(Mis)aligned Investments:

In-Service ITA's Experience Within Their ITA Training Class

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Abstract

Despite their centrality to undergraduate teaching in U.S. universities, few studies focus on international teaching assistants (ITAs) and their experiences within ITA training classes. Through a multiple case study of two In-Service ITA's (China, Taiwan) investments (Darvin & Norton, 2015) in one such class, it became clear how idiosyncratic are perception of these courses: one ITA profound negativity involved accusations of institutional racism, yet another flourished through the class. Data included journaling, interviews/ stimulated recalls, course assignments, and classroom (ESL and departmental) observations. Findings, presented as narrative and then as conceptual configurations of investments, explained their experiences bifurcated due to their disparate teaching experiences and to policy decisions made within one's home departments. This study expands the scope of ITA and investment research by connecting macro and micro-level aspects. Pedagogical implications are to center pedagogy on learners' investments, utilizing reflexive activities to prevent misaligning the course with learners' identities, ideologies, and desired capital.

Introduction

Approximately 400,000 international graduate students were enrolled within American universities in 2019-2020 (Israel & Batalova, 2021), many becoming International Teaching Assistants (ITA's) who serve in their departments through various teaching roles (Gorsuch, 2012). Over the years, North American universities have come to rely on ITAs to teach undergraduate courses, labs, recitations, etc. Preparing for instructional duties, ITAs often enroll in English language course- work (Gorsuch, 2014). Such classes are exponentially important because ITAs eventually instruct other students -

under-graduate learners (Gorsuch, 2016). Within ITA training classes, it is critical that ITA educators maintain learners'motivation in such classes (Gorsuch, 2016), yet their motivations within the course remain unexplored, typically focusing on their socialization and teaching experiences. As a potentially important space for learners' development, the present study explored it through the lens of individual ITA's, seeking to answer these research questions (RQ):

RQ1: In what ways were In-Service ITA's invested in an ITA training class?

- RQ1.1 What were their perceived identities and their imagined identities, and how did they change during their participation in an ITA training class?
- RQ1.2 What were their ideologies towards the learning context and how did they change?
- RQ1.3 What systemic patterns of control facilitated their investment and acquisition of capital, or hindered them?

Literature Review

Recent ITA scholarship continued in well-established veins of research. Studies have compared ITAs and domestic teacher assistants (Tas), reaffirming that distinctions exist (Collins et al., 2022; Zhang, 2019). Assessment of language, intelligibility, and teaching preparedness remain topics of interest (Lindemann & Clower, 2020; Ma, 2022; Sok et al., 2020; Thirakunkovit et al., 2019; Yan et al., 2019). ITA's actual discourse within classrooms has been examined (Cotos & Chung, 2019), as has the impact of a pronunciation pedagogy (LaScotte et al., 2021). One novel approach to ITA pedagogy is greater incorporation of undergraduate students within ITA training (Hatcher et al., 2020), even turning the proverbial tables by directing linguistic training towards undergraduates, not ITAs (Subtirelu et al., 2022). Above all, recent scholarship seems to center largely on self-reported data and perspectives, whether from former ITA (Papi, 2022; Yu, C., 2022) or from redesigned ITA training programs/curricula (Sahranavard & Du, 2022). In particular, one special issue of the Modern Language Journal was dedicated to ITA and included many articles focusing on the perspectives of various stakeholders within one Midwestern U.S. university (Antón, 2022).

One welcomed development in the scholarship is a greater focus on ITA's experiences (Adebayo & Allen, 2020; Agrawal & McNair, 2021) and their perspectives (Collins, 2021a; Collins, 2021b; Ramjattan, 2020; Wang, 2020). This work extends prior scholarship that examined the socialization and acculturation processes of ITA's (Bengu, 2009; Jia & Bergerson, 2008; Uzum, 2012; Uzum, 2013), from testing through teaching assignment (Ernst, 2008), including an examination of ITA's social lives off campus (Myles & Cheng, 2003). Focusing on ITA's teaching experiences (Adebayo & Allen, 2020; Agrawal & McNair, 2021), this work has not examined ITA's development within the ITA training class/ curriculum. As the site of potential learning, it is critical to understand ITA's experiences and abilities within such curriculum, availing an understanding of how such pedagogies facilitate ITA's overcoming obstacles and "cultural bumps" they perceive in their path (Collins et al., 2022; Ramjattan, 2020).

Few studies have focused on ITA's experiences within ITA training classes/curricula. Notwithstanding, the few studies that examine ITA's learning in ITA training courses are now somewhat dated, and studied the impact of specific pedagogical interventions (Stevenson & Jenkins, 1994; Wallace, 2015; Zha, 2006). Moreover, they were conducted by researcher-instructors, meaning the researcher both taught the course and simultaneously conducted research. This, combined with the lack of a comprehensive, longitudinal view of a semester long ITA training course while ITAs perform departmental teaching duties, leaves considerable gaps in our understanding of what facilitates and hinders ITA's linguistic and professional development.

Theoretical Framework

Like its companion study which examined Pre-Service ITAs (Anderson, 2022), this study explores aspects of learners' identities. These aspects are no longer considered ancillary to how one learns a new language; rather "issues of identity and power are being recognized as central to (the field of) second language acquisition (SLA)" (Norton &

McKinney, 2011, p. 74). Identity work enriches the study of SLA in four principal ways. First, it uniquely integrates the individual learner within their larger social world. Secondly, it examines how opportunities to use and learn the language are socially constructed, to which, thirdly, practices, resources, and identities contribute. Fourthly, identity research produced the concept of investment, which recognizes the complex relationship between the learner and their commitment to learning the language and makes room for learners' imagined identities and imagined communities (Norton, 2013).

Within this line of inquiry, Norton developed the concept of investment to more fully understand ESL learners' "motivation," viewing the construct of motivation to be simplistic (Norton, 2019). Within identity research, exploring learners' investment is an important item on the research agenda (Norton & De Costa, 2018). The most comprehensive model of investment is Darvin and Nortons' (2015), which takes learners' investment as the interplay between identities, ideologies, and capital (Darvin & Norton, 2015). Overviewing each, identity is, "the way a person understands his or her relationship to the world, how that relationship is constructed across time and space, and how the person understands possibilities for the future" (Norton, 2013, p. 5). Next, ideologies are defined as, "dominant ways of thinking that organize and stabilize societies while simultaneously determining modes of inclusion and exclusion, and the privileging and marginalization of ideas, people, and relations" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 44). Lastly, drawing from Bourdieu (1986), capital is simply put, power, -power that manifests in different forms within different spheres. For example, economic capital could take the form of property, wealth, or income, while cultural capital, specific types of knowledge or credentials (Bourdieu, 1986).

These three components unpredictably cascade into one another. Nonetheless, the model holds that learners bring multiple identities (real and/ or imagined) into learning spaces, which are already influenced by existing ideologies. It is learners' desire for capital that propels their learning. As their capital is valued by others, their identities become affirmed. Yet during these processes, others may not value learners' capital, and/or learners may not successfully acquire the capital they seek. Ideologies within the learning space, manifested as structures of power, patterns, or practices, may impair learners' acquisition of capital. Against these impairments, learners may struggle to be recognized as the identity they desire for themselves (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 46-7). Learners' investment then is the interplay between these components.

At present, few studies have used Darvin and Norton's model of investment (Barkhuizen, 2016; Gearing & Roger, 2018; Shahri, 2018; Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2017). Broadly, investment has been used both as tool for exploration and as an explanatory tool (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Applications of Darvin and Norton's model is no different. Within classrooms, it was used to examine the investments of English language learners within a private Iranian language institute (Shahri, 2018). Outside classrooms, it was deployed to explore or explain EFL instructors' learning of Korean while living and working in South Korea (Gearing & Roger, 2018), the identities of one immigrant Pre-service EFL teacher in English over eight months (Barkhuizen, 2016), and the engagement of Ugandan teachers in a digital education intervention (Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2017). The model's comprehensiveness makes it well suited for use with a variety of learners, exploring factors inside and outside the classroom.

Methodology

Using Darvin & Norton's (2015) model as conceptual framework and organizing principle, a descriptive case study was conducted. Case studies are an, "in-depth description and analysis of a bounded system" that aimed to produce a *thick description*, meaning a "complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated" (Merriam, 2009, p. 40). In understanding language and its learning, Duff (2008) posited, "the case study approach to applied linguistics research has been very productive and influential", having been used (as multiple- and single case studies) of teachers, immigrant language learners, bilingual families, and programs (Duff, 2008, p. 36).

Among the misconceptions of case study work are issues of generalizability and researchers' biases. As presented by Flyvbjerg (2006), it is often believed that one cannot generalize from a singular case, and so singular cases do not contribute to science. Case studies also are confirmations of researchers' pre-conceived notions, some posit. Reformulating these critiques, Flyvbjerg (2006) responded that, "formal generalization is overvalued as a source of scientific development; the

force of a single example is underestimated" (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 216-245). As for bias, the scholar posited that case study research exhibits no more confirmatory tendencies than any other form of research. To explore ITA's investments, a multiple case study was most appropriate because it availed a highly contextualized comparison between two cases -here meaning individual learners. Sampling was "purposive" (Merriam, 2009, p. 77-8), eliciting participation from ITA's enrolled in ESL 9999.

Participants Quenton and Jacob (pseudonyms), two ITA's at Paw State University (PPSU-[pseudonym]) were this study's two focal participants. As Chinese and Taiwanese graduate students -respectively, both were serving their departments (Chemistry/ STEM Education) in roles that required regular, instructional, oral communication with undergraduate students (and so were considered "In-Service ITA's"). Both were enrolled in one section of ESL9999 taught by Mr. Sam (pseudonym). The study was part of larger project that involved Pre-Service ITA's, who were previously reported on (Anderson, 2022). For this IRB-sanctioned research, participants were recruited at Autumn 2018's start from all sections of ESL9999. As a token of gratitude, each participant received a total of four $10 gift cards during data collection, paid by the researcher. The researcher offered participants no corrective feedback.

Setting PPSU is a large Midwestern university enrolling thousands of international students annually. Mandated by state law, all international graduate students working as instructors must become certified via the ESL department's testing. Typically prior to/ upon arrival, international students take the I-TEACH Test (pseudonym), which assesses English comprehensibility when teaching field-specific concepts. Home departments assign ITA's instructional roles depending upon their scores, with more communicatively demanding assignments reserved for high-scoring ITA's. Some test-takers gain certification for any instruction role, while others get certified for roles while concurrently taking ESL9999. Those receiving the lowest scores may only serve as graders or lab-preparers, while concurrently taking ESL 9998 and/or 9999. Testing may be taken once per semester- independent of ESL9999- and again upon completion of ESL9999.

Researcher's Positionality ESL9999 instructors were four Caucasian, American men. One was the researcher, yet none of the researcher's students participated in the research. All other instructors also rated I-TEACH Tests. I, the researcher, had been teaching ESL9999 for 4 years as a graduate teaching assistant (GTA), having received initial training from veteran instructor Mr. Sam, whose course design and approaches I adopted. Mr. Sam's ESL9999 classroom oriented his learners toward the teaching of undergraduate classes, involving student-led discussions on cultural topics, partner work, lecturing, and microteaching/ tutorials. As a researcher, I believe the combination of my deep familiarity with the class and sharing the approximate age/ identities of GTA /graduate students afforded me keener insight into the experiences of ITA's than had I not shared these identities with ITA's. I am not aware of any way in which my positioning negatively impacted the research or the participants.

Data Collection Data included weekly journals, class assignments, interviews, and classroom observations of ESL9999 and within home department courses (See Tables 1, 2, and 3). Four semi-structured interviews were done, which occurred at the semester's start, middle, and conclusion, and at the onset of Spring 2019 after the I-TEACH Test. The second and third interviews were stimulated recall sessions that utilized ESL9999 assignments, journals, and the researcher's field notes taken during observations. All interviews were structured to align with the Darvin & Norton (2015) model of investment, exploring each of the three components. Additionally, two rounds of interviews were conducted with ESL9999 instructors and one round with home department coordinators. Weekly journaling prompted participants' written responses, using a secure Google-doc-like software, to "Describe a particularly significant moment that occurred in or through your class/ your class assignments." Two 150-word sample paragraphs were provided. Outside ESL9999, observations were made in Quenton's teaching within labs and office-hours. For Jacob, observations of his interactions were not possible. First, Jacob requested his participation in the study be concealed from his department. Secondly, Jacob's supervisory role

involved watching student-teachers interact with school children, for whom many protections exist. Instead, I made observations in two PPSU courses in STEM Education that Jacob hoped to teach.

Table 1

Data Collected- Interviews

ITA Participant	interviews (hours)	ESL 9999 instructor interviews (hours)	home department interview (hours)
Jacob	4.25	3.75	1
Quenton	5.5		.75

Table 2

Data Collected- Observations

ITA Participant	ESL 9999 observations	Direct observation of ITA's performing teaching roles (hours)	Observation in Home Dept. of other TA's performing teaching roles (hours)
Jacob	4.25	0	4
Quenton	5.5	4	2

Table 3

Data Collected- Assignments/ Deliverables

ITA Participant	ESL 9999 assignments collected (assignments)	Journaling (number of entries)	Journaling (average number of words per entry)
Jacob	36	13	138
Quenton	21	12	317

Data Analysis Account data, the study's primary interest, consisted of semi-structured interviews, weekly journals, and stimulated recalls. Account data were transcribed verbatim. Secondary data included assignments, instructor feedback, and fieldnotes from classroom observations taken in both the ITA training class and in home department classes. The combination of these sources afforded triangulation, which, "…can bring greater plausibility to the interpretation of results" (Hyland, 2010, p. 195). All data were indexed before being coded for themes using Transana Professional 3.31c, a qualitative analysis software. Coding was done using qualitative content analysis, which is interested in the communication of meanings (Merriam, 2009, p. 205). Three *a priori* categories (identity, ideology, capital) initially guide the study, however additional categories are anticipated to emerge. Later, categories of findings were woven into an interpretation (Merriam, 2009, p. 189).

Within the account data, the boundaries of data points were set as moments in the transcripts when the conversation moved from one idea to another. Best efforts were made to capture in one data point a particular point a participant made and its exemplification (if applicable), however, any second exemplification offered would have been recorded as a separate data point. Counts of data points were used to identify salient findings, as soon described. Secondary data -classroom assignments/ feedback and field notes- were analyzed and utilized in stimulated recall sessions to generate more account data. Within secondary data, data points were identified as relatively coherent units that addressed or supported an emerging theme without parsing.

All data was labeled one of four types: "Homework data" (hw:#), observational data (obs:#), and the two varieties of account data: interview (int:#), and journaling (j:#). Tabulations were made of each theme. For example, a theme, "Louie was a confident teacher," supported by four account data points (two journal and two interview data) and two homework data, would appear: "(int:2, j:2, hw:2)". Only findings are reported that were supported by at least 3 account data or by 4 assignment data, which emerged from analysis as a logical threshold. Among findings, only those essential to the emerging

understanding were reported. Although imperfect, these tabulations allow an assessment of the supporting data. Afterward, cases are compared utilizing cross-case comparisons (Duff, 2008, p. 164), before discussing findings conceptually.

Results

Profiles of the two cases are presented before findings are presented -first as individual cases, then as cross-case comparisons.

Quenton

Quenton was a 23-year-old, first-year doctoral student of Chemistry from China. Before arriving at PPSU, Quenton earned a bachelor's degree in China before obtaining a master's degree from a small university in the same state as PPSU, which constituted his first English immersion experience. Quenton was in his first semester at PPSU and his first in teaching, leading two general chemistry lab sections.

PPSU's Chemistry Department's Rigorous Pedagogy

Beyond doctoral studies, lab-leading TAs had numerous obligations. Weekly meetings required them to learn the pedagogy of each lab lesson, taking turns giving mini-lectures as practice. Later in Head TA's office hours, TAs had to prove their ability to implement each week's lesson. TAs then led the three-hour lab, twice per week, which required giving instructions and individualized guidance. Afterwards, TA's grade students' lab reports, which a Head TA verified the consistency of grading across all labs/ all TA's and required re-grading if the TA had not graded using the department's methods or standards. TAs also staffed office hours, 60-minute walk-in tutoring sessions in which 20-30 undergraduates from all Chemistry courses, could seek any TAs help.

Seeking English/ Teaching Skills/ Cultural Knowledge

Quenton saw potential employment in teaching following graduation (int:6). Aspects of American capitalism inspired him, and he envisioned himself using applied chemistry as a means to acquire future wealth, ultimately to be reinvested through philanthropic work (int:5). Quenton's desire to interact with Americans, to fit in with them, was strong (int:6, j:4). He saw cultural familiarity as critically important (int:4, j:1). Quenton admired aspects of the US university and of American students, including their diversity (int:4). Quenton viewed interactions with native speakers as important for his language development (int:3). Quenton saw his own English as flawed resulting from a lack of environment in which to practice (int:3) and his previously limited interactions with native English speakers and rare use of English (int:3). Quenton faulted the Chinese educational system for focusing too much on input at the expense of output (int:3). He wanted someone to correct his mistakes in English (int:3).

"Surviving" His Studies

Quenton viewed teaching positively (int:5) yet he reported negative emotions tied to his current lab teaching, particularly grading students work, which was "brainless" and felt like a "job" (int:5, j:7). PPSU's chemistry labs are too bureaucratic (int:4, j:2). Because of his many duties tied to lab-leading, Quenton reportedly felt he was only "surviving", sensing that he was being surpassed by his departmental peers (int:5, hw:1). His Chemistry peers would all prefer a research position to a teaching position (int:5). Within teaching positions, he saw recitation-leader as less time consuming than lab-leading, and thus desired it (int:3). Because recitation positions were reserved for ITA's who attained full certification on the I-TEACH Test, Quenton valued improving his score (int:1). Quenton viewed his lack of preparation and completion for his ESL9999 assignments as detrimental to his teaching and to his confidence (hw:4). In both lab and ESL9999, Quenton was frustrated by a language barrier that he felt was hindering his fluency (int:4, j:1, hw:5). Within the course, Quenton became too busy for all his ESL9999 work (int:6).

Improving His Chemistry Lab Pedagogy Using ESL9999

Quenton's ESL9999 instructor, Mr. Sam, perceived the intelligibility of ITA's as highly complex (int:7). He valued ITA learners acquiring a keen awareness of their audience (int:11), and these views converged with Quenton's. Quenton's assignments in ESL9999 had direct overlap/ interconnection with his lab teaching (int:3, hw:1), particularly the utility of microteachings for his giving lab instructions (int:8). In both spaces, Quenton became aware of learner's (in)ability to see the board/ visual materials (int:1, hw:7). He likewise became sensitized to the learners' level of prior knowledge of a topic (hw:4), and to the importance of checking in with students and interacting with them (hw:6). Quenton values improving his teaching (int:8). Through reflective assignments in ESL9999, he reflected on the importance of rapport and small talk with learners (hw:3) and developed the view that audience awareness is something that good presenters/ speakers possess (int:4). Knowing American culture helped him develop rapport with his students (int:3). Through ESL9999 assignments, he noticed other instructors' use of connecting words (hw:5) and saw the heterogeneity of his ESL9999 peers as an asset (int:3, hw:1). He learned that good speakers control their rate of speech (int:3).

"The Experience Difference"

Despite positive experience leading labs generally (int:5), in his Tuesday lab, the rude behavior of one problematic student undercut his self-confidence (int:2, hw:4). Quenton perceived this student's negativity spreading to her peers, leading him to the atmosphere of Tuesday's lab being "frozen," and to his becoming increasingly insecure in front of his students (int:3, j:3). Lacking preparation, he reported in his homework, undercut his confidence (hw:4). Quenton explained the contrast as, "the experience difference": students' negativity in his Tuesday's lab section -which was reflected in his SEI scores, he later said-, compared with the amicable atmosphere of the Thursday section, was explained by his own inadequate preparation for Tuesday's lab and stronger preparation in leading the same lab a second time each week (int:7, hw:3).

ESL9999: an invaluable experience

Ultimately, Quenton found ESL9999 to be generally helpful for his lab-teaching (int:4), having transferred skills from it to his lab (int:6, j:1). Quenton so positively viewed the course and its instructor, whom was an "expert," that he theorized that courses like ESL9999 makes the difference between good and poor Chinese speakers of English (int:6). Specifically, he found the individual tutorials most beneficial (int:6), particularly in differentiating /l/ and /n/ (hw:4). After ESL9999, Quenton became certified on the I-TEACH Test to avoid additional ESL coursework. The next semester, Quenton continued to serve as a lab instructor of two sections of a new course.

Jacob

37-year-old doctoral student Jacob was in his third year studying STEM Education. In his native Taiwan, Jacob earned a bachelor's degree in Science Education with an ESL endorsement and a master's degree in Math. Prior to PPSU, he had several years of elementary school teaching in Taiwan and three years of Math/ Chinese Foreign Language teaching in a Midwestern US state. At PPSU, for a fifth semester, Jacob supervised pre-service K-12 teachers -undergraduate students in training- in field placements within local schools. He met them weekly and occasionally observed their teaching.

An Expert Teacher, Strengthening His Case for A Teaching Appointment

Jacob's high confidence in his teaching abilities is based on his prior teaching experience (int:6). Jacob saw himself as unique amongst his ESL9999 peers and departmental colleagues because of his teaching experiences, which included ESL teaching (int:5). Jacob was confident in his supervising role (int:3) and saw himself as benefitting from the experience (int:3). Yet Jacob was frustrated at being assigned to supervise student-teachers, rather than teaching (int:5). Jacob's desire to teach STEM Education courses at PPSU was robust, pursuant of future work as a university instructor (int:6, email:1).

Prior to and during Autumn 2018, Jacob invested many hours observing undergraduate classes within his department that he hoped to teach, preparing himself for a teaching position, conducted independently from all ESL9999 assignment or coursework (int:5, j:1, hw:3). At the start of Autumn 2018, Jacob reported having only rare or mostly troubled interactions with Americans (int:5). Throughout the semester, he had negative interactions with one female supervisee (int:4).

ESL9999, Redundant Yet Educational

Despite consistently reporting that he "already knew" much of ESL9999's content (int:5), Jacob developed an array of skills. He liked having access to ESL9999 materials (int:3, j:2). He initially took interest and valued native English speakers' vocabulary and phrasing (int:5, j:2, hw:1), and in reductions and linkages of words (int:2, j:2). Later in the semester, Jacob came to believe that his receptive skills of native speakers' reductions were sufficient for him (int:1, j:2).

Jacob firmly believed that good teaching was interactive teaching (int:6, j:1). Jacob saw his microteaching as superior to those of his classmates (int:1, j:1, hw:4), and used his peers as a measure of his own progress (int:4). He noticed the interactivity of peers' microteachings, or lack thereof (int:1, j:1, hw:4). One assignment, to explain a poster, allowed Jacob's interactive teaching skills to be valued (int:2, j:2). Jacob improved upon a variety of presentational/instructional skills using humor (int:1, j:1, hw:5) and referencing real-world examples when explaining concepts (int:2, j:1, hw 1). Through his peers' microteachings, he noticed their assertiveness (or lack thereof), and made increasing assertiveness a goal of his own (int:5, hw:3), as well as eye contact with the audience (int:1, hw:5). Assignments to watching and transcribe his own microteaching were beneficial (int:4). Jacob appreciated and wanted more microteaching practice since it used the format of the I-TEACH Test (int:3, j:1).

Conjoint Frustrations

Jacob's views on ESL9999 darkened by the semester's end. He viewed the course to not be providing what he truly desired: fluency-building activities (int:7, hw:1). (Conversely, Mr. Sam believed ESL9999 and its learners to not need fluency development but greater precision [int:1] amongst a litany of other skills.) Jacob saw the course engaging in and promoting instructor-led lecturing, which was as not only negative, and but pedagogically harmful to learners (int:6, j:2). Jacob reflected that the course lacked clarity in policies and organization (int:5). He also complained that assignment assigned six times, the Key Terms lists and recordings, were burdensome and unnecessary, for which he minimized his efforts (int:4, hw:3). ESL9999 work became less important, and progressively devoted less time to them (int:5). Before the semester finished -and before he had taken the I-TEACH Test- Jacob learned that his department had selected other TA's for the teaching roles he sought, and he would again supervise. Knowing that he would again not be an instructor, Jacob insisted that only through teaching a class could he apply ESL9999 skills, and because he was only supervising he was unable to judge ESL9999's usefulness (int:5). Nearing semester's end, Jacob's views culminated in his appropriating peers' accusations of racism and exploitation regarding capable ITA's being required to take ESL 999 and the I-TEACH Test, to speak like an American (int:2).

Unfortunate Epilogue

After the course's end, Jacob gained full certification on the I-TEACH Test and was again supervising in Spring. Yet following data collection, Jacob emailed the researcher that he learned he would not be offered a supervisor position the following year, for reasons he did not specify (email:1), resulting in his loss of funding for his fourth at PPSU. The researcher did not seek explanation from administrators, nonetheless two points made by the department coordinator when earlier interviewed may be relevant. First, within this department, there is habitually greater demand for teaching positions than positions available (int:1). Secondly, pressure from external state accreditation agencies on the department factor into the department's staffing decisions. Concisely, it matters to the department whether those teaching future teachers hold state licensure themselves (int:1). Jacob, who had taught at a private school in another U.S. state, did not (int:1).

Conceptual Findings

This section provides answers to the research questions. Examining ITA's investment, the research questions inquired into participants' identities, ideologies, and access to capital. Because of the interlocking nature of these three components, findings are reported conjointly to not lose explanatory power. Each case is reviewed before a comparison is offered.

Aligned: Quenton's Investments, ESL9999, Chemistry Labs

Quenton's identity as a novice instructor, seeing as important capital interactions with Americans and self-improvement as an instructor, was an excellent fit for Mr. Sam's ESL9999. The nature of the ESL9999 assignments, their overlap with and direct applicability to his lab context proved the most salient. Moreover, its paralinguistic, cultural material -rapport building and small talk- most facilitated Quenton's lab-leading abilities. Quenton developed an ideology -a "way of thinking" - that having strong rapport with his students enhanced their learning, which reduced his time needed to grade their mistakes, freeing him to focus on his own academics. ESL9999's assignments, tutorials, and feedback, were capital that Quenton found immediate use for in his lab teaching. Moreover, Quenton's duty to lead the same lab on Tuesday and on Thursday for different cohorts also facilitated his teaching, and thus, his identity as a successful lab-leader.

Conversely, this identity was most hindered by the number of TA responsibilities he was shouldering. These duties burdened him academically, reaffirming his status as an international student inherently disadvantaged alongside his American peers. Quenton's numerous duties also hindered his ESL9999 work and thus his lab-leading. An astute observer, Quenton theorized the "experience difference," an ideology that linked his own inadequate preparation to students' malcontent and misbehavior in Tuesday's lab, in stark contrast to his enjoyment and learners' success in Thursday's lab. Teaching the same lab anew, Quenton felt more capable and perceived positive results, which affirmed his identity as an effective instructor.

Misaligned: Jacob's Investments with ESL9999's approach

Jacob's disquieting case revealed several important conceptual points. It is clear that Jacob's identities, ideologies, and capital were tightly bound to the point of inseparability. As a supervisor of student teachers, Jacob was promoting interactive teaching among his supervisees, which was valuable capital that had developed during his doctoral studies in STEM education, his extracurricular observations of many PPSU classes, and his own years of teaching experience. Jacob believed his skillset to be the capital necessary for a teaching appointment within PPSU's STEM education classes, itself being the most prized capital available to him. Such capital and subsequent identity, that of a course instructor at a renowned American university like PPSU- were capital he envisioned that would lead to employment post-graduation. Merely supervising student teachers, for Jacob, was no substitute.

To be eligible to be appointed to a teaching position, Jacob needed to pass ESL9999 and gain full certification on the I-TEACH Test. Both of which required him to adopt their specific practices, which Jacob viewed as teacher-centered lecturing. Ironically -and tragically then, this practice ran contrary to his ideology that teacher-centered lecturing is antithetical to good teaching. As such, it also conflicted with the triad of Jacob's identity as an expert teacher, teaching ideologies, and capital, both desired and previously collected. Moreover, critiquing teaching -usually student-teachers'- was his main duty as teaching supervisor. This duty to critique, and this role, represented the highpoint of his teaching experience, and the closest he was permitted to actually leading a university course in the U.S. In other words, critiquing ESL9999 was at once a critique of counterproductive teaching practices and an exercise of Jacob's extant capital -drawing from his identities as supervisor, expert teacher, and emerging STEM education scholar.

Jacob's negativity towards ESL9999 developed concurrently with his departmental frustrations. Repeated disappointments involving teaching assignments being given to others provided the backdrop for his negativity towards ESL9999. He took on the identity of an aggrieved, exploited ITA. Conflating ESL9999 with his hiring frustration, Jacob ultimately reported that ESL9999 had been useless because he was not a classroom teacher, yet he was not a classroom teacher because his department had repeatedly denied him this promised opportunity. This ideology overlooks the myriad

of skills he reported to have developed and discounts any applicability of these skills to his supervisions. Neither ESL9999 nor Mr. Sam played any role in Jacob's departmental frustrations, yet Jacob pondered ESL9999's complicity in an unjust system.

Comparing Cases

Both In-Service ITA's were enrolled in the same section of ESL9999. Quenton saw ESL9999 as growing his teaching identity, while Jacob reported ESL9999 to be of little use. What most explain this difference are the identities, ideologies, and capital they had formulated and accumulated prior to ESL9999. Jacob's identity as an expert instructor was solidified before the course while Quenton's was still embryonic. Jacob saw himself as an expert teacher wrongly placed into a remedial course with peers who needed the remediation. Jacob was attentive in ESL9999 only to the wrongheaded pedagogy it proscribed: lecturing, a type of capital Jacob not only devalued but eschewed. So Jacob dismissed course material as personally redundant but harmful to other ITA's.

Conversely for Quenton, ESL9999 was an invigorating source of learning. His concurrent lab-leading responsibilities meant his learning was not theoretical but made real impacts and ramifications for his identities and pursuit of other capital, his own academics. Jacob viewed his supervising role as availing no opportunity to apply ESL9999 learning, a view must be understood within the context of his dissatisfaction with his employment and emerging identity as an aggrieved ITA. These findings demonstrate the importance of the extant identities, ideologies, and capital the ITA's brought to ESL9999, and power of their perceived immediacy of their need for the course content.

Discussion

This study examined the identities, ideologies, and capital that two ITA's developed through their semester-long ITA training course, leading to a deeper understanding of ITA's investment (Darvin & Norton, 2015). It expands our understanding of this model within language learning (Barkhuizen, 2016; Gearing & Roger, 2018; Shahri, 2018; Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2017) by underscoring the unpredictable, idiosyncratic nature of individual learners' investment within the learning context. Despite being enrolled in one section of the same course, the two ITA's experienced the course in opposite ways, due largely to their dissimilar developmental stages vis-à-vis teaching. It also discovered that decisions made within home departments -external to the ITA training class- profoundly impacted the investments that ITA's make in the ITA training class. This demonstrates that power structures that are seemingly removed from the learning context nonetheless can greatly impact the learning. Moreover, it is participants' perceptions of these power structures may be of equal, if not greater significance, to their learning.

Much messier than any notion of a straight-forward test-preparation course, the learning that was recorded in this ITA class was complex. Mr. Sam's course was multi-faceted, often-times embedding assignments within his learners' own home departments, and availed ITA's choice in the substance of their learning. The messiness came from the disparate ways that ITA's aligned, or misaligned, with the course. Jacob did not recognize these elements of choice the course was granting him. His case illustrated that issues of identity and power are critical in second language acquisition (Norton & McKinney, 2011, p. 74). Dually victimized by his department and by ESL9999's failure to honor his capital, he positioned the ITA training as useless for his supervising. This finding confirms that cultural capital, and earning others' recognition thereof, "is always a site of struggle" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 45).

By framing ESL9999 as exclusively imparting lecturing skills on ITA's, then condemning lecturing as pedagogically harmful, Jacob was, "challeng(ing) normative ways of thinking, in order to claim the right to speak" (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 47). More than speaking, Jacob was claiming the right to critique, and to exercise his capital, thereby affirming his multiple identities as teaching supervisor, experienced teacher, and educational scholar. Jacob's discrediting of ESL9999 appears a unique example the educational beliefs of ITA's (Gorsuch, 2003), connected to learners' resistance in the L2 classroom (Liu & Tannacito, 2013). Within studies of investment using Darvin & Norton's (2015) model, no other case exists of misalignment between learners' constitutive investment components and the proscribed learning (Barkhuizen, 2016; Gearing & Roger, 2018; Shahri, 2018; Stranger-Johannessen & Norton, 2017). Jacob's case also contributes to the growing literature on international students' perceptions of racism (Buckner et al., 2021; Yu, 2021).

Findings also underscored the importance of the alignment between learners' investment, their learning context, and the external space in which they apply their learning. Jacob's case presents a warning for pedagogues about significant misalignments exist between them. Particularly critical to explore is learners' application of the learning -real and envisioned. The alignment of instruction with learners' needs remains a concern for educators (Johnson, K.A. & Parrish, 2010). This study adds this new dimension to prior work exploring learners' investments within a classroom connected to outside-classroom contexts (Andrew, 2011; Gu, 2008; Johnson, E.J. & Johnson, 2016). Beyond investment, similar recent work has focused on the alignment of instruction with learners' motivation (Sato, 2021).

The hardships and misalignments revealed in this study, including Mr. Sam's, point to the need for future research on ITA educators' practices and perspectives (Gorsuch, 2003) and their investments in building their learners' repertoires (De Costa, P.I. & Norton, 2017). If pedagogy takes seriously the well-being of ITA's, it must also take seriously the well-being of ITA educators. What is needed are both fine-grained analyses of individual ITA educators like Mr. Sam, coupled with surveys of the ITA community of practice, akin to surveys of educators of other niche groups (Lough & Toms, 2018). More work is also needed to elucidate the communication and implementation of ITA-language-related policies across campuses (Ernst, 2008).

This modest study (n=2) should constitute an initial step towards a wider exploration of the investments of ITA's. Rather than producing generalizable truths, case studies produce from rich, deep data intriguing topics to pursue further exploration. One such topic is how participants' varying levels of teaching expertise and experience impact their learning. Another is the availability of teaching contexts in which to apply one's learning developed in an ITA training class. Every comparison between humans brings affordances and limitations. Additional case studies would benefit comparison, particular cases focused on ITA's leading labs or in advisory type roles like Jacob's. Finally, within qualitatively oriented research the positionalities of the researcher are not marginally important, but central. Alternative data, findings, or interpretations may have arisen had the study been conducted by other researchers. Additional work done by female, non-native English speaking, or non-teaching researchers would also benefit comparison.

This study also offers insights for research. These findings demonstrate that investment is an effective conceptual tool for both exploring learners' learning and analyzing it (Norton & Toohey, 2011). Moreover, the positioning of the researcher as researcher only (not researcher-instructor) afforded the research deeper, critical perspectives on the experience that were previously absent. Regarding ITA's, the two cases here were keen to connect with Americans, despite their workloads. Researchers should harness and facilitate such connections, remaining mindful of ITA's many departmental duties. These insights may lead to more useful, honest perspectives.

Implications and Conclusion

Pedagogical Implications

ITA educators must take account of ITA's home countries, first languages, cultural traditions, and academic disciplines (and the teaching contexts/styles of each). To this list, we must add ITA's prior teaching experience. Because Quenton and Jacob were at starkly different points in the development of their teaching identities, differentiated instruction would have proven useful. Of equal importance, instructors must allow ITA's latitude in choosing the capital they acquire. In a high-stakes course like ESL9999, the types of the capital ITA's are to acquire seem fixed. Assignments allowed ITA's the freedom to customize assignments for ITA's own purposes. Reviewing studies of ITA training classes (Jia & Bergerson, 2008; Stevenson & Jenkins, 1994; Wallace, 2015), such freedom appears unique. This study echoes calls to make investment be a pillar of a course's design (Trentman, 2013; Wu, 2017).

For learners like Jacob, for whom the learning became "meaningless and ritualized" (Norton, 2010, p. 10), instructors must remind such learners of the control afforded them to shape their learning. Likewise, also needing explication are the possible applications of skills targeted in the course within non-teaching contexts (e.g. academic conferences, job interviewing, etc.). In this way, it is ITA educators who must "struggle" to have learners recognize the value of the capital the ITA training course offers (Darvin & Norton, 2015, p. 45).

Regrettably, Jacob's resentment grew unbeknownst to his ESL9999 instructor. For Jacob, course-required journaling may have revealed his frustrations to Mr. Sam, who could have then looked "upstream" and "downstream" to

understand his discontent (Erickson, 2004, p. 187). Journaling might also have surfaced Quenton's "experience difference," which Mr. Sam could have leveraged as learning opportunities. Preservice teacher training has successfully used reflective practices to combat excessive stress (Garbys-Barker, 2012). While supporting a healthy emotional life was not an ESL9999 course goals, it should be. Kramsch (2006) posited that pedagogy must educate, "whole persons with hearts, bodies and minds with memories, fantasies, loyalties, identities" (Kramsch, 2006, p. 251). More work is needed of ITA's within their academic and social circles, accounting for their lives both on and off campus (Myles & Cheng, 2003).

Quenton's strong emotional experiences and subsequent development demonstrate the necessity that ITA's be involved in teaching and interacting with real undergraduates in which to practice their emerging instructional skills. The cycle Quenton established -experiencing real teaching, valuing ESL9999's targeted skills and recognizing their potential applicability, then applying and sharpening them within his teaching- represents the ideal pedagogy for ITA's. Furthermore, Quenton found amicable conversations with his undergraduates to be mutually beneficial and therefore focused on developing these skills in ESL9999. This finding attest to the "double linguistic calibration" (De Costa, P.I., 2010, p. 778) that ITA's often experience, needing proficiencies of both formal language for instruction and informal language for their social lives. Findings suggest that ITA training classes should target these rapport-building skills.

Lastly, home departments should recognize how the various duties they assign ITA's impact them, including their academics. Home departments should furthermore understand how teaching appointments are viewed by ITA's. For Jacob, it was a coveted form of capital. If departments shared Jacob's perception, it would have taken greater care to transparently distribute them and comply with university language policies. To do anything less may foster accusations of malpractice, as those issued by Jacob.

Conclusion

This examination of the investments of two In-Service ITA's in their ITA training class was a novel contribution to comparative and international higher education. Conducted by an external researcher, the study extended through the duration of the course and testing. It produced findings from various data types sampled from the multiple ecologies to which the ITA's belonged. The idiosyncrasy of the investments of the two ITA's in their singular ITA training class is revelatory. Making this difference was their varied levels of prior teaching experience, the availability of authentic teaching contexts, and policies of their home departments. These findings necessitate that pedagogy recognize ITA's prior teaching experience and attitude towards teaching alongside their other more recognized identities and capital. Findings also demonstrate the pedagogical importance of all ITA's having opportunities to instruct undergrads in some manner.

Theoretically, this study demonstrated the thoroughness of the Darvin & Norton (2015) model of investment, which affords a more holistic, and thus accurate, view of learners' "motivation" to improve their skills in a second language. This conceptual model can benefit higher education broadly, both as a tool of exploration and as one for pedagogical design. Finally, it became clear through the study's voluntary reflective activities that the ITA's socio-emotional well-being were not adequately addressed. Quenton's and Jacob's cases offer a window into the complexities of ITA training but symbolize their incredible perseverance to rapidly adapt to new environments, becoming leaders within North American undergraduate classrooms.

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