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The Role of the Native-Speaker Listener in English as a Lingua Franca Interactions

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The Role of the Native-Speaker Listener in English as a Lingua Franca Interactions

by

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A capstone project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: Introduction…………………………………………………………4

Researcher Interest and Context……………………………………………..5

Key Terms……………………………………………………………………11

Rationale for Capstone Project………………………………………………12

Summary and Closing………………………………………………………15

CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review………………………………………………18

Global Englishes……………………………………………………………19

English as a Lingua Franca…………………………………………………31

Listening to English as a Monolingual NS…………………………………46

Summary and Closing………………………………………………………56

CHAPTER THREE: Project Description…………………………………………58

Project Overview……………………………………………………………59

Website Content……………………………………………………………64

Grounding Frameworks for Content…………………………………………72

Product Implementation……………………………………………………74

Summary and Closing………………………………………………………79

CHAPTER FOUR: Reflection………………………………………………………80

Major Learnings……………………………………………………………86

The Research Overall………………………………………………………87

Implications…………………………………………………………………88

Limitations…………………………………………………………………90

Future Research……………………………………………………………………91

Communicating Results……………………………………………………………92

Benefits to Profession………………………………………………………………93

Summary and Closing………………………………………………………………94

REFERENCES…………………………………………………………………………..95

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

When English is relied upon to meet communicative needs in a multilingual setting, it is acting as a *lingua franca* and is therefore called English as a Lingua Franca (ELF). ELF settings are definitively multilingual because their participants have first-language backgrounds that differ from each other. My initial interest in the practices of ELF communication came from a very personal place of frustration in these types of interactions. I noticed that I, a native speaker (NS) of English, often had difficulty understanding the spoken English of non-native speakers (NNS) and speakers who used a variety of English that I was unaccustomed to hearing. I also noticed that NNSs would be the ones to clarify for me what another NNS had said and that my auditory misperception, at times, had the effect of shutting down the NNS who had spoken. Finally, I learned early on in my linguistic studies that ELF stood out in the world of English-use as a misunderstanding-mitigating phenomenon. Its users intuitively use linguistic techniques and strategies to help them with speech perception and recognition in the presence of vast English variation. These explicit techniques and strategies have been so widely observed that they are now a known feature of ELF.

Soon, my personal question that asked "Why can't I understand them when they speak English?" turned into the central question driving my capstone project: *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?* My aim with this was to become a more effective listener and, therefore, communicator. I wanted to find out how this was done so that I could offer it to other

English NSs as well. I also wanted those once unable to perceive NNS English as intelligible to be able to change into individuals who could correctly recognize the spoken meanings of any NNS interlocutor and therefore be capable of disarming communicative discomfort that comes with second-language use, simply by listening without automatic confusion.

In this chapter, I discuss the development of my interest in this topic, briefly explain key terms, provide a context and rationale for addressing the NS-listener problem and, in summary, briefly outline the upcoming chapters.

Researcher Interest and Context

My interest in the topic of this paper began with imagining myself, a NS of English, having the ability to adapt my listening skills to whatever amount of English variation was present, in whatever communicative context I found myself in; I wanted more flexible listening skills. This interest began around the time I became a teacher, which is also when I became a traveler. When these paths began, they both brought my relationship with English, and with language in general, into question. Living in eastern Asia, I began to see the multiple forms that existed for using English in both my work and travels. There were a vast number of location-oriented variations coexisting within the English speaking contexts I encountered. Although I had not yet discovered that this was an area of formal research, I have distinct memories of the moments when I began to distinguish English variation as a concept of its own and when I began to ponder it.

Encountering ELF

The first experience I recall, which I often credit with the birth of my research question, took place in New Delhi, India. My friend had sent a driver to pick me up from

the airport. He was a Sihk man who was clearly proficient in English and yet, by the end of the ride, I had hardly understood anything he had said. It alarmed me with a sense of linguistic self-awareness I had not yet experienced. My mind went not to the driver's English but directly to my own inability to understand him. This would happen repeatedly in the following years as I engaged in exchanges with other travelers who usually were not first-language English speakers and with whom I used English. I soon began to observe in my travels that English was often identified as a local language to certain nonnative locations, such as I had experienced in India. Additionally, I soon learned from fellow expatriate colleagues in South Korea that English was so widely spoken in their home countries that it was very rare to find someone who did not speak it, despite the fact that it was not a national language in their countries.

Later in the United States again, I began substitute teaching at a local international school whose students were new-to-country arrivals from all over the world. The school is made up entirely of immigrant and refugee students who use English as a lingua franca with each other, since student language backgrounds vary so widely. When I began working here, I asked administrators if they needed more regular substitute teachers and offered to be a primary option for them if needed. In response, I was immediately added to a preferred substitute list and told of the difficulty they had experienced in finding substitute teachers who wanted to work with low proficiency English speakers. The school had often found that their substitutes would finish a day and never come back again or would even incredulously state, "You mean they don't speak English?" upon leaving. This stuck with me.

Encountering ELF at Work

Now, working as a full time teacher at this school, I experience the familiar internal tension first encountered in my early days of international travel. When a student responds to my question in class, I wonder if I will understand them the first time they speak and, if I do not, how they will feel. I can sometimes tell that they shut down, appearing ashamed of their speech and embarrassed to repeat what they consider to have been a failure. This, I am convinced, is not entirely their failure but rather largely my own and that of any other teacher in the school or native English speaker outside of school who may have had this type of interaction with them. It is our failure to hold up our end of the meaning-making exchange in these students' efforts to communicate in what is their second, third, or sometimes even fourth language. I am aware of research that exists that addresses the grammar and pronunciation features recommended for second-language (L2) users of ELF to obtain command of, for the sake of their own intelligibility. But my project is not addressing this. It is addressing the role of the person on the other side of this exchange, when this person is an English NS.

At the time that I am writing this paper, I am currently experiencing the NS listener issue I speak of with a student in one of the classes I teach. The background needed to understand this situation is that I teach a multilingual class of students, all of whom are fairly new to the country. The majority of this class are native Spanish speakers, a language which I have studied and spent time around and of which I have a higher listening command of due to greater familiarity with the phonological variations of L1 Spanish-speaker English. This gives me the ability to discern what they are saying and make meaning of their English forms at a higher rate than students with other L1

backgrounds. As for the rest of the class, there is one Somali speaker, one Karen speaker and one Khmer speaker. The Cambodian Khmer speaker is one of the lower readers in the class, in terms of his English proficiency, yet he is actually one of the highest in proficiency in terms of his listening and speaking abilities. What this often means is that he is the first to speak up when I address the class with a question. When this happens I have frequently failed to understand what he is saying when he first says it as well as after I have asked him to repeat himself. This is painful for me and, though unconfirmed, likely more so for him. This type of situation is one of the driving forces behind my guiding question.

Encountering the Research

As my studies progressed in pursuit of a master's degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MA in TESOL), my understanding of ELF did as well. My guiding question had thus far been based on the fact that misunderstanding is incredibly low in NNS-NNS ELF interactions. This was when, in a class on sociolinguistics, the development of my guiding question took its next jump; I here discovered, with little surprise, that the presence of NSs in ELF exchanges was indeed empirically evidenced in research to introduce misunderstanding (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Canagarajah, 2007; Lindemann, 2002; Pietikainen, 2016; Saito & Shintani, 2016). Up until this point in my master's program all I had known was that NSs were reluctant in addressing discrepancies of meaning perception (the role of the listener) in ELF exchanges (Lindemann, 2002; Pietikainen, 2016). Now, with empirical evidence that my suspicion was true–that there truly was a NS listening problem–the pieces started to come together and my primary and secondary guiding questions neared their final form.

The theme of listening drew itself out as, throughout my program, I continued to learn that ELF communicative interactions were highly burden-sharing. This means its participants equally share the work it takes to effectively communicate. Moreover, they do this intuitively. I began to compare this new knowledge to what I was learning about the NS listener problem, as I had then begun to call it, and an idea began to form: I wondered if, like NNSs, English NSs could be taught to throw off reluctance and strive for mutual understanding as well. Whether or not this could be done became the question I longed to answer; the heart behind my guiding question was for NSs to burden-share too. The problem then felt large and, with increasing clarity, I saw that it concerned a range of elements; it was not just pragmatic communicative skills that NSs needed to learn, it was also dispositions and attitudes.

Encountering the Influence of Attitude. In learning more about the contact of English NSs with ELF, one's attitude toward learning how to listen to diverse forms of English (varieties) began to emerge as influential. I wondered what was at the root of this and was soon introduced to linguistic ideologies (see the next section of this chapter for a definition) when I attended a virtual TESOL International conference in the summer of 2020. A session held by Evan Frendo, a Business English and English for Specific Purposes (ESP) specialist who often speaks at conferences like TESOL International, initiated my thoughts on the connection between attitude and listening improvement. He described real-world contexts in which English NNSs are taken advantage of, time and time again, as a result of the English NS presence in business meetings. These NS participants, he said, have been found to use language complexity as a weapon. They do this by intentionally employing a variation of English less known to their counterparts

and, in the end, winning out monetarily or otherwise in the exchange. Frendo's session deeply impacted me and, to this day, is one of the first stories I mention when people ask me about the interest I have in my topic. It was the first time I remember realizing that the NS listener problem was not just inconvenient for NNS. It was a source of injustice in the world as well.

Encountering the Concepts of Language Change and Variety. My final point of interest in the project topic came because what I was learning in graduate school courses was continuing to cross paths with my experiences. International living has brought me into contact with different varieties of English; so when it dawned on me that language change was a phenomenon of its own and that it resulted in the continual development of English varieties, I immediately felt my guiding question take on new significance. It was here that Mahboob (2018), a researcher I encountered early on in my studies, put words to this for me by teaching me about a framework that acted as a stepping stone in my understanding: he referred to language as a *Complex Adaptive System* (CAS) saying that where ELF focuses on what linguistic variation does to communication, English as a CAS goes a step further by addressing how variety continues to develop. In other words, ELF needs listening skills that can accommodate an exponential amount of spoken English differences; it needs dynamic listening skills. With this, my hope for my project settled upon offering NSs the opportunity to learn (within reasonable extent) these dynamic listening skills and, in doing so, to alter their inherent communicative behaviors too. This completes a description of the trajectory of interest that led to my current guiding question.

Key Terms

At this point, a few of this paper's key terms have been mentioned so it is worth taking pause to define them. This list is neither comprehensive for the paper nor thorough for these terms; it serves only to signal terms which are foundational and which will be further drawn out in the literature review of Chapter Two. In some cases, this section will also provide a rationale for the way I have chosen to use a term in this paper.

Native Speaker and Non-Native Speaker

Native speaker (NS) and *non-native speaker* (NNS) are terms used in literature to describe participants in the ELF phenomenon. They have undergone enormous shifts in use as the idea of what qualifies an English user as "native" continues to evolve with post-modern globalization (Canagarajah, 2007).[1] Traditionally though, the term 'English NS' generally refers to someone with English as their first language (L1) and 'English NNS' to someone with English as their second or greater language (L2[2]) (Dewaele & Wei, 2013). Furthermore, English Language Teaching (ELT) has historically idealized monolingual Western English (the NS-standard) as the form to be achieved in L2 English acquisition (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016). This is part of why 'English NS' traditionally means monolingual as well (see the definition of language ideologies below).

English NNSs are then the opposite; they are interlocutors who employ English as an L2 in a multilingual context (Dewaele & Wei, 2013). This ELF communication produces pragmatic practices that mitigate misunderstanding among differing L1s (De Bartolo, 2014). These are not learned by monolingual English speakers (Canagarajah, 2007; De Bartolo, 2014; Kubota, 2009).

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[1] This paper uses 'native' interchangeably with 'L1' and 'non-native' interchangeably with 'L2'.
[2] This paper uses 'L2' to imply any number of additional languages, second or greater.

Rationale for Use. This monolingual/multilingual distinction is why the terms NS and NNS have been chosen for use in this paper instead of more current alternative terms. The objective of this choice is that, when referenced, NS will signal a monolingual group of L1 English users and NNS will signal their multilingual counterparts. This is to act as a reminder of what they stand for leading up to my project which addresses monolingual listening problems with multilingual listening practices. How this can be done is covered in Chapter Two.

Language Ideologies

Pioneering scholar Silverstein (1979) defines *language ideologies*[3], or *linguistic ideologies*, as sets of user-articulated beliefs around language which rationalize and justify a "perceived language structure and use" (p. 193) even when said perceptions are incongruent with reality (p. 194). This causes "cultural categorizations" (Silverstein, p. 195) based on grammar which in turn form categorical perceptions of ethnic groups (Boas, 1911, as cited in Silverstein, 1979, p. 195). According to the founder of modern anthropology, this (a product of language ideologies) is the only social phenomenon that "remains unconscious" (Boas, 1911). In other words, language ideologies are powerful because they are hidden. Specific language ideologies that are mentioned in this paper include *nativespeakerism* and monolingualism, or, *monoglossic ideologies* (MacSwan, 2017).

Rationale for Capstone Project

The ability of a NS listener to correctly perceive NNS English, clearly influences the communicative experience of the NNS. Even prior to an analysis of literature on the topic, this influence is observable through either the breakdown of or the success of a

[3] This paper uses 'language ideologies' interchangeably with 'linguistic ideologies'.

communicative exchange. The contexts in which NS listening effectiveness plays out are vast and include everything from international business meetings like the one described above, to international travel settings, military contexts, education, and more.

Accessibility

As I am currently working in education at an international school, this is where I see my guiding question validated most often. The above mentioned issue of my school's inability to retain substitute teachers due to their discomfort with L2 spoken English, and my own current struggles to keep from smothering the voices of my students whose spoken forms I struggle to understand in class, are both tangible evidence of the need for the proposed project: an accessible website for self-directed activation of ELF awareness and training in strategic multilingual listening techniques observed within ELF, described in Chapter Three. Generally speaking, the rationale for this project is that schools in the United States who have English NS teachers and any immigrant or refugee students at all can benefit from this work.

Positioning

My personal role in the overall project rationale is twofold. First, the applicability of ELF listening strategies to my own current work context, as well as to my future work and travel contexts, is part of the rationale for my project in the sense that I am part of the big picture. Those whom I impact with my listening perception skills are also part of the bigger picture. The way that I engage in communication with them matters because not even short, call-and-response interactions like those in a classroom are beyond the effects of my listening capabilities. My second role in the rationale regards the way I have become aware of what my monolingual upbringing caused me to lack in overall linguistic

experience. While having yet to investigate whether these personal observations are confirmed by research (this is done in Chapter Two), I have felt, as an adult, that my monolingual background and its lack of exposure to multilingualism or even English variation may have affected my listening accuracy. Ultimately, as part of my rationale, I hope that there is space for my research and website to inform practices around monolingual upbringings and their effect on the intelligibility perception of the NS listener in ELF exchanges.

Benefactors

The rationale for this Capstone Project, aiming at education and multicultural classrooms, recognizes the need for the voice of the L2 English speaker to be made apparent. This need is both literal and implicit. It is literal in the sense that their voices utter intelligible cues that English NSs misperceive. But it is also implicit in that only their voices can provide the truth about the communicative experiences of English NNSs when English NSs misperceive their speech. The L2 English speaker, which in the case of this Capstone Project is the student, is the key to knowing what needs to change. Because of these students, United States classrooms are included in the contexts which can be labeled ELF. Furthermore, since United States classrooms contain English NS teachers, these classrooms are in need of access to the awareness activation (awareness of what ELF is and means for English use) and multilingual listener training my website can offer. This is so that, as just described, L2 English voices can be better heard both literally (intelligibly) and therefore implicitly (their perspective) as a result.

Reach

Finally, English NS teachers travel abroad to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL), make up a significant portion of the population of English Language (EL) teachers in the United States, interact with immigrant families, teach mainstream content courses containing ELs, teach in university language programs, community centers, and more. Therefore education alone, I would argue, is a large enough beneficiary of what I hope to accomplish through this project that it is, in itself, a noble end. Yet I am hopeful that my project can be of widespread service to ELF communities by giving English NS listeners, with all kinds of personal and professional roles, the tools they need to be able to extract meaning from any form of intelligible spoken English and the equitable understandings to do so. This rounds out the rationale for making a website, the accessibility of which allows the efforts of this Capstone Project to reach a much wider network. The project targets native English speaking United States educators, yet its format enables its resources to reach even those educators who are global, and beyond.

Summary and Closing

In summary, Chapter One has introduced the question guiding my research, delineated the timeline of my interest in the topic where reasons were given for its importance and rationale on a personal level, and finally, moved into a broader rationale and the significance of my question's current pertinence. In doing all of this I have laid out my own participation in the problem of English NS-listener ineffectiveness in understanding the ELF talk of L2 English users, as well as shown the widespread need for addressing the NS listener problem. The fact that this problem has wider implications than just the United States is clear, appearing to impact ELF interactions globally

wherever English NSs are present. Nevertheless, educational settings in the United States have emerged as a locus of need with the most temporal and physical proximity to the setting in which this Capstone is being completed. As a result, native English speaking United States educators are the audience for this Capstone Project, a topic generally qualified, by nature, throughout Chapter Two and explicitly qualified in Chapter Three.

Chapter Two surveys the literature surrounding my question. It begins by summarizing and discussing the three pillars of Global English. Here, philosophies that exist in monolingual and multilingual settings and how these impact exchanges and impact the people involved in them are addressed. This is followed by a look at ELF talk itself to identify emerging communication strategies and how they play out through the roles of interlocutors in ELF interactions. The third section is on listening as a monolingual NS of English and what can be done about what they bring to ELF contexts. What it means to acquire new listening skills that may not come naturally to an individual yet need to be learned for interpersonal communication to flourish, is a lens through which to view Chapter Two.

Chapter Three will provide an overview of the Capstone Project website as it seeks to practically enact an affirmative answer to the guiding question: *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NS to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNS of English?* The Capstone Project attempts to make this happen and Chapter Three explains how a website is the format that was used to do so; it focuses on the specific context of educational settings in the United States but also recognizes the wider need for a website

that does this. This is followed by Chapter Four which reflects on the overall learnings of this Capstone Project and addresses its limitations and future goals.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

Introduction

Human communication is successful when there is mutual understanding between participants (Bavelas & Gerwing, 2011; Jonsdottir & Fridriksdottir, 2019). When mutual understanding is not achieved and communication breaks down, who is more to blame? Is it the speaker and their ability to speak in a way that is comprehensible to the listener? Or is it the listener and their ability to perceive the spoken (auditory) cues of the speaker? In response to these questions, research shows that the point of breakdown in a communicative exchange occurs during the turn of the listener (Brownell, 2010) when they fail to recognize the spoken cues (input) offered by the speaker (Lecumberri et al., 2010). In other words, communication is “listener-defined” (Brownell, p. 141). This is true for English listening whether communication is held between people who speak English the same way or not (Rost, 2014).

What makes ELF unique for the listener is the presence of multiple different L1s and the consequentially varied norms and forms of spoken English. This is where a discrepancy exists among individual listeners' abilities to perceive intelligibility in ELF exchanges. The multilingual listener, naturally equipped with listening techniques that help them manage variety, has little trouble. The monolingual listener on the other hand, typically only accustomed to hearing English that is similar to their own, does.

Guided by the question, *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?,* this chapter begins with a closer

look at English variety through the framework of Global Englishes and the value that being aware of how diverse English is today has for speech recognition ability. This first section also provides answers regarding why, even when limiting communicative contexts to a baseline of English proficiency, many NSs of English struggle with listening perception in the presence of English NNSs. This alludes to the second two sections which focus on the two types of language users present in the guiding question: multilingual ELF users and monolingual English users. Here, the second section discusses ELF users' intuitive use of miscommunication-mitigating listening strategies and the third discusses monolingual[4] English NS's acquisition of them. As a whole, the chapter draws out the concept of listening as a basic linguistic skill and important communicative role. It also considers the impact of attitudes and dispositions toward language and language use, on language use.

Each of this chapter's three main sections serve to inform the creation of a website for the self-directed acquisition of multilingual listening techniques by monolingual English NS-listeners. Chapter Two cumulatively provides an understanding of the frameworks upholding the website and the rationalizations behind the resources it offers.

Global Englishes

Literature on ELF practices often begins by looking at *Global Englishes* (GE) because it is an important part of understanding how English is used in the world today. It is a cover term (Mahboob, 2018). This means it is defined by what it contains which, for the GE paradigm, are three models describing global English use: ELF and English as an

[4] To understand why 'NS' does not always equal 'monolingual', see the Chapter Two section titled 'World Englishes' and Footnote 6.

International Language (EIL) (usually grouped together as one model of GE), World Englishes (WE), and Translanguaging (Selvi, 2019). The various features of the global English phenomenon are displayed in these models of use. This includes, among other things, the communication strategies of ELF that are used to achieve a high level of accurate meaning perception when a variety of English forms are present: the object of acquisition in this paper's consequential project. The objective of this section is primarily to highlight that English is pluralistic, or has great coexisting variety. This understanding is foundational to why the project is necessary.

English as a Lingua Franca and English as an International Language

The first GE model for English-use is ELF. Terms to first clarify, because they use acronyms similar to 'ELF', include English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL). Most importantly, ELF is a model for English use in the GE paradigm but EFL and ESL are not. Instead, EFL is a model for international ELT in the modern foreign languages paradigm (Cenoz, 2019) and ESL is an English language acquisition service optionally offered in a variety of formats, including traditional ELT, to qualifying students in the United States as a civil right (Lau v. Nichols, 414 U.S. 563, 1974) mandated by the Equal Educational Opportunity Act. This paper and project are focused on ELF use, not formats of ELT, yet they aim to serve an audience connected to ELT.

The models, or model, of English-use referenced by EIL and ELF are essentially one and the same; they are both GE models for cross-cultural communication (Mahboob, 2018). Occasionally, literature chooses to use one of the other based on their respective emphases of setting (EIL) and purpose (ELF) (Selvi, 2019). In other words, EIL has been

used to highlight that spoken L2 English, without linking forms to geography (DeBartolo, 2014), is used globally (McKay, 2010) and ELF to highlight that it is used socially–for many cross-linguistic purposes (House, 2003; Selvi, 2019). Nevertheless, each of these defining features are true for both models (Selvi, 2019). Therefore this paper has chosen to use ‘ELF’ because it was more widely used in the literature and because of its leaning toward the social/user aspect of GE.

As a lingua franca, the English-use modeled by EFL/EIL contains vast linguistic variation–a feature known as *pluricentricity* (Cavalheiro, 2015). This is when a language has such unprecedented diversity within itself, historically first described by WE (see next section), that each exchange it occupies requires its interlocutors to adapt to norms and expectations for mutual understanding that may be different from any they have encountered before (Cenoz, 2019; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). So the pluricentricity of ELF use is why it is defined by norm negotiability, variability of speaker proficiency, and the integration of linguistic forms from other languages (House, 2003). The unique communicative features that come out of this will be covered, with special attention to speech perception skills, in the second major section of Chapter Two.

World Englishes

The second GE model for English-use is WE. ELF is said to be a better alternative to the WE model (historically, the first established GE model; see Cavalheiro, 2015) because it lacks the hierarchical positioning of English varieties that is implicit to WE (Canagarajah, 2013). Where ELF simply regards the plurality of global English use with its international settings and purposes, WE compares and contrasts the norms and forms used by different GE communities (Canagarajah, 2013).

The community-based norms and forms of WE are organized by Kachru's (1986) three concentric circles (as cited in Cavalheiro, 2015). The first is the *Inner Circle*. These are communities that are typically monolingual (Canagarajah, 2013) where English is, by global comparison, the most widespread L1 (Selvi, 2019). The second is the *Outer Circle* which refers to communities where English, used internally as a result of post-colonization (DeBartolo, 2014; Mahboob, 2018), is an institutionalized L2 (McKay, 2010; Selvi, 2019). These communities have developed new norms for English use (distinct local varieties) through their appropriation of English to their local languages and values (Canagarajah, 2013; DeBartolo, 2014). The third and final circle is the *Expanding Circle*, where English is primarily used for intercultural-communication (ELF) (McKay, 2010; Selvi, 2019) and not for internal use (Canagarajah, 2013; Murray, 2012).

Inner Circle varieties of English have historically been referred to as native varieties whereas Outer and Expanding Circle varieties have been categorized as non-native (De Bartolo, 2014; Higgins, 2003). For communities in the Expanding Circle, this is because of their lack of internal English use (Selvi, 2019). As for the Outer Circle, certain of its varieties–such as Indian English or Singaporean English–have undergone a status-change[5] in recent years where they were recategorized in the WE model as local L1s rather than L2s and said to be "recently nativized forms" (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 925). This was due to their long-standing, widespread internal use (Canagarajah, 2007). Therefore one may ask why ELT continues to position Expanding and Outer Circle Englishes alike as dependent on Inner Circle norms as their model of correct English-use

[5] This paper intentionally uses 'English NS' to represent monolingual English users but acknowledges that, in reality, the term is subjective for this reason.

(Flores & Rosa, 2015; Selvi, 2019), if at least Outer Circle varieties are frequently considered native.

To answer this, recall that Chapter One above, in defining the term ‘native speaker’, added that “...English Language Teaching (ELT) has historically idealized monolingual Western English (the NS-standard) as the form to be achieved in L2 English acquisition (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016).” These forms, typically specified as North American or British varieties (Reagan, 2016), are Inner Circle Englishes (Selvi, 2019) and their idealization in ELT is language ideology institutionally at play, validating some varieties over others (Reagan, 2016). Therefore the WE model of GE has been used in the ideological practice of *language legitimization*.

Language Legitimization. Language legitimization is an ideological practice that protects the superiority of Inner Circle Englishes (Canagarajah, 2007; Kubota, 2009; Reagan, 2016; Tupas, 2021). The legitimization of some English variations over others is done through *linguistic markets* (Kubota, 2009; Tupas, 2021). These are environments in which the “rules of use and specific configurations of social relations between users of languages” (Tupas, 2021, p. 223) are authoritatively used to evaluate and assign value to each variety as well as control and sustain their categorizations. This appraisal of different varieties based on language ideologies, like monolingualism, typically evades the awareness of those doing it because linguistic markets run underneath communicative exchanges; this especially happens at elite social levels of institutional English use (such as in schools) which are powerful sources (Tupas, 2021).

Reagan (2016) states that, within the United States, the ever-enforced NS-Standard for English-use gives language legitimization a far reach. At the individual

level, possessing a legitimized variety as one's linguistic identity equates to a form of capital that socially privileges the English speaker (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016) yet perpetuates stereotypes and prejudices toward non-dominant varieties (Kubota, 2001, p.49). This occurs openly because, as stated by Silverstein (1979), social categorizations caused by language ideologies are the only ones done unconsciously. What this means for the objective of creating a website is that it must be conscious of this unconsciousness, in light of the fact that it may appear in its audience members who are from the Inner Circle.

Native-Speakerism. Language ideologies that categorize English varieties and are mobilized by linguistic markets include the overlapping *monolingualism* and *native-speakerism* (Tupas, 2021). Native-speakerism, a monolinguistic ideological framework, legitimizes only Inner Circle Englishes as the NS-standard/model for English use in ELT practices (Canagarajah, 2007). It also impacts ELF environments outside of ELT (Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016; Saito & Shintani, 2016; Tupas, 2021) as was exemplified in Chapter One through Even Frendo's TESOL International presentation on international business settings. It is heavily criticized among ELF research where it is shown to be a powerful hidden current, divisively hindering the occupational and educational opportunities of people with non-Western varieties of English (in contrast with the social capital mentioned in the previous paragraph) by inhabiting public discourses that appear to be normal and acceptable (Cenoz, 2019; Kim & Elder, 2009; Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016; Reagan, 2016; Saito & Shintani, 2016; Tupas, 2021). This subversiveness is why raising awareness of GE, specifically of ELF, must preface the acquisition of multilingual listening techniques. As a result, the website that this project intends for such purposes begins with awareness activation.

Monolingualism. Kubota (2001) states that “Inner Circle mainstream English speakers are partly responsible for the perceived communication ‘problems’ that non-mainstream speakers face” (p.49). This, through native-speakerism, ultimately comes down to the influence of monolingualism on a person’s communicative capabilities.

Saito and Shintani (2016) give an empirical example of this through their study comparing the ease with which North American and Singaporean English users could understand non-native English utterances, or in other words, comparing their *comprehensibility* perceptions. The listeners in the study were all NSs of English but the North Americans were monolingual and used English in monolingual environments whereas the Singaporeans were all multilingual and used English in multilingual environments. Speech samples of non-native English came from Japanese L2 English learners at a wide range of proficiency levels. The results of the study were that the Singaporean comprehensibility raters consistently gave the Japanese L2 English a higher comprehensibility score than the North Americans. Saito and Shintani also state that the way the two groups of raters listened was different. The monolingual listeners had focused on the pronunciation accuracy of the Japanese speakers whereas the multilingual listeners had focused on the word and phrase structure of the English utterances they heard; they had a high sensitivity for discerning the meaning of chunks of English without needing to focus on pronunciation, which the monolingual comprehensibility raters defaulted to.

Beliefs around monolingualism at their most extreme have been classified on their own as *monoglossic ideologies* which include the belief that the monolingual speaker and the monolingual setting embody “the natural and unmarked condition of language”

(Garcia & Otheguy, 2014, as cited in MacSwan, 2017, p. 190). As such, they equate any form of multilingual language use, including ELF, with acquisitional failure stating that multilingual language use, by definition, has a concerning linguistic deficit (Cenoz, 2019; MacSwan, 2017). This is verifiably incorrect (cf. MacSwan, 2017). Therefore the ideological danger of holding to monolingual native-speakerism is apparent. Moreover, studies have shown that monoglossic ideologies play a role in ethnocentrism (Kubota, 2001); this connection further highlights their risks as well as the importance of prefacing the acquisition of multilingual listening techniques with ELF-awareness activation or, in other words, with the raising of awareness around the existence of English variation.

Inner Circle Responsibility for Communication Problems. Rost (2014) uniquely defines a monolingual person as someone who has not attempted to acquire an L2 (p. 132), whether by choice or by inaccessibility. This is a form of how one can lack linguistic exposure: something that can be obtained through learning other languages (Rost, 2014) or by using English in a multilingual environment (ELF) where other languages are both used explicitly on their own and implicitly as a resource from which ELF users take communicative tools (Murray, 2012).

Linguistic exposure (or a lack thereof) is a key factor in the ability (or inability) to perceive correct meaning from English forms and norms-of-use that are different from one's own (Berry & Ernestus, 2018). Lowe and Kiczkowiak (2016) agree with Rost's definition of a monolingual person, adding that it is a state of "being numb to variation" (2014, p. 11). They say that this absence of exposure and resulting numbness is why monolinguals are bad listeners. It is also the reason given by intelligibility perception studies from the literature as to why monolingual English users were conclusively found

to perform either the lowest in a tested group (Saito & Shintani, 2016) or erroneously when tested on their own (Lindemann, 2002). In fact, Saito and Shintani's study above also connects low linguistic exposure to a focus on pronunciation in speech perception instead of on the meaning of word and phrase combinations, which the multilingual listeners focused on in coming out with higher comprehension.

The influence of monolingualism on communicative capabilities is further demonstrated by how it affects multilingualism. Sattarova and Khojastehrad (2015) give an example of this in their study of international students (all multilingual) who were studying at English-medium universities in Malaysia where a local variety of Malaysian English was used. The study showed those who had acquired L2 English through British or American monolingual models, had simultaneously acquired a lack of familiarity with other varieties of English. Furthermore they had, with this, acquired a disdain for particular phonetic cues within particular varieties (native-speakerism at play). So these multilingual learners acquired the poor speech perception skills that follow from a lack of familiarity with English plurality, or simply put, that follow from monolingualism (Lindemann, 2002). It can be said then that native-speakerism's effect on ELT is, at its core, monolingualism's effect on multilingualism; Inner Circle English standards impede variation perceptions even when learners are already multilingual.

So the monolingual practices of native-speakerism within the WE model are near the heart of what causes there to be misunderstanding in multilingual ELF exchanges where, in complete contrast, the presence of great English variety is actually a communicative asset (Murray, 2012). For more on this, see the second major Chapter Two section on ELF.

Translanguaging

The third and final GE model for English-use is translanguaging. Confronting the language ideologies within WE requires an effort to do the exact opposite of what they do by legitimizing a more diverse range of linguistic norms and practices (De Bartolo, 2014; Kubota, 2001; MacSwan, 2017; Tupas, 2021). This is where translanguaging comes in. It is defined as multilingual language-use that occurs naturally and draws fluidly from the different languages or varieties a person has access to (Cenoz, 2019), known as their linguistic resources (De Bartolo, 2014) or their linguistic repertoire (Sung, 2018); to draw fluidly means that a person uses their linguistic resources as an integrated system that is shuffled through while what is needed to communicate successfully in a distinct exchange is gathered from it (Cenoz, 2019). According to Flores and Rosa (2015) the same fluidity of boundaries is used when someone has access to multiple English varieties.

Language Boundaries. This understanding of language boundaries is the part of translanguaging as a practice that is used to problematize the implicit discrimination of strict language separation (Cenoz, 2019; Flores & Rosa, 2015) and English-only ideology (Sung, 2018) which occurs through the WE English-use model (Canagarajah, 2013) and which monolingualism harnesses to maintain NS superiority (Cenoz, 2019; MacSwan, 2017). The concept of fluid language boundaries is central to the practice of translingualism (Cenoz, 2019; Sung, 2018).

The Multilingual Perspective on Language Boundaries. Some research has argued that the many internal linguistic repertoires of multilinguals are not just integrated in use, but also undifferentiated (MacSwan, 2017). Undifferentiated means that grammars

do not exist discretely according to the languages they come from (Cenoz, 2019; Tupas, 2021). In this view of language boundaries, language users possess a single unitary grammar which contains all of the grammatical forms known to a multilingual person (MacSwan, 2017).

Other researchers have pushed back against the complete absence of grammatical language boundaries saying that if named languages are not real, and grammars are completely undifferentiated, the importance of the unique communicative resources that distinct linguistic communities offer is diminished (MacSwan, 2017).

The recognition of the communities of origin that linguistic and social communicative resources come from is called a *multilingual perspective on translanguaging* (MacSwan, 2017) or a *Focus on Multilingualism* (FOM) (Cenoz, 2019). It is a view of language boundaries that falls in the middle of ELF's language boundary debate because it neither promotes strict separation between named languages (Tupas, 2021) and varieties (Flores & Rosa, 2015) nor does it promote the total fluidness of language boundaries. Cenoz calls these 'soft boundaries'. Intercultural communication, and therefore ELF, translanguages through these soft-linguistic-boundaries: flexibly using all their linguistic resources while simultaneously paying attention to the distinct resources of others (Canagarajah, 2013). Tupas (2021) and Sung (2017) agree stating that ELF users communicate translingually when most effective.

Successful GE Use Needs its Users' Diverse Norms. Several sources, in viewing English-use as necessarily translingual in light of its global use (Canagarajah, 2013; Mahboob, 2018; Sung, 2018), highlight one particular thing: that what is needed to raise general awareness of Global Englishes is that there be more of a relationship between

English and other languages (Cenoz, 2019; Sung, 2018). This is another way to put the concept of having soft linguistic boundaries, with a focus on the other languages present.

Scholars who say this mean that any English-use that takes place in the presence of multilingual English users, should be characterized by seeking to get to know the resources of whatever other linguistic or cultural backgrounds are present; they influence communication in that sphere (Jenkins, 2015, as cited in Cenoz, 2019; Mahboob, 2018). This is because the personal language experiences of each English user around the globe are predominantly multilingually-influenced at this point (Seidlhofer, 2017, as cited in Cenoz, 2019; Selvi, 2019). This is evidenced by the fact that English today is a language used by more non-native speakers than native-speakers and by more than a quarter of the world, 80% of which are non-native speakers (Selvi, 2019).

English-using contexts should therefore forgo the use of fixed standard norms, and even of forms, and instead capitalize on viewing English as a global resource (Tupas, 2021). Holliday (2006) even said that this promotion of relationships between languages and the resource-sharing that results, is what can undo native-speakerism. What this means for the objective of creating a website for multilingual listening skills in monolingual English NSs is that audience members should be taught to think of language as a resource for sharing since this is a tool for undoing native-speakerism, which may appear in the website's Inner Circle audience members through monoglossic ideologies that are present there (Kubota, 2001; MacSwan, 2017; Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015).

GE Summarized

In closing, English is only increasing in variety/dynamicity (Mahboob, 2018) and therefore benefits from an understanding of linguistic boundaries as less stable and fixed

(Cenoz, 2019). This is where this section's discussion of the three models of GE comes together: there is extensive variation in English and English-use (ELF); exposure to this vast variety is necessary to obtain familiarity with linguistic differences and the ability to perceive them, which does not happen within monolingualism (WE); this does happen in linguistically varied settings, like ELF, where there is a low level of language separation in communicative language use (translanguaging).

Following from this, scholars argue that translanguaging, as a GE model of English-use, offers options for effective communication in the places where WE, as framework for GE, does not (Canagarajah, 2013). Furthermore ELF users, by nature of it being a lingua franca (House, 2003), use translingual practices (Canagarajah, 2013; Cenoz, 2019) which, in turn, are what give these NNSs of English highly successful listening perception of English variation (Sung, 2018).

English as a Lingua Franca

Beginning with this section on the ELF phenomenon, the next two major sections will focus on the language users whose linguistic practices are of importance in building the website this literature review aims to inform. This section will cover the strategic listening techniques that form out of multilingual experiences (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Lindemann, 2002), like translanguaging (Canagarajah, 2013), and that make multilingualism an asset (De Bartolo, 2014; Murray, 2012). It will do this by looking at how ELF users 1) harness pluricentricity and their multilingualism 2) to negotiate and extract accurate meanings from English utterances with norms and forms different from their own, 3) and the pragmatic communicative practices of ELF themselves that help users to do so. In doing this, this section focuses on the NNSs of English in the guiding

question: *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?*

ELF Practices for Communicative Effectiveness

The reality that being non-native to English is actually a valuable communicative resource (De Bartolo, 2014) comes down to the fact that ELF communication is translingually practice-based (Canagarajah, 2013). Due to the extensive presence of diverse linguistic backgrounds in ELF exchanges (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018), communicative success cannot depend on the correct use of specific linguistic forms (Canagarajah, 2013). Instead, language necessarily becomes a resource to be used fluidly (Cenoz, 2019) through practices like negotiating hybrid linguistic forms and communicative norms that meet the linguacultural[6] needs of everyone present (De Bartolo, 2014). In the words of Selvi (2019), "practices rather than proficiency" (p. 91) are required.

This major subsection has two minor subsections: one on linguistic awareness and competency within ELF and one on the explicit strategies that are used to minimize miscommunication in ELF exchanges. These are all part of what are considered 'ELF practices for communicative success'.

Awarenesses and Competencies. The diversity of L1 backgrounds in ELF exchanges means that a contextually-dependent (Selvi, 2019) amount of *linguistic ambiguity*, defined as a "lack of familiarity with accent, pronunciation, unknown words, [and] grammar" (Dewaele & Wei, 2013, p. 233), is expected. Therefore before it is

[6] The descriptors 'linguistic' and 'cultural' are often merged together to make 'linguacultural' in the literature on ELF as both of these are spheres ELF users need to navigate and negotiate to communicate successfully (De Bartolo, 2014; Pietikainen, 2018).

possible to use communicative practices to mitigate this ambiguity, ELF users must possess the particular linguistic, social, and cultural *competencies* (Selvi, 2019) that the practices rely on (De Bartolo, 2013) and that without which they are inaccessible.

In the context of intercultural communication, *competency* is generally used alongside *awareness* and can be defined as the ability to correctly deduce contextual norms (Cavalheiro, 2015; De Bartolo, 2014; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). The literature agrees that this awareness is cultivated naturally in members of the virtual ELF community who have had long-standing access (and therefore exposure) to multilingual, multicultural communities (Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Lecumberri et al., 2010; Saito & Shintani, 2016; Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Tupas, 2021). Furthermore, it is said that ownership of ELF, and therefore ownership of English as it exists today, belongs not to any monolingual users of it but to anyone who can display the multiple competencies that are needed for successful intercultural communication (Selvi, 2019).

Some examples of these competencies, largely multilingual competencies (Sung, 2018), include: *language/linguistic awareness*, that is, awareness of one's linguistic surroundings (Cenoz, 2019); *metalinguistic awareness*, or, to be aware of one's own linguistic resources (Cenoz, 2019); and *interactional competence*, which is more of a contextual competence (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). A few more include *grammatical*, *strategic* (as in communication strategies), and *intercultural-communicative* competencies (Cavalheiro, 2015), as well as the competence to distinguish, while in the role of listener, between general and specific or vague and explicit spoken input (Kaur, 2011).

Once again, these linguistic, social, and cultural competencies must be available to each of the interlocutors in an ELF exchange if communicative success is to be maximized through the use of communication strategies and other practices (Cavalheiro, 2015; De Bartolo, 2014); this is why communication breaks down in the presence of NS-listeners who do not have multilingual competencies and awareness. The documentation of these multiple forms of competencies among ELF users adds validity to the claim that misunderstanding is almost non-existent in ELF exchanges despite the presence of vast linguacultural asymmetries (Canagarajah, 2007; De Bartolo, 2014; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Saito & Shintani, 2016).

Global Language Proficiency. Next, the terms *monitoring*, *negotiation*, and *alignment* will be defined and their connection to each other explained, since they are each a major part of the ELF phenomenon and require competency and awareness to take place. They are the manifestation of what Dewaele and Wei (2013) call *Global Language Proficiency*, or, “the sum of oral and written knowledge in various languages” (p. 231). This is measured at its highest among multilinguals where *multilingual* is defined as having “at least partial mastery in a number [more than two] of languages” (p. 231). Following this, a sampling of the pragmatic strategies intuitively (Saito & Shintani, 2016) used in ELF exchanges will be described.

Global Proficiency: Using Competency to Monitor. Where linguistic competency is defined as the ability to correctly deduce contextual norms (Cavalheiro, 2015), *monitoring* is defined as the ability to catch linguistic-cues (Berry & Ernestus, 2018). Linguistic competencies produce monitoring which, in turn, is necessary for linguistic norm-negotiation (defined next).

In order for ELF users to develop brand-new norms and forms on the spot that will help them make meaning with each other, they necessarily refrain from passive intake and intentionally monitor the speech and behavior of the interlocutor (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Canagarajah, 2007; Cenoz, 2019; Saito & Shintani, 2016). They do this by monitoring three things: 1) the proficiency of their counterpart so as to determine which strategic measures they could take to ensure intelligibility (Canagarajah, 2007; MacSwan, 2017), 2) their own perception of comprehensibility so as to activate the appropriate communication strategies (Lecumberri et al., 2010; Saito & Shintani, 2016), and 3) the context of the exchange for linguistic and social cues that would invite comprehension (Dewaele & Wei, 2013). This is the type of multilingual awareness that manages ELF ambiguity (Canagarajah, 2007; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; De Bartolo, 2014; Cavalheiro, 2015; Pietikainen, 2016) through a translingual, practice-based approach (Canagarajah, 2013).

Global Proficiency: Monitoring to Negotiate. Most of the communicative practices that are depended on for meaning-making in ELF exchanges are done through negotiation, a technical term mentioned earlier as a defining feature of ELF communication. *Negotiation* in ELF takes place after interlocutors have suspended their personal expectations about which norms and forms of English will be used in the exchange at hand (McKay, 2010). These include things such as preference for different speaking styles or familiar L1 norms of grammar usage. This norm-suspension occurs simultaneously with the co-construction of new norms that ELF users create to accommodate each other’s English varieties and to adapt to each one that is present (Sung, 2018). This is what Dewaele and Wei (2013) are talking about when they describe

ELF participants as having shared expectations; they do not mean that interlocutors begin ELF exchanges with the same norms and forms, but rather that they implicitly share the expectation to negotiate: working to co-achieve communicative success by establishing common ground (Levis, 2018).

Global Proficiency: Negotiating to Align. The establishment of common ground includes the merging of linguistic forms, which is called *alignment* (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Cenoz, 2019; Lindemann, 2002). Here, *forms* refers to the phonological combinations (words) that are made by joining phonemes (individual units of sound) together (Lecumberri et al., 2010).

This merging of forms can be further described as follows: at the outset of an exchange, interlocutors may natively use a set of forms (phoneme combinations) that are different from each other and sound the way they do as a result of the specific (non-comprehensive) set of phonemes they have had access to based on their L1 and other linguistic experiences (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Lecumberri et al., 2010; Salves et al., 2020). But as interlocutors continue to negotiate and co-construct communicative expectations with each other, alignment happens (Canagarajah, 2007) and interlocutors actually take on certain phonological differences from each other's speech (Berry & Ernestus, 2018). In other words, they start to sound more and more alike "during or after conversational interaction" (Berry & Ernestus, 2018, p. 362). Alignment displays a phenomenon called phonological plasticity, which can be described as the ability of phonological production and perception to adjust (Salves et al., 2020).

The natural occurrence of alignment proves both the irrelevance of a 'standard' form of English, and the necessity of ELF's contextual-dependency to rely on the ability

to use communicative practices as a measure of proficiency (Selvi, 2019). Research says that phonological alignment and general user-to-user accommodation to one another's speech patterns occurs naturally when intrusive language ideologies are removed; it is an expected/normal part of intercultural communication (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Lindemann, 2002). Interlocutors of ELF not only share the expectation (stated above) that they will negotiate English use but also, more deeply, the ultimate goal of successfully producing meaning through their exchange (Dewaele & Wei, 2013).

A Competent Listener Requires Exposure. Alignment begins with the listener, who is responsible for speech perception (Brownell, 2010; Lecumberri, 2010). This can be seen in the technicalities of its process where "perceptual boundaries dynamically update in response to phonetic input and listener expectations about that input" (Berry & Ernestus, 2018, p. 344). Monitoring influences this (Dewaele & Wei, 2013) because, as stated by the above section on monitoring, one of the things that ELF users monitor is their own speech perception. Most importantly, this implies that a person's increasing ability to understand (perceive) unfamiliar phonetic input ultimately comes down to the flexibility of their expectations and their willingness to let go of their own social and linguistic norms as a universal standard (Canagarajah, 2007). Following from this, alignment can only be achieved after linguistic awareness is awakened (De Bartolo, 2014). Exposure determines this awakening (Berry & Ernestus, 2018).

Furthermore, since alignment gives way to intelligible communication despite ambiguity (Canagarajah, 2007, 2013) and since it comes through skillful monitoring and speech perception (Lecumberri et al., 2010), it can be assumed that a focus on listening is the most appropriate way to address the NS listener problem (Saito & Shintani, 2016).

In closing this subsection, competency, monitoring, negotiation, and alignment can be connected as terms in the following way: one needs the ability (competency) to catch linguistic cues (monitoring) before they can agree on which of their diverse, individual social and linguistic norms of English-use (negotiation) to merge together into something that works for everyone (alignment). The negotiation part of this system is where the use of pragmatic strategies takes place (Pietikainen, 2018; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018).

Strategies. An overview of the need for linguistic competence and awareness in communicative success has just been covered. This next subsection of 'ELF practices for communicative success' looks at explicit examples of the pragmatic communication strategies intuitively used in ELF environments that promote mutual understanding and therefore communicative success.

Murray (2012) describes ELF participants as possessing a toolkit of communication strategies. This can be understood through *pragmatic competence*: yet another documented multilingual competency. Pragmatic competence is defined in ELF as the employment of multilingual awareness (De Bartolo, 2014; Sung, 2018), or more explicitly, as the possession of sensitivity to linguacultural differences that affect communication and the ability to navigate them. This set of linguistic sensitivities and navigation abilities is Murray's toolkit of communication strategies.

Pragmatically competent communicators use this strategy toolkit in real-time to co-construct appropriate norms for the communicative context at hand (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018), after having monitored their interlocutor's linguacultural resources (see section on translanguaging above) to see what appears to be available to them for

communicative use (MacSwan, 2017). Furthermore, the fact that monitoring interlocutor resources is participant-specific means that the ELF toolkit is not a stable or fixed set of one-fits-all strategies that are effortlessly applicable to any exchange (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). Instead, pragmatic strategies are applied uniquely to each exchange as ELF users access their full range of multilingual resources, including the competencies and awarenesses shared by all multilingual participants (Björkman, 2014). So then, after the unique exchange is monitored, strategies are applied to communication during the process of meaning negotiation (see section on awarenesses and competences above). These strategies assist in producing the phonological alignment that follows (De Bartolo, 2014) and therefore mutual comprehension (De Bartolo, 2014; Lindemann, 2002; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018).

The communication strategies described below have been observed widely in instances of the ELF phenomenon taking place. They are definitively used for the purpose of handling linguistic ambiguity and asymmetry and typically include strategies in two categories: accommodation for these linguistic divergences (De Bartolo, 2014) and preemption of misunderstanding via different forms of explicitness (Kaur, 2011). *Diversity management* is the official term used by Kaur (2011) in referring to the use of strategies as a whole. Accommodation strategies more often take place on the turn of the listener whereas preempting strategies at times involve more cooperative action on the turns of both speaker and listener throughout an exchange. Both are described here for a full picture of what one in the role of listener, the focus of this paper, is presented with.

Accommodation Strategies. Accommodation strategies are a type of strategy that address *problematicity*: instances where a communicative issue that either has or could lead to misunderstanding has already occurred (De Bartolo, 2014).

The *let-it-pass principle* is a frequently re-visited example of accommodation as it demonstrates how ELF exchanges cooperatively orient toward mutual understanding by overlooking idiosyncrasies in an interlocutor's turn (Canagarajah, 2007; McKay, 2010; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). Canagarajah and McKay state that it is mainly used to divert attention from idiosyncrasies in the exchange when a threshold of mutual understanding has already been obtained. The principle is cooperative because it is an intentional move of the listening interlocutor, while the speaking interlocutor is speaking, and is done to show solidarity (Kubota, 2001; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). This is an example of how accommodation strategies in ELF are intended to maintain the flow of communication by saving-face, or preserving normality, so that the exchange can go on with minimal disruption (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). This can most successfully be done when one has linguistic awareness because it is an awareness of linguistic variety that allows someone to let divergent utterances pass without misunderstanding the utterance (Rost, 2014).

Other accommodation strategies include repetition and paraphrasing, overt questioning, co-creation of the message, and word replacement. Word replacement – replacing a word that diverges from mutual understanding with another – is an example of a strategy that can either accommodate or preempt errors (Kaur, 2011). When it is acting to accommodate, it takes part in the process of paraphrasing what has been said to confirm understanding (Björkman, 2014). This confirmation is another feature described in the research on active listening; it is described as something that should be expected

from one's listening interlocutor (Bavelas & Gerwing, 2011). In ELF, confirmations of what has been spoken are a place where accommodation strategies can be enacted.

These examples of accommodation strategies, as well as the let-it-pass principle above, are all specifically *other-initiated* (Björkman, 2014, p.129-133). What Björkman means is that they are initiated by the interlocutor who is "other" to the speaker, or in other words, whoever is in the role of listener. This is logical because, according to the study of listening in overall human communication, misunderstanding takes place when spoken input has failed to be correctly perceived, or heard (Brownell, 2010; Lecumberri et al., 2010). Finally, this supports the fact stated in the introduction to Chapter Two that communication is listener-defined (Brownell, 2010, p. 141).

Preemptive Strategies. According to De Bartolo (2014), preemptive communication strategies, or *explicitness strategies* as they are also called, are much more the focus of current ELF research than accommodation strategies. This is because their use has been shown to successfully address ambiguity before it ever occurs (Kaur, 2011; Pietikainen, 2016). Björkman (2014) describes preemptive strategies as a constant relating of each interlocutor to the other which is dictated by the flow of discourse as it changes from moment to moment.

As it relates to the guiding question, these preemptive strategies are only occasionally the type to be enacted during the turn of the listener; they are often the job of the speaker to employ (Björkman, 2014; Pietikainen, 2016). Yet we know that communication is listener-defined because whatever is said next a communicative cycle is completely dependent on whatever meaning the listener assigns to what they've heard - their perception (Brownell, 2010). This is why preemptive strategies are important for the

listening role of communication too; one can use them on a speaking turn to lighten the communicative load of their interlocutor on that interlocutor's next turn and, by doing so, increase the odds that what is spoken next will be intelligible (or at least have fewer options from which to select a probable meaning). In other words, preemptive strategies are participatory to listening: an important feature described in research on the skill of active listening (Jonsdottir & Fridriksdottir, 2020).

A particular group of preemptive ELF strategies is described by Pietikainen (2016) as intelligibility-enhancing. These include strategies such as *topic fronting*, *self-initiated repetition*, and *co-construction* of an utterance (Pietikainen, 2016). As an example, Kaur (2011) explains that topic fronting often begins when the speaker highlights a topic with a noun phrase; for example, in the utterance <Coffee with sugar… would you like to have some?>, "coffee with sugar" is the noun phrase fronting the topic which is the offer of coffee. This allows the speaker to immediately orient their interlocutor to the topic. The topic can then be more easily explicitly addressed by the speaker and further explained (Kaur, 2011), or, it can take on the form of an accommodation strategy at this point and be overtly changed or dropped (Canagarajah, 2007).

Repetition, along with the practices of paraphrasing or rephrasing (McKay, 2010), are used preemptively to create redundancy as well as to preempt or stall miscommunication at points of an exchange where there are pauses or other signs signaling potential misunderstanding that have not yet been confirmed to have happened (Kaur, 2011). This is different from using repetition to accommodate a discrepancy (usually taking the form of paraphrasing or word-replacement) that has already occurred,

where the interlocutor in the role of listener knows they have not correctly perceived the input and repeats what the speaker has said so as to begin the process of repair. When repetition is instead used to create redundancy as a preemptive strategy, the listener will repeat their interlocutor's spoken utterance to signal understanding (De Bartolo, 2014). This is preemptively done on a segment of speech immediately preceding whatever has signaled the potential for misunderstanding (Kaur, 2011).

Next, co-construction is an intelligibility-enhancing preemptive strategy that comes in a variety of forms. An example of this is *backchanneling* (Cavalheiro, 2015; De Bartolo, 2014). Backchannels are signals, either verbal or nonverbal, that are given by a listener to an interlocutor to show that they are listening or to elicit more speech in the exchange (De Bartolo, 2014). Examples consist of utterances such as 'mhm, yeah, uh huh' and so on. They occur during simultaneous speaking and listening (Bavelas & Gerwig, 2011) and explicitly demonstrate that the listener has registered the meaning or partial meaning of the utterance (Cavalheiro, 2015).

Another example of a co-construction strategy is that of *repair*. Repair occurs when an interlocutor either clarifies him/herself in an exchange or signals the need for a clarification of their counterpart's utterance (Pietikainen, 2018). *Self-repair* is initiated by the speaker on their own turn in the exchange whereas *other-repair* is initiated by the participant whose turn it is not, although a need for the other-initiated repair may have been signaled by the turn-holder (De Bartolo, 2014). In other-repair, cooperation is required to make the source of the problem clear. This is when a listener can initiate a repair, possibly through questioning, so as to obtain meaning in that part of the exchange; or, it is when a speaker can shape the communicative effect of an utterance "according to

the interlocutor's reactions" (Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018, p. 88). This is to co-construct, or to "jointly construct a speech act sequence via turn-taking" (p. 88), which is a feature of pragmatic competence in ELF.

Finally in the case of listener-initiated overt questioning, which is usually an accommodation strategy, it is a preemptive strategy when it is used to help an exchange along in repair rather than to clarify an existing misunderstanding. In connection, Kaur (2011) states that repair is distinguished from correction in that it can occur in the absence of a mistake. Unlike correction, repair can take place when there are "no observable problems or trouble in the ongoing turn or prior turn" (Kaur, 2011, p. 2706). This is where overt questioning can be a part of preemptive co-construction and the strategic turn-taking that actively maintains clarity in an exchange.

Reflexivity. All of these strategies and others like them demonstrate discourse reflexivity, or *metadiscourse*; a person's ability to self-examine their approach to a communicative exchange (Canagarajah, 2007; Kaur, 2011). McKay (2010) describes discourse reflexivity as the suspension of norms that occurs in ELF contexts, prior to negotiation where the use of strategies occurs.

The place in which interlocutors linguistically exist in this act of linguacultural norm suspension has been termed *no-man's-land*: a virtual space between their primary languages and cultures (Canagarajah, 2007). This space is entered by all in a true ELF exchange through various reflexive practices such as humor or explicit commentary. Doing this is a highly reflexive cognitive act (Rost, 2014) into which communicators enter on their native communicative norms and proceed to abandon them as they monitor their interlocutors (Berry & Ernestus, 2018). Entering the no-man's-land allows

interlocutors to gain distance from their primary norms and "activate flexible practices that facilitate communication" (Canagarajah, 2007, p. 926). Through reflexivity, this primary/native norm suspension is what results in very little interference of either interlocutor's L1 norms upon the exchange (McKay, 2010).

Another example of reflexivity was described in the section on monitoring above which stated that one of the three things ELF users monitor is their own perception of comprehensibility. They do this so that they can know which communication strategies to activate (Lecumberri et al., 2010; Saito & Shintani, 2016). This is an example of a reflexive practice because it is a form of examining one's own approach to an exchange. Without reflexivity, the perceptual boundaries of a person that were mentioned above (Canagarajah, 2007), which are supposed to fluidly shift with incoming input if the listener is actively monitoring, cannot shift; they will remain stationary which, as has been shown, is a primary inhibitor to successful ELF communication (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Rost, 2014).

In closing, Dewaele and Wei (2013) state that proficiency in ELF (where proficiency refers to the achievement of mutual understanding) comes down to one's ability to monitor. Negotiation and alignment, as shown in the section on ELF competencies above, lead to fluid communication but cannot happen without skillful monitoring. Furthermore this section has shown, through observing the phenomenon of ELF communication, that the ability to successfully monitor the linguacultural traits of another comes from linguistic reflexivity which comes from having multilingual awareness. This is the primary element lacking in a monolingual environment (Rost, 2014).

Listening to English as a Monolingual NS

The present paper and resulting project are an effort to address the listening responsibilities of native English users from the West when they find themselves unable to accurately discern the meaning of their non-native interlocutor's spoken English utterances. With a focus on monolingual environments, this section will specifically address the listening skills of English listeners from the Inner Circle (called 'NSs' in the guiding question; see the section on World Englishes above) some of which are the audience for the capstone project – the website which this literature review informs (see Chapter Three). It will do this by bridging the multilingual experiences, techniques, and pragmatic strategies used by the NNS ELF community with the needs of NS Inner Circle listeners. In doing so, this final section will fill out an answer to the guiding question: *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?*

The NS-Listener Problem

This paper is not new to the NS-listener problem. It is something that literature, such as that which was delineated in the section on WE above, has sought to find the root causes of. It emerged in the section on WE, confirming the experiences instigating this capstone project, and is here made concise.

To understand what the NS-listener problem is, one can juxtapose two corroborated realities. First is the fact that "non-native speakers can be highly intelligible even when their speech is strongly accented" (Levis, 2018, p. 12). Studies such as Saito and Shintani's (2016), in which multilingual NS English users gave higher

comprehensibility scores to NNS English than monolingual NS English users, demonstrate this. Second are the occurrences demonstrated by NS-NNS ELF communication studies on speech perception where English NS participants had difficulty or were unable to accurately perceive spoken ELF (Lindemann, 2002; Salves et al., 2020; Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015). This absence of speech perception abilities in the presence of English diversity is the NS-listener problem. Its existence supports the understanding that speech perception abilities are what define communicative success because, as stated by Brownell (2010), a message means whatever a receiver (listener) thinks it does.

Lindemann's (2002) study demonstrated the NS-listener problem and this power of the listener to determine communicative success by choosing what meaning to assign to an utterance. The study was set up to test the ELF speech perception of its monolingual participants. In it, a NS-NNS ELF exchange takes place where monolingual NS participants not only misperceive the NNSs but also believe they have actually correctly perceived what they heard (as opposed to knowing they have misunderstood the speaker). They go on to give a spoken response to what they've heard that is based on their incorrect perception, which immediately results in a disruption of mutual comprehension: a misunderstanding (Pietikainen, 2016). This study and others like it (Björkman, 2014; Kubota, 2001; Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015) have demonstrated that the NS-listener problem is a problem of listener responsibility (Brownell, 2010; Lindemann, 2002; Reagan, 2016; Rost, 2014; Tupas, 2021).

The cause of the NS-listener problem. This lack of proactivity in creating mutual understanding between oneself and one's speech-divergent interlocutors (Bavelas

& Gerwing, 2011; Jonsdottir & Fridriksdottir, 2019) is directly caused by a lack of previous exposure to divergence in linguistic norms and forms (De Bartolo, 2014; Salves et al., 2020). Ambiguity-expectant ELF exchanges (Dewaele & Wei, 2013; McKay, 2010) require exposure to linguistic diversity to be successful which, in turn, consistently results in linguistic awareness and knowledge of pragmatic communication strategies (Lecumberri et al., 2010; Rost, 2014). As previously stated, this exposure is missing in those with the NS-listener problem (Saito & Shintani, 2016; Salves et al., 2020; Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015); it is what is present when misunderstanding is rare and what is absent when misunderstanding is common (Garcia, Lecumberri et al., 2010; Murray, 2012; Rost, 2014; Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015). Therefore literature points to the understanding that to seek this exposure would be to move toward proactive ELF communication.

Tolerance of Ambiguity

Another way to refer to the NS-listener problem, which will be how it is discussed for the remainder of this paper, is through the *Tolerance of Ambiguity* framework, or TA (Dewaele & Wei, 2013). Looking at the NS-listener problem through the TA framework can provide NS-listeners with a more tangible objective, should they choose to work to improve their speech recognition skills.

Defining TA. TA has been defined by Dewaele and Wei as "the capacity to perceive and process [linguistic] information that deviates from the usual patterns" (2013, p. 232). Their study empirically measured this capacity by correlating the consistency of mutual comprehension between interlocutors in the presence of ambiguous[7]

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[7] Spoken stimuli "which cannot be adequately structured or categorized by the individual because of the lack of sufficient cues and is characterized by novelty [no familiar cues], complexity [high

communicative stimuli while using a common language with 1) how many languages they knew, 2) the normative frequency with which they used two or more of those languages within a communicative environment, and 3) their linguistic background – whether monolingual, bilingual, or multilingual – in upbringing. Ambiguity, reiterated from above, is "a lack of familiarity with accent, pronunciation, unknown words, [and] grammar" (p. 233). This ambiguity in auditory (spoken) stimuli comes from the divergence of norms between interlocutors, as it is called in the definition of TA (Dewaele & Wei, 2013).

What it means to have high TA. Ambiguous[8] communicative cues can include behavior cues as well as linguistic cues (auditory cues, words, sentences, and ideas) since both make up what constitute a person's communicative norms (Rost, 2014). So having 'high TA' means having high listening flexibility in the presence of speech that deviates from a listener's norms in what are potentially countless ways (Dewaele & Wei, 2013). This comes through a "focus on multilingualism" (Cenoz, 2019, p. 80) in one's language-use, which, can change one's personality (Cenoz, 2019; DeBartolo, 2014; Lowe & Kiczkowiak, 2016), or, as Tupas (2021) puts it, produce *translingual dispositions*: Identities that are formed around sensitivity to linguistic difference (p. 223).

The focus is on listening rather than speaking within the concept of high TA (Dewaele & Wei, 2013) because listening is the communicative skill that real communication uses the most (Trabanco, 2017). This is confirmed by the fact that even

[8] An ambiguous situation or stimulus is "one which cannot be adequately structured or categorized by the individual because of the lack of sufficient cues and is characterized by novelty [no familiar cues], complexity [quantity of ambiguous cues], and insolubility [contradictory cues]" (Dewaele & Wei, 2013, p. 232, brackets mine).

speaking requires listening because spoken messages are the outcome of speech perception, not the other way around (Brownell, 2010; Lecumberri et al., 2010).

Empirical findings on TA from Dewaele and Li. The findings of Dewaele and Li (2013) in measuring TA provide knowledge about what monolingual NSs of English might need in order to raise their ELF-TA. These findings consisted of the following:

1. A high amount of linguistic resources: Multilingual people, due to having the highest measured sums of Global Language Proficiency (GLP) among mono-, bi-, and multilingual participants (defined in the section on ELF above), had significantly higher TA scores than their monolingual and even bilingual counterparts (Dewaele & Wei, 2013). (The difference between bilingual and multilingual is defined in more detail in the ELF section above.) Saito and Shintani (2016) supported this finding in their study that empirically showed users of Singaporean English (a variety of English whose users are multilingual) giving higher comprehensibility scores to Japanese-English speech than users of North American English doing the same. The finding also matches Sung's (2017) conclusion that those who find translanguaging necessary in English-use are more effective communicators.
2. Regular engagement (different that use) with divergent speech: Extended immersion in/engagement with a linguistically and culturally foreign environment (participants measured were living abroad in a foreign country) produced higher TA scores. This lines up with the outcome of Salves' et al. (2020) study which successfully applied this concept to a group of British-English listeners who

struggled with speech perception of Brazilian-English until they had received familiarity-training with it over a period of time.

3. Regular use of all one's linguistic resources: Multilinguals who did not often use their L2's had a similar level of TA to monolingual participants. This showed that consistent translingual practices, even when it is one primary language being used, (Cenoz, 2019; Tupas, 2021) are what both produce TA and maintain TA and that acting to raise the frequency of exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity is what indiscriminately raises the TA of both monolinguals and multilinguals (Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Kubota, 2001; Salves et al., 2020). The study done by Lecumberri et al. (2010) on non-native speech perception in adverse conditions reflected this finding in concluding there to be no difference between the speech perception skills of monolingual language users and those multilingual language users who do not often use their L2s.

Raising Native-Speaker Listener TA

The objective of this paper is to find out whether NS-listener TA can be raised by applying knowledge from the communicative practices of ELF users to NS-listeners. Findings from the section on ELF above included that 1) linguacultural awareness precedes all ELF-proficiency skills and comes from consistent exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity, 2) that reflexivity, or, reflection on one's own communicative practices (which results from exercising linguacultural awareness; see Tupas, 2021), leads to the intuitive use of pragmatic ambiguity-mitigation strategies, and 3) that specific types of successful listener-employed communication strategies for ambiguity-mitigation have been highly documented in ELF communication and are therefore potentially replicable.

These three findings are here applied to the idea of raising NS-listener TA to address the NS-listener problem. The capstone project website is formed around this information.

Raising TA through Awareness of ELF Variety. The subsection on translanguaging in ELF above revealed that, for ELF users, multilingual/translingual awareness comes and is maintained through participation in an environment with soft boundaries between multiple distinct linguistic resources that are being used together; Sung (2017) reported that English-only ideology was not subscribed to when individuals considered the use of words and phrases from other languages to be necessary for effective ELF communication. The problem with this regarding the NS-listener problem is that this type of multilingual environment is always not accessible to those with the NS-listener problem. When this is the case, research shows it to be less likely that they will be able to obtain a disposition-affecting level of multilingual (translingual) awareness (Tupas, 2021) or of the vast amount of variation in GE (Kubota, 2001; Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015).

An alternative the literature offers to this is that individual attempts to acquire a second language have been shown to have an impact on both disposition toward multilingualism and on TA (Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Tupas, 2021). Doing this has been considered a form of exposure to multilingualism and linguistic variation (Rost, 2014; Salves et al., 2020).

Finally, in the absence of an individual's attempt to acquire a new language, research supports the importance of learning, at minimum, that there is not a 'right' and 'wrong' way to use English: that a vast variety of divergent norm-sets for English-use have been formally and collectively established in different parts of the world

(Canagarajah, 2007; Hilpert, 2013; Lonsmann, 2017). Simply being aware that this is the case has, in some cases, been shown to initiate the pursuit of higher TA and translingual dispositions (Cavalheiro, 2015; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Saito & Shintani, 2016).

Raising TA through Reflexivity. As seen in the section on ELF above, creating flexibility in a person's perceptual boundaries for spoken form recognition (Lecumberri et al., 2010), or, heightening a listener's TA (Dewaele & Wei, 2013), requires reflexivity: the self-examination of one's approach to an exchange (Canagarajah, 2007; Kaur, 2011). Only through consciousness of which norms one is using to communicate, can one become aware that those norms are not universally applicable and begin taking responsibility for their approach to listening (Lindemann, 2002; Rost, 2014). Doing this is also what could enable a NS-listener to begin approaching the ELF practice of abandoning one's norms to monitor and linguistically align oneself to another (see section on Global Language Proficiency).

Applying this to how NS-listeners might learn reflexivity, Cenoz (2019) discusses the process of beginning to view one's first-language as a dynamic linguistic repertoire and therefore as a resources; he considers this a proactive means to enabling a more flexible use of whatever linguistic resources one possesses, even when those resources are monolingual. Sung (2017) refers to this same process, when it happens in English-users, as the "exploitation of their multilingual repertoires" (p. 22). This has been done through introspective metalinguistic reflection where one takes note of both their linguistic and extra-linguistic norms, including body language for example, and learns to consciously select from these consciously-registered norms based on what is situationally called for (Cenoz, 2019).

Cenoz (2019) suggests one can initiate this type of actual reflection in a person by asking them to explain their own linguistic experience and then seeing where they take their response. He proposes that this can be formally done by having individuals write language biographies - a biography of their linguistic experiences (p. 80). This could be applied to raising the TA of NS-listeners.

Raising TA through a Toolkit of Strategies. Finally, applying the concept Murray (2012) calls a 'toolkit of pragmatic strategies' for communication (see the subsection titled 'Strategies' in the ELF section above), NS-listeners can do the same as they increase in proactive listening (Cavalheiro, 2015; Lonsemann, 2017; Tupas, 2021).

Gathering this literature review's discoveries of pragmatic listening strategies used by the ELF community, NS-listeners could, after having taken action to obtain linguistic awareness, employ a variety of the strategies. Examples from the section on ELF include but are not limited to the following:

1. Refraining from passive intake to intentionally monitor the speech and behavior of the interlocutor (Canagarajah, 2007; Saito & Shintani, 2016; Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Cenoz, 2019):
   Not only is this an ELF strategy, it is also a practice of active listening which has its own field of study concerning human communication as a whole. This overlap is the case for several of the documented ELF strategies, further confirming that skilled ELF listening is highly collaborative (Lindemann, 2002), as collaboration is also a key characteristic of active listening. Monitoring strategies that are common in both the ELF and active listening fields of study include those in the following list. The first two are versions of

providing feedback to the speaker which Lindemann (2002) says is a way to stay closely in tune with the context at hand and on top of misperceiving speech:

a. Monitoring through preemptive-overt-questioning:

   A strategy where the listener asks questions throughout a speaker's turn – so while listening – to make sure that understanding is maintained (Björkman, 2014; Kaur, 2011).

b. Monitoring through backchanneling (Cavalheiro, 2015; De Bartolo, 2014):

   This is defined as either verbal or non-verbal interjections by the listener throughout the ongoing turn of a speaker. Actions such as frowning or shaking the head when confusion occurs are examples of such interjections.

c. Monitoring through consciously ignoring distractions to the communicative exchange (Brownell, 2010). This connects to the next strategy.

2. Focusing on the task to be completed by the exchange, or, the objective of the exchange. That way, if uncertainty occurs, there is a signpost to which the listener can reorient (Rost, 2014):

   According to Rost, this is real-time motivation for active-listening that looks like asking, "What am I trying to accomplish?". He says that asking this is how one focuses on a task and that the answer to this question will be specific to each exchange. Examples of answering the question include: a) determining

to learn the location of a restaurant someone is talking about or b) determining to find out a student's reason for missing the last week of school. Doing this reveals the variable complexity of a listening task to the listener, reminding them that it is important to always be alert, and opportunities they can take for collaboration along the way that have to do with the objective that is being held in mind (Rost, 2014).

3. Attempting to learn another language (Rost, 2014):

   This has the potential to enable a listener to let errors pass when they hear them, without calling for clarification (Canagarajah, 2007; McKay, 2010; Taguchi & Ishihara, 2018). This is because knowledge of an interlocutor's first language can lend understanding to how first language forms may transfer to second-language English use (Salves et al., 2020; Sung, 2018).

Summary and Closing

This literature review laid out research supporting the objective of the website described in Chapter Three, an introduction to which is described below. Its first section revealed the existence of many collectively established English varieties (GE). It looked at the models through which these varieties have been viewed and the dynamics of power and ideology that have come from the global spread of English. Finally, it addressed the concept of language boundaries as they apply to the use of ELF around the world today. The second section discussed English-use when its users do not possess it as their L1, otherwise known as ELF. It exposed the pragmatic strategies for communicative success that are intuitively used by the ELF-user population, with a focus on those used in listening. The third section of this review bridged the previous section's new knowledge

of ELF misunderstanding-mitigation strategies for listening with what the first section revealed about the listening-abilities of monolingual English speakers. It did this by looking at how the awareness and competencies of ELF users might be applied to NS-listeners to raise their Tolerance of Ambiguity (TA) and make them more effective ELF listeners and therefore communicators.

In summary, it was determined that to raise NS-listener TA, NS-listeners would need extended exposure to linguistic variation that demonstrates (experientially for most effectiveness) the communicative value of diversifying their system of usable linguistic resources. They would then need to practice being auditorily sensitive to which of those resources are needed for each communicative exchange they encounter until they develop the types of pragmatic listening skills seen in the ELF-using population. Research agrees that this boils down to the possession of a disposition, or an attitude, that looks favorably upon multilingualism and diverse English use (translanguaging).

Next, Chapter Three will describe the website this literature review has informed. The website's purpose is to be an answer to the part of the research question that asks if NSs of English can be taught to be effective listeners in exchanges with English that diverges from their own norms. The website seeks to teach this by offering resources and tools for the acquisition of multilingual awareness, communicative self-reflection, and multilingual listening strategies.

CHAPTER THREE

Project Description

Introduction

Research confirms that the monolingual English NS must attempt an alternative approach to listening if they are to do so effectively in the presence of NNS English use. Research also shows that this is necessary whether their ineffective listening has been conscious or not (Lindemann, 2002). This is why transitioning from a monolingual English listening identity to a multilingual one is not only a decision, but an “act of identity” (Rost, 2014, p.134). It is the purpose of this project to offer native English speaking individuals the opportunity to act upon their own identity in this way.

To do so, I have built a website guided by the central question, *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?* The specific aim of this website is to offer resources and tools for the acquisition of multilingual awareness and multilingual listening strategies to the individuals or groups responsible for teaching or tutoring NNS of English.

The following chapter will first provide a detailed overview of the project as a whole, incorporating its objective and the rationale behind choosing to create a website. This section will also describe the features of web-design central to fitting a website to its audience and will lay out the content of the website as it relates to these features and the objective of the project. The next section will give descriptions of the theoretical frameworks grounding adult acquisition of new awarenesses and acquisition of the pragmatic listening techniques that are aimed at improving individuals’ speech

recognition and overall communicative participation in multilingual environments. Finally, the chapter will bring these multilingual environments into focus by describing the educational settings that the website is intended for and by illustrating the educator audience it was, among others, made to serve. The project's timeline and my plan for the future assessment of its success is also explained.

Project Overview

Here, I will provide an overview for the website which was made to fulfill the project requirement of this capstone. After writing Chapter Two, the experiences I described in Chapter One became much more informed. I learned that there were reasons for why English NS were poor ELF listeners and that there were ways to change this. I also learned about the importance of the communicative role of listening and how it works to uphold communication overall.

Locus of Need

The development of the project's objective culminated in finding a locus of need, or, a place where the NS listener problem was prevalent. It is generally easy to cross paths with the NS listener problem, especially when one is the English NS in these situations. Real-life communicative exchanges between NS and NNS of English take place all the time: in hostels between travelers, in both international and national business settings, on airplanes, in international aid settings, in restaurant kitchens and many, many more. One context that sticks out among the others though is that of education. Look globally and you will find many places where NSs of English are teaching NNS of English. In many cases, it is some form of ELT. In the United States though, it is often content classes where the teacher is a NS of English and the students are immigrants,

refugees, or international students: NNS of English. This means that the role of the NS-listener is of great importance in United States classrooms. Additionally, these classrooms, whether elementary, secondary, post-secondary, or in the community, are often students' introduction to the English language. This introductory aspect of the United States classroom and the widespread reality that English NSs are often the ones teaching English NNSs for various purposes (job training, high school or college classes that typically require discourse, GED, etc.) is what led to the project's objective, which is described next.

Project Objective

The objective of this project was to create a website that strategically offered resources and tools for the acquisition of multilingual awareness and multilingual listening strategies to the educators or educator groups responsible for teaching or tutoring NNSs of English. These are individuals further described below as the primary audience of this project. The website presents theories from the research as the heart of the project; they reveal the problematization of English NS listening practices, which specifically come from monolingualism, and support the idea that listening capabilities can be altered.

The website then focuses on three overarching parts. First, it assesses an individual's ability to reflect on their language use and to understand spoken English that is divergent from their own communicative norms (TA level). Next, it exposes users to English variation with the aim of fostering new perspectives about English varieties that may have previously been seen as hierarchically-beneath North-American or British English varieties. Finally and ultimately, it trains users on the concept of knowing and

using one's linguistic resources, a practice also known as multilingual-listening, and on using active listening strategies to start activating more sensitive listening skills: a strategy presented by Rost (2014) as a means to helping monolinguals with their multilingual-listening skills. Each of these parts of the website's objective was supported by the research revealed in Chapter Two.

Project Method of Use

The website is primarily a tool for self-directed learning with an option for group-facilitated learning. As a tool primarily for self-directed learning, it needed to be made in a format that would be accessible and easy to share with audiences in a variety of contexts. Platforms in education can do this by announcing the website as a preparatory tool included in opening week tasks, offering it as an asynchronous professional development to work through on one's own time, or including it in places like employment paperwork, syllabi for teacher training courses, online course resources within teacher training programs, and school website staff pages. Secondarily, the website will include a simple outline written from the general perspective of a training facilitator which will be a guide on how to present the information in the website to a group with minimal effort.

Group-facilitated use of the website would be appropriate for contexts like tutor onboardings, school professional developments, student teaching seminars, or other synchronous elements of teacher training programs. It was formatted in such a way that would allow it to straightforwardly fit it into a lesson plan. Options for future development of the website include adding a lesson plan template, especially formatted for the information in the website, that can be used or modified by users.

Finally, ideas for reaching individuals or groups with the website, particularly in these educator contexts, include advertising it as a learning tool for educators through social media, interpersonal means, or at places like educator job fairs and local community centers in a format as simple as a flier with a description and link.

Project Format and Rationale

The goals of this project seemed to best fit the format of a website because this seemed to be the format through which tools and resources could be made most mobile. This was a desired feature due to the tendency of an educator audience, described in more depth below, to have limited flexibility in their schedules due to the demanding nature of a teaching career. It can be accessed on one's own time and at one's own pace: an aspect of the project that was also desirable based on the fact that better listening develops, first and foremost, out of personal conviction which is not guaranteed in the absence of experiential learning and first-hand exposure to linguistic variation (Kubota, 2001). Therefore, the ability to pace oneself and to come and go as motivation ebbs and flows seemed like it would lend itself to user success.

An additional appeal of using a website was that it offered the option of a compact design where a significant amount of information could be made available in a user-friendly, minimally overwhelming way. This seemed as though it would make concepts more approachable for those who are new to them. The one-stop-shop nature of a website can be designed to control what users focus on first, helping them to get the most out of new concepts and information. This is where web design came in. It was understood that carefully designing the website could mean the difference between guiding users into discovery and learning or not.

Web Design

According to the Interaction Design Foundation (2002), *web design* is defined as the process of designing the user-experience aspect of websites as they appear on the internet. It concerns the appearance and layout of a website in so far as these features suit its intended user-group by facilitating ease of use. The layout of a website's design refers specifically to "*how* information is structured and categorized" (Interaction Design Foundation, 2002, para. 2). Web design can also concern the website's content creation, though this is not always the case. When it is the case, the Interaction Design Foundation says that special attention must be given to making sure users are not confused by the presence of excess information and that, instead, they are drawn into the website by the absence of frustration and the amount and speed with which the overall web design targets the users' reason for visiting the website.

Users. It can be assumed with a fair amount of certainty that the educator community, which makes up one of the website's proposed user groups, is proficient with the use of technology, especially internet technology, at an average level or greater. This might be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the imperative mass-use of digital learning platforms, tools, and resources that nearly all educators, young and old, were subjected to for varying periods of time at the height of the pandemic. As a result, an organized website is likely to be considered user-friendly by most users. Additionally, according to the Interaction Design Foundation, a website is likely to be considered by its users to be trustworthy if the content it offers is appropriately structured and organized.

Layout and Appearance. The appearance of a website influences user interest (Interaction Design Foundation, 2002) and so was taken into consideration. At the same

time, the design prioritized content clarity and organization above aesthetics. Structure was given to the content offered by the website (text, video, audio content, embedded forms, etc.) by organizing it into sections with different objectives. These are the menu items pinned to the header of the website via a navigation bar, which demonstrates how considering the layout of a website organizes the content.

Website Content

As seen in Chapter Two, Murray (2012) refers to the communication strategies that are used by ELF users as a 'toolkit of strategies'. This website can be thought of as a toolkit of strategies as well: one that offers linguistic awareness and speech perception tools to NSs of English. The content of this web-toolkit is a curated collection of online resources, organized around information gleaned from Chapter Two's literature review that give it structure and significance as it is distributed throughout the website. A list of references used in the website is included and accessible via its main navigation bar.

Home and About Pages

The website first opens to a homepage that immediately makes the purpose of the website explicitly clear. It does this via a quote about the power the listener has to steer communication which is followed by three statements connecting 1) the website's purpose, 2) the user's linguistic experiences, and 3) the entry point for the user to start at in joining in on the website's purpose. This is meant to be read in the order "we, you, us" and concludes with a homepage button reading "start".

The "start" button on the homepage sends users to an About page with three sections to learn more about the 1) NS listener problem, 2) the website's beliefs about listening in a world where English is global, and 3) the terms it will use throughout. The

first section provides an example of the NS listener problem via a video of a NS of British English who is having difficulty perceiving the speech of someone using a variety of English that is different from his own. The second About section presents a slide-deck that users can click through to read a progression of information about speech perception and TA, which concludes with a statement of the website's driving beliefs. Beneath the slide-deck, this About section concludes with brief descriptions of each of the three main topic sections of the website, the titles of which are visible from the navigation bar from any place in the website. These topic sections are described below. The third and final section on the About page is a list of terms that are used in the website. They are concisely defined, do not take up a lot of space, and include images for each term to help users understand what they're reading in a visual way. These terms also appear on their own separate webpage, which is hidden from the navigation bar but is linked at different points throughout the website, whenever users may need to refresh their memory.

The flow of the homepage and About page is intended to help website visitors have a clear understanding of the purpose of the website and how they fit into it, before they continue into the more deeply-involved portions of the website. These introductory pages were made to help users clearly see how they could benefit from the resources the website offers. They direct users from one item to the next via linked buttons that are easy to see and, when clicked, guide them directly to where they should be next. This includes the final button on the About page, which guides them to take the self-assessment by bringing them to the first of the three main topic sections: Self Assess. The Self Assess section and the sections that follow it are described next.

Three Main Topic Sections

Navigation bar access is available to the three main parts of the project objective: a metalinguistic awareness assessment, linguistic exposure and awareness activation, and multilingual listener strategy training. These make up the three overarching sections of the website. They appear in the navigation bar via their titles which are: *Self Assess*, *Step In*, and *Strategize*, respectively. As navigation bar items, each of these sections includes dropdown menus that display easy access to the guided resources they offer. Otherwise, if clicked directly, *Self Assess, Step In* and *Strategize* lead to their own homepages which open to a quote from the research that epitomizes the objective of that section and shows where in the process of getting through the three topic sections of the site one is at when entering that portion of the website. A quick-link is available here to take users further down the same page, stopping where they are directed on how and in what order they should begin interacting with the resources in that main topic section: the same ones which appear in the navigation bar as dropdown menus.

Self Assess Section

The language awareness activation process begins in the first major topic section of the website, titled *Self Assess*. *Self Assess* contains one self assessment and one rubric with which users can interpret their self assessment. The assessment is linked only on the *Self Assess* homepage but the rubric is linked on the homepage and appears in the navigation bar dropdown menu as well.

The Assessment. The self-assessment was made to both measure and begin activation of users' metalinguistic awareness (reflexivity) and TA. More explicitly, the assessment first asks about 1) users' ability to consciously recognize and reflect on their

own communicative behavior (native language norms of use) and about their attitudes toward English variation. It next inquires about 2) users' TA by having them attempt to try to correctly transcribe (extract correct meaning from) two auditory samples of L2 English variations that are different from their own. These probings make up the content of the self-assessment because reflexivity and TA are important for effective listening within a pluralistic, English-using communication environment. Since this is the case, metalinguistic awareness and linguistic awareness both need to be activated, which this assessment attempts to initiate. The self-assessment is titled *Linguistic Background Intake* because its questions are primarily about the user's collective experiences with language since this is largely what determines their status regarding possession of metalinguistic awareness and TA.

One of the two English varieties used for the L2 English transcriptions in the assessment was selected because of Lindemann's (2002) study which chose to use L1 Korean English speakers to test the speech perception of monolingual standard American English speakers. This was due the systematic mistreatment of Asian-Americans in the past history of the United States that has caused long-standing negative sentiments to be documented as having persisted toward Asian varieties of English. Although this is a two-decade-old study, it is likely that this sentiment is still relevant today which is plausible in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and sentiments toward Asian-Americans that became apparent, in its wake, via as much as a scroll through social media.

Getting Results. The self-assessment opens directly from the *Self Assess* homepage to a Google Form which, once submitted, sends each participant a copy of their responses via email. They can then compare this to the assessment rubric on the

website which is intended to help them interpret their responses. Each question in the self-assessment asked for a 'yes' or 'no' answer, so, the way the rubric works is that statements matching up to each question appear by the number the question has in the copy they have of their results. These state the implications of having answered 'yes' or 'no' for each question. These statements give users context for the implication of their responses, the understanding of which is assisted by the terms page on the website, which can be opened in a separate tab. In this way, users find out what their responses imply about their ability to correctly perceive divergent English (via linguistic awareness and TA). They also get a virtual feel for their TA level through the transcription portion of the assessment and whether or not it requires great effort from them to confidently perceive what was said, or not. Both the assessment questions and the rubric implication statements were created from the research on linguistic and metalinguistic awareness, reflexivity, and the theoretical framework called TA that was delineated in Chapter Two.

Self Assess culminates with users evaluating their assessment results (to be clear, this is not a scoring-system) with this rubric. After this, they return to the *Self Assess* homepage to follow a link to the *Step In* section. There, they can begin further activating their linguistic awareness by first learning about conventionalized English varieties around the world, apart from North American or British English.

Step In Section

Step In, the second main topic section of the website, informs on overarching themes that appeared throughout the research covered in Chapter Two. These themes are organized into two subsections that respectively cover: 1) variety within the English language, 2) the concepts of linguistic awareness, communicative competence, and

language as a resource through the linguistic repertoire. These subsections have their own subpages on the website and are linked on both the *Step In* homepage and dropdown menu where they are respectively titled *English as a Lingua Franca* and *Language as a Resource*.

First Subsection. The goal of the *English as a Lingua Franca* subsection is to show users that English is actually a global language with many conventionalized variations (Hilpert, 2013; Mesthrie, 2019) that are very different from North American or British English varieties. It includes video-based information on topics including the development of English pluricentricity, the judgment of right and wrong when it comes to the many English variations (accents) that exist today, and an example of how exposure to many of these varieties can help your listening perception and TA. This subsection draws on the Chapter Two section titled ‘ Raising TA through awareness of ELF variety’.

The subsection aims to meet its learning target by asking users to respond to questions which were created to direct them toward clear understandings of the information and examples presented in the video material. For example, one exercise has users listen to audio samples from a variety of English variations after which they are asked to respond to questions about what they are hearing and what they think about it. Another exercise has users listen to a native English speaker leaning on her full linguistic repertoire to determine the origins of the English spoken by NNSs behind her, whom she cannot see. This leads to the next subsection.

Second Subsection. Next, the *Language as a Resource* subsection defines linguistic awareness and introduces the concepts of the linguistic repertoire and language as a resource that everyone has, the use of which flows out of linguistic and

metalinguistic awarenesses. Its objective is to further activate linguistic awareness through 1) learning about multilingual resources, 2) seeing examples of language resources in action, and 3) helping users start viewing their own linguistic experiences as resources. It is also intended to help users see the measurable difference between multilingual and monolingual listening in ELF settings. This subsection emphasizes the dynamic nature of language resources where individuals' linguistic knowledge is seen as a growing and changing repertoire that can be used to facilitate more successful communication. It draws on the Chapter Two section titled 'Raising TA through Reflexivity' which emphasizes the importance of harnessing whatever linguistic resources one has, multilingual or not.

Language as a Resource ties everything back to listening and the effects of both monolingualism and multilingualism on listening through video resources that present this phenomenon in an engaging way. In addition to this, it aims to meet its objective by asking users to respond to prompts at certain points throughout these videos. The prompts were made to guide users toward 1) self-reflection (reflexivity) on their own linguistic repertoires and 2) a desire for higher TA. The subsection concludes with a TEDx talk on body language types and how understanding it can help with speech perception: an active listening tool. It is accompanied by questions that draw on the body language information by helping users reflect on their own body language. This final exercise calls on research from Cenoz (2019) who emphasizes the importance of considering one's extralinguistic communication norms to be part of one's linguistic repertoire as well, especially for monolingual communicators. This is because these norms also come from our communication experiences, just like linguistic norms do.

Chapter Two highlighted the fact that linguistic awareness must predicate the alteration of a listener's perceptual boundaries. Therefore exposure to linguistic variety, both English plurality and multilingualism, was emphasized in this *Step In* portion of the website. Furthermore, by prompting users' to reflect on their linguistic experiences as well as their intuitive extralinguistic communication norms (body language), *Step In* invites users to become explicitly aware of which language resources, linguistic and extralinguistic, they are already familiar with. This, in turn, acts as an invitation for users to start closely monitoring the communication environments around them for shared resources. In other words, this subsection concludes with an attempt to heighten users' TA while they still remain monolingual.

Strategize Section

Strategize is the final major topic section appearing in the website's homepage navigation bar. It contains 1) one video-based training, one image-illustrated training, and 2) a form that users can fill out as an Action Plan for practicing strategic listening going forward. These are provided in two subsections titled *Learn How to Listen Like a Multilingual* and *Target Your Listening: Action Plan.* Aside from appearing in the navigation menu dropdown, under Strategize, they are linked on the Strategize homepage as well where they have short, descriptive summaries.

The objective of *Learn How to Listen Like a Multilingual* is to provide users with an introduction to two specific pragmatic listening strategies from ELF, which is based on research from the Chapter Two subsection titled 'Raising TA through a Toolkit of Strategies'. It touched on key components of mobilizing monolingual listeners in a multilingual world which are that the reflexivity of active listening may have a positive

effect on the TA of monolingual English users in ELF settings, if practiced, and that some of the widely observed ELF pragmatic strategies are applicable to monolingual English speaking listeners. Finally, the objective of *Target Your Listening: Action Plan* is to assist users with the creation of attainable, listening-related goals through reflection on what they have learned while completing the website trainings.

Grounding Frameworks for Content

As mentioned in Chapter Two, the capacity to find speech intelligible is referred to as *Tolerance of Ambiguity* (TA). Chapter Two showed that it can be adjusted. *Andragogy* on the other hand or, the study of how adults learn, has not yet been introduced. Andragogy was applicable to the creation of this website because it was made for adult learners. It is something that was important in understanding whether the website could effectively accomplish its goal. These two concepts were the guiding frameworks for the content of this website. Therefore this section briefly refreshes TA and introduces the concept of Andragogy.

Tolerance of Ambiguity

As seen in Chapter Two, Dewaele and Wei (2013) define TA in as “the capacity to perceive and process information that deviates from the usual patterns" (p. 232). High TA means high listening flexibility in the presence of speech that deviates from a listener’s norms. They define ambiguity in a linguacultural context as a shortage of recognizable cues. This can include behavior cues as well as linguistic cues since both make up a person’s communicative norms. Since Dewaele and Wei (2013) show that TA can increase, it was the grounding framework for this website. It supports the website objective. Dewaele and Wei’s study on TA was used to write the self-scoring rubric that

website users have access to after completing their self-assessment at the beginning of the website.

Principles of Andragogy

The results of Coker's (2013) investigation of Knowles' (1990) principles of andragogy (adult learning) showed that an adult's perception of the method used to instruct on new information is positively correlated with newly acquired competencies. As a result, the website was built with this in mind: that the adult audience for which the website is intended will be influenced by their perception of its instructional method.

This is where a key learning from Chapter Two's research on language ideology comes into play: It was established in Chapter Two that language ideologies cause social categorizations and that social categorizations caused this way are the only ones done unconsciously (Silverstein, 1979). Studies such as those from Lindemann (2002) and from Saito and Shintani (2016) provided real-world examples of this happening. As a result of this, and in light of the fact that this project sought to reach those at the heart of the Inner circle where monoglossic ideologies such as native-speakerism are present (Canagarajah, 2007; Reagan, 2016; Tupas, 2021), the creation of this website attempted stay away from mainstream buzz-words that might act as an affective filter upon those it is intended to help. Examples of words that might fall into this category include, but are not limited to, 'racism', 'anti-racism', and 'bias'. Knowledge that this is important if results are to be achieved came in part from the author's experience receiving her primary and secondary education in monolingual English using environments in the United States.

In addition to an adult learner's perception of the learning method that is used is the factor of time. Coker's (2013) study produced results showing a significant positive

correlation between the number of contact hours an adult has with a new linguistic skill and their acquisition of it. This is supported by the widely agreed-upon findings from Chapter Two which emphasize that the acquisition of multilingually sensitive listening skills requires significant exposure to linguistic variety (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Kubota, 2001; Lecumberri et al., 2010; Salves et al., 2020).

Product Implementation

As mentioned above, the locus of need this website was aimed at reaching was with educators or educator groups responsible for teaching or tutoring NNSs of English. This is the audience. The setting is United States classrooms where English NSs teach upper secondary or adult English NNSs for various purposes including English language, GED, and secondary or postsecondary content courses that typically require discourse.

Audience

Research on SLA states that it is virtually impossible for individuals who acquire a new language as an adult to phonologically reach the NS standard that is set out by so many traditional ELT programs (Levis, 2018). Additionally, research on the global use of English shows that its pluricentricity runs deep and only continues to deepen (Cavalheiro, 2015). These findings mean that any setting involving ELF use in a United States classroom will have communicative participants (usually its students) either using English as an L2 or greater or possessing a variation of English that has contextual norms and phonological forms that are labeled “non-standard” by a large amount of monolingual English-speaking Americans (Reagan, 2016).

Qualified by Student Population. When L2 English users make up the student population of a classroom, the instructor of that classroom meets the initial, default

qualifications to be a member of this project's audience. Everyone in that classroom can be called ELF users by definition since they are using English to communicate with others who do not share their first language background. This implies that the project audience teaches in an ELF context. The audience is also limited to educators who teach individuals that have passed the critical period of language acquisition. This is because age is something that can affect the outcome of their acquisition (Lightbown & Spada, 2021) in ways that have proven to incapacitate the listening comprehension of monolingual English NSs. So the age and linguistic identity of the students, and therefore the nature of the classroom's English use, is part of what qualifies educational instructors as this capstone project's audience members.

Qualified by Linguistic Background. The other means of audience member qualification is their linguistic background. The tools on this website were designed to best meet the listener needs of educators in the following linguistic background categories: 1) monolingual English NS educators, 2) English NS educators who, even if they have attempted to acquire a second language (an experience that Rost (2014) says is often missing when the effects of monolingualism are most prevalent), are not regularly using any languages other than English, and 3) English NS educators who fit into either of the previous two categories and, in addition, have not recently been engaged with English varieties outside of the one employed by their native speech community. These qualifiers come from the research illuminated in Chapter Two which found that sustained multilingual use (Dewaele & Wei, 2013) or sustained exposure to linguistic variety (Saito & Shintani, 2016; Salves et al., 2020) were the primary factors maintaining high TA in listeners.

Positionality of the Author. The goal of this website was to give monolingual English speakers the opportunity to act on their identities. It does this by asking users to examine their beliefs around the English language as well as their linguistic approach to listening in exchanges with non native English speakers. In some cases, this could mean asking people to make fundamental changes to how they operate.

As a result, I wanted to acknowledge that language can be a hot button issue in certain communities, either itself or because of how it connects to bigger hot button issues like immigration. Therefore the website's intentions were not to 'call out' but to 'invite in' the audience by positioning change as desirable. I believe that making careful language choices in designing the website's content play an important role in its ability to have this effect. To this end, and as mentioned above in the section on andragogy, I wanted to keep the website free of buzzwords connected to potential hot button issues in potential audience communities. The goal of this was to avoid triggering negative ideological sentiments early on before users have had the chance to encounter potentially shifting information. This was not because these sentiments are necessarily acceptable but because I believed it could increase the likelihood that individuals would see the problem autonomously. The personal experience and knowledge I have from my community of origin assisted me in this approach.

Setting

The things above that qualify a specific type of educational instructor audience are what limit the setting of this project to United States classrooms where English NSs teach upper secondary or adult ELF users for various purposes. Having provided English language instruction in both upper secondary and adult settings, I was able to envision the

specific types of educational settings that seemed as though they would most benefit from this website. These include but are not limited to Adult Basic Education (ABE), Adult Literacy, ELL at the secondary or postsecondary level, General Education Development (GED), and mainstream content education at the secondary or postsecondary levels.

The exact location of the setting where this website will first be implemented after completion and submission of this project is variable since it is primarily for self-directed use. Once implemented, the affected setting will include the students in these educators' classrooms themselves when the educators take what they have learned from the website into their work-hours and attempt to implement it in communicative exchanges with their students. These exchanges between student and teacher are considered an extension of the setting. For example, when a student asks the educator a question, that question is the set of linguistic cues which the audience-member educator must try to correctly perceive the meaning of.

Timeline and Assessment

This project had a set timeframe within which everything was completed that was initially in conjunction with the course GED 8490 Capstone Project but, in the end, was decided upon by my faculty advisor for the project due to extenuating circumstances regarding my ability to complete the project. During this timeframe, each chapter, an abstract, and my capstone project was completed and submitted in their final form. I began this process by creating a site map for myself where I could brainstorm and formulate a detailed plan for the content on each level of the website. I then used this, and a physical notebook designated for website planning notes, to guide the scope of my website as I collected online resources to curate within it. I also reached out to individuals

who could offer advice regarding the technical side of building a website which was something I have never done before, even on a platform like Wix. The information they provide helped me decide to use Wix. I was also briefly assisted by Hamline University's Instructional Technology and Design Coordinator, Nicole Nelson.

Following the submission of my capstone, my short-term goal is to share the website with personal acquaintances in education in the most immediate future. More information on my future plans for the website is included below, in Chapter Four. Sharing the website with acquaintances in my circle of educators will be the first, small step in the direction of success assessment. One possibility is that if individuals fitting the audience criteria who are in my circles are willing to test the final product, I will be able to begin investigating the success of the website soon after launching it. Educator colleagues of mine who fit the criteria for an audience member, specifically those teaching content courses in the all-immigrant/refugee high school we are employed in at the time of this capstone project, are those I plan to invite to test out the website as some of its first users.

My long-term goal is to get word of the website out on a wider scale, with some of the goals for its use coming from the ideas mentioned in the Chapter Three section titled 'Method of Use'. This section stated that, as a tool meant for self-directed learning and optional group-facilitated use, the website would first need to be made available to an audience that has some incentive to use it: to want to learn what it has to teach. I will need to keep this in mind as I brainstorm how to get the website to those who most need it. Ideas for general advertisement include formally presenting the website to outside entities like teacher preparation programs or organizations that have online information

boards like TESOL International. This is further discussed in Chapter Four. Less formal ideas for advertisement include, as mentioned, advertising the website through social media, through interpersonal means, or at places like educator job fairs and local community centers in a format as simple as a flier with a description and link.

Summary and Closing

Chapter Three began by providing an overview of the project at hand. It did so by describing the general locus of need for a website of this nature, the objective of the website, the methods of use it is intended for, the rationale behind choosing a website to house the information from this project, and a basic outline of the design and content of the website. The chapter gave a detailed description of the topic sections of the website in the content portion of the overview. This was followed by an overview of the theoretical frameworks grounding the ideas behind the website and its rationale which incorporated a revisit to major themes drawn from Chapter Two and their connection to the website objective. Finally, Chapter Three offered a description of the website's audience, setting, and proposed timeline for implementation.

Chapter Four will next lay out the major learnings obtained through the processes of writing Chapters One, Two, and Three and through creating the website. In doing so, it will reflect on major learnings gleaned from the researching and writing process and on the literature, discuss the website's implications and limitations, and describe what areas of the project have appeared to be areas for further research.

CHAPTER FOUR

Reflection

Introduction

The central question guiding this capstone project has been: *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?* My goal for the capstone project was to create a website as a tool with which to attempt this. The central aim for my website, Persought, was that it could be used as a learning resource by individuals or groups in the United States (such as, but not limited to, faculty of educational institutions) that have been dispositionally and linguistically shaped by monolingualism. As mentioned above, Rost (2014) defined the state of being monolingual as those who have not yet attempted to learn an L2: something that requires motivation or, at the very least, interest. With this in mind, I wanted Persought to be accessible both to 1) monolinguals who are aware of their own listening struggles in multilingual English-using/ELF exchanges and 2) monolingual individuals and groups who are not yet aware but who find themselves working or regularly participating in ELF environments right outside their front door as the already-common presence of multilingualism increases in the United States in all kinds of public spheres and careers, most notably in education.

In Chapter One, I discussed the development of, and my interest in, the central question. I explained key terms that would be used throughout all of the chapters and provided context and a rationale for addressing the NS-listener problem that stemmed from my personal, professional, and prior academic experiences. It was here that I began

to use ‘NS-listener problem’ to refer to the presence of low speech-recognition abilities in English NS communicating with English NNSs.

In Chapter Two, I reviewed and synthesized research on listening in English in today’s multilingual world. Research revealed the NS-listener problem appearing throughout the development of GE and how native-English norms and forms from the west became the global standard for English acquisition and use. Next, GE’s ELF phenomenon and its misunderstanding-mitigating listening practices from multicultural communication were expounded upon. Finally, the cause for low speech-recognition skills that was revealed in the GE section and new learnings of the multilingual listening skills of ELF were bridged to discover how to present multilingual listening skills to monolingual English NSs.

In Chapter Three, I laid out the plan for Persought by describing how I would curate existing resources to raise awareness of English variation and then offer practical ideas for English NS-listeners to use in developing their own toolbox of ELF listening strategies. I also described how Persought could be used in educational settings to promote multilingual listening/ELF skill-acquisition for monolingual English NS educators in the United States.

In this fourth and final chapter, I describe major learnings I had that resulted from researching for and creating Persought and which of my discoveries from reviewing the literature most impacted the building of Persought. I then discuss Persought’s implications, limitations, and areas for future research. Finally, I reveal my hopes for the use of Persought, first describing the benefits it offers education and, then, how I hope it to be used beyond education as well.

Major Learnings

In this section, I will explain what I have learned regarding personal growth as a researcher, writer, and learner as well as what I have learned regarding my specific area of research, study, and work. I walked away from this project with learnings about listening and listening in a multilingual world that have had and will continue to have a deep effect on all areas of my life, personal and professional.

Personal Growth

The most challenging part of completing this capstone project was related to the correlation of time and progress. Between beginning to write Chapter One and submitting a completed Capstone Project, I unexpectedly obtained a full time teaching job after the teacher for whom I was a long-term-sub did not return to work and I temporarily lost housing. Because of the difficulty these things added to making progress at times and the extra length of time that it took me to finish this project while working full time, I came to learn to approach my work, not only as a researcher, writer, and learner, but also as a teacher and as a professional, with more self-diplomacy and resilience. I believe I began a journey in understanding what it looks like to fail well and to use failure or delayed success as a means of accepting peace where there would otherwise only be pressure. This personal growth journey is not yet complete but the work of this capstone has begun it in a way that might otherwise have been difficult to come by. I hope to continue growing in this way and in my ability to persevere with hope, and even with joy, when life brings challenges.

In the next section on key takeaways, I will explain how other personal growth took place via the topic of my capstone as it has had long-standing personal connections.

Key Takeaways

The central question that guided my research was one I had been asking myself long before I began graduate school. Having become an international traveler and educator in my early 20s, I encountered what I came to call the 'NS-listener problem' first-hand in those early years, at the beginning of my own growth in cultural and linguistic awareness. In light of this, getting to focus my research on a long-held question has been a privilege and delight. Furthermore, the length of time I had spent pondering the central question prior to and throughout the introductory courses of my MA in TESOL, provided me with a rich foundation of experiences and thought from which to expand my understanding of the heart of the NS-listener problem. Some of these new understandings became specific key takeaways.

First Key Takeaway. The first key takeaway happened when I came to understand that listening defines communication more than speaking does. The research widely confirmed this (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Brownell, 2010; De Bartolo, 2014; Dewaele & Wei, 2013; Lecumberri et al., 2010; Lindemann, 2002; Rost, 2014; Saito & Shintani, 2016; Tupas, 2021) and Brownell's quotes stating that this is because "a message means whatever the listener believes it to mean" and that "speakers are at the mercy of listeners who interpret what they hear and act on that basis" (2010, pp. 142-143) will forever stick with me. I had personally experienced the difficulty of ELF listening as a formerly monolingual NS, but it wasn't until discovering and sitting with this paper's research that I felt the weight of listening as a communicative role and responsibility. This influenced my creation of Persought in that it gave my work a tangible sense of urgency. Additionally, the counterintuitive-ness of listening having more weight than

speaking was further confirmed as I spoke about my project with friends and acquaintances and would often encounter statements of surprise or disbelief as I explained the concept of a listener's power to direct communication.

Second Key Takeaway. The second key takeaway came in the wake of the first. It was in learning that skilled ELF speech perception is foundationally a disposition before it is anything else (Brownell, 2010; Lindemann, 2002; Saito & Shintani, 2016); there is a dependent interplay between attitudes and comprehension. This came with learning that disposition can even be imparted through the way English is taught to NNSs: determined by whether it is taught through the lens of multilingualism or through the lens of a NS standard (Sattarova & Khojastehrad, 2015);

Not only did I read studies that explicitly revealed monolingual disposition hindrances, both conscious and unconscious in those who possessed them (Lindemann, 2002; Salves et al., 2020; Saito & Shintani, 2016), but I soon realized that this was why Berry and Ernestus (2018), Goldson (2020), and Rost (2014) talked so heavily about how to create listening motivation in a person, why Berry and Ernestus (2018), Lowe and Kiczkowiak (2016), Rost (2014), Sung (2017), and others emphasized multilingual exposure to the third degree and, along the same lines, why Kubota's (2001) experimental effort to teach monolingual English NSs an appreciation for the plurality of English today was so unsuccessful without experiential, first-hand learning. On the multilingual side of things, it was also why the concept of a 'no-man's-land' with its complete communicative norm-departure existed (Canagarajah, 2007) and why the astounding multilingual phenomena of phonological-form alignment had been so repeatedly documented in ELF

exchanges (Berry & Ernestus, 2018; Canagarajah, 2007; Cenoz, 2019; De Bartolo, 2014; Lindemann, 2002).

The effects of disposition on aptitude for ELF speech perception was initially discouraging as I thought about reaching communities and individuals like the ones in Lindemann's (2002) study which stunned me; not only did these participants misperceived their NNS interlocutors, but they passively believed they had actually correctly identified what they had heard and then passively went on to break down communication as a result. Passivity within monolingualism was a deep dispositional reality with subscribers I was not initially sure how to reach. I thankfully soon learned that translingual practices offered ideas for reaching through the barrier of monolingual passivity, but I believe that this takeaway left me with a more realistic perception of the uphill work it might actually take to implement Persought in the places it would most benefit. Ultimately, I am grateful to have been sobered in learning more deeply about the hidden power of ideology on listening skills because lacking this understanding would have further increased Persought's inaccessibility.

Unexpected Learnings

The mention of translingual practices leads me to what came as an unexpected learning, though it probably should not have been so unexpected. I was surprised to find that the answer to my central question was affirmative: that the TA and speech perception skills of NSs in ELF exchanges could actually be improved. Or, as Lecumberri et al. (2010) put it, a person's perceptual boundaries for understanding spoken English can indeed be altered.

Monolingual passivity's power to damper not just ELF listening skills, but interest in multilingual awareness at all, had made me somewhat unsure if what I wanted to achieve was possible. Translingualism's concept of language as a resource gave hope to this dilemma. It taught me (through Cenoz, 2019, Lecumberri et al., 2010, Tupas, 2021, and others) that, in the same way that highly competent ELF users selectively choose which of their multilingual resources can be used to benefit a specific exchange, monolingual English users could learn to be sensitive to and selectively employ various extra-linguistic communicative resources (i.e. gestures or intonation) to do the same. The synthesis of various literature pointed to this working because extra-linguistic communication resources are already possessed by monolinguals; they only need to become aware of them, access them (learning to think of them as a toolkit), and learn how to monitor for when which of them are most useful, just like multilinguals do in ELF but without yet learning a new language. I had discovered an accessible way to try raising monolingual TA.

New Connections

The surprising learning described above was also the most prominent new connection that came out of my research. It can be more succinctly described as the connection between active listening practices in general human communication and the multilingual listening techniques of ELF. It meant that, if monolinguals could acquire active listening skills in their first language, there was something that could act as a stepping stone to acquiring multilingual awareness, then ELF listening skills, and maybe even eventually learning a second language.

The synthesis of a multilingual take on translanguaging (Cenoz, 2019), the concept of what it takes to move from a monolingual identity to a multilingual identity (Rost, 2014), and a broad look at the research on active listening (Brownell, 2010; Jonsdottir & Fridriksdottir, 2020), was what revealed this new connection. Its importance as a stepping stone between active and multilingual listening was specifically in its potential to reach Persought's intended audience: English-using monolinguals who may not initially be interested in learning about other languages or cultures.

The Research Overall

Much of the literature that proved most important for my capstone has already been revisited in the key takeaways and new connections described above. A few more spotlight-worthy sources (and some re-mentions so as to summarize) that shaped Persought and influenced its goals included the following:

Lindemann (2002), Saito and Shintani (2016), Sattarova and Khojastehrad (2015), and many others, verified the NS-listener problem as an authentic issue. Björkman (2014), Cavalheiro (2015), Canagarajah (2007, 2013), Selvi (2019), and Taguchi and Ishihara (2018) displayed ELF pragmatics (skills, competencies, techniques, and more), emphasizing how ELF relies on practices over proficiency and pointing to monolingual tendencies to do the opposite with English. Cavalheiro (2015), Cenoz (2019), Murray (2012), Rost (2014), and Tupas (2021) revealed various aspects of how intercultural communities, such as ELF-using ones, view and use multilingualism as a resource for more successful communication. These joined with Berry and Ernestus (2018), De Bartolo (2014), and Dewaele and Wei (2013), to bridge multilingual resources with flexibility in listening/higher TA. Finally Brownell (2010), Jonsdottir and

Fridriksdottir (2020), Lecumberri et al. (2010), and Rost (2014) were especially helpful in better understanding the communicative role and task of listening itself, as well as what it looks like to listen in a world that is becoming more multilingual all the time.

Most of these sources cross-contributed to the areas where my central question required research, while others provided significant information to only a few parts of my synthesis. I returned frequently to the sources mentioned above, but there are others that were highly influential as well but are not listed here. Overall, only the most refined part of the central question, that of how to teach multilingual listening skills to monolingual English speaking adults, proved to be challenging to discover answers to, though they were discovered. This could be an area for further research with a focus on testing the ways Persought chose to do it, which were based on the research surrounding the issue here. I will expound more on this in the section on future research below.

Implications

There are two big-picture implications that quickly come to mind when I think about the objective of this project and what I am hoping for it to accomplish.

The primary implication of Persought, as a learning tool for monolingual English NSs who need multilingual awareness, is that it could change the experience of life in the United States for people like the Jordanian immigrant tow-truck driver I met in August of 2022, near the end of this project. He was a man around the age of 30 who had been living in Minnesota for eight years. I chose his towing company from a list on Google Maps because its location was near me. He arrived and hooked up my vehicle, then I rode with him in his tow truck for thirty minutes en route to the car shop. On the way, I learned he was from Jordan and, by way of interest, asked how many languages he spoke.

His English was strong, and in my opinion, very comprehensible in the presence of his L1 Arabic influence. Eventually, after asking him more about his experiences with English acquisition and communication in the United states, he shared something that affirmed everything I was doing to create Persought: He explained how he frequently receives phone calls for tow-requests in which, as soon as the caller hears his accent, they hang up. He also told me that each time this happens, his caller I.D. shows the same area code: one from a nearby border-area in rural Wisconsin.

If we can assume that this driver's experience of his business' rejection can be attributed to the linguistic discrimination that appears to be occuring, then the potential implications of Persought are as big as that it could have a positive and improving impact on the work experiences of immigrants like my tow truck driver. This is the implication, though, only if Persought is able to reach and impact individuals like those on the other end of his phone line.

The other side of the same coin is where Persought's other implications lie; that is, it has implications for the lives of the callers described above as well. What I mean by this is well explained by a viral TikTok video I recently came across; it provides a poignant and rare look at the heart of a common stereotype that exists about the United States in other parts of the educated world and paints a vivid picture of the conclusions inferred by the research that led to Persought. In the video, an elderly British man who, when stopped by TikTok creator Eric Jeng, was asked for his thoughts on New York City through a few specific questions. His answers referred more to the United States as a whole: First, when asked about his "tinge of an accent" and where he was from he responded, "A tinge of an accent? Well yours is a very noticeable American accent."

Next, when asked about how long he had been in the United States and what he thought of New York City he replied, "Too long … I've been [to] most parts of the world, unlike most Americans who've been nowhere … The breadth of their interest in other people and other countries is nil … The number of people in this country who have passports, except to go to Canada or to Cancun…" After this, he incredulously trails off before the interviewer asks another question.

So, Persought has implications for the United States' value-systems that demonstrate a lack of cultural awareness to other parts of the world. Persought addresses this value system through the lens of linguistic equity which calls for individuals to consciously reflect on their communicative norms, especially as listeners.

Limitations

The most noticeable limitation faced by Persought is that it does not directly offer interpersonal experiences to its users. Interpersonal and experiential learning experiences were the common factor in studies that presented the presence of (Saito & Shintani, 2016) or increase in (Salves et al., 2020) individuals' TA in Chapter Two. Likewise, this is what was missing in Kaur's (2011) study which attempted to raise the multilingual awareness of monolingual English NSs with minimal success. Therefore Persought is limited in this way since it is a virtual resource which cannot itself provide the level of experiential/first-hand learning that the research proved to be key in achieving these kinds of objectives.

In response to this need, I chose to create a website because of its flexibility. A website can be used as a resource by individuals on their own time, in one-on-one consulting or mentoring scenarios, or in large-group events such as professional

developments or employee onboardings. It can also be used as a supplemental guide to real-life experiences for individuals experiencing the NS-listener problem in their daily life and wanting to do something about it. Additionally, Persought encourages users to step outside their comfort zones by seeking out experiences like those the website describes, and offers recommendations for how to do so.

Future Research

Since I set out to focus on listening skills in multilingual English-using contexts, my project leaned heavily on this specific area of communication. The times when it was most challenging to stay narrowly focused on listening was when more and more of the research I encountered zoned in on dispositions. Brownell (2010) summed up my dilemma well in the following quote: “Some researchers have suggested that, if we can assume a threshold level of intelligence, then motivation accounts for up to 70 percent of an individual’s listening success” (p.148).

This presents the opportunity for related projects expounding upon dispositional growth and attitudes within Persought. Based on the findings in Chapter Two, efforts to create the most noticeable movement toward higher reflexivity in monolingual communities might benefit most from a model that asks for a deeper commitment from its users. Using the imagination, examples of this could include intentional travel experiences hosted by a linguistic coach or, at minimum, in-person consulting through a program that includes communication workshops with multilingual guests built into its scope and sequence. The objective of these projects would be to reach past disposition barriers into the hearts and minds of those with the NS-listener problem.

Another direction further research could take, as mentioned above in the section on the overall research, would be that of testing Persought's methods. The ways Persought has chosen to approach multilingual awareness and listening skills with monolingual English-users came from a synthesis of the research, which provided solid evidence pointing to the need for reflexivity and consciousness of one's linguistic resources. Persought took this knowledge and made it into a web tool, which was not a method seen in any of the research. Because it is a one-stop-shop of sorts, it incorporates the research in ways that theoretically should work but has not, to my knowledge, been tested. One option for doing this would be to perform this research on a test group and assess its results in the way that I might have done had I chosen to write a full thesis for this part of the MA TESOL program. I believe that doing this would also involve a deeper look at androgyny in an effort to better understand how to make Persought successful with adults in stages of life that present higher levels of being set in one's ways, so to speak.

Communicating Results

Communicating my results requires a specific audience. The fact that I have a wide variety of audience-types in mind, in which to offer Persought as a resource, means that there are a variety of types of website launches I could do in the future. For this project, I have chosen educators as my specific audience and as an initial starting point for the emergence of Persought.

I will begin by sharing Persought on my personal social media and by creating an Instagram account specifically for Persought so as to widen its audience. Aside from these, my biggest goal for Persought's launch in education is to shape it into a

professional development presentation and to also create a template to include on the website for other groups to do the same. I believe I have the information I need to create a professional development already without much further research and see it as something I could take around to various educational organizations' events such as those offered by TESOL International and the Minnesota English Language Education (MELEd) conference. Additionally, I am currently a member with MinneTESOL and plan to reach out to this organization to gauge interest in Persought and request some form of space on their platforms.

Benefits to Profession

Persought is a curated collection of resources that was made for encountering the concept of linguistic variation within English and for learning what perceptive, linguistically-aware listening looks like in a multilingual, English-medium world. Existing within the format of a website allows this tool to lend itself to an extensive range of templates for teacher education. An example of this includes various types of professional developments, either synchronous or asynchronous, since the website comes with learning exercises already laid out.

As mentioned, classrooms all over the United States are already multilingual and multicultural places that are only becoming more so as our student bodies grow and change in the multicultural direction. Therefore any educational institution which employs monolingual educators is ripe for the kind of communicative growth Persought sets out to catalyze. I believe that it can turn tides in schools that struggle with things like teacher buy-in to programs like School-Wide English Learning (SWEL), for example, a program from Minnesota that helps whole-schools learn to better attune to the linguistic

needs of their students; this is because part of Persought's aim is not just to raise awareness of linguistic diversity for the sake of better listening skills, but also to teach individuals that language is an invaluable resource if only we pay attention to it and give it our conscious thought.

Summary and Closing

Chapter Four has provided a post-research reflection on the work I have done to create the website Persought for my capstone project. It has revealed my growth as a learner, key takeaways overall, unexpected learnings and why they were unexpected, and what resources were most helpful to me. It has also discussed what I believe to be the major implications of Persought as well as its limitations, space for future research, how its current results will be communicated, and the benefits it offers to the field of education.

The objective of this project was to answer the guiding question: *Can the strategic multilingual listening techniques intuitive to ELF be explicitly taught to monolingual English NSs to raise their speech recognition skills in exchanges with NNSs of English?* I feel satisfied with having done so to the best of my ability within the time frame that was provided for this project to be completed in. I am excited about the further work that can be done with Persought, which was laid out in the section on future research above. There were times when I was unsure of whether the answer to my question would be affirmative; when I was unsure of whether monolingual NSs of English could become better listeners in ELF contexts, in spite of persistent passivity. Coming to the conclusion that there is a way to do this if the listener is willing came from looking at a wider variety of research than I had initially set out to do. I am thankful for

the learning that resulted from this, regarding my central question, but I am also grateful for the ways it taught me to persist. My hope is that Persought will have an impact like that which I have described above for the field of education, but that it will also eventually make its way into the hands of other fields as well such as international business, places staffed with multilingual food service staff, and United States families in rural places taking study abroad students into their homes, to name a few of the many that have come to my mind over the last few months. It is a tool for better listening, but it is also a tool for human minds and hearts: that we may learn how inseparable a rich and full existence is from appreciating multilingual beauty.

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