

Clashing Roles and Identities of EL Teachers during Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning

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Abstract

During Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL) and the closure of schools due to the COVID-19 pandemic, teachers of multi-lingual students were positioned to adopt varied outreach methods to sustain access to education among multilingual families. Prior to ERTL, instruction in schools was socially situated as having greater institutional value relative to service-oriented tasks, yet service-related needs, including health and human services and/or access to technology increased during the physical closure of schools. EL teachers took on more service-related tasks for their MLL families and did so by assuming, negotiating and resisting particular roles; a reflexive

and interactional process. Using theories of teacher positioning and language teacher identity, we examined the experiences of EL teachers in the Great Lakes Region of the US. Findings demonstrate that few EL teachers resisted roles within instruction and service during ERTL, a critical dimension of teacher identity transformation and advocacy for MLLs. As we move into recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and into a Remote Teaching and Learning (RTL) period, implications suggest that when EL teachers' roles and identities are incongruous, resilience can be fostered informing a unique form of agency and teacher leadership; a necessary characteristic for an equity-informed education.

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With the implementation of Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL) at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, schools shifted from physical settings to distant ones. Teachers, administrators, and paraprofessionals, alongside students and families, assumed emergency response roles to maintain school-based education in its many instructional and social service dimensions, while physically isolating (Milman, 2020). English learner (EL) educators mitigated barriers that restricted multilingual students (MLLs) from experiencing a fair and equitable education during Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL) at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This included bridging school language and cultural practices, and addressing access to food, healthcare, and social services (service), while continuing some form of teaching (instruction).

We define *instruction* as specific language/literacy support that facilitates academic access and outcomes. For example, this could be in a stand-alone context where MLLs receive scheduled instruction from the EL teacher and/or that they co-teach with a grade-level teacher. *Service* includes supports that facilitate material, cognitive, and social-emotional access to instruction. For example, EL teachers facilitate home/school communications or transportation (Harvey & Teemant, 2012). Service may also include acquiring internet service or connecting youth and families to health and human services (Benegas, Morita-Mullaney, Cushing-Leubner, Stolpestad, & Greene, 2021; Cushing-Leubner, 2021; Morita-Mullaney, Greene, Cushing-Leubner, Stolpestad, & Benegas, 2021). These roles of instruction and service took on new dimensions during ERTL and how EL teachers self-positioned or were positioned by others

contributes to how language teacher identity (LTI) forms. We ask two research questions:

How did EL teachers provide instruction and service to MLLs during initial phases of Emergency Remote Teaching and Learning (ERTL)?

How did EL teachers navigate personal, professional, and institutional expectations of their roles and how did that inform their language teacher identities during ERTL?

LITERATURE REVIEW

When governmental, national security, economic, social, and/or environmental instability occurs, public education is significantly disrupted, necessitating the implementation of ERTL (Davies & Bentrovato, 2011). While teaching in alternative ways has always been an option, ERTL makes such provisions obligatory with the need to act quickly (Bozart & Sharma, 2020). While EL teachers may have school-furnished resources to shift to ERTL, their MLLs may not have the same technological infrastructure to access and interact within this medium (Chan et al., 2022; Gopal, Carrillo, & Mallonga, 2022), invoking a particular type of care that attends to the situational needs of MLLs (Kaden, 2020).

Before ERTL, EL teachers' status in their schools was peripheral. Their instruction historically was constructed as less vital with their service-oriented skills as most paramount (e.g. interpreting, family outreach) (Farrell, 2012; Harvey & Teemant, 2012; Morita-Mullaney, 2019a, 2019b; Varghese, 2016) shaping what happened when ERTL was implemented. During ERTL, EL teachers were positioned to assume, negotiate, and resist roles of service and instruction. This "constitutive process" potentially disrupted how EL teachers saw themselves and how others saw them (Ajayi, 2011; Watson, 2008), making ERTL a capstone moment to capture their evolving language teacher identities (LTI). Such identities emerge within a given structure and/or condition and examines how EL teachers 'make things happen' (Varghese, 2016, p. 44).

Language Teacher Identity

Varghese, Motha, Park, Reeves, and Trent (2016) describe the discursive process of LTI and that it is in constant formation and

renegotiation, recognizing that language teaching is not a discrete set of behaviors or roles, but rather an “embodied process with, at its center, the teacher, the student, and the context or teaching/learning environment” (Varghese et al., 2016, p. 549). Thus, LTI is a constitutive process that is constructed dynamically and considers how teachers wrestle with how they see themselves and how others may see them (Ajayi, 2011; Kanno & Norton, 2003; Varghese, 2016). Edwards and Burns (2016) articulate the “struggle” that language teachers endure “as teachers seek to legitimize new identities in reaction to a specific professional event” (p. 735). Invariably, language teacher identities are formed within the conceptual framework of positioning.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

EL Teacher Positioning

Across instruction and service, EL teachers both position themselves and are positioned by others in varying and sometimes competing ways. This includes “discursive practices by which individuals position themselves, position others, and are positioned by others in social encounters” (Iversen, 2019, p. 2); EL teachers *assume, negotiate, and resist* particular roles, while simultaneously re/constructing their teacher identities (Crump, 2014; Morita-Mullaney, 2018). These are internal processes rooted in emotional investments (Morita-Mullaney, 2018), or what Britzman (1994) calls the “internal commitment” we make as educators (p. 239). *Assuming* a particular role describes duties given to a person and adopted with little to no contestation. A teacher may assume a particular identity as an advocate for MLL families and thus their respective roles within instruction and service are mediated by their identity stance as “advocate”. *Negotiating* a role involves determining who will be responsible for a particular duty and how the new or adjusted responsibilities will be implemented. Negotiating may be discomforting, as teachers’ attempt to find ethical and internal congruence in their professional actions and commitment that may engage internal misalignments with their beliefs about themselves (Edwards & Burns, 2016). *Resisting* roles is the active and public refusal to adopt a particular role because it does not align with one’s individual identity and/or the identities they embody in relationship to students and their families. Resisting identities is informed by structural and ideological (external) conditions, which may prescribe and impose a particular role upon someone. This prescribed role may be incongruent with how teachers see themselves (internal). This results in a reflexive wrestling with and within oneself (Davies & Harré, 1990). Scholars consider these

dynamics necessary conditions for language teacher's identity transformations over time (Kanno & Stuart, 2011; Varghese, 2016).

Assuming, negotiating, and resisting roles and identities involve reflexive self-talk and internal negotiations (Davies & Harré, 1990). This is the case when there is incongruence or dissonance from outside others who push back on one's positionings (Kayi-Aydar, 2018; Watson, 2008). Harré and van Langenhove (1991) describe the process of first and second order positioning. First order positioning or *interactive positioning* describes how educators interface with others. When tensions arise from such interactions, teachers then move to second order positioning, namely, *reflexive positioning* as teachers attempt to reconcile the dissonance. Importantly, the first and second order positioning can be a back and forth (negotiation with self and others), which can lead to resistance or a stoppage at negotiation. Whether reflexive or interactive, positioning is situated in a landscape of power relationships, shaping teachers' professional identities and informs the ways they become agentic within the 'structure' of their settings (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018, p. 187).

Advocacy within language teaching is an identified teaching standard (Morita-Mullaney, 2019b), yet how it is embodied and enacted requires deeper examination as significant blindspots of agency in relationship to LTI persist (Morgan, 2016). While EL educators are encouraged to advocate for their MLLs, there can be a naturalization of their advocacy or a "domestication of dissent" (p. 708) leading to little systemic change, as their resistance is regarded as perfunctory. When advocacy is domesticated, EL teachers' dissonance between their role and identity can lead to identifying other strategies for dissent or a gradual resignation to the majoritarian logics of their schools.

By drawing upon the work of positioning theorists in relationship to LTI, we intersect these bodies of work to frame how EL teachers' identities invoked the types of instructional and service-oriented roles they adopted during ERTL with their MLLs (Figure 1). Specifically, we attend to how role-taking and remaking shaped their language teacher identities in the ways that they assumed, negotiated, and resisted roles and activities during ERTL.

METHODOLOGY: CRITICAL INSTANCE CASE STUDY

We used critical instance case study (Mills, Durepos, & Wiebe, 2010; Stake, 2006) which examines one or more sites to understand a situation of unique interest. For this inquiry, the situation of interest was how EL teachers negotiated their teaching and service-oriented tasks during the early stages of ERTL (Cushing-Leubner, Morita-Mullaney,

Positioning Theory & Language Teacher Identity

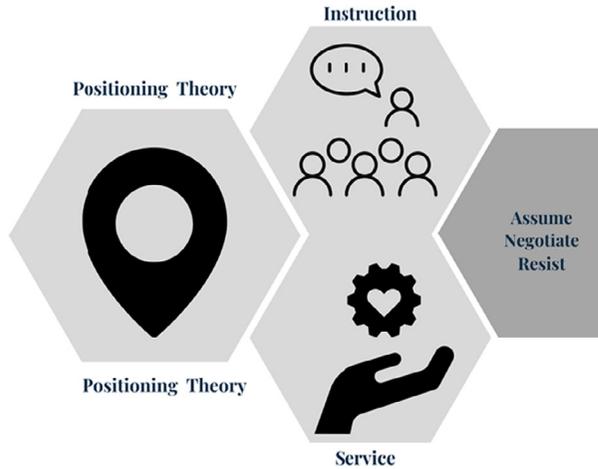


FIGURE 1. Positioning theory and language teacher identity.

Greene, Stolpestad, & Benegas, 2021). A critical instance case study deeply considers the ERTL phenomena, in a geographical location, and captures the depth of the experiences among the target teachers. Because there are similarities among the three states in terms of demographic shifts, recency of the profession and preparation programs, it bounds the experiences and the location as a critical instance. We drew on data from two primary sources (survey and semi-structured, deep interviews) across three state sites: Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, all regarded as newer immigrant destination states (Hilburn, 2014; Morita-Mullaney & Stallings, 2018).

Method

Data Collection. The first phase of the study included a 25-item survey distributed to EL teachers in three U.S. Great Lakes states (Indiana, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) via professional organization listservs as well as email using publicly available school website teacher contact information. The survey was administered from May 18 through June 5, 2020, and 405 responses were generated. Data from surveys were coded and analyzed using descriptive statistics. Findings detailed the instructional roles that EL teachers took on during ERTL including the use of varied learning management systems, and how

they coordinated with their general education colleagues. For service, EL teachers surveyed denoted how they connected families with social services and internet connectivity. Such outcomes then informed the development of the semi-structured interview protocol for the participants who volunteered for a follow-up interview.

The second phase drew on semi-structured interviews with 57 of the 405 EL teachers originally surveyed, conducted between the months of April and June of 2020. The interviews ranged between 60 and 100 min in duration and focused on participant experiences related to service (non-instructional tasks) and instruction during ERTL. Additional information related to school demographics, support staff, and geographic location as well as teacher race, multilingualism, and grade level of instruction was also collected to inform analysis. Questions included content on instruction and service and how they positioned and were positioned by others in terms of instruction and service. All interviews were done on Zoom and recorded and transcribed.

Data Analysis. The researchers created a priori coding for instruction and service as a parent nodes. We define instruction as any activity related to direct instruction to MLL students or instruction done collaboratively, such as co-teaching with general education teachers. We define service as any activity that supports access to instruction and/or addresses immediate health and human services. Thereafter, we applied the subareas of assume, negotiate, and resist to the parent areas of instruction and service, drawn from work in teacher roles and identities (Crump, 2014; Morita-Mullaney, 2018). For instance, when teachers talked about instruction during ERTL, we asked questions related to how they assumed, negotiated, or resisted modes and content of instruction. We used the same framework within instances of service. We coded our respective interviewees using the same heuristic on the NVivo 12 software platform (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2018). To check for greater reliability of coding, we conferred until consensus was reached. We then identified saturation of codes across the two areas of instruction and service as well as the subareas of assume, negotiate and resist (Table 1).

Participants. Participants were practicing EL teachers during the spring of 2020. The majority of participants were from Minnesota, followed by Indiana and Wisconsin (Figure 2). Information in the following chart represents participants that participated in the survey (Phase 1) and subsequent interview (Phase 2) by state, grade level, and

TABLE 1
Assume, Negotiate, or Resist Analysis

Construct of analysis	Operational definition
Assume	Taking on new roles as established by school or creating new duties in the absence of directives
Negotiate	Negotiating roles and tasks with anyone engaged with ML students, including school personnel, community agencies and/or ML families
Resist	Resisting imposed expectations and/or requirements of given directives

Adapted from Morita-Mullaney (2018).

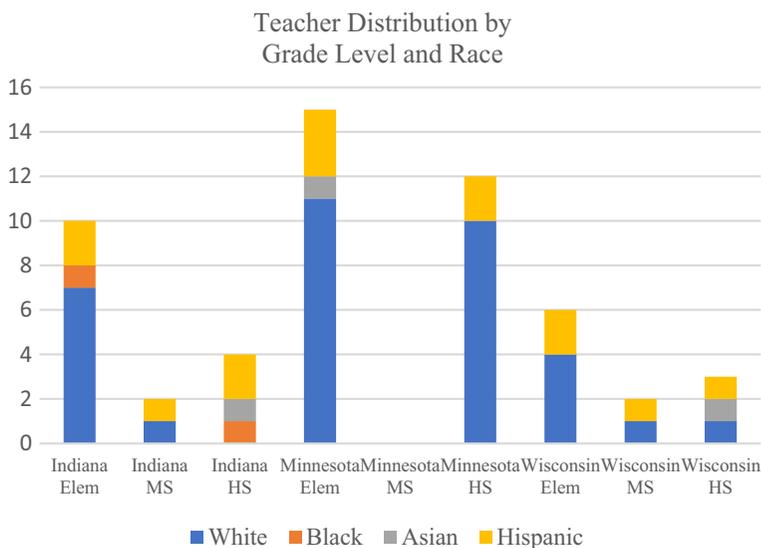


FIGURE 2. EL teacher participants.

race. Demonstrably, the EL teacher constituency in the three states is predominantly White.

Almost half of the participants (26 of 57) were multilingual; however, each state had a different makeup. While most Wisconsin participants were multilingual, 43% of Minnesota participants and only 24% Indiana participants spoke a language other than English.

All three states have EL licensure available, but in Indiana and Wisconsin the requirement of this license was not required at the time of study. More simply, a teacher could serve as an EL teacher without any licensure coursework. In Minnesota, a state policy called The Minnesota Learning English for Academic Proficiency and Success Act (2014) requires rigorous coursework for EL licensure and requires that teacher training for MLLs is in all components of state

educational policy, which may in part describe why a proportionally higher number of teachers are multilingual in Minnesota. Indiana and Wisconsin mostly employ a structured English immersion (SEI) model, and Minnesota ascribes to a content based instructional model (CBI) with a heavy emphasis on co-teaching between EL and general education teachers (Cushing-Leubner et al., 2021).

SURVEY FINDINGS

The bulk of this two-part study is focused on our interview findings, but we discuss responses from a three-state survey on the provision of instruction and service before and during ERTL to foreground the study (Benegas et al., 2021; Cushing-Leubner et al., 2021; Morita-Mullaney et al., 2021). Survey results from this study clearly demonstrated the distinctions between instruction and service pre-pandemic and during ERTL. Prior to the pandemic, EL teachers spent 77% of their time directly instructing MLLs and only 23% in service-related activities. But during ERTL, the proportion changed dramatically with instruction occupying only 43.6% of their time and service occupying over half their time at 56.4% (Figure 3). This significant shift was detailed further as EL teachers identified how they assumed, negotiated, and resisted particular roles across instruction and service. We turn to their interviews now.

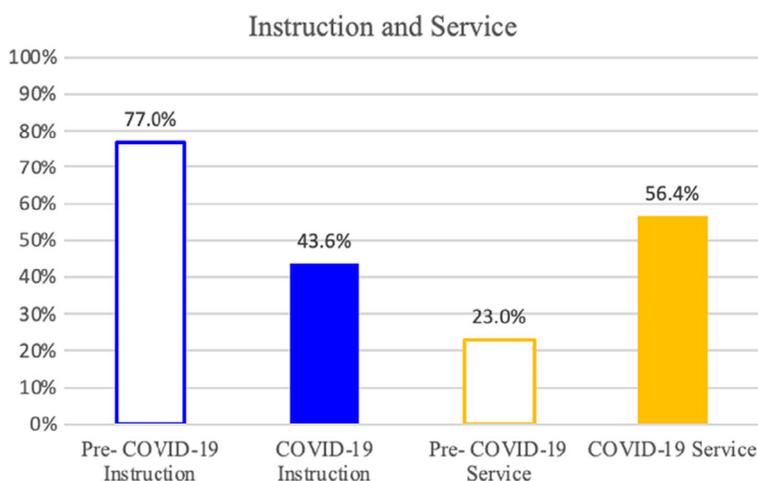


FIGURE 3. Time comparison between pre-COVID education and ERTL education in instruction and service among EL teachers.

INTERVIEW FINDINGS: INSTRUCTION

Drawn from the 57 interviews across the three Great Lakes states of Indiana, Minnesota and Wisconsin, EL teachers mostly described their instructional experiences during ERTL in terms of negotiating and assuming roles with 54 teachers *assuming* duties and 56 teachers negotiating instructional duties. Notably, the number of teachers *resisting* instructional roles was appreciably smaller with only 23 teachers identifying this as a way they responded to the instructional demands of ERTL. Furthermore, there were the numerous instances of *assuming* and *negotiating* roles with 342 distinct instances across the 54 teachers for assuming instructional duties and 351 codes across 56 teachers. Resistance to instructional responsibilities was lowly saturated and by a lower number of teachers ($N = 23$) and having fewer frequencies with just 54 codes among participants (Table 2).

Assume Instruction

The 54 EL teachers detailed the numerous ways they assumed instructional activities, some of which were informed by the protocol set forth by their administration. In other cases, EL teachers assumed instructional roles in the absence of any feedback or support from their administration or colleagues.

Assuming in the Presence of Direction. EL teachers were often subsumed in the directives of their administrators, who were scrambling quickly to create an ERTL system as the schools were closed. Bernice, a White monolingual EL middle school teacher from Indiana detailed how the district prescribed instruction, which strayed from her historic focus on SEI.

... I didn't even do anything with the teaching because the district prescribed lessons for English language arts and math. And there were really no options for those. It was just here – have the kids do this. So, there is no room for me to insert anything in there ... that makes no sense.

TABLE 2
Saturation Across Instruction in Assume, Negotiate and Resist

Instruction	No. of teachers out of 57	Code saturation
Assume	54	342
Negotiate	56	341
Resist	23	54

Bernice's prescriptive context yielded most of her attention to supporting English language arts (ELA) and mathematics. Bernice led a stand-alone EL course in her middle school, but during ERTL the course was classified as an "elective" by her administration. With this designation, she was given 15 min a day instead of her regularly scheduled 55-min period. In contrast, the English language arts and Math teachers received 30 min a day because they were teaching testable subjects. Thus, she was rendered to a smaller and less rigorous schedule because she and her students were positioned as 'electives' and she was a 'helper' for the ELA and math teachers. The same was true with elementary EL teacher, Doua, a native speaker of Hmong and bilingual in Hmong and English from Wisconsin, who shared, "... so there wasn't a lot of, I guess, language instruction going on, it just became a lot of 'how can I support them in their content learning?'"

Assuming in the Absence of Direction. In contrast to Bernice and Doua's experience, Indiana elementary EL teacher Sharon, who was White and English monolingual, discussed her administration's lack of direction and how she operated in relative autonomy during ERTL.

...they just had given us no instruction on grading until like two or three weeks before the end of the school year. And then they said we were going to do a satisfactory, or unsatisfactory. Dependent on if students had done work and the students didn't know if they were going to be held accountable for the work either up until three weeks before so it was more. It just felt last minute.

Sharon took the opportunity to do what she felt was best instructionally for her students, which contrasted from the roles imposed on her elementary general education colleagues. Her content being positioned as less valuable led to her isolation, but also development of her creativity.

Wisconsin EL middle school teacher, Samantha, White and bilingual in English and Spanish, shared how she created a new intensified focus with her MLL students, which focused on content she felt was germane to her students based on their English proficiency levels. She shared, "But every class, we would start with a writing activity. Then we'd move into speaking and then I would read. They would listen and then have to produce something." Samantha identified what she felt was best suited content for her students and implemented it.

In addition to operating autonomously, teachers also identified that they became stewards of learning management systems. Wisconsin High School EL teacher Joanna, Hispanic and a native speaker of Spanish, described becoming self-taught in "all things Google Meet" so she could properly facilitate language lessons during her assigned time

with MLLs. Because the structure was set up for content areas already privileged as core and thus “essential” (e.g. ELA and math), EL teachers were positioned to figure out how to operate within such a structure, which was contingent on the structures that existed before ERTL. For the stand-alone EL teachers who pulled students out or had designated class periods for SEI or CBI, their instructional duties completely changed, and they had to collaborate with content area teachers, and reception to collaboration varied. EL teachers had to position themselves as helpful ambassadors to support MLLs in content area classrooms. For many Minnesota teachers who already had well-established co-teaching relationships in place, this allowed such partnerships to continue, and coordination was welcomed.

When there was neither structure nor expectation and lack of interactional positioning, EL teachers were reflexive and made their own decisions about instruction, thereby determining what was of greatest value during ERTL. Such agency allowed for creativity and responsiveness to students, creating greater congruence with their assumed roles, and thereby, their LTI. Specifically, they were able to identify content and language activities matched to their students, demonstrating a distinct form of agency.

Negotiate Instruction

Negotiating instruction was the most saturated code in our schema with EL teachers engaging with other educators, administrators, students, and families to negotiate what the content, scope and sequence and assessment would be like for their students during ERTL. Findings demonstrate the tensions and collaborations that manifested.

Negotiate Instruction in Tension. Roxanne, an Indiana elementary EL teacher, White and bilingual in English and Spanish, discussed the careful tightrope she had to negotiate with grade level teachers in kindergarten and first grade, sharing, “And you know, it is kind of difficult with ESL teachers. It’s a delicate balance between the classroom teacher and ESL teacher. You don’t step on too many toes . . .” While this had been a tension pre-COVID, the strain became more polarized during ERTL. Roxanne experienced less cooperation because general education teachers were so hyper-focused on delivering instruction online, meeting daily attendance requirements, and mitigating accountability demands for ELA and Math.

Negotiate Instruction in Collaboration. Rhonda, an Indiana High School EL teacher, White and bilingual in English and Spanish,

discussed how the conditions of ERTL and her own desperation to have contact with her MLLs led to greater collaboration. An elementary teacher colleague who was also learning about online instruction was willing to be creative and collaborate with Rhonda.

I work very closely with another teacher. We actually do lesson plans together. We find material together and we work together to decide what we want to teach. Since our textbooks are outdated, we decided in the beginning of the semester that we were going to shy away from the textbooks anyway.

Such negotiation allowed Rhonda to be creative alongside a partner, a collaborative relationship that did not exist pre-COVID.

Yer, an EL high school teacher who was a native speaker of Hmong discussed how the negotiation was more delegatory. She asserted for content area lessons be pushed out to her ahead of time, to provide input and attempt appropriate accommodations for MLL students, sharing “and so, we had a chance to see the lesson before the lessons were pushed out to kinda give our input on what could be added or what could be, you know, cut down.” Yer described advocating for similar “pushing out” of material to her in advance of lessons pre-COVID. While this had been an ongoing struggle, she found that the crisis of ERTL provided the conditions for lessons being consistently shared. Yet, Yer viewed this as transactional, rather than equity-driven, explaining that her general education colleagues had to report on attendance daily, so the lesson ‘push-out’ became an instrumental tool as she was positioned as indispensable as they relied on her to collect EL attendance. In exchange for her access to their instruction, she was the *de facto* service provider.

EL teachers regularly negotiated with their general education colleagues during ERTL and in some cases, collaborative efforts were productive, yet arduous and exhausting. EL teachers were able to see lessons before they were pushed out through the learning management systems and the overall fewer hours put into direct instruction enabled more time to collaborate with teachers. EL teachers’ interactions with general education teachers allowed for a greater accommodating view for students, but they did so in acquiescence to general education goals. Thus, EL teachers revealed the interest convergence of the system relying on them, but only including them instrumentally and the swift domestication of dissent (Morgan, 2016). This phenomenon polarized preexisting tensions, creating another form of incongruence between their role and identities as they attempted to advocate for MLLs. Power relationships between EL teachers and general education teachers appeared more collaborative during ERTL demonstrating how EL teachers negotiated through first order positioning. Yet

collaboration was still unequal, unsettling the teachers' aspiration of the crisis (the structure). The teachers' aim of reciprocity led to dissonance within second order positioning.

Resistance in Instruction

Resistance within instruction was not as represented among EL teachers. Yet, it did manifest in three distinct ways among 23 of the 57 teachers who expressed a resistance to their positionings during ERTL, including resistance in accommodation, resistance in remediation, and resistance in responsiveness for MLL families. Notably, this category had a high representation of multilingual teachers of color, accounting for 5 of the 11 teacher of color participants (nearly half). In comparison, 12 White EL teachers (less than one third of the White teacher participants) resisted elements of instruction during ERTL. This illuminated a particular and distinct construct of reflexivity among multilingual teachers of color.

Resistance in Accommodation

Most EL teachers reported that their districts responded to ERTL with homework packets given to families that contained content related to grade level curriculum available via mail or pick-up at school or at community drop-off locations. Typically, these grade level packets were standardized and in English only. EL teachers recognized that the material, which was self-guided and monolingual, and had no considerations of MLLs' multilingual assets or the accessibility of the material to families. Greta, an Indiana elementary EL teacher who was White and monolingual in English shared:

... a level 1 [English language proficiency] kindergartener for my level 4, fourth grader. It didn't make sense to make a packet. You would have to individualize way too much. And I could just see different kids getting different things and not understanding. So, we [EL team] made a packet which would have links to our websites and they could pick up and they could type it in.

Greta and her colleagues demonstrated how, in the absence of linguistically-appropriate material, EL teachers created new and accessible materials for their MLLs.

Haley, a Minnesota EL high school teacher who was White and bilingual in English and Spanish, shared her defensiveness related to this standardized curriculum packet.

... And I just felt like it was a constant fight to make sure they were getting equitable services and instruction... they [general education colleagues] would say, 'hey, can you help so and so with their assignment', and I really tried to play on that and say, 'how can I help you modify this for all 20 of your kids in this class?' but they really saw me more as, how can I help the student versus how can I help the teachers.

This condition contrasted with the more collaborative nature of Haley's work before ERTL where she had a higher proportion of time and claimed she was able to provide demonstrable impact on her general education colleagues' instruction of MLLs. However, during ERTL, because she was so oppositional to the prescribed packet, she was re-positioned as the primary instructional provider for what became her MLLs – not only in terms of English language development, but also the defacto content instructor across multiple subjects.

Resistance to the Adoption of Remediation. Frustrated by the standardized and unaccommodated view of curriculum and instruction, some EL teachers lowered the academic content expectation by making the content more remedial and driven by their MLLs' levels of English proficiency. Nancy, a White English-monolingual EL high school teacher from Minnesota, shared:

I quickly made the executive decision for myself and my students that I was not going to try to introduce anything new because it was too difficult for them, a lot of my students and families to just try to keep up. So, I just was like, 'Nope, I'm not going to introduce anything new.' And that was a decision I made. It wasn't a district decision... I tread lightly when it comes to those situations and, and advocate where I can and do what I can and worst case scenario, I go behind my administrators' back and I go run photocopies anyway. Ask forgiveness instead of permission.

While Nancy took on ERTL to be adaptive and resistant, she did so in the lowering of the standards and simplifying content, language, and instruction provided to MLLs. Miriam, a Minnesota Hispanic EL teacher who was bilingual in Spanish and English to elementary students, also shared that she strayed from the standardized textbook, not using the assigned basals and critiquing the district-furnished, "wonky" online tools. She stated, "So, I started doing my own thing. I started working with functional English."

Miriam reverted to a fully English language development focus, dissuading her historic focus on academic content and language. Yet, her responses of remediation also intersected with a means of responsiveness for her students, which we turn to next.

Resistance in Responsiveness. EL teachers also took ERTL to a newer permutation by deviating fully from the curriculum and creating one that was more inclusive of their MLLs' prior experiences and identities. Miriam shared:

I started looking at stories that... we can read together. And in fact, the first few times, we met, he (an EL student) was just telling me, 'I want to show them my yard'. And I said, what? ... tell me about the weather. You know, what can you do like on a rainy day?

Miriam also detailed beneficial language impacts on MLLs language in the short time they had been apart between school closure and the two-week Spring break, stating that her MLLs were now speaking Spanish in their online meetings. "They were speaking in Spanish! I speak Spanish!" In schools, her MLLs adopted the dominant language of English, in a virtual space, Miriam and her students reclaimed the formerly English-dominant school experience to be a multilingual context, where teaching and learning could be done translingually and more fully in their home language of Spanish. Miriam described a positive repositioning with her students and families where their shared linguistic identities could be affirmed. Miriam created an interactional element of positioning where the curriculum drew from students' experiences and language, which stood in congruence with hers. Her positioning was both interactional and reflexive, but not with educators, rather students and families; a newer power equilibrium was realized through their shared racial and linguistic identities.

Valeria, a Hispanic Wisconsin EL elementary teacher who was bilingual in Spanish and English, talked about her district edict of having two lessons a week with her MLL students. She, however, resisted this requirement, increasing the minimum standard, hosting community circles and immersive writing activities, saying:

I know some people would have said, 'well, that's just too much for the students it's gonna overwhelm...' and the way I felt was, this is diversifying the lessons... I didn't listen to my district and do two lessons a week of instruction, because I know my students. Sorry, Charlie. I can't live with myself... I don't know how people can sleep at night...

Valeria shows how she did not have lowered expectations, rather higher ones and because MLLs were positioned as inaccessible by her English-dominant content area colleagues, she was positioned as their defacto primary instructor. In response, she positioned herself alongside her students interactionally and re-negotiated her professional identity in ways that refused the marginalization of both her and MLL students, arriving at a rhythm of instruction that was coherent for her MLL classroom community.

The 23 EL teachers resisted the structures and procedures their school systems had set up for teaching and learning, responding instead by creating their own curriculum packets and instructional foci. This created the opportunities for lowered standards and remediation, but it also allowed for creative responsiveness and greater provisions, particularly in cases of Spanish-speaking students with Spanish-speaking EL teachers, who otherwise felt constrained by the predominantly monolingual and English-dominant in person space of school. Similar examples of resistive and negotiated multilingualism were not described in relationship with EL teachers teaching MLLs with multiple home languages or when languages were not shared between the teacher and their students. In cases of shared language, the online medium of ERTL delivery allowed for MLLs to be more expressive and to bring their identities into the learning environments, particularly those created by their multilingual EL teachers of color. This created structure allowed for teachers' interactional positioning with their students and families, enabling them to respond to their students; a condition that was not present prior to ERTL. Thus, a newer coherence of role and identity (reflexive) emerged in collaboration with MLL families (interactional).

INTERVIEW FINDINGS: SERVICE

In the area of service, 50 of the 57 teachers assumed service duties with another 48 negotiating such services and 18 actively resisting the provision of particular services that they deemed inappropriate for their MLLs or demands that were unrealistic for them to meet during ERTL. Most code saturation in service fell into assume and negotiate with very low representation in resistance. For service, EL teachers did most of the assuming and negotiating within their own school system, community centers, and WiFi providers. Most acts of resistance fell outside of the structures of school, where EL teachers worked directly with MLL families to ensure that they had what they needed during ERTL (Table 3).

TABLE 3
Saturation Across Service in Assume, Negotiate and Resist

Service	No. of teachers out of 57	Code saturation
Assume	50	278
Negotiate	48	212
Resist	18	39

Assumed Roles in Service

Attendance Clerks for General Education Teachers. EL teachers were positioned as attendance takers, coordinating with grade level and content area teachers who were expected to provide daily reports to administration, including ELs. Susana, a Hispanic elementary EL teacher in Indiana who was a native Spanish speaker, talked about her increased responsibility for contact with MLL families.

The teachers were contacting me left and right there to help them connect with students, which I did a lot of that. I was the mediator between the parents and the teachers just because of the language. And I do have a relationship with families... I would say 98% of my parents. So, we collaborated.

Susana worked with her parents, so the content and grade level teachers could meet the daily demand for attendance as teachers were held accountable for daily tracking. Thus, during ERTL, grade level and content area teachers relied heavily on EL teachers to manage EL attendance.

Grades were held at a no harm status in most schools and so attendance or 'contact' became the focus. Bernice, a monolingual English Indiana teacher at the middle school, shared how she documented attendance in coordination with her general education colleagues in her middle school.

So... if they (MLLs) did something for us, we'll go into this attendance sheet and we'll put our initials in there for that week. And as soon as three teachers put their initial, then we stopped... so even so, even if they did five, you know, work for five teachers, only three of them counted towards this attendance sheet.

Bernice's role became more imperative because she was the primary contact for MLL families, and her colleagues relied on exclusively on her, so the rosters were positively populated. Bernice expressed concern that her energy spent on attendance deterred her from supporting instruction.

Technology Liaisons. WiFi and device availability was disparate with MLL families who had to mitigate connectivity through technology staff that were monolingual-English speakers and someone MLL families did not know. Rhonda, a White Indiana high school EL teacher who was bilingual in Spanish and English, took on the role of technology coordinator in the homes of her MLL families. She talked about the provision of technology being districtwide but supporting the

home use of such tools always fell to her. She remembered a conversation with an MLL family.

‘Hey, my Chromebook is broken Oh my God, what do I do?’ So, I gave them the information the school gave to students, but I simplified the language for them because it is in too many words and too complex

While this parent connection was important to facilitate connectivity for families, Rhonda critiqued the limited structure of their school districts that clearly needed Spanish speakers in the technology department who had the content expertise and language facility. ERTL clearly revealed the inadequacy of their districts to respond comprehensively to MLL families and how EL teachers were positioned to take on these roles because of their relationships with MLL families and their language facility. Meanwhile, the technology department benefitted from EL teachers assuming this service; a labor that went unrecognized.

Social Service Agents in Service. While EL teachers denoted that they provided service pre-ERTL, the types of services that families needed intensified during ERTL. Minnesota EL high school teacher Sara, who was White and monolingual in English, shared how she “. . . worked like social worker . . . I took on more of a motherly role. It was a lot of making sure that they had what they need. It was, well, let’s talk about how you’re feeling . . .” Although Sara’s district had identified social workers, she became the default for MLL families. In addition to meeting MLLs’ immediate needs such as food and housing, she also addressed their overall mental health needs. She assumed this role as she saw no one having a sufficient history with the families to understand how they were experiencing ERTL.

EL teachers recognized the inadequacy of resources (structure) prior and during ERTL when it came to attending to the full needs of MLL families. While all hoped for their systems to change substantially to furnish culturally and linguistically responsive services for MLL families, such was not the case, and they had to pivot quickly and thus, assumed many service-oriented roles that were imminent and timely. Given the time crunch to attend to service needs to MLLs could access instruction, teachers moved from first order to second order positioning quickly, ultimately, taking the lead step in assuming service for their MLL families.

Negotiating Service

Negotiating Service in Peripheral Ways. When it came to the negotiation of service-related roles, teachers mostly did this directly with MLL families, whereas with their school personnel, they assumed such duties. EL teachers figured out ways to coordinate and communicate with parents. Maria, a Hispanic Indiana elementary EL teacher who was bilingual in Spanish and English, shared how she connected with families outside of school because school pick up of food had limited hours.

I did that for a few weeks and then realized that it was really hard for some of the parents. So, I tell them on a certain date I will meet you. And those parents and me make it a meeting. I made it to their home. I grew up in the area . . . come out and meet me outside so they can get your packet.

Over the course of ERTL, Maria and her MLL families created their own system for receiving meals, while picking up materials for their children. Specifically, this negotiation was between the EL teacher and families and not necessarily in coordination with their schools.

Olivia, a White monolingual English high school EL teacher from Indiana, negotiated a service of connection with her MLL families who were not doing so through their schools' learning management system. Olivia shared her communication strategy.

So, I started at Google Voice and reached out to his family via Google Voice and texting. And the student responded to me and then he was sending me texts, lots of questions about what was going on, but he would not send me messages through our learning management system. He would say that 'the attacks', which I thought was interesting.

Olivia's MLL families felt unsafe logging into a learning management system and trusted tools that they had used to communicate with their families in Latin America. Greta, also a White monolingual English teacher from Indiana, discussed the use of WhatsApp and how this texting tool was most trustworthy to her MLL families and one that could be used on their smartphones, the main device of use for families. Minnesota EL elementary teacher Jackie, who was White and monolingual in English, discussed how her personal phone was the primary tool for communication. She shared, "...and the only way I could do that was using my personal phone. So, I used that to send links and text messages and lessons, just trying to find a variety of avenues to reach parents." Although the district had furnished laptops and, in many cases, free WiFi with hotspots, the smartphone was the most trusted source for MLL families. Thus, EL teachers negotiated this provision of service via their phones with and among families

facilitating increased access to instructional materials and meeting their service-related needs.

Negotiation of service was a first order positioning that teacher took on directly with their MLL families, working within and around their school systems to attend to their distinct needs. While teachers had a 'self talk' about the dissonance and frustration they had with their systems (second order positioning), there was brevity in this frustration as they moved to pragmatically meeting family needs.

Resistance in Service

Eighteen of the 57 teachers resisted their districts' protocols for in-person family contact. Despite these statements and/or protocols, some of the EL teachers resisted district policies. Polly, a White English monolingual Indiana elementary teacher, found that most MLL families were able to get a device for each school-aged child and did so in relative secrecy stating, "Shhh give me names, you know.... Shhh... tell them to come at this time, you know and I'll get them a device."

Nancy, a White English monolingual high school EL teacher from Minnesota, discussed how she attempted to honor stay at home orders and as reinforced by her administrators, but she did stray from this requirement.

... as much as I was trying to just do the distance learning and stay home, there were certain things that it was like, okay, I need to get this into my students' hands. So, I would drive over to their house, you know, ding-dong ditch the doorbell and then wave at them from my car.... I was surprised that I had to do it, but more so I was surprised that when I shared what we had done [EL team], that we were basically told we shouldn't have done that. I'm trying to reach my students in any way I can. So don't slap my hand for not following your rules.

Similarly, Beatriz, a Hispanic Indiana high school teacher who was bilingual in Spanish and English, was honest with her administrator about going to MLL families' homes to furnish services so they could connect with their service-related needs to access instruction, was confronted for her behavior. She shared, "I know my administrator sometimes gets frustrated, because he's like, 'Well, that's not your job'. I'm like, well, who else is going to do it?"

Nancy and Beatriz of Minnesota assumed the stance of doing what was needed for families despite the risk of reprimand. Importantly, EL teachers showed how their systems did not permit home visits during ERTL, which they recognized as the necessary tissue to connect home

and school. EL teachers critiqued that without home visits, educational connections were more diminished relative to other student groups.

Resistance in service, while less represented did emerge and mostly among multilingual teachers of color. Beatriz experienced first order positioning with their MLL families for services even though their administrators advised against it. MLL families were the structure, not the school, and they made this known to their administrators. Their acclaimed dissatisfaction with the system demonstrates their agency when need is met by a small team of bilingual personnel.

DISCUSSION

While roles changed for all educators during ERTL, the roles for service increased for EL teachers. EL teachers were “entangled” in the swiftly changing circumstances of their schools and communities (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018, p. 186). Interactive positionings, a first order positioning was ongoing in the context of service-related tasks as administrators showed disapproval for home visitations as it violated historic practices and stay at home health orders (Harré & Langenhove, 1991). In other cases, EL teachers responded to service-related needs imagining their principal’s disapproval. EL teachers also felt beholden to the demands of the general education teacher who wanted an attendance taker and thus required their assistance as they “knew them better”, revealing that EL teachers were ‘domesticated’ into cooperation so they could have access to their MLL families (Morgan, 2016). Over the course of ERTL, EL teachers arrived at a relative level of congruence about what service duties were best suited for their MLL families, a reflexive process (Harré & van Langenhove, 1999) and a second order positioning (Harré & Langenhove, 1991). Notably, the interactional and reflexive positioning happened between EL teachers and MLL families directly. For multilingual teachers of color, this connectivity fostered a racial and linguistic affirmation of their collective identities not experienced as deeply pre-ERTL.

For instruction, which took less time during ERTL, there was a greater representation of assuming and negotiating instruction related activities, leading to more contact with school personnel. With contact, came the challenge of what ERTL instruction should look like for MLLs, and thereby a higher interactional process of positioning was evident. EL teachers had to collaborate and/or connect with general education teachers to have instructional access. While this did lead to greater coherence for some teachers as teacher collaboration improved, dissonance was also evident as EL teachers were subjugated as ‘assistants’, a historic positioning (Farrell, 2012), and now a

domesticated one (Morgan, 2016). Whether EL teachers collaborated or self-directed, the external ascriptions of their roles remained focused on who they represented (MLLs) and not on their instructional expertise.

As EL teachers repositioned themselves and were repositioned by others during ERTL, their identities were confirmed, challenged, and reshaped (Varghese, 2016). For some, tensions between their personal positioning and external positioning forces already in play pre-COVID (Varghese & Jenkins, 2005; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018) were further polarized during ERTL. Thus, the ERTL context often reinscribed already marginalized positions of EL teachers as acting in service to MLLs, and to their institutionally legitimized general education colleagues (Farrell, 2012). This disequilibrium simultaneously diminished and subverted assertions of expertise that EL teachers brought to instruction, creating the conditions for continual identity disruptions (Varghese, 2016; Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018), yet a particular type of resilient congruence, was evident among teachers of color who spoke the native language(s) of their MLLs.

IMPLICATIONS

Since our data collection in Spring 2020, US schools have shifted through multiple iterations of partial remote teaching and learning, re-instantiations of ERTL, hybrid remote and precarious returns to in-person “schooling as usual”. Yet narratives about the “return to normalcy” suggests a static structure that can potentially refute the experiences of EL teachers and MLL families, brought into bold relief during ERTL. EL teachers’ ERTL experiences created an exploration of their first and second order positioning, demonstrating their creative and subversive means of agency. Their varied agentic performances across service and instruction reveal how their LTIs were reaffirmed and how it offered them resilience during ERTL.

As Figure 4 demonstrates, EL teachers assumed, negotiated, and resisted roles within instruction and service and worked in peripheral ways around the structured (gray-dotted-arrows). While this demonstrates a creative form of agency, EL teachers hoped for a more direct reformation of their systems. To this end, we illustrate what the EL teacher resisters identified as the more reciprocal relationship with their senior administrators, general education colleagues that did not manifest during ERTL. Working within and through service and instruction in schools with a distributive form of interaction, where the power relationships are in greater equilibrium, LTIs can be more deeply understood and examined (black-double sided arrow). When

Positioning Theory & Language Teacher Identity

Responsive Resistance for Language Teacher Identity

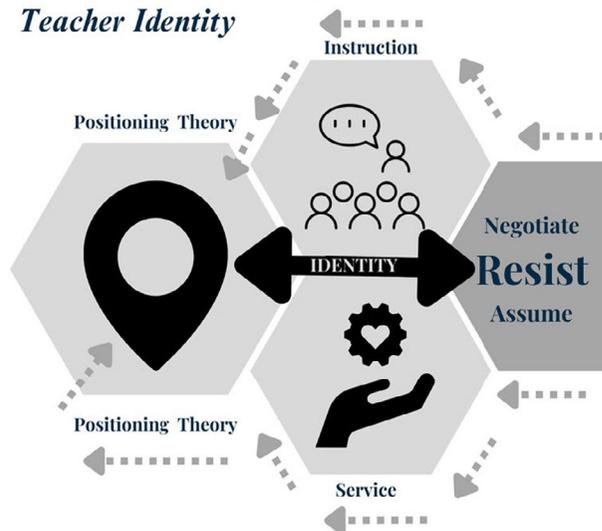


FIGURE 4. Responsive resistance for language teacher identity.

LTIs are understood more deeply, we can offer tools and strategies to the assumers, negotiators, and resisters, so they understand the emotionality of their commitments, and that they possess a distinct and worthy logic of advocacy (Zembylas & Chubbuck, 2018). Importantly, this process furnishes key insights to general education educators on how they domesticate and naturalize EL teachers' roles that centralizes their instruction and content as the most valued (Morgan, 2016); a research call we make to the field of multilingual education (Figure 4).

The positionings EL teachers shared herein are an augmented reality of the misalignments that regularly play out across the myriad roles that EL teachers are positioned to adopt. Many are framed by their central commitments in their identities as educators, advocates, and caretakers of MLLs in educational spaces, revealing a distinct form of resilience; a worthy teacher characteristic in our future casting of equity grounded settings for MLLs.

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