International Secondary Students in BC Public School: Navigating Neoliberal Discourses and Living in the In-Between

by

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Abstract

The rise of international education and the institutional push for it in Canada necessitates further investigation in the K-12 public sector, for which there is limited research. This dissertation is based on a one-year qualitative ethnographic study in a secondary school located within Metro Vancouver, British Columbia (BC). It explores the experiences of eight international students at the high school level as they navigated internationalization and globalization discourses and led in-between lives while trying to achieve their educational goals.

Drawing upon a range of literature, this dissertation is an examination of international education as it intersects with neoliberal ideology and the phenomenon of globalizing English. The thesis applies internationalization and international education frameworks in exploring the narratives and experiences of these secondary international students. Data includes interviews with students, teachers and administrators, and fieldnotes from participant observations and impromptu conversations that occurred during school visits and interactions with participants. Additionally, data incorporates references to policy and program documents that reflect official discourses around international education in the K-12 system. The dissertation identifies and contextualizes the market paradigm underscoring international secondary education, even as participants and educational programs aspire to more idealistic notions of it. The constraints of a neoliberal system are shown as leading to an ad hoc quality in international programming design and practices. Analysis also focuses on students' imaginaries and the pressures faced as they buy into competitive and instrumentalizing discourses regarding competency accumulation. In addition, poststructural and postcolonial theorizations surrounding hybridity and discursivity highlight instances of in-betweenness and opportunities wherein international students might negotiate dominant discourses along their international journeys.

The thesis also reflects upon possibilities for reimagining international education through consideration of such factors as students' liminality and their positions as younger participants in study-abroad programs. By identifying how students can be affected by an economized education system, as well as how they take up and/or dialectically engage with dominant discourses, this dissertation contributes to knowledge and programming for internationalization at the secondary level.

Keywords: Secondary international education; Internationalization; Globalization; English language learning; Identity and in-betweenness

Dedication

To the teachers and administrators working with the students and within the intricacies of international education, who were so willing to share their knowledge and insight… Thank you for welcoming me and providing me with the opportunity to immerse myself in the community.

To all the students in this study who have generously shared their time and stories with me… Thank you. I wish you all the best. May you reach your goals and may your dreams come true.

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My heart fills with love and gratitude when I think of my family. What would I do without you, The Lam Family? I wish my grandma could have been here as she has been for each major event in my life – to share food, to steal and wear my graduation cap, and to smile that smile of hers. But I know, my Popo, that you are with me in spirit. And I still can feel your smile. My grandpa has encouraged me in his own way, calling to see if

“it’s done yet.” It’s finally done, Gong-Gong, and I can’t wait to celebrate with you and the whole family. Thank you to my parents, Randy James and Nicole Lam James. Their support is the foundation for everything I’ve ever accomplished. My mom’s quiet but fierce dedication is my rock. The only thanks I can offer is through a hope that I make you proud. And to my husband and partner through this journey of life: thank you. Here’s to you and “The Jubays.”

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List of Acronyms

ACDE	Association of Canadian Deans of Education
BC	British Columbia
BCCIE	British Columbia Council for International Education
BCIES	British Columbia's International Education Strategy
CBC	Canadian Broadcasting Corporation
CBIE	Canadian Bureau for International Education
EAL	English as an Additional Language
ELL	English Language Learning
ESL	English as a Second Language
IELTS	International English Language Testing System
PMD	Pacific Meadows District
TOEFL	Test of English as a Foreign Language
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
WSS	Western Shores Secondary

Introduction

I completed my teacher training program (a Bachelor of Education in secondary teaching) in 2010 when the world of public schooling for teachers was particularly unsteady with a flurry of budget cuts and teacher lay-off notices. Options for teacher candidates included leaving Metro Vancouver for more remote areas of BC, going overseas to teach, or changing teaching foci in order to incorporate subjects that were more in demand by schools that were hiring, and were therefore more marketable. It was pointed out to me several times that my primary degree of a Bachelor of Arts in English Language (with a focus on grammar and the structure of the language) could propel me toward teaching English as an Additional Language (EAL)[1]. Friends who had graduated years before and were already teaching advised me that it was much more realistic and even potentially lucrative to switch my teaching focus. I was sent examples and advertisements of English teaching jobs both in Metro Vancouver and overseas. Instead of applying to the public sector, I set out to become TESOL-certified (certification in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages).

Thus, my experience as an educator prior to beginning graduate school had been mostly with international students in private language institutions and in small independent schools where international students can obtain a BC high school graduation certificate. I was also a private tutor of international students who attended public high schools in Metro Vancouver. Most of my students have therefore been international high school seniors with the goals of completing a secondary education in BC and attending a North American university. I often helped them to navigate various institutional systems and the standardized procedures of different English benchmarks. My graduate studies that incorporated work with English Language Learning (ELL) or EAL students at both the secondary and postsecondary levels through various teaching

[1] I address different forms of English language programming throughout this dissertation according to the relevant context. "EAL" pertains to broader English learning contexts, including English programs of private language institutions. I refer to English language programming and classes as "English as a Second Language" or "ESL" when citing a reference that utilizes this terminology. However, I revert back to "English Language Learning" or ELL" when describing BC's K-12 system, or the students and circumstances from my own dissertation project, because this is the official terminology used in BC's public schools.

and research projects provided me with ample opportunity to continue interacting with international students.

From the beginning, even when I was a teacher candidate, words such as "marketable" and "lucrative" were often circulating when international education was mentioned. Between the marketization of international education as can be seen in the description of the BC education context below, and through educators' quests to become more marketable within the system, I began to think of all the students who are on the other end of the marketing and their experiences journeying through international education and wanted to find out more about them.

This study examines the experiences of eight international students at the secondary level who have come to British Columba (BC) and are studying in the BC K-12 public schooling system. Study participants are international students attending Western Shores Secondary (WSS) in Pacific Meadows District (PMD), a public school district located in Metro Vancouver[2]. The study will explore some of the ways these international students navigate dominant discourses surrounding international education and their own identities in trying to achieve their educational and/or future career goals. This first chapter briefly introduces the context of international education in BC and considers some of the motivations behind my interest in researching secondary students' journeys within international education. It will also include the research questions that originally guided this study and a description of the chapters that make up this dissertation.

1.1. The Context: Attracting International Students from All over the World

The international education sector in Canada is growing, with holders of international study permits increasing from 330,170 in 2015 to 572,000 in 2018 (Canadian Bureau for International Education [CBIE], 2019). International education in Canada has become a "core public policy focus" (Trilokekar, Jones & Tamtik, 2020, p. 7) both federally and provincially. As homes to the larger cosmopolitan Canadian cities, the provinces of Ontario, Quebec and BC host approximately 84% of international

[2] The school and district have been given pseudonyms.

students in Canada (Canadian Bureau for International Education [CBIE], 2018). In BC specifically, a strategic plan[3] for expanding international education (British Columbia's International Education Strategy [BCIES], 2012) summarizes plans for growing the sector by 47, 000 additional international students over a period of four years; 6000 of these international students would be students in the K-12 system. Indeed, a BC *Global News* article (Loriggio, 2017), collating commentary from education professionals and statistics from across the country, reports a "spike" in the enrollment of international high school students in recent years, despite international secondary students traditionally being a relatively smaller fraction of international students in Canada.

According to the Government of BC, international education increases intercultural exchanges and promotes diversity (Government of British Columbia [BC], n.d., "International Education"). Correspondingly, the British Columbia Council for International Education (BCCIE) 2017/2018-2019/2020 Service plan (2017) asserts that the promotion of international education is a "two-way global flow of students and ideas" (p. 7). However, a Canadian 2019-2024 international strategic plan (Government of Canada, 2020) determines that very few Canadians venture abroad to work or study. The same strategic plan cites a joint publication by the Centre of International Policy Studies and the Munk School of Global Affairs (2017), which establishes that only 11% of Canadian undergraduates journey abroad, in comparison to, for instance, the 33% of students from France who go abroad. Thus, the reality of international study is not representative of that purported two-way flow. Meanwhile, international education brings many economic benefits to Canada. That same Canadian 2019-2024 international strategic plan, for example, presents international education as not only creating connections that feed international trade globally, but as a main contribution to Canada's overall economy. In 2018, international students in Canada spent approximately $21.6 billion on tuition and various other expenditures, and in 2016, helped to maintain 170, 000 Canadian jobs (Government of Canada, 2020). The strategy additionally acknowledges the global competition involved in recruiting international students with the realization that international students are an "importance source of revenue" (p. 3).

Zoning in on the BC context more specifically, a report by Kunin and Associates (2019) determines the economic impact of the international education sector on the

[3] This is the most current internationalization strategy for BC.

province of BC for the fiscal 2017 year, with additional economic comparisons between 2015 and 2017. According to the report, the total annual spending of international students in the K-12 sector reached $542 million in 2017. International student spending as a whole is deemed "substantial to our provincial economy" (p. 14), with its contribution to the creation of many jobs as well as government revenue in the form of taxes alone. With the push for internationalization in BC education, and the competitive motive of attracting students from around the world, it is important to expand upon existing studies of international students. This is especially true in reference to the K-12 population where there is a paucity in research (Cover, 2016; Deschambault, 2015; 2018; Elnagar & Young, 2021; Evans, 2011; Matthews, 2002; Popadiuk, 2009; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011; Tamtik, 2018; 2019).

It is important to additionally note that my study took place before the Covid-19 Pandemic. I had conducted my last research interview in the summer of 2019 and BC's province-wide lockdown began the following March of 2020. This global pandemic has undoubtedly altered the landscape of international education. But if anything, some of the dynamics outlined above have merely been accentuated by the pandemic, especially in terms of international education being a critical source of revenue. For instance, a news article by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) reports on depleted funding from international programs negatively impacting Metro Vancouver schools (Ballard, 2021). Since gaps in government funding have increasingly over the years been filled with international tuition, districts have been scrambling to address new budgetary concerns caused by the pandemic's travel restrictions. While this study explores pre-Covid times, many of its threads are still pertinent and should continue to be explored as we try to move forward in reimagining international education following the pandemic.

1.2. My Interest in International Education

In addition to my reflections at the outset of this chapter, one specific moment was particularly meaningful in drawing my attention to the experiences and positioning of international students. I was helping out in an ELL classroom in Metro Vancouver. It was at the beginning of the school day and the classroom teacher had been issuing the morning bulletin and relaying information based on what was pertinent to the students. Many of the students in that classroom were international. In order to gauge relevance

to the students, the teacher asked them if anyone would be buying yearbooks before providing details on how to purchase the books. Nobody put up their hands. As it was nearing the end of the school year, the teacher then informed students of the date for cleaning out their lockers. A discussion ensued concerning lockers, with a group of international students who sat together stating that they had never used their lockers; some did not even know where their lockers were.

This moment had me considering these international students' sense of belonging, their ties (if any) to the school culture, and their identities as students fluctuating in-between spaces – both physical and otherwise – that seem neither here nor there. I wondered about this system of attracting international students to feed into BC's public system and further questions started to form: Who are these students? What are they hoping to accomplish? What have they been told they can accomplish through seeking an overseas education? How do they sift through such information and layered processes and what kinds of knowledge are thereby being legitimized? In looking beyond economic benefits, the BCIES (2012) also states the province's goal of ensuring "safe, fulfilling and positive life experiences" (p. 19) for these students. How exactly are we ensuring students' "positive life experiences" and what are the implications of students all around the globe taking their educational experiences internationally to English-medium institutions of the Global North[4]? As much as the paucity in research warrants further investigation into K-12 international education in BC, so too does the murkiness enshrouding the processes individual students undergo necessitate further exploration.

[4] Similar to my usage of language learning terminology and abbreviations as indicated above, I use varied terms in reference to "imagined divisions" (McGregor & Hill, 2009, p. 473) of the globe. Some of the terms used throughout this thesis include: The West/Other or non-West (Stein & Andreotti, 2016); Global North/South; Centre/Periphery; and subaltern. I mostly utilize "Global North/South," to suit contemporary attempts at more nonlinear geopolitical conceptualizations (McGregor & Hill, 2009) but I also adhere to the terminology used by the respective authors/scholars I am citing or referencing. Even though I use the terms at times interchangeably, I understand that there are nuanced meanings underpinning each individual term. Additionally, like Stein & Andreotti (2016), I am aware of the potential homogenization and reification involved when using any dichotomous terminology but still utilize these specific terms "in order to indicate and emphasize enduring social, political, economic and onto-epistemological divides" (p. 226).

1.3. Research Questions

In order to begin forming my project, I outlined the focus of my inquiry and developed a set of preliminary research questions. These questions guiding my study were based on the ruminations I discussed above and are as follows:

1) What are the prevailing discourses surrounding public international secondary education and how is international education enacted in this environment?
2) What are students' educational plans and goals and how have prevailing discourses influenced or not these plans and goals?
3) How do international secondary students navigate their identities and experiences vis à vis prevailing discourses?

While this study did develop and evolve in scope as well as in terms of specificity in themes and theories, these questions remained pertinent and helpful throughout.

A key aspect of this study is the investigation of the internationalization process as it unfolds in the public K-12 setting. Using a political economy lens, I have selected theories on how neoliberalism interacts with entities outside of the immediate business domain to better understand language and power and their connections to internationalization in secondary education. Processes in education are examined as reflecting neoliberal ideology dictating privatization and the necessity for public schools to become businesses generating income (Block, 2018a; Holborow, 2012a; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Meanwhile, the English language and intercultural understanding are analyzed as competences individuals need to acquire to become participants in a world economy (Block, 2018a; Flores, 2013a; Gray, 2010a; 2010b; Holborow, 2012a; Tarc, 2013). Implications of these developments for international students are analyzed through the idea of social imaginaries (Taylor, 2002; Andreotti, Pashby & Nicolson, 2016; Stein & Andreotti) and theories of idealized English (Bhatt, 2002; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Park & Wee, 2012). These phenomena are also highlighted by frameworks explicating competing and/or entangled educational agendas (Tarc, 2009; 2011; 2013; 2019) and discursive orientations (Andreotti et al., 2016; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). Another set of theories pertaining to hybridity, particularly conceptualizations of liminality (Bhabha, 1994a), informs exploration of international students' negotiation of discourses and being in-between languages, cultures and identities (Canagarajah, 2004; Pieterse, 2012).

This dissertation is a qualitative ethnographic study, with an emergent and exploratory approach to data collection (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Data includes interviews with students, teachers, and administrators, and fieldnotes from participant observations and impromptu conversations with participants. I also include analyses of policy and program documents reflecting official discourses around international education. I adopt a bricolage research perspective that pulls from different data analysis methods in order to address emergent research processes and this wide-ranging data set (McLeod, 2011). In particular, I apply a Foucauldian discourse analysis lens rooted in Foucault's theories of power and knowledge (Cheek, 2008; Gordon, 1980). Data analysis thus involves examining "the rules which 'govern' bodies of texts and utterances" (Fairclough, 2003, p. 123).

The significance of this study lies firstly in the aforementioned paucity in research of international education in the K-12 public sector. This research therefore adds to the important, yet few studies on K-12 internationalization. There are studies of international education within the K-12 sector that significantly inform this dissertation and I will situate this dissertation amongst these relevant studies within Chapter 2 through reviewing of the literature. However, this study is an additional contribution to empirical knowledge through its attempt to bring international secondary students' experiences to the forefront. Awareness of how students experience international education is important in determining salient issues that can arise from internationalizing. Additionally, and more specifically, this study considers not just the K-12 sector, but the public K-12 sector in BC, Canada. Thus, this study pinpoints inequities and issues that can stem from the privatization of public schooling; examples of such inequities and issues will be highlighted throughout the thesis and tied to the relevant literature and theories mentioned above.

1.4. Overview of Chapters

In the next chapter, I review literature relevant to the exploration of international education in secondary schools. Following this literature review, Chapter 3 explores theories surrounding neoliberalism and the global rise of English, as well as postcolonial theorizations of hybridity that were used to frame this study. Chapter 4 presents the methods I used to conduct this study along with some methodological considerations as I situate both the context of the study and myself as a researcher within the study.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 are dedicated to presentation and analyses of data. The first data analyses chapter – Chapter 5 – corresponds to the first research question in that it provides contextual information, examining prevalent discourses and the "material conditions" (Tarc, 2019, p. 738) that can shape how international education is enacted. Chapter 6 corresponds to the second question in its exploration of students' goals against a larger backdrop of globalization and neoliberal international education discourses. A final data analyses chapter – corresponding to the final research question – presents instances, through the lens of postcolonial theorizing on hybridity, in which students negotiate dominant discourses in their journeys as secondary students in an international setting.

The last chapter of this dissertation revisits the original research questions and summarizes the findings. Taking into consideration the complexities surrounding international education and the nuanced experiences of the high school international students who participated in my study, I present implications and recommendations in the final chapter based on the findings that emerged through this study.

1.5. A Note on Intent

Before I move forward with this dissertation, I would like to preface any discussion or analyses I make of international education at WSS and PMD. Working with all the participants in PMD was enlightening and I was very privileged to have this experience. While the students provided the narratives that would be the foundation of this thesis, both teachers and administrators alike demonstrated enthusiasm about and care for their work and students, and provided invaluable insight and knowledge from their years of experience as educators. Any analyses, as derived through reading of the data and made throughout the thesis, are observations of an educational system as a whole – including the effects of and responses to this educational system that exists in an increasingly neoliberal world – and not commentary on any particular educator nor on the state of WSS or PMD. Fundamentally, the moments captured in this thesis are reflective of the contemporary and circulating discourses of international education, globalization and English, and the reactions and uptake of such discourses by individuals and programs within secondary education in BC; this is made evident by my linking of excerpts and data sets to the wider literature and relevant theoretical frameworks.

Additionally, through my work with K-12 international education, I am acknowledging my own professional connections to and participation within this same system upon which I am commenting (Flores & García, 2017). Instead of passing judgement or proposing a new system altogether, my intent is to explore the prevailing discourses and potential issues involved with internationalizing processes. Perhaps, as Stein, Andreotti and Suša (2019) attempt to do in their work on pluralizing frameworks for global ethics in internationalization, I can also "open up other possibilities" (p. 26) by shedding more light on international education in a secondary context to illuminate the specific complexities of this sector.

Chapter 2.

Examination of Relevant Literature and Contexts

The following chapter explores literature relevant to this study. I begin by illustrating the current state of research on K-12 international education, which will shape the presentation of literature in this chapter. I point to contextual research examining phenomena surrounding international education and demonstrate how global developments can influence internationalizing processes as well as the terminology used to refer to these processes. Research from the K-12 international education sector will then be interspersed with a set of wide-ranging pertinent literature organized under the following sections: Policies, Programs, and their Intersection with Global Processes; Understanding and Tracing Internationalization; Interculturalization; English and English Language Learning; Diversity and Integration; and Welcoming and Belonging in order to set the context for this dissertation. As is common in the field of applied linguistics, as I review studies illuminating the K-12 context that contribute to my own understanding and knowledge of different facets of the K-12 sector, I will be noting the differences in scope and foci between existing research and my study as I go along, highlighting what gaps this dissertation can potentially address within a sector wherein there is a general dearth in research.

2.1. K-12 International Education and Pertinent Research

Chapter 1 drew attention to the push for international education in Canada as well as the monetary benefits the international education sector can bring to both Canada and BC. However, the lack of research being conducted within the K-12 international population – despite these factors – was also highlighted. In this section, I present existing studies specifically on international education in K-12 while positioning my own study within this research. Some of these studies will also be referred to in other relevant sections of this chapter as I continue setting the context for this study across various facets of K-12 education.

Examples of available research include scholars examining how market elements can override more holistic internationalization strategies within K-12 contexts. In

Australia, Leve (2011) inspects official programming discourse concerning international education and how it can obscure processes commodifying education. Cover (2016; 2020) pinpoints the discrepancies in BC between the business aspects of international education and more culturally and socially beneficial aims, while Elnagar and Young (2021) argue that traditional notions centring learning and global citizenship within international education have been completely undermined by revenue- and market-driven practices in Manitoba. Meanwhile, researchers of educational policy in BC delve into the government-imposed neoliberal climate with processes of privatization and competition creating the need for public schools to participate in entrepreneurial activities such as international education (Fallon & Paquette, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Poole & Fallon, 2015; Rozworksi & Kuehn, 2019; Kuehn & Vaitekonytė, 2019). Waters (2006) integrates theories of geography and globalization into similar assessments of the BC international education situation.

These studies differ from my study as they are derived from analyses of larger overarching structures such as global processes, public and media discourses, and governmental and/or school-based policy and programming. There are qualitative studies featuring interviews with participants (see for example Cover, 2020; Tamtik, 2018; Waters, 2006), but interviews are conducted with administrative figures involved in international education in varying degrees of leadership, rather than with students. For instance, there are investigations into policy and its interconnections with relevant stakeholders in K-12 international education within the contexts of Ontario (Trilokekar & Tamtik, 2020) and Manitoba (Tamtik, 2018; Tamtik & O'Brien-Klewchuk, 2020; Trilokekar & Tamtik, 2020). Through document analysis and interviews with education government officials and school administrators, such studies examine complex processes and negotiations involved with policy and the stakeholders involved, revealing how there can be contradictions in educational objectives for international education. Arbor, (2009), on the other hand, problematizes othering notions of culture, identity, and difference within study abroad programs, in addition to the marketing of international education in Australian public secondary schools. In this work, inferences are again acquired through interviews with administrators and teachers. My dissertation also visits discourse, policy, and input provided by administrative figures and teachers; however, my dissertation additionally includes student narratives. The above research therefore informs this study by providing a macro-overview of the context, wherein this dissertation

can then address more micro developments through examination of students' stories about their participation in international education programming and the impact of wider discourses on their experiences.

There are studies that do examine students' study abroad narratives derived from single interviews. In one project, for instance, Tamtik (2019) explores reasons why K-12 students participate in international education programs through interviews with international students and their parents. Additionally, Tamtik and O'Brien-Klewchuk (2020) incorporate interviews with students and parents in their investigation of stakeholder interests and how these can shape international education programming. Participants were interviewed at the end of their journeys, just prior to their returning home. Another example is the work of Popadiuk (2009; 2010) and Marshall (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011) who holistically analyze nuanced processes of integration for international students. This research is also derived from single interviews with student participants and has implications specifically for counsellors working with adolescent international students. My study adds to these existing investigations of student experiences through my additionally incorporating field work and several interview sessions with each student. More specifically, I remained with the students and their school community for one school year, and interviews with students were reflective of their unfolding stories throughout the course of that year.

Similarly, Shin (2010; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015) employs field work in her ethnographic examination of English acquisition and students studying transnationally and living in Canada. But while Shin's study involves international students and their stories, not all the students are fee-paying international students. Wu and Tarc (2021a; 2021b) also provide an example of an ethnographic study examining students living and studying transnationally in Canada while striving to acquire cosmopolitan forms of capital. More pointedly, the international students of their study attend a private secondary school. Thus, while both sets of studies feature international students and can shine light on international education experiences, neither focuses specifically on public K-12 international education experiences as my study seeks to do.

Of the existing research on K-12 international education, the works of Deschambault (2015; 2018) and Schecter and Bell (2021) are the most similar to this dissertation with their field work centring around international education and links to

language learning. Schecter's and Bell's government-funded action research project in Ontario is a collaborative effort between both university- and school-based researchers mediating the language needs and social integration of international students in an Ontario high school. However, while language and socialization issues international students might face are foregrounded, there is no explicit focus on discourses and issues from a political economy perspective. In this regard, Deschambault's work especially parallels this dissertation with its focus on public K-12 international secondary student experiences in BC amidst the marketization of education and English. That being said, my dissertation differs from Deschambault's research in that it employs existing internationalization and international education frameworks in order to analyze the narratives and experiences of international secondary students. Similar to my dissertation, Deschambault establishes his research amongst relevant studies from differing but related fields (for example, research of ESL youth and research of educational migration), but does not pull from existing frameworks specific to internationalization and international education in his analysis of secondary international students and their experiences. Because most of the research regarding the internationalizing of educational institutions is centred on higher education (Cover, 2016; Elnagar & Young, 2021; Evans, 2011; Matthews, 2002; Popadiuk, 2009; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011; Tamtik, 2018; 2019; Tamtik & O'Brien-Klewchuk, 2020), my dissertation visits literature and theories derived from studies of higher education to fill the gaps in research and literature on K-12; some of the internationalization frameworks used to inform this dissertation are therefore theorizations on internationalization in high education. Hence, my use of frameworks from higher education also distinguishes my examination of public K-12 student experiences in BC from Deschambault's.

As a whole, though differing from this dissertation in varying degrees of implementation, foci and scope, the studies discussed above inform my analysis to a significant extent. However, with there being limited K-12 research, I additionally turn to literature from other domains that I argue are useful to my study. Below, I merge K-12 international education research with research from other fields of study under the categories mentioned at the outset of this chapter. Subsection 2.1.1 will furthermore demonstrate how global phenomena can influence – not only internationalizing processes – but also the terminology used to refer to these processes, and therefore the terminology I employ throughout this dissertation.

2.1.1. Policies, Programs and their Intersection with Global Processes: An Entrepreneurial Spirit

International processes in education are often situated vis à vis the process of globalization (see for example, Beck, 2012; Beck, 2013; Beck, Ilieva, Scholefield & Waterstone, 2007; Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; de Wit, 2011; de Wit, Gacel-Ávila, Jones & Jooste, 2017; Egron-Polak & Marmolejo, 2017; Elnagar & Young, 2021; Fallon & Paquette, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Ilieva, Beck & Waterstone, 2014; Knight, 2004a; 2012a; 2013; Poole & Fallon, 2015; Scott, 2017; Waters, 2006), thereby weaving globalization into its definitions and explanations. Although they are not the same, both processes can be seen as influencing one another, with globalization's commercialization and competition agenda pushing education across borders, and cross-border education policies and subsequent trade agreements bolstering globalization (Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; Knight, 2013). It is arguably important to be aware of global interconnectivity and the political and economic interests underpinning everyday societal and institutional actions. For instance, BC's educational institutions can be seen as expanding beyond their local communities to engage with more transnational spaces as the BC government is entangled in these above-mentioned dynamics of globalization (Fallon & Pacquette, 2009; Waters, 2006). I will therefore be referring to scholars examining K-12 policy throughout the dissertation in contextualizing this study against a broader backdrop of globalization and governmental intervention on education programming.

Of the studies on polices, the work of Fallon, Paquette, and Poole (Fallon & Paquette, 2008; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Poole & Fallon, 2015) – and their highlighting of the 2002 *Bill 34, School Amendment Act* as introduced by the BC Liberal government – is especially salient for understanding the contexts of this study. Though they can be traced as far back as the 1980s, market-based inclinations are substantiated in BC's educational policy with *Bill 34*. According to these policy researchers, *Bill 34* aimed for an entrepreneurial and competitive education system that pushed school districts toward efficiency measures such as accountability benchmarks; notably, the bill accentuated private funding sources within a public system. Such conditions led to individual school districts seeking novel prospects for funding, which included moving into international education ventures. Along these entrepreneurial lines, a form of privatization of public education is occurring (Cover, 2016; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Tamtik, 2018; Trilokekar &

Tamtik, 2020), even if not necessarily in the traditional sense (Cover, 2016). "[M]arketing their knowledge products within established and emerging national and international markets" (Fallon & Paquette, 2009, p. 146) becomes a "'survival' strategy" (Waters, 2006, p. 1060) for BC's public school districts.

Some might therefore view international processes in education as a component of a globalized neoliberal free market situation (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Fallon & Paquette, 2009). Research of government policies thus provides a window into how global dynamics and governmental processes cross and work together in shaping educational incentives. As mentioned in the previous section, research on policies can also bring to light discrepancies in aims and perspectives behind internationalizing initiatives and of different stakeholders and government levels. Tamtik's (2020) exploration of policy enactment in Manitoba K-12 international education points to the distinction between the school level – where administrators must focus on establishing students' quality educational experiences – versus government officials' preoccupation with international education as an industry. Meanwhile, in their analysis of policies in Ontario and Manitoba, Trilokekar and Tamtik (2020) demonstrate how a neoliberal ideology and the need to generate revenue can overtake internationalizing initiatives altogether.

The notion of neoliberalism is introduced above and will be interwoven throughout my dissertation. I will be examining neoliberalism more thoroughly in the theoretical framework chapter, which incorporates a political economic lens. In the meantime, I will address how these above developments pertain to the terminology I will be using throughout this dissertation.

A (Consequential) Note on Terminology

My use of certain terminology is reflective of contemporary contexts surrounding this study, including the globalizing and marketization processes discussed above. In the introduction to section 2.1, I explained my application of literature from studies in higher education to the K-12 international education context. This dissertation continues to blur the lines between the two spheres of research through use of terminology. Specifically, I will be referring to both the concepts of "internationalization" and "international education" – at times interchangeably – even while acknowledging the

concept of “internationalization” as being more applicable to literature on higher education.

I refer to both terms in acknowledgement of specific but also shifting implications underlying each term. To start, it should be noted that a key project leading to the expanding and contemporary practical implementation of international education was the International Baccalaureate (IB) program originally developed in Switzerland – and now available globally – to instill intercultural understanding and appreciation for different languages and perspectives (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Tarc, 2009). Thus, while the term “international education” is oftentimes used ambiguously (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Elnagar & Young, 2021), it more pointedly connotes a dimension of progressivist education that is oriented toward global mindedness, as motivated by a liberal-humanist desire for international understanding of globally interconnected issues and relationships that transcend the nation-state (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004; Gutek, 2006; Tarc, 2019). By contrast, internationalization pertains more so to postsecondary education (Elnagar & Young, 2021) and the intensifying “*process* of educational activities, products and/or actors that extend their reach, or are mobile, across political borders” (Tarc, 2019, p. 733, emphasis in the original). The internationalization of education can even initiate further non-educational activities and actions, and therefore deviates from the more normative implications associated with international education (Tarc, 2019).

Elnagar and Young (2021) recognize the distinction between the two terms but argue that “internationalization” has “supplanted” (p. 81) “international education” in more recent years due to underlying incentives of international education being increasingly market-driven. Tamtik (2018) fluidly moves between the terms, pulling from internationalization literature in order to address the commodification of educational practices in international education. The operation of the terms by these researchers is arguably valid and applicable to my own research context, in light of the increasingly instrumental qualities marking educational contexts in BC. These instrumental qualities were introduced above through the analysis of BC’s engagement with transnational spaces and push for entrepreneurial strategies, but will become more apparent as we continue to examine international programs and processes of globalization.

While considering Knight's (2004a) definition of "internationalization," Cover (2016) argues that internationalization can be equally ambiguous depending on context and the actors involved. Meanwhile, he posits that fitting international educational into a "discourse of internationalization" (p. 173), is useful because of the merging international intents and activities associated with both terms, even if they are not completely congruent with one another. With policies aimed at higher education impacting secondary education due to it being viewed as a pathway to postsecondary (Elnagar & Young, 2021), "the logic of internationalization in higher education is [thereby] inextricably linked to what is happening in schools" (Rizvi, 2017, p. 22). This arguably leads to several of the international education scholars discussed in this section, in addition to others, employing perspectives from postsecondary internationalization as points of reference (see also for example, Leve, 2011; Matthews, 2002; Tudball, 2005).

Instead of being prescriptive with definitions, Tarc (2019) also purposely engages both terms with one another, arguing for an approach that traces the relevant and interwoven histories of both concepts in order to unearth the similar visions and issues that have manifested from both processes. I acknowledge the technical and philosophical differences and coalescence as illustrated by the above scholars, and additionally follow in Tarc's (2019) lead by switching in-between both terms to find "conceptual anchors" (p. 735) that might inform my study. Finally, in using both terms, I recognize Pacific Meadows District's usage of internationalization theories taken from higher education, and their collapsing of the two different notions, to inform their own internationalizing processes.

2.1.2. Understanding and Tracing Internationalization

In acknowledging its complexities, some scholars have proposed different ways of tracing the processes and directions of internationalization. This dissertation entailed the sorting of various and wide-ranging internationalization developments and processes, including both district and government philosophies for international education, along with students' reasonings for embarking on study abroad journeys. The prospect of tracing internationalization is therefore compelling if we take into consideration the complex trajectories of internationalization.

To begin with, Knight and de Wit (Knight & de Wit, 1995; Knight,1999; 2004a; 2004b) organize and analyze rationales for the internationalization of education. Rationales can be seen as an approach to internationalization (Knight, 2004a), wherein internationalization is described and incentivized based on a set of justifications for internationalizing (Knight, 2004a; de Wit, 1995). Knight and de Wit (1995) traditionally recognize rationales in four groups: social/cultural, political, academic, and economic, but clarify that the rationales themselves can overlap and are complex, sometimes even contradicting one another.

While in her later work Knight (2004a; 2004b) has suggested that over time, the categories have become even more blurred, she concedes that they are still relevant and useful. Analyzing rationales helps to map the intended outcomes of internationalization efforts and without identifying rationales, internationalization can seem "fragmented" (Knight, 2004b, p. 3) due to sheer volume and varied internationalization activities. Additionally, analysis can reveal the "unintended consequences" (Knight, 2009) that can manifest from the motivations underlying rationales. For example, the push for economic growth can be representative of a more competitive and neoliberal model of internationalization and education, which can be problematic (Ilieva et al., 2014; Knight, 2012b; Robertson, 2011; Waters, 2006). Rationales concerning intercultural or social development, or the overall quality of education can become compromised if emphasis is continuously placed on commodification or the buying and selling of education, and as educational institutions become corporate and conduct themselves in more profit-driven terms (Beck et al., 2007; Ilieva et al., 2014; Knight 2012b). The discourse can become reduced to schools churning out a set of marketable skills and competencies (Beck et al., 2007) and the students themselves as merely fee-paying consumers who generate income for educational institutions (Marginson, 2011; Marginson, Nyland, Sawir & Forbes-Mewett, 2010; Marginson & Sawir, 2012; Robertson, 2011).

The above brief summary of rationales for internationalization reiterate Knight and de Wit's (1995) assertion that rationales are complex. However, Stier (2010) proposes that internationalization should not be discussed through rationales but rather through ideologies (Stier, 2004; 2010). In his approach, ideologies can be referred to as "a set of principles, underpinnings, goals and strategies which structure and permeate the actions and beliefs of educators, groups, organisations or societies" (Stier, 2010, p.

340). Stier asserts that the concept of ideologies is more nuanced than rationales in that ideologies can be conscious or entirely unconscious and based on assumptions about internationalization. Like rationales, these ideologies are implicated in how institutions internationalize and are an additional critical scrutinizing wherein both explicit but also implicit strategies and values regarding internationalization are investigated.

Stier (2004; 2010) categorizes ideologies into three different normative views, which he calls the "three *ideologies of internationalization*" (Stier, 2004, p. 85, emphasis in the original). These are: idealism, instrumentalism, and educationalism. Stier is critical of all three ideologies. With the idealist assumption that internationalization will provide those from "developing" countries with necessary knowledge for establishing quality of life, is also the assumption that the knowledge and ways of developed countries are superior. Stier (2010) dubs this discourse a "one-way flow" (p. 346), in which the "poor world" (Stier, 2004, p. 89) is educated by higher economic countries while their knowledge and ways are devalued, leading to a form of global hegemony or standardization. Similarly, instrumentalism is critiqued as spreading the perspectives of rich countries and a profit-based corporatized form of education, through transmission of "desirable ideologies of governments, transnational corporations, interest groups or supranational regimes" (Stier, 2004, p. 90). Lastly, educationalists risk reducing serious and systemic issues by assuming that education or enlightenment alone can solve deep-rooted problems such as poverty or inequality. Stier's work demonstrates that awareness of ideologies altogether aids in dissecting internationalization processes as we try to determine and draw-out the valuable aspects of internationalization. His research therefore emphasizes more nuanced and individualized aspects of internationalization. For example, as well as tracing internationalization incentives, he considers the personal implications for students embarking on cultural and emotional journeys (Stier, 2003). For this reason, his work additionally serves to inform this study's exploration of students' complex navigations as international students.

Similar to Stier's (2010) stance regarding rationales, Beck (2013) questions whether or not rationales can indeed capture the complexities of internationalization, especially in light of institutional pressures to commodify. Rationales which seem more constructive, such as an academic rationale, can be overstated without any clear indication of how these rationales are being addressed (Beck, 2012; 2013). Sure enough, while the BC Government (Government of BC, n.d., "International Education")

claims rationales that are more social/cultural, the only rationales that can be measured are more economic ones as evident from the economic impact report for international education (Kunin & Associates, 2019).

Stein, Andreotti, Bruce, and Suša (2016) extend this issue to posit that internationalization typologies tend to be "static presentation[s] of an objective reality" (p. 4), not particularly open to fluctuating contexts and circumstances that can sway internationalization and incentives to internationalize. Instead, they and other scholars (Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew & Hunt, 2015; Andreotti, Stein, Pashby & Nicolson, 2016; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Stein et al., 2016; Stein, 2017) exploring more ethical possibilities for internationalization, cautiously suggest a method of mapping that pulls from decolonization theorizations and the scholarship of Paulston (2009) on social cartography. Social cartography allows for a charting of historical roots and is therefore more conducive for challenging common sense assumptions and tracing the constant variables and contradictions within internationalization (Andreotti et al., 2016). Because social cartography involves being self-reflexively cognisant of maps being representative of only some perspectives in particular moments in time (Stein, 2017), there is also an openness to engage others in extending the conversation (Stein et al., 2016). Additionally, the act of identifying certain representations through cartography does not necessarily mean the cartographers themselves are in agreement with these same representations (Andreotti et al., 2015, p. 22).

These scholars have used social cartography to illuminate different aspects of internationalization. Of these varying maps, their cartography of discursive orientations surrounding higher education (Andreotti et al., 2016; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016) is the most useful and is one of the internationalization frameworks I alluded to earlier as being helpful in understanding this study. This particular map identifies three interlocking orientations. At first glance, they seem separate with the neoliberal orientation accentuating corporatization and commodification of education, the liberal orientation promoting an equitable and democratized form of education, and the critical orientation questioning the capitalistic, racialized and colonial tensions in education processes. However, a fourth interface emerges through an interlocking of the other three, wherein orientations can overlap or even "mediate" (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016, p. 778) one another, even if they seem incompatible at the surface.

The usefulness of these interlocking orientations is strengthened when coupled with Tarc's scholarship on tensions and competing agendas (2009; 2011; 2013; 2019). Tarc himself identifies the work of Andreotti and colleagues (2016) as a "productive conceptual framework" (Tarc, 2019, p. 734) to understanding international processes in education. Herein lies an example of my merging of international education and internationalization frameworks. Though stemming from the field of K-12 international education, Tarc's framework is presented here as I follow suit in his prioritizing of useful and comprehensive concepts over traditional definitions of and prescriptions for either field of study (Tarc, 2019). In his own theorizing about internationalization, Tarc (2013; 2019) discusses the competition between different intents behind international education. Like the cartographers' presentation of discursive orientations, Tarc (2011; 2019) identifies how the dimensions of internationalization are complex and can overlap. Both idealist and more instrumental agendas can be at play simultaneously, and seemingly different visions can become entangled (Tarc, 2011; 2019). The mapping of interlocking and overlapping orientations and dimensions can be useful for my study's tracing of internationalization discourses and for unpacking institutional aims and practices behind international education.

2.1.3. Interculturalization

It is important to understand how global citizenship through education and intercultural contact can become idealized in the context of escalating globalization and transnational activities (Tarc, 2011; Tudball, 2005). Indeed, the idea and discourse of interculturalization is interwoven throughout BC in all contexts of public education (Cover, 2016; 2020). PMD did not deviate from such attempts toward interculturalization and their international program used internationalization literature to instill an intercultural pedagogy into their international practices. The work of Kyra Garson was communicated to me[5] as being particularly important to PMD in terms of interculturalization.

[5] This was communicated to me by an administrator study participant. I do not differentiate administrators by their respective titles or roles; this aspect will be made clearer in the Methodology chapter where I outline the specifics of how I will be referring to each study participant throughout this dissertation due to ethics considerations with respect to participants' anonymity.

Garson (2013; 2016a; 2016b) calls for an accentuation on global citizenship education within internationalizing endeavours, with internationalization connected more explicitly to global learning outcomes and the development of intercultural competence. Intercultural competence refers largely to capabilities concerning communication and behaviour during cross-cultural situations (Garson, 2016b; Deardorff, 2004; 2006). These capabilities are based upon intercultural knowledge but also a range of skills such as abilities to contextually relate or analyze (Garson, 2016b; Deardorff, 2006). Most importantly, interculturalization and the development of intercultural competence must be intentional and cannot merely be an effect of internationalization (Garson, 2016a; 2016b).

Interculturalization is argued as necessary for all students and individuals across all disciplines for the purpose of nurturing citizens to participate in global contexts (Garson, 2016a). Through his research of international education in BC, Cover (2016; 2020) acknowledges the benefits of international education and how it affords opportunities for cross-cultural contact. However, Cover (2016) additionally recognizes how such intents are often overshadowed by market-based values. It should be noted at this point that my intent for this dissertation was not to focus specifically on interculturalization or intercultural competence as theories in and of themselves. Rather, I repeat that I was directed to the work of Garson and was consistently confronted with the notion of interculturalization throughout my research process. This has led me to include an introduction of interculturalization here to further situate the study and lay groundwork for later references toward interculturalization. My use of Garson's work or any other literature on intercultural competence throughout this thesis is a nod to institutional use of such ideas. Since this dissertation investigates, among other things, prevailing discourses, I feel the need to highlight institutional rhetoric that oftentimes heralds intercultural competence and understanding as the basis and reason for international education.

Instead, interculturalization and intercultural competence will be more concretely explored as part of larger internationalization incentives. They will be linked to the idea of English as an acquirable competency, as the acquisition of both intercultural competence and English are instrumentalized under a market paradigm. Discussion of these intersections and, correspondingly, how internationalization is oftentimes equated with English will be further explored in the theory chapter through an examination of

neoliberalism. Even though Garson's (2016a) emphasis on purposeful interculturalization aims to move away from economic rationales for internationalization, this dissertation explores how engagement with global citizenship discourses can still manifest neoliberal propensities. Kubota (2016), for instance, argues that inclinations toward intercultural understanding can stem from a more neoliberal agenda positioning communication for economic successes. Meanwhile, Beck (2012) considers how intercultural exchange discourse oftentimes disregards existing local diversity. This is especially true in reference to local Indigenous populations, who are oftentimes only mentioned in tokenistic ways (Ahenakew, Andreotti, Cooper & Hireme, 2014; Beck & Pidgeon, 2020), and/or as marginalized victims in need of help (Battiste, 2017; Tuck & Yang, 2012) who have nothing to offer in terms of culture and intercultural sharing (Huaman, Chiu, & Billy, 2019). In attempting to magnify the intercultural and diversifying aspect of internationalization, we must still consider the complex, fluid, and sometimes underlying trajectories of internationalization (Beck, 2012) and how emerging motives and purposes can be both interlocking and contradictory (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016).

2.1.4. The Significance of English

Students can embark on study abroad as a form of development (Tamtik, 2019; Chirkov, Vansteenkist, Tao & Lynch, 2007; Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman & Playford, 2008). As explored earlier, development can include seeking cross-cultural, global knowledge. It can additionally include appropriation of English, viewed as a global form of communication (Block, 2018a; Flores 2013a; Gray, 2010a; Kubota, 2011; 2016; 2020; Kubota & Takeda, 2021; Park & Wee, 2012; Shahjahan & Edwards, 2021). Lin (1999) uses Bourdieu's (1984) notion of symbolic violence to explicate how certain imposed "representations of the world" (Lin, 1999, p. 395) can become legitimized and normalized. Within this framework, English becomes the language necessary to obtain to effectively participate in society, thereby also ushering in the demand for English education (Kubota, 2020). Theorizing about the relationship between desire and language is also helpful in an internationalizing context. Motha and Lin (2014) indicate that English is tied to desire for the types of identities and symbolic capital associated with English. In this sense, English has become the "indispensable language for globalisation" (Lin & Motha, 2020, p. 16), in its association with global development. It should be noted, however, that such desires are rooted in colonial discourses

determining what is modern and developed, with individuals' aspirations determined by a racialized hierarchy (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022). These issues will be discussed in the next chapter through theorizations of the global rise of English. As notions of desire are complex and formed socially and discursively, the linking of these notions to English can be helpful in discussing students' navigation of dominant English discourses. Meanwhile, the idea of English is presented here because internationalization literature indicates the significance of English in international education. Indeed, Tamtik's (2019) look at Canadian policy against K-12 international student incentives pinpoints both intercultural exposure and a desire to learn English as the leading reasons for studying abroad.

The work of both Deschambault and Shin are useful as windows into the study abroad experience and how it might interact with phenomena surrounding English as a global and dominant entity; such work is useful as this relationship is one that I attempt to explore further within my research. More specifically, Deschambault (2015; 2018) shines light on the complex socialization and construction involved in the categorization of international students in a school district in BC. Institutional obscuring of student categorizations points to a commodifying of English education and has equity implications for international students and the ELL population. His analysis of the relationship between international education and English thus addresses policy concerns in BC, which is helpful to my own understanding of policy for the context of my study. Additionally, he examines the tendency to equate international education with English. I have alluded earlier to the connection between international education and English and reiterate that this convergence is further explored in the theory chapter and throughout this dissertation.

Shin's (2010; 2012; 2013; 2014; 2015) work is similar in incorporating a market discussion in relation to English and study abroad. Drawing on Bourdieu's (1977; 1991) model utilizing market terminology in a symbolic sense, she examines the experiences of early study abroad students (ESA) and their investment in English education as an essential form of capital to maintain relevance in a globalizing economy. While the idea of education within a market paradigm has been mentioned briefly several times throughout this discussion thus far, I will be considering market terminology more explicitly in the next chapter. Market terminology intersecting with education as well as English and English language learning are critical points of consideration for the analysis

of international education in this thesis. Meanwhile, Shin's work exemplifies how market terminology within English learning and use phenomena can be applicable to students studying abroad. Shin includes an exploration of students' leveraging their contemporary Korean cultures to assert global cosmopolitan identities. This point in Shin's research comes into play through my examination of students' negotiation of their international experiences. It is important to note, however, that constructs regarding English and the delegitimized positioning of certain speakers of English leaves these students on the periphery, never wholly participants within any dominant market and/or identity options (2012; 2015).

The idea of delegitimized positionings leads to the investigation of English language learners as perceived through a deficit lens (Ilieva, 2016; Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Kanno, 2000; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Li, 2010; Marshall, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Talmy, 2004). By looking at the studies and research of several scholars collectively, we can begin to understand deficit-based constructions in language learning contexts. Talmy's (2004) study of a public secondary school in Hawai'i examines how the identities and cultures surrounding institutionally-bestowed terms like "ESL" and other designations for English language learners are more-so culturally and ideologically produced. Through his work with a postsecondary academic literacy course, Marshall (2010) explains how multilingual students can be positioned by what they are presumed to lack instead of the sociocultural resources they bring. A deficit lens thus implies multilingual students as deficit learners of English. In her examination of deficit discourses in a pre-service teacher education program, Guo (2015) surmises that assumptions regarding the need for remediation also tend to go hand-in-hand with deficit perspectives. An institutional and social marking of students occurs, instigating consequential and complex identity negotiations (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). In efforts to resist linguicism and corresponding identity positionings, students can become intertwined in the recursive reproduction of the same discourses that work to constrain them (Marshall, 2010; Talmy, 2004).

Scholars (Ilieva, 2016; Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Kanno, 2000; Li, 2010) also discuss the schooling system itself, arguing that oftentimes even the most comprehensive and inclusive ESL programs still uphold a deficit model with entire schools exempt from addressing students' language and cultural diversity. Multilingual students are left with the responsibility of obtaining the "appropriate" skills and

knowledge before they can be introduced to the rest of the school community. While this literature is derived from studies and analyses of different educational contexts, they remain relevant for the context of this particular study, contributing to an understanding of the different positionalities students of this study can encounter and adopt as international but also ELL students. Theorizing around deficit discourse can be linked to a political economy lens (again, see the following chapter for further elaboration) in order to address this idea of "lacking" and international students' subsequent and continual efforts to gain English alongside other forms of capital. To a lesser degree, I will also refer to the above literature in referencing inclusivity, a related issue that arose throughout the course of this study and will be addressed in the next few sections.

2.1.5. Diversity and Integration

The above dynamics regarding students as perceived through a deficit lens can be especially frustrating when taking into consideration how researchers link linguistic integration with social integration (Marshall, 2010; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011); the welcoming and acknowledgement of multilingual and other diverse learners – along with more instances of interaction with English-speaking peers – can better enable socialization, educational achievement, and an overall sense of belonging (Li, 2010; Marginson & Sawir, 2012). Schecter and Bell (2021) further note that international student engagement with their surrounding communities eases challenges students face when studying abroad. Meanwhile, despite institutional claims toward internationalizing for cultural benefits, students themselves oftentimes report few chances for cross-cultural interactions (Beck, 2013; Evans, 2011; Guo & Guo, 2017; Minichiello, 2001; Richardson, 2007; Tudball, 2005; Wu & Tarc, 2021a), with local students responsible for much of the cultural divide (Marginson 2011; Marginson & Sawir, 2012). Taking the above connection between linguistic and social integration into consideration, it can be postulated that while a strong agency helps towards language proficiency and cross-cultural relations, it is also cyclical in that cross-cultural relationships also foster agency (Marginson, 2014); barriers and blocks to cross-cultural relationships – and thereby local society – effectively "rob" international students of agency (Marginson & Sawir, 2012).

To that end, researchers of international students in the Australian and New Zealand contexts (Marginson; 2011, 2014; Marginson & Sawir, 2012; Sawir, Marginson, Deumert, Nyland & Ramia, 2008) advocate for an approach that makes room for

differences through intercultural encounters and relations by way of a three-way interactive and interdependency model of agency, communication, and cross-cultural engagement that will ultimately lend towards the international student journey of self-formation (Marginson & Sawir, 2012; Marginson, 2014). This particular three-way model was derived from the narratives of international students through interviews, and is touched upon over a series of publications by these researchers. While the interviewees on whose ideas and practices the model is based were students in higher education, their experiences are still pertinent. Moreover, their stories and the subsequent model advocating agency, communication, and cross-cultural engagement can arguably speak to the experiences of many international students and their potential difficulties integrating into the host community. Such models – coupled with other commentary on integration and connection (see scholarly work cited in the next section) – can be especially helpful in terms of having considerations that place international students' experiences and narratives at the forefront.

2.1.6. Welcoming and Belonging

The earlier-referenced work by Popadiuk and Marshall (2011) provides insight from a counselling perspective specific to the demographic in question (international students) and their transitioning experiences. Their work (Popadiuk, 2009; 2010; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011) identifies events that "facilitate" or "hinder" integration and belonging. Stemming from interviews with students from three different schools in the Vancouver school district, this research is informative in pointing out aspects impacting international student transitions, including where there might be gaps in student support. Such implications, as combined with my problematizing of a neoliberal system, can work to especially highlight disparities that might be exacerbated when a market paradigm is used to frame education and processes in education.

Examination of student support can be additionally illuminated by using frameworks and/or general literature related to ethics, such as concepts pertaining to community and social justice – and correspondingly – theoretically-based explorations of care, some of which may be derived from research or work with immigrants, newcomers, or other marginalized populations. For example, scholars like Guo and Guo (2016) and Esses and her fellow colleagues (Esses, Hamilton, Bennett-AbuAyyash & Burstein, 2012) consider the benefits and different features of welcoming communities for new

immigrants. Tolley (2011) details the diversities and complexities that are concurrent with the experiences and integration of newcomers and how these processes might intersect with policy and other institutional mediation. Meanwhile, research of younger populations emphasizes the importance of social networks for young immigrants (Hébert, Lee & Sun, 2003) or other transitioning youth (Raffo & Reeves, 2000). While these above-mentioned works might refer to individuals or groups of individuals outside of the international student realm, arguably, research and work pertaining to the fostering of belonging for newcomers of different ages and statuses can provide insight into certain aspects of international student integration. Like studies from a counselling perspective as highlighted earlier, different facets of such works can help in identifying gaps in student support that might impede socialization.

However, belonging can also be linked to addressing issues of justice and equity; in that regard, there are researchers who demonstrate the importance of removing barriers and making space for individuals' participation in communities (Fraser, 2008; Keddie, 2012a; Keddie, 2012b). This inquiry includes application of social justice models in examining the policies and practices surrounding EAL populations (see Ilieva, 2016), of which international students are oftentimes a part. Finally, the work of Noddings (2013) does not address international students or even newcomer populations but her discussion of care as pertaining to the education sector is still pertinent, given the expansive community involved in the international student experience. Noddings emphasizes a welcome learning environment that engages and nurtures shared learning goals of the students, educational institutions, and peripheral associations involved. Though wide-ranging, these varying yet, at times, interlocking sets of literature can aid in examining studying abroad as it intersects with other domains of research.

2.2. Conclusion

The above reported literature informs this study in various ways, with each subset of research, scholarship, or model lending to and contextualizing my exploration of international education. The work of those researching programming and policy alongside global processes, for instance, helps to illustrate the context of this study. However, while informative, this form of research does not delve in-depth into students' lived experiences. The same can be said of literature tracing or organizing internationalization, in that it offers a more macro analysis. Aside from the work of Tarc

(2009; 2011; 2013; 2019), this literature – while still informative – is also mainly directed to internationalization in higher education as opposed to public K-12.

Meanwhile, this dissertation aims to firstly explore international education at the secondary level – where there is a gap in research – and the discursive construction of international education alongside policy and other such material elements or macro structures. It incorporates but moves beyond document and policy analyses by looking in detail at students' narratives. I have discussed here studies that explore secondary students' stories and their experiences of studying abroad. However, these studies are oftentimes derived from single interviews, providing useful insight through a different approach than approaches I undertake for this study. Meanwhile, other studies with study abroad students differ from this study as they are not specific to the case of international students paying to study within public K-12 institutions. By incorporating fieldwork – involving interviews but also visits to the school and impromptu conversations with students and other participants – this dissertation explores the experiences of international students studying in a public secondary school, and the different identity shifts that might occur during their navigations over the course of one school year. In addressing the gap in research in particular, scholarship of some working outside the realm of international education and/or internationalization can be helpful in situating this study. While not pertaining directly to international students, examination of related communities – such as English language learning or newcomer populations – can help in the analysis of international program practices and students' reported experiences. Additionally, I hope to extend the discussion in terms of similar research that has already examined international student experiences ethnographically and through analysis of English language learning and other intersecting phenomena (see Deschambault 2015; 2018) by incorporating literature and internationalization frameworks of higher education to address interconnected issues within secondary international education.

I establish once again that this literature will be further interwoven with commentary on education and language learning as framed through a market paradigm in order to fully address the themes that arose from my engagement with international students at the secondary level. Thus, the next chapter, where I discuss in detail the theoretical approaches that conceptually anchor this study, will expand upon some of

these same topics, by providing a foundation for my exploration of international students' experiences vis à vis dominant discourses and global processes.

Chapter 3.

Theoretical Frameworks

In this chapter, I outline the main theories used to frame this study. The introduction and review of the relevant literature hinted at the key role neoliberalism will play in this thesis. I restate that I will be using theories addressing how neoliberal ideology can shape entities outside of the business realm. As Tarc (2013) argues, "it is the dominance of a neoliberal form of economic globalization that has allowed for the resurgence of international education as an expedient" (p. 9). I refer to this specific quote since it works in particular to link neoliberalism with international education, while also hinting how contemporary global processes are involved in moulding education systems and determining which educational programs and routes are coveted and desirable. Thus, I begin by addressing the broad notion of neoliberalism before addressing how a market metaphor has come to dominate and pervade sectors outside of just the economic sector, working its way into the realm of education, and reinforcing a neoliberal system (Holborow, 2015). More specifically, I address the interlocking theories that are at the centre of this study involving neoliberalism and how it intersects with the internationalization of education and the global rise and movement of English. Such intersections stem from the economic field conducting a form of "colonization" (Fairclough, 2002, p. 163) of other fields outside of the economic domain and shaping, not just the political, but the social and cultural (Block, 2018a). I then examine concepts surrounding hybridity. In particular, notions of hybridity are discussed in reference to how they might inform our understandings of students' identity negotiations vis à vis their time studying abroad amidst the uncertainties of a globalizing world.

3.1. Influence of the Neoliberal

An often-cited source while tracking neoliberalism can be found in Harvey's (2007) *A Brief History of Neoliberalism*. In this work, Harvey pinpoints a turn towards a neoliberal political framework beginning from around the 1970s and early 1980s, with the rise of world leaders and key global players such as Margaret Thatcher, Deng Xiaopeng, and Ronald Reagan, who were intent on revitalizing their economies. Thus, neoliberalism can be seen as a set of policies and institutional and economic practices

prioritizing the fiscal and the functioning of markets. Definitions of neoliberalism also point to how it seemingly offers freedom in "choices," which ultimately guide individuals toward consumption and into becoming a particular form of citizen to participate within and keep the economy growing and profiting (Block, 2018a). There is an accentuation on the individualistic, with "deregulation" being a keyword in neoliberalism, again alluding to freedom, and the state stepping aside to allow individuals' choice and therefore a supposedly true democracy (Chun, 2017; Holborow, 2012b). This idea of deregulation points to privatization of what were previously government services (Block et al., 2012; Harvey, 2007; Tarc, 2013). Additionally, a neoliberal framework prioritizes the creation of a knowledge economy under the presumption that technological advances can enhance communication in market transactions (Harvey, 2007).

My introductory chapter and initial description of the study made reference to the role neoliberalism plays in BC's international programming. More specifically, neoliberalism and neoliberal thought interact with international education and the individuals involved in the context of my study in two ways. Firstly, as public programs are increasingly losing governmental support in controlled and specific areas of funding, sectors such as publicly-funded or subsidized education become businesses and rely on students as customers to fund the system (Block, 2018a; Holborow, 2012a; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Secondly, international education is advertised as a way for students to accumulate skills such as intercultural competence and English so that they might be better equipped to participate in a global economy. Another key thread winding its way throughout is this idea of "tensions" (Block et al., 2012; Chun, 2017; Harvey, 2007; Holborow, 2015; Tarc, 2009), manifesting due to the different intersecting domains, competing philosophical and technical considerations and ideological contradictions, and the constraining material processes of neoliberalism. The notion of "tensions," in particular, will be further elaborated upon with use of scholarship earlier introduced in Chapter 2 on discursive orientations (for example, Andreotti et al., 2016; Pashby & Andreotti 2016) and competing and/or entangled educational agendas (Tarc, 2009; 2011; 2013; 2019). These phenomena will be addressed throughout my dissertation.

At this point, and to better explicate the above issues and connections to my study, it is important to note that the term "neoliberal" itself rather connotes a critique of a free market and is only used by critics, rather than proponents of a free market (Block et al., 2012; Harvey, 2007; Holborow, 2015). While at a glance, neoliberalism can be

defined as a set of political practices, many scholars would rather discuss neoliberalism as an ideology (Block et al., 2012; Block, 2018a; Holborow, 2015; Tarc, 2009). In this sense, neoliberalism – as an ideology – is a particular world view shaped by both real-world phenomena and occurrences and discursive practices. Such a world view is imposed onto society by a dominant or elite class, but is often below the surface also wrought with issues, contradictions and both the sometimes simultaneous acceptance and rejection of associated common sense beliefs (Chun, 2017; Holborow, 2012b; 2012c; Harvey, 2007). Fundamentally, critics challenge the supposed "free market" of neoliberalism and how the system is contradictory when put into practice. For instance, neoliberal ideology boasts a new system within a meritocratic corporate setting that transcends the archaic factory institution (Chun, 2017). Meanwhile, the idea of workers as individuals supposedly having the freedom to choose between a cornucopia of jobs and careers blurs the capitalist structure and organization of corporate work places – still very much resembling that archaic factory – wherein workers hold very little power. On a broader scale, Holborow (2012a; 2012c; 2015) also points to how a "free" market is an oxymoron and, in reality, means more state intervention in order for this specific type of free market to thrive, with state and corporations merging and key market players being given government sanctioned subsidies.

With this free market and ideological neoliberal assertions of reduced state intervention and privatization, so too is state funding on education reduced in areas such as educator salaries and working conditions (Holborow, 2012a). Educational institutions are forced to find ways to generate income in order to be self-sufficient and sustainable (Waters, 2006). However, Holborow (2012a) warns against blindly accepting claims of privatization and minimizing of the state's role, reasoning the state would never reject or ignore instances for monetary gain. As an example, I refer back to literature from Fallon and Poole (2014) who suggest individual school district autonomy is a façade. As districts gain "independence" through their own funding schemes, the BC government is better able to maintain and therefore control BC's education budget in its entirety. This is where the argument that education has become an "instrument of economic advancement" (Tarc, 2009, p. 127) introduces itself as, in a paradoxical turn, the state recognizes the ideological power and monetary potentials behind the education sector and purposely engineers processes and developments in education, whether it be through state-issued educational policies or curricula and exam regulations (Holborow,

2008). This argument regarding education being an economic instrument is therefore also two-fold. There is a doubling of corporatization with schools themselves becoming businesses geared toward profiting, but also with schools additionally working to serve corporate interests (Holborow, 2012a). In particular, as the world becomes increasingly defined in economic and profit terms, the purpose of education is remodelled to encompass a training of individuals to fulfill a function in the world economy (Holborow, 2012c). There is a competitive acquisition of knowledge because knowledge within education is linked to skills, and these skills should be measurable and deliberated upon in terms of return investment (Bucker & Stein, 2020; Holborow, 2012a; 2012c); and while the state benefits from the production of globally competitively competent citizens, schools themselves can capitalize by harnessing and reproducing such rhetoric and individual ambition (Block, 2018a).

3.2. Neoliberalism, Power, and Language

Specific skills, which in the context of this study are intercultural understanding and English, are positioned as "must-have" (Block, 2018a, p. 12) competences. With the nation state proclaiming not just the disappearance of the state, but even the absence of borders altogether, there is this idea of a global collective and participation within this global collective is increasingly pushed (Block, 2018a). International competence, derived from international schooling and developing intercultural understanding, is therefore regarded as a skill students feel they must attain to remain competitive in a global job market (Tarc, 2013; Wu & Tarc, 2021a; Yemini, 2014). "[S]kills become fetishized as economically viable" (Kubota, 2011, p. 249) and the education system is mobilized to accommodate such neoliberal trends (Kubota & Takeda, 2021).

In a similar vein, the English language is harnessed as a skill in a way to add to an individual's overall value. Thus, there are several calls by a number of scholars to engage a political economy perspective when looking at language phenomena (see for example, Block et al., 2012; Block, 2018a; Chun, 2017; Flores, 2013a; Flores & Chaparro, 2018; Gray, 2010a; Holborow, 2015; Park & Wee, 2012; Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012). Block (2018b) refers to skill accumulation as a form of self-presentation, constituting in the neoliberal age a form of branding. Neoliberalism is after all, not just "corporatization of society but also corporatization of the individual subject" (Flores, 2013a, p. 504). Such a phenomenon stems from the idea of individualism,

which was addressed at the beginning of this section, and is a key concept of neoliberalism. There is an emphasis on the entrepreneur and a type of self-endorsement people must perform to make themselves distinguishable from others as competitive players in a neoliberal arena (Block, 2018b; Gray, 2010a; Gray, 2010b). Accordingly, individuals are responsible for acquiring the proper skills like an "employability checklist" (Holborow, 2012a, p. 96) and the onus of overall success is on the individual alone (Holborow, 2015). We will later see examples of how these discourses depicting knowledge as a set of skills will be taken up by students and how participation in such processes can impact students.

Under neoliberal principles, a form of commodity logic takes over that places a price tag on an individual's attributes, including aspects of one's culture (Gershon, 2011; Holborow, 2008). Appadurai (1986) defines "commodities" as "objects of economic value" (p. 13). However, he additionally suggests looking at the entire trajectory of commodities, from production through to exchange and consumption, especially highlighting the societal aspect tied to commodification and how the social or cultural can discursively determine what holds value. Concomitant with Appadurai's approach, what can be perceived or labeled as a "commodity" can therefore be expanded. Thus, using the above work of Appadurai and his complexification of the commodity process, Heller and Duchêne (2016) argue that language as a skill can therefore become commodified too. Several scholars draw upon the notion of language commodification within their work (see for example, Flores, 2013; Urciuoli & LaDousa, 2013; Heller, 2010; Heller & Duchêne, 2011; 2016; Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012). For instance, Heller and Duchêne (2011; 2016) argue that language can be explained in market terms given how it is often given symbolic value. Symbolic value transitions to material value as certain languages are used in shaping the global economy. In a form of commercialization, languages can even be branded through modernist processes of nationalism and the marketing of identities (Heller & Duchêne, 2011). In terms of intercultural competence, the idea of diversity can become a commodity (Gaztambide-Fernández, 2012). Meanwhile, Flores (2013a) expostulates that knowledge itself can be commodified in a neoliberal framework if it were considered profitable. When overarching neoliberal ideologies tend to commodify everything (Holborow, 2018), international education presents possibilities to attain cultural understanding and awareness for language and diversity, albeit purely

as a competence or skill to increase profit and productivity in the market and in the making of the ideal neoliberal subject (Flores, 2013a).

While there is agreement regarding the application of a political economy perspective amongst many scholars, there seems to be lack of consensus regarding the extent, scope and nuances of such an application. For instance, Block (2018a) disputes how abstract entities tend to be declared commodities merely because they are constructed as such through social interactions. Even though neoliberalism has shaped entities such as language, language itself arguably cannot be wholly commodified in the true Marxist sense of the word, which connotes labourers producing a commodity from which capitalists – who control the means of production – profit from the surplus (Block, 2018a; Simpson & O'Regan, 2018). A Marxist understanding of capitalism means specifically acknowledging how the amount of labour necessary in producing a product is obscured, which results in profiting for the dominant class, and the maintenance of inequality and class struggles (Chun, 2017). Thus, even though neoliberal ideology tends to designate commodity status upon every entity, when examined carefully, the process of commodification is more nuanced as skills such as language or intercultural understanding are not free-standing commodities; they are still tied to human labour and the individuals involved (Holborow, 2018).

Scholars wary of theories surrounding language commodification challenge such conceptualizations to avoid a form of "philosophical idealism" (Gray, 2010a, p. 15) that can often stem from symbolic analysis wherein material processes are obscured. In other words, scholars who take a Marxist stance take issue with the conflation of discourse, or symbolically-constructed activity, with activity they perceive to be rooted in the material realm (Block, 2018a; Holborow, 2007). They argue that placing discourse at the centre of analysis is a fallacy as it also centres what is imagined or perceived by individuals rather than examining life processes (Holborow, 2012b). There is a danger in that studies of knowledge commodification often slip too far into the sociocultural, leaving behind important material and concrete issues of class or "economically grounded inequality" (Block, 2018a, p. 23).

Block (2018a) further elaborates through his understandings of Foucauldian notions of discursivity, in which power infiltrates through "knowledge" that is symbolically distributed laterally by discourse and is impactful because it permeates and is embodied

in each individual. He argues that this poststructural take on power can diminish attention placed upon the actual structures or obstructions enacted by higher powers and the dominant class, which can work to tangibly constrain people's daily lives. Although the reality of hegemony should not be discounted, power should ideally be examined at the source instead of just how it is embodied or discursively received (Holborow, 2012b; 2015).

Block (2018a) concedes that while abstract entities such as language or cultural knowledge cannot be commodified in the true sense of the word, the process can broadly be a form of commodification in that language is reduced to a skill, and is part of a larger set of skills belonging to that of the neoliberal citizen. Furthermore, if abstract entities like language are viewed as a part of labour power – as opposed to just a product of labour – they can be classified as a form of commodification and a form of capital that are very well part of the new work order (Gray, 2010a; 2010b).

Regarding the larger issue of discursivity, other scholars such as Chun (2017) are quick to point out that poststructuralist frameworks are not necessarily incompatible with a Marxist-based analytic, and that indeed Marx and Engels (1978, as cited in Chun, 2017, p. 43) attest that they have never discounted other factors outside of the material and economic realm as being determiners of people's realities. Altogether, there is arguably a "false dichotomy" (Springer, 2012, p. 135) between Marx and Foucault, and the material versus the discursive. Springer (2012) asserts that neoliberalism as a whole needs to be understood through non-monolithic analyses that do not prioritize any one interpretation nor favour either top-down or bottom-up approaches exclusively. Rather, discourse analysis should examine how neoliberalism can be symbolically configured while still prioritizing how concrete material practices such as state formation and policies also shape neoliberal ideology.

I draw attention to this debate because I seek to continue such bridging of frameworks through my own dissertation. Concurrently examining discourse along with the material can reveal important power dynamics since some words, phrases, and ideas acquire more legitimacy and therefore more symbolic capital over time, and this helps us to question such power dynamics and who benefits (Chun, 2017). Similarly, I find a political economy perspective – particularly explanations of neoliberalism – useful as a lens to view this study but also acknowledge such a perspective's entanglement

with discursivity. My presentation of neoliberalism is intended as a basis for analyzing material processes occurring with international education in public K-12. But, as mentioned earlier, I also intend to do a form of Foucauldian discourse analysis in the examination of my data. In this sense, power is not fixed in language but tied to real-world contexts, with material processes governing circulating discourses (Hook, 2001; Preece, 2009). However, this is cyclical in that discourses can then shape reality (Cheek, 2008). Further analyses will demonstrate the arguably inextricable link between material and discursive processes. We will see how dominant discourses working hand in hand with material and external forces can constrain the framing of international programs, as well as how individuals can discuss international education. A meshing of both lenses can help in further investigating the complex processes and intersections involved in international education.

3.3. Further Mapping of English onto Neoliberalism and Vice Versa

While international education is the topic of my dissertation project, it is its intersection with neoliberalism and the role of English that is the key to examining the data within this study. Meanwhile it is English as an imperative and obtainable skill that is a fundamental aspect of – and often reason for – the study participants' international experiences. Indeed, an English education is often taken as synonymous with internationalization (Deschambault, 2015; 2018; de Wit, 2011; 2017). Even though de Wit makes this suggestion while listing a series of misconceptions about internationalization, we should question why there is this assumption about English, even if it is a "misconception."

Returning us to a political economy analysis, Holborow (2012b) would argue that English has, in essence, become a language for neoliberalism as it is a medium for many new and global service industries. Proponents for English as a "global language" argue that there is a need for a common language to ease international mobility (Crystal, 2003) – particularly in the context of Education (Graddol, 2006) – with English specifically playing a key role in commerce and globalization and internationalization processes (Crystal, 2003; Graddol, 2000; 2006; 2010). Having achieved its current dominant global position through British colonial expansion and then British and American investment in technology, English continues to spread because it is arguably

the language of money and knowledge (Crystal, 2003). And while the world is changing and becoming more multilingual, multilingualism and varieties of English are identified by some proponents of a global language as progressing in tandem with globalization to create a common and standard English that can be used by all (see for example, Crystal, 2003; 2012).

The assessment of English through a global language perspective can be deemed more or less an "unproblematical [*sic*]" (Phillipson, 2014a, p. 29) assessment. In other words, the role of English can and should be problematized and we must question whose knowledge and culture are being spread with English as a language for global communication (Cameron, 2002). English as a global language can spread Eurocentric values (Phillipson, 2001; Rajagopalan, 2009) and it cannot be assumed that other varieties of English will progress harmoniously with English, as proponents for English as a global language might suggest, because varieties are not viewed equally (Pennycook, 2009).

Phillipson is especially critical of a neutral view of English, and his work on linguistic imperialism traces the colonial legacies in the dominating spread of English while implicating contemporary neoliberal systems (Phillipson, 1992; 2017). According to Phillipson (2014b) a powerful "West," emanating from colonial roots, was then created over time by a series of partnerships and trade agreements between the US and the UK which would come to determine the international system. This international system entails the spreading of Western culture which, together with Englishization, proliferates certain subjectivities in the creation of a lucrative neoliberal society, wherein individuals are no longer critical thinkers. According to Phillipson (2001; 2011; 2014c), English dominance serves to maintain Western influence, control and profit – creating disparity, inequality, and the loss of minority languages.

While his work is comprehensive as a genealogical inquiry into English, critics of Phillipson's work consider his views extreme. Such an "alarmist rhetoric" (Rajagopalan, 1999, p. 201) assumes that the introduction of English would disrupt some form of "perfect" monolingual setting, but it also reduces the agency of oppressed groups, who are capable of choosing to reject English (Davies, 1996). Broadly, critics argue that there have always been unequal power dynamics with imperial languages but such inequality lies within all human relations (Davies, 1996; Rajagopalan, 1999; Widdowson,

1999). Even though Phillipson argues through a political economy perspective and today's contemporary neoliberal mentality is addressed, the idea of linguistic imperialism disregards evidence of English being quite a fluid entity and it ignores the conflicting and complex social relations behind a neoliberal market (Holborow, 2012b). Regarding the contexts of my research, it can be difficult and presumptuous to use such a critical but also deterministic view of English to discern reasons international students – who are so diverse as a group – have for studying English and what roles(s) English will play in their future educational and career aspirations. In short, it seems linguistic imperialism works best purely as a metaphor (Holborow, 2012b) to start the conversation.

However, while the English phenomenon is fluid and plays out differently in varied contexts, still, we can see there is little dispute that English – coupled with other skills such as intercultural competence – is associated with wealth and privilege but also is a determiner of many social inequalities (Block, 2018a). While Phillipson's (1992; 2011; 2017) arguments can be deemed extreme, questions concerning what kinds of culture and knowledge are being prioritized and for what neoliberal purposes are still pertinent, especially as certain languages can be prioritized based on assumptions of efficiency and economic ease (Canagarajah, 2021). As intercultural understanding is increasingly desired to gain economic advantage, there are skewed neoliberal logics involved that determine English speakers as the "automatic 'global citizens'" (Tarc, 2009, p. 129) who are not required to engage with other languages and cultures to be considered as such.

Additionally, it is not just English itself that becomes so central, but rather a specific standardized form of English that is deemed more authentic and therefore more valuable on the market (Park & Wee, 2012; Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012). More specifically, it is the theoretically ambiguous notion of a native English speaker (NES) who is above all privileged when it comes to learning and speaking English (Bhatt, 2002; Kubota, 2020; Kubota & Takeda, 2021). Bhatt (1995; 2002) explains how native English – as performed by the centre or Global North (Park & Wee, 2012) – is continuously manufactured through propagation of ideologies and rationalizations by so-called experts as legitimate while non-native variations or speakers themselves are considered illegitimate, deficiently fossilized versions of the standard, even if the English spoken is intended for non-native or periphery contexts. Thus, through a system of abstraction, in which language is divorced from the social (i.e., language in practice, dependent upon

speakers and their unique cases), a linguistic market can be established and maintained, in which varieties such as standardized NES English hold value and can be lucrative and marketable (Park & Wee, 2012; Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012).

In such a system, however, an inadequacy on behalf of the speaker not conforming with this ideal can be internalized, which only serves to further authenticate the authority and therefore legitimacy of the standard, and possibly those speaking the standard (Park & Wee, 2012). A particular social hierarchy is formed and reproduced (Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012), as English is envisioned through different scenarios wherein non-native English speakers (NNES) are imagined vis à vis global contexts and are made to feel as though they fall short in an international arena of global communication (Park & Wee, 2012). Speaking from their analysis of the Korean context, Park and Wee (2012) argue that when individuals are confronted with what they perceive to be their inadequacies in a particular competency, they tend to invest and believe all the more in a glorified ideal and achieving the skill or competency associated with said ideal. Feelings of anxiety, insecurity and embarrassment can ensue, and through indexicality, or in a form of "Bourdieuan practical… [individuals] subordinate themselves to the authority of English and its stereotypical native speakers" (Park & Wee, 2012, p. 136). Examination of language practices through a political economy lens therefore reveals material inequities emanating from more ideological and discursive processes (Kubota, 2020). Explanations of such issues are helpful for examining the language learning processes of the participants of this study.

In summary, an overly critical and purely material view such as Phillipson's might be incompatible with analysis of diverse international students. However, despite coming from varying personal, linguistic, and educational backgrounds, international students can buy into many of the above ideologies regarding English. Theorizations in the above section present a means to explore students' focus not just on attaining English but a specific standard spoken by NES as fitting what is idealized in a linguistic market (Park and Wee, 2012; Shankar and Cavanaugh, 2012). This focus is especially interesting given the liberal-humanist call within international education for diversity and intercultural understanding (Tarc, 2009); these dynamics thus have implications – which we will see continuously unfold throughout this thesis – for the earlier discussed intersection between English, internationalization, and neoliberalism.

3.4. English and a Coveted Global North

International education encompasses the exploration of other cultures, but at the same time, mostly centre, rather than periphery, cultures are coveted and therefore explored (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Stein & Andreotti, 2016; Weenink, 2008). Even though the international use of English does not equate global understanding and communication, English is still heralded as the most useful language to transcend borders (Kubota, 2016). Just as it is skewed neoliberal logics that determines English speakers as global citizens, it is also a "Western education" (Wu & Tarc, 2021b, p. 916) that is primarily hailed as the education to obtain for economic advantage. Tarc (2019) reminds us how – within the contradictions and tensions behind international education – even though the intercultural is sought-after, so too can remnants of colonialism manifest. Thus, it helps to examine past colonial histories in order to address these developments as colonialism can be seen as laying the groundwork for modern society (Stein, Andreotti, Hunt & Ahenakew, 2021).

The idea of social imaginaries can be helpful here. Taylor's (2002) use of "imaginary" pertains to "ways in which people imagine their social existence, how they fit together with others… and the deeper normative notions and images that underlie these expectations" (p. 106). Although theory can help to shape the imaginary, they are not one and the same, due to how social imaginaries are unstructured, indefinite, and rooted in the everyday. Scholars exploring internationalization against a legacy of colonialism refer to a specific global imaginary that can be traced back to the beginnings of modernity and the 15th century slave trade wherein colonists put forth this singular Eurocentric narrative of progress (Stein et al., 2016). As the West is positioned at the top of a hierarchy within this global imaginary, all entities stemming from the West – including forms of education – are coveted, while cultures and identities of international students are racialized and othered (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). Such a dominant global imaginary is problematic seeing as social imaginaries provide a normative framework that can determine individuals' relationship with the world (Andreotti et al., 2016; Taylor, 2002); as this imaginary can work to shape even desires, it is difficult to imagine what lies beyond its confines (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). While these theorizations regarding social imaginaries pertain to internationalization, such references to the desirability of

Western institutions and knowledge can arguably encompass language practice, especially when paired with more critical approaches to analyzing English.

Regarding idealized languages and language practices, Rosa's (2016) analysis is useful as he presents how individuals and their bodies are first racialized – or seen through a racial lens – and any perceived linguistic deficiencies or superiorities are then somehow arbitrarily linked to language ideologies. Paralleling the above theories regarding the dominant global imaginary of the West, standards and language hierarchies can also be seen as stemming historically from overall institutional epistemological pushing of another, larger umbrella hierarchy, a racial one in which Europeanness reigns supreme (Rosa & Flores, 2017). Imaginaries can be seen, after all, as part of racialized processes that regulate power structures (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022). For instance, certain discourses over time can become linked to English, especially discourses of Self and Other, which are rooted in colonialism and work to construct and shape learners of English (Pennycook, 1998). By contrast, Phillipson's (1992; 2017) more structuralist take determines that historically, education in English was pushed in British-colonized countries to enforce the spread of Western culture through the English language. Pennycook (1994) opposes Phillipson's take; instead, both notions of Anglicism (policies pushing for education in English) and Orientalism (encompassing policies supporting education in indigenous languages) can be seen as working alongside one another and were complimentary discourses during colonial times. English was provided across the British colonies, but only enough to support administrative and clerical roles that could continue colonial administration and expansion. Meanwhile, the use of vernacular or indigenous language was and is usually promoted in order to continue engendering colonial authority and practices by ensuring racialized subjects remain within their places (Rosa & Flores, 2017) or "humble positions in life" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 88).

Today's current globalization processes are shaped by this enduring European colonialism and the dominant global imaginary, affecting language and race, serving to reinforce socialized distinctions between whites and non-whites, and thereby influencing the contemporary lived linguistic perceptions and experiences of individuals (Rosa & Flores, 2017). We can therefore see how there are ties between language and much broader social processes, and how language ideologies can be caught up in ideologies reifying people and groups of people (Flores, 2013b). Again, despite international

students coming from diverse and varying backgrounds bringing a multitude of linguistic and sociocultural resources (Marshall, 2010) and the dominant discourses within the district heralding the root of international education being intercultural understanding, students can still simultaneously subscribe to a dominant imaginary in which Western knowledge and culture are the "desirable product[s]" (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p. 226). There is a link between colonialism and modern-day capitalism or neoliberalism (Suspitsyna, 2021) wherein language ideologies are used for capitalist interests (Kubota, 2020), and individuals, in essence, invest in Whiteness (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022). Discoursal relations of power that can legitimize and delegitimize are complex enough on their own. However, they also arguably feed into the current neoliberal vision which sees the practices of racialized subjects as incommensurate with a global economy (Kubota, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Frameworks explicating dominant imaginaries and/or racialized language ideologies can inform analysis of the language learning practices students of this study undertake. With students concurrently facing deficit identities as English language learners (Ilieva, 2016; Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Kanno, 2000; Leung, Harris & Rampton, 1997; Li, 2010; Marshall, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Talmy, 2004), we begin to see how students can take-up and internalize discourses of race that keep certain groups marginalized and in a perpetual state of trying to acquire the appropriate capital and competences to remain relevant and competitive.

3.5. Hybridity

Theories of hybridity emerge from a postcolonial perspective that sees the world as fluid, and questions the purity of notions such as culture, traditions and borders (Bhahba, 1990; 1994a; Pieterse, 2015). Hybridity theories problematize fixed ideas of culture and identity, positing that social reality is much less rigid and more transitional. Postcolonial discourses of hybridity therefore entail a form of dialectical thinking which challenges dichotomies and embraces otherness or alterity when it comes to social identification (Bhabha, 1992; Pieterse, 2015); the pidgin or the creole is the native subject's mode of resistance (Bhabha, 2002).

As I have previously remarked, the pathway for analysis of international education and English I have chosen takes into consideration the material while also highlighting the ideologies and discursivity involved. In order to address the "paradox" (Lee & Norton, 2009, p. 282) that is English – and arguably international education – a

form of decentring is necessary. While this involves identifying deeply ideological and discursive issues and problems as we have above, it also involves acknowledging resistance and how all learners within periphery communities have a certain level of autonomy and knowledge of the global (Canagarajah, 1993; 1999).

For instance, the matter of English and its dominance is neither simplistic nor linear (Pennycook, 1994; 1998). Many communities have ambiguous relationships with English for its colonial history intertwined with the fact that the language has since been integrated into many individuals' lives in both educational but also social and personal contexts (Canagarajah, 1993; Lin, 1999). Such relationships are made all the more complex by transnational flows of language and culture (Pennycook, 2005). We often dismiss the agency of the subaltern and their ability to appropriate different languages for different means (Bhatt, 2004). With these kinds of arguments in mind, scholars have worked to reimagine alternative ways in conceptualizing language. Such reconceptualization includes pedagogically approaching languages as unbound, and viewing students as social actors drawing upon their unique language repertoires, depending on the context of their lives (see for example, Canagarajah, 2021; García & Wei, 2014; Hua & Wei, 2020; Liddicoat, 2019; Lin & He, 2017; Marshall & Moore, 2018). Altogether, there is a reimagining of language to contextualize the fluid spaces that individuals inhabit (Canagarajah, 2004). These concepts regarding flow, ambiguity, and fluidity can be seen as in line with postcolonial theories of hybridity.

Hybridity can be linked to globalization, with hybridity lenses positing that globalization entails a blurring of boundaries, interrupting simplified and dichotomous explanations which traditionally see global flows as moving purely from West to East (Pieterse, 2012; 2015; Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014). Hybridity can therefore be seen as a "boundary subverting, resistive and critical tool" (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014, p. 8), so labelled because it challenges essentialized and binary thinking regarding ethnicities, cultures, boundaries, and because of its potential in its "dominant form" (Prabhu, 2007, p.1) to engender agency and destabilize power.

Theories of hybridity are often linked to Homi Bhabha's seminal work, *The Location of Culture* (1994a), a collection of essays that investigates history, literature and societal issues. While I do incorporate the works of other authors as well in theorizing about hybridity and in applying a hybridity lens during data analyses, I

prominently feature Bhabha's work within this chapter as he provides some of the core ideas surrounding notions of hybridity. In *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha uses a postcolonial lens to explore how cultures collide during colonization. Instead of the colonial power's culture becoming entirely imposed upon the colonial subjects, hybrid identities can emerge. Thus, cultural purity is an illusion. As Bhabha states, "the colonial presence is… split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and different" (p. 153). Each constructed re-enactment of the original image gives rise to difference, as fissures materialize through the "act of enunciation" (p. 153). Enunciation is seen as opening up a discursive space (Bhabha, 2015a). Because of this act of enunciation through which new identities are created, he argues that there is always an ongoing negotiation, even for those who are minoritized (Bhabha, 1994a).

Postcolonial scholars suggest that those on the periphery negotiate plural identities but also monolithic versions of history, parlaying the imperial language, culture, discourses and conventions in order to challenge those same discourses and conventions (Canagarajah, 1999; Prabhu; 2007; Said 1994). Moreover, culture and identity should be seen as a production, always in process and tied to politics of representation and positionality, and sometimes caught in-between altogether (Hall, 2013; 2014). While we cannot discount histories of displacement and conflict, there are possibilities for transformation wherein individuals can constantly reinvent themselves through mixing and speaking through new identities (Hall, 2013). The possibility for individuals to construct new forms of identification also provides the opportunity for individuals to "combat domination" (Prabhu, 2007, p. 5).

New forms of identification return us to Bhabha's (1994a) theories of enunciation, which involve thinking beyond "narratives of originary and initial subjectivities" (p. 2), toward in-between or liminal spaces. Bhabha refers to these liminal spaces where negotiations take place as a "third space" – a key concept tied to hybridity. The third space is a metaphorical in-between and discursive space where new identity positions are negotiated that can serve to dispute set social categories (Bhabha, 1994a; Bhatt, 2008). Canagarajah (2002b) suggests that third space can be a useful notion when addressing students "in a context where cultures and codes are in flux" (p. 146). The concept of third space thus serves this study by offering a lens through which we can explore international students' movement through liminality.

With the possibilities hybridity can bring, however, there are also critiques. One of the biggest concerns with hybridity is that it has historically and politically been used by dominant groups to oppress marginalized groups of people who might collectively unify as a form of resistance (May, 1999; Kubota, 2014a). In a similar vein, some of the students in this study refer to their cultures and ethnicities in reified terms, thus indicating how notions of culture and ethnicity are tied to their social identities. It can therefore be argued that some individuals and groups need to choose, for various reasons, to embrace reified labels, boundaries, and cultural or ethnic categorizations (Friedman, 2015; Werbner, 2015).

Nevertheless, in the search for nuanced pedagogical applications of hybridity, I refer to Kumaravadivelu's (2008) cautious indication of scholars who have addressed the intricacies of hybridity theory through approaches such as interculturality. The concept of interculturality works with notions of metaphorical spaces, specifically spaces of negotiation when individuals from different cultures interact (Lo Bianco, Liddicoat & Corzet, 1999; Kramsch, 1993). With interculturality, language educators look beyond a functional perspective on language, instead incorporating a reflexivity that traverses language and cultural boundaries in order for learners to engage with and problematize others' perspectives (Kramsch, 1996; Liddicoat, 2019; 2020). The dialogicality in interculturality does not aim to universalize what are sometimes "irreducible differences" (Kramsch, 1996, p. 8). Such theorizing about hybridity is useful given this study's focus on English within international education.

With macro global processes being diffused and taken up by the local, I would also like to re-emphasize that a discursive and socially-derived lens need not be incommensurate with analysis of the material (Chun, 2017; Plehwe, Walpen, & Neunhöffer, 2006; Springer, 2012). As discussed in the previous section, neoliberalism – as ideologies tend to be – is rife with cracks, contradictions, diverse intersections and hybrid formations that require non-monolithic analyses, which in turn, necessitate examination of interstices and possibilities for resistance (Canagarajah, 1999; Hall, 1997; Pieterse, 2015). An examination of hybridity as a theoretical lens for my study means an analysis of the institutional discourses and material constraints behind internationalization, and then how students might navigate these vis à vis their international experiences. After all, hybridity is noted as one of the tools that students can utilize in constructing fluid and flexible identities toward agency and self-formation

(Marginson, 2014). In exploring hybridity, however, I am trying to avoid a romanticized version (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014) that addresses cultures lightly as though they were interchangeable (Marginson & Sawir, 2012). I note the fragility involved with living on a "fine line" (Minh-Ha, 2011, p.54) that requires constant negotiation, but this negotiation can also involve a balancing of borders wherein individuals are not bound to either side (Bauman, 2015; Minh-Ha, 2011). Like Bhabha (2015b), I do not want to negate individuals' cultural choice, especially if those choices afford agency, but instead, want to explore how liminal and marginalized spaces can offer alternative possibilities.

Theories of hybridity are beyond learning about or acknowledging diversity, additionally encompassing an analysis of interactions between states, groups and identities that potentially cause the fragmentation of societies (Said, 1994). There should be an interrogation into essentialist terms and essentialist understandings of "truth" (Spivak, 1996). Conceptualizing hybridity therefore additionally includes an inquiry into the social discourses that make it difficult to focus on interstitial moments and dialogical collaboration (Bhabha, 1994b). And while borders might be acknowledged by the minoritized as a form of resistance (Kubota, 2014a; May, 1999), arguably the ability to negotiate across borders, especially if referring to vulnerable migrants, is equally important and sometimes even a matter of survival (Pieterse, 2012).

Writing from the discipline of communications, with an emphasis on processes of globalization, Kraidy (2002) states that he cannot picture a phenomenon or notion other than hybridity that can adequately "characterize the dual forces of globalization and localization, cohesion and dispersal, disjuncture and mixture, that [can] capture transnational and transcultural dialectics" (p. 327). While students can embrace certain labels, the students in this study were living in-between in terms of being in-between worlds and as they considered their future lives following their time abroad. Even with the acknowledgement and use of labels and/or bounded understandings of culture, students can also take part in a form of "strategic essentialism" (Spivak, 1996) in which identities and their associated stereotypes are negotiated and even reimagined (Hua & Wei, 2020). Regardless of arguments for or against hybridity and its potential shortcomings as a theoretical framework, hybridity is inherently interwoven within the context of internationalization or through intercultural contact (Pieterse, 2015; Rizvi, 2005). Hybridity processes will be accelerated as individuals and ideas mix and move between borders, as new cultural formations emerge through the fragmented flows of

information. Hence, hybridity theories provide a means of understanding in-between worlds and spaces students might inhabit.

3.6. Conclusion

This above exploration of hybridity and related notions thus concludes the Theoretical Framework chapter, which was an attempt to encapsulate the theories that helped to shape this study. A political economic lens – particularly focused on neoliberal ideology as it intersects with internationalization and English – and hybridity are concepts that I utilize to explore students' realization and navigation of their study abroad experiences. The next chapter will focus on the methods used to conduct the research as well as some philosophical reflections behind my methodological approaches.

Chapter 4.

Methodology

This chapter considers the methodological underpinnings of this study and provides contextual information about the research site. I firstly explain the lenses through which I have approached this project, which includes an outlining of my chosen methodology with reflections of my negotiations into the research site. As my methodology is tied to addressing my original research questions, I restate them here:

1) What are the prevailing discourses surrounding public international secondary education and how is international education enacted in this environment?
2) What are students' educational plans and goals and how have prevailing discourses influenced or not these plans and goals?
3) How do international secondary students navigate their identities and experiences vis à vis prevailing discourses?

These above research questions, with a focus on discourses and student narratives and experiences, additionally guided my data collection and analysis methods, which are also described in this chapter. I then include a discussion of the credibility of my data analysis and potential methodological critiques. Finally, I introduce Western Shores Secondary (WSS) within Pacific Meadows District (PMD) and the study participants.

4.1. Research Design

I address this project through a poststructuralist lens within a qualitative research paradigm. A poststructuralist lens means that I will be regarding identity as in flux, as always in process and in an engagement with discourse and social formations (Norton, 2013; Smith, 1988, Weedon, 1997). Individuals can be seen as negotiating identities and positionalities based on these social formations and the discourses that are available to them in a reciprocal relationship that also works to maintain discourses (Preece, 2009). Such a research lens implies my consideration of how the social world shapes much of what subjects see and think, instead of my forming conclusions and interpretations "cleansed of doubleness, oppositions and multiplicity" (Davies, 2004, p. 7).

As already mentioned, my study is a qualitative study. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) roughly define qualitative research as "a situated activity that locates the observer in the world … [and] involves an interpretive, naturalist approach to the world" (p. 3). A qualitative researcher has the ability to "make the world visible" (p. 3) through certain qualitative methods and data sources such as fieldnotes, interviews, conversations and photographs. That being said, theorizing about qualitative research is complicated by the oftentimes dichotomized and positivist juxtaposition of qualitative and quantitative research, with qualitative research being measured against quantitative efforts to maintain trustworthiness (Guba, 1981; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; LeCompte & Goetz, 1982; Shenton, 2004). But it is arguable that qualitative and quantitative research should not be viewed as wholly oppositional to one another (Hammersley, 1992; Mason, 2006; 2018). Qualitative researchers are not disregarding quantitative measurements but rather question claims that any standardized research instruments – as human constructions – can be neutral (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Mason, 2018).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) argue that the most suitable research methodology is the paradigm that best suits the researcher's position and the research context itself in terms of ontologies and epistemologies. More static methods which measure and quantify variables might not be particularly suitable for conducting studies if researchers are employing more poststructuralist approaches and theories to examine student learning and experiences (Norton & Toohey, 2011). I draw attention once again to my research questions, which refer to notions of identity and discursivity; my chosen research paradigm and associated methods therefore should be able to address such complexities. In the end, I turn to qualitative methods because they provide a nuanced, contextualizing research process (Creswell, 2013; Mason, 2006) that is ontologically and epistemologically more congruent with my researcher lens and how this study is conceptualized (Mason, 2018; Norton & Toohey, 2011).

4.1.1. Ethnography

More specifically, my research project takes a qualitative ethnographic approach. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) provide a "core definition" (p. 2) for ethnography, with a disclaimer that this definition does not harness all related concepts. Ethnography can refer to:

> the researcher participating, overtly or covertly, in people's lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, and/or asking questions through informal and formal interviews, collecting documents and artefacts – in fact, gathering whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the emerging focus of inquiry (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 3).

In regards to what is being observed, Blommaert and Jie (2010) add that it is oftentimes the seemingly unimportant aspects of individuals' lives and societal structures – unconsciously performed – that become topics of inquiry. Over the years, ethnographers have also incorporated an awareness of meaning-making into what it means to do ethnography (Tedlock, 2000; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Marshall, Clemente & Higgins, 2014). Ethnographers are just as part of the social world as their research participants and research is an intersubjective co-construction of meaning.

Overall, the study of issues and phenomena in education corresponds with strategies and theoretical underpinnings associated with ethnography (Hymes, 2004; Walford, 2008, Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Educational environments and schools are intricate spaces that require time and in-depth relationships with the participants in the community and ethnography is open to these nuances (Hymes, 2004; Walford, 2008). Additionally, Hammersley's and Atkinson's (2007) discussion of the mostly unstructured and exploratory nature of ethnographic research – in which data collection and decisions about data collection develop and progress with time spent in the field – seems to parallel my own research processes. As I shall later elaborate upon, negotiations into my research site took time and were largely unstructured, and other processes such as the planning of visits and scheduling of interviews were open-ended, and dependent on participants' schedules and comfort, and the flow of the classroom and school spaces. With the research participants of my study hailing from all over the world and entering complex and already-diverse Canadian communities that "carry the global at its local" (Beck, 2012, p. 139), I see ethnography and its open-ended and reflexive characteristics as the suitable approach to explore international student experiences in times of globalization, diversity, and shifting time-space (Marshall et al., 2014).

4.1.2. Reflexivity and Researcher Positionality

One of the most important and valuable aspects of ethnography is the endeavour to understand different perspectives, and thus, why there might be biases in research (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2011; Hammersley, 1992). Since we cannot remove ourselves from our ethnographic studies, we must consider partiality and our potentially problematic interpretations of the people and spaces we are studying through the practice of reflexivity (Hammersley, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Hymes, 2004; Richardson, 2000). While I do not imagine reflexivity to be a "simple mechanism that neutralizes ethnographers' subjectivity" (Pink, 2011, p. 23), I am also not presenting my research as an objective reality by attempting to write "en absentia" (Sayer, 2014, p. 198).

Reflexivity includes acknowledging one's socio-historical locations and the potential "values and interests" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 15) associated with such locations. In locating myself in the study (Sayer, 2014) I must acknowledge the institutional constraints for research dissemination (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007), as well as my researcher positionality, which was impacted by my initial foray into and continued negotiations within the research site. Firstly, my ethics application to the school board and approval were contingent upon my sharing of the results with the school board. International education has been and is a convoluted and potentially contentious topic in the public K-12 BC system. As discussed in Chapters 1 & 2, there is contention as researchers pinpoint K-12 international education in public schools as a source of inequity within BC (Fallon & Paquette, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Poole & Fallon, 2015; Rozworksi & Kuehn, 2019; Kuehn & Vaitekonytė, 2019). Additional points of debate can be found in an article in the *Vancouver Sun* (Todd, 2019) illustrating several of the issues surrounding K-12 internationalization as outlined by Larry Kuehn, then Director of Research of the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (BCTF) and author of several articles on policy and programming used in this dissertation. For example, Kuehn summarizes teachers' concerns which include accusations that international education lacks pedagogical practice and is purely a marketing of degrees to "customers." Based on the tensions surrounding international education, international programs can understandably be hesitant to allow access to researchers. Limited access to information can shape sources of data, and therefore the shape of the study. I will provide more details of such limitations when I discuss my research site and study

participants. Secondly, ethnographic work often means some form of negotiation into the field, meaning I had to obtain both formal and informal approval for my site. It should be noted that interactions with gatekeepers and sponsors can shape data collection but also the nature of the research as a whole (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

My initial point of contact was a teacher whom I had previously met on another research project and with whom I worked in associated professional development workshops regarding ELL programming. Negotiation into the field involved volunteering in this teacher's classrooms to gradually introduce myself and my intended project. As an additional act of reciprocity (Emerson et al., 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007) and in order to "mak[e] a role" (Angrosino and Pérez, 2000, p. 680) and actively position myself within the community, I acted as the teacher's aid. Simultaneously, I wanted to establish a certain level of comfort with the students and chatted casually with them about such topics as being a university student in BC, in an effort to be more accessible.

These interactions, relationships and positionalities are arguably further complicated through concepts such as the roles of insider and outsider. Being a researcher "involves living simultaneously in two worlds, that of participation and that of research" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 89). I am an insider in the sense that I am an educator with a vested interested in the students and education. However, I am also an outsider in that I am an outsider to my research site and that specific school community. Furthermore, I am a researcher, studying and writing about this school community. However, it can be said that the distinction between insider and outsider is problematic in and of itself (Hammersley, 1992; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). Since knowledge is constructed, the epistemological assumption that "knowledge comes from contact with reality" (Hammersley, 1992, p. 143) – or that either insider or outsider positionality can be superior – is problematic. During my time with this school community, I moved between being viewed as a teacher, a teacher's assistant, student, and later, confidante to several of the student participants; but altogether, I view my positionalities as fluid.

4.1.3. Data Collection

As highlighted earlier through the definition of ethnography by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007), ethnography involves drawing upon a range of data sources in order to

address the focus of inquiry. Accordingly, my own data collection plans emerged based on my desire to "pursue answers to [my research] questions more effectively" (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 4). My data collection methods included: ethnographic fieldnotes, interviews with participants, analyses of policy and program documents, and the collection of artifacts in the form of pictures taken by students that they felt were representative of their experiences in BC and Canada. I discuss some theoretical considerations behind each method below.

Ethnographic Fieldnotes, Interviews, Analyses of Policy and Program Documents, & Picture Artifacts

Fieldnotes are written accounts drawing upon participation and immersion in some "initially unfamiliar social world" (Emerson et al., 2011, p. 35), and have increasingly become recognized as a central aspect of ethnography (Emerson, Fretz & Shaw, 2001). Like Emerson, Fretz and Shaw (2001; 2011), I approach fieldnotes through an interpretative lens. In this sense, fieldnotes are not just an objective recording of the site. Rather, the ethnographer's presence affects the setting and the writing of fieldnotes is an "active process of interpretation and sense-making" (Emerson et al., 2001, p. 353) on behalf of the researcher.

If fieldnotes are an act of interpretation, there can be issues with representation and how participants and a community are being portrayed. Additionally, the researcher's presence in the setting will have an effect on the setting and what is observed. However, if viewing fieldnotes as interpretive and knowledge as co-constructed through interaction, it is possible to try and represent the ethnographic account as multi-voiced, incorporating as many facets of that interaction as conceivable (Emerson et al., 2001; 2011).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) assert that interviewing can serve as effective supplementary data in combination with participant observation and other ethnographic data. Interviewing can be a central form of inquiry because "conversation is a basic mode of human interaction" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. xvii) and a contributive window into a subject's experiences.

Many of the interpretivist components outlined above regarding the writing of ethnographic fieldnotes can apply to the research practice of interviewing. There is,

again, a certain epistemological perspective derived from the social sciences that determines knowledge from interviews is socially constructed, shaped by the lived realities of the participants, as well as through interactions between the interviewer and those being interviewed (Kvale & Brinkman, 2009; Mason, 2018; Miller & Glassner, 1997; Silverman, 2000; Seidman, 2006). However, these forms of narratives can still be informative, revealing how participants understand their own experiences, and also revealing specific social contexts under investigation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Seidman, 2006). If researchers hold the epistemological view that knowledge is a discursive negotiation for meaning, then the research interview can be seen as another way of accessing that discourse (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). As there are cautions against ethnographers using interviews as default qualitative data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Mason, 2018), I see interviews as one dimension of overall data collection, albeit a very rich one.

Foucauldian discourse analysis, which is the analysis method for this dissertation, involves the identification and collection of different forms of texts for the purpose of analyses. In this Foucauldian sense, the definition of "texts" is broadened, and different forms of texts can range and include ethnographic and qualitative data such as the fieldnotes and interview data mentioned above; texts can also encompass policy and program documents (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2011; Cheek, 2008). Discourses arising from these texts can be critically dissected to reveal the normalization of certain ideas and beliefs (Buckner & Stein, 2020) and "their effects within particular contexts" (Cheek, 2008, p. 357). Analyses of official policy and program documents are in line with Foucauldian discourse analysis and a genealogical inquiry of how governmental and other institutional power can shape subjectivities (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2011). Foucauldian discourse analysis will be elaborated upon in the data analysis section.

The use of images can provide a glimpse into people's experiences in a world where ethnography is becoming increasingly multi-sited and where participants' lives can be seen as constructed by more than the immediate research site (Pink, 2011). With this being said, ontological and epistemological issues may arise concerning what constitutes reality and how photographs construct notions of reality. What can be made visible is subject to interpretation and different things have different meanings to different individuals over time, especially taking into consideration the instability of cultures and

meanings (Brace-Govan, 2007; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Oliffe, Bottorff, Kelly & Halpin, 2008; Pink, 2011; Rose, 2016; Schembri & Boyle, 2012; Wright, 2016).

However, while postmodern or poststructuralist scholars might dispute a realist approach to images, it must also be acknowledged that people do take on a realist or iconic view of photographs because people commonly connect photographs directly to their real-world subjects (Wright, 2016). It is not about whether or not images can signify reality but rather about exploring both the individual and larger contexts and why certain images can become meaningful to certain groups and individuals, and what kinds of discourses are embedded in these meanings (Pink, 2011). Moreover, by having participants take their own photos through a form of participant photography, there is an epistemological change – or a "postmodern twist" (Schembri & Boyle, 2012, p. 1252) – in traditional photograph use in anthropology, wherein researchers instead give participants the means to document their own culture (Harper, 2000).

4.2. Data Procedures

In this section, I detail the data procedures that transpired. I was at my research site from January of 2018 to June 2019. However, prior to the fall of 2018, I was only a volunteering visitor; I therefore only collected data at WSS during the 2018-2019 academic school year. I provide details of this process in a later section in which I introduce the research site more comprehensively. At the onset of my investigation, I visited one-two times a week. Even though I was acquainted with the teacher from when I was just a volunteer, there was a shifting as well as influx of students in the fall of 2018 and I wanted to get to know these students (who would later become the student participants of this study), hence the extended time in the field. During conversations with my senior supervisor, we established that fewer visits with more detailed observations just once or twice a month would be acceptable since I had become quite acquainted with the school and classroom environments. While I mostly adhered to this schedule of visiting approximately twice a month, there were times in which my visitations were not regular. In this sense, I could visit WSS every day for a given week but not at all in another week because visits were also dependent on participants' schedules. Invitations to view or help with a specific class, as well as a particularly full week of participant interviews (at the convenience of the participants' schedules) could impact the frequency of my visits to WSS.

After receiving ethics approval to collect data starting the fall of 2018, I explained my research to students of the teacher who was my primary contact. I only attended and observed the classes of this one teacher. As we became better acquainted, eight international students agreed to participate. In order to participate, students and their parents or guardians had to sign assent or consent forms. I informed students and the forms indicated that participating would mean I could take notes of my observations and our interactions during my visits. Students also understood that they would be interviewed and that they could share artifacts in the form of pictures they took that they felt were representative of their international experiences. All the students who signed on agreed to all the above. Subsection 4.7.1 later in this chapter explains how one student (Miyu) discontinued interview sessions but remained in the study. I began taking general detailed notes reflecting upon PMD's international program and my time at WSS after I received approval to commence data collection. Thus, the data in this dissertation does not include brief notes I may have made to myself about individual students prior to these students and their parents or guardians signing both forms respectively.

While I observed the classrooms of just one teacher, teachers in this school often share some of the same students across a range of ELL courses, collaborate on unit and lesson planning, and interact with each other's classrooms and students in school and community activities. These other teachers were therefore in contact with my student participants. Several student participants of this study were also taking more than one class with the main teacher whose classes I observed (refer to subsection 4.5.4 for class details), and I was therefore able to observe and talk to these students quite often. In addition to the conversations with my senior supervisor about time in the field, we established that close observations of students might be difficult to conduct if I attempted to attend all the teachers' classes. Meanwhile, interviewing the other ELL teachers whose classes my focal students attended – along with some administrators – while adhering to classroom observations of just the one teacher's classrooms, provided me with sufficient contextual information of the school, the international program, and the students' participation in their ELL classes and their program.

Teachers who signed on were informed that their participation included my interviewing them and my taking notes during my visits to WSS. Though I did not attend the classes of all the teachers I interviewed, I did take notes of our interactions during my time with them at WSS. Administrators were alerted of my presence through my

ethics approval process and by my movement in and around the school community and district. I then directly contacted several administrators for interviews. Like the teachers, administrators also understood that I would be taking notes of my observations and my interactions with participants while at WSS. Again, data in this dissertation does not include notes from observations and interactions with participants (including teachers and administrators) prior to their signing consent forms.

My classroom observations and time with WSS and PMD yielded 156 pages of reflective ethnographic fieldnotes. Altogether, I interviewed eight students, three teachers, and four school and district administrators. As stated earlier, I also asked students to send me photos reflective of their international student experiences. Additionally, I refer to official policy and program documents that demonstrate official discourses around international education in the K-12 system in BC and the school district where my research site was located.

4.2.1. Ethnographic Fieldnotes

In keeping with an interpretative lens and in an effort to create multi-voiced ethnographic accounts, I attempted to contextually account for events and issues and different aspects of a given interaction in the writing of my fieldnotes (Emerson et al., 2001; 2011). I also acknowledged my researcher's presence as an additional element within an interactional space and therefore took on responsibilities, actively becoming engaged in the community to make the research process one of collaboration (Emerson et al., 2011; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Hymes, 2004).

Instead of attempting a full reconstruction of my research at a later time, I used fieldnotes to document an emergent process (Emerson et al., 2011). I would jot notes throughout each visit in order to remember events, activities, and developments, and then use these compiled notes to write reflective fieldnote entries after each visit. Through fieldnotes, I also captured very informative naturally-occurring oral accounts, which Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) pinpoint as a useful and significant data source. Altogether, my fieldnotes served to trace my understanding of unfolding events in the field, assisting me in connecting different issues and events over an extended period of time (Blommaert & Jie, 2010).

4.2.2. Interviews

All interviews with students and teachers were conducted on school grounds, with some administrator interviews taking place in buildings within the district's community. I scheduled interviews at the convenience of the participants but these mainly took place before classes, during the lunch hour, or after school hours. Some teachers opted to be interviewed during their reserved planning period, and one administrator interview took place in the summer after the semester was over.

I interviewed the eight students of my study a total of three times over the course of a year so that their narratives might unfold simultaneously with their experiences. (There were two students – Miyu and Anya – who were exceptions to this process and their individual cases are discussed in section 4.7). This form of interviewing is in line with Seidman's (2006) "Three-Interview Series," which seeks to first contextualize narratives by delving into participants' life histories, before exploring the details and experiences of the topic under investigation. A third interview asked participants to reflect upon their experiences. My interview process emphasized context over a given amount of time, which is important to my study since I am exploring student experiences and their navigational processes, which develop over time as influenced by past experiences and ongoing dominant discourses. The interviews of teachers and administration are for contextual information of the school and international student program and so I interviewed these participants only once.

I prepared overarching themes[6] for the interviews, aiming for a semi-structured interview process with the intent to "assist [participants] in the unfolding of their narratives" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 167). For example, a theme for student interviews pertained to educational goals and future plans. Teachers and administrators were asked about their experiences working in an international education context. Additionally, interviewing provided an in-depth inquiry (Seidman, 2006); I was able to ask the participants clarifying questions about any events or oral accounts I had encountered in other contexts, thus, inspiring more discursive forms of knowledge construction through acknowledgment of participants' interpretations of their experiences.

[6] Refer to Appendices A & B for all interviewing themes.

4.2.3. Analyses of Policy and Program Documents

I introduced several official documents at the outset of this dissertation – such as strategic plans for internationalizing – that served as a preliminary examination of some of the dominant discourses surrounding international education. I refer to these same plans at various points throughout the thesis. Additionally, I refer to the websites of governmental organizations pushing for internationalizing, such as the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) and the British Columbia Council for International Education (BCCIE). Certain pages from both the BC and Canadian government websites that either promote international education or advertise different features of international education (particularly English education) were further useful points of textual reference. I also consulted PMD's international education website along with the websites of several affiliated associations detailing international program options and processes. I do not directly cite these texts, however, due to issues of anonymity. Analyses of these texts can help to unearth dominant discourses or "powerful histories and assumptions" (Buckner & Stein, p. 153) that can work to govern (Foucault, 1980b) international programming and how individuals buy-into and partake in international education. My analyses of these forms of texts and their potential ramifications on students and programming are interspersed throughout the dissertation.

4.2.4. Picture Artifacts

I originally intended to include images in the data collection as an extension of students' narratives and – corresponding to an ethnographic approach – as part of an emergent research process (Wright, 2016). I informed the students they could send me photos through encrypted forms of digital sharing platforms, or they could bring photos to discuss with me during their interviews. I was hoping to have images as an additional layer, working to establish another mode of communication between myself as the researcher and my participants (Brace-Govan, 2007; Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). See subsection 4.3.4. in the Data Analysis section for an explanation of how the images eventually became used in this study due to students' busy schedules.

4.3. Data Analysis

With the open-ended aspect of ethnography and an array of rich data collection methods, ethnographers often find themselves with a widely-ranging set of unstructured data (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). My data analysis is reflective of my own widely-ranging data set. I approached my data with a bricolage research perspective, which encompassed a broad thematic analysis after initial coding of the data, but also more specifically Foucauldian discourse analysis and theorizations surrounding visual analysis.

4.3.1. Bricolage

The complexity of research and the flexibility a researcher must therefore demonstrate can be captured in bricolage or the notion of "researcher-as-bricoleur" (McLeod, 2011, p. 120). The metaphor of bricolage alludes to a bricoleur – or "maker of quilts" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 4) – assembling different parts, attempting to piece together a larger image. Bricolage portrays the researcher as improvising with and even creating new tools to approach research data. Analysis of data is therefore also open to a "range of alternative approaches" (McLeod, 2011, p. 120). With the "messy reality of doing qualitative research" (Ilieva, 2014, p. 79), bricolage was not so much a conscious effort for me as it was a process that progressed naturally (Kincheloe, 2001). The notion of bricolage, wherein I pulled from different data analysis methods, helped to holistically address my wide-ranging data set.

4.3.2. Coding and Thematic Analysis

To begin data analysis, I coded the data into smaller units through Microsoft Word and conducted an initial thematic analysis before further delving into data analysis. Creswell (2013) describes coding as the process of breaking down the data into smaller units of information, which is especially helpful since researchers often do not use all the data they have collected. Coding therefore forces researchers to begin making judgements toward the process of analysis (Ryan & Bernard, 2000), a helpful practice as I had an abundance of data. I reiterate that I had 156 pages of fieldnotes and I also had 729 pages of transcribed interviews.

Critiques of coding range from accusations of coding being reductionist to claims that coding subsumes an objective perspective on the data (Saldana, 2013). Nevertheless, coding can be viewed heuristically, particularly as a starting point while having a meta-awareness of interpretation and categorization choices during data examination (May & Perry, 2013; Saldana, 2013). Thematic analysis was additionally useful in helping me to link the data back to the original goals and research questions, derived from initial research of theories and literature reviews (Ryan & Bernard, 2000; Saldana, 2013).

4.3.3. Foucauldian Discourse Analysis

Foucault's approach to discourse is rooted in his theories of power and how it intersects with knowledge (Cheek, 2008; Gordon, 1980). Foucault (1980a) theorized that power is not "localised in the State apparatus" (p. 60) and that it does not censor knowledge. Instead of power working to repress knowledge, power creates knowledge. In order for power to maintain its authority, it needs to infiltrate through every level of society, working like a network in shaping and producing knowledge and definitions of the everyday, and fundamentally producing discourse (Foucault, 1980b). With power being effective through its regulation of individuals' "acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behaviour" (Foucault, 1980b, p. 125), discourse, then, can refer to "ways of being in this world" (Gee, 1989, p. 6), specifically ways of "life which integrate words, acts, values, beliefs, attitudes, and social identities as well as gestures, glances, body positions and clothes" (pp. 6-7).

Foucauldian discourse analysis, then, is the use of these same ideas developed by Foucault regarding power and knowledge to inform analysis of research data (Cheek, 2008). It involves analyzing the interplay and dialectic relationship between different forms of texts (with the definition of "text" broadened to include statements and utterances), processes of production and interpretation of texts, and the social conditions that mould production and interpretation (Fairclough, 2001; 2003). But while Foucauldian discourse analysis is malleable and has been integrated into different disciplines of social research (Hook, 2001; Cheek, 2008; Arribas-Ayllon, 2011), this method of analysis is not without its critiques. In addition to the general critiques of using sociocultural approaches to examine material and institutional structures and

processes[7], two other salient critiques emerge specifically with Foucauldian discourse as a method of data analysis.

The first critique assumes that too much consideration is given to language analysis of the texts within the research data (Hook, 2001; Arribas-Ayllon, 2011). To address this critique, some proponents of Foucauldian discourse analysis (Hook, 2001; Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2011) argue that an overly in-depth language analysis of "an instance of linguistic usage" (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2011, p. 102) is a misconception about Foucault's theories. Foucault's focus was not just on the actual utterances of research participants or any individualized text, but the historical and social conditions that can potentially shape those utterances and texts. The emphasis is on a genealogical inquiry that serves to demonstrate the interconnectedness and lateral lines of discourse and power. Indeed, my own focus is on policy documents, program advertisements, and participants' narratives and explanations but additionally on how they are "events" dialogically comprised of different encounters, voices, interactions and origins – all of which should be subject to analysis (Hook, 2001).

The second critique argues that Foucauldian discourse analysis does not produce a satisfying analysis or closure (Cheek, 2008). However, poststructuralist forms of research do not aim to reduce the nuances of complex situations under analyses through a simplistic search for truth; rather, there is an attempt to disrupt the stability of more ideological or hegemonic truths (Davies, 2004). Seeking closure would undermine Foucault's complex theories of power and knowledge as well as both the epistemological understandings of this approach (Cheek, 2008) and my own connection with a poststructural qualitative research paradigm.

In essence, this analytical approach works well with the methods/methodology I have illustrated above. Foucauldian discourse analysis can be seen as pulling from a larger toolbox of Foucault's theories (Cheek, 2008) and so its emergent, multifarious process is compatible with bricolage. Moreover, since the examination of texts should be done vis à vis an inquiry into other aspects of social life, discourse analysis is arguably best conducted within the larger framework of ethnography (Fairclough, 2003),

[7] Refer to Chapter 3 and the work of Block, 2018a; Gray, 2010a; Holborow, 2007; 2018 who point out that sociocultural approaches – which are rooted in more symbolic analyses – tend to obscure the material processes that can work to constrain individuals' lived realities.

which my study seeks to do. When internationalization discourse is examined in a Foucauldian sense, we thereby examine associated normalized ideas and idealizations, how they intersect, and how they can potentially limit our conceptualizations of internationalization, especially when taking into consideration the current global imaginary discussed in the previous chapter (Bucker & Stein, 2020; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). Thus, Foucauldian discourse analysis has the potential to be especially informative of the underlying assumptions and beliefs linked to international students' plans and goals.

4.3.4. Analysis of Images

As students were very busy, they oftentimes forgot about this extra mode of participation, and I did not collect as many images as I had originally anticipated. Some students sent several pictures over the course of the school year while other students did not send any pictures. In total, I collected 20 pictures. Images therefore did not become a focal point during data analysis. However, I was viewing the images as extensions of students' narratives and the photos I did collect gave me insight into their experiences, especially by expanding our thematically-guided interviews. In the end, I did not include the images outright in the dissertation but interwove descriptions of them and what they seemingly represented into the data chapters when these was pertinent to analysis of students' narratives.

4.4. Addressing Credibility and Limitations

It should be noted at this point that ethnography does not equate a qualitative research paradigm (Hammersley, 1992; Marshall et al., 2014). However, as this research project does take a qualitative ethnographic approach, my discussion of limitations for this study integrates analysis in terms of both ethnography and qualitative research. I begin the discussion by looking at some primary critiques of ethnography, which merge into the discussion of limitations for qualitative research. I also consider how this study might address questions of credibility and methodological limitations.

With lack of a concise, standardized ethnographic method (Hymes 2004), ethnography is susceptible to critiques, especially critiques that question its scientific credibility. Of these critiques, what seems to emerge most often from the literature are

issues regarding the traditional research measurement tools of validity and reliability, generalizability, and the questioning of whether or not ethnographic accounts can be representative of reality. However, the idea of objective evidence and such traditional criteria applied to even quantitative research is questionable (Lather, 1986; Hammersley, 1992; Mason, 2018).

If meanings are constructed, for instance, notions of truth and validity are problematic, and we should instead concentrate upon an exploration of meanings through in-depth examination of research site and context (Hammersley, 1992; Hymes, 2004). Like Hymes (2004), I am hesitant to assume that a researcher can acquire an all-encompassing understanding of any given community. However, I believe my participation in the school community helped me as the researcher obtain a reasonable level of background knowledge in order to conduct my inquiry and develop careful understandings of the data collected. As an example, I again highlight how time in the field enabled me to discuss with participants prior events and revisit with them conversations and even topics previously discussed during interview sessions for further insight. Additionally, the genealogical aspect of Foucauldian analysis and my examination of pertinent program policies and documents provided another layer that informed my analysis of the data I collected. With ethnographic methods such as participation and observation, researchers attempt to address what is known in more positivistic terms as “validity” by obtaining sufficient background knowledge and an understanding of meanings the researched community might attribute to different societal structures before writing about ways of this community and how it functions (Hammersley, 1992; Hymes, 2004).

Another methodological concern for ethnographic studies is the issue of generalizability. I once again acknowledge that this research project was fairly unstructured, with my recruitment of participants aligning with the “exploratory character of ethnographic research” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 4). Participants joined the project as they and I became acquainted with one another, and not because I had a strict recruitment plan or a research design “specifically set up for research purposes … [or] experiments” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007, p. 4). Furthermore, my study was on a smaller scale, with participating students being from the same school. Generalizability and representativeness in the more positivistic sense can be more difficult to achieve based on these factors. Blommaert and Jie (2010), however, highlight the inductiveness

of ethnography, and how data collected should then refer researchers to a set of larger theoretical issues. In a sense, ethnographic research can become generalizable and part of "larger categories" (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p .12) based on the synthesis of data and theory. Again, I point to my linking of data to wider literature and theoretical frameworks, which then inform understanding of the data, thereby tying the data to a "larger category of cases" (Blommaert & Jie, 2010, p. 13). Linking of data to literature and theory also signifies a form of triangulation, specifically a form of theory triangulation (Carter, Bryant-Lukosius, DiCenso, Blythe & Neville, 2014) in which the application of various theories can help support research claims. Arguably, several forms of triangulation take place within this study. For example, my wide-ranging ethnographic data can be seen as method triangulation, which utilizes ranging data sources and collection methods to more rigorously address a particular subject of inquiry (Carter et al., 2014; Polit & Beck, 2012). Moreover, phenomena noted in this ethnographic study were examined through various angles – through consultation with relevant literature and theory but also through briefings with my senior supervisor and consideration of student, teacher, and administrator perspectives on a given issue. Altogether, qualitative triangulation is occurring through the "convergence of information from different sources" (Carter et al., 2014, p. 545). Such considerations further address the previous discussion regarding providing as in-depth a documentation as possible for a given research context. And while participating students were from one school, administrators (and my analyses of relevant policies and documents) could speak to district-wide practices and philosophies.

Fundamentally, scientific criteria are addressed but through more meaning-making frameworks. Lather (1986) would argue that striving to reach more traditional research tenets can often lead to "consistent subjectivity" (Lather, 1986, p. 66). Depending on the epistemological and ontological lens, however, subjectivity need not be vilified. Instead, we can embrace the intricate nature of qualitative research through engagement with subjectivity, being careful with the data, and trying to understand potential inconsistencies in data (Pink, 2005; 2011; Seidman, 2006; Koro-Ljungberg, 2010). To further address these ruminations, I refer back to my earlier discussion of ethnographic fieldnotes. Engaging and being careful with the data can mean how I attempted to contextualize my fieldnotes by incorporating different facets to descriptions of a particular interaction and through accounting for my own researcher's presence

(Emerson et al., 2001; 2011). The concept of reflexivity – which I introduced in subsection 4.1.2 – is therefore also linked to this discussion of subjectivity. While subjectivity in research cannot be avoided, my practicing of reflexivity was arguably helpful in documenting how factors like biases can impact data (Lather, 1986; Richardson, 2000). This reflexivity as well as my attempts to fully document data sources (except when there were ethical considerations), the research design, and how I made certain inferences about the data provide a transparency that adds to academic rigour but also invites others to evaluate research claims or even participate in the conversation (Moravcsik, 2019). Such transparency therefore can address the more traditional research tenet of replicability, in that it enables a study to be extended, while still acknowledging a more interpretivist paradigm through inviting critical engagement.

Altogether, just because ethnographic accounts are the result of interaction, social construction, and researcher influence on the research site, this does not mean they cannot also be representative of existing social phenomena (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007). This argument addresses the question of ethnographic research being representative of reality as a whole. Hymes (2004) points to the “ineradicable role” (p. 13) of participant narrative accounts in ethnographic research. Even if based on interactions and socially-constructed perspectives, what individuals claim to be their experiences are valid because they are grounded in the norms, values and societal beliefs from their everyday lives (Walford, 2008). Altogether, we are entangled with the social world in our everyday lives. Instead of outright rejecting all presuppositions and inferential knowledges that govern everyday activities, individuals engage with and inquire into any doubtful or conflicting aspects of life. A similar logic should be applied to ethnographic research (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007).

4.5. Western Shores Secondary (WSS) within Pacific Meadows District (PMD)

4.5.1. Introduction to the Site

My overall intention in this section is to situate my research site, which might include reiteration of some information regarding details pertaining to my negotiations into the site. Previously, as a graduate student researcher, I had been involved as a research assistant in a project concerning English Language Learning (ELL)

programming in British Columbia that involved the collaboration of teachers and pertinent administrative figures across several districts as well as university researchers. While presenting at and participating in professional development and collaboration sessions over the course of a year, I came to know several teachers from Pacific Meadows District (PMD). As we shared details about our work, one teacher in particular showed interest in my own separate dissertation project and invited me to visit their [8] school: Western Shores Secondary (WSS).

At WSS, I met other teachers and after obtaining a routine criminal records check, was able to float in-between two classrooms between January and June of 2018 as a volunteer teacher's aid. During this time, I was introduced to several members of the school community – which helped me through the process of later obtaining ethics approval at the district level – and was also able to get to know the school culture. I then applied for ethics approval with Simon Fraser University's (SFU) Office of Research Ethics (ORE) in August of 2018 and received conditional approval to conduct research in September of 2018. Following this acceptance, I applied for approval at the school district level, and upon receiving it, was granted full approval by SFU ORE in October of 2018 and was then able to begin formal data collection. Hence, prior to receiving this approval, I was only a volunteer and the data in this dissertation is not reflective of conversations or class activities I was part of in the Spring 2018 term, although my previous role as a volunteer helped as I had familiarity with the site and some teacher and administrator participants prior to the start of my study.

4.5.2. WSS and I

The cross-district project of which I was a part progressed simultaneously with my time at PMD. I was therefore able to extend contact, seeing and chatting with WSS teachers and some administrators during the cross-district project sessions in addition to our chats at WSS. In the Spring of 2018 at WSS, I helped the teachers with several gallery events wherein ELL students could showcase larger projects they had worked on throughout the school year. During the 2018-2019 school year, in which I was collecting

[8] As mentioned in the Literature Review Chapter, I will be elaborating upon anonymization and the use of gender-neutral pronouns within this chapter, but in a later section in which I introduce the participants.

data, I also volunteered to chaperone a large fieldtrip with all the WSS ELL students and teachers, and attended the end-of-the-year school fair.

During the summer of 2019, I conducted my last interview with an administrator and thus wrapped up the main data collection stage. However, I had permission to stay in contact with all participants. At the beginning of 2020, I was even planning a visit to the school and having lunch with one of the teachers. But shortly after making these plans, BC's schools and many non-essential places of business – where we were opting instead to meet – were closed as part of the Covid-19 province-wide lockdown. Thus, the pandemic and resulting precarity of all academic and school situations have put a pause on any visiting plans. I have not collected data or visited the site since the summer of 2019.

4.5.3. WSS within PMD and its International Program

Popadiuk (2010) and Tamtik (2019) highlight how a lack of research concerning younger student demographics is due to the oftentimes difficult, lengthy, and complex ethics processes involved. Tamtik (2019) adds that it usually falls upon the willingness of school administrators to help researchers through these processes. I was lucky in this regard with both teachers and administrators helping me to gain access and obtain formal approval. However, that said, the issue of ethics can still be constraining, most specifically when considering anonymity.

To keep the school and district anonymous, I can only broadly refer to their situatedness. WSS is a public secondary school in a school district located in Metro Vancouver, BC. With easy access to more urban areas – including shopping malls and restaurants – WSS itself sits in a residential neighbourhood with mostly detached housing. There is a nearby shopping plaza with a larger chain grocery store, several restaurants, and a café. Students often frequent these shops during breaks and I even used the café to write my reflective fieldnotes.

While internationalization of the K-12 system is a province-wide effort, each participating school district hosts its own respective international program. International students in PMD's program come from a variety of different countries and are here for different lengths of time, depending upon their personal goals and/or their participation in

any programs that are linked to their own schools in their home countries. Again, owing to issues of anonymity, I can only partially reveal aspects of the program. I did not have access to formal program documentation and was informed by an administrator that these were regarded as a business plan with a model that could not be revealed to other potential competitors (Fieldnotes, 08/04/2019). Moreover, I was told by several administrators that elaborating upon details of the program's makeup would reveal the district and potentially even the school in question.

To give some general details, students studying within PMD pay roughly $15,000 CDN a year in tuition fees[9]. The cost of health insurance, homestay, and custodianship – should students not already have a legal guardian accompanying them – are additional costs. There is also the process of recruiting international students, which can be quite nuanced with there being different avenues and ways for students to learn about program possibilities. Internationalization initiatives stemming from economic drivers have created a business of commissioned agents working both in Canada and overseas to recruit students for school districts; these agents can charge additional fees to students and their families for services rendered (Elnagar & Young, 2021). Public institutions' use of private agents as a recurrent aspect of international education in BC can be traced back to Waters' (2006) analysis of internationalization and processes within the Vancouver School Board. Meanwhile, concrete knowledge of the proceedings and practices of the use of agents to recruit students in the K-12 sector is limited, with only the province of Manitoba currently possessing a set of regulations and standards of practice for education agents (Council of Ministers of Education Canada [CMEC], 2013; Elnagar & Young, 2021; Tamtik, 2018; 2020). PMD also engages with overseas agents who promote PMD's international program globally. The methods that students utilized in coming to PMD, however, varied; these will be elaborated upon later in introductory vignettes and in applicable data analyses. Additionally, while students are allowed to make their own homestay arrangements, PMD refer students directly to a separate homestay program by Fortuna Academy[10] and are not responsible for students opting for other arrangements outside of Fortuna.

[9] A search of other districts in Metro Vancouver shows similar tuition fees.

[10] As with most names of institutions in this dissertation, this is a pseudonym.

Due to the high volume of international students at PMD, students are met with an intricate and comprehensive international program team with a range of roles created to address the needs of both the students and their host schools within the district. Each school additionally has its own respective team seeing to the specific needs of its students. As we shall later see in the data chapters through a few participants' explanations of the program, these roles specific to international education were emergent and based on the gradual growth of the program over the years. Commensurate with this growth, the international program has enlisted the help and expertise of specialists in the field and refer to literature and research – including that of internationalization of higher education – to inform their programming. The discussion of Garson's (2013; 2016a; 2016b) work in intercultural competence is reflective of this process.

4.5.4. English Language Learning (ELL) Classes

As stated earlier, I observed the classroom and several classes of one ELL teacher at WSS. ELL classes are not-for-credit and are intended to prepare students for integration into mainstream courses. In BC, ELL students are roughly defined as "students whose primary language, or languages… are other than English" (English Language Learning Policy and Guidelines [ELLPG], 2018, p. 4), and international students often fall under this umbrella term. The existing diversity of PMD should, however, be noted with over 100 languages spoken by students of the district. Incoming international students are firstly assessed at a receiving centre to establish initial English levels. While their progression through ELL is determined by classroom work and their teachers' assessment of such work, they are also given a district-wide exam at the end of the year in their respective schools that are also part of the deciding factor in their placement within ELL classes.

I observed 3 ELL courses within this one classroom. These courses included: ELL Language and Literature; ELL Cultural Studies; ELL Science. I restate that some students took more than one of these courses with this one ELL teacher, and so I was able to interact with them in more than one classroom session. This ELL teacher also taught more than one session of each course and so I sometimes observed a repeated lesson plan but with different students and therefore interactions. My focus, however, was not on conducting a detailed analysis of the ELL classroom or classwork itself, but

rather on student experiences as a whole amidst discourses of internationalization. The classroom was more so a gateway for me to become acquainted with the students and gain some insight into their interactions while partaking in a study abroad program. And with English playing such a large role in students' lives and internationalization discourses, the ELL classroom provided a prime initial point of contact.

4.6. "Meeting" the Teachers and Administrators of WSS and PMD

As already mentioned, I worked with and interviewed 3 teachers from WSS and interviewed 4 administrators working at WSS and/or within PMD. While I worked with the teachers all throughout the school year and took notes from my observations, I more formally interviewed each of these non-focal participants – both teachers and administrators – only once. The intention behind working with these non-focal participants was to capture the general contexts of international education within PMD in order for me to better understand the experiences the students – who were my focal participants – were relating to me. While the non-focal participants' accounts are important and helped to shape this thesis, my focus was on the students and their narratives. In other words, the intent behind my thesis was not to expand upon the personal narratives of the teachers and administrators, nor do I examine theories pertaining specifically to educators and their identities, their professional and/or pedagogical processes, or any literature in relation to these topics.

Throughout the data chapters, I refer to the 3 teachers as T1, T2 and T3 and I refer to the 4 administrators as A1, A2, A3 and A4, instead of giving them pseudonyms and elaborating on any personal histories or backgrounds. The configuration of WSS and PMD was particular in the sense that revealing any specific administrator title might inadvertently reveal the identity of the district or identities of the participants to those within PMD. And while they were keen to participate and discuss their experiences working with international students, teachers preferred to have a higher level of anonymity, especially with any comments they made that they felt could be potentially perceived as critiques. I therefore utilize a gender-neutral system when referring to teachers and administrators in my data and refer to them with the gender-neutral pronouns "they" and "them." Again, each non-focal participant was only interviewed once. Unless otherwise specified (i.e., a fieldnote excerpt from an observation or

naturally-occurring conversation), any interview excerpt from a teacher or administrator is stemming from the one interview with that participant.

4.7. Meeting the Focal Participants

Eight international students were the focal participants of this study. Table 4.1. below provides some demographic information on these students:

Table 4.1. Participant Information

Name	Gender	Age[11]	Grade	Country of Origin	Language(s) spoken other than English	Living Arrangements	Length of Stay in Canada[12]
Miyu	Female	15	9	Japan	Japanese	Living with mother and sister	1 year
Lindsey	Female	13	8	China	Mandarin	Living with mother and sister	2 years
Yamato	Male	17	12	Japan	Japanese	Homestay	10 months
Cindy	Female	17	11	Vietnam	Vietnamese	Homestay	10 months
Thom	Male	16	11	Vietnam	Vietnamese	Homestay	9 months
Sun-Hee/Kate	Female	15	9	Korea	Korean, Mandarin	Homestay	10 months
Anya	Female	16	10	Germany	German, French	Homestay	5 months
Iman	Male	16	11	Iran	Persian (Farsi), Arabic, Turkish	Living with aunt	10 months

In addition to the above demographic information, the following vignettes are short introductions to the students based on an amalgamation of the information they shared

[11] Students' ages at the time of the first interview.

[12] Length of stay in Canada refers to when they first arrived up until June of 2019 (the end of the academic school year). Anya was a part of a 5-month program and departed at the end of January of 2019.

with me in interviews but also all throughout my visits at WSS. Some of the information might be reiterated later in relevant data analyses.

4.7.1. Miyu

Miyu agreed to be interviewed because she was interested in asking about the university I was attending – Simon Fraser University – as this is where Miyu's older sister wanted to attend post-secondary. Miyu's sister and mother lived with her here in Metro Vancouver while her father stayed in Japan to work. Previously the whole family had lived in Malaysia while Miyu and her sister partook in an international student program with a Canadian curriculum. However, Miyu complained of the air quality in Malaysia, which caused her to be sick often and this is why she, her sister, and mother moved to Canada.

When I first met Miyu, she was 15 years old and in the 9th grade. While Miyu's sister wanted to attend SFU, Miyu wanted to return to Japan for post-secondary. She was, in fact, only here in Canada as an international student in order to ensure an easier transition into university. According to Miyu, entrance examinations are very difficult in Japan but international students can take a different – and in her opinion – easier entrance exam, which would allow them into select universities. Miyu therefore wanted to utilize her international student status to access these university options back in Japan. This sort of strategizing involved some sacrifice on her part as Miyu identified more with Japanese culture and the Japanese education system, describing North American education systems as too focused on participation and speaking up in class.

In the end, Miyu decided to discontinue our interview sessions after one interview because she wanted to focus on school. She, however, allowed me to include her in the study and we were still able to chat casually throughout the rest of the school year. I have retained some of her accounts because they offer a certain insight into the international student experience.

4.7.2. Lindsey

Lindsey is originally from China, from a large city near Beijing that she described as being also "beside the sea" and came to Canada because her older sister was

already an international student in Metro Vancouver. While Lindsey's parents consulted her regarding whether or not she should go abroad with her sister, ultimately her father decided that Lindsey also attend school in BC in order for the family to be together for the most part. Lindsey's mother moved full-time to be with her daughters and even though their father still resides in China for work, Lindsey told me that they still see him often as he frequently travels to BC and they can go back to China during holidays.

At the time of my school visits, Lindsey was in the 8th grade and at the beginning of the school year was 13 years old. Although she was just starting out her high school career, she had actually been an international student within PMD since the 7th grade, and therefore had experience attending elementary school abroad as well. A particularly prominent aspect of our discussions were her difficult experiences attending elementary school as an international student, experiences which will feature within her accounts later in the data chapters.

We also often discussed with humour her addiction to games and apps on her phone, and how her mother would try – unsuccessfully – to regulate her phone usage. By our last interview, Lindsey's sister was graduating high school and had just been accepted into the University of Toronto. Lindsey and her family were unsure whether or not Lindsey's sister would travel to Toronto to live on her own or if Lindsey and their mother would follow where Lindsey would start all over again, attending school in Toronto.

4.7.3. Yamato

Yamato is a Japanese international student from a city that is a two-hour train ride away from Tokyo, and was in Canada for a one-year sojourn. A Japanese agency Yamato found online acted as a liaison to Fortuna Academy's program, which then organised all the technical components of his study-abroad, including arranging accommodations with a homestay family and paperwork for him to attend school. At WSS, Yamato was in the 12th Grade. However, he explained to me that after finishing that year abroad, he would be returning to Japan in order to complete 2 more years at his technical high school.

Yamato was inspired to study abroad for a year to experience other cultures and, most importantly, to learn English. While Yamato's high school career would take him back to Japan, he was originally intending to go abroad once more, for his post-secondary experience, and even settle in Canada or the United States in the more distant future. He would often voice his distaste for what he perceived to be an exhausting and stressful education system and work culture in Japan, alongside what he felt to be poor conditions for learning and practicing English. Thus, it was his dream to later study and work abroad after graduating high school.

However, during his one-year experience, Yamato had a change of heart, revealing that he had discovered a career choice in Japan while researching for a project in an ELL writing class. Yamato's narratives often presented a kind of juggling of choices and feelings between Japan and North America; he would move in-between treating his year abroad lightly as just a fun experience and stepping stone towards opportunities in his home country, and thoroughly immersing himself in these experiences as a foray into his future in North America.

4.7.4. Cindy

Cindy did not show interest when I first explained my project in front her class and at the beginning of my visits, we did not have many interactions. It was when she discovered that I was able to speak Vietnamese that she seemed to open up, exclaiming that she had not known I was Vietnamese but that she was now excited to converse with me and ask me questions. She would later tell me her preference for our interviews to be in Vietnamese, a form of language sharing that would make her feel "homey." All of our communication ended up being in Vietnamese.

Cindy was especially prompted to speak of her experiences as an international student because she wanted to divulge complaints about her first homestay arrangement. I had been asking casually how things were going when she mentioned she was in the middle of moving from a particularly traumatizing and "isolating" host family experience and this became the core of her accounts. She wanted to tell me about her experiences to make known some difficulties international students face.

Although her poor first homestay and moving experiences did dominate a lot of our conversations, we also discussed other aspects of her life. Cindy had moved here with her younger brother so that she might learn English in order to later study in the United States. The siblings, together with their parents, went through Fortuna in finding placements. Although she and her brother were separated at the beginning, they were able to reunite when their mother negotiated with Fortuna to find new placements. A self-professed food-lover, Cindy missed Vietnamese food and we often shared places to eat, particularly restaurants that served more traditional, yet not well-known Vietnamese dishes. I also helped her to navigate some medical red tape as she struggled to find ways to cope with a chronic pain condition. At the time of our meeting, she was 17 and was supposed to be in the 12th Grade but was in the 11th because she had been held back a year in Vietnam due to a bout of sickness as a child. Altogether, Cindy's life seemed to be shaped quite a bit by the transitional nature of her education abroad, with a younger sister she had never met because this sibling was born after Cindy left Vietnam, a boyfriend with whom she had to juggle conversations and rely on serendipitous meetings back home in Vietnam due to the fact that he is also an international student (studying in the United States), and as she – like Yamato – debated between life abroad post-graduation or back in her home county.

4.7.5. Thom

Thom is also a student from Vietnam but was the opposite of Cindy in that he did not want to use Vietnamese, preferring to practice English as much as possible. During our conversations, from my visits and in our interview sessions together, he fluctuated between feeling as though he was being held back unjustly in his ELL levels – insisting that his English was better than the peers in his class – and then lamenting that his English was not good enough. Thom informed me that he wanted to join my project as a means to practice speaking English and would begin his interviews with some mention of English, and end by questioning me regarding whether I thought he had improved.

In addition to his concerns with English, Thom was also preoccupied with finding ways to permanently settle in Canada. While he was only in the 11th Grade and still considering his potential post-secondary options, his primary worry was whether or not he could stay in Canada post-graduation and what jobs he could attain to thrive in what he deemed to be a very expensive city (referring to all of Metro Vancouver).

Throughout my year at WSS, Thom would show me the books he was reading to improve his everyday English and inform me about new business and tech start-up ideas he would conjure-up with friends he had met through a myriad of online forums and chats. This preoccupation with settlement and making money was sometimes punctuated with wistful descriptions of how he would prefer to travel before settling but then he would say such plans were not pragmatically feasible considering his overall goals, unless he could also profit from such traveling ventures.

Originally accessing his homestay accommodations and school placement through Fortuna, Thom often discussed future permanent residency (PR) options. These ranged from convincing his mother to let him forgo university in order to enroll in a trades program and secure a job sooner, to navigating less conventional approaches such as an arranged and purchased marriage to a Canadian citizen. This latter option was a source of grievance to Thom, with his Vietnamese friends from one online forum – both living in Vietnam and living abroad – pushing and trying to convince him that marriage is the quickest route towards PR, while he argued that marriage as a business transaction was full of “shame.”

4.7.6. Sun-Hee (or Kate)

Like Yamato, Sun-Hee was also caught in-between staying in Canada and returning to her home country of Korea. However, unlike Yamato, Sun-Hee’s indecisiveness was not predominantly due to being torn between cultures, but rather because she was reluctant to leave her mother alone. Sun-Hee is an only child and her father had passed away when she was younger. Before she departed from Korea, friends of Sun-Hee’s mother, along with Sun-Hee’s aunts, warned Sun-Hee that her mother would be very lonely if Sun-Hee were to stay abroad. Sun-Hee was 15 years old and in the 9th Grade when we met but informed me she was supposed to be in the 10th Grade. However, due to discrepancies between the Korean and Canadian education systems and her English levels, she was officially placed in the 9th Grade and was taking most of her courses at the 9th Grade level. Despite having several years left before high school graduation, she was already quite well-versed and knowledgeable regarding different pathways to get into prestigious universities; she fantasized about traveling to learn English and other languages and cultures, together with working abroad for several

years post-graduation, but remained hesitant for the most part because of her home situation.

In order to study abroad, Sun-Hee and her mother went on Kijiji[13] to find a private agency that would make homestay and schooling arrangements. Sun-Hee and her mother then used personal connections to find a custodian for Sun-Hee for her time spent in Canada. They specifically chose for Sun-Hee to come to the Metro Vancouver area because this is where one of Sun-Hee's aunts also lives, even though Sun-Hee would remain with host families and not with her aunt. Sun-Hee would speak of another aunt in awe, because this aunt was an architect – Sun-Hee's dream occupation – and had built her own house back in Korea. This dream was also a source of sadness for Sun-Hee as she later felt it was unlikely she could be in a Science, Technology, Engineering, Math (STEM) stream due to her English levels, and because she felt she was already "behind."

Along with being caught in-between countries, Sun-Hee was caught in-between names. She had originally chosen an English-sounding name for herself because she perceived her Korean name would be too difficult to pronounce, especially for English-speakers. But upon arriving in Canada, she realized that when Anglicized, her name sounded very much like another English-sounding name. To use her pseudonym – which was chosen based on this same possibility – as an example, "Sun-Hee" can sound similar to "Sunny." Since she had already started her time at WSS as "Kate," Sun-Hee decided she would reserve the anglicized spelling of her Korean name for her university career. Still, during my time at WSS, I would glance at the name written at the top of her work and we would sometimes comment on her alternations and which name she had chosen for the day.

4.7.7. Anya

Anya was here through Fortuna for a special 5-month program that could fit into her own high school timeline when she returned to her home country of Germany. At the time of her 5-month program, she was 16 years old and was here mostly to learn English while also experiencing another country and other cultures. Specifically, she

[13] Kijiji is an online advertising website.

had an upcoming exam with a large English component that she stated would be a big determinant of her high school career, and Anya had decided a stint abroad in an English-speaking country would help her learn and practice English. According to Anya, English is very important in Germany in order to enter universities or to obtain jobs. Understanding the significance of English in her home country and seeing her own mother successful as an English instructor at the university level, Anya was determined to "do something with English" as a future career, although she had yet to decide the exact job.

Since she was at WSS for just 5 months, I was only able to interview Anya twice – once at the beginning of the school year and then once again before her departure. However, we also chatted quite a bit during my school visits and I often joined her conversations with Sun-Hee as they were friends and sat together in one of their shared classes. With her return to Germany set and without the added stress of navigating a more uncertain future that some of the other international students were navigating, Anya was more or less free to revel in the cultural experiences of her program. Her weekends were filled with events and she frequently shared with me pictures of her outings around town with other short-term international students and with her host family. While Anya could not state fully that her future would not involve more travel and study abroad, for now, a short-term experience was enough, since she could not fathom the thought of being away for her family for more than 5 months.

4.7.8. Iman

Iman's first few weeks in Canada were very hectic as he switched back and forth between WSS and another secondary school within the same district. Iman – who came to Canada from Iran – had originally enrolled at WSS but was told they were not accepting students and he, instead, started his Canadian study abroad experience at a neighboring secondary school. Iman's experiences at this school did not bode well with him, as he had an uncomfortable and unfriendly feeling during his stay and tried yet again to get into WSS. With the help of an aunt, he was accepted. However, upon discovering that his prior school offered a semester system[14] which would allow him to

[14] A school with a semester system divides the school year into two parts or terms, with students taking half of their courses within the first term and the other half of their courses in the second term. By contrast, students in an annual school system take all their courses simultaneously

fast-track his English levels, he began second-guessing his choices. Under the advice of one of his ELL teachers and the guidance councillor and after much discussion, Iman ultimately decided to stay at WSS where I was able to work with him throughout the year.

Iman's coming to Canada was also a large discussion, one involving all his family members weighing in. Two of Iman's aunts had previously traveled to BC, intending to settle here. Iman's older aunt – who had come with her children – ended up returning to Iran, with her family unit citing that the English barrier was too much and that they would return and try once more after taking more English lessons in Iran. During my time at WSS, Iman resided with the aunt who had elected to stay in BC – the same aunt who helped him attend WSS – and she also acted as his custodian. This aunt was also the one who had persuaded Iman's parents to let him come to Canada, informing them of her own experiences and imparting how she thought being an international student in Canada would present many opportunities for Iman's future. But even before then, studying abroad was something Iman expressed much interest in as he disapproved of many aspects of the Iranian education system – including the way English was taught – and was wary of the Konkour, a high-stakes standardized entrance exam necessary to enter any form of higher education in Iran.

A source of sadness for Iman was the fact that he would not be able to freely visit his home country and see his relatives. At 16 years old, he was just one year away from the age of mandatory military service in Iran; if he returned to Iran after turning 17, he would be forced to enter the military unless his family was able to buy-out his service. Neither Iman nor his family wanted him to be in the military, perceiving it to be a dangerous venture. Thus, Iman's future goals included making enough money to settle in Canada – after which he would sponsor his parents once he had achieved PR – and buying out his military service so that he might return to Iran in the future to visit other relatives and help "develop" some of the rural villages and areas where his family lived. His heart was set on being accepted into a dentistry program, as he figured it would be a steady career with a high salary that could help with his personal goals. As we chatted

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throughout the entire school year. In Iman's case, attending a school with a semester system would allow him to finish any prerequisite ELL courses within the one term, thereby also allowing him to begin taking the content courses necessary for graduation or entry into his future university program in the second half of the same school year.

throughout the school year, Iman would usually try to discuss university options and was already plotting both short-term and long-term goals towards his objectives, hence the sense of urgency regarding which high school could secure for him the quickest route to graduation.

4.8. A Note about the Data

Before delving into data analysis in the next chapter, I will refer here to a few details about the data and its presentation. As previously remarked, data collection included fieldnotes, which I then incorporated into the data analysis. Some fieldnotes will be extracts marked off from the main body with indentations (Emerson et al., 2001), while other fieldnotes will be woven into the main text and analyses. Marked off extracts are mostly to convey contrast between the time the fieldnote was written and later analysis (Emerson et al., 2001). Some naturally-occurring oral accounts will also be featured through these fieldnotes. The accounts in Vietnamese were translated by me.

I also transcribed all of the interview recordings. Cindy's interviews were all conducted in Vietnamese and I translated these myself directly from the recordings into English during the transcription process. There are no transcriptions (from the interviews, fieldnotes, or otherwise) in Vietnamese[15]. The following conventions are specific to Cindy's interviews:

- English words are in ***bold italics***[16]
- All Vietnamese phrases are translated into English unless there is no direct translation available[17]
- Interjections/confirmations/perfunctory words (ex., OK; yeah) alternated between English and Vietnamese but I do not differentiate the language used through bolding, italics, or otherwise in order to prevent confusion
- I use contractions in my English translations in order to illustrate how the interview and overall language use were conversational and informal

[15] While I am quite proficient in my Vietnamese comprehension and speaking, I consider myself illiterate in Vietnamese.

[16] While the interviews were primarily in Vietnamese, there was some translanguaging and use of English terms.

[17] This was mostly in the case of food or names of places and people.

The following conventions apply to all interviews:

- The speaker “CLJ” refers to me (Connie Lam James)
- … indicates a brief pause
- […] indicates sections that were edited out
- - (hyphen) indicates stuttering; speakers abruptly stopping mid-word (sometimes because they changed their mind regarding choice of word(s)/phrase); speakers interrupting one another mid-word
- Texts in brackets represents any additional comment(s) about the interview excerpt

In the next chapter, I begin looking at the data. As discussed in Chapter 3, theorizations regarding education as an economic instrument are two-fold. Chapter 5 explores one aspect of neoliberalism shaping education – the operation of schools as businesses – and the potential ramifications of such an operation on students and their experiences studying abroad, and this will be the focus of the analyses that follow next.

Chapter 5.

Neoliberalism Part 1: Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural – The Ad Hoc Element in International Secondary Education

As indicated in the theoretical framework chapter, with dwindling governmental support for public programs, publicly-funded or subsidized education can become regarded potentially as a business (Block, 2018a; Holborow, 2012a; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012). Thus, Chapter 5 examines this neoliberal process of schools as businesses, and the relationships and developments ensuing with students as customers funding the public education system. This chapter addresses the first of my original research questions, in that it explores some of the prevailing discourses of international education at the public secondary level but then narrows in on how both discourses and material conditions can constrain the enactment of international education. Data includes contextual information provided by teachers and administrators, which provide a broad understanding of the program. Excerpts from interactions (through interviews and conversations during school visits) with the international students of this study demonstrate how discursive and subsequent programming processes can affect their international experiences.

In particular, I begin by noting more idealistic notions for internationalization, specifically surrounding interculturalization. I then analyze the phenomenon of public schools operating as businesses. Several developments then emerge from the data, stemming from one dominant and larger theme. With schools forced to enter entrepreneurial terrain to generate necessary funding, PMD's programming and their addressing of the arising pedagogical and practice needs demonstrate an ad hoc quality. Correspondingly, I examine the application of existing internationalization practices in K-12 contexts and how students' younger age demographic should be taken into consideration. I draw from the narrative of one student in particular (Cindy), whose struggles navigating the international program serve to highlight the age and potential vulnerability of secondary international students. Along similar lines, I explore students' socialization vis à vis PMD's philosophies for interculturalization as interwoven with their complex funding allocations for international student activities. The last section

considers one student's (Lindsey) elementary school experiences, which are shown to be linked to the above issues and analyses regarding an ad hoc quality in programming and subsuming of existing internationalization practices into K-12. While the examples and scenarios illustrated throughout the sections within this chapter vary and involve the different actors and organizations within international education in WSS in different ways, the ad hoc characteristic winds itself throughout.

5.1. Touting the Intercultural

Through examining interculturalization discourses, we can begin seeing the emergence of neoliberal inclinations. I therefore start this chapter by presenting the more idealistic district and province-wide rationales for internationalizing that are centred around the notion of intercultural exchange. Within PMD and WSS, teachers, administrators, and students all emphasized that the intercultural aspect is a highlight or should be a highlight – if not the main focus – of the international program in the district. In their separate interviews, for example, the following teachers and administrators voiced similar attitudes regarding international students and the role they have in bringing different cultures into the schools and even the curriculum:

> T2: […] it's always interesting to have diverse cultures in the classrooms.

> A1: [...] they impart that kind of [cultural] knowledge in the classrooms and kids look up to them […] And, like, I know teachers really enjoy having them in the class because it sparks a lot of conversation.

> A3: […] they bring diversity, different cultures, different languages [...] I think they offer, like I said, a lot of diversity, a different way for us to approach our teaching.

Theorizing about the students who journey here, T1 stated "so, there's the cultural exchange," listing the cultural aspect as one of the reasons for students coming to BC to study. The students themselves reveal this same sentiment regarding their decisions to come to Canada to study. When asked why he chose Canada, Yamato replied, "because in Canada they have many different country people" (Interview 1), then further explained that coming to Canada would mean that he could then meet and

experience the cultures of these different people. Similarly, Anya brought up how she was both surprised and happy to discover that there were so many different cultures and languages to hear in Metro Vancouver (Fieldnote, 21/01/2019). Most of the students at some point or another indicated how their current international student experience and learning English would hopefully act as conduits to future forms of travel – especially work and travel – as exemplified by Thom's stating that his dream job was related "to going around the world and wandering" (Interview 1) or by Cindy's answering of "we can maybe communicate and I like to travel" (Interview 1) when asked why she chose to go abroad and study English. Cindy was referring to using English as a lingua franca while traveling to different countries and with foreigners coming to Vietnam.

As discussed in the Theoretical Framework chapter, neoliberal ideology celebrates participation in a global collective (Block, 2018a). A push for a global collective means intensifying the use of discourse regarding education for global citizenship within internationalization initiatives (Tarc, 2019). As was previously outlined in the Introduction, such discourse can be found in Pacific Meadows District's (PMD) internationalization activities, and in the activities of those connected to PMD. For example, Fortuna's explanation of its offered programs and Pacific Meadows District's homepage advertise and reference in some way, shape, or form how international education offers opportunities for cultural exchanges, with the BC Government itself purporting how such cultural exchanges or "valuable intercultural learning" (Government of BC, n.d., "International Education") can connect British Columbia to an intercultural global community. Such discourse, evident in publicly available material regarding internationalizing, can be seen above as being taken-up and reproduced by both teachers and administrators and the students.

During my school visits, I was also able to witness WSS' attempts to integrate cultural exchanges into the culture of the school. Here is an example of one instance:

> There is also a special event going on at WSS in which Japanese students from Japan are being paired with Japanese language learning students (and/or leadership students who can speak Japanese). It's another form of exchange in addition to the international student program. I saw these students all throughout the hallways and they were still wearing their school uniforms from Japan. One leader and his group of students came into the classroom after asking the teacher permission to see their class. The leader was struggling to explain to the exchange students in Japanese the context of the class. The classroom teacher volunteered

> Yamato to explain, which he did, after which the leader thanked him profusely with a bow. It was really interesting to see an international student being a resource and this type of cultural exchange. (Fieldnotes, 23/10/2018)

For A4, forms of exchange like the above example and the intercultural aspect should be the root of the international program in PMD. A4 stated that the philosophy behind the program was in the process of "changing from internationalization to interculturalization" (Interview). The district was actively working – both under the advice of and through analysis of the work of several pertinent scholars – to make the program more theoretically grounded, and to move towards Garson's (2016) argument, as presented earlier, that intercultural learning be intentional. Part of being more intentional with interculturalization is fostering connections and interactions between students and groups of students to the point where the student body is wholly integrated. As A4 explains:

> Because also what we're trying to get away from is differentiating international students from local students. International students do not like, after a while, being called 'international students.' They are a student. (Interview)

Indeed, Garson's (2016) research shows breaking any divides – whether it be through intentional labeling or otherwise – would be another step towards the purposeful interculturalization that is key to developing intercultural competence for future graduates to be able to work in "multicultural and globalized environments" (p. 80).

In discussing Pacific Meadow District's international program during our interview, A4 referred to PMD's philosophy altogether as being about student care and having the appropriate support mechanisms in place, regardless of any "local" or "international" designations. A4 spoke of taking into consideration the level of care a parent would want for his or her own child, assuring that PMD emphasizes such levels of care while stating, "we're all about, ah service." A4's reference to "service," however, suggests that we should once again enable a political economy perspective in examining the broader internationalizing processes that can occur as the education sector aims towards goals such as cultural exchange and interculturalization. The focus is not just on A4's utterance within our moment of interaction but rather as Foucault would argue, the social, global, and political conditions that can potentially shape such utterances (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine, 2011).

While A4 is referring to how the district can support and nurture students, the use of the word “service” can be a significant point of interest as it speaks to how education is becoming increasingly marketized. Gray (2012) emphasizes that a marketing paradigm tends to position educators as service providers and students as potential customers. Such a positioning occurs because of an overall “semantic stretching” (Gray & Block, 2012, p. 121), in which terms and concepts from the business world are stretched for use in educational lexicon and in educational matters, in order to link business to the realm of education.

5.2. A Whole Industry – the Big Business Aspect

International students were oftentimes viewed as potential clients or customers. In this section, I further explore the implications behind business terms like “service” and how the business world is encroaching onto the education world and into the lives of the students participating in international education. Through these discussions, I introduce planning agencies[18] and other businesses working to capitalize on internationalization and international students themselves.

On most days, I drove to WSS for my visits and observations. On many occasions, I would return to my vehicle to find an advertisement flyer attached to the windshield. These flyers ranged from tutoring help to more suspicious-looking ads for “essay writing services.”

A2 helped my understanding of these services, explaining that there are international student planning agencies stationed all around Metro Vancouver with one mall in the vicinity of WSS that was host to several agencies. These latter agencies do provide tutoring as I saw advertised in the flyers; however, they are mostly geared toward aiding students in navigating international programs, with services that ranged from homework completion to custodial services and pathways for fast-tracking high school graduation. As A2 (Interview) illustrated:

[18] These independent agencies are not to be confused with the educational agents as discussed in the Methodology chapter who work both overseas and here in Canada as contracted and commissioned by larger institutions, including BC’s public school districts (Elnagar & Young, 2021).

> [They are] a group of people, an agency who recommend these students taking these paths, because they think that will help to get- sort of like a master-mind, kind of […] All these students are offered the same thing and information. They only- or at least one of the biggest, um, I guess draw to these- for these people to go to these companies and businesses and pay money for these academic advice, or an academic plan, is that they speak their language. Chinese, that's a big market. Sometimes, they help them come here, so it feels like it's a whole plan. And sometimes, they offer behind-the-scene work to help get students into school […] Tutoring is one. Um, helping them sign onto some sort of shady path or school that get- get them the credit that they need to get into university are amongst others […] There are schools and there are agencies in [the mall] that I've seen with banners or advertisements for WeChat[19] that says, 'without stepping foot in a classroom, you can get an A and get into university too!'

A2's explanation, along with the associated marketing tone and jargon, offers a glimpse into the world of businesses geared toward international students and how potentially lucrative such businesses can be. I draw attention back to the report by Kunin and Associates (2019), which provides a detailed picture of international student spending in BC but also their overall economic contribution to the province. Granted, the purpose of the report is a practical statement of statistics, but it also serves as a prime example of the marketization of education, wherein such a statement – aimed at detailing profit margins – is necessary in highlighting the benefits of international education. "Semantic stretching" (Gray & Block, 2012, p. 121) is inevitably strong in the report, with the use of such words as "market" and "revenue" interspersed throughout, and with international education altogether equated to an "export trade." As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the reported statistics provide a testament to the potential monetary benefits when education is marketized. Planning agencies are one example of how of education can be marketized for economic gain.

According to A2, such agencies can attract potential clients with the promise to accelerate the schooling process by helping students – oftentimes illicitly – complete certain assignments and exams. These forms of assistance, in turn, help students in bypassing certain credits, either as a check of completion for graduation altogether, or for completing prerequisites that are necessary for accessing other content courses or

[19] WeChat is a Chinese mobile application with an array of purposes. A very popular app across Asia, it is often used as a social media platform, where advertisements can also be displayed, and for use in both local and international text messaging.

even post-secondary admittance. Whether or not agencies were able to deliver on such promises remains questionable. However, A2 was certain that they continue to be profitable. A2 provided evidence of these businesses' profitability. A2 had witnessed particularly successful agencies open numerous and larger branches for their growing businesses. Custodians acting as the mandatory and legal guardian for students tend to juggle many clients and hire assistants to help manage these clients. A2 complained to me of times in which they had to directly contact a legal custodian – sometimes on important and even safety measures regarding an international student – but were unable to pass business-like administrative roadblocks, such as the custodian's assistant or automated voicemail messages.

I was informed by several administrators and teachers of the potential monetary gain for agencies and other business models offering custodial or homestay services. T1 (Interview) spoke of homestay situations with "kids piled on top of each other" because an individual host family was attempting to make more money by hosting more children at a time. A1 (Interview) confirmed this same assessment in their work with international students, noting that "some homestays tend to be more money-making schemes." As evident in descriptions of the setting in the methodology chapter and through introductory descriptions of each student participant, there are several avenues through which international students can come to BC and enroll in school. Thom and Cindy both discussed the process of discovering and using Fortuna Academy, with Thom filtering his options by reading reviews and gauging numbers of star-ratings and Cindy screening potential homestay hosts by parsing their online profiles, which worked as personal ads for homestay families to showcase what they offered. Such activity further alludes to that "semantic stretching" (Gray & Block, 2012, p. 121) as institutions meant to serve social and community interests work under market rules and systems of evaluation and accountability (Block, 2018a).

Although most avenues to international education seemed to lead to Fortuna Academy and their homestay programs, there are also many connecting points with further businesses offering a variety of different services. A2 spoke of how the earlier-mentioned planning agencies working independently offer further bridging services such as IELTS (International English Language Testing System) or TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) preparation courses geared towards helping students plan for any necessary post-secondary transitions. Students like Thom, who are often thinking

ahead, were taking part in such services. Thom was specifically working with a free service offered online. However, any in-depth preparation required payment. A quick online search of the website Thom used presented many testimonials of the paid programs' successes in guiding students toward gaining the necessary language test results for their study-abroad dreams.

Altogether, this network – by no means exhaustive – represents the business industry that is involved with international students. In order to participate in such a network, a considerable amount of financial stability is necessary. While some international students and their families possess such financial stability, others do not. For instance, Thom revealed that his fixation on settling as soon as possible was because his family was reasonably comfortable in their finances but prolonging costly and continuous study abroad was not feasible. T1 spoke of entire family and group efforts in some cases amassing the funds for tuition to send one child overseas to study. Like Thom, Iman also discussed with me possibilities for work, albeit just part-time work for students. Part of our conversations was the daily cost of living in Metro Vancouver, with Iman complaining of how small purchases like snacks could add up and contribute overall to the exorbitant costs of living abroad. For Iman, such sacrifices were a small price to pay in the face of larger issues like finding a career that would enable him to make enough money to later sponsor his family and buy-out his military service.

The above phenomena demonstrate the scope of international education as an industry, from the businesses themselves to the more minute transactions international students and their families must manage and undertake, as the education sector and those moving in and around it "take up the discourses and the representations of the economy" (Chun, 2017, p. 18). As Wu and Tarc (2021b) argue, there are families and individual students who are ready to make the "transnational wager" (p. 908) involved in international education. And students like Thom and Iman specifically – who already knew they wanted to settle in Canada – also understand the possibilities and mobility that can come "from having a Canadian passport and speaking the English language" (Kataoka & Magnusson, 2011, p. 275). Thus, to continue borrowing from neoliberal ideology and the subsequent use of business jargon, such sacrifices or risks are deemed worth the investment by students and/or their families.

5.3. Schooling as a Business

As I told T3 about my initial reactions to the businesses set in place capitalizing from education as an industry, T3 informed me of how they believed school boards themselves to also be businesses (Fieldnotes, 18/10/2018). Thus, I begin to examine the dynamics of schooling as a business.

T3's belief about school boards is buoyed by some of the similar sentiments of the teachers and administrators with whom I spoke, and/or their descriptions of PMD's program. For instance, and as I mentioned in an earlier chapter, A2 (Fieldnotes, 08/02/2019) spoke of not being able to reveal too many of the intricacies of PMD's international program as it would reveal too much of what is, in essence, a competitive business plan. As A2 establishes, "it is a business still, more or less" (Interview). Regarding the aspects that they felt they could speak to, A2 referenced PMD's use of educational agents and marketing experts. However, though aware of these business entities, A2 could not speak in-depth about them since A2 is more focused on the educational front. Prior references to Kunin & Associate's (2019) reporting of international students' monetary contributions to the province's economy is telling enough of how international education is deeply linked to business, and just how potentially lucrative such a link can be. And as the economic grounds many interactions within education, it stands that public schools themselves can also benefit monetarily with proper strategizing and implementation of international education as they are made to continuously address gaps in government funding.

Business vocabulary continued with A4's description of PMD's team, as they explained the roles of the agents and marketing experts. Marketers are the liaison, providing information and promoting PMD's program to overseas education agents, who then in turn, connect students from their respective countries to the program. While initially A4 used vocabulary such as "agent" and "marketer," they later switched to more education-based terminology, wherein "agents" were more so "educational counsellors" and "marketers" were "student support." A4 explained:

> And so- and so the students so, the marketing team- they're well, they're marketers but they're also student support because they might- because parents or agents will contact them […] So, they are a conduit between the school and overseas parents or agents. So, even though they're marketers, we- they still play a critical support role.

(Interview)

Again, the level of support is highlighted, seemingly to also drive home the educational intent, but it is difficult to ignore the underlying business discourse and motives.

5.4. Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural: Necessary Funding

The idea of schooling as a business gives rise to a discussion about how internationalizing can provide necessary funding in the face of receding government support. The issue of necessary funding for WSS and PMD was addressed quite frankly by both teachers and administrators. Several instances in which funding was discussed are considered in this section as I also begin to discuss the ad hoc element introduced earlier within the introduction to this chapter.

During A3's interview, the subject of funding arose as A3 explained that international education at the secondary level can be seen as an increasingly popular phenomenon that would be interesting to examine socially, but that at the root of it, international education was also simply providing essential funding for the public system (Fieldnote, 04/24/2019[20]). Individual school districts in BC can use at their discretion international student tuition toward increasing staffing and additional teaching and technological resources (Deschambault, 2018; Kuehn & Vaitekonytė, 2019). A3 informed me that at the time, nine teachers had been hired for WSS with funding from the international program. I wanted to verify with A3 that I could add to my dissertation this piece of information that was seemingly specific and intimate to this school and district. A3 confirmed that I could add this information but also replied by laughing and saying, "I mean, come on, Connie, people know" (Fieldnote, 04/24/2019). A3 seemed to be implying that international education for economic means was an established reality, and we would be pretending to assume otherwise. Thus, my exploration of international education at WSS and within PMD – if viewed through a political economy perspective – revealed a type of ad hoc quality, despite the surrounding pedagogical focus on interculturalization, idealistic intents, and all the mechanisms that were in place to

[20] A telephone call interrupted our interview and I turned off the recorder. We resumed the interview after this call. Instead of interrupting A3's narrative to turn the recorder back on, I jotted notes during our conversation.

support this theoretical framework and the international students themselves. There was a sense that the program was conceived for economic reasons, especially in terms of much-needed funding, with the pertinent educational and pedagogically-oriented discourses applied once the program was already established.

A4's interview seemed to echo realities of necessary funding. When asked what the original goals and objectives for international education were, A4 stated that it was "two-fold," referencing how having international programs enhances schools but also, "there's the question of resource. It did add resources so we could run more courses" (Interview). A4's concerns are warranted considering how quality in school programming, courses, and services are directly correlated to communities' ability to adequately generate income from private funding sources (Fallon & Paquette, 2009; Poole & Fallon, 2015; Rozworksi & Kuehn, 2019). T1 spoke of hearing similar statistics like the statistics A3 reported regarding funding and how within WSS, "international students pay for eight full-time teachers." Meanwhile, T3 spoke to district geographical logistics and how international funding also helps to settle issues of declining enrollment. As T3 explains, "they bring in the population to run the school if the school is declining" (Interview). According to Waters (2006), public education sectors are not just dealing with funding issues but rather specific funding issues that occur when individual schools receive less governmental financing due to declining student numbers in these schools. In Waters' article, which details the spatial and geographical implications of internationalization, Metro Vancouver school boards such as the Vancouver School Board address such issues with strategic placement of international students in order to maintain those dwindling schools, their staffing, and any academic programming at risk of elimination. While written some time ago, Waters' explanation speaks to all the above illustrations of PMD's preservation and maintenance of staff and programming and overall funding needs, and therefore remains pertinent.

The prevailing discourses of international education are thus aligned with neoliberal ideology and an economizing form of globalization (Tarc, 2013). Schools take up discourses of global citizenship and intercultural understanding. However, with neoliberalism's prescription of less government interference, schools must partake in an incentivizing of such discourse to attract students "in the wake of reduced governmental support" (Tarc, 2013, p. 10). We must therefore examine the rules governing certain data excerpts or "texts" (Cheek, 2008). The earlier mention of teachers' and

administrators' acknowledgement of business orientations toward education and their use of business jargon to reference the international program are moulded by current and dominant systems. In Foucauldian terms, power can constrain knowledge but also how reality is framed (Cheek, 2008). Additionally, the apparatus of power controlling language and what can be known are tied to real-world contexts and even external, more material or tactical entities (Hook, 2001; Preece, 2009), hence why it was argued earlier that poststructuralism is not necessarily incommensurate with a political economy lens. Neoliberal propensities and reduced government funding in BC constrain the structure of the education system – creating the need for a business-motivated program (Fallon & Paquette, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Poole & Fallon, 2015) – and thereby constrain the ways in which the international program can be discussed and framed by school boards and educators alike.

However, while teachers and administrators were frank about the funding aspect, it seemed as though they were also confident and hopeful of the pedagogical and more idealistic intentions of the international program. Even though A3 addressed the root of international programming being about necessary funding, A3 also specified that a significant portion of international fees still contributed to programming for international students (Interview). Again, the focus of international education within PMD seems to orient towards cultural diversity. As discussed earlier, while internationalizing did and continues to serve an economic purpose, movement toward intentional interculturalization should – according to the teachers and administrators I spoke to – be the main concern with a purposeful integration of the entire study body through meaningful cultural exchange. With the program now more firmly established, A4 spoke of how there needs to be a refocus, stating:

> Um, and you know, as it's growing, our focus had to be on supporting our international students. But we are now in a good place where we can expand that thinking to our local students as well and really broaden- OK, let's, you know, really- how do we use these international students and enhance experience of- it- local students. How can we be intentional, right?

It was thus once the program was more fully established that PMD could then focus on the desired cultural exchange aspect.

This collision between the different wants and needs of the district as shaped by material conditions embodies the ad hoc characterization earlier introduced and can be

further understood with examples and references to Tarc's (2009; 2011; 2013; 2019) work on tensions. Tarc (2009) seems to be generally commenting upon complications that can arise when globalization intersects with education but in particular, he also refers to tension between the "dream of a liberal-humanist education" (2011, p. 110), or aspirational form of education with intent to create a better world through international understanding, and the instrumental, which encompasses the pragmatic or concerns with functionality. The pragmatic can mean satisfying a "neoliberal imaginary" (Tarc, 2011, p. 111), wherein education is competitively obtained by individuals to suit an international and economic function (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004). I will be discussing this later in the next chapter by detailing the second way in which neoliberalism and neoliberal thought interact with international education within the contexts of my thesis project. The pragmatic, however, can also refer to schools generating revenue, the topic in question for this chapter and current discussion. Tarc's references to tensions correspond with this continuously emerging issue of an ad hoc quality at WSS and PMD, a phenomenon I will be further elaborating upon in the next few sections.

5.5. Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural: Idealism and Pragmatism

Within the constraints of a neoliberal system, PMD and the district's associated educational organizations need to firstly satisfy pragmatic demands, mainly the demand to generate necessary revenue. This section explores these dynamics and examines the sustainability of such an operating system. In relation to these issues, this discussion incorporates consideration of student recruitment and I include one student's (Cindy) reported experience of navigating the homestay system. The issue of international students at the secondary level being of a young and potentially vulnerable demographic will also come into play.

In their interview, A2 described special support staff for international students that PMD later hired in order to accommodate duties and address issues that were previously attempted by school counsellors but were then deemed outside of the counsellors' reach and scope. As A2 recounts:

> We used to have counsellors that does this. But then we find out that it was too much work for the counsellor because it's not just checking in with [the students]. […] It was above and beyond what counsellors should be doing.

This sort of ad hoc process is reflective of Tarc's (2019) description of top-down initiatives wherein international programs – initially started in order to gain revenue – then hire the appropriate support staff to address the practical and/or pedagogical needs that arise. As I have already illustrated, PMD's aims seemed to be aligned with an aspirational, or liberal-humanist take on education with the district's focus on fostering intercultural connections. However, it is arguable that PMD's program began with a more pragmatic demand, what Tarc (2019) describes as a need for "revenue generation stream under declining government funding" (p. 737). Tarc explains that a pragmatic demand is usually followed by expectations that more idealistic or educational goals also be integrated, especially as the program unfolds and more pedagogically- and theoretically-based support is required. Tarc's explanation is therefore also similar to PMD's process of requiring funding to run programs and then its attempts reactively to integrate the more idealistic aims regarding cultural understanding.

A Foucauldian discourse perspective recognizes how knowledge exists in overlapping and sometimes contradictory spheres (Arribas-Ayllon & Walkerdine,2011), thus making it possible for intersections to arise between the neoliberal, liberal and even more critical imaginaries when discourses of internationalization are mapped (Pashby and Andreotti, 2016). Similarly, fulfilling pedagogical expectations coupled with the original pragmatic demands can become intricate as the circumstances surrounding both demands inform and influence one another and become entangled (Tarc, 2019). Programs need to find financially-sustainable and practical ways to maintain those appended progressive and/or pedagogical measures, creating a cycle of attempts to satisfy pragmatic and then idealistic needs and requirements. Approaches and intentions are rarely ever present in either "pure form" (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004, p. 173) with the idealistic and pragmatic sometimes becoming indistinguishable from one another, or the neoliberal and critical crossing as education is problematized using the "grammars and desires of modernity" (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016 p. 78). Thus, international education is oftentimes attempting at a form of "reconciliation of a dilemma" (Cambridge & Thompson, 2004) between competing yet overlapping forces.

Additionally, PMD's predicament of having to first address pragmatic demands sometimes resulted in unintended (Tarc, 2019) or even adverse effects that are quite contrary to the more aspirational discourses of international education. Some processes within the program revealed gaps in or neglected aspects of the program. In particular, there was a discrepancy between ease of initial student recruitment and students' actual experiences progressing through and navigating the program. To begin with, the initial set-up through which most of the students registered to become international students seemed very straight-forward and accessible. Fortuna Academy seems to dominate the industry with a well-established history of organizing homestays and with individual students and their families seeking Fortuna's services, but PMD also works directly with Fortuna and prospective students are actively referred to Fortuna by PMD on PMD's international education website. When I asked Yamato about working through Fortuna Academy to find a school program and homestay family, he replied with:

> But so, it's so easy. Basically, I did nothing. They did, like, everything. Yeah, to get Visa or find a host family, or, ah, the school I want- I will go or- like, basically everything.
>
> (Interview 3)

Yamato's depiction of working with Fortuna demonstrates how seemingly easy it is to initiate study abroad. Other study participants discussed similar processes or addressed the initial registration processes fleetingly because of the ease of embarking on their study abroad. However, such initial ease could later transform into much more convoluted and problematic processes, therefore also demonstrating how the system seems to be aimed at acquiring the business of the students first and foremost, leaving many complicated aspects of living abroad – especially for students so young – to be figured-out later through an as-needed basis, or sometimes, not at all.

The earlier-discussed issue of the international student planning agencies correlates with students' murky navigation processes, and such agencies were arguably conceived in response to oversights of public-school-run international programs. I restate that there is a difference between the agencies working independently from school districts and education agents who are contracted by school districts (including PMD), both of which I discuss in this section. The following exchange with A2 provides insight into the conception of several agencies:

> A2: About 12 years ago, I noticed that one of the agencies- and these are very new agencies, by the way, which very little resources are needed. They first showed up with the intent to help students get into a system, how to- how to become an international student, how to get in the system, how to get the support and what does it look like going to school here. They feel like they come in blind-folded. But more, like, they just need someone to explain the system.
>
> CLJ: That's so innocent. [Laughs.]
>
> A2: You're right. And eventually it got merged into the whole- what happens if the student gets kicked out and then there are students who are skipping a lot of classes. You get kicked out of school, that's what. And- and some people it's like, there are private schools that help you get around certain classes. "Is there any way to help me get into university?" And there are guarantees, guarantee of a Canadian university on, like, banners and advertisement if you walk around [the mall].
>
> (Interview)

The above exchange alludes to how international education systems require a certain amount of suave navigation, which many students might not have, as exemplified by A2's use of the phrase "they come in blind-folded." Agencies therefore fulfilled a need within the international education system. They initially started with the intent to support students in a system which students might not be comfortable nor altogether knowledgeable in navigating, a system that is more convoluted once students are past the initial ease of recruitment. And while A2 also describes how these same agencies transformed over the years into businesses with conspicuous educational plans, this transformation further hints at the equally-conspicuous forms of navigations students must perform in order to move fluidly throughout their study-abroad programs.

For instance, as seen above, A2 mentioned how independent agencies might offer ways "around certain classes" or even promise university admittance with their educational plans. Such promises and avenues suggested by private agencies speak to the potential difficulties many students might encounter while trying to reach these study abroad touchstones. T2 spoke of the desire students and their families have for the students to graduate on time and the frustration that ensues when this is not possible. T2 questioned:

> Um, they all want to graduate on time, even if they've arrived in Grade 10 and are beginner-beginners. They think or- they think they will be able to graduate. And in the past, there's been some countries where

> we've wondered if they've been promised that they will graduate on time because it's so insistent.
>
> (Interview)

Similarly, T1 outlined the case of one of their international students who had come with the impression that schooling abroad at WSS would be an easy feat. T1 stated, "he thought he was going to graduate based on just being signed up" (Interview). T1 did add that this student behaved with a certain level of entitlement by not putting in effort into his classes. Regardless, however, such developments and this overall student line of thinking in reference to program ease beg the question of: what are the overseas education agents contracted by school districts or any other intermediary actors telling or advertising to the students and their families? It is arguable that "material conditions" (Tarc, 2019, p. 738) have helped to shape international education at the secondary level. Meanwhile, ethical internationalization practices should instead include communication to students of potential interreference with their career and learning trajectories (Association of Canadian Deans of Education [ACDE], 2016). The ACDE is referring more to the pathways of higher education and even graduate students, but the same sentiment is applicable to the secondary sector, where students and their families should be made aware of the limitations of international programs and what they, or their connecting overseas agents, purportedly offer.

Both T1 and T2 are representative of the teaching side and it is therefore understandable that they are not as knowledgeable of how the program is portrayed overseas to prospective students; however, with one administrator's pronouncement that their role is "cut off from all the agents[21]," we can see how there are gray and unknown areas when it comes to attracting students from abroad. As well, I refer back to a point made earlier regarding the lack of Canadian regulation for use of contracted education agents and how agents' recruitment practices are relatively unknown and uninvestigated (CMEC, 2013; Elnagar & Young, 2021). Thus, while the illicitness of the independent planning agencies and the steps students are willing to take come into question, so too do the roots of why such avenues exist at all. We are made to question what Tarc (2013) might call a "lag" (Tarc, 2013) in the idealistic intents of any international

[21] They are referring here to the use of educational agents contracted by PMD.

education program, when students are brought here so swiftly and efficiently – satisfying government funding issues – but are then left to flounder.

The above instances are examples of more suspicious avenues students might take – perhaps due to gaps in understanding of PMD's program and what is advertised – and the businesses trying to capitalize on these gaps. However, in other cases, gaps in student support were much more obvious, and less about the discrepancy between program reality and students' understandings of the program. Cindy's case indicates just how difficult it might be for international students to manoeuvre their ways through certain aspects of their programs, especially with their parents – who are sometimes just as inexperienced about international programs – living so far away. Cindy was the student with the particularly traumatic first homestay experience. While she was able to change homestay families, it was not a simple process. Here, Cindy (Interview 3) explains trying to decipher steps she and her mother had to go through:

> Cindy: […] my mom said something like, we had to get the school to agree before we could transfer. I don't know why, even. […] At that point, I was like, "oh, isn't that weird?" Because if we can't live with these people, then we should transfer. Why do need to now have the agreement of the school before changing like that?
>
> CLJ: But at the end, was it right or not?
>
> Cindy: No, it wasn't right.

In the above exchange, Cindy explains her and her mother's attempts to change homestay families. Initially, Cindy's mother had been hesitant to change at all even though Cindy pressed her mother to inquire into a transfer. Cindy's mother instead told Cindy to remain with that first host family and "just try" (Cindy, Interview 2) because she was unsure of homestay etiquette and what the norms for interactions between homestay hosts and students were. From this specific case, there seemed to be no system in place to further guide families' understandings of the new experience of staying with a host family, nor to ensure that both parties are happy once students are initially installed in a home. Cindy informed me that her mother had to actively seek-out Fortuna and explain reasons for requiring the transfer. In the end, Cindy's mother had relented and began transfer processes, with Cindy rationalizing her mother's change of heart, "…because I'm far from home. So, if I become depressed or something like that, then nobody can help me" (Cindy, Interview 2). However, as shown in the above

exchange, once they had initiated the change, quite a bit of confusion ensued as they were both unsure of the process and there were mixed messages regarding protocol. Cindy and her mother thought that they had to obtain the approval of WSS before she could transfer, a process that irritated and did not make sense to Cindy. It turned out that this bit of information was inaccurate. Altogether, even though Cindy was unhappy with her living conditions, it seems families must work in advocating for themselves and navigating the system, despite initial recruitment of international students being seemingly easy.

It should be noted that Tarc (2019) claims his analysis does not aim to critique such processes or the pragmatic demand but rather aims to acknowledge the entanglement and the tensions, especially in order to understand what can be suppressing more aspirational intentions. For instance, a constraining issue is the earlier-mentioned lag in idealist intents behind more pragmatic motivations in internationalizing (Tarc, 2013). This can be compounded when institutions are also under strain to ethically and sustainably respond to the sheer increase in internationalizing activities (Association of Canadian Deans of Education [ACDE], 2016). Such lag can potentially lead to "unintended outcomes" (Tarc, 2019, p. 742). The cases in this section are examples of lag and unintended outcomes. Students embark on study abroad under certain pretences and promises and if there are discrepancies in these promises, students can falter in the international program. Students are then potentially susceptible to businesses like planning agencies that are geared to profit from international students. Moreover, there is the disparity between the ease at which students can initially come to Metro Vancouver to study, versus the more convoluted routes they must navigate once they have arrived.

5.6. Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural: Idealism and Pragmatism, a Filtering Down

This section further explores the younger demographic of secondary international students as part of the discussion of ad hoc processes. I include excerpts of teachers and administrators expressing concerns about and/or the importance of student support. Additionally, I return to Cindy's case, because her stories are prime examples of the issues that can arise when young students are studying abroad on their own.

T3 *(*Fieldnote, 18/10/2018*)* revealed their reservations about homestay programs, especially Fortuna's, after having students in their classes who confided terrible experiences. In one case, a father was so angry about the living conditions of his child's homestay that he complained to T3, who then urged the father to file a formal complaint. In explaining their reservations with homestay programs, T3 voiced their opinion that Fortuna's program, along with other similar programs, were originally intended for university- and college- aged students and that when it comes to working with younger students, these programs need to re-evaluate their courses of actions and support systems, instead of merely filtering the pre-existing structure to suit K-12. Even if Fortuna's program was not conceived in this fashion and/or a K-12 system was developed concurrently with their programming for older students, something still needs to be said regarding why Fortuna's program for K-12 is perceived as ad hoc.

It seems as though the same can be said about secondary school forays into internationalizing altogether, in that K-12 ventures into international programming are more novice in comparison to programs for university- and college-aged students. Indeed, A4 agreed that the secondary sectors participating in international education are "newbies" and that "it's been centuries post-secondary's been involved in international. A4 stated "[S]o, [PMD has] always gone to the post-secondaries for help" (Interview), and then proceeded to explain how PMD often looks toward research, literature and existing models of post-secondary internationalization to inform their internationalization processes. A4 is reiterating a point I have made in previous chapters regarding the dearth of information available on international education in the K-12 sector. However, while I have weighed the merits of using theoretical frameworks meant for internationalization of higher education in the K-12 sector, we still need to question the merits and potential ramifications of an ad hoc application of an existing, established and tangible post-secondary system in a secondary context, and what sorts of issues and tensions (Tarc, 2011; 2013; 2019) can result when taking into consideration much younger students with potentially different needs (Elnagar & Young, 2021; Tamtik, Trilokekar & Jones, 2020).

Teachers and administrators alike spoke of the significance of age-group in their discussion of forms of support that might enable or hinder international student socialization and adaptation. Like T1, A2 highlighted the difference between high school and university students in reference to concerns with support and or/adaptation:

> Because these aren't university students who've been striving to go. These are high school students you've been hand-holding through all the steps and I swear, most of [their parents] do their application with them. So, they just got signed up to it and they are just on their own. So, they need the support.
>
> (Interview)

Regarding support, A1 stressed the importance of having a solid homestay family:

> And students in homestays with less support and supervision do have problems, such as adjusting to life in Canada. And they often feel lonely and isolated and unhappy […] So, um, trying to get students into a good homestay, I think, is really, really important.
>
> (Interview)

It is therefore imperative to thoroughly examine the level of care necessary in supporting such young students, as well as the communities that might be involved in their care.

Again, I refer to Cindy's case in order to further the above arguments regarding just how important it is to take into consideration the age group of the students and the system(s) being applied accordingly. During our interview sessions and even while speaking casually in and around the classroom, Cindy often spoke of her first homestay experience in Canada before she transferred, and the strict rules her homestay hosts had for her and another international homestay student who was Cindy's roommate and who also ended up requesting a transfer. According to Cindy, these rules included but were not limited to: staying in their rooms or in the basement suite unless they were all eating meals together on the main floor, no watching television (unless the hosts were the ones to turn it on), no cooking (even though Cindy and her roommate were living in a basement suite which housed a kitchen), no opening the windows to their bedrooms, 12-minute restrictions on showering, and no use of the hallway light at night even if the students required a light to venture to the washroom (Cindy, Interviews 1 & 2).

The regulations and confinements seemed to come to a head when Cindy and her roommate were forbidden to join the homestay family in their Thanksgiving dinner, which resulted in Cindy's roommate being reduced to tears. The experience is related in the following excerpts:

> Cindy: […] for that holiday- ***Thanksgiving***- the Homestay Parents brought food down for me, for me and the other homestay student. So, they had this big party upstairs, very lively. You can hear everyone

> lively talking. And the other homestay student and I were downstairs, so sad. Because we missed home.
>
> CLJ: Oh. But they didn't allow you to go upstairs?
>
> Cindy: They wouldn't let us go upstairs. Wouldn't let us. "You both aren't allowed to come up." Like, I pitied myself. Like, the way they did this, we felt discriminated against.
>
> CLJ: So, here [indicating WSS], did you ask your friends- did you ask, "for ***Thanksgiving***, did you eat with your homestay families?"
>
> Cindy: Yes, I did ask. They were allowed to join in the parties and meals with their homestay families […] When we come here, we need a family more than just a rented room. And like- I feel as though we came here and paid money, and they just saw us as renters. And [my roommate] felt the same. She told me, regarding joining in for the party, joining in and eating with their family- he wouldn't let us join and she sat there and cried. Because maybe it's like self-respect or self-esteem, I think. It's like- how do we say? How do I put it? Ah, why do they treat us like this? Why are they treating us like this? We should be cared for like adopted children. We want love too because we miss home enough as it is. We are going to school so far away.
>
> (Interview 1)

While the homestay family's extremity and restrictiveness in their rules and regulations are debatable and subjective, again, it is more about the level of support and care that a secondary-aged student might require that is put into question (Elnagar & Young, 2021; Tamtik et al., 2020). With international students being away from their families and living in homestay situations, their care and responsibility for their care arguably extends well beyond the school itself. Here, Noddings' (2013) insight on the process of "deprofessionalization" (p. 174) is helpful. In essence, knowledge of how to work with students should extend beyond the educator-student relationship, enabling anyone involved within the students' overall community to be well-informed and better able to work with the students. There is a need for international programs to examine their programming and any extended interactions with international students (for example, through partnerships with associations such as Fortuna and corresponding homestay families) since there are so many points of potentially meaningful and impactful contact for each international student.

On this note, as PMD's goal is interculturalization, such endeavours to promote diversity should also extend beyond the school, as per Noddings' (2013) argument.

PMD's international education website specifies that experiences with homestay families should facilitate integration with the host family, as well as learning of Canadian culture, which go hand-in-hand with PMD's philosophy of intercultural exchange. Yet, Cindy and her roommate, who was also an international student, were left out of Thanksgiving festivities, arguably a prime opportunity for intercultural exchange within the overall international student experience. Encouragement for Cindy and her roommate to join and participate in such international student experiences would have been warranted, as opposed to discouragement or the students being barred from a North American holiday dinner altogether. The prospect of inclusion and creation of inclusive spaces are key aspects to fostering positive relationships that can thereby allow development of understandings of diversity (Keddie, 2012a). Additionally, as per Fraser's (2008) social justice model, there is injustice when individuals are denied opportunities to participate, may it be metaphorically and systemically or, as in this case, through Cindy's physically being barred from dinner.

Moreover, the fact that Cindy was afraid to voice her concerns for her own well-being alludes to the idea that perhaps the age and life experience of the student also needs to be taken into account. Cindy felt the need to appeal to her parents, and it was her mother – and not Cindy – who was the one who initiated the transfer, but only after some nudging on Cindy's part, as it was difficult for Cindy's mother to know the extent of Cindy's discomfort due to the distance and her mother's physical removal from the situation. Since young students are often hesitant to challenge their homestay arrangements due to a variety of reasons – including fear that they will embarrass their families or be seen as a problematic student – Popadiuk (2010) even suggests school administration closely monitor homestays situations. This concern takes us back to the issue of whether or not programs conceived for older students can be applied, ad hoc, to a secondary-aged population. T1 argues, "they're being treated like adults and they're not" (Interview). Meanwhile, T2 adds, "they often are writing their own sick notes […] or, sometimes I wonder how often they are seeing the guardian or what have you" (Interview).

Cindy's case also works to emphasize T2's point. On one of my visits (Fieldnotes, 21/01/2019*)*, Cindy revealed to me that she was looking for a local doctor and she asked me if there would be an interpreter for doctor's visits. According to research on Welcoming Communities funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada

(Esses et al., 2010), “Accessible and Suitable Health Care” (p. 6) is amongst one of the vital components for host countries to facilitate newcomer integration and belonging. PMD provides international students with basic public health insurance, similar to what is available for eligible residents of BC[22]. However, I would like to highlight the word “suitable” through Cindy’s pursuit of healthcare in Metro Vancouver.

While PMD’s team could provide technical information regarding students’ health insurance policy and what is covered, ultimately, finding the right doctor with whom she could communicate was up to Cindy. I tried to help Cindy by searching the online BC general practitioner registry to find doctors who could potentially speak Vietnamese and forwarded this to Cindy. However, many doctors were not receiving new patients. Rather than trying to navigate further, Cindy informed me that she would simply wait until she went back to Vietnam for the summer holiday to obtain a full medical examination.

Instead of addressing any health issues that could be potentially serious, Cindy was choosing to wait and return to Vietnam where she would be able to communicate with her doctor and where she would be navigating a familiar system with the support of her parents. Cindy’s quest can possibly instigate several lines of further inquiry. Firstly, however, I return to this idea of “suitable” (Esses et al., 2010) healthcare for newcomers. What is suitable to locals might not be as suitable to newcomers, with newcomers having potential added barriers to seeking appropriate care. For instance, the linguistic barrier can be particularly difficult and Esses and colleagues argue that making available interpreters properly trained for medical jargon should be a key part of newcomers receiving adequate care. Cindy – and arguably a number of international students – are confronted with this linguistic barrier and therefore a major obstacle to the care they should be receiving. Inclusivity and sustainable internationalization require international students have the support they need in navigating all the different systems and practices of the host institution and country (ACDE, 2016). Moreover, her case mainly serves to highlight the gaps that are exposed with younger students in the system when a system for older students – that seems already difficult enough to navigate – is applied (Elnagar & Young, 2021). And according to A2, the market for younger students is one that is increasing day by day with numbers rising considerably within the K-12 age group.

[22] See https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/health/health-drug-coverage/msp for information on what is available through the BC Medical Service Plan (MSP)

A2 warns against any assumptions regarding international education only involving older students:

> Sometimes it's taken so lightly because it's a misconception that this used to be university students and college students. They were mature enough. Now, though, the trend is getting younger and younger.
>
> (Interview)

Indeed, Yemini (2014) underscores globalization processes that are currently changing the landscape of education from earlier on, making international competence in some contexts imperative right from the kindergarten level. Meanwhile, we are made to wonder how this change is being addressed outside of the recruitment process, especially with teachers and administrators emphasizing the need for proper support and/or the students' age and how this can affect support. International students are already making difficult transitions through studying abroad but processes can be exasperated when considering how these same transitions might psychologically impact young adolescents (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011). Reflecting on these potential impacts and the pressures acclimating international students must face T2 considered, "[a]nd try living up to that while still being a teen in a Canadian environment is- is really tricky" (Interview).

Students like Anya seemed aware of the significance of age in terms of studying abroad. Since Anya was here for only a 5-month program, we discussed what it would be like for her to attempt a longer sojourn, much like some of her peers were experiencing. While a longer sojourn in the future was still an option, Anya stated, "yeah, and I think maybe I'm too young. I don't know." She referenced a few of her peers, specifically one classmate who had been here for 3 years:

> And she lives here for 3 years. And she lives with her aunt and cousins but not with her mother or father. And it's very- I was so shocked. Because it's not normal for us to go- it's so long time to us, a country without parents and, yeah.
>
> (Interview 1)

Anya's comments demonstrate her acknowledgement that younger students might need more support. And even though Anya was "shocked" that this peer could live abroad for so long at that age, she was still referencing someone who had the support of family members who could potentially advocate for them. Meanwhile, many international

students – included those who participated in this study – were and are here on their own. T3 and A3 – in their individual interviews – discussed the repercussions for students without that support, by referencing some of the cases they have witnessed:

> T3: Some of them have never been- I'm sure have never been away from home before, have been, like, taken care of, and then all of a sudden, they're not eating properly, they're not sleeping properly, right?
>
> A3: I know they come in as teenagers but they're still kids and when they don't have the structure and support around them that they need, ah, and things do go badly. It's hard to recover, you know, to get them back on board with what, why they're here, why they're in this school […] You- you felt almost helpless. Like, you know, I want to help this kid. They- they're not coming to my class. What do I do? Who do I call? And the process is you have to go through so many layers.

A3 did go on to say that PMD strives to make sure that the structures are in place for student success. However, with such issues as the above examples taking place and gaps presenting themselves, it is still evident that these mechanisms are an ad hoc and delayed response to the "top-down driver" (Tarc, 2019, p. 737) that is revenue generation. As a whole, the above teacher and administrator musings and instances – including Cindy's case – reference the earlier-posed question regarding adequate levels of support for this particular group of students, who are not university- and college-aged, yet are expected to navigate the system with an older student's capabilities, and often in another language, no less. The community involved in caring for students is very important, especially because – as earlier highlighted and as I will further accentuate throughout several subsequent sections – international students are becoming younger. With this being the case in addition to the fact that integration is fluid and unpredictable, policies need to be more dynamic and adaptable as opposed to being derived from regulations conceived for broader contexts and uncritically applied anywhere (Tolley, 2011).

5.7. Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural: Necessary Funding but for What Purposes?

I have discussed the reality of international education as a source of necessary funding for public school districts in BC and in the specific case of PMD. Here, I present teachers' and administrators' accounts of their understandings of funding, and the

intricacies involved when complications emerge regarding provision of support for mental health or learning disabilities.

A discussion about core competencies demonstrates an example of such issues. In BC, students must demonstrate that they are reflecting upon a set of "core competencies" or social proficiencies in varied ways throughout their journeys in different classes and contexts in the K-12 system (BC's Curriculum, n.d.). On one of my school visits (Fieldnotes, 18/10/2018), T3 was handling and organizing different translated copies of the core competencies for the ELL classes. As reflection on core competencies are needed for graduation and are therefore arguably high-stakes, the ELL teachers had collectively decided that they should be reflected upon in the students' home languages since core competencies were quite "heavily language-based" (T3, Fieldnote, 18/10/2018). As we were looking over the handouts together, T3 revealed that the ELL teachers had translated them through Google, even though the ELL teachers themselves were all unsure of the accuracies of such translations.

In their interview, T2 stated that communication was a particularly difficult aspect for working with international students, even though Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS) and pertinent international administrative staff strive to find translators and/or other ways to ease translation and communicative issues. From T2's statement, it seems as though SWIS workers are included within the system of support for international students. However, while T3 and I discussed the core competencies, I asked about whether or not the forms could be more officially translated for the students. T3 replied that it was difficult because official translators are under the umbrella services of SWIS workers who can be called upon for permanent residents, landed immigrants and citizens, but international students – as they do not fall under any of the above – could not benefit from these services. A2 (Interview) corroborated that SWIS workers were outside the realm of support for international students. While there are different administrative staff members working within PMD's international program who can alleviate communication issues, these staff members have other official roles outside of translation. Altogether, avenues for supporting international students in reference to language issues were not clear. With such confusion regarding specifications and designations, and because the ELL classes were classrooms of mixed-status students, it was more efficient to simply have the core competency worksheets translated via Google. It should be noted once again that core competencies are a requirement.

Using Ilieva's (2016) take on Fraser's (2008) justice model to analyze circumstances surrounding Metro Vancouver's English as an Additional Language (EAL) population, it can be discerned that the needs of the international students are not being met, with lack of resources and recognition of language needs effectually preventing these students from adequately participating in these forms of salient academic experiences.

The above situation therefore speaks to an interesting development during my time at WSS and communicating with all the educators. Teachers and various administrators seemed knowledgeable of where the funding for the schools was generally allocated, with administrators like A3 additionally speaking – as mentioned earlier – towards how a significant portion of international student funding is re-contributed towards the international students themselves and programs for them. As earlier-discussed, teachers were aware of the money international students generated and how such funds contributed to the hiring of new teachers. However, other specifics regarding funding – even if they were important specifics – were more or less only speculated about. It was difficult to find accurate information as some teachers and administrators relayed different facts regarding regulations and funding allocations, while at other times, they assumed such funding for students was in place but were not quite sure. In other cases, it was speculated that a specific funding should or did exist considering how much international students were paying in order to study here, but circumstances surrounding such assumptions were convoluted. Thus, another ad hoc characteristic concerns inconsistencies as regulations and allocations are tacked-on, eliminated, and speculated-upon in response to emerging issues, thereby furthering Tarc's (2013) argument that there are idealistic visions for international education, but these visions are subject to pragmatic and real-life issues, contributing to the overall sense of "ambiguities, contradictions and tension" (p. 5).

Complications can arise when it comes to more critical issues such as mental health or learning disabilities when there is confusion as to what is provided, and what can or should be provided for international students. For instance, in addition to speaking about homestay quality and gray areas in regards to language and translation support, T3 (Fieldnotes, 18/10/2018) raised the question of mental health and how students' mental health issues can slip through the cracks amidst registration waivers and discrepancies in definitions of mental health between cultures and countries. A particular quote from Tolley (2011) regarding immigration is applicable to explain both

this particular circumstance as well as Cindy's medical navigations, in that integration is "a human process that is often submerged in bureaucratic wrangling" (p. 40). In cases such as these, teachers and administrators had both opinions and concerns over the district's responsibility and obligation.

For A3, it is an issue of safety when mental health is concerned. A3 went on to say:

> A3: […] I'm not sure if we need to go through all the steps to then prove that they have a mental health issue just to send them home. I feel like that's enough for me. You know? I mean, if they've missed school for X amount of days and I- I mean, I don't know. I just feel like a doctor's note and, ah, a psych- this whole process, and then, like- like, how much are we on the hook for? I don't know. I don't know what the answer is. Like, how much do we invest? You know, how much do we put in? Like, do we- like, do you know what I mean? Like, I don't know what the answer is. Like, it's- it's- like- right? […] I just- my concern is someone's going to get hurt. You know? Like, I don't want to be involved in a situation where we forced the kid. Or, we're going through all these processes of keeping them here and then something happens and, who's- then- then what? […] I read the agencies[23] and they- it's pretty clear to me that they weren't supposed to be here in the first place. Like, if they have severe issues, they're not supposed to be here.
>
> CLJ: It's the agencies that screen them, right?
>
> A3: Yes. Yeah.
>
> (Interview)

According to A3, the connecting agents are the ones who are responsible for screening the students and when they are not properly screened, it is an issue of safety for the student and potentially those around them. In such extreme cases, A3's opinion was that the student needs to leave the program, although at the same time, A3 (Interview) is still hesitant, questioning, "how much is our responsibility?"

In regards to the screening process, such waivers are important because international students are not eligible for the forms of support that local students are if issues should arise and leave the students vulnerable during their sojourn. T3 informed me that any mental health issues and learning disabilities cannot be formally accessed or even addressed if the students are not residents (Fieldnotes, 18/10/2018). The

[23] A3's use of "agencies" here is actually in reference to the education agents contracted by PMD.

following excerpts taken from separate interviews are teachers and administrators adding to this discussion:

> T1: You can't get them the help that they need 'cause it has to be all under the table, so whether it's medication or behaviour support, you can't get those from the school system for the international students. So, it's a lot. ELL teachers are having to find- like, go and do research and become experts in, like, behaviour management of ADHD or, um, I know that in this school, a couple years ago, we had a student that we strongly suspected had autism. So, we- now we got to go and research supports for autism. 'Cause we know that sending them home isn't a good solution. So, that doesn't actually answer the strategies.

> T2: And then there's also the students who arrive with, ah, seeming-learning issues. So, it's interesting because their international contract, one of the lines, is that there can be no educational difficulty. Um, but- or no educational issue. I can't actually remember the phrasing of it. Um, but often we have students who we think have undiagnosed learning issues or we wonder sometimes if it has been diagnosed but it's been, sort of- […] sort of, ignore and see, "oh, maybe they'll do better in Canada where they accept more of these things"

> A1: And I think parents, they don't want to tell 'cause they- then they don't think their kids are going to be welcomed in- in a Canadian school but they come, and they're in our classes and we want to work with them and so that whole cultural piece about being quiet about their child learning needs and just say, "it'll go away, it'll go away. Nobody's going to notice." It's not true. We notice.

Additionally, according to A3, when students or their families are adamant about staying and avoiding detection, there are further avenues of evasion once students are here if international education programs need to actively seek out and engage the student to evaluate the severity of the situation:

> A3: Another issue is that kids will go from custodian - so they'll be part of an agency- and if it's not working out with that agency, they will move to another one. So, [Metro Vancouver's] full of these private agencies that will recruit these kids and these kids will jump ship […] then we are now in transition with these kids, we can't find a custodian. They're not with this one or this one.

Thus, while there is a screening process which is supposed to act as a system in and of itself to alleviate issues of mental health or learning disabilities, there seem to be students and their families finding ways to bypass the system, or students and their potentially complex issues are merely slipping through the system. A point of interest is the business-like manner and the applicable business terminology (Block, 2018; Gray 2012; Gray & Block, 2012), with which the system is put into place. Students sign a

"contract," effectually entering an agreement and it is assumed this business agreement will suffice in clearing complex issues such as mental health or learning disabilities. In theory, this contract supposedly eliminates the issue of providing further support for students with any underlying issues. But in reality, as evident through T1's accounts, it is the teachers who must work outside of their reach to find resources to support their students. To further exacerbate issues, T3 (Fieldnotes, 18/10/2018) added that oftentimes, any undesignated underlying issues are treated as communicative issues due to language that can be addressed within ELL classes. The community of ELL teachers are then scrambling to find ways to provide extra care for these students, even though such care is outside of their domains.

As can be seen in A3's earlier statements, the issue of safety should be the key element in dictating how mental health issues should be approached, but A3 acknowledges that there is still a gray area, and it is not so easily discernable what the district should or should not be responsible for. The same gray area seems to exist regarding learning disabilities or any other potentially undesignated issues. For T1 and A1, international students with underlying issues should be supported and cared for, especially if they are already in the system. This sentiment can be found in A1's statement above and additionally through T1's comment of:

> I think that- I think as a school or- nah, a school system, if we're going to accept international students, we need to start to accept that some of them have learning disabilities as international and whether or not we charge them for those supports- um, I still think we should be giving those supports. It's- yeah, it's a personal feeling of mine.
>
> (Interview)

At the time that I was with WSS, PMD was exploring issues of mental health. However, this was after cases had arisen, as can be seen by the level of frustration voiced by some teachers and administrators, pointing once again to the lag as pedagogy strives to keep up with other, more pragmatic, internationalizing initiatives (Tarc, 2013). Additionally, as much as the question of whether or not international students should be additionally supported is a gray area, so too does the question of "how" to support them seem gray. Already, the issue of funding is intricate, and at times even perplexing. T2 gave examples of just how perplexing funding can be by highlighting the issue of textbooks:

> […] I've- that's definitely- like, the Grade 10s in Science don't have a textbook that they can bring home […] They can't bring them home because there aren't enough copies. And these are students who pay thousands and thousands and thousands of dollars and, yeah.
>
> (Interview)

On this topic of funding, T1 asked rhetorically how WSS could still afford to pay for 8 full-time teachers if a portion of international student money was to go to additional support systems. With how convoluted the allocation of funding is and the different designations for which supports different categories of students can draw upon, T1 suggested that the realization of an official support system for international students would effectually become a "logistics nightmare" (Interview). A related issue, then, that will be explored in the next section is how funding is allocated or should be allocated for activities and other social aspects of the international student program within PMD.

5.8. Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural: Funding Versus the Intercultural, a Great Divide, and Ensuing Tensions

Together with the lack of clarity in regard to provision of support in areas such as translation, mental health, and learning disabilities, there was no clear consensus regarding funding for several other aspects of the international student program. This lack of consensus, once again, left gray areas in my overall understanding of the international program at PMD and created a series of questions as other related issues and gaps were consequently highlighted. Data in this section speak to the unclear circumstances in terms of funding for students' extracurricular activities. There is an additional exploration of students' participation in these activities, as well as rationales behind the international program's planning of activities. I also address student belonging and the divide between international students and the rest of the student body, issues which can then be linked back to discussion of PMD's programming.

Attempts at fostering socialization and cultural exchange and the organization of such endeavours provide an example of complex funding dynamics. With fostering cultural exchange as the main intent for PMD's international program, fostering connections and social interactions as a whole was therefore important and necessary. The following excerpts are descriptions taken from separate administrator interviews of

how PMD attempts to foster these connections and create instances for student interaction:

> A4: So, they'll do a luncheon every month and- and to get the students together, really to give them some updates, to check up on them. They will have- they will- some of them have blogs, some of them use Instagram. "Hey, join this club. This is try-outs time for the, you know, soccer team." 'Cause they want them to get connected to the school. Um, they also do some field trips, 'cause they- again, to connect students together.
>
> A3: So, they organize team bonding and group bonding events and I've been on a whole bunch of those. You know, they'll go down to Granville Island and have a scavenger hunt or they'll go up to Grouse Mountain and do some snow-shoeing. Like, they'll do some really cool thing for the kids. Ah, or sometimes they're in school. I know there's pumpkin-carving contests.

Such opportunities were appreciated by students like Lindsey, who enjoyed the monthly international student meetings and the free lunches offered. When I asked Lindsey what was her favourite aspect of PMD's international program, she laughingly replied, "Um, we got paid- like, we don't pay for anything 'cause it's all free" (Interview 3). This part about everything being free, however, was a complex situation.

T1 provided an example of how the issue of "it's all free" is complex:

> […] or, like, fieldtrips. International students don't pay funds for fieldtrips, right, because they've already- it's already put into their tuition […] Sometimes teachers don't know that or they don't- principals don't always tell teachers that. Admin doesn't inform and so they're asking kids to pay for things they shouldn't be paying for […] Yeah, they just give the same- like, they give them the same form as everybody else but the teachers don't know that international students shouldn't pay for school fees because they've already paid for them. Um- ah, one of my students, like- the class was going on a river-rafting trip, and it was like, $100 and they're, like, "no they have to pay." And I was like, "but." They're like, " 'cause it's not mandatory." So, the whole school's going- ah, the whole class is going. So, it, kind of, is mandatory. So, their funds should- that should be included.
>
> (Interview)

According to T1, with the amount of money that international students already pay, all field trips were and should be included. However, not all teachers or educators at WSS were aware of this situation and through T1's above retelling of a discussion with another teacher, it is arguable that T1 was not entirely sure of the regulations either. It

seemed that WSS was often sorting out such intricacies in terms of field trips and other student events. For example, during one of my school visits (Fieldnotes, 13/11/2018), a morning bulletin announcement included updated information regarding a senior dance arranged for grades 10-12. The announcement was amending a previous posting about the dance and it was now being stated that international students were receiving a discounted price for dance tickets. I wondered about this updated information and why there was a price change, or, if tickets were already discounted for international students, why this fact was not known at the time when the dance was first announced and advertised. Such confusion, as can be seen through this issue with the dance tickets and as discussed by T1, inevitably led to an arbitrary situation in which some international students were being made to pay for fieldtrips and some were not. To make matters more complex, there were other fieldtrips that were arranged specifically for the purpose of socializing the international students and getting them to meet and get to know one another. As A4 explains:

> […] 'Cause internationals are going to connect first to each other. And then they will, at that- after that, then they will become more- expand and take more chances and- and connect with local Canadians. But normally they start with each other and then expand.
>
> (Interview)

A4 thus provided reasonable explanations for arranging instances of interaction specific to international students. However, the students themselves had different and varying reactions to such arrangements. For example, one of the fieldtrips arranged for international students was a major trip to Whistler. Both Yamato and Anya referred casually to attending a Whistler trip. When I was able to speak more directly to Anya about the trip, I realized that there had been a misunderstanding and that Anya had not attended the international student trip but rather another one arranged by WSS for a mix of students. The following is an excerpt from our conversation when I asked why Anya had chosen to go on another Whistler excursion instead of the excursion planned specifically for international students:

> Anya: 'Cause it was cheaper.
>
> CLJ: Oh, really?
>
> Anya: Yeah, it was a lot- it was a lot cheaper. And I just want to go one day there and not a whole weekend. So, it was cool. I don't know. And

> all my friends decide to go there. So, the Canadian friends. So, and then I went with them.
>
> (Anya, Interview 2)

Anya's reasoning of "it was a lot cheaper" again draws attention to the element of funding when it comes to international student activities. Granted, the international student trip to Whistler was for a whole weekend, as Anya indicated, and this factor alone would determine its higher cost in comparison to the one-day excursion Anya attended. Thus, while there is still confusion about what paid activities and fieldtrips are included within international student fees, it is also understandable that such larger excursions would require international students to pay additional fees. However, there is this level of exclusivity – when there are extra international student trips that require supplementary funds – that emphasizes a misconception about international student wealth, privilege, and cosmopolitanism (Shin, 2012), thereby creating a divide between students.

Firstly, it must be pointed out that there is a misconception regarding international students' assumed socioeconomic status. T1 referenced that misconception with:

> I think- a lot of times international students from content teachers or classroom teachers, they get this rep that they maybe all rich kids or all the entitled kids that I was talking about before. Um, but I do think that teachers need to be aware that they do come for a variety of reasons. Um, and that families, they're not all well-to-do families and sometimes are sacrificing huge amounts financially to get them here. Um, and that all students have a story but with the international kids, sometimes it's harder to get that story.
>
> (Interview)

Instead of this assumed blanket-wealth, international students come from diverse backgrounds, as indicated by T1 above with the statement regarding family sacrifices and the earlier discussion of students making that "transnational wager" (Wu & Tarc, 2021b, p. 908). Meanwhile, through my walks about the classroom, I overheard international students discussing amongst themselves that trips such as the Whistler trip were too expensive for them to take part (Fieldnotes, 19/11/2018). In reference to another extra international student excursion to Tofino, Iman expressed to me "it's quite expensive" (Interview 2) in explaining why he would not be attending. Such extra excursions can thereby accentuate a divide between those who are able to afford to

attend and those who cannot. However, this divide is not only amongst international students – and concerning just money – but symbolic of an overall divide between international students and the rest of the student body.

While A4's explanation regarding international students requiring the time and space to expand their social groups makes sense, such situations can be quite nuanced. When I asked Iman about his attending any of the international student activities, he replied:

> Ah, the reason is, like, I want to go with my friends, actually. So, they- when they're not attending, so, I'm not seeing a reason to go.
>
> (Iman, Interview 2)

Not only is there a monetary factor in Iman's not attending the extra international student excursions, but he also chose not to attend because his other friends – referring to those who are not international – are not attending. Similarly, Anya indicated that while the weekend-long trip to Whistler was too expensive, she specifically wanted to go on an excursion wherein her "Canadian friends" (Interview 2) could also participate. Such circumstances – though perhaps just due to oversight or pedagogical lag (Tarc, 2013) in program development – seem to be contrary to purposeful interculturalization and integration as heralded by interculturalization academics like Garson (2016) and upheld by PMD.

Additionally, the divide between international students and local students, and a gap in interculturalization and integration was arguably already an issue without any reference to extra international student activities. At this point, it is necessary to analyze this divide before discussing how any program intervention (or lack thereof) can potentially exacerbate issues. Assumptions regarding wealth aside, there are still other issues that can work to marginalize international students and we must therefore question how international students can be positioned simultaneously as "both privileged *and* vulnerable" (Stein, 2017, p. 19, italics in original). In this sense, I return to some of the literature and frameworks regarding the importance of community and inclusion, as well as having adequate care and/or support.

I begin a discussion of this divide with several of the students' experiences regarding attempts to socialize. On an occasion in which Thom was casually updating

me about his life (Fieldnotes, 4/12/2018), he mentioned that he was volunteering outside of school in order to socialize and meet new people but that in general, “it’s hard to make friends.” Elaborating upon difficulties meeting new people, Yamato (Interview 2) described his initial experiences in Canada:

> Yamato: The thing is, the Canadian people, ah, can speak so fast. So, if I cannot, like, understand what they are saying, I cannot- of course, I cannot, ah, talk with them. So, the first time I cannot, like- my listening skills also bad. So, like, if they, ah, like- they are trying to speak to me, but I cannot understand. So, like, the, ah- we cannot make conversation. […] Yeah, that's the problem if I don't know how to say- like, how to say, "what did you say" or like, "can you speak slowly," yeah.

Even though Yamato informed me that communication eased after he was more comfortable with English, and that it was becoming easier to meet new people, he still replied “ah, I think, still hard” when I asked if he was making friends with the local students. By his third interview after being at WSS for a whole school year, Yamato claimed, “most of my friends are internationals.” Shin (2013; 2014) notes how the study abroad students of her research usually resort to socializing only with other study abroad students. Meanwhile, as evidenced through research on immigrant populations as well as with international students, much of successful transitioning into host societies – and thereby closing the divide between locals and those perceived as outsiders – is dependent upon friendships or the social relationships available to those transnational individuals, both inside and outside their newcomer circles (Guo & Guo, 2016; Hébert, Lee & Sun, 2003; Kashima & Loh, 2006; Li, 2010; Marginson, 2011; 2014; Marginson & Sawir, 2012; Minichiello, 2001; Popadiuk, 2009; Raffo & Reeves, 2000; Sawir et al., 2008).

Cindy also described the difficulties of socializing with those outside of the international program at WSS. She discussed a particular moment when she saw a classmate outside of school, at whom she smiled. However, the classmate “ignored” Cindy, leading Cindy to additionally surmise:

> Like, Canadian people are not very friendly. Like, ignoring me. Like- I- when I was in Vietnam, I heard that Canadians aren't racist, that they will be friendly. But when I come here, they actually ignore me […] Like, it's not what I thought it would be, that they would be friendly to me. Because, sometimes, like- like, we want to make friends with people. Like, if I can't actually speak, if I smile or greet them- but she

> just ignored me. Like, "you can smile all you want but I'll just do my thing."
>
> (Cindy, Interview 2)

Similar to Yamato, despite her efforts, Cindy was not able to socialize as much with local students.

Cindy added that when she spoke English, it was mostly with other international students and not with any Canadian students, and that otherwise, “in general, aside from Vietnamese people, I don’t really have friends.” Even when international students purposefully attempt to expand their social circles (Wu & Tarc, 2021a) they are oftentimes only able to socialize within their own cultural groups (Minichiello 2001; Wu & Tarc, 2021a). Meanwhile, Minichiello (2001) emphasizes the importance of socializing with local students in addition to co-nationals as a form of mentorship to ease transition into the new environment; even “loose affiliations” (Hébert et al., 2003, p. 104) – such as those Cindy might be attempting to establish by smiling at her classmate – are important in adding to a sense of belonging.

From Thom’s, Yamato’s and Cindy’s accounts, there is an overall sense that the onus is on the international student to initiate interactions across cultures. It was up to Thom to seek out opportunities like volunteering in order to make friends, with his efforts still proving the task to be a difficult one. Yamato felt there was a communication barrier because of his inability to ask clarifying questions. Meanwhile, Canadians would speak quickly to Yamato without making the effort to be more communicative. Cindy tried to initiate an interaction with a peer but was “ignored.” Thus, while establishing social ties and networks can lead to student belonging, these processes are limited by the forms of systems within which individuals are moving (Raffo & Reeves, 2000). As presented in the Literature Review in Chapter 2, international students’ agency can be strengthened through cross-cultural relationships (Marginson, 2011; 2014; Marginson & Sawir, 2012). In this sense, cross-cultural relationships enable students to communicate on their own behalf, thus fostering students’ senses of securities as well as their capacities to exercise self-determining agency. This relationship is cyclical but still quite dependent upon opportunities for contact between international students and locals. Research surrounding welcoming immigrants also suggests that there should be direct effort on behalf of locals and the host country to engage newcomers (Guo &

Guo, 2016). However, it is often solely the responsibility of the newcomers to both adjust to being in a new setting and engage with others (Hébert et al., 2003; Marginson & Sawir, 2012). While PMD's aim is interculturalization, there was not much of a system in place to help ease barriers for international students nor add to their agency.

Altogether – as can be seen through the above examples – there are existing issues and difficulties regarding international student integration. However, there is an additional discrepancy or pedagogical lag (Tarc, 2013) between PMD's program organization versus its intention or promise of purposeful cultural exchange or integration. Such discrepancies or lag can arguably contribute to any existing divide between international students and non-international students. Divisions amongst international students and between international students and local students can be heightened as mentioned earlier by having extra international student activities requiring supplementary funding; however, divisions can be further accentuated – even inadvertently – through PMD's convoluted funding allocations. An example of divisions arising from such complexities can be found in the next example.

Iman discussed the other activities held for international students at WSS that did not require additional fees, adding that he quite enjoyed activities such as ice cream sundae-decorating and pumpkin-carving contests. T2's examination of these activities provided an alternate view, as can be seen from the following excerpt:

> T2: But the resident students feel really excluded. Like, you know, they say there's pumpkin-carving.
>
> CLJ: Oh, yeah, I saw that.
>
> T2: And the pumpkin-carving was- is completely international students. What a cool experience it would be for ELL students but- right?
>
> CLJ: Ah, I didn't think about that
>
> T2: Like, the Residents and the PRs and all of those people
>
> CLJ: 'Cause they're even in the same community as the international students and-
>
> T2: -They are in the same community. These are their peers-

> CLJ: -They see them every day.
>
> T2: Their classmates are- are able to go to these things and they can't and so it's really tricky and I wish- sometimes, I ask, you know, "is there funding for the regular students?" We often get field trips covered by some of the international funding.
>
> (Interview)

When internationalization discussions and initiatives are aimed solely at the international population, we tend to exclude others, who are sometimes equally marginalized, from educational opportunities (ACDE, 2016); this is despite the original objective of internationalizing involving integration of student populations.

From Iman's and Anya's statements regarding attending special international student excursions without their peers – peers that included non-international students – it can be assumed that further integration is desired by the students themselves. On this note, I reiterate that the funding allocations are unclear. Here, Deschambault's examination (2015; 2018) of the BC education system's obscured allocation of resources derived from international tuition fees becomes pertinent. In his work, he explains how unclear categorization of students and school- and district-discretionary spending of international revenues can impact policy for ELL students, potentially even detracting funding from ELL support and programming. Thus, in addition to having divisive consequences between international and local students as described above, skewed distribution of funding can also affect equitable relations with local ELL students, a group inextricably linked to international students' socialization and overall network of communities. With PMD and WSS, there could be funding for endeavours such as inclusion of residents in international student activities; however, such endeavours were not made apparent and if they did exist, were not uniformly advocated for across program activities, revealing inconsistencies in the program and tensions between pragmatic and idealistic intents (Tarc, 2011; 2013; 2019). When the existing diversity in schools is not harnessed, the marketing and commodifying rationales become foregrounded to seem like the only drivers for international education (Tamtik, 2018).

There is acknowledgement of potential issues regarding divides, as evidenced in A4's commentary on the district's desire to collapse student labelling of "international" and "local" because international students do not enjoy the distinctive label (see section 5.1). However, such idealistic desires are oftentimes not reflected in the concrete

structuring of international programs (Stein, 2019). Government stakeholders are oftentimes focused on the marketing of international programs (Tamtik & O'Brien-Klewchuk, 2020) while those working in the schools with students are the ones absorbed in issues of student welfare and educational experiences (Tamtik, 2020). It can be up to individual teachers like T2 to ruminate on possibilities regarding officially allocating funding toward better integrating residents and international students. Oftentimes, teachers end up being the "change agents in education" (Marginson & Sawir, 2012, p. 8). At one point during the interview and the discussion revolving around inclusion for students outside of the immediate international program, T2 wondered aloud, "actually, maybe that's something I should ask PAC[24] about." We cannot exactly disparage the district's intercultural goals; but merely voicing these intents and "simply increasing the number of marginalized identities" (Keddie, 2012a, p. 23) or having "the mere presence of international students on campus" (Guo & Guo, 2017, p. 862) will not necessarily promote diversity. The students' saddening stories of their attempts toward belonging support the arguments made by Keddie and Guo and Guo. Altogether, the initial descriptions of PMD's activities reveal the idealistic intention behind such initiatives but within a neoliberal system – wherein the pragmatic entails firstly addressing revenue generation for under-funded schools and educational programs – specifics that would benefit intercultural exchange are lost, and idealistic visions are obscured and can sometimes become "more slogan than substance" (Tarc, 2013, p. 5).

5.9. Undoing Internationalization and the Intercultural: Idealism and Pragmatism, a Further Filtering Down

This section provides details about Lindsey's experiences in elementary school, specifically highlighting obstacles she faced in terms of inclusion and the discrimination she encountered while speaking Mandarin. Such obstacles reemphasize the gaps in interculturalization intents and, once again, accentuate the notion of filtering down and the ad hoc use of an internationalization model meant for a different student age and demographic. As a reminder, I restate here that Lindsey was in the 8th grade at the time of my visits with WSS but had experience being an international student through attending elementary school within PMD.

[24] Parent Advisory Council

As we were discussing her experiences, Lindsey confided:

> Um, like, I don't, like, really, like my elementary school […] So, like, the people's like- ah, they're like, don't really like international. But like really- a teacher who was really nice is- was my ELL teacher.
>
> (Interview 1)

Elaborating all throughout our different interview sessions, Lindsey spoke of how she – as an international student – was made to feel segregated and removed from the rest of her peers while at her elementary school. Lindsey described a situation where she was placed into a group for a project by her regular classroom teacher and two students from within the same group removed themselves to start a new group:

> And, like, one of them- he's Chinese but he- but his voice and, um, he- he came here, like, 3 or 5 years. And he was- he know I'm Chinese and I don't talk to him, like any of times. So, he just- he doing the new one, like- we're doing the same presentation, like same Power Point but he's- he doing a new one with his friend. And we're- 'cause, like, in that group, we have 2 ELL students. So, like, we feel like very confused and yeah.
>
> (Interview 3)

Lindsey identified that this classmate was able to speak Chinese but that he was a local and not international student. When I asked whether she felt the use of Mandarin would have eased the process of working together, Lindsey replied:

> Lindsey: No.
>
> CLJ: No? Why not?
>
> Lindsey: 'Cause, um, they just like, um, came here very long time and I can't join them, like, yeah.
>
> (Interview 3)

Lindsey was effectually identifying her status as an international student as a factor in creating the divide between herself and her peers, pointing to the other student having been "here [for a] very long time" as in indicator of why she would not be able to "join them."

It should also be noted how oftentimes the label of "ESL" can encompass a stigmatized identity positioning associated with deficit (Kanno & Applebaum, 1995;

Kanno, 2000; Marshall, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Talmy, 2004). From Lindsey's story of her classmate and group project, it can be argued that there exists a hierarchy dividing recent from older ESL members (Talmy, 2004). Students work to avoid being marginalized or seen as the Other, and in order to better assimilate into dominant cultures (Kanno, 2000; Talmy, 2004). However, these responses to their own marginality, and therefore adherence to and reproduction of the same discourses, can serve to further stigmatize ESL positionality as a whole (Talmy, 2004). In Lindsey's case, these dynamics can reinforce the identity and positionality of international ESL students as newcomer, but also Other. Thus, everyday school dynamics and minute classroom actions can propagate and reproduce a certain existing culture around ELL and hierarchies within ELL (Talmy, 2004).

Even though Lindsey's general description of her elementary school experiences seems disheartening, a silver lining was her description of her ELL teachers as can be seen in the first excerpt – a positive description which she also repeated throughout her interviews. Lindsey pinpointed that her ELL teachers made her feel as though "we're in the same level" (Interview 3), thus addressing the inclusive culture established by her ELL teachers. Both A1 and A4 in their interviews respectively addressed similar issues of inclusivity, arguing that ELL teachers are often trained in strategies specific to fostering inclusion, and that such sensitivity can be especially useful when working with international students. Popadiuk (2010) notes that when adults surrounding students are knowledgeable about diversity and cultures as well as transitional struggles, students feel encouraged and are better able to succeed.

Previous sections have summarized the ad hoc characteristic that seemed to pervade PMD's international program. This characteristic was analyzed through a mapping of imaginaries of internationalization (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016) coupled with Tarc's (2011; 2013; 2019) explanations of "tensions" and can be seen as embodied in such interlocking features as the gaps in enacting interculturalization discourse, and the filtering down and use of a program conceived for university- and college-aged students with a K-12 population. Examples of such tensions and the notion of filtering down can also be found in Lindsey's descriptions of her elementary school experiences. For example, we should still question why Lindsey felt that awareness and inclusivity was specific to ELL teachers and not a school-wide practice, despite PMD's discourse of fostering integration and interculturalization. Such questioning brings us back to issues

of gaps between the aspirational and instrumental, as the elementary setting seemed to exacerbate any pedagogical lags in terms of internationalizing initiatives.

T1 (Interview) was able to shine light on these issues by elaborating on the general makeup of PMD, arguing that at the elementary level:

> "[…] they're not a system. They're not- they're not 'international students.' They're just this person, and this person, and this person."

International elementary students are therefore seen as individual students peppered throughout the district and not a cohesive group. The fairly small number of international students in the elementary setting explains why there is much less aspirational internationalizing initiative directed at elementary students. However, Lindsey's narrative suggests the absence of any purposeful cultural integration.

Lindsey shared how, over time, she began to speak less altogether due to students in her elementary school constantly repeating what seemed to be almost a mandate of "no Chinese!"[25]. This saying of "no Chinese!" was even appropriated by other multilingual students, thus indicating a lack of reflexivity and discussion surrounding deficit identities vis à vis complex multilingual and cultural backgrounds (Talmy, 2004), and the potentially "high degrees of multilingual competence" (Marshall, 2010, p. 48) both local and international students might possess. Students are instead buying into more abstract yet powerful discourses regarding English being the language they are bound through duty to speak because they are in Canada (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011). These dynamics therefore also indicate an absence of purposeful cultural exchange, or even acknowledgement of diversity, that might be conducive to interculturalization within international education initiatives. As can be seen in Lindsey's case at the elementary level and the lack of integrated discussions regarding global community, languages, and cultures, such absences can lead to continued marginalization and reinforcement of global hierarchies in these very same categories (Buckner & Stein, 2020). While it is understandable that such practicalities like international student population and numbers can determine the nature of activities and programs available for both students and teachers reflecting upon inclusion and fostering inclusion, we are left to wonder about the purpose of having international

[25] More implications surrounding English, specifically English in a globalizing world, will be discussed in a later section within Chapter 6.

education at the elementary level at all, when there appears to be little evidence of a pedagogical or aspirational intent.

Lindsey's case highlights the elementary perspective. While my focus is international education in the secondary sector, Lindsey's accounts were much dominated by her elementary experiences; without honouring such experiences, it would be difficult to comprehensively address Lindsey's narrative, which remains pertinent to this study's main themes. Moreover, analysis of Lindsey's elementary school narrative arguably aids in the understanding of the overall pragmatic demands – an issue winding itself throughout this dissertation – that are grounding international programs in K-12. According to A2 (Interview), there are regulations in place to address how young elementary-aged students are. For instance, they are required to come with at least one parent. However, the idea of a "filtering down" still applies as the theories and goals toward interculturalization are seemingly diluted, as can be seen through Lindsey's case missing the purposeful integration and sharing of cultures that is attempted at the secondary level at WSS. These dynamics hint at the root of international education being revenue generation due to declining governmental support; idealistic intents and pedagogical challenges are then addressed provisionally, with a filtering down of existing systems and structures as international education is applied to whichever sector of students is in question.

5.10. Conclusion

Again, the debate is not regarding the level of or absence of care behind each teacher, administrator or even WSS or PMD themselves. Indeed, the great level of care and consideration shown by teachers and administrators is evident through many of the data excerpts presented thus far. Educators dedicated a great amount of effort in working with international students as well as with all their students. Administrators like A1 spoke of the "genuine care" (Interview) required while working with international students and teachers like T3 recommended teachers of international students be like "surrogate parents" (Interview).

However, with neoliberal ideology increasingly advancing beyond the immediate realm of business and economics, so too it is encroaching upon education, shaping and moulding how education and therefore internationalizing initiatives within education are

enacted. In a Foucauldian sense, external and material power constrains the discussion and framing of international education (Hook, 2001). It is arguable that PMD has a more idealist aim and its international program has endeavoured to meet the ensuing pedagogical demand of such aims, albeit if at times in a "reactive fashion" (Tarc, 2019, p. 737) due to the pull of the pragmatic. But even the existence of an international program – established within a government-run public schooling system to organize and support the pedagogical demands stemming from a system originally intended for revenue generation – speaks to the contradictions and tensions of neoliberal ideology (Holborow 2012a; 2015) in and of itself. Cover (2016) explains how international education has, in a sense, privatized public education. A2 similarly describes the international program at PMD as being "basically a private school program within a public school program" (Interview). These explanations are telling of the main contradiction involved. Neoliberal ideology claims receding government intervention (Holborow, 2012a), but an international program demonstrates how, paradoxically, the government is involved in the engineering of educational processes, in this case, as an economic instrument for profit.

Within the confines of a neoliberal system and stemming from PMD's need to satisfy the pragmatic demand of necessary funding, an ad hoc element can be found embedded throughout PMD's program. In this sense, program planning and delivery – including interculturalization objectives – are responses to more top-down funding goals (Tarc, 2019), with pedagogical and idealistic intents often lagging behind more pragmatic internationalizing initiatives (Tarc, 2013). For instance, the initial recruitment process for students seemed relatively easy but students like Cindy struggled to navigate the system once recruited. Meanwhile, international students were positioned as clients or customers within a larger international education business industry. Companies like planning agencies that capitalize from international education vie for students' business. When recruitment practices and promises (especially through the use of contracted agents) are unclear, students can flounder and then be compelled to enlist the help of such companies. What emerges are concerns regarding student support; students' age demographic and vulnerability become issues as internationalization models are applied, ad hoc, to a K-12 system. Moreover, students reported difficulties integrating and socializing. And through ad hoc application of interculturalizing discourses and discrepancies in funding, divisions between international students and the rest of the

study body are amplified. Finally, Lindsey's experiences in her elementary school setting further demonstrate lagging pedagogic and intercultural intents with the filtering down of existing systems and structures into the elementary level.

Thus, while the efforts to instill aspirational and pedagogically-sound intent into PMD's international program are apparent, we still need to examine the roots of international education and the tensions that can occur as a result of crossing imaginaries (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016) and "competing instrumentalities" (Tarc, 2019, p. 738). As a whole, the search for sustainable forms of international education involves acknowledging how and why the instrumental can shape the performance and implementation of the aspirational (Tarc, 2019). Next, I will examine another enactment of neoliberal ideology and tension, as educational processes are engineered for corporate interests, with the training of individuals to partake in the world economy (Holborow, 2012c).

Chapter 6.

Neoliberalism Part 2: Students' Plans and Goals and the Instrumentalizing of Competences

Chapter 6 addresses my second original research question: what are students' educational plans and goals and how have prevailing discourses influenced or not these plans and goals? The organization of *Neoliberalism Part 2* will be similar to *Part 1* in that it will be divided into several sections and further subsections but now with the main focus throughout all sections detailing the accumulation of skills purported to equip students for future participation in the global economy. Like the investigation conducted in *Part 1*, *Part 2*'s investigation of the competitive completion of an "employability checklist" (Holborow, 2012a, p. 96) will continue to reveal the neoliberal inclinations and discourses that can emerge – along with how such inclinations and discourses can personally affect students' imaginary and goals – despite more idealistic and aspirational rationales for internationalizing and for students taking part in international education.

In this chapter, I examine some of the discourses surrounding global citizenship and English as instrumentalized competencies. Other themes include the pressures students face trying to achieve certain schooling benchmarks and their focus on English, particularly an idealized form of English. Racialized notions of language and students' internalizing of such notions are also analyzed. Themes and discussions within this chapter re-emphasize the connection between neoliberalism and the internationalization of education with the global rise and movement of English. Discourses will be highlighted through examination of government and program documents. Data will again include contextualizing information supplied by teachers and administrators along with excerpts of data from students speaking about their goals and their experiences trying to realize these goals.

6.1. Touting the Intercultural: For What/Whose Purpose?

As discussed in *Part 1*, there has always been a tension within international education between the liberal-humanist dream and pragmatism. Pragmatism can refer, in part, to education as stemming from a neoliberal imaginary, wherein education is

conceived as serving an international and economic function (Tarc, 2011). Meanwhile, in reference to the liberal-humanist dream, Tarc historically traces global post-war sentiments and the vision of international education and the subsequent connecting of borders as forging "a more egalitarian, less violent world" (Tarc, 2011, p. 110). This section explores this theme of the liberal-humanist dream of global citizenship through analysis of several documents and websites by different government programs, organizations, and initiatives, and some descriptions of PMD's international program.

An examination of the language used on the homepage for the Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) provides insight into how the liberal-humanist vision is embedded in internationalization. The CBIE is an organization partnered with the Government of Canada overseeing the development and research of international education (Canadian Bureau for International Education [CBIE], n.d.). Their slogan of "learning beyond borders" is a reference to this vision and the notion of education leading to the traversing of boundaries and the establishment of commonality amongst humans. In addition to this slogan, with its commitment to social justice, the CBIE addresses an "egalitarian" world as can be seen in the following statement:

> The Canadian Bureau for International Education (CBIE) is committed to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Indigeneity, Anti-Racism, and Intersectionality. As a global leader in international education, we acknowledge it is our responsibility to actively pursue learning, programs, activities, policies and advocacy to promote justice and advance these values. International education has a profound impact on the world. We must ensure this impact is inclusive, positive and sustainable.
>
> (CBIE, n.d.)

Even when social justice issues like anti-racism or inclusion are not directly referenced, there is still an overall idealist sentiment with the CBIE and other actors involved in international education to create a global community through cultural celebration. This kind of sentiment can be seen in the following excerpts:

> Values – Global Mindedness: connecting effectively with diverse cultures, communities and ideas
>
> (CBIE, n.d)

> Objective: to create globally oriented education system in British Columbia – a system that embraces diversity and positions all students for success
>
> (British Columbia Council for International Education [BCCIE], 2017)

> International students provide opportunities for British Columbia students to have more global education experiences at home and bring social and cultural benefits to communities, schools and institutions throughout the province.
>
> (Government of BC, n.d., “International Education”)

Altogether, the above examples present a largely vague celebration of internationalizing and social justice endeavours (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Stein, 2019). Meanwhile, a deeper inquiry with discourse analysis can destabilize seemingly benign presentations of reality (Hook, 2001). For instance, underlying neoliberal ideology begin to emerge and tensions arise if we start examining the business language that is intertwined with such idealistic discourse within the same documents or written objectives. For example, the CBIE (2019) begins their strategic plan with a list of “advantages” (p. 5) for those who choose to be connected with their organization. Such advantages, amongst them an extemporary “track record” (p. 5), veer toward Block’s (2018a) description of educational organizations competing between themselves to solicit potential clients that are students and their families, and in this case, other educational institutions involved in international education. Correspondingly, BCCIE (2017) directly addresses the competition for students by listing competitors and competing trends – such as attempts by some countries to retain education within their own borders. Meanwhile, the neoliberal practices of accountability and evaluation (Block, 2018a) can be seen through the Government of BC advertising BC’s high quality “brand” of education complete with “consumer protection” (Learn Live BC, n.d., “World Class Education. World Class Life.”), as ensured through Education Quality Assurance (EQA), the governing body which designates official standing of quality education in BC. Thus, while the idealist intentions involved are still apparent through objectives aimed at a global community, idealism seems to be competing with a more pragmatic entity.

In examining the use of business jargon, we should also pause to reflect upon the above objective by the BCCIE (2017) regarding attempts to position “all students for success” (p. 7). Beyond education and schools as businesses, as I have already

detailed in Chapter 5, what do such allusions to the business world – as present in the above excerpts – represent? What is encompassed within this reference to "success?" Under neoliberalism and with educational institutions framed as competing businesses, so too are students and their families competing with one another to partake in such educational institutions; education becomes a means to achieve "success," or rather, the "right skill set and dispositions to compete both inside the nation-state border and globally" (Block, 2018a, p. 74). And from analysis of the above documents and statements, it seems that the right skill set and disposition refers, in part, to intercultural understanding toward global citizenship. While international education is to lend to "Canadians' enduring commitment to global citizenship" (CBIE, 2019, p. 3), any intercultural understanding toward global citizenship is, however, fundamentally for participation in "today's highly competitive, knowledge-based global economy… against a backdrop of increasingly complex networks of human mobility" (p. 3). These two ideas – one indicating global citizenship and the other pointing toward a neoliberal knowledge market – can be found on the same page within the same CBIE document, with both market-oriented and more idealistic notions of global citizenship and education placed together as though there are no tensions between these positions (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). And in addition to the market terminology that already permeates the BCCIE's service plan, there are also references to how the province's overall "success" in international education can be measured by certain "indicator[s]" (pgs. 9 & 11). Discourse demonstrating neoliberal propensities that frame global citizenship in market terms (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016) becomes apparent throughout all the above documents and websites demonstrates. Education becomes a means to accumulate knowledge, now identified as measurable skills, that individuals compete to obtain as they are ultimately trained to fulfill functions in the world economy (Block, 2018a; Holborow, 2012a; 2012c).

The "ideological tension" (Chun, 2017, p. 87) that can occur as neoliberal inclinations pervade the more idealistic discourses of an intercultural global community can also be seen in descriptions of PMD's international program and the purposes surrounding why students might partake in such studies. I again note that PMD uses internationalization research and theories on how to instill intercultural understanding for future graduates to work in a multicultural global arena (Garson, 2016). These theories were introduced in the Literature Review chapter and referenced throughout the thesis in

discussions of PMD's program intents. However, application of these theories seems to slip into a neoliberal celebration of diversity. As a whole, intercultural awareness is increasingly becoming a necessary competency (Tarc, 2009) and international education is a prime method to obtain such a competency. Teachers like T2 acknowledged the benefits of taking part in the international program at PMD:

> Ah, I think- I think, yeah, I do- a lot of them do want to go to post-secondary wherever it is. And this is a good- good thing to have on your resume or on your, um, experience to- for post-secondary anyway.
>
> (Interview)

Meanwhile, A4 directly addressed competition while considering intercultural awareness, and how even local students require this form of awareness in order to "be more competitive in the world" (Interview). T2's reference to the resume and A4's reasoning of why students need to develop intercultural awareness are linked to the competitive branding concept of individuals making themselves more distinguishable and marketable (Block, 2018b; Gray, 2010a; Gray 2010b).

Moreover, the international program itself at PMD must also be competitive and "engage markets globally" (Tarc, 2013, p. 9). For example, in further describing the program, A4 considered why PMD's international program is attractive to students:

> Well, we have a very good reputation. It is the word of mouth. We have very good reputation for our schools, academic-wise. Um, and that's really important for your long-term, at markets in Asia.
>
> (Interview)

A4 did list other aspects that were potential draws to PMD that had to do with PMD's educational programs, their exceptional technology, as well as the level of support provided to all students. Such aspects are not included here due to their being overly specific details that might inadvertently reveal PMD's identity. However, the market terminology along with market logic is still apparent. Neoliberal systems of accountability and evaluation (Block, 2018a) are at play and a "good reputation" seemed to be an important aspect of PMD's program, with A4 even discussing the awards PMD's international program has won as attracting many students.

Thus, it is increasingly more apparent how idealistic intensions for international education can simultaneously and paradoxically conform to neoliberal notions of

individualism and assumptions that individuals' competitive accumulation of competency will lead toward success (Tarc, 2009). With trends in education veering towards global citizenship, we also see evidence of how diversity and intercultural competence become commodity entities that can be neatly packaged (Flores, 2013; Heller & Duchêne, 2016). In a neoliberal system, which is dominated by commodity logic, education can involve marketable packages sold to students, now positioned as consumers (Gray, 2010a; Holborow, 2015).

This interplay between idealism and pragmatism can even augment and reproduce unequal power dynamics by working on students' psyche and beliefs in a way that triggers the "modern-colonial imaginary" (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016, p. 782), feeding into an imaginary that positions Western education and ways as the desirable capital to attain. But if we are examining texts in a Foucauldian sense, it is difficult to conceive of there being other subject positions and discourses available for students to take up outside of this imaginary (Hook, 2001) due to the heavy ideological marketing and push for certain competencies. The next few sections will introduce English as part of that marketable package of "valued competences and skills" (Block, 2018a, p. 12) while examining its effects on students' imaginaries.

6.2. "I Want to Talk about English": The Other "Must Have" Competency

An analysis of international education is arguably remiss without considering the power behind English. One important factor to highlight is that students were often the ones to broach the topic of English, without my having to inquire about English. For example, students like Iman, Cindy and Yamato voiced unfavourable opinions about the English teaching quality in their home countries. Meanwhile, it bears repeating that the student participants' international sojourns – as it was similarly identified in Tamtik's (2019) study – were oftentimes in part because of a desire or need to learn English. I therefore discuss in the next section students' focus on English – including their concerns about passing certain English benchmarks – and the underlying discourses involved.

In keeping with this desire to learn and practice English – as it was mentioned earlier on when Thom was introduced – Thom would begin most of his interview

sessions with some mention of English. Similarly, in my second interview with Yamato, I began by explaining that we could begin with any updates he had, and in general "how it's been going so far." His reply was:

> Ah, OK. So, ah. So, it's been good. Like, about English- I want to talk about- about English.

This statement of "I want to talk about […] English" seems to encapsulate the interest and focus on English that the study participants seemed to have; hence, it is the title of this section. To a certain extent, English becomes "conflated with international education" (Deschambault, 2018, p. 55).

Firstly, in a practical sense that spoke to students' real-life issues, it is understandable that English was predominant in their minds as it was often a gatekeeper (Guo, Guo, Yochim & Liu, 2021), blocking different pathways for them. For instance, students had difficulty partaking in courses in the disciplines or they were blocked from taking such courses altogether because of their English levels, with such circumstances sometimes due to their own perceptions of their English or because of how they were placed after having their English levels formally tested. The following excerpts are examples of such difficulties:

> Math was very easy but now it's getting harder 'cause now I have to use the language to explain something and it's not just Math, like explaining in English. […] It's just like, we have to do a task and then it says, like, "explain why is it- why you have to do it like this" and then you have to- you have to use, like, specific words, like math things.
>
> (Anya, Interview 2)
>
> When I was in Korea, I like Biology because I love Science in Korea. And here, actually, Biology require me a lot of English, right? Extremely a lot. Like- so I start to hate Biology here.
>
> (Sun-Hee, Interview 2)
>
> Oh, 'cause I'm in ELL so I don't have Socials.
>
> (Lindsey, Interview 1)

The teachers and administrators working with the students also provided insight into the importance of English and its effect on students' lives. T2 indicated that students can struggle when their English levels are not taken into consideration by teachers from courses in the disciplines:

> […] they're also reporting, like, the pace that teachers are speaking is often too quick for them, um, which- it- like, it very much depends on the class you have in front of you. If you have a class of 30 and there's 1 international student who's a Level 3, are you really going to slow your pace down that much? Probably not […]
>
> (Interview)

Extending the topic of student struggles with English, others reported how English levels are therefore generally an indicator of students' overall success in the international program. When asked about student acculturation and those who tend to be "happy with their international experiences," A2 replied by commenting on support systems and effort on the part of the student, but also with, "usually, they come in with a slightly stronger English background so it doesn't seem like it's such a big difference" (Interview). In a similar vein, A3 commented:

> It's, sort of- that's what I see in terms of whether they- how they are here when they're here. Um, if their English is better and a lot of it depends on their English. If their English skills are strong, […] it's way easier for them to make friends, make connections in the school because they've been speaking English since early ages, you know.
>
> (Interview)

Finally, students exhibited an overall anxiety or even fear about English preventing them from accomplishing their goals or blocking them from accessing opportunities to even attempt at reaching their goals. Both Lindsey and Sun-Hee expressed fear about future university applications. Even though Lindsey was only in the 8th grade, she was already conceding, "I'm nervous for the university" (Interview 1) while describing the process of needing to exit ELL to bypass having to take any standardized language proficiency tests required of international students applying to universities in Canada. Like Lindsey, Sun-Hee also confessed feelings of anxiety, commenting "I'm scared about it" (Interview 1) regarding exiting ELL for the same purposes of applying to Canadian universities. Meanwhile, even though he was at times very confident about his English, Thom still had instances of anxiety, especially when he began to examine his future goals. Despite having previously detailed different plans he had regarding some form of post-secondary training, job opportunities, and settlement in Canada, during his second interview, he expressed worry about passing English to graduate high school:

> So, um, to be honest, I'm scared. Yeah, I'm just scared to be graduated. […] If- so- if I- if I not graduate, so- so what will- what will I do next?

Thom's entire arrangement for his future was dependent upon his graduation from a Canadian high school.

Thus, it is understandable that English seemed a dominant part of student narratives. However, we must also ask why English has acquired such power and what discourses are underlying processes behind that power, especially since advocates of international education purport a celebration of diversity in language and culture. As introduced and analyzed in previous sections, PMD and both the provincial government and the Government of Canada, along with their associated partners and agents promote a discourse of intercultural sharing and exchange. Yet simultaneously, they also participate in and enable this push for English. Earlier in the introductory chapter, I referenced the Canadian 2019-2024 International Education Strategy (2020) and the competition involved in recruiting students as they are increasingly identified globally as sources of revenue. This same strategy recognizes that Canada and other well-known destinations for international education are facing increased competition with more countries entering the arena and offering English education. Not only is English "conflated with international education" (Deschambault, 2018, p. 55), the promise of English is used as a primary means of attracting international students.

As well, amidst the BC Government's discourse heralding the intercultural experiences that can be obtained through studying in BC on the *Learn Live BC* website, a linked page summarizes the many programs and credits the BC education system offers, with "English as a Second Language (ESL)" as the very first advertised bundle of program options (Learn Live BC, n.d., "Credentials and Credit Transfers"). Meanwhile, part of PMD's and Fortuna's joint promise is an immersion in an English environment. These kinds of offers demonstrate the centre position that English holds, as English language competency is perceived as necessary to participate within the global economy (Block, 2018a; Tarc, 2009).

The international students involved in this study seemed to buy into this discourse regarding English as a necessity as they also reproduced the discourse or were partaking in the discourse in various ways. For example, Anya was the student whose mother was a university English instructor. Anya herself wanted to perhaps be a teacher or "do something with English" (Interview 2). She proclaimed English as being very important in both her interviews. When asked in her first interview about why she

decided to take Fortuna's 5-month program, she explained that she needed to learn and practice English for her upcoming standardized exam, and that English is important for everyone in regards to post-secondary goals. In the following excerpt, she goes into more detail about this importance:

> Anya: So, if you speak English, not perfectly, but if you speak very well English, it helps a lot for university and if you go for a job or something, it helps.
>
> CLJ: Oh, they want English?
>
> Anya: Yeah.
>
> CLJ: Like, everybody just wants English?
>
> Anya: So, the most wants English. And it's- when you can show you speak English, it's very good.
>
> CLJ: So, when you show it, do you mean, not just speaking but on your- whatever- your history, to say that you went to study in the US or Canada or something?
>
> Anya: Right, this is very good for getting a job.
>
> CLJ: Oh, OK. OK, and university too, or?
>
> Anya: Yeah, university too.
>
> CLJ: OK, so a lot of your friends are doing it too, or?
>
> Anya: Hmm, actually no. It's not- so it's famous but it's very expensive and so the most people can't do it. But a lot want to do it. And so, yeah, this is why but, the most of the German people really likes the family and want to stay with their family.

From this excerpt, we can derive that family is an important aspect in Anya's perception of German culture. As she herself has stated, not many of her friends would choose to be international students, not only because of the strong family culture prompting students to remain with their families but also because international programs can be quite expensive. However, the importance of learning English prompted Anya to participate in the program, despite her own strong family ties, which she directly described and/or alluded to in several instances over our time together.

As previously pointed out, Anya was willing to make the sacrifice of living apart from her family and investing in this program because it would only be 5 months long. However, programs with an extended or indefinite stay were, at the time, out of the

question for Anya. What was also previously highlighted was Anya's relative freedom due to her future being less nebulous in comparison to some of her peers, who were here indefinitely. I had asked the students to share pictures of their experiences with me and only Anya shared pictures regularly. She presented photos of restaurants where she had eaten, dances she had attended, and school trips in which she had participated. She also explored Metro Vancouver outside of her school and homestay contexts, adventuring with friends to cross the Lynn Valley suspension bridge in North Vancouver, and attending the Vancouver Christmas Market. When I asked in her second interview before she went back to Germany what was her most important and meaningful experience, Anya replied:

> Of course, that I learned more English. I learned a lot of more vocabularies and I- so I want to do something with English in my job but I'm not sure what. So, something with, maybe, children and English, maybe teacher, I don't know. So, English, it's very important. And in general, English is very important to- to know it in Germany. Of course, anyone who knows German gets a better- ah, who knows English gets better job and something like this. And, yeah.

Thus, despite all her experiences, the learning of English and having more opportunities to learn English were still the most dominant and useful experiences to Anya.

Just as Anya had to make sacrifices in order to embark on her 5-month sojourn, so too did Miyu have to make several sacrifices. Miyu's father remained in Japan instead of traveling with his family to Canada, but Miyu was still lucky in the sense that she had her sister – who was also an international student at WSS – and her mother with her in Canada. However, she had to sacrifice the comforts of the Japanese schooling culture in order to study in Canada, describing Canadian education as "not fitting with me." As Miyu explained:

> Like, here teachers want me to, like, talk more or, like that. But in Japan, we don't need to talk like in here.
>
> (Interview 1)

Despite her description of Japanese culture as being more "in [her] character" (Interview 1), Miyu understood the importance of having an international education in order for her to return to Japan and attend post-secondary there. She described a

system in Japan with some universities valuing international students who complete a special entrance exam that only international students can take:

> Miyu: …but it's easier than, like, normal test. Like, in Japan, we have to took a test to go to university and, like, only international students can take this test.
>
> CLJ: This test. Instead of-
>
> Miyu: -instead of the other one. And it is- I think it's easier for international students to go to university in Japan.
>
> CLJ: Oh, you think it's easier?
>
> Miyu: Yeah, because, like, normal Japanese student have to take, like, five subjects test but this test don't need to take five- five subject test. But I- we have to do, like, some writing in Japanese and English. And we have to do some conversation.
>
> CLJ: In English?
>
> Miyu: In English. Then, university decides who will go to [trails off...]
>
> CLJ: But you think that this test is easier than the regular test?
>
> Miyu: Yeah, for- for us.
>
> CLJ: OK. Do a lot of students go, um, go to school internationally so that they can take this test instead of the other test?
>
> Miyu: Yes.

T1 corroborated Miyu's description of many countries' education systems prioritizing international education for university admittance. T1 claimed many international students they had taught chose to do the international program for reasons similar to Miyu, and regarding entrance exams in particular, T1 added, "They can bypass it, which is one of the reasons that people come here" (Interview). While Miyu was seeking to take a modified entrance exam, T1 informed me that students partaking in international programs oftentimes were seeking to bypass university entrance exams altogether. Wu and Tarc (2021b) argue that not all international students connect with Western culture and educational models, and treat their sojourn with more narrowed purposes as opposed to attempting a fully immersive cultural experience. Similarly, it seems Miyu's primary goal was more in line with obtaining that "symbolic capital of the Western diploma" (Wu & Tarc, 2021b, p. 910) in her aim to then achieve that larger goal of postsecondary back home in Japan. T1's description and particularly Miyu's accounts

serve to highlight how both intercultural exchange and English are the coveted competencies. From Miyu's account, we see that English is prioritized to the extent that international students can potentially skip 5 separate exams, and take parts of a shorter entrance exam in English. Both T1's and Miyu's explanations reveal dominant discourses regarding both competencies, institutions' involvement in such discourses, and the student realities of having to navigate these systems, which sometimes served to reproduce such discourses.

With institutions prioritizing and promoting competences in ways that suit a neoliberal imaginary (Tarc, 2009; 2011), it is no wonder that students begin replicating these same discourses. As earlier explored, students take up subject positions and discourses that are made available to them, with their utterances made up of "texts" already in production and repetition (Hook, 2001). There were several instances in which the students of this study revealed how they adhered to such discourses of English as a necessity. It was mentioned earlier that Thom's narrative was quite motivated by English. In addition to the forums Thom was involved in that I have already mentioned, he was part of a chat on Facebook called "English Everyday" which was dedicated to practicing English as much as possible, or "every day," as the play on words in the chat name might indicate. During class one day (Fieldnote, 18/11/2018), Thom showed me the chat and how members could also send one another photos of their everyday lives in order to prompt discussion in English but also to show how their lives might involve English. Immersion in English seemed very important to Thom. On another occasion (Fieldnote, 08/03/2019), after I answered a question Thom and his seatmates had during class time, I overhead Thom telling a peer in Vietnamese, while referring to me, that this peer could ask for my help in Vietnamese if it was needed but to also "just keep using English if you can." It was important to Thom to therefore be immersed by partaking in this international program, conducting most of his interactions – including our interviews – in English and while communicating digitally with others around the world. When asked why English was so important to him, Thom indicated that English was necessary to get a job, specifically, "the well-paid job" (Interview 3). He told me this was true of obtaining a job in Vietnam as well. Instead of language being seen as socially connecting and relational (Li, 2010; Popadiuk & Marshall 2011), it becomes "something that is simply pragmatic or a tool to be learned, practiced and mastered" (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011, p. 233).

Similar sentiments regarding English were echoed by many of the students. For example, Yamato described an international program that was available at his school that would send students to Australia to learn English. Yamato's description is similar to Miyu's explanation of testing processes in Japan, wherein these international students returning from Australia could then take an English-based exam in lieu of more traditional post-secondary entrance examinations. When asked about this focus on English, Yamato replied that English was a must "for a job or, like, for university" (Interview 2). The focus on English was similarly apparent to Sun-Hee, who stated, "that's why I'm here: learn English" (Interview 3) when she was reviewing reasons for coming to Canada. To explain, she added:

> Ah, like, this- Korean people think English is really important to work or study or whatever. And I think, like, ability to speak English is good to everything. Like even company or when I work- work, or travel somewhere.
>
> (Interview 3)

Likewise, Cindy mirrored Sun-Hee's idea that "English is good to everything" (Sun-Hee, Interview 3) by asserting, "I think that English will be necessary for everything" (Cindy, Interview 1). These instances represent the discourses circulating regarding English and how students seemingly engaged with such discourses.

However, just as there was a discoursal discrepancy between intercultural exchange and a push for English portrayed by the institutions involved in international education, so too did the students' perceptions of interculturalization seem complex and full of tension. In order to explain, I draw attention once again to how several student participants voiced their negative opinions of English teaching in their home countries. Throughout my time with Yamato in particular, he would express that the education system surrounding English learning and teaching in Japan was "too bad" (Interview 3). More specifically, Yamato complained that English teaching in Japan mostly concerned only the testing of grammar and vocabulary with very little speaking. Instead, Yamato wanted to learn English on a more communicative level, as can be seen in the following statement:

> The language, basically, like language- language is- language exists for communication, right? I think. But, like, hmm, um- we are learning English but we don't know how to speak- like, we don't know how to speak English so it doesn't make sense to me.

To Yamato, such communication was necessary for intercultural exchange. He had stated in his first interview that he was in Canada to learn English in order to communicate with others from a variety of different countries. Additionally, Yamato described the popularity of Japan as a tourist destination but that Japanese residents are unable to communicate with tourists:

> […] many people around the world want to come to Japan. Then, when they come to Japan, they, ah, will be, like, cannot make conversation with them. Like, they will think, like, um, "Japan is nice country." But like- like they cannot understand us, so, then, maybe, like, um- they never think, "I will come back again." Just one time is enough. But, like, yeah, this is the big problem, I think. Like, Japanese- Japanese can't- um, like, most of Japanese are, ah- ah, like- I don't know. Like, they cannot speak English […]
>
> (Interview 3)

Sun-Hee expressed related concerns with needing to learn English for communication. Sun-Hee wanted to learn English because she wanted "talk to a lot of people and English is, like, most people use English" (Interview 1). The intricacies of using English as a lingua franca for interculturalization purposes revealed themselves, however, when Sun-Hee spoke of the potentialities of using English abroad:

> Sun-Hee: Ah, because- um, even some people, like- for example, if I travel to Spain, this is not, like, polite but if I- even I don't speak Spanish, if I speak English, they can understand and, like, talk to me and explain me. I know that's not polite but, like, yeah.
>
> CLJ: Sorry, what's not polite?
>
> Sun-Hee: Ah, 'cause I think if someone want to go their country, they should learn some words at least, because that's their cultural, like, respect things. Like, if I want to go Spain, I should learn several- several, like sentences to- at least I can travel. That's why I said it's not polite to say in English this way.
>
> CLJ: Oh, OK. But you're saying that most people will use English still, or?
>
> Sun-Hee: Yeah. Most of people, use English and know some English.
>
> CLJ: Oh, OK. Do you think it's helpful then, or?
>
> Sun-Hee: Help.

Thus, even though Sun-Hee acknowledges that it would be more "polite" to use the language(s) of the country one is visiting, she upholds the importance of English and

learning English for communicative purposes. Indeed, while an interculturalization discourse is being bandied about, there is a focus on English, rather than using other languages. The same analysis can be said of Yamato's case, in that the sharing of other languages was dismissed with English as a lingua franca chosen as a mode of communication with a variety of people. This pressure to have English as a lingua franca is felt by Yamato despite processes of communication being entangled in everyday interactions and, thus, not necessarily commensurate with more neoliberal and instrumentalized notions of English (Kubota, 2011; Kubota & Takeda, 2021). To Yamato, visitors to Japan should expect English as opposed to trying to learn Japanese terms and phrases. Yamato also viewed his own improved English as a potential access point to obtaining a part-time job when he returned to Japan, where he could possibly work as a translator.

Such developments are arguably a part of neoliberal logics that have positioned English as central for economic advantage. However, as Tarc (2009) adds, these neoliberalized logics can work to narrow possibilities for idealized pursuits of intercultural exchange, with facets of international engagement reduced to commodity forms. English becomes a simplified and sought-after instrument – without consideration for many different and layered social aspects of language and language contexts (Byrd Clark, 2020; Park & Wee, 2012; Shankar & Canvaugh, 2012). And as it was previously argued in Chapter 3, it is the speakers of English who are then seen as the "automatic 'global citizens'" (Tarc, 2009, p. 129) without their having to attempt at engaging in international or cultural understanding. Explorations of diversity seem to continue and intensify the existing neoliberal system and the legitimacy of its institutions (Stein et al., 2021). A4 acknowledged these dynamics in which students and their families simply accept English as a sought-after instrument for future successes:

> Um, I think- I think we're quite privileged in Western society, in Canada, that we don't have to send our child abroad. Ah, the lingua franca is English. Um, and I think people don't realize that. It- it's a different reality overseas, right, for those long-term students.
>
> (Interview)

However, we must question this acceptance – even as we partake in the same processes and dynamics that enable it – and examine its interplays with more idealistic intentions toward interculturalization.

A similar attitude could be found in Thom's attempts at immersion or Yamato's descriptions of tourism in Japan, with the underlying discourse being the centrality and necessity of English (Lee & Marshall, 2012) and students' responsibilities to be flexible and obtain for themselves the necessary requirements – in this sense, English and an international education – toward being a productive and contributing citizen (Tarc, 2009). This perspective therefore also alludes to another issue at play which concerns what can happen when the responsibility of obtaining the necessary competencies is placed solely on the individual. This issue will be elaborated upon in the next section.

6.3. "I always be the Loser": Aiming for Those "Must Have" Competencies

With many international programs being just one segment of students' lives intended for the students to partake in, in order to reach their goals, it is understandable that the issue of time and feelings of pressure in connection to time can occur. Here, I explore pressures students face, their impact on students, and the neoliberal logics associated with such pressures.

Teachers reported how they sensed the pressure international students were feeling. For example, T1 compared international education at the high school level with the elementary school experience, describing how international parents are often asking teachers in elementary school for a holistic picture of their children's progress. Meanwhile, at the secondary level, both the parents and students are focused on "'how can they get out of ELL?'" (Interview). T2 added to this discussion of timing by highlighting the "unrealistic expectations" (Interview) that can ensue. Students were often asking T2, "'can I move up next month?'" and revealing the pressures they were receiving from their families back at home, who were sometimes threatening to bring their children back to their home countries if these students were not reaching certain levels within certain arbitrary time frames. Meanwhile, even more pragmatically-speaking, the development of academic proficiency in English requires time, and can take between 5-7 years (Cummins,1981; 1992; 2000; Gunderson, 2008).

I was also able to witness or hear about students navigating such pressures and time constraints during my time at WSS. On one of my classroom visits (Fieldnotes, 06/06/2019), Cindy pleaded with me to ask her classroom teacher for her final ELL exam

score, asking additionally if I could refrain from telling the teacher that it was she who asked. I had the sense that she had already requested her scores several times and did not want her teacher to know that she was asking yet again. When I returned to Cindy with the information that her ELL scores would be returned the following week, Cindy appeared visibly upset. She wondered aloud why the marking process would take so long considering a large part of the exam was conducted through the Scantron multiple choice system, and should therefore be quick and easy to mark. The final ELL exam was comprised of several components and would partly determine students' levels for the following academic year. Cindy was anxious to have her score before she travelled back to Vietnam for the summer, so that she might show it to her family and in order to solidify her plans and the appropriate maneuvers for the following academic year.

Meanwhile, sometimes the students are the ones to place the pressure on themselves. On this same day, Thom asked me about admittance into SFU. He then revealed that it was his mother who wanted him to attend SFU while he preferred to complete a trades-training program at BCIT. Even though Thom's life ruminations were often about work coupled with travel and moving across the globe to meet new people, the pressure to quickly obtain a job for PR often outweighed these dreams. Thom's persistence with leaving ELL went hand-in-hand with such pressures to graduate and obtain a job.

Wu and Tarc (2021b) argue that neoliberal discourse can become so prevalent that international education and all its discourse of lifelong education and intercultural exchange can become simply a "*means* towards an *end* of accruing forms of capital" (p. 916, accentuation in original). With globalization discourses having "made their way into the everyday psyche of the citizenry" (Lin, 2012, p. 141), students and their families are instilled with this need for the students to acquire certain skills and to do so within a certain time frame to either get into desired post-secondary schools or in order to obtain jobs. Additionally, within neoliberal parameters, global communication is not only equated to just English but English education is then shaped by accountability and therefore testing processes (Kubota & Takeda, 2021). Acquiring the appropriate forms of capital can overtake students' international educational experiences, and can even be detrimental to their educational plans or their overall well-being in the long-run.

For international students in ELL classes in particular, an especially salient aspect of their international journeys is the additional pressure to exit ELL, or complete the necessary ELL requirements that will enable them to take credited courses in the disciplines or to further advance in other endeavours (Deschambault, 2015; 2018; Li, 2010). As a whole, ELL students are put at a disadvantage, with mandatory but non-credited courses acting as a gatekeeper to university prerequisites (Gunderson, D'Silva & Odo, 2012; Ilieva, 2016; Kanno & Applbaum, 1995; Minichiello, 2001). We saw in the previous section the anxiety this could spark in students like Lindsey, Sun-Hee and Thom, who worried about postsecondary entrance, or even high school graduation altogether, without the appropriate credited courses. Using Fraser's (2008) social justice model, Ilieva (2016) notes the political injustice generated by this system toward ELL students, with institutionalized obstacles preventing equal student participation across all levels and as students' multilingual resources are dismissed. These dynamics are especially staggering considering the amount of money international students must pay yearly and – as highlighted throughout this thesis – because international programs claim the original goal of their programming to be about diversity or intercultural competencies. And in addition to these injustices for ELL students, the current system of uncredited ELL courses creates for international students yet another "measurable behaviour" (Holborow, 2012a, p. 96) to check off. There is therefore a disconnect when it comes to the relationship between this idealistically holistic international education plan and globalization rhetoric, along with its more mechanical and systemic structures (Bolsmann & Miller, 2008) that are measurable, assessable (Holborow, 2012a) and are high-stakes in the sense that they can determine students' access to mainstream credit courses.

Iman's case serves as an example of the realities of obtaining these forms of capital regardless of personal well-being. Iman almost sacrificed his fondness for WSS and his overall peace of mind in order to fast-track his English levels[26]. In describing WSS, Iman said:

> They accept me and I was so happy. I saw the environment. It's so friendly, yeah.

[26] Refer to Iman's section in *Meeting the Focal Participants* for a review of his situation and semester systems.

(Interview 2)

By contrast, he had negative associations with the other secondary school within the same district that he was made to attend when he first arrived. Of this school, Iman stated:

> Hmm, I don't know. Like, I couldn't find many friends there. Like, the- ah, the time I was there, I couldn't find- I don't know why I couldn't get that good feeling from there.
>
> (Interview 2)

Yet, when asked why he was willing to transfer back to a school that did not give him a "good feeling," Iman replied:

> Because they have, like, ah the courses that I needed to pass- for- for English. Yeah, so I, like- it was harder but I should have to do that.

Iman clarified that it would be "harder" to return to his first school because he had negative associations with the school but that it would be necessary if it could help him complete any necessary credits and prerequisites for graduating and applying to university within a certain time frame. Research on international students show positive outcomes (Chirkov, Vansteenkist, Tao & Lynch, 2007; Chirkov, Safdar, Guzman & Playford, 2008; Popadiuk, 2010) – including feelings of pride, independence and ability to focus on the tasks they have chosen for themselves – when students have control over their academic decisions, whereas more negative outcomes or a "hindering" effect can result with less autonomy (Popadiuk, 2010). Popadiuk's (2010) study includes students' selection of schools, including which schooling systems – semester or annual – as important and impactful decisions students must make. While there was no direct opposition to Iman's decision-making, loss of autonomy could arguably be found in the pressure he felt to complete English credits by entering a semester system at a school he disliked. Disruption in learning can also occur through physical movement between schools. From their research of immigrant students in the Vancouver School District, Gunderson and colleagues (2012) report that students can disappear from a study due to mobility in and out of different schools and districts, and student mobility can be complex with varying personal and circumstantial justifications and rationales. However, the researchers also note that mobility can have negative ramifications on student learning. Fortunately, Iman's counselor was able to help him plan a different route so that he might stay at WSS. Nevertheless, Iman's case still demonstrates the pressures

involved and potential interference in student learning while trying to adhere to the neoliberal logistics surrounding credits and skill attainment.

Several students alluded to the same pressures but also a subsequent anxiety from the race to successfully and efficiently complete credits and prerequisites. For instance, Thom often referenced his ELL journey as associated with time and timelines. He was in a rush to complete his ELL courses and then his mainstream English credits in order to graduate in time. Explaining that he would have to spend 2 summers "working on my- the English stuff," Thom added, "I'm now- I'm now late" (Interview 2). Using language that establishes this economics-based relationship he has with his investment in his education, he said of the program:

> It costs me 1 year, as you know. So that's why- that's the reason why I'm going to be late to be graduated.
>
> (Interview 3)

Such "costs" are also grounded in real-life contexts, as students are pressured to complete benchmarks before accumulating further schooling costs and fees (Schecter & Bell, 2021). As discussed in an earlier section, Thom's family were not financially comfortable enough to prolong his studying abroad.

Similarly, Sun-Hee reviewed her schooling processes with the same references to timelines. In her first interview, Sun-Hee measured the different steps she would have to take along with the proper timelines for completion for each possible future pathway she envisioned. In regards to attending post-secondary in the United States, she predicted, "if I want to go State university, I need to quit ELL before I be tenth grade." She added that such a dream would unlikely be an option for her. By our third interview, Sun-Hee had plotted a whole system in order to graduate on time with the proper prerequisites, along with several alternative schedules as contingency options. Many of her courses were chosen mainly based on the quickest routes for credits and prerequisite completion. For example, she originally elected to take Physical Education (PE) 10 – a graduation requirement – and Career Life Education online because she had intended to spend Summer 2019 in Korea and continuing school throughout the summer, even though she would be doing so remotely, was important for her overall fast-tracking plans. When I asked her what PE online might look like – because I was genuinely curious and unknowledgeable about online PE – she laughed, exclaiming, "I don't know!"

Meanwhile, Career Life Education was chosen based on a recommendation from a friend because the course was an allegedly easy one. Sun-Hee ended up canceling her Korea trip but according to her, the courses were non-refundable so she retained both PE and Career Life Education in addition to 2 other required courses she added to her already busy summer schedule. The fact that she was willing to take PE and Career Life Education online while in Korea to fast-track graduation and credit requirements is a testament to the instrumental overriding any intercultural or experiential notions regarding international education for some of my study participants.

Such planning harkens to arguments that international study can be reduced to instrumental approaches (Byrd Clark, 2020; Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; de Wit, 2016; Wu & Tarc, 2021a; 2021b) with discourses based on "achievement and accumulations" (Wu & Tarc, 2021b, p. 916). This instrumentalizing of objectives can create tensions and have negative effects on students (Tudball, 2005), as can be seen with Sun-Hee worrying how she would be able to complete all her courses within one summer. Similarly, speaking of his ELL journey, Thom added, "that's the main key of destruction" (Interview 3), sadly referring to his perception of ELL as affecting the timing around his entire planned trajectory. Aware of the anxiety some international students faced, A1 stated:

> […] they have intense pressure to succeed in school, and, you know, unreasonable expectations from their parents that they're going to graduate in a year. So, I think some of those are- are huge and, um, I worry constantly about depression for those kids who are under that kind of pressure because, um, it's impossible to graduate in- in- in one year.
>
> (Interview)

Addressing these timelines can lead to added stress with students and parents sometimes working even harder to search for ways around prerequisites and regulations. A2 (Interview) informed me of parents and students approaching them for substitution, shortcut, or bypassing options in order "to check things off the list" of required credits. Herein again lies this idea of the kind of "checklist" (Holborow, 2012a, p. 96) that students and their parents must quickly and efficiently fulfill, thus narrowing the concept of education to a set of manageable learning outcomes of the neoliberal era. Searching for substitutions can oftentimes lead back to the conspicuous agencies, which

students and parents seek if they are “desperate enough” (A2). A2 had first introduced the agency business model to me by highlighting the issues with trying to bypass credits:

> And we've had students who've left and they can't go to university or they can't even consider graduation because they were rushing through credits. These are people who- and I’m sure you’ve noticed places that have all kinds of agencies, um, that offers that.
>
> (Interview)

Sadly, with such agencies being part of a corporatized system geared for profit with little pedagogy involved, students can be left in limbo once they have completed the credits but lack the foundations to progress further because such credits were obtained quickly, illicitly, and without students having actually learned anything throughout the process. For example, Schecter’s and Bell’s (2021) reporting of their action research project draws attention to students turning to private programs to further their English, but also highlights how these private schools are ”considered to have less rigorous academic standards than the public system” (p. 13). Turning to private agencies with questionable reputations can also undermine credentials as such acts can be seen as “‘buying’ a commodified credit” (Shin, 2012, p. 197), thereby delegitimizing said credits and working to further marginalize the students.

To exacerbate issues, the supposed freedom that neoliberalism boasts (Block, 2018a) and the idea of individualized self-endorsement (Gray, 2010a; Gray, 2010b) make it so that individuals are responsible for their own life trajectories and thus, the onus of success but also failure lies solely on the individual (Holborow, 2015; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). The discourse at WSS and within PMD was very much one of care and student support. However, neoliberal inclinations towards freedom and individuality were still manifesting, as they can only do in a neoliberal system wherein education is oftentimes conceived for revenue generation and/or the moulding of future citizens.

A4 discussed exit strategies and arrangements in the event students are experiencing extreme levels of difficulty in the program. A4 conceded that there are times the program might not be the right fit for certain students:

> Yeah, and even students I’ve sent home, and said, ”no, not the right place,” um, it’s- that’s- that to me, that’s still a good thing, right? We didn’t let you flounder. It’s not the right place, not the right time […] We keep moving our kids forward, right?

(Interview)

While this may be the case, there seemed to still be a certain level of culpability placed upon the students rather than on the neoliberal system itself when it comes to success in the international program. For example, when I asked A2 what the biggest challenge was to students' international education experience, A2 replied with, "self-discipline" (Interview). Similarly, A3 highlighted, "the biggest frustration […is] when the commitment to the program is not there and they're having attendance issues" (Interview). Both A2 and A3 in their separate interviews went on to discuss other factors that can affect commitment and/or discipline – including poor custodians or home support – but there is still this overall program accentuation on commitment or an internal motivation that can be compounded by external factors, instead of these external factors embodied in a neoliberal system as being the root of such commitment issues.

Again, I accentuate that PMD's international program has endeavoured to provide proper mechanisms of support for students, with teachers and administrators working to meet many pedagogical demands as they emerge. Yet, the neoliberal logic of "personal choice" (Gray, 2010b, p. 722), wherein both material and discursive structures of powers are often overlooked, was imbued within the backdrop of international education itself, and in how international education was referenced by the various actors involved in this study. Even though there is anxiety expressed by students, and teachers and administrators acknowledge difficulties of acquiring competences, English and international education are instrumentalized and spoken of in more or less neutral terms, instead of being examined as the institutional gatekeepers they can be. Through neoliberalism, the process of acquiring English and intercultural competence is portrayed as a liberal journey in which students will succeed once they have properly progressed through processes of self-realization and have attained the appropriate self-branding characteristics (Gray, 2010a).

Through this same neoliberal ideology, failure to achieve is "nobody's fault but your own" (Holborow, 2015, p. 26) with individuals being the ones who did not work hard enough nor take enough risks in the true entrepreneurial essence of neoliberalism. This sentiment can be seen in students' anxieties, but more so in their internalizing of their perceived shortcomings and/or inability to tick off those instrumentalized checklist items.

It is up to the students to remove themselves from “bad” English teaching and learning situations to find better ways to acquire English; the students do not question why there are few instances to speak English in their home countries and simply accept the discourse that English is necessary to acquire jobs. When students and their families make the decision for the students to journey afar to acquire English, the students are the ones who now are “late” (Thom, Interview 2) on pathways toward graduation. Students like Sun-Hee pile stockpile courses in an effort to alleviate feelings of being “behind,” even though it is formal and standardized testing and discrepancies in the leveling of different countries’ education systems that have determined that they are “behind.” Such internalizing is epitomized in Thom’s detailing of his anxieties about the future, particularly in regards to graduation:

> Thom: That’s the thing in my mind. That thought. I don’t know.
>
> CLJ: Which thought?
>
> Thom: The thought that I always be the loser.
>
> (Interview 2)

Stein and colleagues (2021) determine that modern economies harness and utilize humanistic fears and emotions – including feelings of worthlessness – to further mobilize individuals’ investment and participation in the existing capitalistic system. This idea of being a “loser” is additionally reminiscent of Chun’s (2017) assertion of a whole discourse based on “winners” and “losers” within capitalist society, wherein those who do not succeed are effectually “losers” due to lack of effort. Those who win are those who work hard and do not accept handouts – a position that goes hand in hand with neoliberal efforts to distance from government welfare. While some could argue that the discourse of personal choice can be freeing or motivating, it can also be a neoliberal “uncritical celebration” (Gray, 2010b, p. 730) that can negatively impact students and their perceptions of themselves. Student perception of self and other became an interesting point of discussion that will be explored in the upcoming section.

6.4. English and the Imaginary

The data thus far have provided some glimpses into how the contradictory nature of international education and neoliberalism (Block et al., 2012; Holborow, 2015; Tarc,

2019) creates interesting dynamics. For example, only certain cultures and languages are coveted (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Stein & Andreotti, 2016; Weenink, 2008), which emphasizes traces of the "legacies of colonialism" (Tarc, 2019, p. 741) that can underline aspects of globalization and internationalizing processes. But with English being such a dominant aspect of these students' international education experiences, it made sense that English loomed large in their consciousness, impacting how they perceived themselves and those around them. Next, I explore notions surrounding legitimate forms of English and how these notions can intersect with and impact the minds and lives of students.

An important facet of the centrality of English (Lee & Marshall, 2012) was also the question of who was speaking English. At the beginning of my research project, a few students approached me to ask about my personal background and where I was born. When I replied that I was born in Canada, several gushed that I was lucky to have been born a Native English speaker (NES), with one student calling it "the dream" (Fieldnotes, 17/10/2018). A look at the wording from important and influential institutions adds a Foucauldian form of lateral analysis from which we can examine what "acts, statements and subjects [are] possible at certain specific locations" (Hook, 2001, p. 540). Many secondary international students – including some students from this study – view their high school experiences as pathways to also attend postsecondary abroad (Guhr & Furtado, 2015). Meanwhile, universities such as The University of British Columbia (UBC) use terminology such as "native-speaker" while referencing their language admission standards. On their website instructing students how to request a language requirement waiver, they state that students can try for the waiver if they "believe that [they] have the proficiency of a native English speaker," (Undergraduate Programs and Admissions, n.d., "English language competency"). As well, a request must include an official recommendation letter from the prospective student's school which can attest that the student's English proficiency is "close to or equal to that of a native speaker" (Undergraduate Programs and Admissions, n.d., "English language competency"). Language from an esteemed institution can arguably circumscribe discourses available to students and we can see how the dichotomy of native-speaker vs. non-native speaker can become naturalized.

Later, I learned that several of the students participating in the project had similar outlooks regarding NES, particularly Thom. It was discussed earlier how Thom often

began and ended his interview sessions with a comment about English. Again, I point out how Thom's perception of his own English fluctuated – sometimes within the same conversation – with him commending his own English processes and improvements, and then doubting his strengths soon afterwards. In his second interview, when I asked him how everything was going for him, he replied, "First thing's my English skills. Like, um, I'm more like native [-speaking English] people right now." Firstly, I highlight how, like Yamato, Thom chose to begin our conversation with the topic of English. Secondly, he was not only commenting upon his English but rather commenting on his English in reference to the NES. At the end of the interview, when I asked him if he had anything to add, he asked me what I thought of his English, a conversation which resulted in the following excerpt:

> Thom: Yeah, so how's my tone of voice?
>
> CLJ: Your tone of voice?
>
> Thom: How's my tone of voice?
>
> CLJ: I understand you.
>
> Thom: Yeah, but it's not fluent, as fluent as, um, the native.

Thom has now moved from commending his English improvement to doubting his English, but again, in relation to the NES. With such an emphasis placed on NES, it was also worked into his goals. The following is an excerpt from when I asked Thom about his future goals:

> Thom: Yeah. So, from now, talk as a native speaker. [Laughs.
>
> CLJ: That's your-
>
> Thom: -Oh, my God.
>
> CLJ: That's your goal right now, then?
>
> Thom: Yeah, that's my goal.
>
> (Interview 2)

Thom's "oh, my God" was a form of exasperated interjection into his own thought processes as he relayed his goal to be more like NES, but while also acknowledging how difficult this objective might be. In Thom's opinion, NES are more "understandable" and this is important because, "you're worth more understandable" (Interview 2).

Thom's mention of "worth" once again links the economy to English learning. We have already argued that learning English is not a neutral process but additionally, within these complex processes, students are also learning the skills of decoding varieties of English (Gray, 2010a). In the world of language commodification, language as a skill is a valuable commodity with different varieties holding different values within one linguistic market (Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012). Shankar and Cavanaugh point toward the neoliberal workplace, which is arguably the goal of the students within this study. The neoliberal workplace is marked by speaking styles and registers which hold certain values and can become commodified. In Thom's case, it is the English spoken by NES that is the valuable variety, deemed "eligible to circulate" (Shankar & Cavanaugh, 2012, p. 364).

Like Thom, Sun-Hee was also cognisant of how her English sounded during our interviews together. And also like Thom, Sun-Hee often referenced NES when speaking about her own English acquisition. When asked about the challenges of living abroad in her second interview, Sun-Hee replied,

> I think it's mostly English because, um- um, I know my language- I know my English is not that perfect, like nation people, like native- like local Canadian. Mmm, because not- because English is not my first language, right?

By her third interview, Sun-Hee stated:

> Because at the beginning of the year, I- my English was not that, like, fluent. But now, it is. But, like, my English not perfect as native speakers but better than [laughs]… Better than the beginning of the year.

In evaluating her English, Sun-Hee does so by comparing herself to NES in both instances. Interestingly, Sun-Hee still valued her Korean, informing me how it was important for her to still speak Korean with her friends in Korea. However, as can be seen by the above excerpts, Sun-Hee still upheld the NES as a standard.

Additionally, Sun-Hee upheld more traditional notions of multilingualism, wherein speakers of multiple languages should be able to speak each language with the ability of a monolingual native speaker (Auer, 2007; Byrd Clark, 2020; Kachru, 1994; Marshall & Moore, 2018). For example, in her second interview, Sun-Hee explained:

> And I also think, like, someone- immigrants- some of them who are immigrants. Like, if their mother, father is Korean and they- they're some born in Korea- ah, here. Then, probably you can speak English and Korean. Like, kind of perfect. Not perfectly but much better and probably two languages would be almost perfect, right?

Sun-hee seemed to envy those born in Canada, specifically how they could speak their home languages but then move – in her opinion – effortlessly into a "perfect" form of English. Sun-Hee therefore worried that her "English is not that perfect like that" (Interview 2). In detailing this traditional notion of double monolingualism (Auer, 2007), Sun-Hee compared herself to those born in Canada, and questioned, "Why am I not person like that?" (Interview 2). This form of romanticizing of bilingualism can work to reify the languages spoken and therefore also reify the speakers themselves along with their cultures and backgrounds (Leung et al., 1997). For Sun-Hee, such romanticized and compartmentalized musings led her to also doubt her English, and she often asked me at the end of our interviews, whether or not I thought she sounded "weird." According to Lee and Marshall (2012), the idea of sounding "funny" or "weird" is tied to student perception of what is legitimate. English that is accented or marked is not seen as legitimate because more traditional understandings of language determine languages to have distinct boundaries and be "pure and discrete systems" (p. 71). Sun-Hee's traditional conceptualizations of NES and language can therefore be seen as linked and serving to delegitimize Sun-Hee's own identit(ies) as a speaker.

Students like Thom and Sun-Hee seem to place value on this static, reified, and uniform notion of the NES without considering context and overall ambiguity, with the reality being that so-called NES also speak in a range of non-standardized forms (Bhatt, 2002, Leung et al., 1997). For example, in detailing what advice he would give to other international students, Thom stated:

> Hmm, I would encourage them to, like, communicate with, ah, Westerner people. Like, the Canadian. The true Canadian. […] I think it will improve their English a lot. Not with international. It's, ah- as you know, international, their English is the- it's not good as the foreigner.

However, the notion of who is a "Canadian" and "Westerner" can be quite convoluted, with many local students' backgrounds in Metro Vancouver being potentially layered and multilingual. These assumptions point to how there is oftentimes a discrepancy between the complex lived realities of individuals versus

the “linguistic and ethnic categories imposed on them” (Leung et al., 1997); we also frequently forget that entities such as “nationality and ethnicity … [and] language ability and language allegiance” (Rampton, 1990, p. 100) are equally complex and do not necessarily align. Even in Thom’s statement, he moves back and forth between the use of the words “Westerner,” “Canadian,” and then “foreigner,” to describe the same group of individuals in comparison to himself and other international students. The use of the word “foreigner” is most interesting as in this particular context, he is technically the “foreigner” as an international student. Here, I should note that Cindy also used Vietnamese words and phrases like “English Native Speaker,” “Westerner,” and “American” interchangeably, and like Thom, she interspersed the word “foreigner” throughout her dialogue, and sometimes used “foreigner” to refer to Canadians and local students. Thus, the students adhered to traditional concepts of language and standards despite they themselves having otherwise alluded to nuances in labels, boundaries, and language practices (Park & Wee, 2012). Thom’s advice and the students’ use of labels demonstrate how ambiguous groups of people and their associated labels can be. Meanwhile, Sun-Hee had acknowledged that she would most-likely return to Korea after graduation. Thus, sometimes students can be focused on NES while referring to English usage potentially within non-native or periphery contexts (Bhatt, 1995; 2002). Such abstracted recognition of an official standard – despite all the varying social contexts involved – can alienate speakers from languages, and leave learners feeling anxious and insecure (Park & Wee, 2012). Students like Thom and Sun-Hee – with her supposedly “weird” English – come to fill a certain subject position in relation to English, and end up further reproducing inequalities as their insecurities are recognition and therefore evidence of a legitimate standard (Park & Wee, 2012). This legitimate standard then becomes perceived as being symbolically powerful and having value and students begin seeking this standard, or form of “authentic English,” despite such a concept being unclear and not wholly definable (Shin, 2013).

This form of positioning and subsequent legitimizing is also found in Yamato’s earlier discussion of tourists traveling to Japan but who are then unable to communicate with Japanese locals. In the following excerpt, Yamato expressed his frustration at these dynamics in light of the upcoming Olympic games:

> Yamato: Like, if you go out, like, ah- the- go out of Japan, maybe you- you maybe have to speak English. 'Cause the first language is not Japanese. Maybe, like, I don't know- depends on- hmm, depends on country. But, like, most of people should be able to speak English. So, maybe, I don't know, like first language- like, first common language is, English, I think. So, like we have to speak English and then, like, if, like someone who is from another country- also, we have- we may have to speak English. So, English is necessary. Like, it- even though you are- you are living in Japan, or doesn't matter where- where you are, we have to speak English and then of course, there's Olympics. So, they are- the many countries- like, many people coming to Japan. So, yeah, anyway, like it's necessary. So, that's why, like the government is trying to, um, improve, like our English skill. But- actually, they- they have been trying to improve our Japanese English for, like 10 years or something. But nothing changed. But, like- I don't know if they're like- if they realize or not. I don't know. Like, nothing changed. So, it's just meaningless. It's just wasting time. So, yeah, I'm not, like- I'm not politician so I don't know- I don't know, like, how to- how to change or, like, how to improve our English skill.
>
> CLJ: But you want it to improve too?
>
> Yamato: Yeah, I want. That- that's why I'm here.
>
> CLJ: OK. And what's your reason? So, you said the government says that when you go out there, you have to know English and then for Olympics, people come here, you should know English. So, what do you think? Why should-
>
> Yamato: -Oh, yes. I agree with them.
>
> (Interview 3)

Again, the centrality of English (Lee & Marshall, 2012) is highlighted with Yamato pinpointing his desire to learn English for communication as his reason for partaking in this international program. According to Yamato, individuals living in Japan should learn English even if they do not intend to leave Japan. Yamato's discussion of the Olympics and his use of specific language referencing "time" and therefore efficiency is arguably a form of neoliberal logic, wherein English is needed to attract tourists and boost or maintain a tourism industry in Japan. Herein lies an example of language (in this case English) holding value because of its role in economics globally (Heller & Duchêne, 2011). However, as Park and Wee (2012) illustrate by drawing on the Korean context, this form of English pursuit begins with "economic calculation" (p.134) but ventures beyond it toward semiotic value, and can also bring about anxiety and even embarrassment as learners worry they are unable to compete in the modern world due to perceived lack of English. Within the same conversation, Yamato further highlights

his frustration with the English dynamics in Japan, criticizing the fact that most of his friends in addition to most of the people he knows back in Japan cannot speak English:

> Yeah, now it's OK 'cause maybe I can speak English. But most of my friends, no- I think most of my friends- not only my friends- my, you know- Japanese people cannot speak English so that is serious problem, I guess.

This critique coupled with the fact that he felt the Japanese government is "a little bit stupid" (Interview 3) in their strategizing of their English programs demonstrate the kind of self-deprecation involved in the pursuit of English.

But again, it is not just the pursuit of English but rather a certain standard of English that is to be aspired to. In the nuanced field of indexicality, certain meanings become associated with language and when learners engage in language practices and thus also meaning-making, certain emotional reactions – such as embarrassment and anxiety in the case of the above student examples – can ensue. Through these scenarios, speakers come to value English and as we discussed earlier, the authority of "stereotypical native speakers" (Park & Wee, 2012, p. 136) all the more. In analyzing both the material conditions and symbolic practices involved in neoliberalism (Springer, 2012), we are better able to understand the intricacies and deeply-rooted inequities involved in language abstraction and uncritical market metaphors used to explain-away language learning processes. A language can only be perceived as having capital and a global status if it is given an "essential form" (Park & Wee, 2012, p. 105) that can be measured for its value; and the valuing of the stereotypical NES has colonial roots and can encompass so much more than instrumentalized forms of language.

An example of such dynamics can be found through institutions trying to capitalize on societal beliefs and semiotic processes surrounding NES. In researching international programs, Sun-Hee (Interview 1) revealed that she had considered other schools and countries before settling on WSS in Canada. Along with researching schools in Singapore, Sun-Hee had also contemplated a branch of international schools throughout China but with ties to a consulting agency stationed in the United Kingdom. I did an online search of this program, which yielded a webpage dedicated to the recruitment of teachers that specifies being a Native English speaker as a teaching requirement. Additionally, a promotional angle used to advertise their programs to prospective students points to the employment of teachers who are not Chinese citizens.

With language abstraction and acceptance of the uncritical, common-sense use of economic metaphors to explain and account for language learning processes (Park & Wee, 2012), we risk obscuring processes of "racial capitalism" (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 630), wherein no amount of acquired linguistic capital nor adherence to any standards can shift structural inequalities nor erase the racial marginalization of non-whites (Rosa, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017). Not only are speakers and their language communities seen as fixed rather than as fluid as they are, there has historically been this emphasis on biological factors to explain language processes despite language use being quite a social entity (Rampton, 1990). Language ideologies surrounding English arguably go deeper than language itself with discourses of Self and Other – as rooted in colonial history – helping to construct speakers and learners of English over time (Pennycook, 1994; 1998); these same colonial discourses included a positivistic and seemingly scientific rationalization that framed English as "natural, neutral and beneficial" (Pennycook, 1994, p. 6). Such overall discourses have thus shaped racialized dynamics over time and such instances as, for example, institutions' employment of only NES and non-Chinese in China-based schools, and the rhetoric surrounding the superiority in the "authentic English" spoken by Europeans and "foreigners."

As institutions capitalize on this NES discourse, so too do they perpetuate these ideological constructs about English and speakers of English. The students of this study sometimes adopted and reproduced these same constructs. While the imaginary of "the West," especially in contrast to the racialized Other was perpetrated by the West, its prevalence and pervasiveness over the years makes it difficult to contest and is now taken up globally by those in both the centre and on the periphery (Stein & Andreotti, 2016). Individuals can unwittingly participate in their own marginalization (Kubota, 2021) because it is difficult to imagine society outside of these established discourses (Kumaravadivelu, 2016). This reproduction can be found in the earlier excerpt of Thom and his advice for international students to speak with "Westerner people." Additionally, Cindy spoke of the schools she attended in Vietnam and their hiring of foreigners to teach English. Of this process, Cindy explained, "a million Vietnamese teachers can't measure up to the English Native Speaker" (Interview 1). More specifically, Cindy explained how at times, it might fall upon Vietnamese teachers to teach Listening, Reading and Writing courses but that, "the ***speaking*** class, like in ***Speaking***, an English person, a foreigner teaches […] so- so we can speak well." Similarly, Yamato informed

me that when he initially arrived in Canada, he felt intimidated speaking with interlocutors whom he perceived had better English competency. He therefore chose to speak with other international students who were Asian – rather than with international students from other areas – because he felt more comfortable in his perception that they were of similar English competencies. Of this calculated decision, Yamato said:

> I feel like Asian people- people from Asia, ah, are not good at speaking English […] compared to European, like, or, Bra- or Brazilian people.
>
> (Interview 2)

We therefore cannot ignore how Asian English is oftentimes positioned as illegitimate (Shin, 2015). We also cannot discount how racialization can oftentimes shape understandings of the native speaker (Aneja, 2016; Rosa & Flores, 2017) especially when we consider the "tendency to assume White monolingual English speakers are automatically affiliated to standard English" (Leung et al., 1997, p. 556). Earlier I discussed Thom's assertion that English is required in Vietnam "if you want to get a job. I- I mean, the well-paid job" (Interview 3). He is thus pointing to neoliberal logics of instrumental competences accumulation to be able to participate in a global job market (Block, 2018b), wherein English communication has become "conflated" (Kubota, 2020, p. 59) as measurable skills for resume enhancement. However, neoliberal logics can be used to obscure more deeply-rooted issues of race encompassing persistent "colonial distinctions between Europeanness and non-Europeanness" (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 622). In this same interview, Thom reflected on a conversation with his friends regarding learning English:

> Hmm, they said that […] like, something that's, "if you don't speak like the native speaker, then study English for what?" […] It- it's just a joke but like, it's hurt. [Laughs.] It's painful.

These forms of linguicism coupled with the earlier-discussed deficit identity that English language learners often face (Ilieva, 2016; Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Kanno, 2000; Leung et al., 1997; Marshall, 2010; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008; Talmy 2004) can create more material inequities, even as they are produced, in part, discursively. Firstly, students seemed to internalize this deficit identity, not recognizing their own multilingual competences (Marshall, 2010). This can be seen through the earlier analysis of Sun-Hee's case. Sun-Hee had negatively compared herself to students born in Canada who could speak Korean but also a "perfect" English, despite the fact that she was

multilingual herself. Sun-Hee's self-doubt is understandable considering the types of discourses and linguicism that seem to be naturalized around students. (For example, the school in China she had considered attending only employed NES and non-Chinese). In Thom's case, despite this feeling of "pain," Thom (and his friends) still persisted in learning English because "it's really important to learning- ah, to learn English in Vietnam" (Interview 3). This task was still measured against the idealized standard of the NES, with him commenting, "yeah, to become a native speaker, um [sighs]- maybe 10 more years [laughs]." Viewing English through the lens of desire, we can see how individuals can be left unfulfilled because English is conditional and contingent on factors like accent and/or race (Motha & Lin, 2014). Race can be a tool that perpetuates the imaginary of the West, and students "must feel compelled to invest" (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022, p. 751) in this imaginary in order to maintain its dominant position (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022; Suspityna, 2021). Students doubting themselves can be left forever striving to attain the appropriate competences – a feat that can perhaps be futile due to racialized language ideologies depicting the language practices of racialized speakers as incompatible with a contemporary global economy (Rosa & Flores, 2017), and students' buying into and internalizing such discourses. Thus, it is hard to dismiss the need for further examination of discourses or assumptions underlying the above processes, especially when considering the colonial ties inherent in internationalization processes (Stein, 2019), and how language ideologies and related linguistic perceptions can oftentimes be seen and determined through a racial lens (Rosa, 2016). Such processes are especially important given their impact on students.

The centrality of English (Lee & Marshall, 2012) therefore took an interesting turn in one particular instance, demonstrating how internalization of perceived shortcomings – when faced with language and racialized ideologies – can become a form of internalized racism (Nguyen, 2016; Pyke, 2010; Pyke & Dang, 2003; Schwalbe, Godwin, Holden, Schrock, Thompson & Wolkomir, 2000). During my time at WSS, an English-related controversy was an ongoing issue at North Carolina's Duke University in the United States. An assistant professor at Duke University was under fire for issuing an email to the students of a graduate program, of which she was the director. In this email – which was perceived by some as discriminatory to international students – she

cautioned students against speaking Chinese in the department's public spaces[27]. T3 used an article referencing this issue as a basis for discussion in one of their classes. During our interview together, T3 referenced this class discussion, describing how most of the students – including the international students – sided with the professor and did not perceive the email as discriminatory. T3 summarized:

> The students were saying it. So, some of the international students were saying, like, "yeah, they come-" and I was surprised about what they said. They said, "um, they're not the best students." Like, the people who come here. "They're wanting to come and get into university but they're not the best students to begin with." […] Yeah, so they're saying- they were telling, like "oh yeah- so, they're not good students but, like, if you're a good student, you would be wanting to speak English." In other words, some people are just coming here, not the best students and then they have no initiative to, like, study hard or want to learn, yeah.
>
> (Interview)

Through T3's summary, we can gauge how their students perceived that "good" international student behaviour equates utilizing international experiences to the fullest, employing only English in order to obtain this sought-after competency. The notion of discrimination is dismissed because "good students" would not consider a language outside of English while partaking in international education, nor should local students or even faculty and staff be expected to engage with – or even be hearing – languages other than English.

For a closer look, we can begin by revisiting neoliberal ideology concerning self-marketing (Gray, 2010a; 2010b) as individuals are wholly accountable for both their successes and failures, with no liability on the part of any associated and governing systems (Holborow, 2015; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). Corresponding linguicism and language ideologies begin to show themselves with the resurfacing of deficit ESL identity and any consequential self-blame (Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008), as well as assumptions regarding which language individuals feel they are bound to speak by default of being in a North American country (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011). But in the case of Duke University's international students, there is further implication for the regulation of language-minoritized groups and their fluid language uses based on idealized and oftentimes racialized understandings of linguistic practices (Flores, 2013b; Flores &

[27] See for example, the BBC's (2019) report on this issue for more information.

Rosa, 2015; Rosa & Flores, 2017; Shankar, 2008). In T3's students upholding these same notions regarding what is "appropriate" language practice for the Duke University international students, they also seem to be occupying and then internalizing this "ideological position" (Flores & Rosa, 2015, p. 151) that works to marginalize them.

The case of the Duke University students – who were homogenously lumped together as deficient users of English – and others' perceptions of them signify how racialized language ideologies are at play (Flores & Rosa, 2015; Shankar, 2008). Celebrations of multiculturalism and multilingual international students have an allotted time and place in educational institutions, whereas monolingual English is the norm; even when minoritized students are quite proficient in English, any "nonnormative use of language" (Shankar, 2008, p. 283) positions them as Other and inadequate without further examination of their language repertoire(s). Such racialized dynamics – in addition to the colonial legacy running through English and internationalization as outlined earlier – could lead to internalized racism. Marginalized groups seek acceptance by the dominant group through self-denigration (Pyke & Dang, 2003) and through a form of identity mediation known as "defensive othering" which is a reactive engagement with and reinforcement of existing codes and identity definitions created by dominant groups (Schwalbe et al., 2000). As can be seen here through T3's international students critiquing other international students, minoritized individuals take part in a form of "policing" (Nguyen, 2016, p. 520) of one another in order to further distance themselves from any stigma associated with their coethnics, or in this case, with their international peers. This classroom instance regarding the Duke University controversy summarizes a lot of the insecurities and internalizing of perceived incapabilities highlighted throughout the thesis as shaped by the education system in its current neoliberal and instrumentalizing state.

6.5. Conclusion

As a whole, and as part of a "general neoliberal trend in education" (Heller & Duchêne, 2016, p. 141), wherein emphasis is placed on global citizenship and intercultural understanding, skills gained through international education such as intercultural and English competences become valuable resources which individuals seek access to. We can see this discourse of neoliberal logic throughout the above examples, through deeper analysis of the idealistic philosophies surrounding

international education, and examination of the students' personal goals concerning capital and competency accumulation. Such a system can be problematic on several points. As introduced and analyzed in Chapter 3, its focus is feeding into the global economy. But most importantly, neoliberal promises of skills leading to dream employment opportunities and class ascendance are misleading, and disregard any contemporary economic conditions and systemic inequalities that tend to favour those already with wealth and/or power (Holborow, 2015; Kubota, 2021). For example, reports of the UK contexts during the 2008-2009 global recession show that being highly skilled did not secure elevated employment, and many were left struggling to find employment altogether (Holborow, 2012a). Additionally, in regards to competences as attainable commodities, individuals with fewer resources and of lower socioeconomic positions have little power in determining what is "authentic" and are therefore less likely able to acquire valued forms of certain skills (Park, 2011). With English and language learning specifically, it is also important not to dismiss the potentials for racial capitalism (Rosa & Flores, 2017), and how social distinctions are produced and reproduced, impacting racialized students' perceptions, internalizations, mentalities, learning experiences and lives as a whole (Shin, 2015). As Chun (2017) would argue: there is only freedom and freedom of opportunity if and when the system allows it.

When we examine international education through a political economy perspective, we are able to see the holes in the existing neoliberal system that can serve to alienate and even disempower students. Students were shown above to be under intense pressure while participating in an instrumentalized accumulation of competences. Furthermore, their rush to accumulate English competence were shaped by ideological constructs about English and speakers of English, especially in terms of standards and the idealized NES. While neoliberal ideology suggests acquiring competences can give individuals a competitive edge, several students of this study seemed to internalize deficit and racialized discourses, leading to a sense of futility in their efforts. Identification of these discrepancies or "holes" in the system while narrowing in on students' narratives can then lead to analysis of how students might be better cared for and supported with more ethical and sustainable internationalizing practices. An examination of students' individual experiences, however, can also lead to exploration of their negotiation of the constraints discussed above. I will begin such an

exploration with the next chapter organized around the concept of hybridity in relation to the participants in my study.

Chapter 7.

Living In-Between: International Secondary Student Negotiations of Languages, Boundaries, and Identities

I have presented different facets of neoliberalism and how the ideology shapes the current education system, with its discourses permeating the lives and experiences of the individuals presented throughout this study, at times, causing constraints for international students. Nevertheless, in exploring the accounts of these same international students, we are given a glimpse of the nuances embedded within their narratives and experiences, and throughout their micro connections to the schooling system(s) of which they are a part. Thus, while we must be wary of labelling such experiences as "cosmopolitan," a cautious look is warranted of students' engagement with the opportunities presented through studying abroad and their shuffling between countries and cultures (Canagarajah, 2002; Tarc, 2013; Wu & Tarc, 2021b).

The prior chapter on neoliberalism was an examination of the "messy" (Rubdy & Alsagoff, 2014, p. 1) and fragmented aspects arising from globalization and internationalization processes (Mansouri & Modood, 2021; Rizvi, 2010; Yemini, 2014); the following chapter continues to highlight such fissures but additionally focuses on how students then navigate them. This last data analysis chapter and its focus on students' negotiation of dominant discourses and the potential subsequent constraints therefore addresses my third research question: how do international students navigate their identities and experiences vis à vis prevailing discourses? I address the uncertainty students face while studying abroad but then examine how students might negotiate uncertainty and the inhabiting of liminal spaces. In this sense, I present instances in which students navigate borders, cultures and languages. Data throughout this chapter incorporates excerpts from student interviews and descriptions from fieldnotes and our interactions together.

7.1. Education Abroad: Living In-Between Lives

I begin by drawing attention to how students' lives seemed to be encompassed by a sense of in-between-ness and even uncertainty (Rizvi, 2005; Shin, 2013; Stier, 2003). Firstly, students partaking in this study were physically living in-between borders, with some students planning their postsecondary experiences around similar circumstances and others anticipating an indefinite future between different countries. Students like Cindy and Yamato discussed their changes of heart regarding their career goals, wanting instead to move back to their respective home countries of Vietnam and Japan following their programs. However, their intentions were to still travel extensively in the future, with the younger Cindy having several years yet before finishing high school and then postsecondary, which she planned to complete in the United States. Meanwhile, students like Thom and Iman were hopeful about settling in Canada but with Thom's ambitions to include traveling – if possible, given his qualms regarding money and expenses – while Iman would have to continue living in-between Canada and Iran in order to see the many relatives he had, who would be remaining in Iran.

The students' unpredictable living arrangements gave rise to equally uncertain dynamics. For instance, Cindy commented of returning home to Vietnam for the summer holidays and her travel itinerary, "I will stay and be with my parents […] Because my mom only just gave birth" (Interview 2). With her studying abroad, Cindy had yet to meet her new sister and needed to spend whatever time possible reacquainting herself with family. She was also hoping to squeeze in time with her boyfriend, noting "it'll be a few years before we see each other again" (Interview 2). Both Cindy and her boyfriend are international students, making their entire relationship transnational and based on arranging meetings for when they happen to be in the same country. Similarly, Iman remarked upon the punctuated meetings with his family by highlighting his father's observations of the changes he noticed in Iman:

> […] my father told me, like, communication-wise, like he told me, "you're better at communicating with people." And… And I don't know. He said, "you grew up so much." Not like physically. Like, my manner and stuff.
>
> (Interview 2)

Iman's father made this observation after his first visit to Vancouver to see Iman after Iman had settled in. While commenting on the changes on Iman's "manner," his father also noticed physical changes, including how much taller Iman grew during their time apart. These above dynamics, especially Iman's own acknowledgement of his physical and emotional development, underscore the constantly fluctuating nature of studying abroad for students (Podadiuk & Marshall; Popadiuk 2009; 2010) and the myriad of potentially difficult identity shifts, in addition to the physical growth, that can occur through and while students negotiate "multiple transition realities" (Popadiuk, 2010, p. 1543).

Meanwhile, Yamato's high school completion would be conditional and dependent upon his fulfillment of 2 more years at his technical high school back in Japan. Even though he could attend WSS' graduation ceremony, it would be purely ceremonial. Yamato acknowledged, "I want to graduate from here […] But I can't- I cannot" (Interview 1). When asked if he was looking forward to graduating instead with the students back home in Japan, he replied, "No, I don't know. Yeah, the- the- ah, the younger age, yeah, so I don't know- I don't know them." In essence, Yamato's peers would be complete strangers to him. Students can sometimes therefore face more uncertainty upon returning home to encounter an environment that might seem quite different after they themselves have gone through so much change (Stier, 2003).

Even Anya – whose plans were to return home to Germany after her short-term sojourn and who had no immediate plans to study abroad in the near future – faced a level of uncertainty arising from international exchange being "an emotional journey" (Stier, 2003, p. 81). In terms of leaving Canada, Anya stated:

> […] I want to go home because my family and friends are there. But I also really want to stay here. It's- I don't know. 'Cause when I'm going back now, my- all my life that I had here, it's over and I will never have this again. (Interview 2)

There can therefore be feelings of anxiety about returning to a different reality after an exciting and eye-opening stint abroad (Stier, 2003). Lindsey's case provides another instance of constant fluctuations. Lindsey – as an eighth grader just entering high school – still had, in theory, several years of stability but her older sister's post secondary plans instigated an abrupt move to Toronto for their family. The

unpredictability of international education therefore has students constantly beginning anew.

Meanwhile, stability was never an option from the outset for students like Sun-Hee. While she was fulfilling a dream of hers to study abroad, an array of options can be conversely stifling when faced with complex family situations and feelings of filial piety (Lin, 2012). Regarding her family circumstances, Sun-Hee revealed, “my mom’s friend always said to me, ‘you need to go back to Korea’ […] because my mom is alone” (Interview 1). Sun-Hee had visions of further study and work and travel abroad, and was well-versed in making these options materialize. However, she would most-likely be forced by her sense of familial responsibility to return to Korea, a feat which was made more difficult by the fact that she felt unprepared to take the extra exams and avenues she said were mandatory for international students returning to Korea and wanting to enter a prestigious Korean university. Concerning these difficulties, she worriedly estimated, “we need a really high score, almost 100%, I don’t know” (Interview 1). As mentioned in the previous chapter, Sun-Hee suspected that studying in the United States was not an option either because she would not have the proper prerequisites ready in time. Instead, Sun-Hee had the contingency plan to complete university in Canada before returning to Korea for work, though this plan would then be dependent on her English scores. Living in-between can therefore also be accompanied by an uncomfortable sense of “indeterminacy” regarding possible future trajectories (Shin, 2013).

7.2. The Case of Students’ Imaginaries and Navigating Borders: Decisions and Reconsiderations

This section presents examples of students’ understandings and negotiations of culture. With the above descriptions of students living in-between, hybridity itself can seem constraining but students were able to demonstrate their movement through and in-between such liminal spaces (Bhabha, 1994a). Students’ uncertain positioning need not be seen as lost or without direction. Instead, an indeterminate state can also be a median state providing more directions for varied movement, and possibilities for the destabilizing of extremes (Minh-Ha, 2011). Such decentralization can occur in both a material and tangible sense but also ideologically-speaking.

As can be seen in the previous chapter, powerful discourses shape understandings of reality (Cheek, 2008) and students buy into dominant notions and neoliberal discourses. The dominant global imaginary can mould students' projections, with students coming to position the West as "a desirable product" (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p. 226). For example, there is the neoliberal but also colonial discourse of English that was previously examined. Additionally, students demonstrated a desire for this notion of freedom that they projected onto the West, as will be discussed in this section. In some cases, the situations and differences highlighted were more so about pragmatic issues. In this regard, Iman mentioned having better facilities in Canada that enabled him to participate in experiments for his science classes, as opposed to in Iran, where the labs lacked equipment. As he described, "In Iran, I went to the lab just two or three times. I didn't even use anything. I just- I was just watching" (Interview 1). Students also described having less homework and more options regarding their course sections. In comparison, there was an abundance of homework in many of their home countries in addition to stricter structuring of their schedules and course selections. Both Thom and Cindy explained how the Vietnamese education system did not allow for many electives. Thom outlined the Canadian system as having "a lot of subjects that we can choose, not like Vietnam" (Interview 1). Such discussion led to conversations about freedom in terms of having free time. As Lindsey illustrates, much of her time in China was spent studying to the point where she didn't "have time to play, ah, like, even the weekend" (Interview 1). These discussions are linked to preservation goals in which students look toward study abroad for freedom or as a means to change circumstances they were facing in their home countries (Chirkov et al., 2007; 2008; Tamtik, 2009).

Discussions of freedom, however, also veered toward more subjective and/or more discursive understandings of freedom, especially in the sense of comparing Western or central ways to systems and cultures on the periphery. For example, many of the students spoke of how they felt schooling was much easier in Canada than in their home countries. By contrast, teachers like T3 argued that this line of thinking is an inaccurate summary of idiosyncrasies and explained, "I'm wondering, like, if their perception of schools in Canada isn't a little misleading […] it's not that it's easier. It's just that we focus on different things" (Interview).

Students like Cindy and Yamato were vehemently against the education systems in their home countries and painted them in a negative light. Cindy spoke of feeling

overly pressured in Vietnam, preferring Canada's autonomy in aspects such as course selection. She explains, "in Vietnam, they just overload you. Like- like here, they teach you the basics and the necessities but in Vietnam, we need to learn everything. But when you go into the outside world, it's not applicable" (Interview 1). While trying not to discount the lived experiences students have related, I would like to draw attention to this dominant sense of the West and its processes being more modern and progressive, with the prioritizing of individual autonomy, despite realities being much more complex and more so about the normalization of certain discourses (Bryan, 2013; Khoo, 2011). Such normalized discourse can be seen in Cindy's commentary regarding the "forward-thinking" process here in Canada of teaching the necessary basics that can lead to informed and self-determined career pathways, in contrast to Vietnam's "backward" process of overloading students with impractical knowledge. Yamato spoke similarly of education in Japan as representative of the general state of education in Asia, stating "Asian education is bad, I think" before further explaining that the system was purely about "only study, study, study and then test, test, exam, exam, yeah, it's boring" (Interview 1). This speaks to the general understanding that Asian education is purely rote learning in contrast to the critical thinking promoted in Western countries, despite this form of critical thinking being in and of itself moulded by a particular context and space that curtails other ways of thinking (Wu & Tarc, 2021a). Furthermore, Yamato disliked Japanese work culture, accentuating that his own mother was trying to influence him by telling him, "'you have to- yeah, you have to go to the foreign country and then get a job'" (Interview 1). Yamato's mention of "foreign" here refers to "Canada or the US" (Interview 1), as he later specifies within the same interview during his discussion of future education and career options. Yamato's (and his mother's) goal of going to a Western country to escape work pressures underscores this dichotomous logic that presents areas of the globe as being either demanding or not, or free and autonomous or not (Jefferess, 2012).

For Cindy, freedom extended beyond work and school, expanding to encompass her general understanding of living in Western countries. In speaking of North America in comparison to Vietnam, Cindy argues:

> Here we can do whatever and nobody pays attention. We can be free. We can wear what we want and do what we want. And in Vietnam, we always have to be on the lookout and see if there's anything going on. It's not free like here. (Interview 1)

Positioning of the West as superior on a global hierarchy is thereby also dependent on the maintenance of difference and distinction from the Other, wherein the Other is deemed “less developed along a linear path of human progress” (Stein & Andreotti, 2016, p. 228). Students can reproduce these discourses, as demonstrated through students’ comparisons and dichotomization of West/Centre versus Other/periphery (Jefferess, 2012).

However, this being said, these projections regarding the West and Other were not black and white, instead revealing shades of grey. For instance, Miyu effectually agreed with the other students regarding education in Canada in comparison with education in her home country, Japan. She gauged that “in Japan, it’s only, like, learn and remember the things” (Interview 1) and regarding Canadian education, acquiesced “I think it’s better than Japan.” Yet, as presented in the previous chapter, Miyu insisted that despite these aspects about Canadian education that she deemed “better,” she still preferred the Japanese system because it was a better personal “fit.” Amidst our analyses of neoliberalism, colonialism, and racialized discourses, is the idea that individuals are not unaware of the circumstances and potential issues of the system(s) within which they participate (Chun, 2017). Even with dichotomized understandings of the world, students indicated their occupation of a median position that provided a form of agency wherein students acknowledged extremes but were not beholden to either side (Minh-Ha, 2011). Moreover, while their understandings of the world were seemingly dichotomized, their reactions to or uptake of these understandings and conditions were more fluid.

Examples of the above dynamics can be seen through Cindy’s and Yamato’s narratives. Both Cindy and Yamato changed their future plans during the course of the school year. International students are usually accustomed to juggling their different identities but additionally, they must also make substantial and life-altering decisions quickly, adapting and modifying their lives swiftly because they are acting within stricter time frames (Marginson, 2014). Additionally, any buy-in of particular world views can be seen as “partial” (Gray, 2010a, p. 25); individuals’ connections to these stances are not only discursive but also in constant flux based on their own reflexivity in the face of changing circumstances (Gray, 2010a; Hall, 1980). Thus, while their original decisions were aligned with a particular stance, subject positionalities in relation to beliefs can

fluctuate, allowing for reconsideration and re-evaluation and even an agentive inconclusiveness.

In Cindy's case, her dream of becoming a cosmetic surgeon evolved into a business plan that involved extending her parents' existing food manufacturing business to encompass a more intercultural concept. She had hopes of traveling extensively, collecting ideas to create a series of food stalls in Vietnam featuring street food from around the world. Although by the end of our time together, Cindy was quite set on a business concentration for postsecondary as opposed to a medical program, as well as focusing on a pathway toward her proposed business venture, her attitudes toward Vietnam and living in Vietnam were more ambiguous. Specifically, she worried that it might be difficult to return to Vietnam after having lived for so long abroad in a different cultural climate. She was open to traveling while having her main line of work stationed in Vietnam but the idea of living only in Vietnam was something she remained unsure about. She frequently referred back to the difference in cultures, at one point explaining "if we're talking about Vietnam, I'm not sure how I'd return to Vietnam" (Interview 1). To reiterate, Cindy found Vietnamese culture to be quite stifling, highlighting what she perceived as the lack of freedom in comparison to North America, and an atmosphere in which acts outside of what is deemed the norm would make an individual "the centre of attention" (Interview 1). Cindy complained that Vietnam's vetting of cultural norms "means that the whole online world of Vietnam will know about you. They will know you" (Interview 1), creating a dynamic in which individuals need to act accordingly within certain confines. Furthermore, Cindy began to personally identify with her perception of North American culture and freedom, informing me, "when I was in Vietnam, I was very aggressive but also timid. But when I got here, it's like- something. It's like I became more open […] over here, we're more free and I talk more" (Interview 2). Cindy's concern about her future alignment with Vietnamese culture is a preemptive nod to Kanno's (2000) description of returning Japanese international students who are oftentimes perceived and stereotyped as "a strange mix of East and West" (p. 363). Cindy's business plan still has traces of the neoliberal in the commodification of interculturalism. However, this business plan coupled with the strategic harnessing of her study abroad experiences arguably enable her to remain in a median position that additionally allows for ease of movement between cultures, an aspect that is conducive to a future that Cindy has imagined for herself.

Like Cindy, Yamato had many qualms about different aspects of his home country's culture. When we first met, he was insistent on a future in North America, explaining, "um, I hope I- in the future, I want to go back Canada or US" (Interview 1). Yamato was referring to returning to North America for both postsecondary and work after completing his remaining mandatory high school years in Japan. Of working specifically, Yamato declared, "[Japanese workers] look so tired. But in here, they look very fun. So yeah, I want to get job in here, yeah" (Interview 1). Later, Yamato announced that he would, instead, remain in Japan for university and work. After having researched career options for an ELL writing course project, he outlined his decision to remain in Japan to become an astronaut for their space program. For this particular career, candidates are required to complete their education and certain prerequisites in Japan at a "specialized school, like specialized university" (Yamato, Interview 1). As well, working for the Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA) would mean residing in Japan.

While his change in trajectories was career-motivated, Yamato was also prompted to re-evaluate his impressions of Japanese culture through being an international student. Even though he was still of the mindset to leave Japan during his first interview, a gradual realization about his home country was already beginning. This realization can be seen through the following:

> Yes, so Asian education, I don't know, but I don't like Japanese education but then when I come here, um, so, I um […] So- so, when I was in Japan, I didn't notice that- I didn't notice but since I came here, I was aware of the greatness of Japanese culture […] yeah, first, um- so every, um, many countries, they can eat, like, for example, like many countries people like sushi. And, um, Japanese food or Japanese culture. Um, like also in here, when, hmm- some students learn Japanese and Japanese culture. And then, so yeah, I was aware of the, like unique, greatness […] Yeah, I didn't notice when I was in Japan because all, most people Japanese, are Japanese, so yeah.
>
> (Interview 1)

By his third interview and after he had made his decision to remain in Japan, he then relayed:

> So, um, before I come here, when I in Japan, I really don't like my country […] And then, I really want to live in Canada or US in the future. But when I come here, ah, I realized my country is good. Like, 'cause my- through my friends who are not, ah- my friends who are not from

> Japan. Like, I mean, like any other country. People tell me, like Japan is good. Like, 'I went to Japan before and the food is good' or 'people is kind.' Then, um, I realize, like- like Japan is good country. Then I realize, like good culture. Of course, like, good technology […] Then, um- then, of course I'm Japanese so I- like- like before I come- like now, I really like my country.

International students' feelings of nationalism can be dependent upon their positionalities within their host countries (Wu & Tarc, 2021b). As well, creating new international ties can change or even enhance ties to heritage culture (Stier, 2003) as students are given opportunities to "recognize their cultural uniqueness" (Kashima & Loh, 2006, p. 473). Yamato seemed to internalize over time the positive ways in which his country was positioned by the host country and other transnationals. His fluctuations also speak to the fluidity regarding culture and our understandings of nation and society (Bhabha, 1990; Kramsch, 1996). Such understandings are never a completed production (Hall, 2013; 2014) and can furthermore always be reconstituted depending upon the surrounding circumstances (Canagarajah, 1999).

Yamato's willingness to remain in a more fluid mindset arguably and conversely contributed to his determination of how to approach studying abroad. Even though international students are placed in situations in which they must make swift decisions, students can still become confused when there are so many different life trajectory options – that can oftentimes be contrasting – stemming from transnational experiences (Rizvi, 2010). For example, Yamato seemed quite unsure about the kind of international study abroad experience he wanted, oscillating between being more of a full-fledged WSS high school student or a visiting sojourner, and participating or not in events like WSS' graduation ceremony. To explain Yamato's case, I highlight the variations that can occur through different program options. Students like Anya who described her experience with "we went every weekend out" (Interview 2) were able to more enjoy their time abroad since they were participating in short sojourns that were not as high-stakes. Meanwhile, students like Thom, who was under pressure to maintain grades that would help his settlement endeavors, acknowledged the potentially exciting adventures study abroad could offer, but of his own experience, explained, "But with me, it seems not, not good at all […] because I have many things to do" (Interview 1). In interviews, teachers and administrators also acknowledged the differences between short and long-term sojourns, highlighting how long-term students are "focusing" (T1, Interview) while short-term students are "here for the experience" (T3, Interview).

As Yamato's plans to remain in Japan became more concrete, so too did the pressures of achieving the proper grades and taking the right exams to later enter a North American university seem to recede. Like Anya, he began to participate in many of the international student events, along with events held by the school intended for all students. While Yamato verbally informed me he would participate in sending pictures of his experiences in Canada, he often forgot or was too busy to do so. However, after he changed his mind about returning to Japan, he – also like Anya – began sending more pictures. These pictures were of the events he attended, usually with captions about the beauty of Canada.

By the end of the school year, Yamato opted out of the graduation ceremony, electing instead to meet with another international student friend visiting from The United States. He also refrained from participating in the exit interviews meant for Twelfth Graders as part of their graduation requirements. On the day the interviews occurred, I had arrived at school to see students dressed in suits and other formal attire; Yamato was dressed in a sweat suit and shrugged off the interview experience because it did not apply to him (Fieldnotes, 02/07/2019). As Yamato's opinions and decision about Japan's culture and his future career waivered, his intentions for studying abroad became more purposeful and he was able to immerse himself in and enjoy the study abroad experience. Thus, for both Yamato and Cindy, while transnational trajectory options can be confusing, so too can there be "opportunities emanating from such ambiguities" (Rizvi, 2010, p. 162). Their median positioning offers a third space (Bhabha, 1994a; Kramsch & Uryu, 2020), wherein they can examine different aspects of the cultures surrounding them, aligning themselves with certain aspects while distancing themselves from others. These practices are also perhaps a form of "strategic essentialism" (Hua & Wei, 2020; Spivak, 1996), a concept that will be further explored in the following analyses.

7.3. The Case of Students' Imaginaries and Navigating Borders: Conflicting Identities and Feeling Different

Sun-Hee and Iman were also students who closely examined their choices to study internationally; their cases and corresponding identity negotiations are discussed in this section. International students can analyze different educational routes and address potential challenges encountered abroad with flexible strategies that involve

maintaining contact with communities from home (Wu & Tarc, 2021a). With different online platforms connecting students with other students and friends from back home, Sun-Hee and Iman were given the opportunity to conduct continuous comparisons of their experiences with that of their peers', which they then shared with me. Comparisons were heightened when Sun-Hee extended her spring break to return to Korea. During this time, Sun-Hee visited her old school, which was at that time in the middle of changing semesters and student-teacher configurations, and was therefore holding festivals instead of formal classes. Sun-Hee described partaking in these activities and having fun but also feeling wistful. In the following, she speaks of feeling separated from her peers based on their different experiences:

> Yeah, and it makes me so, like, oh, like- um, I feel OK because I'm here. Of course, I have, like, stress because of the grade but not that much. And like, I feel better because I'm here […] so, it kind of, feels me lonely […] Lonely because they are talking about their high school. Because it's too tough. And they have first test, like, the final test- like, the middle final test on May. And they are preparing that and they always study, like, until 1am and woke up, like 6, and if it- and they always say it's stressful. And it makes me like, "what am I doing here? Am I doing hard like that," like, kind of nervous. […] Because, um, I'm Korean. And I think, because I've been here, like 6 months. Um, I think I'm still Korean education style, like memorize all of things, kind of that. And it makes me, like, nervous or stressful. (Interview 1)

Sun-Hee's nervousness stemmed from trying to find that balance between learning sites "being challenging and being comfortable" (Kanno & Applebaum, 1995, p. 42) and feeling neither here nor there. In terms of her identity, she still aligned with the "Korean education style." While she felt "OK" because she was in a less stressful school setting, the discrepancy between her Korean mindset versus her chosen educational path was a source of anxiety, and had her questioning her choices.

In a similar vein, Iman felt removed from his peers. He explained how in Iran, students were not prone to using their phones and now his main source of contact with his peers was through the phone and different instant messaging applications. Of this change, Iman expressed, "you know, it's not feeling the same. Like, you should talk with your friend, like, physically like see them" (Interview 2). Moreover, the physical distance created an emotional distance between Iman and his friends. Iman came to realize certain attributes about these friends that he had not noticed before, such as their lack of motivation. Some friends had been slipping into more reckless adolescent behaviour

such as smoking of cigarettes but of this behaviour, Iman, stated “if I- if I didn’t came to Canada, I don’t know” (Interview 2). Through these realizations Iman concluded that he would continue chatting with these friends but added “I’m not going to have any more relationship” in that it would no longer be “close” as it had been before (Interview 2).

Sun-Hee’s and Iman’s stories demonstrate a phenomenon in which the traveler can become a stranger in their home countries as experiences and identities developed while abroad cannot be undone (Minh-Ha, 2011; Stier, 2003). Sun-Hee’s experience in particular speaks to a general feeling of uncertainty amplified by a quickly accelerating and unpredictable world that seems much less concrete than the worlds of prior generations (Bauman, 2015; Melucci, 2015). Current global dynamics make recognizable pillars such as traditional educational and career choices, consistent identities, and familiar collectives in the form of nearby and accessible family and friends much less secure. Furthermore, both Sun-Hee and Iman are confronted with the process of “palimpsest identity” (Bauman, 2015, p. 53). With identity being in flux and under constant construction is the prospect that it is just as easily disassembled and scrambled, confusing individuals with overlapping ideas and ideals. But despite this disconcerting ambiguity, the state of being transitional and crossing borders has also socialized students like Sun-Hee and Iman to see more than one point of view. With knowledge of different overlapping ideas and ideals, they need not be compliant with constructions that can be limiting (Bauman, 2015; Minh-Ha, 2011); their transnational lives afford them the possibility to weigh different learning styles, cultures or ways of being.

In discussing what she saw as differences between Korean and North American students, Sun-Hee added that she felt she was of a Korean mindset because North American students are allowed to be outspoken while Koreans students are not. Of North American students Sun-Hee said, “Here, like- like, they really, like think about- talk about what do they think. Everything, about what do they think about, and it makes you kind of surprised” (Interview 2). Sun-Hee was referring especially to students speaking their minds with superiors like those in teaching roles. When I asked if she was prepared to speak her mind in a similar way, she replied with a sure, “no,” explaining “it makes me kind of surprised and awkward” (Interview 2). However, following these seemingly set admissions, by her third and last interview, Sun-Hee addressed the same situation with the following:

> But I always kept careful about being rude. It's, like, not bad thing but it's also not a good thing, I guess, because I shouldn't say my opinion I can say because I need to worry about how the other people thinking about my- what I am saying. But now, I care but I don't care that much what they are- [laughter, trails off…] I'm thinking Canadians are allowed to say their opinions and so, it's good. (Interview 3)

Even though she seemed originally quite opposed to this outspoken Canadian identity, Sun-Hee's practices and opinions regarding speaking out changed. Based on her understandings of these two different systems, Sun-Hee accordingly developed practices to suit her surroundings.

For Iman, while remaining in contact with his peers from back home proved to be somewhat jarring, other contrasts and comparisons between his home country and Canada were welcome. Unlike Sun-Hee, Iman was quite sure in his alignment with a North American schooling system. In his first interview Iman expressed he felt the Canadian system is "better" because "you don't have- you shouldn't be worried to, like, go to- you can go to every university you want" (Interview 1). Iman was therefore latching onto some of the same discourses earlier discussed through Cindy and Yamato, in terms of the West symbolizing freedom and choice. While Iman spoke of his experiences in an altogether positive light, he, like the other international students, did face some challenges navigating the different systems of international education. For instance, as discussed in the previous chapter, he felt it was necessary to switch to a school he disliked in order to more efficiently complete his ELL requirements. However, his original attitude toward the education system was arguably strengthened by his continued communication with his peers. On top of texting with his friends, Iman remained a member of several group chats that included both students and teachers from his old school. According to Iman, these chats would sometimes involve the teachers posting and berating students' low scores, a process that he believed could never happen in a Canadian school because "the teachers, like- they respect you" (Interview 2). Iman expressed how facing these practices again was "weird 'cause like, it just happened for me" (Interview 2). Through the group chats, Iman was reminded that he too was once a part of that same system. Remaining in these chats, straddled between two different education systems, helped to reaffirm Iman's complex and layered choices and reasons for embarking on international education.

Sun-Hee and Iman – as well as the other students comparing educational systems – can be seen as pointing toward categorical and discrete understandings of different (educational) cultures. However, such understandings can be seen as a "strategic use of positivist essentialism" (Spivak, 1996, p. 214). This form of bounded discussion involves the imagining of communities wherein individuals speak of and gauge different cultures in an essentialized way; however, such processes are potentially empowering as individuals can then agentively position themselves within the discourse (Werbner, 2015). This essentialism is not fixed because imaginings are continuously changing and emerging based on context. Both Sun-Hee's and Iman's understandings of cultures are collective and hybrid, based upon and acquired through their movement and mixing of identities.

Additionally, the idea of boundaries making it easier for individuals to make sense of their lives does not discount individuals' ability to also cross said boundaries (Crozet et al., 1999). Sun-Hee, for example, through essentializing, chooses to speak beyond "authorized boundaries" (Minh-Ha, 2011, p. 13) by not fully aligning herself with one or another side. Instead, she weighs her options within larger global contexts vis à vis her circumstances and where she is living, in a process that speaks to expanding and overlapping imagined communities (Werbner, 2015). Meanwhile, Iman's process of being confronted with this sense of removal from his home country and peers involves entering a kind of third space in which he must take note of cultural differences and perceived borders, questioning the "foreign" in both himself and others, in order to make use of available options (Kramsch & Uryu, 2020). Because the production of culture is a social practice, students' engagement with culture is therefore beyond simplistic notions of enculturation or assimilation; instead, their integration into any chosen culture implies hybridization with students' multiple identities and understandings of culture working to create "categories of a new public sphere" (Wicker, 2015, p. 40). Participating in strategic essentialism (Spivak, 1996) arguably challenges essentialized identities through individuals' negotiation and being resourceful with essentialisms (Hua & Wei, 2020). Students living in-between can create new ways of being and knowing through their essentializing and playing with the same stereotypes they themselves buy into.

7.4. Student Negotiation of Personal Identity: The Issue of Naming

Through the above examples, we can see how cultures are negotiated through social practice and thereby students moving through different cultures and settings can also explore and experiment with hybridity and culture, even if this form of exploration can oftentimes mean managing identities through conflict, dominant discourses and disjuncture (Bhabha; 2002; Marginson, 2014). Dominant discourses have been explored throughout this thesis. Students' movement within dominant cultures is complex, in part due to the varied ways in which aspects of dominant culture are absorbed and taken-up by individuals (Pratt, 1991). Students' naming practices and identification with chosen and/or given names help to further illustrate some of these complexities.

While names are oftentimes regarded as integral to an individual's sense of identity, research of more peripheral communities demonstrates that poststructural views of identity apply to names wherein names and naming practices can be more dynamic (Edwards, 2006). Retaining one's given ethnic name can serve to maintain cultural ties (Tae-Young, 2007). However, we cannot reductively assume that obtaining or being given an anglicized name is inherently repressing identity; instead, elaborate identity negotiation is often involved in naming practices (Edgar, 2019; Edwards, 2006; Tae-Young, 2007; Thompson, 2006). Additionally, having the option of different names can lend to individuals' movement between different cultures (Edgar, 2006). Sun-Hee's names are an example of such identity and cultural negotiation.

I had heard the use of both Sun-Hee's anglicized and Korean names when we first met. When we then began communicating with one another in order to arrange our meetings for my thesis project, she informed me that she would be using her anglicized name (Fieldnotes, 23/10/2018). Later during our interview, she told me the story behind her names:

> But [Koreans names are] hard to pronounce for English- for, like, English speaker, so I decided- I decided to choose my English name. So, I made it my English to- from Korea, it's "Kate." But I noticed my Korean name to English pronunciation is "Sunny." It is not that hard. [Laughs.] Yeah […] Because I want to [use my Korean name] but most of my friends know my name is "Kate," so probably I'm going to go university-university? I'll be Sun-Hee. (Interview 1)

Tae-Young (2007) argues that the use of a new name can be part of a third space between cultures that is shared by transnationals. Liminality and having the possibility of a new name can provide a metaphorical escape from any connotations and values associated with an individual's prior names. And while Sun-Hee reported that she would be adhering to "Kate" for the remainder of her time in high school, I witnessed several instances of her switching back and forth, with one specific instance (Fieldnotes, 26/11/2018) in which she handed in two separate worksheets with different names written on each. Sun-Hee's names and her intended future use of these names point to how access to different names can have transformative properties for students as they move throughout their educational journeys (Edwards, 2006).

This discussion of names also reintroduces the argument that we cannot disregard students' awareness of the systems and issues that surround them (Chun, 2017; Minh-ha, 2011). For example, while it was discussed how Yamato held English in high regard and equated the West with this sense of freedom, he still had an awareness for nuances between these forms of dominant discourses. During a class in which the students were using computers to write reports (Fieldnotes, 01/10/2019), Yamato asked me what the differently-coloured lines underneath certain phrases represented in a Word document. He was confused about why some were blue and others were red. I explained that the blue identifies grammatical or punctuation errors while the red indicates incorrect spelling. At this point, Yamato pointed at the screen and the red underlining his name and exclaimed "but this is my name!" His exclamation expressed a form of indignancy over his given ethnic name being judged as "incorrect." Yamato was one of the students who for whatever reason, chose to maintain his original given name, which could perhaps be reflective (or not) of his complex personal ties with his home country. Altogether, students have different reasons for retaining or changing their names, with these choices being symbolic of different forms and levels of investment or lack thereof (Tae-Young, 2007). For instance, Thom's name maintenance was specifically because the name existed in both Vietnamese and English (Interview 1). Meanwhile, Sun-Hee originally chose her anglicized name because it sounded "common and easy" (Interview 1), thereby demonstrating an awareness of the value in being easily recognized and therefore memorable. Her practices point to how students have been known to choose names in order to stand out, blend in or even purposefully be culturally ambiguous in order to gain access or exit certain communities (Edwards, 2006; Tae-

Young, 2007; Thompson, 2006). These forms of movement through and negotiation of culture highlight how many social processes occur along non-binary lines (Hall, 2014) and when students are aware of these options and potential constraints, there are more possibilities for their alignment with different forms of representation.

7.5. Student Negotiation of Personal Identity: The Issue of Language

In line with this chapter's thread regarding movement and negotiation across and in-between boundaries is students' language use which was oftentimes a "shuttling between codes and conventions" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 186). While circumstances and discourses shaping their language use were at times constraining, students in this study were also accessing their language repertoires and transcending language boundaries depending on the context and their specific life experiences (Canagarajah, 2021; Hua & Wei, 2020; Liddicoat, 2019; Lin & He, 2017; Marshall & Moore, 2018).

I begin with a description of Thom's language practices. Thom was very outspoken about using only English to practice and develop his English competency as much as possible. He was also very active on different social media platforms for various reasons, including to obtain advice on how to navigate his studies abroad. Thom would parse through advice from friends back in Vietnam who were also online and compiling anecdotal information through their own various avenues. Throughout the course of the school year, Thom would meet up with other international students with whom he connected through his social platforms. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Thom was part of a Facebook group called "English Everyday" specifically to practice English with people from around the world. During a class in which students were given time to work on their projects and writing (Fieldnotes, 13/11/2018), I had approached Thom, who then began giving me an update about his life. He had met another international student online through English Everyday and they were able to meet in person that previous weekend. Since he had his laptop in front of him, Thom showed me the chat where I could see members sending pictures to one another about pertinent experiences regarding the stories they were sharing.

Interestingly, Thom chatted with his new friend in Vietnamese and when they met in person, they also conversed in Vietnamese, even though their shared platform group

implied emphasis on English usage. Through conversations with his new Facebook friend, Thom obtained advice on how to interact with locals and how to volunteer or find a part-time job. In line with making connections, Thom and another friend planned to start a YouTube channel that they hoped could someday be monetized. Thom explained his relationship with this other new friend and potential business partner:

> Oh, um, one of my- like, ah, one of my partner, she- she now study in Toronto. And she first met me and invite me to join in. […] And [laughs], I haven't met her before. Yeah, just online, you know- so, she invite me and, ah, then I join in. (Interview 2)

When asked who their intended YouTube audience would be, Thom replied that the audience would most-likely be a mixed audience, with the videos themselves being a mix of "both Vietnamese and English" (Interview 2). Already we can see notions of hybridity interwoven within Thom's practices through social media platforms with collective global sharing, connection, interaction and the fractured and reconstruction of knowledge giving rise to new forms and meanings (Fraser, 2008; Werbner & Modood, 2015). But additionally, Thom's use of language can be seen as fluid and heterogenous in order to suit his purposes (Canagarajah, 1993; 1999).

By contrast, and as part of his insistence on practicing English, Thom was firm about our interviews being conducted in English, saying "it help me to improve my skill" (Interview 1). At times, he paused to think upon a word but when I informed him that he could use Vietnamese if needed, he replied "no, I won't" (Interview 1). Furthermore, as mentioned in an earlier section, Thom upheld a rule of English-only, even informing another student that it would be best for him to "just keep using English" (Fieldnotes, 08/03/2019). This contrast between Thom's verbalized beliefs in comparison to his real-life language use demonstrate how conscious decisions to accept and/or reject English and other languages are more ideological, and part and parcel of discourses of power more so than being reflective of the reality of language practices (Canagarajah, 1999). Meanwhile, through online spaces, students like Thom and his cohort of other transnationals mix and blur local and global practices, thereby challenging the very discourses they might buy into, including notions surrounding languages and language practice as uniform and discrete (Canagarajah, 2004). In keeping with Foucauldian concepts of destabilizing "truths," deeper analysis of discourse can work to reveal shortcomings and contradictions surrounding dominant discourses (Hook, 2001). Here, the centrality of English (Lee & Marshall, 2012) is still apparent as can be seen in the

integration of English throughout students' language practices. However, this centring is arguably also skewed as English is "invaded" (Hall, 1997, p. 28) and peripheral communities are able to show legitimacy and strength of their own languages and cultures through its fusion with English (Said, 1994).

There are traces of the neoliberal still at play in some of these circumstances such as Thom leveraging his English as a commodity towards his business intentions. However, there is additionally a pluralizing and "democratization" (Canagarajah, 1999, p. 175) occurring through social processes and from specific contexts and speakers' actual practices helping to shape what is considered valuable and appropriate (Park & Wee, 2012). Moreover, while Thom is adamant about the importance of English and its use in discrete and separate forms as the key for future successes, his intention to learn English was not consciously oriented toward his YouTube channel. Rather, the languages he aimed to use in his videos were simply holistically and organically aligned with his intended audience. Thus, macro issues of neoliberalism and English in a globalizing world are made more complex and are negotiated on more local, dynamic and diffused terms (Plehwe et al., 2006; Springer, 2012). As we shall see in later cases as well, the argument seems to be in finding a balance between the extreme of rejecting English and buying into this discourse of the benefits of English and English as linguistic capital (Canagarajah, 1999).

As illustrated above through Thom's case, conscious decisions pertaining to language use are ideologically and discursively shaped; thus, while the idea of pluralized identities can provide a means of agency for individuals, the prospect of choice coupled with dominant discourses means that identities require a certain level of "management" (Hua & Wei, 2020, p. 239). For Sun-Hee, acquiring English was imperative for the future but the situation as a whole – just as it was for Thom – was much more complex. Sun-Hee portrayed an intricate system of mixing languages that spoke to these complexities. She would speak a so-called "proper" version of English in school; however, if she used this same form of English with her Korean friends, she would be asked if she was "trying to be American" (Interview 2) and these same friends would poke fun at her. Following her visit home to Korea during her extended spring break, Sun-Hee described her language management:

> Um, I think Korean think if we say English like this, it sounds, like, really like too much […] Like, if I say "career-life" and in Korea we say it like "career life" [pronounced with exaggeration on certain syllables while tapping finger on table]. Like that. And if I say like, "career life" [pronounced without the exaggeration], probably they could think, like "why is she pronouncing like that?" (Interview 2)

The above explains how she speaks with her Korean friends back in Korea, with whom she maintained regular contact even while in Canada. In these contexts, Sun-Hee would use what she referred to as "Korean English" with a purposeful accent and exaggerated pronunciation of certain syllables.

Shin (2012) describes similar instances of students positioned as "uncool" for their lack of awareness of a "Koreanized" (p. 195) English speaking culture and for trying to mimic native speakers of English. Complex and layered ideas regarding language and identity can make overenthusiasm in use of English seen as "betrayal of one's ethnic identity" (Park & Wee, 2012, p. 93). Sun-Hee's friends' challenging Sun-Hee and asking if she is "trying to be American" is also reminiscent of English use in periphery communities, wherein certain forms of English can be seen as a discarding of "rural identity [to] pass off as an anglicised bourgeois foreigner" (Canagarajah, 1993, p. 616). In light of these prescriptions, Sun-Hee conceded that it was "too awkward" (Interview 2) for her to use proper English with her Korean friends. Her use of the word "awkward" points to an "anxiety of confluence" (Bhabha, 2015a, p. 9) that occurs while students play with and try to merge or dissolve conflicting and disputed boundaries and borders. But within this merger, students are still afforded a form of agency when their struggle thereby also creates new subject positions and in Sun-Hee's case, as multilingualism leads to more identity options through a "multiplying of the self" (Pratt, 2002, p. 35).

Again, we can see how students' descriptions of their actual language use show that languages are much more interconnected and fluid rather than separate, discrete and autonomous, as a more instrumentalized view would depict. Students' practices point to deeper, cultural, potentially personal, and symbolic implications for language (García & Wei, 2014; Liddicoat 2018; 2019; 2020; Lin & He, 2017; Marshall, 2020; Marshall & Moore, 2013; 2018; Park & Wee, 2012). Explorations of fluidity can include contestation of the existence of languages as a whole, as part of the argument that named languages are socially invented and constructed (see for example, Makoni & Pennycook, 2005). However, I am coming from the perspective that many students

need to negotiate the idea of named languages as part of their lived realities (García & Wei, 2014). Students like Sun-Hee recognize language boundaries but this then allows them to play within the boundaries and slip back and forth in-between identities.

Sun-Hee's narrative also demonstrates how the compartmentalization of diverse aspects of culture is purposeful and constructed (Pieterse, 2015). English or selected use of it in periphery communities can perform a social function for particular purposes, whether for prestige or in this sense, to show an awareness for social rules around English; regardless of the choice to use or explicitly reject English, we can see how "pure" language is imagined and performative rather than natural (Canagarajah, 1999). And just as decisions to use language are socially-informed, so too are desires and attitudes surrounding English discursive, dependent upon context, and under constant negotiation (Motha & Lin, 2020). Complying with the theme of tension and ideological contradiction throughout this thesis, perceptions of and expectations for English are also complex and contradictory; because of these dynamics, the social benefits for using English can vary (Canagarajah, 1999; Lee & Canagarajah, 2017). There are conflicting cultural, ideological and social desires when it comes to learning, speaking, and using English and students can oftentimes be pushed and pulled toward solidarity with different groups and discourses. These complicated circumstances can be seen in Sun-Hee's case and can be explained further through examining Lindsey's story.

With the need to acquire English competency elevated to such a high status, English often overshadowed any intercultural aspirations, or, as seen in the previous chapter through students' explanations of using English as a lingua franca, notions involving English and intercultural exchange were often skewed and/or influenced by neoliberal logic. For example, Lindsey revealed to me (Fieldnotes, 17/06/2019) that many of her local friends were taking Chinese heritage language classes and she wished to take part. Lindsey described wanting to spend time with her local friends through these classes while also improving her own Chinese reading and writing, which she felt she was losing after years of concentrating on English as an international student. However, Lindsey's mother forbade her to register because Lindsey practicing English took precedent over her attempts to retain Chinese. Lindsey's mother and even her older sister – who Lindsey looked up to – deemed extra Chinese lessons unnecessary. Adhering to more instrumentalized views of language, Lindsey's mother agreed to Lindsey taking Mandarin courses once she was out of ELL and only as a

language credit toward graduate or as a post secondary language prerequisite. While Lindsey mourned this lost opportunity of Chinese heritage language classes, she ultimately seemed resigned to the idea, stating, “but it's OK because I live in Canada” (Fieldnotes, 17/06/2019).

Once more, we see this linguicism involving a duty to speak English by default of students simply living in Canada (Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011) and an imposition of English-only and monolingual identities in spaces that are arguably more fluid (Canagarajah, 2004; Marshall, 2010). Moreover, we see the idiosyncrasies that were alluded to earlier regarding attitudes towards English and the discursivity and performativity behind language choice. In this scenario, Lindsey is negotiating a relationship with Chinese (rather than English) for the purposes of fitting into Canadian contexts with local Canadian students. Instead of using the seemingly stable affiliations prescribed by discourses surrounding the nation state, students can make new points of identification to use in negotiating positionality (Hall, 2014; Said, 1994). Lindsey is representative of how individuals might identify differently with certain languages and cultures dependent upon context and which identities they might want to claim (Canagarajah, 2004). Despite English being the imposed language through discourse and through her mother’s regulation of her schedule and course selection, Lindsey wanted to take Chinese lessons to claim an identity that would more closely align her with the local multilingual students. Lindsey’s case and arguably all the above cases point toward this idea of “culture as a strategy” (Bhabha, 1992, p. 47) with students navigating their transnational lives while taking careful consideration of when and where and in which circumstances to mix or pull from their heritage and cultures (Shankar, 2008). While the instances discussed above are complex and even create tricky circumstances for students to navigate, there are possibilities within these complexities; where contradictions can be identified, there is also room for agency (Canagarajah, 1999).

7.6. Conclusion

The analysis of neoliberalism as interlocking with the internationalization of education and the global movement of English throughout this thesis demonstrate the constraints along with the colonial ties that can arise through internationalization processes (Stein, 2019). This chapter on the notion of hybridity is an attempt to address

these overarching issues through the examination of liminal spaces (Bhabha, 1994a) and the "interdependencies" (Said, 1994) that dominant cultures are reliant upon. For example, Yamato began to positively identify with his country through living transnationally and through continuously negotiating understandings of culture (Hall, 2013; 2014). Meanwhile, Sun-hee harnessed to her advantage the liminality (Tae-Young, 2007) between her Korean and Anglicized names. With the idea of dominant cultures becoming split through articulation but also being dependent upon borrowing and appropriations altogether, we therefore have alternatives – a way of opposing imperialism by imagining other possibilities for the human experience (Bhabha,1994a; Said, 1994).

However, while we can conclude that hybrid identities are authentic, we must also be aware that the world and its issues are not entirely based on intangible notions such as culture; we therefore risk being overly agentive in examining the hybridizing of culture alone (Friedman, 2015). We must additionally attend to the material constraints as can be identified through a political economy perspective (Block et al., 2012). By examining internationalization and the global movement of English through a perspective that balances the discursive and the material (Hook, 2001; Springer, 2012), we are better able to see the power dynamics involved.

The issue of languages is a prime example of the complexities in potential constraints. Even though languages are hybrid and perceptions of them discursively-determined, circumstances surrounding them are still inhibited by very real language codes and social regulations, as well as the discourses and endorsements behind the phenomenon of linguistic capital that work to disempower and stratify (Canagarajah, 2002). The cosmopolitan mixing of languages is still constrained by the delegitimized positioning of select groups and individuals with racialized speakers of English still being held in comparison to the native speaker (Shin, 2012). There are similar issues regarding social codes and power imbalance in the naming phenomenon as well. A fine line exists between the agency that can be found behind multiple names and students' compliancy in order to assimilate into different groups and positionalities (Edwards, 2006; Keller & Franzak, 2016; Thompson, 2006).

Altogether, while the idealism behind interculturalization (Tarc, 2019) and what it offers a globalizing world can be very appealing, it cannot be assumed that education

abroad alone can magically erase borders and create hybridized identities that can “defy territorialization” (Canagarajah, 2021, p. 574). But with all the global flows, tensions and mixing of the modern world (Rugby & Alsagoff, 2014) there should be a way to balance social responsibility, plurality, and agency through individualism by attending to the individuals in question, who can be alienated by academic conversations that can sometimes be detached from individuals’ lived realities (Friedman, 2015; Melucci, 2015). And while hybridity is not a stable concept that can easily be applied across contexts (Papastergiadis, 2015), the circumstance connecting the individuals in question is that they are all international students, a position that is both privileged and marginalizing (Stein, 2017). With this in mind, I am attempting to examine the contexts that create the conditions for hybrid cultures to arise (Bhabha, 1994b; Hutnyk, 2015). Rather than focusing on just hybridity as a concept, my exploration involves a Foucauldian form of examining subject positions and discourses that are available to students (Hook, 2001), and how they might play amongst these. By analyzing the macro constraints and fissures through individual narratives and the micro negotiations of these students, perhaps we can move toward implications and thus more sustainable internationalization practices that are more conducive to students’ thriving in international education.

Chapter 8.

Conclusion

I conclude this dissertation by reviewing the findings in several capacities. To begin, I refer back to my research questions. In doing so, I summarize some of the central data and how it might relate to my questions. I also contextualize this study in respect to the existing and relevant literature. Within this process, I also address implications and considerations for international education in BC in light of the above findings. Finally, I recognize limitations of this study as well as reflect upon future possibilities.

8.1. Revisiting the Research Questions and the Context of the Study

As stated in several places throughout the dissertation, the research questions I set out to explore in this study are as follows:

1) What are the prevailing discourses surrounding public international secondary education and how is international education enacted in this environment?
2) What are students' educational plans and goals and how have prevailing discourse influenced or not these plans and goals?
3) How do international students navigate their identities and experiences vis à vis prevailing discourses?

In order to address the first question regarding prevailing discourses, I return to a quotation by Tarc (2013) introduced at the outset of this thesis in the Theoretical Framework chapter. Tarc establishes that "it is the dominance of a neoliberal form of economic globalization that has allowed for the resurgence of international education" (p. 9). His explanation of this "neoliberal form" coincides with many of the theories and arguments made throughout this study in that a market paradigm is utilized to frame other institutions outside of the business realm. With the need to incentivize schooling in order to satisfy reductions in state funding as per neoliberal ideology (Block 2018a; Holborow, 2012a; Kalantzis & Cope, 2012), international education is advertised as an opportunity for students to competitively obtain some form of intercultural exchange as a

necessary competence (Tarc, 2013). These are the dynamics that govern the discourses surrounding international education. For instance, I reiterate that Canada's marketing around international education (see section 6.1) promotes global citizenship, but specifically for "today's highly competitive, knowledge-based global economy… against a backdrop of increasingly complex networks of human mobility" (CBIE, 2019, p. 3). As such, students seem to have taken up such discourses, with the students of this study choosing international education as a means to equip themselves for participation in the global economy by obtaining the "must-have" (Block, 2018a, p. 12) competences of interculturalization and English.

PMD has also engaged in interculturalization discourse, with the emphasis for internationalizing being more aspirational; however, their efforts are arguably constrained by and framed within a neoliberal system. The network at WSS and within PMD appears to be comprehensive, with team members to support international students at many different levels. Nevertheless, it is openly acknowledged that international students are a much-needed source of funding (see section 5.4). Here we see tension within neoliberal ideology (Block et al., 2012; Chun, 2017; Harvey, 2007; Holborow, 2015) specific to international education (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Tarc, 2009; 2011; 2013; 2019). With the pragmatic and idealistic intents competing against one another (Tarc, 2019), imaginaries can become entangled (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). Moreover, idealism at times must strive to keep up with the instrumental (Tarc, 2013), leading to the ad hoc quality in PMD's program design and practices.

For instance, we can see PMD's international program was initiated as a response to declining government support, with them provisionally adding applicable support staff (see section 5.5) to address the emergent practical and pedagogical demands of internationalizing (Tarc, 2019). This ad hoc quality can also be seen in other program practices. Elnagar and Young (2021) problematize "the subsuming of K-12 policies within a broader internationalization of education policy driven by larger post-secondary education sector" (p. 90); such problematizing is understandable given, for example, Cindy's case. Teachers and administrators alike (see sections 5.2 and 5.6) voiced their concerns about homestay situations, with T3 arguing that homestay programs seem to be intended for students of higher education, then applied provisionally to the K-12 population. Students like Cindy who are much younger in comparison to their university- and college-aged counterparts are left struggling to

navigate their homestay situations because of this ad hoc subsuming of K-12 practices within established higher education internationalization processes.

I also note here how Cindy's homestay family did not allow her and another international student to attend Thanksgiving dinner (see section 5.6), even though such an event would be a prime moment for sharing of cultures. Moreover, and despite PMD's philosophies being rooted in interculturalization, international students are oftentimes only socializing with coethnics or other international students (see section 5.8). Ad hoc application of intercultural discourse coupled with discrepancies and inconsistencies concerning funding for international students seemed to exacerbate existing divides between international students and the rest of the student body. An example of this can be seen through T2's discussion of the pumpkin carving contest excluding other ELL students (see section 5.8), a group linked to international students' socialization and community (Deschambault, 2015; 2018). The lack of discourse on diversity at the elementary level as per Lindsey's experience being told "no Chinese!" (see section 5.9) further hint at idealism being more so ad hoc.

Thus, in regards to Question 1, it can be argued that the prevailing discourses of international education comprised an economizing mode of globalization, as per neoliberal ideology (Tarc, 2013). Within neoliberalism, international programs and students are necessary for schools to address the need for funding. Through a Foucauldian lens, language can frame reality, with power regulated discursively to shape the material conditions for international education (Cheek, 2008). The enactment of international education can therefore be constrained by these dynamics, with PMD's program design and practices and the international students of this study working within these confines of a neoliberal system.

Question 2 and analysis of student experiences vis à vis their plans and goals amongst prevailing discourses extends our discussion of neoliberalism. Herein lies the second aspect of neoliberalism as discussed in the Theoretical Framework, in which education is corporatized with knowledge measured in terms of return of investment (Buckner & Stein, 2020; Holborow, 2012a; 2012c). While the specifics of students' plans and goals varied, altogether goals were aligned with neoliberal discourses of individualism and competition (Block, 2018a; Gray, 2010a; Gray, 2010b); students

bought into the notion that competitive accumulation of competency will equate future success (Tarc, 2009).

This instrumentalizing of education (Byrd Clark, 2020; Brandenburg & de Wit, 2011; de Wit, 2016; Wu & Tarc, 2021a; 2021b) seemed to have a negative effect on students with the creation of enormous and unreasonable pressures. To begin with, instrumental discourses in education can be seen through Sun-Hee's stockpiling of courses with no regard for their content, just to complete an arbitrary number of credits (see section 6.3). Instrumental discourses can in essence override idealistic and experiential notions. This overriding was also exemplified through Iman's desire to switch schools purely to quickly finish his English credits, despite his personal misgivings about switching to a school he did not like (see section 6.3). Teachers and administrators weighed in with reports of the pressures students face and students' ensuing anxieties (see section 6.3). T2 even questioned what overseas education agents or other intermediary actors are advertising to students and their families in terms of completion timelines; there is an implication that agents are overstating what can be achieved within and through joining international programs (see section 5.5). Meanwhile, with a neoliberal focus on individualism, the onus of succeeding and failure are both fully on the individual (Holborow, 2015), leading to students like Thom sadly internalizing, "I always be the loser" (see section 6.3).

Such instrumental discourses also feed into a particular imaginary regarding a dominant West, wherein Western education is coveted and in demand because the West inhabits a position at the top of a global hierarchy (Bucker & Stein, 202; Stein & Andreotti, 2016; Weenink, 2008). With the additional equating of English education with internationalization (Deschambault, 2015; 2018; de Wit, 2011; 2017), students from periphery languages and cultures are continuously positioned as incommensurate with a global economy (Rosa & Flores, 2017).

Firstly, the students of this study seemed to value not just English but a reified notion of an idealized form of Native English (Bhatt, 2002; Kubota, 2020; Kubota & Takeda, 2021; Leung et al., 1997). Thom spoke of how he and his friends questioned the purpose of studying English at all if they could never be Native English Speakers (see section 6.4). In a similar vein, Sun-Hee's asking me whether or not her English was "weird" and Yamato's feelings of shame toward his country's lack of English proficiency

legitimize a certain English standard (Park & Wee, 2012). These feelings are indicative of broader language ideologies rooted in colonialism that have constructed both speakers and learners of English (Pennycook, 1994; 1998), leaving delegitimized speakers of English (Rosa & Flores, 2017; Shin, 2015) forever scrambling to attain the appropriate competencies. Altogether, prevailing discourses regarding a dominant West and the instrumentalizing of education influenced students' goals and plans, at times creating undue pressures for international students.

Finally, Question 3 addresses students' navigation of the above dynamics, and their subsequent negotiation of identities. In their navigation of prevailing discourses and experiences studying abroad, most students of this study seemed to occupy a potentially agentive median space between boundaries that they were negotiating (Minh-Ha, 2011). This negotiation thus prompted my using the work of postcolonial and poststructural hybridity theorists within my analysis.

Examples of this balancing includes Miyu's shuffling her alliances between Japan and Canada, as fitting her identity and goals (see section 7.2). Students such as Iman, Yamato and Cindy individually spoke of how they felt Canadian education was superior to the education in their respective countries. Miyu seemed to be of the same mindset, comparing Canada's system to the rote learning in Japan. But these thoughts were complex given that she still preferred the Japanese system as it was a better fit with her identity. More complex still is her move to Canada as an investment in her future, in light of how she identifies. Students' complex balancing and movement between cultures can also be seen through Sun-Hee's names (see section 7.4). Her fluctuation between her Korean and English names lends Sun-Hee a third space through which she could harness liminality to her advantage (Tae-Young, 2007) by allowing her, for instance, to access or exit different communities at her discretion (Edwards, 2006; Tae-Young, 2007; Thompson, 2006).

And even though students participated in an instrumentalized and compartmentalized form of English language learning, their actual language practices were much more fluid, pointing to deeper, personal, and cultural implications for language use (García & Wei, 2014; Liddicoat 2018; 2019; 2020; Marshall, 2020; Marshall & Moore, 2013; 2018; Park & Wee, 2012). For instance, Sun-Hee would speak a form of "Korean English" while Lindsey sought to take heritage Chinese language

courses (rather than English) in an effort to better socialize with her local multilingual friends (for both instances, see section 7.4); these multilingual practices can lead to more identity options for students (Pratt, 2002). Thus, an exploration of Question 3 demonstrates how dominant discourses can influence students' overall educational trajectories, but that students can also move amongst and play within these social constructs (Bhabha, 1994a; Minh-Ha, 2011), discursively engaging with them (Said, 1994) and creating new ways to identify (Hall, 2013; 2014; Prabhu, 2007).

The above presentation of students' experiences at WSS in tandem with educators' contextualizing of international education at WSS and PMD can shine light on international education at the secondary level in BC against the broader backdrop of globalization. This dissertation contributes to existing literature, especially in regards to moving beyond document and policy analysis to include fieldwork and the personal stories of international students at the secondary level. While this dissertation does not assume to originate new theories or frameworks in the domains of identity studies, English and English language learning, or even research on international education, it does draw on wide-ranging sets of literature and theory in order to inform our understanding of international education in public high schools – for which there is little research (Cover, 2016; Deschambault, 2015; 2018; Elnagar & Young, 2021; Evans, 2011; Matthews, 2002; Popadiuk, 2009; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011; Tamtik, 2018; 2019), especially in the Canadian and BC context. Scholarship in the realm of newcomer groups and/or other marginalized communities, for instance, illuminated analysis of international students and issues around their (lack of) integrating. Given the significance and impact of globalizing English on international education, I additionally used literature specific to English and English language learning – intertwined with frameworks theorizing the marketization and/or racialization of English – to examine international students' experiences obtaining English as a global form of communication. Also notably, the use of postcolonial and poststructural theorizations surrounding hybridity highlighted instances of identity negotiations and potential for agency for international students at the high school level amidst the realities of dominant discourses and the pressures for them to realize their imagined educational trajectories.

A key aspect of this dissertation was an examination of international education and the intersecting phenomenon of English language learning as framed by neoliberal ideology. Deschambault's (2015; 2018) examination of the economizing of international

education in BC has many parallels to this study in terms of scope, intent and in the analysis of the marketization of education and English. It is my hope that I was able to continue this conversation on marketization and also extend it with my use of existing internationalization and international education frameworks to explore the stories and experiences of secondary international students in BC. A contribution of this study to existing literature is therefore a focus on tensions as brought to light by scholars analyzing processes and discourses of internationalization and/or international education (for example, Andreotti et al., 2016; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016; Tarc, 2009; 2011; 2013; 2019). Their frameworks of crossing and competing intents and imaginaries worked to highlight, for example, the ad hoc quality of a neoliberal education system and how such processes within such a system can affect students. This study took theorizations of converging visions and discursive fields within internationalization and contextualized them by applying them to fieldwork in school contexts at the secondary level. In the next several sections, I reflect upon the implications of such an exploration.

8.2. Implications

Once again, I state that this study is not intended to be a critique or commentary directed at WSS, PMD or any students or educators involved with either. For instance, I am not debating individual educators' concern for student welfare and the amount of consideration the district put into the creation of their international program over the years. I refer back to the numerous references made throughout this dissertation to PMD's system of support for their international students, with the program itself "developed based on research around connection" (A4, Interview). As well, I am trying to be cognizant that analyses of internationalization must recognize that students' needs, desires, and investment regarding studying abroad are rooted in their lived realities (Stein, 2017). Rather, this study is an attempt to reflect upon a system entangled amidst dominant discourses that work toward the maintenance of the educational structures of which we are all a part (Hook, 2001; Stein, 2017). Beyond the immediate managing of PMD's program, there is still the matter of an overall neoliberal ideology and system engineering educational processes and individuals' imaginaries, weaving together seemingly incompatible orientations toward education (Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). With this thought in mind, I cautiously consider several implications, highlighting a few

connections that can perhaps speak to constraints on more idealist dimensions of international education (Tarc, 2019).

8.2.1. Multi(cultural/lingual) Students, English & Interculturalization

As previously explored, PMD's international program has the overall goal of instilling an intercultural dimension into the district's educational practices. The district has called upon the work of scholars such as Garson in purposeful development of intercultural competence (Garson, 2016a; 2016b). With a look at the discourses and practices surrounding English, however, it can be argued that acknowledgement of the multicultural can be extended to encompass a reflexivity of multilingual backgrounds.

Firstly, I re-accentuate the centrality of English (Lee & Marshall, 2012) as a whole. To begin with, we need to remember that developing academic proficiency in English can take between 5-7 years (Cummins,1981; 1992; 2000; Gunderson, 2008). With these potential limitations in mind, there can be greater transparency regarding how the program is marketed, especially in the case of aligning students' goals with program possibilities. In this regard, I echo Elnagar and Young (2021) in that there needs to be more insight into and regulation of the practices and recruitment methods of contracted education agents, working both in Canada and overseas. Students might not graduate within the timeframes they and their families imagined for them; there should be acknowledgement of and discussions surrounding these considerations.

There is also a crossing of neoliberal and English discourses problematically framing English as a competency that is necessary for individuals to participate in the global economy (Block, 2018a; Tarc, 2009). This is despite international programs advertising cross-cultural education and interculturalization. Meanwhile, as can be seen in Chapter 7, students might have different motivations and investments regarding English. For instance, we must especially take into consideration the open-endedness of their trajectories with not all students intending to use English in centre countries, but more so in peripheral contexts and situations (Canagarajah, 1993; 1999). For example, Sun-Hee would mostly-likely return to Korea following her education (see subsection 4.7.6 and section 6.4). Moreover, we caught many glimpses of students' changing narratives and unfixed circumstances throughout this dissertation. Students can also change career and educational goals and like Cindy, be unsure of where and if they

would settle permanently (see sections 7.1 and 7.2). Thus, students' language practices can also take place transnationally with students continuously playing out their educational and career goals abroad and in-between countries.

Yet, despite, these fluctuating transnational lives and their demonstrating of how "pure" language is imagined (Canagarjah, 1999), students seemed to outwardly compartmentalize their diverse cultural and language backgrounds (Pieterse, 2015). We saw, for instance, Sun-Hee envying a more traditional notion of double monolingualism (Auger, 2007) and many of the students were focused primarily on an instrumental acquisition of English (see section 6.4). ELL teachers and those working directly with international and other multilingual students were noted for their awareness of diversity. However, it seems that this awareness needs to be extended, with discussions recognizing students' diversity in identities and language repertoires (Marshall, 2010) moving amongst the students themselves and beyond, toward any population working with international and multilingual students, even if the contact with international students is only peripheral.

With the dominant neoliberal outlook on education, we must also be wary of the increasing propensity to also instrumentalize – in addition to English – other entities like intercultural competence (Block, 2018a; Tarc, 2013; Wu & Tarc, 2021a; Yemini, 2014). Here, it should be noted that economic benefits to international education are much easier to convey while more social benefits like interculturalization are difficult to substantiate, leaving the impact of cultural interactions more or less unknown (Cover, 2016). Being wary, however, does not mean disregarding attempts at interculturalization altogether but rather avoiding an instrumentalization of culture (Wu & Tarc, 2021a). For example, Keddie (2012a) considers the development of "social capacities" that prepares students, not for the global economy per se, but instead to understand diversity and differences. This involves fostering a sense of "cultural respect" (p. 161) with the additional recognition of the marginalization of minority groups and how different positionalities can be privileged or challenging. Rather than superficially trying to encounter differences, Buckner and Stein (2020) propose the possibility of "'encountering difference *differently*'" (p. 23, italics in the original), an attempt to inquire into common sense and hegemonic understandings, while resisting the neoliberal and competitive notion of acquiring knowledge like commodified competences. The common ground in these forms of cultural exploration is the rejection of any "singular truth or end

point discovery" (Keddie, 2012a, p. 143) and a focus instead on more discursive understandings of differences and complexities.

8.2.2. Living In-Between

Mentions of discursivity link us back to notions tied to hybridity. As introduced at the outset of Chapter 7, students are living in-between lives, which give way to in-between practices and ways in which students negotiate their study abroad experiences. Institutional acknowledgement of not only diversity – in non-instrumentalized forms – but also the idea of a sometimes precarious ambiguity and how this can affect the educational journeys of the students can perhaps be helpful. I addressed, for example, how such ambiguity can be encompassed in students' language practices. While students oftentimes verbalized dichotomized narratives, their realities were, by far, more fluid. Thus, we must be careful not to compartmentalize their K-12 international experiences with dichotomized options such as: renaming or ethnic name maintenance; continued postsecondary and careers abroad or return to home country; choice of speaking English or another language with discrete, compartmentalized understandings of language. While issues related to hybridity might sometimes seem inconsequential, the acknowledgement of hybridity has the power over time to affect social structures and processes by "translate[ing] into different institutions" (Pieterse, 2015, p. 109).

8.2.3. Young Adolescents Abroad

The outset of this thesis and my review of relevant literature referenced not only a collapsing of terminology used to reference international processes, but also the use of literature from higher education to address a secondary population. This overlap makes sense considering the paucity of literature in the K-12 sector (Cover, 2016; Deschambault, 2015; 2018; Elnagar & Young, 2021; Evans, 2011; Matthews, 2002; Popadiuk, 2009; Popadiuk & Marshall, 2011; Tamtik, 2018; 2019), and how there are theoretical links between higher education and K-12, especially in light of the increasingly market-driven incentives underlying K-12 international education (Elnagar & Young, 2021; Tamtik, 2018). However, we still need to problematize the use of internationalization processes from higher education with the much younger K-12 population (Elnagar & Young, 2021).

We have seen throughout this thesis the issues that can arise when minors embark on such an exciting but also potentially challenging journey. As well, we noted how younger international students are hesitant to broach issues such as difficult homestay situations (Popadiuk, 2010); moreover, marginalized students can internalize their perceived deficits, which oftentimes results in their not seeking help when needed (Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008). Meanwhile, students like Cindy seemed to blossom with the appropriate level of supports from her new homestay situation. Comparing her different homestay experiences, Cindy stated of her second homestay, "it's better because they love us and treat us like family members" (Interview 2). Again, I note that Cindy had to advocate for herself in changing homestays (see section 5.6), a task that happened after some hesitation and that required much navigation on her part and, later, on the part of her mother, who had to negotiate the situation from afar. Thus, Popadiuk (2010) proposes consistent monitoring of homestay situations. She additionally suggests that international students be given workshops that can facilitate their being more assertive regarding their needs and requirements (2009).

With the community surrounding international students being so important, it is therefore important that this community be heard, especially if their added input can better address the needs of the students. Even though de Wit (2016) is referring to higher education, his words still ring true in terms of the discourse of internationalization being dominated by only a particular group of stakeholders. Instead, the wider community pertaining to international students' education and care should also be heard. For instance, Elnagar and Young (2021) also call for wider representation, highlighting the importance of listening to parents' input. De Wit's (2016) pointing to the input of faculty members is especially relevant, considering the many examples of teachers providing insightful observations and assessments of situations throughout this study. For example, there was T2's suggestion (see section 5.8) that events for international students – like the pumpkin-carving contexts – be available to a larger population of students, specifically students (for example, the ELL cohort) who are so socially connected to international students.

8.2.4. (Questioning) Pedagogy

In subsection 8.2.1, I made a call for extending awareness of diversity in terms of multilingual students' identities and language repertoires (Marshall, 2010). Such a call

can have implications for exploration of pedagogy and intentions, and even teacher education. However, in addition to discussions of students' diversity, there is a need to also have discussions that question the underlying connotations behind the different strands of their international education experiences. For instance, students can reflect upon and question language education, particularly in terms of the neoliberal and instrumental accumulation of competences but also the colonial and racialized processes surrounding English acquisition (Kubota, 2021). What are the reasons behind a push for communicative skills when communication – as previously discussed in section 6.1– is so dependent upon context and not necessarily in tune with a globalized notion of English (Kubota, 2011; Kubota & Takeda, 2021)? What kinds of inequalities are being maintained and how are students involved in their own marginalization when engaging in neoliberal interpretations of communication and the practices surrounding English teaching and learning (Kubota, 2011)? Likewise, students should be questioning what they are buying into when participating in international education as a whole. Shahjahan and Edwards (2022) highlight the need to examine the undercurrents in the branding and ranking of higher education institutions. In section 6.1, I discussed the awards PMD's international program has won, which arguably parallels Shahjahan's and Edwards' argument. What kind of education is being upheld through rankings? There needs to be reflection upon what forms of knowledge are privileged with the privatization and marketization of public K-12 education (Cover, 2016; Tarc, 2013) and students investing in awards and branded institutions (Shahjahan & Edwards, 2022).

Kubota (2021) argues that these kinds of critical discussions should be moderated by teachers. In particular, teachers can moderate by prompting further questioning and dialogue. Similarly, Battiste (2017) contends that part of an educator's role is to assist in students' discussions and recognitions of our educational system's historical and contemporary ties to Eurocentric knowledge and assumptions. Teacher education, then, needs to enable educators to attend to these forms of critical reflections. Because these reflections can challenge deeply-rooted personal beliefs and/or narratives, comprehensive programs for teacher education should also work towards preparing teachers to participate in potentially challenging discussions (Kubota, 2014b; Kubota, 2021). Again, with the prevalence of international education and the continuous influx of international students, such considerations toward teacher education are important and should extend beyond those working in just ELL contexts.

Throughout this thesis, I demonstrated through a Foucauldian perspective, how power can discursively shape our realities (Cheek, 2008). In this same sense, Kubota and Takeda (2021) acknowledge that it is perhaps not possible nor even necessary to endeavour in dismantling the neoliberal system, especially since we are all entangled within this system and at times, even benefit from it. In recognizing that systems of modernity may be irreparable, some scholars exploring the decolonializing of education (Suša, Andreotti, Stein, Ahenakew, Čajkova, Siwek, Cardoso & Kui, 2021; Stein et al., 2021) suggest there should be a focus on how to navigate complexities. Rather than fixing the system, we can identify and learn from mistakes in a form of "damage control" (Suša et al., 2021, p. 6) that can hopefully mitigate further harm. Having critical discussions about international education amongst its participants to pinpoint potential harm, and enabling educators to initiate and moderate such discussions go hand in hand with these scholars' proposal.

8.2.5. Further Food for Thought

As a whole, there needs to be an interrogation on behalf of all international programs into the competing and crossing of intents and imaginaries when it comes to internationalizing initiatives. While the contemporary neoliberal system works to constrain initiatives for internationalizing and how international education can be enacted, international programs can still inquire into the entanglement of different discourses. Such interrogation is necessary especially in terms of more instrumental discourses overcoming more idealistic intents and how these developments might be embodied within any specific international program.

Any interrogation or reflexivity needs to also be continuous as intents can transform and manifest other less ideal propensities. This is especially true in the case of international education for K-12 students, wherein students are younger and potentially more vulnerable. While any given international program might have a comprehensive system of support, there are still possibilities for lag (Tarc, 2013) or "unintended outcomes" (Tarc, 2019, p. 742). As can be seen in various examples throughout this dissertation, students do slip through the cracks. These students are then vulnerable to businesses geared toward exploiting and profiting from them. There is also the issue of students reporting loneliness or problems integrating with other students. Given the many studies and literature on loneliness and newcomers'

socialization difficulties (see subsection 2.1.5), we can assume that such reports are quite prevalent rather than isolated events. Moreover, this study demonstrated that there are existing divides between students but that such divides can become exacerbated by discrepancies and pedagogical lag in international programming.

Again, I point to the importance of those working on the ground with the students. Both teachers and administrators in this study raised concerns about student support and isolation, and can highlight gaps in programming. The students themselves should additionally be consulted about their experiences at different points in their journeys. Harnessing this form of knowledge is necessary and students' sharing of their experiences can be a concrete resource for all those working with international students. Teachers like T1 and T2 reported (Interviews) having their ELL students write letters or fill out surveys in which students can discuss "what they find challenging" (T2, Interview). K-12 international programs should consider adopting similar practices systematically with students given opportunities to share their experiences and input throughout their time within the program. Having a system in place with access to such input can point to nuanced aspects of living abroad that can be detrimental or conducive to international students' overall wellbeing and their dreams and goals for the future. While it is difficult to anticipate and deflect all negative aspects of students' journeys abroad, we can still work towards the earlier argument of hedging to reduce harm (Suša et al., 2021; Stein et al., 2021).

A reflective interrogation into intents also needs to occur at the government level with government officials and other policy makers within BC and Canada. Firstly, public policy and the various actors working within policy enactment can shape the very basis and core elements of the education sector; an examination of policy processes and how they are played out amongst those involved is therefore warranted (Trilokekar et al., 2020; Trilokekar & Tamtik, 2020). Secondly, competing and contradicting intents can also occur at the government level or between different levels of administrative leadership roles. I have demonstrated through analyses of discourses how both idealistic and marketing rhetoric can occur simultaneously within the language of government programs, organizations, and initiatives (see section 6.1). An examination of public policy in both the Ontario and Manitoba contexts reveals additional discrepancies behind internationalizing initiatives and activities of different stakeholders (Tamtik, 2020) and overall discrepancy between more idealistic internationalizing

objectives and actual enactment of policy as a necessary response to lack of government funding (Trilokekar & Tamtik, 2020). Interrogation into policy and objectives at the government and administrative levels can reveal discrepancies and thereby also reveal which stakeholder voices need to be amplified in order to better programming and student support.

Frameworks illustrating how intents and discourses cross within internationalization already exist and have been presented in this dissertation. I did not contribute to scholarship that might further such frameworks. However, this dissertation did apply these frameworks – in tandem with corresponding theoretical conceptualizations on neoliberalism – into the context and analysis of one international education program. This study's presentation of students' stories (along with teacher and administrator perspectives) thereby contextualizes these theories and frameworks; by situating students' experiences against broader and potentially constraining global processes and ideologies like neoliberalism, we can begin to see how there might be room for change.

8.3. Limitations/Challenges, Future Possibilities & Concluding Thoughts

This thesis set out to explore the experiences of international students and the dominant discourses they must navigate. The students' provision of insightful narratives and the year that I spent with these students were helpful in such an exploration. However, there were limitations.

For instance, the language practices used throughout this study were quite fluid in the sense that I encouraged students to use phrases in their languages of comfort, which I could later translate or we could translate together. But due to there being such a range of languages – and with certain linguicism surrounding English – we mainly communicated in English. Having a larger study with other researchers speaking other languages might have been more conducive to students wanting to share or feeling comfortable enough to share.

Additionally, it can be difficult for marginalized students to seek assistance or even speak of their issues (Kanno & Applebaum, 1995; Ortmeier-Hooper, 2008;

Popadiuk, 2010). For example, Cindy informed me that she was initially hesitant to tell me her story. For Cindy specifically, there was a worry of repercussions should she negatively speak of any aspect of the program for fear she would be dismissed from the program. While this fear might have been unfounded, her case makes me wonder how many other students had untold stories they were afraid to share.

As well, a part of my ruminations regarding international education concerned students' goals against prevailing discourses. While I was able to track some developments and changes in plans and goals, a longitudinal study might be more helpful in seeing or not whether and how larger goals come to fruition. The Covid-19 Pandemic especially emphasizes the potential for a longitudinal study that can trace students' navigations along the ebbs and flows, constant changes, and external disruptions in educational terrains.

My study did not set out to analyze international education against a global pandemic, but this global disruption did shine light on issues at the heart of this thesis: the belief in and/or reliance on a neoliberal ideology and system. Already critical of such a reliance, Kuehn & Vatekonytė (2019) pre-emptively cautioned BC against adhering to a market model because unprecipitated financial crises such as a "global outbreak of illness" (p. 3) could reduce international student numbers, thereby instigating crises in educational funding. Substantial changes to international student numbers can threaten even individual schools "with financial disaster" (Arber, 2009, p. 177). While growing inequities in funding between different schools and districts due to privatization have already been traced (see Chapters 1 and 2 and for example, the work of Fallon & Pacquette, 2009; Fallon & Poole, 2014; Poole & Fallon, 2015; Rozworksi & Kuehn, 2019; Kuehn & Vaitekonytė, 2019), the effects of the Covid-19 Pandemic have arguably been unparalleled in more recent times. In light of the pandemic, the CBC news report mentioned in the introduction of this dissertation (Ballard, 2021) cites West Vancouver's Superintendent Kennedy as acknowledging the "fragility of the international education system."

I do not presume to hold answers but through this modest contribution, am aiming to highlight some of the challenges and conflicts in a challenging system. Tarc (2019) argues that useful analyses are ones that "illustrate, in a specific time-space conjuncture, *how* the instrumentalist agenda, for example, is specifically constraining or

short-circuiting the realization of the aspirational agenda, and, thereby, the worthiness of the IE initiative itself" (p. 739, italics in original). As well, I restate my recognition of how different, seemingly incompatible educational orientations overlap and even mediate one another (Andreotti et al., 2016; Pashby & Andreotti, 2016). In a similar vein, I am mindful of Deschambault's (2015) suggestion to "locate public education, like neoliberalization… as a material and discursive formation in the midst of ongoing socio-spatial change" (p. 329). These words prompt continuous reflection on an education system within an arena that is globally-connected, constantly changing and evolving, and becoming increasingly entangled. The students' stories told here – along with the contextual information provided by educators – can hopefully contribute to the discussion and potential reimaginings of international education.

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Appendix A.

Interview Guide: Students

Interviews are open-ended discussions guided by the following themes:

1) Deciding to come to British Columbia (BC) and Canada
2) Beliefs about Canadian education
3) Educational goals and future plans
4) Experiences while studying in BC
5) Navigating different educational systems

Appendix B.

Interview Guide: Educators

Interviews are open-ended discussions guided by the following themes:

1) Student beliefs about Canadian education
2) Working in an international education context
3) Challenges working within an international context
4) Strategies for working with international students
5) Guiding students toward goals or guiding students outside of the immediate classroom context