

Challenging labels within TESOL - Seeing Our Students Differently.

by Louise Sandiford

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Research undertaken by LOUISE SANDIFORD

Supervised by Dr KHAWLA BADWAN

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Content page.

Abstract	Page 4
Introduction	Page 5
Literature review	Page 9
Investment	Page 9
EFL terminology and term	Page 15
Methodology	Page 22
Philosophical Background	Page 24
Data collection and Analysis	Page 25
Reliability, ethical concerns and limitations	Page 27
Participant information	Page 28
Piloting	Page 29
Findings and Thematic analysis	Page 30
Students' Responses	Page 30
Teachers' Responses	Page 41
Conclusion	Page 48
Reference	Page 51
Appendix section	Page 54
Appendix I – Students' Journal	Page 54
Appendix II – Teachers' Questions	Page 55
Appendix III – Ethical Approval	Page 57

Abstract

Learning a new language is a journey that facilitates new ways of inhabiting the world, different worldviews, and new possibilities for a social identity. However, this journey is neither neat nor straightforward and it often entails grappling with numerous labels that could position the language learner unfavourably. The labels and the influence of labels, on how language learners perceive themselves in relation to English, is the key focus of this research. This paper seeks to uncover the impact of negative language labels that are commonly used with English Language Teaching (ELT). The construction of an individual's emerging social identity is influenced by much more than just the lexical nuances, as each interaction, more specifically within their educational journey, will leave an imprint. As such, this work seeks to challenge the normative frames through which English language learners are commonly seen, whilst exploring how these frames can have serious repercussions on a learner's motivation, self-worth, and notions of becoming. The term 'second language learner', which is utilised throughout the English Language Teaching sector, reinforces the idea that English will never become a language for a learner to embrace or make their own. It is a label with strong othering mechanisms that could amount to discrimination. The research will argue that the language learning classroom should not be referred to as a room of "second language learners". Rather, it needs to be a room that accommodates Emerging Bilinguals (EB) and multilingual identities. This label draws on the politics of 'recognition' (Fraser, 1995), that recognises the processes and dilemmas that language learners engage with. It also recognises that their 'emergence' is inevitably linked to diverse identities and worldviews that intersect with differing social class and ethnic affordances, diverse abilities, sexual orientations, and political stances. The aim of this paper is to challenge labels and explore whether the social and emotional growth of an individual's L2 identity has pre-imposed constraints: which may negatively limit their progression and own self-worth based upon the ideology of normative/colonial pre-designed and outdated terminology within ELT.

Key words: second, language, learner, emerging bilingual, identity, discrimination, ELT.

Introduction.

This research is designed to investigate whether the term 'second language learner' is loaded with negative labelling mechanisms, whilst discussing whether it impacts upon a learner's emotional development. This study is centred around my quest to identify each student as an individual. Interest in the topic has grown over a number of years with theorists such as Bonny Norton and Christopher Emdin calling for recognition of the individual learner, a change to educational practices and the combination of their culture and lifestyle to be at the forefront of their learning. Previously, I conducted a study which 'Explored learner motivation in relation to the country of study', (Sandiford, L. 2021), and whilst there was a distinct connection between motivation, learning and the country, the study highlighted issues with terminology specifically related to the language learner's identity.

At the beginning of the 21st century, as a result of growing mobility, English in the world found itself in a paradoxical position, (Seidlhofer, B. 2005). For the larger percentage of the global population, English is not their native tongue, and the term 'non-native' is used to identify them. In contrast, the smaller percentage who possess it as a mother tongue, 'native speakers', are expected to provide a model of acceptable usage. Prior to this, the English language was transported around the world through the reign of the British Empire. For those who did not possess the English language, they were deemed to be less civilised, and English quickly became the language at the centre of power and all other languages were placed at the periphery.

Today, the English language is amongst the most widely used languages in terms of its global usage. The usage of English is more common within all areas of

the following sectors: education, medical, media and business, making it the most commonly spoken language. However, if we were to examine the medical, media and business sectors, it is likely that the findings would return that the individuals are not categorised based on their linguistic repertoire: So, I must ask, why do we need the term 'second language learner' within the education sector?

Upon enrolment, language students are automatically identified as 'second language learners' and there are no end of journals, reports, and books available which use this term readily. Within TESOL, there is a specific discourse of research entitled Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Although its sole focus is centred around learning styles and strategies to assist the students, the title however, is not accurate, especially if the individual already possesses multiple languages and therefore the skill set/knowledge of how to add an additional language. Previously, there have generally been two identifying labels used within literature and teaching practices, 'second language learner' and 'non-native student'. 'Second' is linked to language and 'non-native' is linked to country of origin. However, as global mobility and perceptions have changed, so too have the connotations linked with these terms. The growing understanding is that both terms are such that they display no consideration to the student's potential linguistic repertoire or cognitive ability. Instead, these labels place the student in an unfavourable position based upon their linguistic/cultural priority and places English at the top. A student's linguistic history is one component that defines their identity and therefore they should be acknowledged for their entire repertoire, which may have consisted of multiple languages before they began to study English.

Within her book, *Language in a Globalised World* (2021), Dr Khawla Badwan highlights the complexity of globalisation in relation to an individual's view of

language, the world and their own identity, (Badwan, K. 2021). Following on from this, this research becomes more significant, impactful and timely to not only continue her work but also to apply her framework/rationale and thinking surrounding identity, to the inter-field 'othering' through labels.

For colleagues, the research creates a dialogue about how to see language learners differently, with the aim of creating a positive environment within their educational setting. The findings can be used to equip colleagues with the linguistic tools and pedagogic resources required to ensure each of their students feels valued, empowered, and recognised. In turn, this will create a safe space for language learners to discover who they are as they 'become' an emerging bilingual or multilingual. It is these emerging identities that are facing not only lexical challenges but are adding a new language to or developing their linguistic repertoire. The significance of this research is to positively embrace and empower learners and tutors to have a valued input to the language of their classroom. After all, their learning journey starts before they attend their first class. Advancing this further, the intended impact may become evident within attainment grades as there may be a positive impact upon their motivation. My hoped is that the change of labels will create a slightly new symbolic reality and an open environment to improve the students' journey of discovery and learning.

This research hopes to provoke a sense of unjust, not within TESOL as an overarching entity, but the manner in which students are addressed and categorised. The paper will first explore current literature surrounding the classification of discipline specific terminology used and any potential links to a language learner's personal, emotional, and cultural growth throughout their English learning journey. The participants enlisted for this study have been split into two groups, students and

teachers. To provide a cross reference of perspectives, the participants have been enlisted from two different educational sectors, private and public. Details of their involvement is outlined in the methodological section. The findings of the research will be evaluated through the different phases of data collection and data analysis. Where gaps in the dataset are identified, the project will flexibly move in the direction that follows the participants, as co-researchers with voices and views that matter. My target is to address my fellow colleagues in TESOL as 'educators' and not just as 'teachers', 'tutors' or 'trainees'. I also aim to shed light on the Ding and Bruce's (2017), competing conceptualisations of the TESOL practitioners as part of a support service working for the individual student. Ultimately, the goal is linked directly to the students and for the educational system and the educators to cut through the labels and see the students differently, as human beings.

Literature already used within the field.

Identity is not a term with one simple definition, as an individual's identity is a combination of multiple factors. These include facets, feelings, ideas, emotions, language, and ideals that will range from their earliest memory and will be continually affected by future goals, dreams, and aspirations. In short, identity is a fluid part of one's existence and that *self* is continually thinking and developing. According to philosopher John Locke, the self – or personal identity – is constituted by consciousness (Locke, J. 1975). He claims that a person's existence is marked by 'successive changes from the past to the present, and it is through consciousness and the mediation of memory that a person can cement together these different stages of existence to constitute personal identity', (Locke, J. 1975). He also uses the term consciousness in relation to the memory, 'The mind many times recovers memories of a past...' (Locke, J. 1975). However, when we consider the past conscious existences, it draws attention to what lies beneath, the fundamental schema of a 'person' and how that should be distinguished from 'a being', (HRI-UK. 2021). This research will explore how a language learner's identity can affect the conscious *self* through the themes of investment, culture vs nature as a human learner, EFL terminology and discuss how othering, alienation, and marginalisation through the language education system can also have an impact on the conscious *self*.

Investment.

The term investment was first developed by Bonny Norton in the mid-1990's and it represents the historical and social commitment of a learner. Her work recognised

that language learners are social beings with complex identities and highlighted the relationship between learners and the target language, (Norton, B. 2013; Norton Peirce, B. 1995). Norton's work demonstrated that the commitment displayed by a language learner is not just a product of their motivation, but how a learner recognises the wider range of symbolic and material resources which will in turn increase their cultural value and even their social power, (Darvin, R. and Norton, B. 2015). If we explore motivation briefly, we must note that a learner may be highly intrinsically or extrinsically motivated. However, this motivation can be affected by external factors as it is not a fixed or a unitary part of their personality. The language used within the classroom to address the students may result in the learner resisting the opportunity to speak and this draws our first reference to the open use of the term 'second language learner' being used within the learning environment. The idea of investment demonstrates a social and historical web that each language student is entangled within, and their commitment and experiences add strength to certain strands. However, although there is an abundance of research that surrounds investment and the acknowledgement of a student's historical identity, there is little recognition given to their linguistic repertoire, as English is immediately placed as their second language by others. This draws further attention to the focus of this research and the significance of adding recognition of linguistic repertoires to the field of investment.

Fig. 1 Darvin and Norton's 2015 model of investment

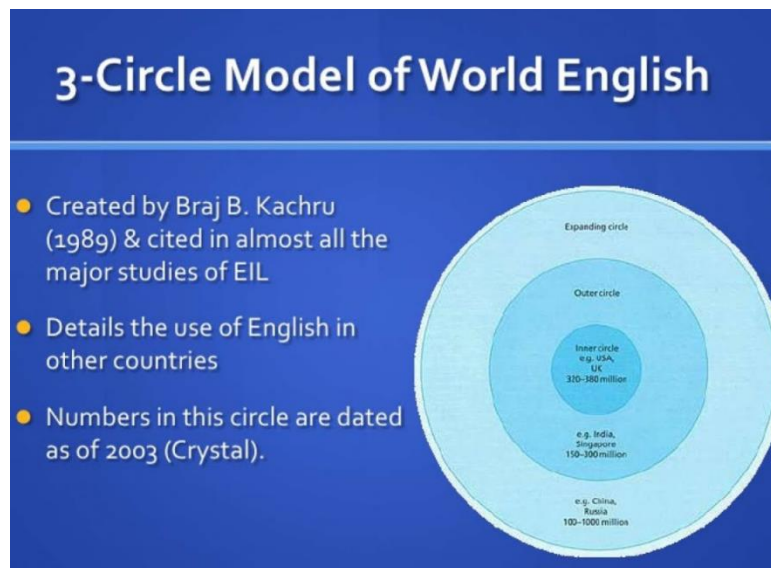


Investment is defined by Darvin and Norton as something that crosses over a person's identity, ideology, and capital (see Fig. 1.) which builds on Norton's earlier definition from 1995. As identity will continually be explored throughout this paper, this section will focus on ideology, including ideological views and the idea of the individual as human capital linked to English language. Darvin and Norton refer to ideologies as "dominant ways of thinking that organise and stabilise societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and exclusion" (p. 72). However, in an age of mobility, learners move more fluidly through multiple ideologies which all contribute to the shaping of their identity and interpretation of positioning. To view identity as multiple and fluid, recognises that the value of one's economic, cultural, or social capital shifts across time and space – subject to constraints by the ideologies of different groups or fields, (Darvin, R. and Norton, B. 2015.).

When understanding ideologies, it is important to understand the term 'World Englishes' (WE), popularised by Braj Kachru and Larry Smith in the 1970s and 1980s and it refers to varieties of English around the world, (Johnson, R. J. 2018). Each 'English' will have been adapted as it has moved from the centre to the periphery, but it becomes more interesting when we uncover the colonial history of English. Kachru created the three circles of English in 1985, which highlights the

usage and status of English. The model comprises of three concentric circles: the inner circle, the outer circle and the expanding circle (see Fig. 2.). The outer circle typically comprises countries that were once British colonies or had colonial relations. English was brought to these countries and with it came the ideals of language as power. English became the medium of instruction in education, or it was used as the 'working language' and was the chosen language when conducting business. With the language came ideals and promise. However, Kachru considers these outer circle countries as 'norm-developing' and states that they had the opportunity to further expand upon colonial norms, (Kachru, B. B. 1997). The expanding circle comprises pretty much the rest of the world, which means there are no immediate colonial ties. However, English is still used as a medium for communication and individuals within the expanding circle look to the inner and outer circles for correct models. They are considered by Kachru as 'norm-dependant' (Kachru, B. B. 1997). Ideologies also shape a learner's habitus, an internalized system "of durable, transposable dispositions" (Bourdieu, P. 1990, p. 53) that allow them to make sense of the world. While one's social location shapes habitus, which in turn structures the way one thinks and behaves, there is also desire that may align with, or contradict, this predisposition.

Fig. 2. Kachru three-circle model of World English 1992.



This becomes particularly important when we reference to the term ‘second language learner’ as, despite their historical connections, through education or business with the English language, individuals from the outer circle are still categorised using this term. Interestingly though, within Kachru’s article, *World Englishes: approaches, issues, and resources* (1992), he uses the term ‘bilingual’ to refer to speakers from the outer and expanding circle. One possible interpretation for this label choice could be linked to his heritage, as he is an Indian linguist. Another may be that he was aware of the term but because he felt it undermined his linguistic ability as he was able to convey meaning in both languages and did not see himself as a second language speaker. Alternatively, it may have been linked to his views of human capital through language.

To explore language as a capital, I must first draw upon Pierre Bourdieu’s explanation, stating that when capital is “perceived and recognized as legitimate” (Bourdieu, P. 1987, p.4) it becomes symbolic capital. Both Darwin and Norton place value on the linguistic or cultural capital learners bring to the classroom – their prior

knowledge, home literacies, mother tongues – (Darvin, R. Norton, B. 2015).

Together they believe that it will impact the extent to which learners will invest in the language and literacy practices of their classroom. If a learner is viewing their new identity through the lens of them being viewed as capital, then this self-image will be affected by not only the language they aim to use but also language choices of how they are addressed.

Some authors treat language as simply a means of communication and view these interactions in a similar way to money transactions. However, this view is an extremely linear one with no allowance for the individual's beliefs. An individual is usually not interested in a language as such (*per se*); rather, they like the life associated with it (Čok, L. and Novak-Lukanovič, S. 2005). There in lies the economical aspect of language and how language can be treated as human capital, enabling the individual to acquire financial means to improve their living standard. To apply the colonial lens to this view, English was brought to individuals living within the outer and expanding circles who, through colonialism, had been deemed as subordinate to the inner circle. These actions will have become inherent within their community's historical culture and will have given English a value – a promise of a better life. Language became power rather than viewing language and power as equals. With such, an individual's aim to command a new language may not always be borne from the desire to communicate with their neighbours. Rather, the idea of progression and mobility through the world, comes through the condition of possessing English within their linguistic repertoire. The idea of intellectual capital (Grenier and Vaillancourt 1983) views language investment as bringing short-term profit through a better salary, and a long-term profit through easier access to foreign markets. From this, it is easy to understand why there is a desire within students to

study English but this does not explain why they are addressed so unfavourably. For many learners, they exercise agency by choosing what they perceive as beneficial to their existing or imagined identities through language. By consenting to or resisting hegemonic practices and by investing in a language and literacy practices of particular classrooms and communities (Darvin, R. Norton, B. 2015).

Whilst Darwin's and Norton's model of investment aligns well and provides a theoretical underpinning, it becomes even more clear why learners can grapple with identity, as it will continually change over time, space, and interactions. Their continued struggle echoes the fundamental fact that these are more than learners, they are individual human beings and need to be viewed beyond labels and term within the field.

EFL Terminology and Terms.

People can have mixed emotions linked to terminology and terms. For some it becomes a badge of honour whilst for others, it can feel like a label of shame. Roger Berry states within his book, *Terminology in English Language Teaching: Nature and Use* (2010), that terminology is political, and the use of terminology is a dispute over ownership. If we think for a moment about doctors and the vocabulary that they are accustomed with, to them, the ones with the knowledge, they understand exactly what they are saying. But, to the receiver it highlights their lack of medical awareness and emotionally, may cause subconscious stress. This issue is echoed throughout the language teaching field and begins with the educational journey of the teachers before the learners. Firstly, we must draw attention to the difference between terminology and term. The word 'terminology', a noun, means a set of specific vocabulary that refers to a specific area. The verb 'term' however, means a

single word used to refer to a particular subject. The use of terminology as a noun can be linked back to early work by Ferdinand de Saussure and how there is a systemic nature of language (De Saussure, F. 2006). To interpret language terminology as a working, living system, is to accept that the terminology functions as a whole. If the foundational rules are taken away, the language loses structure, and this can impact upon the intended meaning of the speaker. The inner structures of language, grammar for example aid to shape lexical utterances into a coherent statement, request or response. Throughout this research, we will view these two functions as the lexical unit and the meaning.

Upon entering the field, the first noticeable terminology used is, Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL). Within this term, English is given the priority placement and although it accurately defines the discipline, it creates an imbalance between English and other languages. Within this discipline, it is further divided into four major categories, based on the status of the English language: English as a second language (ESL), English as a foreign language (EFL), English as an additional language (EAL), and English as a language of wider communication (ELWC), (Judd, E. L. 1981). From the four categories, there are two that are problematic and possibly ambiguous within multicultural communities, ESL and EFL. Terms which this section will unpack further.

In advance of exploring the problematic terms highlighted above, we must firstly look at English as an Additional Language (EAL). Although this is still a label, it is potentially a more inclusive overarching term that could be used across the entire TESOL field. Typically, it is associated with school children aged 5-11 years and as such is used to refer to those in primary education. Despite the potential of the term, it is not necessarily fully inclusive. Professor Richard Andrews of the University of

London conducted a review of research in English as an Additional Language (EAL) in 2009 and highlighted that there are some 'severe gaps' within the teachers' knowledge surrounding how to support EAL students, (Andrews, R. 2009). From the 54 completed studies, he identified that although there is plenty of policy analysis, there is little research that addresses pedagogic practices in EAL teaching. Most classroom-based research is small scale, based on teacher perceptions, and/or anecdotal, (Andrews, R. 2009). His research also indicated, regarding learning, that there is a distinct lack of comparative studies, as most of the research appears to be focussed on the early years and on primary education. This highlights that there is a gap in studies that focus on the age group 11-18 years. So, whilst the term itself, denotes inclusivity of their mother-tongue, there is potential for further research, exclusively within this area.

Secondly, we must explore the potentially negative terminology, English as a Second Language (ESL), which is utilised throughout the English Language Teaching sector. The term "second language", is defined within the dictionary, as "a language learned by a person after his or her native language, especially as a resident of an area where it is in general use.", (Paperback Oxford English Dictionary, 2012). Looking at the term more critically, 'second' can also impose several negative connotations that are often echoed throughout the education system, reinforcing the idea that English will never become a language for the learner to own, embrace, or make their own. It is a label with strong othering mechanisms which could amount to discrimination, (Sandiford, L. 2022). Elliott Judd (1981) poses an interesting dilemma within his article for TESOL Quarterly, stating that English can be recognised as an official language and hold dominance within sociolinguistic context of education within a country, yet English is taught as a

second or foreign language. This raises the question that if a learner has grown up in a community that openly and freely engages with English, does this term strip away part of their cultural identity that they will identify with? The sociolinguistic effects of the use of English in former English-speaking colonies can also be discussed (as well as the phenomena of pidginisation and creolisation and the reasons behind their existence), (Sifakis, N.C. and Sougari, A.M. 2003). It is because of the sociolinguistic view that we find ourselves with language variations such as: Spanglish, Hinglish, Singlish, Denglish, and Chinglish and changes the view of world English to World Englishes and the notion of shared ownership.

Thirdly, the terminology, English as a Foreign Language, (EFL) which introduces us to the term *foreign*. Within TESOL, EFL is linked to the place/country where the education takes place, moreover, where English is not a native language to the land. The term foreign, however, denotes something other than one's own and is used in reference to mean the opposite of domestic. This term also has several loaded connotations: distant, outside, alien, non-native, unknown, odd, and introduces the idea of the exotic. In turn, the reality of the term would place English in an unfavourable position as it is the language that is the 'outsider'. Although, that is not the case. Instead, the connotations of the term are linked more readily to the individual and labels such as non-native or alien are assigned to the learner. Interestingly though, EFL courses can serve little communicative functions for students once they have completed the course, (Judd, E. L. 1981). Considering this, perhaps it would be beneficial to assign the connotations to the language and not the learner. Within the idea of foreign, attention must be drawn to language links, race, and xenophobia. Sadly, this is a common theme throughout the world today and it is not only linked to language but accents and skin colour also. For the speakers,

speaking a foreign language, 'looking foreign' or having an accent often means exposing themselves, (Schnelten, E. 2020).

More recently, Russia enacted war against Ukraine, and this forced large amounts of the Ukrainian population to leave their home in search of sanctuary. In a bid to help, governmental schemes were actioned to support the families and allow them to escape from the threat and horror of war. However, there was a stark difference between supporting efforts offered to the Ukrainian refugees and refugees from Iraq, Syria and Afghanistan. There became a European/non-European divide, linked to preference, as the Bulgarian prime minister stated, "These people are Europeans...These people are intelligent...educated...This is not the refugee wave we have been used to, people we were not sure about their identity, people with unclear pasts, who could have been even terrorists ...", (Wamsley, L. 2022). This statement is very significant as it was linked directly to the Ukrainian refugees. Interestingly, Ukraine is not an official member of the European Union, despite this Petkov referred to the people as Europeans. Human rights campaigner Nyasha Bhobo writes in *The New Arab*: "The subtle rhetoric here ... is that refugees of white-European, Christian orientation are preferable. Others who are Black, Arab, and especially of Muslim faith are to be violently kept out...", (Bhobo, N. 2022). This links directly to xenophobic behaviour, surrounding language and race, and even denotes how political actions and opinions towards differing races can pierce through individuals' self-worth, just as a bullet can pierce flesh.

Unfortunately, language is weaponised and with such can be used as a tool to determine whether you belong or not. According to Craft et al, (2020), people with a foreign accent are less likely to be hired – this practice is known as linguistic profiling. The ideal of a native speaker, however, is problematic when we consider

the rise in mobility. Now that English is commonly pluralised into Englishes (Kachru, 2006), it is less clear how a native speaker of English may sound, (Pennycook, A. 2012). Thus, further highlighting the need to revisit these two terminologies and view them within the contemporary world.

Within the term English for Speaker of Other Languages (ESOL), we are presented with a further reference and the use of the word *other*. The "Other" as an epistemological concept intertwines with the notion of *Othering* (Moncada Linares, S., 2016), and the position of *Self* (Suomela-Salmi & Dervin, 2009; Staszak, 2008; Woodward, 1997). Whilst this term has similar characteristics to the one that have been previously discussed, within this section, reference will be drawn to the role of the tutors in the students' construction of self, whilst they are becoming in their new language. The role of an educator is much more than generally perceived and there is a blind association between teaching and learning grammatical rules, lexis and peace, equity and justice. The teachers become ambassadors, and for many, a beacon of knowledge that goes far beyond the page, or the classroom, as they become a pillar of support for the students: as first and foremost they are humans navigating through ideas and values that might challenge their cultural heritage. A goal may be to help learners understand who they are through the language classes and challenge how real-world issues perpetuate othering (Moncada Linares, S. 2016). Sadly, not all tutors are equipped with the basic empathy required to support students through terminology which is subconsciously continuing to reinforce othering within the educational sphere.

For a student, the language learning journey becomes vitally important as they can explore how issues around the world influence them, and in turn, it provides the opportunity for them to become co-creators. All of this, whilst still exploring their

own culturally shaped knowledge e.g., values, beliefs, behaviours, etc. Then to also, reflect upon their educational journey and potentially puzzle over TESOL terminology from their own experience and even question, 'Why am I different?'

Christopher Emdin's work surrounding Reality Pedagogy becomes vitally important here, namely the idea of *context* and *co-teaching*, two of the 5'c of Reality Pedagogy (Emdin, C. 2011). He summarises the phrase '*context*' as being hyper focussed on the immediate communities that the students are from. He states that it is a seemingly superficial thing, but to the students it shows that their heritage has value within the educational place (Emdin, C. 2011). This view de-sanitises the academic environment and allows the students to imprint their own identity and merge their two versions of *self* together. This is opposed to being forced to conform to normative frames just because they have been classified as a Second/Foreign language learner. Emdin uses the phrase *co-teaching*, (Emdin, C. 2011) to allow the students to become teachers. Allowing them to teach from their perspective and bring the individual cultural heritage from each learner into the classroom. This creates the space for them to problematise with a topic or even a label and discover the impacts this may or may not have on their forming identity. The integration of Reality Pedagogy allows for the exploration of self, and the emerging self as they become within the language they are studying. After all, if they are studying within the UK, they are continually exposed to cultural products such as literary and non-literary textbooks, audio files, national symbols etc, and they may wish to draw reference/challenge these during their educational journey. Based on this, we can draw upon Bakhtin's work to further understand the idea of becoming. For Bakhtin, the ideological becoming of a human being ... is the process of selectively assimilating the words of others. (Bakhtin, 1981, p.341; Holquist, M. 2003).

Therefore, it is a process of learning to be in the world and finding one's voice through interactions with others. However, if the formulation of a student's voice is emerging, whilst being caught up in the strings of many labels, we must wonder whose voice will emerge – the individual's or that of the individual organisation. Lou Harvey states that through developing and claiming authority and responsibility for our voices, we grow and mature...The concept of voice is therefore central to the concepts of ideological becoming, (Harvey, L. 2007).

Methodology

Research strategy and design - For this study, the data was collected using a qualitative approach, with a focus on ethnographic, thick descriptions. Previously, large amounts of research conducted within the field have employed the use of closed questions within any qualitative questionnaires or journals, which limits the space for a response from the participants. Whilst closed questions are proven to provide a quick response, Susan E. DeFranzo has previously highlighted that closed questions are likely to “put ideas into a respondent's mind”, (DeFranzo, S. 2018). A popular method of choice for participants to respond is the Likert scale. This is a “psychometric scale commonly used within survey forms/questionnaires and is still evident in research today”, (Britannica, 2020). Likert scale style of questioning asks participants to respond using an intensity scale of 1-5; 5 indicating that they strongly agree, and 1 that the participant strongly disagrees with the question, thus, providing easy-to-use data based on the work by American social psychologist Rensis Likert. However, because this study will ask questions relating to thoughts, emotions, and feelings, the decision has been made to use open questions, negating the use for the Likert scale, and providing the participants with an opened space to answer.

Wasik and Hindman recognise open questions to 'provide opportunities for individuals to express their ideas', (Wasik, B.A. & Hindman, A.H. 2013). This method mimics the style of questions learners will have been accustomed to throughout their learning journey. Open questions are widely supported as they offer the opportunity to respond using oral language to communicate with an interlocutor in a completely original/unrehearsed form to share potentially complex ideas and responses, (Hoff, 2009). Although, it is worth noting that using open questions may pose a time pressure issue, the piloting process discussed later will aid in allowing sufficient time for each participant to respond to the allotted number of questions.

The participants were recruited using convenience sampling through two educational institutions to highlight any potential differences between the public and private sector. The University Language Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University, where the students are attending a course free of charge, through an outside charity organisation, and Britannia English Academy where the attending students have paid for their courses. "Convenience sampling is a type of sampling where the first available primary data source will be used for the research without additional requirements.", (Dudovskiy. 2018). This allowed me as the researcher to enlist participants more readily as I was able to enlist language students and tutors that I have previously engaged with. It was this familiarity that dictated the eligibility criteria and I enlisted participants that were able to identify with the research question. The qualifying criteria for the students stated that the participants must be aged 18+, have been previously enrolled or currently participating in an English course conducted either by the Language Centre at Manchester Metropolitan University or at Britannia English Academy. The teacher participant criteria stated that they needed to have been actively involved in the delivery of content and one

participant was selected from each institution. This allowed for comparisons to be made between the public and private sector of English language education and record any notable differences.

Philosophical background - Due to the extensive nature of qualitative research and the time-consuming questioning style, the project was conducted with a small sample size of approximately four learners, equally weighted from each sector, and two tutors, one from the public sector and one from the private sector. Originally, it was proposed to have been six learners but after evaluating the pilot phase and time needed for each participant, the number was reduced to four. The weighting of learners to tutors was intentional to provide a rich dataset primarily from the learners' perspectives but also to acknowledge different tutors' responses and wonderments that may have previously gone un-noted when investigating terminology within the field.

The participants' involvement was split into two groups, learners, and tutors. The learners were asked about their thoughts, emotions, and feelings, whilst reflecting upon certain terminology used in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and their learning experience. The tutors were asked about their thoughts, emotions, and feelings relating specifically to the terminology 'second language learner' and whether, in their opinion, it places a negative label on the learners, whilst also identifying how prominent the term is within their different sectors. Collectively, they were also asked to reflect on the topics they studied/taught and how they felt about them in terms of relevance to their lives, cultures, and professional aspirations. Additionally, this study contributes to Hanks' (2017) notion of 'Exploratory Practice' that encourages teachers to engage in a reflective process

about the nature of their role. This is hoped to trigger puzzlement and wonderment towards potentially doing things differently, in ways that work better for the students as acknowledgement surrounding how they are addressed may only require a small but significant change. This notion of wonderment and puzzling with anything connected to language is a theme throughout Badwan's book, *Language in a Globalised World*, (Badwan, K. 2021). Her chapter entitled *Embracing and Navigating Vulnerability* discusses the importance of asking 'Why?' based on her own experience and in turn, empowers tutors and other teaching professionals to puzzle about their own practice. It was based on the input from this chapter that the decision was cemented to ensure the inclusion of a tutor from each sector and feature their responses. This inclusive decision allowed for further recognition of the tutors to become 'agents of change', (Pantic & Florian. 2015). The term 'agents of change' has become increasingly popular in literature around the world and is 'endorsed by a social justice agenda that is concerned with educational equality for all, service providers and the end users', (Pantic & Florian. 2015). The strategic idea of teachers as agents of change in reducing educational inequalities is linked to research showing teachers are the most significant in-school factor influencing student achievement, (Hattie. 2009; OECD. 2005). This further understanding supports the research decision to include the teaching staff in the project.

Data collection and analysis - The data was collected via two qualitative methods: research journals for the students and interviews for both groups where the researcher could comment on any behavioural changes. The incorporation of two different data collection styles is designed to assist in building a rapport with the participants whilst also providing opportunities to note any subtle behavioural

changes linked to terminology being used. Once the data had been collected, it was analysed using thematic analysis (Braun and Clarke. 2006).

The questions were constructed with three key themes in mind; beliefs about social desirability, emotion, and identity, although this was not explicitly stated within the journals. This was done to aid in the understanding of the results and allowed for the utilisation of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis “is a poorly demarcated, rarely acknowledged, yet widely used qualitative analytic method within psychology.”, (Braun. V; Clarke. V. 2006), and as this research asked the participants to include their emotions, supports the research well. Thematic analysis is applied by progressing through six phases as detailed below,

Table 1 Phases of thematic analysis.

Phases	Description of process
1. Familiarizing yourself with your data	Transcribing data (if necessary), reading and re-reading the data, noting down initial ideas.
2. Generating initial codes:	Coding interesting features of the data in a systematic fashion across the entire data set, collating data relevant to each code.
3. Searching for themes:	Collating codes into potential themes, gathering all data relevant to each potential theme.
4. Reviewing themes:	Checking if the themes work in relation to the coded extracts (Level 1) and the entire data set (Level 2), generating a thematic ‘map’ of the analysis.
5. Defining and naming themes:	Ongoing analysis to refine the specifics of each theme, and the overall story the analysis tells, generating clear definitions and names for each theme.
6. Producing the report:	The final opportunity for analysis. Selection of vivid, compelling extract examples, final analysis of selected extracts, relating back of the analysis to the research question and literature, producing a scholarly report of the analysis.

(Braun. V; Clarke. V. 2006)

The awareness surrounding the three key themes ensured that the questionnaires for students and teachers seeking to answer the overarching question – is the terminology used within TESOL loaded with negative connotations? The questions are centred around three key areas: social desirability, emotions, and

identity. The purpose of thematic analysis is to further understand the results through the identification of themes within the responses.

During the interviews the student participants were asked to summarise their current learning journey by answering: What did they learn about themselves? How do they see themselves in relation to 'English'? What would they like to do differently moving forward? As such, the project draws on Seal's (2020) notion of Participatory Pedagogic Impact Research. Furthermore, it also contributes to ongoing research for revisiting existing educational arrangements with a focus on social justice and links to Emdin's Reality Pedagogy theory by employing a co-teaching style as each participant will be given the opportunity to share any further information, they feel may be useful to future educators.

Reliability, ethical concerns and limitations - As the research enlisted public participants, an ethics application was submitted to ensure that the research was completed ethically. Before the participants were sent the journals or asked to attend an interview, they were asked to read a participant information sheet outlining the purpose of my research and the anticipated timeframe. Each willing participant was then sent a consent form and advised to return the signed document within 48 hrs, indicating their availability for interview. Upon receipt, each participant was then sent a journal which they had seven days to complete and return. This timeframe made allowances for other life commitments whilst allowing each participant time to complete, review and reflect upon their answers before returning. The purpose for this was to enable them the time to initially think about the questions they were expected to answer. Secondly, allow them to ask any questions they might have in relation to completing the journals and finally, sufficient time to complete, as the learners were specifically asked for a reason 'why' within most of the questions.

Although the participant count was low, it was vital to ensure the research maintained a qualitative data focus; therefore, the planned open questions were used with ample space to record emotive language.

A key part of the ethics application was to ensure anonymity among the participants and with such the journal had no identifiable indicators. None of the participants were asked to provide their name, in compliance with the ethical guidelines that were indicated within the participant information sheet. However, the students were asked their gender to gain a balanced response as the questions ask them to comment directly on feelings and emotions to avoid gender discrimination. Further to this, all data was saved securely on a faculty secure device to preserve the anonymity of the participant. Once all the data was received, the answers within the journals were collated and deciphered to produce the results. Following completion of the research, the returned journals were destroyed in accordance with the ethical policies.

Participant information - There were six participants altogether and to protect their identity they will be addressed as the following within the findings and discussion section:

	Gender	Nationality	Languages spoken	Journal	Interview
Student 1 (S 1) Private	Female	Indian	Hindu/English/French	Yes	Yes
Student 2 (S 2) Public	Male	Turkish	Turkish/English/Arabic	Yes	Yes
Student 3 (S 3) Public	Female	Ukrainian	Ukrainian/English	Yes	Yes
Student 4 (S 4) Private	Male	Mexican	Spanish/French/English	Yes	Yes
Teacher 1 (T 1) Public	Female	British	English/Italian	No	Yes
Teacher 2 (T 2) Private	Female	American	English/French	No	Yes

The variety of nationalities and genders was planned to ensure balanced validity within the results as it is common for males and females to attend classes simultaneously. The pre-set timeframe was chosen with a posthuman intent in mind, as it allows the participants to complete their journals within their own personal space. The journals were not observed as I did not want any additional pressure to make the participants feel uncomfortable when writing about their inner emotions. This allowed the participants to become emotionally involved with the research as they could select their own place to complete the journal. Some of the participants selected to write their responses in the comfort of their own home. A place which started as a foreign space for them. A place where there is no judgement or labels, an area they have made their own in time. Wachob (2006) comments within his research how participants can change or alter their answers based upon their knowledge of what and who they are completing the research for. As all the participants were recruited through convenience sampling, this was an area that required extra focus to ensure the validity of the results as the journals were not observed.

Piloting – The piloting was designed as a small-scale implementation to assess the quality of the questions featured within the journals and interviews. Throughout the piloting phase, the decision was made to reduce the number of student participants to four. This allowed each participant more thinking and answer time and subsequently, attention could be given to their entire answer as the research is intended to include thick ethnographic content. In advance of the face-to-face interviews with the students, the preliminary responses indicated a greater level of awareness surrounding different TESOL terminology. Despite the limited number of

participants, the initial responses highlighted that there were a lot of common thoughts and feelings between the different nationalities and their responses to terminology used. From the piloting, there were two questions removed from the journals as they were a little ambiguous and the questions needed to be clear and direct. The journal needed to be coherent for the different levels of student participants to allow them to complete each question without additional help which may have impeded their answer. Once it was agreed that the questions were clear of any ambiguity, they were ready to be distributed to all the participants.

Findings and thematic analysis.

The data for this project was collected over a four-week period throughout August 2022. The primary focus was thick, ethnographic responses from all six participants highlighted in the above table. The questions used in the journals (appendix I) and within the interviews (appendix II) are centred around three key areas: thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Each section has questions that are linked to themes of investment, culture/nature, identity through language, terminology issues, othering, alienation, and marginalisation through education. The focus of the research is to determine whether the students and teachers feel that the terminology used within the field of TESOL is loaded with negative connotations. The findings are displayed in two separate groups: Students' responses and Teachers' responses.

Students' responses

Within the general section, each participant was asked how many languages they speak, and three out of the four students, that were selected at random, spoke three languages. Based on this small sample size, the term 'English as a second

language' is not accurate. However, the students all share English at variety of levels which makes English the lingua franca between them.

After establishing the linguistic foundation of each of the students, the next section focused on the idea of language and place and if there were any external factors that dictated their language choice. Each student reported differences in the way they use language and prioritise their language choice depending on their links with family, profession, education, and personal growth.

- Which language do you use the most at home and why?

S 1 - Hindu as it is what my family speak, French with some friends, English as it is what is recognised the most, English AGAIN as it is what my classes are taught in.

S 2 - Home we use Arabic and Turkish as we speak in both away from home English it's all people know.

S 3 - I learn English since five months ago and I try use it everywhere but its difficult no as people no understand me yet. With family we use Ukrainian as its quicker but when have time, try English so much.

S 4 - So, I speak three languages total, Spanish, English and French. For me, English is because I am here in England, Spanish is for my family as in Mexico we speak Spanish and yes, I speak French at work. So for me, I guess my French is professional, Spanish is for family and English because I need for my promotion at work.

What is interesting about the language spoken section, is that despite the low number of participants, 75% spoke more than two languages, and this instantly challenges the idea of English as a second language for all. The participants were not asked anything relating to where they may have studied and therefore, we cannot state whether their English education was that of a second language learner or a foreign language learner prior to their present ongoing education. However, the participants drew a clear distinction between English, place, and personal connection.

Following on from this, the students were asked a very simple question:

- Have you ever heard the term 'Second language learner? If so where and do you remember who by?

S 1 - Early on when being taught English we had a male tutor who used it and I remember him because I did not like the term I feel he used it to remind me I did not yet speak English. Also the term is not accurate as many of us speak over two languages.

S 2 - Yes, I took class and the head teacher man told us these are our second language books.

S 3 - When course started teacher said it I remember.

S 4 - Yes in France, French as a second language.

Student 1's response is by far the most interesting as it supports the rationale for conducting this research project as well as the use of open questions. The detailed event within their answer clearly indicates that for this student the terminology used left a negative imprint on their memory that will remain linked to their language learning journey. For this student, their ability to become within English language is overshadowed by the comments of just one tutor. This highlights the importance of the educator's role and how something as simple as a 'term' can have a lasting impact on a student.

The second section of the journal was centred around the students' thoughts relating to specific terms, terminology, and whether they have been allowed to use their mother tongue in the classroom. Their responses in this section were insightful.

Firstly, they were asked:

- What does the word 'second' mean to you?

S 1 - It means to not be first, to be treated like an afterthought

S 2 - Not number one

S 3 - Not first

S 4 - Second, not your first so something you adopt or borrow maybe

None of the students viewed the word 'second' in a positive way. Moreover, their connections to the word 'second' supports the negative connotations, perhaps in a

literal sense. This was further explored as the participants were asked to share their thoughts on being categorised as ‘second language learners’. The purpose of this question was to discover whether the students are aware of how the term is used within the field and explore how this may resonate within their conscious thoughts about their own self image. Their responses were enlightening:

- What are your thoughts to learn that you have been categorised as a ‘second language learner’?

S 1 - I do not like it as it makes me seem like I am worthless for only learning English as a foreign language.

S 2 – for me, I guess second language student or refugee as I come England for new life and it never be home.

S 3 – Why? It like label but I’m not. I am doctor and I save life.

S 4 – Maybe it because the language will be influenced by other I speak. Maybe because I have different maternal language and for them it is easier.

We can see from the responses that the term is problematic when applied to human beings. Although it can serve a purpose within the academic sphere, when the term is transcended downwards into the learning environment it has a significant impact on the formation of a student’s voice. This can be linked directly to Bakhtin’s ideology of becoming as a human within the language learning sphere (Bakhtin. 1981, p.341: Holquist, M. 2003). Students learn not only from the page of a textbook but from the world around them and the world is constantly filled with language, voiced and unvoiced. It is the process of learning that will shape the students’ ideology of who they are expected to be based on their interactions with the world around them. However, based on the results from the first few questions in the journal, the formulation of a student’s voice is impacted upon by the terminology used by the tutors and institution. Earlier, we wondered whose voice will emerge – based upon the theoretical underpinning of Harvey’s notion of becoming (Harvey, L. 2007). The research informs us that the individuals voice is a by-product, not only of their

existence and cultural heritage, evident from S 4, but it is also shaped through their interactions. What is most interesting, however, is the students' ability to recall negative links with terminology used, especially when examining S 1 responses. We can also approach S 1 responses from the viewpoint of Berry's work surrounding terminology: Nature and Use (Berry, R. 2010) as for this student, the idea of being a second language learner is not received as a badge of honour towards their linguistic development.

To support linguistic growth within the classroom, there is a long running debate within Second Language Acquisition (SLA) surrounding the use of a student's native language (L1) to support their understanding as they engage with the target language (L2). I wanted to explore this within the journals and the students were asked:

- Have you been allowed to use your mother tongue within the classroom?

S 1 – only when I first started learning English if we really didn't understand it

S 2 – one teacher let me but many not much

S 3 – ah yes, was allowed as my English not good

S 4 – no, possibly sometimes to translate as one teacher would highlight the importance of language transferability so that I could take learning with me when I leave.

Despite the negative views surrounding the use of a student's L1, all the participants reported that they have used their L1 throughout their learning journey and additionally, the students' levels ranged from A2 – C1 based on the Common European Framework of Reference. Further supporting research concluded that the L1 has the potential to be a tool for supporting teaching and learning and it is a lecturer who determines whether use of the L1 helps or hinders English language learning, (Agustin, D.T. and Mujiyanto, J. 2015).

Moving on from the section centred around the students' thoughts linked specifically to the terms and terminology, the next section of their journal focused on emotional connections to language. The participants were allowed the opportunity to choose which term they felt best suited them as a person and were asked to explain their choice. They were given four options: multilingual, bilingual, second language learner or an emerging bilingual. The results were as follows with detailed rationale for each student:

- There are several terms which can be used for English students; multilingual – they know more than two languages, bilingual – they know two languages and second language learner – learning a language that they are not native to. Out of the terms, which do you think best describes you.

Multilingual

Bilingual

Second language learner

An emerging bilingual

Please explain your choice.

S 1 - Multilingual - I am multilingual, i speak more than two languages, and I feel it describes me best. It also means I can add more languages.

S 2 - Multilingual - to me multi as I know more than 1. But Turkish and Arabic are similar and English is different

S 3 - Multilingual - I know more than my home language, one lots and current not lot.

S 4 - Multilingual but i like the phrase emerging as i have not finished learning yet.

Interestingly, despite the participants having previously heard and been addressed with the term 'second language learners', none of them identified with the term or felt emotionally connected to the terminology.

Following on from this question, the students were asked if being addressed as a second language learner has ever impacted upon how they viewed themselves. The

purpose of this question was to further explore their internal emotions as part of the quest to understand whether our words do in fact cause sub-/conscious harm.

- If you have been addressed as a 'second language learner' has this ever impacted how you see yourself?

S 1 - yes it makes my self-esteem low as I am undervalued in my own abilities, but i can do everything for myself in English. I do not understand this language, why am I not just called student?

S 2 - er, it not nice. Others in class would use names and it feel much better. I feel like I'm lower than teacher but in my country we respect teacher.

S 3 - well I'm Doctor, I'm refugee, I'm mother to my babies... (shrugs shoulders) I'm a lot of things I guess.

S 4 - maybe yes, when i studied in France. The teacher would only ask the native students to answer questions, maybe because I am not native, I'm ment to be stupid. It did make me feel less than other students and even now, when I work I feel less than my French colleagues. But I don't know, maybe not all teachers say it or think it.

Once again, despite the small sample size, the results are unanimous and

conclusive that yes, the terminology is harming the students' emotional growth.

Moreover, their choice of specific vocabulary is interesting as they reference to ideas of self-esteem, respect, labels and the idea of intelligence. Their choice of words is linked to the idea of self-worth and links directly to investment as earlier discussed using Norton's work. She stated that the commitment displayed by a language learner highlights their complex identities as they build a relationship between themselves and the target language, (Norton 2013; Norton Peirce 1995). It is a fair analysis that the commitment displayed by a language learner is not just a product of their motivation, but how a learner recognises the wider range of symbolic and material resources will in turn increase their cultural value and even their social power, (Darvin, R, and Norton, B. 2015). S 1 and S 4 have both undertaken education through a private institution and have personally financially invested into their learning journey. Contrastingly, S 2 and S 3 have received their English

language education through community outreach support programmes provided through the public sphere. Both groups exhibit high motivation, but also state how this has been affected by the language used. Investment from the learners is not only measured through financial commitment, but the time they dedicate to their studies whether it is for personal or professional progression. All whilst grappling with their existing social and historical identity and, added to that, negatively loaded terminology.

To explore this further, the students were asked:

- Is it possible, in your opinion, that your language affects job opportunities in the UK?

S 1 - Definitely, if you do not speak English, you not getting a good job.

S 2 – Yes of course, that why I learn

S 3 – I have good job, but I not practice medical here until my English gets better.

S 4 – Yes, 100% but it depends on the job and company. Maybe some are looking for international change and they need only English speaking. I'm here because I cannot move up until they can see my level.

The results clearly indicate that all the participants believe that English is needed to position themselves within the world. This type of positioning is referenced by Darwin and Norton as capital (see Fig. 1.) which builds on Norton's earlier definition from 1995. The idea of an individual as human capital is linked to the value of the English language. The participants are clear evidence of this ideological view as they have embarked upon an English language journey, taught in England, to develop their identity within the modern world. For some it is their social capital and for others it is their professional capital, either way the idea of progression has been linked to the value of the English language as part of their linguistic repertoire.

The final section of the journal focussed on the participants' feelings and the first question asked them to think about how they were addressed whilst studying:

- Thinking about your time as a student, can you remember how you were addressed by the teachers?

S 1 – During my learning, it was Non-native speaker, second language learner or my name.

S 2 – I remember on day one the teacher called us all second language learners, but then main teacher used names once they could say it.

S 3 – I miss the first class, teacher I met used my name.

S 4 – Maybe in feedback from some work, a teacher said oh its because you are a second language learner but normally it is always my name.

Within this, we can read the value students have placed on being recognised as an individual. Although some of them remember being referred to as a second language learner, they collectively comment and speak fondly of the teacher who addressed them by name. This is hugely significant to the research as the quest is to see our students differently, and clearly the participants wish for the same change. The next question was to explore how the students' view the term 'second language learner':

- In your opinion, is the term 'second language learner' negative? Please explain your answer.

S 1 - Yes as it makes all learners seem worse than those who speak English as a native language, it is a very derogatory term.

S 2 – Yes, I feel sad when they say it. I am trying and my English not to bad. It reminds me of when older say you will never be good enough.

S 3 – Well I learning but I am more. If they sick I would make better so am I still second no. I am just a learner but I not second.

S 4 – Not sure it negative but it is used to remind you that its not your first. Sometimes it stopped me getting job because people know you are second you just don't know and people I've found judge me because my English is not first so I say, maybe yes.

Within their answers, we read further, the impact of negative labelling, and understand how the students receive the term. For S 1 they view it as a derogatory term, for S 2 they link the idea back to their heritage and connect similar negative feelings to ones they have felt before. Interestingly for S 3, as a medical professional they question the phrase before they remove it entirely to view themselves as a learner and strongly state that they are not second. Inside S 4 response they

comment on how it is used to remind them that English is not their first language. They further support this and justify their answer based upon how they have been stopped from gaining work due to the level of their language skills. This style of othering is based around linguistic discrimination. In terms of explicit negative labelling, it is still possible to hear the use of radical undertones, which clearly signal the 'otherness' of the group or person being named. A further interpretation of this, is to view the word 'second' as a potent form of abuse because it leaves the addressee feeling powerless; that they have been arbitrarily dumped into a morass of negative perceptions which allows no recognition of them as acceptable individuals, (Singh, I. 1999). This supports my quest to view the students differently and the research calls for removal of the word 'second' from 'second language learner'.

The final question of the journal asked:

- If you were given the choice, how would you prefer to be addressed? Briefly explain your choice.

Multilingual individual

Bilingual individual

An emerging bilingual

Second language learner

S 1 – It hard to pick just one as I am multilingual, but I still grow so I think perhaps an emerging language student. I know it not on list, but I think it works for me. Either that or my name.

S 2 – For me, multilingual learner. I not know only one language.

S 3 – well I learn English to speak more good so maybe number three, emerging multilingual.

S 4 – I prefer my name to be used, I don't like labels. If I could only pick one off the list then I am an emerging multilingual.

This set of results were fascinating, as throughout this research the focus has been to look at the negativity surrounding the inaccurate use of 'second' language learner. Here, directly from the participants minds, is the affirmation that they neither identify

with nor do they self-assign with the term, 'second language learner'. However, it is certainly worth noting that none of the participants selected the term 'emerging bilingual' which was a possible replacement term that was introduced earlier.

It is possible that the participants focused more on the number of languages they speak and therefore the greater connection was centred around multilingual. In support of this, research on individual multilingualism and third language acquisition has expanded greatly in recent years. A theoretical correlation is the recognition of the fact that humans are potentially multilingual by nature (Hammarberg, B. 2010) and that multilingualism is the default state of language competence. This in turn, has implications for an adequate theory of language competence, use and acquisition. Therefore, the term 'second language learner' has become an outdated label, (Sandiford, L. 2022).

Once the journals had been completed the participants kindly gave up their time to attend a short face-to-face interview which comprised of three questions. The questions allowed the participants to reflect upon their journal answers and think about how they might view terminology going forward, within their educational journey, or even within their personal life.

- Q 1 - What did you learn about yourself whilst completing the journal?

S 1 – Oh so much. It made me realise that I may not know English like you or others but I find now I am not any less. I can do what you do, I can give my children the chance to use our language more and it be ok.

S 2 – I learn I am more than what I can say. My English, bad at times but it ok and I can carry on pursuing my dream. It also made my think maybe I can say I'm not second, I am (name removed).

S 3 – If carry on, I speak gooder. When I speak gooder I can treat you if you need help and you know I am not second in what I say.

S 4 – It has made me think about when people have looked at me differently even though I speak good English no. I remember all teachers faces who ever said second to me and I look forward to seeing them and saying I'm not second anymore.

- Q 2 - How do you see yourself in relation to 'English'?

S 1 – I see the future I want. I see me speaking like you but in my voice. I see English as just speaking and I now see my own language again.

S 2 – I see it like a tool. I see tool for better job, better home and I see me using it for my own gain.

S 3 – I see me learning it, I see me working again when I speak it better.

S 4 – I see my promotion because it has got better since I came here to study it.

- Q 3 - What would you like to do/say differently moving forward?

S 1 – I will tell my children that it ok to speak how they want.

S 2 – I like to say I can get job and they say yes to me.

S 3 – I say I not second, I am (name removed).

S 4 – I will tell my family who are learning to not be afraid of it. I would like to say to previous teacher I am worth the same and my teacher now you, thank you for letting me see how they have treated me.

The face-to-face interviews compound the previous findings and support the call for the term 'second language learner' to be rethought. Linguistically, the students may hold a language repertoire of three or maybe five languages and therein lies the problem. Nonetheless, beyond the number of languages the learner possesses, they are above all else, human, and deserve the right to addressed in a manner befitting them.

Teachers' responses.

The structure of the interviews followed a similar path to that of the students' journal questions. It is worth noting at this stage that the two teacher participants are from different teaching sectors. One is from the private sector where students typically pay to attend smaller classes in a small organisation/business and the other is from the public sector that accommodates both funded and non-funded students. Firstly, a general question section to build a rapport with the two teacher participants before asking the first question that required a detailed answer.

- Have you ever used the term ‘second language learner’? If so, why and in what context?

T 1 - Heard the term within studies, undergraduate, masters and within the diploma of English language teaching I've always heard the term. Use interchangeably within the profession to say a second language learner or English as a second language learner.

T 2 – No, I'm aware of the term but I don't think I've ever personally used it.

From these first responses there already seems to be a difference as T 1 is more familiar with the term being used within the professional sphere whereas for T 2 their recognition of the terminology is not as high.

- What does the word ‘second’ mean to you?

T 1 - That there will be a first somewhere else, that they will probably have another language and they are using this as their second language.

T 2 – second in that term I would say that they are already fluent in their first language, so they are acquiring a second one.

The definitions of second from the teachers’ perspectives denote the same thing.

The idea of fluency is concurrent between both answers, but the difference lies in the description of the second, whether they are using it or acquiring it.

- What are your thoughts surrounding students being categorised as ‘second language learners’?

T 1 - Well if I think about working at a XXXXXXXX, my role is EFL – English as a foreign language tutor that because its international students, so the foreign term is associated with them being temporary. Maybe when dealing with adults its ESL because you have already established your first language quite significantly and its your second that you are adding.

T 2 – The term a second language learner in general I would see it as a neutral term I guess to denote what number of language they are on. Although you don't really hear many people being described as a third language learner or a fourth language learner, but I think I see it as quite a neutral denotation for what they are doing.

The two teachers seem to approach this term differently. For T 1 the term is linked to the idea behind place or duration of stay which is quite transactional and links back to our earlier discussion surrounding colonialism and English in the paradoxical position, (Seidlhofer, B. 2005). To contrast this with T 2's view, the

terminology is purely as a way to potentially denote the number of language they are currently studying with no reference to place. However, as discovered during the students' responses it is not always an accurate representation.

- In your opinion, is the term useful within education and why do you think it exists?

T 1 – Yeah, I'd say so. That's what this industry is, what this teaching is going to be about, so if you have an English language learner or an English language teacher that can mean many different things. I think there is a need for having the second in there to establish the difference between what is English language teaching and learning.

T 2 – second language learner, is kind of a vague term. I don't think it's particularly informative and probably doesn't really consider any of the reasons behind why people are learning the language and what their circumstances are. So, in that way it's quite a negative thing. I imagine it exists to give an order, to classify people in a certain way to better meet their needs and to instruct them as their needs are different.

This question had juxtaposing answers as one teacher agreed and the other disagreed. T1 acknowledges that it helps to differentiate between teaching English to native speakers and teaching English to non-native speakers. This viewpoint is supported in relation to Second Language Acquisition (SLA) as it recognises that the students will learn differently to that of a native child learning to read or write. Contrastingly, T 2 view leans more towards a posthuman stance, as the term does not differentiate or acknowledge their individual needs as they embark on the learning journey.

- Thinking about EAL students, when they are learning an alternative language in the UK, (French, Spanish, German) the term modern foreign language students is used. Why do you think the terminology changes to modern and not second?

T 1 – I'd say it's because of the environment we're in potentially, because it is a predominantly English-speaking environment. Although, you could have French as a second language but perhaps if you were in France and you were learning French in your second language. We kind of group other languages together and call them modern foreign language and then English as a second language is separate to that perhaps because we are in an English-speaking environment. However, where I

work, English is within modern foreign languages because we have international students learning English as a language, albeit not one of the foreign languages that we kind of promote.

T 2 – Maybe be because of the socioeconomic, historical impact of those languages. In modern times as opposed to, rightly or wrongly you could say Chinese is a modern language or Arabic. I would say maybe they are thinking about the socio, historical and political changes and how popular they are.

Both participants shared a similar viewpoint and even question the inclusion of other languages to be viewed as modern. Interestingly, the socioeconomical factors are brought up by T 2 which easily links to Norton's theory of investment and the proposal of humans as capital, (Norton, B. 2015).

- In your opinion, does the term 'second language learner' impact how students see themselves?

T 1 - I think it still gives importance to their first language though and I think that's important to keep that, this is my first language. Where its potentially problematic is if they have two first languages so if they are bilingual the next one isn't a second language, it's a third. However, I understand if you have two or three first languages, you're multilingual and then you learn English as a second language, it is not a second language it is an additional language which I'd never really thought about before.

T 2 –I would assume if a student heard that and if they are a second language learner that they would just say that is what I'm doing, I'm learning a second language. It could be that maybe they feel like some how their first language, I hesitate to say native language, but their first language is diminished in a way in favour of learning a second language as opposed to acknowledging or celebrating their first language.

The responses pose a differing of opinions. T 1 argues that it still gives importance to their first language whereas T 2 states that their first language is diminishing due to their second language learning. However, T 1 does recognise the term as problematic especially if the students have an established linguistic repertoire of multiple languages.

- Have you experienced students who identify as having multiple additional languages?

T 1 - Yeah, I think those who live and work in an English-speaking environment they have this repertoire of many languages that they can draw upon. Maybe when you work and live in a non-English environment, they are less inclined to identify as multilingual – there is certainly an element of how much you must think about that language though. In terms of students who have many languages and I think that's where the term additional language is useful, that's why it is becoming used in schools more and maybe our industry is behind.

T 2 – Yeah, they seem to be more socially and pragmatic aware. With bilingual students who are learning English on top of that they seem quicker to catch on to the patterns of learning English.

Both participants have experience of teaching established multilingual students. T 1 comments on the environmental factors surrounding language use but also draws reference to the term 'additional language' as an overarching term which maybe better suited. Interestingly however, they also recognise that the term is not used within the adult learning sector and even suggest that the industry is behind and therefore needs to adopt a more posthuman approach to all students regardless of age. T 2 focusses on the pragmatic benefits the students exhibit and how this is displayed within their work.

- Thinking about your time as a tutor within the UK, can you remember how you addressed the students at the beginning of a course?

T 1 – It depends where they are, in a XXXXXX setting they quite like being called students especially if they are in a class. But I'd make them aware they are learning a language. Perhaps in a 1-2-1, I'd say learner rather than student to establish less of a teacher student kind of relationship. I honestly think I'd use both and I have used both they are second language learners and second language students.

T 2 – I'd say everybody, very neutral it often depends on who is on the course, men and women and their culture. Maybe I'm very traditional in a way perhaps it comes from trying to initiate mutual respect. Either that or just their name because yes they are students but I'm not there to remind them of that.

These answers provide us with a clear divide between public and private institutions.

In the public sector there is the reference to student or learner to maintain stance whilst building rapport. Contrastingly, within the private sector the focus appears to

be centred around the individual's gender as opposed to imposing institutional constraints.

- In your opinion, is the term 'second language learner' negative towards the students? Please explain your answer.

T 1 - I wouldn't say so, because if you are learning any skill, you are the learner and if you are a student, you are also the learner as well. So, if they are going into a class, to study a course their aim is to learn so that makes them a learner. I've never had any feelings that I'm causing them offense by calling them a learner because if that's what they have chosen to embark upon that something they put themselves in as well.

T 2 – I don't think its intended to be, there might be this interesting connotation like you're a second language learner so maybe there is more value in the second over the first, but I don't think it is designed to be inherently negative.

This question was the most interesting as we must wonder, based on their responses, whether they have been subjected to inter field conditioning. Both teachers are so familiar with the term that the overuse has stripped away any deeper connotations that could be demeaning to the modern students who are more culturally aware of labelling and alienation. However, T 2 does reference to the undervaluing of their first language based upon the term.

- Do you feel that students would benefit from a dual language learning approach? (one course book printed in multiple languages)

T 1 - Certainly at low level, beginner elementary I think that could be useful but only in certain settings, monolingual classes or if they are doing independent study. When I taught beginners, I found it useful having an Arabic textbook to recommend, mainly for translation of nouns. At low level I think that's appropriate. Low level only, like the use of L1 in the class

T 2 – So Spanglish for a class, trans-languaging, yes absolutely. Englishes in the classroom. Just think of all the extra cultural information they can learn.

Within these answers we can see the benefits from the teachers' perspectives into the inclusivity of multiple languages in one coursebook. The idea of using it as a support tool for lower levels but also how it might promote deeper cultural awareness.

- Do you feel that the term 'second language learner' could undervalue the students linguistic repertoire? Please explain your answer.

T 1 - If they are near the beginning of their journey, it can be oh I've got two and I'm proud to have a second language. But if they have been studying for many years or are very proficient maybe calling it a second language it devalues the process they have already been through and it can make them think, it's not my second, I'm good at it already.

T 2 – Definitely, especially if they are already multilingual or bilingual when they come into the classroom, I think the second language learner doesn't consider the person's identity and what they have experienced or learnt before in relation to language learning. I think it can be quite demeaning. The assumption maybe from the past that we have brought English to you people and without it you have not been able to survive. Although people will move around and won't always know only one language.

These answers support the idea of removing 'second' from the term 'second language learner' as in their professional opinion it does undervalue the students' linguistic repertoires. The term bears no consideration for the individual or what knowledge/awareness they might bring with them into the learning environment. This supports the idea that we need to see our students differently and view them for their full range of abilities and not simply focus on the language they have come to learn.

- In your opinion, if students were given the choice, how do you think they would prefer to be addressed? Please explain your choice

An emerging bilingual

Second language learner

T 1 - I think they would love to be called an emerging bilingual, but I don't know if that's appropriate for two separate reasons. Firstly, if you are talking to someone who is low level, explaining what emerging means and what bilingual means it is quite complicated and secondly, you can't really manage their expectations. Being bilingual is different to having a second language. To say having an additional language might be the best term really after having this conversation because then you're not saying its secondary you are just adding to your repertoire.

T 2 – Possibly emerging bilingual, it carries quite a lot of heft to it I think that's the goal that people want when they are learning a language. The idea of emerging I think is a beautiful one as it shows the idea of growing and it gives a nicer sentiment.

Neither of the teachers selected 'second language learner'. Instead, they both commented and made suggestions for other terminology to be used. They both

connected with the idea of emerging, however T 1 raises the interesting point of whether the student would understand the word emerging or not, and this creates the space for further development. However, we can see how a change to the term used to describe the group of learners, will not only shape the students' learning journey, but also how the teachers view the individuals in their classroom.

Conclusion.

This research project was borne from the idea that our terminology within the field may be harming our students. We, as the teachers are their first port of call and potentially the most stable factor within their linguistic becoming and new identity formation. However, the external connotations of the role of a teacher can often be based upon blind association. It is this association that must be recognised by the teachers themselves, as whether they can see it or not, they are the users of the terms as highlighted within the teacher findings. This awareness needs to be focussed on the teachers as they are in fact, the agents of change within their classroom. To ensure our learning environments are inclusive and socially just, we must look into our own use of terminology when addressing our students. The responsibility does not fall to the policy makers, as they are not the deliverer. As the front line to the students, teachers have the ability to deliver content in a way that fits best for their learners, as no one will understand your students better than you.

In this study, the student participants voiced their opinion surrounding the terminology used throughout their educational journey and have even offered examples of alternatives. Accommodating these changes would allow us to follow Christopher Emdin's Reality Pedagogy framework (2007) and recognise that we do not just have a class of students, but we have a room of human beings filled with

curiosity, nerves, questions, wonderments, and different linguistic backgrounds. This inclusive approach will require small changes from within the education infrastructure including; policy makers, coursebook designers and teachers as they all play an important role as agents of change. Together the influences of all the aforementioned parties will culminate in assisting the learners as they shape their identity. Through working collaboratively with other agents, and thinking systematically about the ways of transforming practices, schools and systems, (Florian, L. & Pantić, N. 2015) change can be enacted. It is not only on the surface that education can support everyone. Displaying solidarity amongst the tutors would further support a positive environment in which the students can thrive (Sandiford, L. 2022). Our classrooms need to be a space where our students can become more than learners. It needs to be a space where they can become the individual they are within this new language (Harvey, L. 2007).

This quest was set to determine whether the students were aware of the vocabulary choices used within the field and whether they had been consciously or subconsciously affected by them. However, the study unearthed a far deeper level of understanding from the participants. Based upon the findings from this research, from all who were involved, it is clearly apparent that we need to take a fresh look at the way we address our learners. We, the collective expanse of teachers, educators, and academics within the field, need to recognise each student beyond their language needs. Linguistically, the students may hold a repertoire of three or maybe five languages and therein lies the problem with traditional terminology. We need to be revolutionary and consider new ways of addressing our collective student group. By removing the word 'second' within 'second language learner' we can enable our students to become language learners. As an alternative, there is an argument for

recognising the collective more widely, by using the term, English as an Additional Language (EAL). Currently, the term is specifically used when referring to juvenile students, to protect their feelings. However, adult learners can exhibit similar emotions/feelings as children. I propose that we look upon our labels and further investigate the emotional othering that is currently happening within the field. The students' learning journey is not free from humanist input as "Education is not memorisation. It is the activation of the imagination and a path towards liberation", (Emdin, C. 2007).

To conclude, regardless of the number of languages the learner possesses, their heritage, duration of stay or their financial status, they are above all else, humans. Each individual has their own personality, but a linguistic goal shared with their peers. This study clearly indicated that the students did not identify with the term 'second language learner'. Similarly, the teachers taking part also acknowledged that the label is negatively loaded. I believe that it is time we started 'Seeing Our Students Differently' and allow them a voice, letting them become co-creators of their educational journey.

Word count: 15,054

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Appendix section.

Appendices I

Student participant journal.

Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability and add as much detail as possible as this will help to understand the terms and phrases used within English educational practices.

General.

How would you describe your nationality?

How would you describe your gender?

How many languages do you speak?

Which language do you use the most at home and why?

Which language do you use the most away from home and why?

What language or languages did you use in the classroom?

Have you ever heard the term 'second language learner'? If so where and do you remember who by?

Thoughts

What does the word 'second' mean to you?

What are your thoughts to learn that you have been categorised as a 'second language learner'?

Have you been allowed to use your mother tongue within the classroom?

Emotions

There are several terms which can be used for English students; multilingual – they know more than two languages, bilingual – they know two languages and second language learner – learning a language that they are not native to.

Out of the terms, which do you think best describes you.

Multilingual

Bilingual

Second language learner

An emerging bilingual

Please explain your choice.

If you have been addressed as a 'second language learner' has this ever impacted how you see yourself?

Is it possible, in your opinion that your language affects job opportunities in the UK?

Feelings

Thinking about your time as a student, can you remember how you was addressed by the teachers?

In your opinion, is the term 'second language learner' negative? Please explain your answer.

Do you feel that your language abilities were catered for during your education?

i.e. that you can speak multiple languages...

As a multilingual/bilingual individual, do you feel that the term 'second language learner' undervalues your linguistic repertoire?

If you were given the choice, how would you prefer to be addressed?

Multilingual individual

Bilingual individual

An emerging bilingual

Second language learner

Briefly explain your choice.

Face-to-face questions.

What did you learn about yourself?

How do you see yourself in relation to 'English'?

What would you like to do/say differently moving forward?

Appendix II

Teacher participant questions.

General.

How would you describe your nationality?

How would you describe your gender?

How many languages do you speak?

Which language do you use the most at home and why?

Which language do you use the most away from home and why?

What language or languages do you use in the classroom and why?

Have you ever used the term 'second language learner'? If so, why and in what context?

Thoughts

What does the word 'second' mean to you?

What are your thoughts surrounding students being categorised as 'second language learners'?

In your opinion, is the term useful within education and why do you think it exists?

Thinking about EAL students, when they are learning an alternative language in the UK, (French, Spanish, German) the term modern foreign language students is used. Why do you think the terminology changes to modern and not second?

Emotions

There are several terms which can be used for English students; multilingual – they know more than two languages, bilingual – they know two languages and second language learner – learning a language that they are not native to.

Out of the terms above, which do you think best describes you.

Multilingual

Bilingual

Second language learner

An emerging bilingual

Please explain your choice.

In your opinion, does the term 'second language learner' impact how students see themselves?

Have you experienced students who identify as having multiple additional languages?

Feelings

Thinking about your time as a tutor within the UK, can you remember how you addressed the students at the beginning of a course?

In your opinion, is the term 'second language learner' negative towards the students?

Please explain your answer.

Do you feel that students would benefit from a dual language learning approach?

(one course book printed in multiple languages)

Do you feel that the term 'second language learner' could undervalue the students linguistic repertoire?

Please explain your answer.

In your opinion, if students were given the choice, how do you think they would prefer to be addressed?

An emerging bilingual
Second language learner

Explain your choice.

Is there any term throughout your teaching journey that you have gravitated to the most?

Appendix III

Ethical approval.

22/07/2022

Project Title: Challenging labels within TESOL - Seeing students differently.

EthOS Reference Number: 45920

Ethical Opinion

Dear Louise Sandiford,

The above application was reviewed by Dr Khawla Badwan and on the 22/07/2022, was given a favourable ethical opinion. The approval is in place until six months after the end date recorded in your application documentation (05/09/2022).

Approved Documents

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Information Sheet	Participant-Information-Sheet Postgrad	17/07/2022	1.1
Project Protocol	Protocol 1.1	18/07/2022	1.1
Information Sheet	Participant-Information-Sheet teachers	20/07/2022	1.1
Consent Form	Consent form student	20/07/2022	1.1
Consent Form	Consent form teacher	20/07/2022	1.1

Conditions of favourable ethical opinion

The favourable ethical opinion is granted with the following conditions

Approval is in place for your UG/PGT project

This approval is only valid for Undergraduate (UG) and Post Graduate Taught (PGT) projects and does not grant approval for any Staff or PGR projects.

Adherence to Manchester Metropolitan University's Policies and procedures

This ethical approval is conditional on adherence to Manchester Metropolitan University's Policies, Procedures, guidance and Standard Operating procedures. These can be found on the Manchester Metropolitan University Research Ethics and Governance webpages.

Amendments

If you wish to make a change to this approved application, you will be required to submit an amendment. Please visit the Manchester Metropolitan University Research Ethics and Governance webpages or contact your Faculty research officer for advice around how to do this.

We wish you every success with your project.

Art and Humanities Research Ethics and Governance Committee

For help with this application, please first contact your Faculty Research Officer. Their details can be found [here](#)