

DESTINATIONS: AN ANALYSIS OF SLA SUCCESS THROUGH THE IMAGINATION

Christine Palumbo

University of Arizona

Focusing on a Vygotskian theory of cultural-historical psychology, this article features a narrative analysis to examine the role of subjectivity and the generative potential and agency manifested in Non-Native English Speaking Teachers' (NNESTs) successful development of second language (L2) fluency. My research takes another view of Vygotskian theory by considering the imagination. Taking a cultural-historical approach, I conducted a qualitative analysis of how NNESTs pathways to fluency evolved from their Imagined Destinations. Imagined Destinations is defined as a goal or objective in the mind of the learner that mediates and is mediated by his or her lived experiences. From the analysis of online survey data with 27 Panamanian NNEST teachers and a detailed case study analysis of the language learning of eight of these teachers, the concept I coin as Imagined Destinations surfaced. These data revealed how participants dynamically create and recreate their language learning trajectories that support the transformation of their environments to advance their L2 learning goals. These transformations have implications for how factors of the environment and goal setting intertwine throughout the participants' lived experiences "through the processes of collaboratively transforming the world in view of their goals" (Stetsenko, 2008, p. 471). Findings indicate that teachers' language trajectories are continuous, emergent, and the result of taking on very deliberate ecological roles in their bilingual success despite recurring salient and limiting circumstances. These findings about the centrality of Imagined Destinations in learning "smudges" the perception that societal power outweighs the dynamic and agentive roles of individuals as active molders of their lives. Finally, this research also seeks to enrich scholarship by demonstrating how NNESTs use their bilingual identities, built from their trajectories to bilingualism, as ways to influence and inspire their own students' second language learning.

Keywords: agency; imagined destinations; sociocultural theory; second language learning; sociocultural theory; subjectivities; generative potential

OVERVIEW

This study examines the role of subjectivities and the generative potential and agency of eight Non-Native English Speaking Teachers' (NNESTs) trajectories to L2 fluency as dynamic systems. This examination familiarize the reader with the processes of how people "come to know themselves and their world as well as [become] human in and through the processes of collaboratively transforming the world in view of their goals" (Stetsenko, 2008, p. 471). The overall goal of this paper is to show the generative potential of these teachers while engaging from their Imagined Destinations (IDs), a term defined as a goal or objective (destination) in the

minds of individuals that generates potential to organize and orchestrate successful language learners' roads to fluency (Palumbo, 2015). This potential is specifically connected to their emotions and predilections for acquisition. Through sharing these individuals' stories, I show how these progressions support the altering of these teachers' worlds as Subjective Alternatives that complement and transform their environments. Below, I demonstrate how the externalization of these narratives include the teachers' control of symbolic processes that stimulated the correction of actions sufficient to achieving their goals, while serving them in defining their identities as second language learners and teachers, all along considering and highlighting the enormous value of these NNESTs, who come from a different mother-tongue than the language they are teaching.

To provide a preview of how I measured participants' transformational trajectories, the first thematic analysis uses participant narratives to closely examine and elaborate González Rey's (2007) Vygotskian-based insights on the role of subjectivity in human development, and the mediating roles of emotions and *vivencias* in shaping these subjectivities. In my analysis of participant narratives, my first thematic discovery (Finding) relates four constructs that clarify and enhance the role of Imagined Destinations: Construct 1: Imagined Destinations; Construct 2: Subjective Alternatives; Construct 3: Agentive roles; and Construct 4: Unity of Affect and Intellect. I further define these constructs and clarify the role of *vivencias* below.

Moll (2014) discusses *vivencias* (akin to the Russian *perezhivanie*) as “lived or emotional experience convey[ing] the dialectical connections between affect and cognition in relation to living a social situation, and it includes the subjective meaning and sense of an experience” (Rodríguez Arocho, 2009, as cited in Moll, p. 104). Moll explains the term *vivencias* when he compares two students in one of his studies who “ostensibly share the same social situation of development” but “experience it differently, living socially, emotionally, linguistically, and intellectually different lives” (Moll, 2014, p. 104). Moll continues in his explanation of *vivencias* as a way “to capture the combination of intellectual and emotional aspects of the social situation while underscoring the inseparability of development from its contexts” (p.105). Thereby “in an emotional experience we are always dealing with ... indivisible unity of personal characteristics and situational characteristics... represented in *perezhivanie*” (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 342: in González Rey, 2009, p. 70). Consequently, *vivencias* (*perezhivanie*) supports the understanding that two people will experience the same event differently due to the combination of emotion, personality and context.

The second theme (Finding) I employed to analyze the narratives was taken from a study by Johnson & Golombek (2011). This study provides three functional constructs originally designed to analyze the benefits and uses of narratives in teacher development: Function 1: Narrative as a Mediational Tool. Function 2: Narrative as Systemic Evaluation. Function 3: Autobiographical Reflection. The three are associated with the actual monitoring of whether teachers are metacognitively aware of their L2 learning experiences, retrospectively. These three constructs also establish how the eight cases related their historical records to their L2 learning classrooms when adapting the function of inquiry to gain insight into their minds and their L2 identities as English learners and teaching professionals. By combining these two analyses, the subjective places (roles) and imaginations of participants' autobiographical retellings could be monitored, becoming as important as the social context for learning and development; person and context become inseparable through the teachers' *vivencias* within their narrative storytelling. This organic view of successful language learning poetically relays the importance of rendering learners as active participants in the learning process, realizing that knowledge is

constructed: in other words, they do not see students as empty containers merely awaiting knowledge to be poured into them, but instead important contributors to their own success.

From a pedagogical viewpoint, one of the main aims of the analysis is to take a critical look at the perhaps too-eager desire of teachers to jump into additional language learning without consideration of the “whole” person who enters their classrooms. By doing so, they may actually set up their students for communicative challenges and failures by not fully considering the cultural ideologies and behaviors that students must successfully traverse in promoting learning through inquiry and interaction as guided by learners’ backgrounds, relevant experiences and situated contexts (Przymus, 2014). Theoretical issues within a cultural-historical framework therefore, follow a system, inseparable from the mind, where the inevitable IDs (goals, subjectivities) that begin internally are eventually mediated within participants’ *vivencias*. González Rey (2007) argues these systems are “dynamic configurations within the social context in which the subjects’ action is developed” (p. 3). This theoretical analysis takes root in Vygotsky’s earlier work discussing cultural historical origins involving the psychical system. This perspective lends credence to subject and subjectivities of mental processes as a system that encompasses the following theoretical viewpoint: ideas can begin in the person’s psyche, initially originating in the place I coin as “Imagined Destinations.” These very real destinations, set in the mind of the participants and then retold in their narrative stories, are theorized as going through permeable phases of development into successful L2 acquisition. Vygotsky’s work encapsulates imagination as a part of human development, emphasizing imagination as “a means by which a person’s experience is broadened... not limited to the narrow circle and narrow boundaries of his own experience” (Vygotsky, 1967/2004b: as cited in Moll, 2014, p. 94). Therefore, the theoretical elaboration analyzing how the NNEST teachers’ pathways to fluency evolves is furthered by viewing this as their Imagined Destinations.

Finally, this work also seeks to enrich scholarship by demonstrating how NNESTs use their bicultural identities built from their trajectories to bilingualism as ways to influence and inspire their own students’ L2 learning. To peer through the opacity screening L2 fluency, in the study within, I build upon another view of a Vygotskian theory, by elaborating on the role of the imagination. I look to the data and the power that is in our own cultural historical records and the ideologies that our students (these teachers) bring to their L2 learning experiences as they interact with the environments they encounter. In studying successful L2 adult learners, I wondered why some English Language Learners (ELLs) succeed despite “inequitable worlds in which learning takes place” (Norton & McKinney, 2011).

The examination of this diverse array of ELLs “smudges” the perception that societal power outweighs the “emergent and agentive roles of individuals as active molders of [their lives]”, indicated by Moll (2014) and furthered by Stetsenko (2008), González Rey (2009, 2011), and other contemporary researchers. Through particular narratives discussed in the Findings section, readers can easily monitor how Imagined Destinations and the art of narrative storytelling can act as tools to acquire language and empower teachers to be inspirations for their L2 learners in their classrooms. The use of these evolving theoretical frameworks and ideas will be elaborated upon in the Literature Review.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Vygotsky’s Early Work

Vygotsky’s work originally focused on the mental processes of the individual, and later shifted to the mediation of tools within an environment. Sociocultural theory (SCT) more popularly grounds itself in the dominant Western interpretations, which are, according to

González Rey (2009), the “second moment of Vygotsky’s work emphasizing semiotic mediation, signs, tools and internalization... ignoring the involvement of those [earlier found] processes and tools in the functioning of the psychical system as a whole” (pp. 62-63). These phases are discussed temporally as different “blending of ideas from [Vygotsky’s] written works in different times” (p. 60). To continue this conversation, as it has developed, according to van der Veer and Valsiner (2009), “Vygotsky had different moments in his written works” (p. 11). Vygotsky’s important reflections in these earlier works had to do with emotions, personality, fantasy and the generative capacity of the mind. The particular theoretical underpinnings of his cultural-historical theory informs this current study built upon the understanding that successful L2 learners begin their language goals (identities) in IDs that begin internally: that is, as a part of the psyche and as a form of the systemic organization of the person within their imaginations. According to these stages of mind, ideas (subjectivities) are at first mediated in the environment naively and later deliberately, indicating the importance of looking at the learner from their own cultural historical ideologies and learning goals. As stated in Moll (2014, p. 145)

As Vygotsky (1978) proposed, human learning and development depend crucially on the process of social intercourse, on the nature of our relationships---primarily relationships with other people, but also with artifacts, institutions, nation-states, and linguistic and political ideologies. All of our lived experiences mediate our thinking in powerful ways.

When examining these phases, the NNES teachers’ own unique personalities and subjective selves, each in their own way, are highlighted below. Important to note for this study, subjectivities here are neither passive nor are they simply reflections of the environment - subjectivities are active, dynamic and produce outcomes that cannot be entirely inferred from the external circumstances where human actions take place (González Rey, 2011, p.47). Subjectivities are “a complex human production within which, collateral effects, consequences, facts, and subjective configurations of the individuals and those social spaces [where] they live combine into a recursive and complex subjective network” (González Rey, 2009, p. 65). If this system of mind does exist, and the participant learning the language, in fact, becomes more committed when his/her intellect becomes metacognitively aware of its passions while ‘gradually learn[ing] to control them’, as discussed earlier- classroom pedagogical tools begin to develop.

Also relevant to the study, is further discussion on the “transformative power of the narrative [that] lies in its ability to ignite cognitive processes that foster teacher professional development” (Johnson and Golombek, 2011, p. 488). Johnson and Golombek (2006) discuss how this type of inquiry functions as a vehicle for teacher inquiry “based on the assumption that such inquiry will ultimately bring about productive change in teachers and their teaching processes” (p. 486). Such is shown in the narratives’ autobiographical retellings time and again, which will be pointed out more specifically in the Findings section below.

Finally, when we look at NNESTs and their L2 students as *Funds of Knowledge* (Moll, Amanti, Neff, & González, 1992) and amply challenge interpretations of L2 learners and their NNEST as deficient, or lacking, and instead remember who they are and where they have been within the Vygotskian constructs analyzed in this research, we honor Vygotsky and the results of this work. Peter Medgyes’ (1994) also sheds light on this often relegated topic, stating “NNESTs have the capacity to be good role models to their students due to their insight into the “other” culture and language, especially in anticipating the road blocks in the L2 learners’ environments to which they mutually share” (p. 253). Medgyes continues by pointing out that the NNEST can also be seen as a better anticipator of language learning difficulties while having the likelihood of being more sensitive to language learners’ needs and better facilitators of language learning as

a result of a shared mother tongue. By participation in a shared culture and having achieved success in English, and as demonstrated in this research, teachers' stories can be shared to inspire and motivate their students. Further discussed by Medgyes is that these NNES teachers can be effective providers of learning strategies because of their own roads to fluency and the trajectories of their language learning experiences. Situated within the above literature, below I detail the context of this study and methods used to highlight and measure the impact of these NNESTs' Imagined Destinations on their learning, identification, and development as teaching professionals.

METHODS

Setting and Participants

The context of the study was a teacher training program for Panamanian teachers of English at the Center for English as a Second Language (CESL) at the University of Arizona campus. As an educational consultant and English Language Fellow (ELF) working in Panamá for the past eight years, I share a long-term professional relationship with the majority of the 27 Panamánian teachers participating in this research. I had met most participants either directly or indirectly during an eight-year period that I was living and working in the country. Furthermore, this group came to the Arizona Teacher Training program in concert with discussion and decisions made with the Panamánian Ministry of Education (MOE) and administrators making the decisions. In addition, the course requested was designed specifically for a supervisory capacity and in follow-up to the work already accomplished (with me) directly and indirectly with English language learning in the country. Jointly decided by the Ministry, these supervisors and coordinators have the highest potential to impact English language programming in the country because they are responsible for all the private and public school English language programs in the country. Participants in the study are therefore considered proficient bilinguals capable of overseeing all EFL classes (kindergarten through university) offered within the context of both private and public schools, primary through university, in eight of the nine provinces in the country. All born in Panamá, their fluency in English situated them for a lifetime of teaching, and then supervising and coordinating English language programs and teacher supervision in the country.

Steps of Analyzing the Data leading to Findings

Here I describe the procedures of data analysis step by step for the reader, in order to understand the mental process I went through in choosing the next two analyses in process of answering the research questions indicated below. The qualitative analysis assumed by a narrative perspective (autobiographical storytelling) first aimed to answer three research questions (RQs) seeking to understand human development through participants Imagined Destinations. As I answered the RQs, the findings led to the two main themes that consistently emerged throughout the narratives.

1. Do teachers deliberately preordain reaching goals that came from their Imagined Destinations?

The confirmed "yes" answer to this Research Question led me to the definition of Imagined Destinations and Thematic Construct One in Analysis Two.

2. What was the biggest obstacle to fluency in English? And, how did they handle those obstacles?

The answer to this Research Question led me to Thematic Constructs Two, Three and Four in Analysis Two.

3. Do teachers feel/think their journey supports their skills in the classroom? / Do they use their stories to inspire and teach their students?

The answer to this research question led me to Thematic Analysis Three, created and used by Johnson and Golombeck (2011), specifically Function 3 and the work of Peter Medgyes' (1994).

In order to address these RQs, I first carried out content analyses of the online survey. Afterward, I transcribed the interviews from the audio recordings in Word format. Next, I did the content analysis of interview transcriptions sorting the data in three ways: 1) I examined the narratives answering the research questions; 2) I sorted the participants according to the age they indicated learning English on the survey and their answers to their roads to Journeys to Bilingualism (Online Survey, Appendix, 1); 3) I created short vignettes of the participants in order to share them in the Data Analysis section. Interview data were analyzed qualitatively, attempting to clarify and go beyond the data from the survey questions and get a more detailed picture of the participants' Imagined Destinations and their journeys through bilingual pathways within SCT, particularly the cultural historical framework from Vygotsky's earlier work, in order to more clearly answer the research questions.

Transcribing and then sorting the data to answer the research questions allowed me to grow more comfortable with exactly what I was concomitantly asking and what I was aiming to be answered. The creation of the vignettes further familiarized me with the autobiographical renditions of the teachers' journeys to bilingualism within the questions asked. I was able to more closely monitor the narratives from a more metacognitive place, which led the way into the next two data analyses (Analysis Two & Three); these were found within the processes of transcribing and analyzing the data. In contrast to quantitative designs, in qualitative research, specific research questions typically emerge after the research begins. As the specific questions emerge, certain participants are often selected using the purposive sampling technique to elaborate and clarify the theoretical positioning and elaboration. According to Small (2008) "the strengths of qualitative work comes from understanding *how* and *why* questions" (p. 8). Because these teachers succeeded learning English in a country where only the privileged upper class become bilingual, I wondered "why" these ELL learners succeeded. Evaluating their success by asking "how" the teachers overcame the weight of societal power overshadowing their chance of success became an "overarching variable to improve the reliability of answers to how and why questions" (Small, 2008, p 8) further leading to Analysis Two and Three.

In this process, by getting to know the participants through their narratives I was able to recognize the process discussed by Vygotsky's cultural historical origin as elaborated on in the work of Moll and González Rey on Subject and Subjectivities and specifically Moll's interpretations of Vygotsky's writings on the imagination. From their interpretations of Vygotsky's work, I could more closely see how Imagined Destinations begins in the self. A goal set in the imagination begins a process that follows in stages from an internal place to an external one, which is where participants' Agentive Roles, in combination with emotions, transform the environment to meet participants' goals. González Rey (2011) discusses these transformations as sub-alternates in their environments due to exigencies needed to achieve their goals. Therefore, within the analysis of the data, I was more specifically able to find the theoretical positioning in relationship to the analysis I had already accomplished, that originally guided the formation and answering of the research questions. As a part of this process, the other two thematic analyses were formed: Imagined Destinations, Agentive Roles, Subjective Alternatives, and the Unity of

Affect and Intellect. Analysis Three was chosen as a way to monitor the narratives, taken from the study by Johnson and Golombek (2011), both discussed in the Literature Review. The authors' three functions of Narrative Analysis were also discovered as a part of the Findings: Narrative as a Mediational Tool, Narrative as Systemic Evaluation, and Narrative of Externalization are more intimately described in the next paragraph.

Because the narratives were so intimate and well-spoken, narrative analysis became the obvious route to take. The Johnson and Golombek (2011) study based on the narrative analysis of two L2 teachers was a perfect guidance in the value of utilizing narrative as a mediational tool to influence "how [the teachers] come to understand" what they are narrating about (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 472). Both analyses were cyclical in the sense that each informed the other. For instance, the emergence of certain categories during the content analysis of interview transcripts informed the content analysis of the narrative data.

Online Survey Analysis: Analysis 1

The distribution and receipt of online surveys was the first of three analyses (coding tools) carried out in the study to inform the investigation. The results of the online survey mainly included counting of participants' demographic information, the calculation and documentation of their journeys to bilingualism, the age they began learning English, and the noting of parental literacy. Additionally, I chose the participants most likely to represent the clearest picture of the seven constructs chosen to analyze the narratives. My purpose was to provide the purest form of in-depth interviewing using qualitative research to "produce scientific work based on [participants] own language, not that of others" (Small, 2008, p. 5). Designing my study to "include a ... pre-determined number of [NNES] respondents, even if this meant finding them through non-random means..., [left] me more room to examine the question[s]" (Small, 2008, p. 3).

Imagined Destinations: Analysis Two

This second data analysis created a way to monitor and illuminate the construct of Imagined Destinations within *vivencias* as discussed by Vygotsky, Moll, González Rey, and as interpreted by myself. Subject, Subjectivities, Subjective Alternatives and Agentive Roles were interpreted from the work of González Rey, 2002, 2007, 2009, 2011 and Moll (2014) as a part of the dynamic system coming from the participants' Imagined Destinations. The constructs gauged to analyze subjectivities and Imagined Destinations and the narrative functions are briefly defined in the Table below.

Table 1. Analysis two

<p><i>Construct 1. Imagined Destinations (IDs)</i> - Possibility to imagine another place venturing far beyond boundaries, assimilating with the help of imagination someone else's historical or social experience and is an essential condition for almost all human mental activity (Vygotsky, 1967/2004b). A goal within the subject's imagination based on subjectivities of the person.</p>
<p><i>Construct 2. Subjective Alternatives (obstacles)</i> - Individuals self-regulate by exerting their own voluntary control over mental functions when they discover opportunities to advance in their surroundings, or by finding alternatives to advance their development regardless of the social norms or materials offered. Actions that are subversive in relation to the dominant current</p>

social status, sub-alternates that embody emotions and are shared (González Rey, 2011).
Construct 3. Agentive Roles - Imagined Destinations (goals, subjectivities) that begin internally are eventually mediated within participants' <i>vivencias</i> . González Rey (2007) argues these systems are “dynamic configurations within the social context in which the subjects’ action is developed” (p. 3).
Construct 4. Unity of Affect and Intellect - Unity of Affect & Intellect guarantees control of emotions to correct actions’ adequate to the exigency of the subjects’ goals despite the environment (Moll, 2014 & González Rey, 2009).

Functions of Narrative Analysis: Analysis Three

Analysis Three is taken from teacher narrative research carried out by Johnson and Golombek (2011). Johnson and Golombek (2011) in their study with teachers discussing how this type of inquiry functions as a vehicle for teacher inquiry “based on the assumption that such inquiry will ultimately bring about productive change in teachers and their teaching processes” (p. 486). Please see the three Functions defined below.

Table 2: Analysis Three: Taken from Johnson & Golombek (2011)

First Analysis (A1): Narrative as a Mediational Tool - Analysis representing the tools used in teachers’ environments that support mediational space to transition into consciousness through inquiry, reflection, and verbalization to regulate the thinking process (cognition).
Second Analysis (A2): Narrative as Systemic Evaluation is how the teachers use the social to explain the experience through inquiry, reflection, and verbalization to regulate the thinking process.
Third Analysis (A3): Autobiographical Reflection (retelling) - Narrative of Externalization of their prior language learning experiences, critically analyzing those experiences, and then relating their analyses to their current conceptions of both language learning and language teaching.

In conclusion, combining the data taken from the surveys with the qualitative data from the narratives, this data set was analyzed across three lines of systematic inquiry guided by answering the research questions: first, to quantify the profiles, demographics and participants journeys to bilingualism; second, as guided by the answers to the research questions to examine the RQs against the constructs of analysis in Analysis Two; and then again examining the functions of analysis in Analysis Three. The transcriptions were analyzed according to the seven constructs, both across narratives and within a single narrative. As the two Methods are a part of the Findings, the insights for both ELLs and L2 Teachers will be discussed in the Final Discussion and Conclusion sections below.

FINDINGS

The goal of this section is to provide a snapshot of the participants' narratives to elucidate findings from the Two Thematic Analyses discussed above. In both Analysis Two and Three, the functions are by no means mutually exclusive, but instead permeable, as a single narrative activity will most likely, but not necessarily involve any, or all of the constructs or functions of analysis (Johnson & Golombek, 2011, p. 488).

As stated, the first thematic analysis (Analysis 2) uses constructs to more clearly view Imagined Destinations within *vivencias* through the four defined constructs of Imagined Destinations, Agentive Roles, Subjective Alternatives, and Unity of Affect and Intellect. These are used to gauge subjectivity, imagination, and agency within the subjects' trajectories to English. Below, through two narratives, these four constructs transpire through the retellings of Marco and Yara (pseudonyms).

Construct One: Imagined Destinations (IDs)

IDs, defined as a goal that begins in the subject's imagination are clearly stated in Marco's interview when asked if he remembered when his interest in English began:

I *always dreamed* to interact with native speakers. I *imagined* myself in a different country - *imagined* me talking to people in English. ... it was that picture in my *imagination* because I didn't know any English, but when I would see someone speaking I was fascinated... (1: 2014).

Construct Two: Agentive Roles

Agentive Roles of the participants underscore the active character of subjectivity through which the "individuals' produce their distinct realities" (González Rey, 2011, p. 9). Rey discusses these goals eventually showing up as "dynamic configurations within the social context in which the subjects' action is developed" (p. 3). These Agentive Roles were witnessed in Marco's depiction of the tools he used to mediate English: using a mirror, music, using a dictionary, etc., and in Yara's narrative when she gained access to a scholarship and later decided to be an English teacher. Disillusioned from the hardship and frustration of her experiences, Yara said,

I had a terrible time at this time I was 17, I was frustrated and angry with my teachers because they were so bad ...but then I [applied for] and got a scholarship to go to a one-year exchange program in the States to Minnesota (2:2015).

Construct Three: Subjective Alternatives

Subjective Alternatives are subversive in relation to the dominant current social status, and embody emotions (González, 2011). Individuals self-regulate by exerting their own voluntary control over mental functions when they discover opportunities to advance in their surroundings, or by finding Subjective Alternatives to advance their development regardless of the social norms or materials offered. Marco vividly displays this construct:

Even though the teachers were not good, I just tried a lot on my own, I remember I got a dictionary and I started studying vocabulary but it was hard because I didn't have anyone to practice with, we didn't have tourists so I use to practice by myself... my parents thought I was having psychological problems (2:2015).

Using a mirror to talk to himself in English was one tool Marco uses to attain proficiency in English. He also describes his parents' response in that "my parents thought I was having

psychological problems” (3:2015). Here, Marco’s Agentive Role acts “as subjective configurations which organize themselves based on ongoing action” (González Rey, 2011, p.8). Marco clearly describes the subversive alternatives he uses that were in direct opposition to the environment in which he lived. Not only did his parents think he was having psychological issues, Marco also lived in a small town with few English speakers with whom to converse or interact and his family is monolingual and uneducated.

Another subversive element, her contained emotion, was how Yara’s anger toward her “bad teachers” (as discussed in Construct Two) did not discourage her from pursuing English. Instead, she pursued a scholarship to the US, which is not a logical, or perhaps, a common response to such a negative situation. Yara changed the odds of never becoming fluent to completely reversing those odds by getting a scholarship, creating “sub-alternates” that embody emotions that completely changed her situation in a positive direction.

Construct Four: Unity of Affect /Intellect

Unity of Affect/Intellect shows that emotional control helps to correct actions adequate to the exigencies of the subjects (Zaporozhets, 1986, p. 283, in González Rey, 2011, p. 16). Again, citing Marco’s narrative, he says, “I noticed that I was better and more skillful than the rest of my classmates ... I am the first person to learn English... we were a very poor family and also I wanted to get ahead because we were poor...” Marco shows metacognitive awareness of his accomplishments that corrects the exigency of getting out of poverty that learning English might solve.

Both Yara and Marco’s journeys to bilingualism show combinations of affect and intellect when dealing with their English language paths to achieve their current fluency and status in Panama. Yara’s anger at her “bad teachers” also shows the agency she set forth to alternate in her environment by pursuing a scholarship to unify and correct actions adequate to the exigencies to right the wrong. Even though Marco’s parents at first thought he had psychological problems, he later described them as his “biggest supporters” (4: 2014). Yara’s anger at her bad teachers was mollified when she gets a scholarship to the US and has great English teachers, something she recognizes stating, “I had a terrible time at this time; I was 17. I was frustrated and angry with my teachers because they were so bad” (Yara, 4, 2015).

Brief Synopsis of the Findings

Yara and Marco’s stories have some intertwining themes. Both are from rural areas. Similarly, both participants come from poor families and neither set of parents has college degrees. As depicted in the four constructs written above, stemming from their Imagined Destinations, both Marco and Yara used their own Agentive Roles and determination stemming from their own L2 goals/objectives to transform their environments, subjectively altering their worlds creating access to the goal of English fluency. Through the unification of their emotions and affect, participants recurrently correct actions adequate to the exigencies needed to achieve fluency in their second language.

Analysis Three: Functions of Narrative Analysis

As aforementioned, similar to the aim of the study done by Johnson and Golombek (2011), this research uses narrative analysis as a way to document teachers’ reflections and engagement to foster teacher development. It also demonstrates how teacher reflection, through autobiographical retellings, ultimately brings about productive reflection and potential change in

teachers and their practices. These Functions of Analysis also support answering the research questions, especially RQ3. In order to elucidate these findings, I will use Marco's narrative, in the form of a vignette below, to describe each of the Functions of Analysis Three.

“Marco from Bocas del Toro”

To elucidate the conversation, teacher Marco was so committed to learn his second language English, he continued to pursue an active, dynamic role coming from his subjectivities to produce outcomes that “cannot be entirely inferred from the external circumstances where human actions take place” (González Rey, 2011, p.47). An example of this was, as aforementioned, his use of the mirror to practice English due to his lack of English-speakers to converse with. Though Marco's parents were worried that he was having some type of breakdown, Marco actively engaged in this subversive behavior to fit the exigencies lacking in his environment. Eventually Marco's parents supported his path; thus the mediated tools were created and used by his own volition, despite his parents and family members who did not understand his obsession and his own idiosyncratic self-determination to learn English. Marco's active use of mediational tools to transition into fluency, coupled with a subjective predilection for English, beginning in his imagination long before he embarked upon language learning, supported mediational spaces to transform his environment and allowed him to do what he needed to do to accomplish his goal of fluency stemming from his initial predilection for learning English (as defined in A1 and A2, see Table 2).

Marco continued to describe his situation as a teenager in rural Panamá. He was slightly desperate as there were few English speakers and inadequate teachers. Even though the teachers were not good, he went on to try on his own. He got a dictionary and started studying vocabulary, but it was hard because he had no one to practice with in a rural area with few tourists and very little English support (2: 2015). Here, Marco was clearly using his narrative to mediate the relationship he had with English growing up and also to regulate the thinking process to ignite his motivation and his path as discussed in both Functions One and Two (as defined in A1 and A2 above).

Positioning himself as poor, Marco is reframing his relationship to poverty as a place that created even “more desire” to succeed. His Imagined Destinations within *vivencias* in English drove him to becoming fluent because of his disadvantages, not despite them. Marco was not less prone, nor less able to learn. On the contrary, he learned because of the *vivencias* to which he was born. This again, intersects well within the concept of self and self-determination as a tool to control his world and to regulate his thinking process within his recollections as again described in both Functions 1 and 2.

I asked Marco if he used these self-proclaimed paths and agencies with his students, and he very readily and confidently replied with a story that pointed out the power in his autobiographical reflection to externalize his prior language learning into language teaching.

I always ask the first question to my students while they learn English -- do they like it? Then I ask them do you? Do you.... watch TV with English subtitles; on and on until their hands will go down after a while. So I use that as my guide for them to add to their daily lives; stuff they can do each and every day. And they come back to me after a while and tell me now I am doing these things that I recommended and in fact, they are enjoying learning and seeing a difference (5: 2014).

Whether Marco thought to use this method in his classroom as a result of the questioning, or whether it had already been activated and acknowledged before, Marco's own trajectories and experiences into English language learning, not only inspired his students, they also become useful pedagogical tools in his English classroom. This autobiographical reflection (A1 above) clearly relates his language learning experiences to language teaching. Using Narrative as Systemic Inquiry (A2 above) in autobiographic detail, Marco regulated his path by creating sub-alternates, thus gaining immediate control over his circumstances.

Teacher Marco is a role model to his students and he is proud of that very important position. Sharing his *vivencias* in Imagined Destinations, Marco externalizes his prior learning experiences, critically analyzing those experiences and then transferring them to his current conceptions of language learning and teaching. His narrative illuminates before, during, and after how he inspires the learners sitting before him and offers them tools of mediation to create their very own IDs. From those places, his students are given the opportunity to utilize and control their environments versus go victim to them as shown through teachers Marco and others NNESTs facing inadequate English teachers, poverty, rural contexts of living, no access to English speakers, etc.

This singular narrative tale gives a picture of the three Functions of Analysis taken from Johnson and Golombek's study (2011), and intimately involves the reader in the importance of narrative reflection for Teacher Education. By reflecting upon their own stories, NNEST teachers were able to "ignite cognitive processes" (Johnson & Golombek, 2011) relevant to their professional world as extrapolated from their own autobiographical reflections (retellings) of their journeys to bilingualism.

FINAL DISCUSSION

This study foregrounds how the structure of NNEST teachers' beliefs, assumptions, and backgrounds play a crucial role first, in their own language learning experiences and next in their L2 classrooms, pedagogically. Based on these Findings, we not only see a view of the generative potential of second language learners into fluency, but this research also adds a new way to monitor and build upon Vygotskian theories. Furthermore, this study acknowledges how the NNEST adds a perspective to the L2 classroom, potentially not available to a native speaking teacher of the target language being taught. This Finding is further discussed below in the Conclusion.

Another important point seen in this study, within the elements of Vygotsky's definition of imagination and as described from the Panamánian teachers' successful trajectories from their Imagined Destinations into English fluency, is that every person regardless of their socioeconomic status or ethnicity has an equal playing field to create their goals and aspirations within their lived experiences, no matter how poor or limited those places may be to an "outsider" (Blommaert, 2006). Teacher's subjectivities, born in their imaginations, supported these teachers' successful learning and eventual teaching of English within the data that reveal how participants dynamically created and recreated their language learning trajectories to support the transformation of their environments to advance their L2 learning goals.

Further explained, due to teachers' subjectivities and proclivities toward L2 learning, when the environment did not provide what was needed, the subject's Subjective Alternatives posed new norms and alternatives as options in their environments. Specifically put, when the intellect becomes metacognitively aware of its passions, "it gradually learns to control them" (Valsiner & van der Veer, 1999, p.240), thereby supporting the transformation of the

environment in order to achieve language fluency “through the processes of collaboratively transforming the world in view of their goals” (Stetsenko, 2008, p. 471). These results happen when learners take on very deliberate ecological roles in their bilingual success, despite recurring salient issues and limiting circumstances within participants’ environments, as seen in the autobiographical retellings of Marco and Yara in the Findings section above.

CONCLUSIONS

In this study I have assembled important conversations drawn upon a larger argument based on the interconnected analyses that principally states and highlights the enormous value of bilingual teachers who come from a different mother tongue than the language they are teaching. This view of second language acquisition that I appropriate as Imagined Destinations directs the eye to a broader context for investigating L2 learners’ trajectories into English fluency. This view of second language acquisition that I appropriate as the construct of Imagined Destinations directs the eye to a broader context for investigating L2 learners’ trajectories into English fluency. This fourth construct uncovered, while locating the three concepts of imagined communities, imagined identities and investment (Norton, 2013), further relegates deficit perspectives, often ubiquitous in cultural contexts outside of the target language and culture.

Based on the teachers’ stories being deliberately and actively used in their L2 English classrooms, in a number of ways these NNESTs reveal the funds of knowledge, the insight, and inspiration available to their students and to the pedagogy they are able to provide-- from their own language learning continuum. Consequently, by teachers sharing their own life histories into successful fluency with their students, a more tangible representation of the person they can be transpires. In further alignment is the image Vygotsky coins for imagination, that within human development we (humans, learners) conceptualize something from another person’s narration and description of what s/he has never directly experienced. Furthermore, they are not limited to the narrow circle and boundaries of their own experiences (1967/2004). As in the teachers’ responses to Research Question 3, there is a powerful chance they can become the role models needed to inspire their students to generate their own potentials in similar L2 learning contexts. Teacher narrative and self-reflection becomes an important metacognitive tool to enhance teacher identity and motivation for the teachers teaching and the students learning.

Another important purpose of this study was to foreground subjectivities and Imagined Destinations as processes for examining successful L2 learners’ pathways to English fluency. When defining the participants’ original goals relayed vividly from their imaginations, answered in Research Question 1 and furthered in Analysis Two, we can begin to see the process of Vygotsky’s work in a theoretical sense. This finding advances knowledge in the expected direction that this dynamic system posited by Vygotsky, in fact, exists. Consequently, if this system does exist, the vibrant nature of Imagined Destinations and the role of the internal system of the psyche by virtue of these findings, calls for a wider version of “‘context of the context’, and ‘the ‘before and after’ context” (Valsiner, 2009, p.30).

In conclusion, in Vygotskian terms, both cultural historical and individual ecological factors are important to consider in learning a second or foreign language. An additive versus a deficit or subtractive approach to viewing the L2 student and the NNEST enables us to propagate the cultural historical origins and generative potential of L2 learners and teachers as assets that complement the second language learning environment. Because of the teachers’ and students’ potential to develop their own success within *vivencias*, originally from their Imagined Destinations, we should celebrate the cultures and environments of these learners when looking

pedagogically within the context of the L2 classroom. We can recognize their environments and trajectories into L2 fluency as powerful tools that aid in successful L2 learning and teaching. Another tool are goals the learners set for themselves that transform their environments that ecologically transform their environments to let them meet the exigencies and achieve successful outcomes understood when answering Research Question 2, and also in examining the autobiographical retellings within all four constructs in Analysis Two, through viewing the value of the narrative as dissected in Analysis Three.

By combining these two Thematic Analyses, my analytical focus renders the subjective places and imaginations of participants as important as the social context for learning and development; person and context become inseparable through the teachers' *vivencias* within their autobiographical retellings, hence, narrative converts into a powerful tool in L2 education and teacher development. This focus gives us an organic view of successful language learning, poetically relaying the importance of rendering learners as active members in the learning process by them realizing that knowledge is constructed; not seeing students (teachers) as empty containers merely awaiting knowledge to be poured into them, but instead as important contributors of their own success. These findings then, are useful to the larger readership in promoting the idea that societal power does not outweigh the deliberate membership of the participants' emergent roles in their journeys to L2 fluency, further reducing the common notion that societal power overshadows the L2 learners' chance of success. In this study I have assembled important conversations drawn upon a larger argument based on the interconnected analyses that principally states and highlights the enormous value of bilingual teachers who come from a different mother tongue than the language they are teaching. This view of second language acquisition that I appropriate as Imagined Destinations directs the eye to a broader context for investigating L2 learners' trajectories into English fluency.

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Appendix A: Online Survey; Analysis One

The survey can be previewed by hovering the link and control clicking here: [Survey Preview](#).

The preview does not show data collection. As this survey will not collect data, feel free to interact with it as a respondent would.

Appendix B: Additional Examples of Analysis from Teacher Narratives

Analysis Constructs	Examples in Teacher Narratives
<p>1. Imagined Destinations (ID) – Possible to imagine another place venturing far beyond boundaries, assimilating with the help of imagination someone else’s historical or social experience and is an essential condition for almost all human mental activity (Vygotsky, 1967/2004b).</p>	<p><i>Marco</i>: “I always dreamed to interact with native speakers. I imagined myself in a different country imagined me talking to people in English” ...</p>
	<p><i>Tran</i>: “I wanted to be like those girls who helped me in my class – I imagined it”</p>
	<p><i>Blex</i>: “I believe that I always liked the language”</p>
	<p><i>Andi</i>: “When I go back to China, they say, they know everyone will know that I failed and they will say oh because he is playing all the time, he failed”</p>
	<p><i>Sonie</i>: “When we had vacation I would take those books and I would study those books with my dictionary and to practice I used my sister and I use to stand in front of the mirror... and I would memorize songs too... imagining I could speak the language”</p>
<p>2. Subjective Alternatives (SA) - Subversive in relation to the dominant current social status, sub-alternates that embody emotions and are shared (González Rey, 2011).</p>	<p><i>Blex</i>: Earlier said, “I always pictured myself in the United States... she further said, I went to the US before I studied, but I knew English because I learned it in the street. I believe that because I liked it and so I always found people and then my former husband was from Norway and so he was my very first English lesson”</p>
	<p><i>Marco</i>: “Even though the teachers were not good, I just tried a lot on my own, it was just grammar instruction really I remember I got a dictionary and I started studying vocabulary but it was hard because I didn’t have anyone to practice with, we didn’t have tourists so I use to practice by myself in the mirror... my parents thought I was having psychological problems “(Marco 2, 2015).</p>
	<p><i>Patrick</i>: “Madrid was sending back parents and their kids back to Barbados because he did not want anybody to speak English so you just spoke English at home. My parents thought to keep the language despite the governments saying no English they continued English”</p>
<p><i>Yara</i>: “The teachers were very conductive but then I got a scholarship to go to a one] year exchange program in the States to Minnesota. I had a terrible time at this time I been 17 I was frustrated and</p>	

	<p>angry with my teachers because they were so bad.”</p> <p>Andi: “I was frustrating and my class mate usually jokes about it and they laugh at me... and I was angry so I decide I am going to show you something back even if two to three years”</p> <p>Yara: “My teachers were conductive... I was angry that they were so bad”</p>
<p>3. Agentive Roles Played (AR) - Multiple subjective actions that embody emotions and symbolic processes, expectancies that are not cognitive (Moll & González Rey).</p>	<p>Patrick: “I learned Spanish from my classmates... first I learned by communicating and fighting with my peers. Sometimes you learn the bad first”</p> <p>Blex: I went to the US before I studied, but I knew English because I learned it in the street. I believe that because I liked it and so I always found people and then my former husband was from Norway and so he was my very first English lesson. I practiced with him... I was 27.</p> <p>Andi: “I didn’t know anything about Christianity but as my family is Christian people I will like when I eat with my host family... pray ... I realized that if I want to be a member of the family so I started reading the bible to be close and to improve my English skills”</p> <p>Andi: “I was frustrating and my class mate usually jokes about it and they laugh at me... and I was angry so I decide I am going to show you something back even if two to three years”</p> <p>Yara: “My teachers were conductive... I was angry that they were so bad”</p> <p>Sonie: When we had vacation I would take those books and I would study those books with my dictionary and to practice I used my sister and I use to stand in front of the mirror... and I would memorize songs too...</p> <p>Nico: But I think what helped me to improve in English was reading because it gave me the confidence to speak so when I was 14 or 15 I started reading all the books in the house.</p>
<p>4. Unity of Affect and Intellect - Unity of Affect & Intellect guarantees control of emotions to correct actions’ adequate to the need of the subjects (Moll & González Rey).</p>	<p>Marco: “I noticed that I was better and more skillful than the rest of my classmates and I use to help them too. I am the first person to learn English... we were a very poor family and also I wanted to get ahead because we were poor”</p> <p>Andi: “I was frustrating and my class mate usually jokes about it and they laugh at me... and I was angry so I decide I am going to show you something back even if two to three years”</p> <p>Yara: “My teachers were conductive... I was angry that they were so bad”</p> <p>Patrick: “Madrid was sending back parents and their kids back to Barbados because he did not</p>

	<p>want anybody to speak English so you just spoke English at home. My parents thought to keep the language despite the governments saying no English they continued English”</p>
	<p>Marco: “we were a very poor family and my parents only went to grade school --- I wanted to get ahead because we were poor”</p>
	<p>Patrick: “I learned Spanish from my classmates... first I learned by communicating and fighting with my peers. Sometimes you learn the bad first”</p>
<p>5. First Analysis (A1): Narrative as a Mediation Tool (NMT) - Analysis representing the tools used in teachers’ environments that support mediational space to transition into consciousness through: inquiry, reflection, verbalization, to regulate the thinking process (cognition).</p>	<p>Andi: Bible and Mean Classmates</p>
	<p>Patrick: Fighting with peers, parents going against the president’s wishes</p>
	<p>Marco: I got a dictionary and I started studying vocabulary but it was hard because I didn’t have anyone to practice with, we didn’t have tourists so I use to practice by myself in the mirror... my parents thought I was having psychological problems (Marco 2, 2015).</p>
	<p>Yara: Scholarship, teacher Cody, pursuing a career in English</p>
	<p>Marco: Mirror, dictionary, teachers</p>
	<p>Margy/Nico: family, books,</p>
<p>6. Second Analysis (A2): Narrative as Systemic Evaluation (NSE) - How the teachers use the social to explain the experience through inquiry, reflection, and verbalization to regulate the thinking process.</p>	<p>Marco: Marco continues to position himself as poor again, however he reframes this relationship of poverty to a place of “more desire” a destination that provided him with more drive to becoming fluent because of his disadvantages.</p>
	<p>Margy: After a time Margy began to cry as though she put it all together in her head or her heart or both. Having suppressed that piece of the story for so long, Margy described how her and her sister really wanted to live with their mom, but that her mom had financial troubles and that living with her dad’s abusive ‘maltreatment’ was an untold secret that she only shared with the chosen few that led her there.</p>
	<p>Sonie: But originally I wanted to study chemistry and my mom asked if I had a backup plan so English became my backup.</p>
	<p>Blex and Sonie: Now people want to learn the language</p>
<p>7. Third Analysis (A3): Autobiographical Reflection (AR) – Externalization of their prior language learning experiences, critically analyzing those experiences, and then relating their analyses to their current conceptions of both language learning and language teaching.</p>	<p>Patrick: Very confidently Patrick talked about how she has “a better comprehension” of her students’ process of learning the language. She said, I have a bilingual identity and ... I have the value of learning the different languages...</p>
	<p>Yara: “but I decided if I ever became a teacher I would be a good teacher. I am very communicative teacher sand I think they need this and my task is</p>

	that they can always communicate all basic things and move from there.
	Sonic: “Yes, I tell them if I was able to do that back then and I am from the countryside they can do it too.”
	Nico: “Well, the students can really be inspired by us and they are young and we can push them to look at the future because they are young and in order to inspire them we must share with them... because then they will trust you to advise them.”
	Margy: So I tell my students that nothing should stop you from taking away your dreams... God is always there for you and I try to be an inspiration to them and even though you have struggled coming from a very hard place and poor place ... problems... God will always be there for you and he will always take you from where you are into where we want to be