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An Investigation Into Identity, Power and Autonomous EFL Learning Among Indigenous and Minority Students In Post-secondary Education: A Mexican Case Study

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree in Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

This critical ethnographic case study draws on the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning process of Indigenous and minority students in Mexico. The study specifically focuses on students who enrolled in a program called *Una Apuesta de Futuro* (UAF), or *A wager with the Future*, which was designed to address scholastic asymmetries of Indigenous and poor people in Mexico by offering them full scholarships to study at a private university in Puebla. On the one hand, the study aims to identify and understand contributing factors in these students' struggles with the process of learning English, and on the other, factors influencing these students' investment in EFL.

The research is framed by (critical) applied linguistics and post-colonial theories. The dual focus of the framework is on: analyzing language learning autonomy from a critical perspective - a perspective that favours the integration of students' socio historical context in their learning of English, and questioning (unequal) power relationships between languages and cultures by investigating the connections between power, identity and culture.

The qualitative research design adopted for the methodology sought to achieve trustworthiness through the following data collection techniques: semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and the analysis of relevant documents. The design aligned with the theoretical framework by also aiming to decolonize the research process by using participatory methods, such as Interpretative Focus Groups, that allow participants to coanalyze the data and produce glocalized knowledge.

On a macro level, findings show that UAF students' relationship with English is rooted in Mexico's colonial legacies. These legacies impose unequal cultural and linguistic power

relationships on languages and cultures, relationships that are expressed through discrimination in the EFL classroom where English is used to show superiority. Students' perceptions of this discrimination have an impact on their subjectivities; specifically, they feel afraid and inferior in the EFL classroom. On a micro level, the programming adopted in the university's Language Department does not promote the recognition of UAF students' local knowledges and languages; it has adopted a 'monolithic' approach to teaching English that does not draw on diverse students' multi-competences in other languages. Nonetheless, some Indigenous students manage to invest in EFL by: (1) creating imagined communities that reposition them on a national level and in the EFL class; and (2) appropriating English through the creation of autonomous pluralistic language learning strategies.

Finally, the conclusion draws on the importance of focusing on UAF students' heterogeneity, and recognizing their local cultures (and languages). This enables them to draw on their learning, and has the potential for them to develop the agency needed to meet academic success and, possibly, engage in social action.

Keywords

EFL; Mexico; Indigenous and minority students; (critical) language learning autonomy; pluralistic learning strategies; colonial legacies; English linguistic imperialism; participatory data analysis.

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Beginning to write acknowledgments is not easy because it means going back in time and analyzing the whole PhD process. It is a subjective and emotive task. As mentioned in the dissertation, my identity is multiple and I relate with people in different languages. Hence, I will "make identity" and will acknowledge people who supported me during the whole process in the language in which I identify with them.

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Preface

From colonial times to the present, Mexican Indigenous[1] peoples[2], like most Indigenous

peoples around the world (in America, Asia, Australia or Africa), have had to suffer, first

under extermination, then exploitation, segregation, and finally, through assimilation politics

(Ogbu & Simons, 1998). On the one hand, in Mexico, results of this oppression and the

colonial discourse - defined as linguistically-based practices that create and reinforce

Western dominance (Hall & Gieben, 1992; Hall, 1996) - can be seen in terms of racial and

social hierarchies (i.e., the belief that some racial and social groups are superior or inferior to

others) (Carillo Trueba, 2009). On the other hand, results of this oppression can also be seen

through scholastic asymmetries (i.e., lower educational levels) amongst Indigenous and poor

people compared to the rest of the population (Schmelkes, 2006). According to the 2011

Latin American Report on Poverty and Inequality (RIMISP, 2012), the illiteracy rate in

Mexican rural communities was at 15.6%, whereas as in urban communities it was at 4. 3 %.

This asymmetry increases when comparing Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous populations.

According to the 2000 "National Census on People and Households" in Mexico, the illiteracy

rate for non-Indigenous people was at 7.54%, whereas amongst Indigenous peoples, it was

33.7% (INEGI, 2000). Only 8.31% of non-Indigenous people did not get any official

education, while 31.35% of Indigenous were deprived of it. The results of these asymmetries

are clearly reflected in the two groups' economic income levels. Indigenous populations have

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[1] For purpose of this dissertation, the words Indigenous and Western will always be written in capital letters because my position is that both sets of cultures, Indigenous and Western cultures, should be recognized as being equal.

[2] For purpose of this dissertation, in "Indigenous peoples", the word "people" will always be written with "s" because Indigenous populations are not homogeneous. They represent many different cultures, even within Mexico.

consistently had the highest poverty rates in Mexico (Hall & Patrinos, 2005; Bello, 2008; Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 1998).

In this research, I am especially interested in a group of 56 students from the rural communities of the Sierra Norte de Puebla region who study in an intercultural program called *Una Apuesta de Futuro* (UAF) (A wager with the future[3]) at the *Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla* (UPAEP), a private university in Puebla, Mexico where I worked for six years. Not all of the students self-identify as Indigenous. Some of them do, others self-identify as *mestizos* (i.e., mixed race population between Spanish and Indigenous descendants). These students have been selected to study at the UPAEP because they all come from impoverished rural communities. They are all offered full scholarships in order to help to overcome scholastic asymmetries. Sixteen out of the 56 students are bilingual in Spanish and Nahuatl, one is bilingual in Tzotzil and Spanish, and two others are bilingual in Totonaco and Spanish. Additionally, they all have to learn English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as part of their undergraduate studies. Yet, most of them seem to be unsuccessful in EFL as shown in UPAEP's official records (DELC, 2011). There is a blatant difference in the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) results between students from the UAF program and their peers in the B2[4] English level. Average scores in spring 2011 of non UAF students were at 530 points (Despagne & Grossi, 2011), whereas UAF students scored an average of 402 points in summer 2011. Both groups of students received exactly the same Strategy-Based Instruction, which aims to develop language learning autonomy in a period of

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[3] All translations are mine and are my sole responsibility.

[4] The B2 level of the Common European Reference Framework (CEFR) refers to an intermediate stage of proficiency. Users of this level are expected to use the main structures of the language and to use appropriate communicative strategies in different social situations.

six terms before taking the TOEFL test. On a macro level, English in Mexico is perceived as cultural capital (i.e., a cultural knowledge that confers power and status) (Bourdieu, 1982/1991), but at the same time, it also ignites images of imperialism, exploitation, and loneliness (Chasan & Ryan, 1995; Despagne, 2010). Mexico's sociolinguistic reality and the socio-cultural challenges that UAF students (Indigenous and mestizos) face in their learning of English - a "global" international language - need to be examined.

Hence, the research will be a critical ethnographic case study. It will specifically seek to understand the above mentioned challenges through the lens of critical applied linguistics, whose aim is to contribute to the understanding of real-world issues by connecting language to other domains, such as education, sociology, psychology or history. The research will carry out an analysis to determine whether UPAEP's language learning pedagogies, which are based on the psychological version of language learning autonomy (Holec, 1981, 1990; Little, 1991, 2002, 2007; Chamot & O'Malley, 1994), are adapted for UAF students' EFL learning. Autonomous language learning pedagogies can be analyzed from different perspectives. The psychological vision is mainly concerned with learning strategies, whereas the critical vision focuses more on a critical awareness of the surrounding power relations.

This study will evaluate whether students' low EFL results may be constructed socially and historically. In other words, it seeks to explore through a post-colonial lens whether the present minority students' perceptions towards EFL are shaped by Mexico's cultural legacy of colonialism (Mignolo, 2005; Escobar, 2005; Quijano, 2000) by examining the relation between UAF students' identities (Indigenous and mestizos) and EFL investment.

The notions of identity and investment are embedded in the field of critical applied linguistics (CAL). For purposes of this dissertation, the working definitions of identity and

investment will follow those of Norton and Toohey (Norton Peirce[5], 1995; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Toohey & Norton, 2003, 2010), both of which will be observed in socially-embedded language learning contexts. Learners' identities will be defined as multiple, complex, dynamic and represented as sites of struggle. Investment tries to capture "the complex relationship between power, identity and language learning" (Norton, 2000, p. 10). Learners invest in learning a language when they can use it as a "cultural capital" (Bourdieu, 1982/1991) (i.e., when the language matches with their desires for the future). According to Norton and Toohey (2011), investment in learning a language is closely linked with investment in learners' identities, both of which change over time and space; moreover, investment and identities are subsumed in power relations. Hence, post-colonialism analyzes these power relationships and sites of struggle by looking at how the colonial past shapes contemporary power relations.

These two major sets of theories, post-colonialism and critical applied linguistics, represent the theoretical foundation upon which this study is built. These theories will serve to provide a link to understand the macro and micro connections between EFL learning and the historical, as well as social influences that underlie the EFL learning process in Mexico, specifically among Indigenous and mestizo university students from impoverished rural communities.

This research builds on the knowledge base that other second language researchers, linguists, anthropologists, and sociologists have developed in Mexico. While some work has focussed on EFL teaching for non-Indigenous students in Mexico, and other work has focussed on

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[5] Norton and Norton Peirce are the same person. Her 1995 paper appears with the name Norton Peirce, and all the following contributions appear with the name Norton.

intercultural education for Indigenous peoples, there is a significant lack of research literature on Indigenous EFL learners. In order to fill this gap, my study aims to answer this main research question:

Non-UAF students respond well to the psychological focus of language learning autonomy, so why do UAF students not respond in the same way?

This main question will be supported by the following two sub research questions:

1. UAF students have lower TOEFL test results than their dominant group peers. What are the contributing factors in this discrepancy?

2. What factors influence minority students' investment in EFL learning?

Thus, to answer the above-mentioned questions, I will divide this dissertation into seven main parts. First, I introduce the theoretical framework that supports my research (i.e., [critical] applied linguistics and post-colonialism). Second, I present a thick description of the context of the study by specifically focusing on Mexico's macro context and the micro context in which UAF students are studying. In chapter three, I link the theoretical framework to both contexts and highlight the specific theories that I use in the analysis of the findings. In chapter four, I position myself as a researcher in relation to the study and the participants before introducing the methodology I use in the following chapter. On the one hand, the methodological section defines how I triangulate data collection, and on the other, how we (i.e., participants and myself) analyze it. Then, in chapter six, I introduce the findings analyzed from both world perspectives - the participants' and my own - based on the theoretical lens described in the first chapter of this dissertation. Finally, in chapter seven I

discuss these findings by integrating the theoretical lens, but also, and above all, by paying close attention to the context of the study.

Chapter 1

1   Literature Review

The objective of the following literature review is to explain notions related to the study from the fields of cultural studies, more specifically of post-colonialism, and of (critical) applied linguistics. Given the growing interest in both fields, the present review will be selective in orientation and will explore literature directly relevant to the research.

The first part of the review will examine the two main models of language learning autonomy, namely the psychological focus of applied linguistics which is the focus used at the UPAEP Language Department, and the critical focus of critical applied linguistics which integrates students' social and historical environment. Both models will guide my understanding of Indigenous and minority students' micro EFL environment. The second part will focus on post-colonialism with a special focus on Latin American post-colonialism which deals with the macro context of Mexican Indigenous and minority students and the political historical connection with their contemporary culture.

1.1   Autonomy

The following part of the literature review will draw on the concept of autonomy by briefly going through its historical evolution in the field of education, with specific emphasis on the second language acquisition context. It will then examine the psychological and critical political perspectives of language learning autonomy. The reasons for having chosen these two perspectives are the following:

1. The psychological vision of language learning autonomy has been adapted at the UPAEP Language Department since 2004. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages was the guiding framework used until July 2013 (Council of Europe, 2000). The department then shifted to ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) as will be analyzed in the findings of the study.

2. The socio-political focus of language learning autonomy will be reviewed as a possible complement to the psychological perspective because EFL results of the Indigenous and minority students in the UAF program are low. This alternative connects research in language learning, identity, and social change through a post-structural lens (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000) and shows the importance of situating language learners in the larger social world (Norton & Toohey, 2011). It also illustrates different subjective ways of constructing students' identities (Weedon, 1987, 2004; Kramsch, 2009). It is therefore possible that UPAEP minority students' struggles with EFL learning are shaped by their wider historical and social context, and their subjective identities.

1.1.1   Autonomy and education

The concept of autonomy can be traced back to Kant (1788) and the 18th century European Enlightenment period, when moral autonomy was perceived as universal and as having authority over one's actions. The concept of autonomy began to grow in the early 1920s in the field of education with pragmatists like Dewey (1938), who associated autonomy with freedom and democracy. Dewey launched the concept of "learning by doing" through which students had the opportunity to take part in their learning process

(Boisvert, 1998). His ideas were then followed by the movement of educational progressivism and active learning that marked a paradigm shift in education from behaviourism, or teacher-centered teaching (Thorndike, 1910; Watson, 1928; Skinner, 1978), to more constructivist and cognitive educational approaches, where students were viewed as active participants in their own learning (Bruner, 1977; Piaget, 1969; Vygotsky, 1962, 1978). Central to the concept of learner "autonomy" in the late twentieth century are the notions of action taking, critical thinking, judgement, reflexivity, and self-evaluation (Gremmo & Riley, 1997). Autonomy has become a requirement for today's "knowledge society", because citizens must become life-long learners to adapt to the rapid evolution of knowledge (Delors, 1996).

1.1.2　Autonomy and language education

Autonomy, specifically related to second language acquisition, is not a new concept. It has been influenced by global educational philosophies, and was officially introduced in the field of applied linguistics in Europe, after the political turmoil in the late sixties (Gremmo & Riley, 1997). Holec (1981) was the first to coin the term "autonomy" for foreign language teaching, which he defined as being the "ability to take charge of one's own learning" (p. 3). Benson's (1997) seminal paper "The Philosophy and Politics of Learner Autonomy" was the first to introduce the idea that autonomy can be perceived from different lenses. His model integrates technical, psychological, and political critical perceptions of autonomy. Beginning with the technical version of autonomy, this focus perceives learner autonomy as "the act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational framework and without the intervention of a teacher" (Benson, 1997, p. 19). The psychological focus perceives learner autonomy as a capacity that has to be

developed, and therefore draws on an internal transformation. Finally, the political critical version defines autonomy as a "control over the process and content of learning" (Benson, 1997, p. 19) and insists in a social transformation of the context.

Benson's work has since been revised by examining the differences in other ways (O'Rourke & Schwienhorst, 2003; Oxford, 2003; Holliday, 2003; Smith, 2003; Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Ribé, 2003). Oxford's (2003) revision seems especially salient in that she adds two additional categories, sociocultural I and sociocultural II. In sociocultural autonomy I, the approach holds that the learning of the language is situated in a very particular "social and cultural setting populated by specific individuals at a given historical time" (Oxford, 2003, p. 86). This perspective seems to go along with a modernist idea of culture where culture is defined as "membership in a national community with a common history, a common standard language and common imaginings" (Kramsch, 2011, p. 355). Sociocultural autonomy II, in turn, focuses on the work of scholars who perceive the socio-historical context of the learner as significant, where culture "is associated with ideologies, attitudes and beliefs created and manipulated through discourses" (Kramsch, 2011, p. 355). However, all these researchers – like Benson (1997) and Oxford (2003) – distinguish between the psychological view of autonomy held by applied linguists and the critical view of autonomy held by critical applied linguists. Ribé (2003) and Oxford (2003) argue that a mixture of both would create an optimal learning environment. At both levels, context is important, but in different ways. Both perspectives will be analyzed in the next section. Psychological autonomy refers to Vygotsky's (1978) educational theory where cognitive learning is situated in a particular context and time; critical autonomy refers to the "context of

autonomy rather than the individual exercising it" (Oxford, 2003, p. 87). In other words, in critical autonomy, the context is the place where people live and interact (Wenden, 1991). This place will be examined in the contextual part of this research.

1.1.2.1 Autonomy in the field of applied linguistics

In 1990, O'Malley and Chamot defined a set of systematic taxonomies of language learning strategies, and Candy (1991) compiled a list of over 100 competencies linked to autonomous learning. O'Malley et al. (1985) and Cohen (1998) then found that learners specifically use metacognitive, cognitive, and social mediation strategies to learn a language. These strategies are learning processes that learners consciously select and are constitutive of language learning autonomy (Cohen, 1998).

In the past decade, autonomy became a buzz word in second language acquisition, especially since the European Commission launched the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) in 2000 as a political tool for the construction of Europe (Council of Europe, 2000). The CEFR refers to autonomy through the concept of the "ability to learn" (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 85) which essentially focuses on performance and independence of cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective learning strategies supported by a Strategy-Based Instruction. Learning strategies represent "learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning" (Little, 1995, p. 81) because these strategies reflect on students' own learning process. According to Little's (1991) definition, autonomous students understand the objective of their learning and participate in the elaboration of these objectives; plan their learning activities and put them into practice; and regularly check and evaluate their learning. Dam (1995) further presents autonomy as an attribute that is not innate. Learners need guidance to improve

their autonomous language learning and this can only be achieved in a formal educational context (Wenden, 1998). Dam's study of how teenage Danish EFL students develop psychological relationships with one another provides an interesting account of how they gradually become autonomous in their own learning by focusing on what Little (2004) calls the three basic pedagogical principles of autonomous language learning. They include (1) an appropriate use of the target language, (2) learners' critical reflection on how they learn, and (3) learners' involvement and responsibility in their own learning process.

These principles have also been discussed earlier by Rubin (1975) as being the characteristics of good language learners (i.e., of strategic learners); learners who plan their learning process. Thus, language learning autonomy is an attribute of learners and not a learning situation (Dickinson, 1987).

Context is important for researchers who espouse the psychological view of learner autonomy. Context matters to them because learning always occurs within a particular context and context "consists of a particular kind of relationship, that of mediated learning" (Palfreyman, 2003a). Mediated learning consists of assisting learners to develop cognitive processes. Through mediation, teachers introduce students to a set of learning strategies, also called Strategy-Based Instruction, which takes students' background knowledge into consideration.

In summary, psychological learner autonomy focuses on students' internal transformation where autonomous learning becomes a set of strategies that are not static and that evolve over time. They have to be mediated by the teacher in a formal classroom context.

Nevertheless, this focus, even if it takes students' background knowledge into consideration, as used through the Strategy-Based Instruction at UPAEP (Despagne & Grossi, 2011), does not reflect on the historical power and the ideologies related to languages. Power and language ideologies may influence Indigenous and minority students' learning, especially in the case of English, the national language of the United Sates with which Mexico has a historical and contemporary love/hate relationship (Rangel, 1977). Hence, the following part of the review on language learning autonomy will draw on a complementary socio-historical connection.

1.1.2.2   Autonomy in the field of critical applied linguistics

The shift from the psychological to the critical perspective of learning autonomy goes along with the "social turn" in second language acquisition, where emphasis is placed on how the wider social and historical context influences individuals' lived experiences and therefore their language learning process (Block, 2003, 2007; Canagarajah, 2004; Lantolf, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2004; Hall, 2003). An increasing number of scholars also analyze how students can use their agency to integrate their lived experiences in their learning process - a process by which autonomy and agency become closely related (Benson, 2001). For the purpose of this research, I will use the notion of agency from the field of cultural studies and of sociology where agency is perceived as the capacity of individuals to act independently and to make their own choices (Giroux, 2004) and as their capacity to engage in social action. According to Giddens, agents are actors who have the capacity to act "to achieve desired and intended outcomes" (1984, p. 15). However, choices and actions are constrained by the social system that surrounds them. For critical applied linguistic researchers, the notion of agency is essential because

learners who are marginalized in the dominant discourse have the capacity to resist and contest this marginalization. Canagarajah (2005) and Manosuthikit (2008) speak about resistance agency. According to Manosuthikit (2008), learners who exhibit resistance agency "employ an array of strategies, including silence, satire and humour, and selective use of discourses, to express their opposition without openly confronting the dominant groups." (p. 1). Thus, by exerting their resistance agency, learners can also reposition themselves as no longer marginalized (McKay & Wong, 1996). The notion of positioning adds an additional layer in language learning because through language, the agent may be positioned in certain ways. Yet, he/she can aspire to a different positioning in society, especially in today's globalized world. According to Davies and Harré (1990), "positioning is largely a conversational phenomenon" (p. 45) which occurs through discursive practices in which people construct social and psychological realities, interactively, when one person positions another one, or reflexively, when one person positions herself. Agency and repositioning may be facilitated in a situated learning perspective and not in only cognitive situations which mainly focus on the acquisition of skills (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Díaz Barriga, 2003). In other words, agency and repositioning will be possible in contexts where learning is associated with social participation and where it is "situated in local community practices, shaping and shaped by concrete relationships" (Kanno, 2003, p. 286).

At the same time, an increasing number of scholars who resist the value-free perception of languages and language teaching, especially in EFL as a global language (Phillipson, 1992, 2009; Pennycook, 2001; Canagarajah, 1999), push towards a shift from the mainstream psychological vision of autonomy to a more critical-political-social vision of

autonomy, a view that is embedded in CAL (Pennycook, 1997, 1998, 2001; Benson, 1997, 2001; Palfreyman, 2003a; Canagarajah, 1999, 2004, 2007; Clemente & Higgins, 2008; Schmenk, 2005; Holliday, 2003; Smith, 2003). CAL explores perspectives on language within historical, political, and socio-cultural contexts by focusing on power, and discourses defined as formalized ways of thinking that can be manifested through language, and social practices, as determining the conceptual content of our beliefs.

Seen from a CAL lens, culture holds a more central position in autonomy than other versions of autonomy (Palfreyman, 2003a). At the same time, the CAL lens tries to overcome cultural reductionism. In other words, it tries to understand the complex nature of social relationships instead of reducing them to the interaction of their parts, such as the "us"-"them" divide. Autonomy in CAL is therefore embedded in the vision of critical multiculturalism, a vision that recognizes the existence of inequalities between cultures and languages (Kubota, 2004). Critical multiculturalism sees inequalities of power and racism as fundamental. It advocates for the recognition and rights of minorities by supporting critical language pedagogies, such as critical language autonomy, that build upon students' capacities to analyze and act on the ways discrimination and privilege are used in everyday interactions through language.

Scholars of the social turn, such as Schmenk (2005) and Canagarajah (1999), state that the psychological version of autonomy comes across as "value-free", a pedagogy that is not influenced by any value. Canagarajah (1999) cautions that the concept of autonomy is a Western cultural construct, which can be traced back to Kant, and "to the colonial mission of spreading Enlightenment values for civilizing purposes" (p. 12). In other words, since autonomy was at the heart of European humanism that believed in universal

laws and in civilizing the world, autonomy became a universal good at the center of modern development. However, the psychological mainstream version of autonomy denies its historical and political expression by focusing much more on learning techniques, strategies, and materials than on the socio-political context (Pennycook, 1997, p. 36). Hence, for the scholars of the social turn, psychological autonomy seems to be embedded in the vision of liberal multiculturalism – one that celebrates cultural diversity and teaches tolerance. According to Díaz Polanco (2006), Mexico favours a neoliberal approach to multiculturalism where diversity and difference are recognized, but where there are still problems to be solved through cultural inclusion. Gasché (1997) also refers to this form of multiculturalism as the "angelical utopia" which focuses on educating towards the respect of cultural differences, a perspective, as we shall see later, that is clearly embedded in UPAEP's EFL strategy-based instruction. In opposition to critical multiculturalism, liberal and neoliberal multiculturalism, or the "angelical utopia" do not examine the hierarchies of power underpinning interactions between the different cultures. In this sense, psychological autonomy allocates "equal treatment of all English language learners" because it does not take existing power relationships between learners and the surrounding context into account (Kubota, 2004, p. 34).

In response to this universal vision of autonomy where all cultures and languages are perceived as being equal and where the existence of language hierarchies is not taken into account, scholars of the social turn offer social alternatives to autonomy. These alternatives specifically take the power relations between languages and cultures into holistic account; furthermore, they encourage learners to use their agency to gain control over the context of their learning. Some of these alternatives are summarized below.

Alternatives to "mainstream" autonomy

Pennycook (1997) first introduced the idea of "mainstream" autonomy because it was essentially concerned with individual learner psychology and learning strategies. He mainly focused on English Language Teaching (ELT) and proposed that students "find a voice in English" (Pennycook, 1997, p. 48) by integrating their own cultural framework into EFL learning, such as accepting their own accent and not trying to reproduce a British accent. For Pennycook (1997), encouraging autonomy is to guide students "to become authors of their own world" (p. 45). From his perspective, to be an autonomous language learner is not so much a question of what are the best learning strategies, but rather a question of how to fight for cultural alternatives or how to integrate one's own life experiences in the learning process. In essence, Pennycook intends for ELT teachers to let their students participate in their own learning by incorporating their cultural references in their knowledge construction, as opposed to the forceful imposition of Western thinking and pedagogies which often have no real connections with Indigenous students' local realities. In this way, students will gain ownership in their EFL learning process. Holliday's (2003) notion of "social autonomy" also confronts mainstream psychology because autonomy is not an ability that has to be learned anymore, but a position from which to engage with the world. In his work, Holliday (2003) argues that all human beings are autonomous in different ways, depending on their cultural background. For Holliday, language learning autonomy is a central notion used in the official EFL discourse. Holliday argues that this official discourse opposes the active Western learners to the passive non Western learners. In other words, the discourse

universalizes the Western construct of autonomy, and does not accept that each culture perceives autonomy in different ways.

Most recently, Schmenk (2005) argued that today, autonomy is perceived as a universal good in second language acquisition. Schmenk (2005) was also concerned about the homogenization of autonomy, in other words, that only "mainstream" autonomy is perceived as being the right one. The homogenization of "mainstream" autonomy may be problematic because it does not question its cultural constructs. Yet, it embodies cultural values that language teachers will impose on their students unless they "admit that autonomy is not a universal and neutral concept" (Schmenk, 2005, p. 115). They will, for example, impose specific language learning strategies that may work for Western students, but may not be as successful for students from other cultural backgrounds. Schmenk (2005) therefore contended that mainstream language learning autonomy, even if it has value, must be followed by a critical awareness of its limitations within specific contexts.

For all the critical applied scholars (Pennycook, 1997; Holliday, 2003; Schmenk, 2005) then, autonomy is power, not power in terms of educators "empowering" students, but in terms of students actively constructing meaning with the educator through questioning and a growing awareness of the cultural and ideological world around them as well as the integration of students' lived experiences and local lives in the learning process. Hence for CAL, autonomy becomes the power of control for the learner, "control over the content and processes of one's own learning" (Benson, 1997, p. 25). This control has clear political implications because minority learners have to claim the recognition of their cultures which may be discriminated against by the official discourse. This claim

can be achieved in the language classroom if linguistic representations are discussed because perceptions and the symbolic power of languages have emotional impacts on students' senses. In other words, critical applied linguists such as Kramsch (2009), focus on the importance of multilingual subjective realities or on how learners should express their feelings about their surrounding languages and cultures. Hence, language subjectivity plays an important role in CAL because it is "used to characterize the affective aspects of the language experience and is positively associated with the cognitive and emotional development of the self" (i.e., with identity construction and negotiation) (Kramsch, 2009, p. 16). As a result, language subjectivities have an impact on learners' reality and therefore "shape their processes and strategies for language learning and use" (Moore & Gajo, 2009). In the case of Mexico for example, Nahuatl or Indigenous knowledges, do not have the same power as English or knowledge produced in the Anglophone world. Additionally, Indigenous languages do not have the same discursive status as Spanish. These power relationships should be reflexively discussed in class to allow minority students to link the new knowledge acquired in EFL classrooms to their funds of knowledge, defined by González, Moll, and Amanti (2005) as "the historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual functioning and well-being" (p. 72). These funds of knowledge are also closely related to students' personal diverse experiences, beliefs and feelings. English should not be taught based on a monolingual paradigm (or monolithic perceptions of languages and cultures) that assumes that the languages for each individual are perceived as the sum of separate competences in each of the languages. From this perspective, languages are placed in separated boxes and are not connected to each other.

On the other hand, EFL should focus on a plurilingual teaching approach, in other words, it should teach English by incorporating students' multi-competences, (i.e., all their different linguistic and cultural knowledges) (Cook, 1992, 1999, 2002). As mentioned by García and Sylvan (2011), a plurilingual teaching approach should "focus on teaching individuals within multilingual classrooms in which the plurality is created by paying attention to the singularity of the individual student" (p. 386). García and Sylvan also refer to this approach as dynamic plurilingual education where educators have "to pay close attention to how a student and his or her language practices are in motion" (2011, p. 390). According to the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2000), a plurilingual approach in language teaching should not keep students' languages and cultures in "strictly separated compartments to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact" (p. 4). Hence, the plurilingual view of the CEFR tends to encourage teachers and learners to view all of the languages spoken by an individual "as a whole, comprising a unique and global set of competences available to an individual for use in different communicative needs and situations" (Coste & Simon, 2009, p. 173). For that purpose, the European Center for Modern Languages (ECML) announced a paradigm change (i.e., shift from a monolithic to a pluralistic teaching approach) that would favour social cohesion of multilingual nations and classrooms by further developing plurilingual and pluricultural competence, a key concept in the CEFR (Candelier, Daryai-Hansen & Schröder-Sura, 2012; Despagne, 2013b). Following that paradigm shift, the design of a new framework called FREPA (Council of Europe, 2012),

the English acronym for Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures[6] begun in 2004 as a complementary resource in the gradual development of plurilingual and pluricultural competences. The framework is divided in seven global competences[7] and in descriptors of resources. The lists of partially hierarchized descriptors are divided into knowledge (from K1 to K15)[8], attitudes (from A1 to A 19) and skills (from S1 to S7), each one subdivided in linguistic/communication and cultural descriptors. Hence, bi- and plurilingual students may conform to linguistic and cultural descriptors, even if both are interrelated, or only with cultural descriptors in the case of students who do not speak the languages of their local communities anymore, but who still feel identified with them. In reference to languages, Cummins' (2000) Interdependence Hypothesis seems to reveal that all the languages a person speaks are interdependent with one another and form a Common Underlying Proficiency with one another. Hence, there are proficiencies that are common across languages, such as metacognitive learning strategies, and should be used by adding any new language in students' linguistic repertoire. Herdina's and Jessner's (2002) Dynamic Model of Multilingualism also represents languages as one complex system where all the languages of an individual are interdependent and non-linear. Grosjean (1989, 2008) also mentioned that bilinguals are not two monolinguals in one person. Bi- and multilinguals'

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[6] FREPA webpage: http://carap.ecml.at/

[7] The seven global competences of FREPA are: managing linguistic and cultural communication in a context of otherness; constructing and broadening plural linguistic and cultural repertoires; decentring; making sense of unfamiliar linguistic and/or cultural features; critical analysis, and recognizing the "other" and otherness (Council of Europe, 2012, p. 20).

[8] In FREPA, "K" is the abbreviation for "Knowledge", "A" for "Attitude", and "S" for "Skill".

languages interact. This complex system makes it possible to capture synergetic developments across the multilingual's languages. However, in the case of Mexico, for this plurilingual approach to be possible, it must first reach consensus that all Indigenous languages are real languages and not dialects or folklore, (i.e., something that does not have the status of a language), as generally perceived in the Mexican *mestizo* (mixed blood) population. Hence, in a plurilingual approach of EFL teaching, questions of unequal power relationships between languages and cultures must be discussed.

At this point, it becomes important to clearly link critical autonomy with notions such as identity, imagined communities, and investment in language learning. This work, as mentioned above, will mostly follow Norton's and Toohey's definitions (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000; Norton & Toohey, 2011; Toohey & Norton, 2003, 2010), but it will also insert additional scholars when necessary.

First, the notion of identity is intrinsically linked to critical language learning autonomy because this pedagogical focus favours students' participation in the construction of their own knowledge by integrating their personal lived experiences. Students' integration of themselves in the new knowledge construction will automatically redefine their sense of self. This sense of self may be enhanced or lowered depending on the success or failure of the social interaction in the target language (Toohey & Norton, 2003; Toohey, 2007). The sense of self may be enhanced when EFL students experience positive linguistic and cultural interactions with native English speakers, but it will decrease if these experiences are negative and if learners feel that they are not accepted as equal. In the case of this research, participants' interactions in English will generally take place with native and non-native EFL teachers and classmates. Hence, the redefinition of self through the

learning of English will take place in the university context defined by a larger socio historical context. Indigenous and minority students' interactions in this specific context also make Gee's (2000) contributions of identity salient because he analyzes identity from a postmodern perspective (i.e., a critique of modernism) that will clearly match with the second part of the literature review on post-colonialism. According to Gee (2000), identity is to be a "particular kind of person" (p. 109) in a particular context which will be defined within an interpretative system based on people's lived experiences. What is important for Gee is "how and by whom a particular identity is to be recognized" (p. 109). In this work, I will also focus on Gee's D-identity (i.e., on the identity created through discourse or how others perceive me). Gee's notion of D-identity is similar to Davies and Harré's (1990) notion of interactive positioning referred to earlier. For both, the source of power relies on the recognition of others which leads to positive, but also negative or imposed identities. The recognition, in turn, is tied to specific discourses rooted socially and historically (Gee, 2000, p. 111). The interesting point in Gee's perspective is that, because identity can be understood in terms of different interpretative systems, it can also be constructed in different ways. Hence, Indigenous and minority students' identities can be negotiated and contested. They are flexible and multiple and can change in time and space. In this research, the construction and/or negotiation of participants' multiple identities will be analyzed through García Canclini's (1990) hybridization process explained in the second part of this literature review. Norton's (2000, 2001) notion of *imagined communities* will also contribute in the analysis of participants' multiple identities, but with a special focus in the EFL class. Imagined community, a term first coined by Anderson (1991), has been adapted by Norton (2000,

2001) for SLA to describe how "the learning of another language, perhaps more than any other educational activity, reflects the desire of learners to expand their range of identities and to reach out to wider worlds" (Pavlenko & Norton, 2007, p. 670). By learning English for example, learners may imagine that they will be able to reach, and belong to a certain community, to which they had no access without the language. Students' affiliation to these imagined communities might reflect on their commitment with the language, which might in turn also influence their identity construction. These imagined communities might be professional communities or communities in which they might reposition their construction of selves. However, imagined communities have rules to be followed, in other words, they have requirements for participation. Learners have to follow a certain set of rules to gain access to these communities (Kanno & Norton, 2003).

Lastly, the notion of *investment,* coined by Norton Peirce (1995), integrates not only language learners' affective variables, such as self-esteem and anxiety for example, but also the wider social context where "power relationships play an important role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 12). Hence, cultural power relations between an EFL speaker and a native English listener, for example, may inhibit the speaker to express himself in English because he will feel that he is not accepted as being equal. The notion of investment therefore complements the psychological approach of autonomy which does not, as referred to earlier, take these social power relationships into consideration when it comes to language learning. Additionally, because identities are not fixed, investment "attempts to capture the relationship of the language learners to the changing social world" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 17). This notion seeks to understand how the changing world may

influence the language learner. Similar to the notion of identity, investment is a flexible relationship and it can change over time and place. Studies with similar results have been conducted on identity and investment in language learning in different parts of the world, such as in Uganda (Kendrick & Jones, 2008) or Mexico (Clemente & Higgins, 2008; López-Gopar, 2009).

In Uganda, Kendrick and Jones (2008) incorporated drawing, photography and drama into EFL class activities. The incorporation of multimodal activities gave teachers the opportunity to validate students' local literacies, cultures, and identities. Students' funds of knowledge (González, Moll & Amanti, 2005) and multi-competences (Cook, 1992) were taken into account. This led them to engage with the multimodal activities and to begin to use English as a natural means of communication.

In the case of Mexico, López-Gopar (2009) conducted a study on multiliteracies (i.e., children's literacies from their native cultures). In this study, he opposed the negative identity given to Indigenous peoples as being illiterate. He worked with Mexican children in the city of Oaxaca, the majority of whom are Indigenous peoples from poor rural communities. By building upon the multiliteracies children brought with them, such as the use of *papel amate* (paper made of bark of ficus trees) for drawing since the pre-Hispanic times, López-Gopar (2009) validated the Indigenous students' local knowledges (Battiste, Bell & Findlay, 2002) through EFL activities and engaged them to invest in the language.

Another study that took place in Mexico led by Clemente and Higgins (2008) focuses on pre-service Mexican English teachers. The two researchers created role-play activities in

class through which they questioned the dominant discourse of native English teachers, which is widely accepted in Mexico. Through these role-play activities, students were able to make English their "own" language and put it into practice.

Hence, these three studies and many others, show that by validating students' local knowledges, cultures and identities that are generally marginalized and devaluated in their own context, it is possible to increase their investment in EFL and give them the possibility to appropriate more desirable identities.

In summary, the first part of this literature review discussed the concept of autonomy in second language learning. Autonomy was first placed historically, and then slowly shifted from global education philosophies to the field of second language acquisition in (critical) applied linguistics. For applied linguists of the psychological stream on one hand, autonomy in language learning is mainly a question of acquiring learning strategies which can be influenced by different social contexts. On the other hand, for critical applied linguists, context becomes the main focus in autonomy as it is shaped by unequal social relationships. These power relationships and students' local knowledges, cultures, and identities must be taken into consideration when learning foreign and/or second languages because they will impact on learners' investment in the target language.

Power in social power relationships and questions of identity are not only crucial in critical applied linguistics, but also in subaltern and post-colonial theories, the second part of the theoretical framework that will inform this study. Post-colonialism will guide my understanding of how Mexico's history, culture, and social context shape today's

social power relationships and how these are experienced in Indigenous and minority students' daily lives. It will also guide my understanding of how participants in this study perceive the context in which they live and study, a central point in critical language learning autonomy. As a result, the second part of the literature review will focus on subaltern and post-colonial theories that will help provide an understanding of the power relationships in relation to language acquisition and identities, which are also salient in post-colonialism. Hence, the concept of identity will match both parts of this literature review together. As the literature is also very intense in this field of research, I will narrow my scope here too. I will first review the South Asian School whose work has given crucial contributions to the field. Second, I will narrow the focus on the Latin American reformulation of post-colonial scholars and on the hybridization process which will help to analyze the specific question of identities in the Mexican globalized world (García Canclini, 1990).

1.2 Cultural studies, subaltern theories and post-colonialism

Post-colonial studies are part of the field of Cultural Studies grounded in critical theory. The field of post-colonialism refers to *subaltern* identities, a term taken from Gramsci (Hoare & Nowell Smith, 1999) which refers to persons or groups geographically, politically, and socially outside of the hegemonic structures of power which will be used in discussions of race, class, sexuality, gender, ethnicity, and religion.

Cultural Studies (CS) is a relatively new area of study first created in the School of Birmingham in England with Stuart Hall and Raymond Williams as founding fathers (Mato, 2000). After the department's closure in 2002, CS has then been recycled in the

United States (Picas Contreras, 2011). For CS, *culture* is not an object of study, but the lens through which the different objects of study are analyzed. Hence, CS is transdisciplinary; it is orientated to the critique of power, to intervention in order to build more social forms of life; it is self-reflective and it is contextually grounded (Mato, 2000). Hence, this research will be analyzed through a holistic lens of culture that allows the study of power relationships in Mexico in regard with minority students' EFL learning process.

Post-colonial theories differ from the anticolonial theories created after World War II. Anticolonial theories looked for the epistemological nature of the anticolonial discourse, whereas "post-colonial theories challenge the founding principles of modernity and rejects the explicit drawing of representations of Otherness" (Picas Contreras, 2011, p. 1). Post-colonial theorists mainly draw on critical reflections of Western hegemonic discourse. They question the colonial construct of the "Other" and its omnipresence in literature, history, and communication; they also critique the Eurocentric discourse which denies the identity of the "Other" in order to reaffirm its own identity, the "Self". Post-colonial studies critique the binary division between Self and Other created through colonialism, and focus on the (re)construction and the expression of former colonial states' own identities. In brief, it is a counter discourse of Western societies (Quijano, 2000).

Central to the English-speaking post-colonial movement is Said's (1978) influential critique of Western scholarship in his book *Orientalism*, which exposes the Western study of Eastern cultures. This book became one of the founding disciplinary texts for contemporary post-colonial theories (Young, 1995), especially in the Western

hemisphere. Said (1978) argues that Western writings about the East are permeated by hegemonic bias, or by perspectives of the dominant culture, and are therefore based on stereotypes. Western scholars appropriated the exploration, analysis and narratives of Eastern history, languages, and culture from the point of view that Europe is the norm of reference. Therefore, histories, languages, and cultures which do not belong to the Western imaginary are labeled as exotic or inscrutable. His critiques were followed by the academic recognition of subaltern groups (i.e., groups that offered new views on history from the perspective of colonized people, rather than from colonizers) (Spivak, 1988). In other words, postmodern thinking analyzes the link between knowledge and power, and post-colonialism situates this analysis in geographical spaces which have been marginalized by modernity. As a result, the first Subaltern study group was created in the 1980's in India with the leadership of Ranajit Guha, followed by the African and the Latin American Subaltern study groups. Even if I will not focus on the African Subaltern Study Group, I do not want to minimize the importance of their scholarly work. African scholars' contributions are specifically salient because on the one hand, they advocate the existence of an African way of thinking (Thiong'o, 1986) and an African philosophy in the occidental and Arabic writing systems (Mudimbe, 1988; Tiyambe Zeleza, 2008), and on the other hand, they reclaim an African history that goes beyond any writing system (i.e., the role of oral tradition in history) (Diouf, 2001; Mbembe, 2001). However, because I have to narrow my scope in this literature review, I will specifically focus on the South Asian Subaltern Study Group because of its influence in the English speaking world and then, on the Latin American one which will help to

analyze the Mexican context where *Una Apuesta de Futuro* students live, study and work.

1.2.1 South Asian post-colonialism: the South Asian Subaltern study group

Ranajit Guha (1988) has been the main leader of the South Asian group. Guha and his colleagues critique the Indo-British historiography on India and situate Indian peasants as the core subjects of an autonomous history, a history in agreement with Indian specificities and with its relation to modernity and capitalism. Guha is influenced by Foucault and therefore conceives subalternity based on economic, social, cultural, and linguistic power relationships. Yet, Spivak (1988) argues that subalterns cannot be heard and cannot exist based on Eurocentric relational categories. Even if Spivak is influenced by Foucault (and by Deleuze), she criticizes the Eurocentric perceptions of the South Asian Group and the lack of understanding they had concerning the heterogeneity of subaltern subjects (Picas Contreras, 2011). In her essay *Can Subalterns Speak?* (1988), Spivak argues that by speaking out and reclaiming a collective cultural identity, subalterns will reinscribe their subordinate position in society. Any subaltern consciousness and identity will 'objectify' the subalterns. A few years later, another central figure in post-colonial movements, Homi Bhabha, wrote *The Location of Culture* (1994) in which he explains the "liminal" or "interstitial" category that occupies a space "between" competing cultural traditions, historical periods, and critical methodologies. Bhabha (1994) examines the contradictions and ambivalences of colonial discourses that enable a capacity of resistance. He expresses this capacity through the theory of hybridity which offers the creation of a third space that goes beyond the binary

categories of Self and Other, a multiple identity. This hybrid space – or identity - is a space where it is possible to step outside the boundaries of national states, cultures, and languages. It is an intersection between several cultures, times, and spaces where differences and diversity can be more fully explored. It allows post-colonial subjects to leave the traditional bipolarity between dominant and dominated, Self and Others, and to identify themselves outside these colonial boundaries. This hybridity will be further analyzed in the Latin American context as a process, a process of "hybridization" which will be linked to Hall's analysis of identity (1996, 1997) perceived as "a dynamic, vital and emergent process located in the discursive spaces between individuals" (Hall, 2003, p. 19). Hence, in post-colonial theories, identity – and culture - are not clearly fixed and bounded; they are beliefs and principles which are not always coherent and which sometimes lack uniform meaning (Eisenhart, 2001).

Latin America has a long academic tradition in working on issues related to culture and power, even before the area of Culture Studies existed. Post-colonial analysis has been an important feature of Latin American intellectual life, specifically since the 1950s (Ashcroft, 1998). As stated by García Canclini (1996, p. 84) "I became involved in Cultural Studies before I realized this is what it was called" (Mato, 2000). Hence, the following part will draw on this tradition and will partly explain how it will be used to analyze the concrete case of the present study.

1.2.2   The Latin American reformulation

As previously mentioned, CS and the post-colonial discourse mainly exist in the English speaking world. It does not exist as such in Latin America. Even Latin America does not exist; the term Latin America is a social and a colonial construct. Latin America is not a

homogeneous identity; it is very diverse and heterogeneous with many different cultural imaginaries and languages. Even within Mexico, diversity presents itself through 62 Indigenous languages (INALI, 2007).

Most of the contemporary Latin American intellectuals are influenced by two major scholars, the Brazilian Paulo Freire, and to a smaller extent the Colombian Fals Borda (Mato, 2000). Freire's seminal book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, first published in 1968, focuses on two main points which will always reappear in Latin American writings about culture and power: (1) working *with* the oppressed or subalterns and not *for* them, and (2) making oppression the topic of reflection and critique which will engage subalterns in the struggle for their liberation.

The Colombian sociologist Fals Borda, focuses on Participatory Action Research in many different countries to articulate the production of knowledge with social change. He believes that every person and community has a self-knowledge that has to be taken as a key element in research and political work. From the perspective of this study, this self-knowledge will be taken as a key element for students' EFL learning process.

Since post-colonial discourse has been principally developed in an Anglophone elitist context, scholars such as Jorge Klor de Alva (1995), first banished post-colonialism in Latin America by stating that "Mexico is not another version of India" (Klor de Alva, 1995, p. 247). Additionally, as Chanady notes "English speaking post-colonial critics are faulted for ignoring Latin America in their work" (2008, p. 422) because English speaking intellectuals do not generally read in Spanish and/or Portuguese, and translations are very expensive. The fact is that globalization, as will be analyzed later,

speaks English. However, Latin American scholars have been exposed to intellectual production in colonial languages since colonial times which gives them generally a very broad perspective (Mato, 2000). This may be one of the few positive points of what Mignolo (1995) calls *coloniality of power*, as will be analyzed later.

In Mexico during the 1960's, the sociologists Pablo González Casanova (1963, 1965, 2006) and Rodolfo Stavenhagen (1963) developed the concept of *colonialismo interno* [Internal colonialism] which was originally defined as linked to the Spanish conquest where natives became part of the state of the colonizers, and then of the independent nation states. Today, this concept refers to Indigenous peoples' subjugation to the dominance of the elite. In 1973, Enrique Dussel became the architect of the *Philosophy of Liberation* which considered European philosophical thinking as oppressive since it posited the ontological question whether Indigenous peoples are or are not humans. Dussel then goes further and explains that by creating their own philosophy (i.e., a Latin American way of thinking), periphery countries can convert philosophy into an instrument of liberation. His work inspired many Third World struggles in the 1970's and 80's.

As a result, Dussel and many other Latin American scholars such as Quijano, Walsh, Coronil, Escobar, Mignolo, Castro Gómez, and Grosfoguel created the Latin American Subaltern Study Group in 1993 to re-examine the "concepts of pluralistic societies and the conditions of subalternity within […] societies", but from the Latin American perspective instead of the English speaking world perspective (Latin American Subaltern Studies Group, 1993, p. 110). It seems important at this stage to mention that the work of

most of these scholars is now published or translated in English and that it is, little by little, contributing to scholarly debate outside of the Spanish speaking world.

Hence, the post-colonial lens, as a window into the political nature of Mexico's context, will guide my understanding mainly through the eyes of Latin American scholars. Mignolo's (1995) notion of *colonial legacies* will explain how the modern Mexican world is shaped by its colonial past. In other words, colonial legacies refer to the relationship between the beginning and the present stage of the Latin American historical evolution. In Mignolo's (1995) own words, the "legacies of the Spanish empire in the Americas are what connect the 15th and 16th centuries with the present" (1995, p. viii). In this sense, colonial legacies connect English with the West, modernity, growth and education, and high cultural capital (i.e., English as a social asset that may promote social mobility) (Bourdieu, 1982/1991), whereas more than 60 Mexican Indigenous languages are linked to tradition, folklore, lack of education, and poverty. These colonial legacies show a strong connection between knowledge and power which are mutually constitutive. In other words, knowledge always outlines power, and power always redefines knowledge (Foucault, 1969, 1975). English therefore is not a neutral language and its political and historical foundation has to be analyzed.

The Latin American Subaltern Study Group disappeared later mainly due to organizational issues and a lack of external support. It was followed by the Latin American Modernity/Coloniality group (also MC group) in 2002 which is exploring the interrelation between coloniality (i.e., the ongoing colonial relationship in the former Spanish colonies) and modernity. The MC group aims not only to contribute to international academic knowledge production, but also to participate in the

transformation of society as a whole. This is where the MC group plays an important role because it suggests that other ways of thinking and other forms of knowledge are possible by developing "an original and heretical methodological framework able to go beyond European paradigms and to make the coloniality of power and of knowledge visible" (Picas Contreras, 2011, p. 23). For post-colonialists of the English speaking world, including the South Asian scholars, there is only one modernity which began during the British colonization period related to the 18th century Enlightenment period. Conversely, the MC group focuses on two different modernities; the first modernity related to the "discovery" of America in 1492, and the second modernity being related to the 18th century Enlightenment period. In fact, the Spanish colonization period predates the British colonization period by over 100 years.

The MC group perceives *modernity* as a global phenomenon which leads to a decontextualized social life, local context, and time and space distance relations (Walsh, 2007). The concept of *modernity* implies that knowledge production comes from the West, and revolves around the logic of order, centralization, and a hierarchical construction of power (Mignolo, 2005). Modernity in opposition to colonialism does not operate through conquest anymore, but "it imposes economic, social, cultural and linguistic norms" (Escobar, 2005, p. 29). Modernity implies a second concept already referred to earlier, called *coloniality of power* which makes reference to how the Spanish cultural colonization process attempted to eliminate the many forms of Indigenous knowledge and to replace them with more sought-after knowledge that was deemed more appropriate for civilizing purposes (Quijano, 2000). Coloniality of power supported the hegemony of European production of knowledge based on the hierarchical classification

of population created in the 16th century where taxonomies divided the world population into different races, assigning each one a fixed place within the social hierarchy (Carrillo Trueba, 2009). This taxonomy is the pillar on which Spain consolidated its dominance over its colonies which became a "scientific" legitimatizing of European colonial power (Castro Gómez, 2008).

Colonialism refers to the past, whereas coloniality refers to the fact that the colonial relationship still exists, that it persists on local and global levels, because human relationships continue to be based on racial hierarchies (Quijano, 2000). Languages are part of this hierarchical order with English positioned at the top. This is the reason why the MC group also publishes in English today, a language without which the group could unfortunately not aspire to participate in the international dissemination of knowledge production. Hence, *modernity* and *coloniality* also privilege Western thinking patterns and deny the possibility that other forms of knowledge can come from other sources, countries, and languages. According to the MC group, this is the reason why Indigenous knowledges and languages are not recognized and are referred to as folklore, and why English is overvalued nearly everywhere.

At this point, it is important to link modernity and coloniality with Phillipson's theory of linguistic imperialism (1992, 2009) because English became part of Mexico's linguistic norm and clearly expresses coloniality (i.e., an ongoing colonial, and therefore imperial, relationship between center and periphery countries). According to Phillipson, "linguistic imperialism permeates all types of imperialism" (1992, p. 53); first, because language is a medium for transmitting ideas where English became the shared code of globalization, a language that comes from center countries; second, because English linguistic

imperialism dovetails with any type of imperialism such as culture, communication, economics and others (Phillipson, 1992). Linguistic imperialism analyzes the unequal relationship between center and periphery nations as the modernity/coloniality framework analyzes the unequal relationship between center and peripheries as far as knowledge is concerned. Mexico belongs to the periphery countries or poor underdeveloped nations where knowledge is often imported from center countries and where knowledge is predominantly produced in English. As a result, Mexico clearly represents English linguistic imperialism because it has been directly or indirectly imposed as a dominant language, and it "is asserted and maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 47). English linguistic imperialism is, according to Phillipson, "a sub-type of linguicism", a term coined by Skutnabb-Kangas (1988) because it refers "to ideologies and structures where language is the means for effecting and maintaining an unequal allocation of power and resources." (Phillipson, 1992, p. 55). Hence, linguicism and linguistic imperialism are part of Mexico's reality because there is an unequal and ongoing power relationship between Mexico and the West, and mostly between Mexico and the United States.

According to Foucault (1969), discourse mediates the exercise of dominant systems of power and knowledge. This is the reason why the discourse of racial purity became the first great "discourse" of the modern world which makes *coloniality* a constituent of *modernity*, or in other words, today's modernity is shaped by its colonial legacy. Hence, Latin America's modernity has been provided through colonialism, a situation that still continues today (Escobar, 2002). At that time, the discourse of racial purity was related to

Spanish, because Spain was the locus of colonial power. Today, the discourse of modernity in Mexico is related to English because the locus transitioned to the United States and to a new discourse of coloniality.

Both English speaking post-colonial scholars (including the South Asian Group) and the MC group agree on the fact that "coloniality is not the past of modernity; it is simply its other face" (Castro Gómez, 2008, p. 283) because the construct of a discourse socially incorporated through colonial legacies, made European colonialism possible. English speaking post-colonial scholars, and the MC group only differ in time. For Said (1978), this discourse is called Orientalism, whereas for the MC group it is called Occidentalism. According to the MC group, Said (1978) did not see that there are two modernities as explained above (Castro Gómez, 2008). Hence, according to Mignolo, "without Occidentalism, there is no Orientalism" (Delgado, Romero & Mignolo, 2000, p. 28). Nevertheless, both Orientalism and Occidentalism are cultural imaginaries. They are communities that are socially constructed through narratives, myths, symbols, rituals, and collective memories, and imagined by people who see themselves as part of that group; they are not only ideologies, but also structures of thought and action which lead to certain ways of life, a style of life still visible today. These imaginaries will also be visible in the narratives on the participants of this study.

In the case of Mexico, even if the ethno-racial hierarchy implemented during Spanish colonization has been officially over since the Declaration of Independence in 1821, "we have maintained de jure and de facto structures that guarantee a caste-like society" (Hernández Zamora, 2010, p. 21). Because the racial hierarchy was founded on an ontological division, it also legitimated the geopolitical division of the world (East/West

and North/South) which persists in contemporary times. In this geopolitical division, the West is the active originator of knowledge characterized by rationality, abstract thought, discipline, creativity, and science, and is generally disseminated through the English language (Phillipson, 1992, 2009). The publications of the MC group represent a clear example of this dissemination. The rest of the world is a site of reception which has to welcome the progress and knowledge from the West. Coloniality of power therefore was about making the Indians "naturalize the European cultural imaginary as the only way of relating to nature, the social world, and their own subjectivity" (Castro Gómez, 2008, p. 281). After years of colonization, this imaginary was shared by colonizers and the colonized, which still seems to be a part of the Mexican social legacy, what González Casanova (1963, 1965, 2006) and Stavenhagen (1963) call *internal colonialism*. In order to partly overcome this coloniality of power by disseminating another cultural imaginary different from the European one, and to contribute to international academic knowledge production, the MC group had to decide to publish in English.

In summary, all subaltern or post-colonial study groups (i.e., the African, the South Asian and the Latin American) have several main points in common: (1) to place subaltern groups as core subjects; (2) to write an autonomous history from the perspective of the core subjects; (3) to analyze the relationship between the local and the global modernity in each context, and (4) to analyze the economic, social, cultural, and linguistic power relationships. The core topic of all these research lines is strongly influenced by the question of identity. As expressed earlier in the critical applied linguistic part of the literature review, identity cannot be perceived anymore as a static and unidirectional

body of knowledge. Identity is not only an issue in Anglophone post-colonial states, but generally speaking in all post-colonial countries where the question of national identity has always been salient after achieving Independence. After Independence, the newly created states generally followed monolingual nation state ideologies. In other words, nation states imposed the ideas of one nation, one language, one culture to reaffirm their differences with the former colonizer. In nation states, culture and identity became fixed and bounded. However, in a globalized world, they can no longer be defined homogeneously.

As a result, Hall's (1996) definition of identity embraces the idea of subjective, multiple identities that do not identify one absolute truth. Identity from this perspective is also a site of struggle and negotiation (Weedon, 1997; Norton, 2000). As expressed earlier, Mexico has always been a multicultural country which places "identity" at the forefront of academic and literary narratives. Specifically in the case of this study, UAF student participants move from one identity to the other; they live in between their local, national, and global identities as will be explained in the contextual part of this work. Hence, it becomes salient to analyze this constant move, a move that may create "happy hybridities", but also hybridities made of "contradictions and conflicts", as mentioned by García Canclini (1990) which might influence UAF students' EFL learning process. It is certainly possible to draw parallels between Homi Bhabha (1994) and García Canclini's perceptions of hybridity. For both, hybridity is "a moment or a space of negotiation, resistance, and incorporation of elements of the metropolitan culture which are reshaped and redefined by the peripheral culture" (Dapia, 2000, p. 20). However, García Canclini focuses on the creation of a new material form (or a new subject) which involves a

negotiation with the old form – like a musical fusion that creates a new musical genre, whereas Bhabha's hybridity operates in the "in between" space which is still carried by the dominant culture. In other words, Bhabha's perspective does focus on the creation of a liminal hybrid subject, whereas García Canclini expands on the creation of 'authentic' or 'original' cultural products (1990, p. 21). Additionally, to overcome coloniality of knowledge and to analyze participants' context from the Latin American cultural tradition, I will use García Canclini's (1990), and not Bhabha's, theoretical concept (i.e., the process of hybridization). This process will allow me to analyze at what moment the blending of identities may be productive (i.e., when the blending will allow students to invest in EFL) and when conflicts cannot be resolved because of the incompatibility of some practices.

This new 'original' cultural subject creation occurs within a specific context. As a result, the process of hybridization cannot be defined without defining globalization and then glocalization, all three being interdependent with each other.

1.2.3   Globalization, glocalization and hybridization

Both terms hybridization and globalization have to be analyzed in relation and in opposition to each other, because for student participants English represents modernity and globalization, as shown later in the findings. Additionally, by learning English UAF students redefine their identities by "mixing" the different worlds that surround them; they become hybrids who remain constantly in motion.

The term globalization is rich in definitions. For the purpose of this work I will follow García Canclini's (2000) definition, influenced by Giddens (1996), which states that the

globalization of financial and communication markets in the second half of the 20th century, is the result of a process of economic and technical changes that began five centuries ago. Globalization is not a synonym of internationalization, but rather the result of it. Internationalization (i.e., the geographical expansion of economic activities), began in the 16th century with European navigation to and from America, Asia, and Africa. It was followed by the different colonization processes and the expansion of Christianity. Transnationalization describes the following phase in the first half of the 20th century, with the development of multinational businesses whose economic power exceeded that of nation states. Hence, globalization here is the result of internationalization and transnationalization (García Canclini, 2000). Globalization is not a fixed and resolved state with clear characteristics; it is a process that leads to economic and technical changes as expressed earlier, such as the delocalization of the production of consumer goods, the creation of an "international popular culture" (Ortiz, 1995), high competition, low costs, labour flexibilization, unemployment, migrations, and transnational connections above all others. Globalization is neither a synonym for cultural homogenization nor an antonym for local cultures. Globalization is not a process of economic or cultural homogenization, but rather a process of reorganization of differences and inequalities without abolishing them. Hence, globalization leads to glocalization, a term borrowed from the Japanese business world where global products are to be adapted to local specificities in order to meet the taste of local cultures. According to Robertson (1995) who first introduced the term in social science, glocalization blurs the boundaries between the global and the local. Both become interdependent because local cultures are ones that assign meaning to global influences.

Local cultures select, process, and consume global influences according to their local needs. As a result, English as a global language may also become glocalized if used in local boundaries.

Hence, for García Canclini (1990), hybridity, a term borrowed from biology, is also a process of hybridization through which it is possible to understand identities in times of globalization and glocalization wherein blurred identities with unclear boundaries between local, national, and global structures emerge. Hence, García Canclini (2005) defines the process as a sociocultural process "in which discrete structures or practices, previously existing in separate form, are combined to generate new structures, objects and practices" (p. XXV).

Structures and practices are discrete because they are also the result of prior hybridizations. In Mexico, the population has been mixed with the West since colonization. However, even before colonization by Spain, many different cultures shared the same territory and became mixed. Hence, there are no pure points of origin. Consequently, hybridization as a process not only combines premixed structures or practices, but also tries to reconvert or to adapt them in order to reinsert them into new contextual circumstances and conditions. Therefore, according to García Canclini (2000), the focus of analysis is not hybridity in itself (i.e., the result), but the different processes through which the reconversion can be achieved. Hybridization can be an unplanned process, a result of migration, tourism, or academic, economic or communicational exchanges, but it can also be an intentional creative process, a dynamic discursive process through which groups and/or individuals reflexively position themselves or are positioned by others (Davies & Harré, 1990). García Canclini builds on a Latin American

intellectual tradition that emphasizes the importance of the local and how it can be 'inserted' in the global to construct a new 'material' form. Hence, the notion of hybridity as a process, or hybridization, clearly links post-colonialism to critical applied linguistics in that subjects use language to position themselves, to position others and to be positioned by others in society.

As a result, hybridization puts 'authentic' or 'pure' identities into perspective. Identities are not perceived as something fixed anymore, but as something in process, always under construction that depends on its positioning in a specific historical and cultural context. As a consequence, it is important in this context first, not to focus on dual identities rooted in colonial times, such as Indigenous and non-Indigenous, and second, not to focus on the danger of local identities disappearing. The notion of hybridization follows Hall's (1996, 1997) definition of identities where identity becomes a process of identity formation and where groups or individuals can be positioned by others or can position themselves within the narrative of the past (Davies & Harré, 1990). Hence, participants' narratives will deal with intersections and transactions between different cultures and languages. Their stories will enable multiculturalism (i.e., liberal multiculturalism as defined by Kubota (2004) earlier in the literature review) to avoid segregation and switch to interculturalism, generally defined in Latin America as the cultural and political recognition of native populations (Hernández Reyna, 2007).

In summary, the South-Asian post-colonial lens on one hand, based on Guha (1988), Spivak (1988) and Bhabha (1994), and more specifically the Latin American post-

colonial lens with the modernity/coloniality group on the other, will guide my understanding on examining whether and how UPAEP minority students construct their respective identities in the EFL classroom, and how their language learning investment may operate within a framework of power and hegemony inherited from Mexico's colonial past. Mignolo (2000, 2005, 2008) and García Canclini (1990, 2000) will be the main architects who will shape how these potential constructs (i.e. identity and investment in EFL learning) may be framed by students' incorporated colonial legacy and by notions such as modernity, coloniality of power and hybridization. Hence, the post-colonial lens will first guide my understanding of minority students' lives by bringing to the surface potential hierarchies as well as dominations, oppositions, inconsistencies, and contradictions within their respective processes of identity formation. Second, post-colonialism will claim for language learning autonomy not to understand "learners as a bundle of psychological reflexes", but will analyze how learners negotiate their hybrid identities in competing discourses within a socio-historical context and how this influences their practice of EFL learning (Canagarajah, 2004).

To understand how students negotiate their hybrid identities and to determine if their quest is a struggle between the local cultures, the national Mexican dominant cultures, and the global forces of English, it is imperative to examine both the Mexican socio-linguistic context, and students' immediate context in the UPAEP-UAF program. The following part will focus on both the macro and micro contexts of my study.

Chapter 2

2   Context of the study

This chapter will focus on UPAEP Indigenous students' context. It will begin with the broad macro context by briefly analyzing Mexico's historical evolution and its contemporary linguistic situation. Then, the description will zoom into the micro context by presenting a case in point (i.e., the UPAEP university, the program "A wager with the future", and finally UPAEP's Language Department). This contextual part aims to situate UPAEP Indigenous and minority students not only in their wider context, but also within their daily interactions at the university. As shown in the literature review, situating students in their context is essential for post-colonial and critical applied theories. It also serves as a thick description because the research is a critical ethnographic study (Geertz, 1973), as will be examined later in the methodology.

2.1   Macro context

2.1.1   Historical background

2.1.1.1   Historical evolution

Since pre-Hispanic times, Mexico has been a multilingual country. Numbers vary from one source to the other, but most historians agree that there were over 100 languages spoken before the Spaniards arrived (Brice Heath, 1986). During the 15th century, the Aztec empire was conqueror and colonizer. Its supremacy spread from the Gulf of Mexico to the Pacific Ocean (Terborg, Landa & Moore, 2006). During this time, Nahuatl became the lingua franca and the usual language of communication among subjugated

territories. It also became the language of privilege, as it was used by the elites of the Aztec empire (Brice Heath, 1986). In other words, Nahuatl was to Mexico what Latin was to Europe at that time: the language of science, arts, and education of the elite. As a dominant language, Nahuatl caused strained power relations with minority languages at that time because the Aztec empire imposed its language on the dominated territories. In other words, language loss in Mexico began during the Aztec dominance (Garza Cuarón & Lastra, 1991).

During the colonial period, Indigenous peoples became rapidly aware that speaking Spanish would help them to defend their rights, and open up a whole new range of opportunities. Those who remained monolingual could not negotiate with the Spaniards (Lopez Arellano, 1983). During that time, Nahuatl and subsequently Spanish played the role of instrumental languages (Pellicer, 1997). In 1821, when the Mexican independence was signed, the newly formed government led by *mestizos* who had a more European vision of the world, saw language diversity as a political problem; it was a great danger to the unification of power. The solution to the problem would be Hispanization, a process in which assimilation to the dominant language was mandatory, in order to level or reduce diversity by imposing Spanish as a common leveller (Baker, 2001). The new *mestizo* identity, a national project known as *mestizaje*, would help to differentiate Mexico from Spain by mixing European culture with the glorious past of the Aztec empire. Since then, Mexico has adhered to a monolingual and monocultural ideology (i.e., one nation, one language, one identity) that always looks at the West as an example to be followed (i.e., referred to as coloniality in the literature review).

Even though the first Mexican Constitution declared equal rights for all Mexicans in 1824, Indigenous peoples without any European origins were considered to be backward, ignorant, and barbaric (Oehmichen, 2007). Mexico followed the civilizing mission of the colonial world to enter into "modernity". The second modernity, as previously noted in the literature review by Mignolo (2000), was introduced during the European Enlightenment period and the French Revolution which entrenched the secular concept of reason. Tradition, such as Indigenous cultures and languages, became the enemy of modernity. Indigenous peoples, who resisted colonization, such as the Lacandons for example, were treated as savages, and those who acquiesced, were perceived as having some kind of reasoning (Carillo Trueba, 2009). Based on the concept of reason, Spaniards categorized the mixed population of New Spain through the previously mentioned taxonomies. This categorization became "scientifically objective" through Buffon's essay *Varieties of the Human Species* written in 1749. This has been especially criticized by Todorov (1993) as being the primordial paradigm of modern racism. Carillo Trueba (2009) interprets Darwin's "theory of natural selection" (1859) as offering an additional strong instrument for scientific racism by arguing the superiority of the white "race". Indigenous peoples had to be civilized, and therefore educated in Spanish. If not, Mexico would not be able to enter into the modern world. As expressed by Touraine (1992), modernity replaced custom with reason, and rational thinking being one of the main characteristics of modernity. Even today, Indigenous peoples in Mexico often call white people "hombres de razón" (reasonable people). Technically, racism does not exist in Mexico because it is a multicultural country where it is taboo to speak about racism or, as expressed by Gall (2004), "Anti-Indigenous racism in Mexico has been buried for

decades behind the myth of *mestizaje*. However, it is a definite phenomenon with an enormous social importance" (p. 221). Racism in Mexico, according to Mexican critical scholars, is a socio historical construction originally based on the aforementioned taxonomies (Gómez Izquierdo & Sánchez Díaz de Rivera, 2011; Gall, 2004; Carrillo Trueba, 2009). Yet, the Mexican nation state has been founded on the political doctrine of *mestizaje* (i.e., the superiority of a mixed race population) to create the national identity. National resources, such as cultural policies and education, were to follow the official doctrine of *mestizaje* (Stavenhagen, 1994). From this perspective, *mestizaje* institutionalized the difference between "we" and "they" and was followed by social and racial exclusion, internal colonialism, and racism. Indigenous people had to be educated and mixed with "white" people to "whiten the dark skinned population" (Gómez Izquierdo & Sánchez Díaz de Rivera, 2011, p. 20). Further, education was used to homogenize Mexico's diverse population where Spanish had to be the official language that represented the national *mestizo* identity.

2.1.1.2   Spanish as a symbolic power towards assimilation

The civilizing mission of the second modernity gave birth to Mexican "bilingual education", which today is called Bilingual Intercultural Education (Martinez Casas, 2006). Mexico's first model was to immerse children directly into the *mestizo* identity through Spanish, a language they did not understand, and that had no meaning for them. This immersion form relates to Baker's (2001) weakest form of bilingual education, based on the idea of language as a problem, and not as a right (Ruíz, 1984). Even though the objectives of the Mexican Bilingual Intercultural Education have changed over the years, Spanish has been, and still is a tool of subjugation used to provide common

attitudes, aims, and values (Flores Farfán, 2011; Despagne, 2013a). The Spanish language was to be represented as the symbolic power of the unique national civilized and modern identity. By the end of the 19th century, Mexico's bilingual school programs resulted in assimilation towards Spanish and the *mestizo* identity, making Spanish the predominant language in the cities, with most rural communities remaining monolingual in their native language (Lopez Arellano, 1983). After World War II, the civilizing mission was relegated to a secondary place not only in Latin America, but in all the former colonies as development and modernization, known today as globalization (i.e., efficiency and expanding markets), dominated (Mignolo, 2008). These missions relocated knowledge, power, and languages worldwide. In Mexico, colonial languages such as Spanish, French and English, in that order, are given hegemonic power in the creation of knowledge and cultures of scholarship (Mignolo, 2000). According to Mendieta, Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas (2006), research written in languages other than English and/or by researchers outside the inner English language circle countries is downplayed on a global level. This is one of the MC groups' main claims as noted in the literature review. Research in Latin American post-colonialism has not been taken into account by English speaking post-colonialists because it has been mainly written in Spanish, a language with no power in the academic realm. As matter of fact, the Bologna Declaration signed in 1999 by 29 European countries to reform higher education and achieve common standards, favours the supremacy of the English language even more than Western academia (Phillipson, 2003). The same phenomena exists in Mexico. Languages are therefore perceived differently according to their cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1982/1991), in other words, according to their power and status within the

socio- linguistic context. Hence, the following part on Mexico's macro context will draw on its socio-linguistic situation, and how all the languages used in Mexico are generally perceived.

2.1.2   Mexico as a multilingual and multicultural country

Since January 1992, the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico has officially recognized that "the Mexican nation has a pluricultural composition, originally sustained by its Indigenous populations"[9]. Even though this amendment to the Constitution is important, it forgot part of Mexico's history and multiculturalism. Mexico has always been multicultural, even before the Spanish conquest. During the 16th century, when both America and Africa were colonized and when the New World began to suffer under workforce shortage, African people were also brought to Mexico as slaves. This is Mexico's "third root", a root that has often been forgotten in the official discourse (Rodríguez, 1999). The nation-state's two pillars were, and still are, Mestizos and Indigenous. Black people simply did not exist and are still missing in Mexico's official history even though their presence is substantial in the southern state of Oaxaca. This example shows the kind of liberal multiculturalism inherent to the Mexican state, a multiculturalism that does not integrate all of Mexico's diverse populations, and that does not question unequal power relationships between the different cultures. Mexico's aim is to assimilate the diverse populations to one national identity, and one national language (i.e., Spanish) (Bertely, 2003).

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[9] Official Journal of the Mexican Federation, "Decree that adds article 4 to the Political Constitution of the United States of Mexico", Mexico City, January 28, 1992.

2.1.2.1   Spanish

Spanish is Mexico's national language, which was influenced by Nahuatl, the language of the former Aztec empire. Spanish has been integrated in the creation of the Mexican identity and has been used, as already mentioned, to ensure uniformity throughout the nation. Nahuatl loanwords are generally lexical loanwords from different semantic fields in relation to everyday life (flora, fauna, gastronomy, construction, health, toys and others), such as *papalote*, called *cometa* in Spanish from Spain, and kite in English. Officially, these loanwords are called *Nahuatlismos* and are an object of study from the end of the XIXth century (León Portilla, 1981). They mark the difference between Mexican Spanish and other varieties of Spanish, especially with the Spanish of Spain, by showing the traces of Mexican identity (i.e., the blending between Spanish and Indigenous cultures). Attention has to be called to the fact that the semantic units of these loanwords only reflect everyday life and not "modern" knowledge production which generally happens in Spanish (or English).

2.1.2.2   Indigenous languages

Besides Spanish, Mexico is home to more than 60 Indigenous languages spoken by Mexican Indigenous peoples. It is difficult to get an exact number of Mexico's Indigenous languages and people because of the politics of self-identification as a minority. This makes demolinguistic figures unreliable, and is as difficult as trying to estimate the exact number of Kurds in Turkey (Taylor & Skutnabb-Kangas, 2009) for example. If we take Mexican official sources as a reference, Mexico's National Institute for Indigenous Languages (INALI) (2007) does not count the number of languages, but regroups them in 11 linguistic families and sub-divides them further into 68 linguistic

groups. Mexico's National Institute for Statistics, Geography and Informatics (INEGI) estimated that in 2000, 7.1% of the Mexican population spoke an Indigenous language, whereas the National Board of Population (CONAPO, 2005) contends that 13.1% of the Mexican population is Indigenous. This percentage is based on people's own self-identification as Indigenous peoples, whether they speak an Indigenous language or not. In other words, 13.1% of Mexico's population is Indigenous, but 6% of them do not speak their native language anymore. Language loss is a great danger not only in Mexico where 27 % of the Indigenous languages are endangered (Flores, 2008), but also worldwide (Skutnabb Kangas & Phillipson, 2008). Mexico still follows a monolingual ethos and stigmatizes non Western languages and cultures. It institutionalizes monolingual and monocultural ideologies (i.e., Spanish as the only language and *mestizo* as the only culture in Mexico). This is despite the fact that the Mexican government officially published the General Law of Linguistic Rights for Indigenous peoples in 2003, a law that recognizes Indigenous languages as official languages, on the same level as Spanish (Flores Farfán, 2011). Hence, Mexico has been an officially multilingual state. This represents one of the major paradoxes in Mexico's linguistic policy. On one hand, it advocates for linguistic and cultural plurality, and on the other hand it promotes a monolingual ideology by stating that Spanish unifies the Mexican state and by assimilating Indigenous peoples to Spanish and to the unique *mestizo* identity (Pellicer, 1997). The absence of Indigenous population during the festivities of the bicentenary of Mexican Independence in 2010 gained notoriety. Today, Indigenous languages are still perceived by Mexicans in a deceptive way as being "dialects" (i.e., something that does

not reach the level of a real language). The representation of languages as dialects is a direct result of colonialism (Pennycook, 1998; Flores Farfán, 2010).

2.1.2.3   English

It is very difficult to find institutions that offer Indigenous language classes whereas English language classes are found on nearly every street corner (Despagne, 2010). English is today what Spanish was during the colonial period, the main cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1982/1991) and the main instrumental language (i.e., the language seen as having the highest practical value from which Mexicans can benefit the most) (Lambert, 1974). Through English, Mexicans hope to get better paid jobs, a higher social status, and the chance to travel, study or live abroad. Mexico belongs to the periphery countries or poor underdeveloped nations according to Galtung's (1971) "Structural Theory of Imperialism", which analyzes the unequal relationship between center and periphery nations (Galtung, 1971; Phillipson, 1992). Mexico also belongs to the expanding circle of English speaking countries, where English has neither a historical nor a governmental role, but is widely used as a foreign/second language (Kachru, 1986).

English has been inserting itself in the Mexican sociolinguistic context specifically with an increasing potency since December 1994 when the government signed NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement, which allowed preferential trade between Mexico, the United States and Canada. This agreement also represented Mexico's official entry into "modernity", as referred to in the literature review. A free trade agreement with two major Western English speaking economies positioned Mexico as a modern country as modernity comes from the West (Escobar, 2005). English in Mexico, like anywhere else, cannot be detached from its original context. It is neither a neutral nor a transparent

code, because of its proximity to the United States, and because the United States is Mexico's most important economic and political partner. Both countries have a common border of 3141 kilometres and a long, controversial history – including the war of 1846-1848 when Mexico lost over 50% of its territory to the United States. Today, nearly 10.2 million Mexicans born in Mexico live in the United States, and between the years 2000 and 2004, around 400 000 Mexicans emigrated to the United States each year (Zúñiga Herrera, 2005). The money that Mexican workers living in the United States send to their families in Mexico, called "remesas", represents the country's second source of income after oil production. Emigration to the United States is often the sole solution to many economic problems of Mexican families.

The use of English in everyday life in Mexico has also increased since the NAFTA agreement. English is used in the media such as TV, newspapers, advertisements, and business shop windows (Baumgardner, 2006). Mexican media uses many English loanwords integrated into the Spanish language (McClure & Mir, 1995). Over 50% of all cable and satellite programs are in English and broadcast by programs from the United States, such as CNN, History Channel, or ESPN. Even if these programs are translated into Spanish, the vision of the world remains that of the United States, a clear effect of cultural imperialism as it imposes only one unique vision of the world as being the right one (Despagne, 2010).

Education is another context where English becomes more powerful every day. In education, priority is given to English everywhere, a clear effect of linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988) and of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992). Both educational systems in Mexico, the free public school system and the private school system, have to follow

the guidelines of the Education Ministry (SEP - Secretaría de Educación Pública). On the one hand, English in the public system has been mandatory since 2009 from grade one, but is generally poorly taught because English teachers lack any specific language training. No other language is imposed as mandatory. Conversely, claims of English instruction are marketing strategies for private schools and universities. These private institutions range from highly elite ones, such as the American, French or German schools that respond to the Mexican elite's interest in gaining cosmopolitan international education, to low level institutions which use English to attract clientele.

At the university level, linguistic imperialism is even greater because the acquisition of English seems even more important to future success. It is mandatory to reach an advanced level of English at every university. Many private universities make it obligatory for students to take the TOEFL exam as a condition for getting their final degree (Despagne, 2010). This is also the case at the UPAEP. What seems most important at the university level is the internationalization of higher education. All universities focus on international alliances, networks, joint master and PhD programs, student and teacher exchange, and international research programs mainly with universities in Western countries, evidence for another expression of coloniality (Mignolo, 2005). As "internationalization" is a key catchphrase and strategy in universities' curricula, English is gaining importance in academic work. Additionally, it is interesting to observe that 64% of all the grants that Mexico's National Council for Science and Technology supported in 2002 went to English speaking countries (i.e., the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada). English teaching positions are in high demand and the yearly MEXTESOL conference, the Mexican affiliate of TESOL

(Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages) is becoming increasingly important. The 2006 convention in Guanajuato for example, received over 200 representatives from all over Mexico and speakers from the United States, the United Kingdom and Canada (Wilson, 2006). In the labour market, English is also becoming a mandatory requirement, even though it might not be used on the job. English is often only used to rule out potential candidates.

2.1.3   Perceptions and attitudes towards languages

The Mexican sociolinguistic context explained above leads to different perceptions and attitudes to languages, which have to be taken into account in second language acquisition (Perrefort, 1996; Castellotti & Moore, 2002). This context is important because "the notion of perception refers to a group of attitudes and ideas, even stereotypes that the person conveys in an unconscious way which affects the students' learning process" (Barbot & Camatarri, 1999, p. 58). Additionally, attitudes depend on the "individual's perception of ethnolinguistic reality" which means that a learner's "behaviour as a member of a group and with respect to other groups, will vary according to his beliefs about the linguistic situation; and language learning is a crucial aspect of that behaviour" (Riley, 1989, p. 67).

In Mexico, student perceptions of English have been examined in two studies, one conducted in Mexico's biggest public university, the UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México), and the other at the UPAEP in Puebla.

The first study was conducted by Chasan and Ryan (1995) with 370 UNAM students. The study shows that students' perceptions of English are mainly negative because of

North American interventions in other countries, and because of the discrimination that Mexican immigrant workers face in the United States.

The second study was conducted by myself at the UPAEP with 300 mixed beginner students of EFL (Despagne, 2008). Their ethnic affiliation was not required. This study showed that an average of 61% of the 300 students held negative perceptions of English because they consciously or unconsciously linked English to economic, political, and socio cultural problems between United States and Mexico. Yet, results of this study also showed that even though a high percentage of their perceptions were negative, 90% of the students felt that English was extremely important for their professional development. Until now, no study has been conducted on minority people's (Indigenous and/or poor people) perceptions of English.

In summary, Mexico's socio-linguistic context revolves around three groups of languages. The first group consists of more than 60 Indigenous languages, the second is Spanish as the national representation of the "unique" Mexican identity, and the third is English as the main foreign language. If we imagine language perceptions on a scale, at the lower end we would have Indigenous languages which are, as mentioned above, not valued at all. Spanish would be represented in the middle of the scale, as it is the national language that unifies all Mexicans and that represents the nation-state. It also differentiates itself and marks its own identity through the *Nahuatlismos* (i.e., loanwords from Nahuatl) incorporated into the Spanish variety from Mexico. At the higher end of the scale there is English, the global language that nearly every Mexican wants to learn, but towards which Mexicans generally have a strong love/hate relationship (Rangel, 1977; Despagne, 2010) as it represents linguistic and cultural imperialism (Phillipson,

1992, 2009) and invasion (Kachru, 1986; McArthur, 1998; Chasan & Ryan, 1995). Language vitality in Mexico legitimates colonial linguistic hierarchies, putting Spanish and English at the forefront (Calvet, 1974; Phillipson, 2002).

These perceptions are part of the reality of the group of Indigenous students who will be participants in this study. They all have to study English as part of their undergraduate studies at the UPAEP. As mentioned at the beginning of this dissertation, they all struggle in EFL classes and their final results are lower than those of UPAEP mainstream students (i.e., students who do not belong to the UAF group of minority students). The following pages will explain a case in point. In other words, these pages will explain the purpose and rationale of the UAF program "A wager with the future", and the main processes UAF students have to follow in the institution. Hence, the following pages will first contextualize the research through a short description of the university in the study; second, they will present the UAF program where minority students are enrolled; and third, they will draw on the main tenets of the Language Department where EFL classes take place.

2.2   Micro context: a case in point

2.2.1   The UPAEP University

The UPAEP was created as a result of the social and political turmoil of the late sixties. During that time, the BUAP, Puebla's most prestigious public university (Benemérita Universidad Autónoma de Puebla) was divided between conservative and liberal wings. The conservative wing separated itself in 1973 amid a hostile atmosphere and created the UPAEP which is the focus of this study. The newly created university based itself upon a

humanistic and Catholic vision (Louvier Calderón, 2006). At the beginning of its

creation, university teachers who supported the university's values worked for free

because the institution had no money. Today, the UPAEP has two different university

campuses, one in Puebla, and another one in Tehuacán. Since 2010, the UPAEP has also

been integrated as a system. In other words, this system combines nine high schools and

two university campuses that follow the same educational model, a model based on

flexible pedagogy that favours situated and contextualized learning processes. The

UPAEP system also follows the new educational model of the Mexican Ministry of

Education (i.e., an educational model based on the development of competencies for

lifelong learning) which focuses on meaningful learning and situated cognition.

Both university campuses have more than 250 full-time professors, 500 part-time

teachers, over 9,500 undergraduate students, and 3,000 graduate students (Miranda,

2011). Its main campus in Puebla is where the study of this dissertation takes place. It is

an urban institution located in one of Puebla's oldest neighbourhoods and offers 43

different undergraduate programs and more than 50 graduate programs as well as several

different professional development courses (UPAEP, 2011a). The UPAEP is a private

institution which generally receives students from middle-class families. Since 2006, the

UPAEP has received the official award from SEP every year, Mexico's Ministry of

Education, as being an "Institution of Academic Excellence" because 88% of enrolled

UPAEP students study in official accredited undergraduate levels. In 2003, the university

defined a strategic vision that should be attained in 2015. The third of the five main

strategies of this vision, claims for "Connections and alliances with the local and the

global society" (UPAEP, 2011b). This is exactly where the UAF program and the

Language Department fit in. The UAF program represents local connections and alliances while the Language Department represents global connections and alliances.

2.2.2   The program "A wager with the future"

General description and objectives

The program *Una Apuesta de Futuro* (UAF) (A wager with the future) is the answer UPAEP is giving to fight educational inequality in Mexico where an average of 45% of young middle-class people between 19 and 23 who are living in cities get access to higher education versus 3% of those living in rural areas, and only 1% of Indigenous peoples achieve access to higher education (SEP, 2001, p. 186; Schmelkes, 2006). Additionally, rural communities in the State of Puebla only rely on survival economies that typically lead to emigration of young productive people to the cities or to the United States. In this sense, the principal objective of the UAF program is to promote the development of the so called micro regions (i.e., the official identification of highly marginalized geographical and social spaces in rural regions) with a high percentage of Indigenous populations in need of basic infrastructure (SEDESOL, 2011). Hence, the UAF program aims to strengthen social organizations and businesses that work in the micro regions of the State of Puebla. Both the social organizations and businesses work with nongovernmental associations. The program invests in the professional education of young people who already work in these mentioned social organizations, and who are committed to the development of their respective micro regions. By accepting a UAF scholarship, students are committed to going back to their communities after finishing their studies for a minimum of two years and using their knowledge to develop their communities. Officially, the core focus of the UAF program is interculturality, through

which it aims to enrich students who participate in the UAF program, the whole university community, and the respective micro regions (UPAEP, 2007). Interculturality however, is still an objective that has not yet been achieved because there is no knowledge exchange between UAF Indigenous students and the rest of the university population. Hence, the UPAEP seems to follow Díaz Polanco's (2006) concept of "ethnophagy", that is, a process through which UPAEP's dominant culture tries to subsume UAF Indigenous students' cultures, mostly by imposing national *mestizo* standards over ethnic ones. Up to the present, it seems that the UPAEP follows the same cultural assimilation process as followed by the Ministry of Education in Indigenous education all over the country (Despagne, 2013a).

However, the UAF program is interesting as it has offered scholarships since 2007 that generally cover 100% of students' tuition, lodging and food expenses during their undergraduate studies. No other university in Mexico offers such scholarships. During this time, students receive ongoing support from the UAF team (social workers, educators, and psychologists) and academic tutors. However, all the students have to self-manage their lives as university students in the new urban environment. Because they all live together in five houses, they have to manage the houses' expenses for example. The program has an average annual cost of 10,000.00 Canadian dollars per year and per student and is mainly financed by external donations.

The university issues an official call every year in March to select new students for the following year. During March and April, the UAF team visits the different social organizations in the micro regions of the State of Puebla to get to know the potential candidates and to present information on the program and the university. All the

interested candidates must then send in their documentation which is examined at the university. Candidates have to write the examination and attend an oral interview where the UAF team evaluates students' knowledge and social participation in their community, their sense of social responsibility, their interest and motivation for the chosen degree, and their attitude towards rules, program activities, and general values. Additionally, candidates have to take a test which evaluates their study habits and multiple intelligences. Based on all these results, an average of ten new students are invited to the pre-university course every year during which time they choose what they want to study. If they pass the course, they are definitively accepted to the university and are officially enrolled in the chosen degree.

In 2011, the UAF program served 56 students, a mix of Indigenous and mestizo students. All of the students have studied in the public school system in their communities of origin, some of them in the bilingual intercultural system. 17 out of the 56 students are bilingual, 16 in Spanish and Nahuatl, and 1 in Spanish and Tzotzil. The rest are monolingual in Spanish (UAF, 2010). During their first semester at the university, students have to take the English placement test. As of now, all of them begin at the first proficiency level.

Minority students' admission process to the UAF program is long and arduous because, as has been explained in the description of the program, investment in each one of the students, monetarily and time wise, is high. Students must be very motivated and committed to be accepted. Maturity is also a crucial aspect that is taken into consideration, as the first year is psychologically difficult for them since they have to leave their communities and adapt to a totally different urban life style far from their

families and local cultures. By studying EFL at the Language Department, they are further challenged with an extremely "global" culture with which they may have no personal connections. The following lines will broadly present the UPAEP Language Department where UAF students learn English.

2.2.3   The Language Department (DELC) and the EFL program

The actual Language Department was first created as a Language Center in the 1980s, and only taught English for many years. It was restructured at the beginning of 2004 to support the third strategy of the 2015 Vision, and the university's internationalization process. During its restructuring, the Center proposed a new pedagogical vision based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, and was from there on re-baptised as the DELC (i.e., *Departamento de Estudios de Lengua y Cultura* [Department for Language and Cultural Studies]). The Language Department's curriculum was based on the CEFR until summer 2013. After that date, it will be based on the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) framework as will be explained in the findings. Independently of the framework, the department establishes international language certification programs based on concrete proficiency levels which facilitate the internationalization initiative of student and teacher mobility. In 2012, more than 50 language teachers taught English as a Foreign Language (EFL), French, German, Italian, Spanish as a Foreign Language, and Mandarin to an average of 4,000 students per semester, 80% of whom study EFL (Despagne & Grossi, 2011). Yet, it does not teach any Indigenous languages.

In Mexico, as explained in the macro context, English is the main foreign language and it is mandatory for UPAEP's internationalization plan. All students are therefore required to

attain an advanced B2[10] level of the CEFR, and depending on the undergraduate studies they have chosen, all undergraduate students must attain between 450 and 550 points on the paper-based Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam. This is the reason why the DELC is worried about the 402 TOEFL score average attained by UAF students in Summer 2011 whereas the rest of the students reached an average of 530 in Spring 2011 (Despagne & Grossi, 2011).

Students are placed in different EFL levels according to their score in the EFL placement test. The DELC offers six proficiency levels in English, of 80 hours each, at the end of which they should be able to attain the required TOEFL score. According to the EFL curriculum, both formative and summative evaluations are based on mid-term exams that count for 40%, KWLH (i.e., an acronym that stands for what students Know, what they Want to learn and what they Have Learned) for 15%, and general performance rubrics. The latter counts for 45% of the final grade, which includes oral participation (20%), quizzes (5%), homework (10%), and paragraph writing (10%).

Because of the CEFR (and then ACTFL) being the guiding framework for all languages taught at the UPAEP, the DELC's main pedagogical vision aligns with language learning autonomy based on the psychological perspective, referred to in the CEFR as the "ability to learn" (Council of Europe, 2000, p. 85). As explained in the literature review of this dissertation, the psychological focus of language learning autonomy focuses on students' internal transformation through cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective learning strategies which are supported at the DELC through a Strategy-Based Instruction. A two-

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[10] The B2 level of the Common European Reference Framework (CEFR) refers to an intermediate stage of proficiency. Users of this level are expected to use the main structures of the language and to use appropriate communicative strategies in different social situations.

year professional development program *Strategy – Based Instruction Mentorship* has been created for language teachers to focus on the implementation of Strategy-Based Instruction and CEFR/ACTFL, especially in EFL classes. According to students' TOEFL results as mentioned earlier, the pedagogical focus of the UPAEP Language Department seems to have a positive impact on most of the students, but not so much on UAF students (Despagne & Grossi, 2011).

In the first main part of the dissertation, the literature review examines theoretical points that are important for the study, such as the psychological and the critical focuses of language learning autonomy where the critical one may serve as a complement to the psychological one. Then, post-colonial theories are examined as an attempt to analyze Mexico's socio- historical context. The second main part of the dissertation precisely presents this context, divided into the socio-historical macro context, and the specific micro context of UAF students at UPAEP. Now that the two main components have been presented (theories and context), it is important to link them together. Hence, the following theoretical framework will help clarify which theoretical points will be used from post-colonial theories as a lens to analyze Mexico's macro context, and which points will be used from CAL theories as a lens to analyze UAF students' micro context.

Chapter 3

3 Theoretical framework and context

As presented in the literature review, post-colonialism and critical applied linguistics will inform this study and will intertwine with one another. Both sets of theories are commensurable because they are both grounded in critical theory which represents the foundational base of the research. Critical theory will guide the whole study in order to understand the interconnection between power and oppression in students' everyday life by building bridges between all parts in relation to the whole. Hence, the research will be a constant zooming in and out of students' macro and micro contexts, and will challenge the status quo and the potential forms of privilege in this interconnection by "uncovering social structures, discourses, ideologies, and epistemologies" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2008, p. 306). The following sections will briefly describe the main theoretical aspects that will be specifically used in the study by going from the broad macro context to the specific micro context of UAF students' relations with the English language.

3.1 Context and post-colonialism

Post-colonialism will inform the study in order to understand UAF students', and specifically Indigenous students' macro context. Drawing upon this theory, the study will look for power relation patterns between languages and cultures, embedded in students' everyday lives, aiming to explain their low results in EFL. Post-colonialism examines whether or not students contest the monocultural and monolinguistic hegemony (one language, one identity, one nation), the Western curriculum and teaching methodologies, and the global forces of English as explained in the context part of the dissertation. Macro

patterns will examine how "culture [is] a domain of struggle where the production and transmission of knowledge is always a contested process" (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005, p. 310). This part of the framework will focus on five main notions.

The first notion that will be examined is the colonial legacy, defined by Mignolo (2005) as the relations between the beginning and the current stage of the colonial historical process. Interviews and observations will determine whether students' thoughts integrate the legacy of the colonial discourse that refers to language and cultural hierarchizations.

The second notion, modernity, will be related to Mignolo's (2005) second modernity (i.e., the one that was introduced during the Enlightenment Period and the French Revolution). Reason and development characterized the second modernity which today is perceived as rationality, abstract thought and science, as mentioned in the literature and the context. Mignolo's (2005) definition will guide me to determine whether students perceive English as being the language of modernity, whether they think that by learning English they will get easier access to the "rational", "modern" and "developed" world of Western cultures.

The third notion, also borrowed from Mignolo (2005), coloniality of power (i.e., the ongoing colonial relation) will define how UAF students perceive power relationships in their daily lives at the UPAEP and how they manage power relationships with Mexican mainstream classmates in the EFL classroom.

Colonial legacy, modernity, and coloniality of power will determine how power relationships operate in UAF students' lives and the EFL classroom. They will also determine how these relationships influence Indigenous and UAF students' identity construction.

Identity is the fourth notion that will be analyzed through the lens of post-colonialism, and that will later link post-colonialism to critical applied linguistics. Because culture in Mexico cannot be defined homogeneously, nor can it be defined as oppositional categories such as Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous, as expressed in the contextual part, it is not a static and unidirectional body of knowledge (Hall, 2003). Participants' identities will be examined as an intersection, between cultures, times and spaces (i.e., between students' local cultures and languages, the *mestizo* national state identity and Spanish, and the global forces of English). Hence, participants' identities will be analyzed by a fifth notion defined by García Canclini as a process of hybridization (1990) which will specifically focus on two main points: (1) First, it will analyze how ethnic, regional and national identities recreate themselves in globalized times; (2) Second, it will analyze how social and historical conflicts intervene in this process.

In this work, I will concentrate on how participants in the study construct their ethnic and social hybridities through the creation of imagined communities, as defined earlier by Anderson (1991) and Norton (2001), and which role English plays in the creation of these new structures. I will also focus on how UAF students manage the power relationships between local, national and global boundaries, and on how they reconvert their "local" knowledges in the new urban environment. I will specifically draw my attention to how they use autonomous language learning strategies in the EFL class during the aforementioned reconversion process. In chapter one, the use of "local" knowledges was introduced in relation to students' investment in language learning. As a matter of fact, García Canclini focuses on the relational character of identities because they "depend on where we are situated" (García Canclini et al., 1997, p. 83) or, as expressed by Hall

(1996, 1997), they depend on their specific historical and cultural context. Hence, we have to abandon the dual opposition of whether we are going to accept globalization and learn English, or whether we are going to defend our identities (García Canclini, 1999). As expressed by García Canclini (1999), it is more important to focus on how we are going to deal with heterogeneities, differences and inequalities. From this perspective, the study will analyze what student participants will be able to do during the process of hybridization during which they also learn English. This focus allows me to analyze "hybridity" not only in relation to cultural inequalities, but also in relation to what student participants can or cannot appropriate (i.e., what they can or cannot integrate in their multiple identities during their process of negotiation).

The notion of identity is important not only for post-colonial scholars. It is also relevant for critical applied linguists such as Norton (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton, 2000) who defines it, as already mentioned, as multiple, complex, dynamic and as a site of struggle. As a result, the notion of identity links both theoretical frameworks together.

3.2   Context and (critical) applied linguistics

Applied and critical applied linguistics will be used to analyze students' micro context. First, applied linguistics, and specifically autonomous language learning from a psychological perspective, will be used in order to examine policy documents related to UPAEP's language learning pedagogies, and how they are applied in the EFL classroom. Second, the study follows the "social turn" of second language acquisition, or critical applied linguistics, and more specifically, critical autonomy in language learning. It examines the factors that contribute to students' investment in EFL learning. In other

words, participants' interviews and class observations help me determine whether students feel the need for their wider historical and social context to be taken into account in the EFL classroom. Micro patterns look at how students engage in different ways in rewriting their socio political role by investing their local knowledge in EFL classes (Giroux, 1997). In order to do so, interviews and EFL class observations also focus on two main notions exposed in the literature review and developed by Norton Pierce (1995) and by Toohey and Norton (2003). These are explained next.

The notion of investment examines if "social power relationships play an active role in social interactions between language learners and target language speakers" (Norton Peirce, 1995, p. 12). In UPAEP's specific context, Norton Peirce's (1995) notion of investment helps me examine how UAF students manage power relations with mainstream students and teachers in the EFL classroom, how they perceive power relations between Indigenous languages, Spanish and English; and whether these power relations influence their investment in learning English.

The notion of identity, defined as "sites of struggle" (Toohey & Norton, 2003, p. 69) is used to examine how UAF students perceive themselves at the UPAEP and specifically in the EFL classroom, and how their sense of self may change over time and space. The notion also helps me capture how students perceive themselves in light of Indigenous languages, Spanish and English, in other words how they perceive themselves as plurilingual and pluricultural learners in a monolithic social and historical context. The literature review draws on these notions as being in opposition to one another. As a

result, the study also tries to capture how pluralistic Indigenous students (i.e., students who possess more than one identity, culture and/or language) manage to use all these diverse forms of knowledge in the learning of English.

As can be observed, the notions of investment and of identity are closely related to one another. Both describe flexible relationships that will change according to the context, the time and the space where they take place. This is the reason why students' context is so important and why it is essential to understand the historical evolution of this context, as history influences our daily lives. Both notions allow me to analyze whether and how students' EFL investment is shaped by social power relationships influenced by Mexico's colonial history, and how this context influences their identity constructions.

The theoretical frameworks I have chosen to inform the study (i.e., post-colonialism and critical applied linguistics) also influence my own identity construction, my own life experiences, and how I relate to the world. It seems therefore essential to position myself as a researcher before drawing on the methodology used in the research.

Chapter 4

4 My positioning as a researcher

Critical qualitative studies require researchers to position themselves in relation to the object of the study (i.e., why they have chosen to study the topic). In addition, the study has to elucidate how the power relationships between researcher and researched will be managed (Smith, 2005; Bishop, 2005). Hence, the following lines will specifically focus on why I have chosen to study this topic, how I position myself in relation to UAF participants (Indigenous and mestizos) and which epistemologies inform the study.

4.1 Personal experience in Mexico and at the UPAEP

My purpose as a researcher is to examine why UPAEP-UAF students do not attain the same level of EFL as "mainstream" students. I am specifically interested in this study because I had lived in Mexico for 17 years and worked at the UPAEP Language Department from 2004 to 2010. I officially resigned from my position as the Director of the Language Department in order to pursue the PhD degree in Canada for which I am writing this dissertation and to be able to determine why, at the UPAEP, UAF students are less successful than non-UAF students in EFL. At the same time, I wanted to give my children who were born in Mexico an international experience which would allow them to be plurilingual cosmopolitans (i.e., trilingual in Spanish, French and English).

I am also specifically interested in this topic because I was the leading person who introduced all the main changes at the UPAEP Language Department in 2004 (i.e., who proposed the CEFR as a guiding framework, who hired language coordinators and

teachers and who guided them towards the psychological perspective of language learning autonomy). At the end of 2008, I taught an additional beginner EFL class to some of the bilingual Indigenous UAF students in order to know them better and to try to understand the challenges they had to face in EFL classes. At the beginning of the term, I asked them who spoke a language other than Spanish and most of them spoke, or at least understood, Nahuatl quite well. When I told them that they were already bilingual, and that we could draw on some of their knowledge in Nahuatl in order to learn English, they were surprised. This led us little by little to analyze general language perceptions and to discuss power relationships among languages in Mexico. I was surprised how they opened up over time. I observed that the more confidence they gained, the more they invested themselves in the EFL class. This led me to analyze more critical perspectives of language learning autonomy that would complement the psychological one currently in use.

I am aware that this research, and the related socio-linguistic context, is highly political. As a qualitative Western researcher, I want to favour an emancipatory decolonizing discourse that connects post-colonial theories (Mignolo, 2000, 2005, 2008) to critical applied linguistics (Norton Peirce, 1995; Norton & Toohey, 2004, 2011). I am by no means an insider, and I am also aware that being white, blond and from European background grants me privileges that other Mexicans do not have. Because I am a Westerner, I know that I have to "resist the legacy of the Western colonizing other" (Denzin, 2005, p. 935). I will not "use" UPAEP-UAF students in order to extract knowledge from them that I will then appropriate myself (Smith, 1999). I will try to be an

"allied other" as expressed by Denzin (2005) who will include participants not only in data collection, but also in the analysis of the results, because this research is for them. They are the ones who encounter problems while learning EFL, and the problems have therefore to be analyzed from their own perspectives in order to find possible solutions.

I can however specifically identify with the Indigenous minority students in that we both negotiate our identities between different languages and cultures. They constantly travel between a continuum of more or less Indigenous and more or less *mestizo* identities, and some of them between their Indigenous languages and Spanish, whereas I travel constantly between French, Spanish, German and now also English. During the four years I dedicated myself to the PhD, it became clear to me that identities and language repertoires are in a constant "up and down" depending on the context in which I am involved. While living in Canada, I got closer to the Anglophone Canadian culture and to English. In Canada, I was often positioned differently (as a French, a German or even a Mexican citizen), depending on the cultural community with which I was related. Back in Mexico, I got closer to Mexican friends who lived many years in Germany. These friends unconsciously made me negotiate with my German identity with which I am in conflict. This constant negotiation allows me to reinvest myself in my German identity and to speak German with those Mexican friends.

Nevertheless, I am also aware that the struggles of my own identity construction are not the same as UAF students' struggles. UAF students have to face unequal power relationships that I do not have to face. I was raised in the dominant culture, whereas they were raised in the dominated one. This awareness leads me to "work the hyphen" as mentioned by Fine (1994, p. 70) which means that I will constantly analyze my

relationship with the participants. I want to negotiate the power with them in order to create an ethically responsible relationship between us which will lead us to gain critical consciousness of authentic ways of representing them. Again here, it is important to repeat that UAF students are not a homogeneous group. They are made up of Indigenous and mestizo people, all from impoverished rural communities. This common origin categorizes them as a minority. Indigenous students are however part of an additional ethnic categorization which will be analyzed next.

4.2   What is being Indigenous?

When I first wrote the proposal of the research, I thought that UAF students may not easily position themselves as being Indigenous. The term "Indigenous" is generally problematic "in that it appears to collectivize many distinct populations whose experiences have been very different" (Smith, 1999, p. 6). Indigenous communities are not homogeneous. The term is problematic because it refers to the colonial binary division between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations where Indigenous peoples are the most researched people under the Western research gaze. Additionally, in Mexico, *mestizaje* or hybridity as a racial, cultural, and ideological mixing between European and native peoples has been very successful because it was, and still is, part of a political project since Independence has been reached. Some Mexicans do not identify themselves as Indigenous because being Indigenous is still connected to the concept of being backward, ignorant, and barbaric and leads to social and racial discrimination (Oehmichen, 2007). This is the reason why I thought that students of the UAF program at UPAEP may not directly identify as such, even if their local native cultures strongly influence their identities and world visions. However, I realized during the empirical

research process that Indigenous UAF students had no problem at all self-identifying as Indigenous people because the notion Indigenous is currently related to power in the academic realm. In other words, the term Indigenous is getting little by little a cultural capital as defined by Bourdieu (1991) earlier. According to administrators of the UAF program, "all the students now suddenly declare to be Indigenous" because by doing so, they have the opportunity to apply for many different additional scholarships available to Indigenous people in Mexico, the European Union and in the United States.

In this work, I will use the term "Indigenous" in order to refer to peoples who have been "subjected to the colonisation of their lands and cultures […] by a colonizing society […], even after it has formally pulled out" (Smith, 1999, p. 7). However, I will use the term UAF or minority students when referring to all the students of the UAF program (i.e., those who self-identify as Indigenous or as mestizos). UAF students' culture and identities must be defined in a flexible way, as non-static and multidirectional as mentioned earlier in this dissertation, because their identities, like mine, are hybrid as we are constantly moving from one culture and language to another. Hence, identities and cultures in this study will be defined as dynamic, vital, emergent, and hybrid processes as defined by Norton (1995, 2000) and Norton & Toohey (2011) in the literature review, and as expressed in postmodern and post structural perspectives that inform this study.

4.3   Epistemologies

As such, postmodernism questions the existence of one single scientific truth (Patton, 2002) and post structuralism conversely links language, subjectivity, social organization, and power together where language is the centrepiece (Richardson & Adams St Pierre, 2005). For postmodern and post structural thinkers, views of realities are constructed

socially and are embedded in different cultures. Language does not "reflect" social reality. On the contrary, it produces meaning and creates social reality. English teachers, for example, who just follow page by page mainstream EFL textbooks published in England or the United States will generally produce the discourse of the dominant EFL world and impose it on their students without questioning its meaning. Hence, by teaching EFL without considering the wider social context, the UPAEP Language Department may serve the interests of the dominant cultures and may impose their world views on minority students.

This study will therefore aim to *deconstruct* participants' realities as presented in the following chapter by examining how these realities are constructed, by whom, for what purposes, and by identifying the structure of constraints. The following research design (or methodology) allows the research to bring to the surface potential hierarchies as well as dominations, oppositions, inconsistencies, and contradictions (Creswell, 2007).

Chapter 5

5   Methodology

I believe that change is possible, and that citizens (and in this context the UPAEP minority students) can be active in "authoring [their] own world without being subject to the will of others" (Young, 1986, p. 19). The postmodern and poststructural paradigms, and the participants themselves, help me understand, "the world in which they live and work" and how "they develop subjective meanings of their experiences" (Creswell, 2007, p. 20). I recognize that my interpretation is shaped by my own world visions. Therefore, I attempt to distance myself from the Western scientific and colonial research gaze by involving participants in making sense of the meanings they have about their own world. This objective has been made possible by aiming to *decolonize* the creation of knowledge explained in the research methodology (Smith, 1999).

The study is a critical ethnographic case study as it concentrates on one specific and situated case – Indigenous students from the UPAEP-UAF program learning EFL – by paying close attention to its social, political, and historical influences (Stake, 2005). It locates UPAEP minority students in the world (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

Following Yin (1994, 2006), I use case study as the "preferred strategy" because the research questions are exploratory and the phenomenon (i.e. students' low results in English and their investment in EFL learning) is a contemporary event.

This study is not an ethnography, first because of lack of time, and second, because it concentrates on all the students who are part of the UAF program. Yet, it used an

ethnographic approach because I spoke with people and observed them through interviews and class observations. The interviews and observations, based on a prepared theoretical structured framework, lasted four months. Ethnographies generally avoid specifying any theoretical propositions, yet case studies specify them at the beginning (Yin, 1994). This ethnographic approach promoted dialogue with the participants not only during the data collection, but also during the data analysis as explained further. This constant dialogue developed high levels of self-consciousness (Madison, 2005). The study also uses a critical approach in order to "disrupt the status quo, and unsettle both neutrality and taken for granted notions by bringing to light underlying and obscure operations of power and control" (Madison, 2005, p. 5). It analyzes "what is" in reference to the linguistic and cultural power relations, and then moves to "what could be" through critical approaches in language learning. It is critical, because it extends its political aims of social justice by positioning participants' voices in opposition to the dominant discourse. This positioning is translated in the following design.

5.1   The case study design

According to Yin (1994), case studies have five major components: research questions, purpose of the research, connection of the data to the theoretical propositions, units of analysis, and criteria of interpreting the findings. Research questions, purpose of the research, and connection of the data to the theoretical propositions have already been discussed earlier in the dissertation. The final two components were integrated in the following units of analysis.

1. The first main unit served both data collection and data analysis, and integrated 15 out of the 56 Indigenous students who study in the UPAEP-UAF program.

2. The second unit was subdivided into two subunits, one for data collection, and one for data analysis.

      a. The subunits for data collection integrated 9 minority students (six women and three men) studying EFL at different language levels, ranging from A2 to B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference* competency levels.

      b. The subunit for data analysis integrated six minority students (3 women and 3 men) who did not participate in the interviews.

Data collection occurred from January to May 2012 and data analysis from August to September 2012.

Participant recruitment

In order to recruit students for the study (i.e., for the subunits of data collection and data analysis), I first attended a general meeting in January 2012 with the students of the UAF program, to which I was invited by the UAF program coordinator. During the meeting, I presented the main points of my research in a way that students understood (i.e., avoiding jargon and, keeping the language simple and concrete). I showed the PowerPoint presentation to the UAF coordinator before the meeting, in order to get her feedback, because she is the person who knows the students and their context best. During the presentation, I primarily focused on the purpose, the rationale, the research questions, and the methods. I also focused on the fact that this study must be done collaboratively in order to really understand students' challenges when learning EFL. I added that these challenges had to be identified by students themselves, and that I would guide them in

identifying the problems they face, and inform the study theoretically. Nevertheless, students' challenges cannot be identified unless they actively participate in both processes: the data collection and data analysis.

Students were invited to participate in the research study at the end of the presentation. I also told them that those who were interested in participating would be given consent forms. I explained the consent forms in the presentation since they are not commonly used in Mexico. Participation in one subunit versus the other mostly depended on students' availability.

During the meeting, I explained that I needed twelve participants for the data collection, and six participants for the data analysis. All of them had to represent the different EFL competency levels of the UPAEP Language Department.

1. For data collection, I was looking for four monolinguals, and eight bilinguals, more specifically four students who had a high competency level in the Indigenous language (B1 or B2), and four other students who had a lower level in the Indigenous language (A1 or A2). The aim was to check if the competency level in the Indigenous language would play a role in research results. Six participants had to be males, and six had to be females.

2. For data analysis, I was looking for three monolinguals, and three bilinguals with different proficiency levels in the Indigenous language.

Socioeconomic status could not be a selection criterion because all of the minority students in the UAF program come from "microregions" (i.e., marginalized geographical

and social spaces in rural regions), as explained in the contextual section. This representation was intended to give a precise idea of how Indigenous students respond to the different challenges at the different stages of their formal EFL learning process at the university, and how different the perceptions are between monolinguals and bilinguals. After I had planned exactly who my participants would be, different circumstances changed the original plan. The first circumstance was that many students had to write exams during the winter 2012 semester, or just did not have enough time to get really involved in the research. The second circumstance confronted me with my first misconception as a Western scholar (i.e., thinking that all UAF students, because they came from poor rural communities, had to be Indigenous). Not all of them self-identified as being Indigenous. This categorization, as I quickly realized, is a Western construct, product of my own education and of Mexico's colonial legacy. Being Indigenous or not, is very difficult to define in Mexico, because of the *mestizaje* policy, as examined in the contextual part of this work. *Mestizaje* refers to the Mexican state creation policy since Independence which favours the mixing of races. Hence, being Indigenous or not is part of a continuum. Additionally, this state policy has officialised and internalised the colonial categorization of humans referred to earlier, which has led to the result of associating being Indigenous to poverty, inferiority, and slow judgement, even today. Consequently, being Indigenous or not is not clear cut, and the categorization itself is a Western construct still used today, and a part of the self/other divide.

Yet, UAF students are, and feel different from the rest of the UPAEP students because they come from poor rural communities and they all receive a UAF scholarship. Moreover, they perceive the world from different lenses even if they are perceived as one

single subgroup within the university. Some UAF students began to self-identify as being Indigenous, mostly because they began to see a certain kind of recognition which allowed them to get additional funding opportunities in the academic realm. In the urban world, UAF students began to see that they were different from the "mainstream" students, a difference they did not perceive in their local worlds because they did not know any other culture to compare with. Hence, after informal interviews before and after the first general meeting in January 2012, I subdivided UAF students in three sub categories:

- monolingual mestizo students,

- monolingual Indigenous, and

- bilingual Indigenous students.

As a result, after calling all the interested students who signed their names on a paper after the general meeting in January, I integrated the above mentioned categorization for data collection and data analysis. The categorization has been member checked with participants of the data analysis subunit later. As a result, data collection included the following students[11]:

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[11] The names of all the participants are pseudonyms.

Dates: January – April 2012	

4
   2
   2
	Monolingual participants
	Indigenous monolinguals: Guillermo, Trinidad
	Non-Indigenous monolinguals: Gabriela, Elena

5
   2
   1
   1
   1
	Indigenous bilingual participants
	B2/C1 level in Nahuatl: Leticia, Jorge
	B1/B2 level in Totonaco: Frida
	A1/A2 level in Nahuatl: Angel
	A1/B1 level in Totonaco: Blanca

3 6	Males Females

Table 1: Data collection participants

Data was then co-analyzed with six additional and different participants as follows:

Dates: August-September 2012	
3	**Monolinguals** Indigenous monolinguals: Arturo, Teresa Non-Indigenous monolinguals: Marisol
3	Indigenous **bilinguals**: B2 levels: Pablo, Hector A2 level: Lourdes
3 3	Males Females

Table 2: Data analysis (focus group) participants

UAF students willingly participated because most of them were and still are worried

about their English classes and about losing their scholarships, if they fail the EFL

courses. When I was still working in the UPAEP Language Department, some of the students of the UAF program came to see me to find solutions. The UAF coordinator created a special committee, led by UAF students themselves, to deal with problems in the EFL program. On December 9, 2012 I was surprised to see on the facebook page of the program that one of the UAF students posted that she passed EFL. Over 30 other UAF students answered her post and congratulated her as having achieved a major step. Hence, it is important to mention that the impetus of the study originally came from them. As a result, more students than expected wanted to participate at the beginning, but selection went on naturally because not all of them could attend all of the required meetings and interviews. At the end, a total of 15 students participated in different stages of data collection and analysis. Both are explained next.

5.2   Data collection methods

Data was collected in the main unit and subunits in Spanish through multiple methods. The data therefore captures different realities, practices, and interpretations of students' global, national and local worlds by combining:

- an analysis of relevant policy documents;
- formal interviews with monolingual and bilingual students enrolled in different EFL levels;
- informal interviews with teachers and administrators;
- informal observations of the setting;
- EFL class observations.

5.2.1   Analysis of policy documents

The first method used was the analysis of relevant *policy documents*

- at a national level*,* such as the English language policy and the National Program for English in Primary Education, both defined by the Mexican Ministry of Education;

- at local level, such as the pedagogical views of the Foreign Language Department at UPAEP, the EFL curriculum, the EFL teacher training program, and the UAF program.

Both sets of policy documents show how and where the official discourse is situated in the linguistic and cultural power relationships.

5.2.2   Interviews

The second method used two types of personal *interviews* (i.e., semi-structured and unstructured). Semi-structured interviews represented the main formal set of interviews and were centred on the following objectives:

- to collect background demographic data;

- to ask students to self-assess their competency in their Indigenous language based on the CEFR guidelines, and

- to focus on the theoretical framework and research questions.

Semi structured interviews took place at the university, in an office that the Language Department lent me during the whole research process. I conducted 3 interviews with each participant and each interview lasted between one and one hour and a half, depending on how much students were willing to share.

Semi structured interviews followed a question guide[12] which ensured that the same basic lines of inquiry were pursued with each interviewee (Patton, 2002). The complete question guide was attached to the Ethical Review form (appendix 9). All questions directly related to the theoretical framework and focused on the notions exposed in the literature review of this dissertation, such as colonial legacy, modernity, coloniality of power, identity, and EFL investment. Both sets of theories (i.e., post-colonialism and critical applied linguistics) were intertwined in the questions asked. For example, when I decided to focus on the notion of "colonial legacy" as defined by Mignolo (2005), I asked students about their representations of Indigenous languages and Spanish, if they thought that these languages were important, and why, or why not. If I focused on the power relationships in the EFL classroom for example, I drew on the notion of "coloniality of power" (Mignolo, 2005) and I first asked students how they felt in EFL classes, how they perceived their relation with the EFL teacher and with their classmates. I also told them some personal anecdotes from when I was learning English and from when I had to write my first paper in English in Canada. I told them that I spoke several languages, and that I was always moving from one identity to the other, just like them. This made me easily sympathize with them. I tried to guide the interviews as conversations, ordered conversations, but conversations nonetheless (Blommaert & Dong, 2010). I never followed a formal set of questions because questions cannot be asked directly in the Mexican culture; this would be perceived as being rude. I first had to create a positive atmosphere, a natural flowing conversation. Once I created a positive rapport with the

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[12] See appendix 9 for the question guide for semi-structured interviews.

students, I was able to ask them if they participate actively in the EFL class, and why or why not. I think students told me what they were feeling; I felt their trust. Some of them told me about different humiliating experiences they had in EFL classes for example. These were hard moments for them and not easy to express. If I had not been able to create an empathetic atmosphere in the interviews, students would simply have repeated the dominant discourse.

During each interview, I also member checked the answers in order to see if I had really interpreted the student's answers as he/she had wanted me to interpret them. I used techniques such as paraphrasing and summarizing in order to clarify the most important aspects of each session. A second major member check took place during the analysis of the data with the Interpretative Focus Groups, made up of six other students from the UAF program, not the students who were interviewed as mentioned at the beginning of the methodology chapter. This second member check will be explained in the following part of the dissertation. Both checks, during the interviews and during the data analysis, allowed me to minimize possible distortions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Member checks are also important because Mexican minority students' meta-communication may differ from mine. Meta-communication refers to statements that report, describe, interpret, and evaluate communicative acts. These acts are generally "culturally patterned" (Briggs, 1984). "Yes" for example, does not always mean *yes* in Mexico. It is important to know how to read other signals that tell if this "yes" really means "yes", or "maybe" or even "no". Even though I have lived in Mexico since 1995, I may still misunderstand some communicative acts because Mexico is not a homogeneous country. Culture differs from one social and/or cultural context to the other. I therefore tried to focus on how to read

the intonation of students' voices, word stresses, body language and/or how students looked at me during the interviews.

However, the use of the question guide for interviews provided me with topics and general subjects that allowed me to explore, probe and ask open ended questions that illuminated the particular subject, such as discrimination for example. The data collected through the interview guide approach allowed me to write a cross-case analysis (i.e., to group all students' answers to the explored notions). Hence, the guide also constituted a descriptive analytical framework for the data analysis process (Patton, 2002).

I did not take many notes during the interviews because it disrupted the natural flow of the conversation, but I audio recorded all of them. All the participants gave me permission to record them by signing the consent forms. I immediately began to transcribe the recordings after the first round of interviews. It called my attention to how participants changed between the first and the third interview. In the third one, they were much more open, honest and reflexive than they were in the first one.

Unstructured interviews also took place throughout the field study with students, teachers and administrators. According to Patton (2002), unstructured interviews are a natural extension of observations because they generally occur during the ongoing participant observation fieldwork. Both informal interviews and observations are therefore closely related. I still know many people working at UPAEP, even though I left the university more than three years ago. This made the contact much easier. Unstructured interviews were not planned or guided in a formal way. Most of the questions during informal interviews flowed naturally from the immediate context and changed over time and place.

They occurred in the university hallways, while having a cup of coffee with students, teachers or administrators or during lunch. I did not record them, but I took field notes immediately after they occurred. These informal interviews allowed me to build on the semi structured interviews in order to expand on information, to move in new directions and to seek answers to the many questions that emerged during the research. When I used information given during informal interviews in the writing process of the findings, I asked the teachers or administrators if I could use it and asked them to sign a consent form.

My aim as a researcher was, and still is, to create a trusting relationship with the participants, not only to get possible answers, but above all because of the moral and human relationship all human beings should have with each other. By the end of the third interview, several participants told me that they enjoyed the interviews because they had never been faced with questions about power between languages and cultures. Even if ultimately, I am the one to determine the themes of the narrative, as noted by Wasserfall (1993), this empathetic approach at least tried to restore an ethical relationship between human beings who have different life experiences and privileges. This narrative tries, as much as possible, to represent the lives of UPAEP minority students (Glesne, 1999). Nevertheless, I am aware that interviews are never neutral tools and that they take a stance because the questions are shaped by the context and by my own worldviews (Fontana & Frey, 2005). Arturo, one of the data analysis participants was very aware of that. In the first meeting, he carefully listened to the summary of the research I prepared, and then he told me:

> *The answers given by the interview participants may have been influenced by the topic itself. We may react and answer what the researcher wants to hear and see.*

For example, we associate modernity with the United States and with English because the research has to do with English and how we learn it. And English is the language of the United States.[13]

Student participants are very different from me; their world visions, race, social status, age, and sometimes gender differ from mine. This is the reason why I always tried, as much as possible, to collect data from different sources and to member-check my interpretations with UAF students' world views, as will be examined in the analysis of the data. It is also the reason why I decided to follow Campbell's (1975) "pattern matching" approach in order to relate students' patterns drawn from the interviews, link them to theoretical propositions and focus on them during the observations. This helped me to integrate students' perspectives in the observation process too.

5.2.3   Observations

The third method, *observations* was used in order to observe human activities and physical settings (Angrosino, 2005). Observations played an important role in this study because they allowed me to explore the social and historical context that surrounds the linguistic and cultural power relations. Observations mainly took place in EFL classes, in each language level where the data collection participants were enrolled. Before observing an EFL class, I sent an e-mail to the participants' teachers describing the observations I would like to make in their class. The observations were, as expressed above, based on the patterns created through the student interviews regarding the theoretical notions detailed in chapter 3 of the dissertation. In this way, they integrated students' perspectives. For example, when the interview students told me that they did

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[13] I translated all student excerpts to English. All translations are my sole responsibility.

not participate in EFL classes because they felt intimidated by their classmates, I tried to observe and see if there were any connections between their feelings and the ongoing power relations within the EFL class. This observation helped me understand why their sense of self may have been affected in the EFL classroom. In this way, students' voices were not only integrated in the interviews, but also in the observations.

Additionally, I made informal observations of the setting throughout my time in the field (i.e., from January to December 2012). These observations, as already mentioned above, go hand in hand with the informal interviews.

In summary, data has been collected through mixed methods. On one hand, the analysis of national and local policy documents guided my understanding of the dominant discourse regarding the UAF program and foreign language education at the UPAEP. On the other hand, using interviews and observations I attempted to capture students' voices and their perceptions of the surrounding linguistic and cultural relationships, which has then been opposed to the dominant discourse of policy documents. I took field notes and audio recorded all semi structured interviews. The data collected, based on full transcriptions, allowed me to write a case record in order to get a sense of the whole, and establish themes and categories that were then analyzed collaboratively with the research participants. The main objective of the collaborative analysis was to check if UAF students felt that they were reflected in the established themes and categories. It also served as a deductive analysis in order to confirm and test my own analysis as explained in the following section (Patton, 2002).

5.3 Data analysis and criteria for interpreting the findings

This study embraces Smith's (1999) decolonizing methodology. In other words, it looks for ways to decolonize research by recognizing Indigenous and minority peoples' belief systems and knowledge, and by positioning itself within critical theories that question the hegemony of Western cultures. The study follows Smith's (1999) reminder of the power of research and representations by critiquing its own gaze and its own representations as being the only potential "truth". Hence, it claims to initiate a *decolonization* process of Western research by focusing "on interpreting data from other people's lives" in collaboration with "the other" people (Dodson, Piatelli, & Schmalzbauer, 2007, p. 822). This claim has been developed through qualitative research methods which involve participants in the data collection process by giving them voice through personal interviews which has been be done in this study too. However, the integration of students' voices is only a small step towards the claim of decolonizing research methods because, as already mentioned, the researcher decides what to integrate in the narrative and what to exclude. Additionally, the main result of research (i.e., the creation of knowledge itself) still remains in the researcher's hands, and therefore is still dominated by the Western gaze if the researcher is not Indigenous or part of a minority. This is exactly post-colonial theories' main critique (i.e., the ontological division between the West and the rest of the world); the West as the only active originator of knowledge and the rest as passive elements of knowledge (Castro Gómez, 2008). In this study, I propose to overcome this colonial ontological division by involving participants in the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

Hence, I tried to make sense of the data by following (1) first, an inductive analysis (i.e., by discovering patterns, themes and categories in the data itself), and (2) second, by following a deductive analysis in order to member check if participants saw themselves reflected in the inductive analysis (Patton, 2002) through Interpretative Focus Groups with six other UAF students.

1. The inductive analysis was subdivided in two main steps:

   a. The first step looked for an emic analysis (i.e., *for Indigenous concepts*, typologies and themes or categories defined by the participants themselves). However, my first step was to do an "in vivo coding" in order to understand minority students' perspectives, and their specific world views. According to Boas (1943), if we really want to understand other people's lives, we have to base the analysis on other people's concepts, not on our own concepts. Hence, a first analysis of student interviews made terms emerge such as "los demás" [the others] or "miedo" [fear] which were recurrent all the time. These terms were then used as patterns and are reflected as answers to research question one (i.e., at the origins of UAF students' struggles with English).

   b. The second step of the analysis was an etic analysis because it introduced *analyst-constructed typologies*. In other words, this second step introduced categories taken from the theoretical framework, such as modernity, imagined communities, investment and others. Hence, through this second step, I tried to identify and to make explicit patterns that seemed to remain unperceived or unconscious by UAF interview participants. These patterns

are mainly reflected in research question number two because participants focused on how they get more invested in EFL which, according to language learning research theories is translated in learning strategies. As a result, the second step of analysis reflects my observer's and researcher's typologies, but based on participants' world views.

The combination of both steps (i.e., Indigenous concepts and analyst-constructed concepts) aimed to create a *glocalized* knowledge (i.e., the blending of local and global knowledges) or the blending of participants' and researcher's world perspectives. The result of the inductive analysis was a PowerPoint presentation that I used as a basis for the second step of the analysis (i.e., the deductive analysis).

2. The deductive analysis' main objectives were first, to check if participants felt reflected in the inductive analysis (Indigenous and analyst-constructed concepts), and if not, to criticize it, and second, to confirm and test the inductive analysis. Participants in this collaborative and participatory analysis added information I did not see and contested some of my assumptions. This deductive analysis has been carried out through the creation of *Interpretative Focus Groups,* as referred to earlier. Not much literature is available on Interpretative Focus Groups. This innovative approach has been created by Dodson, Piatelli and Schmalzbauer (2007) to inquire into living habits of marginalized people. In this case, Interpretative Focus Groups (IFG) also allowed me to inquire into what is generally kept hidden. Six students from the UAF program participated in the

IFG. All six belong to the main unit of the 56 minority students, and to the subunit of data analysis. These data interpreters, half monolingual and half bilingual, analyzed the patterns I presented them and that were created through the inductive analysis by creating their own "local meanings". They interpreted silences, encoded answers and "hidden transcripts" (Dodson et al., 2007, p. 826) that I was not able to understand. As expressed earlier, I am not an insider, as I am part of the Western dominant group. Student interpreters therefore also challenged my own interpretations and assumptions. IFG participants made me aware of my own assumptions, such as the idea that undergraduates in the UAF program represented a homogeneous group with only Indigenous students. As already mentioned, the research process showed me that UAF students may be subdivided in three different categories (bilingual Indigenous students, monolingual Indigenous students and monolingual mestizo students). These categories were later fully accepted in the Interpretative Focus Groups.

In other words, IFG participants critiqued and reinterpreted my Western "*mis*interpretations" (Dodson et al., 2007, p. 826) and created a more local knowledge than what I could have created on my own. When students' interpretations differed from my own interpretations, I had to reconsider, as expressed above, some of my unintended assumptions to allow the creation of a *glocalized* knowledge, which is clearly linked to the post-colonial theories of this study. It is only in this way that the final work could be a real collaboration. Each of the four IFGs lasted two hours. The UPAEP Language Department lent us a meeting room for that purpose. It should be noted that I never mentioned interview participants' names during the IFGs in order to respect their

confidentiality. Additionally, I carefully explained these issues to the IFG participants during the first meeting. Terms of confidentiality appear in the consent forms and have been signed by all the participants who kept a copy for their own records. All IFG sessions occurred between August and September 2012.

5.4   Ethics and validity of the research

The ethical process of the study followed the criteria set by the Tri-Council Standards and the guidelines of the Institutional Review Board of the University of Western Ontario. As mentioned previously, ethical issues are embedded in the kind of relationship I tried to construct with the students. Students were not only informants; they were also participants and interpreters. To gain their support and participation, I explained the purpose of the study and protected their anonymity by assigning them aliases. I did not engage in deception and will not reveal personal information given to me during interviews when participants asked me to keep it personal. All the participants signed an informed consent protocol form which mentioned the purpose of the study and its importance[14]. I did not give any financial compensation to the participants because it could have been culturally misinterpreted in the Mexican context. Students participated on their own will because they are interested in understanding their struggles in the EFL learning process. At the end of the data collection and data analysis sessions, students asked me to present the results to the university in the hope that they will serve future UAF students. This goes beyond financial compensations because UAF students were the first interested in this research.

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[14] See consent form samples in appendix 8.

Because the study is informed by social constructivism, there is no objective truth, nor objective validity. However, the substantive significance of this research or its "validity" has been constructed through a triangulation process which showed the "diversity of perceptions" (Stake, 2005, p. 454). Hence, triangulation has been constructed on two levels:

1. First, during the data collection process through multiple methods of inquiry (interviews, observations and documents analysis), and

2. Second, during the deductive analysis through Interpretative Focus Groups (i.e., a participatory interpretation of the findings where knowledge and "truth" are negotiated between the participants and the researcher).

This process of interpretation adds an additional layer to the validity of this study, because it analyzes the findings from two different lenses – the researcher's and participants' lens - which are complementary rather than displacing one for the other (Schwandt, 1996, 2000).

This dialogic effort is expressed through the narrative by integrating all the different voices, by being reflexive, and by producing students' life histories that express significant aspects of themselves. My voice is by no means authoritative; it is rather supportive in order to bring the lives of the UAF participants to the public (Chase, 2005). The following section aims to briefly present each one of them as they represent the core of this research. The names used in the dissertation are all pseudonyms that do not reveal participants' identities.

5.5   Research participants

Participants for data collection and IFGs are categorized as monolingual Indigenous, bilingual Indigenous and mestizos. These categorizations are based on self-identifications as mentioned earlier.

5.5.1   Data collection participants

Indigenous bilingual students

Jorge and Leticia grew up in a Nahuatl-speaking context, but both went to Spanish monolingual public schools. Both self-evaluated as having advanced levels of proficiency in Nahuatl. They speak Nahuatl with their parents, grandparents and older community members. For Jorge, Nahuatl is the first language he learned at home. He learned Spanish at school where he had to learn how to read and write in a language he first did not understand. For him, Spanish is the language of national assimilation. Leticia's mother learned Spanish in order to speak Spanish to her children. The mother wanted to avoid them suffering at school. Hence, today the mother speaks Spanish to Leticia, but Leticia answers her in Nahuatl. Today, Leticia is in her 6th semester, studying Agriculture at UPAEP and Jorge is in his 3rd semester, studying Political Sciences. For both, being able to study at a university is an honour which conveys a special recognition of them in their local communities. They both speak Nahuatl with each other.

Angel also speaks Nahuatl, but he always says that his competency level is not good enough in order to be really perceived as bilingual. He always wants to learn more, and insists that his nephews must learn the language. In his local community, the percentage of Indigenous population is high and he clearly identifies with them. Angel studies Law

at the UPAEP. In September 2012 he travelled to Europe to study one year as an exchange student in a Spanish university.

Frida and Blanca speak Totonaco. Frida is in her 2nd semester, studying Law. Blanca is in her 6th semester, studying Environmental Engineering. Both went to bilingual (Spanish and Totonaco) primary schools in their respective communities. Frida has an intermediate level of Totonaco. She mainly speaks Totonaco with her grandparents and with older people in her community, but her parents speak Spanish to her. Blanca's proficiency level in Totonaco is lower than Frida's. Blanca self-evaluates her Totonaco as being at the CEFR breakthrough level. Only in listening, she said, her proficiency is much better. She understands everything for the most part. Blanca's paternal grandparents speak Totonaco with each other and with her father. Her mother speaks Nahuatl, but Blanca grew up with her father's family. Therefore, she has not been surrounded by Nahuatl. Blanca and Frida do not know that they both speak Totonaco, and have never spoken it with each other.

Indigenous monolingual students

In Guillermo's community hardly anybody speaks Nahuatl anymore. This is the reason why neither he nor his parents speak it. However, he feels identified with that language. Guillermo studies Accounting and Finance. He likes it, but he feels highly discriminated against in his department and in EFL classes.

Trinidad had many problems adapting at the university when she first arrived. She was afraid of everything. For her the life in the city was too hasty. Now, she is nearly finishing her BA in pedagogy where she feels very well accepted by her classmates.

However, her dream is to go back to her community and to teach in the local school there.

Jorge, Leticia, Angel, Blanca, Frida, Guillermo and Trinidad all self-identified as being Indigenous people, but their definition of what makes them Indigenous differs. Some feel that being Indigenous is being strongly in contact with nature, and local cultures; Guillermo for example said that "*an Indigenous person would never eat a hamburger, nor would they use ketchup; they live from what they grow and eat only natural food*"; others say that Indigenous people are more sensitive than people in the cities, and that for them respect and recognition are two highly important values. Indigenous people give more than they take. They live in accordance with their natural environment and respect it. Additionally to Indigenous students, two interview participants represented the voices of mestizo students who also study in the UAF program. Non-Indigenous students also come from poor rural communities, but communities who generally are more in contact with modernity and the local urban world.

Mestizo monolingual students

Gabriela and Elena both self-identify as being *mestizas*. When I first asked them if they would self-identify as being Indigenous, there was a long silence. Nobody ever asked them such a question. Both come from the same rural community, a community close to the city of Puebla. They both already knew Puebla before coming to study at UPAEP. Gabriela adapted quickly to her new environment, whereas Elena had a lot of problems being accepted. Gabriela studies marketing; she only has a few semesters left before finishing her BA. Elena had just begun to study Business when I first met her. She was in

her second semester when she participated in the research. Unfortunately, because of her low grades and her adaptation problems, the UAF program had to retract her scholarship. As a result, Elena went back to her community and to her former life.

In addition to the nine interview participants who participated in the data collection, six additional students as explained above participated in the data analysis. These collaborators are introduced next.

5.5.2   Interpretative Focus Group participants

Indigenous bilingual students

Pablo, Hector and Lourdes speak Nahuatl with an advanced competency level. They all use Nahuatl at home with family and community members. Pablo and Hector study Engineering and Lourdes studies Communication. All three are in the last stages of their BA, and finished the compulsory EFL levels. However, they had not passed the TOEFL test as of now yet.

Indigenous monolingual students

Arturo is the only monolingual student who self-identified as Indigenous in the IFG group. Even though he does not speak any Indigenous language, he knows some words in Nahuatl and would like bilingual students to teach him. He studies agronomy and is in his 7th semester. Arturo finished the compulsory EFL levels as well.

Mestizo monolingual students

Marisol and Teresa are respectively studying marketing and industrial engineering, and are in their 5th and 7th semester. Marisol is still missing two EFL levels and Teresa finished all the mandatory levels. Both students declared themselves as not being Indigenous, but that they felt very close to Indigenous people because of their socio cultural context.

All IFG participants are students studying in higher semesters, and nearly all of them passed through all the required EFL levels. Hence, they are more experienced with EFL classes at UPAEP than interview participants.

In summary, the study of this critical ethnographic case (i.e., the EFL language learning process of Mexican minority students studying in a program called *Una Apuesta de Futuro*), has been designed in accordance with the theoretical framework of the research. The methodology and the theories used in this work are interrelated and intertwined during the whole process. Theories of post-colonial studies and of critical applied linguistics claim to speak for the rights of minorities. In other words, they ask for their knowledge and their languages to be recognized and included on a global level. They also claim for the hegemony of Western knowledge and languages to be reduced in order to allow the creation of a *glocalized* knowledge. This has been, as expressed above, the objective of the present methodology (i.e., to give UAF participants a voice, meshed together with the researcher's voice) in order to understand UAF students' struggles with EFL. Students' voices have been recognized through their participation not only in data

collection methods, but also through an innovative form in the realm of applied linguistics (i.e., in the analysis of the data itself). Hence, the following research results, as mentioned above, include categories and themes defined by both UAF participants, and by the researcher.

Yet, before analyzing the findings through both lenses in chapter six (i.e., participants' lenses and my lens), the following section (6.1) aims to present a summary of interview and IFG participants' main answers to the research questions. The objective of this summary is to give a general overview of participants' answers, and to build the subsequent analysis of the questions on these answers.

Chapter 6

6   Findings

In this chapter, I present the findings of the research. I analyzed the findings from two lenses; first, from an emic perspective where typologies, themes and categories from UAF participants' interviews were used to do an "in vivo coding" as mentioned earlier in the methodology of the study. This "in vivo coding" allowed me to better understand participants' perceptions towards their macro and micro contexts, and towards the factors that influence their EFL investment. Second, I also included an etic analysis. In other words, I correlated the "in vivo coding" with categories from the theoretical framework (e.g., coloniality, EFL investment or plurilingual learning strategies). The results of both analysis (i.e., emic and etic) were then summarized in a Power Point presentation which I presented to the participants of the Interpretative Focus Group (IFG) as a form of member-check. It provided them a forum to approve, to contest and to (re)interpret the results. Consequently, the findings presented in the following sections use typologies from UAF participants and from the theoretical framework of this study.

The findings will be divided into five sections. The first section aims to present two summaries. The first summary introduces relevant quotes from interview participants while the second summarizes IFG participants' reaction to the PowerPoint presentation (i.e., the first analysis).

The second section focuses on how UAF participants perceived their macro context and therefore how they perceived modernity, coloniality and the symbolic power of the

languages in their environment. In section three, I will examine participants' micro context, (i.e., the UPAEP Language Department; specifically, the language reference framework they use and the EFL teacher education program). The influence of participants' macro and micro contexts on their EFL learning process will then be presented in section four where students' language subjectivities are analyzed. Finally, section five draws on those participants who exercised their agency in order to resist EFL subjectivities. Thus, the findings express interview participants' voice and my voice, both member-checked by IFG participants. The methodology allowed for glocalized knowledge production and will be presented next.

6.1   Summary of the interviews and Interpretative Focus Groups

This section (6.1) has two main objectives.

1. First, to show a summary of significant excerpts of interview participants' answers to the questions listed in the question guide (appendix 9). The question guide, as mentioned earlier, is based on the theoretical framework of this study and has been designed to answer the following research questions:

Main research question: Non-UAF students respond well to the psychological focus of language learning autonomy, so why do UAF students not respond in the same way?

Sub question 1: UAF students have lower TOEFL test results than their dominant group peers. What are the contributing factors in this discrepancy?

Sub question 2: What factors influence minority students' investment in EFL learning?

2. The second main objective of this part is to show a summary of IFG participants' reactions in relation to the first analysis of their peers' answers, and how they interpreted and sometimes reinterpreted their perspectives.

To better guide the reading of the summaries and later of the findings, tables with interview and IFG participants' names and their main characteristics are available in appendices 10 and 11. In appendix 10, interview students are matched with an image that seemed to characterize them during the interviews. I perceived Jorge as "the perfect hybrid" because he seems to be the one who best negotiates his multiple identities; Leticia is "the farmer" because she studies agronomy; Frida is "the politician" because she hates English, but loves the power associated with it; Angel is "the plurilingual learner" because he uses Nahuatl and Spanish to learn English; Blanca is "the basketball player" because it is her favourite sport, and she seemed more interested in basketball than in English; Trinidad is "the school teacher" because she wants to teach in a rural community; Guillermo is "the dreamer" because he wanted to live on another planet; Gabriela is "the business women" because this seemed to be her aspiration; and Elena is "the quiet and anxious girl" because even though she arrived punctually to all the interviews, she was very shy and it was hard to make her speak.

6.1.1   Summary of interview participants' answers

The answers to research sub questions one (i.e., the contributing factors in the discrepancy in EFL results) focus on interview participants' perceptions of Mexico's macro context. The macro context, as discussed in the literature review, relates to how participants perceived modernity, coloniality, and the symbolic power of Indigenous languages, Spanish and English. This part determines whether participants' perceptions

of Mexico's macro context may influence their perceptions towards the EFL learning process. Representative quotes of interview participants' narratives are presented next based on both Indigenous and analyst-constructed typologies as explained earlier in the methodology.

6.1.1.1   Answer to sub question 1: Mexico's macro context

6.1.1.1.1   Modernity

Table 3 shows what UAF interview participants think about modernity. On the left hand side, the excerpts express how all the students generally perceived modernity while excerpts on the right hand side express only Indigenous students' views of modernity.

Interview participants think that modernity means:	In addition, Indigenous monolingual and bilingual interview participants think that modernity means:
Modernity = technological advancement: *"For me modernity is like technology"* (Elena)	Modernity = change that requires one to leave behind cultural traditions *"For me modernity means a change in life, technology and science. It is means to leave your cultural traditions behind and to forget all this so you can have new generations."* (Angel)
Modernity = United States *"Modernity is like the United States because it's like a growing place, a place where technology changes all the time, a growing place in positive and negative things"* (Leticia)	Modernity = change from the most natural and simple to the most complicated *"Modernity is like a change that happened, it's like going from the most simple to the most complicated"* (Blanca)
Modernity = English *"In order to enter modernity, we have to speak English." "English and modernity are the same. They represent the United States."* (Elena)	Modernity = to adapt to something that comes from outside *"Modernity is to adapt to new forms of life, new forms that come to us, to our culture."* (Guillermo)
Participants perceive two "levels" of modernity. (1) The Mexican modernity: *"Mexico can represent modernity, a change in life. Coming to this program for me has been like*	Modernity = free will to adapt or not *"To get modern requires work, but I also think that this depends on yourself, it depends if you really want to change, if you really need it. Nobody can you oblige*

entering modernity" (Elena) (2) The modernity of developed countries: *"If you don't speak English, you don't enter modernity, only Mexican modernity"* (Elena)	*to do so."* (Trinidad)
Modernity = innovation, change *"Modernity is like something new that just came out." "It's something that is changing, innovating, like cell phones for example."* (Gabriela)	Modernity opens spaces to do things more quickly and more easily *"In the city, people live very quickly. I feel that they do not take time to eat, to think, to enjoy. They do everything very quickly as if they don't really enjoy life."* (Aide)
Modernity ≠ culture/tradition *"To be modern is like something new, something opposed to culture. Culture for me is to preserve traditions, ancient traditions, but in modern worlds people loose these traditions."* (Gabriela)	
Modernity = a change that is external to them *"Modernity is an external change, it does not come from me. It comes from globalization"* (Gabriela)	

Table 3: Interview participants' answers to modernity

As shown in Table 3, all the students generally accepted that modernity refers to technological advancement, the United States, English, innovation, and to an external change. They also thought that there are two different levels of modernity, and that modernity is the opposite of culture and tradition. In addition, Table 3 shows that Indigenous students' seemed to be even more concerned than mestizo students with the change to which they have to adapt.

6.1.1.1.2 Coloniality of power

Table 4 shows what interview participants perceived in relation to the power of knowledge (i.e., with coloniality).

Participants (in general) think that:	In addition, Indigenous participants think that:
Anglophone authors have more knowledge than Mexican ones *"I feel that English writers are more experienced and that they have more knowledge"* (Elena) *"In my area of studies, the most recent knowledge comes in English (…) The most up-to date knowledge is in English"* (Leticia)	Knowledge is produced on both sides (i.e., in the traditional and in the modern world) *"I think that the knowledge exchange is mutual, from here to there and from there to here (…). With the knowledge I have from my own community, I can contribute a lot in the modern world. As a matter of fact, I did that yesterday in a class. The teacher asked to give my own perspective on a subject, which I did, and all my peers were quite impressed."* (Jorge)
Most of our books are in English *"(…) That's the problem because when we want to study for academic subjects, all the books are in English."* (Leticia) *"We have to read a lot in my undergraduate program. In the third semester we have to read in English; it's essential. Professors even come to give conferences in English"* (Jorge)	Education is better in the United States or other developed countries. *"Here in Mexico, we don't have enough technology, and teachers are not educated enough to teach what they teach. In the States and in other countries, they have better schools, better ways to teach, better technology which allows learning more efficiently."* (Guillermo)
Technical knowledge comes from the United States which is normal because it is a modern country *"In my area* [marketing]*, it is highly important to speak English because most of the theories we use come from the States. And the books I buy, they are all in Spanish, but they were translated from English. The authors are from the States or elsewhere. I have no Mexican author (…). This is due to the fact that the States is a more modern country than Mexico; that's why also knowledge comes from there."* (Gabriela)	Knowledge and recognition are linked to English. *"English now is a global and a modern language. If I would speak English, people in my community would recognize me as being someone with more knowledge."* (Frida).

Table 4: Interview participants' answers to "coloniality"

As shown in Table 4, most of the students thought that knowledge produced in English

(or from the West) is more valuable than knowledge produced in Mexico. Only

Indigenous students seemed to think that their own local knowledge may also contribute

to the modern world.

6.1.1.1.3   Linguistic representations

Table 5 shows students' linguistic representations of Indigenous languages and Spanish.

The table subdivides Indigenous and mestizo students' excerpts when necessary.

Indigenous languages		Spanish
Mestizo students	**Indigenous students**	
Indigenous languages = origins, roots *"I feel identified with Indigenous cultures in some way because in my community, we have traditions and customs that are influenced by these cultures."* (Gabriela) *"Indigenous languages represent our communities, it's the origin of the communities."* (Angel)		Spanish = identity *"I am still not convinced that Spanish is my identity for being Mexican"* (Jorge) *"I identify with Spanish, that's the only language I speak."* (Elena and Gabriela)
Not modern languages *"Modernity and Nahuatl? Mmmh, no …. Nahuatl is disappearing. Spanish is not."* (Angel) *"Totonaco is not a modern language. It's not current."* (Blanca)		Spanish = utilitarian language for bilingual Indigenous students *"I perceive Spanish as a language that allows me to connect with other people in Mexico, like English allows me to connect with overseas."* (Jorge) *"I just use Spanish because it is a necessity, because I cannot study in Nahuatl."* (Leticia)
Languages of the past *"I feel Indigenous languages as something very far away because in my community nobody speaks them anymore. They also do not speak them in the neighbouring communities either."* (Gabriela)	Languages of the past and the present: desire to maintain *"When I entered university, I scolded my mother for never really teaching me Nahuatl. In my community people speak Nahuatl. It's great to have two languages, and if I learn English, I will have three"* (Angel)	Spanish = language of assimilation *"I had to learn Spanish at school when I was five because it was mandatory. My teacher did not speak Nahuatl."* (Jorge)
	Indigenous languages = identity *"We have to be proud of where we come from and of*	Spanish = bridge, connection *"Spanish is like a bridge. It connects me with the world outside from my community. I feel like I am living between*

	our language. My father always told me that we never have to let us fooled, that Nahuatl is difficult to learn. I grew up in Nahuatl. I speak Nahuatl at home with my parents and my siblings. It's my first language." (Jorge) *"We feel identified with Indigenous languages. It's important not to lose them; they should be taught from one generation to the other."* (Guillermo)	*both languages, Totonaco and Spanish."* (Blanca)
	Indigenous language = utilitarian *"To speak an Indigenous language gives us a lot of opportunities. We can get a lot of scholarships thanks to Nahuatl."* (Leticia)	**Spanish = official and universal language** *"For me Spanish is universal language because everybody speaks it; it's also Mexico's official language because only few people speak Indigenous languages. Here at the university for example you can't speak an Indigenous language. Nobody understands you. You have to speak Spanish."* (Frida)
Indigenous language = dialect *« I would like to work in a community where people speak dialect (…) it's a dialect. I don't know them as languages. English and French are languages. A language is something bigger. Rural Indigenous areas speak dialects. "* (Trinidad) *"According to what I have read, Nahuatl is a dialect because it does not have so much vocabulary. It is spoken in some regions only, not in whole Mexico. Spanish has much more vocabulary."* (Jorge)		

Table 5: Linguistic representations towards Indigenous languages and Spanish

As shown in Table 5, Indigenous and mestizo students perceived Indigenous languages as part of their origins and roots. They did not perceive them as modern languages, but as dialects. Indigenous students thought that they are part of their present and their past, whereas mestizos only perceived them as part of their past. In addition, Indigenous

students thought that Indigenous languages may sometimes be utilitarian languages. They also declared the will to maintain these languages because they represented their identity. Mestizo students identified more with Spanish, a utilitarian language for them, which was also perceived by both groups as an official and universal language. In addition, Indigenous students thought that Spanish is a language of assimilation and therefore a bridge that connects Mexico's diverse cultures.

Table 6 shows UAF students' representations of English, the language of modernity.

English = power/cultural capital	
"When I think in English, I think of power, in money. When people immigrate to the United States, they send money back home and in the United States they have nice houses (…) they have better life conditions, they eat better, dress better and have better opportunities." (Angel) *"Here too, you need English when you look for a job. They want 70-80% of English competency. Not always, but when you want a modern job, you need it. "* (Angel) *"Educated people speak English and have good jobs."* (Elena) *"To be honest, I don't like English at all, but I like the power that comes with it"* (Frida)	
English imposed by the society	**English imposed by the university (UPAEP)**
English = US *"Here English is basic because the United States are our neighbours; we should at least speak their language"* (Jorge) *"They are pretending to make English an official language now and we have no choice but to speak it."* (Frida)	English = difficult language = obligation *"I feel that English is a difficult language. And because I feel it is difficult, it's like an obligation, a burden."* (Guillermo) *"I don't like English. If it wasn't mandatory, I would not study it."*(Frida)
English = imposition through modernity - *"English and modernity?"*(Researcher) - *"Yes, because it grasped me, it was imposed on me."* (Blanca) *"English is modernity because it is something that reached me, to which I have to adapt."* (Trinidad)	English imposed at the university, as Spanish was imposed at school. *"It was like a blow, I remember it was difficult. When I first arrived in grade one, my peers already knew how to speak Spanish. And the truth is that I did not know anything. Here at the university we already know how to speak Spanish, and now they want us to speak English."* (Jorge)
English = necessity, aspiration *"English is a necessity and an aspiration for you, because you want to improve, and therefore you*	Content classes in English *"In some classes, teachers show their slides in Spanish, but they speak English. That's why I feel that the whole*

will do whatever it takes in order to learn new things, modern things that come to the world; you want to learn them in order to acquire more knowledge and be able to communicate with people." (Guillermo)	*university is English. In Agro meteorology 15 out of 60 classes are in English, but there are other classes who are 100% in English. And we have to present in English too sometimes"* (Leticia)
	English = too recognized at the university *"The university wrote a note about [a] student on facebook and twitter, and mentioned that he successfully passed his exam which was in English, but the Board never recognizes any other subject. Another UAF student who studies Law also passed a very difficult exam with a high grade, but he has not been recognized in the same way as the other student. His exam was in Spanish, not in English. I don't really know why the university recognizes English so much, much more than any other subject."* (Jorge)

Table 6: Interview participants' linguistic representations towards English

As shown above, Indigenous and mestizo students thought that English is a cultural

capital that represents power. English is a necessity and an aspiration in Mexico, imposed

on national and local levels through modernity and the United States. However, some

students felt that English is too highly valued at UPAEP.

6.1.1.1.4   UAF students' subjectivities in the EFL classroom

Table 7 shows how UAF students reacted to the English learning process in EFL classes

at UPAEP.

Discrimination	
At the university	In the EFL classroom
"It upsets me that there are still people who support inequality (…) yes, it upsets me, not so much because I am an Indigenous person, rather because they accuse us of being less intelligent (…) additionally, they often do not even say Indigenous, but Indian." (Leticia) *"Some students are very cruel, they don't help us, they don't value us, yes, some are still like this, and they discriminate against us a lot."* (Guillermo)	*"In the English class, some classmates help you and explain, but others are horrible, they literally turn their back on you. At the beginning I suffered a lot because of that because I felt very small, I did not feel recognized anymore, I felt I had nothing left."* (Jorge) *"They think they know everything and that they know a lot of English, They feel superior. They do not care about us, just because of English, and they*

"People look at me the way I dress [because he does not dress with nice clothes]. *They make fun of me. They are very cruel"*(Guillermo) *"They are not inclusive; when we have to do team work, they exclude you (…) they are very obvious. That hurts a lot."* (Jorge)	*make you feel it very clearly."* (Guillermo) *"Some of the "other" students perceive English as a power; a power they impose on us. In class, always the same students participate, those who want to show that they can speak. And those who don't speak English, just have to stay quiet."* (Jorge) Special EFL courses *"The university makes us stupid. This was a big mistake (…). Teachers were far too tolerant with us."* (Angel)
Colonial divide (we/them) *"The truth is, the real problem is that the "others" know a lot, much more than we do"*(Angel) *"They all went to private schools where they really learnt English. We went to public schools where the English teacher does not speak English at all."* (Leticia)	
Feelings of inferiority *"Since primary level, they study English. They do understand the teachers and the texts. They are confident about what they know. We are not."* (Angel) *"The "others" talk and talk English in classes as if they were talking in Spanish"* (Blanca)	Feelings of fear *"Teachers sometimes are very rude, they force us to participate. Even if you don't know what to say, they stay there and wait until you answer something."* (Blanca) *"I feel inhibited by fear, fear of not doing well, of giving the wrong answers and fear that my classmates will make fun of me."* (Gabriela) *"If I focus more on English, I will lose my roots (…). Here in Puebla, I don't speak Totonaco. I like living here, but I am afraid of losing my Indigenous identity."* (Frida)

Table 7: UAF students' subjective feelings towards English in EFL classes

As shown in Table 7, UAF students felt discriminated against not only at the university, but also in EFL classes, because, according to them, English is used to show superiority. Hence, students also felt "othered" and therefore felt inferior and afraid in EFL classes.

6.1.1.2 Answers to sub question 2: factors that influence EFL investment

The following quotes answer sub question two. Interview participants expressed what factors influence their investment in EFL.

Students as agents	
Creation of students' plurilingual learning strategies *"I always relate new English words to words in Spanish or Nahuatl, to something I already know. I may not participate much in class, but I can visualize and feel what I am learning."* (Jorge) *"With my nieces, we often pretend that we are cooking or that we get together for gossip, and then we say: "In English we say CAT, in Nahuatl NIXTON, and in Spanish GATO." We do the same with colors, animals or any other things. In a certain way, it's easier for us when we relate the three languages, it's easier to remember English like this."* (Angel)	Creation of students' pluricultural learning strategies *"If what we learn is not related to something I know, I kind of try to relate it, I look for a different strategy that will help me to understand."* (Jorge) *"When I am learning English, I make my own connections. The teacher does not know that I am from the UAF program."* (Blanca) Preparing classes *"It helps me a lot to prepare the class beforehand because then I understand what the teacher is talking about."* (Gabriela)
Ownership of English *"I feel that English now is not a foreign language anymore. At the end, we hear English everywhere in Mexico, even in Indigenous communities. It's becoming like a third language, I am not the only one, neither the first nor the last one who has to learn English, right?"* (Leticia) *"I would like to make English my own, something I could identify with, to see it as something normal and not as an obligation anymore (…). I would like to merge the English language with my own culture, because, in the end, it's only a language, a form of expression. What's inside me that will never change."* (Guillermo)	Fight discrimination *"There is pressure to speak English if we want to be better. If we don't speak Nahuatl, nothing happens, but we need to speak English to be perceived as competent."* (Angel)
Imagined communities *"If we speak English and can connect with other countries, people won't say anymore that we are poor and that we don't have education."* (Leticia) *"If I want to get to know important people and to climb the social scale, I need to speak English. English is like the key that opens many doors, right?"* (Elena) *"I want to learn English to be able to BE, and to be able to go on with my life"* (Gabriela) *"I want to learn English, I really do, I want to be able to speak it, to use it because I know that I will have much more authority, more culture; I will be more knowledgeable, more everything."* (Frida)	
Hybridization vs. assimilation	
"I want to enter modernity, but without ever	*"Some people seem to be ashamed, yes, I think they*

leaving my past. I never forget where I come from, my origins, and now I am adapting here. I am doing this fusion. I will go back to my community just the way I left it. I don't forget." (Guillermo)	*feel shame of where they come from. Some people arrive at the university, and suddenly they don't remember their communities anymore (...) they feel as if they had lived in Puebla forever, and as if they do not come from a rural community."* (Jorge) *"I would like to focus on both languages, and not leaving one for learning another one. But, for the moment, when I focus on English, I take more time to study English. I go less to my community and speak less Totonaco. Therefore I forget it and my competency level goes down."* (Frida)

Table 8: Factors that influence UAF students' EFL investment

As shown in Table 8, UAF students invest in EFL when they are able to act as agents. Agency allows them to create imagined communities, and plurilingual and pluricultural autonomous language learning strategies. This agency exerts a sort of resistance that allows them to fight against discrimination, to gain ownership of English, and to negotiate their multiple identities through a process of hybridization.

After the first analysis, interview participants' answers were (re)analyzed in four Interpretative Focus Group (IFG) sessions with six other students from the UAF program.

6.1.2   Interpretative Focus Group participants' member check

The PowerPoint presentation I prepared for IFG participants was based on the points listed below and on interview students' quotes without mentioning students' names. I first introduced IFG participants to the objective of the study and to the research questions. I also introduced them to the theoretical constructs, such as modernity, coloniality, imagined communities and others. In addition, I asked them if they would agree to divide the UAF group by categorizing them between monolingual Indigenous, bilingual Indigenous and non-Indigenous (or mestizos). They accepted this categorization

unanimously. As expressed by Teresa: *"sure, that's exactly what we are."* Based on the PowerPoint presentation, we discussed the first analysis. We had four meetings of two hours each. Below are IFG participants' responses to the main topics.

6.1.2.1 Mexico's context

6.1.2.1.1 Modernity

Participants generally agreed with their peers' perceptions as far as modernity is concerned. While they perceived two different modernities, they did not distinguish between the local and the global, but between Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The non-Indigenous perception was the one expressed during the interviews. Pablo explained the Indigenous perception of modernity as follows:

> *Modernity, from our Indigenous perspectives, is NOT to go ahead, to replace the "old" by the "new" like it is in the globalized world. This would be an eradication of traditions, a loss. For us, modernity is to recover what has been already lost. It is to recover languages, traditions, forms of doing different things, forms of analyzing the world.*

In addition, IFG participants expressed that they did not like the word "modernity". Arturo *"would not call it modernity, but rather globalization. Modernity, I think, is to adapt to globalization."* Arturo also criticized how politicians speak about modernity: *"they always think that they will bring modernity to our communities, they also think they know how things work better."* Arturo's analysis made reference to the unequal power relationship between urban and rural contexts which seems to be very similar to the unequal power relationships between center and periphery countries (Galtung, 1971) that lead to coloniality, as referred to in the context. Teresa agreed that modernity is perceived very differently in both contexts (i.e., in the rural and the urban world). However, she thought that it is possible to have both tradition and modernity. According to her: *"it's a*

question of balance; it's like music. In music, we always fuse different genres together."
Hence, IFG participants added a more Indigenous or rural perspective of what modernity
might represent to UAF students.

6.1.2.1.2   Coloniality

I showed IFG participants their peers' quotes in relation to coloniality. Teresa reacted
strongly and said that: *"it is not alright to think that foreigners are better than Mexicans,*
that they have more valuable knowledge than Mexican people." Then I asked why
interview participants thought that many Mexicans believe in the "superiority" of
foreigners. Teresa expressed that these are ideas have been imposed on them. Lourdes
said that:

> *This comes from colonization. People who have strong identities, people who are*
> *sure about what they know and about what they don't know are less manipulated*
> *than others. They valorise what they have. They criticize the official discourse.*
> *Those whose identities are not strong enough let themselves be influenced more*
> *easily. They adopt other ways of life and other ideas more quickly.*

Arturo added that*:*

> *The UPAEP makes us believe that knowledge production is better in the United*
> *States than in Mexico. I study agronomy and it's obvious in the bibliography we*
> *use. We have always been told that the editor Mc Graw Hill is much better than*
> *Trillas, even if Trillas publishes Mexican studies from Chapingo[15].*

He also added that the UPAEP library signed more agreements with publishers from the
United States than with Mexican editors, *"that's why students will mostly find books from*
authors from the United States, translated into Spanish in the library." Hector and
Marisol agreed with Arturo's perspective by adding that *"in general, the books we have*

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[15] Chapingo is a recognized public university in Mexico that focuses on agronomy studies, but whose
ideologies are opposed to UPAEP's ideologies.

to read for our studies are mainly written by foreign authors or are translated into Spanish."

6.1.2.1.3   Linguistic representations

As far as linguistic representations are concerned, IFG participants agreed with all the different points mentioned by their peers and did not add much. They agreed that English has a powerful position in Mexico, that the language is perceived as self-improvement and that it is associated with modern and technological advancement. They also agreed that English is a difficult language for them which is imposed on national and local levels (i.e., at the UPAEP). Lourdes added that: *"This is exactly what we don't like, to have learning something imposed on us; that's why we don't find the positive side of English."* It seems that this imposition to learn English, as expressed by Lourdes, leads to the subjectivities shown next.

6.1.2.2   UAF students' subjectivities in the EFL classroom

6.1.2.2.1   Colonial divide / discrimination

Participants reacted strongly when I first introduced the point in relation to interview participants' categorization "we" vs. "the others". According to IFG participants the use of "we" vs. "the others" came from the EFL courses that were specifically created for UAF students. Teresa explained: *"even if the objective of these courses was good* [i.e., to help us]*, they were counterproductive because teachers lowered the EFL level and we stayed in a comfort zone in which we had to believe that we knew less than "the others."* Arturo added: *"I think that this opposition we make may also be due to the fact that most of the "others" come from private schools and that we come from public schools."* In the end, he also exclaimed that: *"the worst is that we believe it"*, in other words, the worst is

that they still believe that "the others" know more than they do. IFG participants also agreed that discrimination exists at the university and in EFL classes. As expressed by Teresa: *"Sure we feel discriminated against and more in the EFL classroom."* They also agreed that some of their dominant peers use English to show superiority. Pablo declared that: *"I was about to leave the university and the program just because of English."* He recalled that his teacher was a native speaker who never let the students say anything in Spanish. When he had to ask something, it was in English and *"they [his peers] often laughed at me because I couldn't pronounce well and the teacher did not care. They called me "rancherito"* [little farmer]. *I felt horrible."*

6.1.2.2.2   Feelings of fear and inferiority

Teresa expressed that they *"are only afraid in EFL classes, not in other content classes"* even if, at the beginning of their studies they had to catch up to the academic level of other content classes. Lourdes expressed that *"English makes us panic and bogged down. This does not allow us to see the positive sides of English. We only focus on the negative sides; on the fact that it is imposed and that it may lead us to lose our roots. But in reality, if our identity is strong, we will never lose our roots."* This contradicts somehow Frida's feelings who declared in the interviews that she was afraid to lose her Indigenous identity. When Pablo expressed his feelings, he said that on one hand he feared EFL because he never understood anything in class. It was like *"as if they* [i.e., the "others" and the teacher] *are speaking Chinese*[16]. *They talk to us in a language we do not*

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[16] In Mexico, when someone says that someone *"habla en chino"* [talks Chinese], it means that the listener does not understand anything. Hence, in Pablo's case, to understand someone who speaks English is like trying to understand someone who speaks Chinese (i.e., something nearly impossible).

understand. Hence, we concentrate on decoding the language, in deciphering. We mainly focus on the fact that we do not understand, and meanwhile, the rest of the class is moving forward." On the other hand, he also feared them and felt inferior because: *"the teacher always talked about topics related to trips to foreign countries, everything in English. He asked us where we had travelled and which places we knew. I felt ashamed to say that I had never travelled and that my most important trip was from my community to Puebla. Nobody tried to understand me. I just did not fit in."* When it was his time to participate, he had nothing to say. At the end of his intervention, he added *"all the other courses were difficult, but this one, the English class, was just another world."* Marisol added that: *"in the first semesters when students speak about global topics, it makes no sense to us. Now, in higher semesters, you don't feel so bad anymore, you understand what they are talking about."* *"But in the end",* according to Pablo, *"the fear is not English in itself, the fear is to fail the course; you pass or you pass; you can't fail, that's the major fear."*

6.1.2.2.3   Factors that influence EFL investment

IFG participants agreed that they create their own language learning strategies. They did not criticize what their peers expressed, but rather added on it. Teresa for example related EFL to mathematics because *"grammar is like learning mathematical rules. You just have to use them."* Pablo in turn said that he *"begun to study English because* [he] *had to read papers in Engineering, and his strategy was to look up every word he did not know in the dictionary. That helped a lot. This strategy also helped to pass EFL exams."* Marisol in turn needed to feel that English is used in the everyday life *"and called* [her] *father and* [her] *uncle who work in Ontario, Canada, and tried to speak English with*

them." Lourdes and Marisol also insisted *that "preparing the EFL class beforehand helps a lot. If you read the articles in the book and look up vocabulary, you will be able to participate more easily. I also researched the topics on the internet. It's easy to find information about these topics because they are always related to the United States."* IFG participants also agreed that they have to become agents to fight against discrimination. Marisol said that in order to do so *"you have to speak about your life in class. It's better if they know about your community and your traditions. This helps you to be proud of yourself. This is yours and nobody has the right to take it away from you."* Teresa recalled that she always used a bag that was made by women in her community: *"this bag calls people's attention and so I can speak with them about my community."* It was a good hook.

6.1.2.2.4   Appropriating English

IFG participants agreed with interview participants in that they are creating ownership of English in higher semesters. According to Marisol they *"feel English as* [their] *own once* [they] *really realize that it will be useful in* [their] *professional development."* Pablo added that now that he finished all the mandatory EFL levels, *"*[he] *want*[s] *to learn English because* [he does] *not feel the imposition anymore."*

- **Imagined communities**

"If you can't beat them, join them" was Marisol's answer to the factor that influences EFL investment. I asked her if by speaking English, she could join "them", making allusion to the idea that if UAF students speak English, they may join a higher recognized

"community" in Puebla and in the EFL classroom. She answered that *"yes, unfortunately, yes. They will perceive us as poor rural kids, but kids who speak English. Some people see it that way. They do not value you as human beings; they are just interested in what you possess and what you know. It may be an advantage because it's easier to reposition yourself that way."* Lourdes added that *"in the context of the city, it's normal to speak English; speaking English repositions you. It's the same if a French person, or any foreigner, goes to an Indigenous community and lives there. If that person learns the Indigenous language, it will reposition her in that specific context too. I saw that personally. Some French people live in a community since 15 or 20 years and they learned how to speak Nahuatl. People appreciate and value them because they speak the language."* Hence, according to Lourdes, repositioning can occur in any context.

In general, IFG participants did not like the notion "imagined community"; it did not make much sense to them. Marisol expressed that *"it's a very weird term, I don't like it."*

6.1.2.3   Additional points to be taken into account

IFG participants raised several points during the meetings that I did not take into account in the first analysis. These points are listed next:

6.1.2.3.1   Rural vs. urban context

IFG participants explained that UPAEP students are living in different contexts and times. The rural context where UAF students come from has nearly no contact with the global world. According to Hector *"in our communities, people speak Nahuatl or Spanish, or both, but there's no English. They don't really need it."* On the contrary, in larger cities like Puebla, everything is in English and people have more contact with the

language. They are more used to seeing and hearing it. Arturo explained that: *"it is very similar to what happens with new technologies. My father for example cannot use a cell phone, but for me it is something normal which is part of my daily life. Here in Puebla, English is already part of people's daily life, but in rural communities it is not important yet. This may change with the time."* Hence, according to them, students who do not come from rural communities have greater facility in learning English because they are already more "global", closer to the English context. Thus, the change in their lives is not so radical.

6.1.2.3.2   Generation

Arturo mentioned in one of our meetings that: *"We also have to take into account that there is a difference in generations. Those generations of students who come after us seem to be better prepared in English because English teachers in public schools seem to be higher qualified now."* According to Arturo, English teachers seem to be "real" English teachers now, whereas a few years ago, content teachers had to teach EFL even if they did not speak the language. All the other members of the IFG agreed with Arturo because, according to Marisol: *"this year's new cohort achieved higher EFL levels in the English placement tests than we did. Some of them even directly entered in the second or third competency level."*

IFG participants called my attention that both context and generation play an important role in their struggles with the EFL learning process. I had not thought about them previously.

6.1.2.3.3   Aversion towards English

According to Pablo *"we obviously have an aversion towards English because of our deficiencies. We don't reject English because we can't learn it, but we reject it because we are those with more deficiencies. The others began to study English before us and we have to adapt to their learning rhythm. And the teachers build upon those who know more instead of building upon those who know less. The aversion is towards the English class, not towards the language in itself."* Arturo added that the aversion towards the language also comes from the fact that English is the language of the United States and *"even if we don't want to accept it, the United States represent the invader, those who want to take up everything, those who discriminate against us; as a nation, we feel bitterness against them and English is their official language. We don't feel the same bitterness against Spain even though they colonized us. We still speak Spanish. The bitterness we feel against the States is at several levels: it's economical, it's discrimination, it's because of the Mexican migrants they want to throw out."* Teresa agreed that learning English *"has a lot to do with the perceptions we have of the United States."* According to Marisol, UAF students have something additional that their dominant peers do not have: *"we and our families are much more in contact with the Mexican migrants. Our families leave to the States to work there and they tell us about how they get abused, discriminated against, how they cross the border and how they have to suffer."* According to Marisol, this also increases their aversion towards English.

Table 9 shows UAF participants' reactions when asked what the Language Department or the UAF program could do in order to improve EFL classes.

6.1.2.4 Recommendations for improvement

Table 9 shows what IFG participants added in relation to their peers' answers when asked

what they would like to change in EFL classes.

To create a real breakthrough level	To make EFL learning reflexive
"We need a real beginner's level to catch up with the others who already know English." (Marisol)	*"This teacher makes us laugh all the time, and therefore you don't forget. He makes us feel comfortable. Say it as many times you need to say it, that's his catchphrase. He always tells us that we need to make mistakes, so we know where we mess up. This teacher really makes a difference because he makes English learning reflexive."* (Teresa)
To live in an English speaking context *"I would like to have the opportunity to work in summer in the States or in Canada to get immersed in the language. It would be great to do that at the beginning of the undergraduate program during one or two summers."* (Lourdes) To use Spanish in class *"Native speakers tell us that we can't speak Spanish, that they don't understand us. EFL teachers should be bilinguals."* (Marisol) *"When we had to remember something important, this teacher spoke to us in Spanish. That was great and helped me a lot."* (Pablo)	**To awaken teachers' interest in teaching** *"Teachers speak too fast because they want to show that they are good and superior. There's this new teacher for example, who speaks well but very fast. So I asked him to slow down and he answered "Oh lord! Give her some brain! That's impossible!" This same teacher also makes fun of students who do not pronounce well."* (Marisol) *"The Language Department should select the teachers who can teach best, not those who can speak best."* (Lourdes) *"Teachers make the difference between the fact that you learn or don't learn; between the fact that you like the subject or you don't like it."* (Teresa)
To change participation rules in EFL *"The participation rules are all right because they help you to participate in class, but sometimes, even if you participate you get low grades. Participation grades do not take the effort we make in consideration. Not everything can be measured."* (Pablo) *"Some teachers make participation rubrics and explain them to you. They tell you exactly how you can improve. That helps a lot."* (Hector)	**To make teachers recognize local forms of knowledge** *"It's difficult because they would have to change the books. They are not published here, they are written in another context, a more global one. Teachers would have to make a bigger effort to recognize that in each group there are diverse people, people with different knowledges. Teachers would have to make the topics adapt to the interests of their students."* (Lourdes) *"To have prior knowledge about a topic you have to talk about is essential. If not, you just don't know what to say, not even in Spanish. That happens a lot when they deal with global topics. We don't know what to say."* (Hector)

To create context based advanced EFL classes	To "rethink" the use of learning strategies
"The creation of content based EFL classes in higher competency levels would help a lot because we would be able to speak more about our interests than about global topics we don't know about. These topics would be linked to stuff we know, that are easy for us." (Pablo)	*"All the teachers use learning strategies, but some of them make them very boring, they are very inflexible and follow the instructions too carefully. We need dynamic classes."* (Marisol) *"Learning strategies kind of demotivated me because I have my own way to learn."* (Teresa)

Table 9: IFG ´participants' recommendations for improvement

As shown in Table 9, IFG participants would like to create a real breakthrough English course level and advanced EFL content-based courses. They would also like to live for a while in an English speaking context. According to them, teachers should allow them to speak Spanish in class when necessary, they should rethink how to use language learning strategies, recognize minority students' local knowledges, make EFL learning reflexive, and show more interest in teaching English.

In summary, section 6.1 aims to show some of interview participants' most relevant excerpts and how participants approved, contested and sometimes added on my and their peers' interpretations. Some of these excerpts will be repeated in the following sections to make different points and to illustrate different levels of analysis. Thus, the next section analyzes the data of both groups, but through the lens of the theoretical framework presented in the literature review.

6.2   The macro context: participants' perceptions

Perceptions of UAF participants' macro context are divided as follows. First, I analyze how UAF participants perceive their context by examining what modernity represents for

them. Next, I present the symbolic power that participants attribute to languages in their environment and their "worlds."

6.2.1   Modernity

Interview participants, in general, thought that modernity is represented by the United States because it is a "developed" country and, according to Leticia, because it is *"a growing place, a place where technology changes all the time."* Modernity is also represented by English because, as stated by Elena, *"to enter modernity we have to speak English. English and modernity are the same. They represent the United States."* For interview participants, modernity is synonymous with technological advancement, innovation and change. Modernity opens new spaces and is associated with urban life styles. However, interview participants distinguished two different levels of modernity: the first level is the Mexican urban context because, according to Elena, *"coming to this program, for me, has been like entering modernity."* The second modernity is highly valued by Elena: *"if you don't speak English, you don't enter modernity; only Mexican modernity."* Jorge confirmed Elena's idea of the two modernities by stating that *"we can be part of Mexican modernity, but English allows us to cross the border."* IFG participants contested this perception. They also perceived two modernities, but rather two different perspectives and not levels of modernity. Pablo expressed that:

> *modernity from our Indigenous perspective is not to go ahead, to replace the "old" by the "new" like it is in the globalized world. This would be an eradication of traditions, a loss. For us, modernity is to recover what has been already lost. It is to recover languages, traditions, forms of doing different things, forms of analyzing the world.*

However, participants of both groups generally agreed that in order to be part of modernity (i.e., to have access to the world of technology), they have to change their

current lives. They perceived this change as something that comes from the outside as expressed by Trinidad: *"For me, getting modern or being part of modernity is like changing, it's a change because it's something which is not in me."* According to Gabriela, *"modernity is* [also] *an external change, it does not come from me, it comes from globalization."* Arturo confirmed that for UAF students, modernity *"is to adapt to globalization."* Trinidad expressed that this change is not mandatory, one is free to accept it or not: *"to get modern requires work, but I also think that this depends on yourself, it depends if you really want to change, if you really need it. Nobody can oblige you to do so."* According to interview participants' answers, the idea of "change" seems to be more developed in Indigenous than in non-Indigenous students' minds. For some Indigenous students' like Angel, this change is essentializing two different cultures (i.e., to explain differences by inherent, biological, "natural" characteristics shared by members of a group which results in stereotyping differences). For him modernity *"means a change in life (…). It means to leave your cultural traditions behind and to forget all this so you can have new generations."* For others, like Guillermo, modernity requires one *"to adapt to new forms of life, new forms that come to us, to our culture."* Hence, the required change is more an adaptation and not so much essentializing two different oppositional cultures anymore. This adaptation is also expressed by Gabriela who thinks that *"in Mexico there are a lot of cultural things, we conserve traditions, but in the United States there is technology and modernity. However, you can't go to a Mexican community and bring in modern technological stuff because you will ruin the traditions."* IFG participants agreed more with Guillermo in that modernity is more *"a question of balance; it's like music. In music, we always fuse different genres together"* as expressed by Teresa. As a result, not

all research participants thought that modernity means to lessen ties with their cultural traditions which are, according to some of them, in opposition to modernity.

However, all the participants (interview and IFG participants; Indigenous and non-Indigenous) agreed that modernity is not yet part of their lives; it is something that they have to acquire, learn, and fight for as expressed by Trinidad: *"if we want to access modernity, we have to make a specific effort."* Blanca imagined this change as *"going from the most simple to the most complicated"* (i.e., as moving from their local context where they speak Spanish and/or an Indigenous language to something difficult, such as a global life where they will have to speak English).

The extracts above indicate the influence of colonial legacies on participants' perceptions of modernity because they related modernity to the United States, to English, to technological advancement and innovation which does not take place in Mexico, but in more "developed" countries. Modernity requires a change that is imposed on them from the external world, a change they will have to make if they want to be part of the "modern" world. Hence, there is an ongoing power relationship in this perspective of modernity, between a center country which is represented by the United States and the highest level of modernity, and a periphery country which is Mexico with a lower level of modernity. To access the highest level of modernity, students need to speak English. Only Pablo mentioned a more horizontal perspective of modernity based on Indigenous people's schemata. As mentioned in the literature review, modernity as defined by UAF students implies that knowledge production comes from the West (Mignolo, 2005) which will be analyzed next based on the notion of "coloniality". For this reason, the following

section examines participants' beliefs about knowledge, and the kind of knowledge they will be able to harmonize in their process of change towards modernity.

6.2.2   Coloniality

Participants perceptions also differed as far as knowledge production is concerned, mostly depending on participants' affiliation.

6.2.2.1   All UAF participants

In general, UAF participants thought that Anglophone authors were more knowledgeable than Mexican authors as expressed by Elena: *"I feel that English writers are more experienced and that they have more knowledge."* As a matter of fact, most of the books UAF students have to read are in English, or translated from Anglophone authors. Jorge stated that: *"in the third semester [they] have to read in English. Professors even come to give conferences in English."* Leticia also said that: *"when* [they] *want to study for academic subjects, all the books are in English."* This was confirmed by Arturo from the IFG group who also expressed that:

> the UPAEP makes [them] *believe that knowledge production is better in the United States than in Mexico. I study agronomy and it's obvious in the bibliography we use. We have always been told that the publisher Mc Graw Hill is much better than Trillas,*

Trillas is a Mexican publisher who publishes research from the University of Chapingo, one of Mexico's leading agronomy programs. Hector and Marisol also confirmed that generally they *"have to read books written by foreign authors or translated into Spanish."* Hence, the university also seems to favour coloniality. In addition, non-Indigenous students like Gabriela, clearly favoured the knowledge production from

"developed" countries and were aware that in order to be able to acquire the most up to date knowledge, they needed to speak English. Gabriela stated that:

> *I study marketing which is something globalized. Additionally, the United States is so close and has such a big influence on Mexico. This is the reason why knowledge comes from there. That's the way it is and that's the reason why I have to learn English.*

Gabriela was clearly aware that English represented knowledge, and therefore power, a power she did not seem to question at all. Frida also linked knowledge to power and to English. For her *"English now is a global and modern language. If I spoke English, people in my community would recognize me as being someone with more knowledge."* English is therefore closely linked to coloniality and power, a relationship that will also be discussed in participants' linguistic perceptions. Only Teresa in the IFG group contested the belief that knowledge production from the West is better. She stated: *"it's not true that foreigners are better than Mexicans, that they have more valuable knowledge than Mexican people."* According to Lourdes, the belief in the superiority of foreign knowledge *"comes from colonization. People who have strong identities, people who are sure about what they know, and about what they don't know, will be less manipulated than others. They value what they have. They criticize the official discourse."* As a result, perceptions about coloniality are divided.

To summarize, participants generally believed that knowledge production from Anglophone countries (or the West) is better, but Teresa, an IFG participant, contested that belief. However, participants believed that the university favours coloniality because students are mostly required to read books written in English or Spanish translations.

Indigenous participants' perspectives seemed to differ somehow on what was mentioned above as analyzed next.

6.2.2.2 Indigenous UAF participants

Indigenous students, like Jorge or Guillermo, think that knowledge production does not only come from the "modern" world or from the United States. They perceive that their local cultures also offer valuable knowledge as expressed by Jorge: *"With the knowledge I have from my community, I can contribute a lot in the modern world."* Yet, the level of empowerment Indigenous participants feel in relation to their local knowledge differs from one person to the other.

Jorge is the one who feels most empowered by his Indigenous background. He tries to share his local knowledge whenever he can. According to him: *"The most important thing is to be proud of what you know."* Guillermo in turn, is more careful: *"I know a lot of things they* [dominant EFL peers] *don't even imagine*." Guillermo is aware and proud of his knowledge, but he also knows that it is not always recognized.

Frida, in opposition to Guillermo and Jorge, thinks that local knowledge and cultures are not recognized at all in Mexico. According to her, there is absolutely no exchange between Indigenous and "modern" knowledges, and therefore, it is better for her to move on (i.e., to learn English and to acquire the knowledge related to that language). According to her: "*Indigenous languages and knowledges are not recognized at all here. Nobody asks you about them. They know about them only if you tell them. When you speak about 'Nahuatl, Totonaco or Otomi', they say, 'What? I have never heard about that'. Indigenous populations don't even appear on the map."* Even if Frida is aware and

proud about her local knowledge, she does not feel empowered by it at all. Yet, this feeling of empowerment plays an important role in Indigenous students' identity negotiation as to be discussed in section 6.5.

In summary, UAF students perceived modernity as a synonym of the United States, technological advancement and innovation. English represents the access key to the "modern technological" world. Participants' perceptions also showed the intrinsic link between modernity and coloniality, because according to them, knowledge is generally produced in English speaking countries. Indigenous students however, in contrast to mestizo students, thought that knowledge can also be produced at local levels, even if not all the Indigenous participants felt empowered by it. Hence, colonial legacies influence participants' perceptions of their macro context because they are embedded in unequal power relations between center and periphery countries. As a result, it is important to have a closer look at the languages in students' environments and the symbolic power they attribute to them. Power, or its absence, is also significant for how they negotiate their multiple identities.

6.2.3 The symbolic power of UAF participants' languages
6.2.3.1 The symbolic power of Indigenous languages
6.2.3.1.1 Identity

All the participants, Indigenous and mestizos, perceived Indigenous languages and cultures as part of their origins and roots. This common historical membership is part of the creation of the Mexican nation-state, a historical membership that made Mexicans different from their former colonizer. Guillermo, an Indigenous participant, stated that

"Indigenous languages are always part of us even if some people discriminate against

them; we have to be proud of our roots because at the end, we all come from Indigenous cultures." Leticia identified *"with Nahuatl because when* [she] *hear*[s] *a person talking in Nahuatl at the university,* [she] *feel*[s] *touched; it moves* [her] *to tears.* [She] *feel*[s] *proud."* Gabriela, a mestizo student, also accepted her Indigenous roots. She said: *"I feel identified with Indigenous cultures in some way because in my community, we have traditions and customs that are influenced by these cultures."* However, by the use of "these cultures", Gabriela, and other non-Indigenous participants, showed that the colonial divide (i.e., us vs. them) is still present.

6.2.3.1.2   Utility

For mestizo participants, Indigenous languages represent the past; they are part of history. They do not represent Mexico's present because, according to them, there is no utility in speaking them. Gabriela noted that: *"I feel Indigenous languages as something very far away because in my community nobody speaks them anymore, they also do not speak them in neighbouring communities either."* None of the participants perceived Indigenous languages as modern languages, not even Indigenous bilingual students. Angel could not relate modernity with Nahuatl: *"Modernity and Nahuatl? Mmmmmh, no ... Nahuatl is disappearing, Spanish is not."* Blanca agreed with him: *"Totonaco is not a modern language. It's not current."* However, even if Indigenous participants did not perceive Indigenous languages as modern languages, they began to find a certain utility in speaking them as mentioned by Leticia: *"To speak an Indigenous language gives us a lot of opportunities. We can get a lot of scholarships thanks to Nahuatl."* Thus, there seems to be a growing awareness of the utility of speaking Indigenous languages in the

academic community because the Mexican government through the CONACYT[17] (Mexican Council of Science and Technology) and several international organizations like UNESCO offer scholarships for Indigenous people who speak Indigenous languages.

Hence, Indigenous students, in opposition to mestizo students, perceived Indigenous languages not only as their past, but also as their present. Indigenous monolingual students want to learn them as expressed by Trinidad: *"I think that Indigenous languages are important even if they are disappearing. I would like to learn Nahuatl because I want to work in a school in a little community."* Angel, who is bilingual, would like to improve his competency level in Nahuatl. He mentioned that when he entered university he *"scolded* [his] *mother for never really teaching* [him] *Nahuatl. In* [his] *community people speak Nahuatl. It's great to have two languages (...)."* Guillermo wants to maintain the language because *"we feel identified with Indigenous languages. It's important not to lose them; they should be taught from one generation to the other."* In addition, bilingual Indigenous like Jorge speak Nahuatl at home: *"I grew up in Nahuatl. I speak Nahuatl at home with my parents and my siblings. It's my first language."* As a result, the Indigenous language represents Indigenous students' present because they identify with it and, some of them like Jorge also recognized the knowledge they possess in these languages. As mentioned earlier, Jorge feels empowered by his culture and his language. However, even if he was raised in Nahuatl and feels empowered by it, he still perceived Indigenous languages as being

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[17] CONACYT is the abbreviation for "Consejo Nacional de Ciencia y Tecnología": www.conacyt.mx

dialects. This is a clear example of a colonial legacy, and of what González Casanova (1963, 2006) used to call 'internal colonialism'. Jorge stated that: *"Nahuatl is not a language, it's not a studied language, it's, how can I say, it's a dialect, an argot that is created in the communities."* It is a dialect because, according to him, *"it does not have so much vocabulary. It is spoken in some regions only, not in whole Mexico. Spanish has much more vocabulary."* Blanca also perceived Indigenous languages as dialects. For her *"it's a dialect.* [She does] *not know them as languages. English and French are languages. A language is something bigger. Rural Indigenous areas speak dialects."* Consequently, Jorge's and Blanca's statements illustrate how they have (tacitly) endorsed and naturalized the European cultural imaginary which gave Indigenous people, and their languages, an inferior status in society.

In summary, interview participants expressed different opinions depending on whether they self-identified as Indigenous or not. Non-Indigenous students perceived Indigenous languages as part of their past, whereas Indigenous students perceived them as a part of their present. They identified with them because of the affective relationship with family and community. In general, participants accepted the idea that Indigenous languages represent origins and roots. However, they did not perceive them as modern languages. As a result, participants internalized the dominant discourse of language hierarchies, a result of the formerly mentioned colonial legacies, or as expressed by Pennycook (1998) and Flores Farfán (2010) in the literature review, the way of representing languages as dialects is a direct result of colonialism.

6.2.3.2   The symbolic power of Spanish

6.2.3.2.1   National language

Generally, UAF participants perceived Spanish as the national language which connects them with people in Mexico. Indigenous students referred to Spanish as a bridge or a connection. According to Blanca *"Spanish is like a bridge. It connects me with the world outside my community."* Frida referred to Spanish as a universal language because *"everybody speaks it; it's also Mexico's official language because only few people speak Indigenous languages. Here at the university for example you can't speak an Indigenous language. Nobody understands you. You have to speak Spanish."* Hence, Spanish is generally perceived as the national communication language, and part of students' present.

The observation made by bilingual Indigenous students, those who learned Spanish as a second language at school, is interesting. They are aware that Spanish has been and still is the language of assimilation towards the "unique" national *mestizo* identity. As a result, bilingual students compared English to Spanish. Jorge for example stated that: *"Here at the university, we already know how to speak Spanish, and now they pressure us to learn English."* In other words, Jorge associated the process of assimilation towards Spanish he experienced in primary school, with the process of learning English at university. This process of assimilation towards Spanish gave him access to the Mexican national world, just as English will give him access to modernity and to the globalized world.

6.2.3.2.2   Identity

Monolingual students identified with Spanish whereas bilinguals identified more with their respective Indigenous languages. Elena and Gabriela for example stated that they

"identify with Spanish because that's the only language [they] *speak."* Trinidad, who is Indigenous, but monolingual, also expressed that for her *"Spanish is her language, the only language* [she] *can speak and with which* [she] *feel*[s] *able to communicate."* Jorge in contrast said that he is *"still not convinced that Spanish is* [his] *identity for being Mexican."* Jorge's statement clearly referred to the will of the Mexican government to unify Mexicans under the umbrella of one single identity and one single language as referred to in the context of this study.

In addition, participants seemed to think that only basic knowledge is produced in Spanish because many of the books they use at university are written in English (or are translations from English) as mentioned earlier. Even if Spanish represents participants' present, it is not always associated with knowledge production and power anymore, as it was during the creation of the nation-state.

English in contrast is a goal; it is the change UAF students have to live in order to access modernity as mentioned earlier in the findings. English is an aspiration, as will be analyzed in the following part.

6.2.3.3   The symbolic power of English

The following section shows how UAF participants perceive English and how the power they attribute to the language is part of Mexico's colonial legacy (Mignolo, 2005; Escobar, 2005) . The section focuses on how English is imposed on a national level through linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2009) (i.e., direct or indirect imposition of a dominant language) and on how it is imposed on a local level at the university

through linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988) (i.e., when priority is given to only one single language).

6.2.3.3.1 National imposition: linguistic imperialism and colonial legacies

Interview and IFG participants perceived English as imposed by modernity (i.e., the United States and globalization) as mentioned earlier in the findings. The need for Indigenous people to learn Spanish during the civilizing mission of the second modernity (Mignolo, 2005) as referred to in the context of this work seems to be similar to the need for learning English today in the quest for modernity.

- **English and modernity**

English and modernity are interrelated because of globalization and because it is the language of the United States, Mexico's major economic partner as mentioned in the context. For Jorge, English in Mexico *"is basic because the United States are our neighbours; we should at least speak their language."* This comment shows the presence of English in the students' daily lives. Frida also mentioned that: *"they are pretending to make English an official language now and we have no choice but to speak it."* UAF participants seemed to follow today's dominant discourse of modernity because English, from their perspectives, represents a world with fewer financial needs and better professional opportunities than participants' current world. As mentioned by Angel, *"here you need English when you look for a job. They want 70-80% of English competency. Not always, but when you want a modern job, you need it."* Elena expressed a similar opinion by stating that *"educated people speak English and have good jobs."* This access to modernity symbolizes, as already mentioned, an important change for

UAF students, a change that first started when they left their local communities. Modernity and English are not something innate that comes from them, but something imposed from the outside world. Trinidad stated this feeling clearly: *"English is modernity because it is something that reached me, to which I have to adapt."* Hence, English is the linguistic expression of modernity to which they have to adapt.

Blanca stated that English and modernity "*grasped* [her]. *It was imposed on* [her]." Even if English and modernity are imposed, Guillermo expressed that *"English is a necessity and an aspiration for you, because you want to improve, and therefore you will do whatever it takes in order to learn new things, modern things that come to the world; you want to learn them in order to acquire more knowledge and be able to communicate with people."* Hence, UAF students want to enter modernity by learning English. However, English also represents coloniality. Both modernity and coloniality, as stated by Mignolo (2005), are interdependent and are, in this specific study, represented through English linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2009) (i.e., the imposition of English everywhere).

- **English and coloniality of knowledge**

English is linked to coloniality of knowledge as referred to earlier in the findings because it is related to knowledge production from the West. In the following excerpt, Jorge also referred to English as a way of acquiring not only new knowledge, but also a higher valued knowledge. He stated that: *"If I want to participate in an exchange program, I need English, and if I go there, it's because I want to learn new things and better knowledge."* In this excerpt, the link between modernity and coloniality of knowledge

seems evident because English allows him to acquire "better knowledge". Mignolo (2005) recalls that the concept of modernity refers not only to Western knowledge production, but also to a hierarchical construction of power. Leticia's comment reflected this perception as well: *"(…) the most recent knowledge comes in English. That's the problem because when we want to study for academic subjects, all the books are in English, and yes, these books refer to more technological stuff. Spanish books generally explain basic stuff such as how to plow. The most up-to-date knowledge is all in English."* Consequently, Leticia was of the impression that knowledge written in English is better and more trustworthy than knowledge written in Spanish.

The above excerpts summarize the main link between colonial legacies and linguistic imperialism. English is imposed by coloniality (i.e., access to Western knowledge, perceived as superior) and by modernity (i.e., access to a world of technology) through linguistic imperialism. Hence, because colonial legacies and linguistic imperialism are interconnected, priority is given to English on local levels, and specifically in educational institutions.

6.2.3.3.2   Local imposition: English linguicism at UPAEP

UPAEP, as expressed earlier, is a private university that follows neoliberal ideologies which favour and do not question processes of globalization as mentioned in the context. About 90% of all language classes at UPAEP Language Department are EFL courses, and an increasing number of content-based classes in undergraduate and graduate studies (e.g., in political science, administration, agriculture, and others) are given through the medium of English. Additionally, as also mentioned in the contextual part, all students have to take the TOEFL test once they finish all the mandatory EFL levels. If they do not

reach the score required by their undergraduate program, they cannot graduate. Thus, the university imposes an additional power relationship through English based on the TOEFL test, a major concern not only for UAF participants, but for all UPAEP students who struggle with English. Hence, the UPAEP asserts and maintains the dominance of English in its institutional establishment, a clear expression of linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988).

Furthermore, because internationalization, defined by García Canclini (2000) as the geographical expansion of economic activities, is part of UPAEP's strategic plan, English is more valued than ever. Some of the undergraduate courses, as mentioned above, are now taught in English, even if teachers have never been trained for that purpose. According to Leticia:

> in some classes, teachers show their slides in Spanish, but they speak English. That's why I feel that the whole university is English. In agro meteorology, 15 out of 60 classes are in English, but there are other classes who are 100% in English. And we have to present in English too sometimes.

Bilingual UAF participants, like Jorge, perceived this shift from Spanish to English content courses in the same way as the shift from Indigenous languages to Spanish, a movement of assimilation and of "modernization" at the same time: *"It was like a blow. I remember it was difficult. When I first arrived in grade one, my peers already knew how to speak Spanish (…). Here at the university we already know how to speak Spanish, and now they want us to speak English."* Jorge also commented that: *"English is something basic we have to learn. In my undergraduate program, some teachers do not teach their class in Spanish anymore."* This modernization movement is clearly perceived in Jorge's excerpt by the use of "not anymore." Apparently, Jorge thinks that language shift is a natural trend of modernization, but he also criticizes this trend. According to him,

English is too highly valued at the university, more than any other subject. He gave the case of an UAF student as an example, a student who has been officially recognized by the Board of Directors in UPAEP's social networks because he passed a difficult external exam in English. He explained that:

> *The university wrote a note about this student on facebook and twitter, and mentioned that he successfully passed his exam which was in English, but the Board never recognizes any other subjects. Another UAF student who studies Law also passed a very difficult exam with a high grade, but he has not been recognized in the same way as the other student. His exam was in Spanish, not in English. I don't really know why the university recognizes English so much, much more than any other subject.*

Pablo's statement does not fully support the notion that there is aversion to the English language itself though most of my other participants did express that view; a view they developed in reaction to the value the university placed on English. While students were motivated to learn it due to its prestige and utility, they tacitly recognize the related linguicism in a structure that legitimates the power of English (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988, 2008; Skutnabb-Kangas & Phillipson, 1989). This feeling of imposition on national and locals levels is intensified as a result of Mexicans' aversion towards English and the United States.

6.2.3.3.3   Aversion towards English and the United States

IFG participants reminded me of the historical love/hate relationship between Mexico and the United States (Rangel, 1977) that I first mentioned in the context, but then forgot to include in the findings. As mentioned, the negative relationship goes back to the 1846-1848 war where Mexico lost 55% of its territory. After this war, the United States intervened twice in Mexico's domestic affairs. These interventions are the reasons why

Mexicans perceive the United States as an invader, perceptions that were later intensified with the theories of imperialism. Arturo explained these perceptions clearly:

> *even if we don't want to accept it, the United States represents the invader, those who want to take up everything, those who discriminate against us; as a nation, we feel bitterness against them and English is their official language. We don't feel the same bitterness against Spain even if they colonized us. We still speak Spanish. The bitterness we feel against the States is at several levels: it's economical, it's discrimination, it's because of the Mexican migrants they want to throw out.*

Teresa confirmed that *"English has a lot to do with the perceptions we have towards the United States."* The relations between Mexico and the United States are based on unequal economic and political power relationships. Marisol added to this unequal relationship by saying that UAF students are in contact *"with the Mexican migrants. Our families leave to the States to work there and they tell us about how they get abused, discriminated against, how they cross the border and how they have to suffer."* UAF students are much more in contact with migration problems than their dominant EFL peers.

Following on the socio historical aversion towards the United States, Pablo also added that the aversion UAF students have towards English comes from their deficiencies for having been educated in a rural environment where the illiteracy rate, as mentioned in the introduction, was at 15.6%, whereas in the cities it was at 4.3% in 2011 (RIMISP, 2012). As a result, according to Pablo,

> *we obviously have an aversion towards English because of our deficiencies. We don't reject English because we can't learn it, but we reject it because we are those with more deficiencies. The others begun to study English before us and we have to adapt to their learning rhythm. And the teachers build upon those who know more instead of building upon those who know less. The aversion is towards the English class, not towards the language in itself.*

As a result, UAF students feel a double aversion towards English; first, because of the unequal power relations between Mexico and the United States, and second because of the unequal academic education in rural and urban contexts.

In summary, part one of the findings focused on UAF participants' perceptions of their macro context; a context where modernity is associated with English because it represents the access to better life conditions; a context where knowledge produced in English is more appraised and a context where Indigenous languages are relegated to the past, Spanish to participants' present and English to their future. However, even if participants perceived that their macro context favours English linguistic imperialism (i.e., English imposed on a national level) and linguicism (i.e., priority given to English on a local level) and that there is a socio historical aversion towards the United States and English, they all felt the imperative need to learn the language in order to fulfill the required change towards modernity. Consequently, part two of the findings will focus on participants' micro context, and more specifically on the micro context where they learn English (i.e., UPAEP's Language Department).

6.3 The micro context of the UPAEP Language Department

Part two of the findings focuses on two main points that also influence UAF participants' EFL learning process. The first point refers to the shift of UPAEP's EFL curriculum from the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) to the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) framework. Second, the findings center on the two-year professional development program for EFL teachers called the Strategy

Based Instruction Mentorship (SBIM). Findings in part two are essentially based on informal interviews with administrators of the UPAEP Language Department, an analysis of the SBIM and EFL class observations.

6.3.1   A framework shift: from CEFR to ACTFL

In 2012, the Language Department officially decided to shift from the CEFR to the ACTFL framework and designed new curricula for all language courses based on the new framework with effect from August 2013. According to the administrators of the Language Department, the reasons for this change are twofold:

1. ACTFL offers clear and transparent goals and standards of language instruction.

2. ACTFL's goals and standards are linked to an easy to use resource guide that prepares teachers to teach languages based on language learning strategies.

Yet, the final pedagogical goal of both frameworks (i.e., CEFR and ACTFL) is the same. They both aim to guide teachers to develop independent or autonomous language learners, as earlier defined in the literature review. The Language Department used the CEFR as a framework for about six years. However, when the Department began to educate teachers, according to the administrators, it seemed easier to do so with ACTFL; firstly because ACTFL is directly linked to cognitive, metacognitive and social affective learning strategies; secondly because it offers an easy-to-use resource guide; and thirdly because ACTFL is easier to understand for EFL teachers in the UPAEP context. According to the administrators of the Language Department, the CEFR is a dense and comprehensive framework, but because of its complexity, it answers more to a European multilingual context than to a Mexican one. Thus, this observation seems to be based on a

monolingual perspective which believes that Mexico is represented by one unique identity and one language (i.e., a monolingual context), a perspective that most EFL teachers seem to share, as observed in EFL course observations.

The reality is that UAF students and Indigenous students in general, represent a very small percentage of UPAEP's alumni, a percentage which is not taken into account in the design of curricula. As a result, administrators focus on the majority of the students, not on minorities such as Indigenous and/or poor students. Moreover, according to the DELC administrators, European language teachers are generally better prepared teachers than Mexican language teachers. Since UPAEP is a system that integrates high schools and universities[18] as referred to in the context of the study, the Language Department of the university must also prepare EFL teachers of UPAEP high schools through the Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship. However, EFL high school teachers often do not have a solid background in EFL teaching. Hence, ACTFL is easier to use for this purpose.

Yet, there are differences between ACTFL and CEFR, even if both are combined models (i.e., cognitive and sociocultural orientated). Central to the two frameworks is the notion that language learning autonomy is the pillar of independent language learning and thereby promote the use of cognitive, metacognitive and socio affective learning strategies. However, the CEFR offers a plurilingual language learning approach that ACTFL does not offer. The plurilingual language learning approach, as expressed in the literature review, is not the sum of different linguistic competencies but rather one global

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[18] As mentioned in the context of this study, the UPAEP self-defines as an academic system that integrates nine high schools and two university campuses.

and complex system (Herdina & Jessner, 2002) where all languages interact with each other and are equally recognized. ACTFL does not take these levels of recognition into account, however, the plurilingual approach aims to use the linguistic and cultural knowledge capabilities of heterogeneous students to learn a new language. In other words, it focuses on the communicative competence of all the languages at the level of the individual, be it for Indigenous languages or international ones, dialects or standard languages. Hence, the plurilingual language learning approach builds the learning of the new language on students' diverse linguistic and cultural resources, and therefore promotes awareness and recognition of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students, teachers, and institutions. This awareness of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds and recognition of unequal power relations between UAF students' languages and cultures seems to be the missing link in EFL classes at UPAEP. The Strategy Based Instruction mentorship for EFL teachers at UPAEP does not include this perspective either. As will be analyzed below, the focus of UPAEP's Language Department is based on the psychological perspective of language learning autonomy which omits the awareness and recognition of unequal power relations between languages and cultures. Hence, UAF participants' multicultural and multilinguistic realities are not taken into account in Mexico's macro context, nor in the Language Department's micro context.

6.3.2   Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship (SBIM)

SBIM is a two-year program for EFL teachers at UPAEP which was created in 2009 to strengthen English language teaching in the UPAEP system (Despagne & Grossi, 2011).

It was first based on the CEFR, but has now been shifted to the ACTFL framework as indicated above.

The principal objective of the program is to guide EFL teachers in transfering theoretical knowledge acquired through the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and Sheltered Instruction (SI) to their daily teaching practices, in other words to bring theory to practice. The second objective is to plan and analyze EFL classes based on the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP). Lastly, the third objective is to create and implement thematic units for all EFL levels based on SIOP and accessible as a resource guide for all UPAEP-EFL teachers. At the end of the two-year training program, teachers have to create their own thematic unit and implement it in a course during which they are filmed implementing their new teaching practices. Each new thematic unit is then integrated in the DELC resource guide.

SIOP, the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol, used as an instructional model and observation protocol for EFL classes at UPAEP introduces content instruction through the use of learning strategies. SIOP is an approach to teaching that was empirically validated for three years in the United States "with an expanded team of teachers on both the East and West coasts" (Echevarría, Vogt, & Short, 2008, p. 15). It was originally funded by the United States' Department of Education to integrate English language learners in mainstream classrooms. English language learners have to learn standard academic content and develop their English language proficiency at the same time. In other words, SIOP is a model of Content Based Instruction (or CBI) (i.e., an approach that provides second language learners both language development and content teaching). The reasons for using the SIOP approach at UPAEP are threefold:

1. It meshes well with DELC's objective of forming lifelong or autonomous language learners, and with the ACTFL framework as it organizes instruction with a special focus on learning strategies.

2. It provides teachers with guidance for lesson planning and delivery, but also with an "observation instrument for rating the fidelity of the lessons to the model" (Echevarría et al., 2008, p. 15). Hence, it allows classroom observations in order to assess the implementation of the instructional model and to offer further guidance to teachers if necessary.

3. It meshes well with UPAEP's attempts to "internationalize" as many upper year courses as possible in all undergraduate and graduate programs by using English as a medium of instruction (or CBI).

However, as indicated earlier, UPAEP teachers who deliver their course material in English are not yet trained in SIOP. SIOP training for content professors, such as professors who normally teach economics or law in Spanish but who would like to teach their courses in English, is part of the Language Department's future planning.

As can be observed, this teacher education program is intensive. According to the DELC administrators, 90% of the 54 EFL teachers employed during Winter 2012 had already taken the SBIM or were enrolled in it. In addition, the program not only linked the ACTFL framework and the EFL teaching approach closely together, but also aligned with the psychological perspective of language learning autonomy, referred to in the literature review. To explain, from the DELC's perspective, autonomy is not innate as expressed by Dam (1995); students have to learn how to become lifelong language

learners. The team in charge of the pedagogical development of the department thoroughly investigated on metacognitive knowledge and followed Wenden's (1998) recommendations who stated that autonomy can only be achieved through a guided process in a formal educational context. Hence, UPAEP-EFL teachers learn how to guide their students towards autonomy by teaching them language learning strategies, a teaching practice that they acquire through the SBIM. As a result, the educational context mentioned in the SBIM program is theoretically that of mediated learning where all the teachers should assist students in developing cognitive processes through the use of learning strategies (Palfreyman, 2003a). Each semester, the DELC pedagogical team observes at least one class of each EFL teacher based on SIOP, as part of the on-going implementation and guidance of language learning autonomy in the department. Most EFL teachers do use the thematic units created during the mentorship and accessible as a resource guide for all UPAEP-EFL teachers. However, these thematic units have not been created for higher EFL levels yet. During my EFL class observations, I noticed two important points that seem to affect UAF participants' EFL learning process:

1. Most observed teachers effectively taught their classes by assisting students in the use of language learning strategies. However, some teachers teaching higher EFL levels for which no thematic units are available in the resource guide do not implement what they learnt in the SBIM. Teachers mentioned that it takes too much class preparation time to create these thematic units on their own, time for which they are not paid. Hence, the total implementation and use of mediated learning by all EFL-DELC teachers will need some additional semesters, or even years until all thematic units will be created for all levels.

2. One of SIOP's features is to link new concepts to students' background knowledge and to connect them to their own local experiences (Echevarría at al., 2008) in order to create meaningful learning (Díaz Barriga, 2003). However, UAF participants' schemata (i.e., familiar knowledge, concepts and beliefs based on one's culture) does not always match with the cultural references of a text, video or other EFL materials given by the teacher (Echevarría et al., 2008). UAF students grew up in a different social and cultural context than most UPAEP students and they therefore often do not relate with what is discussed in class as mentioned earlier. When I asked Leticia for example if her EFL teachers sometimes focused on her cultural knowledge or language she answered: *"My English teacher does not even know that I speak Nahuatl."* Then I asked her if she sometimes tries to link Nahuatl or Spanish with English and she answered: *"No, I never even thought about that. They are all very different languages."* I observed Leticia in an advanced B2 level class in which students had to read a text about the spread of English worldwide. The teacher discussed the effects of English on Spanish in Mexico. Some students referred to Spanglish (i.e., the fusion between Spanish and English used in northern states of Mexico) and to Halloween which is, little by little, getting the same status as the *Día de Muertos* [The Day of the Dead], a very traditional celebration in Mexico. Nobody mentioned the influence of English on Nahuatl or on local communities' cultures such as Cuetzalán, a very traditional Indigenous community in Mexico where most of the inhabitants still speak Nahuatl, like Leticia. I further asked Leticia why she did not mention anything related to her culture and she just repeated the same: *"I did not think in relating it with Nahuatl or with the culture of my community."* Hence, it seems that

UPAEP-EFL teachers, and even some Indigenous bilingual students like Leticia perceive languages as being totally separate from each other and not as "one global but complex capacity" (Coste & Simon, 2009, p. 174); as a result, they do not compare and contrast English with any other language learning process, and they do not compare and contrast the new cultural knowledge with local cultures. The EFL courses I observed at UPAEP are mainly only English classrooms where Spanish is hardly ever used (and Nahuatl or Totonaco never) despite the fact that the SBIM program favours the use of Spanish when necessary. Marisol confirms this observation in an IFG session, *"native speakers* [i.e., teachers] *tell us that we can't speak Spanish, that they don't understand us."* Pablo had one single experience with a teacher who used Spanish sometimes: *"When we had to remember something important, this teacher spoke to us in Spanish. That was great and helped me a lot."* However, apart from Pablo's single experience, it seems that teachers generally teach and students generally learn English based on a monolithic approach (i.e., an approach that clearly separates languages and cultures from each other) which may be perceived as an additional legacy of Mexico's socio historical context where the official discourse has mainly supported one unique identity, and therefore only one language since Independence.

In summary, part two of the findings analyzed the micro context of UPAEP's Language Department. The first section of this part examined the shift from the CEFR to the ACTFL framework, and the reasons for this shift. The second part explained the main objectives of the EFL teacher education program (i.e., the Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship) carried by 90% of the teachers. However, the SIOP approach may not have

been totally implemented yet in the UPAEP Language Department and the connection between the new knowledge acquired in class and students' prior knowledges and languages seems to need additional focus. In short, it seems that the Language Department, even though it gained in practical connections between different components of the language instruction process by shifting to the ACTFL framework, it did lose in teaching perspectives. In other words, it seems that the pedagogical process perceives EFL students as being a homogeneous group and therefore does not observe "the singularities in pluralities", as expressed by García and Sylvan (2011). In other words, diversity is not taken into account in the educational process.

The following part of the findings examines the impact of macro and micro contexts, on UAF participants' feelings when they learn English (i.e., their language subjectivities), discrimination being at the forefront of their struggles with that language.

6.4   UAF participants' subjective experiences in EFL

Part three centres on how UAF participants' contexts impact on their subjective experiences in relation to EFL because subjectivity is created in interaction with the environment in which we live. This work follows, as mentioned in the literature review Kramsch's (2009) definition of subjectivity viewed as "our conscious or unconscious sense of self as mediated through symbolic forms. It is the symbolic meaning we give to ourselves, to our perceptions, reactions, and thoughts that orient our relationships to others" (p.18).

Hence, in the following sections I examine UAF participants' subjectivities, in relation to English, based on their personal perceptions of their macro and micro contexts (i.e., the symbolic meaning they give to their socio historical environment). One of the symbolic

meanings students seem to experience from their context is discrimination which will be analyzed next.

6.4.1   Discrimination

6.4.1.1   Discrimination at the university

As mentioned in the contextual part of this work, Mexico's colonial legacy favours a "caste based" society where Indigenous, dark skinned, and poor people are at the lowest level of social recognition (Hernández Zamora, 2010). UAF participants feel this discrimination in different ways at the university. Firstly, being Indigenous is equated with being backward, as expressed by Leticia: *"It upsets me that there are still people who support inequality (...) yes, it upsets me, not so much because I am an Indigenous person, rather because they accuse us of being less intelligent (...) additionally, they often do not even say Indigenous, but Indian."* In Mexico, the use of the word "indio" [Indian] is used as an insult. Being treated as an "indio" is very offensive, and clearly is the result of Mexico's colonial legacy where Indigenous people were perceived as being inferior to "white" people. Secondly, being Indigenous is synonymous with poverty, which is also considered to be a sign of inferiority. Guillermo for example expressed that *"People look at me the way I dress* [because he does not use nice and expensive clothes]. *They make fun of me. They are very cruel."* He feels discriminated against not only by being excluded because he is Indigenous, but also because he is poor. Additionally, participants not only feel discriminated against by fellow students, but also by some teachers.

Following on the topic of discrimination based on family income, Frida shared an incident she once had with a teacher while she was selling donuts in order to collect funds

for the UAF program. She recalled: *"the teacher told me* [that he was buying the donuts] *in order to help the poor little children. The tone of his voice was so disrespectful. This bothered me a lot."* Frida felt that the teacher blatantly made fun of her because she was poor. Hence, these three excerpts show that discrimination is based on both ethnic and social affiliations. UAF participants began to mention the word discrimination in their third interviews. In their first interviews, they all said that they never felt any discrimination at the university. They may have said so because technically, racism does not exist in Mexico. It is still buried behind the myth of *mestizaje*, as expressed by Gall (2004) in the contextual part of this research. Discrimination towards Indigenous and poor people exists on a daily basis in Mexico. There are many disrespectful words or sentences in Mexico to assign Indigenous people a lower place in society. Many Indigenous people do not speak their languages anymore because they are ashamed, as stated by Jorge: *"some people seem to be ashamed, yes, I think they feel ashamed of where they come from."* Leticia also mentioned that they *"only speak Nahuatl between* [themselves] *when they feel safe."* Hence, discrimination towards Indigenous people is internalized in the way of life of most Mexicans (Gall, 2004; Gómez Izquierdo, 2005). As examined in the following section, the feeling of discrimination seems to be specifically intensified in EFL classes because of the symbolic power of English and its association with modernity and the global world.

6.4.1.2   Discrimination in EFL classes

Depending on the year UAF students enrolled in the program, they had to study English in special or mixed EFL groups. Special EFL groups were specifically developed for UAF students and mixed EFL groups were groups where all the UPAEP students studied

English together. Special EFL groups existed from 2009 to 2011. UAF participants studying in both groups expressed feelings of discrimination as will be examined in the following lines.

6.4.1.2.1   Special EFL classes for UAF participants

In 2009, the administrators of the UAF program became aware of the difficulties UAF students had in relation to English. To find a solution, special EFL groups for UAF participants were created. For the first semester, the Language Department hired teachers who had worked in rural communities to teach the special courses. These teachers were sensitive to UAF students' problems and tried to find different ways of teaching them the same content as they used in mixed groups and according to the same EFL levels. Hence, they tried to find local solutions. However, after a while the Language Department hired additional teachers who were unfamiliar with Mexico's rural communities. According to UAF students, these teachers lowered the EFL requirement level over time, changed the exams, and made everything easier for them. Consequently, mixed feelings about these groups began to grow among UAF participants.

At the beginning of the special group meetings, all participants expressed that they were confident in class, could participate without fear, and trusted that they would not be teased if they made mistakes. There were no socio historical power differentials between students. According to Leticia: *"We did not feel afraid of the "others." We spoke and participated and were not afraid of making mistakes because we all had the same level of English."* Trinidad then added that in special EFL groups, it was much easier to understand because: *"We talked about our communities, about ourselves. I understood better because we talked about places I could go and visit."* Hence, EFL topics were

related to students' local lives through which they could better appropriate the language (Pennycook, 1998) and not to the global world of textbooks anymore, a major claim related to fear in the EFL class, as will be analyzed later, and to linguistic imperialism as mentioned earlier (Phillipson, 1992, 2009).

Even if UAF students first felt safe in special EFL classes, they were slowly enrolling in mixed EFL courses as they were becoming aware of the fact that they had to take the TOEFL test. They began to prefer "normal" to "special" courses because in the "special" courses they felt that they were treated as less capable compared to other UPAEP students. Angel expressed this feeling categorically: *"the university made us stupid. This was a big mistake. There was no pressure between students, no competition. Teachers were far too tolerant with us."* Leticia added that: *"teachers made everything easier for us"* (i.e., EFL teachers lowered the course level, redesigned the exams, and students were sure to pass the course). Trinidad supported this feeling: *"the special groups did not require much effort. We knew that we were going to pass the course anyway."* Yet, when participants shifted from special to mixed classes, they suddenly began to feel pressure from their teachers and classmates. Leticia expressed that special EFL groups: *"helped her* [in a patronizing way] *to pass the two A2 levels without worrying too much, but then when I joined mixed groups, it was very difficult because this time we really had to study. If I could have changed something in the special courses, it would have been to tell them not to discriminate against us, thinking that we were not capable."* Leticia clearly felt discriminated against in the special classes. However, she also understood that the university was trying to find ways to provide equitable, responsive pedagogy.

The discrimination reported by Leticia, Angel and Trinidad motivated UAF participants to study in mixed courses. By succeeding in mixed courses Trinidad expressed that they now were able to show the academic community that they were as intelligent as anybody else: *"mixed groups motivate me much more because I can prove that I can learn English too. I don't want to stay behind."* As a result, in 2011 the special EFL groups were discontinued and all of the UAF students enrolled in mixed groups. Yet, discrimination is still present in these groups.

6.4.1.2.2   Mixed EFL groups

UAF participants express feeling discriminated against by their classmates in the English language classroom. Firstly, they express the feeling that classmates discriminate against them on a racial and financial basis, using their knowledge of English to flaunt their superiority and their place in a global world. According to Guillermo, his EFL classmates: *"think they know everything and that they know a lot of English. They feel superior. They do not care about us, just because of English, and they make you feel it very clearly."* Jorge expresses similar concerns by linking English to power: *"Some of the "other" students perceive English as a power; a power they impose on us. In class, always the same students participate, those who want to show that they can speak. And those who don't speak English just have to stay quiet."* At the beginning, Jorge asked his classmates for help when he did not understand something, but he did not receive any support. According to him, *"some classmates help you, but others just turn their back. I suffered a lot because it makes you feel very small."* Hence, according to these extracts, English is used to show belonging to or an identity in a higher class; it is used to show superiority.

Secondly, UAF participants express a lack of recognition of the values of their local knowledge in mixed EFL classes. Teresa, an IFG participant, thinks that UAF students feel a difference between global and local knowledges only in English and Spanish[19] classes, but not in other content classes. She illustrated this point in the context of an autobiography she had to read in front of her Spanish class. Even though this happened in a Spanish class, she mentioned, exactly the same could have happened in EFL. While she was reading her work and sharing with pride where she came from, she saw the penetrating gaze of other classmates who were sneering. She remembered that: *"I felt their gaze when I was reading my autobiography, they laughed at me. I felt bad, I felt inferior because I felt discriminated against."* Teresa felt discriminated against because she comes from a rural community. Pablo confirms this feeling. He recalled that he *"was about to leave the university and the UAF program just because of English."* He remembered that when he had to participate in class his peers *"laughed at* [him] *because* [he] *couldn't pronounce well and the teacher did not care. They called him "rancherito"* [little farmer]. [He] *felt horrible."* Pablo was also discriminated against through the medium of English because he comes from a rural community.

In summary, UAF students' quotes show that English, because of its association with the modern world, power, and global knowledge is used by others in a way that makes them feel discriminated against. It is used to show superiority and is used to show minority students that they are neither knowledgeable nor modern. English opens the doors to the global community, just as Spanish opens the door to the national community,

[19] Spanish classes at UPAEP are courses where the main objective is to develop critical thinking abilities. These courses are mandatory during the first two years of every undergraduate program.

represented by the *mestizo* identity. In Mexico, *mestizos* have to speak Spanish; and "global" people have to speak English. Otherwise, they do not belong to Ortiz's (2000) "international popular culture" (i.e., the popular knowledge of a globalized world) and are perceived as inferiors. The discrimination felt by the UAF students in EFL classes has a strong impact on the way they perceive themselves, such as a pronounced 'them/us' divide, and feelings of inferiority and fear in EFL classes as will be examined next.

6.4.2   Impacts of discrimination on students' subjectivities

6.4.2.1   "Nosotros" [we] vs. "los demás" [the others]

UAF participants speak about their EFL classmates (those who do not belong to the UAF program) as *"the others who know more"* (i.e., those who know more English). The "other" is created in opposition to "us" (the students enrolled in the UAF program). This divide is, as mentioned earlier, a categorization inherited from colonization where "the others" were *los hombres de razón* [savvy people], an expression used during the Spanish colonization period when Indigenous people referred to *mestizo* people who spoke Spanish. Today, "the others" are not the *mestizos* who speak Spanish, but the *mestizos* who speak English; those who have access to the international world. Consequently, this divide creates the association between English, modernity, and coloniality of knowledge which leads minority and Indigenous students to perceive people who speak English as more modern and knowledgeable, a sort of modern colonial divide.

When confronted with this categorization in the Interpretative Focus Groups, participants first laughed because they said that they always used this differentiation. Arturo mentioned in the IFG that: *"the worst is that we believe it."* Arturo seemed aware that UAF participants embraced the European imaginary referred to in the literature review

that is that they internalized or inherited the idea that "the others" were more intelligent

than themselves (Bourdieu, 1982/1991). According to Teresa, the expression "*los demás*"

[the others] comes from the special EFL classes mentioned above. When UAF students

integrated into mixed groups, Teresa said they felt like: "*we were really behind all the*

others" in terms of linguistic proficiency. According to Arturo, UAF students who only

participated in mixed EFL groups, use the same distinction. He thinks that it also might

come from the difference between public and private schools, private schools being

associated with privilege and financial advantage[20]. UAF students come from the

national public school system where they began to study English at the secondary level.

In contrast, most of the "others", according to Arturo, studied in private schools. In

private schools, children generally begin studying English at the primary level. Yet,

Pablo clearly expressed what UAF participants feel when they first enter EFL classes:

> *In the first English classes, we feel as if they* [i.e., the "others" and the teacher] *are speaking Chinese*[21]. *They talk to us in a language we do not understand. Hence, we concentrate on decoding the language, in deciphering. We mainly focus on the fact that we do not understand, and meanwhile, the rest of the class is moving forward.*

Consequently, UAF students get behind in class for trying to decipher what the teacher

says.

Hence, this distinction "*nosotros*" [we] vs. "*los demás*" [the others] is the result of several

contextual factors and only appear with reference to EFL. The colonial legacy and the

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[20] Private and public schools represent two different education systems in Mexico. However, both systems have to follow the curriculum design defined by the SEP (the Mexican Ministry of Education). Differences between both systems are generally based on teacher preparation and resources. In addition, private schools offer EFL classes from kindergarden level upwards.

[21] Same reference as 15.

association of English with modernity may be one reason; the creation of special EFL classes may be a second reason; and the last reason, added in an IFG session, seems to result from the low level of EFL teaching in the public school system. This categorization, along with the contextual macro and micro factors, has a strong impact on UAF students' subjectivities (i.e., on the affective process of their English learning process). The following sections examine this impact.

6.4.2.2   Feelings of inferiority in the EFL classroom

6.4.2.2.1   Linguistic competency level

All UAF participants in the interviews and Interpretative Focus Groups express feelings of inferiority in EFL classes. They are overly impressed by the "others" who know more. They compare themselves (people who know less English) to "the others" who already know how to speak English. According to Jorge: *"the real problem is that some classmates know a lot, much more than we do."* Angel explained that the difference in English proficiency is due to the fact that: *"Since primary level they study English. They understand the teachers and the texts. They are confident about what they know."* Jorge's extract confirms what Arturo mentioned earlier (i.e., UAF participants think that "the others" all went to private schools where they began to study English in grade one). Blanca also expressed that: *"The others talk and talk as if they are speaking Spanish."* UAF participants did not learn English at the primary level because when they went to

school, EFL was only taught at secondary level[22]. Consequently, due to their lower level of English competency, UAF students feel inferior in English compared to the "others."

As expressed by Pablo earlier, UAF students mostly focus on deciphering the language in the first levels because the first EFL level is a "false beginner's" level (i.e., it does not begin with real basic elements of the target language). The Mexican urban context is highly influenced by English. As mentioned in the context of this study, it is part of everyday life, whereas in most rural communities, English is completely absent. In Cuetzalán[23] for example, where many UAF students' come from, words and short sentences in Nahuatl can be seen written on store windows and on public transportation almost everywhere. People are used to seeing and to hearing Nahuatl on the streets, not English. When I went there for a conference in 2012, I felt attracted to the language and lost at the same time. It was difficult for me to remember the words as I had no cultural and linguistic reference with Nahuatl. I mentioned my experience to IFG participants who answered that this is exactly what happens to UAF students with English. English had never been part of their daily life before they enrolled in university.

6.4.2.2.2   Differentiated background knowledge

In addition to their lower English competency level, UAF participants feel afraid to participate in class because their local knowledge is neither recognized at a national level,

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[22] The Mexican Ministry of Education began to teach EFL at primary school level only since 2009. The new EFL program is called PNEIB (Spanish acronym for National English Program in Basic Education) and was introduced step by step.

[23] Cuetzalán is a community in the Sierra Norte de Puebla. It is a region with a high percentage of Indigenous people where Nahuatl is used extensively.

nor in textbooks. Local knowledge or UAF students' funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) or multi-competences (Cook, 1992), as referred in the literature review, are perceived as inferior, or less valuable. The textbooks used in class use a "universal" knowledge UAF participants are not familiar with as expressed by Jorge: *"In our textbooks we discuss universal topics, topics such as cultures, the Russian culture, but I don't know anything about it, about its laws. That's not for me. I can't learn English speaking about Russian culture."* EFL textbooks do not refer to Mexican Indigenous cultures that would be more meaningful to UAF participants as expressed by Trinidad: *"If I could change something in the EFL classes, it would be the topics. I would like to speak about my community, my customs, what we do on the fields, about what we eat."* IFG participants confirmed that EFL topics should be more related to their own Mexican context. Teresa expressed this point very clearly:

> *Most students would benefit from the fact that topics are adapted to the Mexican context because our peers do not all come from Puebla. Many come from different states and small cities; many of them also have other scholarships. They have to face the same kinds of problems we have to face.*

Jorge commented that *"to have prior knowledge about a topic you have to talk about is essential. If not, you just don't know what to say, not even in Spanish. That happens a lot when they deal with global topics. We don't know what to say."* Lourdes also mentioned in an IFG session that building new knowledge on Indigenous and minorities' prior knowledge would mean:

> *to change the books. They are not published here, they are written in another context, a more global one. Teachers would have to make a bigger effort to recognize that in each group there are diverse people, people with different knowledges. Teachers would have to make the topics adapt to the interests of their students.*

As result, UAF participants clearly perceive that teachers do not focus on their multi-competences (Cook, 1992) or funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) and that they do not pay attention to the singularity of the individual student (García & Sylvan). In addition, by using North American textbooks not adapted to the local context, the UPAEP follows a clear path of cultural and educational imperialism (Phillipson, 1992) where the center (i.e., center countries, such as the United States, that publish EFL textbooks) defines "what is worthy of being taught" (Phillipson, 1992, p. 57) (i.e., in this case "global universal knowledge") and how is has to be taught. Hence, the second cause that leads to feelings of inferiority, specifically in EFL classes, is the preference for higher recognition of forms of global knowledge (in textbooks and on a national level) that the UAF participants do not possess in the early stages of their university studies as confirmed by Marisol in an IFG session: *"in the first semesters when students speak about global topics, it makes no sense to us. Now, in higher semesters, you don't feel so bad anymore, you understand what they are talking about."* Teresa confirms this unequal relationship between local and global knowledges in English class in another IFG sessions by stating that they (i.e., UAF students) *"are only afraid in EFL classes, not in other content classes."* Thus, EFL classes for Indigenous and minority students in Mexico could follow the lines of multilingual education's (MLE) philosophy for example, a philosophy that replaces "the authoritarian, rigid, preordained knowledge approach of dominant culture-centric education (…) by empowering students to become valued, equal and responsible members of their own." (Panda & Mohanty, 2009, p. 301). MLE is rooted in critical pedagogy which aims to empower students to create knew knowledge based on their individual problems and experiences by connecting them to the

social context in which they are embedded (Freire, 1970; Giroux, 1997). Through MLE, Indigenous students would question the unequal power relationship between cultures and languages, and could learn English based on their own personal linguistic and cultural life experiences.

As a result of discrimination, and an inadequate approach of EFL teaching for UAF students, learners are afraid to participate in class, to lose their Indigenous identity, and to lose their scholarship. These fears are analyzed next.

6.4.2.3   Feelings of fear

6.4.2.3.1   Fear of participating

What UAF students' fear most in the EFL classroom is fear of participating (i.e., having to speak orally). As mentioned in the micro context of this work, one component of their course evaluation in the EFL curriculum is oral speaking that counts for 20% of the final grade. Hence, students are indirectly forced to speak. Teachers pressure students to participate which may have counterproductive effects as expressed by Blanca: *"teachers sometimes are very rude, they force us to participate. Even if you don't know what to say, they stay there and wait until you answer something."* This makes Blanca feel uncomfortable. She added that: *"I don't like sitting at the back of the classroom because I don't like it when classmates look at me when the teacher forces me to say something. They once made fun of me and I hate that."* Due to this pressure of speaking English, Blanca always sits at the forefront of the class, so that other students cannot see her when she has to participate.

Consequently, this pressure to participate makes UAF participants feel nervous, because of the gaze of the "other'" students and because often, they have not much to say due to the different background knowledges. In the IFG Pablo confirmed the same feeling of fear and inferiority because

> *the teacher always talked about topics related to trips to foreign countries, everything in English. He asked us where we had travelled and which places we knew. I felt ashamed to say that I had never travelled and that my most important trip was from my community to Puebla.*

The teacher did clearly not perceive Pablo's individuality. Gabriela experienced similar feelings: *"I feel inhibited by fear, fear of not doing well, of giving the wrong answers and fear that my classmates will make fun of me."* UAF participants are afraid of making mistakes, pronouncing words incorrectly, structuring sentences improperly, and feeling that nobody will understand them. Still, fear of having to speak orally is not the only fear. UAF students may also fear to lose their scholarships and Indigenous students their identities.

6.4.2.3.2 Fear of losing Indigenous identity and their UAF scholarship

Frida fears losing her Indigenous identity by learning English. She explained that "*if I focus more on English, I will lose my roots. In order to learn English, I need to stay in Puebla, and here in Puebla, I don't speak Totonaco. I like living here, but I am afraid of losing my Indigenous identity.*" She learns English in Puebla, but in the city she does not speak her local language. This lack of practice distances her from her local identity. As a result, Frida associates English with the fact that she is losing her Indigenous identity. IFG participants contested Frida's perspective. Lourdes expressed that "*English makes us panic and bogged down. (...) We only focus on the negative sides, on the fact that it is*

imposed and that it may lead us to lose our roots. But in reality, if our identity is strong, we will never lose our roots." According to Jorge they do not lose their identity if they are *"proud of where* [they] *come from and of* [their] *language."* This excerpt confirms that unequal power relations between cultures and languages have to be discussed in class. Hence, it seems to be more a question of intercultural ability that could be developed in class (i.e., to assume one's own linguistic and cultural identity). The Framework of Reference for Pluralistic Approaches to Languages and Cultures (Council of Europe, 2012), referred to in the literature review, aims to develop these kind of abilities, just as multilingual education as mentioned above.

Other students are also afraid of English classes because they fear losing their scholarships. According to Pablo, one of the IFG participants, the major fear they feel *"is not English in itself, the fear is to fail the course; you pass or you pass; you can't fail, that's the major fear."* This fear comes from one of the rules in the UAF program that states that when students fail one course, they have to pay for it; if they fail two courses, they have to leave the program. They can still study at the UPAEP, but under their own costs, which generally is the equivalent of leaving the university as they cannot afford to pay for any of the courses.

In summary, research results show the effects of discrimination on UAF participants' EFL learning process: the creation of the us/them divide; feelings of inferiority in the EFL classroom due to the belief, and known fact, that the "others" know more English and have a global knowledge they do not possess; and due to the fact that the "others", teachers and EFL textbooks do not recognize UAF participants' funds of knowledge or multi-competences. These feelings of inferiority create fear (i.e., fear of participating in

class, fear of losing the Indigenous identity or fear of losing their scholarship). Feelings of inferiority and of fear are very strong, but UAF participants are aware of them. It is because of their awareness, that some participants are able to make use of their agency (Benson, 2001) which allows them to overcome their language subjectivities by adapting the learning process to their own experiences. Hence, the following and last part of the findings reports on participants' attempts to create their own autonomous language learning strategies which may allow them to position themselves differently (Davies & Harré, 1990).

6.5 Participants' hybridization process: creation of adapted autonomous learning strategies

Findings show that research participants, specifically monolingual and bilingual Indigenous participants, follow a hybridization process (i.e., a process through which they put their different identities into perspective) (García Canclini, 1999). Through this process, participants intend to use their funds of knowledge in national and global contexts, and decide what can be harmonized and what is absolutely irreconcilable during their identity construction. Participants do not perceive this process as an autonomous learning strategy. Yet, it seems to be an intentional process of adaptation and fusion where students negotiate and resist the subjectivities they feel in relation to English and mentioned in part three of the findings, such as discrimination, fear and feelings of inferiority. Hence, through this process of hybridization, participants use a resistance agency (Canagarajah, 2005; Manosuthikit, 2008) to varying degrees to position themselves in the EFL classroom. Those with high levels of resistance agency create autonomous learning strategies adapted to their own lived experiences. As a result,

hybridization is a process through which agency and autonomy become closely related (Benson, 2001), as mentioned in the literature review.

The following section attempts to show some of the strategies UAF participants create while they also deepen in their hybridization process. The section will specifically focus on Indigenous participants because they have to negotiate between at least three identities (i.e., local, national and global). This process of hybridization, if it succeeds in harmonizing participants' multiple identities, allows them to invest in their English language learning process by creating learning strategies that have not been taught to them (i.e., local imagined communities, plurilingual and pluricultural learning strategies).

6.5.1 The power of imagined communities

As mentioned in the literature review, imagined communities, according to Norton (2000), are communities of the imagination; desired communities that offer learners a chance to enhance and expand their range of identities to reach out to wider worlds. By imagining themselves being part of these communities, learners invest more in the target language. UAF Indigenous participants come from poor rural communities and their first learning strategy when they begin to study at UPAEP is to try to fit in Mexico's national urban world. This is the first change they have to go through, as referred to earlier, and their first imagined community. Consequently, they first enter the hybridization process by negotiating with their Mexican national identity. Later, in EFL classes they are confronted with the global world of EFL textbooks, and therefore they have to negotiate with an additional identity, a more global one. According to the findings, Indigenous UAF participants create a locally positioned imagined community – that I will label local imagined community - in order to enter what García Canclini (1999) calls a "happy"

hybridization (i.e., a process through which identities are harmonized) which also allows them to invest in EFL.

Local imagined communities

UAF Indigenous participants, as mentioned in the context of this study, are positioned in Mexico as being backward (Oehmichen, 2007). According to Gee (2000) in the literature review, this positioning or D-identity (i.e., discourse identity) is tied to Mexico's national discourse, and rooted socially and historically. In order to resist this D-identity and to reflexively reposition themselves on a national level (i.e., in a context in which they feel discriminated against) (Davies & Harré, 1990), UAF students use their resistance agency to create a *local imagined community* through which they "use" the power English represents locally (i.e., English as synonymous of modernity, technological advancement, United Sates and innovation); through local imagined communities, they imagine themselves as being recognized as "competent" people. As stated by Angel: *"There is pressure to speak English if we want to be better. If we don't speak Nahuatl, nothing happens, but we need to speak English to be perceived as competent."* Because of his Indigenous roots, Angel is perceived as the lowest of the low on the social scale, but English allows him to gain access to a higher level of social recognition. He will still be perceived as an Indigenous person, but as an Indigenous person who speaks English and who wants to gain access to modernity.

Leticia confirms this feeling: *"If we speak English, people won't say anymore that we come from poor communities and that we don't have education".* Marisol also expressed in an IFG session that *"they will perceive us as poor rural kids, but kids who speak*

English. Some people see it that way. They do not valorize you as human beings; they are just interested in what you possess and what you know. It may be an advantage because it's easier to reposition yourself that way." Lourdes added that *"in the context of the city, it's normal to speak English; speaking English repositions you."* According to Angel's, Leticia's, Marisol's and Lourdes' excerpts, even if Mexico is, as mentioned earlier, an expanding English circle country where the language has no historical nor governmental role (Kachru, 1986), the power of English is such that it allows people from lower positioned affiliations to renegotiate their recognition on a national scale. As a result, Indigenous UAF participants like Angel and Leticia invest in EFL by creating *local imagined communities* through which they will interactively reposition themselves at a national level (Davies & Harré, 1990).

In short, it is interesting to observe that imagined communities, as far as English is concerned, are not always tied to Anglophone countries. The community of the imagination, as in the cases of Indigenous UAF participants, may be placed on a local level to enhance EFL investment. Hence, the symbolic power of English inside Mexico can also be a source of learning investment. Additionally to the local imagined community, Indigenous UAF participants look for creative ways to integrate their multi-competences (Cook, 1992) (i.e., multiple linguistic and cultural knowledges) as mentioned in the literature review, in their English language learning process. These strategies will be presented next.

6.5.2   A plurilingual learning strategy

Angel and Jorge are both bilingual and both seem to be the participants who believe most in the plurilingual learning approach, as referred to in the literature review. Both

expressed that they use their multi-competences when they learn English. Jorge stated that: *"I always relate new English words to words in Spanish or Nahuatl, to something I already know. I may not participate much in class, but I can visualize and feel what I am learning."* Hence, he relates English to Spanish and Nahuatl (i.e., his native language). Angel also uses Spanish and Nahuatl to learn English, but in another way. He learns English with his nieces who speak better Nahuatl than he does. He tells them words and short sentences in English all the time, and then he asks his nieces (in Spanish) how to say the words in Nahuatl. Together they all repeat the new words and sentences in the three languages. In this way, Angel also improves his competency level in Nahuatl. He explained the following: *"With my nieces we often pretend that we are cooking or that we get together for gossip, and then we say: "In English we say CAT, in Nahuatl NIXTON, and in Spanish GATO." We do the same with colors, animals or any other things. In a certain way, it's easier for us when we relate the three languages, it's easier to remember English like this."* As can be observed, Jorge and Angel perceive all their languages as a whole set of competences and follow the CEFR's (Council of Europe, 2001) plurilingual language learning approach which states that all the languages of an individual are interrelated and interact in the learning of a new language. Both participants create their own plurilingual strategies to learn English inside, or outside the EFL class. This plurilingual strategy also encourages Jorge, and other students, to integrate their local knowledges, a sort of pluricultural, or situated learning strategy, to access a more meaningful learning process as expressed below.

6.5.3   A pluricultural learning strategy

Just like Trinidad earlier, Jorge and Guillermo clearly expressed that for them, it is easier to learn English when they can speak about their own communities or about cultural practices they are familiar with. Hence, they use pluricultural learning strategies (i.e. situated learning strategies) that allow authentic educative practices that are culturally relevant for them (Díaz Barriga, 2003; Lave & Wenger, 1991). When EFL teachers do not take their context into account by presenting new English concepts or words, Jorge and Guillermo look for other ways to make the needed connections. Jorge explained that:

"If what we are learning is not related to something I know, I kind of try to relate it, I look for a different strategy that will help me to understand." They both give the example of homework they had to do. Jorge recalled that: *"Last time for example, the teacher asked us to write about a trip we made. I never travelled anywhere. The only place I really know apart from Tlaola* [i.e., Jorge's community] *is Puebla. So, I talked about my experience when I first arrived to Puebla. That was my own personal trip."* Guillermo used the same strategy, but the other way round. He said: *"I have never travelled anywhere, but I imagined myself going on holiday to my community."* These two excerpts show how UAF participants appropriate English by building the new knowledge on the basis of their prior personal and cultural knowledges, and not on the basis of knowledges belonging to other cultures. Jorge already expressed earlier that he cannot learn English based on other cultures he does not know. He needs to create an ownership (i.e., to learn the new language based on his own cultural references) and find his own voice in relation to the English language learning process (Norton 1997; Pennycook, 1997).

In short, part four of the findings analyzed the creation of autonomous EFL learning strategies developed by Indigenous UAF participants (i.e., local imagined communities, plurilingual and pluricultural learning approaches). As expressed by Holliday (2003) in the literature review, these autonomous EFL learning strategies represent a position from which students engage with the world. The learning strategies also go in line with what García and Sylvan (2011) refer to as dynamic plurilingual education or what the CEFR (Council of Europe, 2001) refers to as pluralistic approaches, both mentioned in the literature review, because participants do not keep their languages and cultures in strictly separated compartments. On the contrary, Indigenous UAF participants use their multi-competences (Cook, 1992), funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005) or their global set of competences (Coste & Simon, 2009) to create these strategies where languages and cultures follow a dynamic model (i.e., where languages and cultures are interrelated and interact between each other). It is important to mention at this point that students who follow a pluralistic learning approach by using either plurilingual or pluricultural strategies, or both, are all students who seem to be able to negotiate between their multiple identities and to harmonize them or, as expressed by García Canclini (1999), students who seem to enter a process of hybridization as mentioned in the literature review. This hybridization process allows them to negotiate the unequal power relationships of their multiple identities. Other UAF participants, such as Frida, who perceive their multiple identities as mutually exclusive, do not create autonomous pluralistic language learning strategies. As a result, there seems to be a link between students' hybridization process, language learning paradigms (i.e., monolingual or plurilingual) and EFL investment that could be investigated further.

6.6   Conclusion of the findings

The first part of this chapter introduced the reader to a summary of interview and IFG participants' answers to the research questions.

In part two, research participants define their macro context based on which they associate modernity with technological advancement, innovation, the United States and English as a linguistic norm. Since this modernity is not found in participants' rural world, they believe in modernity as a change, a change that will open doors to wider worlds. Participants also associate modernity with coloniality (i.e., with the idea that knowledge production in the West is more valuable). Modernity and coloniality, as expressed by UAF participants, clearly show the influence of colonial legacies (Mignolo, 2005). These colonial legacies are further expressed in the symbolic power participants attribute to Indigenous languages, relegated to students' past, and to Spanish which represents their present. English in turn, represents their future because it symbolizes the key towards better living conditions, and social recognition. Yet, participants' feelings are divided as far as English is concerned. They feel the imposition of linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2009) and of linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). However, participants know that they want to access modernity, and therefore that they have to change, and learn English. The change and the imposition of English are both at the core of the conflict. During the change, participants have to decide what to take with them and what to leave behind. This change is a change of the self; it represents the incorporation of an additional identity with which they will have to negotiate.

The third part of chapter six focuses on the micro context where UAF participants learn English. The UPAEP Language Department shifted from the CEFR to the ACTFL

framework, a language teaching/learning framework that seems to be easier to manage for UPAEP-EFL teachers, but that fails to integrate a plurilingual and pluricultural learning approach that would recognize and value UAF students' multi-competences. ACTFL specifically focuses on the integration of cognitive, metacognitive, and social affective language learning strategies in EFL teachers' daily teaching practices. This perspective of language learning autonomy is taught in the Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship. Yet, this perspective lacks understanding of the unequal power relationships between languages and cultures in UAF students' social context.

Part four analyzes UAF participants' subjectivities in relation to their English learning process. These subjectivities are the results of the influence exercised by the aforementioned macro and micro contexts. This chapter analyzes how participants experience discrimination not only at the university, but more specifically in the EFL classroom. This perceived discrimination has clear impacts on participants' EFL learning process. Consequently, UAF participants internalize the European imaginary even more by creating an "us/them" divide, by feeling inferior to their classmates and by experiencing fear in the English language classroom.

In the last section, findings show how four Indigenous participants are moving towards "modernity." These participants develop a high level of resistance agency that allows them to fight against the subjectivities examined in part three and to negotiate their multiple identities by entering a hybridization process through which they define what can be harmonized and what must be excluded in the (re)definition of their selves. This hybridization process is interconnected with participants' pluralistic learning approach that lead them to create autonomous language learning strategies that promote EFL

investment because it favours the integration of participants plurilingual and pluricultural multi-competences.

As a result, the findings presented in the sections above address the main question of this research:

"Non-UAF students respond well to the psychological focus of language learning autonomy, so why do UAF students not respond in the same way?"

Findings show that "context" in language learning autonomy has to be analyzed from a wider perspective than in the psychological version of language learning autonomy. Findings show that Mexico's social historical context does influence UAF students' linguistic perceptions, which in turn, influences how they feel when they have to learn English. The importance of this will be addressed in the next chapter, followed by a discussion of the methodology that was used in this research and what could be improved.

Chapter 7

7   Discussion

The discussion of the findings focuses on three main points. First, I will briefly discuss the findings of chapter six that most surprised me. Second, I will discuss the possible integration of a more socio critical autonomy in EFL teaching for UAF students. The socio critical perspective takes participants' socio historical context into consideration and allows students to engage in social action and to invest in EFL through pluralistic learning approaches. Finally, I will focus on the challenges I had to face by using the adopted methodology, specifically by using Interpretative Focus Groups, and how they have allowed the production of a glocalized knowledge, as claimed throughout the dissertation.

7.1   Brief discussion of the findings

Findings have already been presented in chapter six. The following aspects of the findings pertaining to how I answered the questions merit discussion in relation to UAF students' (a) macro and (b) micro contexts, and in relation to (c) UAF students' EFL learning strategies.

In part two, findings show that UAF students' perceptions of their socio historical context closely relate English with modernity and coloniality, and therefore with colonial legacies. Findings also show that the UPAEP micro context fails in integrating UAF students' multi-competences or funds of knowledge and that EFL teachers therefore do not build EFL learning on the strength of diverse students. Two points surprised me in relation to these macro and micro contexts.

7.1.1   UAF students' macro context

I was surprised to see that only two students criticized the globalized vision of modernity. Only Pablo and Gerardo mentioned once in an IFG session that this was only one of many different forms of perceiving modernity, and that Indigenous people in their communities perceived it in totally different ways. I expected more similar contests. In relation to that point, I was also surprised to see that many UAF students really believe in the superiority of Western knowledge. Only Jorge and Guillermo criticized this belief. I would have thought their perceptions to be more critical towards the supremacy of English and Western knowledge. Thus, the influence of students' socio historical legacies carries a weight that cannot be ignored.

7.1.2   UAF students' micro context

The second noteworthy point is the strength with which English is imposed and how it is imposed at the university. As mentioned in my positioning, I was part of the leading team in the UPAEP Language Department before I decided to begin this research. I may have had my own tendencies of linguistic imperialism without being really conscious about it. Now I am. However, I think that most EFL teachers, who teach based on a monolithic language approach are not conscious at all about the effects of their teaching approach on students. They may also not be conscious at all that they have a monolithic teaching approach. This monolithic perception is so embedded in people's everyday life in Mexico and in the way teachers teach languages that shifting from a monolithic to a pluralistic approach is an important paradigm shift in this specific context. Including this shift in

teacher education programs will therefore play a key role in addressing UAF students' struggles in EFL.

7.1.3   UAF students' EFL learning strategies

The last part of the findings shows how Indigenous students who move towards "modernity" by negotiating their multiple identities (or entering a hybridization process) are able to create autonomous language learning strategies (i.e., local imagined communities, and plurilingual and pluricultural strategies) that not only reposition them on a national level, but that also allow them to claim for the equal recognition of their cultures and languages. These learning strategies are of vital importance because they allow UAF students not only to empower themselves, but also to (re)valorize their local languages and cultures in a country where 27% of Indigenous languages are endangered, as mentioned in the context of this study. Consequently, focusing on pluralistic learning approaches in EFL teaching and learning for Indigenous students satisfies two major accomplishments: (1) to maintain Indigenous languages and cultures in Mexico, and (2) to invest in the English language learning process.

As a result, it seems that UAF students' macro and micro contexts must absolutely be considered in their English learning process. Some relevant implications are discussed next.

7.2   Implications of the findings

The findings of the study go alongside those who advocate for socio critical autonomy and with those who believe that autonomy is diverse in nature (Benson, 2001, 2007; Esch, 2009; Holliday, 2003; Palfreyman, 2003a; Pennycook, 1997). Findings contradict

the individual and psychological autonomy concepts prevalent in Western societies that "attribute learning success exclusively to internal factors rather than external ones" (Oxford, 2008, p. 49). On the contrary, research findings show that learners' social context (i.e., external factors) and the way they interact with that context and its constraints, "is of vital importance to the success of the educational endeavour" (Harmer, 2003, p. 288). As a result, context, agency and reflexivity, as discussed next, should be the frame based on which autonomous EFL learning is to be understood for UAF students (Oxford, 2008).

7.2.1   Importance of the context

Context in autonomous language learning, as experienced by UAF participants, is not only that of mediated learning in the language classroom (i.e., a context where teachers assist students to develop cognitive processes) (Dam, 1995; Wenden 1998). In addition to cognitive processes, UAF participants constantly interact with Mexico's macro context (i.e., colonial legacies, linguistic imperialism and linguicism) and experience subjectivities related to the English learning process, such as discrimination, we/us divide, feelings of inferiority and fear. Consequently, these findings show that Mexico's macro context has to be taken into account when teaching English to UAF students.

Findings also show that UAF students interact differently in relation to their context. On one hand, students like Jorge, Angel and Guillermo seem to act as social agents and resist the above mentioned subjectivities by using their linguistic and cultural repertoires (i.e., their multi-competences (Cook, 1992) and/or funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005)) in the learning of English. On the other hand, students like Frida and

Elena have more difficulties to act as social agents and cannot build their learning on their linguistic and cultural repertoires.

According to Moore and Gajo (2009), depending on the social context and the interlocutors, the language learner will (or will not) be "encouraged to use his/her repertoire as a bilingual or as a learner and sometimes, even, as a monolingual" (p.142). In the social context of this case study, learners are not encouraged at all to use their prior linguistic and cultural repertoires because these repertoires are socially discriminated against (i.e., they are not modern, and therefore not valuable). As a result, even if UPAEP- EFL teachers teach how to create cognitive processes to learn English based on language learning strategies, processes are not created based on diverse students' funds of knowledge (or local knowledges) with which they identify, as expressed by students themselves when they speak about their differentiated background knowledge which makes them feel inferior (6.4.2.2.2) . In addition, as mentioned in the findings too, EFL teachers build these cognitive processes on more "universal" knowledges with which UAF students are not related at all, as expressed by themselves. Hence, only students with a high level of agency, defined as the capacity to act and engage in social action (Giddens, 1996), seem to be able to integrate their prior linguistic and cultural knowledge and learn English in an autonomous way. Jorge, Angel and Guillermo seem to have this capacity, but Frida and Elena do not. Agency therefore seems to be an important component in UAF students' autonomous EFL learning process.

7.2.2   Importance of agency

Agency, autonomy and identity are interrelated and interdependent concepts in sociocultural settings (Benson, 2007; Norton & Toohey, 2004). On one side, (resistance)

agency (Canagarajah, 2005; Manosuthikit, 2008) is what allows Jorge, Angel and Guillermo to resist EFL subjectivities and to fight for the equal recognition of their languages, cultures and identities. On the other hand, agency allows them to use the local knowledges they claimed for in the learning of English. In addition, by using these local knowledges in the learning of English, Jorge, Angel and Guillermo are able to negotiate their multiple unequal identities and gain ownership of their EFL learning process (Pennycook, 1997) through the creation of pluralistic learning strategies. Guillermo, for example, expresses this negotiation and ownership when he says that he wants to make English his own language and to merge it with his culture.

Consequently, findings show that thanks to agency, students create their own learning strategies (i.e., local imagined communities, and plurilingual and pluricultural strategies) which, as noted by Oxford (2008), are signs of learner autonomy. At the same time, students "find a voice in English" (Pennycook, 1997, p. 48) by fighting for cultural alternatives of autonomy that allow them to integrate their own life experiences in the learning process, as noted in the literature review.

According to Esch (2009), the problem of the individual/psychological autonomy, as the one used at UPAEP, is that it is "based on a conceptualization of the individual which is separate from that of the community" (p. 37). Context becomes insignificant, as observed in EFL classes. This seems to be also clearly expressed by Leticia when she mentioned that her EFL teacher does not know where she comes from and which languages she speaks. Consequently, agency also seems to be the ability which allows Jorge, Angel, and Guillermo to include the 'missing' link related to their communities in EFL classes at UPAEP, as referred to in the findings. Frida and Elena do not possess this ability. They

seem to be involved in what Benson (2001) calls a "dualism in which individuals are counter-posed to the communities of which they are members" (p. 45). This is the reason why Frida and Elena perceive their multiple identities as mutually exclusive. In fact, they are not in a 'dualism', but rather in a 'trialism' in which they are counter-posed between the powerful world of modernity and English, the national world of Spanish and the rural worlds of their local communities (with or without Indigenous languages and knowledges).

In addition, "the pursuit of personal [psychological] autonomy may be admirable as long as individuals are sufficiently influential, powerful or rich to control much more than themselves" (Esch, 2009, p. 37) which is not the case of Frida and Elena. They both feel undermined by Mexico's socio historical constraints. They do not feel empowered by their local identities and therefore remain in conflict with UPAEP's autonomous EFL learning experience. Thus, the socio historical context of UAF participants' is important and influences their EFL learning process. It must therefore be taken into consideration and focus on the development of students' agency. Agency is what Little, Ridley, and Ushioda (2003) call the "principle of learner empowerment" (p. 17) which may be developed through critical thinking and reflexivity (Esch, 2009).

7.2.3   Importance of reflexivity

In Frida and Elena's cases, it is not their "lack of autonomy" which is at stake, but rather the lack of reflexive opportunities in the EFL classroom in relation to language and cultural ideologies. As Giddens argues (1996), individuals are obliged to construct their own identities, and therefore "the self has become a reflexive project" (Benson, 2009, p. 22). As mentioned earlier in the findings, a reflexive discussion on language and cultural

ideologies and beliefs with all the EFL students seems to be the missing link in UPAEP's version of autonomy. To discuss the unequal power relationships between languages and cultures in EFL may allow Frida and Elena to create the needed agency to negotiate their "selves" by (re)positioning themselves in the English language classroom. Benson (2009) recalls that autonomy and agency are closely related because "it is part of our role as teachers to support their [i.e., students'] autonomy as far as we are able by creating the conditions in which it can flourish" (p. 26). EFL-UPAEP teachers can support UAF students' autonomy by promoting critical discussions of social and cultural constraints (i.e., of the unequal power relationship between cultures and languages) in the EFL classroom. Hence, it requires "both teachers and learners to engage in the social process of knowledge construction" (Esch, 2009, p. 38). As argued by Esch (2009), becoming responsible (or, autonomous) learners is a never ending process which requires learners and teachers to identify contradictions and conflicts in discourse and in their daily practices.

In brief, this second point draws on Mexico's socio historical context and how it exerts constraints that make EFL learning more difficult for UAF students than for their dominant peers. This point is not about shifting from one autonomy perspective to the other, but rather including a socio critical perspective to the psychological one which seems to work for some UPAEP students, but not for all of them. Hence, by embracing a psychological vision of autonomy and, at the same time, a vision "associated with ideologies, attitudes, and beliefs created and manipulated through discourses" (Kramsch, 2011, p. 355), the UPAEP Language Department would create an optimal learning environment (Oxford, 2003; Ribé, 2003) that would include context, agency, and

reflexivity as key components in EFL curriculum design and in the Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship.

The third discussion point moves away from language learning autonomy to focus on the methodology that allowed finding what has been discussed above. Thus, the next lines aim to show which challenges I faced by using the adopted methodology, and specifically by using an Interpretative Focus Group that allowed me to achieve the methodology's main objective (i.e., to decolonize the creation of knowledge (Smith, 1999)).

7.3   Methodological challenges

7.3.1   The framing: Indigenous vs. non-Indigenous

Throughout the research I used opposing identities such as Indigenous/minority students vs. non-Indigenous/mestizo students as shown in appendix 10 and 11. Yet, Spivak (1988) always reminded me during the research process that the notion *Indigenous* reclaims a collective identity that reinscribes the Other in a subordinate position in society. In addition, the post-colonial framework, as referred to in the literature review, not only challenges the principles of modernity, but also rejects the representation of Otherness. I tried to avoid the image of the Other in the framing of the methodology. However, as mentioned in the context of the study, the notion Indigenous has been created based on the colonial taxonomies of New Spain, and is still widely used, specifically in Mexico. I also mentioned in the context of the study that Mexico is a caste-based society where the discourse of racial diversity focuses on the Indigenous Other. I asked research participants if they self-identified as *Indigenous* or as *mestizos* to see how they would react. I was surprised to see that they self-identified without any problem in one or the

other category because this is how Mexicans still categorize themselves. However, the definition of what it meant to be Indigenous varied from one person to the other, as mentioned earlier. Students referred to their native language which made them feel different. Others associated being Indigenous to a question of belonging or linked it to a specific world perspective, different from that of their dominant peers. Yet, some of them also identify themselves as Indigenous people because they get access to scholarships. Hence, there is also a certain utility involved. Though, all of the students embrace the widely accepted idea of opposing identities inherited from the colonial discourse of "the Other" (Bourdieu, 1982/1991) because, as mentioned in the context, the "we" vs. "they" divide has been institutionalized through the official doctrine of mestizaje (Gall, 2004; Stavenhagen, 1994). This colonial legacy is also shown in the findings when participants refer to their EFL classmates as "the others". It seems then that both UAF participants and I essentialized each other.

When I designed the methodological part of the research, I was aware that this colonial legacy is difficult to erase. This is the reason why I tried to find additional methods that would allow a more glocalized knowledge production. One of these methods was the creation of an Interpretative Focus Group that would allow UAF students to collaborate in the findings of this research, and therefore to participate in the analysis of their own world. Hence, in the following lines, I draw on how this approach has been helpful to achieve to decolonize knowledge production and what needs to be considered in future use.

7.3.2   Use of Interpretative Focus Group

I used Interpretative Focus Groups as a method to member-check the first analysis of participants' interviews, so IFG participants could approve, (re)interpret or add additional information to the analysis of the findings. This method, as referred to in the methodology of this study, followed the lines of Dodson et al. (2007) who used participatory methods such as IFGs to investigate representations of life of poor mothers in the United States. Indigenous and minority people in Mexico, such as poor women in the United States, are "othered" and have long been studied. In fact, UAF students are the most studied students at UPAEP. They therefore hesitate to share their world perspectives which may "affect reliability in social research and even preserve distorted images" (Dodson & Schmalzbauer, 2005, p. 949). According to Goffman (1963) and Dodson et al. (2007), "othered" people belong to a "culture of silence" (Freire, 1970) and are stigmatized (or, essentialized). They therefore feel unsure of how "the normals" may perceive them, and may camouflage their answers. I followed Dodson, Piatelli, and Schmalzbauer's (2007) approach by integrating collaborative participative methods in two of the three stages of the inquiry process (i.e., (1) research design, (2) data collection, and (3) data analysis). The research was designed by me without discussing the research themes and goals with UAF students because at that time I was still living in Canada. However, the impetus of understanding the struggles in the EFL learning process came from UAF students' themselves as mentioned at the beginning of the study. I was aware of the problem as I was working at the UPAEP Language Department. Students' voices have then been formally integrated in stage two and three.

The use of IFGs in stage three was an attempt, on one hand to avoid misinterpretations, and on the other, to create, as mentioned earlier, a glocalized knowledge. At this stage of the writing process, I retrospectively discuss how this process has achieved its original objectives as it seems to be new in critical applied linguistics. Hence, the following lines aim to show the valuable points of this process.

7.3.3   Positive results of Interpretative Focus Groups

In this particular study, IFG participants were members of the UAF program, but who had not been involved in the data collection. They were more advanced students than interview participants. In other words, IFG students were about to finish their undergraduate studies and had finished the mandatory EFL classes whereas interview participants were all still highly involved in classes. This was a positive point as it gave IFG participants a more critical perspective of the whole process. They were able to perceive differences between the beginning and the final stages of their learning process at UPAEP. Marisol mentioned one of these differences in 6.1 when she said that in the first semesters they had no idea about global topics, but that in the last semesters they understood more what "the others" were talking about. Hence, IFG participants' critical perspective allowed them to approve my interpretations by giving more personal examples, but also and above all to introduce additional information such as the differences between rural and urban contexts or the generational differences in the UAF cohorts. IFG participants' critical perspective also allowed them to reinterpret and to contest some of the interpretations. Arturo was the first one in contesting research designs in general, as mentioned in the methodology, by stating that research questions are generally based on researchers' perspectives, and that interview participants may just

answer what the researcher wants to hear. Hence, he reminded me that by asking questions, I may "impose some structure upon the setting" as mentioned by Wolcott (1997, p. 160). Dodson and Schmalzbauer (2005) also mentioned that in their study with poor mothers participants' answers may go "along with the expectations of authorities" (p. 951). Thus, I consciously tried to avoid IFG participants to always agree with me and tried to favour the expression of different perspectives. I therefore focused on "active listening" by following Crowley Jack's (1999) recommendations that state that "active listening involves attending as closely to the speakers as possible." (p. 91). Listening is an ability that has to be learnt through experience, just as researchers also have to learn how to interview (Fontana & Frey, 2005) and how to ask questions (Briggs, 1996). In this way I avoided "lazy listening" which leads to appropriate what a person is saying to one's existing ideas or existing theories. Active listening has been specifically important in IFG sessions because I presented participants a first analysis based on my own world perspectives in which I had already preconstructed ideas on different topics. However, I could avoid the temptation to let IFG participants approve all my perspectives. Pablo for example contested my interpretation of how his peers perceived modernity by mentioning that Indigenous people perceived modernity differently. He clearly separated both perspectives. On the same line, Lourdes (re)interpreted and contested my interpretation of Frida's fear of losing her Indigenous identity by learning English. She stated that when Indigenous people's identities are strong, they cannot lose them. All these interventions made me open myself more and listen to them more carefully so I could include IFG participants' views in the final analysis of the findings.

Hence, from this perspective IFG participants really participated in the analysis of the findings by approving, contesting and/or (re)interpreting my interpretations of their peers' interviews. Consequently, IFG sessions were an effective variation to conventional member-checking approaches because, as stated by Dodson at al. (2007), I did not seek confirmation of accuracy of the collected data, but rather coanalysis. In addition, IFG participants felt that they were taken into account by being involved as data interpreters and by being able to speak on behalf of their peers, rather than always be involved as respondents. From this perspective, the use of IFG "disrupted the status-quo" (Madison, 2005) and achieved its main objective. It decolonized the creation of knowledge (Smith, 1999) by interpreting data from other people's life with the collaboration of "the other" (Dodson et al., 2007).

In brief, an Interpretative Focus Group is a good way to include "the others" in "authoring [their] own world without being subject to the will of others" (Young, 1986, p. 19). In this research, IFG participants did indeed approve, (re)interpret and contest my interpretations of their world, and together, we achieved to create a glocalized knowledge as shown in the findings.

To conclude, chapter 7 discussed three points that emerged from this research.

First, I discussed three additional issues that arose from the findings. I was surprised to see that only few participants contested the globalized vision of modernity. They all perceive the imposition of modernity (and of English) everywhere, but do not oppose it. On the contrary, they find ways to adapt and/or merge it with their own cultures. Second, I was also surprised to see how teachers and administrators can follow monolithic and

imperial teaching approaches without being conscious about them. Again, this shows the oblivious weight of colonial legacies. Finally, I mentioned that by shifting to pluralistic learning approaches, UAF students not only invest in EFL, but also favour the maintenance of endangered cultures and languages.

Second, findings show that Mexico's socio historical context does clearly influence UAF students' EFL learning process. This outcome is in conflict with the vision of psychological autonomy managed at the UPAEP Language Department which perceives context as a particular context where learning has to be achieved through the mediation of cognitive processes in the language classroom. Consequently, the inclusion of an additional socio critical layer to the existing psychological vision should be taken into consideration. This addendum should draw on three main points: context, agency and reflexivity.

Finally, this chapter discussed the methodology used in the research and showed that it fulfilled its main objective (i.e., to create a glocalized knowledge). The participation of UAF students in the analysis of the data through the creation of an interpretative focus group has been successful. However, as it is a new method in decolonizing research methodologies, more recommendations will be needed in future. The following conclusion will mention a few.

Conclusion, recommendations and further research

In this critical ethnographic case study, I analyzed and evaluated whether UAF students' low EFL results were constructed socially and/or historically. In other words, I first explored the contributing factors in their struggles with EFL, and second, I explored which factors influenced their EFL learning process.

Former Mexican President Porfirio Díaz once exclaimed *"Pobre México, tan cerca de Estados Unidos y tan lejos de Dios"* [Poor Mexico, so close to the United States and so far from God]. This statement has been relentlessly repeated in many forums around the country. Mexico and the United States indeed have a love/hate relationship (Rangel, 1977). However, findings reveal that the contributing factors of UAF students' struggles with EFL are deeper than just the political and economic imperialistic perspective that the language stimulates. Findings show that for UAF students, English is synonymous with modernity and coloniality of knowledge, both of which are rooted in Mexico's colonial legacies (Mignolo, 2005; Escobar, 2005). These colonial legacies impose unequal cultural and linguistic power relationships between languages and cultures that gain expression through linguistic imperialism (Phillipson, 1992, 2009) and linguicism (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1988). This unequal relationship is experienced by UAF students in the EFL classroom through a form of discrimination whereby English is used to show superiority. UAF students are not a homogeneous group. Some self-identify as Indigenous, while others identify themselves as mestizos. Some are bilingual and others are monolingual. Regardless, they all have an additional identity to negotiate, be it a rural

and/or Indigenous identity; an identity that is discriminated against in the urban world where the UPAEP is embedded.

This discrimination has an impact on students' EFL subjectivities (i.e., their affective relationship towards the learning of English). Consequently, participants adhere to the colonial divide (i.e., they see themselves in opposition to the "Others" who 'know more') and, therefore, feel inferior and afraid in the EFL classroom. On a micro level, the UPAEP Language Department does not recognize the existence of inequalities between students' cultures and languages. The Department, and the university as a whole, are invested in a vision of liberal multiculturalism that prioritizes equal treatment of all EFL students (Kubota, 2004). As a result, the Language Department does not favour the recognition of UAF students' local knowledges and languages; rather, it favours the teaching of English based on a monolithic approach that does not draw on diverse students' multi-competences (Cook, 1992) or funds of knowledge (González, Moll, & Amanti, 2005).

Findings also reveal that agency is one of the factors that influence UAF students' investment in EFL because it allows them to resist feelings of discrimination and to become autonomous learners responsible for their own learning process. Some - though not all - Indigenous students contest and resist their marginalized position by: (a) creating imagined communities that reposition them on a national level, and in the EFL class; and (b) appropriating the English language through the integration of their own voice in the learning process (i.e., they become autonomous learners who create their own learning strategies) (Pennycook, 2001). These students develop a pluralistic language learning

approach that favours the creation of autonomous plurilinguistic and pluricultural language learning strategies (Council of Europe, 2001; Despagne, 2013b).

In short, students who enter a hybridization process through which they are able to negotiate their multiple identities (local, national and global) exhibit agency to resist discrimination (Canagarajah, 2005; Manosuthikit, 2008) which in turn allows them to invest in EFL.

These findings draw on the first point of discussion regarding the pedagogical vision of the UPAEP Language Department - a vision that centres on the psychological components of language learning autonomy, a perspective that does not take Mexico's wider context into account. Yet, findings reveal that UAF students' struggles with EFL are indeed constructed socially and historically. Consequently, the integration of a socio critical layer of language learning autonomy to the already existing perspective would, according to Oxford (2003) and Ribé (2003), create an optimal language learning environment that consists of developing cognitive processes based on the context where people live and interact (Wenden, 1991).

The second point of discussion addressed the methodology used in this dissertation and its potential to lead to the co-development of a glocalized knowledge. Participants' voices were not only integrated in the data collection, but also in the data analysis. Participants who did not enter the interview process analyzed data in four IFG sessions where they voiced their views on my interpretations of the interview data; views that approved, (re) interpreted, and sometimes contested some of my initial interpretations. The IFG participants' interpretations were then incorporated into my findings in chapter six.

The two discussion points above mentioned lead to recommendations for, on the one hand, the UPAEP Language Department and, on the other hand, for researchers who would like to conduct Interpretative Focus Groups to decolonize research.

Recommendations for the UPAEP Language Department

Findings suggest that it would be beneficial for the UPAEP Language Department to add an additional, socio critical layer to their current psychological perspective on autonomous language learning; a layer that views learners as social beings that interact with the world, rather than essentially cognitive beings (Palfreyman, 2003b). Consequently, I strongly recommend that there be focus on students as heterogeneous beings able to engage in different ways with their environment because all of them possess many different kinds of cultural and linguistic knowledges situated in larger socio historical contexts (Coste & Simon, 2009). UAF students should be motivated, allowed and encouraged to involve their diverse prior knowledges and adapt them to their own EFL learning strategies, which would allow for them to be involved in and responsible for their language learning process. This possibility is important since, as noted in the literature review, "involvement and responsibility" figure prominently in Little's (2004) three principles of language learning autonomy.

Findings also reveal that context in autonomous language learning should not only be that of the mediation of cognitive processes in the language classroom. If cognitive processes are to be built on students' prior knowledges, as referred to by Echevarría, Vogt and Short (2008) and as taught in the Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship at UPAEP, they should build on recognition of diverse students' wider socio historical context. As a

result, it would also be highly beneficial for the approaches to EFL pedagogy adopted by UPAEP to guide diverse students to expressing their own voice in their learning process (Pennycook, 1997) and to exerting choices (Giddens, 1996) in how learning strategies adapted to their own cultural and linguistic experiences are created. For this to happen, teachers must gain greater awareness of Mexico's cultural and linguistic heterogeneity. An awareness couched in a vision of critical multiculturism (Díaz Polanco, 2006; Gasché, 1997) that takes unequal power relations into account, and of interculturalism with cultural and political recognition of native populations would enable them to build their EFL pedagogies on students' prior knowledges all the more. This critical vision would recognize students' local cultures (and languages), enabling them to draw on them in their learning, and would have the potential for them to develop the agency needed to meet academic success and, possibly, engage in social action. Hence, as previous research has shown, by validating UAF students' local knowledges and allowing them to become 'the authors of their own language learning process', they may increase their EFL investment and appropriate more desirable identities (Norton, 1997, 2000, 2001).

Consequently, I suggest the UPAEP Language Department consider the following three recommendations:

1. (Re)evaluate using the CEFR as a guiding framework in the Language Department, instead of ACTFL, because of the CEFR's plurilingual component, which I view as better supporting diverse students' development of learner autonomy due to its inclusion of a socio cultural perspective in L2 learning.

2. Include a thematic unit on "cultural and linguistic awareness in the Mexican context" in the Strategy Based Instruction Mentorship for UPAEP-EFL teachers

in the aim of heightening teachers' awareness of multilinguistic and multicultural reality in Mexico (and in their classrooms). In this thematic unit, EFL teachers should be challenged to reflect on the following two points:

a. How they could develop reflexive EFL classes where cultural and linguistic power relations can be discussed with all the students (i.e., UAF students and their dominant group peers). The discussions that ensued could open up a space in which UAF students would have a voice, become social actors, position themselves differently (and therefore be positioned) in the EFL classroom.

b. How they could guide UAF students (or any other diverse students) to create pluricultural and/or plurilinguistic autonomous languages learning strategies (i.e., strategies based on students 'own lived experiences).

3. Develop and add on an additional, one-semester long "breakthrough" EFL level (Council of Europe, 2001). It could be accessible to all the UPAEP students, but in it, UAF students in particular could learn the basics of the English language and bring their EFL competency level up to on par with "the others" before they enter the regular program. This would address the issue highlighted in this dissertation of them feeling inferior and frightened, and the negative impact of which was also documented in this research.

In relation to researchers hoping to conduct IFG sessions, and in addition to Dodson at al. (2007) suggestions, I recommend the following points regarding variations to conventional member-checking approaches.

Recommendations for the use of Interpretative Focus Group

My three recommendations are as follow:

1. IFG participants should be more experienced in the undergraduate academic process than interview participants. This experience will give them a more critical perspective.

2. In the presentation of researchers' initial data analysis to IFG participants, researchers should:

   a. Use Indigenous typologies (i.e., typologies created by the interview participants themselves) rather than typologies created by the researchers themselves, likely in accordance with the theoretical framework, as analyst-constructed typologies may confuse IFG participants.

   b. Avoid using concepts or other loaded terms such as "discrimination" that may also be confusing for IFG participants (Blommaert & Dong, 2010).

3. Develop active listening skills and avoid "lazy listening," which leads researchers to appropriate what a person is saying to one's existing ideas or existing theories (Crowley Jack, 1999, p. 91). The latter is counter-productive to the purposes of decolonizing research as it loses IFG participants' voice.

The three recommendations conclude with the socio critical lens that has been adopted to study UAF students' struggles with EFL. The following and final section of this dissertation will draw on different lenses and connections that could be embraced for further research on these struggles.

Remaining questions and further research

After having analyzed and discussed the data of this dissertation, some questions remain open and suggest useful avenues of future research in relation to Indigenous students EFL learning process in Mexico.

At the beginning of the interviews, I asked the UAF students to self-evaluate their competence level in their Indigenous language. I thought that a high level of competence may result in a high level of self-confidence, empowerment, and therefore agency that would allow them to introduce their multi-competences in the learning of English and invest in EFL. However, findings do not show a clear connection between the competency level in the Indigenous language, agency, and EFL investment. More research is needed to evaluate if these connections exist as there might not be any causality.

During the IFG sessions, participants called my attention to the fact that UAF students' struggles in EFL could be analyzed from two different lenses. Some felt that they only invested in EFL if they saw the usefulness of English in marketing, software engineering or pedagogy. According to them, students' area of study may influence their investment in EFL.

The second lens that IFG participants suggested for how this study could be analyzed (which I also observed during several interviews) relates to gender. They suggested that some female students have to fight harder to be able to develop the needed agency that allows them to negotiate the unequal power relationship in their multiple identities. Female students' self-esteem and agency are generally undermined in highly sexist environments.

The IFG participants' views provided additional lenses from which UAF students' struggles with EFL could be analyzed. These additional lenses and the connections between the competency level in Indigenous languages and agency are areas that also warrant future research.

In conclusion, this dissertation allowed me to understand that UAF students' socio historical context does indeed, as expressed earlier, influence their EFL learning process. With this in mind, it seems imperative now to guide students (and EFL teachers) in developing cognitive processes from a plurilingual perspective and adapted to diverse students' funds of knowledge or local knowledges. As a result, my future research agenda will follow Siegal's (2006), Reagan's (2006) and Sayer's (2007) steps of "critical language awareness" defined as a "reflective, socially and politically aware approach to understanding the role that language plays in society" (Sayer, 2007, p. 348). The findings of this dissertation point for a need to support the efforts of critical language awareness so EFL teachers and students can together address the complex and controversial matters of unequal power relationship of cultures and languages in the EFL classroom. Critical language awareness could be included in the Strategy Based Instruction program for EFL teachers at UPAEP as mentioned earlier in the recommendations. This would also convey them to uncover, scrutinize and critique the ideological elements of their teaching (Sayer, 2007).

Finally, this dissertation confirms the importance of socio historical contexts in language learning, specifically in Mexico. While some work has focussed on EFL learning of

Mexican mainstream students, and other work has drawn on Indigenous and minority education, no work has until now focussed on EFL learning for Indigenous and minority students in Mexico. Thus, this study fills a gap in language research in Mexico.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethical Approval 1

THE UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN ONTARIO
FACULTY OF EDUCATION

Western USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1112-1
Principal Investigator: Shelley Taylor
Student Name: Colette Despagne
Title: *Autonomous EFL Learning in Mexico: Indigenous Students' Voices*
Expiry Date: May 31, 2012
Type: Ph.D. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date: January 16, 2012
Revision #:
Documents Reviewed &
Approved: UWO Protocol, Letters of Information & Consent, Advertisement (ppt)

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of The University of Western Ontario Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2011-2012 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board	
Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty of Education
Dr. Farahnaz Faez	Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis	Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty of Education
Dr. Immaculate Namukasa	Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music
Dr. Kevin Watson	Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research *(ex officio)*
Dr. Goli Rezai-Rashti	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Graduate Programs *(ex officio)*
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education, UWO Non-Medical Research Ethics Board *(ex officio)*

The Faculty of Education   Karen Kueneman, Research Officer

Appendix 2: Ethical Approval 2

Western ⚜ Education
WESTERN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1112-1
Principal Investigator: Shelley Taylor
Student Name: Colette Despagne
Title: *Autonomous EFL Learning in Mexico: Indigenous Students' Voices*
Expiry Date: June 30, 2013
Type: Ph.D. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date: April 26, 2012
Revision #: 1
Documents Reviewed &
Approved: Revised Study End Date

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

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Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2011-2012 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board

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Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music
Dr. Kevin Watson	Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research (*ex officio*)
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (*ex officio*)

The Faculty of Education   Research Officer

Appendix 3: Ethical Approval 3

Western Education
WESTERN UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
USE OF HUMAN SUBJECTS - ETHICS APPROVAL NOTICE

Review Number: 1112-1
Principal Investigator: Shelley Taylor
Student Name: Colette Despagne
Title: *Autonomous EFL Learning in Mexico: Indigenous Students' Voices*
Expiry Date: June 30, 2013
Type: Ph.D. Thesis
Ethics Approval Date: March 14, 2013
Revision #: 2
Documents Reviewed & Revised Inclusion Criteria, Revised Study Method, Letter of Information & Consent
Approved: Administrators

This is to notify you that the Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board (REB), which operates under the authority of the Western University Research Ethics Board for Non-Medical Research Involving Human Subjects, according to the Tri-Council Policy Statement and the applicable laws and regulations of Ontario has granted approval to the above named research study on the date noted above. The approval shall remain valid until the expiry date noted above assuming timely and acceptable responses to the REB's periodic requests for surveillance and monitoring information.

During the course of the research, no deviations from, or changes to, the study or information/consent documents may be initiated without prior written approval from the REB, except for minor administrative aspects. Participants must receive a copy of the signed information/consent documentation. Investigators must promptly report to the Chair of the Faculty Sub-REB any adverse or unexpected experiences or events that are both serious and unexpected, and any new information which may adversely affect the safety of the subjects or the conduct of the study. In the event that any changes require a change in the information/consent documentation and/or recruitment advertisement, newly revised documents must be submitted to the Sub-REB for approval.

Dr. Alan Edmunds (Chair)

2012-2013 Faculty of Education Sub-Research Ethics Board	
Dr. Alan Edmunds	Faculty of Education (Chair)
Dr. John Barnett	Faculty of Education
Dr. Wayne Martino	Faculty of Education
Dr. George Gadanidis	Faculty of Education
Dr. Elizabeth Nowicki	Faculty of Education
Dr. Julie Byrd Clark	Faculty of Education
Dr. Kari Veblen	Faculty of Music
Dr. Jason Brown	Faculty of Education
Dr. Susan Rodger	Faculty of Education, Associate Dean, Research (ex officio)
Dr. Ruth Wright	Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (ex officio)
Dr. Kevin Watson	Faculty of Music, Western Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (ex officio)

The Faculty of Education   Faculty of Education Building

Appendix 4: Letter of information to students for interviews & class

**Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico:
Indigenous students' voices.**

**LETTER OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS
FOR INTERVIEWS & CLASS OBSERVATIONS**

Introduction
My name is Colette Despagne and I am a PhD Candidate of the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario in Canada. I am currently conducting research into English learning of Indigenous students in Mexico and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study
The aims of this study are to understand which challenges students of the *Una Apuesta al Futuro* program at UPAEP have to face in order to learn English, what factors contribute to these difficulties and what factors influence their investment in the learning of English.

If you agree to participate
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to
(1) Participate in personal interviews for which you will

- meet with me at the UPAEP for 3 hour-long sessions between January and April 2012;

- discuss the major challenges you face learning English;

- discuss your perceptions of Spanish, Indigenous languages and English;

Formal interviews will be audio recorded, but your name will never appear on the recording. I will use pseudonyms instead in order to protect your identity.

You may also be asked to participate in informal interviews at different times throughout the study. These informal interviews will not be pre-planned. The aim of them is to confirm or delve deeper into information you provided in your formal interviews.

(2) Participate in observations for which you

- allow me to observe you during three of your EFL classes. These observations will occur throughout the full 50 minute long class. During that time, I will focus on topics you mentioned during from the interviews.

Confidentiality
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. I will use a pseudonym when referring to you. I will keep my field notes and your interview data in a locked filing cabinet in my office and destroy them after five years.

Risks & Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your studies at the UPAEP.

Questions
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Colette Despagne or my supervisor Dr. Shelley Taylor.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

[Signature]

Appendix 5: Letter of information to IFG students

Western

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico:
Indigenous students' voices.

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO STUDENTS
FOR INTERPRETATIVE FOCUS GROUPS

Introduction
My name is Colette Despagne and I am a PhD Candidate of the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario in Canada. I am currently conducting research into English learning of Indigenous students in Mexico and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study
The aims of this study are to understand which challenges students of the *Una Apuesta al Futuro* (UAF) program at UPAEP have to face in order to learn English, what factors contribute to these difficulties and what factors influence their investment in the learning of English.

If you agree to participate
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked

- to meet one hour with me and five other students (maximum five one hour meetings) at the UPAEP between April and May 2012;

- to discuss and analyze patterns drawn from the interviews and class observations of other students from the UAF program;

- to discuss and analyze specific excerpts from students of the UAF program.

The names from interviewed and observed students will be kept confidential during these meetings. Interpretative Focus Groups will be audio recorded, but your name will never appear on the recording. However, participants in the focus groups will know each other and will know who participate in it.

Confidentiality
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. I will use a pseudonym when referring to you. I will keep my field notes and your interview data in a locked filing cabinet and destroy them after five years. Please respect the privacy of the study participants by not disclosing information learned in the focus group outside of the group.

Risks & Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your studies at the UPAEP.

Questions
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario, Canada. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Colette Despagne or my supervisor Dr. Shelley Taylor.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

[Signature]

Appendix 6: Letters of information to teachers

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico:
Indigenous students' voices.

LETTER OF INFORMATION TO TEACHERS FOR
CLASS OBSERVATIONS

Introduction
My name is Colette Despagne and I am a PhD Candidate of the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario in Canada. I am currently conducting research into English learning of Indigenous students in Mexico and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study
The aims of this study are to understand which challenges students of the *Una Apuesta al Futuro* (UAF) program at UPAEP have to face in order to learn English, what factors contribute to these difficulties and what factors influence their investment in the learning of English.

If you agree to participate
If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked

- to allow me to observe you in approximately three EFL classes where student of the UAF program who participate in the study are enrolled.

I will sit at the back of the class as an observer, and will not actively participate in it. I will observe specific patterns in relation with perceptions drawn from the interviews with the students. I will not evaluate you as a teacher. I will take notes of the observations during the whole class. You may also be asked informal questions at times throughout the study. The aim of the questions will be to better understand the observations.

Confidentiality
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. I will use a pseudonym when referring to you. I will keep my field notes and your class observation data in a locked filing cabinet and destroy them after five years.

Risks & Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your employment at the UPAEP.

Questions
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario, Canada. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Colette Despagne or my supervisor Dr. Shelley Taylor.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

[Signature]

Appendix 7: Letters of information to administrators

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico: Indigenous students' voices.

**LETTER OF INFORMATION TO ADMINISTRATORS
FOR UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEWS**

Introduction
My name is Colette Despagne and I am a PhD Candidate of the Faculty of Education at The University of Western Ontario in Canada. I am currently conducting research into English learning of Indigenous students in Mexico and would like to invite you to participate in this study.

Purpose of the study
The aims of this study are to understand which challenges students of the *Una Apuesta al Futuro* program at UPAEP have to face in order to learn English, what factors contribute to these difficulties and what factors influence their investment in the learning of English.

If you agree to participate

> If you agree to participate in this study you will be asked to consent to the use of information that you have provided to me in earlier informal interviews and/or conversations that we had about the UPAEP program.

> I will use the information to further confirm or delve deeper into information obtained through document analysis, class observations or student interviews. I will give you a copy of the information that you provided (and that I intend to use for the study) and you will be able to delete any information that you wish.

Confidentiality
The information collected will be used for research purposes only, and neither your name nor any information that could identify you will be used in any publication or presentation of the study results. All information collected for the study will be kept confidential. I will use a pseudonym when referring to you. I will keep my notes and the information you provided me in a locked filing cabinet in my office and destroy them after five years.

Risks & Benefits
There are no known risks to participating in this study.

Voluntary Participation
Participation in this study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any questions or withdraw from the study at any time with no effect on your studies at the UPAEP.

Questions
If you have any questions about the conduct of this study or your rights as a research participant you may contact the Manager, Office of Research Ethics, The University of Western Ontario. If you have any questions about this study, please contact Colette Despagne or my supervisor Dr. Shelley Taylor.

This letter is yours to keep for future reference.

[Signature]

Appendix 8: Consent forms (students, teachers & administrators)

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico: Indigenous students' voices

Colette Despagne, The University of Western Ontario

**STUDENT CONSENT FORM
FOR INTERVIEWS & CLASS OBSERVATIONS**

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: Colette Despagne

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico: Indigenous students' voices

Colette Despagne, The University of Western Ontario

**STUDENT CONSENT FORM
FOR INTERPRETATIVE FOCUS GROUPS**

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: Colette Despagne

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico: Indigenous students' voices

Colette Despagne, The University of Western Ontario

TEACHER CONSENT FORM
FOR EFL CLASS OBSERVATIONS

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: Colette Despagne

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico: Indigenous students' voices

Colette Despagne, The University of Western Ontario

ADMINISTRATOR CONSENT FORM
FOR INTERVIEWS

I have read the Letter of Information, have had the nature of the study explained to me and I agree to participate. All questions have been answered to my satisfaction.

Name (please print):

Signature: Date:

Name of Person Obtaining Informed Consent: Colette Despagne

Signature of Person Obtaining Informed Consent:

Date:

Appendix 9: Question guide for interviews

Autonomous EFL learning in Mexico:
Indigenous students' voices

Purpose

- to learn about student perceptions of the challenges they face in EFL classes;
- to investigate whether these challenges are constructed socially and/or historically;
- to analyze factors that influence Indigenous students' investment in EFL learning

Sample Questions

Background information on languages

1) Do you speak an Indigenous language?
2) If you answered "yes" to #1, please answer the following:
    a) Which language do you speak?
    b) Could you please self-evaluate your proficiency level in your Indigenous language based on this framework?
    c) Where do you use this language and with whom?
    d) Who speaks this language in your family? Community? Friends?

Possible questions based on the main notions of the theoretical framework

Colonial legacy
- What does an Indigenous language mean for you personally?
- Do you think it is important to keep it? Why or why not?
- How do you identify with Indigenous languages and cultures?
- What does Spanish mean for you?
- If do you identify with Spanish, how do you do so?

Modernity
- Does the word "modernity" mean anything to you? If so, what?
- Which places do you think of when you hear the term?
- Do you associate any languages with *modernity*?
- Think about English. What comes to mind when you think about it (e.g., does it represent anything to you?). Is it important? - why or why not?

Coloniality of power
- Why are you learning English?
- Are you succeeding academically in English?

- Do you participate in class? If no, why not?
- What aspects of your relationship with your teacher are you happy with, and what would you like to improve (and why)?
- Do you feel he/she understands your needs?
- Are you in a mixed class (i.e., with Indigenous and non-Indigenous students)?
- Do you work collaboratively with them? Do you help each other? Provide examples and explain why you think you do (not).
- Do you like the textbooks that are used in class?
- Do you feel a connection with the topics covered in the book? Please provide me with some examples.

Identity

- Does speaking Spanish and/or your Indigenous language help you learn English?
- Does anything in particular help you learn English (e.g., something you already know in your own culture and language(s))?
- Do you feel like you are the same person in your community, in the city of Puebla, and in your EFL class? Provide examples of similarities and differences, and reasons for them.
- Does you EFL teacher help you to link EFL learning with your knowledge in other languages and cultures? Could you give me some examples?
- Do you use English outside of class? If so, when and where?

Investment in learning EFL

- What is the most important thing for you that will allow you to learn English. For example, the most important thing for me is …..
- If you could change something in the EFL class, what would it be?
- When you speak English in class, how do you feel (e.g., nervous, proud, etc.)?
- Do your teacher or classmates react in any particular way when you participate in class?

Appendix 10: Interview participants' main characteristics

Participants		Indigenous bilingual participants					Indigenous monolingual participants		Mestizo monolingual participants	
Characteristics		Jorge The "perfect" hybrid	Leticia The farmer	Frida The politician	Angel The plurilingual learner	Blanca The basketbal player	Trinidad The school teacher	Guillermo The dreamer	Gabriela The business women	Elena The quiet & anxious girl
Competency level in Indigenous language		Nahuatl (C2 level)	Nahuatl (B2 level)	Totonaco (B1 level)	Nahuatl (A1 level)	Totonaco (A2 level)	….		….	
Undergraduate studies		Political science	Agronomy	Law	Law	Environmental Engineering	Pedagogy	Finance	Marketing	Management (she had to leave the program)
Opinions on Mexico's context	Modernity	Fusion	United States	Power	Change in life	English	Effort, but one has to choose to change or not	Adaptation	Innovation	Technology
	Coloniality	Knowledge exchange is mutual (from modern to traditional & traditional to modern world)	Technological knowledge comes in English, not Spanish	Knowledge and recognition are linked to English	Knowledge creation is contextual	All the books are in English and it would be difficult to translate them all	Not really interested in knowledge production in English; very focused on her community life	Education is better in the United States	Anglophone authors have more experience and are better prepared	
	Symbolic power of Indigenous languages	Nahuatl = first language. Uses Indigenous knowledge in the modern world	Very identified with Nahuatl	Feels that she is losing her totonaco identity	Wants to learn more Nahuatl	Feels half totonaca, half mestiza	They do not speak any Indigenous language anymore, but feel identified with them because they are part of their roots. They would like to learn them.		Indigenous languages represent their origins, but they do not identify with them	
		Past and present. Identify with them.					Past and present because (want to learn Nahuatl)		Past	
	Symbolic power of Spanish	Utilitarian language. Bridge, connection with people from outside their communities					Language with which they identify			
	Symbolic power of English	Strong local imposition. Assimilation like Spanish	The whole university is in English	Wants the power English represents	Power, money, better profesional opportunities	English is imposed through modernity	English is modernity to which we have to adapt	English is a necessity and an aspiration	English is synonym of fear	Education, better jobs
Factors that influence EFL investment	Use of personal learning strategies	Creation of plurilingual and pluricultural strategies	Creates ownership, perceives English as a third language	None	Creation of plurilingual and pluricultural strategies & fights discrimination	Makes her own connections with EFL topics	None	Creation of pluricultural strategies; he tries to merge with English	Prepares EFL topics before classes	
	Imagined community	local repositioning	local repositioning	local repositioning	local repositioning	local repositioning	local repositioning	local repositioning	local & international positioning	local repositioning
	Language learning paradigm	pluralistic	monolithic but ready to change	monolithic	pluralistic	monolithic, but open	monolithic	monolithic	monolithic	monolithic

Appendix 11: IFG participants' main characteristics

Participants		Indigenous bilingual participants			Indigenous monolingual participants		Mestizo monolingual participants
		Pablo	Lourdes	Hector	Arturo	Teresa	Marisol
Undergraduate studies		Software Engineering	Communication	Industrial Engineering	Agronomy	Industrial Engineering	Marketing
Opinions of Mexico's context	Modernity	Reclaimed an Indigenous perspective of modernity	___	___	Modernity is to adapt to globalization	Modernity is a question of balance; it's a fusion	___
Opinions of Mexico's context	Coloniality	___	The idea that foreign knowledge is something imposed through colonization	The books we have to read are written by foreign authors	The university makes students believe that Anglophone authors are better	Contested the idea that foreign knowledge is better than Mexican knowledge	The books we have to read are written by foreign authors
Opinions of Mexico's context	Symbolic power of languages	Confirmed interview participants' reactions	Confirmed peers' reactions & insisted on that they don't like is to be imposed to do something	Confirmed interview participants' reactions	Confirmed interview participants' reactions	Confirmed interview participants' reactions	Confirmed interview participants' reactions
Students' subjectivities in the EFL classroom	"We" vs. "them"	Comes from the fact that their dominant EFL peers and teachers use English to show superiority	___	___	Comes from the fact that their dominant EFL peers come from the private school system where they learn English from kindergarten	Comes from the special EFL courses for UAF students where everything was made easier for them	___
Students' subjectivities in the EFL classroom	Discrimination	Dominant EFL peers called him "rancherito". He was about to quit the program	___	___	___	Discrimination in Mexico and more in EFL classrooms	___
Students' subjectivities in the EFL classroom	Fear & inferiority	He never understood anything in EFL classes	English makes them panic and bogged down	Use of global topics that make no sense to us	Fear to fail the class	They are only afraid in EFL classes	Use of global topics that make no sense to us
Factors that influence EFL investment	Strategies	Investment in EFL once he could relate it with software engineering	___	___	___	Relates EFL with mathematics	Needed to be in contact with every day English
Factors that influence EFL investment	Strategies	Did not like the notion of "imagined communities"	English repositions Indigenous & minority people in the cities	Did not like the notion of "imagined communities"	Did not like the notion of "imagined communities"	Find different ways to be valued & recognized by others	Speak about your life in class to be recognized by others
Additional points to be taken into account		* Rural vs. urban contexts * Differences in EFL competency level with the following cohorts * Socio historical aversion against English					
Recommendations for improvement		To allow the use of Spanish in class	To live in an English speaking context	To change participation rules in class	___	To make EFL learning reflexive	To create a "real" breakthrough level
Recommendations for improvement		To create advanced context based EFL classes	To change the textbooks for textbooks that are more adapted to the local context	To make teachers recognize our local knowledge	___	To rethink the use of learning strategies	To select teachers who are really interested in teaching

Curriculum Vitae

Name:	Colette Despagne

Post-secondary Education and Degrees:

University of Charles de Gaulle, Lille III
Lille, France
B.A. in Applied Foreign Languages
(L.E.A. Langues Étrangères Appliquées). Dean's List.
1987-1992

University of Maine, France
Le Mans, France
M.A. in Language Pedagogies and Use of New Technologies in
Teaching French as a Foreign/Second Language. Dean's List.
2006-2008

Western University
London, Ontario, Canada
Ph.D. in Education (Curriculum Studies)
2009-2013

Honours and Awards:

Western University, Ontario, Canada
PhD funding package
2009-2013

Western University, Ontario, Canada
Center for Inclusive Education Research Award
http://www.edu.uwo.ca/inclusive_education/resaward.asp
2012

Western University, Ontario, Canada
Faculty of Education
Graduate Thesis Research Award
2011, 2012

Western University, Ontario, Canada
Faculty of Education
Travel Grants
2011, 2012, 2013

Canadian Association of Applied Linguistics
Travel Grants
2011, 2012

Crossroads Conference, Paris, France
Travel Grant
2012

Western University, Ontario, Canada
Faculty of French Studies
Nomination for the Vanier and Trudeau scholarships
2010

Universidad Popular Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico
Master Scholarship
2006-2008

ERASMUS Scholarship, Europe
Universität Duisburg
1990-1991

Related Work Experience:

Leadership position

Director of the Foreign Language Department, UPAEP
(Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla), Mexico
2004-2010

Teaching

Teaching Assistant: Initiation to teaching French in a French immersion program, EDUC 5414Q, Western University, Ontario, Canada, Winter 2012.

French, German, English: all competency levels
Western University, Ontario, Canada
French Studies Department
French as a Foreign Language
2009-2010

Universidad Popular Autónoma de Puebla, Mexico
Language Department
French, English & German
 2004-2009

Volkswagen de México, Puebla, Mexico
Language Department
German as a Foreign Language
 2000-2002

Eugen Wexler de México, Tlaxcala, Mexico
German as a Foreign Language
1998-1999

Business and intercultural communication
International Business School, Universidad Ibéroamericana, Puebla, Mexico, 2003-2004.

Publications

Peer reviewed papers

Despagne, C. (2010). The Difficulties of Learning English: Perceptions and Attitudes in Mexico. *Canadian International Education*, Volume 39 (2), 55-74. http://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1051&context=cie-eci

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Despagne, C. (2013). Indigenous education in Mexico: Indigenous students'voices. *Diaspora, Indigenous and Minority Education: studies of migration, integration, equity and cultural survival,* 7(2), 114-129. http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15595692.2013.763789

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Peer reviewed book reviews

Despagne, C. (2010). Review of Cristina Banfi (2010). Los primeros pasos en lenguas extranjeras. Modalidades de enseñanza y aprendizaje [First steps to foreign languages. Teaching and learning modalities]. Buenos Aires, Argentina: Novedades Educativas.

Bilingual Basics, *12*(1). (Online TESOL publication).
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Despagne, C. (forthcoming, September 2013). Review of K. B. Boeckmann, E. Aalto, A. Abel, T. Atanasoska & T. Lamb's (2011) "*Promoting plurilingualism: Majority language in multilingual settings*," Graz, Austria: Council of Europe (The European Centre for Modern Languages). *TESOL Quarterly, 47(3).* (Special issue on "Plurilingualism in TESOL").

Proceedings

Despagne, C. (2012). *Imagined communities and identity negotiation: Indigenous students learning EFL,* 15-17, MEXTESOL, Puerto Vallarta, Mexico.

Conference papers

Despagne, C. (2010). *Le Cadre Européen Commun de Référence. Son adaptation à la UPAEP (Universidad Popular Autónoma del Estado de Puebla).* Presentation given during the « Teacher Training Day for CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) ». Language Department, University of Montreal, Canada. May 28, 2010.

Despagne, C. (2010). *Intercultural Education in Mexico.* Presentation given during the « Multilingual Education Day ». Faculty of Education, University of Western Ontario, Canada. June 2010.

Despagne, C. (2010). *Adaptation du CECR dans le contexte universitaire mexicain— Lessons for FSL from SK to Grade 12 in Ontario.* Presentation given during the « CEFR Day», University of Western Ontario. June 21, 2010.

Despagne, C. (2010). *Language and Cultural Awareness. The case of Mexico.* ALA Conference 2010 (Association of Language Awareness). Universität Kassel, Germany, July 2010.

Despagne, C; Taylor, S.; Fyn, D.;Li, V; Altiman, A. & Elijah, MJ. (2010). *Language biography: Introducing students to the wonder of language learning.* OMLTA Conference. Toronto, Oct. 23rd, 2010.

Despagne, C; Fyn, D; Majhanovich, S. (2011). *Strategies: The Compass to Language Learning.* OMLTA (Ontario Modern Language Teachers' Association). Spring Conference, March 24-26, Toronto.

Despagne, C (2011). *Critical Autonomy: Empowering Indigenous English Learners in Mexico.* Poster session. Research Day, University of Western Ontario. March 23, 2011.

Despagne, C. & Fyn, D (2011). *Adapting the 'Biography' component of the European Language Portfolio for use in Canadian L2 teaching environments.* Innovative

Approaches to Second Language Teaching. The University of Western Ontario**.** April 8, 2011.

Despagne, C (2011). *Linguistic Imperialism in Mexico.* May 1-5, 2011. CIE (Canadian International Education), McGill, Montreal.

Despagne, C (2011). *Apprentissage autonome de l'anglais au Mexique (Autonomous Learning of English in Mexico).* ACLA (Association Canadienne de Linguistique Appliquée), June 1- 3, University of New Brunswick.

Despagne, C. & Taylor, S. (2011). *Le rôle de SIOP dans la formation des enseignant(e)s de FLS et d'ALS au Canada : des leçons du Mexique (The role of SIOP in FLS and ALS Teacher Training in Canada : lessons from Mexico).* ACLA (Association Canadienne de Linguistique Appliquée), June 1- 3, University of New Brunswick.

Despagne, C. (2011). *Autonomía para el aprendizaje del inglés en México: ¿qué enfoque adoptar?* BILINGLATAM IV, June 29-July 2. Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca (UABJO), Mexico.

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