The Hopes and Experiences of Bilingual Teachers of English: Investments, Expectations and Identity

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The Hopes and Experiences of Bilingual Teachers of English: Investments, Expectations and Identity View project
“Dr. Melinda Kong’s book should interest readers both inside and outside of academe. Although thoroughly grounded in the latest research and scholarship, the book is not a dry, jargon-laden tome. Instead, it is rooted in the author’s own personal experiences as well as in the experiences of eight other representative students when they were in an English-speaking country and teachers when they returned home to Asia. The need for such a book is obvious: English will continue to be an important language, as the world becomes more and more a “global village.” But Dr. Kong’s study should also interest people who are studying (and seeking to teach) other languages besides English. This, in short, is one of those rare academic books that should appeal both to lower-level learners, to teachers of introductory courses, as well as to advanced faculty who teach at the graduate level. It should also interest administrators of language programs. It is hard to imagine anyone who is interested in the teaching and learning of languages for any reason and at any level who would not profit from reading this book.”

– Robert C. Evans, I. B. Young Professor of English, Auburn University at Montgomery, USA

“This book is a welcome contribution to the growing literature on the processes of bilingual identity construction where English as a second and/or an additional language is central. Although its specific focus is on the lives of eight English language teachers from Asian countries who studied in Australia, the data and findings presented by Melinda Kong are relevant and will be of interest to researchers and educators working in other English-dominant higher education settings with students from a range of national and geographic backgrounds. Identity is here conceptualized as multifaceted and as negotiated, and the main focus is on individual agency and the sense of investment of these sojourners who find themselves immersed in English-speaking contexts, both in higher education and society more generally. Written in a very accessible style, Kong’s book shows eloquently how a year of study abroad is a far more transformative life experience than many imagine.”

– David Block, ICREA Research Professor in Sociolinguistics, Universitat de Lleida, Spain

“Dr. Melinda Kong’s book is a timely addition to current research on teacher education and development, by filling a significant gap in the literature on the professional and personal identity construction of bilingual English teachers, who constitute no less than 80% of all English teachers in the world today, and whose work has an impact on untold millions of learners and (through them) the future of English. It drives home the important point that teachers are not ‘technicians of teaching’ (in the words of Parker Palmer’s The Courage to Teach) who merely practice methodologies handed down to them, but active participants and contributors in the language-teaching enterprise, whose knowledge, beliefs and attitudes play a significant role in shaping the effectiveness and relevance of second and foreign language teaching and learning.”

– Professor Tony T.N. Hung, Hong Kong Baptist University, Hong Kong
In this age of internationalisation of higher education, many bilingual teachers from non-English-speaking contexts pursue their postgraduate degrees in English-speaking countries. Most programmes focus on providing content knowledge to them, while neglecting their investments. Furthermore, not much attention is given to what these bilingual teachers expect to gain from studying abroad, as well as their lived experiences and identity construction both inside and outside the classroom in English-speaking countries and when they return home. Nevertheless, these dimensions are crucial to their growth as teachers and users of English.

This book explores these neglected aspects through case studies of bilinguals from various backgrounds. Through these case studies, the book examines the hopes, struggles and adaptation of bilinguals. It provides insights into what international students should realistically expect when studying overseas, and how to empower bilingual teachers, users and learners of English.

Melinda Kong is Senior Lecturer and Course Director of MA Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) at Swinburne University of Technology, Sarawak, Malaysia. She teaches a range of subjects for MA TESOL, and for degree and foundation programmes. Her research interests include education, teacher education, internationalisation of higher education, identity, agency, international students and language-learning strategies.
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The Hopes and Experiences of Bilingual Teachers of English
Investments, Expectations and Identity

Melinda Kong
For Mama
my rock, my pillar
who now rests in a better place
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There are 8 million bilingual teachers of English in the world; eight of them are in this book. Dr. Melinda Kong’s engaging, scholarly and significant account of their becoming and being bilingual teachers of English speaks to readers in education, in English teaching, in teacher preparation, and also to readers interested in the emerging communication order of the Asian Century. Our time is one of profound change in which we can barely imagine the contours and consequences of the newly emerging world around us. These bilingual teachers’ accounts allow us to reflect, learn and understand better the dynamics of the communication reality we live in but barely comprehend. The eight moved from non-English Asian speaking settings to an environment where English is dominant and normalised. Internationalised education is one of the hallmarks of the contemporary world, marked by fierce competition for marketable credentials, and in Dr. Kong’s study, we enter the lived experiences of the participants in the immense industry of English-medium commercialised education. The teachers move to study, they are often challenged, they struggle, but they persist and gradually forge a deep investment in their new language competency and their distinctive professional capacity. They do not merely adapt, however: they become agents stimulating further adaptation and as bilingual teachers of English, they will for their entire careers shape English, its teaching and its public presence in the lives of young people. For all these reasons, the journey of these teachers and their identities, professional and personal, make compelling reading at the human and professional levels, and resonate for academic educators and linguists. The book is strengthened by a robust theoretical grounding in contemporary theories of identity, learning and pedagogy, and these enrich the work further. This is not a work for narrow specialists, but a rich and engaging account of the world of bilingual teachers of English.

Dr. Joseph Lo Bianco
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University of Melbourne, Australia
I am deeply indebted to Professor Joseph Lo Bianco, who has always been extremely confident about my capabilities and work even when things seem bleak to me. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Alan Williams for contributing many ideas to this project, as well as Professor Robert Evans, Professor David Block and Professor Tony Hung for their time and generous comments.

This book is especially dedicated to my mother, Helen Ngui, who has always believed in me and encouraged me in every possible way. Memories of her as a humorous storyteller remain vivid. I thank my family members (especially Associate Professor Michele Kong, Dr. Julian Maha, Abram, Juda and papa), friends and colleagues for their support and love. I appreciate the assistance of Dr. Kieran O’Loughlin, Dr. Simone Senisin, Dr. Ulrike Najar and Dr. Jerome Donovan during different stages of this project. I am also truly grateful to bilingual teachers of English who shared their personal experiences and opened their worlds to me. They have inspired me in many ways. I hope the implications of this study will empower many bi/multilingual teachers. Above all, I thank God, the Author and Perfector of my faith; the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End; the One who made all things possible for me.

I would also like to acknowledge that some findings in this book have been published in the following peer-reviewed journals and book chapter: Kong (2014), Kong (2015), Kong (2016) and Kong (in press). Previously published material contains earlier and less developed elements of the book.
1 Introduction

A personal journey

The internationalisation of higher education (Svetlik and Lalić, 2016) and globalisation of the English language (Gao, 2017; Graddol, 2000) have resulted in a rapidly increasing demand for English language medium education. In response to this trend, bilingual teachers of English from non-English-speaking countries are obtaining their postgraduate qualifications (e.g. Master of Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages/TESOL) from educational institutions in English-speaking settings. This involves living and studying in English-speaking communities for teachers who already have English language skills. These teachers also possess identities as users of English and English language professionals from contexts in which English is not the dominant language (Kong, 2015, 2016).

The relocation of these bilingual teachers of English to pursue their further studies abroad raises some questions worth pursuing. Why are many of them willing to spend thousands of dollars to study in English-speaking countries? What are their investments and expectations in studying overseas? What are their lived experiences in these countries? Are their expectations fulfilled? How do their expectations and experiences contribute to their development as teachers of the language?

These questions are related to my personal experiences of studying abroad. My first experience of studying in an English-speaking country occurred when I pursued my undergraduate degree. I obtained a full scholarship from the Malaysian government to pursue a Bachelor’s in Education (TESOL) in the United Kingdom (UK). After I graduated, I was legally obligated to teach English for four years in a rural government secondary school in Malaysia. After fulfilling this obligation, I decided to invest in a Master of TESOL degree in the UK because of the pleasant experience that I had previously gone through.

I went to London with the expectation of obtaining good grades from a reputable university to pursue a doctorate in Philosophy (PhD). I also had a personal desire to share my Christian beliefs with other students. However, unlike my first experience in which everything was arranged by the Malaysian government, I had to manage everything myself. For the first time, I faced various challenges both inside and outside class in the city. In academic-related matters, I had to prove
that I was able to produce work that was up to the standard set by my lecturers. Outside class, I had to negotiate many aspects of my daily living, from opening a bank account to standing firm on my Christian beliefs. I had to negotiate and renegotiate different facets of my identity not only as an international postgraduate student, but also as a user of English.

My personal experiences during my Master’s degree in London made me realise that the nature of studying abroad in an English-speaking country was much more complex than merely obtaining professional input by attending classes on subjects such as TESOL methodologies, second language acquisition, and key concepts in teaching and learning. My daily interactions with my coursemates who were from non-English-speaking countries also raised my awareness that all our experiences both inside and outside the classroom influenced how we thought about who we were. Our total experiences in the UK contributed to the ways we realised we were changing and how we thought of ourselves as users and teachers of English, based on our investments and expectations. This means that the educational experiences in the country had a profound impact not only on our cognitive abilities, but also on our “whole identities” (Varghese, Morgan, Johnston, and Johnson, 2005, p. 22), on “who we are” (Gao, 2017, p. vii). In other words, all our experiences changed the way we perceived ourselves (Oda, 2017), “made sense of ourselves” (Day, 2011, p. 48), and affected different facets of our identities (e.g. religious, social and cultural aspects), which were not seen in isolation from one another.

My reflections on my personal experiences and interactions with my coursemates triggered my desire to conduct this investigation in greater depth to see whether our experiences were typical or unusual. Many questions occurred to me, including the following two, which seemed especially crucial: How do other bilingual teachers from non-English-speaking countries respond to what happens to them when they are furthering their studies in another English-speaking context? What information does the literature in the TESOL field provide concerning these teachers’ total experiences and identities?

After reviewing TESOL literature, I noticed that the main focus of most TESOL programmes in English-speaking contexts is to provide academic qualifications and professional knowledge (see, for example, Hodson, 1995; Park, 2012; Reid, 1996). Some teacher educators also suggest the need for courses and/or components of language improvement (see, among others, D. Liu, 1998; 1999; Kong, 2015; Lavender, 2002; Medgyes, 1999, 2017). However, as mentioned earlier, my personal experience was that besides my academic study experience, the socialisation process of living in an English-speaking country contributed to the construction of my identity as a user and teacher of English. The negotiation of my multifaceted identity was also influenced by the investments and expectations that I had in studying overseas.

To understand more fully the processes of bilingual teachers’ holistic learning experience and development as English language professionals, it is essential to go beyond the professional dimension and investigate these teachers’ total experiences when they are studying in an English-speaking country. However,
as suggested earlier, dimensions such as bilingual teachers’ personal investments, expectations and out-of-class experiences seem not to be given much attention in current literature in the TESOL field. As an initial attempt to fill these perceived gaps in knowledge, this study aims to explore the complex interface between these dimensions and the educational experiences that shape bilingual teachers’ identity construction as English language teachers.

**Aim and objectives**

The perceived gaps contribute to key characteristics of the current study, which include these teachers’ personal investments, expectations, lived experiences both inside and outside class, and their identity construction, as well as the relationships among all these dimensions. To carry out such an investigation, the following introduces the main aim and objectives of this book.

The chief aim of this study is to examine the processes that contribute to the identity construction of bilingual teachers of English while they are pursuing a Master’s degree in TESOL in an English-speaking country, specifically Australia. To address this central aim adequately, the objectives are to

1. elucidate factors that influence bilingual teachers of English in pursuing their further professional development in an English-speaking country by exploring their investments and expectations;
2. illustrate these bilinguals’ perceived lived experiences while studying in an English-speaking country in relation to their:
   a. sense of identity (particularly as teachers, users and learners of English, and as international postgraduate students),
   b. pursuit of professional knowledge inside class, and
   c. personal experiences of living in an English-speaking country.

This objective also looks into how all sub-points (a), (b) and (c) relate to one another.

3. explore the connection between their expectations and lived experiences in an English-speaking country, and how this connection is related to their identity construction at the end of the course as well as in the initial period after they return to their home countries. This objective takes into consideration the impact of participants’ construction and negotiation of identities when they are in their home countries to add perspective and richness to their experiences in Australia.

The nature of the current investigation is multidimensional, with major aspects such as bilingual teachers’ investments, expectations, lived experiences and identity construction. It is therefore worth being mindful of the proposal made by Trent (2015) and Varghese et al. (2005) that research on language teacher identity should adopt multiple theoretical approaches. Varghese et al. (2005)
elaborated that such approaches provide “a richer and more useful understanding of the processes and contexts of teacher identity” (p. 21) and “open up the possibility of dialogue across theories” (p. 24). This is because “in isolation each theory has its limitation” (p. 21). It is more beneficial to adopt multiple theoretical approaches to add value and insight from their distinctive ways to gather knowledge. Therefore, the “goal is not to evaluate one theory against another but rather to use one to enlighten the other” (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 24). This study draws ideas from literature and research on bilingual teachers of English, international students, the notion of investment and bilingual teachers’ expectations. All these aspects will be described and explored in Chapter 2.

**Why this study?**

As suggested earlier, most TESOL programmes and research on teachers in English-speaking countries concentrate on the professional dimensions of bilingual teachers who relocate from non-English-speaking countries to be trained in these English-speaking contexts. It seems that other dimensions such as these teachers’ personal investments, expectations and lived experiences not only inside class, but also outside class can be perceived as gaps in the research literature in the TESOL field. There also seems to be little exploration on how these dimensions contribute to the identity construction and development of these teachers as English-teaching professionals. This section highlights the rationale and significance of this study, and the attempts that this study makes to fill these perceived knowledge gaps.

The lack of extensive research on teachers in the field of English language teaching can be attributed to the past focus on learners (Cross and Gearon, 2007; Medgyes, 1994). However, several prominent authors have called for further study of English-teaching professionals because of the centrality of their role in facilitating learning. Varghese et al. (2005) state that understanding English language teachers is crucial to developing our knowledge of the overall process of language teaching and learning. Phan (2008) emphasises the importance of examining what happens to teachers of English because they are fundamental agents in English language instruction. There should be more research related to teachers because the path to learners leads through teachers (Medgyes, 1992; Yin, Said, and Park, 2015). Furthermore, understanding these teachers’ representation, perceptions of themselves and desires helps in ensuring the success of professional development in English Language Teaching/ELT (Phan, 2008). This view is supported by Bailey (2001), who identifies the need to conduct research on bilingual teachers of English because it is critical to teacher preparation and development. In particular, there is a need to carry out more studies on language teacher identity (Varghese et al., 2005).

Varghese et al. (2005) suggest that the need to understand language teacher identity emerges from two ways of thinking about language teaching. The first line of research initially tended to look at language teachers merely as technicians (Abednia, 2012; Varghese et al., 2005) who only needed to use the right methodology in the classroom. Later research, however, progressed to realising that
teachers themselves play an important role in classroom practices. As research on teachers began to gain attention, initial investigations looked into different attributes such as teacher knowledge, beliefs and attitudes, but it became obvious later that these attributes should not be considered individually. This is because it is “the teacher’s whole identity that [is] at play in the classroom. . . . [T]eacher identity [is] a crucial component in determining how language teaching is played out” (Varghese et al., 2005, p. 22).

The second line of research has revealed the importance of the broader context and the teacher’s positionality in relation to his or her students. This area of research suggests that many dimensions of a teacher’s identity (such as nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, religion and/or race) could be crucial elements in the classroom. The teacher is not seen as a neutral presence. Rather, his or her own identity, which has been developed through various experiences, is viewed as an important aspect in the language classroom (Varghese et al., 2005). Understanding how a teacher construct his or her identity provides insights into what he or she brings into the classroom (Gedik and Ortactepe, 2017).

Through this study, I would like to contribute to this second area of research as well as to existing theories and knowledge on language teacher identity from the perspective of how the investments, expectations and lived experiences of bilingual teachers affect the construction and evolution of their identity. This is important because one of the ways to understand bilingual teachers of English training in English-speaking countries is to examine their lived experiences and voices, and to assess how these have impacted on their identity construction and educational experiences. Understanding what happens to bilingual teachers of English in English-speaking settings contributes to information that can be beneficial to those who intend to study in English-speaking contexts. It also contributes to understanding and knowledge that can help those who provide and design programmes for professional development (Kong, 2014), and to the participants of the research so that they can understand better what is happening in their development as TESOL professionals.

Such research is useful because the number of bilingual teachers of English has increased in different teaching and learning settings worldwide (Thomas, 1999; Matsuda and Matsuda, 2001). Out of 10.2 million teachers of English throughout the world (McGeown, 2012), approximately 80 per cent are bilingual teachers of English (Braine, 2010; Canagarajah, 1999a). In addition, the role of bilingual teachers of English has become more crucial as the number of native speakers of English increases worldwide and has exceeded the number of native speakers of the language (McKay, 2016). In 2014, for example, the British Council estimated that the number of people who use English as a second language was 700 to 800 million, and the number of people who used it as a foreign language was approximately 1 billion. This number surpassed the number of native speakers of the language, with a total of approximately 400 million people (Ives-Keeler, 2014).

One of the identities of a bilingual teacher while pursuing his or her professional development in the context of the current research, Australia, is as an
international postgraduate student. Consequently, this study also contributes to an understanding of the experiences of international students while they are studying in Australia. Such an understanding is important because Australia is increasing in popularity as a study destination (University of Oxford, 2015), and international students contributed 19.5 billion dollars to Australia’s export income in 2015 (The Department of Education and Training, 2016). In light of international students’ financial contribution to the Australian economy, this study hopes to provide insight into some of these students’ experiences while they are pursuing their studies in the country. Since international students also contribute significantly to the economies of other English-speaking countries, such as English-speaking Canada, the UK, the United States (US) and New Zealand (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2013; Institute of International Education, 2013; Matthews, 2013; NAFSA: Association of International Educators, 2013; Payne, 2010; University of Oxford, 2015), this study may also yield useful information for these countries.

**Contexts of learning and using English**

To situate the research problem, it is appropriate to explore the different contexts in which English is being used, taught and learnt. This exploration assists us in understanding the contexts in which bilingual teachers learn, use and teach English, as well as where they choose to pursue their further professional development. This is important to help us make sense of how bilingual teachers construct their identities in various settings.

Kachru (1985) has classified various contexts of English usage in terms of three types of status that English has in a given society. Devising three terms, which have since become well known (Canagarajah, 2012), he calls these three contexts the Inner Circle, the Outer Circle and the Expanding Circle. The three circles represent “the patterns of acquisition and the functional domains in which English is used across cultures and languages” (Kachru, 1985, p. 12).

Kachru’s (1985) model, however, is considered oversimplified because the three broad categories gloss over distinctions and variations within the societies in each category (Williams, 2005). Furthermore, changes in the use of English worldwide have made the boundaries of these circles more permeable (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Phillipson, 2003). Despite its limitations, Kachru’s broad categorisation is still employed in this book because it is a useful tool to understand the context and nature of this study. This is because the categorisation focuses on contexts, and the current study investigates the experiences and identity construction of bilingual teachers of English as they move from one setting to another. Additionally, McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2008) view these circles as representing three main categories of contexts for learning English at the social level. Williams (2005) adds that the circles vary in terms of individuals’ purposes for learning the language. In other words, the categorisation is beneficial as a convenient shorthand and heuristic framework to refer to complex contexts in which English is used, taught and learnt (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng,
Introduction

2008; Williams, 2005), as well as settings that influence how bilingual teachers construct their identities.

The Inner Circle

According to Kachru (1985), the Inner Circle is composed of countries with cultures that are predominantly derived from having English as their core or dominant language. These countries include the UK, English-speaking Canada, the US, Australia and New Zealand (Bolton, 2013; Kachru, 1986). Some of these countries (particularly the UK and the US) have traditionally been linked with the standardisation process of English (Medgyes, 1994). The speakers of English in the Inner Circle mostly have English as their mother tongue, and many of these individuals are likely to be monolinguals (Ellis, 2016). It should be noted, however, that the population of foreign residents and immigrants has been increasing in these English-speaking countries, resulting in the internationalisation of the community in these countries (Yano, 2001). According to Graddol (2000) and McKay and Bokhorst-Heng (2008), the influx of immigrants has resulted in these English-speaking countries experiencing an increase of linguistic diversity. Some of these immigrants may only learn and use English for limited purposes (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008). We can see that although the position of English in the Inner Circle countries is historical and has helped shape the cultures of these countries, many residents in these societies are not themselves “native speakers” of English. Immigration and the presence of indigenous populations in North America, Australia and New Zealand mean that we cannot consider the Inner Circle to be homogenous in its relationship to English.

The Outer Circle

The Outer Circle consists of countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Nigeria and India (Kachru, 1985), in which most speakers learn and use English as a second language (ESL) (A. Davies, 1989; Graddol, 2000; Medgyes, 1994; Yano, 2001) or additional language (Graddol, 2000; Yano, 2001). This means that English is not the language of primary identity for most speakers of the language. Graddol (2000) explains that in these countries, English is one of the languages in a linguistic repertoire with each language being used in various contexts in appropriate ways (see Bolton, 2013; Canagarajah, 1999a). Many English speakers in these countries may not only be fluent in international varieties of English (Sridhar and Sridhar, 1994), for example, varieties that are codified in widely published materials (Bauer, 2002), but may also use indigenised English (Sridhar and Sridhar, 1994).

These indigenised variants of English contain distinct local forms (Phillipson, 1992) which reflect the local culture (Graddol, 2000) as well as influences of vernacular languages (Canagarajah, 1999a) in order to express sociocultural content (Sridhar, 1996) that is unique to speakers’ circumstances. Indigenised English is
even used by some speakers within their families and communities. In this way, English “is taken into the fabric of social life, . . . acquires a momentum and vitality of its own” (Graddol, 2000, p. 2) and “forms part of the speaker[s]’ identity repertoire” (p. 11).

The complexity of sociolinguistic realities is that a number of individuals in these countries also use English for various purposes (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008) and believe that they have native speakers’ intuition (McKay and Bokhorst-Heng, 2008; Yano, 2001). They consider themselves “native” speakers of English. Canagarajah (1999a) explains that these speakers are native speakers of indigenised Engishes (Sridhar and Sridhar, 1994). Some of them acquire two or more first languages (including English and other local language/s) simultaneously and develop multilingual competence (Canagarajah, 1999a). Furthermore, during their lifetime, these multilinguals may add other languages to their linguistic repertoire or find an existing language within their repertoire becoming less used (Graddol, 2000).

All of these considerations point to the dynamic nature of language competencies in Outer Circle settings. However, the communities in the Outer Circle are unified in their common experience of not being originally English-speaking societies. Graddol (2000) adds that two defining characteristics of English as demonstrated in these countries are permeability and hybridity. The language will continue to change, constructing and reflecting the changing identities and roles of its speakers.

The Expanding Circle

Beyond the Outer Circle, Kachru (1985) identifies most of the rest of the world as the Expanding Circle of English. The Expanding Circle includes countries such as China, Japan, Taiwan, Korea, Greece and Indonesia (Bolton, 2013). The essential characteristic of the Expanding Circle is that it comprises speakers who mainly learn (Graddol, 2000) and use English as a foreign language (EFL) (Graddol, 2000; Kachru, 1985; Medgyes, 1994; Yano, 2001).

Williams (2005) notes that English is learnt and used in limited domains in these countries. These domains are often restricted to business, tourism, and/or education settings in which English is used to access specialised knowledge. Interactions in English are often between a bilingual user of English from the Expanding Circle and visitors who may randomly be from the Inner Circle, Outer Circle and/or Expanding Circle. Many language learners, however, may only have contact with the language in classrooms, and the teacher may be the sole source of English. Nevertheless, it is also possible that they have exposure to the language through media and the internet. In light of globalising processes, instances of English usage are also increasing (Canagarajah, 2012).

Although Kachru’s (1985) categorisation has been adopted in this book, it should be noted that there appears to be a search to move beyond his circles. This is evident in the movement to identify and understand the nature of English when used as a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2006, 2007; Seidlhofer, 2004), for example, in
Asia (e.g. Kirkpatrick, 2010; Kirkpatrick and Sussex, 2012) and Europe (e.g. Jenkins, Modiano, and Seidlhofer, 2001; Seidlhofer, 2007). However, due to space constraints, it is beyond the scope of this book to elaborate on this movement. Furthermore, the focus on English as a lingua franca is not as useful a conceptual tool for the purposes of this study in comparison to Kachru’s categorisation because it concentrates on the nature of English when used among different users of the language, while Kachru’s circles emphasise contexts in which English is taught, used and learnt.

This section indicated complex situations in which English is used by individuals with different characteristics in various social contexts. Hence, terminology that has sometimes begun as “common sense” expressions have come to be seen as problematic as issues pertaining to them are examined. Consequently, after exploring the gaps in the literature, the aim, objectives, rationale and importance of this study, as well as the contexts involved, there is a need to explain the terms used to describe the objects of inquiry (the participants) in the current investigation and some issues related to them. These issues are discussed in the following section.

Elusive terms: natives and non-natives

A critical concept in this research relates to how to name an individual’s relationship to his or her first language. The most commonly used term is a native speaker, but in recent years, specifically in relation to academic dimensions of English as an international language, the expression a native speaker has been found to be problematic (see, for example, Barcelos, 2017; Oda, 2017). Medgyes (1994) claims that the notion is an elusive one. After a long discussion, A. Davies (1991) can be no more specific than this: “[t]o be a native speaker means not being a non-native speaker” (p. 165). Braine (1999a) claims that there is no appropriate definition of non-native speakers, making the meaning of a native speaker ambiguous as well. He suggests that different terms that are proposed by non-native professionals themselves imply “[t]he search for an [i]dentity” (p. xvii), a “struggle for self-definition and the identity crisis that prevails among non-native professionals” (p. xvii).

The following are some of the terms suggested by various English language teachers:

- second language speaking professionals
- English teachers speaking other languages
- non-native speakers of English in TESOL
- non-native professionals in TESOL
- non-native teachers of English
- non-native English speaking professionals
- second language teaching professionals
- non-native English teachers.

(p. xvii)
As we can see from this brief account, different writers are grappling with the term native speakers and its pair, non-native speakers, and not using the terminology “native” seems a challenge in itself. Furthermore, the idea of “native speakers” and “non-native speakers” is complicated (Braine, 2010) and dichotomous, and assumes that a general homogeneity exists in the English-speaking world. This is in contrast to Kachru’s (1985) characterisation of the three circles of English usage, which suggests that there are varieties of English-speaking contexts. Subsequently, various authors have offered alternative expressions to displace the terms, as seen in the following section.

**Alternative terms**

Rampton (1990) recommends using the term *experts* to describe accomplished users in order to displace the term native speakers, adding that when experts is used, teaching and learning become more accountable as students aim for knowledge that can be specified much more closely. Specifically, he is arguing that this change of terminology shifts attention from “who you are” to “what you know” (p. 99). Expertise, as implied in the proposed alternative, is not innate or fixed, but can be learnt. In a related but later discussion, Cook (1999) argues that the focus in English language teaching should be on second language (L2) users, rather than primarily on native speakers of the language. Cook contends that L2 users “should be considered as speakers in their own right, not as approximations to monolingual native speakers” (p. 185). This results in a positive view of L2 users, rather than a negative image of these speakers as failed native speakers. Cook goes on to describe L2 users as multicompetent language users.

While these proposals are useful and interesting because they direct our attention towards questions of language competence and away from ethnic or national identity, the expression “bilingual users of English” from McKay (2002, p. 27) is used in this book to refer to “non-native speakers of English” (NNESs). Although the term “NNESs” is still employed in TESOL literature and by many TESOL professionals (e.g. Braine, 2010; Reis, 2015; Zhang and Zhang, 2015), the phrase *bilingual users of English* is utilised in this study because it is more empowering compared to the former. According to Braine (2004), “A nonnative speaker of a language is invariably defined against a native speaker of that language. Naturally, nonnative speakers are thereby assigned to a second-class, inferior position vis-à-vis native speakers” (p. 15).

In a helpful clarification, McKay (2002) restricts the use of the term “bilingual users of English” (p. 27) to those “who use English as a second language alongside one or more languages they speak” (p. 27). However, the phrase “bilingual users of English” in the current study has a broader usage that includes native speakers of different varieties of English from non-English-speaking contexts as well. These speakers may use the language as their first language alongside another language/other languages in their linguistic repertoire. The term also refers to users who possess a wide range of proficiency in the language (McKay, 2002). This expanded usage is particularly useful for the aim and objectives of
this study. Since the participants in the current study also teach English besides using the language, the phrase “bilingual teachers of English” will be employed.

As a point of comparison with bilingual teachers of English, the term native English-speaking teachers (NESTs) will still be used in this study although it is problematic, as elaborated earlier. The notion NESTs is employed in the current research as an appropriate concept for the purposes of this study, to suggest that the expression has potential disempowering effects on bilingual teachers of English when it is still used a convenient label against bilingual teachers in the TESOL field and among different users of English.

Navigating the book

To explore bilingual teachers’ investments, expectations and identity construction, this book has six chapters. This introductory chapter gives a brief outline of the entire study. It has laid out my personal interest, perspectives and experiences on the points raised, that contributed to this study. From these issues, this chapter presents the main aim and objectives, before discussing the rationale and significance of the study as a unique contribution to the field of knowledge on this topic. It has also described the various contexts of learning and teaching English, as well as the destinations to which bilingual teachers may relocate in order to further their studies. The chapter concludes by briefly defining the main terms used to describe the participants in the research, and the structure of the book.

Chapter 2 examines and draws insights from a selection of relevant literature and recent research related to this study. It provides a brief summary of studies on bilingual teachers of English before identifying perceived gaps in research knowledge, specifically related to the processes of identity construction of these teachers in the context in which their training occurred. This chapter looks into the concept of identity and its features, examines the concept of investment and explores how bilingual teachers’ expectations can be linked to their identity construction.

Chapter 3 presents the methods and analytic approach adopted for this study. It describes conceptual frameworks for data collection and analysis (see Figures 3.1 and 3.2) that were summarised, synthesised and adapted from the literature review in Chapter 2. To analyse how bilingual teachers of English negotiate their multifaceted identities, it elaborates on issues related to positioning theory. It examines how the theory is connected to shifts of identities and pronoun grammar analysis. It also describes the participants and setting, and considers my positioning in the study.

Chapter 4 presents the accounts of eight bilingual teachers of English to elucidate the longitudinal aspect of their experiences in Australia and in the initial period when they return to their home countries. The case studies include the participants’ personal histories, investments, expectations, lived experiences and reflections. All the cases end with comments concerning the participants’ distinctive characteristics that emphasise the change in different facets of their identities
and the causes of those changes. Themes that emerge across all the cases become the foundation for further discussion in Chapter 5.

Chapter 5 discusses and organises the findings of the study based on three major themes that emerged from the data in relation to the main aim and objectives of the book: (1) investments and expectations, (2) adaptation and agency, and (3) considerations of home. Although there are three major themes, the second major theme is discussed in greater detail because it aligns most closely with the primary aim of the study to explore bilingual teachers’ lived experiences and identity construction in Australia.

Chapter 6 concludes the book by suggesting the theoretical implications of this study. It confirms the usefulness of employing multiple theories to shed light on the complexity of language teacher identity. Although the theories used have yielded valuable insights, this chapter also proposes some refinement to the notions that are drawn from the theories. Besides discussing these theoretical implications, this chapter recommends practical implications for future international students, teacher educators and teacher education programmes.

Notes

1 The use of the phrase bilingual teachers of English in this book is elaborated under “Alternative terms”.
2 The notion of investment is suggested by Peirce (1995) and applied broadly in this book to examine how bilingual teachers construct their professional and personal identities. This term is fully defined and explored in Chapter 2.
3 Bilingual teachers of English continue to learn the language in their entire lifetime (Kong, 2014; Medgyes, 1994).


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