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ESL TEACHER EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF DEVELOPING
MULTILINGUAL LEARNERS' ACADEMIC LITERACIES

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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Indiana University of Pennsylvania

August 2019

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This dissertation explores the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners in the multicultural settings of a Toronto College. More specifically, it addresses teacher reported experiences and reported perceptions of developing the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners. It uses a unified conceptual framework encompassing established aspects of ESL materials and methodology, namely, teacher roles, learner roles, materials' roles, activities' roles, and academic literacies development roles to establish essential differences between the plural-noun Academic Literacies and other forms of single-noun literacy approaches. It applies this theoretical and methodological frame to the analysis of its three kinds of data sets: One, an online email Survey; Two, oral face-to-face Interviews; and, Three, written Reflections. It uses an online Qualtrics survey to establish teacher perceptions of the development of multilingual learners' Academic Literacies. Then, it uses face-to-face interviews to examine teacher reported experiences in developing multilingual learners' Academic Literacies. Finally, post-interviews, it analyzes its participants' reported perceptions of developing the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners. Its findings establish the presence of consistent teacher attempts at incorporating learner backgrounds, fluency levels, and individual goals in creating a learner-centered and inclusive literacy education in an academic atmosphere that honors students' real-life aspirations.

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Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless His holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits

Psalm 103: 1-2

Through this dissertation journey, I was blessed in abundance. I dedicate this dissertation to my parents; my mother, Sushila Mathews who has been my inspiration, and my late father, C.C. Mathews who always wanted me to become a Professor. In completing this dissertation, I have fulfilled their dreams.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The need for an Academic Literacies approach for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners in academic English classrooms is imperative and further heightened by a few significant factors in Ontario, Canada. Key among them is the fact that Ontario has the highest number of immigrants compared to other provinces in Canada (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, CIC). Another important factor is the need for Academic Literacies at the college I chose as the site for this study. Toronto College is unique and distinguished by the “Creative Campus” philosophy, a purposeful cross-curricula approach that challenges students to use creative thinking to reimagine ideas, experiment, collaborate, take risks and build a resourceful, resilient, and flexible mind (Toronto College, website). A third factor is the presence of international students who come to further their education in Canada. Ontario has the highest number of foreign students (Facts & Figures Report, U of T, 2012) who come to the college for certificates or courses that prepare them to pursue their education in Canada. Academic English is offered both as part of a General Education (GenEd) requirement for Ontario and as an intensive ESL program for students to improve their English skills for personal, professional, or academic reasons. The highest level, English for Academic Purposes (EAP), can provide students with a conditional acceptance into a diploma, degree, or post-graduate certificate at the college.

Considering the large population of international students and local students who are multilingual and multicultural, it would be significant to explore how academic English is taught

to second language learners in Toronto, Canada. Specifically, it will be important to know how an Academic Literacies perspective might affect the academic English outcomes for the international and local students and their teachers. Yet another factor is that Toronto College's ESL faculty have a solid experience in teaching internationally educated students and professionals (Toronto College, website). The presence of multilingual students in every North American classroom necessitates an awareness of the need to make their learning rich and fruitful (Hall, 2009). Academic English in North American settings has had its own history of the myth of linguistic homogeneity (Matsuda, 2006) where having a monolingual approach to teaching academic English does not serve its purpose. A final factor for choosing this topic in the context of the selected Toronto College is that a more inclusive approach is imperative for ESL students in academic English classrooms.

Context of the Study

The context of this study incorporates the study's site described above, the large majority of multilingual learners (MLs) who are a part of the Academic English environment (Hall, 2009; Matsuda, 2006), and their teachers who negotiate different academic writing approaches. These multilingual learners join the academic English classrooms with their own concepts of academic literacy (Molle, 2015). With Toronto's Greater Toronto Area (GTA) having the highest percentage of immigrants (CIC) and foreign students (Facts & Figures Report, U of T, 2012), the teaching of English literacy requires an international focus, such as the emerging Academic Literacies perspective. The latter emphasizes that academic language is only one of the resources that students use as they learn. In the multilingual classroom, students are viewed as agents and not as deficits (Horner, Lu, Royster and Trimbur, 2011 Street, 1999; Lea & Street, 1998). When teachers in Toronto College engage with MLs in academic English classes, they try to

understand, accept, and work with the academic literacies of their MLs (Zamel & Spack, 2004) within the power dynamic of higher educational environments (Lea, 2016).

The Problem

In Toronto College's diverse international environment, the problem consists in creating a well-balanced Academic Literacies education that at once meets student and institutional academic goals in a manner that integrates given and target literacy practices. Thus, it is interesting to evaluate the strategies that teachers use to assist in the development of their multilingual learners (MLs)' Academic Literacies. It is essential for MLs to comply with the standards for post-secondary education and further develop and refine their Academic Literacies to meet the requirements of their post-secondary education (Lillis & Scott, 2007). Examining the MLs' Academic Literacies development becomes crucial as it determines their success in pursuing post-secondary college-level studies (Street, 1984; Gee 1990, Barton, 1994). The way these learners are accepted in academic English classrooms also becomes significant because the teachers that interact with them understand their needs and facilitate the process of their Academic Literacies development (Michael-Luna & Canagarajah, 2007).

The way multilingual learners (MLs) are accepted and understood is important. Also important are the perspectives teachers inherently portray in teaching academic English to MLs and the way they position themselves in the dominant academic literacy vs. the emerging Academic Literacies dilemma. The single-noun academic literacy implies that to be considered academic there is a specific skillset to be acquired (Scott, Blommaert, Street & Turner, 2007). It endorses an academic ability that is associated with the history, the politics, and the culture in which it functions (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). Students who study these discourses, must master them to proceed from point A to point B in their lives. Their opinions, their critical analysis of

the dominant discourse falls outside the purview of their interaction. In academic literacy, learning must be mastered despite the students' prior learning or experience with academia.

Additionally, teachers face the challenge of developing their MLs' Academic Literacies to fulfill the requirements of post-secondary education in the college selected as the site of this study. For that, teachers attempt to give their students the flexibility of becoming knowledge generators, and not merely knowledge consumers but (Lea, 2016). They encourage them to question, critique, examine its value amid the changing dynamics of higher education, not just endorse a standard (Blommaert & Horner, 2017; Huang & Archer 2017). Again, this study focuses on examining the problem of blending as a resource MLs' first language (L1) literacy practices to established second language (L2) literacy outcomes by exploring teacher practices and perceptions of developing their MLs' Academic Literacies development.

The Gap

The gap this study seeks to fill consists in clarifying the distinct differences between the singular and the plural use of academic literacy (McWilliams & Allan, 2014) as practiced and perceived in a particular educational setting, that of the multicultural and multilingual Toronto College. In its singular form academic literacy is seen to be restrictive and seemingly uniform indicating one set of practices for all. Conversely, the plural form Academic Literacies claims to be more inclusive by supporting individual student agency in the development of their L2 literacy.

Further, this study aims to contribute to the knowledge on the specifics of Academic Literacies approaches as these encapsulate many aspects and various kinds of literacies (Scott, Bloommaert, Street, & Turner, 2007). Students do not come to the class with only one kind of literacy. They are aware that they belong to many communities of practice, each contributing to

various aspects of their academic literacies. Academic literacy does accommodate diverse students but, it gives them no credibility to question academic literacy practices (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). The notion of Academic Literacies is not conceptualized as a single entity but as a dynamic set of multiple literacies. Thus, it is not looked upon as a transferable skill that can be mastered with the knowledge of grammar and vocabulary. On the contrary, the literacy attributed to the Academic Literacies approach is woven into social practice: the way people function in society, the roles they play, the power structure that exists. Therefore, it cannot be resolved as a single problem needing to be fixed. It requires an understanding of the social contexts that determine various kinds of writing and speaking with different conventions, each with a specific set of rules and a power dynamic engrained in it (Lea, 2004; Lillis & Scott, 2007).

The Academic Literacies Perspective

Teachers who adopt the Academic Literacies perspective do not try to fix the problems in student writing, but, instead, introduce their multilingual learners (MLs) to the academic conventions that exist in various forms of writing. They introduce their MLs to the power dynamic that exists in education to help them become successful English language learners but also to the fact that each kind of writing has a specific set of rules, which are determined by audience, purpose, context, and style. Therefore, treating academic English as a transferable skill or academic socialization is not enough. Lea (2016) makes the differentiation between the term academic socialization and Academic Literacies. Whereas academic socialization is more concerned with familiarizing MLs with university conventions and with becoming accustomed to its specific academic culture, the Academic Literacies movement emphasizes the power and the authority associated with institutionalized practices and the way this power affects the MLs and ML writing.

To be specific, the three models which Lea and Street suggested in their famous article of 1998 are integral because, compared with an Academic Literacies approach, a skills approach or an academic socialization approach are not mutually exclusive. What Lea and Street (1998) stress is the ability of MLs to be knowledge generators rather than mere knowledge consumers. They envisage MLs to critique the very systems they are part of and to understand the discourse of power, authority, and significance with respect to their own positions as students. This knowledge no doubt helps them to become acculturated into the system but their ability to question, to critically analyze, and to think rationally is what Lea and Street endorse in an Academic Literacies perspective.

Furthermore, the Academic Literacies perspective emerged because of the emphasis placed on academic English as one of the many channels to post-secondary environments. The presence of multilingual learners (MLs) in the classroom needed a fresh approach. The New London group (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, Kalantzis, Kress, Luke A, Luke C, Michaels, Nakata) convened in 1994 and developed a new direction for Literacy Studies: new literacies of which Academic Literacies is a branch. The position expounded by the New London Group was radically different from the curricula adopted in schools. However, the emphasis of using correct English is not contested (Ferris, 2014). While traditionalists adopt a top-down perspective of looking at learning outside school as distinctly different and isolated, the New London Group looked at all experiences as valid and life forming (Gee, 1996). Every experience had its language exponents which gained meaning in context, but also gained meaning from the nature of the experience itself (Seely-Brown, Collins & Duguid, 1989). Notions like participation, communities of practice (Wenger, 1998), and apprenticeship gained prominence. The New

London Group also draws knowledge from studies in anthropology where discourse in education blends experience and learning.

Undoubtedly, literacies had to have a new focus. The new literacies encapsulate the way information is viewed today. Critical thinking, evaluation, and questioning need to accompany any examination of data presented in a variety of media. The truth today has a lot of shades to it (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003) and educators assist MLs in identifying truth from falsehood, logical reasoning from emotional renderings, and in determining to understand the message no matter how convoluted it is. The Academic Literacies perspective, a branch of New Literacy Studies (NLS), emphasizes the spoken and written use of language. It is transformative in that it exposes the power dynamic and the inequalities that occur in social practices (Street, 2009; Lea & Street, 1998). It transforms the power differential where the MLs and the teacher are equal partakers of the learning process (Harvey & Stocks, 2017).

Additionally, the power differential is not the only factor that is important in the Academic Literacies approach. Another factor, equally significant, is the way multilingual learners (MLs) are accepted and treated in the academic English classroom. Helping MLs see the connections between all the languages that they bring to the classroom promotes their English language learning as well (Jocson & Conteh, 2008; Nieto, 2002). When educators begin to understand MLs in terms of their resources outside the classroom, they can create spaces for growth, nourish their personalities, and refine MLs voices.

Thus, Academic Literacies is part of NLS, a broader area of learning including varied institutional curriculum and personal life factors (Molle, 2015). Research on that is unclear, but factors are linked to individual institutional demands on students on the one hand, and, on the other, to personal student lived experiences as part of their developmental, critical, multicultural,

or interpersonal growth (Molle, 2015). Academic Literacies encompasses both worlds – the world of education and the lived experiences of the multilingual learners (MLs). The connecting links between these two worlds is the focus of this study. The need to find out more about the ways to help MLs optimize their potential motivated me to engage with this study.

Researcher Motivation

I entered the world of teaching English in Calcutta (India), 1989, as a young, energetic, firebrand teacher with a desire to change the world. However, a change of location to an international sphere saw my Indian education as an obstacle. A CELTA and a Master's in TESOL came as next steps to further my career. Through my CELTA journey, I realized I saw myself as different from the image people had of me. To the L2 world, I was an L2 speaker trying to learn the basic tenets of academic writing (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000). I was an “illiterate” in the L2 world (Schuster, 2006). Very soon, I was sold into the concept of propagating standard written English (SWE) in my L2 classroom, as I studied for a Master's in TESOL and also taught American academic writing.

I slowly realized my hypocrisy. I had felt othered before, and in treating my students' English as deficient of the norm, I was othering them. I was often concerned about who and what I was as a teacher. Wasn't I enforcing what I saw as oppressive hegemony? Where did I stand as an L2 writer? Was my writing accepted? Was I conforming to SWE norms? All through my master's, I lived with the notion that SWE was the norm and all else was not standard. The writing that I did in my Indian school, college and university was not SWE, but was it wrong? I struggled with this thought till I read the “Myth of Linguistic Homogeneity” by Paul Kei Matsuda in my doctoral program.

It finally dawned on me that our world is multilingual and to assume the superiority of English in comparison to other languages is an offensive thought. Alternate discourse (Bizzell, 2006), mixed forms of academic discourse and hybrids allow academics to do intellectual work unrestrained by the conventions of academic writing. These alternate forms are not inferior but are the new forms of academic discourse. When I as a teacher could encourage students to bring their “discursive resources” (Bizzell, 2006) into the academic English classroom, I would promote the literacy of our community.

With my doctoral coursework done, I entered the Canadian world of teaching in August 2013. Within a month of arrival, I secured a TESL certification to teach in Ontario’s colleges. Teaching at various institutions both at the post-secondary and continuing-education levels brought me into contact with many multilingual (ML) and multicultural learners. There was a disconnect between what they brought to the academic English classroom and what educators wanted them to have (Land & Whitley, 2008). MLs looked at academic English as a skill-set to be acquired (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) because they felt illiterate, in the sense of Bakhtin’s concept of “addressivity” as a form of negotiated meaning, only if the listener and the speaker are simultaneously engaged (Schuster, 2006). The MLs felt they lacked a shared context of mutual responsiveness. The MLs experienced the power of English not only as an academic necessity but also as a social construct in Canada (Firth & Wagner, 1997) and felt their lived experiences were not enough (Johnson, 2009). My task as a teacher was to be sensitive to MLs’ needs, consider them as “resources” (Canagarajah, 2010), and help them get acclimatized with their new Canadian environment.

Equipped with my knowledge of sociocultural theory (Pavlenko & Lantolf, 2000) and Academic Literacies (Lea, 2016; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lea & Street, 1998; New London Group,

1996), I tried to make multilingual learners (MLs) feel valued in the academic English classroom. Using the personal narrative (Hurlbert, 2006) and their “discursive resources” (Bizzell, 2006), I wanted to connect with MLs and make them feel safe in their new academic environment. I questioned the resources teachers use to cater to MLs: How do teachers help MLs to become a part of their academic English classes? Is academic English an end in itself or a means to an end? Do teachers question the power dynamic and the value of the essay as a genre? (Canagarajah, 2011)? Do they ask their students to work with alternate genres (Reiff, 2006)? Do they liberate their MLs (Freire, 1993)? Do teachers make MLs recognize their “double vision” (Canagarajah, 2010) in their shuttle between languages, cultures, and communities? These questions led me to investigate the way teachers view their experience of approaching the Academic Literacies of MLs in academic English classes. Additionally, I wanted to learn more about the teachers’ practices in and perceptions of MLs’ Academic Literacies development in academic English classes.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate teacher experiences and perceptions of the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs). Since MLs constitute a large population in academic English classrooms, it would be compelling to find out what Academic Literacies MLs bring to the ESL classroom. What do ESL teachers do and what do teachers think they do in their academic English classes? My study is a step towards answering these questions.

Research Questions

1. What are ESL teachers’ reported experiences of developing the academic literacies of multilingual learners?

2. What are ESL teachers' reported perceptions of developing the academic literacies of multilingual learners?

Significance of the Study

In a multicultural and multilingual world, the need for an Academic Literacies approach in academic English classrooms is magnified. This study explores the way English could be taught from an Academic Literacies perspective. Further, it examines the possibilities for integrating multilingual learners' (MLs') first language literacies and the target second language literacies in a specific educational context, that of a multilingual and multicultural Canadian college. It also dwells on the way Academic Literacies are integrated. Another issue that it investigates is what teachers experience in developing of MLs' Academic Literacies and how they perceive this development.

This study is of particular importance for the Canadian context. By choosing Toronto College, which has an enrolment of 22,066 full-time and 3,334 part-time students, I am projected to capture a significant number of the total 454 students that the ESL program of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences has across its three campuses in Toronto (Toronto College, website). Toronto College offers two kinds of English courses, general English (GenEd) and English as a Second Language (ESL). The GenED courses are for those students who need to have the required English academic literacy to pursue certificate, diploma, and other degree courses. Thus, the ESL courses are specifically designed for multilingual speakers (MLs) who need a required proficiency level of academic English to merge into the certificate, diploma, and the degree programs.

This study's significance transcends the Canadian experience that provides its context. Its data, data analysis, and findings could benefit similar studies in other geographical areas. In an

increasingly global economy, marked by economic and cultural exchanges, multicultural and multilingual education in general, and Academic Literacies in particular, are becoming central to all levels of education wherever multiculturalism and multilingualism exist. Thus, this study has a general educational importance with specific implications for educational and professional socialization.

Methodology Overview

The methodology adopted for this study takes into consideration the Toronto Colleges' ESL program's intensive character, academic goals, and international student population and faculty. The ESL program at Toronto College has five levels: Foundations, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP), which provides students with conditional acceptance to a diploma or a post-graduate certificate at Toronto College (Toronto College, website). It boasts of students from China, Korea, Vietnam, Africa, Colombia, Middle East, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Uruguay, Turkey, Iraq, Ukraine and Iran (Languages Canada, 2016). The faculty that teach in Toronto College are as varied the students themselves.

Teachers who are either permanent residents or Canadian citizens, originally from Bulgaria, Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Pakistan, India, Malaysia, Iraq, Iran, Italy, Jamaica, Korea, Brazil, are integral parts of the Toronto Colleges' ESL program at the college (Languages Canada, 2016). Teachers in Toronto College, range from novice teachers to veterans in the profession. Additionally, the range of teacher experience provides a rich setting for this research study. Working in this ESL department has made me value teacher input to the development of the multilingual learners (MLs). Communicating with teachers and understanding their struggle developing the Academic Literacies of the MLs initiated this study. As part of the methodology of this study, the preliminary survey, the face-to-face interviews, and the reflections provide me

with a broader understanding of the instructors' challenges in their classrooms, of their reported experiences of developing the Academic Literacies of the MLs, and of their reported perceptions about facilitating the Academic Literacies development among the MLs in the academic English classes.

In this study, I undertake a mixed-method approach as part of the methodology to analyze the feedback from the teacher survey, interviews, and reflections. In it, I explore how instructors view the Academic Literacies of the multilingual learners (MLs) in their academic English courses. Thus, I examine how instructors understand, accept, and resolve the issue of Academic Literacies in their pedagogical practices. Specifically, I seek to understand how the instructors handle the teacher-student power dynamic, how they might share their power with their students.

In this study, the Toronto College ESL teachers are the participants. Initially, a Qualtrics online-survey is distributed to academic English ESL instructors. After the survey has been answered, the participants are interviewed face-to-face. Subsequently, the participants are asked to reflect on the study, its purpose, and the possibility of adopting an Academic Literacies perspective in their academic English classes. Qualtrics online-surveys are distributed to faculty across three Toronto College campuses. In a quantitative process, the survey requests instructors for their experiences in teaching academic English. Depending on their survey responses, the participants who have opted to be part of the next two stages of the study, are briefed on the process of in-depth interviews and the reflections. Over a period of four weeks, the interviews and the reflections are conducted in a qualitative process. The interviews seek in-depth information on issues raised in the survey. The reflections provide a deeper understanding of the way these instructors view their multilingual learners' (MLs') Academic Literacies development.

The focus of the study is documenting what teachers report as their experience and what they report about their perceptions of developing their MLs' Academic Literacies.

The main data sources include, first, a Qualtrics online-survey administered to academic English ESL instructors, second, in-depth interviews with those instructors, and, third, post-interview reflections. The survey is emailed to all ESL faculty on the three campuses. After receiving faculty responses to the survey, those instructors who are willing to be interviewed more closely through a process of purposeful intensity sampling are identified (Paton, 1980). Purposeful sampling is studying the research sample for information that is rich: where the researcher can learn a great deal about the subject of the research. The minimum sample size depends on faculty responses. As a sizeable number of responses from faculty is secured, then, interviews are conducted after the criteria for purposeful intensity sampling to narrow down the pool is used. After the interviews, teachers are asked to reflect on the survey, the interview, and the study. This project aims to explore what teachers report as their experiences, and how they perceive the Academic Literacies development of the multilingual learners (MLs) in the ESL program at Toronto College.

Operational Framework of Concepts: Glossary

In this section, I define the significant terms used in the study as a way of clarifying my purpose for their use.

New Literacy Studies: NLS is concerned with the meaning-making processes that students go through and often reflects the differences between teacher and student perceptions in writing. It is a more comprehensive approach towards understanding student writing, since it not only accounts for the social practices the students are engaged in but also for the exploration of their identities.

Academic Literacies: A branch of NLS, Academic Literacies is more focused on academic settings. It focusses on viewing literacy not as a single skill but looks at literacy from a more inclusive, all-encompassing lens. Students come into the classroom with their own sociocultural literacies. Academic Literacies is a departure from academic literacy, as is explained in detail in Chapter 2. For the sake of emphasizing the difference from academic literacy, Academic Literacies has been capitalized throughout the document.

Multilingual Learners: An immigrant, or a child of an immigrant who is multilingual, a permanent resident, a naturalized citizen, or an international student who speaks a different language at home and at school.

Academic Literacies Perspective: Views MLs as entities by themselves, challenges academic conventions. Relates particularly to contemporary academic environments where students are treated as resources and not as deficits. ALP focusses on the process of knowledge making and not on the final product.

Multilinguals' Teachers: Follow ALP. Look at language difference not as a departure from the norm, but as a form of student writing. They question what is done in the classroom instead of trying to fit students into certain academic stereotypes. They possess a critical awareness of the different kinds of world Englishes. They use multimodal texts in academic writing classes not as add-ons but as an integral part of Academic Literacies instruction.

Teacher Perceptions: The ways in which teachers view, understand, analyze, and interpret the information presented to them from their students. The mental images which teachers form about an issue, or an event, or a tool, or a pedagogy, or even a phenomenon in the context of their teaching of academic English.

Teacher Experiences: What teachers report as their experiences of what they face in their classrooms, the experiences they have with their multilingual learners. The numerous examples in their teaching experience which help to inform them of how to become reflective practitioners.

Role: The word role has been used in this study to indicate the function, the importance, and the significance of the distinctive features of the Academic Literacies' perspective: the teacher, the learner, the materials and the development of academic literacy. It is connected to social constructivism in the classroom where the teacher is the facilitator not the controller and the learner is more active and accepts more responsibility for the process of learning.

Overview of the Remaining Chapters

Chapter 2 reviews the literature and examines the theoretical underpinnings of the study. It begins by reviewing the history of Academic Literacies. Following that, it examines its distinctive features by comparing it to the other prevalent academic English approaches. Finally, it discusses the distinctive components of Academic Literacies: the teachers, the learners and the curriculum, the study's relevance to multicultural Toronto, and teachers' perceptions of the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs). Overall, it explores the literature on teacher responsiveness to the needs of their MLs (Zamel & Spack, 2004).

Chapter 3 discusses the mixed-method methodology of the research study. By analyzing the context, the participants, and the data sources, the study explicates the tools employed to understand how the Academic Literacies perspective can be applied in the ESL classroom in the hope of making academic English in multicultural Toronto College more equitable. By examining the data collection procedures and the data analysis strategies, the study casts light on the dynamics of the academic English teaching and learning scene in Toronto College.

Chapter 4 analyzes the study's data. A quantitative analysis focuses on analyzing teacher experiences. A qualitative analysis using unconstrained deductive content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008) and Qualtrics examines teacher perceptions as these relate to developing MLs' Academic Literacies. Teacher experiences are then juxtaposed to teacher perceptions to reveal emerging patterns of similarities and differences.

Finally, Chapter 5 articulates the study's results and conclusions based on the data analysis from the preceding Chapter 4. It does so by answering the study's research questions with regards to teacher experiences and perceptions of developing the Academic Literacies of MLs. It also establishes the major areas in which teacher experiences might develop to reflect current perceptions of academic literacy education's inadequacies.

Chapter Summary

Chapter 1 introduces the context of the study, the problem it addresses, and the gap it intends to fill. Furthermore, it explicates the Academic Literacies perspective. Subsequently, it presents the researcher's motivation, the purpose of the study, and the resulting research questions. Given the study's goals and research questions, Chapter 1 also emphasizes its significance. It then provides an overview of the research methodology and the study's design. Additionally, it provides a glossary of the operational framework of concepts. Finally, it offers an overview of the remaining chapters.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews the empirical and the theoretical background of this study. It is subdivided into three sections concerning Academic Literacies: distinctive features, distinctive components, and their relation to teacher perceptions. The first section, distinctive features, examines the background of Academic Literacies as a way of understanding the origins and the evolution of the Academic Literacies perspective from its inception to the present day. For that, it juxtaposes it with other related approaches to multilingual learners (MLs) in ESL settings. The second section discusses the distinctive components of Academic Literacies: teachers, multilingual learners, and the curriculum by examining their distinctive roles in the process of developing Academic Literacies. The concluding section accounts for the relationship between Academic Literacies and the Academic Literacies teachers' experiences and perceptions of those literacies.

Academic Literacies: Distinctive Features

The distinctive features of Academic Literacies perspective could be identified in its definition in comparison to Academic Literacy, New Literacies, Multiliteracies, and other related approaches to educating multilingual learners (MLs) in academic English settings. For that, it is helpful to trace the history of its origin in relation to other well-known literacy approaches.

Academic Literacies: Background

Among the distinctive features of Academic Literacies, the origin of the Academic Literacies perspective needs examining to understand where it comes from, why its origin is

significant, and why this study uses the Academic Literacies perspective to understand multilingual learners (MLs) in academic English classrooms.

The attention to Academic Literacies began in the 1990s as the student body in higher education became more diverse due to university students arriving with various proficiency levels and from different knowledge bases (Lea, 2016; Kiili, Makinen & Coiro, 2013; Lea & Street 1998; Zamel & Spack 1998; New London Group 1996; Lea, 1998). For the first time, the focus in Academic Literacies was shifted to the student who was different yet deserved to be treated with respect and recognition. The plural-noun Academic Literacies suggests that there are other literacies which exist but are without power or recognition (Mc Williams & Allan, 2014; Lea 2008; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Street, 2009; Henderson & Hirst, 2007). The Academic Literacies perspective accounts for students who come from other academic writing backgrounds and who have used other literacy practices in their home environments. It acknowledges that when these students come into a Canadian academic context, they become accustomed to other literacy practices that are steeped in power, significance, and authority (Lea, 2016). The Academic Literacies perspective acknowledges that these students feel at a loss and out of place, and lack in confidence. Fundamental to the Academic Literacies perspective is an attitude of understanding, compassion, and mutual respect (Hungerford-Kresser & Amaro-Jimenez, 2012). It understands that MLs navigate through different higher-education portals learning varied styles of writing as per the discipline, context, and situation (Bizzell, 2006; Bartholomae, 2003; Zamel & Spack, 1998; Elbow 1998; Students Right to Their Own Language, CCC, 1974).

The origin of the Academic Literacies perspective dates back to 1994 with the revolutionary formation of the New London Group (Cazden, Cope, Fairclough, Gee, Kalantzis, Kress, Luke A, Luke C, Michaels, Nakata) because the changing times necessitated a new

direction for academic English. The basic principles on which the Academic Literacies perspective was established inspired numerous studies over the following years (Freison, 2014). The Academic Literacies perspective acknowledges that the presence of diverse MLs in the academic English classroom meant that the knowledge and information required to be conveyed had to be altered (Ayash, 2016). Academic Literacies researchers decided to work out a pedagogy on the principles of transformation involving sociocultural practices. It became a pedagogy of reflective practice, critical questioning, and, so, became an integral part of language education (Allan & Clark, 2007). It endorsed that in reading, writing, listening, or speaking, metacognition helps learners to refine their thoughts and sensitivities (Atkins, 2009). An Academic Literacies perspective (ALP) sees institutions as representative of discourse and power. ALP observes the literacy demands of the curriculum across disciplines, genres, and communicative practices (Gunn, Hearne & Sibthorpe, 2011). It acknowledges that students feel conflicted in modifying their writing to suit the demands of various disciplines which raised deeply affective and ideological conflicts within them (Lea, 2016).

Notwithstanding, the Academic Literacies perspective initiated a fundamental change in viewing the teaching of ESL with a unique perspective to the classroom. There, it recognized outside influences, sociocultural backgrounds, and lived experiences, all impacting what the multilingual learners (MLs) brought into the classroom (Fleming, Bangou & Fellus, 2001). Academic Literacies researchers saw these experiences as valid and life-forming and not as interferences in the study of academic English. At the heart of the Academic Literacies perspective is respect (Hungerford-Kresser and Amaro-Jimenez, 2012). It understands the MLs and realizes their traumas and stresses make their classroom experiences more life-like (Finn, 2015). In an Academic Literacies classroom, school is not divorced from life. Instead, school and

life blend together to form a more rounded individual. One of the first advocates of the Academic Literacies perspective, Street (2005) refers to his checklist of features of innovative approaches to literacy (Street, 1997) and states that literacy cannot be confined to simplistic mechanical skills. Literacy curricula and assessment reflect the rich and complex literacy practices that learners are engaged with in their daily lives. So, in the teaching of Academic Literacies perspective, home backgrounds are key to assessing the learners' prior knowledge (Curry, 2004). In the Academic Literacies perspective, the identity and the origins of the MLs' knowledge are tied to their home backgrounds. To know and acknowledge this as a resource (Canagarajah, 2010) makes learning in the classroom more fruitful to them as learners, more fruitful to their peers who learn by listening and seeing, and more fruitful to teachers who create such spaces for these discussions in their classrooms. In the Academic Literacies perspective, there has been a shift in focus of viewing students' academic writing - not so much from a skills perspective or from an academic socializations' perspective, but in terms of institutionalized expectations of student writing (Street, 2009; CCCC Statement, 2001).

After examining the origins of the Academic Literacies perspective and understanding why it views multilingual learners (MLs) and teachers uniquely, the term Academic Literacies needs defining. Why is the inculcation of Academic Literacies significant in the MLs' context? This and subsequent issues will be examined in the following section.

Academic Literacies: Definition

"Academic Literacies" refers to the writing by non-native writers, foreign students, and mature students whose writing is often looked upon as a problem in the UK (Lea & Street, 1998), largely, within the deficit model of education. It endorses that the variety of international student writing is still not being considered as a resource which the international student, or the

mature/non-native writer brought into the classroom. The Academic Literacies perspective witnessed teachers engaging in research and seeking to forage new paths to understand the complexities of the contexts that they found themselves in. Academic writing, as a field in the UK, was within academic disciplines but in the US and Canada, the Academic Literacies perspective as a field had its distinctive setting in basic writing courses, composition courses, writing centers, or TESOL courses (Lea & Street, 1998). It came to be associated with writing as a part of the disciplines in the UK, but in the US and Canada, writing was its own entity (Cumming, 2013). Understanding the Academic Literacies perspective implies that it intersects with many other applied linguistics fields such as ELT, EAP, sociolinguistics, and linguistic ethnography (Lea & Street, 1998). It is predominantly concerned with examining student writing in socio-cultural contexts where issues of power relations together with identity consciousness are key to understanding the complexities of student academic writing (Cummins, Mirza and Stille, 2012).

Specifically, the Academic Literacies perspective is a more recent approach in New Literacies where literacies are the social practices learners engage in (Lea & Street, 1998). New Literacy Studies (NLS) necessitates both a social and an ideological orientation. NLS is concerned with the meaning-making processes that students go through and often reflects on the differences between teacher and student perceptions on writing. The NLS is a more comprehensive approach towards understanding student writing, since it not only accounts for the social practices the students are engaged in but also for the exploration of their identities (Lea & Street, 1998). Thus, the NLS treats student writing as both dynamic and significant and advises teachers to be careful in their treatment of student writing. As a branch of NLS, the Academic Literacies perspective is specifically focused on academic settings and needs to be

examined in juxtaposition with other current approaches, i.e., New Literacies and Multiliteracies, to identify ALP's salient features. Below, I compare the Academic Literacies perspective to the New Literacies approach.

Academic literacies and new literacies. An aspect of the Academic Literacies perspective which is considered akin to New Literacies encapsulates the way information is viewed today (Watters, 2014; Atkins, 2009; Cervetti, Damico & Pearson, 2006; Leu et. al., 2004; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). Aspects that Academic Literacies and New Literacies share include: critical thinking, evaluation, and questioning that accompany the examination of data presented through a variety of media. Both New Literacies and Academic Literacies acknowledge that the truth today has a lot of shades to it (Tierney, 2009; Lankshear & Knobel, 2003). Educators help students to differentiate truth from falsehood, logical reasoning from emotional responses and to understand complex and even convoluted messages (Albers & Harste, 2007).

In fact, both Academic Literacies and New Literacies involve multimodality where literacy is not only confined to print media but also to other forms of media, such as synchronic or asynchronic multimedia and web-based media (Atkins, 2009; Cervetti, Damico & Pearson, 2006). Both move beyond reading and writing to convey messages through graphics, mixed graphics and print, and even through internet-based technologies (Leu et. al., 2004). Academic Literacies and New Literacies also encompass speech, gestures, and multiple ways of reading various texts. Both imply an expansion of the boundaries of the concepts of literacy and of literacy experts (Frambaugh-Kritzer, 2008; Watters, 2014). In both these contexts, literacies are seen to be in a state of constant transition, with respect to the societies the learners come from and the cultures they represent (Cervetti, Damico & Pearson, 2007). Both Academic Literacies

and New Literacies define the dynamic contexts in which learners and teachers are influenced, affected, and changed by their social and cultural practices (Archer, 2006).

Though both Academic Literacies and New Literacies chart a way forward for educators and students in the language classroom where students are equipped with the strategies to process the information they are constantly bombarded with (Antsey, 2002), Academic Literacies focusses primarily on academic contexts. Even though both emphasize the world of technology, where texts are presented not only in the written form but in audio and video as well, in Academic Literacies, students are evaluated primarily on their spoken and written skills (Watters, 2014). Although both have been termed as "emergent literacies" (Lankshear & Knobel, 2003), Academic Literacies is concerned with multilinguals only in academic settings. Albiet, both present information in diverse ways where teachers must assist their students in understanding and deciphering the messages conveyed in this diversity of thought and opinion (Watters, 2014), Academic Literacies operates in academic English environments solely.

Thus, the aim of the Academic Literacies perspective is far more focused encompassing the development of the MLs in academic contexts through oral and written texts. New Literacies is only concerned with changing the meaning of texts and incorporating new technologies in the way texts are presented. Academic Literacies does incorporate information technology into the rendering of academic texts, but unlike New Literacies which focusses on the design, message, and distribution of the text (Atkins, 2009), Academic Literacies is mainly concerned with the message contained in the text specifically in academic contexts. If New Literacies is an umbrella term for information technology-led messages (Swenson, Young, McGrail, Rozema & Whitlin, 2006), then Academic Literacies incorporates this element of information technology, but its distinctive focus is always in academic contexts for academic purposes. After surveying New

Literacies in relation to Academic Literacies, the next literacy approach to be compared to Academic Literacies is Multiliteracies.

Academic literacies and multiliteracies. Academic Literacies is tied to Multiliteracies, which is defined as meaning-making communicative practices based on the learners' sociocultural or the sociopolitical backgrounds (Knight, Dixon, Norton & Bentley, 2004). Both Academic Literacies and Multiliteracies extend to all domains of communication whether they are language-based, or non-language-based (e.g., technology-based), but sometimes these forms are conflicting (Kress, 2001). The non-language-based forms are new technologies that use aural, visual, and oral sensations, as well as gestures and body language. They also have specific ways of treating audiences, critically differentiating between what or who is appropriate (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000; Alvermann, 2002).

Similarly, in both Academic Literacies and Multiliteracies, educators are aware of who has access to privilege and who does not (Knight, Dixon, Norton & Bentley, 2004). Both question the potentially inequitable or even discriminatory treatment of people of different gender, abilities, race, and ethnicity. The fact that technology includes but also excludes others is discussed in both Academic Literacies and Multiliteracies. Culture-based differences are also examined (Luke, 2000). Both realize that the use of technology limits some while advocating for others. Academic Literacies and Multiliteracies claim knowledge and information should be equitable.

Conversely, though Academic Literacies and Multiliteracies target the conventions of academic writing in subject-related courses, the Academic Literacies perspective is concerned with the academic context solely. Even though both enable students to develop a clearer perspective of how and what to document in their subject area to make their writing suited to the

demands of their assignment (McWilliams & Allen, 2014), Academic Literacies is more focused on oral and written mediums in academic settings only. Although both endorse that with the onset of the digital age, students come into academic English classrooms with a lot more access to information, Academic Literacies is centered on developing the academic abilities of the MLs in the academic context they find themselves in. Although both require teachers to include these student literacies into their curriculum so that students are invested in their learning, in Academic Literacies, the onus of initiating the multilingual learners (MLs) is on the Academic Literacies teacher who gives explicit instructions to the MLs to ensure both the process and the product of learning are equally important in the development of the MLs' Academic Literacies.

In sum, though Academic Literacies and Multiliteracies require readers to comprehend the text and the topical allusions that are present in the text (Antsey, 2002), Academic Literacies is mainly concerned with MLs and teachers in academic settings. Notwithstanding that both imply that the focus is not only on communicating effectively but being able to use critical analysis to understand a variety of texts and media – print and digital, visual and oral, the primary focus in Academic Literacies is the academic context for academic purposes. A distinctive point of demarcation between Multiliteracies and Academic Literacies is the role of the teacher who is responsible for developing the MLs' Academic Literacies by procuring compassion, understanding, and mutual respect in this process (Hungerford-Kresser & Amaro-Jimenez, 2012).

Having investigated the relation of Academic Literacies, New Literacies, and Multiliteracies to Academic Literacies, it is incumbent to examine the latter's relation to the single-termed Academic Literacy.

Academic literacies and academic literacy. The most prominent feature of the Academic Literacies perspective is the moving away from viewing literacy as a single skill or a single literacy and looking at literacy from a more inclusive, all-encompassing lens. Academic Literacy implies a single kind of literacy, one that is mastered through a couple of courses, is uniform and unique, and represents students as deficits to be schooled in academic practices (Barton & Hamilton, 2000; Baker & Luke, 1991; McHoul, 1991). In contrast, Academic Literacies suggests that literacies encapsulate many aspects of diverse kinds of literacies (McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Street, 2009; Lillis & Scott, 2007; Henderson & Hirst, 2007; Lea, 2004). It claims that students do not come to the class with only one kind of literacy but are aware of and belong to many communities of practice, each contributing to various aspects of their Academic Literacies.

In its singular form, academic literacy is seen as a restrictive and seemingly uniform set of practices (McWilliams & Allan, 2014). Conversely, the plural form of Academic Literacies is more inclusive and lets students have a voice. It is concerned with how students interact and make sense of their academic contexts (McWilliams & Allan, 2014). It teaches students about the particularities of academic writing where genre, mode, style, and register are part of the meaning-making processes students are exposed to.

From another relatively opposing perspective, the distinction between Academic Literacies and academic literacy implies that academic literacy presupposes one kind of literacy and assumes it is one set of literacy practices. The term Academic Literacies implies that there are many aspects to literacy and many sets of literacy practices. Thus, the focus shifts from the subject to the learner and to the way learners make meaning. Academic Literacies includes aspects of critical thinking, formal expression, referencing, searching for information, familiarity

with the different academic genres, and distinctive styles of argumentation (McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011). Embedding Academic Literacies instructions across disciplinary courses helps learners see the connections between academic conventions and individual assignments (McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011).

In a deeper look at the distinction between Academic Literacies and academic literacy, the latter is suggestive of one kind of literacy or skill-set, which is to be acquired in one course, with learning support and skill instruction in tow. Academic Literacies, on the other hand, posits diverse ways of learning and knowing. It sees academic writing as socially constructed and deeply associated with cultural practices. It sees students as knowledge bearers and not just as passive receivers. It views students as resources and not as deficits needing to be taught, drilled, and forced into academic norms and conventions. Academic Literacies is concerned with the way students learn, participate, and make meaning in their specific academic contexts (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). The Academic Literacies perspective (ALP) acknowledges that each discipline requires a different kind of writing, with a distinctive set of norms (Hocking & Fieldhouse, 2011). It reiterates that academic writing encompasses not only vocabulary and style, but also separate ways of conveying meaning for different audiences and purposes, communicated through different rhetorical formats of narration, argumentation, and presentation (Rex, Murnen & Mc Eachen, 2002). Learning with an Academic Literacies perspective, MLs not only make meaning, but also challenge the meaning they make by questioning, critiquing, reflecting on what they are learning.

To reiterate, the distinctions between Academic Literacies and academic literacy are the following: Academic Literacies honors the constructed meanings students bring, which are appreciated for the values, the traditions, and the academic disciplines they represent. After

juxtaposing Academic Literacies and academic literacy, it is important to compare Academic Literacies to yet another literacy trend, that of academic skills.

Academic literacies and academic skills. Viewing literacy as a dynamic construct that changes with every writing situation, the Academic Literacies perspective is a departure from the academic skills approach which looks at literacy as an acquisition of transferable skills. The academic skills approach treats the working world as a hierarchy and uses discipline to instruct learners. It looks at writing only with superficial accuracy. Thus, the academic skills approach adopts a constructivist perspective while the Academic Literacies perspective supports a sociocultural or socio-constructivist perspective (Lea & Street, 1998). The academic skills approach looks at writing as constructing knowledge through experience whereas the Academic Literacies perspective looks at writing in terms of the textual form, context, and style specific to each discipline (Wingate & Tribble, 2011).

The academic skills approach looks upon the ML as a deficit needing to be fixed, whereas the Academic Literacies perspective helps the learner understand the context, style, and form of their research (Lea & Street, 1998). The Academic Literacies perspective helps MLs understand the nuances of communication, thought, and research as they develop their academic language (Nero, 2012). In Academic Literacies, the MLs are prompted to own the language they write in, and to feel they are in a safe environment as they express themselves in writing.

Unlike the Academic Literacies perspective, the academic skills approach assumes fixed notions of academic literacy (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). Whether it is a one-size-fits-all approach, or the entwining of literacy in specific disciplines, the academic skills approach lacks the dynamism badly needed to meet the needs of the increasingly diverse multilingual learners (MLs). Unfortunately, certain factors that favor the static academic skills approach persist:

reduced class times, part-time faculty with no accountability, preference for online courses, reduced resources and choices for student course selection (Hirst, Henderson, Bode, & Kocatepe, 2004).

Therefore, as the academic skills approach is limiting, thus, a more innovative perspective is required in addressing multilingual learners' (MLs') needs in academic English classes. One way to surmount these obstacles would be to adopt an Academic Literacies perspective that values the MLs' diversity and their sociocultural backgrounds. The academic skills and the Academic Literacies perspectives are not mutually exclusive in academic writing as the latter incorporates aspects of the former (Lea & Street, 1998). Thus, to reiterate, Academic Literacies is distinctive from academic skills in that it values MLs for their sociocultural diversity, does not support a one-size-fits-all approach, nor sees literacy as fixed and unchangeable. Now that the relationship between Academic Literacies and the academic skills approach has been investigated, the Academic Literacies perspective needs to be viewed from yet another angle and juxtaposed with yet another approach, that of academic socialization.

Academic literacies and academic socialization. In contrast to the Academic Literacies perspective, the academic socialization approach treats writing as a channel to convey information. This approach emphasizes the fact that individual disciplines are marked by specific discourses where certain discourses are privileged for their exchange value. In the new era of knowledge dissemination, it privileges old-age systems that reinforce institutional hierarchy. Accordingly, knowledge is now a marketable skill. It is widely accessible and useful, yet the ways new knowledge is disseminated are conventional and traditional. In the academic socialization approach, writing is monitored and controlled. However, in the Academic Literacies approach, writing is negotiable, debatable, and multifaceted (Street, 2004). Academic

Literacies is in sync with the present work world, where teamwork, collaboration, and virtual spaces advocate flattened forms of hierarchy. Academic Literacies researchers are pragmatic yet critical, both about language use and knowledge-making. From the Academic Literacies perspective, knowledge is not transmitted in a top-down fashion, it is a process and a resource to be used critically and reflectively, where researchers and learners work together to arrive at an understanding of reality as they see and experience it.

Undoubtedly, the Academic Literacies perspective looks at the complexity of the relationship between the task at hand, the context within which the task operates, and the power dynamic within which it unfolds. In Academic Literacies, the complexities of task, context, and power are interrelated so that as the context and the power dynamic change, the task also changes. Academic Literacies educators look at strategies, initiatives, and design curricula that suit the students and not the academic institutions, as is still common in higher education (Haggis, 2003). The Academic Literacies perspective helps researchers understand how education systems today favor and promote the interests of some and forces practitioners to challenge such favored perspectives by considering new ways of conceptualizing knowledge and its distribution.

Hence, the Academic Literacies perspective emphasizes the spoken and written use of language. It is transformative in that it exposes the power dynamic and social inequalities. It transforms the power differential where the students and the teacher are equal partakers of the learning process. On the other hand, the academic socialization approach evaluates students' writing, and, consequently, categorizes them as scholarly or mediocre (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). The academic socialization approach looks upon academic writing as generic, which is misleading as every discipline requires a different kind of writing. Such generic writing is

characterized by a specific set of rules or guidelines to be handed down to MLs, by a secret formula which is to be mastered, or by a space that constantly needs negotiating, adjusting, and adapting to. The academic socialization approach sees academic writing as conventional and norm referenced, which places MLs at a disadvantage. Conversely, the Academic Literacies perspective acknowledges the multiplicity of literacy and its related issues of identity, power, and diversity in academic English classrooms.

In summary, unlike the academic socialization perspective, the Academic Literacies perspective is woven into social practice. The latter is not described as a singular but as a plural entity and is not looked upon as a set of transferable skills that can be mastered with the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and context (Lillis & Scott, 2007; Lea, 2008). Thus, the Academic Literacies perspective steers away from rule-governed writing skills to socially constructed writing practices that reflect the social functions people perform in society, the roles they play, the power structures they experience. Consequently, literacy cannot be tackled as a single problem needing to be fixed but rather as knowledge gained through understanding the social contexts in which it operates and through acknowledging that distinct kinds of writing and speaking have different conventions, with each following specific set of intrinsic rules and power dynamic (Bastalich, Behrend, & Bloomfield, 2014). Teachers who use the Academic Literacies perspective do not try to fix the problems in student writing. Instead, they introduce their students to the various conventions that exist in various forms of writing. In the Academic Literacies perspective, teachers introduce their students to the power dynamic in education to help them become successful English language learners.

The academic socialization approach, which views writing as generic and norm referenced, puts MLs at a disadvantage. Distinctively, the Academic Literacies perspective posits

that each writing situation needs to be negotiated, adjusted, and adapted to suit the needs of the academic context. With this difference established, yet another approach which needs a comparative examination is the digital approach. Below, I discuss how the latter conceptualizes digital literacy and literacies as markedly different from the Academic Literacies perspective.

Academic literacies and digital literacy. As far as the digital approach to literacy, the New Literacy Studies (NLS) researchers have been behind in reporting the significance of the digital world in literacy education (Lea, 2013). The term “digital literacies” is understood differently. As part of digital literacy, the term literacy no longer only includes the digital text alone. Academic Literacies researchers, however, remain within the precincts of the text and the sociocultural practices it represents (Lea, 2013).

As such, the key difference between digital literacy and Academic Literacies is that “digital literacy” has a practical focus that helps students and teachers understand how to incorporate digital technologies into their academic contexts (Lea, 2013). Although research in evaluating teaching and learning in the digital context has been both transforming and critically analyzed, it is different from the focus of Academic Literacies which looks at its epistemology for significance. There is a difference between digital literacies and Academic Literacies with respect to their relationship with technology (Goodfellow, 2011). The former looks at literacy with a cultural focus whereas the latter looks at literacy with a critical focus (Mills, 2010). Despite their different agendas, both digital literacies and Academic Literacies contribute towards student development.

Studies show that some Academic Literacies scholars have concentrated their energies on digital landscapes and their educational impact (Lea, 2007; Goodfellow & Lea, 2007; McKenna 2012). Academic Literacies researchers have also begun to study the way students develop their

technological skills and knowledge (Aviram, Guiron & Eshet-Alkalai, 2006). Three issues have surfaced over the use of digital technology in the field of higher education (Lea, 2013): one, considering the needs of the students and their preferences for online activities, two, enhancing teachers' digital skills to improve their communication with a digital-native generation, and, three, guiding students to use digital technology in educational and professional contexts. When digital literacy is associated with a skill-set, it is far removed from Academic Literacies and its focus on the way texts are presented, the contexts, the situations, and the resulting learning impact.

Therefore, digital literacy is akin to the autonomous model of literacy (Lea & Street, 1998) as it focuses on the acquisition of certain technical and critical thinking language skills (Street, 1995). The Academic Literacies perspective, by contrast, deals with the different contexts, sociocultural practices, and power dynamic (Lea, 2013). Academic Literacies scholars contest issues of who has authority and whose identity is threatened. Digital literacies sidelines issues of power, authority, and identity in the contexts of higher education (Evans & Hornberger, 2005).

In terms of their use, digital literacy/literacies have been used interchangeably, that is unlike Academic literacy/Literacies which conveys a specific meaning (Lea, 2013). The term Academic Literacies has different implications for both teachers and learners across different contexts. Digital literacy, on the other hand, implies a certain set of skills required to work, learn, and contribute to a digital world. It assumes that what students learn in academia will transfer into the work world. Here, unlike Academic Literacies, to be digitally literate is all important regardless of the discipline.

Significantly, digital literacy has come to be associated with capability, capacity, and skill which creates not only a deficit learner but also a deficit teacher (Turner, 2011). When using the term digital literacy, educators are aware of the power of both discourse and text and their meanings in different contexts (Lea, 2013). The meaning and significance of Academic Literacies becomes defunct (Lea, 2013) if educators do not pursue a critical view of teaching and learning and if they fall prey to the term “digital space.” To avoid this, educators in academia might want to pay attention to issues of epistemology and knowledge in the disciplines as they focus their attention back on Academic Literacies, understanding these terms in the context of the digital world (Lea, 2013).

Thus, in comparison to digital literacy, a distinctive feature of the Academic Literacies perspective is its priority on the interactive process of knowledge making, whereas digital literacies focus on ways of text presentation, and on the learning and unlearning of the different techniques for text presentation. With this difference thus established, it would be beneficial for the purposes of this study to juxtapose the Academic Literacies perspective and the translingual approach.

Academic literacies and translingualism. Undisputedly, the translingual approach has similarities with the Academic Literacies approach in that it is transformative in principle and respectful and understanding of multilingual learners (MLs) as valued members of the discourse community. The translingual approach acknowledges that MLs are included and assisted by the academy, thus advocating a more inclusive perspective (Horner, Lu, Royster & Trimbur, 2011). It understands that learners and global communities are not to be discriminated against, as norms change due to language fluidity and dynamics (Horner, Necamp, & Donahue, 2011). Translingualism necessitates that MLs know the established rules without being subservient to

their influence (Horner & Trimbur, 2002). It acknowledges that MLs are active participants in academic discussions and understand their power dynamic to their advantage. In these areas, the translingual approach is akin to Academic Literacies.

Even though the translingual process does not perpetuate the norm, it teaches the multilingual learners (MLs) to skillfully maneuver their way through it. Similar to Academic Literacies, it does not seek to privilege some against the other, making all feel accepted (Lu & Horner, 2016; Lu & Horner, 2013). Similarly, too, researchers who support the translingual approach value MLs, acknowledge them as resources in the classroom, recognize the variations among MLs, and respect MLs' backgrounds (Horner, Lu, Royster & Trimbur, 2011).

Reminiscent of the Academic Literacies perspective, the translingual approach directly opposes the monolingualist tendency of claiming superiority of one variety over other English varieties and strives to reenergize the teaching of English writing and speech. Another similarity between the translingual approach and Academic Literacies is that translingualists look at language as changeable, evolving, and constantly needing to be negotiated by its users. Thus, much like the Academic Literacies perspective, the translingual approach is a departure from accepting standard English as fixed and non-negotiable. It endorses a radical change in understanding the dynamics of language norms and respects all language users regardless of their background.

However, compared to the translingual approach, Academic Literacies goes a step further. While translingualists acknowledge the need to reenergize the teaching of writing and speaking, the Academic Literacies scholars chart a path towards it. They emphasize that to add value to multilingual learners' (MLs') education, educators should acknowledge and honor students' backgrounds with respect to their sociocultural influences and knowledge trajectories

(Hungerford-Kresser & Amaro-Jimenez, 2012). To be specific, uniquely, the Academic Literacies perspective endorses the challenging of academic conventions by critiquing them. It looks at who is making these conventions and for whom. The Academic Literacies perspective inverts traditional power assumptions (Street, 2009) and raises these issues: who makes the rules, who is in power, and what specific literacy is required for each discipline. In Academic Literacies, these issues become relevant to both teachers and students. Particularly, students learn about traditional academic rules as well as the way to question these accordingly.

Furthermore, the Academic Literacies perspective endorses writing as situated where all English language learners acquire the strategies to deconstruct its discipline-specific features. It acknowledges that western writing is not superior to but different from other forms of writing and that students understand that writing differs across disciplines, cultures, and social practices. It understands that when multilingual learners (MLs) are introduced to western academic writing in English, their home writing practices are invalidated and recognizes MLs' subsequent sense of identity loss (Lea, 2016). However, by adopting the Academic Literacies perspective to writing, MLs regain their agency in writing. In contrast to the rather static academic literacy approaches examined here, a dynamic perspective is called for, one that reflects a constantly changing world (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). In this study, the Academic Literacies perspective is explored as a dynamic alternative that reflects and transforms the written presentation of the evolving lived-in world.

In sum, the distinctive features of the Academic Literacies perspective are best understood in their relation to other approaches (see Figure 1, p. 38). Unlike the skills approach, the Academic Literacies perspective sees MLs as resources and not as deficits (Canagarajah, 2010). Unlike the new literacies and multiliteracies, it emphasizes written and spoken mediums,

specifically in academic contexts. Unlike the academic socialization approach, in the Academic Literacies classroom, writing is not fixed but changes with every situation, context, and discipline (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). Unlike the digital literacy approach, in the Academic Literacies perspective, the knowledge-making process is more significant than the final product. Similar to the translingual approach where learning is transformative, in the Academic Literacies classroom, MLs are granted agency (Hungerford-Kresser & Amaro-Jimenez, 2012). Figure 1 below highlights the distinctive features of the Academic Literacies perspective in relation to the literacy approaches discussed here.

Literacy Approach	MLs as resources not deficits	MLs as socioculturally situated	MLs' writing process valued over final product	MLs critiquing academic conventions	MLs experiencing transformative learning	MLs having agency in the ESL classroom
Academic Literacies	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Academic Literacy	No	No	No	No	No	No
New Literacies	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Multiliteracies	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Digital Literacy	No	No	No	No	No	No
Academic Skills	No	No	No	No	No	No
Academic Socialization	No	No	No	No	No	No
Translingualism	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

Figure 1. Distinctive features of the different approaches to MLs' literacy.

In addition to analyzing the distinctive features of the Academic Literacies perspective in comparison to those of other literacy approaches discussed here, for the purposes of this study, it would be beneficial to explore the nature of the Academic Literacies perspective from yet another lens, that of its distinctive components, or participants in the writing process. Figure 2 below highlights the distinctive components involved in applying the above literacy approaches as they affect the role of teachers, the role of learners, the role of the materials, the predominant

view of literacy, the skills or the competencies required, and, finally, the activities involved in that process. After a brief summary of the findings from Figure 2, I will proceed to a separate analysis of each of its components.

Generally, as seen from the Figure 2 below, while the Academic Literacies perspective views the teacher as a facilitator and teachers and learners as co-creators of knowledge, in the other approaches reviewed here, the teacher is primarily the knowledge provider, or the expert. Further, the Academic Literacies teacher initiates and explicates the content knowledge but leaves the process of knowledge-making to the learners, respecting their diverse sociocultural backgrounds and identities. Multilingual learners (MLs) question academic conventions even while understanding the power dynamic operating in academia. MLs are granted the freedom or the agency to construct their identities and their positions in the world in which they operate.

Compared to the approaches to literacy reviewed here, the translingual approach to literacy is most akin to Academic Literacies. However, it still concentrates on the final product and not on the process of knowledge making. Even though the translingual approach grants freedom and agency to MLs, it does not allow them to question the academic conventions. Conversely, Academic Literacies teachers empower MLs to question academic conventions, to see value in negotiations, and to understand learner differences which helps MLs locate the problems in their writing. However, the Academic Literacies teachers also acknowledge that there is no quick fix to MLs' problems in academic reading and writing, thus, creating realistic goals and expectations about writing and about literacy, in general.

Literacy Approach	Role of Teachers	Role of Learners	Role of Materials	View of Literacy	Skills/Competencies	Activities
Academic Literacies	Facilitator, Initiator, Co-creator	Resources, dynamic	Explore learner identities	Socioculturally situated	Diverse ways of knowing, multiple skill sets	Focus on process of knowledge making
Academic Literacy	Expert, Knowledge provider	Deficits, lacking in knowledge	Master skill set	Fixed and unchanging	One kind of skill set, uniform	Focus on final product
New Literacies	Initiator of new technologies	Understand new technologies	Explore new technologies	Emergent literacies	Critical Analysis skills	Focus on medium
Multiliteracies	Initiator of critical analysis	Understand critical analysis	Explore critical analysis	Privileges some, excludes others	Technological skills	Focus on changing mediums
Digital Literacy	Deficit, need digital training	Deficits, digital natives	Explore digital technologies	Digitally literate	Digital skill set	Focus on presentation of texts
Academic Skills	Knowledge expert	Deficits, needing to be fixed	Master academic skills	Fixed and unchangeable	Academic skills, one-size-fits-all	Focus on final product
Academic Socialization	Expert, knowledge disseminator	Categorized as excellent/mediocre	Emphasize context, accuracy	Conventional, norm-referenced	Transferable skills	Focus on final product
Translingualism	Promoter of social justice and equity	Inclusive, learners should know rules but not be subservient to them	Understand social power dynamic	Inclusive of learner backgrounds/variation	Socioculturally contested skills	Focus on final product

Figure 2. Distinctive components of the different approaches to MLs’ literacy.

Overall, the Academic Literacies educators keep learners, teachers, and institutions abreast of current literacy changes, focusing on academic literacies. The Academic Literacies perspective accepts and values multilingual learners’ (MLs’) multiple literacies as they acquire new disciplinary academic literacies. It also supports MLs to stay openminded, critically approach information, understand, evaluate, and critically interpret new sources of information as well as present these in multimodal ways. After discussing the distinctive features of the different approaches to MLs’ literacy, the next section examines the distinctive components of the different approaches to MLs’ literacy: the ML learners, the MLs’ teachers, and the curriculum (e.g., the materials, the skills/competencies, the activities, and the specific view of literacy) (see Figure 2) to understand their interrelationships and their significance to the Academic Literacies perspective.

Academic Literacies. Distinctive Components

The components of Academic Literacies comprise the Multilingual learners (MLs), the Multilinguals' teachers (MTs), and the curriculum. First, MLs will first be defined, then, their personal goals will be listed, and, finally, the challenges they face will be discussed. Second, multilinguals' teachers (MTs) will then be addressed, the program goals discussed, and, finally, the challenges that MTs face will be analyzed. Third, the curriculum will be defined, and, thereafter, its impact will be discussed, followed by the challenges the Academic Literacies perspective encounters in academic English settings.

Academic Literacies and Multilingual Learners

To begin the section, I focus on the first component of the Academic Literacies perspective: Multilingual learners. They are examined with respect to who they are, what their goals are, and what their challenges are.

Multilingual learners: Definition. Studies indicate that “Multilingual learners” (MLs) is a single term with multiple associations that are accepted by the Academic Literacies perspective. The multilingual learner can be an immigrant, a child of an immigrant who is bilingual, a permanent resident, a naturalized citizen, or an international student (Zamel & Spack, 2006). Different students attend the academic English classroom today (Haggis, 2006): mature students, overseas students, disadvantaged students, and non-traditional students. Whoever they may be, these MLs come into the post-secondary environment with differing language abilities, learning styles, learning attitudes, and opportunities to communicate in English. Combined with these factors are their varying levels of inhibition, risk, and self-confidence. Also varied are their countries, cultures, sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic backgrounds, all of which impact their learning significantly.

Conversely, viewing the multilingual learners (MLs) with a sociocultural lens rather than a sociolinguistic lens helps researchers to see MLs' skills as multifaceted and evolving according to their sociocultural contexts and interactions. When viewing MLs sociolinguistically, researchers mainly look at their spoken repertoires. However, the sociocultural perspective helps them focus on the MLs' different mediums and modes, thus draw a richer picture of the MLs' linguistic practices (Lizarraga, Hull, & Scott, 2015). The latter make MLs an integral component of Academic Literacies for several reasons, one, as having varied linguistic experiences by belonging to a globalized world (Bailey & Orellana, 2015), two, as having varied competencies in different languages or in different language varieties, and, three, as having these multilingual experiences in their daily lives, now viewed as assets rather than deficits.

Additionally, it is important to understand where the MLs come from. Thus, MLs coming from local backgrounds bring with them their literacies and develop new literacies in tertiary and secondary education (Bury & Sheese, 2016). They are required to stay openminded, to understand and accept new forms of information, and to present information in multimodal ways (Huang & Archer, 2017). MLs do not need Academic Literacies writing to be diluted for them (Hall, 2009). On the contrary, addressing and incorporating MLs' prior academic writing experiences is a good approach to enhancing their progress (Clarence & McKenna, 2017).

As each multilingual learner's (ML's) identity shifts, generalized predictions about MLs' performance cannot be made (Zamel & Spack, 2006). MLs may share the same language, culture, and political associations, but they differ remarkably in their work ethic and classroom behavior. MLs with strong literacy backgrounds supersede the monolingual speakers but those with limited literacy exposure find the same tasks difficult and struggle to keep abreast. Even though some MLs may not be very proficient in writing, they possess excellent speaking skills.

Some MLs have an excellent attitude to work while others will resent it as they find it increasingly difficult because of their poor literacy background (Warriner, 2007). The critical point of observation is that these MLs have shifting identities based on the varied linguistic contexts they find themselves in (Zamel & Spack, 2006).

Also, multilingual learners (MLs) possess the skill to navigate between speech communities using English as their lingua franca fulfilling their own purposes in their own communities (Canagarajah, 2011). They use their metalinguistic awareness to communicate, thus develop suitable rhetorical strategies across different media to become effective communicators (Lizarraga, Hull & Scott, 2015). MLs work out-of-the-box (North, Snyder & Bulfin, 2008). They function unconventionally, using different mediums, modes, and expressions which are both unique and effective in facilitating their communications in the digital world (Lizarraga, Hull & Scott, 2015).

Thus, multilingual learners (MLs) are multifaceted within a unique learning spectrum. Compared to a sociolinguistic lens which heightens their deficits, viewing MLs from a sociocultural lens perceives them as resources (Wargo & De Costa, 2017). Additionally, MLs have shifting identities which makes them both complex and unique (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). They keep challenging teachers and educators to figure out a methodology that best reconciles MLs' needs and curriculum goals. Finally, MLs are unconventional and use language instinctively to fulfil their purposes and to navigate different media effectively (Lizarraga, Hull, & Scott, 2015). Having defined MLs in terms of their backgrounds, identities, and skills, it is also necessary to understand their personal goals.

Multilingual learners: Personal goals. Studies have indicated that multilingual learners (MLs) enter the Academic Literacies environment with specific goals in mind but expecting their

teachers or the curriculum to fulfil these goals is unrealistic. Whatever the MLs' backgrounds and literacy levels may be, they all enter post-secondary institutions with the same objective: to do well, excel, and learn while developing their English proficiency.

It is also clear from the literature that MLs do not want to be treated differently because of their limited English proficiency (Zamel & Spack, 2006). Although their linguistic repertoire is limited, they try just as hard and appreciate teachers who understand their struggle with English and feelings of alienation. Despite MLs' poor written skills, they do not want an easier or lighter workload but merely ask for assistance with the academic tasks (Zamel & Spack, 2006). They also feel they would be judged even though their low English proficiency is not a reflection of their intelligence (Zamel, 2000). All they desire is assistance and guidance from their teachers who may sometimes be oblivious of the amount of effort it takes to complete an assignment. MLs also notice that teachers who offered timely assistance, proved to be vital in contributing to their academic success (Lizarraga, Hull & Scott, 2015).

Further, MLs are a separate entity with separate goals (Zamel & Spack, 2006) which is a factor central to an Academic Literacies perspective (ALP). They care about the way their work is evaluated, which, unfortunately, is mostly in terms of grammar, spelling, and syntactical errors rather than in terms of the ideas behind MLs' flawed writing. ALP advocates a reorienting of teachers' evaluation of student writing to focus on content rather than form. In addition, MLs appreciate the opportunity to respond to texts from a personal perspective, thus, make their culture visible in the curriculum (Harklau, 2004). By narrating their personal experiences, the MLs reveal their prior knowledge (Bury & Sheese, 2016). Therefore, a critical reading and writing approach towards understanding stories from diverse communities enhances literacy education (He, Vetter & Fairbanks, 2014).

MLs' main goal is effective communication. They use different language to connect with others. The MLs' multifaceted use of language is translingual in that it employs different semiotic resources to convey socially-constructed meanings in various ML contexts (Lizarraga, Hull & Scott, 2015). MLs use various strategies to find their own resources and ways to connect with other language users. Researchers who only observe MLs' receptive and productive skills in a conventional manner may miss MLs' ability to convey meaning in diverse contexts and mediums. In other words, observing how MLs interact rather than judging how they perform opens ways to understanding them more deeply (Lizarraga, Hull & Scott, 2015).

To sum up, the MLs' have multiple personal goals. MLs do not expect special treatment as a special entity, but they do aspire after academic excellence (Zamel & Spack, 2006). In their pursuit of higher levels of academic literacy, they challenge academic conventions, thus making teachers rethink many post-secondary education goals. Lastly, they aim at using language as a communicative tool for different purposes and in different media.

Multilingual learners: Challenges. It is clear from the literature that the biggest challenge MLs face is being judged on their cultural background, past professions, or past education. An additional challenge, their unfamiliar environment sees MLs performing very differently. Even though MLs sometimes lack linguistic proficiency, they use their subject knowledge to enhance their style, content, and ideas. No doubt their grammar, syntax, and phraseology are wanting, however, in their idea development, originality, and critical thinking, MLs tend to excel. Therefore, MLs are not without resources, and, most often, they draw on other languages to fulfil their communicative needs (Zamel & Spack, 2006). Thus, approaching MLs from an Academic Literacies perspective (ALP) facilitates learning where MLs are assets rather than deficits.

As indicated in other studies, another challenge that MLs face is how they are perceived by educators and school administrators. The latter often perceive MLs by their native country identities rather than by their US or Canadian identities (Street, 2003). Merely looking at their US/Canadian identities is limiting to an MLs' voice and confidence. To counter this challenge, equitable spaces are created where MLs can contribute socially, culturally, linguistically, and where they can feel a sense of belonging (Kostogriz & Godley, 2007). This calls for a reevaluation of the way ML literacy is taught and for a rethinking of schools' roles in the lives of MLs – a significant development towards the facilitation of an ALP (Hornberger, 2007).

To take a deeper look, MLs face further challenges in the classroom, specifically the way they are judged linguistically and intellectually. In the academic writing classrooms, MLs benefit from patient, sensitive, and encouraging teachers (Zamel, 2000). MLs want to know about the positive and negative aspects of their work. However, despite MLs' effort, which far exceeds the quality of their writing (Zamel, 2000), students feel misjudged both linguistically and intellectually because of their poor linguistic capability (Marshall & Moore, 2013; Zamel, 2000). Thus, their limited abilities in English are often erroneously perceived as representative of their intellectual abilities and character, that is, as a sign of their laziness or carelessness. Such misconceptions could be corrected through face-to-face conferences with MLs to clarify the issues that they encountered while completing an assignment.

Likewise, receiving appropriate feedback is yet another challenge for multilingual learners (MLs). Timely feedback on assignments encourages MLs to explore new meanings, new ideas, new links, and new experiences, all contributing to their growth as language learners (Zamel, 2000). In this diversified context, discipline-specific courses convey information with respect to that discipline. MLs begin to understand that what works in one discipline does not

work in another and teachers make MLs aware of this uniqueness. MLs can benefit if their teachers understand that student writings are reflective of their work in progress. Constructive feedback enhances MLs' literacy progress, a key aspect in Academic Literacies instruction.

A major challenge for MLs is being treated differently because of misconceptions about their diverse backgrounds (Lauridson, 2010; Jocson & Conteh, 2008; Neito, 2002). The ALP advocates understanding and valuing MLs' sociocultural, sociopolitical, and socioeconomic backgrounds. Diversity among MLs in Academic Literacies classrooms is the norm (Hall, 2009). Devaluing or appreciating diversity in the Academic Literacies classroom can cause MLs to underperform or to excel (Jocson & Conteh, 2008). The former helps nurture, and, subsequently, strengthen ML voices. The latter, however, stifles their voices.

To conclude, MLs face multiple challenges from the teachers, the curriculum, and the institution. To assess MLs solely on their linguistic repertoire is a challenge and a disservice. Conversely, acknowledging MLs' sociocultural prowess, their ability to generate ideas, and their ability to add richness to the quality of academic instruction in academic English settings would assess all aspects of their academic performance fully and fairly. Such challenges could be alleviated and even surmounted by a teacher's patience, reflective and timely feedback, and non-judgmental approach. After discussing the first component of Academic Literacies, that is MLs, in terms of their background, personal goals, and challenges, I proceed to the exploration of the second component of Academic Literacies, the Multilinguals' teachers.

Academic Literacies and the Multilinguals' Teachers

The second component of Academic Literacies is the Multilinguals' teacher (MT). This section discusses who the MTs are, what the program goals that govern the MTs are, and, finally, what challenges they face in the ALP classroom.

Multilinguals' teachers: Definition. The most crucial difference between a Multilinguals' teacher (MT) and a teacher of academic English is that MTs look at language difference not as a departure from the norm, but as an expression of student writing in accordance with the ALP (Bartholomae, 1983). MTs question what is done in the classroom instead of trying to fit students into distinct academic boxes. Three factors of the Academic Literacies perspective dominate the way teachers' approach MLs (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). First, MTs understand today's multilingual and multicultural environments as dynamic and diverse, where MLs deserve fair treatment (Boyd et al., 2006). Second, MTs know that many kinds of Englishes exist worldwide, and that both students and teachers need to develop critical awareness about world Englishes (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). Third, MTs accept the fact that MLs are not recipients but resources in acquiring language proficiency. Here, by defining the ALP MTs, I aim to discover how they are different.

To be specific, the first distinctive characteristic of MTs is the way they view and treat multilingual learners (MLs) by employing three strategies in assisting English language learners (Hansman & Wilson, 1998). First, MTs use language-switching strategies to help MLs acquire the necessary vocabulary and sentence structure. Second, MTs pay special attention to MLs' identities expressed in MLs' writing. Third, MTs use back-and-forth modelling practices to help MLs to read and write academically because MTs understand that MLs' first language dominates their writing. The latter, most importantly, is not considered a deficit but rather a resource.

Additionally, the second distinctive feature of MTs is the role they play in the Academic Literacies perspective (ALP), specifically in five problem areas (Haggis, 2006) teachers generally face. Thus, unlike the ALP MTs, first, writing teachers do not adequately explain the processes involved in evaluation. Second, they do not accept the unusual ways students express

themselves. Third, teachers do not provide detailed explanations while outlining tasks. Fourth, teachers' language sounds too academic, thereby alienating students, and, fifth, teachers are unable to communicate the importance of the process, thus disengaging students from intrinsic learning. The ALP MTs try to correct the misguided treatment of MLs by tackling these problems through an understanding and an appreciation of learner difference, background, linguistic and other diversity as these affect the academic English classroom.

Further, a third distinctive feature of MTs is the different competencies and roles they apply in the ALP classroom (Lapp, Moss & Rowsell, 2012). First among them is critical literacy, which is a central goal of the Multilinguals' teacher who helps learners work with texts rather than with electronic mediums alone. Second, the MT plays the role of a critical discourse analyst who helps MLs examine texts for their intention and authenticity as well as question and assess the facts presented in those texts. Third, the MT introduces different kinds of texts and discourses to help learners understand and evaluate the information presented in these texts. Sometimes, learners may have a better grasp of technical information than the teacher. The MT uses this opportunity in the classroom to demonstrate that knowledge does not have to be gained from the teacher alone. Fourth, the MT provides MLs with feedback and, thus, helps learners understand the different ways information can be presented, without demeaning or discouraging their efforts. In sum, the ALP MTs' critical literacy competencies lead to enabling their students to ask questions, reflect, evaluate, and construct knowledge based on their lived experiences as well as understand and appreciate different points of view as diverse ways of presenting the truth.

Further, a fourth distinctive feature of the MTs consists in their use of key presentation strategies in the ALP classroom (Cruz, 2004). First, MTs explain the abstract concepts of

argument and the connections in academic writing through visuals (e.g., tables and charts). Second, MTs simplify the language they use so that MLs from diverse cultures and proficiency levels may comprehend their teachers' explanations and clarifications. Third, MTs provide MLs with opportunities to demonstrate paraphrasing, exemplification, critiquing, questioning, and analyzing in the process of Academic Literacies instruction (Cruz, 2004). Thus, the ALP MTs make academic concepts accessible to MLs.

In addition, a fifth distinctive feature of the MTs in the Academic Literacies instruction is that they model tutoring, coaching, and scaffolding to ensure fruitful learning through extensive practice (Hansman & Wilson, 1998) that initiates learners into academic traditions (Jacobs, 2012). They encourage students to learn specific ways of thinking, notice specific modes of writing, and develop a critical stance about the way knowledge is conceived, received, and presented. They help students to use texts, to summarize, analyze, synthesize, and refine their own knowledge boundaries to get initiated into the academy. MTs teach students summary, analysis, documentation styles, types of argument, the structure of argumentative writing, using evidence to strengthen their essays' argumentation explicitly (Graff & Birkenstein, 2010), all with a focus on making MLs critique these conventions. As argumentation either strengthens or weakens an argument, they encourage their students to reflect on these aspects of argumentation (Jacobs, 2012).

In closing, a final sixth distinctive feature of MTs is their use of different types of texts, both printed and multimodal, such as visual images and audio files. MTs use the print and electronic versions of texts from newspapers and magazines as well as a range of other aids, such as podcasts, videos, and digital texts from games which contributes to learning about discourse types and the acquisition of disciplinary knowledge (Jacobs, 2012). In using various text types,

MTs often have to experiment with multimodal texts in the Academic Literacies classroom by engaging their students in using video games to learn about text structures (Steinkuehler, 2010), in collaborating with specific online communities to learn with and from peers (Black, 2005; Chandler-Olcott, & Mahar, 2003), and in employing storytelling techniques to refine the processing and presentation of ideas (Jacobs, 2012). Such use of digital texts opens spaces for MLs to interpret information in a variety of ways (Jacobs, 2012; Archer, 2006) and to expand their ways of identifying with the text as an integral part of Academic Literacies instruction, rather than an add-on (Jacobs, 2012). After an analysis of the distinct features of the ALP MTs, it would be important to examine the way they apply ALP principles in pursuing program goals to meet institutional requirements.

Multilinguals' teachers: Program goals. The central issue that differentiates multilinguals' teachers (MTs) from other academic English teachers is that MTs "preserve but refocus" academic practices (Bartholomae, 1993) as a main academic literacy goal. For MTs, the focus of education shifts from the importance of process to the importance of learning, an issue at the heart of the Academic Literacies instruction (Hall, 2009; Haggis, 2006). Generally, academic English teachers rely on processes established by their respective institutions and not on instructional methods that target their students' needs. MTs turn this dichotomy around to prioritize the MLs' needs in adopting learning- and learner-centered ways of reading, writing, and thinking. Furthermore, MTs simplify learning processes to make them transparent and avoid the overarching and overwhelming standards which MLs are subjected to (Haggis, 2006). Central academic issues such as plagiarism and language/cultural interference are revisited and reconceptualized to render academic writing doable and conceivable for MLs and to bridge the divide between teacher and learner.

In addition, a key difference between academic English teachers and Multilingual Literacies teachers lies in their treatment of academic competence as a goal of academic literacy development. The ALP Multilinguals' teachers associate academic competence with the MLs' understanding the power dynamic of their own writing in comparison with others' writing in the relevant field (Blommaert & Horner, 2017). The MT views academic competence as a dynamic process constantly changing target rather than as a static product meeting a definite target. Thus, MTs set learning outcomes by articulating fluid targets. They also help MLs to do research in EAP classrooms by asking them to annotate and analyze sources in terms of their arguments and in terms of their validity, reliability, and authenticity (Cumming, Lai & Cho, 2016).

Furthermore, Multilinguals' teachers (MTs) conceptualize feedback as an educational goal differently. In their experience, teacher feedback is intended to tell students what works and what does not work in their papers (Zamel, 2000). Such teacher feedback is combined with students' examination of their own papers (Zamel, 2000) as well as with peer feedback. Consequently, in addition to receiving teacher feedback, multilingual learners (MLs) are writers and editors of their own and their peers' work, all constituting a richer MLs' experience in the academic English classroom. MTs also question the meaning of feedback leaving surface-level errors to the students, commenting on the development of ideas, and complimenting students on their writing success (Zamel, 2000).

A further educational goal pursued by MTs is task design. Metacognitive assignments help multilingual learners (MLs) to think about what they are learning and how the new information impacts their prior knowledge and understanding (Zamel, 2000). The ALP MTs provide students with numerous tasks focusing on their learning process rather than on the knowledge thus acquired. MTs promote a sense of community through collaborative discussions

and projects and value building activities, such as journals, reflective tasks, or short end-of-lesson writing tasks that prepare students for the following day's lesson (Zamel, 2000). Another task used by MTs is assigning personal reflections that are descriptive, comparative, or critical (Jay & Johnson, 2002). The first, that is the descriptive reflection, engages students with their contexts. The second, or the comparative reflection, requires students to reflect on conflicting sides of the issues under consideration. The third one, the critical reflection, involves students in assessing their course, its goals and learning outcomes, as well as critically analyze their own educational development, its benefits and pitfalls.

Finally, unlike an academic English teacher, the ALP MT sets pragmatic rather than grammatic goals (Zamel & Spack, 2006). In that, MTs consider MLs' cultural and metacognitive awareness a component of their linguistic competency, aiding them in building on their previous diverse experiences (Jenkins, 2005) even though they know it to be a long and uneven process where MLs acquire linguistic proficiency gradually through learning creativity and critical thinking (Cruz, 2004; Molle, 2015). For the purposes of this study, and after a general discussion of the way the ALP MTs understand and conceptualize program goals, it would be crucial to examine the specific institutional goals of the college ESL program selected as this study's site. Such an examination would help understand the study's participants' academic literacy practices and perceptions which are at the core of this study.

Program goals of the Toronto College ESL program. The ESL program in the Toronto College targets specific learning outcomes. Students are placed into Foundations, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) based on their placement test scores or on their IELTS (International English Language Test System) scores. At the completion of each level, students are expected to have reached the set number of learning

outcomes for that level, all articulated in terms of the four skill areas of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Similarly, classes are designed as skills-focused courses: Reading, Writing, Vocabulary, Listening, Speaking, Grammar, and Pronunciation. At the higher levels of Advanced English and EAP, students also learn note-taking skills, considered crucial for post-secondary education.

The Toronto College's ESL program is an Intensive English Program where students learn English 23 hours a week from three teachers. On the completion of each 14-week level, students are expected to be able to read, write, converse, and comprehend basic, moderate, moderately complex, or advanced language, respectively. The program goals for each level build on one another to prepare ESL speakers for the post-secondary requirements of higher education in Ontario. They are in keeping with the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) adopted in Canada. The ESL Program takes students at the lowest levels of two and three and helps them get to level seven, considered adequate for academic communication in post-secondary education in Canada (Guardado, 2012). As it is clear from this brief summary of the Toronto College's ESL program's goals and from the overview of the various academic literacy approaches included in this chapter, far from the provisions of the Academic Literacies perspective (ALP), the Toronto College's ESL program seems to subscribe to a mixed approach that combines components of the single-noun academic literacy and the academic skills approach.

Having discussed the program goals of the context of the study, a related aspect is the institutional goals for intensive English programs in Ontario.

Institutional goals of the Toronto College ESL program. As mentioned in the previous section, each institution in Ontario has to follow the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) a system set into place for all the twenty-three community colleges in Ontario. According to these

guidelines, students who study in intensive English programs must conform to the twelve benchmarks which are sub-divided into three stages (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012). Each stage relates to a level of progression in the learners' path of learning from initial ability to ultimately being fluent in English.

In the first stage termed basic, non-demanding contexts of language use, (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012) it encompasses abilities that are needed to communicate in common predictable situations, common daily activities, and familiar topics of individual relevance.

In the second stage, termed intermediate, moderately demanding contexts of language use, (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012) it encompasses abilities that are needed to communicate independently in wider contexts, be it in the social sphere, in the educational sphere or in the workplace sphere.

In the third stage, termed advanced, demanding contexts of language use, (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012) it encompasses abilities that are needed to communicate appropriately in a wide range of contexts and situations, from known to unknown, from general to specific, from specific to distinctive. Learners are aware of context, audience, tone and style and are exposed to communicative contexts that are high-stake or high-risk in social, academic or work-related situations and contexts (Canadian Language Benchmarks, 2012).

A factor of significance is that learners could be at different benchmark stages in the four language areas (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). With these CLB standards in mind, institutions put pressure on intensive English programs in terms of formative and summative assessments, which in turn, put pressure on ESL teachers who have to work within these parameters.

Having discussed the institutional goals of the context of this study, the next aspect of the Multilinguals' teachers that warrants attention are the challenges faced by the MTs as they engage with multilingual learners.

Multilinguals' teachers: Challenges. There are significant challenges that Multilinguals' teachers face in developing multilingual learners' (MLs') academic literacy. These are related to incorporating student backgrounds and identities, understanding adult low-proficiency-level writing, shifting power dynamic in computer classrooms, accommodating the use of L1 in academic classes, reconciling student needs and institutional requirements, and designing effective feedback and drafts for MLs. The first challenge, accepting and appreciating student backgrounds and identities, addresses MTs' attempt at involving their students in the learning process and acknowledging their home backgrounds, diverse identities, native languages, and cultures (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). Instead of merely applying the best-practices model for teaching English, ALP MTs question monolingual notions of fixed literacy. Such questioning becomes problematic in a dominant western environment where MLs are seen from a deficit perspective. Though MTs advocate a multiliteracies perspective whereby English is taught and learnt with a critical eye to curriculum goals and expectations, pursuing the ALP is difficult. MTs and MLs are meant to not only challenge accepted notions of literacy but engage in meaningful dialogue with sociocultural and sociopolitical implications of learning English (He, Vetter & Fairbanks, 2014) which is problematic.

MTs also face another daunting challenge related to interpreting an adult learner's writing (Bartholomae, 1980). MTs realize that adult multilingual learners (MLs) may be beginners in academic writing, but their thoughts, emotions, and feelings are not childlike. However, academic English teachers can be dismissive of erroneous student texts. The danger is that the

ALP MTs could fall into the familiar pattern of error correction typical for other approaches. MTs' dilemma lies in focusing on the learner texts' content and messages rather than on the mistakes. MTs try not to be "gatekeepers" but, rather, to deconstruct adult learners' writing by paying attention to meaning and intent rather than to grammatical accuracy (Bartholomae, 1980). This is a noble ideal, but it may not be easily accomplished in practice as MLs have both fluency and accuracy errors. The challenge is to devise a system that works for both MTs and MLs.

Further, the power dynamic in the ESL classroom has always been an area of concern in ESL education where, due to the teachers' advanced knowledge of the language, their authority remains unquestioned. The challenge for the MTs relates to sharing power with MLs, especially in the computer classroom. Successful Academic Literacies learning in the computer lab classroom takes place if the MTs are willing to forego their authority and let MLs engage in dialogues about the writing processes (Hansman & Wilson, 1998). In an ALP classroom, power needs to be negotiated and deliberated upon – a challenging area for the MTs because in ESL classrooms roles depend on language proficiency.

Similarly, MTs face the challenge of MLs' first language (L1) use in the classroom. When teachers allow MLs to use languages other than English in the ALP classroom, MLs show their flexibility to use multiple languages critically (Canagarajah, 2011). That is easier said than done as codeswitching, especially between L1 and L2, could lead to a permanent L1 switch. Thus, what is at issue here, is not whether or not to use L1. It is rather how to incorporate the use of L1 for the benefit of MLs' L2 development. One such opportunity is for MLs to engage in reading and writing about readings. MTs help multilingual learners (MLs) realize that readings are not only important for vocabulary building and comprehension but are meant for connecting present knowledge with past experiences, past bodies of knowledge, and past contexts. MTs

promote discussions but know when, why, and where to rein in these discussions remains a challenge. Similar to possessing language capital, MTs are also aware of Bourdieu's concepts of social, cultural, and economic capital (Arnold, 2015). The critical point to note is that those who have gained social, economic and cultural capital wish to maintain their superiority. In the context of education, MTs with more experience maintain their authority and resist new thinking and ways of operation as they are threatened, which poses another challenge.

Additionally, MTs face the challenge of modifying their instruction to suit MLs and the specific context as well as reconcile conflicting MLs' needs and institutional requirements. In that respect, error correction is particularly problematic. Academic English teachers emphasize error correction and feedback in academic English classrooms for their own sake. MTs, on the other hand, focus on making error correction beneficial and meaningful to the MLs (Zamel, 2000). MTs keep in mind that in the Academic Literacies classroom, writing is a difficult activity where MLs are out of their comfort zone. When MTs relate readings to MLs' prior experiences, they are pleased to see the diversity of associations that activity brings about (Zamel, 2000). Thus, engaging MLs in activities that are situated in student-related contexts helps accomplish both personal and institutional academic goals.

Another major challenge that MTs face is that of providing feedback and defining drafts for MLs' assignments. Thinking of their low-proficiency MLs, MTs realize that for them, writing in English is a mammoth effort. A sensitive point is the issue of feedback and drafts. In one type of feedback, MTs offer idea development feedback first, and leave mechanics feedback last (Zamel, 2000). Assignment drafts are usually kept to three drafts where draft one focuses on idea development, draft two - on paragraph development, and, draft three - on mechanics. In this way, MLs are more focused on developing their ideas first and worry about mechanics last. To gain a

fuller picture of the Academic Literacies perspective, and after examining the Multilinguals' teachers' professional identity, program goals, curricular challenges, it would be beneficial for the purposes of this study to explore the Academic Literacies curriculum's content, impact, and challenges.

Academic Literacies Curriculum

The third component of Academic Literacies is the curriculum. In this section, I define the ALP curriculum, explore its impact, and evaluate the challenges it faces.

Academic literacies curriculum: Definition. The curriculum of an Academic Literacies perspective (ALP) defines the relationship between Multilinguals' teachers (MTs) and Multilingual learners (MLs) in their classroom interactions. ALP emphasizes the fact that the primary focus on the language curriculum has been marked by a lesser attention to issues of student identity construction in the process of their migration from their native countries to other places around the world (Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010). That oversight initiated the ALP movement towards transforming the ESL classroom from a dead site into a living dynamic place (Street, 2013). Consequently, aspects of MLs' equity and diversity are further reflections of MLs' mobility and immobility in the Academic Literacies perspective (Tapp, 2015; Scott, Blommaert, Street & Turner, 2007). The latter accepts learner mobility as a complex process comprising human, economic, and social aspects. It defines learning as three converging components, that is, place, path, and time, all of which collectively matter, and none can be excluded because they all affect learning (Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010). Most important, as a confluence of these, the classroom, however, is not a reservoir, nor a container of learning, it is only a place marked by the points in time on MLs' learning path (Leander, Phillips, & Taylor, 2010).

The above view of the classroom as the site of individual MLs' learning trajectories allows scholars to reveal significant learning inequities leading to the exclusion of many learners from the conversation. Academic Literacies researchers question the accessibility of the classroom for MLs who have difficulty finding spaces to draft their own learning trajectories (Leander, Phillips & Taylor, 2010). As a result, it becomes clear that the classroom may not be a place where people use resources but, rather, where resources use people. Consequently, they emphasize the way the non-human aspects of learning assume significance and have far-reaching effects on the learning trajectories of the diverse MLs entering Academic Literacies classrooms worldwide.

Therefore, ALP researchers endorse the rethinking and reevaluation of teaching Academic Literacies (Scott, Blommaert, Street & Turner, 2007). They encourage teachers to support students' questioning and discussing Academic Literacies in class. They also acknowledge that regarding written assignments, institutions are restrictive in that they do not grant teachers the flexibility of designing syllabi that can address the above concerns. However, ALP researchers advocate that teachers question the unconditional propagation of academic traditions. For example, if course outcomes do not specify that, teachers could question requirements that mandate that an academic research essay be formatted according to the MLA or APA documentation style. At present, even though through a critical lens, the Academic Literacies perspective still emphasizes the established power dynamic, but, also, strongly encourages teachers to question, challenge, and critique current systems. When this happens, the Academic Literacies perspective could become a truly transformative pedagogy.

In addition to the classroom as a learning site, the ALP curriculum pays special attention to MLs' roles in academic English classrooms. When reading, MLs are asked to write down their

thoughts in preparation for the discussion activities preceding writing (Zamel, 2000). In this process, they learn to sift through, organize, and prioritize their ideas, preparing for the ensuing class discussion on the assigned reading (Zamel, 2000). However, to complete successfully written work in an academic writing class, MLs also need familiarity with the required body of knowledge and context as well as the opportunity to draw on their prior experiences (Zamel, 2000). MTs are advised to consider offering the assistance and feedback MLs need before they submit the final product. Such critical self-questioning by teachers would transform writing tasks into dynamic activities (Zamel, 2000). Thus, the ALP curriculum pays special attention to the dual process of learning to write and writing to learn while critiquing the current academic conventions. Following the discussion of the ALP's content, it would be useful to consider its educational impact.

Academic literacies curriculum: Impact. The Academic Literacies perspective is important as it impacts all curriculum components, that is MTs, MLs, and the ML classroom. Its relevance is manifold. It affects the conceptualization of academic writing skills in general, and, that of the strategies of developing audience, purpose, and context awareness, specifically. Furthermore, on a larger conceptual scale, Academic Literacies perspective (ALP) constitutes a mindset and an attitude of understanding and adapting to the shifting linguistic landscapes. Thus, teachers change their instructional approach to respond to evolving instructional means, mediums, and messages (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004). Even though the ALP views Academic Literacies as sociocultural practices situated in digital and multimodal settings (Street 1984), post-secondary institutions are still resorting to traditional curricular practices.

Specifically, curriculum researchers believe that ALP-based literacy education at school, college, and university would have the greatest impact on preparing students for the present and

future times (Lapp, Moss & Rowsell, 2012) as writing audience, purpose, and contexts continue to shift and expand (Miller, Kostogriz & Gearson, 2009), and as academic literacy is viewed as part of a broader area of learning including varied institutional curriculum and personal life factors (Molle, 2015). However, Molle admits these factors may be linked to individual institutional demands on students on the one hand, and, on the other, to personal student lived experiences as part of their developmental, critical, multicultural, or interpersonal growth (2015).

Additionally, the ALP curriculum impacts MLs' learning both in-class and out-of-class by incorporating the use of technologies for different purposes and by allowing for MLs' visual, aural, and virtual interactions, thus facilitating the crossing of transnational and transcultural boundaries in an increasingly global world. However, the ALP acknowledges that while technology is available to many students, their engagement with it depends on their financial, political, and geographical positioning which may put them at a disadvantage. Given this, MTs, scholars, and educators consider optimal ALP pedagogical solutions for specific educational contexts in academic writing and across disciplines (Wargo & De Costa, 2017). Studies document that when applied across disciplines, ALP-inspired tasks, such as journals, reflective responses, letters, and other metacognitive tasks, could change scholars' perceptions of MLs' writing (Zamel & Spack, 2006). MTs noted that after shifting their focus from errors to ideas, they could view MLs as critical thinkers and authentic writers.

In addition, the ALP impacts the writing curriculum by adding a fresh realistic view of the ESL classroom in acknowledging the present state of instruction with MLs in oversized classes, burdened by standardized tests, and bundled together despite their abysmal literacy level. Thus, ALP calls for a reworking of the way literacy instruction is conducted in schools to overcome the difficulties MLs face inside and outside school. The latter would assume student

engagement in classroom matters as well as in policy making, which is a central aspect of Academic Literacies instruction (Hornberger, 2007).

Moreover, the ALP impacts literacy education in yet another way. It acknowledges the crucial importance of the learners' autonomy in shaping their education, as in what, when, and where to learn (Mc Williams & Allan, 2014). Since every student enters university with diverse levels of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986), an ALP helps students to determine the level of assistance they require (Moles & Wishart, 2016). By offering a broadened perspective on how, why, and what MLs write, ALP calls for a re-envisioning of literacy goals and content in present globalized contexts (Wargo & De Costa, 2017). As MLs negotiate sociocultural justice and equity, the Academic Literacies perspective foregrounds these processes in the academic writing classroom. Thus, the ALP impacts all aspects of the writing curriculum, and, in sync with the dynamic of our times, advocates for changes that benefit both MTs and MLs. However, in that, the ALP encounters its own share of challenges which I examine in the next section.

Academic literacies curriculum: Challenges. The very attempt at introducing change in a rather conservative literacy education setting already presupposes questioning and opposition, which is the greatest challenge to the Academic Literacies perspective (ALP). In that, ALP is not alone. It counters questions that are common in other disciplines as well. Some of these questions address these issues: the multiple curricular challenges in MLs' education; the prior knowledge and experience MTs bring to this scenario; MTs' expectations about their students; MTs' engagement with student improvement; promoting MLs' learning through collaborative discussion; the content and assessment of MLs' writing; and, the MLs' writing assignments design that helps MLs understand and overcome their errors. In addressing these issues, the MT

rises to the challenge as a language specialist who assists other teachers in creating an academic English curriculum for a diverse group of students (Zamel & Spack, 2006).

A significant challenge of the English curriculum, of literacy education, and of ALP specifically, English proficiency and performance is a serious concern in ESL classrooms and in Canadian post-secondary classrooms in general because of the large number of MLs in each class. The problem is aggravated by multiple difficulties in ESL settings across disciplines, such as the MLs' sense of alienation and the MTs' lack of professional preparation. However, the ALP curriculum seeks to resolve these challenges by using MLs' personal experiences as the subject of class discussions and by promoting an acceptance of the various kinds of MLs' world Englishes. Through such activities, MLs understand that academic English is not just a single authorized variety to the exclusion of other varieties of English (Kim & Helphenstein, 2007). Through action research projects, MTs learn about their students' varieties of English, and, consequently, structure lessons around this newly found linguistic diversity (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). Furthermore, the impact of lower language proficiency is countered when MLs respond to texts from their own individual experiences. Thus, they bring visibility to their culture in the curriculum. (He, Vetter & Fairbanks, 2014).

Beyond these major challenges, ALP practitioners are also aware of other problems in the academic English classroom. One of these is MLs' conviction that they need to fix the accuracy of their writing before they can freely express themselves which prevents them from ever reaching the desired level of fluency of expression (Zamel, 2000). Furthermore, accuracy alone does not translate into fluency and such beliefs ultimately misfire. Yet another problem stems from expecting that MLs should come pre-programmed for their overseas experiences and education rather than embracing their diverse backgrounds (Zamel, 2000). Lastly, added to this,

each disciplinary course has its own set of assumptions, rules, and regulations, its own type of written discourse, and its own methods of knowledge gathering and knowledge production which challenges the ALP curriculum.

In closing, the Academic Literacies perspective offers exciting learning opportunities but also poses significant challenges for its teachers, learners, and curriculum. The literature review completed so far suggests that in the multicultural and multilingual Toronto College, ALP has the potential of providing a meaningful educational environment for all involved. For that, examining its MTs' knowledge of the application of the Academic Literacies perspective could yield valuable information about the specifics of such education, as experienced and as perceived.

Academic Literacies. Teacher Experiences and Perceptions

After reviewing the literature pertaining to the Academic Literacies perspective as it relates to MTs, MLs, and the ML curriculum, for the purposes of this study, below, I will address briefly the nature of teacher experiences and perceptions as they relate the MLs' academic literacies development.

In an Academic Literacies perspective-based writing education, teachers' experiences and perceptions of their teaching are a significant factor in contributing to the success of that education. Whereas teacher experiences can be examined through the exploration of teaching materials and artefacts, teacher perceptions cannot be defined in a quantitative way. Indeed, it is difficult to assess beliefs and perceptions because they comprise one's judgment and evaluation of one's surrounding world, of others and of themselves in this world (Dilts, 1999). In this study, examining teacher experiences and perceptions is important as multilinguals' teachers (MTs) instruct and interact with their students, the multilingual learners (MLs). The Academic

Literacies teachers' experiences and perceptions of their role in this process is vital as teacher perceptions are a valuable construct in teaching and in teacher education (Dilts, 1999). However, human perceptions, human experiences, and beliefs are difficult to conceptualize (Pintrich, 1990) because they are subjective and cannot be determined statistically, thus, they are rather elusive, problematic, as well as composed of different notions in composite clusters (Pajares, 1999). Nevertheless, qualitatively documenting what teachers have to say about MLs' Academic Literacies' development is one way of learning about the academic English classroom (Ertmer, 2005). Documentation from the field and perceptions of the professionals at the forefront of the action give researchers a keen edge (Ertmer, 2005).

The main difference between teacher experiences and teacher perceptions is that teacher experiences signify what teachers do and teacher perceptions signifies what teachers think they do. In this study, the interviews conducted with the teacher participants at the site, enumerate their experiences as they recounted them to the researcher. The surveys and the reflections, on the other hand, account for the perceptions of the teacher participants as they elucidated their perceptions to the researcher.

An added difficulty of analyzing experiences, beliefs and perceptions is that they are both personal and professional and give researchers a glimpse into the cognition of teachers who experience and respond to the MLs in the academic English classroom (Murphy, 2000). Yet another perspective of beliefs or perceptions is that what teachers reflect in the classroom are an amalgamation of their core values, their attitudes, their expectations, their theories and their assumptions about teaching (Ertmer, 2005; Richards & Lockhart, 1994). Experiences and Perceptions are thus unique and documenting them could help teachers and educators in

understanding the benefits and caveats of the pedagogical approaches available for adoption in the multilingual and multicultural classrooms in a power-ridden world.

Chapter Summary

This chapter discusses the theoretical background to the study of the Academic Literacies perspective applied in the writing education of multilingual learners. It first discusses the epistemological nature of the term Academic Literacies. It then defines Academic Literacies and identifies factors that differentiate the plural-noun Academic Literacies perspective from the single-noun academic literacy and its related approaches. It further analyzes the distinctive features of the Academic Literacies perspective in juxtaposition with other approaches, that is, the skills approach, the academic socialization approach, the digital approach, and the translingual approach. Additionally, it elaborates on the distinctive components of the Academic Literacies approach – the multilinguals, the teachers, and the curriculum. Further, it describes how each component is affected by the approach. Finally, it examines teacher perceptions and shows their relevance to the study.

The following Chapter 3 discusses the methodology of the study. Specifically, teacher perceptions are analyzed with respect to developing the Academic Literacies in multilingual learners. The researcher's paradigm, and how the researcher is a methodological tool are examined. It also examines the suitability of conducting this study using a mixed-method approach. Furthermore, the design of the study is discussed together with the participants and the research site. Additionally, how data will be collected and analyzed is elaborated on. It finally discusses the validity of the study and concludes with a chapter summary.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

After analyzing the literature on the Academic Literacies perspective as it relates to the components of literacy education, that is the multilinguals' teachers (MTs), the multilingual learners (MLs), and the ML curriculum in Chapter 2, in this chapter, I provide a detailed explanation and justification of the methodology to be used in this study. First, I start by reiterating the research questions. Then, I explain my paradigm and my stance with respect to this study. Next, I outline the nature of the research as a qualitative study. In addition, I articulate the study's design: the research site, the participants, the data collection methods and analysis, and the probable risks and benefits that might affect the participants in this study. Finally, I conclude this chapter with a summary that highlights the core aspects of this study's design.

The purpose of the study is to investigate teacher experiences and perceptions of the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs). Since MLs constitute a large population in Canadian academic English classrooms, it would be compelling to find out from the teachers about the Academic Literacies MLs bring to the classroom. What are the teachers' experiences and perceptions of developing the Academic Literacies of MLs, in their ESL classrooms? This study is a step towards answering these questions.

Research Questions

In this study, I examine teacher experiences and perceptions of the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners. For that, I ask these research questions:

1. What are ESL teachers' reported experiences of developing the academic literacies of multilingual learners?

2. What are ESL teachers' reported perceptions of developing the academic literacies of multilingual learners?

Researcher's Paradigm

From its inception and design to its execution, a research project is guided by the way the researcher conceives and imagines the world. Thus, research is shaped by the way a researcher conceives or envisions the surrounding world (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Creswell, 2007; McKay, 2006; Guba, 1990). A qualitative research study is, thus, an interpretation of the researcher's epistemology, or worldview. In this study, the researcher employs a social constructivist view (Creswell, 2007) to the study's design and data interpretation. Therefore, from a social constructivist position, this researcher seeks to understand the surrounding world and develop a subjectivity of meaning and experience to uncover a multiplicity of ideas or categories rather than narrow down the meaning of that experience into a few categories or ideas (Creswell, 2007).

In addition, as discussed earlier, the study's emphasis is on eliciting the participants' thoughts and ideas. Through the research questions, I seek to gain insights into what teachers experience in their classrooms as they seek to develop the Academic Literacies of their multilingual learners as well as understand how they perceive the development of the Academic Literacies of their multilingual learners (MLs). Thus, a social constructivist perspective applied to the study's design, data collection, and data analysis suits the study's purpose best (Creswell, 2007).

The Researcher as a Methodological Tool

In a mixed-method study, the role of the researcher is significant because of the way he/she interacts with the participants during data collection and data analysis (Creswell, 2007;

Marshall & Rossman, 2011). The researcher often becomes the instrument upon which the methodology of the entire study is based (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Similarly, my role in this study deserves exemplification. Consistently throughout my research process, I adhered to three principles regarding my treatment of the study's participants (Patton, 2002): being friendly and trustworthy, making the purpose of this study transparent, and getting involved in the study either intensively or extensively. First, to gain access to their thoughts and ideas, I participated in the lives of my study's participants (Patton, 2002). Given that the study's participants are my colleagues, I maintained a transparent approach to them and created a congenial atmosphere which is crucial to the study. When they answered the questions from the survey, responded to the interview questions, and completed their reflections, a formal air might have caused an artificiality in their responses which needed to be avoided at all costs (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Thus, while interacting with the participants, I needed to keep in mind that to obtain rich and reliable data, I must gain the participants' trust in a friendly atmosphere.

The second principle I adhered to is the extent to which I revealed the purpose of my study to the participants (Patton, 2002). I intended to be transparent about the study's focus, intention, and purpose to prevent a potential danger in qualitative studies resulting from the participants' guarded responses. The latter might have undermined the purposes of my research study (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). It was imperative that the participants knew exactly what is expected of them and what the study focused on because they are my colleagues and the issue investigated is sensitive as it relates to our jobs as part-time teachers.

The third principle I adhered to is the extent to which I was involved in the study either extensively or intensively (Patton, 2002). To ensure the authentic responses, I intended to have an intensive role throughout the study, that is in my email and face-to-face communication

related to the survey, the interviews, and the reflections. When interacting with the participants, I ensured that they felt comfortable and unthreatened by this research project. In my email and face-to-face interactions, I paid special attention to the language I used which must contribute to and not take away from the study. Given that this research study is about multilingual learners' (MLs') literacies development, I needed to treat participants carefully. Using technical phraseology, assuming a superior stance, or being too formal would have defeated the purpose of my study which was to document teacher experiences and perceptions in as natural an environment as could be envisaged (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Denzin, 1997).

Rationale for Mixed-Method Approach

The nature and the focus of this study rested on the participants' experiences and perceptions of the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs). Research states that compared to other approaches, a mixed-method was more suitable for examining participants' experiences and perceptions and the way their views were affected by micro and macro factors in their specific environments (Gray, Williamson, Karp and Dalphin, 2007; Northey, Tepperman & Rusell, 2006; Fontane & Frey, 2000; Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Tashkkori & Teddlie 1998; and Frechtling, Sharp & Westat, 1997). When compared to either the quantitative or the qualitative approach alone, a mixed-method research was better suited for this study because it allowed researchers to learn more about an issue from different perspectives and through a combination of research paradigms which led to significant insights (Creswell, 2009). When combined, quantitative and qualitative approaches complement each other to the best results (Northey, Tepperman & Rusell, 2006).

In this study, I followed a mixed-method approach to analyze and interpret the data with certain specifiers in mind, namely, how effective and how appropriate the data is for fulfilling

the study's purposes. My primary focus was on capturing my participants' experiences and views of their teaching context as it relates to their MLs' literacies development. The participants' responses to the questions in the survey are quantifiable facts that could be analyzed quantitatively to gain an insight into the participants' roles as teachers, their learners' roles, the role of the activities and materials, and the academic competencies thus achieved. Therefore, a quantitative analysis of these data would yield a richer and fuller picture of the phenomenon under examination. However, the participants' responses from their interviews and reflections would allow the researcher to explore their perceptions of their MLs' literacies development in depth. Here, the researcher is more interested in recording the participants' statements holistically rather than in gleaning the discrete numerical value of their responses (Maxwell, 1996). Therefore, a qualitative analysis would be more effective in analyzing and interpreting the perceptions -based data. Thus, this study employed a mixed quantitative-qualitative method in analyzing its data in response to its research questions. The role of each of these methods is explicated below.

Quantitative Analysis

In this study, the quantitative approach was used to collect the data from the survey and analyze it numerically. The participants' statements about the role of the various components of the Academic Literacies perspective were subjected to a numeric interpretation. For that, using frequency counts, a quantitative analysis of the participants' responses to the survey were tabulated. Quantifying participant responses made the data rich and afforded a fuller picture of the issues under examination by producing a representative sample of the target population (Gray, Williamson, Karp & Dalphin, 2007). Further, by employing multiple measures from theoretical concepts, it also added strength to the evidence (Northey, Tepperman & Russell,

2002). Added to the quantitative approach, the study was supplemented by a qualitative content analysis to collect and analyze the data gained from the participants' face-to-face interviews and reflections.

Qualitative Analysis

As mentioned earlier, this study used a qualitative approach to analyze, interpret, and discuss the data gained from the participants' face-to-face interviews and reflections. It required the researcher to document the participants' experiences, stories, observations, and interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) and process qualitatively the data reflecting the participants' perceptions of their MLs' literacies development. As scholars have indicated, participant perceptions are socioculturally constructed and reconstructed (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Denzin & Lincoln, 2008; Creswell, 2007; and Patton, 2002), and, thus, the data representing those perceptions would be best processed qualitatively. Furthermore, the qualitative method was suitable for this study's data analysis because it was naturalistic in that it saw people in their natural settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) and portrayed truth as was seen by the study's participants.

To take a deeper look, this study intended to examine the macro and micro factors that shaped or reshaped its participants' perceptions. Its goals warranted a qualitative methodology that examined issues in their natural environments and made sense of the participants' understanding of their surrounding contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008) through documenting the meaning of their actions, thoughts, perceptions, and the researcher's presentation of this meaning (Cresswell, 2013; Hoepfl, 1997). The important point in such qualitative studies was to showcase the views of the study's participants and not to endorse the researcher's or the field's views (Creswell, 2013). In that, qualitative studies benefited from in-depth quotes, careful observation,

and specific detail (Paton, 1980) provided in a holistic and open-ended emic perspective (Mackay & Gass, 2005).

To conclude, this study utilized a mixed quantitative-qualitative method in exploring MTs' experiences and perceptions of their MLs' academic literacies development. The study's methodology determined its research design.

Research Design

Having discussed the study's focus, paradigm, research approach, and research methodology, it is logical to state the research procedures followed throughout the study. In the subsequent sections, I provide insights on the participants and the criteria by which they are selected. Next, I discuss the features of the research site where the study will be conducted. Then, I move onto the explanation of the methods employed in data collection and data analysis.

Research Participants

Choosing participants who share similar features, qualifications, qualities, and capabilities is crucial in qualitative studies (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Cresswell, 2007). The researcher chooses participants who inform and understand the research problem and provide a central phenomenon to the study. The researcher decides on the specifics of the sample: the size, the location, and the form. In keeping with these specifications, I invited a purposeful sample of participants who possessed the qualities that best served the purpose of the study. I invited the teachers of the ESL department of Toronto College to be participants in my study. The ESL department consists of teachers who are Canadian citizens and permanent residents from 13 countries, that is, Brazil, Bulgaria, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Jamaica, Korea, Malaysia, Poland, Pakistan, Russia, and the Ukraine (Languages Canada, 2016). The teachers had varying levels of experience. Some had just started their career while others were veterans in teaching MLs. On

average, the teachers teach about 14 hours per week, twelve contact hours and two hours of computer lab where students work on online projects. There are plenty of online and textbook resources available to faculty. Faculty are encouraged to share their expertise, new lesson ideas, or worksheets on a shared drive, which is accessible to all ESL faculty. Having worked in Toronto College for four years, I find the spirit of the college vibrant, collegial, and supportive.

Research Site

As mentioned earlier, my research was conducted in Toronto College, which is highly populated with immigrant students and offers many programs to help them get acclimatized with the Canadian environment. Toronto College has a total of 22,066 full-time students and 3,334 part-time students across three campuses of the GTA (Greater Toronto Area). Of these students, 454 belong to the English as Second Language (ESL) department which is part of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Sciences (Languages Canada, 2016). The ESL program in Toronto College is a full-time intensive program. It has five levels: Foundations, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP) which provides students with conditional acceptance to a college diploma or a post-graduate certificate. The ESL program of Toronto College boasts of students from China, Korea, Vietnam, Africa, Colombia, the Middle East, Brazil, Venezuela, Colombia, Uruguay, Turkey, Iraq, the Ukraine, and Iran (Languages Canada, 2016). Toronto College faculty are as varied as the students themselves. The ESL program at Toronto College had humble beginnings in 2004 as part of Literacy Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) and had an initial strength of 40 students (Personal Communication). In 2018, the ESL program enrolls 454 multilingual learners from over fifteen countries. The college's ESL program also plans to incorporate service learning and experiential learning. I selected Toronto College as the site of my study because the college ESL faculty are engaged in

experimentation, innovation, and the application of best practices. I find this site appropriate for my study as both faculty and students are invested in the Academic Literacies development.

Data Collection Methods

Once the study's context and the participants are defined, the researcher could undertake a mixed-method study utilizing multiple data collection methods (Cresswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Stake, 2010; Lincoln & Denzin, 2008; Creswell, 2007). In my study, I utilized three major data collection methods: first, I collected data from a Qualtrics survey targeting the participants' experiences of their MLs' of the Academic Literacies development. Second, I used face-to-face interviews disclosing the participants' perceptions of their MLs' of the Academic Literacies development. And, third, I collected the participants' reflections of their experiences and perceptions of their MLs' Academic Literacies development. To be able to answer the study's research questions, I utilized these three data collection methods to collect the data for this study.

Survey

The first phase of my process of data collection involved a quantitative analysis of documents pertaining to the study's context (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). To be specific, via email, the participants were given a Qualtrics survey which addresses their experiences of their MLs' Academic Literacies development in the context under study. More specifically, teachers were asked to share their experiences about their ESL program, the classroom approaches they deploy to suit their multilingual students, and about the classroom dynamic of the context under study. Questions pertaining to five different areas were asked in the survey: about their role as teachers, the role of their learners, the role of the materials in the ESL classroom, the role of the activities used in the classroom, and, finally, the role of the academic literacy competencies. The

participants were encouraged to respond as ESL teachers who have the responsibility of conveying the academic English curriculum but can also see their multilingual learners struggling with the academic literacy required in the various levels of the college ESL program.

Once I had collected the data from the Qualtrics website, I examined each of the six sections and picked out significant participant responses based on their frequency counts. Responses to each section, were looked at in-depth to analyze how they were significant to the study. In order to add to the authenticity of my study, I had a peer reviewer and an external auditor examine all the survey documents related to the study.

While the survey distributed via email provided the researcher with quantitative data, the subsequent oral interviews focused on the qualitative component of this study.

Interviews

Once the teachers' responses to the survey were received and analyzed, I was ready for my second stage of data collection. I initiated face-to-face interviews with the participants in a process which is detailed below. I chose interviews as my major qualitative data collection method following information on qualitative studies, which sought to figure out and explore how certain attitudes, bodies of knowledge, and perceptions are constructed and co-constructed by members of a certain community (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Stake, 2010; Fontana & Frey, 2008; Patton, 2002). Interviews are considered a valuable and effective way for a researcher to understand fellow human beings (Fontana & Frey, 2008). Thus, related to the study's focus, interviewing is an important method of find out the participants' attitude towards and perceptions of their MLs' Academic Literacies development in in the context of the Academic Literacies conceptual framework adopted for the purposes of the study. Subsequently, the study's

participants completed face-to-face interviews (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Stake, 2010; Fontana & Frey, 2008; McKay, 2006; Patton, 2002).

For the study's second stage, each participant was invited to a face-to-face interview at the participant's choice of location, time, date, and campus location. Interview questions were constructed using the structured, semi-structured, and, finally, the unstructured format (Reinhard, 2001) based on the research questions of this study. I chose to use face-to-face interviews because they give richer data for the study (Stake, 2010). Qualitative data obtained through interviews is both valuable and unique (Stake, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2005) as it gives the researcher an aggregate perspective from many participants, and, at the same, time offers information that the researchers are not able to observe on their own.

The interviews started with a structured approach that followed the standard open-ended interview approach (Patton, 1990) where participants are asked the same set of questions, in the same order to ensure standardization during data analysis (McKay, 2006). This approach to questioning suited the purposes of this study as formatting the questions ahead of time (Stake 2010) helps align the methodology to the focus of the study. Another goal of the semi-structured questions was to keep the data aligned with the study's focus, context, and participants. The semi-structured format of questioning also helped the researcher stay in sync with the participants and obtain data on the same issue from each participant (Adler & Clark, 1999). Questions were systematically arranged to get several participants to give their views albeit in formal/informal settings (Fontana & Frey, 2008). I used the focused in-depth interviews in the second stage of the data gathering process because the data thus gathered is expected to be significant. Questions were selected through a process of purposeful intensity sampling (Paton, 1980), that is, through studying the research sample for information that is rich and informative.

The minimum sample size depended on faculty responses. I secured fourteen responses from faculty to be interviewed, so I did not follow the criteria for purposeful intensity sampling to narrow down the pool. I used all fourteen responses in this study. Additionally, I wanted to find ways where I could locate emerging patterns, or even inconsistencies in the participants' responses. To achieve this goal, it was imperative that the participants do not feel inhibited, anxious, or pressured, but, rather, feel comfortable to be able to reflect on and explain their views in their interviews. Discussion points could be different, thus, allowing the researcher to capitalize on this rich data (Fontana & Frey, 2008).

If a point emerging from the emailed survey needed further clarification, I followed an informal conversational pattern for the conclusive section of the face-to-face interview (Patton, 1980) where I could rephrase or vary the length of the question or delve in an issue related to a participant's response during the conclusive section of the face-to-face interview. If the participants were passive in their responses to the email survey, the face-to-face interview could help elicit responses and help participants articulate their views (Fontana & Frey, 2008; McKay, 2006).

Once the interviews were manually transcribed, I evaluated the participant responses to each question as each question was based on the distinctive components of the Academic Literacies perspective. For each question, I examined all fourteen responses, and picked on dominant trends in their renderings. Once I had secured the dominant threads for each question, I grouped them under sub-categories in order to analyze them effectively. In order to add to the authenticity of my study, I had a peer reviewer and an external auditor examine all the interview documents related to the study.

Reflections

The final stage of data collection included the written reflections that the participants emailed the researcher after the face-to-face interviews were conducted. Mainly, here, the participants were asked to reflect on what they found most significant in the study and the way in which their experiences in their MLs' Academic Literacies development were notable. The participants were asked whether their perceptions underwent any change while considering the development of their MLs' Academic Literacies. A final point of reflection was whether the participants envisaged any changes in the system of teaching academic literacy in their classes and the extent to which that is conceivable given the constraints of the syllabus, the institutional guidelines, and the Ontario provincial regulations.

After the participants completed their reflections, they emailed them to the researcher who sorted out their reflections according to the categories created by the distinctive components as mentioned in Chapter 2, the literature review. Reflections were grouped and regrouped by observing how the participants responded to each section of the survey or interview. The participant observations in their reflections provided another opportunity for the participants to add any information they might have missed stating in the survey or the interview. In order to add to the authenticity of my study, I had a peer reviewer and an external auditor examine all the reflection email documents related to the study.

Data Analysis

Once all data was collected, I began the process of data analysis by interpreting and discussing the data and by making sense of the research findings and the ensuing implications in a mixed quantitative-qualitative manner as discussed earlier in this chapter. Data was initially prepared and arranged according to the various types of data gathered (Cresswell, 2007). A

subsequent step was to extrapolate from the data recurring themes in a process of coding, and, then, finally, represent the data collected into figures, a tabular format, or a discussion.

For the purposes of analyzing the data from the interviews and the reflections, I used deductive content analysis to organize, classify, sort, and analyze the research data. Being available and accessible, this software made it convenient to create and code information into categories. Qualtrics helped to input data from the participants' responses to the survey. Thus, using Qualtrics helped to analyze the survey data and the data gathered from the interviews and the reflections in a process of unconstrained deductive content analysis (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). This analysis was not limited to pre-defined sets of codes but had the possibility of new categories based on what emerged from the data gathered. The codes were based on the topics, ideas, and themes found in the study (Cresswell, 2003). Data was categorized, grouped, or classified by a content analysis to arrive at a clear understanding of the situation or context (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). By organizing the data collected into categories and sub-categories, i.e. through analytical theoretical coding, data was arranged to suit the topic of the study and to further explore and clarify the relationship of the data to the research questions (Yin, 2012). Another factor which determined how the information was analyzed depended on the commonness of the information gathered. The categories were created based on having common information accounting for their significance (Krippendorff, 2013).

A unique feature of qualitative analysis is the absence of a predetermined structure for data analysis. There are no fixed tools or prescribed procedures by which the task of data analysis and the resulting discussion can be carried out (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). Data analysis is thus flexible and adaptable to suit the research study. Data can be arranged and altered till there is an adequate representation suited to the purposes of the study (Cresswell, 2003). Once data

had been interpreted and discussed effectively, the data analysis process would be successful. In a qualitative research project, the three aspects of data collection, data analysis, and reporting the findings are not distinct in and of themselves but are all integral parts of the research project as they occur simultaneously (Cresswell, 2007).

A significant issue in qualitative research is the exhaustive pile of data gathered during data collection. Qualitative researchers are customarily overwhelmed and often struggle to manage the data. Sorting through copious amounts of data and making sense of it before analyzing or discussing its significance is a huge ordeal for qualitative researchers (Patton, 1980). However, qualitative researchers can follow a series of steps to make data interpretation more manageable. The two tasks that need to be accomplished are first, reducing the data, and, then, interpreting the reduced data. There are seven steps to be followed: Organizing the data, immersion of the data, generating categories and themes, coding the data, offering interpretation by using analytical notes, searching alternate interpretation, and, writing up the report and presenting the data analyzed appropriately (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

This study followed the above seven steps in the procedures mentioned above, namely, data analysis, data interpretation, and data discussion. Once data was gathered from the survey, the face-to-face interviews, and the reflections, I filed the data electronically to make the data readily accessible. I created a separate folder for each participant where all the data from her survey, face-to-face interview, and reflection were stored. I read and reread the data to establish patterns for interpretation and discussion. Once I had a clear representation of the data, I applied the coding scheme whereby I categorized the data into emerging themes and conducted a content analysis. The themes emerged from the literature review, the participants' statements, and from the researcher's insights of (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). I reexamined the participants' data

numerous times to find patterns, associations, and similarities which helped me form categories and sub-categories, themes and sub-themes (Yin, 2012). This examination process enabled my study to be more analytical. Next, I initiated an analysis examining the extent to which the themes and sub-themes were parallel and non-parallel. For this, I utilized my research questions to function as primary categories under which the data gathered could be sorted and classified.

Once the data was classified and sorted into themes and sub-themes, I analyzed the data with reference to the literature review and the research methods adopted. This step is crucial in qualitative research as it enables the researcher to make insightful interpretations. Documenting the process through notes also makes the study richer and more valuable (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). Often, researchers do find what they originally sought out to find. At this juncture, qualitative researchers should follow a more introspective path of questioning, searching for other reasons why the data is presented in that manner. It is important for researchers to admit that alternate interpretations are possible and that they must be sought out, examined, and represented (Marshall & Rossman, 2011).

In this study, information was represented or discussed from varying perspectives. The information gathered about teacher experiences and perceptions of their MLs' Academic Literacies development is a sensitive issue especially when the norm supports the single-noun academic literacy approach. With such a sensitive issue at the study's center, I challenged accepted notions and reflected deeply on the findings regarding whether the Academic Literacies perspective in ESL college settings is a plausible option.

Validating the Study

Mixed-method studies follow specific strategies for the process of data collection, data analysis, and discussion to maximize the validity of the study. Scholars of mixed-method

research have reiterated several strategies that could help researchers make their procedures reliable and improve the validity of the results gained at the end of the study (Cresswell & Miller, 2000, Miles & Huberman, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Some of these strategies include: writing elaborate and rich descriptions of the context of the study, observing the study's participants over a long and continuous period, getting the participants to render their insightful observations on the study's results, gaining peer reviews during the research process, and asking auditors who are in no way connected to the study to reflect on the process, the procedures, the data collected and the method by which the data was analyzed and discussed. Mixed-method research specialists recommend that two of the above-mentioned strategies should be followed while validating a study (Cresswell, 2007). In this study, I followed validation procedures in three ways.

First, I validated my study by consulting colleagues in a peer-to-peer process. I scheduled meetings throughout the research process of data gathering, analysis, and discussion. My peer reviewer ensured that the procedures I followed were in keeping with the guidelines for the ethical conduct of the study. Questions about methods employed, the processes followed, the interpretations gained, the meanings rendered were scrutinized by the peer reviewer to validate the study. The peer reviewer also asked the researcher questions which might be hard to answer and was able to get the researcher to discuss the entire process of gathering, analyzing, and documenting the information gathered in this study (Cresswell, 2007).

Another strategy I followed to validate my study was to have an external auditor, who is not connected to my study, to review the study's results. Twice during the study, I had a colleague experienced in qualitative research examine the findings (Cresswell, 2007).

A final strategy I followed to validate my study is member checking (Cresswell, 2007) in which the study's participants can examine the researcher's findings and interpretations in the light of the data gathered for the study. Qualitative research experts have stressed the significance of participants' contribution to a study's accuracy and credibility (Cresswell, 2007). Once I completed the data analysis and the discussion, I invited the participants to examine the results and my interpretations and understandings of the data gathered. Participants were free to confirm their understanding, or even contribute by providing elaborations on some aspects of the results. They could even modify my understanding and have differing opinions of the conclusions reached. I ensured that participants were invited to reflect on the common themes that emerged from the analysis. It was interesting to observe the participants comment on the study's emerging themes, thus, heightening the accuracy and the validity of the study.

Ethical Considerations

In this study, I protect the participants' rights in the following ways. First, following institutional rules and regulations, I completed the Institutional review Board's (IRB), which warrants the individual rights of human participants (see Appendix A). I further protected the participants' rights by having them complete and sign the required consent forms (see Appendix B, C, and D), as well as by using pseudonyms which protect their identities. Finally, I protected any other personal information by restricting access to the study's data to myself and by securing the data on an external drive.

Chapter Summary

This chapter offers an overview of the study's methodology. It reiterates the study's research questions and emphasizes the researcher's paradigm stance. Additionally, it explains the rationale for conducting a mixed quantitative-qualitative method study and describes the study's

participants and site. Furthermore, it specifies the use of each component of the mixed method approach, that is, the quantitative and the qualitative method, and discusses the tools for data collection, analysis, and discussion. It concludes by validating the study.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS

Introduction

Chapter Four focuses on the data analysis. It begins with a discussion of the study's context, namely, a description of its participants and data. First, it examines Data Analysis Sample 1: Surveys, which used frequency counts to analyze teachers' perceptions of the development of the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs). Next, it presents Data Analysis Sample 2: Interviews, which used audio transcripts of face-to-face interviews conducted with participants. These documented the reported teachers' experiences of the development of the Academic Literacies of MLs. Finally, I discuss Data Analysis Sample 3: Reflections. The latter used participants' email reflections to interpret teachers' perceptions of the development of multilinguals' Academic Literacies as reflected in the information retrieved from the online survey and the oral interviews.

Participant Description

The fourteen teacher participants come from ten different countries and are between the ages of twenty-five and fifty. I have used pseudonyms to maintain participant confidentiality. The participants are originally from Bulgaria (Anelia and Dimitar), Russia (Anastasia), Korea (Min-Seo and Ha-Yoon), Iran (Yasmin and Darius), Singapore (Alicia), China (Yu-Yan), Pakistan (Aminah), Sri Lanka (Tharushi), Guyana (Alana), and Canada (Emma and Steven). Eleven participants have a master's degree and three have a bachelor's degree. The participants' teaching experience ranges from novice, to medium, to extensive. At the time of this study, all participants from the ESL department of Toronto College taught courses for different ESL proficiency levels (e.g., Foundations, Pre-Intermediate, Intermediate, Advanced, and English for

Academic Purposes – EAP). Their focus was on four skill areas: reading, writing, listening, and speaking. This included pronunciation and business communication.

Data Description

The data for this study was collected from the participants using three different data collection methods over a three-month timespan. The first method, an online Qualtrics Survey, was emailed to twenty-five participants. Within two weeks, fourteen out of the twenty-five responded by agreeing to take part in the survey and the rest of the study. Next, the second method, Oral Interviews, was completed by first scheduling them according to the participants' availability (e.g., date, time, and campus location), and then by conducting the interviews themselves once the participants were available. Dependent on participant availability, the interviews were conducted over a five-week timespan. Finally, the third method, the Reflection Letters, were emailed to participants after the completion of the interviews. The participants had two weeks to submit their written reflections on their survey and interview responses. They also signed consent forms for all three data collection methods: Surveys, Interviews, and Reflections.

Data Analysis

The surveys and the reflections examined teachers' reported perceptions of the development of Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs), whereas the interviews examined teachers' reported experiences of the development of Academic Literacies of multilingual learners. In the following sections, the data sets will be analyzed to examine how teachers' reported experiences and perceptions impacted the development of Academic Literacies in multilingual learners.

Data Analysis Sample 1: Surveys

Data analysis Sample 1: Surveys focused on the participants' prior experiences and perceptions related to the study's goals. The latter is important in a mixed-methods study because it reveals the way that participants' views are affected by micro and macro factors in their specific environments (Gray, Williamson, Karp & Dalphin, 2007). Further, quantifying participant responses enriches the data, presents a detailed view of the issues being examined, and provides a representative sample of the target population (Gray, Williamson, Karp & Dalphin, 2007). The survey was chosen as a way to document participant responses and to add strength to the evidence thus generated (Northey, Tepperman & Russell, 2002). Therefore, I decided to use the survey as my first data collection method.

The survey was divided into six sections: questions about the participants' demographical information, questions about their perceptions of teacher roles, questions about their perceptions of learner roles, questions about their perceptions of the role(s) of the materials, questions about their perceptions of the role(s) of the activities, and questions about their perceptions of Academic Literacies' development. Section one had four questions. All other sections had six questions each.

I interpreted the participants' responses to the survey questions in the context of the definition of teaching Academic Literacies provided earlier in this dissertation. As mentioned earlier, the survey questions were articulated to reflect the distinctive features of the Academic Literacies' perspective, that is, teachers, learners, materials, activities, and academic literacy. In my data analysis, I have considered significant, salient, or noteworthy responses that showed a high percentage, that is 50% or more, of participant agreement. I have interpreted these higher percentages of participant agreement as an indication of the extent to which the participants were

using the corresponding Academic Literacies components in their teaching. Below, I will further specify salient responses in the context of the questions that they addressed.

Survey section one collected demographic information from the fourteen participants. It revealed that the participants were 80% female and 20% male. There was a broad range of ages represented (< 30 years old = 14%, 31-40 years old = 7%, 41-50 years old = 64%, > 51 years old = 14%). Their educational credentials included either a Bachelor's degree (21%) or a Master's degree (79%). The data regarding their teaching experience ranged from fewer than 6 years (14%), between 7 and 15 years (21%), and 16 to 25 years (65%). Figure 1 below illustrates these findings. Significant among these findings are the participants' age groups (64% were between 41 and 50 years old), their years of teaching experience (65% had between 16 and 25 years of teaching experience), and their educational qualifications (79% had a Master's degree). With this in mind, the next section of the survey examined the teachers' roles.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
Sex	Male	0	2	1	0	0	3
	Female	2	1	8	0	0	11
	Non-Binary	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Prefer not to answer	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Not listed	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Age	30 yrs and under	2	0	0	0	0	2
	31-40 years	0	1	0	0	0	1
	41-50 years	0	1	8	0	0	9
	51 years and over	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Prefer not to answer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Highest Academic degree	Bachelor's degree	1	2	0	0	0	3
	Master's degree	1	1	9	0	0	11
	Doctorate degree	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Prefer not to answer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14

Figure 3. Online survey, section 1: Demographic information.

Teacher roles. Survey section two focused on the role of the teacher in the Academic Literacies classroom. First, the notable responses are analyzed and then the significant findings are articulated. Out of the six questions asked, the most significant response was to the question about whether the strategies that teachers used were language proficiency-level appropriate. This question received a unanimous response “frequently” from all fourteen participants. The other significant response was to the question about whether MLs found it difficult to follow instructions in spite of the instructions from the teacher. Here, 86% responded “sometimes,” 17% - “frequently,” and 7% - “rarely.” The question about the frequency of involving MLs that seemed “detached” in class discussions yielded these answers: 79% = sometimes, 14% = frequently, and 7% = rarely. To the question asking whether participants saw themselves as co-creators of knowledge, 47% answered “frequently,” and 40% answered “sometimes.” The other

noteworthy responses indicated that the participants were equally divided in their responses to the question about the creation of level-appropriate assignments: 50% said “sometimes,” and 50% said “rarely.” Another significant area where the responses were unequally divided was to the question about the method in which participants introduced new materials through lectures. This received the following responses: 50% = frequently, 43% = sometimes, and 7% = rarely.

Figure 4 illustrates the data.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
I find it challenging to create level-appropriate assignments for my students	Frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sometimes	1	2	4	0	0	7
	Rarely	1	1	5	0	0	7
	Total	2	4	9	0	0	14
I use teaching strategies appropriate for the target level of proficiency	Frequently	2	3	9	0	0	14
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	2	3	9	0	0	14

Figure 4. Online survey, section 2: Teacher roles.

While participants were divided about offering level-appropriate assignments, (50% found it challenging to design level-appropriate assignments), they were unanimous about offering level-appropriate strategies. All 14 participants responded with “frequently.” Similarly, most of them (86%) thought that learners found it difficult to follow instructions “frequently.” With teacher roles having been analyzed, the next section offers an examination of learner roles.

Learner roles. Survey section three examined teachers’ perceptions of learner roles. First, the important responses are summarized, and then the most salient responses are discussed. All participants responded unanimously with “frequently” to the question about whether multilingual learners (MLs) were always free to ask questions when their teachers were explaining concepts. In response to the question about whether MLs are creators of knowledge, in addition to the knowledge gained from their teachers, most participants stated “frequently”

(50%), some said “sometimes” (29%), and others said “rarely” (21%). Contrarily, participants were equally divided for the question about whether the MLs are recipients of knowledge: 50% said “frequently” and 50% said “sometimes.” Addressing the question about whether MLs were free to discuss task difficulties by asking for clarification after class, most participants responded “frequently” (79%) and others said “sometimes” (21%). Participants were somewhat more divided in their responses to two questions: first, about the question about whether MLs are highly motivated to develop their academic literacy – most responded “sometimes” (64%), and others responded “frequently” (36%). Second, regarding the question about whether MLs participated actively in class discussions of academic literacy, 50% responded “frequently,” 43% said “sometimes,” and 7% said “rarely.” Figure 5 illustrates these findings.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
Learners are free to ask questions when I am explaining a point	Frequently	2	3	9	0	0	14
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	4	9	0	0	14
Learners can discuss their difficulties with the task asking for clarifications after class	Frequently	1	2	8	0	0	11
	Sometimes	1	1	1	0	0	3
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14

Figure 5. Online survey, section 3: Learner roles.

Among the significant responses, three were salient in this category. First, 100% of the participants thought that multilingual learners (MLs) were always free to ask questions when their teachers were explaining a point. Second, 79% of the teachers said that MLs were free to discuss task difficulties, along with asking for further clarification after class. Third, 50% of the participants considered MLs as creators of knowledge in addition to the knowledge gained from their teachers. With the role of the teachers and the role of the learners having been discussed, the next section focuses on an analysis of the classroom materials’ roles.

Materials' role. Survey section four addressed the participants' perceptions of classroom materials' roles. First, the notable responses are analyzed and then the significant findings are articulated. Out of the six questions asked, the most significant response was to the question about whether or not the classroom materials enhanced student motivation. Here, 92% responded "frequently" and 8% responded "sometimes." Another significant response was to the question regarding assessment tools being designed to meet the program's needs, which yielded the following answers: 61% = "frequently," 31% = "sometimes," and 8% = "rarely." Three questions elicited a predominantly "sometimes" response from the participants. The question asking about whether classroom materials included activities that addressed global (L2) academic discourse features elicited these responses: 77% = "sometimes," 15% = "frequently," and 8% = "rarely." Also, the question about the commonly shared online program assignments being a model for specific classroom variations on these assignments. Here participants responded 77% = "sometimes," 15% = "rarely," and 8% = "frequently." Also, the question about the institution requiring textbooks needing be followed as required, yielded these answers: 54% = sometimes, 31% = rarely, and 15% = frequently. The only question in this group that received a variation in response was about classroom materials including the ones that MLs brought from their home cultures to showcase their work. Here, 54% responded "sometimes," and 46% responded "rarely." Significantly, none of the respondents answered "frequently." Figure 6 illustrates the data.

While most participants (92%) said that the materials used in the classroom enhanced student motivation "frequently" only 61% of the participants thought that assessment tools were designed to meet program goals. Similarly, 54% of the participants sometimes let MLs bring materials from their home cultures as part of classroom material. With the roles of the teachers,

learners, and classroom materials having been discussed, the next role needing analysis is the role of activities.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
Classroom materials include the ones students bring from their home cultures to showcase their work	Frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sometimes	2	1	4	0	0	7
	Rarely	0	2	4	0	0	6
	Total	2	3	8	0	0	13
Classroom materials enhance student motivation	Frequently	2	3	7	0	0	12
	Sometimes	0	0	1	0	0	1
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Total	2	3	8	0	0	13

Figure 6. Online survey, section 4: Classroom materials' role.

Activities' role. Survey section five addressed the participants' perceptions about the role(s) of activities. First salient responses are discussed, and then significant responses are noted. Out of the six questions asked, the most significant response was to the question about classroom activities involving teacher-led, whole-class discussions. Here, 79% responded "frequently," while 21% responded "rarely." Two questions received significantly balanced responses. They were, one, the question about classroom activities being different for the varying levels of proficiency, which yielded these answers: 57% = "frequently," 29% = "sometimes," and 14% = "rarely," and, two, the question about classroom activities being adapted from the official ESL textbook. Here, 50% responded "frequently," 43% responded "sometimes" while only 7% responded "rarely."

For the remaining three questions, the participants responded with either "frequently" or "sometimes," but never with "rarely." The question about classroom activities scaffolding academic concepts received the following responses: 71% = "frequently," 29% = "sometimes. Regarding the question about whether classroom activities included student-led small group discussions, participants responded in the following manner: 71% = "frequently" and 29% =

“sometimes.” The question about whether classroom activities focused on the completion of short-term tasks yielded these answers: 57% = “frequently,” and 43% = “sometimes.” Figure 7 illustrates the data.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
Classroom activities scaffold academic concepts	Frequently	2	2	6	0	0	10
	Sometimes	0	1	3	0	0	4
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Classroom activities include student-led small group work	Frequently	2	2	6	0	0	10
	Sometimes	0	1	3	0	0	4
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Classroom activities focus on the completion of short-term tasks	Frequently	2	3	3	0	0	8
	Sometimes	0	0	6	0	0	6
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14

Figure 7. Online survey, section 5: Classroom activities’ role.

While 79% of the participants said that “frequently,” class activities were teacher-led, 71% agreed on scaffolding academic concepts. Notwithstanding a predominantly teacher-led activities’ class, it was significant to note that 71% of the participants frequently allowed multilingual learners (MLs) to lead small group discussions. With the role of the teacher, learner, materials, and activities having been discussed, the last section to examine is the role of academic literacy development.

Academic literacy development’s role. Survey section six focused on the role of Academic Literacies development of multilingual learners (MLs). First, salient responses are examined, and then significant responses are analyzed. Out of the six questions asked, the most significant number of responses were to the question about whether or not academic literacy goals are presented as stated in the curriculum. Seventy-two percent of the participants

responded “sometimes,” 21% responded “rarely,” and 7% responded “frequently.” The other two significant responses were whether academic literacy competencies are introduced implicitly. Here, 86% responded “sometimes,” and 14% responded “frequently.” Also, whether academic literacy competencies instruction clashes with students’ previous academic literacy practices. Here, 72% responded “sometimes,” 21% said “rarely,” and 7% said “frequently.”

A response where more participants agreed rather than disagreed on their perceptions was to the question whether academic literacy competencies emphasize the rhetorical star (e.g., audience, purpose, context, tone, and style) which yielded these answers: 50% - sometimes, 43% - frequently, and 7% - rarely. Addressing the question whether academic literacy competencies instruction clashes with students’ previous academic literacy practices, participants significantly responded 72% - sometimes, 21% - rarely, and 7% - frequently. Figure 8, below illustrates the data.

Among the significant responses, three were salient in this category. While 72% of the participants frequently felt that the academic literacy goals were presented as stated in the curriculum, 72% noted that sometimes students’ previous academic practices clashed with the academic literacy competencies presented in class. Only 50% of the teacher responses sometimes emphasized the academic literacy competencies known as “the rhetorical star” (e.g., audience, purpose, context, tone and style) as significant in the classroom.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
Academic Literacy competencies are introduced implicitly from examples to rules	Frequently	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Sometimes	2	2	8	0	0	12
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Academic Literacy competencies emphasize the rhetorical star: audience, purpose, context, tone, and style	Frequently	1	1	4	0	0	6
	Sometimes	1	2	4	0	0	7
	Rarely	0	0	1	0	0	1
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Academic Literacy competencies instruction clashes with students' previous academic literacy practices	Frequently	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Sometimes	2	1	7	0	0	10
	Rarely	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14

Figure 8. Online survey, section 6: Academic literacy development’s role.

In summary (Figure 9), the survey first looked at the demographical information of the participants and found that most of the participants were between 41-50 years old, had teaching experience of 16-25 years, and had graduate degrees. Next, I discussed teacher roles and found that most participants thought that MLs found it difficult to follow instructions. Third, I discussed the role of the learner and noted that MLs were always free to ask questions when the teacher was explaining a point and were free to discuss difficulties after class. After this, I discussed the role of classroom materials and observed that some teachers let MLs bring materials from their home cultures. Then, I discussed the role of class activities and noticed that teachers frequently scaffolded academic concepts. Lastly, I realized that MLs’ previous academic practices clashed with the academic literacy competencies presented in class. With the analysis of Data Set 1: Surveys completed, the next data sample to be analyzed is Data Set 2: Interviews.

		Number of years of teaching experience					Total
		0-6	7-15	16-25	26 years & above	Prefer not to answer	
Age	30 yrs and under	2	0	0	0	0	2
	31-40 years	0	1	0	0	0	1
	41-50 years	0	1	8	0	0	9
	51 years and over	0	1	1	0	0	2
	Prefer not to answer	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
I use teaching strategies appropriate for the target level of proficiency	Frequently	2	3	9	0	0	14
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Learners are free to ask questions when I am explaining a point	Frequently	2	3	9	0	0	14
	Sometimes	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Classroom materials include the ones students bring from their home cultures to showcase their work	Frequently	0	0	0	0	0	0
	Sometimes	2	1	4	0	0	7
	Rarely	0	2	4	0	0	6
Total		2	3	8	0	0	13
Classroom activities scaffold academic concepts	Frequently	2	2	6	0	0	10
	Sometimes	0	1	3	0	0	4
	Rarely	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14
Academic Literacy competencies instruction clashes with students' previous academic literacy practices	Frequently	0	1	0	0	0	1
	Sometimes	2	1	7	0	0	10
	Rarely	0	1	2	0	0	3
Total		2	3	9	0	0	14

Figure 9. Online survey: Summary of all six sections.

Data Analysis Sample 2: Interviews

The second sample for data analysis were the face-to-face interviews conducted with the participants over a period of five weeks. First, the logistics of setting up the interviews and a detailed overview of the questions are analyzed. Then, significant findings for each of the roles of teachers, learners, materials, activities, and academic literacy development are discussed. The section concludes with a summary of the interview findings.

According to the literature, interviews provide the researcher with richer qualitative data which is both valuable and unique (Stake, 2010; Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The interview as a research tool enables the researcher to examine and interpret how certain attitudes, bodies of knowledge, and perceptions are constructed and co-constructed by members of a certain community (Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Stake, 2010; Fontana & Frey, 2008; Patton, 2002). The in-depth quotes, the careful observation, and the specific details (Patton, 1980) helped to form a holistic and open-ended emic perspective (Mackay & Gass, 2005). Interviews with the participants were conducted following this procedure.

Fourteen faculty members responded to the study invitation, stating that they would be interested in taking part in the study. An interview schedule was sent to the participants who chose a convenient interview date, time, and location. Since Toronto College operates in three different locations, interviews were conducted across the three campuses, wherever the participants were currently teaching. Interviews were held for half an hour, and were usually conducted after teaching hours. The interviews were conducted over a five-week period. On completion of the interviews, the participants consented to write reflections on their experiences of the interviews.

The interview utilized the same sections as the survey, which were created out of the data gathered from the literature review as shown in Figure 1 (see Chapter 2). The participants were asked ten questions about the five key areas of the study: teacher roles, learner roles, materials' roles, activities' roles, and academic literacy development's role. The same set of questions were posed to each interviewee. Each category had two questions as Figure 10 below shows. The participants answered the questions based on their experiences in their classrooms. Interviews were recorded and manually transcribed afterwards. I tried to maintain an informal atmosphere

because I wanted to hear what the teachers did in their classes. Conversing more as a colleague than as a teacher-researcher helped to make the participants relax and narrate their truths as they got to experience them in their classrooms.

Distinctive components	Interview question 1	Interview question 2
Teacher Roles	Challenges Teachers Faced	Teacher Role Seen as Impactful
Learner Roles	Positives Multilingual Learners Brought to the Classroom	Learner Motivation Assumed Necessary for Academic Success
Materials' Roles	Learners' Sociocultural Backgrounds Incorporated in Syllabus Design	Student Difficulties Reported in Assignment Completion
Activities' Roles	Learner Backgrounds Incorporated in Activities Design	Learners Assisted in Taking Charge of their Learning
Academic Literacy Development's Roles	Effective Strategies Employed in Academic Literacies Development	Learners Engaged in Metacognitive Activities

Figure 10. Distinctive components: Interview questions to teacher participants.

Teacher roles. Since the literature on Academic Literacies focuses on the role of the teacher as a facilitator, initiator, and co-creator, as Figure 2 (see Chapter 2) indicates, as a researcher, it was important to verify how much of this information was echoed in the responses of the teacher participants. The two questions asked of the teacher participants pertained to the impact that they had on the learning environment in the classroom and the challenges that they faced in the academic English classroom (see Figure 10 above). To maintain confidentiality, pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

Importance. According to the literature, the ESL classroom is diverse, and learners need fair treatment (Boyd et al., 2006). Multilingual learners (MLs) must be treated fairly and their identity respected by their teachers (Hansman & Wilson, 1998). Likewise, the participants of this study emphasized the teacher's impact in the classroom. A second point of significance that they noted was that teachers take on different roles in the ESL classroom than in a non-ESL

classroom. A third significant aspect were the expectations that came with being an ESL teacher, as seen in Figure 11 further down below.

In answer to the question about teachers' impact on their students' development, the general consensus was that teachers are very impactful. Yu-Yan, Min-Seo, Anelia, Darius, Aminah and Anastasia reiterated the impact of an ESL teacher. Words like "tremendous" (Anastasia), "huge" (Steven), phrases like "world of difference" (Alicia), "a focal point" and "strategic" (Emma), were used to describe a teacher's impact. Both Yu-Yan and Min-Seo noted that the teacher was "very impactful" in developing student confidence (Yu-Yan) and in delivering life skills, survival skills, and cultural skills (Min-Seo). Anelia felt that "the most important thing in the ESL class is the teacher, although we are not an authoritarian class." Darius reiterated this point and said that "the teacher has an important role in helping students improve [their] skills or [their] language systems." Aminah stressed how the teacher was "one hundred percent impactful and was a model for her students." Anastasia observed how "students come with all their questions, not just language but for advice, help, and just to share."

The second significant point was about the various roles attributed to the teacher. Steven, Darius, Aminah, and Alicia specified the roles that teachers play. Steven noted that teachers are social workers, counselors, and cultural ambassadors. For their students, he said, teachers are the first contact person. Darius explained how teachers are "facilitators, educators, psychologists, and counselors." He felt "when students share their experiences, everyone's learning, everyone's listening, everyone's benefiting." Aminah added to the epithets, calling teachers "Canada experts, social experts, psychology experts" and basically people who motivate multilingual learners (MLs) to use their energies by being "a source of energy" themselves. Alicia noted how

ESL teachers are different from regular teachers; they are “guidance counselors as well as cultural experts and psychology majors.”

Another significant teacher role pertained to the positive influence that teachers had to maintain in the classroom. Anelia, Ha-Yoon, Anastasia, Min-Seo and Emma emphasized the need for positivity. Anelia called it “a positive vibe” where the “teacher not only creates, but sets the tone.” Ha-Yoon opined that teachers needed to have a positive influence to help MLs persevere on that path of self-discovery in order to become autonomous learners. According to Ha-Yoon, teachers are not just linguistic experts, they help build student confidence. She said, “We’re facilitating language, we’re having to build almost a new approach, a new chapter of their [student] life.” Anastasia observed that everything depended on the teacher, “The atmosphere we create for three hours is their only exposure to English.” Min-Seo encouraged MLs “to find their voice, to pull up something that they did not realize they had within them.” Emma discussed how teachers are expected “to customize the experience and guide the students gently.”

However, when multilingual learners (MLs) expect learning to be easier, teachers may have to resort to a difficult role. Tharushi, Min-Seo, Emma, Ha-Yoon, and Dimitar observed students’ reactions when teachers demonstrated “tough love.” When MLs want learning to be “palatable, interesting and want to feel comfortable” (Tharushi), “it’s rough on the teacher.” Min-Seo noted, “sometimes ESL learners want formulas and rules” without paying attention to the audience, context, and purpose. This forces teachers to take a tough stance. Emma stated, “Hate me now, but you will thank me later” because learning is hard. Nevertheless, as Ha-Yoon reflected, “a teacher taking away confidence can be too high a risk.” Dimitar warned, “Teachers may be language experts, but without the right attitude and the right tools, they will not be able

to communicate or interact effectively.” So, the difficulty that teachers face is balancing the different components in the class. They need to “keep everything moving; facilitating interactions between the learners, learning materials and learning outcomes” (Emma).

Teacher roles	Importance
Instructional Roles	Identify Focal Points; Apply Effective Strategies; Practice Self-Reflection
Social Roles	Serve as Social and Cultural Experts, Counselors, Psychologists
Motivational Roles	Keep up the Vibe; Set the Tone; Build Confidence

Figure 11. Teacher roles: Importance.

The most important aspects of the teacher roles are to be self-reflective, communicative, and facilitative. Darius and Alana discussed their self-reflective role, Steven and Yu-Yan stressed communicability, while Tharushi and Anelia found being facilitators challenging. Darius observed, “I ask myself. How did I contribute to student learning? What are students taking away from this class?” Alana, too, commented on teachers’ “need to be self-reflective” and ask MLs for feedback. “By putting a critical lens into their [student] heads, helps teachers as well,” she noted. The role expected from teachers is to help MLs work on clarity and communicability (Steven). Further, teachers demonstrate the need for “learning language functions both inside and outside the classroom” (Yu-Yan). Even though teachers “face resistance from students who want to break down the process of learning” (Tharushi), teachers have to “help students value the process of learning” and “help them go through a period which is not easy for them” (Anelia).

Thus, the role of the teacher is a complex one, comprised of different aspects. Whether teachers act as guidance counselors, psychology specialists, or cultural experts, their impact in the classroom and on their students’ lives is enormous. Unlike other content teachers, Academic Literacies teachers have myriad roles. They are expected to prepare MLs for a world where they

need to be resilient, and, at the same time, make sure that learning is learner-centric. After discussing the importance of teachers, the challenges that they face need to be considered.

Challenges. This section discusses the participants' challenges in teaching multilingual learners. Participants faced many challenges: learner differences, learners' cultural barriers, and learner disparities. The interviews with the teacher participants highlighted the greatest challenge, that is the differences among the multilingual learners (MLs). A second area of challenge was the cultural barriers that the MLs brought to the classroom. A third challenge was the disparity among MLs as shown in Figure 12 (see Figure 12). The literature, too, confirms that accepting, acknowledging, and appreciating diverse multilingual learner backgrounds, identities, and cultures is a predominant challenge for teachers (He, Vetter & Fairbanks, 2014).

The first challenge that participants mentioned was learner differences. Yasmin, Ha-Yoon, Min-Seo, and Steven referred to learner differences as a major issue. As Yasmin commented, "The very fact that they come from different cultural backgrounds can bring challenges to the class." Ha Yoon added that because they come from "different backgrounds, they have a different approach to the role of a teacher" and it often "clashes with their ideas." Min-Seo reiterated that multilingual learners (MLs) questioned her use of group discussions in reading and writing classes because in these classes they expected to just "sit and write and rewrite." (Min-Seo). Steven observed that MLs have "different backgrounds, have different learning styles" because "they come from different systems." He commented on the fact that MLs from East Asian cultures do not question the teacher but expect to "get lectured" and "memorize things," which makes it hard "to get them to speak up and participate."

Participants associated learner needs with learner differences. Alana observed that some MLs are "better in grammar, some need more reading strategies." Finding the right balance was

difficult for her. Darius reiterated the same concern, namely, that having MLs at various proficiency levels “makes teaching and planning lessons very difficult and challenging.” When he uses “easy materials, the good ones get bored, and when he uses challenging materials, the weaker students get demotivated.” He tried to overcome this challenge by having a variety of activities ranging from simple to complex.

Teacher roles	Challenges
Address Learner Differences	Learning Styles, Learner Needs
Overcome Cultural Barriers	Cultural Misunderstandings; Expectations for Teachers
Address Learner Disparity	Learner Challenges, Learners’ Different Ways of Doing Things

Figure 12. Teacher roles: Challenges.

The participants also commented on another significant challenge, that is the cultural barriers that multilingual learners (MLs) brought to the classroom. Yasmin, Anastasia, Aminah, and Emma discussed the cultural barriers that they faced in the classroom. Yasmin stated that cultural barriers cause “a lot of friction.” Anastasia observed, “students are less patient across cultures.” Aminah noted that “interacting with other cultures [can] sometimes be a barrier.” She responded by applying appropriate culturally-sensitive classroom management strategies, and by trying “not to violate any rules of sitting next to people from different cultures.” Emma noticed how “teachers [were] not understanding [of] all the cultural cues [and so] not being able to interpret their [students’] behavior.” She attributed this to the “different cultural expectations of what a teacher is supposed to be.”

Related to cultural barriers was the issue of cultural misunderstanding. Dimitar, Steven, and Anastasia mentioned their experiences. Dimitar observed how MLs came into the class with “a certain understanding of the world and they meet people with a different understanding of the world.” Steven reiterated this point by stating that what is “appropriate and inappropriate is very

different across the world,” so teachers “have to be very diplomatic and very aware of it.” Anastasia also mentioned that MLs want to hear “pure English and not listen to different accents.”

The third challenge that the participants spoke about was the disparity among MLs in the same class. Ha-Yoon and Tharushi commented on her experiences with learner disparity. Ha-Yoon qualified learner disparity as huge. Tharushi referred to BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills) and CALP (cognitive academic language ability) as defined by Cummins (1984) and observed that the problem occurred when MLs “hadn’t reached the threshold level.” It was “difficult to teach academic genres.” She noted how CALP was easy to teach if MLs were “academically literate in their L1. A transfer of skills was possible and it was easy to connect; it was just a matter of giving them exposure.”

The final challenge was managing MLs’ classroom participation (Alicia and Yu-Yan) and the MLs’ “different way of doing things” (Yasmin, Alana, Darius and Steven). Alicia commented, “shutting up vocal students and giving the silent ones a voice is the biggest challenge” in the Academic Literacies classroom. Yu-Yan also talked about her “strong class where all students speak together, making classroom management a challenge.” Finally, the biggest challenge came from finding the right balance (Darius and Alana). The disparate class made planning and teaching difficult. Moreover, as Steven noted, teachers had to be aware of and sensitive to what is culturally appropriate and inappropriate.

On the whole, the teachers had to cope with learner differences and classroom disparities that made classroom management challenging. Despite these challenges, teachers played an impactful role in the Academic Literacies classroom. After analyzing the teacher roles, I analyze learner roles below.

Learner roles. In Figure 2 (see Chapter 2), learner roles are the second category following teacher roles. The teacher participants in this study were asked two questions pertaining to learners, as seen in Figure 10 (earlier in this chapter). The first question addressed the positives that multilingual learners (MLs) bring to the classroom, and the second question – the motivation MLs need from their teacher to achieve academic success. Thus, the three main assets that MLs brought to their classes were their diversity, their rich world knowledge, their work and life experiences, and their strong motivation to learn.

Learner assets. According to the literature, the multilingual learners' (MLs') assets are their varied linguistic experience (Bailey & Orellana, 2015), their native literacy (Bury & Sheese, 2016), and their ability to navigate between speech communities (Canagarajah, 2011). These attributes made MLs both complex and unique (He, Vetter & Fairbanks, 2014). While conversing with the teacher participants, it was this diversity, complexity, and uniqueness that I got to witness in their responses as seen in Figure 12 above.

The multilingual learners' strongest asset was their diversity in terms of their cultural backgrounds, traditions, and countries of origin (Yasmin, Anastasia, Darius, Aminah, Anelia, Min-Seo, and Ha-Yoon). Yasmin observed that unlike in homogenous classes, MLs from different cultural backgrounds brought variety to the class in terms of country, culture, and food. Anastasia commented that MLs were “getting more knowledge from different cultures and different countries” making the classroom atmosphere “creative.” Darius noted that different cultural backgrounds played out when MLs worked in “pairs and groups and contributed to the vibrancy of the classroom atmosphere.” Aminah added that the MLs’ “different cultural backgrounds become teaching points, inculcating cultural sensitivity.”

This diversity in culture and age (see Figure 13) made the class more manageable and interactive. Anelia noted that older MLs “bring knowledge from different areas” and are “more confident to share their ideas” and “set a good example for the younger ones.” Min-Seo and Ha-Yoon echoed this sentiment in comparing the more mature MLs to the younger ones. Ha-Yoon noted that the older students’ “different viewpoints of learning really influences the younger ones.” The mature MLs, in Min-Seo’s eyes, were “highly educated, needed accreditation, were eager to finish, move on.” They also understood that their time and energy are limited. On the other hand, the younger ones were here “because their parents pay, [they] didn’t do well in their homeland, [and they] didn’t pass the rigid exam.” Min-Seo noticed that “they are distracted and don’t realize the urgency of learning.” However, the participants agreed that the “students’ different age and background” create a positive atmosphere in the classroom

Learner roles: Learner assets	
Learner Diversity	Sociocultural and Sociopolitical Backgrounds
Learner Rich World Knowledge	Life and Work Experiences
Learner Motivation	Maximize Experience; Multiple Perspectives

Figure 13. Learner roles: Learner assets.

In the participants’ view, the MLs’ second strongest asset was their rich world knowledge and their life and work experience (see Figure 13, above). Yu-Yan observed, “having more adult learners brings in really rich world knowledge” adding to the “classroom dynamic.” Yu-Yan noted, “When students share their passion, the language they use counts.” Alana reflected, “I follow their interests, their backgrounds, their experiences and build my lessons on them.” Min-Seo, too, added to this, “The other thing learners brought with them was the range of experience – life experiences as well as cultural experiences that enrich the whole classroom experience, because students are in a multicultural environment in Canada.”

The third asset that teachers noted had to do with the motivation that Multilingual learners (MLs) brought into the classroom (see Figure 13) (Min-Seo, Ha-Yoon, Steven, Tharushi, Emma, Dimitar and Alicia). Min-Seo mentioned that the MLs were “wanting to maximize their experience in the classroom.” Min-Seo noticed how “students are more willing to go and speak to people they probably wouldn’t have done if they hadn’t been in a classroom.” Ha-Yoon, too, noted how the learners “are highly motivated to complete the course” and try their utmost to “keep up with the different skills.”

Learners come to the class with a “strong desire/motivation to learn” (Steven and Tharushi). Steven noted that “a lot of students are parents, having responsibilities, so are serious.” While the “younger students are not so invested in their learning, for the mature students, this is real, they’ve got to make it, this is their dream.” Steven acknowledged that they “bring a good attitude and value what teachers do.” Echoing the same sentiment, Tharushi said that learner motivation entailed certain expectations, which is especially true of mature MLs who have specific objectives and needs. She said, “it’s easy to cater to their requirements,” which can “easily [be] incorporated in the syllabus” because they “know what they want” and “are very clear.”

The strongest asset that MLs brought to the classroom were their multiple perspectives. Emma noted that despite complicating matters, such diverse viewpoints made classes more “interesting.” She added, “Homogenous classes, in terms of nationality and age groups, have no variety.” As a native speaker, she summed it all up:

I might see something one way and if people see it differently that gives others a fresh perspective, including me, personally. I learn about my own language by learning other languages. There’s an awareness of language as a system not just something that you use

unthinkingly to do as a job. So, ESL learners have a different perspective on English than native speakers do. The ESL learners' diversity is the strongest asset that they bring into the classroom. Together with this, their motivation and zest for learning makes teaching them interesting. Participants observed how there is a big difference in the way they learn. It is these cultural differences that builds an ESL class. Together with this, the learners bring their rich and varied life and work experiences, which enhances the class dynamic, making each ESL class a valuable life lesson for both the teacher and the learners.

The next issue the participants discussed referred to learners' needs, more specifically, the MLs' need for a strong and sustained motivation to lead them in their academic journeys.

Learner needs. The literature reports that multilingual learners (MLs) benefit from patient, sensitive and encouraging teachers (Zamel, 2000). Students often feel misjudged, both linguistically and intellectually, because of their poor linguistic capability (Marshall & Moore 2013; Zamel, 2000). Devaluing or appreciating diversity can cause learners to underperform or to excel (Jocson & Conteh, 2008). Therefore, the teacher is seen as a decisive factor in building student motivation. Related to this, the second question posed to teacher participants was about the motivation MLs need.

Teachers had differing opinions on the motivational needs of multilingual learners (MLs). Four teachers said self-motivation was key (Yu-Yan, Alana, Steven, and Aminah), while two of them said the teacher had a definite role to play in motivating MLs (Anelia and Min-Seo). Five teachers were of the opinion that motivation is relative and MLs have differing levels of motivational needs (Anastasia, Dimitar, Darius, Emma, Yasmin, and Ha-Yoon), while two of

them said that for their MLs, marks (grades) were the only motivating factor (Alicia and Tharushi). This is shown in Figure 13, above.

Some participants stated that internal self-motivation is more important than external motivation from the teacher. Yu-Yan said, “Self-motivated students spend more time on the academic learning platform, check documents [and], always participate in class.” Alana attributed only seventy percent of motivation to self-motivation. She stated, “We as teachers can keep going and nudge them along, but students see their peers as a validation if they are not sure of something. First, they go to their peers, then come to the teacher.”

Self-motivation is key, and MLs need “a good deal of it” depending on “their level of English and their goals” (Aminah and Steven). She “combines lesson outcomes with assignments allotting different percentages of the grade for different parts of the assignment.” This she acknowledged, “Helps in motivating students, as grades is one of their motivating factors.” Steven added to this:

My own experience is that I tell students it’s tough for everyone. If they stick to it – keep a positive attitude – most people do okay, in the end. Persistence is what I say is needed. That sort of gives them motivation.

In contrast to some participants’ strong opinions about the almost exclusive importance of learner self-motivation, other participants emphasized the crucial importance of sustaining a mix of internal self-motivation and external teacher motivation. Anelia endorsed the idea that “teachers are not only teaching a language – when the students get a step closer, it’s easier to teach them something.” She admitted, “Sometimes, ESL teachers have more of an emotional burden with particular students, but then that’s part of the job.” The teacher is in charge of the motivational needs of MLs according to Min-Seo. “Definitely, the teacher has a role to play in

motivating students. If the teacher always points out the wrong, [students] are going to be hesitant.” She said, “You create an environment where it’s okay to make mistakes. In fact, making mistakes is good because we can all learn from [them].”

However, some teachers pointed out that despite teachers’ best efforts at motivating students, learner motivation also depends on other factors that are beyond the teacher’s control. Thus, MLs have differing levels of motivation. Anastasia and many others echoed her belief that “students of different backgrounds especially from university or high school have differing levels of motivation.” She found high school MLs less motivated. “They don’t pay for their education. Their parents do. So, they ignore all assignments, tests and hard work.” In her experience, older and more mature students are in stark contrast to high school students: “they [mature students] save money and pay for their education.” She stated, “They have no whys. They accept life as it is.” On the other hand, some participants endorsed the idea that motivation is individual and depends on MLs’ objectives (Dimitar and Darius). Dimitar observed that MLs are “different individuals, so motivation is relative.” He believed, “It depends on their temperament, their character,” while Darius noted that self-motivation is important for some MLs so that they could achieve their objectives, but for others confidence is a bigger issue than motivation.

Additionally, MLs’ motivation is relative and depends on their age, background, and experience. Emma admitted that MLs do need motivation, and that, “Sometimes, telling them what they need in college is a form of motivation.” She told students, “Learning a language is hard work, and if they are not motivated, they need enough motivation to get them to move from one level to another.” Some teachers tried to motivate MLs through in-class activities (Ha-Yoon and Yasmin). In the past, Ha-Yoon set up activities that are both academically and intellectually appropriate. She felt that designing meaningful activities “stimulates ESL students. It’s a

motivator.” Yasmin too, used reflective journaling effectively. She believes that the opportunity for MLs to assess what they have learned also serves as a motivator.

Learner roles: Learner needs	
Self-Motivation	Individual Drive; Student Objectives
Teacher Motivation	Positive Reinforcement, Classroom Assessment (Marks)
Relative Motivation	Age, Background, and Experience

Figure 14. Learner roles: Learner needs.

However, other teachers emphatically disagreed by stating that only marks (grades) motivate MLs. For Alicia and Tharushi, marks were the determining factor of MLs’ motivation. As Alicia stated, “The only motivation ESL students have is their marks. They don’t care about the learning. There is very little motivation other than grades – it is so sad.” Tharushi, too, reiterated how marks are great point of motivation. She tried to tell them that “the process of learning is more important than the product. I tell them language learning is a process.” She explained that “students need to give themselves time” but, sadly, “some students only care about grades, that too, with the least effort.”

Overall, the teachers’ experience suggested that MLs’ motivation to learn English depended on their needs. Some were highly motivated, and others were not at all. Participants believed that MLs were motivated by various factors, such as their objectives, their backgrounds, or, alternatively, they just wanted grades. After examining the learner roles with regard to the positives that they bring and the motivation that they require to succeed, below, I discuss materials’ roles (see Figure 15).

Materials’ role. According to the literature, teachers rarely have the flexibility of designing syllabi to meet students’ needs (Scott, Bloommaert, Street & Turner, 2007). And, if they do, they are expected to use multimodal texts to respond to learner diversity in the

classroom (Street, 1984) by incorporating materials that highlight the learners' linguistic diversity (He, Vetter, & Fairbanks, 2014). Thus, teachers are expected to modify their approaches by using appropriate materials that suit instructional goals, mediums, and messages (Leu, Kinzer, Coiro, & Cammack, 2004).

With this in mind, the teacher participants were asked two questions (see Figure 15 below). First, can learner backgrounds be incorporated into the syllabus, and, second, did the learners have difficulty in completing assignments set out for them? Participants answered the first one rather favorably. Most of them thought it could be done, though some noted that it was difficult. However, a couple of them firmly believed that learner backgrounds could not be incorporated in the syllabus.

Incorporate learner backgrounds in syllabus design. Eleven of the teacher participants agreed (Ha-Yoon, Yasmin, Yu-Yan, Dimitar, Tharushi, Anelia, Alana, Darius, Emma, Anastasia, and Aminah) that multilingual learners' (MLs') backgrounds could be incorporated. However, one participant, Min-Seo, said that would be difficult. Two participants, Alicia and Steven, said outright that MLs' backgrounds could not be incorporated in their syllabi (see Figure 15).

The teacher participants often incorporated learner backgrounds in their speaking, writing, and grammar materials. Yasmin and Ha-Yoon used small talk to help MLs learn about each other's culture. Ha-Yoon emphasized, "students associate [the idea] that language is not separate, but actually a part of who they are. [It] help[s] them develop and adapt to this new environment they are in." In discussions, participants incorporated learner backgrounds through comparisons. In writing, participants used learner backgrounds in journal writing. In grammar, teachers used learner backgrounds when explaining grammar points. Tharushi mentioned that "In discussions, I try to connect learner backgrounds and the Canadian context" to discuss subjects

like “freedom of the media,” or “the health care system.” Anelia, too, used learner backgrounds, especially in writing and speaking activities and she commented that it is “easy to find topics on multiculturalism, different traditions and customs” but clarified that “For essays and presentations, it really depends on the level the students are in (Pre-Int, Int, Advanced or EAP).”

Learner backgrounds are used in comparisons, that is in “making students discuss how people [express] anger, rudeness, or friendliness.” Emma made students “talk about customs and cultural cues discussing movie scenes.” She used learner backgrounds when “asking students to talk/write about their sociocultural background and state any differences with what they’ve experienced in Canada or in dealing with their classmates.” Aminah, on the other hand, used learner backgrounds in teaching grammar points. She felt that “the appropriateness of a grammatical structure, phrase, or usage can be achieved with the students’ backgrounds in mind.”

Learner backgrounds were included in writing journals. Alana suggested that in her classes “writing journals are open to student topic choices, that is family, culture, food, traditions, which leads to students being interested to write about it.” Darius added that he used learner backgrounds in his class “to ensure that all tasks in the syllabus are communicative.” Anastasia added that it “depends on what you are teaching: reading, writing, listening or speaking.” She thought it was easy for teachers to “find stories and articles that reflect their students’ cultural backgrounds.”

Materials’ role	Incorporating learner backgrounds in syllabus design
Easy and Doable	Design Comparison Projects: Presentations, Essays, Reflective Journals
Difficult	Overcome Syllabus Constraints
Impossible	Offer Stratified Curriculum for Higher Proficiency Levels

Figure 15. Materials’ role: Incorporating learner backgrounds in syllabus design.

Some participants found incorporating learner backgrounds difficult whereas others concluded it was impossible. Min-Seo said, “It’s necessary but difficult because we have such a structured syllabus and a tight schedule.” She added, “As teachers, it’s important to acknowledge student backgrounds and acknowledge everything that they bring into the classroom, so that we can learn and take in but also share.” Positing that learner backgrounds could not be included, Steven vehemently objected, “No. Because the topical outline is laid out for us and we have to work within the parameters.” Alicia too, disagreed, “No, it’s not possible. I have fifty percent very young students, and fifty percent extremely well educated, so trying to bring the sociocultural background into the syllabus/curriculum is hard.”

On the whole, the majority of the teacher participants agreed that learner backgrounds could be incorporated in the syllabus. Some participants had a more guarded response, “it will take a panel of experts to be aware of all the cultural backgrounds of students” (Dimitar). Nevertheless, teachers reported that they did incorporate learner backgrounds in speaking and writing classes. They varied their strategies depending on the MLs’ proficiency level. With learner backgrounds being addressed, the next issue participants spoke about was the way they addressed learner difficulties in assignment completion (see Figure 16).

Address learner difficulties in assignment completion. The teacher participants had varied responses to this question. Some of them felt difficulties in assignment completion had to be addressed as an individual/ majority issue (Alicia, Aminah, Alana, Min-Seo, Yu-Yan and Anastasia), whereas others felt difficulties in assignment completion meant that instructions had to be repeated (Anelia, Dimitar, Steven, Yasmin and Emma). Some participants attributed difficulties in assignment completion to the intrinsic difficulties associated with the process of learning itself (Darius, Tharushi and Ha-Yoon) (see Figure 16).

Some participants approached learner difficulties in assignment completion on an individual basis (Alicia and Aminah) while others treated learner difficulties as a class issue (Alana, Min-Seo, Yu-Yan and Anastasia). Alicia mentioned that “every student is different.” She treated each ML learner as an individual case. She suggested that “Sometimes, extending a deadline is the lifeline they require.” Aminah too, admitted that she extended deadlines on a case-by-case basis. She said, “I give them room, depending on their situation.” Alana, on the other hand, said, “If the whole class has issues, we would look at them separately, then, split the assignment up with different due dates after explaining each step systematically and painstakingly.” Min-Seo added, “I first see [if] it’s a class issue or a personal problem. If it’s an issue that the class needs resolved, I handle it in class.” Yu-Yan had a different technique. She helped students complete an assignment by preceding it with a model activity at the beginning of the term. Then, she kept “reminding students of that activity – it works – there are fewer complaints.” Anastasia blamed herself if the majority of students are experiencing a difficulty. She admitted, “I go over the topic all over again.” She treated each language assignment as a combination of information and culture.

Some participants believed that if MLs had difficulty completing an assignment, their teachers needed to go over the instructions again. Anelia mentioned that she lets MLs know they can email her if they are in doubt. She emphasized, “I give my instructions in the most detailed way possible” by explaining instructions, rubric, and process till students have grasped them fully. She admitted, “If there are still problems, I ask individual students to stay after class so that we could discuss them.” Dimitar admitted, “I try to give them the assignment in advance. I go over it two or three times, yet they negotiate deadlines and they win.” Steven tried to make instructions simple, straightforward, and clear. He commented, “Sometimes assignments need to

be done in a specific manner.” Steven further explained, “With deadlines, I tell students that in the working world, delaying deadlines is not acceptable.” According to him, teachers “are not just teaching English; [they are] also teaching life-skills to new Canadians.”

Materials’ role	Addressing learner difficulties in assignment completion
Address Individual/Majority Issues	Address Difficulties as Case-by-Case or as Class Issues
Offer Explanations	Go over Details; Elaborate Instructions
Enhance Process of Learning	Help with Learning Seen as Hard and Tedious, Scaffold Micro Steps

Figure 16. Materials’ role: Addressing learner difficulties in assignment completion.

If an assignment appeared difficult, participants welcomed questions from their multilingual learners (MLs). Yasmin explained, “When students question why they need to do PowerPoint presentations, my justification is that they will use it at work, plus it’s a good opportunity to practice [their] skills.” Emma had a different approach. She explained, “We will go over instructions together, if someone has obviously had difficulty with something that I understood to be new for them.” She justified her choices, “If I see sincerity, I give them some feedback and some specific suggestions, letting them work and do it again to get a few more points.”

Some participants had a different approach to learner difficulties with completing assignments. Darius, Tharushi and Ha-Yoon felt that these were actually part of the process of learning. Darius convinced MLs that “they are not meant to do easy things all the time. You need to stretch yourself to learn. Learning is hard, it’s uncomfortable.” Tharushi had a milder stance. She said, “I address it, I reflect on it, and ask students where the problem is.” She continued, “I have to explain how learning is a tediously slow process.” Ha-Yoon, in contrast, shifted the responsibility to the MLs. She explained, “With regard to instructions, students need to read and reread instructions carefully.” She suggested that “students do not pay attention to the steps,

often only bothering about the grade, ignoring the micro steps.” She thus concluded, “Students who don’t do well on assignments often miss the steps, and it costs them a lot in the long run.”

To sum up, participants responded differently to the question on learner difficulties in assignment completion. Some of them treated MLs’ issues individually, while others did it with the whole class. Most teacher participants went over the assignments in detail, again asking MLs where the difficulty was. However, some teacher participants believed that these difficulties were associated with the complexities in the process of learning. After discussing the role of the materials, as a distinctive component in the study, I will proceed to analyze the role of the activities, as seen in Figure 17.

Activities’ role. The literature on the importance of activities as a distinctive component of Academic Literacies emphasizes the importance of providing support to learners through the questioning and discussing of activities in the classroom (Scott, Bloommaert, Street, and Turner, 2007). Specifically, assigning journals, reflective responses, letters, and even multiple-draft writing assignments are recommended (Zamel and Spack, 2006). As far as the learners themselves are concerned, studies recommend critical self-questioning as the key to learning (Zamel, 2000).

With this theoretical background in mind, teacher participants were asked two questions. First, are learner backgrounds considered while designing activities? Second, can students be in charge of their learning? In response to the first question, teacher participants considered learner backgrounds in different ways. These included relating classroom activities to “real life,” that is integrating learner backgrounds in writing and speaking activities, in grouping students, or in demonstrating a grammatical point. Teacher participants had various methods of incorporating learner backgrounds in activities design.

Incorporate learner backgrounds in activities design. The teacher participants reported that they incorporated learner backgrounds in designing writing (Min-Seo, Tharushi, and Alicia) and speaking activities (Anastasia and Aminah). Some of the teacher participants used learner backgrounds to group students (Emma and Alana), or to teach grammar points (Dimitar), or even to explain a point in class (Yasmin). Other teacher participants used learner backgrounds when selecting topics (Anelia), for bridging cultural gaps (Darius), or for avoiding culturally offensive content and behaviors (Steven). Some teacher participants examined the practical use of and the way in which activities were related to real-life situations (Ha-Yoon and Yu-Yan). The teacher participants offered various ways of incorporating learner backgrounds in designing activities for their classes (see Figure 17).

Teachers felt that learner backgrounds need to be incorporated in designing writing tasks (Min-Seo, Tharushi, and Alicia). Min-Seo had an activity called “Editing Stations” where students went to various stations in the class to get specific feedback. Min-Seo thought that “In some cultures, editing and peer feedback are so awkward.” She continued, “So I adjust the activity from giving constructive criticism to noting just what works in the student’s paper.” Tharushi incorporated learner backgrounds a little differently. She allowed “students to take notes in their native language (L1) to complete their listening logs.” Tharushi believed, “using their L1 to understand English tasks is enriching and liberating for students.” Alicia said she incorporated learner background in designing the “Opinion Essay.” She allowed “students to use their home backgrounds as a justification for developing their ideas.” She explained, “for the academic essay, students need academic sources but [she] still consider[ed] learner backgrounds by not giving a medical related topic” in a class having medical professionals. She said, “I have

four doctors who will write superb essays disadvantaging the rest, so I keep in mind the learners' professional and sociocultural backgrounds" while assigning academic essays.

Additionally, participants thought that learner backgrounds can be incorporated in designing speaking activities as well. Anastasia let "students present their national food," by describing how it is made in an introduction to the class. In contrast, Aminah created a speaking activity in which students "agree or disagree with an idea" as a preparation for an oral presentation and a written essay. She showed a video about out-of-wedlock "Unwanted Babies" abandoned by their parents. To her surprise, "students were far from being offended, they really got into the assignment and defended the unwanted babies like lawyers." Teachers can encourage the use home of students' backgrounds, she argued, "Because students have a clearer understanding of their own background."

Activities' role	Incorporating learner backgrounds in activities' design
Speaking Activities	Discussions, Presentations
Writing Activities	Opinion Essays, Editing, Using L1
Miscellaneous Activities	Illustrating Grammar Points, Grouping, Selecting Topics

Figure 17. Activities' role: Incorporate learner backgrounds in activities design.

Participants also reported that learners' home backgrounds could be used to group MLs (Alana and Emma) or even to teach grammar points (Dimitar and Yasmin). Alana grouped students according to their proficiency level. She said, "I use students from certain professional backgrounds to share their experiences as a warm-up task to a more extensive class activity." Similarly, Emma considered "students' sociocultural differences and personality traits." She emphasized that she "considers [students'] cultural backgrounds and their level of comfort in working individually or in a group." When illustrating a grammar point, participants noted that they needed "to stay neutral and give an appropriate and inoffensive example from a student's

culture” (Dimitar). In contrast, as Yasmin tried to use learner backgrounds, she found that “It’s not always possible as they come from different countries and different cultural backgrounds.” She used “some representative examples” because “students feel more involved with the lesson and it becomes more interesting for them.”

Some participants used the learners’ professional backgrounds for other activities. Anelia selected discussion topics for her class. Darius, however, used learner backgrounds as cultural gaps that students had to bridge in class. He mentioned that one of the discussion topics he used was higher education. He said, “I also had them compare their educational system with their partners from different countries.” By comparison, Steven used learner backgrounds somewhat differently. While showing his class a movie as a fun activity, he selected appropriate content by avoiding culturally sensitive topics.

Other participants took a more practical approach to designing activities (Ha-Yoon and Yu-Yan). More than incorporating learner backgrounds, they considered how MLs could relate the in-class activities to their “real life” outside of class. Ha-Yoon indicated that she designed activities “that are realistic to real-life situations.” She said, “I consider learner levels, intellectual capacities, and try to balance the intellect of the MLs with the content and the learning outcomes at the level the students are currently in.” Likewise, Yu-Yan stated she always looked at the practical use of an activity by “relating it to students’ real-life contexts so that students can use the language they learn in class.” Her guiding principle is always to make activities “practical.”

The teacher participants had various ways of incorporating learner backgrounds in materials design, from oral discussions preceding writing tasks, to demonstrating grammar points, to designing group activities. Sometimes, they incorporated learner backgrounds indirectly, that is by designing materials and activities that may not represent a specific cultural

or ethnic feature but, never-the-less, relate to MLs' lives. After discussing the ways of incorporating learner backgrounds in activities design, the next issue that the participants discussed pertained to incorporating learner initiative in activities design.

Incorporate learner initiatives in activities design. All the teacher participants agreed that MLs needed to be in charge of their learning. They had various ways of engaging MLs from instilling curiosity (Anelia), to being flexible and creative (Yu-Yan and Alana), to giving the students mock tests (Darius), optional assignments (Alicia and Aminah), and make-up assignments (Emma), all to ultimately make them more autonomous learners (Tharushi, Ha-Yoon, and Min-Seo). MLs needed to take on the responsibility of their learning (Dimitar, Anastasia, Yasmin, and Steven), and teachers were only facilitators in this process, as seen in Figure 18.

The participants believed that teachers are mediators of content knowledge to MLs (Anelia), and that teachers need to give MLs as much flexibility and room for creativity (Yu-Yan and Alana) as they can. Anelia said, "I try to make learning a language an interesting experience." Anelia commented that, because language is so dynamic, she tried "to instill this curiosity and love for learning in students. There is no magic. There's no said way. There's no protocol or procedure to follow. Students are in charge." Additionally, for a group discussion assignment, Yu-Yan endorsed the idea that, "The activity was effective because students chose topics of interest and handled it creatively with their own ideas and opinions." All she did was "give them the required language and they used their own thoughts and opinions." Alana too, let MLs "undertake a lot of peer work and group work." She lets the MLs take control. She just facilitated and stayed away from giving a group leader role. She let all the MLs be leaders in the group making students "work together by emphasizing teamwork."

When MLs asked for mock tests, showing their eagerness, they set a purpose for themselves (Darius, Alicia, and Emma). Darius felt that when MLs told the teacher “their weaknesses in language learning” they helped the teacher to take them “where they need to be.” Alicia similarly, gave MLs optional assignments throughout reading week. As Alicia stated, “I let students decide what they want to learn from the assignments.” Aminah too, used the online practice activities to help students work on their weak areas to be at par with the class. She also let MLs prepare warmers in class for a percentage of their grade. Likewise, Emma put external resources online “especially for extra work, or giving students two choices making them metacognitively aware is another way of letting them be in charge of their learning.”

Activities’ role	Incorporating learner initiatives into activities’ design
Learner Engagement	Instilling Curiosity, Providing an Interesting Experience
Learner Responsibility	Offering Make-up Tests, Mock Tests
Learner Autonomy	Providing Optional Assignments, Online Practice

Figure 18. Activities’ role. Incorporating learner initiatives into activities’ design.

The participants reminded MLs that “they are the doers” and that teachers are just facilitators (Tharushi and Ha-Yoon). Conversely, MLs know more than they let on (Min-Seo) and they need to know that class is only a starting point (Dimitar). Tharushi stated, “I show students websites, how to check for the credibility of sources,” so that students “get accustomed to using the tools they need to become autonomous learners.” Similarly, Ha-Yoon thought it is important to put students in charge of their own learning because “ultimately the goal is to make them autonomous learners.” She gave MLs the freedom to choose certain topics, while writing essays, not restricting them to a particular topic. Sometimes, Min-Seo said, “the test limits them to what the test is, but a lot of them have a knowledge and they have different strong points and different weaknesses because they are adults after all.” Class is only a starting point; the time

MLs spend in class will not guarantee their success (Dimitar). Dimitar emphatically stated, “Practice, listen, take notes, time themselves for speaking tasks, re-record till [students] are satisfied with their performance.”

The participants showed MLs that they are responsible for what they are doing (Anastasia and Yasmin). Anastasia believed that teachers put in a lot of work before “we ask students to be responsible. I give them elaborate instructions, upload guidelines, and upload additional information.” At the outset, Yasmin told them, “I am here as your teacher to help you, show you how to learn, show you the path, but eventually it is you. You need to actually take it; you need to actually learn.” She created a reflective assignment where MLs created a list of all that they had learned that week. She elucidated, “The longer the list, the more successful you will be.”

One participant disagreed with the idea that MLs can be in charge of their learning given the way that the program is set up (Steven). Steven did, however, encourage students to find ways that were interesting for them to learn. He emphasized, “I tell them to find things on YouTube in English, play a sport, join a team, encouraging them to get involved.” He commented, “Students cannot pick up on academic learning but they can surely perfect their conversational communicative English.” Steven pushed MLs “to get out there and speak English. Meet other kinds of people – just talk– not paying attention to verb tenses, just communicating. That’s what did it.”

With regard to incorporating MLs’ initiatives into activities’ design, the participants unanimously confirmed that MLs had to be in charge of their learning. They thought that teachers were merely facilitating the learning process, but MLs’ success depended on their own effort. Further they commented that whether teachers uploaded the information, or set up additional work, or even gave mock tests, the decision to be in charge of their learning was

totally in the MLs' hands. After discussing the role of the activities as one of the distinctive components of Academic Literacies instruction (see Figure 18), I proceed to the discussion of the academic literacy development's role.

Academic literacy development's role. According to the literature, the single-noun "academic literacy" is restrictive, indicating one set of literacy practices (McWilliams & Allan, 2014; Henderson and Hirst, 2007). However, the plural-noun "Academic Literacies" suggests that literacies encapsulate many aspects and various kinds of literacies (Scott, Bloommaert, Street, and Turner, 2007). According to the precepts of Academic Literacies, all experiences are valid and life-forming (Gee, 1996), and teachers and learners are equal participants in the learning process (Harvey & Stocks, 2017). Learners are resources not deficits, and have agency (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 1999; Horner, Lu, Royster & Trimbur, 2011). Teachers are not trying to "fix problems," rather, they introduce students to academic conventions (Leu et al., 2004).

Against this theoretical background, it would be interesting to examine the strategies the teacher participants used to manage the Academic Literacies development of multilingual learners (MLs). The role of literacy development is the last distinctive component in the Academic Literacies table, Figure 2 (Chapter 2). Two questions were posed to the teacher participants regarding the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners. The first question pertained to the cognitive strategies that teachers used to develop the Academic Literacies of their MLs; and the second question asked teacher participants if they engaged in metacognitive strategies in their teaching of English.

Cognitive strategies. The teacher participants used a variety of strategies in teaching Academic Literacies to the MLs in their classes. Whether it was speaking (Yasmin, Min-Seo,

and Dimitar), writing (Emma and Alicia), listening (Yu-Yan), or even grammar (Aminah), the teacher participants had novel ways (Alana, Tharushi, and Steven) of ensuring their students' literacy development. Some teacher participants engaged in modelling activities (Darius and Anelia), while others made students ask questions to help them see the connections (Anastasia and Ha-Yoon) between their learning and their experience. Each of them tried to make English learning a vibrant and interesting experience for the MLs as seen in Figure 19 (see Figure 19).

To demonstrate the strategies that they used to develop their multilingual learners' (MLs') Academic Literacies, some of the participants gave examples from teaching speaking classes (Yasmin, Min-Seo and Dimitar). Yasmin prepared MLs for giving oral presentations by making MLs focus on key aspects. She said, "I explain all these points and then I demonstrate it for them." Similarly, Min-Seo opined that "if students understand why we do things in a certain way, they might be more motivated to do it." She used an example of preparing MLs for debates. She explained, "I gave them fifteen minutes to think about why we do debates." Min-Seo concluded that students "made the connection" between the activity and the reason for doing it "being helpful." Dimitar, on the other hand, worked with pairs and groups if MLs got too self-conscious about delivering formal presentations in class. When he taught listening, he told MLs "it's all about practice."

While teaching writing, some participants used scaffolding and thinking on their feet as strategies for multilingual learners (Emma and Alicia). Emma endorsed the "scaffolding of writing tasks" by using "prewriting, outlining, drafting" to come to a final draft. She worked with "analyzing, reorganizing sentences, adding appropriate transitions before MLs actually write the assignment." Alicia, on the other hand, wanted MLs to think quickly as that is what students will need in Canadian settings. She explained, "I give [students] twenty topics. I say pick one and

write. I only give them ten minutes. I want them to think on their feet and come up with quick thoughts.”

Other participants tried novel approaches to initiate MLs onto the path of Academic Literacies in their classes. Yu-Yan noticed that her class was having difficulties understanding the pronunciation of English speakers in Canada. She helped MLs with academic literacy “by giving them the script, letting them have something to read while listening.” Similarly, Aminah used interactive grammar games by using a platform where MLs used their phones to resolve grammar points. The students’ work was then projected on a screen for all to see. At other times, she had MLs created warm-ups for each class as a part of their assignment. Thus, Aminah created innovative spaces in class to facilitate her MLs’ Academic Literacies development.

Cognitive strategies	Academic literacy development’s role
Speaking Activities	Modelling, Debates, Discussions, Presentations
Writing Activities	Scaffolding, Thinking Swiftly, Multidimensional Thinking
Making Connections	Interactive Games, Listening Effectively, Varying Activities

Figure 19. Academic literacy development’s role: Cognitive strategies.

Similarly, other participants used novel approaches to enhance MLs’ Academic Literacies development. Alana kept an open mind and was flexible about varying strategies. She claimed, “My way is just an option. I am open to different ways of doing the same task.” Tharushi, on the other hand, told MLs “they need to have multidimensional thinking.” She let MLs engage in visual and kinesthetic styles of learning by using flash cards. She noted that “students appreciate such activities.” Steven, on the other hand, tried to vary the activities in his three-hour class by having at least fifteen different activities. He tried to “explain things clearly, keeping in mind that “we are communicating to people with different understanding of things.”

Other participants engaged in modelling practices to help MLs along the path of pursuing Academic Literacies (Darius and Anelia). In his writing classes, Darius gave students different examples of a good “research paper with citations, title page, reference page, and layout.” He believed that “when students see an actual sample, assignment expectations are clear.” Anelia shared her experiences as an ESL learner and joined her students in brainstorming sessions which she thought was helpful to them. She believed that “when we take care of the process, there are far fewer issues with the product (for example, plagiarism).”

The participants encouraged MLs to ask questions and to relate the class activities to their own situations (Anastasia and Ha-Yoon). Anastasia said that she encouraged questions by telling MLs that “There are no stupid questions. There is always an answer, just give me the question.” Ha-Yoon tried to relate class activities with MLs life. She commented, “I constantly remind students that each point we are doing in class, whether its writing, reading, or listening, is related to their academic studies in future.” She emphasized,

They have to see a relevance of why they are doing it – to make the connection – to see English not as a foreign language but a communication tool. I continuously remind students about the purpose of each task, each activity so then they know why they are doing it and how it’s going to benefit them.

Discussing the role of MLs’ Academic Literacies development revealed the participants’ commitment to their students’ success. In their responses, they illustrated their use of creative cognitive strategies to overcome classroom problems. They also applied effective metacognitive strategies discussed below.

Metacognitive strategies. The literature states that Academic Literacies instruction is transformative in that it exposes the power dynamic and inequalities in social practices (Street,

2009; Lea & Street, 1998). Multilingual learners (MLs) are knowledge generators rather than being knowledge consumers (Lea, 2016; Lea & Street, 1998). MLs engage in critical thinking, evaluation, and questioning (Horner & Bloommaert, 2017), gaining meaning in context, but also gaining meaning from the nature of the experience itself (Seely-Brown, Collins, & Duguid, 1989). MLs critique the very system that they are part of (Lea & Street, 1998).

With this in mind, the teacher participants were asked whether they engaged in metacognitive activities with their MLs. The teacher participants offered mixed responses to this question. Some teacher participants wished MLs asked questions (Yasmin, Ha-Yoon, and Aminah), others mentioned that their students asked questions incessantly (Anastasia, Alana, Darius, and Emma). Some other teacher participants commented on their attempts to always relate in-class activities to the world outside (Alicia, Dimitar, and Tharushi). Other teacher participants spoke about being self-reflective (Steven, and Emma) (see Figure 20).

Some participants wished the MLs asked more questions while others opined that questions spoiled the flow or the balance of the class. Yasmin commented that she would be happier if MLs asked more questions, “If students are quiet that scares me, and I start asking questions” to find out where the students are with the material. Ha-Yoon too said, “Most students don’t question – they accept it.” Sometimes, she got the odd question, “I don’t know why we are doing this, but overall, students are accepting of what teachers do” she said grimly. Aminah, on the other hand, opined that “when students ask questions repeatedly, it spoils the flow.”

The participants were asked plenty of questions by the MLs (Anastasia, Alana, Darius, and Emma). Anastasia let MLs interrupt her with their questions because, otherwise, they might forget their questions. She said she spent a lot of time explaining each part of the assignment and granted adequate class time to complete each assignment part without making MLs feel rushed

or stressed. Alana too, was often asked by MLs, “why are we doing something a particular way.” She admitted she “explains it using why and how questions.” Furthermore, some participants thought that students asking many questions and feeling free to do so was indicative of a healthy classroom atmosphere (Darius and Emma). Darius admitted, “I like it when students challenge me because that means they are analyzing the information they learnt previously.” Emma, however, disagreed. She referred students’ questions to the syllabus where students were to find the answers themselves.

Metacognitive strategies	Academic literacy development’s role
Asking Questions	Assignments, Instructions, Value of an Activity
Checking Understanding	Usefulness of Tasks, Related to Real Life
Learner Expectations	Different Methods of Learning, Authenticity of Approaches

Figure 20. Academic literacy development’s role: Metacognitive strategies.

The participants also believed that learning needed to be related to life, thus, useful in real-life situations. Alicia tried to relate her classes to real-life situations. She explained, “I ask students to come up with their opinions and support. They need to know how to convince others logically and rationally, so I give them such opportunities in class.” Similarly, Dimitar justified why MLs do presentations and participate in discussions in class. He elaborated, “I tell [students] that any of the programs they go into will have these assignments and that usually helps them see the value of the assignments.” Tharushi also explained the significance of metacognition, especially when teachers have to explain the rationale for an activity. Tharushi believed that “teachers have to engage not only in academic skills, but also in soft skills because students always want to know the rationale behind a particular activity.”

Some participants listened to the MLs’ questions patiently, explaining the meaning and purpose of the activities (Anelia, Min-Seo, and Yu-Yan), while others deemed this as a distraction from staying focused on on-going class activities (Steven and Emma). Anelia

mentioned that before she taught anything, she explained why it was important to do it. She added that she is “not afraid of discussing any point” but left “personal beliefs and politics out of the classroom.” Min-Seo opined that academic writing conventions, especially at the advanced level, are better understood when MLs question their purpose themselves, “Why do we need to do it? Why do we follow conventions? What do we learn from it?” Yu-Yan too, explained that in note-taking, using abbreviations helped. She continued, “I make it clear through practice so students see the results. Once they see the comparison, they are happy. They realize why they needed to learn abbreviations.” Likewise, Steven also spent time explaining why certain tasks had to be done when MLs questioned the purpose of an activity. Steven explained to students that “nothing is a waste of time, because people have put a lot of thought into it and it’s all useful.” Emma too, reflected, “If students have questions and the assignment isn’t going as planned, I try to figure out what happened. Where’s the road block?”

In summary, after the email surveys, the individual oral interviews conducted with the participants, discussed extensively their experiences regarding the roles of teachers, learners, classroom materials, activity design, and MLs’ Academic Literacies development. Thus, the interviews provided a more layered and detailed perspective on the participants’ experiences teaching Academic Literacies to multilingual learners. The teacher participants emphasized that their various roles had a great impact on their learners and on learning in general. They also appreciated the diversity MLs bring despite the unavoidable cultural barriers that accompany it. They reported that the classroom materials and activities they designed further contributed to motivating MLs and to creating multiple opportunities for learning. Finally, the cognitive and metacognitive strategies that the participants used guided the MLs on the path to becoming autonomous learners in charge of their own learning and academic development. The conceptual

frame applied in the Survey (e.g., data set 1) was further specified for the individual Interviews (e.g., data set 2) to enable the participants to expand upon their initial email statements. To gain a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, beyond the survey and the interviews, they had the opportunity to reflect on their experiences (e.g., data set 3) to clarify and detail those aspects that they found personally significant. Below, I use the same conceptual framework to analyze the information gleaned from the participants' written reflections.

Data Analysis Part 3: Reflections

Reflections form a significant part of a research study in that they showcase the views of the study's participants and not the researcher's views or the field's views (Cresswell, 2013). Reflections document the participants' stories, experiences, perceptions, observations, and interactions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). As a research tool, reflections see people in their natural settings and portray the truth as seen by the study's participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). In this study, the teacher participants were asked to reflect on the survey and the interview process without being explicitly introduced to the concepts of Academic Literacies and multilingual learners. They were asked to reflect on the academic literacy development of the ESL learners, keeping the study's third principle in mind (see Chapter 3 "Research Methodology"). This also meant that the researcher would refrain from using technical jargon in order for the teacher participants to feel at ease rather than be inhibited or "on the spot."

After completing the oral interviews, the teacher participants received the study's reflection question-prompts by email. They were asked to reflect on any points that they might have omitted or underrepresented in their interviews. All fourteen teacher participants sent in their reflections. Below, I analyze the participants' perceptions by following this study's conceptual framework comprising teacher roles, learner roles, materials' roles, activities' roles,

and, finally, academic literacies development's role. I begin by discussing the way the participants perceive their roles as teachers.

Teacher roles. The participants offered extensive reflections on the ways they saw themselves as teachers. Each teacher reflected on different aspects of the teaching-learning process. They reflected on the difficulties they encountered and the responsibilities they had to fulfill. Emma reflected on the difficulties that teachers faced, while Anastasia felt that multilingual ESL teachers are the best because they are learners first. Ha-Yoon reflected on why she chose teaching and why she needed to make her job more meaningful. Dimitar and Yu-Yan, on the other hand, reflected on the ways in which teachers inspire students, and wanted to figure out how to facilitate multilingual learners (MLs) become in charge of their learning. Anelia reminisced about the importance of the classroom as a space that is supportive of equity and mutual interests. Additionally, Yasmin reflected on the ultimate role of the teacher as creator of learning opportunities. Alicia thought about the roles that ESL teachers play in the classroom. Aminah talked about the importance of creating a classroom that is at once a safe space and a medium for effective classroom management strategies.

Many of the participants found reflecting on the study insightful. They felt that frequent changes in the teaching assignments required additional focus on what to teach, which took time away from the considerations of how to teach. Emma pondered over how much classroom time must be devoted to articulating and revising instructions. Being able to reflect on her role as ESL teacher helped Ha-Yoon to re-assess why she chose teaching as a career, and what she needed to do to make her work more meaningful. Dimitar thought about what ESL teachers do to make the cultural diversity in ESL classrooms work in everyone's favour, and how teachers can inspire MLs to take charge of their own learning. Anelia, similarly, pondered over the simple classroom

rules that ESL teachers should always apply, that is promote mutual respect and encourage the exchange of ideas and knowledge among MLs. Along with teaching tips and principles, she also noted the importance of teachers being able to learn from MLs. Agreeing, Anastasia said that “ESL teachers are the best teachers and the best learners.”

Some participants emphasized that among the many roles they have, the ultimate goal of teaching is learning. Yasmin articulated this clearly by stating that the main role of a teacher is to facilitate learning. To do that effectively, teachers had to be aware of their students’ linguistic and cultural background, language proficiency level, and the reason they need to learn English. These emerged as important factors that helped to determine the pace and the sequence for teaching language content and academic literacies competencies. Another participant, Alicia, pointed out that ESL teachers are much more than academic instructors; they are their students’ life skills counselors and advisors. Additionally, Yu-Yan believed that ESL teachers are quite impactful in the classroom because they tended to activate students’ passive vocabulary and grammar knowledge through various class activities and discussions. Aminah added one point that she thought she missed during the interview: classroom management. She mentioned that if student behavior was out of control, learning was a challenge. She strongly believed that the teacher set the tone in the classroom by being responsible for creating a positive environment that allowed MLs to learn and grow.

On the whole, the teachers reflected on their many roles, which amounted to maintaining a developmentally healthy and supportive climate in their classrooms. Whether by assisting MLs to take charge of their learning, or by creating more learning opportunities, they all reflected on the importance of making learning more fruitful for their MLs. Participants specified the different ways in which they sought to maintain a balance between enforcing strict and rigorous

institutional requirements and allowing for flexible and personalized student approaches.

Overall, they viewed teacher roles in the context of creating meaningful learning opportunities, that is, as related to learner roles, discussed below.

Learner roles. The teacher participants reflected on their multilingual learners' (MLs) diversity which was an asset but also caused them to have complex and multilayered lives. Thus, MLs needed to get adjusted to the North American culture and way of life while missing home and coping with the demands of the Canadian education and work realities. Emma noted that the North American setting is foreign for MLs, while Ha-Yoon reflected on the ways in which MLs' expectations differed from program requirements. Min-Seo and Steven suggested that education should have a more practical focus that could prepare MLs for the real world, the one in which students must learn to adapt quickly and profitably. Darius added that offering in-class peer work and letting MLs know lesson objectives helped MLs to appreciate transparency at school as well as in the workplace. Anastasia and Alicia had opposing views on MLs' diversity. Anastasia believed that the MLs' diverse cultural backgrounds were the most valuable component of any classroom, while Alicia felt that MLs' diverse backgrounds significantly limited their abilities to participate in class.

Along with the MLs' diversity issues discussed above, the participants found another important contentious issue, that is, program requirements and outcomes differed significantly from MLs' expectations. Emma thought there should be a support system that would serve MLs' specific interests and needs better. Ha-Yoon felt that it would be interesting to study MLs' expectations alone. She explained that students came to Canada, to Toronto College in particular, with widely varying, even contrasting expectations. She admitted that the institutional and program curriculum, the mandated textbooks and assessments were designed to secure steady

student progress and desired outcomes. However, often, these seemed to be a sole reflection of the official curriculum rather than of the MLs' individual expectations. The latter, she reiterated, should be the driving force and the top priority for institutional policy and materials design. Relatedly, Emma explained that ignoring MLs' expectations defeats those same institutional policies and curricula choices, thus, exposing the unprepared MLs to North American academic culture and education that are foreign and inaccessible to them.

Further, the participants noted the importance of an education with a practical focus aligned with MLs' needs and goals. For that, they explained that they designed learner activities and projects that reflect real-life student needs. Min-Seo believed that there were discrepancies between teaching content and teaching skills neither of which had a practical focus. Some participants reflected that when institutionally mandated courses were designed, MLs' lives and needs remained outside their scope. Such educational planning pushed MLs to the margins instead of placing them in the center of the education designed for them (Min-Seo and Steven). MLs' personal goals included learning English for practical purposes, such as getting a job, or navigating life in an English-speaking country more easily (Steven). To fill this gap, Darius used peer work by having his MLs compare answers in pairs or small groups after they had completed an individual task or activity. Thus, students could share thoughts, ideas, and strategies in assignment completion and collaborate in tasks that may be individually overwhelming.

Finally, another way in which the participants sought to enhance MLs' roles in the classroom included incorporating MLs' diverse backgrounds. They had mixed feelings about that. Anastasia felt that learner backgrounds could enhance interest in the classroom, whereas Alicia thought that MLs' backgrounds could limit classroom opportunities as well. Anastasia mentioned that her favorite part of the interview was sharing her ideas about incorporating the

ESL learners' sociocultural backgrounds in the syllabus and in the classroom which she saw as the only place for MLs' to gain English language skills as well as knowledge about different cultures. Acknowledging this, Alicia added that sometimes MLs' limited knowledge of different cultures could be an obstacle to classroom discussions and assignments.

Overall, the teachers reflected on different aspects of learner roles. They saw MLs' diversity as pivotal in otherwise varying learner roles. Diversity alone was referred to as complementary to curriculum and activities. However, in institutional planning, learner diversity was prominently absent, thus rendering English education exclusive of learner home cultures, personal needs, and preferred goals. Further, learner diversity, or its absence, in syllabi, materials and activities was related to the resulting rather impractical focus of the institutionally mandated academic literacies education. Last but not least, with great enthusiasm, the participants shared their creative ideas for inclusive learner- and learning-centered opportunities they provided for their students. Specifically, the roles of these and other materials are discussed below.

Materials' role. Whereas most participants felt strongly about teacher and learner roles, only some of them reflected on classroom materials (Emma, Yasmin, and Aminah). They emphasized the crucial importance of classroom materials that suit MLs' proficiency levels and meet MLs' personal needs. Further, they identified the crucial role of transparency in materials and assignments, as in letting MLs know about the materials beforehand. They also indicated that materials and activities needed to be culturally sensitive by including topics, activities, and projects that were learner-friendly.

Participants acknowledged that classroom materials needed to reflect the institutional curriculum but also to be attuned to the MLs' needs (Emma and Yasmin). Emma found the latter lacking. Participants also felt that MLs would benefit from a timely preliminary introduction to

their assignments and assignment rubrics to facilitate effective learning. Yasmin mentioned that, frequently, it was almost impossible to find a single ESL textbook that could suit MLs' needs and proficiency levels. Other participants explained that they often gathered materials from different textbooks and sources and adapted them accordingly.

Related to the need for proficiency-level-appropriate materials is the need for culturally appropriate ones. Frequently, although materials are screened and evaluated for potentially sensitive issues, such moments of student discomfort may arise during class. Aminah reported that in a reading class, as students were discussing different norms about the age of getting married in different cultures, one group of MLs seemed to be uncomfortable with the text because in their culture they are not permitted to discuss this topic openly. On the whole, participants reflected on the difficulty of adjusting materials to their MLs' needs in terms of language, culture, and academic competencies. Hard as that was, even harder was the adaptation of institutionally mandated textbooks and syllabi, which participants often had to adapt and supplement with teacher-made activities or other resources. Another way of using materials effectively included giving timely and detailed instructions to accompany those materials and the activities they provided. Mostly, materials adaptations were possible on the level of activities, which I discuss below.

Activities' role. Even though activities are among the few curriculum components that allow teachers a relatively greater freedom of choice and creativity, only a few participants reflected on classroom activities. Tharushi reflected on using group work for practicing grammar and vocabulary material as well as for sharing content and cultural knowledge. She illustrated this with the reading tasks she designed. She found that individually designed reading tasks were challenging because of field-specific concepts and vocabulary. To counter such difficulties, she

adapted these individual activities by offering group completion and by forming permanent groups where MLs' from different disciplines (e.g., sociology, economics, biology) work together and share their content knowledge to accomplish language learning tasks.

Alicia reflected on the ways in which she always tried to incorporate MLs' backgrounds in activities design which she found of crucial importance. Particularly, she included MLs' backgrounds related to their native country and culture, their age, and their educational and family background. Tharushi focused on using group activities and Alicia reflected on her thought processes while designing activities. Tharushi and Alicia also reflected that along with learner backgrounds, and, perhaps, related to learner backgrounds, learning styles were also important in activity design. That is particularly true of the MLs' learning styles in their academic literacies' development discussed below.

Academic literacy development's role. Only one participant, Emma, reflected on the role of academic literacy development. She stated that teaching academic literacy to MLs was difficult because the model currently used was based on individual readiness rather than on student abilities. She also noted another reason for problems with teaching and learning academic literacy, namely, the fixed programs' length which she found inadequate and insufficient for achieving the target institutional outcomes. Further problems were related to the heterogeneity of the ML groups of students. She suggested a possible solution might be using additional online resources to help underperforming students, especially those who preferred working at their own pace. She also believed that using an instructional model (LINC) that

allowed MLs’ to proceed to the next level after achieving performance milestones might be more helpful and more motivating.

Summary of roles	Participant reflections
Teacher Roles	Cope with Difficulties and Responsibilities
Learner Roles	Reflect Complex and Multilayered Factors
Materials’ Role	Address Diverse Proficiency and Backgrounds
Activities’ Role	Incorporate Diverse Cultural Backgrounds
Academic Literacies Development’s Role	Provide Additional Resources

Figure 21. Participant reflections: Summary of roles.

Overall, in their reflections, the participants addressed most emphatically educational roles (e.g., teacher and learner) that they felt directly associated with by identifying common problems and suggesting corresponding solutions. Next, they viewed materials’ and activities’ roles in relation to teacher and learner roles. Understandably, they focused on their work in materials and activities design, but also mentioned ways in which they involved their students in this process. Finally, in their reflections, they paid comparatively little attention to the role of academic literacy development which may have seemed distant and somewhat unrelated to their daily classroom responsibilities (see Figure 21). Given the participants’ heavy workload, challenging teaching responsibilities, and temporary employment status, this researcher was humbled by their commitment to their multilingual learners’ academic literacies development, and, particularly, to the possibility of contributing to the professional debate on this topic by participating in this research project.

Chapter Summary

After discussing the study's methodology in Chapter 3, Chapter 4 presented the results from the data analysis. First, it offered a gist of the study's context, namely, a description of its participants and data. Next, using frequency counts to tabulate the participants' responses, it presented the study's quantitative analysis of the data retrieved from the online Qualtrics survey. This was followed by the qualitative analysis of the data retrieved from the interviews where the participants' responses which were analyzed in a content analysis matrix. Finally, Chapter 4 concluded with a qualitative content analysis of the participants' reflections.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

Introduction

Chapter 5 concludes the work on this dissertation following the review of the literature in Chapter 2, the presentation of its methodology in Chapter 3, and the analysis of its data in Chapter 4. Based on the information from preceding chapters, and particularly from the data analysis from the previous chapter, Chapter 5 offers answers to its research questions as they represent the study's goals. It also offers a conclusion that summarizes the study's main findings. Following that, it discusses the study's implications and limitations. It concludes with directions for future research.

This study targeted the exploration of the nature of Academic Literacies instruction to multilingual learners in multicultural settings. To this effect, I designed an online Qualtrics survey, conducted face-to-face interviews, and collected post-interview teacher participant email reflections. To explore the ESL program's Academic Literacies instruction at the Toronto College site selected for this study, I analyzed teacher reported perceptions in an online Qualtrics survey through a quantitative analysis of frequency counts. To examine teacher reported experiences of Academic Literacies instruction, I conducted face-to-face interviews with the teacher participants which I scheduled conveniently to facilitate spontaneous and uninhibited responses. I then transcribed the interviews manually and coded them to analyze the data gathered through a qualitative content analysis. Further, to fully understand teacher reported experiences, I required the participants to write their perceptions of multilingual learners' academic literacies development and email these to me. I analyzed the reported participants' reflections using content analysis. Finally, for an in-depth understanding of multilingual learners'

(MLs') Academic Literacies' instruction, I applied both quantitative and content analyses.

Below, I discuss the study's findings in relation to its goals as reflected by its research questions.

Research Question 1

1. What are ESL teachers' reported experiences of developing the academic literacies of multilingual learners?

To answer Research Question 1, the participants' reported experiences in developing their multilingual learners' (MLs') Academic Literacies are examined and the related findings elaborated. To answer Research Question 1, the interviews conducted with the participants enumerated their experiences of developing the Academic Literacies in their multilingual learners. The Academic Literacies' aspects that the participants addressed are divided into three categories: most significant, less significant, and least significant. Additionally, Figures 22, 23 & 24 presenting the participants' key answers visually assist in answering Research Question 1.

The participants' interviews provided the data for analyzing their reported experience in developing their multilingual learners' (MLs') Academic Literacies. There, the participants emphasized the extent to which certain academic literacies' aspects were representative of an Academic Literacies' perspective. I have interpreted higher participant percentages or higher participant numbers supporting a particular Academic Literacies' aspect as strongly representative of the Academic Literacies perspective as a trend in academic literacy development. In order to facilitate answering Research Question 1, based on the analysis of the data gleaned from the interviews, I divided the participants' responses into three groups: Academic Literacies' aspects the participants experienced as most significant (70 -100%), Academic Literacies' aspects the participants experienced as less significant (31- 69%), and

Academic Literacies aspects the participants experienced as least significant (1-30%) for developing the Academic Literacies of multilingual learners (MLs).

Academic literacies' aspects: Most significant participant experiences.

The participants found seven aspects of multilingual learners' academic literacies development most significant. All fourteen participants (100%) agreed that multilingual learners were in charge of their learning as a result of being provided with practical goals and autonomous learning tasks (Zamel & Spack, 2006). The participants were also unanimous, that is all fourteen of them (100%) reported that they realized the enormous effort needed to accomplish academic tasks (Zamel, 2000), hence, they employed effective learning strategies to enhance their multilingual learners' academic literacies. Relatedly, all participants (100%) recognized the fact that that learners had difficulties with assignment completion. However, in accordance with the Academic Literacies perspective, teachers did not consider their students' lower language proficiency as a reflection of their intelligence (Zamel, 2000). Almost all participants, that is thirteen out of fourteen (93%), acknowledged a fourth most significant Academic Literacies aspect, that is the multilingual learners' diversity, a well-established feature of ML identities (Haggis, 2006). Furthermore, and in relation to learner diversity, twelve participants (86%) acknowledged the importance of integrating learner backgrounds in materials design as a fifth Academic Literacies' aspect. By highly valuing the incorporation of learner backgrounds in designing classroom materials, the participants were in sync with the Academic Literacies' perspective (Zamel, 2000).

Taking the incorporation of learner backgrounds in materials design one step further, and as a sixth most significant academic literacies aspect, eleven out of the fourteen participants (79%) endorsed that learner backgrounds could be incorporated on a higher level of curricular

planning, that is in syllabus design. The latter, too, reflects the Academic Literacies’ perspective which considers the sociocultural practices of multilinguals as vital (Lizarraga, Hull & Scott, 2015). Finally, ten out of fourteen participants (71%) acknowledged a seventh Academic Literacies’ aspect they experienced as most significant. They agreed that teachers played an impactful role in the ML Academic Literacies’ classroom. The latter is consistent with the Academic Literacies perspective encapsulating different roles for teachers, namely, as experts of critical literacy and critical discourse who are familiar with different texts and discourses (Hansman & Wilson, 1998). In sum, the teacher participants acknowledged seven most important Academic Literacies aspects that reflect the intrinsic difficulties resulting from MLs’ diverse linguistic and other backgrounds and their teachers’ inclusive practices in designing for and in managing the multilingual literacies’ classroom (see Figure 22).

%	Teacher experiences, interviews: Most significant academic literacies’ aspects
100%	Teachers emphasized multilingual learners being in charge of their learning
100%	Teachers discussed strategies to assist with multilingual learners’ academic literacies
100%	Teachers acknowledged multilingual learners’ difficulty completing assignments
93%	Teachers recognized the multilingual learners’ diversity
86%	Teachers noted on ways of incorporating diverse learner backgrounds in materials design
79%	Teachers considered ways of incorporating diverse learner backgrounds in syllabus design
71%	Teachers deemed their role in multilingual learners’ academic literacies development impactful

Figure 22. Teacher experiences, interviews: Most significant academic literacies’ aspects.

Beyond these, the participants exhibited more varied views on the following Academic Literacies’ aspects which they found second in importance.

Academic literacies’ aspects: Less significant participant experiences.

After the seven most important Academic Literacies aspects, the participants identified another five aspects they experienced as second in importance. Seven out of fourteen participants

(50%) thought that self-motivation was key to learner literacy development, and, therefore, a re-envisioning of literacy goals was needed in accordance with the Academic Literacies perspective (Wargo & De Costa, 2017). Second, seven out of fourteen participants (50%) welcomed questions from their students and interpreted these as a sign of learner involvement in their Academic Literacies' development. Third, six participants (43%) found it challenging to manage student participation when the learners had differing levels of engagement. Fourth, six participants (43%) reflected on their role as teachers not just as being reservoirs of information, but, instead, as facilitating a developmental stage in the learners' Academic Literacies development (Leander, Phillips & Taylor, 2010). Finally, five participants (36%) admitted they sometimes resorted to “tough love” with their MLs in response to the intrinsically difficult learning process that called for a stricter discipline approach. Overall, the multiliteracies aspects discussed here generated more varied responses, thus reflecting teacher concerns about student self-motivation and involvement and ways of enhancing these through pedagogical as well as management, that is “tough love,” strategies. Such variation in teacher experiences could be the result of unique teacher experiences in specific learning contexts calling for individual rather than standard solutions (see Figure 23).

%	Teacher experiences, interviews: Less significant academic literacies' aspects
50%	Teachers noted the importance of multilingual learners' self-motivation
50%	Teachers effectively initiated multilingual learners' questions
43%	Teachers recognized the challenge of managing multilingual learners' participation
43%	Teachers acknowledged the need to reflect on their teaching strategies
36%	Teachers demonstrated “tough love” to help learners in their academic literacies' paths

Figure 23: Teacher experiences, interviews: Less significant academic literacies' aspects.

In addition to the less commonly recognized, or less significant Academic Literacies' aspects revealed above, below, I summarize the participants' least common experiences, or, the academic literacies' aspects they deemed least important.

Academic literacies' aspects: Least significant participant experiences.

Fewer than 30% of the participants identified six Academic Literacies' aspects that mattered to them alone. Four out of fourteen participants (29%) emphasized the multilingual learners' (MLs') different learning styles and learning needs, which reflects the Academic Literacies perspective where language difference is viewed as an expansion of student writing (Bartholomae, 1983). Furthermore, two participants (14%) acknowledged that MLs' differences extended beyond their learning styles and needs, to the broader aspects of their ways of learning, their educational backgrounds and life experiences. The latter reflects the Academic Literacies perspective which holds that some learners are better than others. Additionally, three out of fourteen participants (21%) noted that learner differences extended to learner motivation which varied according to age, background and experience (Zamel, 2000). Moreover, three participants (21%) had serious concerns about incorporating learner backgrounds in syllabus design because of the challenges of creating such syllabi for diverse groups of MLs (Zamel & Spack, 2006). Finally, two participants (14%) stated that they experienced the importance of teachers in motivating MLs on the path of developing their academic literacies. To sum up, a limited number of participants while embracing learner differences, also experienced concerns in specific contexts that emphasized learner differences as challenges in MLs' Academic Literacies development as a result of a broader range of multiple individual learner factors (see Figure 24).

%	Teacher experiences, interviews: Least significant academic literacies' aspects
29%	Teachers acknowledged multilingual learners' wide range of differences
21%	Teachers mentioned the need for a greater multilingual learners' involvement in classwork
21%	Teachers recognized that multilingual learners' motivation depended on learner age, background, and experience
21%	Teachers were concerned about incorporating learner backgrounds in multilingual syllabus design
14%	Teachers recognized multilingual learners' different background and life experiences as a challenge
14%	Teachers noted that they played a special role in motivating multilingual learners' in their academic literacies' development

Figure 24. Teacher experiences, interviews: Least significant academic literacies' aspects.

In their interviews, the teacher participants in this study, multilinguals themselves, shared their experience developing their MLs' Academic Literacies by emphasizing the multilingual literacies' aspects they unanimously recognized and valued as well as the specific challenges some of them presented. Comparing their responses, it is clear that more than half of them or all of them (50%-100%) embraced the multilingual Academic Literacies perspective with its focus on the dynamics of learner diversity, self-motivation, and initiative as the driving force of classroom syllabi and materials. They saw themselves at the helm of an Academic Literacies' classroom steeped in the treasures of their students' and their own varied linguistic backgrounds and life experiences.

Yet, along with that, a couple of them, fewer than 50%, emphasized the potentially problematic impact of the learner diversity dynamics on student participation, initiative, and motivation. They proposed to counter such effects with appropriate pedagogical and management strategies attuned to the specific learning situation. Finally, a small number of participants, fewer than 30%, further emphasized the need to address such challenges adequately by detailing the specifics of each one separately as it relates to the dynamics of learning factors, such as learner age, background, and experience, and to teaching strategies that help promote

student participation and motivation. The participants' interviews provided ample evidence of the multilingual teachers' reported experience in understanding their students' diversity as an asset but also as a potential caveat. They demonstrated their undivided commitment to their students' complex but rewarding multilingual literacies' development.

To understand fully the participants' reported experiences of teaching Academic Literacies to MLs revealed in their oral interviews, this study's second research question explored the participants' reported perceptions of their MLs' Academic Literacies' development. Below, I summarize the findings gleaned from the participants' surveys and written reflections in which they explore in-depth some of the ML Academic Literacies' aspects they referred to in their oral interviews.

Research Question 2

2. What are ESL teachers' reported perceptions of developing the academic literacies of multilingual learners?

To answer Research Question 2, I examined the participants' reported perceptions of multilingual learners' (MLs') Academic Literacies' development as well as elaborated on the principal findings based on the analysis of the participants' reported perceptions. Further, I examined the participants' reported perceptions based on their responses to this study's online survey (see Appendix F) and their answers to the interview questions (see Appendix G). Here, too, I have followed the conceptual framework I applied in my response to Research Question 1. Accordingly, I have summarized the participants' reported perceptions of MLs' Academic Literacies development depending on the number of participants addressing identical or similar Academic Literacies' aspects. In that, I have considered the highest participant percentages (survey: 75%-100%; reflections: 51%-100%), as indicative of the most significant Academic

Literacies' aspects. Following that, I interpreted lower participant percentages (survey: 65%-74%; reflections: 31%-50%) as indicative of less significant Academic Literacies' aspects. And, finally, I interpreted the lowest participant percentages (survey: 50%-64%; reflections: 0%-30%) as representative of what the participants perceived as the least important Academic Literacies' aspects, or, alternatively, of what only few participants perceived as important. For greater visual clarity, I have also presented these findings graphically (see Figures 25, 26, and 27).

The conceptual framework adopted in answering this study's research questions enabled me to investigate any differences between teacher participant reported experiences and reported perceptions, and, specifically, to establish the relation between participant reported experiences and their reported perceptions of those experiences. It also facilitated a layered understanding of the relative importance of specific Academic Literacies aspects in MLs' Academic Literacies development.

Academic literacies' aspects: Most significant participant perceptions.

In their online surveys and email perceptions, the participants identified five Academic Literacies' aspects they deemed as most significant. To indicate an Academic Literacies aspect's highest level of relative importance, they selected "frequently" as their preferred option in their surveys and further clarified their choices in their perceptions. All fourteen participants (100%) mentioned that they frequently taught level-appropriate strategies because they noticed that some learners were better than others at certain skills (Zamel, 2000). Such practices are reflective of the Academic Literacies perspective in developing MLs' Academic Literacies. Second, thirteen out of fourteen participants (93%) thought that frequently classroom materials enhanced student participation. Third, twelve out of fourteen participants (86%) acknowledged that frequently learners found it difficult to follow instructions, although these teachers recognized that lower

English proficiencies were not a reflection of MLs' intelligence (Zamel, 2000). Fourth, eleven out of fourteen participants (79%) noted that in their classes, frequently learners were free to ask questions while they were explaining a point. Finally, though eleven out of fourteen participants (79%) accepted that teacher-led discussions were common in teaching Academic Literacies to MLs, only nine of them (64%) reflected on their specific difficulties and responsibilities.

In their reported perceptions, this study's participants overwhelmingly confirmed and further detailed some of the aspects they identified as most significant in their experiences teaching MLs' Academic Literacies. Thus, to address student diversity in language proficiency and backgrounds, they applied focused pedagogical strategies aiming at stronger student motivation, initiative, and at effective instructions and instructional materials. To this effect, they mentioned the importance of maintaining a dynamic balance of teacher-led discussions and student-initiated queries (see Figure 25).

%	Teacher perceptions, surveys and reflections: Most significant academic literacies' aspects
100%	Teachers discussed how they frequently taught level-appropriate strategies
92%	Teachers noticed how classroom materials enhanced student motivation frequently
86%	Teachers realized that frequently students found it difficult to follow instructions
79%	Teachers admitted that they led discussions frequently
79%	Teachers emphasized that learners were free to ask questions while points were being explained frequently

Figure 25. Teacher perceptions, survey and reflections: Most significant academic literacies' aspects.

Academic literacies' aspects: Less significant participant perceptions.

In their online surveys and email perceptions, the participants identified five aspects they perceived as less significant but also somewhat problematic in MLs' Academic Literacies' development. Thus, ten out of fourteen participants (71%) noted that they thought academic literacy competencies clashed with students' previous academic literacy practices. Understanding

this clash, they frequently scaffolded academic concepts. Five of them (36%) reflected that they needed to do this to address learner variation and diversity (Bartholomae, 1983; Haggis, 2006). Ten out of fourteen participants (71%) thought that academic goals were presented exactly as stated in the curriculum. Although teachers adhered to the institutional curriculum, to overcome problems arising from a strict adherence to the mandated curriculum, ten participants (71%) thought that initiating student-led group discussions which is in accordance with the Academic Literacies perspective in advocating value-building activities and collaborative discussions (Zamel, 2000). Nine out of fourteen participants (64%) found that assessment tools were designed to meet program goals but not necessarily learner goals and needs. Finally, five participants (36%) reflected on how both teaching strategies and assessment tools could be made more insightful and better attuned to MLs’ needs and goals.

In their reported perceptions, as an area that is second in significance, this study’s participants followed up on their reported experiences with MLs’ Academic Literacies development by reflecting on possible solutions to mismatches between institutional and learner goals, between teaching and learning strategies, and between teacher-centered and learner-centered activities. Last but not least, participants reflected on possibilities for a diversity-based instruction that meets both personal and institutional expectations (see Figure 26).

%	Teacher perceptions, surveys and reflections: Less significant academic literacies’ aspects
72%	Teachers sometimes realized that academic literacy competencies clashed with students’ previous academic practices
71%	Teachers frequently scaffolded academic concepts
71%	Teachers sometimes initiated student-led discussions
71%	Teachers frequently taught academic goals as stated in the curriculum
61%	Teachers frequently admitted that assessment tools were designed to meet program goals

Figure 26. Teacher perceptions, surveys and reflections: Less significant academic literacies’ aspects.

Academic literacies' aspects: Least significant participant perceptions.

In their online surveys and email perceptions, the participants identified five aspects they perceived as least significant or most problematic in MLs' Academic Literacies' development. First, eight out of fourteen participants (57%) considered allowing students to bring materials from their home cultures. However, four of them (29%) had contrasting reflections on the effectiveness of using learner backgrounds in developing MLs' Academic Literacies. They mentioned the assets but also the caveats of such an approach. Second, seven out of fourteen participants (50%) perceived students as creators of knowledge, which is in keeping with re-envisioning Academic Literacies goals (Wargo & De Costa, 2017). Third, seven out of fourteen participants (50%) acknowledged that they felt challenged to create level-appropriate assignments for their diverse learner populations (Haggis, 2006). Added to this challenge, one teacher (14%) reflected that program outcomes do not seem to match student expectations. Despite this, seven participants (50%) believed that learners frequently participated actively in class discussions. Additionally, seven participants (50%) reiterated their belief that the current definition of academic literacy competencies seemed to emphasize the so-called "rhetorical star" (e.g., audience, purpose, tone, style, and context). They thought that could explain the perception of the classroom as a reservoir of knowledge which is in contrast with the Academic Literacies perspective which defines it as a single point on the continuum of MLs' Academic Literacies' development (Leander, Phillips & Taylor, 2010). Finally, three participants (21%) reflected on the need for a practical focus of Academic Literacies education because as four of them (29%) reflected, the ultimate goal of academic literacy teaching is developing academic competencies that are meaningful and applicable in and out of the classroom.

In their reported perceptions of the MLs’ Academic Literacies development, as a follow-up to their reported experiences, here, the participants dwelled on MLs’ Academic Literacies development’s aspects that are perhaps least significant, less often selected, and sometimes problematic. In their surveys, their most preferred choice of available classroom options was “sometimes.” Furthermore, the participants justified their infrequent choices with reflections about the controversial and potentially disruptive strategies that could allow student home-culture materials, encourage them to be creators rather than receptors of knowledge, all within the challenge of creating level-appropriate curricula and materials (see Figure 27).

%	Teacher perceptions, surveys and reflections: Least significant academic literacies’ aspects
54%	Teachers considered allowing students to bring materials from their home cultures
50%	Teachers speculated on ways of encouraging active student participation
50%	Teachers imagined how to encourage students to be creators of knowledge
50%	Teachers perceived the institutional emphasis on academic literacy competencies’ focus on the “rhetorical star” problematic
50%	Teachers felt challenged to create level-appropriate assignments

Figure 27. Teacher perceptions, survey and reflections: Least significant academic literacies’ aspects.

Overall, the participants’ reported experiences and perceptions provided a layered view of the MLs’ Academic Literacies development in the context of the ESL education at the Toronto College selected as the site for this study. It revealed a group of instructors who are deeply involved with their students’ academic progress and Academic Literacies as the defining factor of that progress. The following conclusions are based on the data analysis and the data analysis discussion offered in Chapter 4 and Chapter 5.

Conclusions

The goal of this study was to examine teacher reported experiences in and reported perceptions of multilingual learners’ (MLs’) Academic Literacies development. For that,

fourteen teacher participants, multilinguals themselves, elucidated their experiences in and perceptions of developing the Academic Literacies of the ESL learners from the ESL department of Toronto College. The study investigated the participants' survey responses, interviews, and reflections to conclude that even though academic literacy development is the official institutional term, the ESL teachers in the ESL department of Toronto College in principle follow the Academic Literacies perspective. Below, I summarize this study's conclusions.

ONE. ESL teacher roles and responsibilities were varied and important. They included meeting student goals and needs by incorporating level-appropriate materials and activities according to program specifications, as well as student backgrounds. Teacher responsibilities included creating safe spaces for learning and inspiring students, as well as ensuring that the classroom was an equitable space for its diverse learners.

TWO. ESL learners were diverse and took charge of their learning. ESL learners differed in language proficiency, motivation, age, and cultural and educational background which determined the extent of their academic success. Despite this variety of factors affecting their overall academic development and Academic Literacies' development in particular, MLs were in charge of their learning by engaging in both cognitive and metacognitive activities as part of their journey to achieve academic literacy.

THREE. Despite teachers' competent, thoughtful and persistent attempts at optimizing educational and Academic Literacies opportunities for their MLs, teachers testified to a number of problems that their students encountered in the classroom which, in turn, created problems for the teachers as well. Most teachers emphasized the difficulty students had following instructions. To overcome this difficulty, half of the teacher participants felt challenged when creating level-appropriate assignments and instructions.

FOUR. The teacher participants acknowledged that although their class discussions were mainly teacher-led, the classes themselves were student-centered. To maintain learner- and learning-centeredness, teachers encouraged students to participate actively in class and welcomed students asking questions during teacher presentations of new material and teaching points. Half of the participants indicated a further feature of their learner-centered classrooms, that is the opportunities for learners to create knowledge.

FIVE. The teacher participants experienced as well as reflected on the curriculum's and program's demands that were not in sync with student needs and expectations. They suggested the possibility of consulting and adopting supplementary books and resources as a way of adapting institutional curricula to individual student goals and needs. They stated that such additional resources could provide a value-added experience for both teachers and learners.

SIX. The teacher participants also indicated the serious implications of the overwhelming workload involved in providing additional assistance to students. They emphasized the conflict between students' expectations and institutional requirements as a profound problem that demanded some in-class but also a lot of out-of-class work with students. Their solution was to fall back on the institutional "five-stars" model of purpose, audience, context, tone, and style, and, thus, at least for the moment, disregard student individual factors until they could find manageable ways of addressing those. They mentioned that adequate solutions to such complex issues could benefit from additional resources.

SEVEN. The teacher participants acknowledged that despite the difficulty of integrating learner background and other factors overall, there were possibilities for doing this at the lower proficiency levels of the ESL program. There, learner backgrounds could be incorporated in

individual, pair, or group in-class activities and in collaborative cross-curriculum projects. Most teacher participants noted that such activities boosted student motivation.

Implications of the Study

This study has significant implications based on examining teacher reported experiences and reported perceptions of the ESL academic literacy program in Toronto College. Despite its teacher participants' courageous attempts at student inclusion, it reveals a strong inclination to present Canadian education and experience as dominant, at the cost of devaluing international students' and immigrants' identities. Therefore, it explores ways of treating international students' and immigrants' diverse multilingual and sociocultural backgrounds as resources and not as deficits. Additionally, it suggests that when the social environment requires both immigrants and international students to conform to Canadian norms, creating equitable spaces of mutual interest could help balance the power dynamic prevalent in Canada. It further promotes the idea that national educational systems and methods are different rather than superior or inferior, thus, making the classroom inclusive, democratic, and sustainable. Furthermore, although the single-noun academic literacy is the official literacy term in the ESL program in Toronto College, which is the site for this study, this study's main goal was the investigation of teacher reported experiences and reported perceptions of what constitutes the tenets of the Academic Literacies perspective. Its most important finding implies that within the institutional curriculum, in their ESL classes, its teacher participants were in fact endorsing and using the multilingual learners' Academic Literacies perspective.

Limitations of the Study

The main limitation of this study lies within the selected focus of its topic, that is teacher reported experiences and reported perceptions of multilingual learners' Academic Literacies

development. It intentionally excluded students' experiences and perceptions from its scope of investigation. A further limitation derives from the study's design which included only three kinds of data samples, that is teacher surveys, interviews, and reflections to the exclusion of student- or artifacts-based data, i.e., student work, teacher syllabi, institutional policies and program documentation. Yet another limitation arises from the exclusion of teacher observations as a data source. The latter could have provided evidence of the actual teaching and learning practices that could be used to investigate the process of Academic Literacies instruction in the ESL department Toronto College as well as the extent to which such instruction conforms to the Academic Literacies perspective. However, as this study was an exploration of the Academic Literacies perspective, these limitations provided a necessary focus of the investigation. Refocusing this study would yield possibilities for further research discussed below.

Directions for Further Research

This study focused on the exploration of its participant teachers' reported experiences in and reported perceptions on their multilingual learners' Academic Literacies development in the ESL program Toronto College. Future studies could address other sites, i.e., public school ESL programs in Canada and abroad, intensive English programs in various locations, and English for Specific Purposes programs as part of ESL education. By design, it focused on academic English ESL learners. Other studies could explore specific ESL proficiency levels, i.e., intermediate and advanced, as well as use other relevant data, such as student papers, tests, and student and teacher feedback. This study used online surveys, face-to-face interviews, and email reflections. Other technologies, such as videoconferencing and Google Docs may provide different participants, data and exploratory opportunities and results. Most important, while this study explored incidental evidence of multilingual learners' Academic Literacies' development, future

research could focus on the effectiveness of specially designed curricula that purposefully implement the Academic Literacies perspective. These could investigate the incorporation of the Academic Literacies perspective in integrated skills ESL classrooms, in various multimodal ESL curricula, lessons and assignments, where teachers and multilingual learners are not restricted to the five-paragraph essay as the only acceptable genre for the higher levels of ESL programs, where multicultural, multi-genre, and multimodal literacy education is in sync with contemporary academic and other professional literacies.

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Appendix A

Institutional Review Board Approval

November 27, 2017

Dear Mary Anne John:

Your proposed research project, "Perceptions of developing academic literacies in multilingual learners," (Log No. 17-268) has been reviewed by the IRB and is approved. In accordance with 45CFR46.101 and IUP Policy, your project is exempt from continuing review. This approval does not supersede or obviate compliance with any other University requirements, including, but not limited to, enrollment, degree completion deadlines, topic approval, and conduct of university-affiliated activities.

You should read all of this letter, as it contains important information about conducting your study.

Now that your project has been approved by the IRB, there are elements of the Federal Regulations to which you must attend. IUP adheres to these regulations strictly:

1. You must conduct your study exactly as it was approved by the IRB.
2. Any additions or changes in procedures must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented.
3. You must notify the IRB promptly of any events that affect the safety or well-being of subjects.
4. You must notify the IRB promptly of any modifications of your study or other responses that are necessitated by any events reported in items 2 or 3.

The IRB may review or audit your project at random *or* for cause. In accordance with IUP Policy and Federal Regulation (45CFR46.113), the Board may suspend or terminate your project if your project has not been conducted as approved or if other difficulties are detected

Although your human subjects review process is complete, the School of Graduate Studies and Research requires submission and approval of a Research Topic Approval Form (RTAF) before you can begin your research. If you have not yet submitted your RTAF, the form can be found at <http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=91683>.

IRB to Mary Anne John, November 27, 2017

While not under the purview of the IRB, researchers are responsible for adhering to US copyright law when using existing scales, survey items, or other works in the conduct of research. Information regarding copyright law and compliance at IUP, including links to sample permission request letters, can be found at <http://www.iup.edu/page.aspx?id=165526>.

I wish you success as you pursue this important endeavor.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Roberts, Ph.D.
Chairperson, Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects
Professor of Criminology
JLR:bkj

Cc: Dr. Lilia Savova, Faculty Advisor

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form for Participants

Project: ESL Teacher Experiences and Perceptions of Developing Multilingual Learners'

Academic Literacies

Principal Investigator: MaryAnne John

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

English Department

Ph.D. Program in Composition and TESOL

You are invited to participate in this research study. You are participating in this study because you are a teacher of English at your institution. The following information is provided to help you to make an informed decision to participate or not. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the experiences and perceptions of teachers towards the development of academic literacies in multilingual learners.

Participation in this study will require a response to a preliminary questionnaire, following which there will be a face-to-face interview with a reflection to follow. If you wish to participate in this research project and give your consent in the questionnaire, you will be contacted for a face-to-face interview, over a period of four weeks. The time for answering the questionnaire is a week. Once, consent is received then the dates of the interview will be discussed with you, the interview will be conducted within two weeks of your submitting your consent to taking part in this research. The total time involvement for the interview and the reflection is six weeks. The total time involvement for the whole study is four weeks.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with your institution.

Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose not to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Principal Investigator by email (m.john@iup.edu). Upon your email request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidential and will not bearing on your professional standing at your institution.

Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in TESOL-related professional journals or presented at academic conferences and meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you would like to have further information on this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me via this e-mail address: m.john@iup.edu

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement attached.

Principal Investigator

MaryAnne John

Ph.D. Candidate in Composition & TESOL

514 Keith Avenue, Glenway Estates

New Market, ON, L3X1V4.

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova,

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Professor of English, Department of English
Indiana, PA 15705-1094

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne

John by email: m.john@iup.edu

Informed Consent Form (continued)

VOLUNTARY CONSENT FORM:

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

E-mail address which you can be reached _____

Investigator's use only

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study; have answered any questions that have been raised; and have witnessed the above

signature.

Date

Investigator's Signature

If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne John at the email m.john@iup.edu

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form for Survey

Project: ESL Teacher Experiences and Perceptions of Developing Multilingual Learners'

Academic Literacies

Principal Investigator: MaryAnne John

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

English Department

Ph.D. Program in Composition and TESOL

You are invited to participate in this research study. You are participating in this study because you are an ESL teacher of English at Toronto College, Toronto, Canada. The following information is provided to help you to make an informed decision to participate or not. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the experiences and perceptions of teachers towards the development of academic literacies in multilingual learners.

Participation in this study will require a response to a preliminary survey. If you wish to participate in this research project you would need to give your consent to answer a survey. In the survey, you will be asked whether you would like to participate in the second step of the research study which is a face-to-face interview, over a period of four weeks. You will need to sign a consent form before filling in the survey. You have a week to answer the survey and email it to the principal investigator at m.john@iup.edu. It will take approximately 30 minutes of your time to fill up the survey.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with your institution. You will receive no direct benefits of participating in this study.

Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose not to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Principal Investigator by email (m.john@iup.edu). Upon your email request to withdraw, all information pertaining to

you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will not have any bearing on your professional standing at your institution.

There are no risks associated with participating in this study. I understand that we are colleagues in Toronto College, but I approach you to take part in this study from the perspective of a researcher. This will have no bearing on our professional responsibilities as colleagues in Toronto College. Please feel free not to participate in or withdraw from this study, if it is inconvenient to you, in any way. You are under no compulsion to participate just because we are colleagues. Please participate if you can make a six-week commitment to the study which will require approximately 120 minutes of your time.

Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in TESOL-related professional journals or presented at academic conferences and meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you would like to have further information on this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me via this e-mail address: m.john@iup.edu

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement attached.

Principal Investigator

MaryAnne John

Ph.D. Candidate in Composition & TESOL

514 Keith Avenue, Glenway Estates

New Market, ON, L3X1V4.

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova,

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Professor of English, Department of English
Indiana, PA 15705-1094

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne

John by email: m.john@iup.edu

Informed Consent Form for Survey (continued)

Voluntary Consent Form

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

E-mail address which you can be reached _____

Investigator's use only

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study; have answered any questions that have been raised; and have witnessed the above signature.

Date

Investigator's Signature

If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne John by
email: m.john@iup.edu

Appendix D

Informed Consent Form for Interviews

Project: ESL Teacher Experiences and Perceptions of Developing Multilingual Learners'

Academic Literacies

Principal Investigator: MaryAnne John

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

English Department

Ph.D. Program in Composition and TESOL

Since you have decided to participate in this research study, you will now be invited for a face-to-face interview over the span of the next two weeks. You will get a week to reflect on the questions before the interview. The interview will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

You are participating in this study because you are an ESL teacher of English at Toronto College, Toronto, Canada. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the perceptions of teachers towards the development of academic literacies in multilingual learners.

Participation in this study will require your participation in a face-to-face interview. If you wish to participate in this research project you would need to give your consent in this form to receive the email for the interview. You will be contacted by email for a face-to-face, over a period of four weeks. The interview will be undertaken in a duration of two weeks. You will have a week to reflect on the questions of the interview. If you have any questions related to the interview, please do not hesitate to email the principal investigator m.john@iup.edu.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to

participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with your institution. You will receive no direct benefits of participating in this study.

Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose not to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Principal Investigator by email (m.john@iup.edu). Upon your email request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will not have any bearing on your professional standing at your institution.

There are no risks associated with participating in this study. I understand that we are colleagues in Toronto College, but I approach you to take part in this study from the perspective of a researcher. This will have no bearing on our professional responsibilities as colleagues in Toronto College. Please feel free not to participate in or withdraw from this study, if it is inconvenient to you, in any way. You are under no compulsion to participate just because we are colleagues. Please participate if you can make a two-week commitment to the study which will require approximately 60 minutes of your time.

Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in TESOL-related professional journals or presented at academic conferences and meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you would like to have further information on this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me via this e-mail address: m.john@iup.edu

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement attached.

Principal Investigator

MaryAnne John

Ph.D. Candidate in Composition & TESOL

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If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne

John by email: m.john@iup.edu

Informed Consent Form for Face-to-Face Interviews (continued)

Voluntary Consent Form

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

E-mail address which you can be reached _____

Investigator's use only

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study; have answered any questions that have been raised; and have witnessed the above signature.

Date

Investigator's Signature

If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne John by
email: m.john@iup.edu

Appendix E

Informed Consent Form for Reflections

Project: ESL Teacher Experiences and Perceptions of Developing Multilingual Learners'

Academic Literacies

Principal Investigator: MaryAnne John

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

English Department

Ph.D. Program in Composition and TESOL

Since you have decided to participate in this research study, you will now be invited to write a reflection after your interview has concluded over the span of the next week. You will get a week to write your reflections. The reflection will take approximately 30 minutes to complete. You are participating in this study because you are an ESL teacher of English at Toronto College, Toronto, Canada. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

The purpose of this study is to investigate and analyze the perceptions of teachers towards the development of academic literacies in multilingual learners.

Participation in this study will require your participation in writing a reflection after the questionnaire and the interview have concluded. If you wish to participate in this research project you would need to give your consent in this form to write a reflection. You will be contacted by email for a reflection, in a week's time. The reflection must be answered by you in a week. You will have a week to reflect on the questionnaire the interview and the study. If you have any questions related to the interview, please do not hesitate to email the principal investigator m.john@iup.edu.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. You are free to decide not to participate in this study or to withdraw at any time without adversely affecting your relationship with your institution. You will receive no direct benefits of participating in this study.

Your decision will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you choose not to participate, you may withdraw at any time by notifying the Principal Investigator by email (m.john@iup.edu). Upon your email request to withdraw, all information pertaining to you will be destroyed. If you choose to participate, all information will be held in strict confidence and will not have any bearing on your professional standing at your institution.

There are no risks associated with participating in this study. I understand that we are colleagues in Toronto College, but I approach you to take part in this study from the perspective of a researcher. This will have no bearing on our professional responsibilities as colleagues in Toronto College. Please feel free not to participate in or withdraw from this study, if it is inconvenient to you, in any way. You are under no compulsion to participate just because we are colleagues. Please participate if you can make a two-week commitment to the study which will require approximately 60 minutes of your time.

Your response will be considered only in combination with those from other participants. The information obtained in the study may be published in TESOL-related professional journals or presented at academic conferences and meetings, but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

If you would like to have further information on this research study, please do not hesitate to contact me via this e-mail address: m.john@iup.edu

If you are willing to participate in this study, please sign the statement attached.

Principal Investigator

MaryAnne John

Ph.D. Candidate in Composition & TESOL

514 Keith Avenue, Glenway Estates

New Market, ON, L3X1V4.

Dissertation Director: Dr. Lilia Savova,

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

Professor of English, Department of English
Indiana, PA 15705-1094

If you have any questions or concerns, you can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne

John by email: m.john@iup.edu

Informed Consent Form for Interviews (continued)

Voluntary Consent Form

I have read and understand the information on the form and I consent to volunteer to be a participant in this study. I understand that my responses are completely confidential and that I have the right to withdraw at any time. I have received an unsigned copy of this informed Consent Form to keep in my possession.

Name (PLEASE PRINT) _____

Signature _____

Date _____

E-mail address which you can be reached _____

Investigator's use only

I certify that I have explained to the above individual the nature and purpose, the potential benefits, and possible risks associated with participating in this research study; have answered any questions that have been raised; and have witnessed the above signature.

Date

Investigator's Signature

If I have any questions or concerns, I can contact the Principal Investigator, MaryAnne John by email: m.john@iup.edu

Appendix F

Survey

Concerning your background, please mark with an x the appropriate box:

Sex:

Male Female Non-binary Prefer not to answer Not listed

Age:

30 years old and under

31-40 years old

41-50 years old

51 years old and over

Prefer not to answer

Highest academic degree:

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree

Doctorate Degree

Prefer not to answer

Number of years of teaching experience:

0 - 6 years

7 -15 years

16 -25 years

26 years and above

Prefer not to answer

Please respond to the following statements by selecting the option that fits best your experience.

Section 1: My role as a teacher in my ESL classes

1. I find it hard to create assignments because students are at various proficiency levels.

Always Frequently Occasionally Never

2. I give elaborate instructions on assignment completion, but students can seldom understand or follow them.

Always Frequently Occasionally Never

3. I let my students decide on the topic of their presentations within the parameters of the assignment.

Always Frequently Occasionally Never

4. I see myself as a co-creator of knowledge with my students.

Always Frequently Occasionally Never

5. I try to involve weaker students in discussions especially those who remain silent and detached but I fail.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
6. I introduce new material using lectures.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
7. I do not formally introduce new material. Instead, I have the students retrieve it from available textbooks and handouts.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
8. I introduce new material by first offering the rules and then having students apply those rules in specific examples.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
9. I adapt my language and teaching strategies to meet my students' needs.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
10. I use language and teaching strategies appropriate for the target material and proficiency level.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never

Section 2: The role of learners in my ESL classes

1. Learners are free to ask questions while I am explaining a point.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
2. Learners are recipients of knowledge from their textbooks and teacher.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
3. Learners are creators of knowledge in addition to the knowledge gained from their textbooks and teacher.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
4. Learners can negotiate the content and deadlines of assignments.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
5. Learners participate actively in class discussions on topics of general human interest.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
6. Learners participate actively in class discussions of academic literacy topics.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
7. Learners can discuss their difficulties with the task and ask for clarifications after the class.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
8. Learners are highly motivated to develop their academic literacy.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
9. Learners complete assignments as required.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never
10. Learners can develop their own assignments.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never

Section 3: The role of materials in my ESL classes

1. The institutionally required ESL textbook must be followed as required.
 Always Frequently Occasionally Never

2. The commonly shared online program assignments are the model for specific classroom variations on these assignments.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
3. Assessment tools are designed to meet program goals.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
4. Assessment tools are designed to meet individual student goals.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
5. Classroom materials include the ones students bring from their home cultures to showcase their work.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
6. Required institution-provided or teacher-designed classroom materials are supplemented with student-generated ones.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
7. Classroom materials include texts and activities that focus on grammar and vocabulary.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
8. Classroom materials include texts and activities that address global (L2) academic discourse features.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
9. Classroom materials include texts and activities that compare global (L1) to local (L2) academic discourse features.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
10. Classroom materials enhance student motivation.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------

Section 4: The role of activities in my ESL classes

1. Classroom activities are mostly from the adopted ESL textbook.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
2. Classroom activities are adapted from the official ESL textbook.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
3. Classroom activities from the adopted ESL textbook are often supplemented with teacher designed activities.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
4. Classroom activities scaffold academic concepts.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
5. Classroom activities are the same for the whole class.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
6. Classroom activities are customized to meet individual student needs.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
7. Classroom activities are teacher-led whole-class discussions.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
8. Classroom activities include student-led small-group work.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------
9. Classroom activities focus on the completion of short-term tasks.

Always	Frequently	Occasionally	Never
--------	------------	--------------	-------

10. Classroom activities allow students to form pairs and groups of their own.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never

Section 5: The role of academic literacy competencies in my ESL classes

1. Academic literacy goals are debated and adjusted to meet student needs.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
2. Academic literacy goals are presented as stated in the curriculum.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
3. Academic literacy competencies are introduced explicitly (e.g., from rule to examples).
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
4. Academic literacy competencies are introduced implicitly (e.g., from examples to rule).
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
5. Academic literacy competencies emphasize audience, purpose, context, style, and tone.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
6. Academic literacy competencies focus on oral communication.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
7. Academic literacy competencies focus on written communication.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
8. Academic literacy competencies focus on comparing global (L2) and local (L1) academic rhetorical styles.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
9. Academic literacy competencies instruction focuses on replacing the students' existing local (L1) academic styles with global (L2) Anglophone academic rhetorical and discourse standards.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never
10. Academic literacy competencies instruction clashes with students' previous academic literacy practices.
Always Frequently Occasionally Never

Appendix G

Interview Questions

1. What would you say are the positives ESL learners bring into your classroom?
2. What are some of the challenges you face while handling ESL students?
3. How can you bring the ESL learners sociocultural backgrounds into the syllabus?
4. Do you consider the backgrounds of students when you design activities?
5. What are some of the effective strategies you have used in your classes to help learners achieve academic literacy?
6. What are some ways you can let students be in charge of their learning?
7. How much motivation do you think ESL learners need to succeed in their academic learning?
8. While handling academic English do you allow discussions about why you are teaching a particular point in a particular way? Do you allow students to critique academic conventions? Do you engage in metacognitive activity with your students - learning why they doing what they do?
9. When students discuss difficulties in assignment completion how do you handle these problems?
10. In your experience how impactful is the role of a teacher in the ESL classroom? Why?

Appendix H

Handout to Teachers

ESL Teacher Experiences and Perceptions of Developing Multilingual Learners' Academic Literacies

MaryAnne John: m.john@iup.edu

Purpose of the study

This study is being conducted to investigate teacher perceptions towards the development of the academic literacies in multilingual learners. Since multilingual learners constitute such a large population in Academic English classrooms it would be compelling to find out what academic literacies, multilingual learners bring with them to the classroom. What are teachers' experience in the development of academic literacies among multilingual learners and how do they view the development of academic literacies in their multilingual learners?

Background of the study

This study is significant because in today's academic English classroom, a large majority of our students are multilingual (Hall, 2009; Matsuda, 2006). These multilingual learners come into the academic English classrooms with their own concepts of academic literacy (Molle, 2015). The academic literacies approach stresses that academic language is only one of the resources that students use as they learn. Students are not looked upon with a deficit perspective but as having agency (Lea & Street, 1998; Street, 1999; Horner, Lu, Royster and Trimbur, 2011). When teachers handle these students in their academic English classrooms, they need to understand, accept and work with these academic literacies of their multilingual students (Zamel & Spack, 2004) and understand the power dynamic that operates in higher educational environments (Lea, 2016).

Additionally, teachers also shoulder the task of developing the academic literacies of their multilingual learners to fulfill the requirements of post-secondary education in college which is a principal focus of the study. At the same time, teachers need to give students the flexibility of not only becoming knowledge consumers but becoming knowledge generators (Lea, 2016) as well as not endorse a standard but rather question, critique, examine its value amid such changing dynamics of higher education (Horner and Blommaert, 2017; Huang and Archer 2017).

The focus of the study is to evaluate the strategies that teachers use to assist in the development of the academic literacies of multilingual learners. Multilingual students need to comply with the standards for post-secondary education and further develop and refine their academic literacies to suit the requirements of their post-secondary education (Lillis & Scott, 2007). Examining the academic literacies of multilingual learners becomes crucial as on this depends their success in pursuing post-secondary studies at college (Street, 1984; Gee 1990, Barton, 1994). How these learners are handled in academic English classrooms also becomes significant because the teachers that handle them need to understand their needs and facilitate the process of their academic literacies' development (Luna & Canagarajah, 2007).

The difference between academic literacy and literacies

Academic literacy implies that to be considered academic there is a specific skillset to be acquired (Turner, 2007). It does endorse that academics is associated with the history the politics and the culture in which it functions (Henderson & Hirst, 2007). Students who study these discourses, must master them to

proceed from point A to point B in their lives. Their opinions, their critical analysis of the discourse, or examining the discourse, fall outside the purview of their interaction. In academic literacy, the learning must be mastered despite the students prior learning or experience with academia.

McWilliams and Allan (2014) make a distinction between the singular and the plural use of academic literacy. In its singular form academic literacy is seen to be restrictive and seemingly uniform indicating one set of practices. On the contrary, the plural form of academic literacies is more inclusive and lets students have a voice and is concerned with how students interact and make sense of the academic contexts they are in. It teaches students about the particularities of academic writing where genre, mode, style, and register are all part of the meaning making processes students find themselves exposed to. Academic literacies suggest that literacies encapsulate many aspects and various kinds of literacies (Scott, Bloommaert, Street, & Turner, 2007). Students do not come to the class with only one kind of literacy, they are aware, and they belong to many communities of practice each contributing to various aspects of their academic literacies. Academic literacy does accommodate diverse students but, it gives them no credibility to question academic literacy (Henderson & Hirst, 2007).

The reason why literacy is described not as a common entity but as literacies is because literacy is not looked upon as a transferable skill that can be mastered with the knowledge of grammar, vocabulary, and context (Lea, 2004; Lillis & Scott, 2007). On the contrary, literacy is woven into social practice: how people function in society, the roles they play, the power structure that exists. Literacy cannot be tackled as a single problem needing to be fixed but rather as knowledge gained through understanding the social contexts in which we operate, understanding that various kinds of writing and speaking have different conventions, each has a specific set of rules, and each has a power dynamic engrained within.

Teachers who use the academic literacies approach are not trying to fix the problems in student writing but instead introduce their students to the various conventions that exist in various forms of writing. Teachers introduce their students to understand the power dynamic that exists in education to help them become successful English language learners. Literacy is not a single entity which is transferable. Each kind of writing has a specific set of rules which are determined by audience, purpose, context and style.

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