

Analyzing narrated language use: What does it mean to be a German speaker?

by

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A thesis

presented to the University of Waterloo

in fulfilment of the

thesis requirement for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

Intercultural German Studies

Waterloo, Ontario, Canada, 2014

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## Author's Declaration

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners.

I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

## Abstract

This thesis seeks to investigate what it means to be a German speaker, and how this identification can emerge, and change, as a person is describing their language use throughout different contexts of their lives. Using four interviews from the Oral History Project at the Waterloo Centre for German Studies, the analysis shows how four people, all from the Kitchener-Waterloo Region, position themselves as German speakers in English-speaking interviews. This thesis explores two research questions, the first is: how and through which discursive means do the interviewees position themselves in their interviews, and thereby formulate linguistic identities, based on their narrated language use. And the second question is: What impact do different individuals or groups have in formulating these identities, and how are these roles discursively constructed? The hypothesis is that insight into the language use of German members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Region can be found by analyzing the linguistic identities and the categories of interactants that emerged in individuals' narrated language use.

Using positioning theory, this thesis determines how the interviewees used the discursive practices of agency, indexicalization, description or evaluation of the past, to position themselves as language users. These positionings, which are dependent on the subject matter of the narration, as well as the interactional context, can change throughout the interview, contributing to the idea that identities are dynamic and emerge through interaction. Language attrition factors, such as the contact that individuals have with a language, are an important part of the analysis of the interviews, as different categories of interactants and domains of language use emerged in the interviews.

The conclusion of this thesis highlights that linguistic identities must be understood as being complex, and as entities that emerge through interaction. Patterns highlight in the analysis

indicate that the interactional context, and the interviewer, can impact how an individual narrates their language use. The situations, stories, and periods of time that are discussed in the interview also impact how the interviewees discuss their language use, as more contact opportunities are discussed and the individuals narrate their agency in their language use in different ways. The concept of what it means to be a German speaker is not something that can be easily defined, and can only be fully understood when contextualized by the interactional context, the internal context of the interviews.

## Acknowledgments

There are many people that I am very grateful for, for all of their help, support, and understanding during my master's program, and the writing of this thesis. First, I would like to thank my supervisor Professor Grit Liebscher, for her patience, guidance, and encouragement throughout this process. Thank you for your honest criticisms, your relentless editing, and for pushing me to strive for my best. I would like to thank my readers Professor Mathias Schulze and Professor Emma Betz as well, for their constructive feedback and encouragement in my research topic. Also, without the Waterloo Centre for German Studies and the Oral History project, including all the interviewers and interviewees, I could never have written a thesis on a topic that I was so genuinely interested in – so thank you for that!

A big thank you to my friends and family, who encouraged me any way that they could. Britta and Tanya – I couldn't have done it without you guys! I appreciate the company, the coffee, the ranting, and all the laughs. Harley, Gayle (and Kimber, too) – thank you for your constant support. And last but not least, thank you to Ben, who always put a smile on my face at the end of each day.

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## 1. Introduction

Growing up in Canada, I have made contact with people who come from all over the world, who come from different backgrounds, and who speak a variety of languages. I have grown up surrounded by many friends and acquaintances who either have immigrant parents, or are immigrants themselves. What I always found particularly interesting was my observation of my friends' reluctance to speak any language other than English, even when their parents or other family members would speak to them in what could be considered their home language or their first language. I always wondered what influenced these language patterns, and began to ask questions such as: What were the motivating factors for someone to use one language and not the other? Were there special circumstances, certain groups or certain individuals, or specific factors that contributed to the personal maintenance and use of languages? And, how do people define or identify themselves as language users in regards to English and their "at home" language?

These types of questions led me to pursue an academic interest in language use, and in particular how people talk about their language use. As a learner of German as a second language, and as student living and studying in Waterloo, I also became interested in the German-speaking community in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region. My motivation to write a master's thesis on the topic of narrated language use came from my involvement in the Oral History Project conducted by the Waterloo Centre for German Studies. This project involved interviewing German members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Region, asking a variety of questions, including ones regarding their languages and language use. A more detailed description of the project can be found in the Data Collection and Description section of the second chapter of this thesis.

In order to provide some context about how languages are discussed in the Canadian context, and to situate the Kitchener-Waterloo Region and its German-speaking population, information from the Canadian census becomes useful. Canada uses its official languages of English and French to assist in its identification as a multilingual and multicultural country. To further strengthen Canada's multicultural and multilingual identity, the Canadian census provides data on languages, other than English and French, that are spoken in Canada. In the "Highlights" section of the "Linguistic Characteristics of Canadians" (an analytical document provided by Statistics Canada based on the 2011 census report), it is reported that more than 200 languages were documented as a home language or mother tongue, and that there was an increase from the 2006 census of people who reported speaking at least two languages at home, 14.2% in 2006 and 17.5% in 2011 (Statistics Canada, 2012b, p. 3).

It is clear that the interest and importance of statistical data on languages in Canada is growing, as the 2011 census was the first to administer three questions regarding languages to 100% of the population, whereas previous information collection on language was only administered to 20% of the population (Statistics Canada, 2012d, p. 4). These questions inquired about the knowledge of Canada's official languages, which languages were used most often at home, which languages were used on a regular basis at home, as well as what languages were first learned in childhood and still understood (Government of Canada, 2010, p. 2300-2302). According to the 2011 census, 430 000 or 1.3% of Canadians list their mother tongue as German (Statistics Canada, 2012c, p. 3). Kitchener is documented as having 2.6% of its residents listing themselves as having German as their mother tongue (Statistics Canada, 2012a) and 2.9% in Waterloo (Statistics Canada, 2012b).

Quantitative data on language use can be very useful, however, a potential problem with the data represented in the census comes with the limitations of the questions. Counting the languages most often spoken at home, regularly spoken at home, and languages learned during childhood that are still understood does not provide an understanding of language, or what it means to be a speaker of a particular language. These statistics do not offer an understandable picture of what it means to be a German speaker, or a German speaker in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region. Language use is a much more complex, and these three measurements are a limited representation of an individual's experience of using the German language, or any other language.

Although it is not surprising that the Kitchener-Waterloo Region, an area known for its German history and culture (Prokop & Bassler, 2004), has a higher percentage of people with German as their mother tongue than Canada as a whole, this type of quantitative data leaves out a lot of information regarding individual language use in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region. For example, many residents who represent the German-speaking population in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region come from German-speaking islands outside of mainland Germany. The heterogeneity of this group is important to note, because they come from different linguistic backgrounds, many having various degrees of exposure to other European language languages and German dialects.

This German-speaking population of the Kitchener-Waterloo Region is represented by a group of people who have very different immigration stories and histories. There was a significant amount of German immigrants coming to Canada after the Second World War, who now have children and grandchildren who may or may not still be part of the German-speaking population. In the decades following the war, many German-speakers have immigrated to

Canada in less concentrated groups for a variety of reasons, including employment or educational opportunities, interest, or family connections. As the German-speaking population changed in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region over time, so did the area, as German shops, bakeries, churches, and choirs became less frequent and less popular. All of these points, highlighting the heterogeneity, are important to consider when looking at statistics on the German-speaking population. Trying to group them under one label takes the focus away from their individual characteristics, making them appear as a somewhat homogenous group of “German speakers”.

Using a qualitative approach, this thesis will seek to explore how individual community members in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region describe their language use, thereby showing the complexities of language use, in contrast to looking at language use as solely represented by quantitative analysis. In looking at how the individuals describe their language use, the focus will be on how they position themselves, namely how they categorize themselves and others as language users. The concept of language use in this thesis will be understood to include speaking, reading, writing, listening to/hearing, and learning a language. The concept of positioning will be elaborated on in the Review of Research in the second chapter, but can be briefly described as a dynamic way in which individuals relate themselves to others. These positionings are dependent on context and can quickly change within a conversation, a turn, or even within a single utterance. This is significant to studying the complexities of linguistic identities, because each individual can change their positionings based on the context, meaning that throughout the interviews different linguistic identities can emerge.

By investigating how individuals narrate their language use in an interactional context such as an interview, it can be seen that the individuals face questions and circumstances in which they are forced to reflect on their language use. These reflections allow for their

positionings as language users to be better understood. For example, they may identify in some situations as a German speaker, and in other situations as an English speaker. From my personal experience in discussing language use with others, I have found that it is quite common for people to define their language use and identify as a language user with the help of mentioning specific people with whom they communicate, such as friends, family, or colleagues. In doing this, they are categorizing their language use, and positioning themselves as language users according to different narrated contexts of communication.

In this thesis, I seek to explore the complexity of individuals' narrated language use, as well as to investigate how they narrate and describe their language use, looking more closely at their discursive constructions. I will also examine the connections that the interviewees make between their narrated language use and people with whom they interact. Looking at how the interviewees position themselves as language users, and thereby express linguistic identities, I seek to investigate the impact that different people or groups of people have on these identities, while also investigating factors such as language attitudes and motivation. These research goals have led to the formulation of two research questions. My first research question is: How and through which discursive means do the interviewees position themselves in their interviews, and thereby formulate linguistic identities, based on their narrated language use? Concentrating as well on the emergence of categories of interactants, my second research question is: What impact do different individuals or groups (family, friends, or colleagues, for example) have in formulating these identities, and how are these roles discursively constructed? (E.g. how do the participants see their language use affected by their family?)

Using these research questions, I will investigate the intersection of narrated language use, categories of interactants, and linguistic identities, with the intention of looking beyond the

numbers provided by quantitative data, and exploring the complexities of language use and linguistic identities. My hypothesis is that insight into the individual language use of German members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Region can be found by analyzing the linguistic identities and the categories of interactants that emerge in individuals' narrated language use.

## 2. Theory, Data, and Methodology

### 2.1 Review of Research

#### 2.1.1 Identity and Positioning

In this chapter, the key theories and concepts used in the analysis of the data will be reviewed. In writing a thesis on the construction of linguistic identities in interaction, it is first important to clearly define the term “identity”, and to clarify what is meant by the distinction of *linguistic* identities. As the concept of identity has become an increasingly popular topic in the field of sociolinguistics, it is clear that language is an important aspect of an individual’s identity and their sense of who they are (e.g. Bucholtz & Hall, 2005; de Fina, Schiffrin, & Bamberg, 2006; Edwards, 2009; Joseph, 2004; Liebscher & Daily-O’Cain, 2013; Llamas & Watt, 2010; Vihman & Praakli, 2014). Identities can be comprised of a variety of elements, such as nationality, age, gender, and language, and in the study of sociolinguistics, identity can be defined “as [a] term used to refer to an individual’s or group’s sense of who they are, as defined by them and/or others” (Swann, Deumert, Lillis, & Mesthrie 2004, p. 140). The focus of this thesis is on one aspect of an individual’s identity, namely, their identity as a language user; their linguistic identity. This linguistic identity will be considered as an identity that becomes evident through the interviewees’ narrations. For example, I will analyze how the interviewees position and identify themselves as German speakers, German dialect speakers, English speakers, or a mixture of these categories throughout their interviews.

Important to the understanding of identities is the notion that they are dynamic, that they emerge in interaction, and that identities cannot be seen as a stable structure with fixed social categories (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 585-6). Bucholtz and Hall’s (2005) framework for the analysis of identity focuses on identity formation at the interactional level, claiming that “identity is a discursive construct that emerges in interaction” (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 587). They

suggest five fundamental principles which contribute to the study of identity, and to the understanding of how, as will be shown in this thesis, interviewees discursively construct their linguistic identities.

The first principle of their framework, called the emergence principle, highlights that identity is not the source of linguistic practices, but rather it is the product, which again highlights that identity is a social and cultural phenomenon (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 577-8). The positionality principle allows for an understanding of identities as being complex, suggesting that individual's identities emerge in discourse by means of temporary roles, orientations and positionings (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 591). The indexicality principle concerns itself with the interactional context in order to understand the social meaning of a linguistic form that is being indexed (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 594). The relationship between self and other, for example, in terms of similarity/difference, genuineness/artifice, or authority/delegitimacy, and the idea that identities are relationally constructed in these ways is what constitutes the fourth principle: the relationality principle (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 598). The final principle is the partialness principle, which reiterates the idea that there are multiple entities that make up an identity, and that identities may be in part intentional, in part habitual, in part an outcome of interaction or larger ideological process, or in part a construct of other's perceptions (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606).

Bucholtz and Hall's framework (2005) draws attention to aspects of identity construction, such as positionings and the importance of the interactional context, both of which are of particular importance for this thesis. The concept that identities are formed "through the social positioning of self and other" suggests that the act of positioning is important to understand how identities are constructed (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 586). Positioning theory (Harré & van

Langenhove, 1991, 1999c), although a theory originally from the field of psychology, proves extremely useful in the field of sociolinguistics and in analyzing autobiographies. Although the interviews being used are not full autobiographic retellings of the individuals' lives, they can be considered autobiographic stories for the purposes of using positioning theory. The significance of this theory to the analysis performed in this thesis, is that positioning theory views identity and "selfhood" as "manifested in various discursive practices such as telling autobiographical stories [and] taking responsibility for one's actions" (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999b, p. 6).

Positioning theory has been used to demonstrate how speakers formulate identities through discursive means (e.g. Liebscher & Daily-O'Cain, 2013; Pavlenko, 2007; Trent, 2012). Positioning theory has also served as a starting point for studies of narrative interaction, such as in Bamberg's (1997) and Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann's (2004) frameworks for analyzing narrative identity. This thesis will use Harré & van Langenhove's (1991, 1999c) theory of positioning, in combination with Bucholtz and Hall's (2005) framework of identity formation and Schmid's (2002, 2011) factors for language use, in order to adequately analyze the data and answer the research questions. Harré and Langenhove's (1991) modes of positioning, which are described below, will be used to describe different ways that the interviewees position themselves. However, the focus of the interviewees' positionings will be on how their narrated positionings contribute to the analysis of their discursive practices of identity formation.

Positioning theory provides an alternative to the concept of 'role' with the substitution of 'positioning'. Although positionings are similar to the linguistic concept of role, positionings are seen as more fluid, and allow for the understandings of identities as being dynamic, and discursively produced (van Langenhove & Harré, 1999, p. 17). Harré and Langenhove (1991) identify five different modes of positioning, which contribute to the overall understanding of

how the interviewees' identities in this study emerge in the interviews, and how these identities are flexible and can change within the interview as a whole, or within a single utterance.

The first mode is first and second order positioning, which is the distinction between the initial positioning of a person done by themselves, or by another, and the succeeding positionings in which the first positioning is questioned and negotiated (Harré and Langenhove, 1991, p. 396). Performative and accountive positioning is when first order positioning is questioned within the conversation (performative) or in a later conversation (accountive) (Harré and Langenhove, 1991, p. 397). Moral and personal positioning refers to the moral orders or the personal characteristics that are used to position someone (Harré and Langenhove, 1991, p. 398). In an interaction, the positioning of the other is implied upon the positioning of the self, just as the positioning of the self is implied when the other is positioned, and this is referred to as self and other positioning (Harré and Langenhove, 1991, p. 398). The final mode of positioning is tactic and intentional positioning, which follows from most first order positionings, which are unintentional or unconscious, and refers to succeeding intentional positionings, which are always considered deliberate (Harré and Langenhove, 1991, p. 398).

More important for the analysis are Harré and van Langenhove's (1999a) three discursive practices of positioning that are used to express identity and unique selfhood: taking responsibility for an action by means of stressing one's agency, by using statements that have indexed meanings, or by contributing to one's biography by providing an evaluation or description of one's past (p. 62). These discursive practices are used in the analysis of this thesis to identify how the interviewees construct their linguistic identities in their narratives.

As can be seen in the analysis section of this thesis, agency in particular is an important part of how the interviewees position themselves discursively, in regards to how much or how

little agency they have, or had, in their language use. Agency refers to an individual's capacity to act (Swann et al., 2004, p. 7). Agentive constructs can be seen as the interviewees' expression of responsibility for an action (acting agentively), whether that be them expressing their own responsibility or the responsibility of others (Miller, 2010, p. 466; 2012, p. 448). A non-agentive construct, or the act of being inagentive, is an expression of a lack of responsibility for an action (Miller, 2012, p. 451). The third type of agency recognized in the analysis is agent-oriented modality, which expresses someone's obligation to act (Miller, 2012, p. 451). When looking at expressions of agency, it is also important to consider the social constraints placed on the individuals, as well as on their actions and their communication (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005, p. 606). Therefore, when analyzing the interviewees' discursive constructions of identity and of agency, the context of their linguistic constructions will also be considered.

Using statements that have indexed meanings is another discursive practice that, following Harré and van Langenhove's (1999a) positioning theory, is used in the analysis of how the interviewees' linguistic identities are discursively constructed. An index can be a word or a phrase that refers to a past or present experience, and is understood based on its sociocultural context (Swann et al., 2004, p. 143). By using indexical statements, words, or phrases, the interviewees are referencing people, places, time, and discourse, all of which are grounded in the context of the interview (Deckert & Vickers, 2001, p. 119-120). Deixis is one aspect of indexing that refers to instances of indexing that takes place within the immediate context (Deckert & Vickers, 2001, p. 120). Examples of deictics include: *I, you, he, she, yesterday, here, there, tomorrow*, etc. These deictics have meaning and are understood within the context of the interaction of the interviews.

The third discursive practice recognized by Harré and van Langenhove (1999a), and used in this thesis to understand and analyze how linguistic identities are discursively constructed, is the description and evaluation of one's past. Here, evaluation is understood in the sociolinguistic sense that individuals make judgments on language, language use, dialects, etc. (Swann et al., 2004, p. 104). For example, an interviewee may express an evaluation of the hierarchy of languages, or they may express an evaluation of their own language abilities. This discursive practice relates strongly to the notion of language attitudes, as well as language ideologies, which will be discussed in the next section of this chapter that describes factors for language use, including attitudes as one of the factors.

### 2.1.2 Narrated Language Use and Impacting Factors

As this thesis will look specifically at how individuals narrate their language use, an interesting viewpoint for the analysis is to look at factors, as mentioned by the interviewees, that they narrate as having an impact on their language use. This relates to the second research question pertaining to categories of interactants, and the impact they have on the discursive construction of linguistic identities. Although this thesis is not measuring, calculating, or analyzing the linguistic attrition of the interviewees, the attrition factors presented by Schmid (2002, 2011) can be used to provide insight into how people talk about their language use. This includes whether they are talking about the frequency of use, or the lack of use, and what they perceive impacts their language use. As will be demonstrated in the analysis, the interviewees frequently narrate their language use by describing different people that they communicate with. Descriptions of their language use with different people, such as their friends or family, or specific times or places, such as when they are visiting Germany, seem to impact how they construct their linguistic identities. There is a large variety of factors that influence language use

and language attrition, and this thesis will focus on the factors that contribute to the hypothesis and research question dealing with categories of interactants, as these factors emerge in the data.

The most important factor for the argument of this thesis is what Schmid (2002) describes as contact. Contact includes language use with: previous generations (such as parents or grandparents), same generation (which can include different categories, such as partner, friends/acquaintances, colleagues, teachers, or strangers), and the next generation (such as the interviewee's children) (Schmid, 2002, p. 70-71). Throughout the thesis, the term 'category of interactant' will be used to refer to these people categories with whom the interviewees have contact (for example, an interviewee's partner as a category of interactant, or a teacher as a category of interactant). The term 'domain (of language use)' will be used to refer to situations of language use described by the interviewees that may include one or more categories of interactants. They are considered 'domains' in the sense that they represent "a sphere of activity" which can be defined by "specific times, settings and role relationships" (Swann et al., 2004, p. 87). The domains of language use that will be discussed in this thesis are: family domain, work domain, school domain, public and private domains, religious domain, political domain, and tourist domain (the latter of which was added in order to describe situations in which the interviewees are tourists, or interact with tourists).

Other factors, such as attitude and motivation, can also be seen to have an impact on an individual's language use (Schmid, 2011, p. 98). Language attitudes can be described as an individual's views and opinions regarding language(s) and language use (Swann et al., 2004, p. 17). For the purpose of this thesis, the concept of language attitudes will also include language ideologies, which are an individual's shared or distinct beliefs regarding the way languages and societies work (Swann et al., 2004, p. 141). Liebscher and Dailey-O'Cain (2009) argue for the

importance of considering local contexts and ideologies in analyzing language attitudes (p. 196). They also point out that through an interactional approach, indirect language attitudes as expressed in conversational settings can be analyzed (Liebscher & Daily-O’Cain, 2009, p. 196). The analysis of this thesis will consider both directly expressed language attitudes, as well as language attitudes that are expressed indirectly, as important factors for language use.

Language ideologies can be seen to have an impact on the way that people talk about languages in general, or their own personal language use. In the analysis of language attitudes, ideologies are an interesting aspect because they are also a reflection of larger discourses on identity, for example, the way languages are viewed in Europe or in Canada. Weber and Horner (2012) identify three dominant language ideologies that emerge in the interviews. These language ideologies can influence people’s attitudes and perceptions of language and language use. The hierarchy of languages ideology has to do with how different languages or dialects are valued in relation to each other, and this ideology also concerns itself with the hierarchies involved with national and official languages (Weber & Horner, 2012, p. 16-17). The standard language ideology suggests that there is a set of abstract norms, which dictate what is “standard” in a given language (Weber & Horner, 2012, p. 17).

The idea that languages are linked with national identities and countries defined by borders is reflected by the one nation - one language ideology (Weber & Horner, 2012, p. 18). Contrary to this ideology is the concept of globalization and globalized communication. Instead of seeing the world as restricted, and instead of seeing countries and languages as defined by physical or political borders, languages can be seen as a means of establishing “global identities” (Jacquemet, 2010, p. 65). Within this global understanding of communication, “national languages” can be replaced with the idea of transnational means of communicating (Jacquemet,

2010, p. 65). As to be seen in the excerpts from the interviews, these ideologies are used by the interviewees to describe, and sometimes to justify, their personal language use.

Similar to language ideologies, Dailey-O’Cain and Darling’s (2010) article on perceptual dialectologies compares how dialects are perceived in Germany and in German-speaking Canada. Dailey-O’Cain and Darling (2010) suggest that German speakers who have had little direct exposure to German-speaking Europe are less aware of German dialects, and their associations and stereotypes. As dialects do emerge as a topic of conversation in some of the interviews, it is important again to keep the context in mind, considering factors outside of the interview that impact the interviewees narrated language use.

Another factor that Schmid (2002, 2011) lists as having an impact on language use is motivation. Motivation in relation to language use can be described as an individual’s desire to speak or learn a language, or their reasoning to not speak or learn a language. Instead of viewing the interviewees’ motivation as a fixed personality trait, Peirce’s (1995) notion of investment will be used for the understanding of language motivation in this thesis. Peirce (1995) describes the notion of investment as an attempt “to capture the relationship of the language learner to the changing social world” (p. 17). Just as Peirce describes language learners as having complex social identities and “multiple desires”, the interviewees in this thesis will be viewed as language users in the same way (1995, p. 17-18). As shown in the analysis, the way that the interviewees narrate their linguistic motivations is often connected to their narrated categories of interactants.

These factors listed here, adopted from Schmid’s (2002, 2011) theory on language attrition, will be analyzed as they emerge in the interviews, always taking into consideration the interactional, societal, and cultural contexts. The factors contribute to the study of positioning,

and of narrated language use, because they provide a theoretical understanding of factors that are known to impact people's language use. In analyzing how people perceive these factors to influence their language use, their discursive positionings also become clearer, especially in terms of self and other positioning, and in regards to agency. As demonstrated in the analysis, these language attrition factors function effectively as a means of narrating language use, because they help to identify relevant components of identity construction. Choosing these specific language attrition factors (the categories of interactants and domains of language use) focusses the analysis while also providing a consistent analysis of the four interviewees and what impacts their narrated language use. These factors also have an important role in this study as part of the methodology of data analysis, which will be discussed in the latter half of this chapter.

## 2.2 Data Collection and Description

The data used as the primary materials for this thesis are excerpts from interviews that have been collected by the Waterloo Centre for German Studies through the Oral History Project.<sup>1</sup> The Oral History Project began in the fall 2013 semester, and at the time of this thesis was still an on-going project. The goal of this project is to document the role of German culture (including language) in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region, and it accomplishes this by interviewing members of the community who are of German descent (including Austrian and German-speaking Swiss), or their children (who are the first generation born in Canada). The participants heard about the project through local advertisements or word of mouth, and they voluntarily contacted the Waterloo Centre for German Studies in order to participate. Because of the self-selection nature of the project, it is important to note that the participants felt that their story was

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<sup>1</sup> Further information regarding the Oral History Project, and complete transcripts of the videos can be accessed by contacting the Waterloo Centre for German Studies.

important or interesting enough to share, and that they also somehow related to the criteria of being of German descent. Therefore, the participants may have approached the interviews with certain expectations as being viewed as German or German-speaking.

The interviews conducted for this project include a variety of questions pertaining to life in Europe, immigrating to North America, and living in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region. There is also a section of questions dedicated to what is called the “Language Biography”, which includes the questions that provide the majority of the data used in this thesis. A full list of the guideline questions used in the interviews can be found in Appendix 1. The interviews were designed to be conversational in nature, and the participants were encouraged to elaborate on personal stories that went beyond the guideline questions. All interviews were different, as they were conducted by a group of different interviewers and often followed the direction of the story as produced by the individual interviewee. Therefore questions from the list were sometimes left out, and very often new ones were spontaneously created.

The interviewers for the project are a varying group of students (including myself), professors, and other researchers of the Waterloo Centre for German Studies. All interviewers, including those who participated in the interviews in this thesis, can be assumed to have knowledge of both German and English, and have varying knowledge of, and experience with, German culture and history.

The interviewees represent a large variety of backgrounds, ages, cultures, and experiences, and they each have varying levels of language proficiencies in German and/or English. In the initial steps of setting up the interviews, the interviewees were asked if they would prefer to be interviewed in German or English. This would generally decide the language

of the interview, although both the interviewer and interviewee were informed that either language, or a mixture of both, was acceptable. Due to the nature of the interview and the interview questions pertaining to language and language use, the Oral History Project presented itself as a good opportunity to explore how people narrate their language use and discursively construct linguistic identities. As a first step in my data collection, I reviewed a sample of twelve interviews to ensure that there would be enough data in the interviews to provide a sufficient analysis on the topic of narrated language use. As it turns out, quite a few, if not all, interviews deal with questions of language use. The four interviews that are included in the analysis of this thesis were chosen, as a second step, in order to represent a variety of German speakers. The decision was made to look exclusively at English-speaking interviews to approach the “German-speaking” subject in a new way. These interviews demonstrate how the interviewees position themselves as German speakers in English-speaking interviews.

Instead of choosing four participants who were of similar age and who immigrated to Canada at similar ages and times, I chose people who were of different ages, and immigrated at different points in their lives, also representing the heterogeneity of the community. This was also done in an attempt to include people who have different degrees of exposure to the German-speaking world, and who therefore may also have different responses regarding the question of linguistic identities. This decision was based on my personal observation that the interviewees often reference their age of immigration as something that influences their language use. Schmid (2002, 2011) also distinguishes different groups of speakers based on their age of migration, and includes length of residence as a factor for language attrition. Although these age factors are not a focal point of the analysis of this thesis, they are still seen as important factors that contribute to the interviewees overall narration of language use.

The four interviews that will be discussed in this thesis are between one hour and one and a half hours long, but only instances where the interviewees talk about their language use will be discussed in detail in the analysis section. Hence, some of the excerpts come from a continuous section of the interview, and some of the excerpts come from different points in the interview. The excerpts pertaining to the interviewees' narrated language use have been transcribed, with some modifications, according to the Gesprächsanalytisches Transkriptionssystem 2 (GAT 2) conventions for the minimal and basic transcripts, which have been translated and adapted for English by Couper-Kuhlen and Barth-Weingarten (Selting et al., 2011). This style of transcript provides enough information to address what was important to my research questions, and with the adaptation for English, GAT 2 was a good choice for the selected interviews, which were conducted in English (Selting et al., 2011, p. 1). A complete description of the conventions used in the transcripts can be found in Appendix 2.

In order to ensure anonymity of the interviewees and the interviewees, the interviewees have been given pseudonyms, which have been selected in an attempt to retain some 'culture' (i.e. "German" sounding names have been replaced with other "German" sounding names). The interviewees will not be referred to by name, but minimal descriptions of each interviewee will be provided at the beginning of each analysis part. The interviewees for the interviews included in this thesis were all university students in their mid-twenties. Some were Canadian students, and some were students from Germany studying in Canada. These details are significant, as to be seen in the analysis, because the interviewer can sometimes be very important in the construction of identities. For example, the interviewer may position the interviewee as a German speaker, to which the interviewee can respond by accepting or challenging this positioning. The linguistic

background of the interviewers is also at times significant, for example because of their knowledge of different German dialects.

### 2.3 Methodology of Data Analysis

Using the interviews as my data, an analysis will be done using elements from both an interactional analysis (also drawing on elements of conversation analysis) and narrative analysis, in order to answer the research question of how the interviewees construct their linguistic identities in the interviews. The second research question, dealing with the categories of interactants and their potential impact on narrated language use, will be analyzed with the help of Schmid's (2002, 2011) language attrition factors.

#### 2.3.1 Interactional Analysis

Interactional sociolinguistics is the study of language and interaction, traditionally studying face-to-face interactions, while considering the language use as being contextualized (Swann et al., 2004, p. 148). An interactional analysis goes beyond the content of what is said, analyzing the social and cultural contexts, as well as the impact of, for example, the interviewer and interview situation (Gordon, 2011, p. 70). Interactional approaches to analysis provide a means of understanding how identities are co-constructed in interaction, while highlighting the importance of linguistic concepts such as indexicality, agency, and ideology (Cashman, 2008, p. 291). In the analysis of this thesis, attention is paid to the discursive construction of identity, and how the interviewees negotiate their narrated linguistic identities through positionings within the interviews. Aspects of conversation analysis such as code-switching and repairs, as they emerge in the excerpts and are important to the overall argument of the thesis, will also be analyzed. Code-switching is when a speaker switches between two or more languages within the context of

a single conversation (Auer, 1998, p. 1). Repairs are when a speaker fixes a ‘trouble area’ presented in communication (Schegloff, Jefferson, & Sacks, 1977, p. 361).

Bucholtz and Hall (2008) highlight the importance of analyzing interactional elements in the analysis of interview data, including the role of the researcher and their interaction with the interviewee(s) (p. 406). An interactional analysis allows for the data to be contextualized, which allows for the analysis to go beyond the content of the interview, taking into consideration social, cultural, political, and many other factors (Bucholtz & Hall, 2008, p. 412). Bucholtz and Hall (2008) also present the argument that:

“the use of interview methodologies... must be matched by the use of ethnographic and interactional methods of data analysis, in order to ensure that researchers approach interviews not as providing mere background information or as a medium from which to extract linguistic variables but as richly contextualized linguistic data in their own right” (p. 416).

The analysis presented in this thesis will use this type of interactional lens, taking into consideration ethnographic observations when possible (for the interviews I was present at, and my observations and reflections of the Oral History Project as a whole).

Liebscher and Daily-O’Cain (2009), in their research on language attitudes, also draw attention to the importance of an interactional analysis, which expands the analysis of language use beyond content based approaches. In their research paper, they conclude that attitudes are not static entities, but rather “they are constructed in interaction through negotiation with interactants, in specific circumstances and with specific interactional intentions” (Liebscher & Daily-O’Cain, 2009, p. 217). As attitudes are one sub-aspect of this thesis, the importance of an

interactional analysis will be considered in all aspects of analysis in this thesis, taking into consideration how linguistic identities are also discursively constructed through interaction.

### 2.3.2 Narrative Analysis

The study of identities, and the constructive and emergent elements of identity, have also been demonstrated in various works on narrative analysis (Bamberg, 2005, 2012; Brockmeier & Carbaugh, 2001; de Fina, 2003; de Fina 2006; de Fina & Georgakopoulou, 2012; Deppermann, 2013; Lucius-Hoene & Deppermann, 2004). Narrative analysis in general is also relevant to the methodology of this thesis because the interviews being used as data are considered narratives, in the sense that they have the specific purpose of recounting personal circumstances, they contain a link between the past and the present, and they all contain the human elements of feelings, experiences, and interaction (Denscombe, 2010, p. 291). As previously described, only excerpts of the interviews will be analyzed in detail, namely parts of the interview where the interviewees talk about their language use.

Bamberg and Georgakopoulou's (2008) work on 'small stories' provides support for how excerpts of a larger narrative are valuable for identifying textual and interactional features and for linking discursive practices with "larger social roles and identities" (p. 379). These authors have made a distinction between what they refer to as 'big stories' and 'small stories', suggesting that the focus in narrative analysis has been on big story research, which "analyzes the stories as *representations* of world and identities" (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 382, italics in original). In comparison to research on big stories is small story research, which is more "interested in how people use small stories in their interactive engagements *to construct* a sense of who they are" (italics in original).

Small stories draw a focus to “underrepresented narrative activities, such as telling of ongoing events, future or hypothetical events, and shared (known) events, but it also captures allusions to (previous) tellings, deferrals of tellings, and refusals to tell” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 381). Additionally, small stories can be about ongoing or recent events, or “about small incidents that may (or may not) have actually happened, mentioned to back up or elaborate on an argumentative point occurring in an ongoing conversation” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 381). As this thesis will also be looking at the interactional context of the interview, it is also important to highlight that small stories can also be about “‘nothing’; as such, they indirectly reflect something about the interactional engagement between the interactants, while for outsiders, the interaction is literally ‘about nothing’” (Bamberg & Georgakopoulou, 2008, p. 381-2). These small stories may be about “nothing” in the sense that they do not contribute to the overall understanding of the person’s life story. However these small stories could be important to understanding how the interviewee constructs their identity, especially if their construction is impacted by the interaction between interviewer and interviewee. As seen in the analysis, people may also use small stories to address complexities, to allow for the interviewer to make their own conclusions, or as a means of indirectly positioning themselves (i.e. describing themselves through the eyes of others). The analysis of small stories of a larger narrative contributes to the understanding of identities constructed in narratives as impacted by the interactional and contextual aspects of the interview.

Pavlenko’s (2007) research on narratives as data in applied linguistics also stresses the value of the interactional and contextual aspects of the interview. She also simultaneously highlights the value of discursive approaches to the analysis, which considers the “linguistic means used by narrators in positioning themselves and others... and in making sense of their life

experiences” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 167-7). Pavlenko (2007) suggests that in using autobiographic narratives as data in applied linguistics, the narrative must be analyzed according to not only its content (analyzing what was said as well as what was omitted and why), but also its context and form (p. 174). The context of the narratives is important to consider because the interviews being used for analysis are in part “cultural, institutional, and social productions,” for which the influence of different elements such as “language choice, audience, setting, modality, narrative functions, interactional concerns, and power relations” are all important to consider (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 175). In the analysis of form, it is important to “examine how storytellers achieve their interactional goals through particular narrative devices or lexical choice” (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 177), an idea that supports the analysis of discursive elements such as agency (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 175) and positioning (Pavlenko, 2007, p. 179).

Both Pavlenko (2007), and Bamberg and Georgakopoulou (2008) draw attention to the interactional context when analyzing narratives, which highlights the importance of what happens before, as well as during, the interview between interviewer and interviewee, and how these interactions can impact the course of the narrative. The analysis of this thesis will look at the context external to the interview, as well as the internal context. Included in the external context is the social and cultural information that is meaningful to what is being discussed, as well as the interactional context, which includes the situation of the interview (an interview conducted for the Oral History Project by the University of Waterloo), and the interviewer/interview dynamic. The internal context refers to the content and form of the actual interview, for example turn-taking, and the sequencing of what is being said.

### 2.3.3 Language Attrition Factors

As previously discussed in the Review of Research, Schmid's (2002, 2011) factors for language attrition will be used to analyze factors that the interviewees narrate as affecting their language use. These factors include people with whom the interviewees communicate (categories of interactants and domains of language use), attitudes (including language ideologies), and factors of motivation. The categories of interactants include categories such as friends, family members, and colleagues. And the domains of language use include the work, school, family, public, private, political, religious, and tourist domains.

In analyzing the data, I first chose excerpts in which there were instances of narrated language use. These included any instances where the interviewees describe learning, or using (speaking, reading, listening to) languages. Using these specific excerpts, I identified how the interviewees positioned themselves as language users, using the discursive practices of agency, indexing, and description/evaluation. I then looked at the potential factors that impact how the interviewees position and identify themselves as language users. This led to the analysis of different categories of interactants and domains of language use that people reference when discussing their language use. As other factors, such as attitudes and motivation, emerged in relation to the interviewees narrated language use, they also became relevant to the argument as factors that affect language use. The narrated linguistic identities in the context of the interviews are not to be seen as a direct reflection of reality, but rather as a product of the contextual and interactional elements of the interviews. The interviewees' linguistic identities are understood to emerge in the narratives, and are analyzed in their discursive constructions, taking into consideration their interactional properties, as well as the contexts in which they were produced.

### 3. Analysis of Four Cases

#### 3.1 Introduction

The interview participants contacted the Waterloo Centre for German Studies upon hearing about the project either from local advertisements, or from word of mouth. The interviewees have varying immigrant or descendant histories, some of them being born in other European countries and growing up in Germany, some of them born and raised in Germany, and some born in Germany and shortly after immigrated to Canada or other countries. The four participants that are discussed in this analysis used English as the primary language in their interviews, and they all reflected on their German language use to varying degrees. Any German that the participants or interviewers spoke is transcribed in the excerpts in German, and the unnumbered line(s) below the spoken German provide a translation in English in italics. More detailed information on the structure of the interviews can be found in Data Collection and Description section.

#### 3.2 Interviewee 1: Nikolas Eckelmann

Nikolas was born in Germany in 1971 to German parents, grew up speaking German, and learned English in school before he moved to the Netherlands in the early 1990's. After studying in the Netherlands, as well as spending time in South Africa, South America, and France, he came to Canada in his early thirties to pursue a job opportunity. At the time of the interview, Nicholas was in his early forties, having lived and worked in Canada for approximately ten years.

Nikolas' interview was conducted by a Canadian male graduate student who was in his early twenties. Nikolas is identified in the transcript as "NIK" and the interviewer is identified as "INT". The interview covered a wide range of topics relating to Nikolas' immigration experience

in Canada. The following excerpts come from a continuous section of Nikolas' interview where the topic of language use was discussed and elaborated on. As demonstrated in this section of transcript, Nikolas struggles with positioning himself as a citizen of a specific country. Nikolas describes his contact with English and Dutch as second and third languages, and expresses different performances of agency in different language learning situations that he encountered. Nikolas describes different categories of people with whom he used his different languages throughout his life, such as with his roommates, with his colleagues, and with his family. In the second section of this analysis, the focus will be specifically on Nikolas' reference to the family domain.

Nikolas expresses his agency in his daughter's language use, and using factors such as motivation and language ideologies, positions himself and his daughter as specific language users in regards to their family relations, as well as their European identifications. The focus of the analysis will be on Nikolas' positionings regarding different European identities, the different categories of interactants (specifically the effect of the (grand)parent-(grand)child relationship), and the overarching perceptions and ideologies that Nikolas has on being European.

The first excerpt leads into the part of the interview where Nikolas discusses his language use and language biography, and is significant for the further analysis of his interview, because it shows how Nikolas perceives himself within the context of the interview.

#### Excerpt NIK 1

1     NIK:  i mentioned that i might apply for canadian citizenship (.)  
2             i don't really feel like a citizen of anything (.)  
3             because (.) i- i just live where i live  
4             and- and i'm- i think i'm a good citizen

5           but not necessarily a citizen of a country  
6           but just as a good neighbor a good person and so on  
7           and i- to be honest i don't feel so much allegiance to any state

After having been brought up in Germany, and spending a significant amount of time in the Netherlands and in Canada, Nikolas (line 2) identifies himself as not really feeling like a citizen of a specific country. This is also earlier reflected in his interview when he makes comments such as “I’m not a good German” (not present in the excerpts) and expresses that he does not feel like he belongs to a country such as Germany, even though he was born and raised there. In line 3, he uses “because” to provide an explanation as to why he does not feel like a citizen of a country. His unprompted explanation suggests that he believes that people are not expected to have this sense of lack of citizenship. This information becomes useful when looking at the upcoming excerpts, when he expresses his agency in his language use and language learning, while at the same time commenting on his identity and expressing his ideologies and beliefs surrounding language use.

### Excerpt NIK 2

1    INT:  so you said you took english in school  
2           did you uhm continue-  
3           did you take any other classes outside of your traditional  
4           schooling  
5           or did you just learn it as well in an informal setting?  
6    NIK:  you are focusing on english now?  
7    INT:  yes yes specifically on english  
8    NIK:  uhm no in the beginning it was just english in high school  
9           normal- normal school setting  
10           and then i had a student exchange to scotland

11           that helped me improving my english it was a couple weeks  
12           but then actually i improved my english probably most when i  
13           went to the netherlands ((light laughter))  
14           because at the beginning i didn't speak any dutch  
15           so i had to speak ENGLISH with the people  
16           because many of them didn't speak german  
17           or they did not want to speak german

In this excerpt, Nikolas begins to break down his language use by describing his usage in terms of different categories of interactants, which can also be referred to as public and private domains of language use. Nikolas describes his primary exposure in English as fitting into an educational category, first in high school (lines 8-9) and on student exchange (lines 10-11). After describing in lines 12-13 that he improved his English most in the Netherlands, he produces light laughter and then begins his next utterance with “because”, and offers an explanation as to why this occurred. Nikolas narrates that at the beginning he could not speak Dutch, and English was a more common and accepted language to communicate with. This specific utterance gives insight into Nikolas’ perceptions of languages and language use, as well as his understanding of the world. His laughter is an expression that he believes it is unexpected that he would improve his English language abilities in the Netherlands. This is a reflection of the one nation – one language ideology, which suggests that languages are linked with national identities and countries defined by borders (Weber & Horner, 2012, p. 18). Although he does not seem to agree with this ideology, since he seems to have experienced quite the opposite, he is aware of these perceptions of language use, which comes up later in his interview when discussing his language use in his family domain.

In lines 10-11, Nikolas uses a non-agentive construct to describe how he learned English on student exchange in Scotland, “i had a student exchange to scotland that helped me improving my english”. He does not express his agency in the situation, but rather describes the situation as impacting his English language abilities. In the next two consecutive lines (lines 12-13), he uses an agentive construct (“i improved”) to describe the next stage of his language learning, claiming that he was active in improving his English, thereby expressing his agency in the situation. Line 15 shows agent-oriented modality as he expresses that he “had” to speak English, indicating that he did not necessarily want to or chose to, but that it was decided for him based on his position in his situation. This is also an expression of his motivation to learn the language – he was put in a position where he had to speak it. These different constructions of agency that Nikolas produces to show how he learned and used English demonstrate that during his time in the Netherlands, it was necessary for him to improve his English, and he credits his time there as a motivating factor to learn English.

Nikolas indicates a perceived attitude towards the German language in the Netherlands (lines 15-17) by saying, “i had to speak ENGLISH with the people because many of them didn’t speak german or they did not want to speak german”. Here, Nikolas is not only providing insight into his perceived language attitudes in the Netherlands (that German was not a language that people wanted to speak, even if they could). It also acts as a source of motivation for Nikolas to learn English. He was motivated to speak English and not German, because English seemed to be a more acceptable language in Netherlands at that time. By indicating that “they” could not speak German, he is also positioning himself here as a German speaker by means of self and other positioning.

In the next excerpt, Nikolas continues his description of his language use while in the Netherlands, again expressing both agentive and non-agentive constructs.

Excerpt NIK 3

18 NIK: so i spoke a lot of english  
19 and that's then i guess what improved my english the most  
20 and then i mean there were then other occasions when i also  
21 had to speak english ( )  
22 so so really (.) i mean of course the high school english  
23 provided the basis  
24 but really speaking english only happened afterwards  
25 when i uhm had to apply it in a daily ah con-  
26 when i had to apply it in a daily level  
27 uhm with people around me at work and that i lived with and  
28 studied and (xxxxx) with  
29 you know

This excerpt begins with another example of Nikolas displaying agent-oriented modality in line 21, and again in lines 25 and 26, where he expresses that he “had” to learn or use English. Again, this demonstrates Nikolas’ motivation for improving his English abilities while living in the Netherlands, as he found it obligatory to do so, not necessarily because it was something that he himself was actively pursuing. In this section, he also makes a point to describe the different situations in which he learned English, which brings different categories of interactants, and domains of language use, into the analysis. He mentions the school domain, by listing high school in line 22, as providing him the basis for his learning of English. In lines 27-28, he then identifies the domains of work, personal/private life, and again the school domain, which he refers to as domains of language use in which he used English on a “daily level”. In the next

excerpt, the focus is on how Nikolas learned English, and on his personal philosophy on language learning.

#### Excerpt NIK 4

30 INT: okay uhm and your mother tongue is german yes?  
31 NIK: yup  
32 INT: yes uhm do you speak any other languages?  
33 NIK: dutch- i'm fluent in dutch  
34 i speak a bit of spanish and a bit of french and a bit of  
35 afrikaans  
36 BTH: (-)  
37 INT: (xxxx xxxx) uhm and so learning these languages ah do you-  
38 ah do you remember any particular activities that really  
39 helped you  
40 NIK: learning [ENGLISH?  
41 INT: [yah helped you to learn or [english or any of the  
42 languages you speak  
43 NIK: [or any other languages?  
44 it's just really (.)  
45 i wanted to say it's being IMMERSED (.)  
46 in the COUNTRY where in that language environment  
47 but maybe in a- maybe it's the combination of ((cough))  
48 that's what happened in the netherlands i (.) i took two  
49 courses there the first half year when i lived there  
50 so i had (.) a couple of we-  
51 ah times a week i had language lessons  
52 and then WAS in that language environment embedded on a daily  
53 (.) ah uhm daily and that could apply directly what i had  
54 learned (.)

55           uhm in my environment and i think that combination  
56           of having the formal teaching plus the language environment  
57   BTH:   (.)  
58   NIK:   that's what really works for me

This section makes for an interesting portion of the interview in looking at interaction and how Nikolas positions himself as a language user. As Nikolas identifies the different languages that he can speak, he leaves out German and English (perhaps because this is already known/assumed since he clarified that German is his “mother-tongue”, and the interview is being conducted in English). But then in line 40, he brings up English in response to the interviewer’s question. Something similar was also seen in excerpt 2, line 6, when Nikolas seeks confirmation that they will be discussing English as a language. It is interesting that Nikolas seeks to bring the conversation back to center around his English language learning, especially when asked to elaborate on how he learned languages in general (lines 37-39 and 41-42), and after his “mother tongue” German was the initial language that the interviewer asked about in this section of conversation (line 30). He also states his position on language learning and his belief that what he refers to as being “immersed” (line 45) in the language environment is what facilitates language learning the most.

By expressing this attitude in regards to language learning, he is also providing an example of a contrast in his own experiences, as he earlier stated that he improved his English most when he was in the Netherlands, where he felt it was necessary to learn English. Up until this point in the interview, the discussion about language use, and by extension language learning, had been centered on Nikolas’ past experiences. This has allowed for an understanding of how he positions himself as an individual with regard to his different languages, and he has

also reflected on some attitudes and motivations regarding these languages. The remaining excerpts of this section of the interview on language biography focus on Nikolas' language use in the private domain, how he positions himself as a language user with different members of his family, and how his identity as a Dutch citizen comes into play in regards to his language use choices.

### Excerpt NIK 5

59 INT: okay (.) uhm so ah- over your time in canada  
60 uhm can i ask you what your lan- what you (.)  
61 what language you ah tend to speak the most and sort of  
62 NIK: english  
63 INT: and uhm both at work and at home or?  
64 NIK: with my DAUGHTER who is still a TODDLER i speak only german  
65 because i want her to speak german  
66 uhm which is kind of WEIRD  
67 because (.) let me explain why it is weird because (.)  
68 we also want her to have a european passport  
69 but the passport that she can get is a DUTCH passport  
70 because i lost my german passport  
71 i only have a DUTCH passport now  
72 so and she- because i am now a dutch citizen  
73 she has the RIGHT  
74 no she doesn't have the right she IS automatically also a  
75 dutch citizen  
76 because she is BORN to a dutch citizen (.)  
77 so she can just apply for a passport and she will have a  
78 passport a dutch passport (.)  
79 but she can't speak dutch

80 INT: ((light laughter))  
81 NIK: and i'm UNLIKELY to TEACH her dutch  
82 because it would be too confusing for- for an infant or  
83 toddler to learn THREE languages at the same time  
84 and TWO different languages being spoken by the same parent  
85 BTH: (.)  
86 NIK: but her grandparents are german  
87 INT: m\_hm  
88 NIK: so that's why i CHOSE for my parents to teach her german  
89 so i speak only german with my daughter (.)  
90 speak sometimes german with my wife  
91 but predominantly english  
92 because that's how we met  
93 we met speaking english and that's very difficult to revert  
94 to change that again  
95 and then of course with my family i speak uhm german  
96 and she speaks a little bit of german my wife

When prompted in line 61 to discuss what language Nikolas speaks the most of, he initially and promptly answers English, which resembles some of his previous utterances when he reverts back to English, positioning himself as an English speaker, and as easily reflecting on his English usage. However, once he begins talking about his language use in the private domain, namely with different members of his family, a more dynamic system of positionings and identities is revealed. In his communications with his daughter, he positions himself as a German speaker in line 64, which he reiterates again in line 89, by saying, “so i speak only german with my daughter”. Even though he has previously focused on talking about his English language use,

and has identified himself as an English speaker, with his daughter he positions himself as a German only speaker.

In his utterance which begins in line 67, with, “because (.) let me explain why it is weird”, he offers his motivation for why he chose to teach his daughter German and expose her to that particular language environment. He is also evaluating his choice for teaching his daughter German, and the results that have come from this choice. It becomes clear that he connects his daughter’s language use and language abilities with her European heritage, and expresses that it is important for her to have that “European” connection. In line 68, he is drawing attention specifically to her being a citizen of a European country and receiving a European passport, which offers as an explanation for why he wants to teach her German.

Nikolas describes the language and citizenship dynamic of his daughter as “weird” in lines 66 and 67. It is “weird” (i.e. opposing the norms that Nikolas perceives that interviewee has) that his daughter is a Dutch citizen but can’t speak Dutch. It may also seem weird to the interviewee that he is teaching his daughter German and that he wants her to have a Dutch passport, even though a Dutch or German passport would grant the same privileges to its holders as citizens of Europe. Either way, he seems to have interpreted this language/country dynamic as something that people (in this case the interviewer) will perceive as being “weird”. However, his view on the situation seems to be more globalized, and focused less on the ideology of one nation – one language. A similar situation can be found in excerpt 2, when Nikolas expressed the recognition of this type of ideology when he was describing learning English in the Netherlands. Nikolas clearly has a more global picture of languages and of the world, as he sees it as an advantage for his daughter to be living in Canada and have a passport for a European country for which she can’t speak the “national” language. Even though he recognizes this situation may

seem strange to others, as is confirmed by the laughter produced by the interviewer in line 80, it still seems that his daughter's German language use is something that is very important to him.

Nikolas expresses another language ideology in lines 82-84, as he states his belief and justification for his daughter not learning Dutch, but rather only German and English, because he believes it would be too difficult for her. Here, it is interesting that he states it would be too difficult for his daughter if he were to speak two languages to her, reiterating that he only speaks German to her, and does not speak English to her. Further on in the interview this appears to be unlikely, considering that his wife is Canadian, and he communicates in English with her. He offers another justification for why his daughter is learning German and not Dutch, as he positions her in the domain of their private/family life and mentions in line 86 that her grandparents are German, and, therefore she too should be a reflection of that – by means of speaking German. However, interestingly, he does not state that he is German and she should be learning German because of that, but rather leaves himself outside of this identity construction, suggesting that his Dutch citizenship is not as significant as his German heritage.

In the next part of this section of the interview, Nikolas continues in his explanation of language use choice for his daughter and expresses his agency in “choosing” (for his parents, line 88, excerpt 5) to teach his daughter German and speak German with her. It is interesting how he never states that his daughter speaking German is a reflection of himself, his identities, or his wants. Instead, he positions her language use in a globalized perspective of languages and identities, as well as dominantly in a grandparent-grandchild relationship, in which he is a facilitator. In the remaining part of this section, Nikolas expresses an evaluation of his language use with his wife and his family.

### Excerpt NIK 6

97 INT: and ah just sort of outside social gatherings  
98 usually in english as well or  
99 BTH: (-)  
100 NIK: you mean when i'm at home with her or  
101 INT: or i mean if you go out with your wife somewhere or  
102 NIK: english [english  
103 INT: [yah english usually  
104 NIK: english its uhm i think what happens is that automatically (.)  
105 people tend to agree to speak the language that is (.)  
106 overall- provides overall the least resistance to  
107 communication (.)  
108 and we could speak german my wife and i  
109 because she had german in high school and she had university  
110 courses  
111 and has been in germany a couple of times  
112 but it would be SLOW  
113 you know it would be harder for her  
114 it's harder for her to speak GERMAN  
115 than for me to speak english  
116 so that's why we speak english

This passage shows again how Nikolas goes back to positioning himself as an English speaker after he leaves the domain of discussing his language use with his daughter. Lines 102 and continuing on to 104, show Nikolas repeating “English” three times leading into his personal evaluation of language use, stressing the importance and dominance of English as his primary language. Expressing the difficulty in changing his language patterns with his wife, as he does in line 112, “but it would be SLOW”, and in line 114, “it’s harder for her to speak GERMAN”,

seems to be his way of justifying his language use, accrediting it to his belief of sticking to the language they spoke when they met. As this is an interview on German-Canadians, it could have appeared to Nikolas that the interview was supposed to be centered on things that are “German”, naturally included in that would be German language use. Therefore, lines 105-116 can be seen as Nikolas basing his justification for his language use in the private domain on his personal ideology of how to best communicate with his wife. This, in turn, is a reflection of how, in teaching his daughter German, he finds it important to not necessarily engage in that part of his identity in his personal life. But rather, it is something important, not only for the instrumental value of her receiving a European passport, but it is also seemingly important for him to pass down German to his children and further generations. This is indicated in line 88 of excerpt 5, when he explains that he teaches his daughter German because his parents speak German.

In summary, Nikolas uses the different domains of work, school, and the private domain to position himself using agentive and non-agentive constructs of language learning and uses. The categories of interactants that include his family members are used to determine how he uses his languages in his present day life. Nikolas’ description of his English language learning provides the initial evidence for Nikolas’ struggle of positioning himself as a language user in a globalized world, as the one nation – one language ideology seems to be relevant in his assessment of his language use. However, it becomes clear that he sees language as being a globalized concept when he talks about his motivation for his daughter to speak German in order to be able to utilize her Dutch citizenship to the fullest, in getting a European passport. Also, by “only speaking” German to his daughter who is born and raised in Canada, he is also going against the idea of the one nation – one language. Nikolas stressed the importance of immersion and having to speak English in the Netherlands as motivating and successful factors in learning a

language. This could also be interpreted as his “German-only” approach in communicating with his daughter.

The different categories of language use (for example, his daughter as one specific category, and his wife as another), help Nikolas navigate through his different positionings. This way he is able to identify as a German speaker with his daughter, and as an English speaker with his wife. In having these separate categories of language use, his motivations for these choices also became clear as he mentioned his German parents, as well as a European passport, as motivating factors for his daughter to learn German. In not expressing his German identity as a motivating factor to teach his daughter German, he is separating himself from this German identity. This is also seen in his multiple referrals to English when prompted by questions, and his justifications for speaking English with his wife. His family relationships seem to be a large factor for his language use choices, including the three main relationships that he mentions: his daughter, and his parents, with whom the main communication is in German, and with his wife, with whom he speaks English.

His ideologies on languages and identities clearly help Nikolas in positioning himself and his daughter in the multi-layered circumstance of their identities. Being born in Germany and having a Dutch citizenship while now living, working, and raising a family in Canada, Nikolas uses his German heritage and background to provide reasoning for him to speak German with and teach his daughter German, and not Dutch. Although he seems to even struggle with the positionings of German and Dutch, he sees his Dutch identity as a means for his daughter to access Europe, and the German language. The way in which Nikolas positions himself while speaking about his language use provides insight into the motivations and attitudes that he has

towards his different languages, as well as his language ideologies and the way he identifies himself as a language speaker.

In contrast to Nikolas, who immigrated to Canada in his thirties and who makes his identity as a German speaker relevant while talking about categories of interactants, is the next interviewee, Kevin Tresler, who immigrated to Canada much earlier in life. Similarly, both Nikolas and Kevin communicate in German with their parents, but their narrated language use patterns take different paths when more categories and groups of interactants, and more domains of language use, are introduced. One interesting difference between these two is how they address their language use with their children. As seen in Nikolas' excerpts, he constructs himself as motivated and active in teaching his young daughter German. As will be seen in the upcoming excerpts of Kevin's interview, his narration regarding his language use, and his motivations for language use within the family domain result in a different conclusion regarding the impact of his categories of interactants.

### 3.3 Interviewee 2: Kevin Tresler

Kevin was born in 1948 in Germany and immigrated with his parents and siblings to Canada when he was five years old. When he arrived in Canada, Kevin did not speak any English, but was able to pick it up quickly in the school system and through communicating with friends and neighbors. As he refers to in the interview, Kevin spent twenty years living and working in the British Virgin Islands during his adult years. At the time of the interview, Kevin was in his mid-sixties.

Kevin's interview took place after an interview with his elderly mother. Also present during the interviews were the interviewer and the assistant, a female German graduate student and a female Canadian student, respectively, as well as Kevin's adult daughter. The interaction

that took place preceding the interview is worth mentioning, because it gives context for the information provided in the actual interview. The interviewer had been previously instructed that both Kevin and his mother would prefer to be interviewed in German, and when first meeting and greeting Kevin and his mother, the interviewer greeted Kevin in German. He responded to her in English and claimed that he did not speak German, or at least not a German that would allow them to communicate with each other. It became clear very quickly that Kevin did speak German, as prior to, as well as during, the interview that took place with his mother present, Kevin spoke freely to his mother in their Danube Swabian dialect, a dialect of German that is associated with the German-speaking settlement that were originally located in the Danube basin of Eastern Europe (Frey, 1982). Interestingly, whenever he used this German dialect with his mother during her interview, he would provide clarification or additional information to the German native speaker interviewer in English.

This interesting dynamic suggests that Kevin was not comfortable communicating in his German dialect with the native speaker interviewer, who spoke what would be considered standard German, or he did not believe that she would be able to understand him. Throughout the interview with Kevin, it becomes evident that he separates his dialect from “German”, which would explain why he claimed that he does not speak “German”, meaning standard German. It is here that the language ideology referred to as the hierarchy of languages appears, which is the belief that linguistic practices can be seen hierarchically with “languages” being superior to “dialects” (Weber & Horner, 2012, p. 16-17). This language ideology, as well as the standard language ideology, which suggests that there is a set of abstract norms which dictate what is “standard” in the given language (Weber & Horner, 2012, p. 18), reappear in Kevin’s interview,

as his identification with his German dialect seems to hold him back from his German language use.

During the interview with his mother, there was an interesting interruption that was initiated by Kevin's daughter, where her perception of language use becomes clear, and is seen as somewhat contrasting to the perception Kevin has of his own language use. In the transcript, Kevin is identified as "KEV", his daughter as "DTR", his mother as "OMA", and the female interviewer as "INT". The upcoming excerpt shows the conversation that took place between Kevin, his daughter, and Kevin's mother, when Kevin's daughter interrupts her grandmother while she is speaking about her language use (line 1).

#### Excerpt KEV 1

1 DTR: we weren't allowed to speak german (.) like it was-  
2 KEV: what do you mean you weren't allowed?  
3 DTR: it was english  
4 it was not- like it wasn't  
5 we weren't TAUGHT because they wanted us to speak english  
6 all the time  
7 ALL: (-)  
8 DTR: it's true same with my other side polish and german  
9 both of us- like they wanted to speak english cause they were  
10 immigrants and they didn't want-  
11 OMA: ja  
yah  
12 DTR: it wasn't-  
13 they didn't talk german  
14 oma never talked german to me as a kid  
15 it was english (.) right?

- 16 OMA: [ja  
[yah
- 17 KEV: [it's cause she wanted you to understand
- 18 INT: aber heute sprechen- sprechen sie BEIDES ((directed to Oma))  
*but today you speak- speak BOTH*

In this section of the interview, Kevin's daughter makes it clear that Kevin and his parents made an active effort to speak English to her throughout her life, and she was not encouraged to learn the languages of her grandparents. In lines 9-10, Kevin's daughter claims that they were not taught German as children because her grandparents were immigrants, to which, in line 11, her grandmother confirms by saying "ja" and again in line 16. In line 17, Kevin offers an explanation for why his mother never spoke German to her grandchild, but he omits any explanation as to why he did not speak German to his own daughter. Although his own motivation to not speak German with his daughter is not clear, it is clear that it was not Kevin's intention to teach his daughter to speak German. Nevertheless, this seems to be a hot topic for Kevin's daughter as she addresses the situation in line 1, by saying that they were not "allowed" to speak German, suggesting some type of control over their language choices. It is also interesting that she shows quite a bit of interest in learning these languages, but her father, as demonstrated in line 17, does not respond by acknowledging her interest, but rather by stressing the priority of her being able to understand what her grandparents were saying. Sensing the tense situation that this exchange uncovered, the interviewer brought the attention back to Kevin's mother and her story in line 18, by addressing the topic of language use back to the focus of the grandmother's story.

This excerpt and the observed communication between Kevin and his mother provided the interviewer with some background knowledge of his language use prior to his own interview.

At the beginning of Kevin's interview, the interviewer began the interview by thanking Kevin for his participation, which she said in German. Kevin replied to this in English, and the rest of the interview was conducted in English, with Kevin only using very minimal German words or phrases, but never narrating his story in German. The section of the interview that involved Kevin's language biography provides information on Kevin's German language use, and his perceptions of his German language abilities, as he provides a description of his learning of German grammar. The analysis of this section of Kevin's interview will focus on how Kevin describes his language use in two categories: one being with his parents, specifically his mother, and the other being German language use in the tourist domain. Another focus will be on Kevin's perception of his German abilities, and how the standard language ideology seems to play a role in his positioning as a German speaker.

In the following excerpt, Kevin narrates what he thinks of, when he thinks of speaking German (other than with his mother). Kevin introduces the idea of German as a tourist language, and in this excerpt, Kevin's perception of his own German as being insufficient becomes clear.

#### Excerpt KEV 2

1 INT: when you speak german is it only to your-  
2 to your mother or (.) [also to other people?  
3 KEV: [you know when i used to get customers in my  
4 restaurant  
5 i'd speak german to them if they didn't-  
6 if they were just german speak-  
7 like in the british virgin islands we got a lot of tourists  
8 from everywhere  
9 and uhm if i got german tourists in i'd speak german to them

10           i was a little bit SHY about it because i don't pronounce the  
11           words the same  
12           and i don't understand necessarily EVERY word (.) german word

It is very striking that the interviewer automatically positions Kevin as a speaker of German in line 1, and Kevin accepts this positioning and continues on to describe his German language use with categories of interactants other than his mother. As someone who seemed adamant in the pre-interview interaction that he did not speak “German”, it is interesting that he accepts this identification. What is also interesting about this interaction, initiated by the interviewer’s question in lines 1-2, is that when he is prompted to speak about his German language use, he immediately refers back to his time spent in the British Virgin Islands (a topic which he also speaks fondly about in other sections of his interviews). He seems to make a connection between his German language use and a specific time and place, meaning that in the context of the interview, he is not making this German speaker identity relevant, but rather referring to a time when he did identify as a German speaker. This is interesting, because he draws a different connection when he narrates his language use with his mother, thereby also making a connection to his present day language use.

Kevin is also establishing his position as a German speaker in a tourist domain, which is seen in lines 3-9, when he identifies that he spoke German to German-speaking tourists that he met at his restaurant. In lines 5 and 6, there are two utterances that he starts, and then he cuts himself off and performs a self-initiated self-repair, where he reformulates the information that he wants to communicate (Schegloff et al., 1977, p. 36). It appears as though he was initially going to communicate that he would speak German to German tourists if they didn’t speak English (line 5), or if they were just German-speaking tourists (line 6). This would have made it

seem like he only used his German language when it was necessary to do so. But instead, he reformulates his utterance to leave the interpretation more open-ended by saying “if i got german tourists in i’d speak german to them” (line 9). This leaves the possibility open to include the option that he may have voluntarily spoken German to them, even if they were able to speak English. He is stressing his agency in this situation by positioning himself as the actor in the utterance and placing the action of speaking German and the ability to do so on himself as the subject.

The question that initiates this section of the interview is asked by the interviewer in the present tense (line 1), and he immediately begins his story in the past tense, and never speaks about his language use in the present tense, except when he refers to speaking with his mother. Although it is not clear if his mother is the only person with whom he speaks German or German dialect with at the time of the interview, it is evident from his answer that he is either more comfortable, or enjoys talking about his German use in the past.

Lines 10-12 demonstrate how Kevin perceives his German language abilities, which he sees as insufficient, or not “standard”, which was clearly also reflected in his reluctance to speak German with the interviewer, and is a reflection of the standard language ideology. By commenting that he felt shy, because of his pronunciation (which is a reflection of his dialect) (line 10-11), and because of his German vocabulary (line 12), he is positioning himself and his feelings in the present tense. This is also an indication of his reluctance to speak German in the present time, not only with the interviewer but perhaps with other German speakers as well. His comments also indicate that he believes there is a “standard” German language that he does not think he can achieve in communication, and he is therefore reluctant or “shy” to speak German. Also, in his comment on his pronunciation, he is reflecting on the hierarchy of languages

ideology, saying that in his dialect he pronounces things differently, and therefore he is shy and reluctant to communicate in that way, likely for fear of being misunderstood. This indicates that he believes that there is a proper or normal way of doing things, and his limitations prevent him from reaching the requirement to be “normal”.

The next excerpt is a continuation of the conversation and begins with an explanation of his language use with his mother, and then continues on with his negative perception of his language abilities as well as his dialect. As he describes his German language education and comments on his parents’ German, which is the Danube Schwabian dialect, his attitude regarding languages and the standard language ideology once again emerges.

### Excerpt KEV 3

13 KEV: uhm but you know i speak german to my mother (.)  
14 pretty much all the time  
15 and she prefers that too you know  
16 because we understand each other  
17 but just like ah with the mennonite german  
18 i- i sometimes have to make sentences with english words  
19 cause i can't remember the german words anymore  
20 and i never took any formal german (.) LESSONS right  
21 and having NOT really gone to school other than kindergarten  
22 in germany i didn't take any german uhm (.) GRAMMAR lessons or  
23 anything like that uhm (.)  
24 so my german grammar obviously is only what i've heard from  
25 my parents  
26 and you know they spoke a different type of german you know

This excerpt begins with Kevin reflecting on the family domain as a category of his language use. As was previously made clear, he does not speak German with his daughter, and it is unknown if he spoke German with his wife or his other family members, as they were not mentioned in regards to his language use. In line 13, Kevin produces an agentive construct to describe his language use with his mother, “i speak german to my mother”. Here, he expresses his agency and responsibility in the action of consciously choosing to speak German with her. He also provides an explanation, stating that she prefers to speak German with him, and it works out fine because they are able to “understand each other” (line 16).

This utterance can be interpreted as a commentary on the dialect that Kevin and his mother share, that even though with others he may be reluctant to speak German, his mother shares his dialect and they are therefore able to communicate with one another effectively. During the interview with Kevin’s grandmother, the interviewer came across some difficulty in understanding the interviewee, for which Kevin was able to aid in the communication. Kevin was aware that the interviewer may have difficulty understanding his mother because of her dialect and also because of her difficulties in speaking due to her old age. He recognizes that their dialect may be difficult for some to understand, which he may also have come across in other interactions, but it seems to affect his language use and his reluctance to speak German.

In this utterance in line 13, it is very interesting that he is now referring to the language he speaks with his mother as German, when he originally seemed to conceptualize the dialect he and his mother speak as something outside of “German”. He only refers to the German his mother speaks as “different”, in line 26, when he wants to reinforce the reasons why he considers his German language abilities inadequate. These inconsistencies exist throughout the interview, which could be due to a variety of reasons. For example, it may be that he is not used to

discussing his language use and is not accustomed to distinguishing between German and dialect. In the presence of a German native speaker who attempts to speak German with him, he may find it necessary to refer to his language use as dialect, but does so inconsistently due to lack of practice. However, the interviewer initially positioned him as a “German” speaker in excerpt 2, so he may have simply accepted her terminology and chose to narrate his language use according to her positioning of him.

Lines 17-26 exhibit Kevin’s attitude regarding his own German language abilities, again referring to them as being inadequate. He also talks about code-switching, which is when a speaker switches between two or more languages within the context of a single conversation (Auer, 1998, p. 1). The comparison word “like” in line 17 can be interpreted as Kevin comparing his code-switching practices to those of the Mennonite German speakers. Referring to code-switching, he describes it as something he “has” to do, “i sometimes have to make sentences with english words” (line 18). This utterance makes it seem like he interprets code-switching as a reflection of his inadequate German language abilities, therefore also positioning his language abilities with Mennonite German speakers, who also do not speak standard German, and who he perceives also engage in code-switching.

In lines 20-23, Kevin talks about not having gone to German school and therefore never learning German grammar, which indicates his understanding of the existence of a standard German language, and his understanding of himself and his dialect as not fitting with this “standard” language ideology. After talking about his language abilities in a negative light, as not being grammatically correct, he summarizes this story by saying that he learned the German that his parents spoke, which he indicates was a “different type of german” (line 26). Here, it becomes clear that he believes that his German, and that of his parents, is inadequate for him to

use to communicate with people other than his parents. His explanation of his speaking abilities was produced as an answer to the question with whom he speaks German. However, his answer is really an explanation of why he thinks his German is not good enough to be spoken to other people, other than with his mother with whom he shares a dialect, and as a sort of tourist language that is available to him, but that he only uses in certain circumstances.

The next excerpt shows how this part of the interview continues as Kevin goes on to describe another instance of his German language use in what is considered the tourist domain in this analysis. He also provides insight into how his perception of his German dialect may have been formed.

#### Excerpt KEV 4

27 KEV: BUT i must say when i was in MUNICH (.) ah for oktoberfest  
28 INT: ((laughter))  
29 KEV: ((cough)) the first time i went to ah to germany  
30 which was maybe ninety eight or something like that uhm ninety  
31 eight or ninety nine  
32 and uhm (.) i was in MUNICH in a taxi  
33 and i spoke german to the taxi driver (.)  
34 and he said "oh du bist ein schwab"  
35 INT: [ ((laughter)) ]  
36 KEV: [and i said how do you know that he said "from your ACCENT"]  
37 right? and i go "from my ACCENT"? (.)  
38 i never knew how to speak german  
39 other than from what i learned from my PARENTS you know  
40 how could i have a schwabisch accent if i'm not from there  
41 you know  
42 or if i didn't go to school there

43           but that's what he said  
44   INT:   yah ((laughter))  
45   KEV:   so i found that kind of neat you know  
46           that he could pick up on the words or the way i pronounce  
47           some of the words you know  
48           that we were from that area

Kevin begins in line 27 to tell a story about him traveling to Munich, where people are well known for having a dialect that is difficult for speakers of varieties that are further removed to understand. In this short story, Kevin recounts his first experience as a German-speaking tourist in a German-speaking country, and reflects on his amazement and surprise that the taxi driver in Germany could locate his dialect. This short story can be interpreted as Kevin not being aware that his German was not the “standard” German before he went to Germany and was identified as a “schwab” by the taxi driver. This is also supported by Kevin never identifying himself as a speaker of this particular dialect, but rather only referencing his German as “different”. He does not feel comfortable with this positioning as a member of this dialect group, and therefore describes the taxi driver as positioning him in this way.

He expresses in lines 37-40, that he didn't think he has a “swabisch” accent because he wasn't from there or didn't go to school there. This demonstrates Kevin's understanding of dialects in this moment as coming from a fixed place, and he is surprised that this language could have been taught to him by his parents when they were disconnected physically from the place of association with the dialect. It is possible that since Kevin moved to Canada at such a young age, and did not visit Germany until his forties, that he does not know very much about the German spoken in Germany and the different dialects. This is confirmed when he expresses that he found it “neat” (line 45) that the taxi driver was able to identify which dialect he spoke. This experience that Kevin recounts may have contributed to his opinion that he expressed regarding

his parents language as a “different type of german”, and therefore also reflecting on his own German as not the “standard” that he expected it to be.

The last excerpt of Kevin’s analysis demonstrates a contrast to what he has previously described as his German language abilities and his language use domains.

#### Excerpt KEV 5

49 INT: yah but it was probably- like pretty hard to understand the  
50 people in munich  
51 BTH: (-)  
52 INT: [because it’s even  
53 KEV: [ah well  
54 INT: even for me it’s really hard [to understand them ((laughter))  
55 KEV: [i have frien- i have friends  
56 from munich  
57 and as long as they speak slowly (.)  
58 i was able to understand them pretty good (.)  
59 i met some- some people in ah (.)  
60 in the british virgin islands that live in munich  
61 and ah we went to visit them when we were there (.)  
62 ((cough))sorry i’m getting a sore throat here

In this excerpt, the interviewer comments that Kevin probably would have experienced some difficulty in understanding the dialect in Munich, an experience to which she can relate, as demonstrated in lines 49-50 and 54, where she says “even for me it’s really hard to understand them”. Here she is positioning her German as better than Kevin’s, and indirectly commenting on the limitations of his German language abilities. However, Kevin is describing his own subjective experiences, for which he has the epistemic authority and contradicts her assumption

that he would have difficulty understanding people from Munich. Kevin disagrees with the interviewee in line 53 with the “ah well” utterance, and, for the first time talks about his language abilities as being adequate by saying in lines 57-58, “as long as they speak slowly” “i was able to understand them pretty good”. Here Kevin is constructing a second order positioning, where he is identifying himself as a competent and able German language user, which contrasts his first positioning of himself as someone who cannot communicate in German.

Also important in this excerpt is the distinction that Kevin makes of being able to understand spoken German. In this instance, Kevin is speaking positively about his abilities to understand the dialect from Munich and is not claiming to be able to speak German. Here, he is positioning himself within the tourist domain, as a tourist in Germany, as someone who can understand German communication. Kevin does not elaborate very much on this topic, and as seen in line 62, he produces the utterance, “sorry i’m getting a sore throat here”, which functions here as a change in topic for the conversation. This is the last time that the interviewer and Kevin discuss the topic of language use in the interview, likely because it was clear in the conversation that Kevin became a little bit defensive (and maybe even offended) when the interviewer suggested he would not be able to understand German in this context. This excerpt also demonstrates the impact that the interviewer can have on the construction of identities in interaction. The assumptions they communicate, and the way that they position themselves (and the interviewee) impact the course of the conversation, the comfort level, and how they interviewee narrates their own experiences.

Overall, the way that Kevin talks about his language use in his interviews demonstrates that there are two distinct categories in which he positions himself as a German speaker. The first

is when he speaks with his mother. It becomes obvious throughout the interview that Kevin feels comfortable speaking German with his mother, and part of his motivation to do so is because she prefers that they speak German together. However, because of the dialect that they speak, and because Kevin left Germany at a young age before learning German grammar in a formal setting, he feels like his German is lacking something when compared to “standard” German.

The standard language ideology and the hierarchy of languages seem to play a large role in Kevin’s narrated language use. He sees his dialect as lower in the hierarchy of languages than standard German. He also describes his German language abilities as not being good enough because he feels that his grammar and pronunciation do not live up to the expectation of abstract norms that constitute what standard German is. In the interaction that took place between Kevin and the interviewer, he positioned himself as an English speaker, and he was also positioned this way by his daughter, with whom he speaks only English. However, he does seem to identify strongly with his German dialect, as demonstrated by his reflections on German dialect when narrating his conversation with the German taxi driver regarding the way he speaks. This identification is also evident by his ability to comfortably communicate using the dialect with his mother.

The second domain in which Kevin identifies himself as a German speaker is the tourist domain. He mentions that when he met German tourists at his restaurant, he would try to speak German with them. But even when talking about this scenario, Kevin downplays his German abilities, mentioning that he may pronounce things incorrectly, and also mentioning that he never had formal German grammar training. The standard language ideology again seems to hinder Kevin in comfortably using German in more circumstances. He does, however, also talk about

being a tourist in Germany and communicating with people there, specifically the cab driver who makes Kevin aware of his dialect and pronunciation. He seems to also identify as a German speaker (or listener) when the interviewer seems to question whether he could understand the dialect in Munich.

What is very interesting about Kevin's narration of his language use is how he sticks very strongly to these two categories. He never mentions talking with people in the community in German, or any members of his family other than his mother. This seems to suggest that he interprets his dialect or the way he communicates in German as something other than the "standard" and is therefore limited. He does not narrate his language use in a way that indicates that he sees himself as a bilingual or able to communicate more frequently in German. Kevin's narrated language use and his life story are personal, but he describes his language use in a way that is not atypical for a number of immigrants. He immigrated to Canada at a very young age, and had very limited exposure to German school. He also never attended German language school in Canada, which also means that he probably had less access to the community of German language speakers. Growing up in an English-speaking school and community likely played a role in his language use throughout his life, and at the time of the interview.

The next interviewee in this analysis is Helena Trommler, who similarly to Kevin, spent the early years of her childhood in a country different to the ones she spent the most time living in. However, Helena's narrated language use is much different than Kevin's, as she identifies a variety of categories of interactants and domains of language use where her German-speaking identity becomes relevant. Helena's narrated language use with her children is similar to the way that Nikolas, the first-mentioned interviewee, describes his language use with his young

daughter. They also share the motivating factor of the German-speaking grandparents. Helena's interview provides an interesting addition to this domain as her children are older than Nikolas', and she discusses how her language use with her children has changed over time. She also discusses the impact that having a German-speaking husband has had, as well as the impact of the German language school on her language use. The analysis in 3.4 will show that Helena's narrated language use is complex, includes multiple categories, and cannot easily be generalized.

#### 3.4 Interviewee 3: Helena Trommler

Helena was born in Serbia in 1957 to her German mother and Hungarian father. She grew up in Serbia speaking Hungarian, and Serbian at school with other school aged friends. At home in Serbia, she describes that they tried to speak Hungarian, because even though her mother and grandparents spoke German, speaking German was not politically or socially accepted in the area where they lived. When Helena was eleven, she moved with her family to Germany and attended German school for the first time. In her thirties, Helena reports that she had the desire to leave Europe to experience something new and moved to Canada. In Canada she found employment success in German-based companies, and met and married a German man. At the time of the interview she was in her mid-fifties.

The following excerpts come from Helena's interview, which was conducted by a Canadian female graduate student, who is identified as "INT" in the transcripts, Helena is identified as "HEL". The section of the interview when Helena talks about her language use starts off with Helena expressing her opinion of learning and knowing multiple languages as something that is negative. As Helena starts speaking about her language use after her immigration to Canada, her expressed attitude and evaluation of speaking multiple languages

begins to change as she introduces different categories of interactants, which include her husband, her children, and her parents, and the work domain. The analysis of Helena's interview has a strong focus on the family domain, since she narrates it as her primary outlet for speaking German. The impact of her varying domains of language use, as well as the impact that the German-speaking community of Kitchener-Waterloo has had, will be discussed in relation to Helena's narrated motivation for language use and how she positions herself as an English and as a German speaker.

The first excerpts focus on Helena's explanation of her language use while she still lived in Germany, focusing on her education experience.

#### Excerpt HEL 1

1 INT: did you speak english before you came to canada?  
2 HEL: very little i only uhm (.)  
3 well i had that ah school english  
4 but because my languages were like-  
5 i had SO many languages to go through through my life  
6 and all the time i felt it was a handicap for me  
7 because first of all like i- i didn't speak serb  
8 and i started school  
9 so i started school speaking HUNGARIAN  
10 and then i had to go like in hungarian serb mix school  
11 THEN (.) just as i got really good in it i had to go to  
12 germany  
13 and i didn't speak german and i had to go into a GERMAN  
14 school  
15 so i never felt like i wanted to do languages

16           that's why i think always i kind of tended to go into the  
17           technical- anything MATH and PHYSICS  
18           and i love physics  
19           and still it's my- and chemistry and all these things  
20           so i became really just [kind of like THIS to languages]  
21           [ ((motions with both hands to represent distance between her  
22           and "languages" ) ]

This excerpt shows Helena's opinion on having to learn so many languages in her life. She describes it as a "handicap" (line 6) that she had to go through so many languages in her life and describes how she had to frequently learn new languages in her childhood. She offers this as an explanation, in line 15, as to why she never felt like she wanted to do languages. She uses agent-oriented modality constructs, such as "i had to..." (lines 10, 11, 13), to describe her obligation to learn new languages, which expresses her lack of choice and agency. This is followed by her contrasting narrated desires and expression of her own agency in lines 16-17, when she describes that she did not want to study languages, and she chose to study a technical subject matter instead. In line 20, she claims that she did not accept learning new languages, or that it was not something that she saw as positive, which she demonstrates visually by motioning that she is pushing something away from her. It is clear through this gesture that she identifies more with technical subjects, such as math and physics, and does not want to identify with the variety of languages she has encountered early in life. Within the context of her narration of this excerpt, this expressed attitude may be connected to her expression of agent-oriented modality, as she is describing in this excerpt that languages were something she was forced to engage in, while she chose to engage herself in more technical subjects.

The next excerpt indicates Helena's career based motivation for expanding her English language abilities beyond what she would have learned at the German high school level.

Excerpt HEL 2

23 HEL: i did not wanna go and and and and get into that area  
24 but then again at some point ah even when you go to univer-  
25 like it's not university it's like a college the  
26 fachhochschule you know  
27 the type of ah education- it's not the same  
28 but even in a fachhochschule (.)  
29 if you take a technical areas  
30 anything like mathematics even or computer science or so  
31 you have to get something a bit more ah  
32 from related to your ah studies  
33 and and one of the things was like TECHNICAL ENGLISH  
34 this is just to be able to do-  
35 understand the terms as as reading any kind of descriptions  
36 and so (.)  
37 so that's the only thing i took was the technical english

In this excerpt in line 23, Helena again indicates that she was not interested in getting into the area of learning languages, and describes it as something necessary for her, by explaining, starting in line 31, that, "you have to" learn technical English. By saying things like "i did not wanna go and... get into that area" (line 23) and "you have to get" (line 31), meaning she was obligated and had to learn English, she is demonstrating that she did not act agentively in this process. She did not want to learn English, but rather it was a choice made for her. She also categorizes the type of English that she learned as "technical English" (lines 33 and 37), which

gives the impression that any interest or motivation she may have had in learning English was career-based.

In the next four excerpts, Helena begins to discuss her language use with her categories of interactants on a daily basis. In another part of the interview, Helena discusses that when she came to Canada, she was able to find employment in her field of interest and study, likely due to having some knowledge of her field in English. It was also likely because she was able to find employment at German-based companies, where she was also able to communicate partially in German. As demonstrated in the upcoming excerpt, Helena is still able to use her German language in the work domain, where she communicates in German with her husband, since he also works there.

### Excerpt HEL 3

1 INT: so you said your husband is also from germany does he speak  
2 german [too] [yup  
3 HEL: [yes] [we speak (.)  
4 the two of us more and more actually now for some reason  
5 because our business is also very connected to germany  
(lines 6-22 omitted)  
23 HEL: but uhm that's basically the-  
24 from the business side we are still very much connected  
25 and we get lots of parts and stuff  
26 so we- i CALL all the time  
27 we are actually just getting two machines  
28 so i TALK all the time  
29 i talk WAY more german now as i used to in the beginning  
30 and i find- and that's what my FRIENDS say too



shared domain of language use, where they are connected to Germany and the German language. When prompted by the interviewer to talk about her German language use with her husband, Helena immediately describes work as the domain where she and her husband speak German. Lines 4-5 also show that working together at a company that has contact with Germany has had an effect on her German language use with her husband. This suggests that before they started working there together, they spoke less German together. The work domain really provides the outlet for Helena to use German more regularly, which may also have an impact on her personal life.

It is interesting that Helena comments that she speaks “way more” German now than she did in the beginning (line 29), with which she is likely referring to her time of arrival in Canada. Whether or not this is accurate is not as relevant as the fact that she identifies strongly now as someone who speaks German frequently. This perception, that is causing her to identify as a German speaker, is narrated as partially due to the comparisons and comments of her friends, who suggest that she is regaining her native accent, and position her as a German-sounding speaker (lines 30-31). Because this may go against the general societal expectation of her to speak less German and more English overtime in a predominantly English-speaking society, she again speaks of her multilingualism as something holding her back (line 41). She says that she has to use hand gestures to facilitate her talking in English (line 39) and she feels like she is often stuck with her English (line 41) because of the mixture of languages she has (line 42). She also refers to languages as holding her back (line 43) when she refers to speaking Hungarian and German to her parents regularly on the phone in lines 50-53. When she talks about the communication dynamic with her parents, and her father in particular, there is another type of language use being described, where there is a mixture of German and Hungarian being used. So

within the family domain, when communicating specifically with her parents, she is actively communicating in German, and her engagement with Hungarian only comes from listening.

Up until this point in the interview, Helena reflects on speaking multiple languages and having a frequent mixture as something that is negative, except when talking about her German language use in the work domain. She describes learning multiple languages in her childhood as a handicap in excerpt 1, and in this third excerpt as something that is preventing her from improving her English-speaking abilities (lines 36-42). When referring to her time living in Germany, she identifies as being a German speaker, as she attended a German high school and started a career there. When talking about her life in Canada, and specifically about her work domain, which also largely overlaps with part of her family domain (her husband), she also identifies strongly as being a German speaker.

In the next three excerpts, Helena talks about her language use with her children and the influence that the German language school in Kitchener has had on her life as well as the lives of her children. She also talks about how her language use has changed over the course of her children's lives, saying that they tend to speak a lot of English now, whereas previously Helena and her husband spoke more German with one another. In the specific domain of language use that Helena describes when she is at home with her children, she constructs a different linguistic identity that contrasts the language use that she describes in the work domain. This draws attention to the importance of the context of the interaction that is being described. The first of these upcoming excerpts (Excerpt HEL 4) shows Helena's justification for speaking more English in her family domain now, as her children are reaching adult age, though her daughter demands German at the beginning of this excerpt.

#### Excerpt HEL 4

56 INT: so what about with your kids  
57 did you ever speak german with them or?  
58 HEL: YES my daughter is VERY demanding  
59 (.)  
60 german  
61 she always says "please you speaking english again with  
62 me  
63 why do you speak-?"  
64 or their friends- now boyfriends and whatever  
65 so we have people in the house they don't speak ah german  
66 so we really have to speak english then  
67 i mean it goes really often to my son had a english speaking  
68 only girlfriend for three years  
(lines 69-70 omitted)  
71 HEL: but- but whenever she was around  
72 and that was a lot and on WEEKENDS and so on  
73 we kinda adopted that  
74 but prior to that just to make it easy for the kids to go to  
75 german school on on weekends  
76 we said always "it's weekend we speaking german" (.)  
77 and we always loved to put the german radio on  
78 like you know like the ten o clock on saturday morning  
79 and you just crank it up real loud so then-  
80 because it's german words and we just like to sing them

In lines 58-63, Helena positions her daughter as someone who is actively demanding that Helena speak German. Helena uses an agentive construct by saying "my daughter is very demanding", which suggests that her daughter's desire is a motivating factor for Helena to speak

German. Here, she is narrating a positioning executed by her daughter, as she describes her daughter as positioning her as a predominantly English speaker. In lines 64-68, she provides an explanation as to why they speak English now more frequently at home, because their children often have their English-speaking boyfriends or girlfriends around. Here, Helena is positioning herself as a predominantly English speaker in the domain of her family life, and is positioning her daughter as someone who wants to be more active in her exposure and learning of the German language.

Starting at line 75, Helena refers to when her children were younger and attended German language classes on the weekends. She positions herself with someone else by using the pronoun “we” in the utterance “we said always “its weekend we speaking german”” (line 76). Here, it is unclear if she means herself and her husband, or herself and her children but either way, she, and someone else were active agents in trying to speak German and incorporate it in their family life on a regular basis. It is clear here that the relationship between German language use and the German language school was two-fold. Helena’s children attended the German language school presumably because both her and her husband and their extended families speak German, and it was a part of their identity construction as a family, that they wanted to share with their children. But as seen in lines 74-75, her children’s attendance at the German language school is identified as a motivating factor for them as parents to try to speak German at home as well, so that their children’s transition into the German language school on the weekends could be easier.

Excerpt 4 shows that Helena’s daughter is active in her narrated language use of German, as Helena’s utterance “my daughter demands” describes. Helena also explains in her interview that her daughter really enjoyed going to the German language school and is interested in

Germany, enjoys visiting there, and would like to do an academic exchange to Germany if possible. So it is clear that her daughter's interest is a motivating factor for Helena to actively engage in speaking German in the family domain.

The next excerpt demonstrates how another one of Helena's languages, Hungarian, has been used by Helena in the family domain.

#### Excerpt HEL 5

77 INT: uhm did you ever speak hungarian with your children?  
78 HEL: no not really  
79 but my daughter said "mom you never- you never had ah talked  
80 with it"  
81 i did when they were like small  
82 little ah rhymes and those things like in hungarian  
83 because my dad would too  
84 and we go home every year  
85 every year like usually with the kids

Helena claims that she did not really speak Hungarian with her children (line 78) and then in lines 81-82, describes her Hungarian language use with her children as restricted to the time period when they were younger. In line 79, however, we see a similar positioning as in the previous utterance of Helena's daughter expressing interest in German. Although her daughter's request for Hungarian is not represented as strongly as her "demand" for German, it is interesting that Helena never actively pursued teaching her children Hungarian in their childhood or adolescence. Because Helena only gives her reasoning as to why she spoke the little Hungarian to her children that she did, in lines 83-85, "because my dad would too and we go home every year", it is not possible to know the exact reasoning why she did not continue with Hungarian as

she did with German. However, in looking at Helena's narrated categories of interactants with whom she speaks German, and looking at potential motivating factors for her language use, there is evidence that suggests why her narrated German language use appears more prominent than her Hungarian language use.

As Helena describes in her interview, she married a German-speaking man, who came from a similar area in Germany, with whom she was able to communicate very easily in German and who may even have shared the same dialect. Helena also describes in her interview that she was drawn to the Kitchener-Waterloo Region in part because of the German-speaking community as well as her opportunities to work at German based companies in the area. As Helena narrates in her interview, even with other career opportunities in other parts of North America, she chose to live and start a family in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region. Because of the German-speaking community, she had access to a German-speaking school for her children to attend on the weekends.

These factors, of having a German-speaking husband, of speaking the German language in her work domain, living in a community where the German language was accessible, and having a strong connection with her parents who still live in Germany, were likely strong reasons for Helena to actively engage in teaching her children German rather than Hungarian. Of course, another factor could be that after living in Germany, attending German-speaking school, and being involved in a German community, she may have identified more, and felt more connection to, the German language. These factors, in particular the German school and her personal desire to pass on this particular part of her background to her children, become more evident in the next excerpt.

## Excerpt HEL 6

1 HEL: that german school thing is SUCH a good experience  
2 and it's SUCH a good connection for people like myself  
3 like with this background  
4 and if you wanna pass it on to your children  
5 i mean without it i don't- i don't think we could have  
6 even though we are BOTH from germany we BOTH speak german  
7 i don't think we could have continued to take this (.)  
8 uhm through our daily lives  
9 because they come from their school like they speak english  
10 there is tv  
11 the other thing is too- like uhm as i got the kids  
12 and i went back to work  
13 which i first didn't really know if i gonna do it  
14 and so i had an ad in the paper  
15 i wanted to have a german speaking nanny  
16 someone who comes to the house or (.) somehow  
  
(lines 17-24 omitted)  
25 HEL: so then my kids grew up in a household where everybody SPOKE  
26 german  
27 and ah there was no tv except only like GERMAN little shows  
28 there was all the german books and everything  
29 like so so they basically had a good dose of this before they  
30 entered the school system  
31 in fact my son did not speak almost like a whole sentence before  
32 he went to kindergarten  
33 i had ah CONCERNS

In this excerpt, Helena reflects on how the German language school that her children attended impacted her own use of the German language. She also positions herself as someone who wanted to pass on her German heritage to her children (lines 3-4), and she credits the German language school for being able to do this (lines 5-8). When talking about the German school (lines 1-3), Helena makes a connection between herself and other Germans, positioning herself within this group. She describes “people like herself”, in line 2, as sharing a German background, thereby identifying herself with this group, which she further reiterates in line 6, when she positions her husband and herself as people from Germany and as German speakers. In contrast to positioning herself and her husband as Germans and German speakers (which can also be seen in excerpt 4, lines 77-78), she positions her children, in line 9, as English speakers, “they come from their school” (referring to the standard Canadian school), “they speak english”. She talks about her language use along with her husband’s German language use as not enough to be able to continue teaching her children German, because of the strong influence of English. Starting in line 5, “i mean without- i don’t i don’t think we could have even-” and continuing through to line 8, Helena gives credit to the language school for helping teach her children German. As she describes, without the school she does not think they could have kept speaking German through their daily lives (line 7). The German language school allowed her children to have more access to the German language, and therefore it was a large factor in Helena being able to communicate with her children in German over the course of their upbringing.

Helena positions herself in this excerpt as someone who wants her children to learn German, and also as someone who actively tried to find ways that they could learn and practice their German outside of their immediate family domain. She describes not only the importance

of the German language school, but also of having a German-speaking nanny for her children. In lines 25-26, and again in line 29, she describes that her children grew up being immersed in the German language, both at home as well as at the German-speaking nanny's house. It is clear that when Helena's children were young, there was a lot of German spoken in the family domain. Helena narrates that she actively sought out a German-speaking nanny and taught her children German instead of English when they were young, as indicated in lines 31-32, when she describes her concern that her son was unable to speak English when he started going to school.

These narrations shows that she identified strongly with German culture and German language at that time, and felt that it was important that her children have exposure to it when they were young. In line 29, she narrates an evaluative aspect of their German language use, by describing that her children had a "good dose" of German, indicating that this was something positive that they experienced. This contrasts with how Helena describes her own childhood experiences with languages, which she earlier described as a "handicap". It is interesting to see the different opinions and values she places on languages when she is talking about language use in different contexts. When she describes her own language use as involving multiple languages, she applies a negative evaluation, but when discussing the language use of her children and her language use with her children, she applies a positive evaluation. She also expresses a positive attitude to them learning German and engaging in German language use, even when they attend English-speaking school and are engaged in a predominantly English-speaking community.

In summary, Helena's language use in her adult years seems to be motivated and altered due to two main domains of language use. The first one is work, which was first indicated when she spoke about having to learn technical English in Germany during her educational training. Also, when she speaks about her work domain in reference to the present time, she talks about

speaking German there because of the strong connection that her company has to Germany. The second category is her family domain. Her language use with her children seems to have changed based on what stage of life they are at. For example, when they were very young she spoke only German to them, but as they started to bring around their English-speaking friends more often, Helena found herself using more English in the household. As Helena describes, she feels like she is using an increasing amount of German, largely due to the circumstances of her job, where she speaks German with her husband. Also part of the family domain are her relatives and parents who are living in Germany, with whom she communicates mostly in German and partially in Hungarian.

Helena seemed to view languages as something negative and as something holding her back when she spoke of learning languages while she was young living in Europe. However, as she speaks about her children's language use, and them learning German and English, multiple languages (and knowledge of German in particular) seems to be something very positive. Based on what Helena narrated in her interview, her positive view of her children's bilingual language use is likely because German is something that Helena and her husband share, and it is something that connects them to their parents and the country where both of them spent a significant part of their life. Although her children have to speak English as they attend school and engage in the community, Helena sees their bilingualism as something positive because she is able to share part of her heritage, and the language of her children's grandparents, with her children. Her expressions that she really wanted to have a German-speaking nanny and how she praises the German language school, essentially for helping her children to be bilingual, support the notion that her children's German language use was something very important to her.

Helena's positionings as a language user change, depending on which domain and which time period she is referring to. At the time of the interview, for example, it seems that Helena identified strongly as being a German speaker, as she explained that she speaks more German now than she used to, and also expressed some difficulty in communicating in English. It seems that Helena positions herself strongly throughout the interview with Germany and German culture, by positioning herself with other Germans and by indicating the importance and relevance of the German language in her life, and the lives of her family. Her language use seems to be most affected by her family domain, which gives her an outlet to communicate frequently in German. Because she was a fluent German speaker, she was able to find employment at German based companies, which allowed work to become a domain of German language use for her and overlap with her family domain through her husband. Overall, Helena's positionings as a speaker changes over the course of her life, but it is evident that the German language is, and has been, a large part of her daily life throughout both her time in Canada, and her life prior to immigration.

The next interviewee Kurt Rosenfeld, like Helena, grew up being exposed to at least four languages or language varieties. Kurt narrates his language use as changing greatly throughout his life and also lists his immigration to Canada as a significant turning point in his language abilities and language use. Unlike Helena, Kurt married a native English speaker in Canada and, as will be shown in the analysis, his language use and the relevance of his English-speaking identity is made clear when he narrates his language use with his wife. In Kurt's interview, he introduces domains of language use that the other three interviewees do not mention in their interviews, which include the religious domain of language use as well as the political. Kurt's

involvement in a local German club also plays into his language use in a way not demonstrated previously in the analysis of the other three participants.

### 3.5 Interviewee 4: Kurt Rosenfeld

Kurt Rosenfeld was born in Romania to German parents during the Second World War. He grew up in Romania, speaking a German dialect at home, Romanian in the community, and standard German at school, where he was also taught Russian. Kurt immigrated to Canada with his mother and siblings as a young adult in 1958. Upon his arrival in Canada, Kurt did not speak any English but quickly learned enough at night school to attend university classes. Kurt was educated as a teacher and among other things, he taught high school German. At the time of the interview, Kurt was in his early seventies, retired, and still an active member of the Transylvania Club in Kitchener.

Kurt's interview was conducted by a German student in her early twenties. Kurt is identified in the transcript as "KUR" and the interviewer is identified as "INT". Kurt's narrated language use mostly centers on his language use in Canada, but the first excerpt begins with Kurt's narrated language use of when he was a child still living in Romania. The analysis of Kurt's narrated language use focusses on the variety of domains of language use that he describes, including the family domain, the tourist domain, the religious domain, and the political domain. Another focus of the analysis will be on Kurt's narrated agency in his language use within his family domain, and what motivations and ideologies he has regarding his narrated choice of language use. Kurt's interview demonstrates clearly how different aspects of his linguistic identity become relevant based on the context of his language use.

In this first excerpt, Kurt identifies the language that he spoke with his family as a child, and also answers the question of why he spoke that language.

### Excerpt KUR 1

1 INT: and uhm with your family when you- you sp-  
2 what kind of language did you speak back then?  
3 KUR: in the house we spoke a-  
4 the german dialect- mundart (.) siebenbürger sächsisch  
5 INT: sächsisch  
6 because your parents were both also from that region?  
7 or did they come? [(xxxx xxxxx xxxxx xxxx)  
8 KUR: [my parents were- my parents were both born  
9 in the same village

In line 3, Kurt corrects the category of interactants that the interviewer introduced in line 1. She asks him what language Kurt spoke with his family “back then”, when they were living in Romania. Kurt’s response indicates that within the family there may have been multiple languages being spoken, as he responds with a new frame of reference for interactions within the family domain when he says, “in the house we spoke...”. Presumably because of the interviewer’s knowledge of German dialects and of Siebenbürger Sächsisch, she formulates her questioning regarding the reasoning or motivation for Kurt to speak that dialect with the assumption that Kurt’s parents must have also been from that region. Here, the interviewer is positioning Kurt’s linguistic identity as linked directly to the region where he and his parents come from. In lines 8-9, Kurt confirms this positioning and affirms that the aspect of his linguistic identity that can be described as speaking the dialect Siebenbürger Sächsisch is linked to the region in which he and his parents lived.

The next excerpt also shows Kurt distinguishing between what he again refers to as “Mundart”, and “German”, as well as providing insight into his motivations, categories of interactants, and his language attitudes.

### Excerpt KUR 2

1 INT: did you- did you speak romanian before?  
2 because you said in the family you spoke german-  
3 german mundart  
4 KUR: yes  
5 INT: and then with the-  
6 KUR: on the street with the children we always spoke romanian  
7 unless there was no romanian kid around then we spoke mundart  
8 until we went to school where we were ENCOURAGED (.)  
9 to speak ah (.) GERMAN even during intermission  
10 INT: oh ((surprised voice))  
11 KUR: yah  
12 INT: yah so [they encouraged  
13 KUR: [yes it was hochdeutsch  
14 INT: hochdeutsch  
15 KUR: at least that's what we called it ((chuckles))

In lines 6-9, Kurt answers the interviewer's questions by describing when he used his different languages, which brings up different categories of interactants, such as with other children, or interactants at school. By means of context, the “we” that he is referring to in these lines includes himself and his siblings, whom he mentions at other points in the interview. He describes his categories of interactants as including the category of friends or acquaintances with whom they spoke Romanian. In line 7, he describes that when there was no one from that

category, meaning no one who spoke Romanian, they spoke in dialect. This is significant because it shows how Kurt perceives his language use as connected to the “we” people he is referring to, and that they were likely more comfortable or more proficient, better able to communicate, using their dialect, which also suggests that this was the language used most often.

At the beginning of the utterance indicated in line 8, Kurt begins by saying “until we went to school”, which is an indication that Kurt perceives their language use to change when they went to school. He indicates school as another domain with which he can describe his language use, which comes as a contrast to the way he positions himself as a speaker of his regional dialect. He indicates that what he is now referring to as “German” is an institutional language, a language he spoke at school, and “Mundart” is something he indicates is what they speak at home as well as in their time outside of school.

When indicating in line 8 that they were encouraged to speak German in school, his formulation indicates, as well as the indexed authoritative connotation of the category of “school”, that he lacked agency in the decision to speak German. This becomes clearer by his formulation in line 9, that “even” during their breaks, they were supposed to speak standard German. The pause before he indicates that the language used at school was “German”, could be an indication that he needed to pause in order to find the appropriate term, as this is the first time he refers to “German”. Or it could be an indication that he is not completely comfortable or sure of his use of this term, which is then reaffirmed in line 15, after he has equated “German” with “Hochdeutsch”, and he indicates that he is unsure of the validity of the language they spoke in reference to these labels.

In line 10, the interviewer indicates that she is surprised Kurt describes that his teachers encouraged them to speak German at school, even during intermission. In line 11, Kurt’s simple

utterance of “yah” confirms that her surprise is not shocking to him, however, in the next two lines, it becomes clear that the interviewer and Kurt are referring to different things. Kurt is referring to the surprise of the element of Hochdeutsch, and the interviewer is surprised because they were encouraged to speak a certain way. In line 13, Kurt reformulates his utterance from line 9, making it clear that they did indeed encourage Hochdeutsch, which he is now used as a synonym for “German” (this being the element that he perceived she was surprised about). Here, Kurt is not only making the distinction that in the category of school he lacked the agency in having to speak standard German, but he also indicates in line 15 an opinion of the language they spoke that they referred to as standard German. Although his opinion is not explicitly stated here, after this repair sequence and the interviewer’s repetition of the word “Hochdeutsch” in line 14, Kurt’s utterance in line 15 can be analyzed in multiple ways. For example, as self-doubt regarding the legitimacy of their teachings of standard German, or as an insecurity of his German accent and pronunciation within the context of the interview (as he does speak some German in the interview, although the majority is in English). Or it could also be analyzed as him not being sure whether or not it was actually standard German that they were taught.

What is interesting here is Kurt’s uncertainty when speaking about German or standard German in comparison to the way that he talks about his regional dialect. He consistently refers to his regional dialect as “Mundart” or by its German name “Siebenbürger Sächsisch”, but seems to struggle with identifying the other type of German that he spoke as “Hochdeutsch”. This suggests that he identifies more strongly as a dialect speaker, as he is able to narrate his dialect language use with more clarity and confidence.

By identifying categories in which he spoke other languages (Romanian when he needed to, standard German because he had to) he is positioning himself as a speaker of Mundart

(Siebenbürger Sächsisch) and making that part of his linguistic identity relevant at this point of the interview. This positioning is done by his narrated perceptions that the dialect was something they would speak whenever they could, indicating that they wanted to, because it was the language that they felt the most comfortable communicating in.

After jumping ahead in his life story and discussing how he met his wife in the German department while they were both studying in university, he begins to discuss his German language use in his family domain, which is where the next excerpt picks up.

### Excerpt KUR 3

1 KUR: so she is of- she is of english descent  
2 but (.) she does speak (.) german she reads a lot of german  
3 she- actually her degree was in philosophy and literature  
4 it was mostly german literature  
5 INT: so would you speak to each other german sometimes too?  
6 or is it  
7 KUR: ah we tried a few times  
8 and it JUST doesn't work  
9 especially if you want to CONFIDE  
10 INT: ((laughter))  
11 KUR: no i just couldn't  
12 INT: why doesn't it work? ((continued laughter))  
13 KUR: no it JUST didn't work it just didn't work well  
14 so we (.) speak german together when we have german company (.)  
15 and of course when you're in germany on a trip then that's-  
16 that's different  
17 but uhm no no the basic language of communication is english  
18 cause you know that's how- how it was

This excerpt begins with Kurt positioning his wife using her personal educational background and her knowledge of the German language and of German culture. He first positions her as someone “of English descent”, and because the common understanding of being of English descent does not include being able to speak German, he uses the conjunction “but” in line 2, because he is presenting a contradiction to common assumptions when he explains that she does speak German. In lines 2-4, in this first order and tactic positioning, as he is describing his wife and her education, he is positioning her as someone who engages in the German language, and someone who is capable of speaking and communicating in German.

However, even though he first positions his wife as someone who is capable of speaking German, he changes this positioning starting in lines 7-8, when he describes that they tried to speak German together and it did not work. This second order positioning is constructed in response to a follow-up questions regarding his wife, and causes Kurt to reflect on his language use in more detail, allowing for a more complex understanding of their German language use. He describes the situation as both himself and his wife acting agentively, saying that they “tried” to speak German. But then, in line 11, he indicates that he was the one who did not feel that their communication in German was adequate as he says “no i just couldn’t”.

The implication here could be that her German was not at the level that Kurt required in order to feel comfortable communicating in German, and to feel comfortable in confiding to her as he mentions (line 9). This could either be because her German just was not adequate in terms of fluency, or it may be because of the distinction Kurt has previously made between standard German and his regional dialect. In his previous excerpts, he has narrated that his regional dialect was something that they spoke at home with his parents, and it also appears to be something that Kurt is confident using and talking about. Standard German, by contrast, is a language he has

associated with institution and his lack of agency, and he appeared more hesitant in referencing “Hochdeutsch” or standard German. Because Kurt has positioned himself within the interview as a dialect speaker in the family domain, he may find it difficult communicating with his wife, who presumably speaks standard German (because she learned it in a Canadian university).

His answer in line 13 to the question by the interviewer, of why speaking German together does not work, also supports the idea that his wife’s German was in some way not adequate, and he does not elaborate on the reasons involved. Up until this point, when discussing the language use category of his partner, he is positioning and identifying himself as an English speaker. What is interesting in light of the analysis of language use with certain categories of interactants, is that even after indicating that speaking German with his wife does not work, he indicates two circumstances where it does work, and when they do choose to speak German together. In line 14, he introduces the domain of language use of when they have company from Germany, and the second, in line 15, is mentioned when he introduces the domain of language use utilized when traveling in Germany. These two examples reflect the tourism domain, when Germans come to Canada as tourists to visit, and when Kevin and his wife are tourists in Germany.

Although this tourism domain of language use can be seen as a valid and important domain of language use, and is likely a domain shared by many others, he downplays the importance of this category by describing it as “different” than normal language use in line 16. In line 17, he reiterates this aspect of his identity by stating that the basic language of communication is English, and references the past as a motivating factor by saying “cause you know that’s how it was”. Following this excerpt, Kurt tells a short story where he describes a couple whose native languages are not German, but since they met in a German-speaking

country where they were German language learners, their main language of communication was, and continued throughout their marriage, to be German. It seems that Kurt is providing the explanation that he and his wife met in an English-speaking environment and they initially spoke English together, therefore it is either appropriate or acceptable that they do not speak German together. It is also interesting here that he narrates that in the tourist domain they speak “German” together, and he never refers to his regional dialect as he has previously done in this interview. This further supports the idea that his wife speaks standard German, and this fundamental difference in their language use is reflected in how Kurt narrates their language use together.

In the following excerpt, the category of language use with Kurt’s daughter is introduced, and Kurt describes his wife and her parents as factors that impact his daughter’s language use, as well as stressing his agency in the matter.

#### Excerpt KUR 4

1 INT: do you uhm- may i ask do you have children?  
2 KUR: we have one daughter (.) ah (.)  
3 yes and we did (inflict) german school on her (.)  
4 ah in the house you know since the two of us didn’t really  
5 speak (.) german together all that much  
6 and kelly’s parents of course didn’t so you know it was-  
7 but i did take her to german school every saturday  
8 we did do the rhymes and you know whatever had to be done  
9 and i think it was twice when she was objecting  
10 but she was taken anyways  
  
(lines 11-36 omitted)  
37 INT: do you speak german with her sometimes?

38 KUR: uhm again when there's company

When talking about his daughter, he automatically begins talking about his daughter's experience as a German language learner without being prompted by a question regarding the topic by the interviewer. This is likely due to the nature of the interview, as many questions center on the participants' engagement in German language and culture, and because of the sequence of the questions, as he was just asked about his wife and his language use with her. In line 3, Kurt's formulation suggests that the "we" in the sentence (likely referring to himself and his wife) were agentive in doing something that caused their daughter to go to German school. Although the verb is not clearly determinable, the phrase "German school on her" suggests that she did not have control of the situation and the decision of attending German school was made by her parents.

In lines 4-6, Kurt begins to describe reasons for his daughter to not speak German within the family domain, a domain which he himself brings up. He refers again to his and his wife's positionings as English speakers in the family domain, and also references his wife's parents, who are not of German descent, also positioning them as English speakers. Kurt then cuts himself off of giving reasons for why she did not have opportunities to speak German, and, in line 7, starts his new utterance with "but", suggesting that he is providing contrasting or opposing information. In this same line, he uses the pronoun I, only indexing himself, as the one who was active in taking her to German school every week. In line 8, he uses the pronoun "we", and it is unclear if he is referring to himself and his daughter, or another possible grouping of people, however, it shows that he was agentive in his daughter's learning of German, which is also mentioned in lines 9-10, when he implies that even if she was not interested, they were making the decision for her to attend the German language school.

In the omitted lines, Kurt goes on to describe his daughter's experience on an exchange semester in Germany, and that she now possesses basic communication skills in German. Even though Kurt was clearly an active figure in his daughter's German language learning, when asked by the interviewer if he ever speaks German with his daughter, he describes that he only speaks German with her when there is German company around (line 38). Similar to the situation he describes with his wife, he only expresses this aspect of his linguistic identity with his daughter when referencing the tourist domain.

In the next excerpt, Kurt reflects on his language use over time, and makes his identity as an English speaker relevant by positioning himself with other English speakers. He also expresses having difficulty with being out of practice in speaking German.

#### Excerpt KUR 5

- 1 INT: do you have the feeling you are losing touch to some german  
2 words or?
- 3 KUR: ah very much so very much so because it takes- (.)  
4 sometimes it takes me quite a while to be able to (.) remember  
5 how to say things  
6 and to express myself
- 7 INT: and would you when you talk to your friends here especially-  
8 for example in the transylvania club  
9 would you switch then  
10 or would you wait until the-
- 11 KUR: ah with certain people we usually switch from one to another  
12 depending on who's- who's around like with helmut hoffmann
- 13 INT: m\_hm
- 14 KUR: ah if it's just the two of us we speak GERMAN

15 INT: okay

16 KUR: if ah our WIVES are along generally not

17 it depends on how competent the people are too

18 because we're dealing with a lot of people that are (.)

19 second generation here (.)

20 you know we are dealing with people that might have been born

21 in AUSTRIA

22 you know during the war or at the end of the war

23 and then came here but (.)

24 you know they came over as little people

25 little children basically

26 and (-) their most comfortable language is english

27 and i find well most- most of the time i fall in that

28 category too

29 it didn't used to be like that but that's how it is

30 because you don't (.) PRACTICE it

31 now if you go away for two three weeks in germany it comes

32 back again (.)

33 i found myself the same with romanian (.)

34 to the point where you don't know (.)

((lines 35-39 omitted))

40 KUR: it becomes RUSTY

41 if you don't use the language it becomes rusty

42 i found myself-

43 i found that out with romanian and russian

44 it's the same now

45 i really really have trouble carrying on a conversation

46 because i REALLY haven't used it

In the first part of this excerpt, in lines 3-6, Kurt agrees with the interviewer's suggestions that he might be losing touch with some German words. He describes that he is not as quick as he once was in remembering and being able to express himself in German. Because Kurt had described that in his younger years he immigrated to Canada not being able to speak any English, and in his reflections focusing on the German speaker aspect of his linguistic identity, it becomes evident that he is now positioning himself as an English speaker. This aspect of his identity becomes clearer as he continues in the excerpt to position himself with other English speakers.

However, Kurt first focusses on the German-speaking aspect of his identity as he talks about the Transylvania Club, and members with whom he communicates in German. In line 7, Kurt describes the Transylvania Club as a place where there is a lot of code-switching, but in lines 11-12 and 14, he narrates his language use with a particular member of the club as being in German, where he emphasizes his German-speaking identity. He positions himself with Helmut Hoffmann, who is a prominent member of the German-speaking community of Kitchener-Waterloo, and draws a connection between them by connecting their language use patterns within the club.

In lines 16-26, he continues to make the aspect of his identity as a German speaker relevant, by positioning himself as competent in German in comparison to others who may not be. He starts in line 16 by referencing his wife, with whom Kurt has already described not being able to communicate in German with. In line 18-19, he positions the "other" as people who are in Canada as second generation Germans. He positions them as being less competent German language speakers, and, in comparison, positions himself as a first generation immigrant who is

more competent. In lines 20-21, he also makes reference to people who were born in German-speaking countries such as Austria, who would have immigrated to Canada at a very young age. He also positions this group as less competent German speakers, and suggests that people such as himself who spent a longer period of time living in Germany have a higher level of proficiency. He completes this idea in line 26 by using “their”, and by indexing the people he has listed, who are likely not able to communicate in German on the same level as himself, and by saying that he assumes they are more comfortable speaking English.

In lines 27-28, Kurt makes his identity as an English speaker relevant, as he provides a contrast to the positionings and attitudes he has just previously discussed regarding competency and his proficiency in German in comparison to people who were not born in German-speaking countries, or those who emigrated at a very young age. The way that Kurt formulates his utterance in line 27, with the use of “well” and the repetition of the word “most”, it can be interpreted that Kurt knew he was making this contradiction and was reluctant to place himself in this category of being an English speaker. He also reflects that this aspect of his identity was not always relevant, he used to be more comfortable speaking in German than he was in English, which is also clearly demonstrated by his narrated language use in the first two excerpts. Interestingly, after he mentions, in line 30, that his lack practice is the reason for his decline in comfort level in communicating in a particular language, he again references the tourist domain in lines 31-32, where he reflects that in visiting Germany, he would feel comfortable again speaking German. He also makes relevant in this section, in lines 33 and 43, that his identity as a speaker of Romanian and of Russian used to be relevant, but now, as he does not use them actively, he no longer can consider himself as a competent language user of either language.

The last two excerpts of Kurt's narrated language use bring attention to two categories of language use that have not been brought up in any of the other three interviews analyzed here. The categories of religion and of politics provide interesting insight into the connections people perceive that they have with languages, and also the way other people's perception of them can impact and restrict their ability to communicate.

The upcoming excerpt comes after Kurt discusses his participation in religion and his attendance of the Lutheran church, which offers a Christmas service each year in German and which he enjoys attending. He goes on to narrate his language use in terms of being engaged with the German language in a religious capacity.

#### Excerpt KUR 6

1 KUR: periodically i do like to hear a good german sermon  
2 INT: do you have the feeling it's different when you hear the  
3 german than in english?  
4 KUR: ah somehow it feels just a bit homier (.)  
5 and i've had that feeling for a long time  
6 and we discussed it at one point  
7 you know in- at- in the library thing i said  
8 "well when i grew up GOD SPOKE GERMAN"  
9 and one of my colleagues said  
10 "kurt you're absolutely light- right"  
11 and he ALSO was mennonite

In this excerpt, Kurt is focusing on the aspect of his identity that has to do with religion, and he is positioning himself as a German language user. After identifying in line 1 that he enjoys sermons in German, he evaluates German sermons as feeling "homier", again positioning

them as something he enjoys and can connect with. He also provides a short story of discussing this same matter with a colleague, who he describes as also making his German language user identity relevant within the domain of religion. In line 10, he describes his colleague as affirming Kurt's linguistic identity, and then, in line 11, he provides an explanation as to why his colleague would agree, namely that he was Mennonite. The information indexed with the term "Mennonite" is that they speak a variety of German, and they use a German bible in their church ceremonies. By positioning himself alongside his Mennonite colleague, he is identifying with the domain of religion as a German language user. Here again, as with Kevin earlier, understanding spoken German is made relevant as an important aspect of language use.

The next excerpt is unique compared to the other excerpts of narrated language use presented in the analyses of the four participants thus far for two different reasons. The first is that Kurt introduces a new domain of language use that the others have not discussed, which is the political domain. This domain is considered 'political', because he is describing a particular setting in which politics are the topic of discourse. The second reason that this excerpt is unique is because Kurt discusses how the topic of conversation that occurs in the political domain determines which aspect of his identity he wishes to make known or relevant. He positions himself according to the people with whom he is interacting. As demonstrated in the excerpt, this amounts to a complex identification process. Leading up to this excerpt, Kurt was talking about being an ethnic German, and that is normally how he identifies himself.

#### Excerpt KUR 7

1 KUR: the only time that (.) i identify myself as from eastern  
2 europe is when we talking about (.) RACIAL things  
3 especially the NAZI area

4 but i mean that- in that crowd i identify myself as from  
5 eastern europe (.)  
6 cause then i feel i can speak for more than just germans  
7 especially since anybody that speaks anything about that is  
8 GERMAN  
9 they're not listened to

((lines 10-21, discussion of a particular political case, omitted))

22 KUR: usually in discussions of THAT  
23 you know especially ones that go in the record  
24 it's there i identify myself as eastern european  
25 because that way at least they listen to what i say  
26 rather than just ignore it  
27 because you know anything that you say as a GERMAN in those  
28 discussions doesn't count

In this excerpt, Kurt positions himself within the context of a certain discourse topic. In lines 1-3, Kurt explains that when people are talking about Nazi Germany, he intentionally positions himself as an Eastern European, and identifies himself in this way. He then, in line 4, refers to “that crowd”, referring to people who discuss topics such as Nazi Germany and who have a certain stance towards Germans vis-à-vis their Nazi past. He positions himself as distinctly separate from that group, by labeling them as “that crowd”, indicating that he does not want to be associated with them. In line 6, when he explains that he can speak for more than just Germans, he is positioning himself within the category of being “German”. This is reiterated in lines 27-28, when describing that when he identifies as a German, no one listens to him. So it becomes clear that Kurt does position himself within the category of being “German”, and here, he is describing certain discourses in which he feels that he must make other aspects of his identity relevant in order to be able to communicate effectively.

In summary, Kurt's narrated language use demonstrates how complex linguistic identities can be, while at the same time showing that within certain domains of interaction and with certain groups of interactants, it is meaningful to place certain aspects of one's identity in the foreground. Kurt's narrated language use mostly centers on his language use in Canada, as demonstrated in excerpts 3-7. The first two excerpts, however, show Kurt discussing his language use as a child in Romania, where it becomes clear that Kurt is aware of different variations of German, which becomes an important aspect throughout Kurt's interview. This awareness of German dialects is something that is unique to Kurt's narration of language use, and is significant when analyzing how Kurt identifies himself as a language user in different domains of language use in which different categories of interactants are involved. For example, he first positions himself as a dialect speaker in the family domain when he narrates his language use from when he was a child. As the context for his language use changes throughout his interview, he describes himself as an English speaker in the family domain, and as a German speaker in the tourist domain (now referring to standard German), and when these categories start to overlap, the German speaker aspect of his identity becomes more prominent.

Within the family domain, Kurt briefly talks about his agentive role in trying to speak German with his wife, and trying to teach German to his daughter. In both situations, however, Kurt provides reasons of motivation and explanation as to why they revert back to speaking English, and never makes mention of his regional dialect in relation to what is considered the family domain within the context of this part of the interview, namely in the context of his present day language use. In his interview, Kurt also talks about different categories of interactants and domains of language use such as the religious domain and the political domain.

Kurt's interview demonstrates clearly how different aspects of his linguistic identity become relevant based on the context of his language use.

## 4. Discussion of Four Cases

### 4.1 Discursive Practices

As outlined in the theory chapter, positioning theory was identified as the theoretical understanding of how linguistic identities are discursively constructed. Positioning theory suggests three discursive practices that are used to express identity, which can briefly be labelled as: stressing one's agency, using statements with indexed meanings, and evaluating or describing one's past. The three discursive practices were the focus of the analysis and are therefore also considered the means of the individuals' positionings and identity formations. Each individual discursive practice will not be discussed in this section, but rather important trends or patterns that occurred within an individual's interview, or throughout multiple interviews, that also contributed to the analysis of the categories of interactants and domains of language use.

#### 4.1.1 Agency

Agency, as one of the three discursive practices, became more of a focus than the other two in the analysis, as it became evident that agency was an important discursive strategy that each interviewee used to describe their language use in the past as well as in the present, and with a variety of categories of interactants. The expression of one's agency was used by the interviewees to stress their linguistic identities, for example, when Nikolas wanted to stress his German speaker identity, he expressed his agency in teaching his daughter German. This is also similar to Helena's and Kurt's interviews, where they also stressed their German speaker identity when expressing their agentive roles in trying to engage in German with their children, and in Kurt's case also with his wife. Kevin, on the other hand, who only identified as a German speaker when narrating his language use with his mother, or referencing his language use in the tourist domain, would only express his agency in speaking German when he was narrating these specific circumstances.

Agency was also used by the interviewees to their language learning experiences. Nikolas, for example, expressed his agency in learning English, and he also described his role in teaching his daughter German, and how this was linked to his perspective on globalization and multilingualism, as well as his parents. Helena expressed negative feelings regarding languages at the beginning of her interview, which was accompanied by her expression of lack of agency when it came to her having to learn new languages. Similarly, Kurt, who expressed his lack of agency in having to learn standard German in school, does not seem to identify as a standard German speaker. He is not as confident or comfortable narrating about his language use regarding standard German, but he is comfortable narrating about his language use when referring to his regional dialect.

All of the interviewees described different categories of interactants as having agentive roles regarding their own personal language use in one way or another. The reoccurring example of this was the responsibility that the interviewees gave to their parents. For example, Nikolas and Helena describe the influence that their German-speaking parents had on their decision to speak German with their own children. Kurt does the opposite, and mentions that his wife's parents, who do not speak German, may have been an influential factor as to why he did not speak more German with his daughter. In the exchange between Kevin, his mother, and his daughter, Kevin describes that his parents did not want to speak German in front of their grandchildren, but instead used English, because they wanted them to be able to understand. As will be discussed in the next section, the grandparent category of interactants seems to have a large impact on the interviewees' narration of their own language use. By describing their categories of interactants as being agentive, and narrating their responsibility in their own personal language use, they are

also making certain aspects of their linguistic identities relevant, namely the aspect that pertains to the language that these agentive actors are speaking.

#### 4.1.2 Indexicalization

The interviewees' narrated language use contains statements that are indexed with societal and cultural information which is significant within the context of the interview. By use of deictic expressions, the interviewees index information which is relevant to the understanding of their positionings and their identities within the immediate context of the situation and conversation of the interview. The interviewees use deictic expressions such as the use of pronouns (I, we, they, we, he, she, etc.) to index information regarding how they position themselves and formulate their linguistic identities. For example, the interviewees use "we" to index their positioning with someone else, and to index co-membership in a group. Helena in her interview uses "we" to describe the agentive act of her and her husband speaking German in their home. Kurt uses "we" to position himself with his siblings and family to identify not only himself, but also these other members, as regional dialect speakers. They use these indexical pronouns to help categorize themselves within categories of interactants, which contributes to the understanding of linguistic identities as being complex and dynamic.

Kurt and Kevin use the indexical meaning of the noun "Mennonite" to allow for their linguistic identities to be known. In Kurt's interview, he uses the term Mennonite to describe someone who also speaks German, and therefore would also perceive God to speak German. Kurt positions himself as similar to the referenced Mennonite in this situation, while identifying the both as German language users. Kevin references Mennonites, and the understanding that like him, Mennonites also do not speak standard German, and are known for their code-switching into English. The term Mennonite is culturally relevant within the context of these

interviews, as the Kitchener-Waterloo Mennonite population is well known and recognized for their connection to Germany, at least in their German language use.

#### 4.1.3 Evaluation and Description

Through the individuals' narrated language use, they evaluate and describe how they have perceived their languages throughout their lives, thereby formulating opinions and evaluations of their languages. One example of this is in Kevin's interview, where he repeatedly talks about his German language abilities as being inadequate, describing how he never attended German-speaking school and never learned proper German grammar. Through this type of evaluation and description, it can be seen that Kevin positions himself as someone who cannot adequately speak German, and it also provides insight into his evaluation of grammar learning as being equated with being able to communicate effectively.

In Kurt's interview, he provides a description and an evaluation of his language use with his wife. He first describes his wife as being able to speak German, but through his narrative, he also provides an evaluation of their communication by describing that it was not effective and they were not able to speak German consistently with each other. Through this description and evaluation, Kurt is positioning his wife, as well as himself, as English speakers and thereby also identifying in this context as an English speaker. Kurt also provides a contrastive situation, where he has formulated an evaluation in his narrative, evaluating the tourist domain as an acceptable circumstance for him to communicate in German with his wife. By providing this type of positive description of the tourist domain as a place for language use with his wife, he is making his German-speaking identity relevant in connection with only this domain of language use.

Nikolas provides a similar evaluation and description of his language use with his wife. He describes her language use by means of referencing her academic and personal experiences of exposure to the German language, but then evaluates her German-speaking abilities as not adequate, and also evaluates his own English-speaking abilities as better than her German-speaking abilities. In the category of language use with his wife, by the help of these descriptive and evaluative narratives, he is positioning himself and identifying himself and his wife, in general, as English speakers.

In Helena's interview, she describes her language use as a child by using a strong negative evaluation of her multilingualism. She describes it as being a "handicap" for her, which provides insight into Helena's attitude and ideologies regarding languages. Helena is positioning herself through these descriptions as someone who is not interested in different languages and as someone who does not want to identify as multilingual. Later on in Helena's interview, she provides a positive evaluation of her children's bilingualism, which offers a very different insight into Helena's perception of languages and language use. The contrast in evaluations of language use, and being able to speak more than one language, is interesting because her opinion seems to have changed when she focusses on her language use with the category of her children. This is a good demonstration of the impact that different categories of language use can have on the individuals' perceptions, attitudes, and ideologies surrounding languages. Motivation regarding language use and language attitudes and ideologies will be elaborated on in the next section.

As is clear in this portion of the discussion, the topic of discursive practices and categories of interactants are not mutually exclusive. These three discursive means of identity formation also include instances of categories of interactants that the individuals describe in

relation to their own language use. The impact that these categories of interactants have in the formulation of linguistic identities in the interviews will be discussed next.

#### 4.2 Individuals' Language Use as Affected by Others

The three discursive practices discussed in the Review of Research were used in combination with groups of interactants, as they emerged in the interviews, to understand how the participants positioned themselves and identified as language users. By using the language attrition categories as described by Schmid (2002, 2011), and identified in chapter two, factors that are known to impact language use were identified in the data as they emerged.

First, the categories of interactants (family, friends/acquaintances, colleagues, etc.) and domains of language use (family domain, school domain, work domain, tourist domain, religious domain, and political domain) will be discussed as they emerged in the interaction, and then other factors that Schmid (2002, 2011) suggests as factors for language attrition, such as attitudes and motivation will be discussed.

##### 4.2.1 Categories of Interactants

Family, likely due in part to the nature of the interview and the questions asked, was a prominent category of interactants for language use that emerged through the individuals' narratives. The category of family, as demonstrated by the interviews, can include parents, partners, children, and is often used to reference relatives in general (for example, when the interviewees reference their families in Germany). Of the participants who talked about their parents as a specific category of interactants (Nikolas, Kevin, and Helena), they all described their language use in this situation as German, thereby also identifying as German speakers in this circumstance. As each of the interviewees come from a German background, it comes as little surprise that they communicate with their parents in German, but since all of their children

were born in Canada, it becomes interesting to see the differences in language use with the category of children.

Nikolas and Helena, although their children are of different ages, seem to be active in teaching and speaking German with their children. They both also reference their own parents as reason and motivation for their children to continue speaking German. Kurt, in contrast, expresses an attempt to teach his daughter German and speak German with her, but it is not something that he continued with her throughout her life. Kurt also describes his daughter's maternal grandparents as English speakers, and suggests that this may be a significant reason why he did not continue speaking German with his daughter. Also, Kevin's interview reveals that he never attempted to teach his daughter German. These different descriptions of language use with their children reveal different linguistic identities that emerge for individuals within this category of language use.

Parents and children seemed to be the two categories of family interactants that had the most impact on the individuals' language use. Speaking their parents' native language and choosing whether or not to pass this language on to their children impacted the language use of each of the individuals. Other than with parents and children, Kurt also made reference to the family category of interactants while discussing when relatives from Germany came to visit, where he discursively positions himself as a German speaker.

Friends and acquaintances was not a category of language use that came up frequently in the four interviewees' interviews, but this is not to say that the individuals would not have had emerging linguistic identities in this type of narrative. Because of the focus of the interviews, unless the interviewees were engaged in German clubs, this was an unlikely category of language use to be elaborated on. Kurt, however, does discuss his language use at the

Transylvania Club with other members. He describes his language use there as speaking German with some of the members, unless their wives are around, or if there are members there who feel more comfortable speaking English. This demonstrates exactly how language use is not static, and cannot always be described in concrete terms in reference to certain people or circumstances. The individuals' language use and the way they position themselves as language users can change based on with whom they are communicating, or who is present at the time of communication. Kevin also discusses very briefly his language use with some German friends, where he discusses primarily his German language listening, more so than his speaking. However, he describes his language use with his German friends as part of him being a tourist in Germany, and this situation which has been referred to as language use in the tourist domain will be discussed later on.

The family and friends categories of interactants were the two categories of language use that were described in the most detail by the four interviewees. Of course there were other categories of interactants, but these are much better described by the domains of language use, because, generally, the narrated language use was with unspecified people, with the language use occurring in certain circumstances and situations.

#### 4.2.2 Domains of Language Use

The domains of language use can include different categories of interactants. For example, Nikolas describes that he speaks German with his daughter (one category), and English with his wife (another category). As both his daughter and his wife fit into what can be considered the family domain, Nikolas' language use in the family domain is described as being more complicated than labelling it either a domain where he positions himself as a German speaker, or as an English speaker. In this way, domains of language use, taking into

consideration certain circumstances where multiple categories of interactants are involved, are a good demonstration of the complexity of language use and of linguistic identities.

In looking at the other three interviewees, they all position themselves as speakers of more than one language with the categories of interactants that make up the family domain. Helena positions herself as a German speaker in the family domain, except when English-speaking friends of her children are around, and, in this situation, she changes her positioning to identify as an English speaker. Kevin identifies strongly as a German dialect speaker when talking about his language use with his mother, and identifies as an English speaker when narrating his language use with his daughter. Within the family domain, both of these linguistic identities are relevant. Kurt's interview demonstrates that his family domain language use experience changes over time, as he describes his attempts to speak German with his wife, and his agency in teaching his daughter German when she was younger. However, as he describes the current situation of the interview, he positions himself as an English speaker in the family domain. Also, when Kurt describes his language use in the family domain from when he lived in Europe, he identifies as a regional dialect speaker. The concept of having a "home" language is not something that can always be easily identified, as these domains and categories are not static entities and they are always subject to change.

Interesting in Kurt's interview is that although he identifies as an English speaker in the family domain, when this domain overlaps with the tourist domain, his positionings change. He describes that when German-speaking relatives come visit Canada as tourists, or when they go over to Germany as tourists themselves, he speaks German with his wife and daughter. This suggests that his narrated language use has less to do with other speaker's competence of the language, and more to do with the circumstances and the situation involved. It is also interesting

that Kurt, who identifies as an English speaker, makes his German-speaking identity relevant when he narrates his language use in the tourist domain. In this specific circumstance of interacting with tourists or as a tourist, he perceives speaking German to be the appropriate form of communication.

Kevin also describes part of his language use as pertaining to the tourist domain. In Kevin's narration, he identifies as a German speaker only with his mother as a specific category of interactant, and also as a tourist in Germany and when he has German-speaking tourists visit his restaurant. The tourist domain is an interesting domain of language use because it brings up the question that if people are able to communicate in German in these specific circumstances, why do they not choose to speak German with more categories of interactants? To use Kevin as an example, why was he reluctant to speak German with the German-speaking interviewer, if he seems to reflect positively on his experiences with the German language in the tourist domain? Similarly for Kurt, if he feels that he can communicate with his wife and daughter in German in the tourist domain, why not do so as well outside of this particular domain? These situations are important because they highlight the complexities of linguistic identities, and highlight that the context of the actual interaction that the interviewees are describing is important to how they narrate their language use. The tourist domain may be an area of language use where the interviewees feel that they are expected, or more comfortable speaking German.

Other domains of language use that came up in the interviews were the work domain and the school domain. Helena was the only interviewee who discussed her language use in the work domain, which overlapped somewhat with her family domain, since she also worked with her husband. It comes as no surprise that while working for a German based company, Helena describes that she speaks a lot of German, but she also describes that her language use with her

husband in the work domain influences her overall language use. This is evident when she describes that she feels like she is speaking an increasing amount of German due to her German language use at work.

The school domain was used by Nikolas, Kevin, and Kurt to make certain aspects of their linguistic identities relevant. Nikolas described part of his process of learning English as occurring in the school domain. Kevin references his lack of opportunity to engage in speaking German in the school domain as an explanation for why his German language use is inadequate, and by his standards “different”, and lacking grammar. Kurt, on the other hand, describes his childhood school domain as a place where they were forced to speak standard German. These three examples demonstrate how one domain can vary greatly amongst three different individuals. In Helena’s case, she talks about the school domain as a place where she learned languages, but she also talks in more detail about the school domain of her children, namely the German language school, and the impact this domain had on her children and their language use. The German language school will be discussed in more detail further on when discussing factors of motivation towards language use.

Kurt’s interview also introduces the religious domain and the political domain of language use. These may also be domains of language use that are relevant to the other individuals’ language use, but were simply not brought up or mentioned in their interview. Nevertheless, they are valid domains of language use, and in Kurt’s specific mention of them in his interview, it shows that they too add to the complexity of the understanding of language use. For example, in Kurt’s description of his language use in the religious domain, he identifies himself as a German language user, with the understanding that he is listening to a German sermon and understanding it, but not necessarily speaking German. This points to the importance

of all means of being a language user, which includes reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Linguistic identities become even more complex when not only speaking identities are considered.

Another very interesting element of linguistic identities comes up in Kurt's interview when he narrates his language use in the political domain. He describes that he chooses to explicitly identify as a certain type of person in order to be able to use language effectively. This demonstrates how ethnical and national identities can influence language use and also shows linguistic identities and their complexities, as ideologies regarding discourses, nationalities, countries, etc., come into play in communication. Attitudes and ideologies surrounding languages and their potential impact on language use will be discussed further coming up.

In summarizing the different domains of language use that emerged in the interviewees' narratives, it is clear that these domains help illustrate the complexity of an individual's language use. One person's linguistic identity does not just consist of one entity, but rather, one person's linguistic identity has different aspects that are made relevant, in this case, through their narrative, depending on the context of the situation. Their current and relevant linguistic identity may depend on who they are referring to as their interactants, or it may depend on where the narrated interaction is taking place, or what part of their life they are referencing. Linguistic identities can change over time, as connected to present and past in the narration, and from moment to moment within a narrative. In line with Schmid's (2002, 2011) factors for language attrition, the factors of attitude and motivation emerged in the interviews as elements that influence the individuals' language use. Although there were other factors that came into play, such as current age, age of immigration, age of second language acquisition, these were

elaborated overall in less detail than factors such as attitude and motivation, which does not make them less important overall, but less significant to the argument of this thesis.

#### 4.2.3 Attitudes and Motivation

The factor of attitudes (which includes ideologies), and motivation are two elements which emerged in the interviewee's narrations. They often overlapped with their categories of interactants or their domains of language use, but did not necessarily always do so. When looking at attitudes and ideologies, for example, those pertaining to languages and language use, it can be seen through the narratives that ideologies such as the one-nation one-language and the hierarchy of languages impact the way that people talk about their language use. Also, to be seen in Kevin's interview, his opinion and perception of his German language abilities plays a role in his German language use. Helena's interview demonstrates how language attitudes can also be context based, as she first describes a negative attitude towards her own multilingualism, and later narrates multilingualism as something positive for her children. How the interviewees perceive their language use (also taking into consideration the impact of the external context of the interview), impacts the way that they narrate their language use.

Motivation also seems to be an important factor in the interviewees' narrated language use. They list different factors of motivation, such as their parents, who they describe as either German-speaking or English-speaking, as influencing their decision to teach their own children German. The interviewee's husband or wife, and their language use, also comes into play in the interviews, as Helena, for example, may be motivated by having a German-speaking husband to continue speaking German with her children. The interest level of their children may also motivate them to continue using their German language, as demonstrated as well in Helena's interview when she discusses her daughter's interest in the German language. Their motivation

can also be instrumental, for example, Nikolas sees his language use and his daughter's language use as connected to her having a European passport.

Overall, the factors that impact language use such as attitudes and motivation help demonstrate how linguistic identities emerge and how they often vary according to category of interactants or domain of language use. Each individual will have different factors that encourage them as well as discourage them from identifying as a specific language user in certain circumstances. In general, these factors help in understanding why individuals narrate and construct their language use the way they do.

## 5. Conclusion

This concluding chapter summarizes the discussion of the analysis while referring back to the research questions and hypothesis stated in the introduction. In discussing the goals of this thesis, the implications for the study of linguistic identities will also be reviewed. This chapter will conclude with a mention of the limitations of the analysis presented here, as well as suggestions for further research in the area of linguistic identities as formulated in narrative interviews.

The first research question asked: how and through which discursive means do the individuals position themselves in their interviews, and thereby formulate identities, based on their narrated language use? The second research question was: what impact do different individuals or groups (e.g. family, teachers, or friends) have in formulating these identities, and how do the individuals construct the varying impacts of their interactants discursively?

As described in the previous discussion section, positioning theory was used as the theoretical perspective of identity, and the positionings of the interviewees were analyzed using positioning theory's three discursive means of identity construction. Through expression of agency, through indexical statements, and by providing an evaluation or description of one's past, the individuals positioned themselves in their narrated constructions of their language use. The positionings in the narrated language use sections of the interview gave insight into the individuals' perceptions, opinion, attitudes, ideologies, and motivations regarding languages and language use, while their linguistic identities were simultaneously emerging. The narrated linguistic identities allowed for an understanding of how one specific aspect of an individual's identity, their identity as a language user, can be analyzed through discursive means.

By using the three discursive practices prescribed by positioning theory, the analysis focused on analyzing how the interviewees narrated their language use in relation to categories of interactants and domains of language use. Both the narrated impact of categories of interactants, and the narrated impact of domains of language contribute to the understanding of the individuals' positionings as language users. Through the discursive construction of their linguistic identities, it can be seen that groups of interactants and domains of language use play a large role in their narration of language use, and also in constructing attitudes and motivation in regards to language and language use.

Referring back to the thesis statement, the final outcomes of the study will be discussed. The thesis statement originally stated that: insight into the individual language use of German members of the Kitchener-Waterloo Region can be found by analyzing the linguistic identities and the categories of interactants that emerge in individuals' narrated language use. These insights into the language use of individuals in the Kitchener-Waterloo Region have been provided by the analysis of this thesis, which connects the individuals' narrated language use, their linguistic identities, and categories of interactants and domains of language use. There are elements of their individual language use narratives that can be compared and analyzed to recognize patterns, similarities, and differences of how linguistic identities emerge through their interaction in the interview.

Across the participants, one of the most interesting findings that came from this thesis is, what I have called, the tourist domain of language use, and how this domain affects individuals' narrated language use. The other domains mentioned in this thesis: work, school, family, public and private, religious, and political, were all useful in understanding different types of impact, and understanding the ways that people talk about their language use. However, the tourist

domain in particular seems to be a space where the individuals make parts of their linguistic identities relevant that they do not normally identify with. In this domain they also describe that they speak German with people who they normally would not have. In the tourist domain, it seems that people are more compelled to speak German, but the answer why they do this is unclear.

It could be possible that in the tourist domain, speaking German is more of a necessity, or it may make communication easier, or it may just be something fun to try. But either way, the tourist domain of language use is something that can be further investigated to understand the linguistic identities that emerge in these situations and how they relate to linguistic identities that emerge in other domains of language use. This domain also brings into questions the impact that a place can have on language use, and not just specific people, or categories of language use. Another interesting domain (or domains) that could be analyzed, particularly when looking at interviews from the Kitchener-Waterloo Region, are domains that pertain to the different German clubs (i.e. the Transylvania Club as a domain of language use).

Another interesting finding from this thesis was a potential connection between individuals' narrated linguistic identities, and their narrated national identities. Because this analysis focused on excerpts of the interviews where the interviewees spoke about their language use in particular, this connection did not occur frequently, however it did come up in a couple of instances. It seems that national identities, either ones the interviewees adopt themselves, or ones that are created by others, may have an effect on how the interviewees narrate their language use. For example, the interviewee in this study who was a Dutch citizen (born in Germany) used his German parents as a reason to teach his daughter to speak German, instead of reflecting on his own German identity. In order to investigate this finding further, it would also be interesting to

look more in the political domain of language use, and to consider how people talk about their nationalities and ethnicities.

A third interesting finding from this study is how the interviewees use time to describe their language use. Similar to this is how the interviewees sometimes connected their language use to certain geographical places. Patterns recognized in the analysis of this thesis show that the interviewees who spend more time in living in German-speaking Europe tend to identify more as German speakers than those who spent more time living in Canada. The interviewees all seemed to connect their German-speaking identities with physically being in Germany or Europe. Both the impact of time and place could be further analyzed in regards to their connection with narrated linguistic identities. Although these patterns may seem obvious, there were interesting instances of the use of time and place, for example one interviewee was asked a question in the present tense about language use, and he responded by describing his language use in the past.

Agency, in particular, seemed to be an important discursive practice that the interviewees used to describe, and evaluate their language use. The interviewees used agency to express their linguistic identities, for example in stressing their roles in learning languages, in actively using them, and also in some instances in teaching them to their children. Agency was also used by the interviewees to describe their obligation to learn languages, and what motivated them, or forced them to do so. What was also interesting was how the interviewees narrated the agentive roles of their categories of interactants in their own personal language use, which again highlights the connection and importance of the context of the situation they are discussing for the narrated language use.

Other patterns that occurred in the interviews that make this study of language use a contribution to the field of linguistic identities have to do with the categories and domains. The

categories of interactants and domains of language use emerged to varying degrees in all of the interviews, and can be seen as a tool that the interviewees use to help them narrate their language use. In looking at these categories and domains, it can be seen how complex narrated language use and linguistic identities can become. With this in mind, these categories and domains could potentially be used in interviews of similar nature to help understand the complexities of language use. For example, children as a category of interactant give insight into how an individual narrates the potential for how their language use changed over time. The religious domain of language use provides information about the effective component of how people position themselves. Other domains, such as the political and tourist domain, show how the setting or surrounding of the described interaction can have a large impact on how an individual positions themselves outside of the activities and interactions of their normal, everyday lives.

The role of the external context of the interview is also very important in understanding patterns of the interviewees narrated language use. The interaction that takes place before the actual interview could impact the way that the interviewer approaches the interview questions. For example, this interaction could cause the interviewer to position the interviewee in a certain way (especially in the context of these interviews, which focused on German identity). The interviewee can either accept this positioning, or reject it, both leading to a different understanding of how they identify as a speaker of a language. The interviewer's linguistic abilities, for example if they are a German speaker (and how they position themselves as speakers), may also make people who are unsure or self-conscious of their German speaking abilities less likely to reflect on that part of their identity.

Combining the framework for interactional analysis and narrative analysis, and focusing on the concept of identities as discursively constructed with potential factors for language

attrition, the methodology allowed for an interesting discussion of linguistic identities. This combination highlighted not only the importance of small stories in interviews, but also the external context of the interaction that takes place between the interviewer and interviewee. Both of these proved important aspects in the analysis. The language attrition factors that were adopted for use in this thesis also contributed to the analysis of narrated language use because they helped identify relevant components of identity construction. The understanding of identities as constructed and emerging in interactions lent itself well to positioning theory, and the focus on the discursive practices used to formulate linguistic identities.

In order to add to, or improve, the methodology of this thesis, it may have been more effective to have set up interviews in which I was the interviewer and had full control over the questions/content to be covered. This way I could have more control over which questions were asked, and could follow up on answers given by the interviewees regarding their language use. Also, with having different interviewers, each interviewee experienced a different interactional context, and having a German or a Canadian interviewer could have potentially altered how the interviews took place. However, the interviews in the Oral History Project were very fruitful data to work with, and I was also able to be involved in the collection process. More questions on linguistic biography could have resulted in deeper reflection of linguistic identities and could have opened up the analysis to more categories of interactants and domains of language use.

It is also quite possible that more useful information pertaining to the individuals' linguistic identities was left out because only the parts of the interview where they talked about their language use were used. Although this information is not essential for the study of linguistic identities, it provides a fuller understanding of the complexities of linguistic identities, and how they may relate or be dependent on other aspects of one's identity. Again, it may also be

interesting to look into how the interviewees connect their language use with their national identities, or with elements such as time or place. Investigating these factors would certainly be interesting and would contribute to further research of how linguistic identities emerge in narrative interviews. Further investigation into the change in contact possibilities (availability of media or German clubs and organizations) amongst immigrants to Canada would be an important aspect of the context of the German-speaking population that could also be further investigated.

As demonstrated by the four interviewees and their narrated language use, the concept of what it means to be a German speaker is not something that can be simply defined or easily identified. All in all, this thesis has made a contribution to the understanding of identities, specifically linguistic identities, as being complex, dynamic, and as something that is constructed and emerges in interaction. An individual's identification as a language user, such as the identities represented in statistical data, are not a full representation of their language use, or their own perception of their language use. The implications of this study go beyond the interview context, and are also significant when considering the perceptions of language learners. Breaking down the barriers of what it means to "know" a language, or what it means to be a "German speaker" can be helpful in providing a positive learning environment for people wanting to learn a second language such as German. By focusing more on peoples abilities, such as how they can successfully communicate in a language, and focusing less on their limitations (such as pronunciation, grammar), the label of what it means to be a German speaker can be applicable to more people. This thesis has also shown how the interviewee (the authoritative figure) can impact how one may perceive themselves, and this could also be taken into the

context of a classroom in looking at how an instructor positions themselves, and how they position their students as language users.

My research with this thesis has taught me a lot about how I identify and perceive myself as a German speaker. There are situations in which I find that describing myself as a German speaker can be advantageous, and others where I find it disadvantageous. Similar to the language use narrations in this thesis, the contextual information is extremely important to how an individual positions themselves in regards to their linguistic identity. The internal context of what is being narrated (such as categories of interactants and domains of language use) are important, as is the external context, which provides insight into the interactional setting and the impact of the interviewer. What it means to be a German speaker, an English speaker, a dialect speaker, or any other speaker is not something that can be answered in a simple sentence. Narrated linguistic identities can change over a lifetime, depending on people, or situations, motivations, and attitudes, and it is their complexities which make them interesting to study and to analyze.

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## Appendix 1 – Interview Question Guidelines for Interviewers

### **About the Interview:**

*The questions are meant to stimulate conversation, while enabling the interviewer to gain insight into each of the question categories. However, the interviewer is neither bound to ask all of the questions, nor to mention them strictly in the given order. All topics, however, should be covered. Ideally, the conversation should flow naturally and interviewees should feel free to tell their story in their own words.*

### **1. Childhood, education, work**

Where did you grow up? Please tell me about your childhood/youth in your country of origin.

What did your parents do for a living?

Please talk about your schooling and training.

Please describe your work experience over your lifetime.

### **2. Migration**

For which reasons did you/your family leave your country of origin? How old were you at that time? Did you move straight to Canada?

How many people did you leave with? Did you leave family/important things behind?

Why did you /your family/your friends choose Canada? How did you come to live in Kitchener-Waterloo (KW)?

Describe your feelings once you arrived in Canada. How did you experience it? How did your children like the new country?

What kind of reception did you receive when you moved to Canada/KW? Did it match your expectations?

Did other family members/friends follow to join you in Canada?

How did you settle in? Did you or your spouse find a job immediately?

What was KW like when you moved there? How has it changed since those days?

How did you stay in touch with your family and/or friends in Europe? Do you still keep contact with them?

How does KW compare to the place where you grew up or lived before?

Do you travel to the city where you were born and how do you feel when you are there?

Do you hold a Canadian passport? If yes, how was the process of becoming a Canadian citizen?

Do you still have your German passport?

### **3. Stories**

Are there any personal stories that you think are of interest to younger readers of the book?

## **Language biography**

How did you learn English? (in school?/informally in Canada?)

What is your mother tongue? Do you have more than one? What other languages did you use to / do speak?

Which activities helped you learn the language?

What do you remember about the experience of learning English? Are there any anecdotes you can tell about the time you were?

How did your family members fare with the new language and the new surroundings?

What has been your language of the home/family at different times in KW? What is your home language now? And at work?, in church?, during social gatherings? (clubs, parties)

Did you or your children attend the German school in KW? If yes, please talk about your experience.

Do you use more English or German in your everyday life now? Which language do you speak at home?

Are there situations in which you feel more comfortable in either of the two languages? If so, what are those situations?

With whom do you speak or used to speak German? ((grand)children, friends, parish, club, shops)

What role did German language and culture play in the upbringing of your children/grandchildren?

Are you a member of any association, club, or church in KW? Are there any other German speakers in it? In which language do you communicate with the other members? Has this changed over the years?

## **Cultural life**

Please talk about your social and cultural life here in the community. What role did clubs and community events (Oktoberfest, Christkindlmarkt, etc.) play in your life? Has this changed over the years?

What do you value most about yourself/ your personal life/ your work life?

Do you consider yourself to be Canadian or German or both? Why? Does it matter to you how you are seen by others (in Canada, in Germany, for example)?

With what (parts of the) community you feel most connected? (German, English, generation, region, ...)

Have you noticed any changes in the community over the years? If so, what has changed?

Do/Did your other family members emphasize your heritage?

Is there anything you did as a child that you think is typically German? (For example when it comes to Christmas? Did you exchange gifts on the 24<sup>th</sup> or the 25<sup>th</sup>? Did you have an Adventskranz and so on?)

Are you still keeping up these traditions? Did you pass them on to your children? Are they passing them to theirs? Why or why not?

Is there anything you miss about Germany? Would you prefer to have certain German stores/restaurants here in KW?

Do you still read books or watch films in German, or listen to music from Germany?

Do you or your family follow any German news channels or read German newspapers?

### **Concluding Questions**

If you could give a message about your life and experience to the younger generation, what would that be?

Can we contact you again in case we are missing a particular piece of information?

Would you like to receive parts of the book, in which you are mentioned, before the book goes to print? If so, can we send it by email?

## Appendix 2 – Transcription Conventions

The notation does not follow conventional spelling rules, since e.g. capitalization is used to indicate emphasis. Intentional line breaks are used to indicate a micro-pause in speech.

BTH/ALL	When both speakers say/do something simultaneously, or the pause between turns does not clearly belong to one speaker or the other (ALL used for two or more speakers)
[...]	Overlapping Utterances
(.)	Short pause (shorter than one second)
(-)	Long pause (longer than one second)
(...)	Uncertain transcription
((...))	Indicates editorial comments
“...”	Reported speech or thought
x	Unintelligible, representing visually the amount of time taken up
?	Indicates a rise in intonation (used to indicate question phrases)
-	Indicates an interruption of the flow of speech
CAPITALS	Indicates an emphasis in intonation (only used when important for argument)
<i>italics</i>	English translation of spoken German