent who holds up certain idea(l)s, through to interactions with one's (future) children. In light of the particularities that came to the surface in my analyses, I propose that besides targeting general aspects of 'heritage' language use, it is important to provide opportunities for students to also reflect on and prepare for processes of meaning making in their 'own' spaces of social activity. In this regard, inviting them to look not only "*at* and *through* language" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 201), but also *at the multilingual lens* through which they experience social reality would be conducive to their development of *symbolic competence* (Kramsch, 2006).

Teachers might start by inviting students to articulate and compare challenges and potentials they associate with being multilingual – an activity that the participants in this study

appreciated and from which they reportedly derived valuable insights. While some aspects of multilingual experience may be personal and should not necessarily be openly discussed in class, educators can encourage students to reflect on their experience and self-perceptions as multilinguals by using different modalities – e.g. different modes of writing, drawings or other artistic creations (see Prasad, 2018), mutual interviewing with a trusted person, guided self-observation outside the classroom, etc. Using such modalities, students may be engaged in questions such as: What has it felt like to be multilingual in different phases of their lives? How would they visualize their multilingual self to reflect different points in time? What do they value, and what can make it hard to be multilingual? How would they describe or visualize the formation of their thoughts through language in different contexts? How would they articulate goals, desires, and expectations they hold as multilinguals?

It is through the involvement with these kinds of questions that learners may develop awareness for struggles, desires, and pleasures that have been or could become relevant to their personal experience of being multilingual (see Melo-Pfeifer, 2015). This awareness would allow them to discuss abilities they deem important to their development as language users, and to discuss how their priorities and goals with the 'heritage' language relate to how they envision themselves as (multilingual) language users at present and in the future. This may help teachers to better 'know' their students and allow students to redefine themselves and their learning objectives. It may also bear potentials for the class as a whole if course members collectively generate an extended perspective on dimensions of multilingual experience, and above all, a deeper and more fine-grained view on what contributes to the diversity across language users with their diverse trajectories – a point that seems paramount to gaining a better understanding of communication as a mutual and interpretive symbolic activity.

8.2.2.2 Biography-centered modules of discourse awareness. One of my most important findings is that the complexity that marks multilingual experience is not merely constituted by the multiplicity of semiotic systems that come together in spaces of social activity or in the repertoires of multilingual speakers. My data show how complexity is added by the ways in which language users gauge and take into account the effects of language discourses as they operate and mediate between languages. This implies that an important aspect in self-reflexive classroom activities concerns raising students' awareness of language discourses and of how they shape their perceptions, actions, and possibilities as language users.

If students' sense of self, their perceptions, and their actions as language users depend on how they position themselves within discourses such as the ones discussed in chapter 6 and 7, then teaching approaches ought to provide opportunities for students to develop a deeper understanding of themselves, their challenges, and their potentials as discourses users. My data call for pedagogies that allow students to explore and better understand the conditions that have shaped their subjectivities, allow them to develop alternative ways of looking at (links between) language and the self, and permit them to expand their ability to exploit or oppose relevant discourses to the benefit of their learning, their agency as language users, and their emotional well-being.

Similar calls have been put forth, mostly in connection with attempts to promote critical pedagogy approaches in the field of heritage language education (e.g. Holguín Mendoza, 2018; Fairclough, 2016; Leeman & Serafini, 2016). Informed by the aim of promoting students' agency in the broader political agenda of overcoming inequality and discrimination of members of linguistic minorities, scholars have called to engage learners "in deep reflections to raise their critical awareness around important and sensitive issues such as language ideologies

and the power structures that have shaped students' beliefs about their own languages, cultures, and identities" (Parra, 2016a, pp. 166-167).

Towards this end, the incorporation of sociolinguistic content into heritage language curricula has been suggested as a means of fostering students' awareness of socio-political dynamics surrounding language, 'heritage' languages, and multilingualism – for instance, by teaching students about patterns of intergenerational language shift, the normality of language variation and multilingual practices, or about the impact of language ideologies and language policy (e.g. Fairclough, 2016; Leeman & Serafini, 2016; Parra, 2016a; Correa, 2010; Parodi, 2008). Parra (2016a) for example suggests that "combining sociolinguistic knowledge with a critical perspective would lead students to question such notions as 'native speaker,' 'balanced bilingual,' 'speaking well,' and 'speaking bad' constructed on theoretical suppositions instead of on the realities of the speakers of multilingual communities" (Parra, 2016a, pp. 172-173). Similarly, Leeman & Serafini (2016) offer several concrete ideas on how to integrate sociolinguistics into the curriculum in order to "foster[...] students' agency and their understanding of linguistic knowledge as a creative resource for performing identities, negotiating social relationships, and navigating political hierarchies" (Leeman & Serafini, 2016, p. 71).

While researchers agree that "students should be given tools to grapple with the personal impact of language ideologies" (Leeman & Serafini, 2016, p. 71), the question how such reflective activities can stimulate students to reflect on and engage with their personal biographical experiences deserves more attention than it has as yet received. The aim to create a critical awareness of language ideologies is a recurring theme in the field, whereas the actual

processes by which students relate their newly gained critical perspective to their personal case and history remains vague (for an exception, see Parra, 2013[59]).

Besides inviting students to consider how generalized sociolinguistic phenomena may apply to their personal situation, it appears promising to consider what 'biography-centered' approaches might look like. Based on my data, it seems indicated, as I noted, to invite students more explicitly to engage with their own trajectories – in fact, one might consider *beginning* with students' introspection into their own perceptions as language users.

As mentioned, my findings bring into focus 'discourse biographies' – i.e. individuals' personal history of living with specific language discourses (e.g. the notion that 'speaking correctly indicates how intelligent you are' as in Marianne's case, or that 'identities are passed down by bloodline' as in Anaya's). In order for students to expand their awareness and possibilities to act as discourse users, the language class would allow them to explore which discourses have been particularly relevant to their own perceptions and linguistic behaviours across their lives, and with what effects. For instance, students may be asked to look back on their language trajectory and identify (perceived) expectations held up to them in the past. Which expectations do they associate with their use of the 'heritage' language and with being multilingual – at home, at school, among friends, abroad? How did they react to these expectations? Do they recall aspects that prevented them from speaking or made them feel comfortable?

Such considerations may elicit narrations on experiences made in public or institutional contexts, as well as in individual relationships. On this basis, language discourses can be

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[59] Parra (2013) describes her use of art work as a means by which she prompts students to represent what they learned about themselves through their class participation. In a final project, each student creates a piece of art (e.g. a poem or painting), along with a written essay that explains what concepts of the class are reflected in their art work.

'rendered visible' to students. They may gain an understanding of how specific discourses relate to affective experiences they have lived through; how certain idea(l)s have affected their perceived possibilities to act during encounters with (specific) others. They might also be led to consider how the same idea(l)s relate to their current ambitions as language users, or how looking at expectations from alternative angles could potentially change how they feel or act as language users in the future.

The vision I seek to promote resonates with existing proposals in that the overarching goal is to raise students' awareness of discourses that shape their development and agency as language users. What I propose to add is a stronger emphasis on placing the *experiencing self* at the centre. If the goal is that students can expand their agency as speakers, they must understand not only how their positionality relates to discourses (such as the native speaker ideal) and that those discourses are usually both invisible and potentially disputable. They would also explore alternative ways of actively dealing with the particular views surrounding language that emerge as relevant to their sense of self. In systematically considering how they have responded to such views in their past and with what consequences, they may gradually develop an understanding of what it means to see themselves as discourse users.

The ultimate goal, then, would be to strengthen their abilities to use discourses in accordance with visions they have (and newly develop) of themselves as multilingual language users. Following up on initial discussions, they might be prompted, for instance, to reflect on the kinds of personal tactics that participants in this study referred to as 'philosophies' – e.g. the philosophy that 'it doesn't have to be perfect.'

As an example, when discourses of correctness emerge as relevant (which seems likely in light of my data as well as existing publications), teachers might encourage learners to

reflect on their language trajectories and discuss questions such as: Has the view that my speech ought to be perfect/correct impacted my own behaviour in some situations? (How) has it affected my willingness or ability to speak in the past? With what (long-term) effects? What 'strategies' do I use when faced with expectations that imply correct language use? What, if anything, would change for me in an imaginary world where nobody attached importance to the correctness of speech? etc.

By reflecting on, and to an extent sharing their perspectives, students would not only gain a greater awareness of the ways in which discourses have been relevant to their own experience, but may also come to see each other's trajectories as impacted by beliefs surrounding (heritage) language(s). They could experience how individuals differ in their responses to such ideas, gaining insight into a range of 'philosophies' and alternative positionings that are possible in response to certain idea(l)s. These are the kinds of insights that teachers should aim for in supporting processes of maneuvering through different possibilities of being in the environments students traverse.

There are, of course caveats to bear in mind. Above all, it is clear that such an approach also requires innovations in the professional development of teachers. Not only would it require teachers to understand how discourses of the monolingual paradigm potentially affect multilingual language users' experience (Potowski, 2002), to be reflective of their own preconceptions (Samaniego & Warner, 2016), and to gain expertise in recognizing such discourses in students' contributions. It also demands high levels of responsiveness and flexibility on the side of the teacher – challenges that many may find difficult to embrace, especially because it runs counter dynamics that characterize prescriptive teaching approaches and that most people, students included, associate with the traditional "order of the language

classroom" (Schmenk, 2015; see also Parra, 2016a). Furthermore, a biography-centered approach is by definition personal, hence designing tasks that engage students at a personal level while ensuring a safe atmosphere requires some sensitivity and creativity.

The aim to promote critical awareness of discourses resonating with the monolingual paradigm also raises questions concerning assessment methods. As Mueller (2011) has pointed out, assessment procedures must follow clear guidelines for the evaluation of students' abilities, and students themselves may seek orientation in what teachers expect of them. If students are led to question the very benchmarks that are traditionally used to measure their achievements, assessment procedures must be adjusted accordingly. Besides measuring success merely in terms of students' performance on dimensions of a linguistic proficiency continuum, further assessment tools are needed that are sensitive to appraising students' development as multilingual discourse users (for a recent innovative approach see Holguín Mendoza, 2018).

In sum, in light of the implications outlined thus far, I envision the (heritage) language classroom as a site where students can more explicitly engage with their own biography as, say, German *and* multilingual language users – including their trajectory as language *and* discourse users. In the next part, I consider implications that concern the importance of including students in applying the proposed shifts.

8.2.2.3 The part of students in implementing the new paradigm shifts. My findings indicate that language learners will usually not enter the classroom with the expectation that they will, ought to, or could invest in their "multilingual sensibility" (Kramsch, 2009, p. 125) – even in the case that a student would find this prospect desirable. It is easy to imagine how Marianne would thrive on classroom activities that 'tickle her brain a little bit,' while exploring effects of linguistic relativity; how Henning would appreciate the opportunity to explore, say,

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usages of irony in German and French from a comparative angle; or how Anaya might gain valuable insights about herself from articulating challenges and benefits that viewing the world from a multi-layered perspective might entail. Yet, none of the three individuals associated the German language classroom with such opportunities, nor did they consider this as a possibility.

This finding brings to attention the importance of acknowledging students' active role in reframing language learning within a multilingual perspective. If they do not envision the classroom as a place that prepares them for processes of meaning making in linguistically complex as opposed to monolingual realities, many may not see the point in more seriously engaging in self-reflexive activities that target their growth as multilingual language users. Accordingly, Parra (2016a) attests that "[a] main challenge is students' own beliefs about what the HL classes are about. Even when teachers work outside normative frameworks, students want to be 'corrected' and learn to speak 'well.'" (182). This implies that we must find ways to create an awareness – not only among curriculum planners and teachers, but also in students – for the potential that lies in investing in 'multilingual sensitivities' rather than viewing these merely as a 'by-product' of acquiring multiple languages separately. On this basis, the attempt to transform the traditional "order of the language classroom" (Schmenk, 2015) must occur together *with*, not *for* students.

In the context of arguing for critical pedagogy approaches in heritage language education, Parra (2016a) has proposed that learners fill out a form prior to taking a class so as to obtain what they think is relevant in learning a 'heritage' language. She suggests that the information will shed light on their beliefs, providing a starting point for critical discussions on assumptions students bring to class. I would add that such forms should include questions purposefully designed to address learners as multilingual speakers, inquiring for instance about

abilities and challenges they deem relevant to living with more than one language, and how they would articulate their (long-term) aspirations as users of multiple languages. Even when this does not yield extensive answers, it may trigger in the student imaginings of a 'multilingual self' with potential needs and responsibilities that has a place and a voice in the language class.

In light of my data, it may also be beneficial to extend the dialogue on beliefs about language, culture, and identity ensuing from such a survey to include exchanges of ideas about institutional language learning itself. Fairclough and Beaudrie (2016) stress the importance that *student involvement* has for innovating heritage language education: "If we were to choose just one concept to convey the meaning of innovation in the HL education field, we would propose 'student involvement' – i.e. students' active participation in the HL learning process. The student should always be at the centre of curricular, assessment, and administrative considerations" (p. 5). They maintain that "the construct of *involvement* could be operationalized mainly in terms of the agency students gain via heightened sociolinguistic knowledge and critical language awareness [...], capitalization on technological advances [...], and stronger connections with their home community" (p. 5). In light of my findings, I would add that it is importantly by engaging students in the process of (re)defining and (re)designing what ought to happen in the classroom, and by including them in the negotiations about goals they wish or ought to pursue as multilingual speakers of today's world that *student involvement* can innovate the field.

8.3 Limitations and future outlook

On our journey of examining the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER within a framework of multilingual subjectivity we have been able to gain several insights that inform a more differentiated view on the phenomenon, as detailed in the previous sections. While the study illuminates an extended range of what is potentially relevant to heritage language education and contributes to a more complex understanding of the phenomenon, it is clear that it also bears certain limitations. In what follows, I address some of the most important points and derive suggestions for further research.

First, my ambitions to approach multilingualism as a lived experience and at the same time pay special attention to discursive positionings with respect to the monolingual paradigm brought along methodological challenges. It required compromises between 'zooming in' on details that illuminate the affective dimension of participants' experience on one hand, and taking a more distant perspective to discuss subjective perspectives with recourse to discursive dynamics on the other. In order to provide a microscopic view of subjective experience, I had to make some cutbacks in presenting how the interplay of aspects amounts to a complex 'bigger picture,' e.g. in discussing how particular views position the narrator within multiple discourses simultaneously. Conversely, the space I gave to ways in which discourses insinuate their way into subjective experience came at the expense of attention to small but intriguing details in selected excerpts. Furthermore, because I sought insight into the *connections* that participants draw between different realms of experience – living with German, language learning, and multilingual experience – the space available for detailed analyses of their constructions of each single realm was further restricted.

Second, in retrospect it would have been beneficial to look at participants' knowledge in Applied Linguistics more systematically by explicitly addressing this point in the interviews. My results indicate that the ability to reflect on oneself as a multilingual language user may depend in part on one's prior engagement with the field. This point is relevant both on theoretical grounds and in light of my data.

On theoretical grounds it is relevant in lieu of the discussions surrounding the importance of fostering language awareness as an important goal of language education in the context of linguistic diversity and complexity (see 8.2). As noted in the previous section, scholars have in fact called for the explicit incorporation of topics in sociolinguistics in order to foster students' critical awareness of discourses and socio-political dynamics surrounding phenomena such as 'heritage' languages and multilingualism. Future research is needed that examines explicitly whether, to what extent, and how students' engagement with concepts in Applied Linguistics relate to a more differentiated understanding of their multilingual subjectivities and with what (longer-term) consequences at the behavioral and affective level.

The relevance of this point is also supported by my data: For one, my findings suggest that the ability to assess others' language-related views is a core aspect of multilingual sensitivity. For another, I found that participants differed in their (evident) awareness of language-related discourses. It is often recommended that teachers foster language students' (critical) awareness of such discourses, yet how such an awareness is gained, and above all, with what longer-term consequences at the levels of affect, sense of self, language aspirations, and linguistic practice has not received the same attention. Research is needed that targets this point.

A third limitation is that the qualitative approach, which I chose to examine the complexity marking the phenomenon of HERITAGE LEARNER *in depth* necessarily comes at the expense of the *breadth* of sampled experiences that I was able to analyze in detail. It is clear that three narratives can only illuminate a limited spectrum of the variation encompassed in the category *heritage learner*. While the analyses in the present study allowed me to illuminate the heterogeneity and complexity behind the label in new ways, I hope that the present project stimulates further investigations into the diversity among language students in ways that go beyond identifying subgroups based on variables such as 'age at immigration,' 'amount of exposure to the language,' 'membership status in a community,' etc. In order to extend the understanding of heritage-learner-as-multilingual-subject-in-process, it would be insightful, for instance, to explore the subjective perspectives of individuals who have (simultaneously) participated in multiple places for extensive periods of their lives, or to explicitly compare how speakers of diverse 'heritage' languages construct their positionalities as multilingual speakers, perhaps including the case of English as a 'heritage' language, which would throw light on the phenomenon from a different angle, since the 'heritage' language at the same time has the status of a world language (Kayam & Hirsch, 2014).

Having examined what it means to reconceptualize 'heritage' learners as multilingual subjects, I would like to conclude by going back to the emergence of the phenomenon. The learners in question came into focus based on the observation that many did not 'fit' traditional approaches to language teaching. While they were quickly seen as a challenge to teachers, their appearance on the scene of language pedagogy was not viewed as a reason to challenge the general suitability of traditional teaching practices. There are other ways, however, to see the

emergence of the phenomenon than in terms of a discovery of a different 'breed' of language student with special needs; specifically, we may see it as an invitation to question the status quo in the theorizing and practices of language education more generally. Besides seeking out special forms of teaching the HERITAGE LEARNER, we also ought to ask what the HERITAGE LEARNER can teach us about the (limitations of the) traditional "order of the language classroom" (Schmenk, 2015).

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Appendix A: Transcription conventions

(.)   A full stop in brackets stands for a micro pause of less than half a second

(-)   A dash in brackets stands for a short pause of about 0.5 – 1 second

(---)   three dashes in brackets stand for a short pause of about 1 second

(2 sec) A number inside brackets denotes a pause of X seconds

,   A comma indicates a rise in intonation

?   A question mark appears to represent a strong rise in intonation

;   A semicolon indicates a slight drop in intonation

.   A full stop indicates a significant drop in intonation

!   An exclamation mark indicates an exclamation

-        A dash indicates unchanging intonation

:::   Colons represent elongated speech, i.e. a stretched sound

( )   Empty space between round brackets indicates that the speech here was not clearly intelligible

(( ))   Where double round brackets appear with a description inside, nonverbal behaviour is specified (e.g. gestures, laughter)

[ ]   Square brackets with a description inserted provide additional information provided by the transcriber

[...]   Square brackets with three full stops indicate that speech was omitted

{ }   Curled brackets demarcate a stretch where overlapping speech occurs

// // Double slashes indicate a short contribution made by the interviewer (e.g. backchannels)

=   The equal sign denotes latched speech

CAPITALS Capitals mark emphases

<smile<oh yes>> Arrows in this arrangement denote the expression of the specified action, gesture, or mime for the stretch surrounded by them

Italics Italics are not part of the transcript. Italics are used <u>in the presentation of excerpts</u> to highlight certain aspects in participants' utterances

A note on spelling: Unconventional spelling (such as 'ye know' for 'you know') is used to reflect pronunciation as I heard it. This choice was informed by my attempt to capture interlocutors' speech (and by extension, characteristics of the interview atmosphere) as accurately as possible. It is important to note that in so doing, I do not aim to position individuals as speakers of a particular dialect or as uneducated.

Appendix B: Ethics documentation

<u>Information letter</u>

Dear participant,

I would like to invite you to participate in a study on growing up with, learning, and living with German in Canada. First of all, thank you for your interest!

I am a PhD student in the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies at the University of Waterloo. I am interested in learning more about the experience of adults, who have grown up in (partly) German-speaking families in Canada, and who are currently taking or have taken steps in the past to further develop their German language (either formally, e.g. through enrolling in a German language course, or informally, e.g. through travel, seeking contact with other German speakers, etc.). Specifically, I am interested in finding out about the ways in which participants feel that living with and developing German is connected with different aspects of their lives, such as how they perceive themselves or others in different contexts, or how relationships are shaped with different people.

What does participation involve?

The project includes the following components and you may be involved in one or more of them, depending on how much of a commitment you are able and willing to give. Prior to participation in any of the following three options, you will be asked to fill out a 5-10 minute questionnaire on demographic information (e.g. age, citizenship(s), etc.) and your language biography (e.g. Which languages do you understand/speak? etc.), which will be sent to you by email. You will also be asked to indicate in which of the following components you would be interested to participate.

1. **Individual interviews** with a researcher (minimum 1, maximum 3, over a period of 4 to 6 months). These conversational interviews will take approximately 45-90 minutes each. You will be asked some guiding, but open-ended questions about your experience of acquiring German and of living with more than one language, and how you feel these aspects have been relevant to aspects of your life. These interviews will be conducted in either English or German, or both, depending on your preference. With your permission, these interviews will be audio recorded. On the attached consent form you are asked to determine how the data may be used (e.g. for transcription only, to be played at research presentations, etc.)

2. **Written reflections**. This study component is designed to give you the opportunity to reflect more deeply on certain aspects of your experience with language learning and language use and how these are connected with other aspects of your life. You will write your reflection at home and be asked to e-mail it to me. To facilitate your reflection, you will be given some guiding questions/reflection tasks, among which you may choose your own focus of reflection. (For example, you may be asked to describe a moment or phases of your life when your relation to your language(s) changed and to reflect on what you think were some reasons and how you feel it impacted your life over time). Some of these options may require additional illustrations, such as simple figures that serve to visualize aspects of the experience you are focussing on. You will be asked to give your compositions to the project permanently. The objective is to provide an additional means of expressing parts of your experience of learning and living with German that may not be captured in interview conversations, where your line of thought is more influenced by the interviewer's questions and own comments.

3. **Group activities and group discussions*** with other participants and a researcher (minimum 1, maximum 3, over a period of 4 to 6 months). This component will involve activities such as creative writing assignments with subsequent group discussion, as well as more general discussions about similar topics to the individual interview —subjective perceptions and ideas concerning experiences of acquiring German, of living with more than one language, and growing up in a family where German was spoken. These meetings

will last approximately 2-4 hours. In general, you will be able to use either English or German or both, depending on your preference. These discussions will generally take place at the University of Waterloo. Please note that group interactions will be audio and video recorded. On the attached consent form you are asked to determine how the data may be used (e.g. for transcription only, to be played at research presentations, etc.)

You may choose to participate in as many (or few) of the three project components as you would like. You will be asked to sign a consent form for each participation option in which you choose to participate. You may choose to withdraw your participation at any time by contacting me (see contact information below). You may also withdraw from any single component, decline answers to specific questions, or decline participation in any single activity at any time without penalty. If you decide to withdraw from the project, you will be able to withhold your permission that any data resulting from your prior participation be used. In order to protect your privacy, all digital files will be encrypted and kept in a secure location. Data will be kept for 20 years and then safely destroyed. I would be happy to share my findings with you at the end of the project. You may request the results by contacting me (see contact information below).

Are there any ways my identity could be revealed? Are there limits to confidentiality?

Yes, given the nature of this project, and that we are seeking to use audio and video clips of you, it cannot be guaranteed that your identity will remain confidential. For instance, if you choose to participate in any focus groups or interviews and have given us permission to show audio or video clips in our research or other presentations, you could be recognized and identified as a participant in this project. In publications, your identity will be protected through *use of a pseudonym* and where possible, identifying aspects will be changed or expressed in broad terms. We may link, for instance a piece of your writing or a drawing to an excerpt from your narrative in an interview, but again, will never refer to you by name. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact me. If you are not comfortable with the risk of being identified, please talk to me about whether and what aspects of participation might be best for you.

If you have any questions about participating in this project, please feel free to contact me. You may do so also if you have additional questions at a later date. This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. Participants who have concerns or questions about their involvement in the project may contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics at 519-888-4567, Ext. 36005 or maureen.nummelin@uwaterloo.ca.

Thanks yet again for your interest in this project!

Sincerely,

Katharina Schröder
PhD candidate   PhD Supervisor:
Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies   Prof. Dr. Barbara Schmenk
University of Waterloo   519-888-4567, Ext. 32148
k2schroe@uwaterloo.ca   bschmenk@uwaterloo.ca

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* Initially, the study was designed to include group-interviews, yet this component was dropped for practical as well as ethical reasons. Firstly, given the number of participants who were willing to take part in an individual follow-up meeting including interview questions and the creation of a drawing, I was able to obtain substantial data through individual interviews, also limiting my time resources for another component. Secondly, conducting a group meeting seemed increasingly unsuitable in light of the level of emotional involvement that participants showed in association with my areas of interest, as I soon realized during the first individual interview sessions.

Verbal Script for Recruitment

My name is Katharina Schröder. I am a PhD student from the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, and I am looking for people who would be interested in taking part in my PhD study. The aim of my study is to explore the experience of adults who were raised in a family where German was spoken, but in an environment where German was not the majority language. Specifically, I am looking for people who are taking steps to further develop their German, either formally or informally, or who have done so, as adults, in the past. If you want to participate, I am asking for as much of a commitment as you are willing to give, over the period of approximately 6 to 12 months. The study will consist of three components, and you will be able to determine which components you are willing to participate in. The first component entails individual interviews about aspects such as the role that your languages have played in your life and about your experiences related to learning German. This will probably work out to between 1 to 3 in-person meetings, depending on your schedule/preferences. The second component entails reflection tasks that you would complete at home. The third component would entail group meetings with other participants, which would include activities in pairs as well as group discussions. Both individual interviews and group discussions will take place in a location mutually agreed upon between you and the researcher, such as a café, or an empty classroom. At all times, you can use whatever language you prefer, either German, English, or both. Of course, participation is completely voluntary and all participants can opt out of study participation at any time by contacting me. This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. If you would like to take part, you can find my contact information in the information letter. If you know somebody who might be interested, I would also be very thankful if you would pass the information on. Thanks a lot for your time.

Online recruitment script

Subject line: Raised in a German-speaking family?

The message below is forwarded on behalf of Katharina Schroeder (PhD candidate), Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies:

I am a PhD student from the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies, and I am looking for people interested in participating in my PhD study. My aim is to explore the experience of adults who were raised in families where German was spoken, in an environment where the majority language however was not German. Specifically, I am looking for participants who are taking steps to further develop their German, either formally or informally, or who have done so, as adults, in the past.

The study consists of three components: individual interviews, reflection tasks, and group meetings, as outlined in the information letter. You may take part in either all or only part of the components, depending on your preferences and whatever commitment you are able and willing to give over a period of approximately 6 to 12 months.

At all times, you can use whatever language you prefer, either German, English, or both. Participation is completely voluntary and all participants can opt out of study participation at any time by contacting me. This project has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. If you are interested, please see the information letter for more details and contact information. Please also feel free to forward this information if you know somebody who may be interested.

Thank you for your time
Katharina Schröder

Return Email introducing "pre-screen questionnaire"

Dear [name of participant],

Thanks again for your interest in participating in my study. I am very much looking forward to meeting you in person and learning about your experience of growing up and living with German. To get a better idea of your personal situation and history, I would like to send you a short (5-15 minute) questionnaire with some questions about your biography and the languages you have come into contact with. It also includes a final question about which study components you would like to participate in, in order to get an estimate of your time and interests.

If you choose to participate in the project, your identity will be protected through use of a pseudonym in the transcripts and any presentations or publications resulting from this study. Please note that bits of information you provide about yourself across different study components (including the attached questionnaire) may be linked for the purpose of data analysis, as outlined in the information letter (which I am attaching again for your convenience). Again, please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or questions regarding the risk of being identified or any other questions about the study.

If you chose to participate, I would ask you to return the questionnaire to k2schroe@uwaterloo.ca and let me know when would be a good time for us to meet.

Thank you so much for your interest,
Katharina Schroeder

Initial electronic questionnaire

Questionnaire:
Linguistic Biography and Demographic Information

Dear participant!

This questionnaire serves to inquire about your biography of language learning and use, as well as some demographic questions. Please feel free to add extra information you consider relevant, and/or skip questions you may feel uncomfortable with. Please contact me if you have any questions. It should take no longer than 5-10 minutes.

Name: Place of birth:

Gender: Citizenship(s):

Age: Occupation:

1. Which languages can you currently *speak* to some extent?

2. Apart from these, which additional languages can you currently *understand* to some extent?

3. Which language(s) are *currently* used in your family? Please indicate with whom *you* currently use which language(s), and whether additional languages are spoken in the family, (e.g. *grandparents – German; mother – English and German; son – English; spouse speaks French with children, etc.*)

4. *In your past*, were further language(s) spoken in your family? ☐ no ☐ yes (please specify):

5. Of all the languages you speak, is there a language that you currently prefer or feel "most comfortable" using?

☐ no ☐ yes (please specify):

6. Please list the places you have lived in chronologically and indicate in brackets approximately at what age(s) you lived there, e.g. *"Bavaria, Germany (0 - 5); Ontario, Canada (5 - present)"*:

As described in the information letter, this study includes 3 components. Please indicate in which components you are interested. (In indicating your interest, you are not yet consenting to participate. This is only to assess your interests/availability.)

☐ I am interested in participating in *individual conversational interview(s)* as outlined in the information letter (approximately 45-90 minutes).

I would prefer to be interviewed in ☐ **English** ☐ **German** (You may, however, switch and mix languages at any time.)

☐ I am interested in participating in *individual reflection activities* as outlined in the information letter (duration depending on your own interest). If you are not participating in the larger interview component, would you be willing to take part in a short follow-up interview (about 30 min)?

☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure yet

☐ I am interested in participating in a **group meeting** (approximately 2-4 hours) as outlined in the information letter. If you are not participating in the interview component, would you be willing to take part in a short follow-up interview (about 30 min)? ☐ yes ☐ no ☐ not sure yet

Would you like to add any comments?

☺ **THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST** ☺

Katharina Schröder, PhD Candidate
k2schroe@uwaterloo.ca

Appendix C: Additional information on participants (selection)

The following table gives an overview of all participants who took part in the study. Besides specifying study components chosen by each participant (*WR* stands for "written reflection", *Int* for "interview," and *LP* for "language portrait," biographical information is given about those whose narratives were included for analysis.

Pseudonym (age)	WR	Int	LP	Additional background information
Henning (22)	1	2	1	born/raised in Canada; mother from Germany, father from Canada, considerable use of German growing up, more use of English, regular visits to Germany across his life, attended French-English bilingual school, attended one German language university class
Marianne (53)	-	2	1	born/raised in Canada; father from Germany; mother is Russian Mennonite from Paraguay, considerable use of German growing up, predominantly raised in English upon entry into school, acquired some Spanish living in Paraguay, attended multiple German language classes during adulthood, enrolled in German studies, has taken Applied Linguistics classes, recent sojourn to Germany
Anaya (25)	-	2	1	born/raised in Canada; (great)grandparents from Germany, limited exposure to German growing up, raised in English, took French in school, attended many German language classes, enrolled in German studies, has taken Applied Linguistics classes, recent sojourn to Germany
Gina (19)	-	2	1	born in Germany, moved to Canada at age 8, mother from Germany, father from Canada, paternal grandparents from Germany, extensive use of German until move, some use of German thereafter but parents 'switched' to English, took French in school, attending an integrative German language class
Hanna (30)	-	2	1	born/raised in Canada; comes from German-speaking Russian Mennonite family, extensive use of German growing up and during adulthood, attended German-English bilingual school, has taken Spanish and French classes, enrolled in German studies, expertise in Applied Linguistics, sojourns to Germany, experience in German language teaching, speaks German with her children, who are being raised trilingual
Laura (43)	-	3	1	born/raised in Canada; both parents from Germany, extensive use of German growing up, later switched to mainly English, attended German Saturday school, took one German language class in adulthood, frequent travel to Germany, has taken French classes, contact with Spanish, Italian
Nadja (24)	-	2	1	born/raised in Canada; her Canadian-born mother was adopted by Austrian/ Hungarian couple and grew up in Canada/Austria; father Canadian, paternal distant ancestors from Germany, some use of German growing up, attended German language classes at Saturday school, multiple German language classes during adulthood, currently limited use of German, enrolled in French studies, sojourn to France
Ryan (22)	-	2	1	born/raised in Canada; grandparents from Germany; German-speaking mother moved to Canada from Romania, limited exposure to German growing up, attended multiple German language classes in high school and as an adult, enrolled in German studies, recent sojourn to Germany
Cora (37)	-	1	-	
Claudia (21)	-	1	-	
Robert (52)	-	1	-	
Rene (43)	-	1	-	
Rita (64)	-	1	-	
Susan (57)	2	-	-	
Frieda (71)	2	-	-	
Jona (29)	1	-	-	

Appendix D: The interview component

Interview guide

(The following questions served to guide the initial interview. The order was subject to change and additional themes were discussed, depending on participants' narrations)

SECTION I: Language trajectory and contexts of (German) language use

A. Learning and using languages.

1. My first question is pretty general. You have written in the form that you speak (X,Y,Z) and I'd be interested to know: how did you learn and develop those languages across your life?
    - At what ages what/how spoken with whom, including present
    - Family history (e.g. where from, where have parents lived)
    - What steps have you taken to develop German as an adult?
    - Have you been to Germany?

2. Do you use your languages *together* sometimes?
    - Can you describe to me exactly how you use them together?
    - Do you have any thoughts on when or why this happens?

B. Subjective meanings associated with German / relation to German.

3. How would you describe your relation with German across your life?
    - (what role would you say has German played in different phases of your life?)

4. What role do you think German might play in your life in the future?

5. Are there memories that you associate with acquiring German that stand out in your mind?

6. What kind of a language is German to you? (Is it a foreign language? Is it a native language?)
    - Was it always that way, or did that change over time?
    - (what do you think shaped these changes in your perception?)

SECTION II: Multilingual subjectivity and sense of self

7. In your experience, what would you say is most interesting about having growing up with more than one language in the way you did?

8. Who or how do you think you would be without the experience of growing up the way you did language-wise?
    - do you think you would be the same person / (child)?

9. Would you say that you have different selves in your different languages?
    · do you feel different/are you someone else when using different languages?
    · *If no*: Was it always that way? Do you have any thoughts on why these perceptions might have changed?
    · *If yes:* How would you describe those selves?
    · *If yes:* Is there also something like a mixed or integrated self? (describe)

10. When you are using one language, do you feel that there are other languages hiding inside you that influence how you say things / what you want to say?

11. In the questionnaire you indicated that you feel XY (e.g. more comfortable using language X) – has it always been that way?
    if no: do you have any thoughts on how or why this changed?

12. Do you consider yourself a native speaker of German?
    · Did you always feel the same about this?
    · Is this a question that has mattered to you across your life?

SECTION III: Heritage, cultural spaces, and cultural identification/belonging

13. When people ask you about your background, how do you describe your background?

14. When you hear "German background" or "German" what does this make you think of? Any pictures that come to mind or stand out to you?
    · (are these aspects that YOU identify with? Are they important to you? Do you feel that those things are part of who you are?)

15. Does your family have certain traditions that are associated with your background?
    · (How important are they to you?)
    · Are you aware of ways in which you might have *mixed* German and Canadian traditions, resulting in something new?

16. When you hear "German community" in Kitchener/Waterloo, what does that make you think of?
    · Do you consider yourself part of the "German community"?

17. Do you feel that people who do *not* have a German background have developed a connection with German things through you? (perhaps even taken on parts of a "German identity")?

18. Is there anything you would like to add?

Additional information on the interviewing procedure

Opening the initial interview. As an introduction to the first interview, I briefly reviewed that my main interest was to investigate what learning German and living with more than one language (had) meant to the particular participant subjectively. Since participants' assessment of what the research context requires of them shapes not only what they talk about, but also *how* they tell (see Riessman, 2008) – e.g. whether they give condensed summaries and explanations or engage in extended narrations – I made an effort to make my objectives transparent before I posed the opening question, encouraging them to elaborate on anything that seems relevant to them or that helps to create a more accurate picture of how they experienced learning and living with 'their' languages. I explained that I had 'prepared some guiding questions, while I like to see the interview as a conversation,' inviting the participant to bring up any aspects, memories, or ideas that stood out in her/his mind, and reassuring her/him that 'going off track' was not an issue but rather welcome. Furthermore, I told every participant that I had grown up in a 'perhaps in some ways similar, but perhaps also opposite kind of way,' namely, in a Canadian, English-speaking family in Germany. This did not only serve as an 'ice-breaker.' I also felt that it was relevant to the ways in which my (re)actions during the interview might be interpreted, and that it would also allow me to act more 'naturally' in conveying my interest, empathy, understanding, or need for further clarification.

Follow-up questions during the first interview. Since I was interested in perceptual dimensions of individual participants' experiences, subjective ways of how they make sense of and draw connections between different realms of their experience, as well as the ways in which they present and position themselves within story worlds and discourses, follow-up questions varied in form and function: some were aimed at eliciting the telling of a story as a specific instance of a particular narrated phenomenon; others, by contrast, were aimed at evoking reflections or analytic reasoning at a more comprehensive or abstract level.

Postprocessing. After every interview, I drafted a short postscript, documenting points concerning the interview process and situation, including observations of gestures or facial expressions that I had jotted down during the interview process.

Follow-up interviews. While the initial interview was designed to gain insight into subjective perspectives and at the same time allow for comparisons across participants' narratives, follow-up interviews were more specifically tailored to the individual participant. Besides asking clarification questions concerning participants' language (learning) trajectory, covering areas that had been dropped during the initial interview for time reasons, and creating the language portrait, follow-up meetings served to invite participants to elaborate on particular points that emerged in the prior interview(s) and seemed relevant in light of my research questions. I generated the follow-up questions after drafting a minimal transcript and identifying main themes of the narrative, as well as positionings, metaphors, or themes that stood out to me.

Appendix E: The written component

Introduction to and questions for written reflection

This study component gives you space to reflect on particular aspects of your language biography. **Please choose one of the following options.** You may write as much/little as you wish. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions!

(1) Please describe a moment or phase(s) in your life when your relation to your language(s) changed. What do you think were some reasons? How did these changes impact your life over time?

(2) Please describe an instance/instances of developing your German that you consider particularly valuable (including formal and/or informal learning). Why do you think these instances stand out to you?

(3) How do you feel when you use (or combine) particular languages? Do you feel that you have "different selves" depending on how you use/combine your languages? If so, how would you describe some of those selves?

<p align="center">☺ THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST ☺</p>

Adapted version for distant participation[60]

This study component gives you space to reflect on particular aspects of your language biography.

To begin with, I would ask you to recount your personal experience of learning and living with German, so I can get a better idea of how you acquired and developed German, and what living with more than one language has meant to you in different phases of your life.

Please feel free to include any memories, associations, or feelings that you connect with learning and living with German that stand out in your mind.

There are no "right" or "wrong" answers, and your reflection doesn't need to be "complete". At this point, I am simply interested in learning about your story and what stands out to you. You can write as much/little as you wish, in English, German, or both.

Please let me know if you have any questions!

<p align="center">☺ THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND INTEREST ☺</p>

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[60] Upon my decision to open the study to participants who could only participate from the distance, I adapted the written component so as to trigger 'initial written reflection,' corresponding to the opening question during initial interviews. While in the oral version, the question referred to all the languages spoken by participants, in the written format I figured that the task would be too daunting, hence the comparatively narrow focus on German.

Appendix F: The language portrait

Detailed description of my use of the language portrait

Participants were given an empty silhouette,[61] which I introduced as 'something that has been used in recent research on multilingualism' and explained the task as follows: 'The idea is: This is you. You choose different colours for your languages and colour them into your body to represent who you are, in terms of language, so to speak. Doesn't need to be fancy. Just what comes to mind.'

In answering follow-up questions from participants, I was careful not to influence them in how they created their portrait, but rather emphasized that they were allowed to do anything that reflected aspects of their subjective perceptions. It was left up to participants whether and to what degree they wished to comment on their composition as they were creating it, or whether they preferred to provide explanations after its completion. As participants were drawing, I took notes, documenting the order in which they worked on specific parts of the drawing, as well as other particularities such as gestures, meanings of deictic expressions used to refer to elements in the picture (e.g. "this part here"), or other actions such as picking up different colours of pencils and putting them back, etc. I did this in order to facilitate the integration of the multimodal data in subsequent processes of reconstruction and interpretation. Whenever possible (i.e. when I didn't feel that this would constitute an interruption), I verbally interjected terms for specific parts of the picture that participants were referring to through deictic expressions, as in the following example. Participant: "and this part here..." – I: "the heart..." – participant: "yes, my heart…" In so doing, I sought to enhance not only the mutual understanding in the conversational situation, but also the clarity in the later phase of transcribing, interpreting, and presenting my data. Upon their completion of the image, I asked participants to add a colour legend, inquired about their choice of colours, and asked them to elaborate on particular aspects of the picture that had remained uncommented (e.g. Do you recall whether there was a specific reason why you...).

Most importantly, I asked participants whether they had any thoughts on what different versions of their portrait might look like that would reflect different phases of their lives. Specifically, I inquired about 'turning points' in the individual participant's life based on preliminary readings of the narrative resulting from the first interview. As argued by Riessman (2003), a "useful way to see how identities can shift over time is to look at 'turning points' in stories – moments when the narrator signifies a radical shift in the expected course of a life" (p. 341). Inspired by this understanding, I chose points of transition that participants had foregrounded across their narrative, as well as points in time when they had begun to take steps to develop their German. (For example, turning points included 'before versus after a trip to Germany,' 'before versus after marriage;' 'before versus after taking a specific German class,'

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[61] The image was retrieved from:
http://www.communityservices.act.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0010/651817/Human-Body-outline.pdf

etc.). Provided there was enough time, I also asked participants to speculate on how this kind of a portrait might look with reference to their future.

I transcribed those interview passages in which participants created and elaborated on their portraits immediately after the interview. This way, I was able to integrate information from the notes I had taken to document non-audible details and explanations of deictic expressions into the transcript with substantial accuracy and detail for the process of data analysis.

**Language portraits created by participants**

Portrait 1. Marianne's language portrait:

*Portrait 2. Henning's language portrait:*

English
German
French
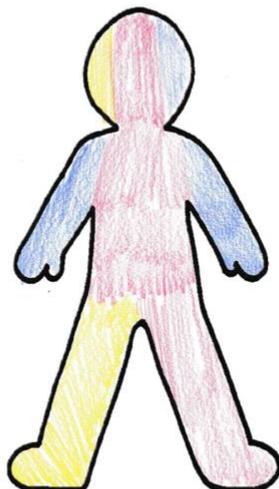
Portrait 3. Anaya's language portrait:

Eng
Deu

L   R

325
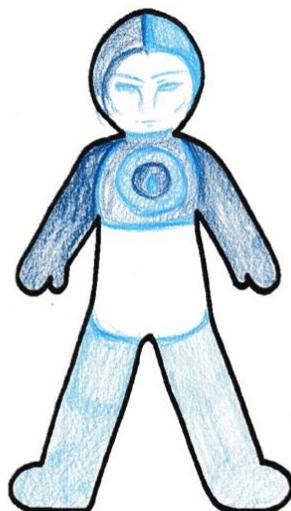
Portrait 4. Laura's language portrait:
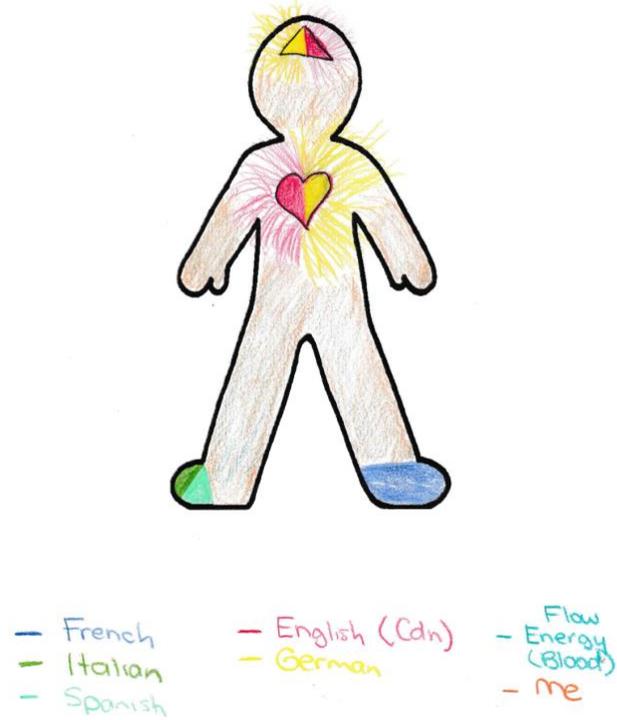
Portrait 5. Nadia's language portrait:

Portrait 6. Gina's language portrait:

Portrait 7. Ryan's language portrait:

Portrait 8. Hanna's language portrait:

● Silence

● English ● Me^(mix) ● French ● Spanish
● Low German ● German ● Russian