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Language Portraits of Four Transnational Educators from China: Experiences, Ideologies, and Teaching Practices

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Abstract. This study uses language portraits (Busch, 2018) to shed light on the relationship between the multilingual experiences and teaching practices of four transnational educators who have lived, studied, and taught across China and the United States. Using multimodal thematic analysis methods (Coffey, 2015; Purkarthofer & De Korne, 2020), this approach highlights the ways in which language experiences and teaching practices are mediated by language ideologies. This approach enables the participants to visualise and describe their linguistic repertoires and multilingual experiences in relation to teaching practices in the focus group interview. Findings show that these educators from China value Chinese as a resource for teaching and learning. They hold an asset-oriented view of the students' home languages and are willing to incorporate their home languages to support classroom teaching and learning. Although they have mixed feelings about English, due to negative learning experiences, they are aware of the economic value of the language, which sustains their efforts to improve their English proficiency and influences their career plans. Overall, the educators evidence an emerging, yet rudimentary, multilingual awareness. The entrenched ideology of Mandarin monolingualism, which prioritises Putonghua (Standard Mandarin) over other Chinese dialects, along with the global dominance of English and its associated language ideology, has profoundly influenced teaching practices in multilingual classrooms.

Keywords: language portraits; language ideologies; multilingualism; transnational educators; teaching practices

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1. Introduction

Globalisation alters the nature of migration and the categories of migrants, which, in turn, boosts global linguistic, cultural, and ethnic diversity (Blommaert & Rampton, 2016). Correspondingly, classrooms around the world have become more diverse in every aspect (García & Kleyn, 2013). Responding to the language diversity in the classroom, bi/multilingual teachers constitute a critical portion of the teaching force, who are positioned to deliver robust culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy (Sleeter & Milner, 2011), due to sharing their cultural knowledge and language resources with students (Villegas-Torres & Mora-Pablo, 2018; Zoeller & Briceño, 2022), and their ability to empathise from first-hand experiences as multilinguals (Varghese & Snyder, 2018).

As these lived experiences could shape their pedagogical orientations (Bacon, 2020), learning about teachers' lived multilingual experiences could help understand the teaching practices of students from diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The multilingual experiences of bi/multilingual teachers, who have transnational experiences in various social, political, and geographic contexts, may add complexity to the relationship between their language ideologies and teaching practices. Transnational teachers refer to teachers who have lived, studied, and taught across national borders (Ong, 1999; Portes, 2001). Here, we present a comparative case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017) that examines the multilingual experiences of four transnational educators who have lived, studied, and taught across China and the United States and the way in which these experiences have shaped their understanding of teaching and learning.

In so doing, we use language ideology (Kroskrity, 2004) as a theoretical lens through which to make sense of the relationship between language experiences and understandings of teaching and learning. To elicit these relationships, we leveraged arts-based methodologies to identify and understand aspects of language experiences (Barone, 2006; Barone, 2008; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Eisner, 2008; Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2020). Specifically, we use language portraits (Busch, 2018) to understand the complexity of their language experiences, which have the potential to reveal nuanced understandings of teaching and learning amongst transnational educators. We ask the following research questions:

1) What are the lived multilingual experiences of Chinese multilingual educators?
2) What language ideologies emerge from their lived multilingual experiences?
3) How do their language ideologies shape their understanding of teaching and learning?

First, we reviewed the recent literature that explores the language experiences and language ideologies of teachers in global contexts, and the role of language ideologies within our theoretical perspective.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Experiences and Teachers

Over the last decade, research has documented the ways in which teachers' language experiences can shape their teaching practices in multilingual classrooms (Ek et al., 2013; Gilham & Fürstenau, 2020; Moodie, 2016; Szwed & González-Carriedo, 2019). On the one hand, multilingual experiences could strengthen an individual's beliefs in linguistically responsive teaching (Settlage et al., 2014). Gilham and Fürstenau (2020) investigated how the language experiences of three primary school teachers in Germany were reflected in the ways they dealt with language diversity in their classrooms. They showed that individuals who have grown up in a fostering environment that values multilingual practices are able to recognise the importance of the students' home languages in their daily lives and incorporate them into their classroom teaching. Similarly, through school-based teaching experiences in foreign countries, transnational teachers can develop their appreciation for multilingualism (Perry, 2020) and a "strength-based, language-focused pedagogy" (Zoeller & Briceño, 2022, p. 47).

On the other hand, negative language experiences can also shape classroom practice (Vélez-Rendón, 2002). Moodie's work (2016) focused on the prior language learning experiences of four public school English teachers in South Korea and the ways in which these experiences influenced their teaching beliefs and practices. He demonstrated that the teachers preferred using meaning-focused activities in their teaching because they found grammar-focused activities to be less productive, based on their own English language learning experiences.

However, Ek and colleagues' (2013) research with bilingual Latina/o teacher candidates in South Texas, U.S., shows that negative experiences may positively influence teaching practices. They demonstrated that the suffering associated with linguistic violence related to Spanish prompted the bilingual Latina/o teacher candidates to help Spanish-speaking students to maintain their home language and strengthen their cultural identity. In a similar vein, bilingual teacher candidates in Szwed and González-Carriedo (2019) were asked to teach Spanish or speak in Spanish to their Spanish-speaking students, who had been forbidden to use any Spanish language at home while growing up and had lost the opportunity to develop bilingual competency.

This body of research indicates a complicated relationship between teachers' language experiences and their teaching practices with bi/multilingual learners (i.e. negative experiences with multilingualism may not relate to disaffirming practices when teaching). However, it suggests that these experiences play an important role in terms of how teachers approach their multilingual learners. In order to better understand this relationship, we turned to language ideologies as a possible mediator between experience and practice (Bacon, 2020), as described below.

2.2 Language Ideologies and Teachers

Language ideologies have been examined in previous scholarly work with differing definitions (e.g. Fine et al., 2020; Irvine, 1989; Kroskrity, 2004; McGroarty, 2010; Piller, 2015; Ricento, 2014; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). In this study, we view language ideology as the beliefs about language within a context, which then shape the evaluation and judgement of appropriate language structure and use (McGroarty, 2010; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994) and the recognition or exclusion of particular speakers (Farr & Song, 2011; Gallo et al., 2014). With regard to our work, we note that these ideologies emerge from interactions between individuals, as well as their interactions with features of a particular context. At the same time, these ideologies then shape individuals' experiences with language within a given setting.

For example, extensive work has shown the ways in which monolingual ideologies can shape the way in which teachers regard bilingualism within school spaces (Gkaintartzi et al., 2015; Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2021). Yang and Jang (2022) examined an English-only ideology amongst Korean bilingual teachers, describing how these ideologies devalued students' translanguaging† practices as a lack of linguistic and academic ability. Monolingual ideologies also result in dichotomic learning goals for native and non-native speakers (Takeuchi, 2021), which labels are determined by proficiency in one language. The transnational teachers were pushed further toward monolingual ideologies by the prevailing English hegemony (Abraham, 2021) and native speakerism (Perry, 2020; Zacharias, 2019) worldwide.

In contrast, multilingual ideologies can result in teachers' flexible attitudes towards the use of different languages (Gu et al., 2019). For example, an elementary dual language teacher in Briceño (2018) views bilingual students' linguistic repertoires‡ as an entire system, in which the learning and use of one language cannot be separated from the knowledge of the other languages.

2.3 Arts-Based Approach and Teacher Education

An arts-based approach could liberate us from the fixed and dictatorial way of viewing the world to a large extent (Barone, 2008), because artefacts are self-consciously created to reflect the reality in the artists' eyes without too many external forces or regulations (Diamond & Mullen, 1999b). It is especially convenient as a way to represent those experiences that are hard to describe verbally (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; McNiff, 2008), to construct knowledge from new perspectives (Eisner, 2008; McNiff, 2008), and to examine ourselves squarely (Diamond & Mullen, 1999b).

† *Translanguaging* is a discursive norm for bi/multilingual speakers who use complex interrelated discourse practices flexibly and meaningfully (García & Li, 2014; Li, 2017; MacSwan, 2017). It refers to using all the linguistic resources at one's disposal for the sake of making meaning in different contexts, with different people, for different purposes (Martínez, 2018; Otheguy et al., 2015).

‡ *Linguistic repertoire* "is understood as a whole, comprising those languages, dialects, styles, registers, codes, and routines that characterise interaction in everyday life" (Busch, 2015, p. 344).

In recent decades, many scholars have asserted that arts-based research can help to identify, understand, and seek changes for the issues in education (Barone, 2006; Barone, 2008; Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008; Diamond & Mullen, 1999b; Eisner, 2008; Mullen, 1999; Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2020).

Having reviewed the literature, we found that there is a lack of research that deciphers the role of language ideologies which mediate the language experiences and teaching practices of educators who have transnational living, learning, and teaching experiences. We also recognised the need to identify a more effective and creative way to reveal the subtleties and complexities of their experiences, ideologies, and practices (Miller, 2017; Weisman & Hansen, 2008), which could be difficult to represent through text-based data (Diamond & Mullen, 1999a).

In order to develop a more diverse, complex, and nuanced understanding (Barone, 2008) of the lived multilingual experiences of Chinese educators, this study examines the mediating role of language ideologies between teachers' multilingual experiences and their teaching practices. Focusing on four transnational educators who have lived, studied, and taught in both China and the United States, the research adopts an arts-based approach. This method enables Chinese multilingual educators to represent and reflect on their language experiences through artistic inquiry.

3. This Study

This is a comparative case study (Bartlett & Vavrus, 2017) which investigates the multilingual experiences and teaching practices of four transnational educators who have lived, studied, and taught across China and the United States. We compare their experiences and practices to shed light on the way in which the change of sociocultural contexts has affected their relations to different language ideologies. In the following section, we first present our understanding of language ideology as the theoretical lens for this study, and then describe the backgrounds of the four participants and the procedure for data collection and analysis.

3.1 Language Ideology: Five Dimensions

This study adopts language ideology as the theoretical lens through which to understand the relationship between the multilingual experiences and the teaching practices of four transnational educators. We argue that language ideologies at the societal level influence educators' sociocultural experiences (Gallo et al., 2014; Martínez, 2013) and dictate their language ideologies at the individual level (Bacon, 2020), which then shape their teaching practices (Achugar, 2008; Bacon, 2020; Brown, 2004; Fitzsimmons-Doolan et al., 2017). Therefore, as the bridge between sociocultural experiences and teaching practices, we believe that language ideologies could explain the manner and degree to which their experiences are projected into their teaching, which has not been sufficiently addressed in previous studies. In this study, we examined the transnational educators' multilingual experiences and teaching practices through five dimensions of language ideologies by Kroskrity (2004): (1) group or

individual interests; (2) multiplicity of ideologies; (3) awareness of speakers; (4) mediating functions of ideologies; and (5) role of language ideology in identity construction (p. 510).

The first dimension is group interests. Language ideologies represent the interests of a specific social and cultural group (Kroskrity, 2004). In the United States, the dominant group is the White middle classes, who regard their English as the standard variety of English that should be used, taught, and maintained in public education (Bacon, 2020; Godley et al., 2007; Milroy, 2001; Piller, 2015). In China, the central government mandates that Chinese Mandarin is the only legitimate common language for national unity and economic productivity (Li, 2006).

The second dimension is multiplicity. Multiple language ideologies can coexist within one sociocultural group (Gal, 1992; Kroskrity, 2004). Studies have shown that in the United States, the hegemonic English-only ideology and counter-hegemonic language ideologies can coexist in one classroom (Fitzsimmons-Doolan, 2014; Lew & Siffrinn, 2019; Martínez, 2013).

Embodiment is the third dimension. People present different language ideologies at varying degrees in practice (Kroskrity, 2004), and language ideologies can affect and be embodied through one's attitudes and language practices (Ellis, 2006; Gal, 1992; McGroarty, 2008; Piller, 2015; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994; Wortham, 2008). Dong (2009) found that the dominant Mandarin-only ideology did not prevent students from using their own dialects in classroom communications, manifesting the dissonance between the dominant language ideology and the actual language practices.

The fourth dimension is mediation. Language ideologies mediate between social structures and language practices. This mediating function of language ideologies specifically refers to the ways in which linguistic and discursive forms are shaped through sociocultural experiences that are dictated by power structures (Kroskrity, 2004). In the United States, English-only ideology mediates between teachers' classroom language practices (Speicher & Bielanski, 2000; Subtirelu, 2013) and the underlying social structure, which favours English and its speakers (Ellis, 2006; Farr & Song 2011; Macedo, 2000).

Finally, the fifth dimension is identity. Language ideologies contribute to the construction of social and cultural identities (Kroskrity, 2004). The language one speaks indicates membership of a particular social group (Lew & Siffrinn, 2019), and a shared language is deemed critical for constructing a group identity (Gal, 1992). For example, Dong (2009) notes that speaking Chinese Mandarin with an accent tends to be associated with the identities of "being rural, working class, and migrant" (p. 124). In the United States, meanwhile, speaking standard English is necessary for obtaining full citizenship (Barros, 2016; Gorski, 2011).

As Figure 1 shows, this study examines the language ideologies of four transitional educators from the five dimensions proposed by Kroskrity (2004) to

elucidate the relationship between their multilingual experiences and their teaching practices.

Figure 1: Five dimensions of language ideologies

3.2 Language Portrait

This study uses language portraits as the primary means of understanding and interpreting the experiences of the research participants (Diamond & Mullen, 1999b; McNiff, 2008; Mulvihill & Swaminathan, 2020). A language portrait is a visualisation of one's linguistic repertoire using the outline of a body (Busch, 2018; Coffey, 2015; Dressler, 2014). It affords the participants a wide range of semiotic devices (e.g. shapes, icons, colours/colour shades) through which to visualise their languages, thus liberating the participants from "the linear, unitary, and disembodied representation of language(s) enshrined in the subject knowledge audit" (Coffey, 2015, p. 504). Moreover, it increases their power as co-researchers who can actively reflect on, interpret, and evaluate their language experiences (Busch, 2018; de Jager et al., 2016; Prasad, 2014). Language portraits have been proven to be productive in furthering the reflection on one's language experiences by eliciting personal narratives and initiating collaborative conversations (Busch, 2018; Chik et al., 2019; Coffey, 2015; Gao, 2023; Prasad, 2014), during which different language ideologies are contested, varying linguistic dispositions are modified, and multifaceted linguistic identities are negotiated (Gao, 2023). Consequently, language portraits represent a powerful methodological tool with which to represent the lived multilingual experiences of the multilingual transitional educators from China and embody their language ideologies. This study adopts the template of the body silhouette from Busch (2018) (Figure 2) to support the participants in visualising their linguistic repertoires.

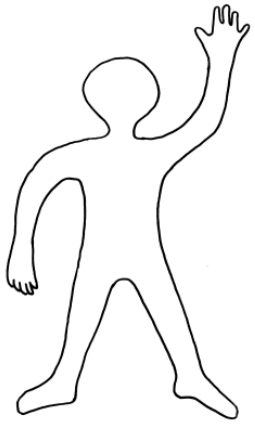

Figure 2: Template of body silhouette (Busch, 2018, p. 9)

3.3 Participants

The participants of this study were four educators from China who were studying in the teacher education programmes in the United States when this study was conducted. They met the criteria of having had various living, learning, and teaching experiences across China and the US. These participants were recruited through convenience and snowball sampling (Tracy, 2020). We identified one eligible participant from the first author's personal circle, for convenient and easy access, and then asked her to suggest more potential participants who might also meet the selection criteria through snowball sampling. Table 1 provides an overview of each participant's profile.

Table 1: Overview of participants' profiles

Name (pseudonym)	Cities and regions (where they lived)	Educational Background	Working Experiences
Mercury	Handan, China Hangzhou, China northeastern US southeastern US	B.A. in Chinese, China M.S. in TESOL, USA, Ph.D. student in education, US	Teaching Chinese and English in China and in the US
Jenifer	Beijing, China Shaanxi, China southeastern US	B.A. in Business English, China M.Ed student in TESOL, USA	None
Yvonne	Anhui, China Nanjing, China southeast US	B.Ed in Elementary Education-English, China M.Ed student in education, USA	Intern in local elementary schools in the US
Linda	Yangzhou, China Nanjing, China southeast US	B.Ed in Middle School English Education M.Ed student in education, USA	Intern in elementary and middle schools in the US

Mercury was born and lived in Handan[§] until high school. She went to a college in Hangzhou[**] and studied Chinese Culture, Literacy and Applied Linguistics. From 2010, she worked as a part-time Chinese and English teacher in Handan and Hangzhou during summer and winter breaks. In 2013, Mercury started her master's study in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at a university in the northeastern United States. After she graduated, she became a teaching assistant at an elementary school and volunteered as an English as a Second Language teacher at a local literacy centre in the state of New York. Mercury continued to pursue a Ph.D. degree in education at a university in the southeastern United States from 2016.

Jenifer was born and lived in Beijing[††] until starting college, and she regularly visited her mother's hometown in Shaanxi Province[‡‡]. Her major in college was Business English. She was just starting her second year of a master's course in TESOL at a university in the southeastern United States when this study took place.

Yvonne was born in Anhui Province[§§]. She moved to Nanjing[***] with her parents and started her schooling there. Yvonne studied Elementary Education (subject area: English) in college, but she gained few teaching experiences in her first two years of study in China. In her junior year, Yvonne was enrolled in an international teacher education programme and started to study at a university in the southeastern United States. She also started to teach in elementary schools in the state of Florida. Yvonne was pursuing her master's degree in the same university while this study was conducted.

Linda was born and went to elementary school in Yangzhou[†††]. She moved to Nanjing with her parents before starting middle school. She studied Middle School English Education at a college in Nanjing but, like Yvonne, she gained few teaching experiences in her first two years of study. In her junior year, Linda was also enrolled in an international teacher education programme at a university in the southeastern United States. She started to accumulate teaching experiences in local elementary and middle schools in the United States. Linda was pursuing her master's degree in the same university when this study took place.

[§] Handan is a city located in the southwest of Hebei Province. Hebei Province is in the northern part of China around the capital city of Beijing.

[**] Hangzhou is a city located in the northeast of Zhejiang Province. Zhejiang Province is a coastal province in the southeastern part of China adjacent to the city of Shanghai.

[††] Beijing is the capital city of China, located in the northern part of the country.

[‡‡] Shaanxi Province is in the northwestern part of China.

[§§] Anhui Province is in the eastern part of China, adjacent to Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province.

[***] Nanjing is a city located in the southwest of Jiangsu Province. Jiangsu Province is a coastal province in the east of China, adjacent to Anhui Province and the city of Shanghai.

[†††] Yangzhou is a city located in the west of Jiangsu Province, adjacent to the city of Nanjing.

3.4 Data Collection

The primary data sources for this study are the language portraits (Busch, 2018), which were created by the participants using a template (Figure 2) provided by the researchers. Immediately after completing their drawings, a focus group interview was conducted to encourage dialogue and discussion of topics among both participants and researchers (Roulston, 2010). The interview questions (Appendix 1) were designed as open-ended, semi-structured prompts to facilitate in-depth discussions among participants. These questions served as a guideline for the whole group discussion, which lasted 70 minutes. This group interview was audio-recorded for transcription and analysis. The language portrait data collection followed Hamman-Ortiz (2021), and the focus group interview was guided by Roulston (2010). The step-by-step procedure was as follows:

1) Participants and researchers sat in a circle.
2) Each participant received a blank body outline (Figure 2).
3) Participants listed all the languages they could speak, assigning a colour and body part to each.
4) They coloured the drawings according to their language experiences, adding explanatory notes and symbols (Bristowe et al., 2014; Dressler, 2014).
5) In the focus group interview (see Appendix 1 for questions), participants described their portraits, explaining their colour choices and the significance of each (Chik et al., 2019; Dressler, 2014).
6) The researchers asked clarifying questions and encouraged elaboration in the focus group interview (Tracy, 2020).
7) During the focus group interview, participants discussed the roles of their languages in their teaching and learning, responded freely to others, and continued working on their portraits if desired.

3.5 Data Analysis

This study mainly uses thematic analysis (Tracy, 2020). Inspired by Coffey (2015) and Purkarthofer and De Korne (2020), the analysis of each language portrait was conducted in conjunction with the focus group interview with respect to:

1) how each language was represented (e.g. colour, shape, symbols)
2) where the language was represented (e.g. which part of the body)
3) what texts were used (if any) and their functions (e.g. labels, headings, speech bubbles)
4) what iterations of the metaphorical devices indicated semantic (in the texts) or semiotic (on the portrait) prosody (e.g. repetitive use of a colour to represent a language)

There were two rounds of coding for this study. In the first round, the researchers examined the data and used descriptive language to annotate the parts that address any item of the analysis guidelines. The second round synthesised the annotations and generated recurring themes (Tracy, 2020). To organise the data based on themes, the researchers created a pile of folders for each participant (Figure 3). Each folder was labelled as the theme and subthemes that were identified in each participant's language portrait along with the focus group interview. Next, the transcription of the focus group interview was printed out and cut into segments. Each piece was sorted and put into the appropriate folder according to who said it and what meaning it might indicate.

Two steps of data analysis were included in this study. The first step was within-case analysis, whereby the stories of each participant were analysed according to the themes and subthemes identified in the second round of coding. The second step was cross-case analysis, in which the themes and subthemes for each participant were examined collectively to identify the common themes for further analysis following the five dimensions of language ideology analysis by Kroskrity (2004).

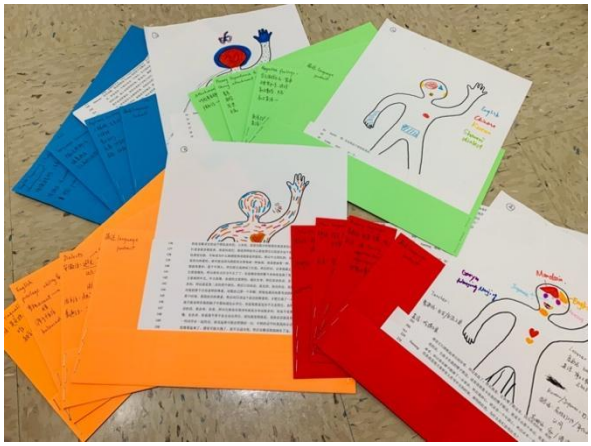

Figure 3: Data folders for each participant

3.6 Ethical Considerations

When conducting this study, we adhered to strict ethical guidelines to ensure the confidentiality and anonymity of the participants. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, whose identities were protected through the use of pseudonyms. Additionally, we ensured that participation was voluntary and that participants were aware that they could withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

4. Findings

The four transnational educators from China had various storylines with their languages, from which they developed nuanced language ideologies and pedagogical practices.

4.1 Mercury

Mercury's lived multilingual experiences comprise a history of contesting monolingual language ideologies. Although she claimed that she applauded multilingualism, her language practices indicated that language hierarchy and English superiority had been deeply rooted in her mind.

4.1.1 Language Hierarchy Among Putonghua‡‡‡ and Dialects

As shown in Figure 4, Mercury used red to represent Chinese (Putonghua). Before coming to the United States, she prioritised Putonghua and devalued local dialects. Although she grew up speaking Handan Dialect, she felt ashamed of it due to its association with being "vulgar, uneducated, and poor" (focus group interview).

Figure 4: Mercury's language portrait

At school, she was forbidden to speak Handan Dialect and had to learn Putonghua. If she used the dialect at home, her family criticised her for not studying hard enough. She used small pink dots to represent Handan Dialect, indicating its limited role in her life.

At college in Hangzhou, Mercury felt "lucky and privileged" to be able to speak standard Putonghua, unlike her classmates from southern China, who struggled with their accents (focus group interview). For Mercury, an entrenched language hierarchy favours Putonghua, reflecting the Chinese government's promotion of the language to facilitate economic and cultural exchange (Law of the People's Republic of China on the standard spoken and written Chinese language, 2000, Article 1). The national Putonghua-only policy influences public education and family language practices (Li, 2019; Shen & Gao, 2019). Mercury's family devalued Handan Dialect as a "less-educated indicator" (Li, 2019, p. 22), leading to her loss of the dialect.

4.1.2 Prioritising Standard English

Mercury valued Chinese and English equally in her language portrait, using blue to represent English. She divided the most important parts (head, feet, heart) evenly between these two languages. Her inner head is red, indicating that she usually thinks in Chinese, while English, represented by an outer blue circle,

‡‡‡ *Putonghua* is also known as Chinese Mandarin. It "is the standard form of Modern Chinese with the Beijing phonological system as its norm of pronunciation, and Northern dialects as its base dialect, and looking to exemplary modern works in báihuà 'vernacular literary language' for its grammatical norms" (Chen, 1999, p. 24).

expanded her knowledge. One foot is red, showing her Chinese identity, and the other is blue, reflecting the Western values she internalised after living in the United States for nine years. Her heart is half-red and half-blue, symbolising the intertwined and inseparable nature of these languages in her identity.

However, Mercury prioritised English in her professional life. She experienced "language shame" in the United States when her academic advisor corrected her pronunciation, which was not "native-like" (focus group interview). This negative experience made her a "critical" teacher who nurtures respect for different languages among American students and advocates for language diversity (focus group interview). For Chinese students, however, she insists on native-like English proficiency to prevent discrimination in mainstream American society, as indicated by the blue hands, which represent English being a vital skill for a better life.

Despite the increased language diversity in the United States since the 1970s due to mass immigration (Rumbaut & Massey, 2013), the English-only ideology remains dominant. This ideology values only the English spoken by the dominant White middle class as the linguistic capital necessary for academic success, political membership, economic prosperity, and social mobility (Ellis, 2006; Farr & Song, 2011; Irvine, 1989; Macedo, 2000; Milroy, 2001; Piller, 2015; Speicher & Bielanski, 2000; Wiley & Lukes, 1996). This standard English ideology has made Mercury feel "discriminated against" because of her accent, and has influenced her teaching philosophy to prioritise standard English proficiency (focus group interview). Though she claimed to advocate for language diversity among American students, she did not require them to learn another language, whereas she urged Chinese students to excel in English. Thus, Mercury's advocacy for language diversity appears superficial, as she remains subject to English hegemony. Her teaching and learning practices reflect different language ideologies, but English-only and standard English ideologies ultimately dominate her professional priorities.

4.1.3 Respect for Multilingualism

The mediating role of language ideology was evident in Mercury's negotiation of the dominant monolingual ideologies in China and the United States through her translanguaging practices. Mercury used translanguaging most frequently in the group interview. She learned about translanguaging while studying in the United States, which changed her negative view of dialects. She adopted an asset-oriented view of multilingualism, considering multilingual speakers as "smart, knowledgeable," and "fashionable" (focus group interview). However, she admitted that she did not want to learn a new language, probably because she already speaks the dominant languages in both China and the United States, reducing the necessity for learning another language. Despite her translanguaging practices and emerging asset-oriented view of multilingualism, the entrenched language hierarchy and standard English ideology rooted in social structures remain unchallenged.

4.2 Jennifer

The greatest impression left by Jenifer's stories is her strong negative feeling for English. By contrast, she had a heavy dependence on Putonghua, and a strong interest in different Chinese dialects. Her attitudes towards different languages/language varieties illustrate the way she had been problematising the prevailing language ideology in China, which placed great importance on English.

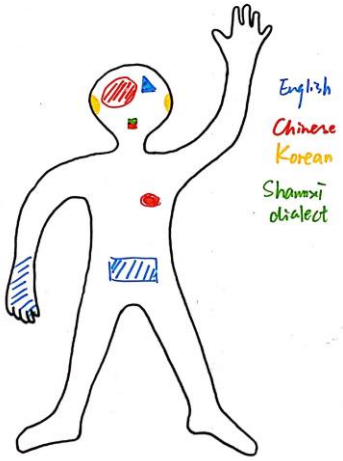

Figure 5: Jennifer's language portrait

4.2.1 Negative Feelings about English

As shown in Figure 5, Jenifer chose blue to represent English, a language she rarely used, and depicted it as being mostly dormant in her belly and barely utilised in her head. She had strong negative feelings towards English due to her negative learning experiences. Jenifer viewed English as a great "burden" imposed on her from a young age, though her parents valued it highly, believing it could lead to many opportunities (focus group interview). This aligns with the Chinese government's promotion of English learning in the context of globalisation over recent decades (Shen & Gao, 2019). Mastery of English is seen as accelerating China's modernisation and development (Zhang & Hu, 2013) and facilitating cross-cultural communication (Lo Bianco, 2009). It also provides greater opportunities in education (Gao, 2009) and the job market (McPherron, 2016).

Another reason for Jenifer's negative feelings towards English is the rote learning and test-oriented teaching practices in public schools. She learned English mainly by reciting texts and was frequently criticised by her teachers for poor memorisation. Her mother chose a Business English major for her in college, in which the professors focused on test preparation. Despite low test scores and a professor doubting her learning ability, Jenifer continued studying TESOL in the United States due to her mother's insistence, though she had little interest in English. She has accepted that she will likely become an English teacher and so she coloured the right hand in blue, viewing English as a tool for her future career.

For Jenifer, the language ideology favouring English as a global language in China has mediated her practices related to English (Kroskrity, 2004). She pursued English as a profession despite her feelings about it, and still plans to become an English teacher after graduating, indicating the deep influence of China's prevailing language ideology on her career plans.

4.2.2 Heavy Dependence on Chinese (Putonghua)

In her language portrait, Jenifer depicted Chinese (Putonghua) as being central to her teaching and learning, using red to represent it. She values Putonghua as the "source" for understanding new concepts (focus group interview), reflected by the predominantly red head and mouth, indicating her communication with teachers and classmates. Despite planning to teach English, she uses Chinese to think and plan lessons and to explain English words and concepts to her students when necessary. Putonghua is the language she relies on in all contexts. This reliance on Putonghua reflects Jenifer's language ideology, which prioritises the home language for practical purposes, influenced by her personal history and needs.

4.2.3 Interest in Chinese Dialects

Jenifer is highly interested in different dialects across China and has made efforts to learn Shaanxi Dialect to connect with her mother's family. Despite her limited exposure during short visits to Shaanxi Province, she gradually picked it up, indicated by the green touch on her mouth in the language portrait. The dominant Putonghua-only ideology has not diminished her enthusiasm for Chinese dialects, which she finds "beautiful" and enjoys listening to (focus group interview). For Jenifer, "language is a fundamental aspect of cultural identity" (Rovira, 2008, p. 66), and speaking a dialect connects one to their heritage and identity. Her interest in Chinese dialects reflects her appreciation for language diversity, which she believes enriches the world.

4.3 Yvonne

Yvonne impressed upon us her tight bond to her home language, Anhui Dialect. This nurtures her advocacy for multilingualism and problematising of monolingual ideology.

Figure 6: Yvonne's language portrait

4.3.1 Bond with Home Language

As seen in Figure 6, Yvonne drew a heart in earthy yellow to represent Anhui Dialect. It is her home language, which has always made her feel warm and loved. However, she used to avoid using Anhui Dialect as much as possible. She felt a sense of "hostility" when speaking Anhui Dialect when she moved to Nanjing, because her accent made her less "local", thus isolating her from the local people (focus group interview). As a result, Yvonne experienced a "language shame" in her home language (focus group interview). To be "integrated" among her classmates, Yvonne had to learn Nanjing Dialect to "swim with the stream" (focus group interview). She used purple to represent Nanjing Dialect. For her, the purple colour was "arrogant" and "aggressive", just like Nanjing Dialect (focus group interview). Now, however, Yvonne speaks less Nanjing Dialect with her peers because she claims to be "mature" enough not to be integrated into the local community, and she thinks it was too "aggressive" for her personality (focus group interview). Yvonne is not ashamed but proud of her proficiency in a dialect. This can be seen from a conversation between Yvonne and Mercury about dialect in the group interview:

Yvonne: I adored all the people who can speak the dialect in their hometown. I think they are admirable.

Mercury: They are really something if their language is very different from mine. But I don't want to learn their languages.

Yvonne: I feel like, for example, you can speak Anhui Dialect and you are ashamed of it, but others may think you are awesome. Imagine you are looking at someone else.

Mercury: Exactly.

Yvonne: That is, something you are capable of, maybe you are ashamed of it, but others may be envious of it.

Yvonne developed an awareness of valuing language diversity after encountering various Chinese dialects in college and different languages in the United States. As a teacher, she encourages students to appreciate their home languages and cultural identities, hoping they do not feel ashamed as she once did. She believes

in the bond between home language and cultural identity, which shaped her own identity (Kroskrity, 2004). Initially devaluing her home language from Anhui Province, she lacked a strong cultural identity. However, by embracing language diversity, she now identifies more with her heritage and is dedicated to promoting linguistic and cultural diversity in her classroom.

4.3.2 Reserved Deference to Multilingualism

Yvonne chose blue to represent English, having had negative experiences with the language that strengthened her determination to promote multilingualism. In her rural elementary school, English was not taught, and in middle school in Nanjing, she felt "self-abased" due to her poor English compared to her classmates (focus group interview). This led her to focus heavily on pronunciation to avoid being mocked. These experiences made her empathetic towards students with accents in her work placement, prioritising the function of language over pronunciation and allowing students to decide whether and how they wanted to polish their English.

Yvonne's asset-oriented view of multilingualism is evident in her translanguaging practices. She valued Chinese (Putonghua) as a crucial resource, especially in developing her English skills, and used red to represent Chinese in her language portrait due to her love for China. Chinese was like the blood flowing throughout her body: essential and ever-present. She leveraged her linguistic strengths through translanguaging, nurturing her advocacy for multilingualism. However, she felt "burdened" by learning Japanese in college due to rigid teaching methods (focus group interview), represented by the lightest pink in her portrait, indicating its minor role in her life. Despite appreciating multilingualism, unproductive pedagogy in a test-oriented curriculum lessened her motivation to learn new languages. Yvonne's language practices reveal a complex ideology that values multilingualism and the home language while being less enthusiastic about new languages due to poor teaching methods (Kroskrity, 2004; Reyes, 1992; Zhang et al., 2015).

4.4 Linda

Different languages/language varieties serve different purposes in Linda's life. Chinese (Putonghua) and English represent her means of livelihood; Korean and Japanese enrich her life; and Nanjing and Gaoyou[§§§] Dialects are the emotional pillars that strengthen her identity. Linda's evaluation of different languages/language varieties manifests her language ideologies.

[§§§] Gaoyou Dialect is one of the local languages spoken in Yangzhou.

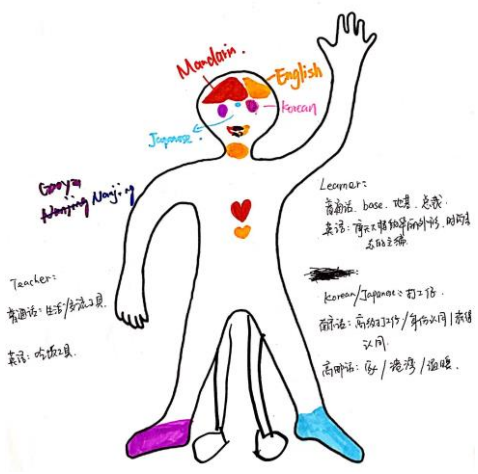

Figure 7: Linda's language portrait

4.4.1 Becoming Multilingual for Utilitarian Purposes

Linda learned different languages mainly for practical purposes, best reflected in her experience with English. She chose orange to represent English for aesthetic reasons. From a young age, she was told that English was essential for accessing the wider world, but her learning experiences were negative. In kindergarten, she memorised sentences, and in first grade, she attended uninspiring weekend tutoring classes that focused on rote learning. Despite this, she chose English Education as her major, believing it was the "only" path to success (focus group interview). She coloured part of her head and mouth orange, indicating her frequent use of English, and drew a small orange heart to portray English as part of her identity, having lived in the United States for two years. However, she viewed English mainly as a "tool" for making a living (focus group interview), while Putonghua, represented in red, is her daily communication language and teaching medium, reflecting her strong Chinese identity.

Linda's complex feelings towards English stem from negative learning experiences and China's nationwide promotion of English to boost global competitiveness (Zheng et al., 2009). Her dedication to English Education partly reflects national interests and the economic value assigned to English (Kroskrity, 2004). Despite some struggles, she uses English frequently in her daily and professional life but identifies most strongly with Putonghua, valuing it for its utilitarian role in learning, teaching, and communication.

Linda learned Korean due to the South Korean cultural wave, represented by light purple eyes, indicating she picked it up through dramas and TV shows. She learned Japanese to meet graduation requirements, but a negative experience with a teacher made her dislike it, symbolised by a small light blue dot in her head. She coloured one foot light purple and the other light blue, expressing her desire to visit South Korea and Japan. Linda's attitudes towards Korean and Japanese were shaped by personal preferences and experiences, maintaining passion for Korean due to its entertainment value and losing motivation for Japanese due to negative learning experiences.

4.4.2 Local Languages for Identity Formation

Linda added dark purple and dark blue to her mouth to represent the Nanjing and Gaoyou dialects. Her home language was Gaoyou Dialect, but she quickly learned Nanjing Dialect to integrate and gain a sense of belonging after moving to Nanjing, where it was a "higher-end" language (focus group interview). She spoke Gaoyou Dialect with her family, feeling naturally close to its speakers as it made her "feel at home" (focus group interview). In her language portrait, she depicted Gaoyou Dialect as "home," "harbour," and "warmth."

Nanjing and Gaoyou dialects play crucial roles in Linda's identity. Identity is constructed and negotiated through language practice (Gee, 2000; Moje & Luke, 2009; Norton, 2010). Speaking a particular language denotes a particular identity, helping to match public expectations of social roles (Gee, 2015; Goffman, 1959). Linda negotiated her heritage culture identity with Gaoyou Dialect and formed a group identity with Nanjing Dialect.

4.4.3 Underlying Language Hierarchy

Linda used metaphors to symbolise the roles of languages in her linguistic repertoire. If it were a building, Putonghua would be the foundation, and English the fashionable exterior. If it were an enterprise, Putonghua would be the CEO, English the chief editor of a fashion magazine, Nanjing Dialect a higher-level worker, and Korean and Japanese lower-level workers. These metaphors reflect the hierarchy of languages in her mind, based on their utilitarian and emotional significance to her.

4.5 Concluding Findings Across Four Cases

4.5.1 Research Question 1: What are the lived multilingual experiences of four Chinese multilingual educators?

The lived multilingual experiences of the four Chinese multilingual educators are characterised by a dynamic interplay between their native languages and the dominant languages in their respective environments. Each educator's journey reflects a unique blend of personal, cultural, and educational encounters. For example, Mercury's transition from Handan Dialect to Putonghua and eventually to English in the United States highlights her navigation through linguistic hierarchies and identity transformations. Similarly, Yvonne's and Linda's experiences with multiple dialects and English underscore their adaptive strategies and evolving linguistic identities. By leveraging their multilingual backgrounds, these educators have enriched their teaching practices, fostering a deeper understanding of their students' linguistic and cultural needs.

4.5.2 Research Question 2: What language ideologies emerge from their lived multilingual experiences?

The language ideologies that emerge from the participants' multilingual experiences reveal a complex relationship with language hierarchies and cultural values. The predominant ideology among these educators is an asset-oriented view of their native languages, viewed as valuable resources for teaching and learning. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable tension with English, which they both revere for its global economic value and resent due to past negative learning experiences. This duality reflects an underlying struggle between embracing

multilingualism and conforming to the hegemonic status of English. Additionally, there is a nuanced appreciation for dialects, although the educators often prioritise Putonghua over local dialects, reflecting broader societal attitudes in China.

4.5.3 Research Question 3: How do their language ideologies shape their understanding of teaching and learning?

The educators' language ideologies significantly shape their teaching philosophies and classroom practices. Their belief in the importance of utilising students' home languages aligns with their efforts to create inclusive and supportive learning environments. This is particularly evident in their application of translanguaging practices, which integrate multiple languages to enhance comprehension and engagement. However, the entrenched ideologies of Mandarin monolingualism and English hegemony present challenges in fully embracing multilingual pedagogies. The educators strive to balance these influences, aiming to foster linguistic diversity while preparing students for a globalised world. Their personal experiences of language shame and discrimination also fuel their empathy and commitment to promoting equity in their classrooms.

5. Discussions and Implications

The participants had different lived multilingual experiences, which resulted in varied language ideologies and nuanced understanding of teaching and learning. However, they all had an asset-oriented view of home languages, bittersweet feelings towards English, and an emerging multilingual awareness. In this section, we further examine the findings through the lens of language ideologies.

First, these transnational educators from China are convinced that Chinese is a valuable resource for teaching and learning. To teach the English language in China, Jenifer and Linda believed that Chinese would be the primary language they would use to plan the lessons, teach new concepts, and communicate with students. Aligned with previous studies, they recognised the role of the first language (Chinese) in second language (English) learning (Gu et al., 2019; Yang & Jang, 2022), and wanted to use Chinese to achieve better teaching results (Zhang & Wei, 2021). Mercury and Yvonne were actively engaged in translanguaging practices. They both used Chinese flexibly to make meaning and construct knowledge when studying in the United States. As Fu et al. (2019) suggest, translanguaging practices are central to the learning and communication of bilingual learners. Bi/multilingual educators tend to be more aware of the importance of translanguaging practices in a new language learning context based on their firsthand experiences.

Except for Jenifer, the educators spoke a dialect before starting school. They all experienced a certain degree of language shame because their home languages were different from the dominant language/language variety at school. According to Ek et al. (2013), this negative feeling comes from the symbolic violence related to their languages, such as the isolation from their peers. As a result, Mercury abandoned Handan Dialect and spoke only Putonghua. Yvonne

and Linda reserved their home languages for family members but spoke Nanjing Dialect to their classmates. They tended to devalue their home languages because of the negative features associated with them (Athanases et al., 2019; Briceño, 2018). In the United States, exposure to a greater variety of languages and the concepts related to multilingualism, such translanguaging, altered their deficit view of language varieties. The linguistically diverse learning environment in the United States created a translanguaging space in which these multilingual transnational educators could break down the physical boundaries of where they were from (Li & Zhu, 2013) and aroused their empathy towards students who spoke a different language/language variety from the dominant one. Thus, this study aligns with the literature, which demonstrates that transnational experiences can extend educators' understanding of teaching and lead to the development of a pedagogy that is equitable and transformative for bi/multilingual learners (Zoeller & Briceño, 2022).

Second, the transnational educators from China have complex feelings about English in teaching and learning. They all had a profound awareness of the importance of English language proficiency for its economic value, which sustained their efforts to learn English. However, they all had negative learning experiences related to English. Mercury and Yvonne were frustrated by the standard English ideology, which resulted in discrimination against them as "non-standard" language speakers (Farr & Song, 2011; Milroy, 2001; Speicher & Bielanski, 2000; Wiley & Lukes, 1996) due to their accent when speaking English. This echoes Perry (2020) and Zacharias (2019), in that the non-native English speaker identity increased their self-doubt and urged them to pursue standard English. The group interview showed that Jenifer and Linda were unmotivated to learn English because of the test-oriented teaching and rote learning, but the potential benefits of learning English sustained their efforts to improve their English proficiency. Therefore, learning English has been a bittersweet experience for these transnational educators. As teachers, they are very likely to emphasise the importance of learning English to their students, as Mercury noted in the group interview. This reflects the privileged status of English in the global market (Ellis, 2006; Farr & Song, 2011; Macedo, 2000). However, as Moodie (2016) suggested, they may teach English in a more flexible and linguistically responsive way because of their own English learning experiences. Indeed, they may actively integrate the students' home languages into their teaching and help them leverage these language resources to support the new learning in English (Briceño, 2018; Zoeller & Briceño, 2022).

Third, the group interview revealed that the participants were willing to promote multilingualism, though probably in a rudimentary and conditional manner. They recognise the significance of Chinese in teaching and learning, show respect for Chinese dialect speakers, and actively engage in translanguaging practices. However, they still tend to prioritise English and associate it with higher status. This could be explained by capital accumulation and global market participation. English-speakers have been holding the "economic power, political domination and colonial gains" for centuries, and English proficiency remains a profitable language skill in today's global market, potentially increasing one's employability

(Mehmedbegovic, 2017, p. 542). Although these educators had negative learning experiences related to English, they had all made great efforts to learn English and decided on a profession related to English. However, they were greatly discouraged from learning new languages by their negative language learning experiences, such as Japanese for Yvonne and Linda, because learning new languages may not yield the same rewards and opportunities as English. Therefore, this study reveals the novel insight that teachers' language ideologies reflect not only their pedagogical considerations (Briceño, 2022; Gkaintartzi et al., 2015; Gu et al., 2019; Metz & Knight, 2021; Rodríguez-Izquierdo, 2021), but also the economic incentives to make a more profitable life in today's globalised world.

Compared with Chinese dialects, Putonghua is distinctly favoured by the transnational educators from China, because the nationwide promotion of Putonghua and the Putonghua-only language policy have institutionalised discrimination against certain dialects (Mehmedbegovic, 2017). In the group interview, Mercury showed an admiration for Chinese dialect speakers although she had no interest in learning any other Chinese dialects. Yvonne and Linda acknowledged the value of dialects in identity formation, and Jenifer was amazed by the "beauty" of different Chinese dialects (focus group interview), but they did not have any intention to maintain or promote dialects in their classrooms. In summary, these transnational educators have an emerging multilingual awareness, but its translation into practice is very limited.

This study also shows that the arts-based approach could facilitate the participants' reflections. When listening to Jenifer's personal narratives about her language experiences, Mercury added Handan Dialect to her language portrait. The language portrait is a productive method for refreshing one's memory of one's language experiences through personal narratives and collaborative conversations (Busch, 2018). Mercury did not realise she could speak a dialect until she heard Jenifer's story about Shaanxi Dialect. Linda added some notes about her deep-seated feelings towards Gaoyou Dialect when Yvonne was presenting her language portrait. The bright colours and the metaphor of blood in Yvonne's language portrait reminded Linda of the feeling of warmth and safety that Gaoyou Dialect provided for her. This shows that the arts-based approach could foster empathetic feelings (Eisner, 2007). Such improvisation grants "an openness to uncertainty, an attunement to difference and the aesthetic intelligence necessary to track significance" (Sajnani, 2012, p. 79) and makes arts-based research more rigorous and vigorous (Leavy, 2009). It is the co-creating process of the arts products, rather than the arts products themselves, that lies at the heart of arts-based research (Sergers et al., 2021) because it triggers deeper conversations and discussions on human experiences (Wang & Hannes, 2020).

The study's limitations include its small sample size of four transnational educators, which may limit the transferability of the findings to broader populations. Additionally, the focus on educators from China and their experiences in the United States may not fully capture the diversity of transnational experiences in other contexts.

Consequently, these limitations suggest directions for future research. One possible direction is to expand the comparative analysis between multilingual and monolingual teachers' experiences in China to identify patterns in their multilingual teaching practices. Another is to extend the study to different educational contexts and languages beyond the China-U.S. setting to uncover potential factors that shape transnational teachers' language teaching practices. Another potential future research direction is to investigate how the duration of participants' internships in multilingual learning environments influences their evolving language ideologies and teaching practices. Li (2023) found that the more Chinese teacher candidates immersed themselves in local multilingual learning environments in the United States, the stronger their English-Chinese bilingual teacher identities became. These teacher candidates also developed more positive attitudes toward bilingualism and were more inclined to adopt bilingual teaching strategies.

Importantly, the study's findings have significant implications for policy-making and teaching practices. The entrenched ideologies of Mandarin monolingualism and English hegemony highlight the need for policies promoting multilingualism and valuing linguistic diversity. Policies should include various Chinese dialects and other languages in the curriculum, fostering a more inclusive educational environment, as recommended by de Jong and Gao (2023). Such policies enhance students' linguistic repertoires and validate their cultural identities.

For teaching practices, this study emphasises the importance of teachers' multilingual awareness and leveraging students' home languages as classroom assets. Educators should be prepared with translanguaging strategies, as suggested by Gao (2023), to support multilingual learners' linguistic and cognitive development. This approach improves comprehension and engagement, as well as fostering an equitable learning environment. As recommended by Li (2023), future studies should explore the long-term impacts of these practices on students' outcomes and the evolution of teachers' language ideologies through professional development and cross-cultural experiences.

6. Conclusion

This study used language portraits to shed light on the relationship between the multilingual experiences, language ideologies, and teaching practices of four transnational educators who have lived, studied, and taught across China and the United States. The findings reveal that the Putonghua-only ideologies of China and English hegemony across the globe have profoundly influenced their learning experiences in these two countries. The participants view Chinese as an important resource to support teaching and learning, but still prioritise English for its utilitarian and economic values. Despite their emerging awareness of welcoming all the languages/language varieties in their classroom, there remains an internal discrimination against other Chinese dialects and less value is attached to languages other than English. In contrast to Sleeter and Milner (2011), this study suggests that multilingual educators are not necessarily capable of culturally and linguistically responsive pedagogy. It is not fair to assume that they have heightened multilingual awareness merely because of their being bi/multilingual,

as the entrenched language hierarchy and English hegemony are too deeply rooted to resist. Therefore, multilingual educators also need explicit guidance to raise their multilingual awareness and develop multilingual pedagogies. Teacher education programmes could provide opportunities for them to revisit their lived multilingual experiences (Briceño, 2018; Moodie, 2016) and critically reflect on the ways in which language ideologies dictate their pedagogical decisions (Ek et al., 2013; Takeuchi, 2021). This study demonstrates that language portraits could be an effective classroom activity for prospective multilingual educators to represent and reconstruct their language experiences. Such an arts-based approach also enables researchers to identify the subtleties and complexities of participants' experiences, feelings, and ideologies through examining the artistic processes. Future studies could also use the body outline to explore other aspects of the lived experiences of multilingual educators and elucidate the reasons for their pedagogical decisions.

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Appendix 1: Focus group interview guides

1. Checklist for verbal descriptions

_____Which languages the participant includes
Notes:

_____How/Why they represent a particular language in a particular way (e.g., which body part is for what language and why; what colour is used and why; what semiotic devices are used and why)
Notes:

_____When/where/how the participant learned these languages
Notes:

_____When/where/how the participant uses these languages for what reason
Notes:

2. Checklist for group discussion

2.1 Group discussion topics

_____How the participant views themselves as a bilingual
Notes:

_____How different languages influence the participant's life
Notes:

_____How the participant views their bilingual competence as a student
Notes:

_____How the participant positions their bilingual competence in their learning
Notes:

_____How the participant views their bilingual competence as a teacher
Notes:

_____How the participant positions their bilingual competence in their teaching
Notes:

2.2 Potential follow-up and clarification questions

1. How do you use your languages in your learning?

2. Have you ever included different languages in your teaching? If so, how and why did you do that?

3. How do you view the students' home languages in their learning?

4. How would you address the students' home languages in your teaching?