

“The level happens.”
Non-native English-speaking teachers’ views
on learning, using, and maintaining English

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Renee Lüskow

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Abstract

Throughout the world English is taught as a foreign language, generally by teachers who also learned it as a foreign tongue. These non-native English-speaking teachers (non-NESTs) can serve as excellent role models because they themselves are successful language learners. However, non-NESTs interact primarily with lower-level learners and may not have access to in-service training to help them maintain their language skills. Without new input, non-NESTs may experience fossilization or language attrition in their levels of English over the course of their teaching careers. Previous studies have indicated that the level of teachers' language skills and their self-confidence regarding these skills has an impact on how they teach. This leads to the question of how non-NESTs see themselves in terms of language competence.

This qualitative study examines German non-NESTs' perceptions of their own foreign language skills and describes the language change they have observed since entering the profession. The research questions posed were whether the teachers notice differences, positive or negative, in their English after so many years of teaching, and, if so, if these differences affect them in any way. The data stem from semi-structured interviews, site visits, and can-do lists in which teachers were asked about how they learned English and how they evaluate their current skill levels as teachers and users of the language.

All of the participants have noted changes in their language levels since the completion of their studies, and these changes involve both loss and gain. Attrition was observed in the areas of articulatory phonetics, oral fluency, and high academic discourse competence; whereas continued acquisition was identified in the expansion of vocabulary and improved mastery of grammar and spelling. Although the non-NESTs were generally satisfied with their current language skills as teachers, some reported a desire for continuing language development activities in order to become more competent language users. Most non-NESTs teaching at lower-level schools or working with younger learners said they believe language maintenance activities should be closely related to their work and relevant to their profession. Non-NESTs working at upper-level schools expressed less concern over language loss and were more confident about their current language skill levels, yet they were also more willing to invest in and organize their own continuing language development, independent of their jobs.

Abstract (deutsch)

Englisch wird weltweit als Fremdsprache unterrichtet, zumeist von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern, deren Muttersprache nicht Englisch ist. Diese sogenannten „non-native English speaking teachers“ (non-NESTs) haben die Sprache zunächst selbst im schulischen Umfeld gelernt und sind daher hervorragend in der Lage, sich in die Situation der Lernenden hineinzusetzen bzw. ihnen als Sprachlernvorbild zu dienen. Der Umgang mit SchülerInnen, deren Fremdsprachenkenntnisse unter denen der Lehrkräfte liegen, kann jedoch zu einem reduzierten sprachlichen Input und damit eventuell zur Fossilisierung bzw. zu Verlusten in der Beherrschung des Englischen führen.

Die vorliegende qualitative Studie widmet sich der Frage, wie deutsche Non-NESTs die Entwicklung ihrer Fremdsprachenkenntnisse wahrnehmen. Sie beschreibt auch Veränderungen in der Sprachkompetenz, die diese Lehrerinnen und Lehrer seit ihrem Berufseintritt bei sich beobachtet haben. Anhand von Einzelinterviews, Selbsteinschätzungsbögen und Hospitationen werden sowohl Bereiche eruiert, in denen die Probanden Sprachverluste wahrnehmen als auch solche, in denen sie einen Sprachzuwachs empfinden. Sprachverluste werden von den Lehrkräften vor allem auf den Gebieten der Phonetik, des flüssigen Sprechens und des wissenschaftlichen Schreibens beobachtet. Einen Sprachzuwachs nehmen die befragten Lehrerinnen und Lehrer hingegen in den Bereichen Grammatik, Rechtschreibung und Wortschatz wahr.

Die Mehrheit der Probanden ist mit ihrem derzeitigen Sprachentwicklungsstand zufrieden und empfindet ihn als ausreichend für die schulische Arbeit. Einige Teilnehmer aber suchen nach Möglichkeiten der Festigung und Erweiterung ihrer Sprachkenntnisse, z. B. durch entsprechende Fortbildungsmaßnahmen. Lehrkräfte an Grund- und Regionalschulen wünschen sich von der Fortbildung einen direkten Bezug zur ihrer Tätigkeit. Lehrkräfte an Gymnasien berichten, dass sie weniger vom Gefühl des Sprachverlusts betroffen sind jedoch eher bereit sind, in ihre sprachliche Weiterentwicklung zu investieren.

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List of terms and common abbreviations

EFL	English as a foreign language
ESL	English as a second language
GT	Grounded Theory
L1	a first or native language, learned from birth on, learned from ones parents and native community
L2	a second language, learned after and in addition to a L1
NEST	native English-speaking teacher
non-NEST	non-native English-speaking teacher (also NNEST)
NNS	non-native speaker of a language
NS	native speaker of a language
PD	professional development
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
RP	received pronunciation, standard academic British pronunciation
SLA	Second Language Acquisition
TESOL	Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages
inner circle	countries where English is widely spoken and in which the majority of citizens are presumed to be “native speakers”, e.g. Britain, Ireland, Canada, the USA, Australia, and New Zealand
outer circle	countries in which English is an additional language with wide acceptance or is recognized as an official state language for many administrative purposes, e.g. India, Singapore, Kenya
expanding circle	countries in which English is often learned and understood, but is not necessary in order to function on a daily basis, e.g. Germany
<i>Abitur</i>	final exams and degree obtained at a <i>Gymnasium</i>
<i>Arbeit, Wirtschaft, Technik (AWT)</i>	a comprehensive course of “work, economy, technology” covering a range of topics
<i>Beurteilung</i>	an evaluation
<i>Grundschule</i>	primary school, currently grades 1-4 in MV
<i>Gymnasium</i>	the top-tiered school, leading to the <i>Abitur</i> after grade 12 in MV
<i>Hauptschule</i>	the lowest-tiered school, grants a basic certificate after grade 9
<i>Land, Länder</i>	a state, states. Germany is divided into 16 federal states, each of which is responsible for its own education system

<i>Mittlere Reife</i>	final exams and the degree obtained at a <i>Realschule</i>
MV	Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, the north-eastern <i>Land</i> in Germany, was part of East Germany until 1990
<i>Realschule</i>	the middle-tiered school, leading to standard certification after grade 10
<i>Referendariat</i>	the “second phase” of teacher education, following university graduation, in which student teachers receive in-service training and work independently
<i>Regionalschule</i>	the combined forms of <i>Hauptschule</i> and <i>Realschule</i> in one school, the norm in MV
<i>Sozialkunde</i>	a course of “social studies” relating to societal organization and the systems which guide and regulate society
SSI	Semi-structured interview
TAP	Think-aloud protocol
<i>Vergleichsarbeiten</i> (VerA)	comparative testing administered in grades 6 and 8 for the subjects German, math, and English
<i>Volkshochschule</i>	a community college or evening school which grants school degrees at all levels as well as providing vocational courses
<i>Zeugnis</i>	a report card or list of marks, issued at the end of a semester, often contains a written evaluation or character marks

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Teachers ... are concerned with both language and teaching, and the trick is to get the balance right between the two.” (Seidlhofer 1996:72)

This study focuses on English language teachers in northeastern Germany and their perceptions of their own changing language abilities over the course of their careers. In this study, I explore how the teachers see their English skills, both as users and instructors of the language, and then look at how these views influence their role as teachers and their participation in language maintenance activities. The goal of this project is not to examine the teachers’ overall language competence, or to test their effectiveness as instructors. Instead, I investigate the role that self-perceived levels of language competence play for these teachers. In studying learner biographies, feelings about language change, and self-perceptions of their skill levels, I focus on the point of view of the individual educator in order to gain an understanding of the participants’ language needs. It was not until I had heard from the teachers themselves and had analyzed their own words that I attempted to identify their perceived strengths or weaknesses, and the relative importance of these factors, as teachers seek to find a balance between “both language and teaching.”

The 20 participants in this study teach English as a school subject from grade levels three to 12, and all of them are native speakers of German. Like most other English teachers in the public school system, they are non-NESTs (non-native English-speaking teachers) who first learned English in a school classroom setting. After finishing school, they spent at least four years studying English at university and then up to two years working as in-service teachers before receiving final state certification. The German school system requires teachers to have a high level of training, including double academic majors and coursework in educational theory. Thus, these teachers are highly qualified professionals who, in the words of a Newsweek magazine report, “really know their stuff” (Waldrop 1991:46).

In recent years, there has been a critical public discussion about the effectiveness of these teachers. German pupils ranked lower than expected on international comparison tests at the turn of the millennium, prompting the question of whether the fault lies with the pupils, their parents, the structure of the educational system, or the teachers. Pointed criticism has been leveled at the teacher training system, and doubts have been

expressed about whether teachers are well-prepared for the job. Teachers in Germany may have an excellent theoretical background, but some critics claim they come to the classroom unprepared to teach the material effectively (Darnstädt et al. 2001), and English teachers are seen as no exception (Busse 2001).

Against the backdrop of this debate, I found it difficult to reconcile what I was hearing and reading about the problems in the educational system with what I was being told by the teachers themselves. The English teachers I knew had quite different opinions about what was “wrong,” and raised a different set of concerns. In a previous project (Flibotte-Lüskow 1999), I had spoken with a dozen English teachers in eastern Germany about what had changed and what had stayed the same in their jobs after German reunification. All of the participants in these discussions told me that they saw themselves as very good language teachers, but that they were not satisfied with their own levels of proficiency in English. I was surprised to hear from all of them that they were concerned about their language skills, and wished to improve them.

It was this dichotomy that caused me to wonder what these non-NESTs really expect of themselves, and how they see themselves as users and teachers of English. According to the media and education experts in the political realm, these teachers “know their stuff,” and should instead focus on how they convey material to the learners in their classrooms. Yet teachers I know personally told me that, while they see themselves as effective educators, they are worried that their language skills might not be sophisticated enough. In other words, they had no trouble teaching English in schools, but they were not confident as English speakers. These conversations led me to wonder whether other non-NESTs are also concerned about their language abilities.

It is quite possible that many English teachers throughout the world worry about their English skills to some extent. Numerous studies (Tang 1997, Reves & Medgyes 1994, Thomas 1999, and Kamhi-Stein, Lee & Lee 1999) have shown that language instructors who are not native speakers often voice concerns about their abilities—not necessarily as teachers, but as users of English. Seidlhofer (1996:76) quoted one non-NEST, who had “*confidence: as a teacher – insecurity: as a speaker.*” This reflected the feelings of many teachers I know and it was this contradiction—i.e., that a person might be a confident teacher but an insecure user of a language—that encouraged me to examine non-NEST views in terms of both “speaking” and “teaching.”

Teachers of English are generally expected to have the best language skills possible, not only to ensure they are capable of instructing others, but also to permit them to define themselves as experts in the language. Is it possible that some non-NESTs have “insecurity” as English speakers; and, if so, does this feeling in any way undermine their “confidence” as educators? It would be important to know whether teachers with a positive self-image as language users see themselves as being more motivated, effective, or resilient as language educators. In turn, would teachers with a weaker self-image be unable to imagine themselves as good language instructors? In short, I wanted to find out whether the non-NESTs are concerned about their own language skills, how they see themselves as speakers and users of English, and whether they are worried about “getting the balance right.”

It could be argued that anyone who holds the position of “English teacher” has a certain mastery of language skills, and that a person who was not proficient in a subject area would not be a teacher. It might therefore be expected that English teachers are, by default, people who are competent in English, and who have a generally positive image of themselves as language learners and users. Because this might not always be the case, I was interested in finding out more about the importance English teachers assign to their own language learning and upkeep. What actions do they, can they, and should they take in order to maintain and improve their own competence as speakers of English? What is being done, and what else can be done, to assist them in their efforts? Finally, are these issues at all important to them as language teachers, or do other aspects of their jobs have a higher priority?

There seems to be a general assumption that, in situations in which one person is teaching EFL and another person or group of people are learning it, the person teaching the language is no longer a learner. A teacher, by definition, teaches the material, and hence must already know the material; thus, the terms “instructor” and “learner” are often seen as mutually exclusive. Yet EFL teachers, and especially non-NESTs, may very well still be adding to their own language repertoire. They also may face language attrition over time unless they take active steps to maintain their language skills. Hence, in this study I examine teachers’ previous and ongoing language learning, as well as areas of possible weakness, loss, or uncertainty. In conjunction with this investigation, I

seek to identify the strategies teachers use to maintain and improve their language skills over the course of their professional lives.

To address the research questions posed in this study, I use in-depth, qualitative methods, such as semi-structured interviews, self-evaluations, task reflection commentaries, Can-Do questionnaires, and informal reports of personal goal-setting. In Chapter 2, I explore previous research on non-NESTs and their relationship to the language, including how they obtained their qualifications and learned the foreign language they teach, and how their language skills may have changed over time based on what is known about retention, attrition, and maintenance. In Chapter 3, I outline the data and the methods used in this study, including the reasons for their application. I describe the types of data and data collection, as well as the steps taken to analyze the data, both during and after collection, and the initial findings. In Chapters 4 and 5 I present the results obtained, first as selected case studies for three individuals, and then for all 20 participants. I provide a short summary in Chapter 6 and discuss the relevance of this study for the individuals involved and for policy makers who deal with questions regarding continuing language learning for teachers. Samples of the materials used in the study, as well as an example of an interview text transcription, are provided in the appendix.

2. BACKGROUND ON NON-NESTs AND LANGUAGE CHANGE

In this background chapter, I begin by defining the term “non-NEST” from a global perspective, and present previous research on teachers who are not native speakers. I then describe how non-NESTs function as English teachers in Germany. Finally, I summarize previous research on language acquisition, retention, and loss; and conclude with ideas about how language change may be relevant for the non-NESTs in this study.

2.1 Non-NESTs in TESOL

The field of TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) is both professional and academic. Various strands of research on language teaching and learning tie in with fields such as linguistics, psychology, education, and public policy.

Members of the TESOL community form a global network of teachers, curriculum designers, and authors of teaching materials, covering both EFL and ESL. Over the past few decades, a discussion has been taking place in TESOL newsletters and academic journals, as well as at conferences, about two categories of English teachers, and about the implications these two categories have for learners, the educational systems in which the teachers work, and for the teachers themselves. The debate has centered on the distinction between teachers who are “native speakers” (NS) of English and those who are not. People who are not native speakers of a language are said to be “non-native speakers” (NNS).

2.1.1 Definitions of native, non-native, and near-native

Who is considered to be a “native speaker” of a language? Lightbown & Spada (1993) defined the term as “a person who has learned a language from an early age and who has full mastery of that language” (1993:124). The term is a “bio-developmental definition” (Davies 1995:156) because it is based upon factors over which an individual has no control. A person cannot influence where she or he was born and grew up, what language(s) his or her parents spoke, or what language was used during his or her early and formative school instruction. A person who speaks a language fluently, demonstrating a high level of grammatical accuracy and using a wide range of vocabulary, may be seen as a “near-native” speaker. However, unless the language was acquired first and early in life, it is unlikely that this person will claim to be a true NS, nor will he or she be seen as such by others. When defining a person as an NS, overall language competence, even if it is at the level of “full mastery,” is less important than the age of acquisition. But because of the special role English has come to play in the world, the definition of the term “native speaker of English” is much more fluid and controversial than it was just a few decades ago.

English is now the world’s primary language of commerce, travel, and research, and it certainly is useful for general communication. However, the spread of English has also made the language an object of resentment for many who see the global use of English as a largely negative development. English has been called a “tyrannosaurus rex” (Swales 1997:373) or the “killer language” (Mühlhäusler 1996, quoting Pakir at the Conference on Austronesian Linguistics held in 1991), edging out all other tongues.

English has come a long way from being perceived as the language of the British Empire or of American imperialism, but there is still a heated discussion about what “English” really is today, and about who has the right to assert what the norms are and what models are acceptable. At a British Council meeting in 1984, Kachru and Quirk argued about who “owns” English, and to what extent the nations of “native speakers” should be allowed to dictate what forms of English are taught, and by whom (see Quirk & Widdowson 1985). Whereas Quirk was in favor of “a single, monochrome standard” (Quirk 1985:6), Kachru (1985) argued that people who have traditionally identified themselves as NSs of English need to realize that the rest of the world is moving away from adhering to Oxford English, Harvard English, or even mid-north-Atlantic English as the desirable norm, and that the “native speakers” needed to acknowledge and respect this shift. Ardó (1997) also criticized a standard of “nativeness” that focuses nearly exclusively on Britain and the USA. Citing studies analyzing the contents of the 1992 Longman “Dictionary of English Language and Culture,” Ardó showed that this reference work, which claims to help users gain access to “the very heart of English” and to get into “the head of the native speaker,” in fact contains a form of English that is 50% British, 40% American, and a mere 10% Australian, Irish, and African. None of the sources used reflect the English spoken in countries such as India, Nigeria, or Singapore, which led Ardó to conclude that “some native speakers are a pinch more native than others” (1997:2).

Widdowson (1994) pointed out that NSs of English are understandably proud and pleased that their language is international, “but the point is that it is only international to the extent that it is not their language” (1994:385) anymore. The terms “English as an international language” (EIL) or “World English” have caught on, and are now being held up as new ideals. The concept of World English brings with it new problems, in that it “belongs to everyone who speaks it, but it is nobody’s mother tongue,” (Rajagopalan, 2004:111). This in turn implies that World English can have neither NSs nor NNSs, as everyone who uses it becomes a “speaker of World English” by default. Ferguson’s (1992) introduction to Kachru’s book “The Other Tongue: English Across Cultures” referred to the “mystique of the native speaker.” According to Ferguson, this concept “should probably be quietly dropped from the linguist’s set of professional myths about language.” The lexicographer Paikeday (1985) went so far as to title a

publication with the simple assertion that “the native speaker is dead,” and to declare that no one can claim such a label, at least not for the English language.

The most vocal proponents of World English and EIL are based not in countries of the “inner circle” (e.g., Australia, Britain, or the USA), but rather in parts of Asia or Africa, where English is used officially, but the majority of the population are not regarded as true NSs. Such countries belong to the “outer circle” (Kachru 1985), where the status of “proper” English often has a direct bearing on the way English is used in these countries, and on how the speakers of these forms are seen in the world. Linguists and policy makers in “expanding circle” countries (where English is learned as a foreign language and is not used officially), especially in Europe, have been much less willing to dismiss British or American as a standard, and still seek to distinguish between native and non-native speakers. This may be because of the close proximity of Great Britain, but it is more likely because English is viewed as foreign. Learners in these countries may seek to become competent users of or fluent in the language, but they do not view English as a “native” element of their culture, nor do they expect their accents, constructions, or different uses of phrases in English to be recognized as a new regional dialect or as an “equal” form of English. Medgyes (1992) stated that there is no need to recognize all non-native varieties of English as equal, and Ridjanovic (1983) pointed out that, while the world might accept the outer circle variety of “Pakistani English,” this would not be true for the expanding circle version of “Yugoslav English.”

Thus, the profile of an NS remains distinct from that of an NNS, and there seems to be no prospect that these two categories might be interchangeable. Although a person may become fluent in a language and be able to function in many different situations, Medgyes (1992) asserted that NNSs cannot aspire to be NSs: “A select few come quite close to native competence but sooner or later they are halted by a glass wall” (1992:342). In most expanding circle countries where English is taught as a foreign language, the NS is not dead at all, but continues to function as a role model and expert for most learners.

2.1.2 Definition of non-NEST

Not everyone who teaches English learned the language as a native language. The majority of English teachers in the world today are “non-native English-speaking

teachers.” A non-NEST is a teacher who has learned English as a second or foreign language, and who may or may not share the same native language with the people he or she teaches. A Swede who has learned and studied English and teaches it to a group of Swedes in Stockholm will be working with a homogenous group with whom he or she shares a linguistic background. The same Swede could also teach English to Italian migrants in London, in which case the learners’ language backgrounds would be dissimilar to the teacher’s. In both cases, a non-NEST is defined not by the learners she or he works with or the setting in which she or he teaches, but by his or her relationship to English and lack of “nativeness.”

Most English teachers throughout the world are non-NESTs, a fact easily explained by the sheer number of English learners (Braine 2005). Canagarajah (1999) claimed that four out of five English teachers worldwide did not learn English as a first language (L1). Not only do non-NESTs greatly outnumber NESTs, their numbers are increasing at a higher rate from year to year (Crystal 1995, Graddol 1997). Non-NESTs play an important role in TESOL, and are a central fixture of most educational systems, yet they have only recently emerged as a unique group of educators in their profession.

Until later in the 20th century, most researchers and teacher educators did not differentiate between English teachers who claimed English as a L1 and those who had learned it as a second or foreign language. Early research on non-NESTs was often embedded in studies on training for future foreign language teachers. These studies looked at aspects of culture and attitudes in foreign language classrooms (Valdman 1978), as well as classroom practice (Lee 1974). It was widely thought that, although English teachers did not need to be perfect, they should certainly have a solid set of language skills that were “error-free in the classroom” (Stevens 1977:71). Subsequent research examined not only the language competence of non-native speakers (El-Banna 1987) and the possible impact of competence levels on learners (Jacobs & Friedman 1988), but also whether non-native teachers might offer a different perspective than their native counterparts when dealing with learning steps and problems (Davies 1983, Kresovich 1988). Interest in non-natives centered mainly on their training, often in the context of graduate programs in the USA (Greis 1984), but also in other parts of the world (Peretz 1988). The terms “non-natives” or “non-NESTs” for these teachers first started to appear in the 1980s (Greis 1984), but were not yet widespread.

It was not until the 1990s that English teachers who were not NSs truly became a focus of research, whereby academic interest followed popular discussion. As early as 1991, the executive board of TESOL published a “Statement on Nonnative Speakers of English and Hiring Practices” (Forhan 1992), in which they pledged to publicize only job announcements from employers seeking teachers based upon professional qualifications. Any wording mentioning “native-speaker” was prohibited because it implied that non-native speakers were not qualified and suggested they could not have achieved “excellence in English language proficiency” (1992:3). Two years later, Medgyes published *“The non-native teacher”* (Medgyes 1994), a highly influential book in which he compared differences between English teachers who were NSs and those who were NNSs. Around this time, discussion groups and prominent journals began to use the term “non-NEST” as a standard abbreviation.

Kamhi-Stein (2004a) divided subsequent research on non-NESTs into three phases. In the mid-1990s, studies focused on the self-images these teachers had; while in the late 1990s the researchers were more concerned with the “minority” status of non-native speaking professionals and their “authenticity” (Kamhi-Stein 2004a:1). In the final phase, which continues into the present time, scholars have examined how teachers are seen by others and what the term “non-NESTs” means to the profession. It is generally acknowledged that a colloquium organized by George Braine at the 30th TESOL convention held in Chicago in 1996, at which both native and non-native teachers spoke of the problems and prejudices non-NESTs often face, sparked wider interest in non-NEST issues. The response to the topic was overwhelming, and two years later the TESOL directorial board approved the formation of a special caucus within TESOL to address the interests and concerns of these teachers. The term “non-NEST” was then shortened to “NNEST” for the group’s logo and website. In 1999, Braine’s book, “Non-native educators in English Language Teaching” was published, and in March of that same year, the first “NNEST Newsletter” appeared on the TESOL website (<http://www.tesol.org>). The newsletter provided a forum for discussions on hiring practices, self-reflection, academic publishing, and discrimination problems. In June 2003, the TESOL board of directors issued an even stronger position statement on teacher quality, in which they called for qualifications in all areas of the field, and stated explicitly that there should be no discrimination against teachers based on their place of

birth, race, or similar factors. The days in which being an NS was the sole prerequisite for teaching ESL or EFL were drawing to a close. The first decade of the 21st century saw an even stronger surge in interest non-NEST issues, with large numbers of books and articles authored or edited by members of the caucus (e.g., Medgyes 2001, Miranda 2003, Kamhi-Stein 2004b, Lee 2004, Llorca 2005, or Braine 2005).

2.1.3 Debates, tensions, and resolutions concerning non-NESTs

Teachers who claim English as a native language are often awarded special privileges that their non-NEST counterparts are not. Some learners and many school employers assume that a person who started learning English at a young age must inherently be a better teacher than a person who began learning English in school or later in life. Early examples of such claims include statements made at the Commonwealth Conferences on the Teaching of English as a Second Language in 1961 (Maum 2002) and 1962 (Phillipson 1992a), where the native speaker as “the ideal teacher of English” was omnipresent. Inbar’s (2001, and Inbar-Lourie 2005) studies in Israel showed that self-identified NESTs were more likely than non-NESTs to agree with the idea that NSs are superior teachers. She referred to “power issues evident in the English language teaching profession” (2005:90) in a country in which the boundaries are not always clear. Even after years of discussion and research have called it into question, this general claim persists, and is made by both native and non-native speakers.

In the same year that TESOL banned job announcements referring to “native speakers only” from its publications, Freudenstein (1991) claimed in an EU policy statement that “the native speaker should become the standard foreign-language teacher within the countries of the European Community. They know best what is important in the language teaching of tomorrow” (1991, as quoted in Phillipson 1992b:13). Private language schools often hire NSs exclusively, perhaps assuming that learners will be willing to pay more for the privilege of being taught by an NS than by a fellow countryman who is fluent in English. And, of course, native speakers themselves are often interested in perpetuating the myth of their supposed superiority when competing for teaching positions or contracts with private clients, as doing so gives them an edge in the job market. Numerous studies have reported that, in school settings, both pupils and their parents often believe that a native speaker is superior to a qualified local

instructor, regardless of whether the focus of the class is EFL (Cheung & Braine 2007, Chiba, Matsuura & Yamamoto 1995), ESL (Liang 2002, Flynn & Gulikers 2001, Mahboob 2003), traditional English instruction, or even another subject taught in English (Clayton 2000, Ding 2000, Pacek 2005, Jordan 2010).

It is true that people who teach English to speakers of other languages must speak English themselves, but it is wrong to assume that anyone who can speak English is automatically able to teach it. Being a native speaker of English “is deficient as preparation for being a language teacher,” and those people who can offer nothing more in terms of skills or qualifications “will never contribute successfully to the English language education of their learners” (Fukumura 1993:29). One important deficit of a native speaker, even a qualified professional, is that she or he does not share the cultural and linguistic background of the learners. While a native speaker brings his or her own culture to the classroom and is an expert at learning English as an L1, the non-NEST is an expert at learning English as an L2 and may be able to help the learners more because of this shared experience. Some researchers have contended that non-NESTs are, in many cases, the better teachers overall because they are more sympathetic to the process their pupils are going through, are better able to anticipate problems and misunderstandings, have two different means of communicating and explaining, and are excellent role models for their learners (Rampton 1990, Phillipson 1992b, Seidlhoffer 1996). Native speakers who do not know the language of their learners cannot respond to misunderstandings and may discourage learners because they have a daunting aura of linguistic competence to which their pupils can never aspire.

In supporting these ideas, Medgyes (1992:340) asked “who is worth more,” and noted that there is a difference between considering who is a more effective teacher and whose English is better overall. He observed that there will always be disparities in language levels between NESTs and non-NESTs, even if “liberal-minded researchers often shut their eyes to the glaring differences” (1992:343). The “glass wall” may be impenetrable for non-NESTs, but this does not mean that they should not continually strive to improve their English. NESTs may also have areas in which they can improve, but they will always be the stronger speakers when compared with non-NESTs, and the two groups “will never become indistinguishable” (1992:349). Medgyes (1994) also asserted that the obvious differences in language ability between NESTs and non-

NESTs also account for differences in teaching practice between the two groups. The two types of teachers can be equally effective in their own ways, but each must work on their deficits. Ideally, a NEST would become sensitized to the issues of the learners, and a non-NEST would seek to improve his or her language skills. In the following, research on non-NEST's relationship with the language, and the influences this relationship has in the classroom, is portrayed.

2.1.4 Past research on non-NESTs' relationships with their L2

Regardless of whether non-NESTs see themselves as proficient or weak speakers, and whether EFL learners benefit more or less from having non-NESTs in the classroom, the fact remains that non-NESTs are defined as such for one overriding reason: because English is not their first or native language, they often do not speak the language in the same way a native speaker does. The language skills of non-NESTs who teach English around the world range from the "near-native speaker" who is indistinguishable from an NS counterpart to all but the most discriminating listeners, to the teacher who has only a rudimentary command of the language and is barely one step ahead of the students. Especially in expanding circle EFL settings, non-NESTs may have several shortcomings, especially in the areas of language intuition, authentic input, and colloquial or idiomatic expressions. These deficits are partly due to a lack of professional development opportunities (Liu 2009).

Numerous studies have shown that teachers' perceptions of their own abilities or lack thereof in the subject matter have a direct influence on the decisions they make in the classroom, and on how they see themselves as educators. Borg (2001) observed both NESTs and non-NESTs, and asked them how they approached teaching grammar. His findings confirmed those of Grossman et al. (1989), who stated that teachers who are "uncertain of their own knowledge" of the subject matter "tried to avoid teaching it wherever possible" (1989:28). When faced with grammar situations in the classroom, a native speaker and a non-NEST who had both reported feeling insecure about grammar changed the topic or altered their manner of dealing with students. The level of insecurity not only influenced the quality and clarity of the subject matter taught, it also affected how teachers interacted with learners in terms of eye contact and speed.

Keys & Walker (2002) cited examples of non-NESTs who avoid teaching pronunciation “because of a sense of inadequacy with respect to their own accent,” as they are not native speakers (2002:299). They did not go into detail concerning interpersonal reactions, but it is safe to assume that this “sense of inadequacy” would also affect the dynamics of the classroom. Murdoch (1994) spoke with pre-service teachers in Sri Lanka and discovered that nearly 90% of them believed that “a teacher’s confidence is most dependent on his or her own degree of language competence” (1994:258). Other researchers investigating ELTs’ needs around the world (e.g., Scholefield 1996, Ng & Tang 1997, or Takada 2000) echoed the idea that language competence and perceptions of competence influence how teachers view themselves and how they interact with pupils.

Reves & Medgyes (1994) surveyed 216 English teachers in 10 countries, including four in Europe (Hungary, Sweden, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia, before the political dissolution of the latter two). They found that non-NESTs saw themselves as lacking in linguistic competence, and stated that the “realization of this inadequacy is the strongest factor biasing non-NESTs’ self-perception and teaching attitudes” (1994:357). Their findings also included the unexpected insight that teachers with better qualifications did not necessarily see themselves as having a higher level of command. While allowing for the possibility that ELTs with higher qualifications simply expect more from themselves and are more self-critical, the authors also noted that many of their subjects learned EFL “in an isolated and artificial context” (1994:358), and were therefore convinced that they could never attain a high level of language competence. The survey respondents ranked the specific areas of unease, with access to a wide range of vocabulary topping the list. This was closely followed by insecurity regarding speaking skills and fluency, and by pronunciation. Grammar was the one area in which non-NESTs reported having confidence, as it was perceived as being “more concrete and more learnable” (1994:362). Reves & Medgyes concluded that non-NESTs teach differently, and that these differences are mainly due to proficiency in English, with the perception of differences affecting attitudes towards work and the non-NEST’s own self-image.

The ability to speak the foreign language can, however, also be a source of security for non-NESTs, and it is often one of the few constants they are able to control when

preparing to become teachers. Barnes (2006) noted that beginning teachers “feel their linguistic confidence is in their control” (2006:43), unlike other concerns they cannot influence, such as pupil behavior, time issues, and dealing with parents. Hence, a foreign language teacher in training may feel that improving his or her language skills is one of the most concrete areas she or he can work on in order to be ready for the classroom. Other pedagogical skills may be more difficult to master, and may be acquired only after a teacher has left the training situation and entered the field. This is not to say that language learning cannot and should not continue once a teacher begins work in the classroom. Lee (2003) responded to the provocative question of “is our English good enough to teach English” by reminding non-NESTs that “we have to be teacher and learner at the same time,” and “pursue ongoing language improvement that addresses our specific language needs” (2003:5). Miranda (2003) echoed this advice, reminding non-NESTs to continue to work in two main areas, “the language itself and language teaching pedagogy” (2003:1), with both being equally important. She recommended that teachers work on their passive language skills (reading and listening comprehension), as these are “private activities” that teachers can do on their own, taking advantage of “ample and accessible means that allow effortless improvement” (2003:3). While allowing that productive skills (writing and speaking) are not as easy to sharpen or keep up, “especially if you reside in an environment where English is taught as a foreign language,” she advised non-NESTs to actively seek out opportunities for language work if they “want to advance professionally” (2003:3).

Studies of non-NEST language competence in English show different levels of L2 ability throughout the world. Much of the research is being conducted by non-NESTs who are native to the country studied. El-Banna (1987, 1990) compared graduates of different teacher preparation programs in the Egyptian university system, and found that there was a wide range of ability levels, strongly dependent upon the level of school at which the teacher worked. A study of Spanish teachers produced similar results: Llorca & Huguet (2003) noted differences in the self-perceived language abilities between primary and secondary school teachers in Spain, and found that the primary teachers tended to be more pessimistic about their skills in English. Butler (2004) also investigated primary teachers’ self-reported language competence in Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, and reported that these teachers had stronger receptive than productive skills.

The same criticisms of the language preparedness of graduates of teacher training programs were made by Al-Hazmi (2003) in Saudi Arabia, and, decades earlier, by Harasawa (1974) in Japan. Lee (2003) cited inconsistencies in the Hong Kong system regarding benchmark testing for teachers, and described the levels of competence of English teachers. Kasule (2003) characterized the level of English proficiency of future teachers in parts of Africa as adequate for elementary education in rural schools, but lacking at higher levels.

Speaking at an international conference in Indonesia, Sadtono (1995) reminded non-NEST professionals that the international accreditation of TESOL instructors lies solely with foreign, “native” experts, such as the Cambridge syndicate, and that there is often no way to specifically tailor certificates to the special needs and tasks that non-NESTs will be expected to perform in the contexts where they work. Elder (2001) pointed out that, for Language for Specific Purposes (LSP) teachers, training in the concepts and terminology of their particular field is just as important as becoming a proficient speaker of English and a master of classroom management, and that these areas are often forgotten when examining overall foreign language “competence.”

In light of this global research on non-NESTs, we will now look at Germany and the historical role played by non-NESTs in the German educational system. In addition to examining the qualifications and training of non-NESTs, an overview of current discussions about their abilities and effectiveness as teachers is provided.

2.2 Non-NESTs in Germany

The majority of English teachers in Germany are non-NESTs who are state-certified, and who received their training through the university system and subsequent student-teacher training programs. This professionalization of language teaching is, from a historical perspective, a relatively new phenomenon. Through the end of the 19th century there was no need to have a large number of foreign language teachers, for English or any other language. Learners of a foreign tongue were usually members of private households who worked with tutors or language masters engaged by the family. These tutors were either native speakers or well-traveled individuals who had mastered the language elsewhere. Teachers’ qualifications varied and were not officially or centrally monitored. Thus, there was no set definition of what an English teacher was or

what sort of language abilities a teacher must have. Only as English gradually came to be regarded as an important foreign language and as German schools began to offer it to larger numbers of students, were more English teachers needed. It was not until the 20th century that the idea emerged that a person who wished to become an “English teacher” needed special training and certification. Even today, the qualifications of English teachers, both as educators of a foreign language and as speakers and users of the language, are still being actively discussed.

2.2.1 History of teaching English and English teachers in Germany

It has always been necessary to learn foreign languages in order to trade with other nations. This need-based learning is often defined as the acquisition of “marketplace” language skills. According to the marketplace tradition, the need for active language learning ceases once the basic goal has been met; i.e., once the learner is able to communicate at a level sufficient for doing business and reaching his or her immediate goals. There is also the “monastery tradition,” in which a language is learned to fulfill a certain social norm (cf. McArthur 1983:12-13). Both traditions pertain to English language learning in Germany. While some tradesmen and craftspeople in centuries past had to learn English to a “marketplace” level in order to peddle their wares and regulate shipping, interest in English in the “monastery” sense came later in Germany, as education in English was long considered far less important than education in the classical languages and French. Klippel (2000) has, however, asserted that, by the 19th century, classical languages were no longer considered more important than modern languages, and that the interplay between teaching methodologies of classical and modern languages may have been more complex than many historical accounts appear to suggest.

Howatt used “locally produced textbooks” (1984:62) to trace the path of English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching in Europe. He pointed out that the first European countries to have an interest in EFL were the countries closest to England: France and the Netherlands, as well as Germany, Denmark, and Norway. Countries farther away followed later “in a kind of ‘ripple effect’” (1984:61), with EFL gradually spreading to Italy, Sweden, Spain, Russia, and beyond. Howatt cited Offelen’s *Double-Grammar* of 1687 as the “first grammar of English for German speakers” (1984:300). He buttressed

his argument that English was evolving into more than simply the language of trade by listing the numerous textbooks that appeared at the end of the 18th century. At this time, there was “an interest, almost an obsession” (1984:64) in English drama and Shakespeare. An overview of the early books Germans used for learning English was provided by Schröder (1975), although Hammar (1992) has pointed out that classifying and accurately assessing foreign language learning materials is not always straightforward.

English as an academic subject also gained a foothold in the university system as post-secondary curriculums were expanded to include modern languages. The first German university to engage an English language master was in Greifswald, where Sprachmeister Salzman began teaching in 1686 (cf. Strauss 1992:209). Other masters followed as more and more universities included English in their curricula. As numbers increased, language instruction was structured around a “*Lektorat*” and courses were offered by “*Lektoren*.” These instructors were either native speakers of English or non-native speakers who had mastered the language through travel and study. The number of instructors, the ratio of NS and NNS teachers, and their terms of contract and salaries varied from city to city and from one decade to the next, depending on funding and politics (Macht 1992). Whereas during the Renaissance the dominant languages were Greek and Latin, by the late 19th century modern languages had caught up in popularity and recognition (cf. Haenicke 1979, Weber 1984, Noordegraaf & Vonk 1993).

By the 20th century, more people were learning English and EFL was gaining in status in Germany and in other countries. It was at this time that new teaching methods for modern languages were being defined and developed in an effort to break from the grammar-translation method. These methods were first introduced in the late 19th century, beginning with the early “new methods” of Toussaint-Langenscheidt, Stead, and Viëtor (Bahlsen 1903); and they paved the way for the ideas of the next wave of “modern” methods in the 20th century. These included, among others, Berlitz in the 1950s, Curran’s Community Language Learning by the early 1960s, and Total Physical Response in the late 1960s; as well as later methods, such as the audio-lingual method, Suggestopedia, and the Silent Way (see Batz & Bufe 1991, Blair 1982, and Richards & Rodgers 1986 for descriptions of changing methods). Each new method or “discovery” was touted as the ultimate solution for language learners, and often disregarded what

had come before. Even in our own times, Hüllen (2000) has observed, language education research rarely refers to any insights that are more than 30 years old, which means that teachers today rarely benefit from past mistakes or knowledge.

The growth in the number of learners, combined with rapid changes in teaching methods and the expectations these methods encouraged, meant that modern language teachers were no longer merely expected to be experts in the target language. Teachers and the institutes that certified them were developing professional pedagogical profiles based on varying approaches to teaching and varying definitions of what made a good teacher. Although many schools of thought were defining how people should learn a language, they were not always as clear about what level of language skills an “English teacher” should have in order to teach the language to others. Richards (2008) noted that the education of foreign language teachers has changed dramatically due to “internal” pressures from within the field and from academic developments, as well as to “external pressures” of demands for standards and accountability (2008:159).

By the beginning of the 20th century, English was being taught in many German schools, and the need for more English teachers was slowly increasing. The training these teachers received varied depending on the area where they lived. Knoll (1967) attributed these differences to the “cultural sovereignty” of each of the *Länder*, which was respected by both the Reich (1871-1918) and the Weimar Republic (1918-1933). Weber (1984) listed various forms of teacher education during the Weimar era, which, she noted, differed not only in their internal structures and external forms, but also in their standards. Whereas teachers for the *Gymnasium* were often graduates with university degrees, the *Volksschule* teachers were also trained in “*Lehrerseminaren*,” or, especially in Prussia, in special “*Pädagogische Akademien*.” Weber pointed out that teacher education actually became more diverse and fractured during this time.

Teacher training was briefly centralized in the 1930s, after the National Socialists came to power. Lehberger (1986) outlined specific examples of education and training for future English teachers, and for those who were already in the classroom. In addition to requiring that all teachers supported Nazi ideology and knew how to structure their classes accordingly, by 1937 the Nazis had also defined a central national list of certification requirements for all English teachers. To ensure that all teachers in all types of schools were working toward a common goal, a regulation of July 1937 required

philology students to spend their first two semesters at a *Hochschule für Lehrerbildung*, together with students training to be *Volksschule* teachers. This arrangement was also in line with the stated goal of the NSLB (*Nationalsozialistischer Lehrerbund*) that all teachers undergo the same training. Due to a growing shortage of teachers, this practice was abandoned in early 1940. Although the National Socialists were intent on unifying teacher training and streamlining the German education system, the overall status of modern languages, at least in the “monastery” sense, fell during their rule. Hüllen (2005) observed that Hitler’s basic attitude toward language learning was guided by simple pragmatics, and that people who were not going to have the need or opportunity to speak French should not concern themselves with learning it, especially as French was the language of the archenemy. English was, however, held in greater regard, and the number of school hours devoted to English were increased in the Nazi era.

After the end of the Second World War, English instruction and English teacher training changed based on the flow of politics and special interests. The division of Germany and the founding of two separate German states a few years later meant that the status of EFL and the resources invested in teaching it reflected the political goals of each country. In West Germany (FRG), English grew in popularity as a school subject and gradually replaced French as the undisputed primary foreign language. The 11 *Länder* (states) that made up the FRG reverted to the pre-war ideals of “*Bildung als Ländersache*,” yet retained central commissions and boards to ensure some semblance of continuity among the states. Although each *Land* trained teachers in slightly different ways, the state governments were interested in making sure that their standards and certificates would be respected by the other 10 states. For example, an EFL teacher certified in Hessen might have taken fewer hours of psychology and more hours of pedagogical theory than an EFL teacher in Bremen, or the certificate language test in Hessen might have included a four-hour essay rather than the three-hour translation required in Bremen, but the Hessen certificate would enable the teacher to work in Bremen, and vice versa. Although each state had different requirements and standards, there was a certain ideal of what “an English teacher” was or was not. This principle has become binding across Germany since reunification in 1990. Each of the 16 *Länder* issues its own teaching certificates, yet once teachers have been certified in one state, they are generally regarded as qualified to teach the subject in any part of the country.

The eastern part of Germany (GDR) took a slightly different path after the war. This system, although now defunct, must be described here in brief because its effects are still present. Many EFL teachers in the classrooms of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern (MV) received their training and began their teaching careers in the GDR, and many of the new generation of teachers now entering the profession experienced the GDR system as learners, albeit as very young ones. For ideological reasons, Russian was the first foreign language taught in East German schools, with EFL ranked a distant second. Nonetheless, as Thürmer (1997) noted, English was a popular subject. In the 1950s, English was added to the curriculum of the *Erweiterte Oberschulen* (EOS), or upper grades, which were attended by less than 10% of all children. By 1959, English had been added as an elective in the *Polytechnische Oberschulen* (POS), which all children attended starting in the fifth grade. Because there was a shortage of qualified EFL teachers early on, Thürmer reported that former POWs who had been interned in American or British camps were often asked to teach English. Once colleges and universities began turning out more qualified graduates, the learning and teaching of EFL was expanded and deepened.

Although the East German state maintained a more centrally managed national school system than the West, the types of teacher education and certification in the East were more varied (Rust & Rust 1995). Graduates of the POS could become teachers, even without an *Abitur*, by enrolling at one of the 25 *Institute für Lehrerbildung*, which were seen as technical schools. After earning a four-year degree, they were then certified to teach lower levels at the POS. There were also eight teacher training colleges that certified higher-level instructors, and six universities offering teaching degrees as part of their program. All modern language teachers went through higher education programs, which included a core set of classes in subject matter and teaching theory. The students participated in group programs and summer study events, and completed a clearly defined period of in-service teaching practice, including observation and evaluation by supervisors.

After German unification in 1990, the two education systems, including teacher certifications, had to be synchronized. In effect, this meant that the five eastern *Länder* adopted the classifications and categories of the 11 western *Länder*. Education experts who have documented and analyzed the processes involved (cf. Hoyer 1996, Rust &

Rust 1995, Döbert & Rudolf 1995) have agreed that the changes were introduced rapidly, leaving little room for negotiation or input from the participants. The need to make the changes quickly, and to ensure that the structures implemented would withstand the test of time, meant that it was most expedient to simply bring in the established western system and install it in the east. Thus, the western three-track system, which sorts children at around age 10, was introduced in the five new *Länder*. (Additional overviews of the German school system can be found in Knoll (1967), Lingens (1997), or Baumgarten (1994), or obtained from the Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung.)

The issue of what should be done with the teachers in the east was rather more complicated. Unlike the educational reforms following the Second World War, it was neither necessary nor practical to replace the entire teaching staff of each school. Some teachers who were accused of having developed especially close and active ties to the party, or of having worked with the secret service, were excluded from public service positions, and were thus deemed unfit to teach children in a unified Germany. For the majority who stayed in their profession, there was the vexing question of qualifications. Which teachers would be entitled to work at the *Gymnasium*, with its higher pay and lower contact hours, and which teachers would only be permitted to work at a *Realschule* or *Hauptschule*? Which teachers would be allowed to continue to teach, but be placed in a lower salary group, and which ones would be required to undergo re-training in order to be seen as fully qualified? Rust & Rust (1995) described not only the difficult process of evaluations and assignments, but also the varied perceptions the teachers themselves had of this process.

By the summer of 1992, the two universities in MV had already adapted their final exams to comply fully with certifications in the western *Länder*, thus turning out graduates who were certified according to the new standards. However, the number of graduates entering the field was not enough to meet the growing demand for English teachers. Early on in the period of transition, it became apparent that there was going to be a shortage of qualified EFL instructors in schools. As early as the school year 1990-91, before official unification on October 3, 1990, teachers with certificates in Russian or social civics, as well as former eastern youth group leaders, were enrolled in English language classes. Through evening school and weekend work, combined with some

administrative support (reduced teaching loads, bundling of hours, etc.) the first such re-trained teachers in MV had completed special programs with full certifications in EFL by the spring of 1993. Many of them started teaching EFL before being fully certified.

2.2.2. Teacher training, qualifications, and continuing education

The school system for pupils in Germany is generally three-tiered, with lower-level, middle, and college preparatory schools providing different certificates after nine to 13 years of primary and secondary education. Only holders of the *Abitur*, generally graduates of the college preparatory school (*Gymnasium*) can enroll in the university system, where teacher training begins (Gnutzmann 2005). All of the primary and secondary EFL teachers in Germany receive their training through the university system (which includes the regionally restricted teachers' colleges in Baden-Württemberg), and teachers in secondary schools must have studied English as a main subject. At university, German foreign language teachers begin the "first phase" of formal preparation for their profession and take the examinations for the first state teaching certificate. The second certificate is awarded after an 18-24-month period of practical student teaching with mentors and under the supervision of state education experts outside of the university system (Gnutzmann 2005). This *Referendariat* is the "second phase" of teacher education, and, like the "third phase" of in-service training and continuing education, it is organized by the individual *Länder* through a number of different institutes and support networks. Extensive overviews of German teacher training and basic requirements can be found in Lingens (1997). Detailed descriptions of the German education system are available in German (Baumgarten 1994, Auswärtiges Amt, online) and in English (Knoll 1967, Kappler & Reichart 1996, BMBF, online).

During the first phase at university, students who wish to become teachers are required to complete courses on the subject itself, as well as courses on how to teach the subject to others. The latter group of courses cover pedagogy, psychology, and educational theory, and must be taken by all future teachers, regardless of their subject areas. The subject-specific courses in English provide solid training in the different areas of concentration in the English department, including linguistics, literature, cultural studies, language didactics, and applied language practice. This last area of

concentration, termed *Sprachpraxis* in most parts of Germany, is usually a bit lower in the hierarchy of language departments, with no professors and no advanced seminars. However, education students must pass courses and exams in language practice in order to graduate and move on to the second phase of their training, the *Referendariat*. This *Sprachpraxis* requisite is the only benchmark language requirement for future EFL instructors in German schools, and *Sprachpraxis* courses focus exclusively on the use of the language itself: phonetics, syntax, extensive and focused lexical knowledge, fluency, and the applied cultural knowledge of speech acts. Language training is considered “complete” at the end of university studies; once students have passed their final exams, they do not have to prove they can speak and write English ever again. The completion of the first phase of teacher education marks the end of required and structured language learning.

The *Referendariat* work leading to the second round of exams, and to full teaching certification, begins after university studies and concentrates on general methods and entry into the classroom. In short, the second phase expands a student teacher’s didactic knowledge and practical teaching skills, but not necessarily his or her specific language skills. Language development becomes an issue only in terms of reacting to learner language, classroom management, and school achievement standards. English teachers undoubtedly acquire some new language skills during this phase as they deal with different textbooks and new requirements, and are able to experiment more fully with the classroom language used with pupils. Depending on the federal state, different lengths of time are needed for this second phase, and the actual division of time between classroom teaching, seminar groups, and consultation sessions also varies.

Whether continuing language learning or maintenance is emphasized in the third phase, which involves taking in-service continuing education courses, or whether it is ignored altogether, depends on the *Land* where the teacher is employed and upon the teachers themselves. Although continuing education (*Fortbildung*) for teachers is mandatory and covers a wide range of topics, it does not necessarily include work on specific language skills. A review of the offerings since 2001 (Fachverband Moderne Fremdsprachen, Bildungsserver Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, both online) showed that the courses and workshops focus on techniques, new materials, cultural topics, and other items teachers can use to teach EFL more effectively, or they seek to explain new standards, exams, or

programs with which the teachers are expected to work. There were no “language classes” offered in MV for English teachers.

This system implies that there are two main assumptions regarding teachers’ language learning. First, it is assumed that once a person has demonstrated the ability to speak, write, and understand a foreign language at the university level, this level is adequate to qualify the person as a teacher. Second, it is assumed that this level will remain constant over the course of a teacher’s career. As professionals, teachers should know if they need to update their knowledge in the field, and they are expected to keep their skills in English at a level that is sufficient for performing their duties well. The first assumption appears to be based on the general consensus that most German ELTs have English skills that will allow them to perform their jobs in most situations, even though there have been pointed and vocal criticisms directed at language learning in general, and specifically at teachers’ language learning and proficiency (cf. Butzkamm 1996, Zydati 1996, and Meißner 2002). There are also reasons to doubt that language levels and abilities can ever be seen as “fixed” and finite, regardless of whether the speaker is a teacher. Section 2.3 will address the issues of language attrition and change, and whether it should be assumed that language levels for non-NESTs will remain stable. Before addressing this issue, I will summarize current discussions about the language levels of German non-NESTs today.

2.2.3. Current discussions on PISA and the “*neue Lnder*”

The German public school system relies almost exclusively on non-NESTs, with NESTs usually only working in private schools or community college settings (Gnutzmann 2005). Until quite recently, this was viewed as normal and unproblematic, as the foreign language competence of German school teachers was considered to be more than adequate for instruction and modeling. While in Germany, as in many other countries, there had been occasional discussions about the effectiveness of the educational system and the ability of teachers to help pupils learn what they need to know, the weight of such debates and public commentary centered more on the ability of schools to impart knowledge and the ways in which teachers taught. It was generally thought that there was no need to worry that the non-NESTs working in German schools did not speak English well enough.

Shortly after the turn of the millennium, however, public discussion about the educational system became more intense in reaction to global comparisons conducted by the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), in which German pupils achieved only mediocre ratings. The PISA studies, designed and operated by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, began testing school pupils in 43 countries in 2000, and focused on the pupils' abilities to use subject knowledge in solving specific applied tasks (see www.pisa.oecd.org). The relatively poor performance of pupils in Germany came as a shock to some observers, and sparked wide-ranging discussions among both educational experts and the general public. The popular press ran provocatively titled articles, such as "*Mangelhaft. Setzen*" or "*Sind deutsche Schüler doof?*" (Darnstädt et al. 2001). Criticism was not only restricted to the school system in general, but also to the teaching of specific subjects, including English. Discussion began to shift away from general system structures to criticism of teachers' training and their preparedness for the job. English teachers in Germany were said to be strong on theory but unprepared to teach the material effectively (Busse 2001).

Less than a decade later, the results of a domestic study commissioned by the Federal Ministry of Culture expanded the discussion to include doubts about English teachers' language skills. The study compared 41,000 ninth grade pupils in all 16 states in the area of "language competence," including both German and the primary modern foreign language studied, in most cases English. This test ranked pupils in the eastern part of Germany (former GDR) much lower in all areas of English tested. In reading comprehension tests, the pupils from the five eastern states ranked 8, 10, 11, 15, and 16 (with the "western" states of Lower Saxony, Saarland, and Bremen also interspersed on the lower rungs). In listening comprehension tests, the eastern pupils filled the last five spaces completely (Köller et al. 2010).

The study itself postulated that there was a direct link between the traditional valuing of English as a foreign language, the language ability of most of the teachers in eastern schools, and the poor test results. The public were swift in declaring that eastern German teachers were lacking in English skills and were thus incapable of teaching English properly. National newspapers covered the results under headlines such as "*Warum Sachsen kein English können*" (Kohl 2010) or "*DDR schuld an Englisch-Defizit?*" (Neiße 2010), and politicians quickly promised that teachers would be sent to

summer classes to improve their English skills (Beyerlein 2010). (Such courses were never offered, nor are they currently being planned, according to a phone inquiry I made to the Ministry in early 2012.)

If Lee (2003) were to pose her question of “is our English good enough to teach English?” today, the answer in eastern Germany, according to newspapers and politicians, would be a firm “no.” This question, while asked in a less direct manner, is one of the focal points of this study. To address this question, I look at teachers’ language gains and losses, teachers’ perceptions of their abilities, and how non-NESTs in this northeastern part of Germany view their relationship with English. The final section of this background chapter thus describes aspects of language acquisition and attrition in relation to non-NESTs.

2.3 Non-NEST language acquisition, attrition, and change

Before we turn to the non-NESTs’ views of their current language skills, it is worth exploring past research into how these skills are acquired and developed, and how they might change over time. This section examines the literature and previous work regarding what teachers experience when learning English (acquisition), and how they might stop learning or lose ground in a language over time (attrition). These two directions in the development of language skills, learning and loss, can occur in tandem. They can affect a single aspect of language, such as vocabulary range or pronunciation, or all aspects of language use. It is also entirely possible that different aspects of language can be affected differently at the same time. Thus, it may be more fitting to use the term “change” (Clark 1982) to describe the progress and the decline in an individual’s language ability. In the following sections, I outline previous research on language change specifically for non-NESTs, and consider the implications this research may have for the non-NESTs as both users and teachers of English.

2.3.1 Acquisition and the non-NEST

In order to be recognized as qualified foreign language instructors, teachers must demonstrate that they are able to speak the language. In addition to having other skills and tools of the trade, mastery of the subject matter is a prerequisite for teaching the

subject, and for EFL teachers this means becoming proficient in English. Unlike native speakers, for whom proficiency is assumed, non-native speakers must prove that their proficiency in the language is sufficient to allow them to instruct others. This raises the question of how a person can learn English well enough to teach it, an issue that is addressed by the research field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). SLA distinguishes between “learning” and “acquiring” a language, although the terms are often used interchangeably. Littlewood (1984) provided a concise definition that reflects the general consensus of researchers: “learning” refers to the conscious aspects and “acquisition” to the subconscious aspects involved in becoming proficient in a language (1984:76). This bare-bones distinction will suffice here, as participants in this study consistently used the term “learning” (*lernen*) to describe their language gains, rather than the terms *“eine Sprache erwerben”* or *“aneignen.”* For the non-NESTs in this study, English is a language learned consciously, and not one acquired passively.

The field of SLA, much like the field of attrition described in the next sub-section, does a disservice to non-NESTs because it does not provide a full explanation of their language acquisition. SLA traditionally focuses on learning a new language, usually in the classroom, up to a certain level of fluency or competence. However, non-NESTs often continue to learn English at such relatively high levels that they fall off the radar of SLA researchers. Thus, their final stages of official or required acquisition are not well-documented. By the time a non-NEST has made the transition from classroom learner to classroom teacher, acquisition is assumed to be complete, and active learning, at least that which is observable, ceases. Another reason why the final stages of non-NEST acquisition are often ignored by SLA researchers is that EFL teachers, as a group, are not very convenient objects of study. Beginner and lower-level learners lend themselves to research because their sheer numbers in classrooms make it easier to study their progress. Advanced or fluent learners, once they have reached a certain level of competence in an L2, tend to spend less time in classrooms and language laboratories, and are thus less easy to find and observe. Non-NESTs are obviously in the classrooms as well, but there are fewer opportunities to monitor their L2 acquisition once they have thrown off the mantle of “learner” and have taken on the role of “teacher.”

This is unfortunate, because teachers are unique language learners. González Moncada (1995) points out that non-NESTs remain “the forgotten learners of SLA theory” (1995:3), even though they have spent more time learning English and have a better understanding of SLA theory than nearly anyone else. Nonetheless, based on what is known about SLA, we can make some assumptions about what kind of language learners the non-NESTs in this study might be. Like other L2 learners, they reflect much of what is already known about learning a language. If we regard them as special learners because they are assumed to be competent users and successful higher-level learners of English, then it is worth trying to identify what unique characteristics they might share in terms of acquisition.

2.3.1.1 Successful acquisition: A product of or a reason for becoming an ELT?

It is fair to say that most German non-NESTs began learning English in much the same way as their peers: i.e., as beginners in school lessons. Learning at advanced levels generally takes place after leaving school, at university or a professional school, and later through continuing education programs. Thus, at least at the early stages of learning English, we might not expect German non-NESTs’ language acquisition to be markedly different from that of learners who do not later go on to become teachers. At some point, however, the non-NEST has made the transition from being a normal learner—that is, someone who is “just” learning English as a school subject or a hobby—to being a learner with the goal of becoming a teacher.

It is at this point that the interplay of cause and effect becomes unclear: does the decision to become a teacher lead to a different kind of learning, perhaps more focused and intense, even at lower levels; or does success in learning an L2 inspire a person to become a teacher of the language? In other words, future teachers may actively decide to learn more English and push themselves further in order to reach a level that qualifies them to teach, or a learner of English may decide to become a teacher because he or she has been particularly successful at learning the language. It may, of course, also be a combination of the two. There has been considerable research on language learners’ reasons for learning, and the amount of effort and general attitude they bring to the task. These aspects are outlined briefly in the next section.

There is another aspect of non-NEST language learning which might be of interest to education experts; namely, the question of whether teachers' language acquisition is reflected in the way they teach the language later. An old adage is that "teachers teach they way they were taught themselves," and this has been investigated in several subject areas, not only language (Lortie 1975, Goodlad 1984). In particular, new teachers in their early years as instructors have been found to employ teaching methods closer to the methods they themselves experienced as learners, rather than to those they studied in graduate school (Britzman 1991, Hansen 1995). In an overview of research on this topic, Zeichner & Gore (1990) divided the lines of thought on this issue into three main categories. The first assumes that teachers' attitudes about teaching stem directly from the individual role models they experienced in classrooms as children, meaning the teachers and other adults present in the learning situation; the second focuses on the institutional settings a person experiences; while the third explores how other sources may affect future teachers. If the first line of thought holds true, there should be an interplay between successful learning and teachers' actions, which would in turn lead to a learner becoming a language teacher.

2.3.1.2 Conditions for learning a new language

The factors involved in successful language acquisition are myriad and complex, and not even the experts are certain why one person will learn a new language easily, while another person will struggle to learn the same material. Spolsky (1989) spent over 20 years synthesizing research on the factors that appear to facilitate L2 learning the most. In his "Conditions for Language Learning," he documented 74 separate items which researchers assume contribute to successful language acquisition. Languages can, of course, be learned even when several of these conditions are not present, but the evidence he collected indicates that learning is easier and more effective when more of these conditions are present. These factors range from the personal and social conditions the learner brings to the task (such as age and cultural background) to the learning context and types of instruction in the target language (such as formal or informal learning opportunities). As these conditions are applicable to all L2 learners, it is interesting to consider which of them might be especially important or telling for the

non-NESTs in this project. In other words, what kind of language learners were, and are, these teachers?

Lower level L2 instruction in the expanding circle tends to be homogeneous, and thus non-NESTs begin learning English under the same conditions, and at the same age, as their peers. Hence, many of the conditions Spolsky listed are similar at the outset. Most learners have a common first language and cultural background. Widespread public schooling in most countries also means that the types of input, the methods of instruction, and the number of contact hours with course content are largely similar. Even in countries in which the control of the schools is broken down into local, state, and federal levels, such as the USA or Germany, the expectations of learning outcomes still follow set norms or standards.

The non-NESTs in this study had similar language learning backgrounds in that all of them had German as a L1, with only one teacher reporting an additional eastern European L1 spoken in her family, and all had taken Russian classes in school for several years before adding English as a second foreign language. Therefore, no major differences between non-NESTs and other learners could be identified in terms of societal structures or schooling, or in the order of language learned. These “outer” conditions do not appear to have helped the non-NEST respondents in learning English. What might differentiate these ELTs in their L2 acquisition from learners who did not go on to become ELTs are internal factors specific to individuals, which Spolsky has assigned to two categories. The first category is “ability and personality,” and the second category is “attitudes and motivation.”

a) Are non-NESTs different in their abilities and personalities?

The first set of individual conditions Spolsky grouped together includes such factors as intelligence, aptitude, personality, low anxiety in learning, and individual learning styles and strategies. He listed these conditions as factors that might be largely “independent of social context” (1989:110); as opposed to attitudes, motivations, influence of peer groups, etc., which might depend more on the social group to which the individual belongs and his or her family background. People who learn new languages easily will most likely have an optimal combination of the cognitive capabilities and the personality components needed for success. If we assume that qualified or certified non-

NESTs are indeed successful language learners, we would certainly expect them to report having met these conditions.

Research indicates high performance on standard intelligence tests correlates with formal language learning success, and that various aptitudes measured by different kinds of tests may predict the ability to discriminate between sounds, remember new vocabulary, and recognize grammar constructs (Genesee 1976, Oller 1981). This is especially true for learners past early childhood ages, meaning school children or adults (Harley 1986). German non-NESTs, as graduates of the *Gymnasium* and the university system, can certainly be said to possess a certain level of scholastic intelligence and to have many cognitive abilities which allow them to excel at learning in general, including at language learning.

Personality conditions are more difficult to define and measure. Spolsky concentrated primarily on anxiety in learning and using the L2, as well as on the strategies or approaches a person employs for language learning and learning in general. Anxiety levels can be determined for classrooms of different subjects relative to language learning situations (Gardner & Smythe 1975), and Horwitz (1986) developed and tested an anxiety scale for language learning situations in general. Ely (1986) also examined risk-taking in foreign language classrooms and determined that anxious learners were more hampered in oral (speaking and listening) tasks than in written tasks. Gardner (1985) also noted that anxiety issues influence learners at lower levels more than at higher levels of proficiency and use, and are most likely to arise among school-age children and adult beginners than among higher-level learners. Non-NESTs in Germany might therefore report having been less anxious in English classrooms as children and teens. As learners, they were more likely to have enjoyed communicating in the foreign language and were not unduly hampered by a fear of making mistakes. It would, of course, be surprising to hear that teachers did not enjoy the subject in school or did not see themselves as strong learners of the subject matter, because “poor” language learners would not be expected to pursue a career as language teachers.

The manner in which a learner approaches learning new material depends on his or her preferred learning styles and strategies, though it should be noted that a style is not the same as a strategy. A style of learning refers to “overall patterns that give a general direction” (Cornett 1983:9) to how an individual approaches a learning situation.

Oxford (2003) observed that learning styles are not always clearly at one extreme or the other, and are more likely to be on a continuum than in a single category. It is the rare learner who is entirely extroverted or intuitive, or who is entirely visual or kinesthetic and not at all auditory. Nonetheless, she classified general styles along the lines of sensory preferences, personality types, and how general or specific learners prefer instruction to be. Individuals appear to have been born with an individual learning style or to have developed it early in life, and this style can be optimized by selecting the learning setting that works best. It is easiest for learners to succeed and to feel good about their learning when the learning environment supports their learning style or allows them to play to their strengths.

Learning strategies, as defined by Scarcella & Oxford (1992:63), are “specific actions, behaviors, steps or techniques” learners use to improve their learning. These might include cognitive or metacognitive strategies that help learners deal with and organize the information they receive, social strategies that entail being able to ask for help when needed, or compensatory strategies that include being able to hazard guesses or use synonyms or gestures to make up for missing knowledge. As Oxford (2003) pointed out, if learners consciously use strategies that mesh with their own learning style and fit well with the L2 learning situation, the strategies can “become a useful toolkit for active, conscious, and purposeful self-regulation of learning” (2003:2). She asserted that strategies are a conscious attempt on the part of the learner to achieve a goal, and she contradicted earlier claims by Rubin (1975) and Naiman et al. (1978) that “good language learners” employ strategies different from those used by less able learners. Oxford emphasized that, in addition to fitting individual learning styles, strategies must also correspond to the situation and methodology used in the classroom.

It is at this point that the styles and strategies of a non-NEST become interesting. Most of the non-NESTs in this study reported having very similar styles and strategies in learning English. It would be very tempting to label them “good” learners and to say they did everything right while in school and at university. This, however, would be only half the truth. The styles and strategies that helped these non-NESTs succeed undoubtedly reflect the design of the classrooms they were in, indicating a good match between their own preferences and the methodology they were exposed to. Teachers, as successful language learners, probably do have learning styles and use learning

strategies that SLA experts would classify as “good.” However, according to Oxford, these styles and strategies would have been effective only to the extent that the classroom allowed them to be.

By the same token, as language teachers who guide others’ learning, these non-NESTs are most likely to design their classroom activities in ways that are similar to the activities they experienced and benefited from as pupils. It would be perfectly logical for them to suggest or promote specific strategies for a unit of learning. By default, the teachers might also design classroom tasks that require learners to apply those strategies the teacher deems useful. As long as the learner and teacher share the same basic styles, and the learners can use strategies to support them, the classroom situation will work well. Gardner & Smythe (1975) found that English-speaking pupils in Canada learning French were more likely to stay in class and progress to higher levels if they had achieved higher scores on standard IQ tests, demonstrated lower levels of ethnocentrism on psychological tests, and displayed a higher rating in the need for achievement in overall school performance. The pupils’ abilities and personality factors combined with their motivation to achieve, allowing the “stay ins” to achieve higher foreign language competence in most classroom settings than the “drop outs” (1975:187). The idea of motivation in language learning is a complex one, and is not fully supported by researchers, as will become apparent in the next section.

b) Motivation and attitude, a double role for non-NESTs?

Spolsky’s second set of individual conditions, related to motivation and attitude, are perhaps even more relevant for exploring non-NESTs’ English acquisition. According to Carroll (1962), the degree of motivation a person has in learning a language will be reflected in the amount of time he or she invests in the act of learning; thus, a person with a high level of motivation would learn more or achieve more. It should, perhaps, be added that it is not only the willingness of the individual to invest “more time” and energy in learning, but also his or her willingness to pursue learning, even when the subject matter is difficult or environmental conditions are not optimal, that determine success.

Gardner & Lambert (1959) were among the first researchers to propose that L2 achievement was strongly linked to motivation. A learner’s motivation stems from his

or her attitudes toward the other group, meaning toward those who already use the language; and to a general orientation to the task of learning. Gardner (1982, 1985) asserted that motivation was just as if not more important than aptitude, and he linked two types of motivation to language learning: integrative and instrumental. Integrative motivation is present when the learner has a positive attitude toward aspects of the L2 community, which results in a desire to communicate with or belong to the group; whereas instrumental motivation implies a desire to learn a language for tangible external rewards to benefit the learner as an individual, such as obtaining a good job. The two types of motivation are also not necessarily exclusive, as Brown (2000) has noted. The terms “intrinsic” and “extrinsic” are also often used to describe different types of motivation in language learning, with extrinsic motivation being similar to instrumental motivation. Extrinsic reasons for learning an L2 might be to improve the learner’s chances of getting a better job, to pass an exam, or to earn praise and recognition from others. Intrinsic reasons are within the individual learner, who pursues learning for reasons not immediately apparent to outsiders, such as learning “for the satisfaction of one’s curiosity, or the joy at performing a certain activity” (Smit & Dalton 2000:3).

The origins for motivation in SLA are not always clear-cut or accepted. Crookes & Schmidt (1991) noted that language learning does not always indicate a positive attitude toward speakers of the target group language, nor is it necessarily a sign of a desire to integrate into the group. By the same token, a strong desire to integrate into a culture does not always result in successful language learning. Dörnyei (1994) claimed that “integrating” has little relevance to the foreign language classroom and that “attitude” is something separate from “motivation,” with the first being embedded in a social context and the second being an individual trait. Ellis (1997) pointed out that the role of motivation in the language classroom is “dynamic in nature,” in that it is not a set or given factor in any individual, but is a trait that can vary “from one moment to the next depending on the learning context or task” (1997:76). Motivation is therefore a changeable variable which cannot be assumed to be constant for every action, and can shift within a class session, over a school year, in and out of puberty, and over the course of a professional life.

Motivation is a problematic concept in SLA, since it cannot be fully defined or accurately measured with standardized tests. Nonetheless, despite the overlap of terms and a lack of agreement about the exact influence the types of motivation have on language learning, the non-NESTs in this study reported that they were, and still are, strongly motivated to learn English, albeit with different attitudes and in different ways. Non-NESTs are both intrinsically and instrumentally motivated to have high levels of English. They need to learn English well in order to pass exams and receive certificates, and in order to be taken seriously in their chosen profession. Having a good command of English helps define a teacher as a professional in relation to peers and students, which is an extrinsic motivation; while a teacher's pride in the language skills he or she has acquired could reflect an intrinsic motivation. Although EFL may not present the same tangible means of integrative motivation, we would certainly not expect a non-NEST to have an active dislike for the language or the people who speak it. The desire to "integrate" might be linked to a curiosity of all things British or a fascination with America, or it might also reflect an interest in having a lingua franca to use in communicating with the global community; both would be attributable to integrative motivation. Although not all teachers in this study reported the same levels of enthusiasm for speaking English or interacting with other speakers of English, only one claimed to have had an explicitly negative attitude toward the language itself during her time as a pupil, and none of the participants dislike English now.

Reflecting again on Zeichner & Gore's overview (1990), the attitudes non-NESTs reported having toward their own teachers did, however, differ. Depending on their levels and ages, the teachers in this study recalled their own teachers as differing significantly in their levels of language skill, pedagogical competence, and enthusiasm for the subject matter and cultural issues; and that the teachers varied widely in the demands they made on the learners. As many recalled, a "good" teacher was able to heighten levels of overall learning motivation and positively shape attitudes toward English, whereas "bad" teachers had the opposite effect. Interestingly enough, although these non-NESTs appreciated having had lessons or contact with native speakers, especially at the university level, their most vivid memories of language teachers were those of other non-NESTs. This could be due to the simple fact that most of their teachers were non-NESTs, but it also shows that "integrating" does not necessarily have

to be linked to a teacher being a native. Attitudes and motivation levels can be, and usually are, shaped by teachers who are non-NESTs.

2.3.1.3 Does Krashen's Input Hypothesis work in reverse for non-NESTs?

The field of SLA research and ideas about how languages are learned have moved in new directions in recent decades. One of the more outspoken and controversial figures at the center of these new developments has been Stephen Krashen, whose various hypotheses have sparked debate among theorists and practical educators alike. While his ideas have persuaded many followers and shaped education policies in the USA and other countries, his ideas are also rejected by many as being too simplistic, and he has been accused of pandering to education audiences by telling them what they want to hear. Regardless of the validity of his theories, at least one of his hypotheses may be of particular relevance for non-NESTs, if only in reverse. While he has proposed a model for language acquisition, his ideas might also be useful in understanding learners who have left the classroom and work with their L2 in new environments.

Krashen's book *The Input Hypothesis* (1985) proposed the idea of "i+1" and defined the term "comprehensible input." His theory postulates that a person learns a language only when receiving input from other people who speak the language, and that this input must be largely, but not fully, understandable, or "comprehensible." As long as this comprehensible input is just a bit above the level of the individual learner, the "i" in the formula, there will be a situation of "plus one," and the language can be learned/acquired. Without "i+1," there will be no progress (cf. Krashen 1981, Krashen & Terrell 1983, Krashen 1993). Krashen maintains that "i+1" is necessary for language acquisition to take place. He has often been criticized for implying that this is all that is necessary. Regardless of whether this hypothesis provides an adequate or complete explanation, the question arises as to what can happen when there is no, or too little, new comprehensible input at the "plus one" level. In the case of non-NESTs, the question is relevant when we consider that most input is negative in relation to the language level already achieved.

A foreign language teacher is constantly immersed in an environment that is different from that of the learner, one which I propose calling "i-1." Non-NESTs teach English to people at lower language levels than their own, and they spend a disproportionate

amount of time with speakers who cannot provide any tangible new input. Even if one does not accept Krashen's "i+1," this constant situation of "i-1" to which an EFL teacher is exposed would not be expected to be beneficial for the teacher's own language skills. Over time, the teachers' skills could stagnate at the level of the learners, and might even deteriorate. Unless non-NESTs steer against this situation, they could very well find themselves imitating the learners' mistakes and mimicking their accents. Thus, they will have to seek input from outside the classroom to avoid moving toward levels lower than those they had achieved at university. Foreign language teachers who do not actively maintain and promote their L2 in their L1 environment will not only stagnate, they can lose proficiency. This concept of attrition, or loss, is described in the next section.

The language acquisition phase for most non-NESTs is considered complete at university graduation. Although we would hope that professional foreign language teachers will maintain and expand their language skills over the course of their careers, this may not necessarily be the case. In Germany, the language training at the university level is the final language learning required of teachers, and thus is often the last point at which teachers have access to structured learning situations in which acquisition can continue. The educational system in Germany does not demand continuing language learning for in-service teachers, nor does it provide support for ongoing structured language learning. Thus, many teachers, especially those who must cope with increasing administrative duties and expanding class sizes, will not have the opportunity to keep up with or improve their own language skills. As Krashen once said of teachers, they are "highly dedicated, inspirational, service oriented people," who, "given an extra hour, are going to spend it on their students" instead of reading theoretical books or working in other non-classroom related areas (Krashen, 1988 interview transcript). One of the questions this study addresses is whether non-NESTs feel the need to spend that extra hour, or any time at all, on their own English language skills. Does non-NEST learning of the L2 cease upon job entry, or is it an ongoing process?

2.3.2 Attrition and the non-NEST

If SLA research neglects non-NESTs toward the end of their active acquisition phase and throughout their careers, the more recent, related area of language attrition research

can be accused of ignoring them completely. This is regrettable, because EFL teachers who have learned English and who now teach it after their own active learning phase has ended can provide a unique perspective on a specific type of risk of loss. The study of language attrition is a natural part of the field of SLA; when seeking to understand how people acquire and use languages, it soon becomes apparent that language skills can also deteriorate over time. While the concept of language loss is not new, language educators have only started to understand how aspects of loss relate to SLA. According to Vechter et al. (1990), “inquiry into learning raises questions concerning loss, while inquiry into loss brings the issue of learning into question” (1990:289).

Early studies of foreign language loss often focused on learners of a school subject; e.g., Latin (Kennedy 1932), Spanish (Pratella 1969, Cohen, 1974), or German (Scherer 1957). However, some researchers, such as Cohen (1975) or Geoghegan (1950), also examined foreign language forgetting in general. The most widely-cited starting point of serious academic research on foreign language loss was at a conference held in 1980 at the University of Pennsylvania, with the main papers published two years later. Lambert & Freed (1982) collected and ordered much of what was known about language loss and articulated the need for more research in this area. The conference served as a focal point for gathering relevant research from different fields, as well as for formulating a number of hypotheses as to why language loss happens, and establishing a definition of loss. A few years later, Weltens, De Bot, & Van Els (1986) published their own symposium proceedings, and shortly thereafter papers on language loss began to appear in linguistics publications. The journal *Applied Psycholinguistics* ran a series on language loss, which included a fundamental paper by Pan & Gleason (1986) and numerous articles on language loss in different situations. A few years later, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition* devoted an entire issue to attrition studies, guest edited by Weltens & Cohen (1989). By the 1990s, researchers interested in SLA had begun to explore in earnest what happens after a language is learned: i.e., attrition as well as acquisition, and the relationship between the two.

2.3.2.1 What language loss is

There are two basic types of language loss, divided according to the causes of the loss. The first is “pathological” attrition, which takes place as the result of injury to the brain,

trauma, disease, or dementia. Aphasia and its various causes have been explored by researchers in the fields of medicine and psychology, with a clear general description provided by Obler & Gjerlow (1999), or, in more layman terms, by Sachs (1970). The second type is “natural” attrition, which occurs in normal and healthy individuals or groups and relates to language learners. This second type contains two large subcategories, with the first being group language loss, which is the type of attrition most often studied by sociologists, anthropologists, or ethnographers, who observe natural attrition in a social setting. Group loss happens when a small population speaking a native dialect begins to die out and can no longer keep their tongue alive, or when population groups migrate and subsequent generations neglect the language of their parents. Researchers of group loss will look for similarities in the way individuals living together deal with their language(s), and for patterns discernible in the population as a whole.

The second subcategory of “natural” attrition is individual language loss. In this case it is not the group as a unit, but the individual speaker (who is obviously also a member of one or more language groups) who is the object of study. Researchers such as linguists, psychologists, and methodologists seek to discover what is forgotten, when and in what order it is forgotten, why it is forgotten, and what the consequences of forgetting are. Most SLA attrition studies focus on the individual speaker, and the individual non-NEST is at the center of this study. The idea of non-NESTs as a “group” is a focal point for study, but any language loss which may or may not take place happens at the level of the individual.

Weltens, De Bot & Van Els (1986) worked together to classify attrition research on individual loss based on two questions. They first determined what is lost, the L1 or an L2; and they then defined the setting in which the loss occurs, in the home language environment or in a foreign language environment. This is seen in Figure 1:

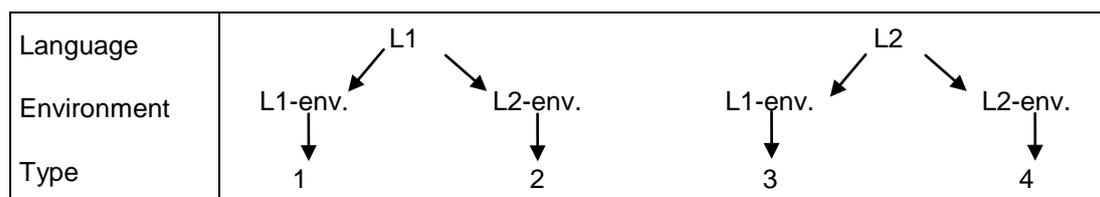


Figure 1: “Types of attrition research” according to Van Els (1986:4)

Types 1 and 2 refer to situations in which people lose their native or first language, either in the native language environment (pathological loss or loss of minority languages) or in a second language environment (a migrant's language attrition in the new environment). Types 3 and 4 refer to the loss of second or foreign languages, again in the native language environment (such as a school pupil forgetting class content) or in the second language environment (pathological loss such as when a migrant loses his or her second language due to the normal aging processes). This figure served as a framework for classifying exactly what kind of research was being done in very different areas of language loss, and how there might be overlap or room for cooperation. As a starting point for attrition studies, this figure was necessary but it soon proved to be too simplistic. Weltens (1989) later acknowledged that it did not always leave room to clearly distinguish between specific pathological and natural loss, or between loss within a short period of time or across many generations.

Another significant problem with Figure 1 is that it does not distinguish between foreign and second language loss as two distinct areas. At the time, Van Els noted that FL and L2 loss were not exactly the same thing, but had "so much in common that distinguishes the two of them together" (1986:4) that they could justifiably be lumped together for the purposes of defining the four main types of loss. Most early work on language attrition that was conducted before the field became established also did not differentiate between L2 and FL, and focused on learners working at very low levels. To assess the effectiveness of language classes, learners were observed to see what "stuck" and what was forgotten. Foreign languages learned in schools provided a convenient starting point for attrition studies, because schools often compare pupils' knowledge at the end of a school year with the results of entry exams. Some school systems also compare entry-level autumn scores with those of the previous spring in order to find out what material was forgotten or retained in the interim. Early works by Kennedy (1932), Geoghegan (1950), Pratella (1969), and Cohen (1974) measured pupils' scores following summer or term interval differences. Other studies examined retention following longer gaps between comparison points. In some studies, the points were a year or more apart, as in Flaugher & Spencer (1967), who compared knowledge upon school leaving with enrolment in college level courses. The studies of foreign language forgetting or loss were also useful in demonstrating what methods or approaches were

thought to provide the longest-lasting and best results over a set period of time. If research could prove that more learners retained more material over months or years, or even overnight, when being taught with a certain method, it would be tempting to label this method superior to other methods that did not produce similar results. Such claims are probably as old as language teaching for profit itself, but they became especially important for the distribution and popularity of many of the “modern” approaches of the mid-20th century. Two examples are Suggestopedia (Lozanov 1978, Schiffler 1989) and TPR (Asher 1969, 1988 and Asher, Kusudo & de la Torre 1974), both of which make excessive claims of offering the key both to accelerated and high-retention learning.

Figure 1 does not differentiate between foreign and second language loss because at the time most “loss” studies were concerned with lower-level foreign language results. Studies of true L2 loss were fewer in number and more difficult to construct. However, it would not be fair to assume that any foreign language learned, for whatever amount of time, automatically becomes an L2. In her doctoral dissertation, González Moncada (1995:14) took issue with this, pointing out that, in terms of attrition “L2 and FL are not interchangeable, they are not equivalent,” and that a fifth category should be added. As can be seen in Figure 2, she proposed expanding the categories in this way:

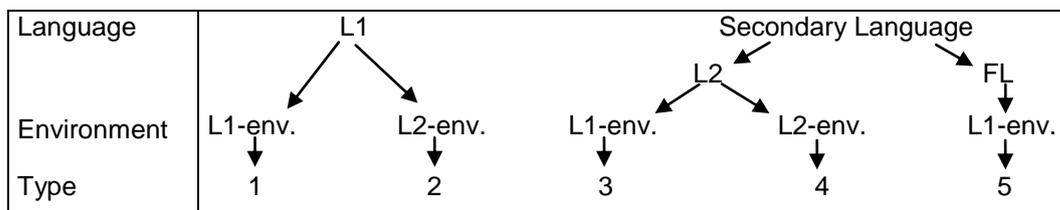


Figure 2: “New Language Attrition Typology” by González Moncada (1995:15)

Types 1, 2, and 4 retain their original definitions, but type 3 has been expanded to show the differences between a “second” and a “foreign” language. To qualify as a type 3 loss, the second language would have to be a true second means of communication, perhaps one the user acquired at a young age or through a lengthy stay in a country where the L2 is prevalent, and a language that the user no longer sees as “foreign.” Due to extensive and intense contacts with speakers of the L2, and perhaps a higher level of integrative motivation, the non-native language becomes an important second language, and the user will have a high and solid level of ability. When the speaker leaves the L2

environment, type 3 attrition takes place. If the speaker suffers from pathological loss in the L2 environment, this would be classified as type 4 attrition. (González Moncada, like other researchers, did not provide extra categories for L2 or FL loss in a L3 environment, although this is certainly a topic in SLA studies of multilingualism and migration.) It is the new category, type 5 loss, in which González Moncada defined attrition differently. She claimed that loss will come at a different pace, and for different reasons, because the foreign language was learned to a lesser extent and is used differently than a true second language.

González Moncada's differentiation lies between types 3 and 5; i.e., between a "second" language and a "foreign" language. The non-NESTs in Colombia she observed and tested were, in her opinion, type 5 because they had learned EFL in Colombia and had not been able to spend an extended amount of time in an English-speaking country. Because their level of English was not fluent or native-like, and because they had learned and taught English as a foreign language, she defined them as type 5 attrition subjects. Although her questionnaire included self-reports and lists of "can-do" items, participants were never asked to report on the distinction between a second and a foreign language. The German non-NESTs in this study are, due to their age and family histories, quite similar to the Colombian teachers González Moncada described. All of them were born and attended school in the eastern part of Germany, where they now work and teach, and most are older, which means they did not have the opportunity to spend a year abroad as an au pair or on work-study programs because the political borders were closed while they were students. The few study participants who did have the chance to travel or spend longer periods overseas before beginning their teaching jobs belong to the younger cohorts. These "younger" teachers were the only participants who self-reported that English was, for them, a "second" language rather than a "foreign" language. Teachers who were around 40 years old or older at the time of the study identified themselves as being competent and enthusiastic speakers of English, but they did not claim English as a true "second" language.

2.3.2.2 Why languages are lost

The fields of SLA and language attrition borrow heavily from the field of psychology in seeking to explain why people forget what they have learned. Schöpfer-Grabe (1998)

listed the three main theories linguists often turn to when exploring why language learners forget: decay theory, interference theory, and retrieval-failure theory. As the word “theory” suggests, none of these have been proven to be responsible for all L2/FL loss situations, although some seem to be more plausible in certain cases.

Decay theory is an explanation that fits well with FL loss over time when the FL is not used. Much in the same way muscles will stiffen and weaken in the chronically ill who are bedridden, knowledge atrophies with disuse. When people say a language has “gotten rusty,” or that they have “forgotten most of it” over time, they are referring to this theory. A school child may learn many vocabulary words and stock phrases in Spanish class, but will, by the time she has reached middle age, claim she can’t speak Spanish at all anymore. The idea of decay is straightforward, and is supported by general anecdotal evidence, but it is not without gaps. Some attrition studies have uncovered evidence that languages learned, even at a basic school level, resist decay for longer than many people might think (cf. Bahrick & Phelps 1987, Weltens, Van Els & Schils 1989, Hansen 1999, Tomiyama 1999, de Bot & Stoessel 2000, or Russell 2000). In one of the longest time reference periods in the field, Bahrick (1984a) coined the term “permastore” to describe the phenomenon of adults recalling foreign language knowledge even decades after leaving school. The idea of decay would seem not to apply to the non-NESTs of this study, as they certainly cannot be said to “not use” their L2. However, when vocabulary or higher stylistic levels corresponding to the academic levels attained during university study are not maintained, these teachers may also report “forgetting” certain aspects of the language. While a non-NEST is certainly using and is actively engaged with certain aspects of English, some skill areas, especially those not used in normal teaching situations, might be subject to decay.

The second theory, called the interference theory, describes the relationship between information taken in at different stages and an individual’s inability to store all of these different bits of information from different times. The “interference” assumed here stems from the foreign language itself, and is thus valid for all foreign language learners, regardless of their L1 and which new language they learn. It does not refer to the ways in which similarities or differences between the two languages may interfere with one another, but instead describes how new foreign language elements may be at cross-purposes with previously learned foreign language elements. On the one hand,

material learned in the past will prevent a person from taking in or remembering new material (proactive). On the other hand, having to remember new information can cause a person to forget what was learned earlier (retroactive). This theory can be particularly useful when observing classroom learning. The order in which the material is taught and the pacing of the syllabus might facilitate or hinder the retention of information. For the non-NESTs here, interference may occur in continuing education programs or self-study activities.

The final theory, the retrieval-failure theory, is the most widespread, according to Schöpfer-Grabe. It assumes that information is stored at different levels, or in different categories. Information that seems to have been “forgotten” has not been deleted from memory; it is merely inaccessible for some reason. People under hypnosis can often recall items they have no recollection of in a conscious state. Schöpfer-Grabe also cited one study (Weis 1986) which showed that it is easier to re-learn information once learned and then forgotten than it is to learn completely new material. The non-NESTs in this study could, theoretically, have problems in recalling certain items once learned, especially lexical material that does not often occur in the school syllabus, or grammar constructs that are too far above the level of their pupils. The double question then is: do the ELTs notice this “forgetting,” and, if so, are they able to retrieve the information at will?

2.3.2.3 How languages are lost

Language attrition can be observed and measured with reference to points in time. Most learners of foreign languages have a period, or a succession of periods, of active language learning (the acquisition period), which occurs through school and possibly also into post-secondary education. The time between active learning and later measurement is seen as an incubation period in which active learning no longer takes place and the language might or might not be used. In this time period, researchers do not measure what is “lost;” instead, they test for what is retained or maintained. In effect, attrition research focuses on “how well language skills are preserved, once the opportunity to practice or use them is no longer available, and what variables predict maintenance” (Pan & Gleason 1986:197). If a researcher were to examine a person’s skills at two points of observation, one at or near the end of language learning and one

after cessation of active learning, it should be possible to determine what aspects of the language have been retained, and to what extent. Pan & Gleason (1986) pointed out the difficulty of deciding what to test and how, and to what extent retrospective studies can truly analyze language loss: “Little light is shed on attrition by measuring skills that were never mastered to begin with, while assessing attrition of very specific classroom-taught structures has only marginal significance for the larger issue of language loss” (1986:198). Despite this problem, several hypotheses have attempted to explain what is lost, when loss occurs, and whether loss always occurs in the same way among different people. The regression hypothesis posits that attrition is the reverse of acquisition, with material being lost as a mirror of how it was acquired. Regression theory is divided on the question of exactly what is lost and when loss occurs. The two main theories, based on work with aphasic patients, are “last learned, first forgotten” and “best learned, last forgotten.” These two are not necessarily in conflict with one another.

The idea that the language “last learned” would be forgotten first, also called Robot’s rule, explains the order of loss as a sequential act (Andersen 1982, Jordens et al. 1986, Moorcroft & Gardner 1987). If the order in which acquisition takes place were known, then this would be relatively easy to prove. Unfortunately, analyzing the layout of a school syllabus or listing the order of language courses taken does not necessarily tell us anything definite about what aspects of language were learned when; it only tells us at which point learners were first introduced to a concept or specific vocabulary item. In order to track the exact path of learning, several points of exact testing would have to take place over the entire L2 acquisition period, so that these points could then be compared with the same points of attrition.

The other possibility, also called Pitres’s rule, is that “language learned best” is the material that is most internalized, thereby causing it to be the last to be forgotten. This rule implies that loss is a matter of the quality of processing, and that the material learned best “will have the greatest habit strength and be most resistant to loss” (Pan & Gleason 1986:202). This does not necessarily contradict the idea of “last learned, first forgotten” because material learned first, in the early stages of L2 acquisition, is often also the material which is learned best. This is probably because learners have more time to solidify what is learned and apply it. However, the idea of “best learned” may ignore the problem of how to determine whether something has been “learned” in the

first place. Andersen (1982) noted that we must distinguish between true loss and the failure to acquire in the first place. If “best learned” really is forgotten last, then the “less better learned” would be the first to be forgotten, even though some of this may not have been truly “learned” in the acquisition period. Neisser (1984) spoke of a “critical threshold” that must be achieved for information to be retained.

Just as attrition researchers do not always agree on the order and proximity of loss, they also describe different rates of loss. Some research projects have shown that elements of the new language are forgotten rapidly as soon as active acquisition ceases (Kennedy 1932, Flaugher & Spencer 1967, Weltens 1989). Language loss is rapid at first and then trails off, leaving some aspects remembered for a long time. Bahrick (1984b) set a rough cut-off point for forgetting at five years, arguing that if aspects of the L2 survive past this point, there is a good chance that they will remain with a person many years or even decades later, even if no active language maintenance is taking place. This traditional curve, of rapid fall-off with a slowly flattening rate of forgetting, directly contradicts the findings of other studies. Researchers like Edwards (1976, 1977) and Weltens & Van Els (1986) have pointed to a “plateau” curve of forgetting (see Figure 3). Their observations indicated that attrition does not begin immediately at the conclusion of active learning, but that it is initially delayed, and then sets in much later.

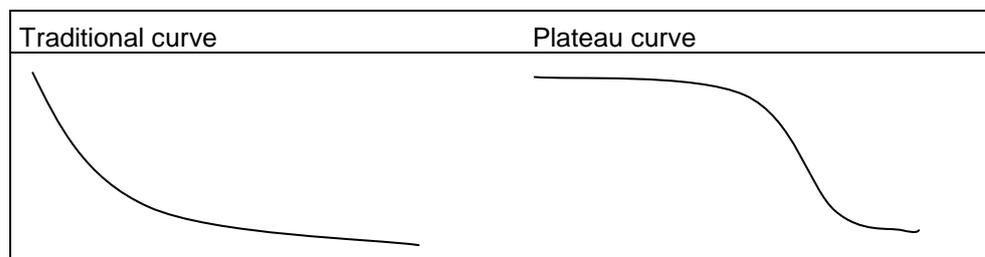


Figure 3: Two types of language loss curves (Source: Weltens 1989:12)

Some studies have even shown an increase in language levels after the end of instruction, called residual learning, which has been explained in different ways. Weltens & Van Els (1986) implied that the learners of French they observed were more mature at the later date, having also learned more about how to take language tests than at the first evaluation point. Scherer (1957) thought that the learners of German had used the summer break between observation points to process what had been learned, and were thus better able to show their skills. Cohen (1975) even speculated that the

higher scores at a later date might be a result of forgetting what was wrong, and asked: “could the process actually produce residual learning by eliminating incorrect hypotheses about the language?” (1975:137).

Language acquisition research seeks to explain not only the timing, but also the specific content of what is lost. In general, it is thought that receptive skills are more durable than productive skills, and that active vocabulary is more likely to be unavailable over time than passive vocabulary (Bahrick 1984b, Gardner, Lalond & MacPherson 1985, Weltens & Cohen 1989). This is not surprising, since language learners in the acquisition period are also generally more successful at (passively) recognizing material recently covered than recalling it for active use. Olshtain (1986) declared that vocabulary in general is more likely to be lost, whereas Moorcraft & Gardner (1987) and Weltens (1989) found that lexical items were more firmly entrenched than grammatical knowledge or the ability to apply simple rules of verb conjugation or tense. Fixed expressions and everyday language skills are also thought to be less likely to be lost than academic-level language skills, as Daller & Grotjahn (1999) found after investigating school language competence among Turkish-German speakers. However, a general rule of thumb seems to be that having a higher language level at the end of the acquisition period will prevent rapid attrition thereafter.

Compensation for language lost, whether it is a specific lexical item or the ability to create complex sentence structures, is also part of attrition research. If the ability to produce a message in the L2 is no longer present, the speaker will have to find a different way of expressing the idea, and will use different strategies to do so (cf. Cohen 1989, Olshtain 1989). One such strategy, often unconscious, includes transferring items from the L1, as noted by Berman & Olshtain (1983). Children are especially prone to make such inter-language transfers (Olshtain 1986), but the problem of L1 interference in learning new languages is often already an issue during the acquisition phase. Again, when noting language transfer in attrition studies, the researcher would have to be certain that the object of interest had been mastered in the L2 and lost, and is now being replaced by L1 interference. Without this certainty, what is assumed to be a loss through interference may simply be an example of what Andersen (1982) identified as failure of initial acquisition.

One drawback of language attrition studies is that they are notoriously difficult to classify and categorize, and there are often problems in confirming results relative to other studies. This is due to the extreme differences in research methods and groups investigated. Many researchers agree that the different contexts of study groups in terms of age, general education levels, gender, and overall intelligence provide a diverse starting point for study groups who are also different in terms of L1-L2 relationships, the length and conditions of L2 acquisition, or the periods between end-of-learning and the evaluation of retention (cf. Reimer 2005, Feuerhake et al. 2004, Schöpfer-Grabe 1998). Some studies are prospective and track learners through acquisition and incubation periods, but most, like this one, are retrospective and only address participants after active learning has ceased. Many educational systems measure retention over a short period, such as between school terms or following breaks, but it is not as easy to contact participants for long-term studies once they have left the education setting. In some studies, all of the learners are included, while others use a selected representative sample or rely on random access. Furthermore, when examining what is retained, there is no standard set of criteria for how to judge what is really lost. As interesting as this research is, and as much potential as it has for adding to our knowledge of acquisition, it must be emphasized that language attrition is still not fully understood or agreed upon.

2.3.2.4 Why non-NESTs are special type 5 cases

At first glance, the field of attrition research as presented above does not seem to apply to non-NESTs. As a rule, a language teacher has already finished his or her L2 acquisition with a relatively high level of academic language skills, and she or he does not enter an empty incubation period in which the language is dormant. Thus, we would not necessarily expect language teachers to be typical candidates for attrition. However, there are two areas of attrition which may be particularly relevant for the non-NESTs; namely, those of fluency/speed and of interference/compensation.

Moorcroft & Gardner (1987) noted that learners report and researchers often observe that the speed of speech production is reduced after the acquisition period ends, with more frequent and longer breaks. Over time, such pauses slow down the speed of a conversation and reduce overall fluency (Kuhberg 1992). Non-NESTs must speak

slowly and clearly in order to teach the L2 to their pupils, and they are not often called upon to demonstrate that they can speak fluently. Their mastery of “teacher talk” for use in the classroom is a useful tool for instruction. However, if the non-NEST no longer has opportunities to speak at a faster, more idiomatic, or fluent level, this could lead to an overall loss of speed or fluency outside the classroom as well. It is highly possible that a teacher might not even notice this loss in skill, or, if she or he does notice, it might not be viewed as a true loss. This change in ability over the course of a career would be especially difficult to track and analyze, as most people do not have concrete records of their speech production.

As González Moncada (1995) has pointed out, non-NESTs working in the home environment of their own L1 may be at a higher risk for interference and may compensate more quickly with their native language. She claimed that many of the non-NESTs in her home country of Colombia had not achieved a stable and high level of English at the outset, and were thus at a higher risk for interference, especially in areas of speech production. The problem was not that none of the teachers had achieved Neisser’s (1984) “critical threshold” level, but that many were on less solid ground to start with than would be considered ideal. Unlike most other learners of a foreign language, non-NESTs can be expected to have a clear understanding of language acquisition processes. Through their own learning and by constantly observing the learning of their pupils, they are well aware of the differences that exist between learner language and “acceptable” language, they recognize mistakes and discrepancies, and they have been taught or have developed strategies for moving language levels in the desired direction. Because their L2 is the basis of their profession, non-NESTs also do not experience the same gap as many normal learners, who may go years or decades without using the foreign language. At the same time, unless English is a real and true L2, the risk of interference from the L1 environment is always present.

Perhaps the terms “loss” and “attrition” are misdirected here, and we would be better served by turning to the concept of “language change,” as was suggested by John Clark as early as 1982. Clark considered the term “language change research” to be more fitting to describe the differences in the “scope or level of language performance over time, regardless of the direction of these changes” (Clark 1982:138). Most L2 or FL attrition studies examine language learners who have not reached such a high skill level,

and they do not account for the fact that non-NESTs have both extended contact with the L2 after the end of their own learning period, and that they have various motivations for wishing to avoid attrition. In any case, it would be wrong to simplify non-NEST language change by painting a stark picture of acquisition followed by attrition with possible occasional maintenance. Non-NESTs continue to have intense and extended contact with their L2 long after their own active acquisition period has ended, and they may very well continue some form of language learning after completing their qualifications. In examining German non-NEST perceptions of language, it is perhaps best to adhere to Barbara Freed's idea of seeing language loss not as a single issue, but as "one point on a continuum" (Freed 1982:5) that covers the full range of learning, maintenance, loss, and overall use.

2.3.3 Linking individual language change to non-NESTs

Non-NESTs gain English language competence in different ways, but for most teachers the bulk of L2 learning takes place in schools and at universities. Non-NEST training programs differ from country to country, and sometimes even within countries. Common to all of these programs is the goal of providing teacher trainees whose native tongue is not English with a solid language background so that they can perform their jobs. Definitions of what constitutes a solid background differ according to the specific type of TESOL work the teacher will be involved with. As was mentioned in subsection 2.2.3, there currently seems to be some doubt about whether all teachers in the eastern regions of Germany have the necessary language background to teach English. Even though the pupils' recent poor test results had not been proven to be a direct result of teachers' language competence, the apparent connection was enough to inspire policymakers to declare that English teachers needed additional training sessions. (To date, no such courses have been offered by the local education ministry.) In other words, the teachers' language acquisition was seen as incomplete and their language skills as lacking. This study investigates how the teachers perceive their language acquisition process, and whether they see any deficits in their language skills that may hinder them in their work.

In addition to exploring past language learning and levels of English at the end of their training, non-NESTs may also see changes in their language ability over time.

Especially among non-NESTs who also conduct and publish research, there is a belief that language acquisition is never complete, regardless of how much experience they have or how good their English is. Miranda (2003) emphasized that language teachers “embark on a never-ending journey” and must “take advantage of every opportunity to practice speaking in English” (2003:1). She asserted that she and other non-NESTs “continue to be learners throughout our lives,” because teaching a subject automatically encourages the teacher to learn more about it and become more proficient (2003:4). According to this perspective, a non-native speaker would improve his or her language skills through reflective interactions and through working with language on a daily basis.

In addition to teaching activities, most non-NESTs engage in continuing education, or professional development (PD), activities. This “third phase” of teacher education in Germany (*Fortbildung*) takes many different forms and covers various areas, many of which are not specifically connected with English language skills per se, but are useful for teachers as professionals. For instance, since 2005 a large aspect of PD for teachers at the *Regionalschule* has centered on differentiated learning activities to use in the more heterogeneous fifth and sixth grade classrooms. This ongoing interaction with the language, and the opportunity to work with the language in new contexts, may help with maintenance and new forms of acquisition. In this study, I asked teachers to describe their continuing language acquisition, and to identify the factors that facilitate this process.

Language change may also take a different direction for non-NESTs if some skill areas suffer from attrition or fossilization. According to González Moncada (1995), teachers who work with lower-level pupils or in less affluent public schools suffer greater losses in many skill areas than teachers in private language schools. After comparing these two groups to students currently enrolled in teacher training programs, she discovered that the first group of public school non-NESTs performed at lower levels in all skill areas, whereas teachers at private language institutes scored better than enrolled students. These test results also correlated with the self-assessment of teachers in different areas. In this study of (primarily eastern) German non-NESTs, I also use self-assessments to explore what areas of negative change, or language loss, teachers might have observed, and outline the steps teachers take to combat loss over time. Next, I will describe the

role of self-assessment and the various data-gathering techniques used in this study, and the methods behind them.

3. METHODS AND DATA

In this chapter, I summarize the methodological basis for collecting and working with data in this research project, starting with a short description of Grounded Theory as a basis for this work. Next, I describe the participants, as well as the different types of data I sought and obtained. This is followed by an outline of collection methods. Finally, I present the steps used in analyzing the data, and describe to what extent qualitative research software was useful in this process. In all sections of this chapter, I reflect on the problems and conflicts that influenced the project, and comment on how these were either resolved or incorporated into the study.

3.1 Grounded Theory, Biography, Phenomenology

Qualitative research methodology is widely described in the literature (cf. Firestone 1987, Eisner 1997, Steinke 1999). In education, it is defined by Merriam (1988) as being focused on process and meaning, whereby the researcher participates in fieldwork and seeks to describe and induce meaning. Qualitative research encompasses different designs. Each of these designs is intended to guide researchers in exploring the subject matter, and calls for slightly different approaches to collecting data, conducting analysis, and presenting results. There are many different ways to classify and define these designs, but one of the clearest is the short list by Creswell (1994), who identified four of the most frequently used designs: ethnography, grounded theory, case study, and phenomenology. A few years later, Creswell (1998) added biography as a fifth design to this list.

For my project, I have elected to follow the basic tenets of Grounded Theory, while allowing space for an awareness of biography and an understanding of phenomenological studies. A description of Grounded Theory and a justification for its use in this study are found in sub-sections 3.1.1 and 3.1.2. In the next sub-section, I discuss the problems researchers typically encounter in using grounded theory, as well

as of the specific problems I faced when using it in this project. The final sub-section defines biography and phenomenology as they pertain to this project.

3.1.1 Grounded Theory

Since the publication of “The Discovery of Grounded Theory” (Glaser & Strauss 1967), Grounded Theory (GT) has become an established and accepted research design. The extent to which these authors “discovered” GT is uncertain, as many of their ideas and procedures had been debated and used previously. In various texts in which they focused on the themes of mortality and dying (Glaser & Strauss 1965, 1968, 1970, and Glaser 1965), the authors noted that they had synthesized the ideas of their predecessors, which led to the development of a new approach to doing research. However, Glaser & Strauss are credited with systematically formulating GT and promoting it as a recognized design, including fields beyond health research. While the two authors later took their “discovery” in different directions, with Glaser tending toward a stricter empirical outlook and Strauss becoming more pragmatic, both are recognized as having supported and contributed to the ideas behind it. Regardless of which school or precise methods were favored, GT has long been embraced by education researchers as a qualitative research tool (cf. Merriam 1988, Borg & Gall 1989, Howe & Eisenhart 1990).

In essence, GT calls for the researcher to interact with data she or he collects, and then, through interpretation and analysis, to generate a new theory to explain the findings. Instead of starting with a premise or hypothesis to be proven by collecting empirical data, GT calls for new hypotheses to be generated from the research. Strauss & Corbin (1998:6) remind us that we should be “skeptical of established theories ... unless these are eventually grounded through active interplay with the data.” In short, when using GT, the data are of primary importance, and the theory evolves from them.

The basic ideas of GT have, however, been criticized by some members of the scientific community. Researchers who favor quantitative methods often see GT as simplistically inductive or “soft,” and claim that it lacks robustness. According to these critics, GT does not allow for replication, which traditional scientific approaches deem to be essential. An ordered summary of the most familiar criticisms of GT, as it is used in the

field of education and in studies such as this one, is provided by Thomas & James (2006).

Even researchers who accept GT struggle with its definitions and processes. Allan (2003) has noted his doubts about GT, including the possible interference of preconceived ideas, the lack of specifics in the coding process, and the lack of certainty about when the study should end based on an open definition of saturation. He stated that GT is a “powerful way to collect and analyse data and draw meaningful conclusions” (2003:9), but that researchers must be prepared to make many decisions alone, based on their own datasets and research goals. Pavlenko (2007) asserted that

“the notion that themes and patterns ‘emerge freely’ in analysis, taking shape of a ‘grounded theory’ (Strauss and Corbin 1998), is in itself naïve and misleading, because it obscures the sociohistoric and cultural influences on the researchers’ conceptual lens.” Pavlenko (2007:167)

She pointed out that all researchers bring their own lens or focus to a project and that these researchers may “end up speaking past each other” as they zero in on different “emerging themes” according to their own personal preferences. This would suggest that results are not reliable, because similar outcomes would not be produced if the data were collected and processed by a different researcher.

Proponents of GT generally assert that such criticisms are unfounded, as GT does not seek to replicate previous findings, support set theories, or work deductively. Thus, they argue, GT should not be judged according to these traditional criteria. The outcome of GT research will be a new theory that fits well with the data set used. Because the data are sought, collected, and analyzed by the researcher, it is expected and desirable that the researcher will interact with the data and influence the outcome as she or he seeks to create meaning. Working inductively from a new corpus, the researcher’s conclusions will necessarily be unique and original, but they will also be firmly grounded in the data themselves. It is this interaction with the data that creates the valued theory.

3.1.2 Rationale for using GT

Using GT to guide data collection and the subsequent analysis is appealing if a researcher is seeking to allow participants to determine the content and reach of a study. If, however, the researcher is more interested in proving a hypothesis or in confirming previous studies, this method would not be a good fit. Because my research question involved asking non-NESTs about their views, I deliberately chose a research design

that would not only tolerate but would enhance the participants' perspectives, without forcing them into a pre-set hypothesis. Although the project began with my assumptions and expectations, including a partially formulated hypothesis, it allowed the data—i.e., the input from the teacher participants—to change the focus of the research question or even contradict prior expectations. Like other research projects focusing on teachers and their beliefs, my research question called for me to place teacher's ideas at the core, “die Äußerung der Lehrenden über ihr Denken und Handeln in den Mittelpunkt” (Schart 2001:51). Thus, using GT appeared to be a natural and effective means of achieving the aims of the study. If the research question had involved determining the actual language competence of these non-NESTs or tracking specific language changes, GT would not have been appropriate.

3.1.3 Limitations of GT and possible deviations in this study

Strauss & Corbin (1998:12) stated that, when working with GT, the person conducting research will “not begin a project with a preconceived theory in mind...Rather, the researcher begins with an area of study and allows the theory to emerge from the data.” If I had taken this statement literally, I would have been unable to conduct this research project using GT. When I first set out to structure a research question, I was interested primarily in the idea of teacher language attrition over the course of a professional life. The motivating theory was that of Krashen's “I plus 1” and comprehensible input (Krashen 1976, 1982, 1985), which assumes that language acquisition takes place, and will continue to take place, as long as an individual is in a “plus 1” situation in which the new language introduced is slightly beyond his or her level, but is still comprehensible. My original hypothesis was a reverse of Krashen's: namely, the question of whether non-NESTs who are in a constant “minus 1” environment, and who therefore receive little or no input, experience language attrition. Before I had even charted my first set of possible questions, I had already generated a rough hypothesis. I sought to underpin this idea with pre-existing knowledge stemming from the literature on conditions of language acquisition and hypotheses of language attrition. This idea of “I minus 1,” coupled with my work experience and ideas developed during previous research, meant that I had expectations based on pre-existing knowledge.

This previous knowledge was the impetus for the research project, and it also gave the research questions their form. However, as the research progressed, these ideas became less important, taking a backseat to the emerging theory. GT states that “theory or hypotheses are not established a priori” (Creswell 1994:162), yet it leaves space for pre-existing knowledge to enter the research process and to be absorbed into the data:

“Vorwissen ist in diesem Sinn also Wissen, das wir vorab... einbringen. ... Der Forschungsprozess besteht nun darin, dieses Vorwissen systematisch durch Überlegungen, die sich auf empirische Daten stützen, weiter zu entwickeln.” (Krotz 2005:168)

The idea of “constant comparison,” which is often mentioned in connection with GT, requires the researcher to compare “knowledge with empirical data” and “knowledge with already existing knowledge” (Krotz 2005:165, translation mine). It is, however, important that we not only acknowledge the existence of such knowledge, but that we treat it with caution and do not allow it to determine the direction of discovery. In their original text, Glaser & Strauss (1967:37) cautioned that there is “little point of actively looking at work done by others, because this hinders searching for new concepts.” At the same time, they did not actively discourage researchers from using “any material bearing in the area” (Glaser & Strauss 1967:169), which includes the writings of others and personal experience. Dey (1993:66) called this “accumulated knowledge,” and pointed out that, because it exists, it must be acknowledged and included.

I thus began data collection with certain expectations in mind. These ideas were grounded in previously published studies and in my own experience, but I was open to the possibility of discarding or altering these theories as I gathered new data. Even with my background knowledge, I was certain there would be at least a few “new” concepts in the data. This proved to be the case early on, as the very first interview demonstrated. While I had a set list of questions regarding the areas I hoped to cover, the participants were instead inclined to focus on those areas which interested them and were of primary importance to their language learning and change. The focus of my questions necessarily shifted to these areas, and I had to make room for the teachers to provide the data important to them. In evaluating the data later, my questions also shifted, and the subsequent interviews were conducted with these insights in mind. In the end, the types of questions asked and the answers provided were determined by the data collected, and the theory was, for the most part, allowed “to emerge from the data,” as GT describes.

3.1.4 Biography and Phenomenology

Creswell (1994) has suggested that researchers first seek to explain to readers what their research will achieve by posing a question. The primary or leading question often is called a “grand tour” question (Werner & Schoepfle 1987) or a “guiding hypothesis” (Marshall & Rossman 1989), and can be followed by “sub-questions” (Miles & Huberman 1984). Creswell (1994:70-1) encouraged researchers to pose such questions using the words “what” or “how,” and to inform the reader about what the study is attempting to do. According to Creswell, if the goal is to “discover,” then GT is most likely a suitable design; while if the goal is to “describe the experiences,” then the design would include phenomenology. One way of describing experiences is through the use of biography, in which the subject gives his or her “life history” (Woods 1987, Knowles 1993) in the form of a “biography” (Butt & Raymond 1987, Goodson & Walker 1990) or a “narrative” (Connelly & Clandinin 1990, Clandinin 1992).

Phenomenological studies are those “in which human experiences are examined through the detailed descriptions of the people being studied” (Creswell 1994:12), and which require us to “orient ourselves towards people’s ideas about the world” (Marton 1981:178). Phenomenology includes the description, analysis, and understanding of experiences from the viewpoint of the individual who has experienced them. A focus on “experiences” became increasingly important to my research over the course of conducting interviews. When I asked teachers to share their ideas about their own language acquisition and possible attrition, their answers often came in the form of narratives, or stories of remembered experience. While listening, I found it helpful to remember that these stories are products of the teachers’ interactions with the language over time, and reflect their processing of the interactions. “When teachers share their stories with collaborating researchers they display both their lived experiences and their understandings of these” (Barkhuizen & Wette 2008:374). Qualitative research uses the experiences and the perceptions of the subjects studied and examines how people understand their life experiences (cf. Locke, Spirduso & Silverman 1987 or Fraenkel & Wallen 1990).

As different participants told me their stories, impressions, and ideas about language change, or lack thereof, it became apparent that my interviews were revealing not a single experience shared by all non-NESTs, but rather “multiple realities,” as defined by

Lincoln & Guba (1985:37 and 41). Before comparing data from different respondents, I first had to examine the context and replies of each individual respondent in order to understand their starting point and outlook. In health and mortality research, the fields in which qualitative methods and GT were first applied, self-rated health is valued as a subjective measure, even though not all respondents use the same frame of reference (Leinsalu 2002). By the same token, self-rated language change, like language competence and confidence, depends on the perspective of the individual doing the rating, and on his or her personal framework. It is also important to remember that these self-ratings are not static or constant for each individual. In the field of health research, Idler & Benyamini (1997:29) pointed out that a self-rating is “a dynamic evaluation, judging trajectory and not only current level” of an individual’s status. Non-NEST language change—regardless of whether it entails continuing acquisition, attrition, or a combination thereof—is also ongoing, and must be viewed in this light.

In seeking to understand experiences and how a participant understands these experiences, a phenomenographic outlook can be helpful, as it takes into account that each act of understanding is unique not only to the person, but also to the time and place in which the understanding was articulated. This does not mean that I proposed to conduct my study according to the guidelines of phenomenology. According to Marton (1981), a considerable amount of education research is guided and inspired by phenomenology, but does not adhere to all of its philosophical underpinnings. Kvale (1996) observed that qualitative interview research:

“is in keeping with a phenomenological understanding, with the life world as the point of departure, the qualitative descriptions of meaning, and a deliberate naiveté as expression of phenomenological reduction” (1996:55).

While conducting this research, I found it useful to remind myself to examine the data as “experiences” and “understandings,” and to place my primary emphasis on the participants’ interpretations of their experiences. Only after allowing space for the non-NESTs to articulate and expand upon their reflections did I seek to process these through the filter of my own understanding and analysis.

Although I did not engage in any true biography research, as participants were not asked to tell me their life histories in a long form (cf. Flick 2006), I did view the emerging experiences as shorter narratives, are often called “stories” in education research (cf. Carter 1993, Clandinin & Connelly 1991, 2000). Moran (1996) also used the term

“story” to describe one foreign language teacher’s account of the steps she experienced in moving from language learner to language teacher, and the interplay between the two. He noted that the progression was “not a linear series of events that flowed smoothly... from past to present,” but that it was more like “criss-crossing ripples, from many intersecting key events, with few (if any) straight lines of cause and effect” (1996:125). Kvale (1996) observed that the meaning given in interviews may be developing as it is being articulated, and that the interviewees “formulate in a dialogue their own conceptions of their lived world” (1996:11). While examining language change and teachers’ ideas on (continuing) language learning, I also tried to view the “stories” I heard in light of the key events that had influenced the participant’s progression across his or her lifetime, rather than as static, isolated points on a past timeline of professional development.

3.2 Participants in the study

The data in this study came from interviews, observations, and self-evaluations, and are described in sub-section 3.3. In accordance with GT, the data stem directly from the study population and are created through interactions between the researcher and the participants. If a different researcher had conducted this project, she or he would have focused on other main areas of interest. At the same time, it must also be emphasized that the participants in this study shaped the dataset with their stories and insights, and that other participants would have created different data. All of the participants did, however, meet a basic set of criteria: they were non-NESTs, they were qualified to teach English in a German school setting, and they were willing to take part in the study. Before examining the types of data collected and analyzed, I will describe the particular teachers involved in this study, and the implications participant selection and restriction had for the findings.

3.2.1 Selection of participants

The study population consisted of 20 English teachers, two male and 18 female, none of whom were native speakers of English. The teachers were working at grade levels five to 12 at the time of the interviews, except for one who was on parental leave for a semester. All of the participants in this study had been born and raised in the eastern

part of Germany, the former GDR, and had been educated in the GDR system through their university training, or, in the case of the younger teachers, at least during most of their schooling. On average, the teachers were just over 43 years old, and had been teaching for 19.7 years, although not always teaching English. The group included 10 teachers working with grades five to 10 at the *Regionalschule* level (including one school for children with physical handicaps), one teacher at a special education school for grades five to nine (for children with learning disabilities), and nine teachers working with grades five through 12 at either a *Gymnasium* or a *Gesamtschule*. Appendix II contains a list of all of the teachers identified by a code number with individual details on age, gender, qualifications, school type, and subject combinations. The final number of 20 participants was not determined in advance, but came about as a result of “saturation” in the data, meaning “no additional data are being found whereby the sociologist can develop properties of the category” (Glaser & Strauss 1967:61). According to this definition of saturation, a researcher is required to seek out participants who might be able to give new or contradictory information, and who might have different perspectives. Having a combination of different age groups, experience levels, school types, and subject combinations would have been desirable, yet in the end the actual participant selection was influenced by three factors: my own pre-set definition of what constitutes a qualified non-NEST, the demographic characteristics of the school system in the area where I was working, and the restrictions imposed by regional education officials regarding access.

3.2.1.1 Defining who is a “qualified” teacher

The first challenge was to define who is a “qualified” teacher, as there are several levels of valid qualification in place, and these gradients are not always apparent to outsiders. Teacher certification is seen as complete after the student passes the second state exam, which is taken after a period of practical student teaching. This *Staatsexamen*, regardless of where it was administered, is valid in most of the 16 German *Länder*, and is seen as a full and unconditional qualification. The *Diplom*, issued in the GDR, is also widely regarded as a valid form of certification. Many teachers in this study had been issued a *Diplom*, which was later recognized as the general equivalent of the *Staatsexamen*. Two of the teachers who had begun their university training prior to

unification but completed their certification afterwards had actually been issued both types of degrees. In this study, either type of certification was seen as defining the non-NEST as a qualified teacher.

Three of the 20 teachers received their certification for English through additional training, which was offered immediately after unification, when there was a high demand for teachers of English in schools. One of these three told me her certificate for English, called a *Lehrbefähigung*, was only valid in this region, and she would not be considered “qualified” to teach English in other areas of Germany. However, another teacher in this group was certain that her *Lehrbefähigung* would be accepted elsewhere, as she had considered moving and had already been told that her certifications were recognized. For these three teachers, English was an additional subject, added to the two subjects they had first studied for their original *Diplom*. According to the ministry of education, however, these three teachers are certainly “qualified” to teach English in MV, and were thus included in the study.

One teacher told me that she was only allowed to teach English at the school in which she was currently employed, and that the education ministry had allowed her to teach by issuing her a special *Lehrerlaubnis*, which was valid indefinitely only for this particular school. She had passed her *Staatsexamen* in other subjects and was qualified to teach those subjects, but not to teach English. Her dispensation to teach English was based on her excellent English skills and her willingness to teach a high-demand subject when there were too few other teachers available. Encouraged by the director at her school, she was completing additional credit hours for a full degree in English when we met. Despite my original misgivings about including a non-NEST without a widely recognized certificate, this teacher was technically qualified to teach English at her school, and was therefore included. Her unique status as both a qualified teacher and as a current student added a new perspective to the study.

In addition to choosing teachers “qualified” according to school and state standards, I also wished to include only those teachers who were actively teaching English at the current time, and who were engaged with the language. For this reason, the number of contact hours each teacher had in total and the percentage of these spent teaching English versus other subject matter were recorded. All of the “qualified” teachers for traditional school settings in Germany have post-secondary certification in at least two

subject areas. Of the 20 teachers in this study, nine were qualified in three subjects or more. This double- (or triple-) subject certification does not always mean that a teacher divides his or her classroom time equally between the subjects. Eight of the teachers were teaching only English, and had no contact hours in their second subjects. In half of these cases the reason was that the second subject was Russian, a language no longer taught in most schools. In the other half of the cases, the second subjects were German or history. While these subjects are in demand, the need for English teachers outweighs the need for the other subjects. It would be wrong, however, to conclude that all qualified English teachers teach mainly English or spend at least half of their contact hours in an English classroom. Five of the 20 teachers reported their teaching load in English was less than half of the contact hours. In two cases, the teachers had second subjects (religion and Spanish) that were in even greater demand than English at their schools. In the next two cases (second subjects mathematics and biology), the participants told me there were already a sufficient number of qualified English teachers at their schools, that they were not obliged to take on more English classes. In the fifth case, the teacher was working at a special school for children with learning disabilities, where English made up only a small part of the total curriculum. Therefore, the percentage of English contact hours for these 20 teachers ranged from less than 20 percent to a full 100 percent of their classroom duties.

Two groups of teachers I did not include in the project were those working exclusively with very young learners, up through grade four, and those teaching in post-secondary systems, such as colleges or adult education centers. Both groups were omitted for reasons of “qualifications,” and the complications that a wide range of backgrounds would have brought to the study. In Germany, adult education is widespread, and it varies according to funding, audience, and administration. While most post-secondary professional schools require teachers to have state certifications, the community colleges (*Volkshochschulen*) do not. Private language centers are not regulated for teacher certification, and both they and the public university system rely on a high number of adjunct teachers with limited contracts. It is difficult to determine in advance which teachers have which certification, and language centers do not necessarily provide such information about their staff and adjuncts. Secondary education is more

regulated, which is why I decided to limit the study to teachers working with grades five through 12.

There are also state regulations for pre-school and primary, but the contexts are slightly different. Kindergartens are seen as part of the German day care and crèche systems, not as part of the school system, and there is no university-level component to teacher certification. Indeed, kindergarten teachers are not referred to as “teachers,” but rather as *Erzieher*. Although English is offered as an early-language component in many kindergartens, the courses are often conducted by external language schools, which, like adult education centers, may not necessarily hire certified teachers, although many do. Thus, many people teaching early English classes to children aged six and under are not “qualified” in the traditional sense of the word.

Primary education in Germany begins in first grade, and in MV currently ends after grade four. Elementary school teachers undergo a different certification process than their secondary school counterparts. In the past decade, English has gained in importance in the primary curriculum, moving from an elective course at some schools to being a mandatory class as of grade three, with a minimum of three contact hours a week. This has created a new demand for more teachers of English at the elementary level, and the schools are responding to this demand in various ways. Some primary school teachers have received additional training and certifications that are only valid for grades one through four, and are not seen as being “high enough” to permit these teachers to teach English beyond this level. Some primary schools “borrow” a teacher certified for grades five and higher from a nearby secondary school. Because primary school English was still very much in flux at the time of this study, I chose to omit elementary teachers as well. However, several of the secondary teachers in this study, especially those at the *Regionalschule*, told me they were already teaching a few hours a week at the elementary level, or were planning to do so soon.

3.2.1.2 An aging generation of mostly female teachers

The non-NEST population of this study are mostly women and do not include younger teachers. The ministry of education does not issue statistics according to subject and gender, but most observers will agree that the vast majority of English teachers are women. For this reason, I made a point of trying to include male teachers in the study,

but I did not actively reject teachers because of their gender. The fact that only two of the 20 participants were men reflects the gender disparity in the field.

However, the fact that most of the participants were older was more disconcerting. While I tried to recruit younger teachers, I met with no success. Three-quarters of the participants were aged 40 or older at the time of the first interview, and two of the teachers were preparing to retire in less than two years. Of the five teachers who were still under age 40, two were mere months away from turning 40, and should also be included in this group of “older” teachers. While I was pleased to have participants with many years of classroom experience, I was worried that I was missing the perspective of “younger” teachers, whose university training was more recent, and who might be in an active period of language change. During the early phase of the study, I called each school on the district list and asked the secretary or director if they had any English teachers on staff who had recently completed their *Staatsexamen*, and who were relatively new to the school. Of 32 *Regionalschulen* on my list, three had been closed and two were omitted due to proximity to my hometown and the fact that my own children were enrolled there or had been previously. At three other schools, no one answered the phone, despite several attempts to call. The remaining 24 schools reported having no English teachers under the age of 35, with the exception of student teachers who were preparing for their second *Staatsexamen*. The age structures of the *Gesamtschulen* and *Gymnasien* were slightly different. The district list contained 28 schools, four of which were in the process of merging with others, and I only had to call 11 schools before finding teachers who belonged to the younger cohort. These three teachers, ages 30, 32, and 37, were employed at a large *Gymnasium*, and had been teaching three, four, and 10 years, respectively.

Thus, in terms of gender and age, my group of non-NESTs was not as diverse as I would have liked. Yet this lack of diversity also reflects the demographic reality of English teacher in the area where this study was conducted. English teachers tend to be female, and, in general, the teaching population is getting older and is not being replaced by younger colleagues. In the mid-1990s, MV sought to compensate for the drop in the number of schoolchildren due to plummeting birth rates with a *Lehrerpersonalkonzept*, which guaranteed employment in return for teachers agreeing to part-time work. This meant that teachers with contracts in the 1990s were guaranteed

further employment at reduced hours and wages. This also made it difficult to hire new teachers as they graduated from the university and completed the second *Staatsexamen*. The result is that not only English teachers, but the general teaching population in this area are aging, and fewer new teachers are entering the profession. Thus, the demographics of my study population reflect the prevalent gender division in language teaching and the aging population structure in the region.

3.2.1.3 Access and self-selection

The local school authorities (*Schulamt*) granted me permission to conduct interviews in a specific region, which consisted of the city of Rostock and the two surrounding county districts. The permission was granted with specific conditions, including requirements that I adhered to certain standards of anonymity and good research conduct with data protection, and that the interviews were voluntary. I was instructed to provide authorities at each school with written verification of my plans and a copy of the permission letter, and the director of each school had to approve my request to contact the teaching staff and conduct interviews. These restrictions meant that my access to the participants of this study was determined by school directors at several levels.

The first step in obtaining access to English teachers was via the director at the school. My initial contact was usually a telephone call followed by an information packet, which included a cover letter to the director, a short project exposé, a copy of the *Schulamt* permission letter, and multiple copies of a general letter addressing teachers in which I asked for volunteers. At roughly 30 percent of the *Regionalschulen*, the school directors told me on the phone that they did not wish to receive such materials, and were not willing to allow me to approach their teachers. The reasons for their refusal ranged from “too much else going on” or “not enough time,” to explanations that the school was “in the middle of being evaluated” and that any conversations on self-evaluation would be counterproductive. One director informed me that her teachers were all “rather old” and near retirement, and she did not wish to “put them through” any more such studies in the final years of their work. If a director did not wish to allow such a study to be conducted at his or her school, it was not possible to approach potential participants there.

Even in cases in which the director did allow me to send in an information packet, I had no way of knowing whether this information would be made readily available to the teachers, or if they would be encouraged to participate. Moreover, even if the school director was not actively against such a study being done, it is entirely possible that my letters were not distributed due to organizational problems, or were forgotten in a stack of other papers. In short, there was little opportunity to find out how the project was presented to the teachers. Roughly half of the school directors I had phoned told me I could mail in my information packet and they would hand out the letters, but in follow-up phone conversations several weeks later the answers were varied. Several directors reported that the teachers had “no interest,” and others said the teachers had “not gotten back” to them on the matter. In a few cases, the teachers contacted me directly, using the phone number or e-mail address I had supplied on my letter. Often, however, it was simply impossible to tell if the directors had actively encouraged or passively discouraged participation

At roughly one-fifth of the schools, the directors chose not to be involved at all, instead referring me directly to an English teacher who would coordinate my request. In most instances, this teacher was the *Fachschaftsleiter* or *Fachschaftssprecher*, who was responsible for coordinating English or foreign languages in general at the school. Such contacts were helpful in that they gave me direct access to a person who could convince his or her colleagues to volunteer for my project, but they were also restrictive in that, once contacted, this person usually was not available to participate in the study. After reading the full information packet, the *Fachschaftsleiter* had already heard about my topics and read about my plans. This, in my judgment, meant that the person had previous knowledge of the study, and might have tried to supply me with the responses she or he thought I wanted to hear, rather than with his or her own ideas. Therefore, I chose not to include these teachers in my study initially. In cases in which my contact with the *Fachschaftsleiter* had not included a copy of the information packet, I did include them as participants.

Thus, the 20 non-NESTs in this study cannot be seen as “representative” because they belong to a double-set group. The project includes only those teachers whose directors allowed access and who then volunteered to take part in the study. This institutional screening and self-selection meant that I was dealing with teachers who both worked in

an environment that permitted such introspective studies, and who were also willing to take the time to speak with an outsider. This restriction does not seem problematic for a GT study because, unlike in qualitative or statistical studies, GT does not rely on participants who are randomly selected. Instead, the researcher selects participants “always with intention” and strives to find “contrasting selections... in order to test the theory developed” (Krotz 2005:191-192, translation mine).

One advantage of this study was that there were few time constraints, and in a number of cases many months passed between a first attempt to contact teachers and the actual interviews and visits. This was especially important for the *Gymnasium* teachers, due to the uneven workload they had with two graduating classes in the school year 2007-08. Teachers who “had no time” but would “love to help” with the project were contacted 12 to 18 months later. Many times the answer at a later date was positive, and the reasons for postponing their participation formed a basis for our first conversation. The disadvantage of such a lengthy study duration, covering roughly 28 calendar months over three academic years, was the changing school structure of the region. Several *Regionalschulen* were closed or consolidated between 2008 and early 2010, and the teachers were often reassigned to different schools. In one case, a participant granted me a first interview late in the school year, but was unable to schedule the second. By the time I tried to set a date for the second appointment, her school had been closed and she had already left the area, teaching at a school out of my project range. We held a follow-up conversation by telephone, but the data were not included in the study.

3.2.1.4 Expanding participant group to include “experts”

As stated above, access to teachers was often aided by a few key “experts,” who helped me establish contacts in a particular school. These non-NESTs were the *Fachschäftsleiter* who coordinated English classes at the school, or they were regional representatives who had been assigned to coordinate continuing education activities for teachers at many schools. In one case, the “expert” teacher had no official responsibilities or title, but was extremely active in planning summer study trips, and therefore had access to a wide network of colleagues. Originally, I had not planned on including these teachers in the study, but I later changed my position.

While interviewing the first non-NESTs in the early months of the study, the participants often mentioned several names of “active” teachers or of people upon whom they relied for information. These special non-NESTs appeared to be at the intersection of professional and social networks, and they were often the very people with whom I had had previous contact. With the Glaser & Strauss definition of saturation in mind, I realized that the teachers responsible for the continuing education activities of their peers, whether officially or informally, would be able to provide new input. Because the study focused exclusively on non-NESTs’ perspectives, I did not want to include policy makers or officials in the study. However, as I recognized the benefits of hearing the insights of teachers with slightly different perspectives, I decided to target a few of these “special” non-NESTs for the study. But because of their special positions and relationships with colleagues, these teachers were interviewed as “experts,” and my questions were more focused on non-NESTs in general rather than exclusively on a single teacher’s point of view.

3.2.2 Communication with participants

After a teacher expressed his or her willingness to participate in the study, all further communication took place directly between that teacher and me, independent of directors or departmental heads. This interaction happened in three phases. The first phase included establishing initial contact and arranging appointments, the second was the interview and observation phase, and the final interaction took place after the study had ended in the form of shared research reports and more personal correspondence.

3.2.2.1 First contact

All but one of the teachers who participated in the project spoke with me prior to our first meeting, either in person or on the telephone. This was important in order to establish a working language (German) for our further interaction. As a native speaker of English, I presented a potential threat or an opportunity for these non-NESTs in that my level of English would presumably be higher than that of the teachers, and my German skills were unknown. It was not only essential to prove that I was competent in German, but that this was also the language of the study. Even though my first contact

letter was in German, and the letter stated that this was the language envisioned for the interviews, several participants asked about this issue before agreeing to participate. Two teachers asked whether we should speak English during the interviews. I told them that speaking English was an option, but that my initial questions were phrased in German, and suggested that we could switch languages if they preferred after the questions were posed. German was therefore established as the working language prior to the first interview or site visit.

One teacher contacted me only via e-mail and did not provide a phone number. She was initially reluctant to participate, but agreed because a colleague at a different school had taken part in the study and suggested she join. She instructed me to meet her outside the front door of the school and took me swiftly to a private meeting room, without introducing me to colleagues or pupils. After a few minutes of conversation she confessed that she had been worried that I would speak to her in English and she was concerned about whether she would understand me, especially as she had never before met an American. Her initial reluctance to meet with me and her expressed desire to remain out of the public eye stemmed from the fact that she was not a confident speaker of English. For many teachers, language was obviously an issue. This is why it was important to establish German as a standard in the initial contact phase, and, at the same time, impress upon the non-NESTs that my study was concerned with their thoughts and opinions, and not with their language abilities.

3.2.2.2 Levels of familiarity

With roughly a quarter of the participants, I had been on a first-name basis prior to the first interview, having met them previously in different contexts. In two cases, the non-NESTs were former students of mine who had taken a university-level class with me nearly 20 years ago. Two teachers were informal acquaintances, and one was the friend of a friend. This prior familiarity often made it easier to gain access to the teachers, but it did not automatically imply greater openness on the part of the teacher or the interviewer. Perhaps the most forthcoming and intimate conversations were those in which the interviewees had not met me beforehand, and in which we used the formal mode of address, *Sie*, rather than the familiar *Du*. Although this surprised me at first, I concluded that this was not entirely illogical. People who already have established a

relationship, regardless of whether it is close, often adhere to established roles and expectations; whereas two people who have never met before and are unlikely to cross paths again might feel comfortable in confiding in one another, knowing that this exchange of information will have no effect on an established relationship.

There was also the issue of mutual acquaintances influencing personal interactions, i.e., a common third-party acquaintance might be mentioned and play a role in establishing boundaries, or lack thereof. The 20 teachers worked at only 14 different schools, which meant that some teachers knew I had already spoken with a colleague before meeting them, or that I might be meeting someone else at their school at a later date. This created some difficulties when discussing topics such as cohesion and support networks, or even relationships with directors and willingness to participate in extracurricular activities. If one teacher had an especially difficult relationship with the school's director, she or he might be reluctant to reveal this, worried that the information might somehow be passed on. Even though participants were assured that everything they told me was confidential, having several interview partners at the same school had the potential to create a reluctance to speak openly about some topics.

In general, the interviews were not overly formal, and they mirrored the tone the teacher set at the beginning. A participant with a louder voice and tendency to laugh resulted in a more buoyant atmosphere, whereas a quieter participant whose voice was modulated and demure resulted in a more subdued conversation. In two cases, the tone and volume of our discussion were influenced by a third party: the interviews took place in a private home took place during a child's naptime, which called for quiet; and in another instance the interview was in the teachers' lounge, and there were occasional passers-by. Although these third parties did not seem to be intent on eavesdropping, the level of the conversation was quieter than it might have been otherwise.

The participants' general personalities also influenced the content of our conversations beyond the topic of English and school. Some of the teachers were what might be termed "chatty," and we discussed the weather, our families, and even dieting tips or sports. Others were more reserved and kept the conversation close to the topics at hand. The length of the interviews also varied widely, primarily due to the teachers' willingness to share additional information. The shortest interviews were within the timeframe of a 45-minute lesson, often commencing and ending with the school bell.

Other interviews not bound by such constraints were closer to two hours, with the longest being just over three full hours. Again, the timeframe was set by the participants and by their willingness to talk. The hour of the day for the site visits varied even more widely, as it depended on the teachers' schedules, the activity they were showing me, and the timeframe of others at the school. More information about interviews and various types of site visits can be found in section 3.3.1.

3.2.2.3 Continuing exchange of information

Contact with the participants did not end with the completion of the interviews and the site visits. The teachers received a letter of thanks from me with a short summary of the findings to date, and many teachers responded to this letter, either with a note of thanks themselves, or with additional input or reflections on issues we had discussed. These letters were added to the dataset for each teacher as scanned documents, with the names and addresses removed. In several cases, the participants and I exchanged book titles or Internet links which had been mentioned in the conversations earlier, and in one instance I sent classroom material to a teacher who had requested it.

In three instances, the teacher contacted me by e-mail after the interview, either the same evening or the next day, to share something she or he had forgotten to mention or feared was unclear. Two teachers told me that they had been thinking about our talk and worried that they might have given me a wrong impression on one matter or another, and they wished to make their position more precise. This seemed to indicate that, not only did they consider our conversations to be important, but the process of the interview itself inspired further reflection. More often, though, the teachers used the space between the first and second interview to reflect on the issues, and nearly all second interview sessions began with a reference to something said in the first session.

Extended contact with many participants also resulted from continuing education seminars and workshops where our paths crossed once again. Occasionally this was because the teacher or I had mentioned the upcoming event and we were expecting to see each other, but more often the meetings were by chance and unexpected. One teacher, close to retirement, had told me in an interview that she attended every possible workshop or seminar in the area, emphasizing that she was always present, and always learned something useful. This statement was confirmed in the following year, when we

met again at no fewer than four such events. Although we did not exchange much more than pleasantries at these chance meetings, the fact that she really was “always there” demonstrated that her previous comment was true, and that her self-evaluation of being a non-NEST who takes advantage of all such opportunities was in line with her actions. Information and observations of this kind were also added to the datasets in the form of an extra notation.

3.3 Data collected

In seeking answers to my research questions, I followed the basic qualitative research steps of GT, which Strauss & Corbin (1998:11-12) listed as belonging to three main components of research: data, procedures, and written and verbal reports used to convey what was found. In gathering and processing the data, I strove for triangulation, which is “drawing together multiple types of evidence gathered from different sources using different methods of data collection” (Baker 1988:483, cf. also Jick 1979). Although GT is often employed only with interviews (Froschauer & Lueger 1992, Creswell 1994, Allan 2003), for me it was important to give the teachers a chance not only to “tell me” what they thought, but also to “show me” where these thoughts originated and what effects they might have. This is why two additional types of data were used, beyond the individual interviews. In the next sub-section, I describe these three types of data, and then outline the steps taken in collecting the data and the work involved in cataloguing and processing the information collected.

3.3.1 Types of data

Three main types of data were used in this study. The first were the interviews, which are typical for qualitative research projects. The second were simplified versions of a Can-Do list for the self-assessment of language ability and for the identification of continuing language learning and maintenance strategies. Various types of “site visits” provided a third set of data, in which the teachers determined which parts of their professional lives they were willing to share with the researcher. All of these types of data were explicitly sought, and the participants were aware of the process and of the researcher’s interest areas. The self-assessment lists and site visits were designed to encourage teachers to elaborate upon information given in the interviews, which were

the primary means of investigation. The Can-Do lists yielded more predictable and manageable additional information, whereas the site visit data were often too broad and sporadic to be systematically catalogued and analyzed. However, this seeming lack of structure also produced input that was both unexpected and useful in its own manner.

3.3.1.1 Type 1: Interviews

The largest amount of data and the main input for my analyses came from two personal interviews with the teachers. These interviews were one-on-one, voluntary, unpaid, and took place on separate days. The interviews were semi-structured, with the first focusing on language acquisition and skills, and the second on maintenance and possible attrition. For all but two of the teachers, the interviews were entirely private, with only rare exceptions in which a third party entered the room to retrieve a book or ask a brief question. At one school, two teachers who had been working together for many years and “had no secrets” from one another wished to be interviewed together, at the same time, on both days. These interview sessions were slightly longer than most others, but still fit into a break in the school day. Nearly all of the teachers chose to be interviewed on site at their schools, in a preparation room or their own classroom. The one teacher who elected to have the interviews conducted at home was on parental leave and asked me to come to his house while the baby was napping. In all cases, the teachers determined the time and place of the interview, arranged the seating, and dealt with any possible interruptions. They were all informed that the conversations were being recorded and would be transcribed. Although they were told in advance that they could have access to the files at any time, none requested a copy of either the recording or the transcription.

A semi-structured interview (SSI) format enabled me to guide the conversations specifically towards the research topics of language skills, change, and maintenance. The SSI format allows participants to contribute new or seemingly non-related input in the form of stories or examples, but it does not give them the same freedom to determine the flow of conversation as an unstructured interview (UI) would (Wengraf 2002). By definition, an SSI is not merely casual conversation, because it is done with a purpose and it uses unbalanced turn-taking. An SSI is also different from an ethnographic interview, in that there is generally only one encounter and not multiple,

long-term contacts between the researcher and the subject. In my case, there were two to three contacts with each teacher, usually with the interviews taking place first, spaced between four days and a month apart, and a site visit later. Qualitative interviews are a distinct break with the normal life of the participant (cf. Spradley 1979, Froschauer & Lueger 1992, and Wengraf 2002), which is why I preferred to conduct the first two SSIs before arranging a site visit. This was not always possible, nor was it desired by all teachers. A few teachers invited me to sit in on a staff meeting or visit their classrooms before scheduling an SSI. For these teachers, the first SSI often started with, or contained references to, this previous site visit.

a) Problems regarding questions

As an interviewer, I sought to pose open questions, which could not be answered with yes/no, and which were not suggestive. Kvale (1996) described various types of interview questions. Introductory or opening questions introduce the topic and tell the interviewee what the interviewer wishes to learn about. Depending on the extent of the answer, the interviewer may have to employ follow-up or probing questions to elicit more information. Such questions may be non-verbal, with a nod or silence, or they may take the form of an encouraging “yes,” “uh mm,” or “tell me more.” Probing questions may also be specific and direct, and questions may re-phrase or echo what the interviewee has said. Questions may also interpret meaning as the interviewer seeks to understand what she or he has heard, and asks the participant to confirm the accuracy of it. In all cases, Kvale noted that the “key issue here is the interviewer’s ability to listen to what is important to the subjects, and at the same time to keep in mind the research questions of an investigation” (1996:133).

Although my list of structured introductory questions had been prepared as very “open” and encouraging, my initial follow-up questions and question probes, which were not scripted, often seemed to be leading or suggestive. Over time, after the nervousness of conducting the first interviews had worn off, I became more skilled at posing these non-structured questions without a script and at using encouraging and open probes. Still, even in the later interviews, there were many instances in which my probes or secondary questions could be seen as directive or misleading. These “bad” questions usually came up towards the end of the interview sessions, and they were often related

to direct contradictions or my questioning of interpretations. In some cases, they were also intentional, posed to elicit a verbal response to some non-verbal input. For instance, when a teacher rolled her eyes or shrugged his shoulders in exaggeration or contradiction, I would supply the “text” and ask for a yes/no confirmation. A list of SSI questions and samples of probes used can be found in Appendix III.

b) Problems regarding answers

The textbook literature on conducting qualitative interviews gives clear steps and suggestions on how to conduct rich and rewarding interview sessions. Less attention is paid to problems that may occur during such conversations. Participant reticence and unwillingness to speak or be open can be a problem, but this was not a real concern in my study because the interviewees had volunteered. Kvale (1996:125-126) mentioned situations in which the “unwritten script” can be broken by role reversal or unexpected behaviors, but this also did not occur in this study. Collins, Shattell & Thomas (2005) published an analysis of “problematic behaviors” on the part of interviewees, including flattery or response bias, which happens occasionally, but, according to their analysis, less often than we would expect, and which was also not an issue in this study.

One challenge I had not anticipated was that of language shifts from German to English. The initial contact with the participants was in German, and they had been told that this was the language we would use in the interviews. I was unprepared when teachers occasionally switched to English in the middle of a sentence or story and I was unsure what language to use for the subsequent probes. In most cases, the teachers used only a few words or a stock phrase and returned to German before it was my turn to speak. Several teachers asked me to confirm their pronunciation of an English word or supply a word they did not know. I complied with their requests, but did so as quickly as possible in order to steer the conversation back to the research question, and to German.

One teacher began the second SSI in German, but then switched to English. I was uncertain about how to apply my prompts and deliver the subsequent questions. A different teacher was unnerved by a word that appeared in English on the initial contact letter. Having recognized the term “acquisition,” this participant told me that, while he understood the distinction between “acquisition” and “learning,” he was confused by the word “attrition,” and he demanded a definition and translation of the term before we

could start. It was difficult to define the word without providing more detailed information, which might have influenced our conversation.

The use of two languages was not necessarily problematic. In no case did I interpret it as a hidden criticism of my non-native skills in German, nor did it seem to be preening or showing off on the part of the participants. Rather, I believe many of the non-NESTs in this study view English as a valid means of communication, not merely as a topic of study, and they actively chose to employ code switching or code mixing as they saw fit. Although I am convinced that it was right to conduct this study in German, I respected the participants' desire to use English when they wished to do so.

3.3.1.2 Type 2: Can-Do Lists

The second type of data came from self-evaluations obtained at the end of each interview session. This data was collected via "Can-Do lists," which are lists of self-rating questions used to gather information on an individual's ability to employ or use a certain skill (Bachman & Palmer 1989:18). Such self-assessed proficiency ratings have been used in various forms in studies on language attrition and learning retention (de Bot & Lintsen 1982, Gardner, Lalonde & MacPherson 1985, Weltens, van Els & Schils 1989, MacIntyre, Noels & Clément 1997). Self-assessment scales were used by the Canadian government as early as the 1970s to complement standard grammar tests given to public service employees (Edwards 1977, as quoted in Gardner, Lalonde, & MacPherson 1985, Edwards 1976), but the first use of a Can-Do list is attributed to Clark (1981), whose questions were posed as partial statements, all of which could be preceded by the words "I can..." Participants were asked to indicate on a numerical scale to what degree they believed they could do the activity described.

Although the Can-Do lists in this study were not constructed to ascertain directly what had been learned during or retained following a specific period of learning, it is important to note that, like other Can-Do lists, they cannot be viewed as a definite statement about the participants' skills. There is no universally accepted verdict on the reliability and use of self-assessment activities in language learning or maintenance. According to Weltens, van Els, & Schils (1989:213), such subject-provided input must be treated with caution in any study. Pan & Berko-Gleason (1986) questioned whether learners can reliably assess their own progress or lack thereof, and Ready-Morfitt (1991,

as cited in MacIntyre, Noels & Clément 1997), pointed out that clear errors in such assessments are possible. One of the few studies to use non-NESTs' self-assessment of their language skills and compare these assessments to set language tests inferred that the relationship between self-reports and actual proficiency is unclear (Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob 2003). Although they sought to link language proficiency to the classroom distribution of English or the native languages in Argentina, Pakistan, and South Korea, Kamhi-Stein & Mahboob found discrepancies between the self-assessed English abilities of the non-NESTs and their actual performance in the classroom and on tests and essays. They therefore encouraged researchers to engage in data triangulation through testing or observation, rather than to rely on self-reports alone.

Some researchers see self-assessment primarily as a useful tool for placing learners in graded levels of language courses without having to conduct time-consuming and expensive tests (Leblanc & Painchaud 1985). Others see close correlations between self-assessment ratings and initiatives to work on maintaining language levels (Harley 1994), between self-assessment and attitudes toward the language (Kenji & D'Andrea 1992), and between self-assessment and the mastery of specific skills (Yli-Renko 1988). Blanche and Merino (1989:315) posited that, if the skills to be assessed are listed clearly and in enough detail, "there is consistent overall agreement between self-assessment and ratings based on a variety of external criteria."

The increased use of self-assessment with language learners goes hand-in-hand with the trend in the literature on education theories toward referring to "assessment" rather than "evaluation" of ability (Eisner 1993:219). Eisner explained that assessment allows room for not just a single concept of ability, but "several things." According to Eisner, assessment "performs different functions and needs to be regarded in light of the educational functions it is intended to perform" (1993:224). Bachman & Clark (1987:21) defined "ability" as "knowledge, or competence, involved in language use and to the skill in implementing that knowledge," and noted that the term "language use" can "refer to both productive and receptive performance."

This study encouraged non-NESTs to assess their own language skills, which gives us two types of insights. The first reveals their perceptions, their doubts, and their self-confidence with the language. Self-examinations of language are useful not only for assessing proficiency, but also for determining whether there is an affective filter that

influenced their attitudes toward the language (Kraemer & Zisenwine 1989). As the non-NESTs assessed their own skills in the Can-Do lists, they not only indicated whether they were able to perform a task, but also whether they had actually performed it, to what extent they felt comfortable performing it, and how this comfort level affected their actions. Such input, collected in the form of commentary, as described below, was taken into consideration in tandem with the numerical self-ratings.

The second potential advantage of self-assessment is that it can provide insight into teachers' wishes and perceived needs concerning continuing learning programs or networks. Holec (1979) noted that self-assessment is a major factor in the success of self-regulated learning programs, which are important for non-NESTs in Germany. Because there are no longer formal language learning structures in place for teachers who have completed certification, any initiative for continuing learning must come from the teachers. If a non-NEST sees no explicit deficiencies, he or she might be less likely to take action, and this would also indicate a lesser need for language maintenance.

The self-assessment in this study took place in conjunction with the two interviews, at the end of each SSI session. As the conversation was drawing to a close, I asked the teacher to mark her or his answers to a short list of simple questions on a chart, entering her or his answers as numbers in boxes. Following the first SSI on the topic of acquisition and skills, there were two Can-Do lists with statements pertaining to the language skills a teacher needs "in the classroom," and the skills the same teacher might use "outside a classroom" in a more general manner. Following the second SSI on maintenance and attrition, the teachers were presented with a single, more complex list of possible continuing education strategies or suggestions for professional language development. Multiple answers were possible, as were deviant answers which did not correspond to a listed answer or tick box. All three Can-Do lists are included in Appendix VI.

The questions and issues that came up while the participants were reading the items on the Can-Do lists and checking their answers were recorded as well. In some situations, the questions initiated new comments from the teacher. These were usually related to points made earlier during the SSI, elaborating upon a point or giving an example, but occasionally they inspired new input from the teacher in the form of additional stories or statements. There was no "average" length of time spent on these Can-Do lists; some

teachers were done ticking the boxes within a few minutes, whereas others spent an additional half hour discussing the finer points or giving examples. This means that this second type of data collection provided two types of new input. The first and primary type was in the form of “numbers,” which could be linked to a specific participant and which could be processed and broken down according to age, gender, or school type. The second type contributed to the SSI data collection by adding information that had been forgotten or left out of the preceding interview. In all cases, the Can-Do lists were introduced after the interview to avoid influencing the SSI.

When a teacher made additional comments, these were added to the transcript in a slightly abbreviated form. The transcripts of these portions of the sessions do not read fluently because time was spent with silent reading and breaks as the teacher considered possible answers. For two participants, there is no audio record of their thoughts while filling in the lists. These two teachers, who were very close colleagues at the same school, participated in double interviews and there was not enough time to complete the Can-Do lists during the sessions. These two teachers filled in the lists and returned them at the start of the second SSI. The second Can-Do list (language development) was mailed to me a day after the meeting.

3.3.1.3 Type 3: Site visits and alternate forms of observation

This third type of input, taken from “site visits,” is the most diverse and sporadic of this project because the participants themselves decided what form these visits took, and whether to allow them at all. The term “site visit” refers to a wide range of situations in which the teachers to allowed me to observe them performing a typical task at work. In some cases, the data were actively collected using traditional means and following the conventions of qualitative research field practice. In many cases, however, the data were provided informally and subsequent standard processing was impossible. The input from most of the site visits was in the form of notes or memos made during or shortly after the site visit. Following Maynard & Clayman’s (1991) commentary on field notes, I found that these memos worked best for my questions when they were connected with information I had collected from the SSIs.

Before the study began, I had envisioned these site visits as either classroom observation, in which I as an observer would take notes of what happened in the

classroom, or a situation in which the teacher worked at a desk, preparing class material or grading exams. For such one-on-one situations, I had planned to use standard “think-aloud-protocols” (TAPs) to record the teachers’ thoughts as they processed information and worked strategically with English. TAPs are a research tool designed to elicit introspective data in a readable form by asking participants to “think aloud” as they perform a task. Early studies of thinking aloud during language learning tasks include those by Raimes (1985, 1987) and Cumming (1989), as well as many articles included in Faerch & Kasper (1987). For a comprehensive overview, see Ericsson & Simon (1993). In each instance, I had hoped to transcribe the classroom records or the TAPs into written data to be used together with the interview transcriptions and Can-Do lists. During the study, a new form of site visit developed in which the teacher invited me either to attend a staff meeting with colleagues, or to sit with them in the teachers’ room at the school and view the shared material they exchanged with colleagues. Although I had not planned for such situations and was not able to audio-record or take full notes, these additional glimpses into teachers’ lives also proved useful for me, and gave me new perspectives on their work. Even if the focus was not always specifically on the use of the English language, these contacts still provided insight into the environment in which teachers used the language on a regular basis.

a) Classroom observation

The easiest to plan and most familiar form of a site visit were the classroom observations. In many cases, the teachers allowed me to sit in on one or more English lessons they were giving, either on the same day as one of the two SSIs, or at a later point. In some cases, the teacher suggested I view a classroom with a high-performing and motivated group of learners; while in other cases the class was full of trouble-makers. Several teachers allowed me to follow them around for a full day, from the time they arrived in the morning to the time they left the school grounds in the afternoon. In one instance, I was allowed to observe a class being team-taught by two teachers, only one of whom was participating in my study.

During classroom observation, it was impossible to note and analyze all that I was seeing because permission for audio or video recording had not been granted. In many situations, I tried to take sufficient handwritten notes in a form that I could decipher and

use afterwards. In cases in which it was impractical to take observational notes or in which I was not permitted to do so, I relied on my memory to create memos later. These notes were later used in collecting further input from the teachers, following a list of follow-up questions and probes asking the teacher about his or her impressions of the lesson.

b) Non-use of TAPs

My study yielded no examples of “class preparation,” in which the teacher prepared a lesson and allowed me to observe him or her doing this. This was partially due to scheduling, since most teachers were not able to name a time and place where they would be preparing a lesson. When I asked a few of them about whether this was possible, the answers were evasive. They told me, for example, that they did preparation work “whenever I have time,” or “sometime this weekend,” or even “pretty late in the evening.” None of them reported using time at school for such work; it was all done at home after school hours. Thus, it was not practical for us to arrange a meeting time, especially since I also had the impression that these teachers did not wish me to observe them attending to such tasks. For these reasons, I abandoned the idea of observing teachers while they were preparing lessons.

I was, however, able to use a few site visits involving “grading,” although these also turned out differently than I had originally envisioned. I had planned to ask the teachers to mark a paper or exam while I looked over their shoulder, asking them to “think aloud” as they worked. Again, many teachers were not open to this, saying that they preferred to work alone and without distractions, and that there would be “little to talk about” during such a task. Several teachers did show me homework assignments or test papers, and two teachers allowed me to view pupils’ essays from the *Abitur* exams that were being marked that month. In these cases, the teachers spoke more about the task set given, and how the pupils had gone about the task, than about how they marked the pupils’ work. When I asked them to link these exams to their work in the classroom, the teachers explained to me how they had prepared their own pupils for exam situations and how certain sets of topics repeated themselves over the years. One teacher was marking the *Abitur* exams as a second reader, and she pointed to the correction marks her colleague had already entered, telling me that the two of them made a good marking

team as they “usually agreed on most points.” This comment reflected an earlier remark in an SSI in which she said she had good relationships with a certain colleague at her school, as they supported one another and had very similar teaching styles and ways of dealing with error, which was reflected in their marking as well.

This complete lack of opportunity to observe lesson planning, and the hesitancy with which the teachers viewed the idea of “thinking aloud,” meant that I was unable to collect and record TAPs as planned. This restriction was disappointing to me at first, but, because I had resolved to allow the teachers to determine the type and extent of data, I had to respect their decisions and their reticence to participate in such activities. However, some of these teachers offered me a different type of site visit, as described next, which provided rich data as well.

c) Observation of meetings and teacher lounge talk

This third form of site visits was initiated by the teachers, who invited me to join in on administrative meetings, a departmental meeting, a coordination session, or simply to have a seat in the teachers’ lounge with them. In situations where I thought it appropriate, I took notes. In many situations, however, I relied on my memory. If it was possible to address a question to the teacher who had invited me, I did so, but often I was simply a silent guest who tried not to interrupt. The data gained from such sessions were not consistent in form, nor did they follow a standard outline. Some meetings contained more gossip than commentary on language teaching, some focused on upcoming events or projects, and some were administrative planning sessions.

Most of my observations of the participants took place in a school setting; however, off-campus activities provided useful input as well. Many of the non-NESTs in this study also attended in-service training sessions or foreign language conferences in the region, where we met again. In most cases, the teachers remembered my interest in their work and invited me to sit with them in the presentation or at lunch, or to join their group of colleagues. The information collected in these contexts was seldom new, but it reinforced what had been said earlier.

Unlike the SSIs or the Can-Do lists, this third type of data did not lend itself to being transcribed, counted, or compared between participants. Instead of attempting to be “complete” in recording these meetings by attempting to note every detail, I decided to

observe as best I could and to note the pieces of information that complemented or contradicted the interviews and self-evaluations. For example, one teacher had told me while filling in the Can-Do list that she enjoyed making phone calls in English and felt very confident about her phone skills. However, in a staff meeting later that afternoon while preparations for a visiting British theater group were being made, she did not volunteer to be the contact person who would arrange matters with the actors in advance over the phone. This discrepancy with the self-assessment she had made earlier meant that I had to examine the data more closely. Perhaps she really did not enjoy such tasks, in which case the validity of the Can-Do lists might have to be called into question, not just for this statement, but for others. In the second SSI a week later, I asked her about her plans to interact with the British visitors, and I mentioned that I had wondered about her seeming reluctance in making that phone call. The explanation was immediate and clear: she had indeed been more than willing to be the contact person, but had instead encouraged a colleague who had fewer opportunities to meet with native speakers to handle the task. She had just been to London with a group of pupils the month before and thought it would have been selfish to volunteer. Thus she allowed her colleague to have initial access to the visitors. Laughing, she assured me that once the actors had arrived, she planned to monopolize as much of their time as possible.

This third type of data is thus best understood as a supplement to the framework of the SSIs and self-assessment lists. It usually provided very little input that was fresh or surprising, as the interactions in real-life situations generally confirmed what had been said in an interview. In those cases in which the site visit occurred before the first SSI or between the two interviews, the visit inspired further discussion and occasionally provided a basis for questions and explanations.

3.3.2 Steps in data collection

In this sub-section, I outline the exact means by which the three different types of data were collected, and the initial processing and early analysis of the data. I address the problematic nature of data collection, both in the field in general and using specific examples from this research, including difficulties of access, transcription, processing, and the organization of different data types. In addition, I explain the end of active data

collection, based on GT's definition of saturation, as it occurred during the phases of early, ongoing analysis.

3.3.2.1 Collecting data in audio and text form

For each teacher in the study, a contact form was created (see Appendix II), which was then assigned a contact number. This identity code number was entered on all handwritten and electronic material pertaining to this teacher. The SSIs and subsequent conversations that took place in conjunction with the Can-Do lists were digitally recorded. The Can-Do lists were handed to the participants as the purpose of the activity was explained, and each teacher's identity code number was written on the pages as they finished. During the second SSI, these pages were also available to the participants, and in two cases a teacher picked up the Can-Do list she had completed earlier and referred to a point on the list. In no instance did a teacher wish to change his or her answers afterwards.

In situations where I was able to take notes (classroom observation and occasionally in a meeting), I also entered the identity code number at the top of each sheet. At no time did I take notes covertly or use codes. Other notes that were taken after the contact situation were also marked with the identity code number and date, and were taken in different colors in order to differentiate the day of the contact and the thoughts or questions that came to me later. These notes reflect the early stages of data processing, which I will now discuss.

3.3.2.2 Early processing of data and transcription

Following the conventions of interview research (Creswell 1994, Silvermann 2001), the participant data collected in the SSIs and through the Can-Do lists were in audio form, and were then transcribed into text form in order to be analyzed later. An example of one such transcribed interview can be found in Appendix V. The numerical data of the Can-Do lists and bibliographical details were recorded on central spreadsheets.

Because the researcher conducting the SSI and the person doing the transcription were one and the same, I was able to avoid several problems usually associated with interview transcription: namely, those of non-participant misunderstanding, deliberate alteration, or intentional compensating (Lapadat & Lindsay 1999, Easton, McComish &

Greeberg 2000, McLellan, MacQueen & Neidig 2003). As Poland (1995) pointed out, there are many opportunities for mistakes to arise during this part of the process, and the researcher must take steps to ensure that errors made in the transition from spoken to written records of data do not influence the steps that follow. The potential for error was compounded by the fact that the interviews were conducted in my second language. Therefore, following Kvale's (1996) suggestions, I allowed myself ample time to listen to the recordings and then proceed with phrase-by-phrase transcription. While working with the first several interview recordings, I found it useful to note my transcription norms and punctuation in a list of symbols (see Appendix IV). When developing this list, I found it interesting to view examples of lists collected and suggested by others (Silverman 2001, Flick 2006), yet in the end I chose to use those notations which made most sense for this study, rather than adhering to a set of prescribed notations. Lapadat & Lindsay (1999:69) called this "a multiplicity of conventions," and observed that "researchers make choices about description that enact the theories they hold" (1999:66). Kvale (1996) asserted that there can be "no true, objective transformation from the oral to the written mode," and that a researcher should not seek to identify the "correct" way of doing, but should instead focus on the question of "what is a useful transcription mode for my research purposes," (1996:166). My own transcription thus reflects not only the typical pauses and insertions, but also instances where I found it necessary to deviate from standard German typography (e.g., capitalization and lower-case of *Du* and *du* to distinguish between "you" as a direct form of address and an impersonal "one"). Transcription was done verbatim, including all pauses and interjections, as well as background noises. In instances in which I had noted certain body language or had the impression of a mood change or particular reaction, I sought to draw from the notes the content that had brought it on. In instances in which I was sure that the emphasis or reaction could be linked to a specific part of the interview, I entered a notation in brackets.

The idea of processing the collected data seemed straightforward at first, as I had assumed I would follow the linear procedure of first obtaining the data, then transcribing and ordering, and finally conducting an analysis in which I would evaluate the information I had been given in order to report on it. I soon realized that it was impossible for me to separate the physical steps of listening, recording, transcribing, and

organizing from the mental process of examining content. In all cases, I found myself unable to block out my own questions and inner commentary while listening to the recordings and transcribing them. After the first interview appointments, I came to realize that my interpretations and thoughts were also present during the interviews, and, in some cases, even prior to the interview. The more I engaged with the transcription of data in order to prepare it for later analysis, the more I came to understand that analysis was an ever-present process which could not be shut off at will. While transcribing a teacher's words, I was already wondering "why" something had been said, and "what" might not have been said. Even before an interview had started, I was asking myself why this particular teacher was granting me an appointment for an SSI, while the other teachers at the school had not.

After only a few interview sessions, the division of "data" and "procedures," which Strauss & Corbin (1998) had been so clear about, felt blurred, and I was concerned about my inability to block out the procedure of analysis from the collection of data. However, this does not seem to be a unique problem in qualitative research, and it may, according to some researchers, offer certain advantages. Creswell (1994:153) stated that analysis of data can be "conducted as an activity simultaneously with data collection, data interpretation, and narrative reporting writing. In this respect qualitative analysis clearly differs from the quantitative approach of dividing and engaging in the separate activities." Kvale (1996) noted that analysis begins long before the transcript is finished as the act of transcribing requires analysis, and analysis may "be built into the interview situation itself... [and] considerable parts of the analysis are 'pushed forward' into the interview situation" (1996:178). There are restrictions as to how much can be done, but in the end "the ideal interview is already analyzed by the time the tape recorder is turned off" (1996:178). Such readings reassured me, as did conversations with researchers outside the field of education studies, all of whom believe that the issue of separation is omnipresent when working with qualitative data. What was key was to keep an open mind during data collection, and not allow inner analysis to hinder new, incoming data.

3.3.2.3 End of collection due to saturation

My preliminary analysis during the phases of data collection led to the formulation of initial themes or topics, called "codes," which in turn influenced future data collection.

As new themes came up during my interviews with new participants, these themes were linked to topics stemming from prior participants. In turn, greater emphasis was placed upon those topics that many participants found important, and less emphasis was placed on topics the researcher had considered important prior to the start of the project. The term “theoretical sampling” (Strübing 2004:32) is used to refer to the researcher deciding to proceed with new topics with new participants, thus soliciting new input and ideas, which in turn leads to the formulation of initial theories. When no new issues emerge that would add to a topic, and the researcher decides that “conceptual reality” is present in the dataset (Strübing 2004:32); this is referred to as a saturation of the data. Because no new input is expected, none is sought, and data collection ceases.

This is perhaps the thorniest phase of a GT project, and for me it was the most difficult to accept. The 20 participants had given me a large amount of data, and, by using constant comparison and after expanding the codes, I felt that they were giving me synonymous data. However, there was also the ever-present question of “what if” when accepting saturation. I wondered whether I should have arranged a few more interviews with non-NESTs to find out what they had to say. What if the 21st teacher could have given me new data or insights? This “what if” question is not one to be taken lightly, but in the end I decided to end data collection for two reasons. One is that the number of codes and statements therein were not expanding as I added new participants, and had not been growing for several months. The second reason is that the time frame of the study was already quite long, and I did not want to extend it for yet another school year. The data were collected during a time of transition for all pupils in grades five and six and for upper-level pupils doing the *Abitur* exam. These transitions made for interesting discussion, but the novelty was wearing off, and teachers had adjusted to the new conditions. Thus, I thought it prudent to limit data collection to a single specific time frame, and to avoid the complications that might have arisen if I had waited for yet another change to take place in the school structure.

This end to explicit data collection meant that my data set for the study was complete, and could now be closed off to further input. Although the option to add an additional participant or include a new site visit with listed participants was left open, this was no longer actively elicited. Later input from chance meetings or correspondence with the non-NESTs was added in note form to the datasets as it came in over the next 12

months, but this was not excessive. With this closed set of data, a full data analysis could commence in earnest, as is described in the next section.

3.4 Data analysis methods

The preliminary analysis had already commenced with the collection and processing of data. The ideas that emerged while selecting participants constructed an initial point of reflection on the content, and this process of reflecting and early analysis followed the data through phases of transcription and correction in the form of memos and notations in an informal research journal. Nevertheless, the point at which active data collection ceased marked the start of full analysis, in which cross-comparisons could be made and categories tested for all participants. It was also at this point that theories – in the sense of GT and a qualitative study – emerged, and could be stated with confidence. The methods used to examine the full dataset and to draw conclusions are outlined in the following sub-sections. In addition, a necessary part of the analysis process is an examination of “error” in the sense of oversights, as well as in regard to the particular perspective of the person conducting the analysis. Therefore, in the fourth sub-section I reflect on my records and insights regarding errors.

3.4.1 Early analysis and analysis as an ongoing process

Brymann & Burgess claimed that “analysis is not a distinct phase” (1994:217), and pointed to numerous qualitative researchers who reject the idea that data analysis can take place separately from data collection. As was mentioned above, the analysis of data in this project was an ongoing and multi-layered process, which took place intentionally as well as involuntarily during the entire research period. An early examination of the data collected was helpful in revealing problems in the study design or in the construction of questions. It also helped me make changes that would be applied in subsequent interviews and site visits. One example is an interview question concerning continuing education activities, which in the first SSIs was posed rather directly: “Sagen Sie, was machen Sie für Fortbildung?” The first participants reacted to this question with answers that seemed focused on proving that they were meeting state requirements rather than speaking about what activities they found valuable. In subsequent interviews, I rephrased this to allow participants more room in which to define the term

Fortbildung for themselves before telling me about their past activities and future plans: “Ich habe hier einige Fragen zum Thema Fortbildung. Was verstehen Sie unter berufliche Fortbildung?” It also became clear that there was a general reluctance to participate in a TAP (think-aloud protocol, see section 3.3.1.3 below), proving that this particular form of site visit was not suited for this study with these participants. The unexpected willingness of the non-NESTs to welcome me into the teachers’ lounge and allow observation there created new opportunities. This showed me how to alter the design of the site visit component, and propose “meetings” or “breaks” as an alternative. This early and informal analysis not only aided me in refining the study, it also proved helpful later, after data collection ended and the products had been transcribed. The questions made in research notes, often called a “journal” in qualitative research theory descriptions, later proved helpful in creating the categories used in the extended and systematic analysis of the data. This expanded analysis was done with the help of a software package, using many aspects of the procedure that GT calls coding. The codes, and the links between them, led to grounded observations and the formulation of theories.

3.4.2 Full data analysis

Strauss & Corbin (1998) defined coding as the steps the researcher takes in breaking down data and conceptualizing them, and then putting them back together. By repeating this process and “constantly comparing” incidents and examples, categories will begin to emerge and develop. It is this process of comparing, seeking new data, and reaching saturation that allows new theories to be built from the data. Strauss and Corbin listed at least three types of coding: open, axial, and selective. With open coding, some initial categories can be discerned, and are further developed as the researcher backtracks and re-defines them. Axial coding identifies relationships between various categories, which may be parallel or hierarchical in nature. Selective coding then gives names to central categories, which can lead to initial theories for the dataset. Flick (2006) observed that these three procedures should not be seen as separate steps that happen sequentially and independently. Rather, he said, “they are different ways of handling textual material, between which the researcher moves back and forth if necessary and which he or she combines” (2006:177).

3.4.2.1 Software for coding, generating categories, and first connections

A “computer assisted qualitative data analysis software” (CAQDAS) program called NVivo was used for much of the data management. This program was developed by Qualitative Research Solutions International from the original NUD*IST (Non-numerical Unstructured Data, Indexing, Searching, and Theorizing), and was originally designed by a social scientist and a computer programmer who wished to use computer technology to handle large amounts of data generated in an ongoing project. Today, NVivo is, along with ATLAS.ti, one of the most widely-used programs for qualitative research (Lewis 2004). Like many other such computer programs, NVivo lends itself to early use in the research process, as it allows for the organization of and commentary on literature reviews and the inclusion of field notes, photographs, and other non-textual data. It also enables the researcher to access these easily (Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge 2004). Using a CAQDAS packet in qualitative research offers many advantages over traditional means of analysis, but it also has drawbacks. The claim that a set of qualitative empirical data was “analyzed by computer” should in no way be seen as an automatic validation of the process or the findings. Instead, my decision to rely on a CAQDAS packet to facilitate data management and the coding process was made late in the project, and it posed risks, as I describe below.

a) The advantages and disadvantages of CAQDAS

Programmers and marketers of CAQDAS products often imply that their products were created to support the ideas of GT, and are thus a useful tool with which to conduct research and produce recognized results (Lonkila 1995). Such claims can lead inexperienced users to assume that, by following the directions on the software packet, they are automatically conducting research according to accepted principles of GT, and that their results must thus therefore be valid. Kelle (1997) pointed out that there are many different types of programs, each with varying emphasis and steps, which can lead to different outcomes; this diversity reflects the wide range of perspectives and understandings of GT, as interpreted by the programmers. I would also add that the differing fields of research in which the researcher-programmers received their training certainly influenced their ideas about what a CAQDAS packet would need and how it

should perform, and in turn influence how a researcher chooses which aspects of the software to use.

The greatest risk associated with CAQDAS is that researchers who do not have a solid background in GT, and who may not have a clear vision of what they wish to achieve, will revert to using the software simply as a “code and retrieve” device. The process of coding, which involves assigning and re-assigning names and categories to parts of data, can be done with pen and paper, and the process of comparing codes and re-grouping them into coherent categories can be done with scissors and a large workspace. While creators of early CADDAS software stated that coding and sorting were processes that could be made easier and cleaner with the help of proper software, “theory-building is a continuing challenge” (Richards 2002:271), and must remain in the hands of the researcher. When relying on a computer to manage data, there is a strong temptation to allow what appears on the screen as seemingly obvious links to be seen as irrevocable truths. Yet without adequate analysis of their own input and a willingness to doubt what appear to be solid early data connections, researchers run the risk of taking information at face value, without deeper reflection or consideration (Gilbert 2002, di Gregorio 2003a). Critics of CAQDAS generally do not propose a return to the pre-electronic days of color-coded index cards and hole-punch sorting systems, but they do caution investigators against relying on computer programs to take over the analytical thought process. “Qualitative data are not easily ‘harvested’ by machine, even very subtle machines. They tend to be complex, multifaceted” (Richards 2002:273) and they rely on human interaction. Computer software should be a tool that aids the researcher in completing the steps of a research project; it should not determine the steps that are taken, nor should it formulate the project’s conclusions.

Proponents of CAQDAS point out that the use of such software packets can have the opposite effect, as they can actually make the entire qualitative analysis process more transparent and rigorous (Bringer, Johnston & Brackenridge 2004), especially in projects conducted by a single individual who handles data alone. The documentation accompanying the data analysis can be followed and accounted for, and the reflective process is more visible to advisors, peers, and readers. By documenting each step of the process, including the decisions that were made and the points at which the researcher reached conclusions and tested theories, CAQDAS is a useful tool for showing how

qualitative analysis happens. Instructors who teach GT and qualitative methods can incorporate such software into their syllabi in order to make explicit the processes of data collection, sorting, and analysis (di Gregorio 2003b, Walsh 2003). Often, the step-by-step processes required by the software help researchers become aware of the cognitive steps they are taking and have yet to take, and of the value of the data they are handling (Fitzgerald, Kelly & Cernusca 2003). In some cases, projects can be expanded to include more multi-faceted input because the planner knows beforehand how such large and complicated data sets can be managed and integrated (Bazeley 2002, Bandara 2006). In this sense, computers and specialized software not only facilitate qualitative analysis, they make the process more explicit, and they can allow research to expand into areas beyond those originally envisioned.

b) Selecting NVivo 2.0 as a software package

For this project, I elected to use the program NVivo 2.0, despite the fact that there were CAQDAS packets that might have been better suited to my data. However, this version of NVivo was being used in a graduate-level course I attended, which gave me a ready support network of people who had mastered various aspects of NVivo and who provided a sounding board for my problems with early attempts at coding and linking. This interaction was enormously helpful in showing me new ways of thinking about my data and the connections I was making.

There were many features of the software that I, as a sole researcher, did not need (password protection, tracking of team members' input on separate sections), just as there were features missing from the older software which I might have appreciated having (scanned images, non-ASCII character input). In short, NVivo 2.0 proved a useful tool for the three stages of coding, but was less helpful for integrating data from Can-Do lists and handwritten observation notes and correspondence. As the main input for my project came from the semi-structured interviews, this was not necessarily a problem.

3.4.2.2 Defining and revising first codes

After each interview had been transcribed, the resulting written text was transferred to NVivo for initial open coding. NVivo refers to the act of coding as a process, and

reserves this term for the cognitive actions of the researcher. In open coding, short keywords or phrases are assigned to sections of the text, which are highlighted as “nodes.” The phrases used to describe each node are either assigned by the researcher or are taken directly from the words in the quotes, and are hence “in vivo;” these phrases can later be re-defined, combined, sub-divided, or abandoned after further examination. Each decision and alteration has the potential to change not only the researcher’s view of a topic in relation to a certain participant, but also how the topic will be analyzed and coded for subsequent participants.

One of the first open codes was generated in vivo from a quote relating to the participant’s decision to become an English teacher. Her words were: “Meine Mutti war Russisch Lehrerin, vielleicht doch angesteckt dadurch. Logisch. Es gehörte irgendwie zur Familie, sage ich mal so” (12reg1). The first term used to identify this node was “meine Mutti war Lehrerin.” As subsequent participants told me their mothers had also been teachers, the nodes were assigned the same term, even when the phrasing of the statement was slightly different. A later participant told me her father had been a teacher, so I changed the coding phrase to “Eltern war-en LehrerIn” in order to include either parent or perhaps both parents. A later interview partner told me that not only had her parents not been teachers, but they had had little formal schooling and were not supportive of her decision to become a teacher. This called for a new term at this node, “Eltern NICHT LehrerIn.” This term was then sub-divided into “Elt Nicht Teach_gegen” for teachers with backgrounds like those of this participant, and into “Elt Nicht Teach_okay” for those participants who came from non-teacher families in which their career decisions were encouraged. Having created a code that called for specific answers, I changed my question on this topic in the subsequent interviews. Instead of posing a very open-ended question, such as “How did you choose to become a teacher, and why did you specifically choose to become an English teacher?”, my question involved a leading answer component, such as “Why did you become a teacher—was it something you always wanted to do or that your parents encouraged?” This example shows how the early analysis of data can influence the collection of additional data by changing the interviewer’s behavior.

At this point of early coding, during ongoing data collection, it was not yet clear whether a participant’s family background would be important, or whether, if a parent

had been a teacher, the subject would be at all relevant. My decision to omit the word “Russisch” from the code taken from Teacher 12’s statement “Meine Mutti war Russisch Lehrerin“ was a conscious choice, but it laid down an early step in my understanding process; one which could be reversed only with additional work. The emphasis in the code “Eltern war-en LehrerIn” was the fact that a parent’s profession might have influenced the participant’s choice of profession, possibly encouraging the participant to pursue a course of study which included English. My main research question focused, however, on the participants’ relationship to English, which would have meant that the parents’ choice of subject, rather than the fact that they had been teachers, might be primary. Because I had not anticipated this in my early coding, I needed to backtrack in order to include the relevant information (parents’ possible language tendencies) into the codes.

There were several ways in which this could have been achieved. I could have gone back and re-coded all nodes with this information, adding a subject or combination of subjects for the parents’ identities and creating several new codes. This option was less attractive, as it might have resulted in more than a dozen combinations for the relatively small number of participants. I also could have used the “tree” option of NVivo, which allows for the construction of hierarchal links between codes, and is seen as the first step of GT axial coding. This would have entailed dividing the code “Eltern war-en LehrerIn” into branching codes; e.g., “Eltern war-en LehrerIn-RusEng” or “Eltern war-en LehrerIn-BioSport.” This was a viable option, but one that might also have resulted in too many layers. In the end, I chose to backtrack and add additional codes to each interview regarding the language affiliation of a participant’s family background, independent of the parents’ professions. NVivo allows for multiple coding strips to be assigned to the same section of text, making it possible to draw two or more insights from the same statement. The new code was named “Elternhaus FL,” and addressed statements about how foreign languages, English or others, played a role in a participant’s background. This also called for the creation of different sub-codes for different foreign language backgrounds, or lack thereof, which was arduous, but it ensured that the two aspects of parental occupation and parental relations with foreign languages were separate, allowing for the open question of “Why did you become an English teacher?” to be answered in different ways.

The process of creating and revising codes is a complicated one, but it was made easier with the help of NVivo and the overview charts the software provides. The more I worked with the system, the easier it becomes to allow myself to make “mistakes” and rectify them, without undue concern about understanding every aspect in full the first time. Because it was always possible to delete, revise, combine, and sub-divide codes, there was no risk involved in creating a new code, especially as coding is not an end in itself, but rather an initial phase of exploring meaning. The turns of phrase used in this project’s coding were a colorful and chaotic mixture of German taken from in vivo words of the participants, English from my own interview schedules, and a blending of the two languages as I sought to understand and process the information I had been given. As can be seen in Table 1, at this stage there was neither a grouping of codes, nor a systematic cross-comparison of nodes. The first 45 terms assigned to various statements were in draft form, complete with spelling errors and my own personal notations and mixing of languages.

als EL kann ich gut als EL kann ich NICHT gut arbeit m kindern gut arbeit m kindern NICHT gut Auslandsaufenthalt, kontakt studium Beziehung Kollegen-anderen Le bilingual classes bleibe Lehrer bis-bin gern Lehrer erst im Hauptstudium gut Fortbildung hilft mir-mein Engl Fortbildung zu wenig Fortbildung WUENSCH Grundschule Englisch Gym vs- Regional I make mistakes in English	ich lerne gerne Fremdsprachen ich lerne NICHT gerne Frmdspr. ich LIEBE diese sprache-tonfall ich nutze E fuer andere Sachen ich schaeetze mein E als --- ein ich werde behindert in mein job lehrer als beufswunsch Lehrerbild in der oeffentlichkeit Lesen Fernseh-Erhalt d Sprache Level must fit kids, not vice versa mein E ist besser geworden mein E ist schlechter geworden meine Mutti war Lehrerin meine Schueler sind faul, boes meine Schueler sind top	moechte x ausprobieren my 2nd Fach New Ts younger than me NonNEST hat vorteile Referendarrat Schule E lernen spouse, partner dis_likes Eng Studium auf Lehramt studium zu wenig E gesprochen T grades 10+ improves my E teaching improves my Engl. teaching lowers my level of E use it or lose it war vorbereitet, Lehrer zu sein Weiterbildung, neues Fach
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Table 1: Working codes after interviews with four participants

3.4.2.3 Comparing, contrasting, and testing relationships

As more interviews were completed and transcribed, the codes helped me to examine the patterns and compare the statements participants were making. Such comparisons revealed the relationships between ideas, as well as possible discrepancies or inconsistencies. GT refers to this stage of identifying relationships, and the lack thereof, as axial coding. In NVivo, such axial codes are most easily organized into “trees” to show hierarchies and opposites. In comparing the data and the codes designated, the main categories and topics become more obvious. These can be pinpointed as selective codes within GT, and then lead to the formulation of initial theories about the data.

After six interviews, at a stage in which new codes were still being generated and old codes were being re-worked, the tree function of NVivo became useful for grouping codes and examining relationships. Figure 4 shows these groupings, some of which proved to be valid and held constant for following interviews, and some of which were unclear or illogical, requiring a second and third look at the original data and more revisions of coding.

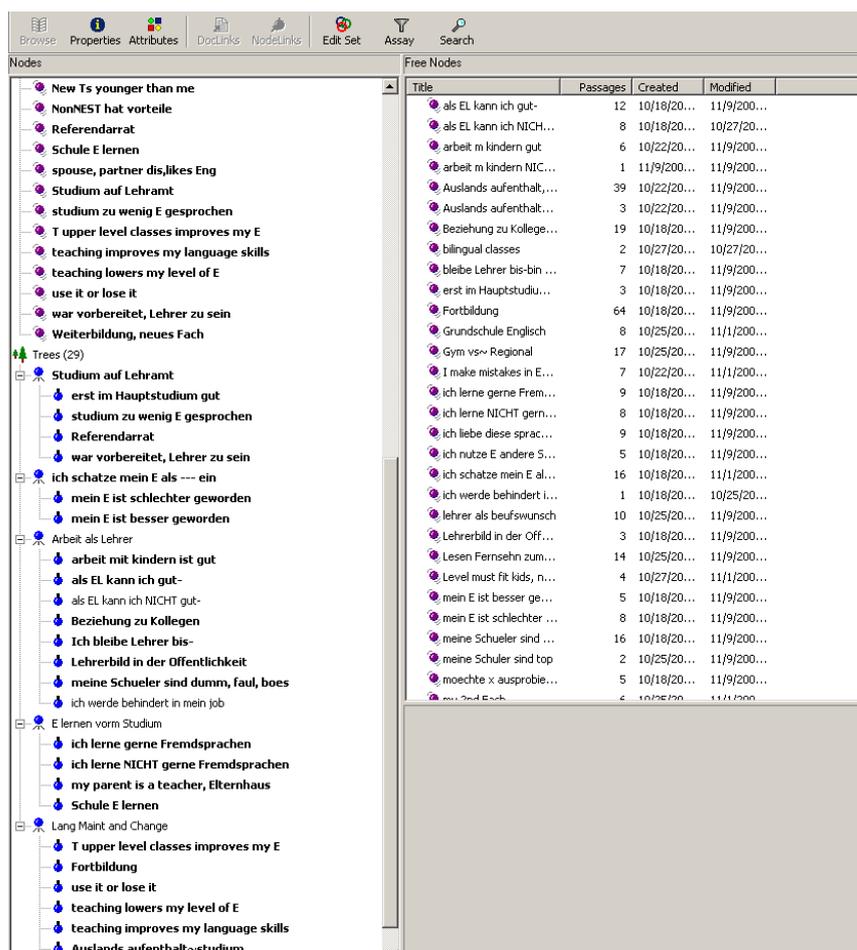


Figure 4: Early codes transitioned to trees after six participants

The group of codes belonging to the tree “Studium auf Lehramt” contained all of the codes referring to language learning that took place after obtaining the *Abitur* and before becoming a teacher, and this grouping was relatively clear and consistent. This early tree contained four codes, three of which remained valid for subsequent interviews. The fourth code, “Referendarrat” [*sic*], was later moved to a new tree, as the content related more to the transition to teaching than to the language learning phase for teacher qualification.

As can be seen in Table 2, the “Studium auf Lehramt” tree later received a new code, “zu viel Theorie” from those teachers who claimed that their university training had provided them with too little training of practical relevance for their present needs as teachers. After speaking with eight participants, nearly half of the total number, this tree had evolved into a central point with many codes. Participants not only answered the question of “How was learning English at the university for you?” with descriptions of their own language acquisition, they had already added information about how this learning phase was useful for their jobs as teachers.

<p>(1) /Arbeit als Lehrer als EL kann ich gut als EL kann ich NICHT gut arbeit mit kindern ist gut Beziehung zu Kollegen bleibe Lehrer bis- Lehrerbild in Oeffentlichkeit Schueler sind faul, boese werde im Job behindert</p> <p>(2) /Studium auf Lehramt erst im Hauptstudium gut war vorbereitet, Lehrer zu sein zu viel Theorie zu wenig E gesprochen</p>	<p>(3)/ E lernen vorm Studium Elternhaus viel mit FS ich lerne gerne Fremdsprachen ich lerne NICHT gerne FSpr. my parent is a teacher, Elternhaus Schule E lernen</p> <p>(4) / schaetze mein E als --- ein alles ist gut in Schule brauche immer Pons Grammatik ist mir jetzt klar kann ja nachfragen nicht so fluent Slang nicht da, top 10</p>	<p>(5) /Lang Maint and Change Auslands aufenthalt-studium E ist besser geworden E ist schlechter geworden need upper level classes teaching improves language skills teaching kids lowers my E use it or lose it</p> <p>(6) /Fortbildung Ausland zu teuer, should go habe nie Zeit-energie hard to find good ideas sie hoeren sich gerne reden want a finished product</p>
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Table 2: Early category groupings after eight interviews

It should not be assumed that because a code exists, or because a particular code is linked to other codes via a tree, that the statement was valid for all participants, or even for a majority. Once a code was defined, it was listed in the analysis, even if it was linked to only a single node in one single interview session. Figure 4 displays a list of early codes with a column for “passages,” which refers to the number of nodes linked. After six interviews, the code “werde im Job behindert” had only one linked node, meaning it had occurred in a single interview statement with only one participant. This called for closer examination: Could it be that I had misunderstood this participant or taken her words out of context? Or was this an exception to the rule, a single case of discontentment? Or perhaps I had missed coding this in the other five interviews, due to different phrasing or a lack of insight? It would be wrong to assume that because only one node exists that the statement was irrelevant or misleading, but the lack of comparison points required backtracking and closer examination. A comparison with later interviews revealed that this teacher was expressing an idea that many teachers shared, but that she had used unusually strong language to do so. Other teachers

expressed disappointment at not being able to cover certain topics or employ different teaching methods at their schools, but they did not directly identify who was at fault for a particular problem (“*ja, das könnte ich so machen, ja. Selbstverständlich. Kein Thema. Aber...*” 30reg1; “*wenn ich dann die Chance hätte...*” 31 reg1). I then had to decide whether to retain the original in-vivo code of “*werde im Job behindert,*” or to change the code to something less caustic, or perhaps to create a branch code to collect these nodes, yet allow for the varying emphases the teachers had given to their feelings of dissatisfaction.

By the same token, having a large number of passages was not an automatic indicator of importance, although it could be. A node with many links was usually a topic that needed to be explored further, and it was therefore coded at multiple sub-levels. The 64 codes linked with “*Fortbildung*” in the first few interviews showed that the participants had given many examples of and references to how they continue learning while practicing their profession, but these details were not well-defined at this stage of coding. A closer examination revealed that the topic of continuing education needed to be tracked at multiple levels. First, I had to differentiate between non-subject-specific, general in-service teacher sessions, which were less relevant for my study; and continuing language learning activities, which were central to my research question. There was also a difference between continuing language learning at an official level and language learning done in private or in a non-structured manner. For privately initiated activities, the issue of costs arose, in terms of both time and money. There were also issues regarding the extent to which a teacher was willing to make sacrifices to participate in such events. Finally, there were the teachers’ evaluations of “*Fortbildung*,” which ranged from comments that it was always very helpful, welcome, and well-structured, to complaints that it was a general waste of time and that the people conducting official sessions were “windbags” who liked to hear themselves talk. It should also be noted that variations in evaluations could be attributed to the same participant, speaking in two different interview sessions. In the end, “*Fortbildung*” became a super-ordinate tree with many branches of meaning, with some branches linked to areas of “language change,” and other branches linked to aspects of “working as a teacher.” Not unexpectedly, the “*Fortbildung*” nodes were not linked to the areas of “learning English before university” or “learning English at university.” It was,

however, unusual that there were very few connections between “*Fortbildung*” and teachers’ comments on “how I see my English.” There are several possible explanations for this, including that the teachers themselves saw no relationship between the two, I had missed seeing links, the interview sessions had been constructed in such a way that the teachers were not able to connect them, or they were in opposition to each other. The questions of why there were so few links between these two areas, and of why I was surprised at this, became the starting point for developing my theory and pruning the information.

The links between the codes provided the basis for grounded observations and beginnings of a theory, which had to be developed further as more data was added. The amount of data the non-NESTs gave me was immense; much of it was fascinating and worthy of further investigation. In the end, however, I chose to concentrate on those aspects which related directly or tangentially to my research questions. My original notion, that non-NESTs might observe stagnation or attrition after years of working in an “I-minus-1” environment, could not be clearly confirmed. However, by examining their perceptions of language change and inquiring about the underlying reasons for these perceptions, I learned that change was an issue, and that these non-NESTs had their own perspectives on it. Additionally, I found clear links between those teachers who reported continuing acquisition, as well as similarities in the concerns and wishes expressed regarding continuing language learning in English. These results will be presented in Chapters 4 and 5, but Table 3 (next page) provides an initial overview of how the results stemmed from the coding process.

3.4.2.4 Examples of linking statements, codes, memos, and other data

It is impossible to list here all of the statements from all 20 interview participants, and to show how each was coded and interlinked. However, by using selected examples from contact with one non-NEST, I will illustrate how coding was done, how research notes were incorporated, and how non-interview data joined the analysis. The following examples are taken from the first of two SSIs with Teacher 22, and demonstrate how coding and categories from one interview session were linked to other participants’ data, thereby testing overall validity and revealing uniqueness.

Research questions	Basic Tree	Codes set at nodes in transcriptions
How did you learn E? why? where/when? easy/hard/good	(1)/acquisition pre-teaching Schule Studium	Auslands-interessen, fascinat. Elternhaus-family War nie in Eng sehr gut Mag Fremdsprachen lernen Schule-teachers good-bad Auslands aufenthalt erst im Hauptstudium gut nicht so fluent
What could you (not) do at end of school/uni?	(2)/Changes in my Engl. E ist besser geworden	war vorbereitet, Lehrer zu sein zu viel Theorie zu wenig E gesprochen more confident / fluent / vocabulary expansion / grammar rules set lazy pronunciation / don't have to speak fast, use long sentences
How has your E changed over time?	E ist schlechter geworden (3)/I-minus-1	I do not need stuff from Prof. X's class, we don't do Chaucer at RS
What can you (still) do (or not) now?	als EL kann ich gut als EL kann ich NICHT gut	explain grammar / give examples / connect to kids' MSpr. / manage class read paper, phone / develop new stuff / live with not knowing / fluent
Teaching E at school affects levels? How?	(4)/other reasons for changes teach upper level classes teaching improves language skills teaching kids lowers my E	preparation forces me to expand / always something new / stretches me routine / experience makes me confident man redet anders / einfacher / the level happens
What helps / hinders your E development?	use it or lose it (5)/continuing acquisition Ausland- press / telly / Internet	Russian ist gestorben / not enough hours / muss wieder einarbeiten brauche immer Pons / man kann ja nachfragen follow the Top 10 / slang is not a good model / need more contact
What are your plans? What is feasible? What do you want?	(6)/Fortbildung needs- wishes Ausland habe nie Zeit-energie hard to find good ideas wird wenig hier angeboten	zu teuer, should go / forms too complicated / family issues need a private life too / life is not school / other duties primary want a finished product / list of links is no help / how to use in classroom I pick what I want to do / sie hoeren sich gerne reden / too far away

Table 3: Category groupings linked to research questions after 10 interviews

Teacher 22, a *Gymnasium* teacher who is also described more extensively in Chapter 4, participated in two lengthy interviews, which incorporated both the Can-Do lists data and much “observation data” of teaching materials and descriptions of their use. The site visit data stemmed from a 90-minute meeting of all of the English teachers at this large school. Because she was the ninth participant in my study, I had already collected a wide range of codes before I met her, and my questions had already been slightly modified to reflect previous knowledge of other teachers’ input. Five teachers at this school had volunteered to participate in my project, and she was the second of four to actually grant me an interview.

As seen in Figure 5, the interviews with Teacher 22 were coded using many of the terms already established in previous interviews:

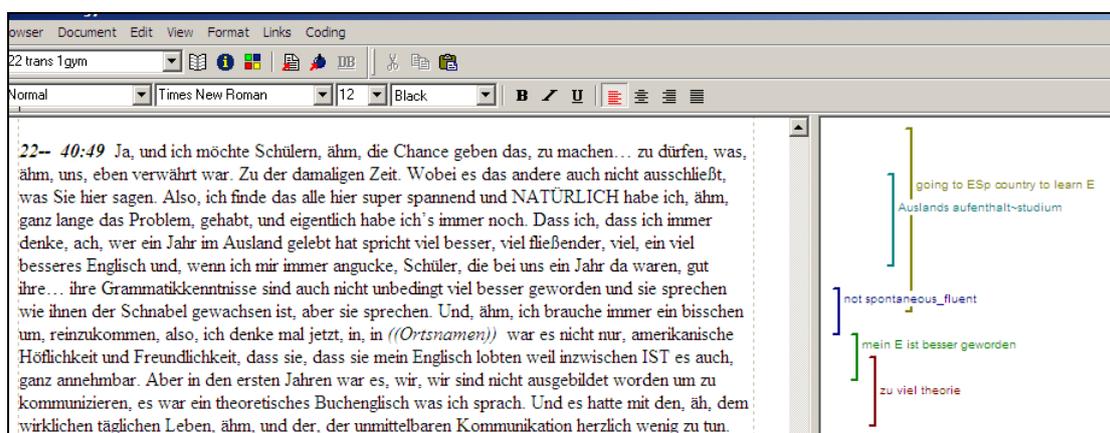


Figure 5: Multiple coding strips in one interview fragment

This teacher made multiple statements regarding problems she saw in studying English (“zu viel Theorie”, “zu wenig E gesprochen”), and linked these with what she perceived to be subsequent deficiencies in her skills (“not spontaneous_fluent”). While she also made several statements which could be coded with “mein E ist besser geworden,” her perceived improvements in English since leaving the university centered on being “kommunikativ” in the language, and this was directly tied to her having spent time in the United States while accompanying pupils on a school exchange program. For this teacher, there was a direct link between improving her language skills and time spent in an English-speaking country, yet the problems she faces in spending time abroad are myriad. Her husband works long hours and her children are young, creating family problems when she leaves home for a week or more at a time. Added to this are the financial considerations, which are immense for a teacher on a reduced salary due to the *Lehrerpersonalkonzept*:

(22gym2-57:30) Ich habe ja gesagt, ohne zu wissen, wie ich das organisiere. Mit meinen Kindern und meinem Mann, der immer nicht da ist, und ohne zu wissen, ob das Geld dann zu Tag X bis dann so angespart worden ist (*lacht*), muss ich ehrlich sagen.

(22gym2-1:04:47) Ich, für mich persönlich, man muss damit nur persönlich, gut leben können. Also, ich sage mir, na, mein Mann, der hat ein bisschen rum gemosert und sagt, das ist eigentlich ein Unding. Keine Dienstreise, von keiner Firma der Welt, würde so laufen, so. Und dann habe ich gesagt, ich sagte, du, ich möchte das aber so machen. Ich, ich sehe das für mich als mein, als mein, mein, Weiterbildung oder als mein-. Ja. Mein Enthusiasmus. Und er, er kennt das ja, mit meinem alten Traum, und dann hat er auch gesagt, na, (*mimic*) dann fahr mal Schätzchen. Mach das mal. Und es ist alle zwei Jahre, man kann sich darauf einrichten. ((MEMO: She can only afford to do this b/c of her supportive husband – whose income subsidizes her travel in connection with her teaching job! If she were single, or was married to a man who was not a high earner, she would not be able to do this. The school/Land doesn't help with such travel. Can only those teachers do this who have spouses with healthy incomes?))

The category of *Fortbildung* was expanded here beyond the broader codes of “Ausland zu teuer” or “habe nie Zeit.” My memo, taken during the SSI and added to the transcript above, poses the question of costs and benefits of *Fortbildung* in terms of stays abroad. When determining whether non-NESTs actively decide to travel to English-speaking countries, it is not enough to ask if they wish to go, or for how long, or what they do there. It is also necessary to inquire about the general feasibility of such plans, and determine what percentage of an individual’s, or a family’s, disposable income is available for such endeavors. Obviously many non-NESTs are single, but in this study the majority were married. Among those who were not married, all but two mentioned that they were cohabitating with a partner. Thus the problem of the negotiation of income emerges. The earlier cross-code of “spouse, partner dis_likes Eng” was not enough to examine this issue, and needed further development. In some cases a teacher’s partner spoke no English and was unwilling to spend his or her holiday time traveling to England. In other cases, the partner enjoyed speaking English, but thought it unfair that a family vacation should be determined by the profession of only one family member.

Being able to spend time in another country is important for this teacher, but her travels to the USA have also led to problems with colleagues on two points. The first was the minor issue of international varieties of English and the problems that teachers trained with an emphasis on RP had when dealing with large numbers of exchange students to and from the United States. A second participant at this school mentioned that, while she respected the decision to accept all forms of English and did not restrict pupils to RP, she was not comfortable dealing with a wide range of accents. Although she always enjoyed pointing out different dialects on recordings played in class, in her opinion American English was starting to dominate the classrooms, in part due to this exchange program, and she did not feel confident in dealing with it:

(24gym2-31:07) Ähm, wenn die ganz doll, diese amerikanische RRRrrrrr machen. Dann manchmal muss ich, ja, denn ganz schön hinhören, ja. Das fällt mir dann, manchmal, ganz schön schwerer, ja.

Two other teachers at this school, one of whom participated in the study and one of whom spoke to me informally at a meeting, reported that there were no problems in teaching both RP and American English, but that things were becoming more difficult as more and more pupils were choosing to spend their time abroad in New Zealand or

South Africa, and it was difficult to decide what was “right” and what was not when they had had no contact with a particular variety.

The second point of contention, which was apparent at a staff meeting and in yet another interview, was that of the costs involved. Teacher 22 was aware that some of her colleagues were not happy with the fact that she had volunteered to participate in this exchange program and pay her own way:

(22gym2-57:30) Ich bin so eine, die nicht immer das gleich versteht, was los ist. Ich habe diese Amerika Sache übernommen, in einer Situation wo einer gesagt hat, ich mache das nicht mehr, wer will? Ansonsten stirbt es. Ich habe gesagt, wenn keiner das macht, dann mache ich das. So eine Art Streikbrecherei. Na, die doofe Trulle, sie war so doof. Ich habe das aber nicht geschnallt, erst (*lacht*).

In her opinion, the English teachers at the school were unhappy that they were being asked to accompany pupils on a long overseas stay and also pay for the privilege of doing so. By not volunteering to participate, they, as a group, would put pressure on the school to contribute to the costs. Thus Teacher 22 broke ranks when she offered to take on the tasks associated with this exchange program. For her it was an opportunity to fulfill an “old dream,” but for the other teachers she became a “strikebreaker” whose actions allowed the school authorities to continue exploiting the teaching staff. In a staff meeting I attended where this exchange program was briefly mentioned, at which Teacher 22 was not present, one teacher, who was not a participant in this study, expressed displeasure that the teachers accompanying the pupils were expected to contribute more than a month’s pay, pointing out that these costs were probably illegal. Another teacher muttered that it was “*unmöglich*” that anyone would agree to participate. One non-NEST in the study expressed it less vehemently, saying she herself might one day volunteer for such an exchange program but at the moment it would be too much of a financial stretch: “Nee, so, im Moment so, da würde ich mich noch nicht darum reißen. Sage ich mal so” (21gym1-44:02). Yet another teacher was regretful, but clear about the fact that money was an issue:

(23gym2-39:09) Ja, ich weiß, der ((Name des Schulleiters)), der hatte mich mal gefragt, ob ich denn da, mitfahren würde, in die USA. Das wäre aber sehr teuer gewesen. Und dann habe ich, habe ich gesagt... das würde ich sehr gerne machen. Das würde ich lieb und gerne machen, aber ich kann es mir nicht leisten. Na, ich war dann damals noch im Referendariat, das ging nicht, das wäre sowieso nicht gegangen, so finanziell. Vom Geld her. Also, habe ich damals so gesagt, ich WÜRDE das gerne machen, ABER. Ich habe schon was beantragt, aber das was ich zugesprochen bekommen habe, das hätte nicht gereicht.

These statements made by Teachers 21 and 23 were linked to the nodes of Teacher 22 regarding travel to the USA and to her willingness to invest money to go abroad. The notes taken during the English staff meeting site visit were, in conjunction with Teacher

24, also tied in with these nodes, as was my own memo on the subject. For this group of non-NESTs at this particular school, there were widely different opinions on the extent to which a person should be willing to go in order to spend time in an English-speaking country. These insights played a role later when I examined the full concept of *Fortbildung* and travel to other countries for all of the participants in the study.

3.4.3 Considerations of error

In any study, the problems associated with error must be identified and evaluated. The term “error” implies that an inadvertent mistake was made: for example, that something important was overlooked or that data were collected and analyzed in an inappropriate manner. Yet errors can also be an acceptable and even constructive part of a study, provided they are recognized and acknowledged. Qualitative studies are no exception, and because GT includes space for the researcher as an individual within the boundaries of the data, the researcher must also reflect upon his or her role in the outcome. Because I was responsible for soliciting and working with this data, I am also responsible for examining my own place in this dataset.

This study examines teachers’ self-perceptions, which meant that the research methods were chosen according to their potential to reveal these perceptions. The nature of this study makes it impossible to confirm whether the actual level of the non-NESTs’ English matches their perceptions thereof or not. When reviewing the data and drawing conclusions, we must remember that simply because a teacher says his or her skills are at a certain level does not make it true. What is important to note is that this teacher believes he or she is at this level. Thus, this study cannot be expected to provide data on actual language performance or to propose language activities that might actually be necessary. Instead, it can only present the views and needs regarding language performance as expressed by the non-NESTs.

The design of this study relied on two assumptions: i.e., that the teachers were able to recognize and articulate their own views, and that they could share this information with another person. Thus, the success of this project was dependent on the thought processes of the participants and their willingness to convey these to an outsider. As a NEST conducting research on non-NESTs’ insights, I was invariably an outsider looking in, seeking perspectives which I could not possibly have myself. This outsider

status was apparent in our lack of a shared native language and in cultural background differences. The fact that my questions centered on the teachers' self-assessed ability in English set up distance because, by definition, my own language ability was clearly different from theirs. My NS expertise in English was balanced by the choice of language for the study (German) and by the fact that I could not possibly know what these teachers knew about teaching English to pupils, and I was fully dependent on the participants to provide this information to me. The fact that I was not German meant that I could elicit information and ask for details in a way that an insider could not, especially in regard to past language learning in the eastern part of Germany prior to unification. Some participants gave very detailed explanations or background information, which they might not have felt the need to reiterate for an insider.

As mentioned above with the example of an overly direct question (“*Sagen Sie, was machen Sie für Fortbildung?*”), interviewer phrasing will invariably influence the answers given to that particular question. It can also influence answers to subsequent questions by changing the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, introducing power issues, encroaching on taboo topics, or implying criticism. The same can be said for body language and gestures, as well as for tone of voice or eye contact. In all of the interview and observation situations, I strove to give the same message: that I was interested in what the teachers as “experts” had to tell me, and that I was grateful for the opportunity to listen to them. Yet the very nature of the interview situation is, in itself, unnatural, and expectations of roles to be played by interviewer and interviewee often reverse the concepts of who the “expert” is. Although I made a conscious and continued effort to elicit self-evaluation by positioning the non-NESTs in the role of expert information-giver, the fact remained that my questions, and the manner in which they were asked, not only initiated the conversations, they usually formed an outline for what types of information these teachers were able to give.

My role of information gatherer relied on my ability to suppress my own evaluations while interacting with the participants. This suppression had to happen at two levels, those of language and of content. As a teacher of English, I am constantly being asked to assess, correct, model, and evaluate the English language skills of learners. Because these non-NESTs were not my students, I had to switch off my own teacher monitor of English and block out my own opinions about their language abilities. This was much

more complicated than I had anticipated, especially during site visits in which I was allowed to sit in on a class and observe the teacher working with his or her pupils. I cannot claim that I was always able to observe the teachers in a neutral way, without thinking critically about their use of English and mistakes they might have made. Because I was not observing them in order to judge them, these inner observations had to be suppressed; but they did exist and were present in my mind as the study went on. Although I did not offer any feedback on participants' language skills, I did not go so far as to ignore a direct question. In those few cases in which a teacher asked me to confirm pronunciation of a word or define a term, I did not refuse to do so. However, I did try to temper my answers with a qualifying statement that I was an American and could not vouch for what might be appropriate in British English or in other areas.

The second level of suppression involved the separation of previous data while receiving new input. Although GT requires constant comparison in order to find meaning, this comparison should not influence the content of new data as it is being gathered. My behavior as an interviewer, be it expressing surprise or nodding in agreement, could signal to the participant that his or her answer was highly unusual or highly predictable. Even as I tried to avoid such outward displays, this was not always possible or realistic. When a person is trying to give information to someone else, it is only natural that the information giver looks for outward signs that the content is being received and accepted. Had I not given any feedback at all, communication would have broken down. Occasionally a teacher would ask directly if other respondents had said the same thing or had evaluated themselves in the same way, and this called for a balancing act between reassuring the teacher that his or her input was consistent with the information provided by the others, and that it was still sufficiently original to be of interest.

In closing, the topic of "error" was an ever-present aspect of this study; not in the sense that procedures were incorrect or invalid per se, but that there were multiple variables to be considered at each step of the process. As with any research project that relies on human interaction, this study can only present what the 20 teachers and one researcher discussed. Within these confines, however, the data collected do allow for some conclusions about non-NESTs and their relationship to English. These findings will now be outlined in Chapters 4 and 5.

4. THREE CASE STUDIES

Before presenting general findings on how all non-NESTs in this study view their English skills, in this chapter I describe in more detail three selected participants. These three teachers were chosen in order to demonstrate the extreme diversity of the input received, and their comments display a wide range of opinions. Many of these differences are closely tied to their own personal feelings about the English language, their experiences in learning the language, and their self-evaluations of their present levels of ability. Their views of the language are also linked to stages in their personal biographies and to their experiences with family, friends, colleagues, and learners.

The first case study is of a non-NEST who is largely satisfied with her own English education and the level she has achieved, while the second case study is of a teacher whose language learning experiences were less than ideal, and who still feels unsure of herself in English. These two teachers gave very different answers concerning their levels of confidence as language teachers and their willingness to continue developing their English skills. The third case study represents the larger middle section of respondents, who said they are generally satisfied with their current levels and usually feel confident as teachers, and who often expressed ambivalence about investing more time and resources into further language development.

The three teachers in these case studies, two women and one man, began learning English as school pupils in the eastern German system, and they had all been teaching in schools for roughly 20 years at the time of the interviews. Two of them had been teaching English for the complete period; the third did not start working with English after unification, and had been teaching the subject for roughly 15 years. Even before becoming teachers, their personal attitudes toward English were diverse, and this affected their experiences of learning the language at school and at university. Since then, they have made very different choices regarding their continuing language development. Although none of them were able to travel to an English-speaking country until after the inter-German border opened in November 1989, and none has spent an extensive period of time overseas, all three have been to English-speaking countries in their role as teachers in connection with school exchanges.

Each of these three case studies is presented through an analysis of the interview and Can-Do list content with some input from the site visits when appropriate. As described

in Chapter 3, the original data were assigned codes and trees, which were then linked via relationships to form categories. The category groupings that were partially developed after the first interviews (Table 3) formed the basic structure for data presentation. The emphasis is placed on tracing the teachers' recollections of language learning and their decisions to become English teachers, the language change they have experienced since entering the profession, their self-perceptions of their current strengths and weaknesses, and their specific plans for continuing learning. This four-fold division will be repeated in Chapter 5, when I present the results for all 20 participants in the study, before discussing viable future language development activities for non-NESTs.

The interview quotations in this chapter, as in the subsequent Chapter 5, have been edited for readability; not every pause or filler sound that was transcribed is listed here, and side comments not directly related to the teachers' statements have been omitted. An example of an original transcription can be found in Appendix V. The notations following each quotation show the code number assigned to each teacher and the interview number. Thus a quotation cited here as "22gym1" refers to Teacher 22, who works at a *Gymnasium* (gym) and a statement made in the first interview session (1).

4.1 Teacher 22: More fluency after going abroad

The first non-NEST we will look at is Teacher 22, who made several of the statements already discussed as coding examples in Chapter 3. At the time of our interviews, she was 41 years old, married with two school-aged children, and had been teaching English for 19 years, all but two of these at the *Gymnasium* level. She was certified to teach English and German but had not taught any German classes for many years. Her school had a shortage of qualified English instructors and therefore all her hours (20 total, ca. 70% of the regular amount, due to the *Lehrerpersonalkonzept*) were reserved for English. These hours had recently been evenly split between higher grade levels at the *Gymnasium* and a nearby elementary school, where she was teaching English to pupils in Grade 3 twice a week.

Teacher 22 was very focused on her ability to speak good English, both as a teacher and as an everyday user, and her main goal had always been oral fluency, which was more important to her than perfection in writing skills or reading comprehension. Although

she did strive to speak grammatically correctly and without a German accent, most of her energy had been concentrated on being able to communicate smoothly in English, at a normal pace, and specifically to be able to converse with native speakers of the language. Throughout the interview sessions she often referred to travel, home-stay programs, contacts with British and American people, and being able to converse with speakers who claimed English as their native tongue. Although she said she is now reasonably satisfied with her oral English skills, this was not always the case. For this teacher, language learning did not stop when she left university, but has continued throughout her years in the classroom. This was mainly due to her own motivation to become “better” at speaking English communicatively and to time spent in an English-speaking country, and it was partially due to her long experience as a foreign language teacher. She noted that she still had a few modest goals left concerning her language skills, but believes that, in order to reach them, she would need to spend more time abroad. In her view, continuing language development would only be possible in other settings, preferably in the USA, and she would not be able to make much additional progress in Germany.

4.1.1 An eager language learner

Teacher 22 had always enjoyed learning languages as a child and recalled having had an active interest in English. Although she described herself as a good learner of all foreign languages, having attended a special *Sprachklasse* to learn Russian and French, she was especially motivated to learn English because it tied in with her dreams of travel, seeing new places, and riding horseback through the Rocky Mountains. She described herself as a fan of all things American, calling her interest in the U.S. a “Leidenschaft” and a “Herzenssache” (22gym1), and explaining that she had always preferred American English to the standard RP that had been taught in schools when she was younger. She herself had no logical explanation for this: “ich fand das *British English* immer ein bisschen steif. Ich kann’s mir nicht so richtig erklären, aber ich habe schon immer das amerikanische spannender gefunden. Vielleicht sind es romantische Vorstellungen,” (22gym1). Her choice to become a foreign language teacher was made early in life (“Ich wollte schon als kleines Mädchen Lehrerin werden,” 22gym2) and she applied to study English at the university level with this goal in mind.

Like most non-NESTs in this study, Teacher 22 had not had the opportunity to spend time in an English-speaking country during her schooling or university studies, and she saw this as a major shortcoming. She felt that by not going to England or America she had missed something essential, and that her language skills were lacking compared with those of other teachers, especially teachers in the western part of Germany (“ich denke, wer ein Jahr im Ausland gelebt hat, spricht viel besser, viel fließender, ein viel besseres Englisch,” 22gym1). At the time of German unification, she was already completing her exams, applying for a *Referendariat*, and was “sehr fixiert” (22gym1) on her new marriage, so she did not immediately make plans to travel after the borders were opened. After finishing her *Referendariat*, she applied twice for a teacher exchange year in the USA and was accepted. However, each time she was unable to participate in the exchange; once due to an operation and once because the American partner backed out at the last moment. Because she had invested so much effort in the application process, having to cancel at the last moment was very disappointing for her (“da war ich dann SO deprimiert!” 22gym1), and she regrets having missed the chance to participate to this day.

This non-NEST saw her language learning as incomplete at the start of her teaching career because her spoken English was poor (“es war ein theoretisches Buchenglisch, was ich sprach,” 22gym1). Her skills in reading and writing were quite good (“Mit Texten hat kein vernünftig ausgebildeter Ost-Lehrer ein Problem gehabt. Da waren wir gut vorbereitet, gut ausgebildet,” 22gym1), but she was not able to speak fluently or engage freely in real conversations (“freies Sprechen, dialogisches Sprechen, das was den Englischunterricht eben interessant macht. Wo ich auch spürte, das erwarten die Schüler,” 22gym1). Although she was competent, she did not feel fluent, and she saw this as a problem (“da habe ich immer so ein Manko gespürt,” 22gym1). A good teacher of English, in her opinion, needed more than just solid training in grammar, literature, or phonetics; a good teacher needed to be able to communicate in the language. Because her teacher training had not given her the skills she needed to speak freely, she thought it was necessary that she acquire these skills elsewhere: “Wenn das Studium derart theoretisch aufgebaut ist, und eben NICHT kommunikativ, dann muss man das irgendwo anders herbekommen,” (22gym1).

Teacher 22 was one of the few teachers in this study who described her efforts during school and university to meet with native speakers and practice her English on a one-to-one basis. During her university studies, she had taken classes with two instructors who were from England, and she remembered many details about these people, including their hobbies, their families, and even their preferences for food and drink. A visiting professor from the USA, who had spent an entire day traveling with her to her hometown and meeting her parents, left a lasting impression, and she recalled the woman's style of dress and odd manner of pronouncing certain words. Her recollections of these people were quite detailed, but when I asked her if she had also attended university language classes with non-native speakers, she had difficulty remembering their names or which sub-department they had worked in. Clearly, for this non-NEST, the native speakers were the primary language source and non-natives were seen as a distant second.

This interest in meeting NSs continued outside the classroom. She recalled seeking out situations in which she could chat with English speakers on the street. In retrospect, she now laughs at her behavior, but pointed out that it reflected her strong desire to speak the language:

“Ach, das war so albern. Ja, ich habe alles genommen, was ich so kriegen konnte. So bis hin zu Situationen, wo ich in der Stadt, wo ich hörte, da waren mal irgendwelche Touristen. Da war ich die Norddeutsche die nicht, mit so einem Gesicht (*deckt die Augen zu*), so vorbei ging. Sondern ich war die, die so GANZ freundlich lächelte (*breitet die Arme weit aus*) und fragte, ob ich ihnen helfen kann (*lacht*). Also, ich habe wirklich fremde Leute angequatscht, was total untypisch ist. Ich bin ja nicht so super mutig, aber da war die Anziehungskraft (*lacht*) so stark, dass ich auch so was gemacht habe.” (22gym1)

Because she saw her language learning in the classroom as deficient, she sought out situations in which she would be forced to react to unexpected input, listen to different dialects, or hear new colloquial expressions. She actively compared sentence structures she knew from textbooks or grammar exercises with the language she heard on the street, and she delighted in finding both confirmation of and deviations from the rules. In her mind, if she was unable to travel overseas, the next best thing was to find an English NS in Germany with whom she could practice. Teacher 22 described herself as an avid and eager language learner who worked hard and experienced success in the classroom, and who was able to apply what she had learned. Still, she was not satisfied with her language learning at the end of her schooling and university studies.

4.1.2 Language change has been all gain

Teacher 22 stated that she has experienced significant language change since leaving university and becoming a teacher, but that this change has been positive overall. She said she believes she has become a more fluent speaker, as she is no longer forced into silence by an unknown expression or jargon, and that she has increased her vocabulary range and become more certain of her decisions in terms of grammar and pronunciation. The reasons for this perceived improvement were twofold, as she outlined in our second interview meeting.

The first explanation Teacher 22 gave for her language expansion was that she had been able to travel to the USA in conjunction with her school's exchange program. She had already completed two such exchanges, and was preparing for her third when I met with her. She was also determined that this would not be the last trip. These stays in the United States had taught her to be more relaxed with the flow of English around her, and to accept that, while she may not grasp every word, she would be able to understand most of what was said if she concentrated on the message. By not struggling as much and by learning to rely on the context and other clues, she found her receptive skills increasing and was encouraged to expand her productive speaking skills as well. This willingness to focus on context and guesswork instead of exactness was something she had been telling her pupils to work on, but she only fully appreciated it when she was in an English-speaking country herself:

“In den USA habe ich auch gemerkt, dass da auch viel Vokabular da war, was ich noch nicht kannte. Aber mir ging's denn dann so, wie es unseren Schülern auch geht, und was wir ihnen immer sagen, man muss nicht immer unbedingt alles nachschlagen, man kriegt es aus dem Kontext, dann weiß man ungefähr was es ist.” (22gym2)

In addition to helping her become a more fluent speaker and listener, she said these trips have exposed her to several new situations in which she was forced to deal with unexpected problems and respond professionally for the benefit of the pupils she was in charge of. There were cases of missed flight connections, pupils who had been handed counterfeit dollars, a hotel fire alarm in the middle of the night, and problems with host families. In all of these situations, she was the language expert who could mediate, and she was able to react appropriately. These experiences tested both her language and interpersonal skills, and her successes gave her further confidence.

The second explanation Teacher 22 gave for her improvement in English lies in her own professional experience in the classroom. After teaching the language for nearly 20 years she has been exposed to a wide range of instructional materials, topics, and exam formats. This exposure, whether to different textbooks or external material she brings into the classroom, has provided her with new language input and forced her to learn more English while teaching the language to others. She greatly values the changing input that is part of her job, and appreciates the fact that she has often been pressured to learn more: “Mit jedem neuen Buch habe ich IMMER noch eine Wendung und immer noch was, was ich noch nicht kannte, und das macht mir auch Spaß. Also, das finde ich schön,” (22gym2). In order to teach, she must first master the material herself. This “Dazulernen” is necessary in order to be a good teacher: “um überhaupt das zu können und zu wissen, und vermitteln zu können, was ich vermitteln muss,” (22gym2).

When I asked her directly if there were any areas in which her skills had deteriorated, or aspects of English that she had “lost” since leaving school or university, her answer was a clear no:

“Ich habe eigentlich nicht das Gefühl, dass es irgendwie, irgendwo weniger geworden wäre. Eher, jetzt, in der Mitte meines Lebens, das Gefühl, dass ich mich, ja, endlich mal wohl fühle,” (22gym2).

For this non-NEST, there is no indication of an “i-minus-1” situation, in which teaching learners with lower levels has influenced her language negatively. On the contrary, for her, teaching has provided the opportunity to add to her language repertoire at a steady and satisfying pace since leaving university.

4.1.3 Near satisfaction with current level of language skills

In our first interview meeting, Teacher 22 mentioned that she had invested a great deal of effort in learning English, and that she was basically happy with her current level (“inzwischen IST es auch ganz annehmbar,” 22gym1). This was also apparent in her self-assigned scores in the first two Can-Do lists, in which she gave herself excellent marks in areas relating to classroom and teaching English, as well as to tasks not related to her profession. She stated that she could perform all of the tasks either “very well” or “okay” (marks 1 and 2) and did not choose the negative answers (“not as well” or “not at all”) for any situation. In four of the 21 tasks listed, she could not decide between the two highest categories, so she rated herself somewhere between the top two marks.

It was, however, unusual that her “teacher-specific skills” averaged a mark of 1.6, whereas her “non-teacher-specific skills” were higher, averaging 1.36 points. Most of the teachers in this study claimed to be better at “classroom English” than at “everyday English,” but Teacher 22 thought her oral skills outside the classroom were her forte. She acknowledged that this influences how she teaches English in school, as she chooses to encourage her pupils to focus their attention on conveying the message, grasping the general gist, and reading for overall understanding. It must be emphasized that she does not avoid grammar lessons or pronunciation drills because she feels uncomfortable or deficient in these areas; on the contrary. She reported that she is a good language teacher whose pupils grasp the basics and can apply them well. But in her mind, the ideal language lesson encourages communicative competence rather than grammatical mastery. Her desire to be “fluent” affects her approach to teaching English to others, as she hopes that they will become fluent as well.

Teacher 22 described her own spoken English as good, but not perfect. After many years of trying to express herself, she said she now believes that she is able to convey her thoughts and ideas to others without undue effort or self-consciousness. She knows that there are other skill areas which she has not yet fully mastered, and may never be able to (“es wird IMMER was geben, was ich nicht kann,” 22gym2). Although she has control over phonically difficult sounds that would otherwise identify her as a German speaker, her accent is decidedly non-native and she knows this. While her “theoretical book English” served her well in her studies, her current reading skills do not allow her to proceed at the same speed or with the same level of comprehension as in her native language when faced with higher level literature or newspapers (“ich kann das nicht so lesen wie eine deutsche Zeitung. So, ein bisschen stockend,” 22gym2). And even though she has spent many years listening to native speakers closely, she occasionally has trouble following rapidly spoken English or understanding non-standard accents and slang (“Also, wenn’s ganz schnell wird, und in Dialektbereiche geht, dann habe ich so meine Probleme,” 22gym2).

She emphasized, however, that these shortcomings are acceptable to her, and that she is confident that she need not be perfect in all aspects of the language in order to communicate freely. For her, making mistakes and learning from them is a natural part of the learning process, which is ongoing. Whereas at the beginning of her teaching

career she had felt some unease with the language (“aber so richtig kannst du’s eigentlich nicht,” 22gym2), she no longer feels this uncertainty. Her experience in teaching and travels has raised her level of confidence with the language (“ein Sicherheits- und Bauchgefühl, eine gewisse Sicherheit,” 22gym2) to the point where she can relax when speaking English and enjoy it (“endlich mal wohl fühle,” 22gym2). Teacher 22 seems to be content with her language skills now, and also with the progress she has made.

4.1.4 Hopes to dream in English someday

When asked about her future plans for continuing language learning, Teacher 22 focused primarily on her upcoming trip to the USA and the opportunities it would offer her to speak with Americans again. She has been learning English for over 30 years now, as a pupil, a university student, and then as a teacher, and she remains convinced that the best way to learn a foreign language is to engage with NSs, preferably in their native setting. Although she regrets not having spent a year abroad when she was younger, she has not lost sight of this goal and hopes, once her children are older, to live in the USA for a semester or year.

Her only real long-term goal in English is connected with this wish to live overseas for a longer period of time. She would like to be able to dream in English, to be so immersed in the language that her mind uses the language even when in an altered state of consciousness: “Ich würde gerne auf Englisch träumen. Wenn ich das will, muss ich in einem englischsprachigen Land sein, und länger als nur zwei Wochen,” (22gym2). The idea that she might be able to achieve this goal while living in Germany strikes her as impossible. Because she feels that contact with English NSs is essential for her own continuing language progress, she is also not very interested in attending local classes or seeking out opportunities to practice her English with other non-natives who function on the same level as she does. When discussing the next generation of non-NESTs now entering the school system, she emphasized that she does not claim she has nothing to learn from her peers. In her role as mentor for university students, she often observes younger teachers in the classroom during their practice sessions, and is pleased to find she can learn while watching them:

“Viele Praktikanten an der Grundschule haben auch noch Englisch mit dabei. Und dann kommen die immer zu mir. Erst gucken die nur zu, und dann dürfen sie auch mal ran. Und das finde ich total interessant, weil sie haben eine ganz andere Methodik jetzt im Studium. Sie haben die Grundschule Methodik, aber sie haben auch diese neuen englischen Sachen, und das finde ich total spannend, das mitzuerleben. Und man kann dann mal was abgucken.” (22gym2)

However, although she may pick up ideas for her own classroom from these younger teachers, she said she is less optimistic that such contacts can help her maintain her English at the level of fluency she desires. She is working toward the internalization of the language and does not see her peers as a language source. In the third Can-Do list, in which I asked her to identify activities she pursues or would like to try in order to improve or maintain her language skills, the items listed having to do with fellow teachers were less interesting for her than those dealing with native speakers of English. She would be very interested in finding the time and opportunity to work as a tour guide for summer visitors or as a volunteer with refugees who use English as a lingua franca. By contrast, she showed little or no interest in activities that entailed engaging with other Germans who spoke English well.

In sum, Teacher 22 is content with her current level of English, but is looking forward to improving her language skills at some point. Her plans concerning her future language ability are optimistic, and any remaining weaknesses she perceives do not negatively affect her work now. Rather, these minor self-perceived gaps inspire her to continue work with the language, even beyond the level she actually needs for her job as an English teacher. Her motivation for learning English is, and always has been, highly intrinsic and quite integrative, as it is closely associated with her interest in the USA and her dreams of the West and of open spaces. She is aware of the differences between her native culture and the target culture she is interested in learning more about. Her anxiety levels when using English are low, and she is continually seeking new opportunities in which to stretch her language skills. Many of her endeavors put her in situations in which she cannot perform to her own expectations, and in which she might “look silly” to colleagues or her pupils. In this sense, her language learning is less instrumental in nature. She is not pushing herself to improve her English in order to show off to her peers or pupils. Instead, she continues to exert herself despite these observers.

Teacher 22 seems to have a low affective filter towards learning English and has high levels of personal motivation. This combination of positive aspects of “attitude” and “aptitude” (as described by Krashen 1981, Chapter 2) propels her toward continued

learning, even long after the end of her formal language studies. As was evident in numerous statements in both interview sessions, she feels it really is only possible to learn a language, and learn it well, by spending time in a country where the language is spoken. Thus, her plans for continuing language learning are focused on travel and contact with native speakers, not on attending local seminars or training sessions. She would not be very interested in attending teacher-specific language classes.

4.2 Teacher 12: An acceptable distance

The second case study involves Teacher 12, whom I had met before on numerous occasions. She and I were already on a first-name basis, and, although we saw each other very rarely, we had a congenial relationship. At the time of our interview sessions, she was in her mid-40s and had been teaching at the *Regionalschule* level for nearly 24 years, first in the subject areas of German and Russian, then adding English as a third subject in the early 1990s. Of the three non-NESTS in this study who had obtained qualifications in English post-unification, Teacher 12 was the most pessimistic about her own abilities in English. Although many of the comments she made were echoed by the other two newly qualified teachers, who also said they lack confidence, this teacher was particularly critical of her English skills and was very honest in discussing them with me. I have chosen to present her views in a case study not to imply that all teachers with later qualifications are dissatisfied with their English skills, but because she was the participant who was most distanced from her subject matter and who had the most problematic relationship with English and with her current status as a teacher of this language. Her feelings about English and about being an English teacher are very different than those of other non-NESTS in this study.

4.2.1 Learning English was never much fun

Teacher 12 had never been particularly fond of English. In school she did not enjoy the subject (“hatte einfach keinen Zugang dazu,” 12reg1), and she had no tangible memories of her teachers (“ich könnt jetzt nicht mal die Namen nennen,” 12reg1) or any personal connections with the language. She was generally a good pupil, but English lessons were a constant struggle for her:

“Englisch war für mich NIE Thema damals. Weil ich einfach in der Schule durch Englisch, nur durch auswendig lernen durchgekommen bin. ... Die Grammatik war damals für mich echt ein Buch mit sieben Siegeln. Das hat mir damals keiner nahe bringen können, dass ich’s verstehe.” (12reg1)

The problem was not that she disliked foreign languages; learning Russian at school was an entirely different matter. Her mother was a Russian teacher and she had been on trips to Russia with her parents as a child. She also believed that the political system in which she had been raised had encouraged her interest:

“Irgendwo hat das sehr viel persönliches, mit dem Russisch gehabt, und das war für mich einfach-*(Pause)*. Ja, sicherlich auch dem System geschuldet, und all diesen Dingen, die politischen Dinge, die damals liefen. Ich habe das mitgelebt.” (12reg1)

She deliberately chose Russian as one of her two subjects to study at university and was unique among her classmates in making this decision (“ich war die einzige, die freiwillig Deutsch und Russisch studieren wollte. Alle anderen wollten Englisch studieren,” 12reg1). She was more than happy not to continue with English after leaving school, and she successfully completed her qualifications as a teacher of Russian and German.

During the year leading up to German unification, Teacher 12’s family was undergoing a phase of upheaval. Her husband at the time was in the army, facing an uncertain future, and they had just had their second child. Based on a series of conversations with colleagues and her school director, she realized that Russian would soon be in less demand and that she might not have a job to return to after maternity leave:

“Dann wurde mir die Frage gestellt, wie sieht’s dann mit Englisch aus, haben Sie schon darüber nachgedacht? *(Pause)* Nicht wirklich. So bin ich erst mal überhaupt ins Denken gekommen. Und dann wurde auch klar, dass Russisch immer weniger eine Rolle spielen wird. Das zeigte sich ja erst in dem Jahr, dass Englisch Hauptfach wird, ab Klasse 5, und Russisch zudem verdrängt wird.” (12reg15)

Even though she had never liked English, she decided to enroll first in an evening course and then at the university in a special program for teachers who wished to obtain qualifications for English. Many of her fellow students were overjoyed at the chance to learn English as a new subject, but she was still not enthusiastic about the language (“ziemlich distanziert, der ganzen Sache gegenübergestanden”), and she viewed the program more as a means to keep her job than as a chance to learn English (“eigentlich nur so in die Notwendigkeit, mich da der Sache gestellt habe,” 12reg2). Teacher 12 began learning English again as an adult not because she wanted to, but because she felt that she had to. English was a means to an end, which in this case was keeping her job, and not something she liked or had a real interest in.

Her re-learning of English happened in two phases. The first was a year-long evening preparatory course offered through the *Volkshochschule*, designed to give teachers of different subjects enough knowledge of the language that they would be able to attend tertiary courses. The second phase was a four-semester program at the university for in-service teachers. Both sets of classes were scheduled during the normal school year, which meant that Teacher 12 was working full time and caring for two preschool children while learning English. She recalled that she always felt poorly prepared for classes and did not have time to do much homework, and she quickly realized that she would not be able to get an acceptable mark by rote memorization as she had in school. Instead, she pragmatically decided to struggle through the situation as best she could and obtain her degree as quickly as possible: “ich muss Dir ehrlich sagen, ich bin an die ganze Sache, das klingt zwar nicht sehr ehrgeizig, ran gegangen, 4 ist durch und gut,” (12reg2). Not only did she not wish to learn English, she was now learning it under much more difficult conditions than she had experienced in school. Her memories of these years included many instances of frustration and very few of success.

In addition to the heavy workload, Teacher 12 struggled with her weak language skills and the feeling of always being a step behind the rest of the group. She had returned to university with the goal of learning English well enough to be able to teach it, much as she had taught Russian. She was surprised at the high level of language she was expected to master and also at the “theoretical” knowledge that was part of these studies. She found the level of coursework overwhelming:

“Ich hatte, besonders was, ich sage jetzt Theoriekram und Grammatik betrifft, das Gefühl, unten an der Leiter zu stehen und die reden fünf Stufen über mir. Ich habe überhaupt nicht gewusst, WOVON die reden. Das war mir einfach zu hoch. Der Einstieg war einfach nicht mein *Level*. Selbst da, durch den Volkshochschulkurs, war da irgendwo, die Grammatik, das ging mir ab.” (12reg1)

Teacher 12 was often frustrated that she, as a qualified foreign language teacher, was expected to attend so many “theoretical” courses, including courses on methodology and didactics. She had expected to transfer her skills as a foreign language teacher (Russian) to a new language (English), and had assumed that she needed only to learn to speak better English in order to teach it. A large portion of her university coursework was, however, devoted to literature, teaching methodology, and language history, and too little, she believed, was spent on actual language practice: “die Sprachpraxis, die ist bei uns SEHR kurz gekommen,” (12reg1). She said she appreciated the practical

language classes in which she was able to form her own sentences and practice the pronunciation of words, and she wishes there had been more of these classes.

For this non-NEST, her previous experience as a learner and teacher of another foreign language was helpful as she approached English. Because she had already overcome anxiety in speaking Russian, she was more willing to attempt things in English that were unfamiliar to her:

“Mein Russischstudium hatte mir den Vorteil damals gebracht, dass ich keine Angst hatte, mich wirklich in der Fremdsprache zu artikulieren. Ich habe zehn Monate (in Russland) studiert, und da habe ich freihändig sprechen gelernt. Das hat unheimlich geschult, und hat so ein bisschen die Hemmung genommen, mit Englisch, einfach zu probieren.” (12reg1)

Like many participants in this study, Teacher 12 explained how learning one foreign language helped to learn a second. Even though she did not actually enjoy English or have a lifelong desire to improve, like Teacher 22, she knew that she was capable of achieving a certain level of language competence. The fact that she had done so in Russian helped her years later when she had to learn English in order to keep her job. As a learner, she drew on this confidence, attempting to “speak freely” and not be “inhibited” in English. However, when she left university and was faced with having to use the new language in the classroom, she had problems.

4.2.2 From nearly nothing to semi-acceptable

Even after receiving her certification, Teacher 12 did not feel adequately prepared to teach English in school: “wenn nach dem Studium mir einer gesagt hätte, bist du jetzt fit, hätte ich das mit einem ganz dicken fetten NEIN unterstrichen,” (12reg2). She recalled her nervousness and uncertainty in her first teaching sessions, and said these feelings stemmed directly from what she saw as her weak English skills:

“Ich glaube die erste Stunde habe ich mir jeden Satz, den ich sagen wollte, aufgeschrieben (*lacht*). Um sicher zu werden. Damit mir da kein Fehler unterläuft. Und mit den Lehrerhandbüchern bin ich damals natürlich ganz anders umgegangen als heute. Heute sind die für mich jetzt methodische Hinweise, und damals war ich heilfroh, dass da Lösungen gestanden haben. Die ich abschreiben konnte. Um meine Unsicherheit ein bisschen wett zu machen. Um zu sagen, ja du weißt es, es ist so. So ist es.” (12reg1)

For this non-NEST, her early years of teaching English were difficult because of her uncertainty with the language and the gaps she saw in her knowledge. It was especially difficult for her to teach those aspects of grammar to her pupils that she herself had not yet mastered. However, these gaps eventually became strengths as she doggedly worked through the material and repeatedly explained it to her pupils. The act of teaching, and

of having to prepare to teach, forced her and enabled her to comprehend the material herself:

“Vor allem was das Grammatikverständnis betraf, ich habe mich noch nicht fit gefühlt. Und viele Dinge, wirklich mit den Schülern, dann erst begriffen, wenn ich es ihnen begreiflich machen musste. Wenn ich gezwungen war, mich mit dieser einen speziellen Konstruktion zu beschäftigen. Zum Beispiel *Gerund*. Jetzt fällt es mir leicht, mich dahinzustellen und zu sagen, zu dem Schüler, du, das gibt’s im Deutschen gar nicht. Deswegen musst du dich nicht wundern, dass es komisch ist für dich. Nimm’s einfach nur so an, so wie es ist. So wie ich damit umgegangen bin.” (12reg2)

The revelation that teaching material helps the instructor understand it better was also mentioned by other non-NESTs in this study, but it was particularly evident for Teacher 12, who entered the profession with what she saw as weak English skills. When she began teaching English, she did not “feel fit” in the language, and had not “understood” all aspects of grammar that were in the curriculum. Her own perceptions of her language ability, or lack thereof, required her to approach teaching English differently than she had taught Russian. In order to compensate for what she saw as deficiencies, she was “forced” to continue learning on her own. This required time and energy, but helped her improve her English and become better.

It would be too easy to state that this teacher’s lack of language preparedness was a problem that should not have been allowed to happen. Obviously it should be expected that a certified English teacher would have at least mastered basic language skills and would be ready to help pupils learn, rather than having to expend energy on his or her own continued learning. However, even though Teacher 12 said she regrets not having had better English skills at the outset, she also pointed out that this process of learning and extended effort had some advantages. Her uncertainty and her struggles with the language helped her relate better to the pupils she was working with:

“Die Grammatik habe ich wirklich erst jetzt beim Unterrichten, BEIM Arbeiten, in der Schule, für mich erschließen können. Es ist ein Vorteil manchmal. Ich kann verstehen, wie es den Schülern geht. Beim Russischstudium hatten wir eine dabei, die ist alles durchlaufen mit super 1, alles ganz locker lässig gemacht. Konnte aber nicht nachvollziehen, wieso einer Schwierigkeiten dabei hat. Weil’s ihr super leicht gefallen ist. Und sie ist dann in der Schule gescheitert. Sie hat’s nicht rüberbringen können. Konnte sich wahrscheinlich nicht hineinversetzen, in den Schüler, was, wo er jetzt eine Blockade hat, oder wie auch immer. Warum das in seinem Schädel nicht funktioniert. Ich kann echt sagen, Leute, ich weiß wie es euch jetzt geht, versuchen wir’s mal so.” (12reg1)

The progress Teacher 12 has made in English has not been easy for her, and she was not as well prepared to teach the language as she should have or could have been. These disadvantages in terms of the target language were offset by the advantages they offered her in relating to her pupils’ learning processes. Her assessment of this empathy, and the

value she feels it brings to her teaching, reflects much of what we know about the advantages that non-NESTs have over NESTs in the classroom.

4.2.3 Not happy with current level, but still learning

On the self-assessment sheets following the interviews, Teacher 12 gave herself rather high marks for all teacher-related language tasks. She said that she is very good at modeling and monitoring pronunciation, and that she is good at explaining new words. She marked herself as being “okay” at teaching grammar and evaluating errors in her pupils’ written work, and noted that she was “not so good” at using jokes, puns, or rhymes in the classroom. She described her English as clear and methodical, not spontaneous, and said that she is competent at performing tasks related to teaching or school exchange trips. She does not like to read in English and she does not feel very confident about her ability to cope well in situations which have nothing to do with the classroom.

When asked to assess her overall level in English, she said that she has improved immensely but is not really good, and she freely admits that there are non-NESTs at her school who are more devoted to English and to language improvement. She feels that she is able to do her job, but she shies away from evaluating it beyond this:

“Ich wage gar nicht wirklich einzuschätzen, wo ich stehe. Ich denke, meine Vokabelkenntnisse sind relativ begrenzt, auf Schülervokabeln. So, die Themen, mit denen man sich beschäftigen muss. Deshalb habe ich hier, wo Du diese Befragung hattest, Gespräche an der Bank führen oder so was, da würde ich mich TOTAL an der falschen Stelle fühlen. Da würden die mich, da mit den Vokabeln, so total überfahren. Das würde ich mir nicht zutrauen, das könnte ich nicht.” (12reg2)

Teacher 12’s self-image as an English speaker was low, and it was defined by the realms in which she uses the language. Language used for teaching poses less of a problem, she said, but language in unfamiliar situations sometimes threatens to “overwhelm” her, and she worries she will not be able to cope. However, she is not fully finished with her language development and she often notices new words or phrases. Because she approached, and still approaches, English with the feeling that she must work at it, she is aware of new input and will research items that are unfamiliar to her. Unlike Teacher 22, who seems to “acquire” English through deliberate contact with native speakers, Teacher 12 continues to “learn” the language. A large part of this learning is tied in with her teaching: “ich lerne immer noch, wenn Du so willst. Jedes

Buch bringt neue Aspekte, wo ich denke, ups, das wusstest du auch noch nicht. Oder, ach ja? So kann man das auch sehen!” (12reg1).

In the year following our interviews, I met Teacher 12 several times outside of the school setting, and on each occasion she had a language question for me regarding words or phrases which had come up in class and which she had not been sure about. By the time she brought the question to me, she had already checked the item in a dictionary, on a teachers’ website, and asked other non-NESTs around her. She is not at all shy about seeking help, and she freely admits that her English skills, as they are now, are incomplete:

“Für mich ist es auch nur eine Fremdsprache, und Fehler können mir unterlaufen. Die fragen ganz oft nach Vokabeln, die ich nicht drauf habe. Da bin ich kein wanderndes Wörterbuch, für mich ist es auch nur eine Fremdsprache, guckt nach (*lacht*). Oder wir gucken zusammen nach.” (12reg2)

English is “only a foreign language,” and she is not upset about this. She still does not really embrace the language as she had Russian, but she has learned to live with it and to teach it to her pupils. For her, English is still work, and it remains a work in progress.

4.2.4 Could improve, but there are obstacles in the way

Teacher 12 acknowledged that her skills in English are weaker than they could be, but at the same time she said she believes they are adequate for her job at the *Regionalschule* level. In nearly all situations, she functions at a level above that of her pupils and, if there are things she does not know, she has several types of resources available to help her. The act of teaching English in a classroom and preparing lessons provides some language input, and she said she does not feel that she needs any more than this right now. She indicated that she is not currently pursuing any activities to improve her English, and gave two main reasons for this decision.

The first is that she does not have access to courses or activities that she thinks would be helpful in improving her language skills. There are no local, affordable courses aimed at her particular needs. She does not have the financial resources or the time to travel to a larger city, and in the area where she lives and works there are only classes aimed at lower levels. Several years ago she had considered attending a conversation class through the local *Volkshochschule* and decided against it, because the target level was so much lower than her own. She had also considered attending language courses in the UK during the summer break, but was unable to afford them:

“Ich habe immer mal geguckt, ob es funktionieren würde. Aber das sind ja solch´ Preise, da legst du dich lang hin. Das ist ja nicht machbar. Meine familiäre finanzielle Situation war immer so, dass ich mir keine Auslandsreisen irgendwo leisten konnte.” (12reg1)

Concerning stays abroad, Teacher 12 takes a very different approach than Teacher 22, and this is not only due to her lower levels of interest in the English language at a personal level. The financial burdens she carries as a divorced mother whose working hours have been reduced due to budget cuts are simply too great to allow for extended travel or language classes overseas. She has accompanied pupils on shorter trips to England and enjoyed being able to test her language skills there, but sees no opportunity to return on her own. She would like to spend time overseas, not only to improve her language skills, but also to be able to relate her experiences to her pupils:

“Wenn es finanziell erschwinglich für mich wäre, würde ich sehr gerne landeskundlich was machen. So, zwei Wochen an der Schule so mitlaufen, in Großbritannien. Oder das Leben in der Familie, noch mal *live* mitnehmen. Weil ich weiß, wenn man das so erzählen kann, wo man selber gewesen ist, kommt das viel besser rüber. Die Erfahrung habe ich von Russisch, wo ich erzählt habe, wo wir zur Besuch waren, oder wie wir da Neujahr gefeiert haben. Das kommt ganz anders rüber, weil man selber ja ganz anders einbezogen ist. Interessieren würde mich das schon, aber mich schrecken halt immer diese Preise ab. Weil ich das einfach nicht kann.” (12reg2)

The second reason she gave for not improving her English through classes or exchanges was that she sees other matters as more pressing. While her language skills are at a level at which she can function and are therefore adequate, she feels that she, and many of her colleagues, need to expand their professional skills in areas which will help the learners directly. In some of her classes she has pupils who had been diagnosed with attention deficit syndrome or dyslexia, others who are living in abusive families or who come to school without breakfast or money for lunch. These learning disabilities and severe social problems are issues she must deal with immediately, and they outweigh the fact that she might not know a word in English. She has chosen to focus on training sessions that will help her address the special needs many of her students have:

“Ansonsten, bin ich nun sehr wählerisch geworden, was Fortbildung anbetrifft. Ich gucke da eher da im Bereich Pädagogik, Psychologie. Weil ich finde, dass wir noch nicht fit genug sind. Ich gucke auch immer wieder, aber ich wähle ganz bewusst aus.” (12reg2)

Because she must set priorities, Teacher 12 has chosen to invest her time and energy in activities with a general pedagogical emphasis, rather than in language improvement. For her, English is a language that will most likely continue to challenge and surprise her over the next 20 years of her career, but she has come to terms with this and does

not see it as problematic. For the time being, Teacher 12 has accepted her own level of English and is comfortable working with it as it stands now.

4.3 Teacher 10: “The level happens.”

Teacher 10 was the first non-NEST to volunteer for the study, and one of only two male participants. We had never met before but had a common acquaintance who had encouraged him to participate in the project. Our interview sessions were scheduled between two classes and were thus limited in length. The site visit entailed an observation of a 10th grade class he taught immediately following the first interview, the discussion of which formed the basis for our second session. Our conversations were more formal and less hearty than other interviews in this project, yet he was very forthcoming with answers and comments.

Teacher 10 had qualifications in English and Russian, and was in his 19th year of teaching. At the small *Regionalschule* where he worked, which was located in a rural area, his entire course load was in English, and he had not been able to teach Russian for many years. Like Teacher 12, he expressed disappointment at not having any Russian classes now, and made several references to the meaning both Russian and English had in his identity as a foreign language teacher.

4.3.1 Learning English was always fairly easy

Teacher 10 had always been interested in other languages and cultures, but he described himself as a lackadaisical learner of English at school:

“Ich wollte gerne herumreisen, in der Welt (*lacht*), was kennen lernen, und dazu brauchte ich eine Sprache, oder mehrere. Ich war auch nicht so besonders zielstrebig.” (10reg1)

His motivation for learning English was to be able to understand song lyrics of the “Rock und Pop Größen,” and he described how he would write down what he understood and then try to decipher it with the help of a dictionary, “anhand der Soundbilder” (10reg1). He did not have to work especially hard at foreign language classes in school and recalled lessons as being a bit dull. Even though he received good marks at school, he did not feel driven to learn or exceptionally passionate about English. He originally thought about becoming an interpreter or translator but did not do well on the entrance exams. When it was suggested that he become a foreign language

teacher, he had no specific feelings about this; it was neither a lifelong dream nor was it something he wished to avoid. It was, however, something connected with foreign languages. Because he was concerned that his skills, especially in Russian, might not be good enough, he asked a mentor for advice. The answer he received was something he has never forgotten: language teachers do not necessarily have to be exceptionally good speakers of the language because: “Naja, Sprechen ist ja was anderes als Unterrichten,” (10reg1).

Even after taking up his studies, he did not immediately feel engaged with the subject matter. His first few years of teacher training were rather unstructured and haphazard, and it was not until his last few semesters that he felt he really understood the concepts of foreign languages and acquired the knowledge and skills he needed, both to learn a language himself and to teach that language to others:

“Ich habe für mich vermisst, dass ich Stützen, Hilfen vermittelt bekommen haben könnte, die für mich so wichtig waren. Wichtig wäre so ein bisschen System hereinzubringen. Weil ich habe das eigentlich ziellos gemacht. ... Das hat ja alles so ein System, und das hätte ich mir gewünscht, im Nachhinein, dass da jemand mich so ein bisschen so darauf dahin geschubst hätte.” (10reg1)

Toward the end of his studies, he attended classes with a linguistics professor who had authored the grammar book used in class. For the first time, Teacher 10 felt that he had a “system” upon which to base his understandings of the language. Whereas before he had been interested in English but felt he had not grasped everything completely, these courses gave him a structure and a sense of order. It is not that Teacher 10 was wholly dissatisfied with his studies, but it was during this time that he realized that, when learning a language, he relied on order and logic, and that he learned systematically instead of intuitively. His first years were not a total loss, but in retrospect he wishes that he could have attended the structured linguistics seminars earlier in his studies: “bestimmte Dinge, vom Verständnis her, hätte man vielleicht effektiver machen können,” (10reg1).

Despite family troubles, he was able to spend at least one semester in Russia, and he did not see it as a problem that he was unable to spend a semester in an English-speaking country. Of all the teachers in this study, Teacher 10 was the only participant to state that his university training was fully sufficient for his language needs as a teacher, even without being allowed to study English overseas, because the conditions where he studied were “perfect” for his needs:

“Wir hatten in ((Studienort)) sehr gute Bedingungen, im Sinne von *Tutors*. Das waren alles auserlesene Kommunisten und *Morning Star* Leser (*lacht*). Nein, die waren alle in Ordnung, das muss man sagen. Das war ideologisch, überhaupt nicht, in keinster Weise, beeinflusst. Wir hatten also Gastdozenten und alles, wir konnten wirklich mit ihnen Englisch sprechen. Ich hatte eine Seminargruppenleiterin, die mit mir nur Englisch sprach. Es war, von diesem Umfeld her, eigentlich perfekt.” (10reg1)

At the end of his teacher training, he felt ready to teach both Russian and English in a school setting. Although he would not claim that his language skills were exemplary, they were certainly at a level at which he felt comfortable entering a classroom as an instructor.

“Es reicht für die Schule. Also für die Schule ist es wirklich ausreichend. Ich war schon im Urlaub in England, war auf Klassenfahrten in London, und wir haben da schöne Abende verbracht, auch mit dem Menschen zusammen. Aber (*stöhnt*) es ist eben noch anstrengend.” (10reg1)

Teacher 10 made a distinction similar to that of his mentor so many years ago: namely, that there is a difference between speaking a language well enough to teach it and speaking it well enough to use it easily as a means of communication. At the end of his studies, he was convinced that his English skills were developed well enough to teach, and he believes they are still “adequate” for his job. He admitted, however, that he had difficulties with non-classroom language. This was an observation many non-NESTs in this study had made, and this teacher’s awareness of his deficiencies in this area was present throughout the interviews, as he reflected on language change and his current levels.

4.3.2 Small changes and stagnation at an acceptable level

At first it was very difficult for Teacher 10 to answer the question of how his language skills have changed since receiving his teaching degree (“Oh, das ist schwierig, das ist wirklich schwierig,” 10reg2). However, as he took stock of his levels of English at different phases in his life, he started to make a tentative connection between his job and his current language skills:

“Vom Rezeptiven her, verstehe ich recht viel Englisch, und sehr gut. Aber das Produktive ist eben doch auf diesem Unterrichtsniveau (*Pause*) hinabgesunken würde ich auch nicht sagen, aber naja. Es ist halt, eben so, mehr im Unterricht, es hat sich der Unterrichtssprache angepasst.” (10reg2)

He admitted that his English has “become adapted” to the type of language he uses in the classroom, and while he was hesitant to use the term “lowered” to describe it, he acknowledged there was some change that occurred when he moved from an academic or advanced level to a school classroom level. When I asked him if he had ever been

able to communicate at a “higher” level, he agreed that his spoken English skills had been stronger at the end of his studies:

“Ja, vielleicht so Ende des Studiums, ich hätte so, Bedürfnisse und so weiter, Gedanken, die man zu einer Sache hat, oder zu verschiedenen Dingen hat, hätte ich äußern können, auf jeden Fall. Umfangreicher als jetzt.” (10reg2)

Because Teacher 10 no longer felt able to express his thoughts on a range of topics that he is interested in, he acknowledged that some of his spoken skills in English have been lost. He debated about whether or not he would have been able to conduct our interview session in English and still give the same precise answers, at the same tempo, as he could in German. During his studies, he recalled, he would have been able to do this, but now he was doubtful. As described below, he spoke English briefly with me in the second interview session, telling me about a class session from the week before. His English was largely correct but halting, and he struggled occasionally to find the exact words he wanted. Twice he asked me for a translation, and then, after roughly 10 minutes, he returned to German, repeating that conversing in English was “difficult” at times.

On the other hand, he also reported that some of his skills have improved since the end of his studies. Like many non-NESTs in this study, he cited gains in the areas of grammar and vocabulary:

“Was Grammatik betrifft, würde ich mir jetzt einbilden, dass ich die wesentlichen Züge der englischen Grammatik, dass ich sie beherrsche, und dass ich auch sehr sicher geworden bin, soweit man es da sein kann. Ich habe auch im Wortschatz dazugelernt. Da sind auch so Zeitschriften, die man auch im Unterricht verwendet, wie *Spot On* zum Beispiel. Da lese ich auch gern drin und da nehme ich auch Vokabular auf. Es kommt denn auch wenn man was hört, dann versteht man das auch. Aber so in die produktive Sprachzentrale, da kommt es eben nicht rein, oder nicht so gut rein, oder nur ganz langsam rein. Also passiv ja, aber aktiv nicht. Aktiv ist mehr Unterrichtssprache.” (10reg2)

He observed that his grasp of English grammar was good at the end of his studies, and that it has “become very secure” since then. Although Teacher 10 did not say so explicitly in this quote above, the gains in grammar were related to his teaching. In both interviews and during the lesson he taught while I was there, he explained and demonstrated how he teaches grammar to pupils and tries to give them an overview of rules. His teaching can be characterized as logical and systematic, similar to his own learning. His continuing acquisition of vocabulary is also related to his teaching in that he learns new words when reading classroom material and views his active vocabulary as “teaching language.” Although he recognizes words in use outside of the classroom,

they remain more “passive” and do not enter his active mental lexicon, at least not readily.

Teacher 10 said he sees a connection between his language development, or lack thereof, and the type of school at which he works. He made it clear that the pupils do not seem to care or notice whether he sets a good language example, and that there is no need for his English to develop much beyond this very low level:

“Das Niveau in der Realschule, ich muss nicht dieses hohe *Level* haben. Es wäre was anderes wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel an die EOS gehe, ans Gymnasium, und dort Ganzschriften wieder machen würde und so. Dann würde ich auch wieder anfangen zu lesen. Dann würde ich auch anfangen, mich damit zu beschäftigen, mit dem *Vocabulary* und den *Phrases*, sich auseinanderzusetzen. Generell Vokabeln auffrischen, die ja auch sowieso in einer Ganzschrift vielfältiger sind als solche, die wir hier in ((Ort)) jetzt haben. Insofern hängt es auch wieder vom Zweck ab.” (10reg2)

If this teacher were to teach elsewhere, at a higher “level,” he would have to adapt his English to the level expected, and he automatically believes that he would be capable of this. The reason his language skills are now at a lower level is because he does not need to be functioning at a higher one. Whereas English teachers at the *Gymnasium* level deal with longer and original texts, his pupils do not; therefore, he as a teacher does not need to read such texts or worry about the “phrases” contained therein. Instead, he generally reads adapted magazines. It is not that his language skills have necessarily become “lower,” although in some ways they have; rather, he sees his skills as fitting in with his current setting, rather than adhering to the norms that he had been exposed to during his studies.

4.3.3 Good enough for school

Teacher 10 knows where his language strengths and weaknesses lie and he is quite realistic about them, in both a positive and a negative sense. His English is not as good as he personally would like it to be, but he also thinks it is far beyond what he needs for his job. In the Can-Do lists he gave himself the top mark of “1” for all “teacher-specific skills” except for two, “phoning in English to arrange school exchange programs” and “always being a good language role model,” both of which he rated himself with mark “2.” The mark “2” was less a reflection of his ability than it was a sign of what was not needed. He indicated that he has never been asked to make a phone call in English in connection with his work, and he said he seriously doubts the pupils at his school appreciate a good role model, although he might be one. He was highly critical of the

type of pupils he works with at his *Regionalschule* and of their willingness to make any effort at learning in general:

“Bei diesen heutigen Voraussetzungen der Schüler, was die Überwindungsbereitschaft betrifft, was die Anstrengungsbereitschaft betrifft, ist es sinnlos. Ich kann mich tausendmal hinstellen und verlangen. Das machen sie nicht mit. Sie machen nicht mal Hausaufgaben.” (10reg1)

According to Teacher 10, his pupils are not very interested in learning English, or in doing much of anything else at school. They will follow along in a subject as long as it is fun and interesting, but as soon as they are asked to apply effort or do actual work, they give up. He is also doubtful that he as an English teacher can inspire these pupils to do more by using innovative methods or communicative games in the classroom. On the contrary, he feels that the more effort he makes to be dynamic and to initiate sessions in which the pupils produce more spoken English, the less effort they make:

“Sie freuen sich natürlich immer, wenn ich hier herumspringe wie Thomas Gottschalk, das finden sie TOLL. Dann gehen die da raus und sind *happy*. Aber wenn sie da RAUS sind, die Tür ZU machen, ist es WEG. Und sie gehen nach Hause, und sie sagen es war heute TOLL, ich mache nichts. Weil es da heute so toll war. Das glaubt man nicht, aber GENAU so läuft es ab!” (10reg1)

At the end of the site visit he commented on his 10th graders' lack of initiative during the lesson and his frustration with several pupils who had not even made a pretense of following along during the 90 minutes. He felt that he was not reaching some of the learners and that this demonstrated why the level of his English was far less important than his pedagogical abilities. He observed that, no matter how flawless his own language modeling, if the pupils are unwilling to pay attention during class, then it is a matter of “throwing pearls before the swine” in this classroom. Indeed, several of the boys in the back rows had been more engaged with their mobile phones than with the material on the handouts, and even after Teacher 10 rearranged the seating assignments, these pupils gave the impression that they were waiting for the class to end so that they could continue their private conversations. Two of the more boisterous pupils did not take the prepared handout with the homework assignment with them; they left the sheets of paper in the storage bins under their desks as they departed the room.

It is actions like these that cause Teacher 10 to feel that there is a problem, but one that has nothing to do with his own foreign language ability. His English skills are not the issue; it is the behavior of the pupils that is problematic:

“Ich sagte da, zu meiner Frisörin, da gehe ich hin und sage, stellen Sie sich mal vor, Schule ist, wenn Sie hier (*klopft am Stuhl*) einen Jungen darauf haben, an Ihrem Stuhl, und er bewegt sich andauernd, und Sie wollen ihn frisieren. Das ist Schule. Ich habe natürlich eine große Auswahl, vielfältige Möglichkeiten, methodisch, didaktisch, und so weiter da vorzugehen. Aber ich werde ständig daran gehindert! Das ist das

Problem. Und das jetzt zu umgehen, das macht die Arbeit eines Lehrers aus. Und das ist die Arbeit, die Zeit kostet.” (10reg1)

Thus, he said he believes his English skills as a teacher are “adequate” for the classroom, but because his pupils do not want to learn, he does not necessarily have to access these skills to any significant extent. Therefore, he saw the issue of whether he provides good language input as a role model as irrelevant.

In the “non-teacher-specific skills,” he ranked himself much lower overall. He admitted that in some situations he would like to have a better command of the language, but said this is simply not feasible. His productive skills are closely linked with the level of language he as a teacher requires, but beyond this they falter. It has been a long time since he has had to conduct a longer conversation in English, and he does no writing in English at all. Occasionally he will listen to the BBC or watch a CNN newscast on TV, but he said he does not actively engage with media for language practice. Most of the reading he does in English is of adapted classroom texts. He admitted that when he does read a non-adapted book in a field of interest, it is often a struggle (“durchquälen” or “mühsam,” 10reg1). In the second interview he revised this statement a bit, saying that he thought his passive language skills, including reading, were okay, but that his active skills, especially speaking, were not as good. It was at this point, early in the interview, that he switched to English; both to demonstrate his level of spoken English and also to explain why he felt this way:

“Aktiv ist so, mehr Unterrichtssprache. Und. Well, I could give you an example about the, about my last lesson, about communication devices. Well, we had to talk about all these things which are around you, which you use them every day to, to get in touch with your partner and with your neighbor and with people from all over the world. And, ähm, well the only thing, no not the only thing, ähm, the, the statement that we were driving at, at the end of the lesson was ähm, that ähm, was the statement that communication devices, all these communication devices, all these modern, yes, modern communication devices, are not necessary today. And so the pupils had to, had to, had to find arguments, ähm had to find pros and cons and all the things and ähm, this is the level I am talking about, I am using English to talk about these things, and so. Aber (Pause). And so I don't think it's a, it's a high level. I think it is a level between average. And well, what is A B C, (lacht) it's between B and D. So. (Lacht) Sometimes more, sometimes less, well (Pause). It depends on the topics, it depends on the, ja, topics, on the ideas of the pupils which ähm, force me to talk, and äh, so ähm, well. (Pause). That's what I am on. That's what I äh, that's the level I am (Pause). I can't pin myself down, what level, so, ähm, well (Pause). It happens (lacht). The level happens.” (10reg2)

As can be seen from the passage above, Teacher 10 is able to produce a string of English sentences and create coherent meaning, but they are marked with repetitions and elaborations that he would use in the classroom. The “communication devices” he describes are not only used to stay in touch with other people, but also “with your

partner and with your neighbor and with people from all over the world.” His speech was slow and accurate, but not “fluent” or colloquial, and was marked by occasional pauses and self-corrections, which he sees as typical of classroom language. Because he does not speak much English beyond school, most of his active spoken production takes place in a classroom setting, where he is providing the language input for his pupils. The topics are set by the textbook and the curriculum, and these are the areas in which Teacher 10 is expected to model language (“*I am using English to talk about these things*”). These areas are relatively easy for him, while others, such as commenting on his own “level” of English, are less so. Like many non-NESTs in this study, Teacher 10 said he sees his strengths in speaking in front of a class about familiar topics, and in using the right pacing and the range of vocabulary his pupils are familiar with.

4.3.4 More important things in life than working on English

Teacher 10 called himself a “relativ pragmatisch” (10reg1) person, and mentioned several times that a teacher must always make choices and set priorities. For him, learning more English or actively maintaining his language skills is not a high priority, primarily because there is no need to do so. He does not see himself as lazy in this regard, but rather as “effective” because he is able to channel his energy to the activities that will help him the most:

“Es kommt im Endeffekt auf das heraus, dass man doch irgendwo ergebnisorientiert arbeiten MUSS. Ja, in dem Moment machst du alles nur noch effektiv. Oder so effektiv, wie es passt.” (10reg2)

Because he feels that his English skills are already more than adequate to teach at a *Regionalschule*, he said he believes he does not need to work on his language skills, and indicated he would not do this in order to fulfill his role as a teacher. He admitted that there are occasionally situations in which having better English skills would be helpful, or in which he might wish that he could express himself more clearly:

“Man ärgert sich immer dann, wenn so eine Situation mal da ist, wenn man das so braucht auf einmal. Und das ist so ein Moment, wo man sagt, heute habe ich keinen Bock darauf zu arbeiten, in dem Moment. Und dann könnte man es doch auf einmal gebrauchen.” (10reg1)

However, these situations are few and far between, and they are not severe enough to make him want to work on his English. Even if he were willing, he said he sees numerous obstacles to spending time on improving his English. He does not have a circle of friends or acquaintances who speak English, and there are no upper-level

English classes offered nearby. Traveling to England to attend such courses or to visit as a tourist is expensive, and he had not heard of any financial compensation for such private initiatives. In addition, he said, any time invested in a language course or extra *Fortbildung* activities designed to improve his English skills would take time away from his family or his job, neither of which was desirable.

Teacher 10 stated clearly that he would not want to attend any sort of language training activities for non-NESTs, and that, if he were to invest any time in a language class, he would rather take a Russian course or attend other professional development activities.

He was not interested in more courses for English teachers:

“Halte ich für sinnlos. Fortbildungen müssen zu den Fächern sein, die man nur sehr wenig unterrichtet. Also wie ich, zum Beispiel, mit Russisch. Dann sollte eher angeboten werden, zum Thema Rechtliches. Wie verhält sich der Lehrer in Unterrichtssituationen. Wie reagiert er auf Unwillen, wie reagiert er auf die entsprechenden emotionalen Äußerungen, und so weiter. Wo sind vielleicht auch rechtliche Dinge, die er beachten muss, und und und. So etwas wäre nicht schlecht.” (10reg2)

Teacher 10 briefly described several professional development seminars that he would find more useful than an English class, and he also mentioned Russian. Because he was not working with this language, I pointedly asked him about whether he would consider taking any foreign language course at all:

“Naja, Englischkurs, dann muss man ja Zeit haben! Aber wenn ich jetzt Prioritäten setzen müsste, dann würde ich natürlich lieber mal Russisch auch sagen. Die ich gerne mal besuchen würde. Als Weiterbildungsangebot, auch mal für die Russischlehrkräfte, da wäre was zu machen. Etwas Unterricht, so'n kleinen *Unit*. Wenn es also jetzt um Prioritäten geht, dann würde ich lieber das machen. (Bemerkung d. Intv.: Jetzt bringen Sie mein Konzept aber durcheinander hier!) Na, *sorry!* (*lacht*) Ja, weil ich's jetzt momentan nicht so brauche, nicht so.” (10reg2)

Teacher 10 said he would not attend an English class because he “does not need” one, but he would attend a Russian refresher course, even though he has not taught this language in over a decade and has no immediate plans to do so. Because I wondered if I might have misunderstood this, I asked him about English development or maintenance again at the end of our interview session, jokingly suggesting that I might pay for an English course, purchase the text book, and chauffeur him to class one evening per week. He thought the idea was interesting but refused to accept my “offer”:

“Gut. Dann gehen SIE für mich unterrichten und dann machen SIE für mich hier den Unterricht und dann nehme ICH mir die Zeit. Aber ansonsten, wie gesagt, muss ich ja als Lehrer dafür sorgen, dass ich fit bin. Fit für den nächsten Tag.” (10reg2)

At three points in the interview Teacher 10 was very clear about his lack of interest in language development for English. For him, “the level happens,” and it is now set, and he is satisfied with this level as it stands. There is no personal or professional need for

him to be concerned about any gaps in language ability, thus he very pragmatically has chosen to apply his energy when the payoff will be the highest. Instead of investing resources in something he does not need, he prefers to work at teaching English the best he can in the situation in which he finds himself.

5. RESULTS

In this chapter, I present the various answers to the research question regarding how the 20 non-NESTs in this study view their relationship with English. First, I explore the teachers' accounts of how they learned English (and other foreign languages), according to a temporal division of learning periods first in school and then at university. Next, I describe the changes the teachers have noticed in their foreign language skills since cessation of formal language learning, and the reasons they give for attrition or acquisition in certain areas. I then examine the teachers' self-evaluations of their current English language ability, both as teachers and users of the language. Finally, I conclude with statements about what steps the non-NESTs are planning or would like to be able to take for future language retention and development activities.

5.1 Language learning prior to becoming a teacher

Because non-NESTs do not learn English as an L1, they are generally able to recall when, where, and why they were exposed to the language for the first time and their feelings about learning it. The teachers in this study, unlike most EFL teacher in western Germany, all began learning English between grades 5 and 8, as a second foreign language after Russian. For all but the two youngest participants (Teachers 21 and 23), Russian remained the primary foreign language throughout their schooling and was their strongest foreign language upon leaving school. The participants who had studied to become teachers of both Russian and English were able to expand their skills in Russian during a university semester or academic year spent abroad. Several of the participants had also been exposed to other foreign languages to varying degrees. In the next four sub-sections, I will look at how these non-NESTs approached language learning, primarily of English, but also of Russian and other foreign languages.

5.1.1 Learning English and other foreign languages in school

All but one of the non-NESTs in this study reported that they had been competent foreign language learners in school. Some were enthusiastic about new languages and had attended special schools in which they were exposed to three or more languages, whereas others mentioned only that they had been satisfied with their progress in school and had enjoyed language lessons. On the whole, many of these teachers had had a close affinity with Russian, through personal contacts or because they had started learning it at an earlier age and felt more confident with it than English. Two teachers mentioned that they had been more interested in learning French as their second foreign language, but they had also enjoyed English classes.

Two of the participants, however, did not have any fond memories of learning English at school. Teacher 12, as mentioned in the case studies, recalled actively disliking English lessons, although she had no problems with Russian. Teacher 23 reported disliking all language classes at school, including German, and always feeling ill at ease. It was not until later that she discovered she suffered from a mild form of dyslexia. Her lack of interest in languages as a pupil was due to a fear of not being good enough, and the need to work much harder than her classmates (“weil ich immer Angst hatte, ich mache was falsch. Und deshalb habe ich ganz viel geübt,” 23gym1). In school this teacher had excelled in mathematics and was considering a career in banking. After an au pair year in the USA, however, she discovered that she enjoyed communicating orally in English. This provided the impetus to become an English teacher. Teachers 12 and 23 each claimed they were not “typical” English teachers and that their decisions to teach the language was made at a later age, and for different reasons, than many of their colleagues in the field. Their negative experiences while learning English at school delayed their decision to obtain an English teaching certificate.

Some participants reported that their motivation to learn English stemmed from a curiosity about the wider world, and a foreign language was seen as a key to meeting other people and experiencing other cultures: “Ich wollte gerne herumreisen, in der Welt, und dazu brauchte ich eine Sprache, oder mehrere” (10reg1). The fact that all of these non-NESTs had been born in a country that did not allow travel to English-speaking countries did not diminish their interest in the language. English could be used as a common means of communication in other countries, and it was also a means of

mentally exploring those places in the world to which East Germans were not allowed to travel. In this sense, English provided a mental window to the world, which made it interesting in and of itself. The English language often stood as a synonym for all things west of the border, for a world that was unknown and different from their own (“eine ganz andere Welt kennen lernen. Ostblock, das kannte man alles und dann, DEN WESTEN. Und diese Sprache dazu,” 18reg1). This fascination was not necessarily tied solely to the cultures of Britain or North America, although for most participants in this study there was a strong interest in Anglo-American cultures.

For other participants, English became their favorite school subject because they had an exceptionally good teacher who not only encouraged them to learn the language, but who inspired the learners themselves (“Mein Englischlehrer, der war sehr wichtig, überhaupt,” 23gym2). Their teachers’ ability to reach out to the learners, to nurture an interest in the language, and to keep this interest alive, even when dealing with tricky grammar or mandatory rote assignments, did not go unnoticed by many participants, who often linked their early efforts at language learning to the person who was teaching: “Der Lehrer, den ich in Englisch hatte, den habe ich auch gemocht. Man hat ja für die Person Sympathie gehabt. Und das wurde auch ein bisschen auf die Sprache übertragen.” (13reg1)

For those who were already considering a teaching career themselves, this empathy with the teacher was also linked to projections about how they might, one day, be seen as teachers. Several non-NESTs mentioned using similar turns of phrase in their classrooms, or employing mnemonic devices they had seen used in school when they were young. Many are still conscious of the fascination with these instructors they felt as young learners:

“Na gut, er hat auch so ein paar Macken gehabt, aber er war eigentlich eine richtige LehrerPERSÖNLICHKEIT. Doch. Für uns alle. Den sehe ich heute noch vor mir, wo ich gedacht habe (*lacht*), da genauso müsstest du’s machen!” (17reg1)

Although none of the participants reported having learned English solely to please the teacher (a form of extrinsic motivation), they were indeed conscious of the role their teachers’ personalities had played in their learning process.

For those participants who did not recall having had a wonderful teacher or being fascinated by English as a lingua franca, there was a motivation to do well in school or be at the head of the class. Some participants had parents who encouraged them to excel academically, whereas others came from family backgrounds with low parental

expectations or an aversion to academic pursuits. Yet all of the subjects in this study shared a desire to work hard at school. They remember wanting to get good marks and they were able to apply themselves to complicated tasks when necessary. This was true not only for foreign languages, but for other school subjects as well, even when they were difficult. These teachers recall their time in school in a positive light, saying they were “fleißig” (13reg1 and 17reg1), “gut” (31gy-reg1 and 30förd1), or “ordentlich” (14reg1). Their hard work paid off in that they generally received high marks (“immer sehr gute Noten,” 16ges1) and recognition from others. There were no participants in this study who were poor learners in school or who had significant trouble with the overall content; and those who did have problems in certain subjects possessed enough discipline and academic talent to overcome them. All of the participants attended the eastern German *EOS* or the *Gymnasium*, moving directly to the *Abitur*.

This overall success at school work made the decision to become a teacher easier for many of the participants. Some said they had always known that they would be teachers: they had played school as children (“Ich habe als kleines Kind schon immer Lehrerin gespielt,” 17reg1, “wollte schon als kleines Mädchen Lehrerin werden, bin da völlig geradlinig gewesen,” 22gym1), and spent their final years at school mentally preparing for a course of studies that would lead them to this profession. Others were less oriented toward the field of education: they had not originally planned on becoming teachers and only enrolled at university after weighing other options. But on the whole, once the decision to become a teacher had been made, English was an intentional choice of subject. Two of the three participants who had only studied English after unification said that they had wanted to study English but had not been allowed to enroll and had been redirected to other subjects instead. The third was Teacher 12, who deliberately avoided English based on her dislike of it in school, and who chose German and Russian. The majority of participants in the study left school with the intention to enroll in a teaching program at university, with English as one of their main subjects. Because they had positive experiences of language learning while at school, they entered university with high hopes of improving their language skills, expanding their knowledge of Anglo-American literatures and cultures, and acquiring the skills they would need to teach the language to others.

5.1.2 Learning English at the university in preparation to teach

The experiences these non-NESTs had in learning English at university were much more varied than those they reported having at school. For some teachers, the content of their studies was more complex than they had anticipated, or their language levels were not high enough for them to participate fully in courses which were taught in English (“natürlich reichten unsere Englischkenntnisse vorn und hinten nicht,” 17reg1). This was not only a problem for the non-NESTs like Teacher 12, who began studying English after German unification (“Das war mir einfach zu hoch,” 12reg1), but also for several teachers who went directly from school to university. This challenge often led them to doubt the wisdom of their subject choice or their own intelligence. Some admitted that there were certain courses or areas which were extremely difficult for them, to the extent that they considered changing their courses of studies entirely:

“Sprachwissenschaft? Furchtbar. (*Gelächter*). Ja, wir hatten bei dem Professor, der damals das aktuelle Lehrwerk geschrieben hat. Das hieß bei uns nur *the yellow monster*. Und er hatte eine Art, vor versammelter Mannschaft, einen aufzurufen. Und dann, wenn man da was nicht wusste, so dann (*mimic*) Na, suchen Sie sich die nächste Mülltonne und rein, und machen Sie den Deckel schön zu. So ging das NUR im Seminar. Es war FURCHTBAR.” (18reg1)

“Phonetik war so was, was ich ja überhaupt (*lacht*) nicht schön fand. Das war richtig hart. Und ich hatte auch wirklich Schwierigkeiten, zur Prüfung zugelassen zu werden. Das war das, was am Anfang, mir sehr schwer gefallen ist.” (14reg1)

Another non-NEST recalls that she was intimidated by other students whose language skills surpassed her own. She came from a bilingual family, and, until she arrived at university, had thought that her skills in her third language, English, were rather good. Although she was not shy or easily intimidated, she reported feeling demoralized by her peers who had spent time in an English-speaking country and were quite fluent, as these students seemed to be showing off with their prowess:

“Es waren Studenten, die waren ein Jahr in den USA, und die konnten gar nicht aufhören zu reden. Sie ergötzten sich in irgendwelchen Fachsimpeleien, wo ich mich da ganz klein machte und ich dachte, so, ach du Scheiße, ich bin so schlecht.” (24gym1)

This feeling of demoralization when others in a group seem to be much more fluent or competent in the language will also be examined more closely in Chapter 5.4.2, in which the teachers report on continuing language development activities.

For other participants, the syllabus content was too basic, or it did not offer enough new challenges. One woman, who had entered university absolutely thrilled to experience more English, told me that she found only more of what she had learned at school. She

had expected an ivory tower of academic bliss and literary discussions, but instead found the same gap text exercises she had done in school: “von der Qualität kann ich mich nicht erinnern, dass ich das jetzt als viel besser empfunden habe. Es war einfach viel MEHR. Nichts Neues, oder was anderes,” (16ges1). Because some participants had been very well prepared for university-level studies and had already worked hard at learning English, they were disappointed at the lack of intensity the university courses offered:

“Erst mal war das Studium ziemlich enttäuschend. Ich habe mich gelangweilt, jahrelang, und habe nebenbei immer was anderes gemacht, weil die Anforderungen so niedrig waren.” (31gy-reg1)

“Ich, weiß nicht, wie ich das sagen soll, ohne dass es böse klingt. Nach einem Jahr, habe ich gedacht, so, mein Gott, ist das hier, so (*zeigt „gähnen“*). Und wenn das so weiter gegangen wäre, wäre das schlimm gewesen. Nachher, im Hauptstudium, so ab dem 3. oder 4. Jahr, dann war’s okay. Aber am Anfang, muss ich sagen, da war ich ein bisschen enttäuscht. Da habe ich mir mehr davon versprochen.” (35ges1)

Several participants felt that they had actually lost ground in speaking and listening to English because so few of their university classes were conducted in English. They felt they had too little opportunity to maintain or develop their language skills. This was true especially for the two participants who had been able to travel abroad between leaving school and starting university, both of whom were keenly disappointed at the amount of German used in the English department at their universities:

“Da war ich schockiert. Ich habe das Gefühl, dass ich, in den ersten paar Studienjahren, unwahrscheinlich viel Englisch verloren habe. Weil wir fast alle Veranstaltungen, alle Vorlesungen und Seminare, auf Deutsch hatten. Wir haben gedacht, wir fangen mit dem Studium an und sprechen sofort Englisch. Und dann wurde zwei Jahre lang so gut wie kein Englisch gesprochen. Dann verliert man das.” (23gym)

This disappointment was also felt by some participants who had not spent time overseas, but who had reported having a “good” teacher in school who had inspired them to use English as a means of communication. They were also unhappy about the lack of opportunities to speak English during their studies:

“Ich konnte nach dem Abitur richtig gut Englisch und dann, nach dem Studium, so gar nichts mehr. Das muss ich leider mal so sagen. Da habe ich im Studium einfach zu wenig gesprochen, selber gesprochen, meine ich.” (30förd1)

Participants who reported having had less inspiring teachers while in school did not sense such a discrepancy, and were instead pleasantly surprised and challenged by the amount of spoken English they were expected to use in their studies. One woman had had an English teacher at school who had relied entirely on the grammar-translation method, and she was pleased at finally being asked to express her own thoughts:

“Was zugenommen hat, war diese Aufforderung, zu reden, zu diskutieren. Ja, sich zu unterhalten. Das kannte ich von der EOS gar nicht. Da war wenig freies Sprechen. Das muss ich mal sagen. Das war an der Uni schon anders.” (25gym1)

With the exception of Teacher 10, presented in the case studies chapter, all of the non-NESTs said they wished that they had been required to speak more English during their university phase, even if it would have made things more difficult. Even those participants who had struggled with English at university said they believed that, because language learning was such an important part of preparing to become a foreign language teacher, every opportunity to practice the four main skill areas should be taken while at university. Those participants who host student interns or work with recent graduates now reported that today’s new teachers seem to be more fluent and comfortable with the language, but they said they believe this is due to time spent living abroad, away from the university. There was general agreement that, although it might be more complicated for both students and instructors, English should be the default language for all students in training to become teachers, and that the university system should support concerted efforts to enable students to use the language as much as possible. Some participants said that students must bear responsibility for this, while others thought that it was a matter for university instructors to address. One non-NEST was very critical of some of her professors and tutors, saying that they had often lapsed into German in class or had allowed students to turn in written assignments in German. One professor had actually encouraged students to write their term papers in German, and this, in her eyes, was inexcusable. She argued in favor of an English-only policy:

“Ich glaube, eine wichtige Sache, eine absolute Bedingung, ist es, dass an der Uni alle Dozenten wirklich nur Englisch reden. Immer. Und nicht, dass man, wie manchmal hier teilweise an der Schule das macht, dass man wichtige Aspekte noch auf Deutsch erklärt oder zusammenfasst. Sondern ich finde an der Universität, auf Uniniveau, dass es NUR NOCH Englisch gibt. Dass man da NUR noch auf Englisch redet. Also, NUR. Und das haben nicht alle Dozenten gemacht.” (21gym1)

A desire to improve their language skills while at university was common among these non-NESTs, but they generally reported that their university phase was not very useful in terms of language development. When asked to recall the most useful courses in terms of their own language learning, the teachers recalled two types of classes. The first were the upper-level literature classes with extensive reading list requirements, in which they spent longer and more concentrated periods working with original material. Reading such diverse works and long texts was not easy, but those who devoted themselves to the task said it was extremely helpful for both their reading

comprehension and speed. Many teachers also found the discussions of the works in smaller seminar groups afterwards to be helpful, provided the course was conducted in English and the instructor encouraged all of the students to contribute.

The second type of courses were the practical language (*Sprachpraxis*) classes, in which students were required to produce either spoken or written English on their own, and received immediate feedback from an instructor. Although each non-NEST in this study had his or her own particular favorite courses, the following were mentioned as being especially helpful in developing language skills: drafting and revising essays, conversation courses with role plays, public speaking or presentations (including those in non-*Sprachpraxis* courses), and producing translations into English. The older teachers, who had completed their studies before unification, reported having had smaller class sizes and more opportunity to practice speaking and listening skills in small groups, some of which had only eight or 10 students interacting directly with an instructor. Those teachers whose studies extended past unification reported having been in larger groups, even for “conversation” or “oral presentation” classes, and having been unable to speak as often or get as much individual feedback as they would have liked.

For all of the teachers, regardless of when they completed their studies, there was a sense that much more attention was paid to written work and accuracy in text production than to their oral skills. Perhaps this is true, and their university instructors did not focus on their spoken English skills in class. However, this impression may also be due to the form instructor feedback generally takes. If an instructor provides written feedback on an essay or written homework assignment, a student will be able to re-read these comments repeatedly and may refer to these comments when working on future assignments. Instructor feedback in a “conversation” course would more likely be given immediately, in oral form, and would thus not be readily available for future reference. It is unclear in retrospect whether the university instructors did pay more attention to written production than to oral, or if this is something the participants can no longer reconstruct.

Many participants, especially those working at the *Regionalschule* level, said that they believed too much time was spent “learning about” the language, its history and structure, rather than on actually “learning” the language. Teacher 11 pointed out that she, as a teacher for grades 5-10, did not deal with longer works of prose, and that her

pupils do not have to read Shakespeare or Chaucer in English. As a student, however, she recalls spending a great deal of time and effort on literary theory courses:

“Wenn ich an Literaturwissenschaft denke, es hat ja letztendlich nichts mit dem eigentlichen späteren Beruf zu tun gehabt. Sicherlich, es gehört einfach dazu, dass man sich ein bisschen in der Literatur mal auskennt, aber meines Erachtens nutzt es mir natürlich an der Regionalschule ((Name)) jetzt überhaupt nichts. Ich habe alles vergessen.” (11reg1)

For her, the content of such classes had “nothing to do with” her profession as a language instructor. She said she understood why they are in the curriculum, and stressed that she valued them because they provided her with the chance to read in English and then discuss topics in class and write about what she had read. However, she said, she did not really appreciate the subject matter itself.

Several non-NESTs commented on the usefulness of classes in linguistics, in which they could explore the fundamental workings of English and ask questions about what was correct and what was not. Other teachers recalled such classes as being more of an academic exercise than something that helped them to improve their own productive language skills. In addition, they observed, university-level linguistics classes were not very helpful in giving them specific skills for teaching English to children:

“Diese Grammatikvorlesungen und die Grammatikseminare haben mir überhaupt nichts gegeben. Im Gegenteil. Wir hatten ständig irgendwelche *Handouts* mit tausend Ausnahmen. Und die haben mich eher verwirrt, als dass ich irgendwie da einen roten Faden hatte. Im Nachhinein habe ich mir einen einfacheren Grammatikfaden zusammengestellt, für meine Schüler hier, und habe erst mal die ganzen Ausnahmen wieder- (*lacht, zeigt* „wegwerfen“). Also für meine Lehrtätigkeit hat es mir nichts gebracht.” (14reg1)

Many teachers, regardless of the type of school at which they are currently working, mentioned that there was a gap between the language skills they had expected to acquire during their years at university, and the skill level they actually achieved. It seems that all of the non-NESTs, no matter how well they had been prepared for the university, began their studies with the expectation that their English would improve beyond the level they had already reached. Many of them also thought that they would develop language skills that would help them in their later profession as school teachers. When this turned out not to be the case for some of them, their disappointment was immense:

“Das gab es selten, ab und zu, mal so ein kleines *Conversation* Ding. Das meiste war da *Grammar Basics* und die *History of* schlag-mich-tot. Wenn man sich für den Rest seines Lebens mit der Erforschung der englischen Sprache befasst, dann mag das ja sinnvoll sein, dass ich da Mittel- oder Alt-Englisch lerne. Aber, für mich persönlich, das fand ich HÖCHST SINNLOS. Ich fand das SOWAS von sinnlos! Das hat so viel gekostet und das hat SO VIEL Motivation weggenommen. Ich habe das nachher schrecklich gefunden, das überhaupt zu studieren, echt!” (30förd1)

Teacher 30 was very emotional as she recalled her language learning at university and her language skills at the end of her studies. She belonged to the cohort of students who had enrolled at university just prior to unification, and for whom the course requirements were often changed, which angered her. Whereas she had started university expecting to fulfill a requirement of one historical linguistics course, in the end she had to complete three different courses before she was allowed to sit her final exams. Immediately prior to these exams, she also had to fulfill a Latin requirement, which had not been part of the description of studies when she had enrolled. As she recalled her feelings nearly 20 years ago, she became upset again and questioned the use of requiring future foreign English teachers to attend such courses.

In sum, these non-NESTs had different recollections of their university language learning, not all of which can be attributed to the fact that they studied at different universities. Whereas one teacher was overwhelmed by the requirements at Rostock University, another was bored. One described courses in Potsdam as having been more than adequate in terms of language exposure, but another teacher recalled that she spent nearly two years there waiting for the chance to use her oral skills beyond the sentence level. Obviously, these teachers had entered the university system with varying levels of competence and approached their studies with different expectations, but they were viewing these specific years of language learning in retrospect and from a distance. The extent to which this distance affects their current perceptions cannot be determined.

5.1.3 Learning English outside of a classroom setting

In addition to learning English in a school or university classroom, the participants recalled a number of additional situations and settings in which they were able to expand their language skills before becoming teachers. As Teacher 22 mentioned in the case studies chapter, even before unification there were tourists and western visitors in East Germany, and some English learners were able to approach strangers and engage them in conversation. Several teachers had used English as a lingua franca during travels in other countries, or, like Teacher 12, as an additional means of communication with Russian speakers during studies abroad.

For those non-NESTs who had more academically-oriented families, parents and siblings also provided opportunities to use English in different settings. Teacher 23

remembers practicing vocabulary words with other family members, not to prepare for a test, but simply to see how many lexical items they could associate with a certain topic:

“Wir haben das auch ganz oft gemacht, in der Familie. Einfach mal so zwischendurch, dass wir einfach, äh, sagen, ein Themenfeld, und erst bist du dran mit einer Vokabel und dann ich, und dann du, bis uns dann nichts mehr einfällt, zu den Themen, zu den Vokabeln.” (23gym2)

Just as Teacher 11 described trying to decipher the lyrics in pop music songs, others remembered watching educational TV shows for English learners (“Zu Ostzeiten war diese eine Fernsehsendung, auf Englisch,” 17reg1, “Ja! *Tom* und *Peggy*,” 18reg1) or reading children’s books beyond the normal school reading assignments.

The younger non-NESTs who were still in school or at university at the time of unification were also able to supplement their coursework with access to new media, including international TV channels (CNN and BBC), a wider range of fiction and magazines, and books on tape. While none of the teachers had spent any significant amount of time in an English-speaking country during their school years, the two youngest participants had done so after leaving school, prior to enrolling at the university, through au pair (Teacher 23) or work-study (Teacher 21) programs. Their primary motivation was to see and experience something new, rather than to polish their language skills, and both of them said that their decision to study English at university and then become a teacher had not been definite until after this time spent abroad. In both cases, these overseas experiences were supported by their family emotionally but not financially, and they both recalled the challenges associated with going abroad without help from their parents:

“Das ging aus finanziellen Gründen nicht. Wir sind drei Kinder zu Hause und meine Eltern haben gesagt, Studium, alles schön und gut, ABER. Also, habe ich au-pair gemacht.” (23gym1)

“Da war ich überall. Ja. Wirklich. Ich habe da auf einer Farm gearbeitet, dann im Norden, und dann in ((Ortsnamen)) in der Küche, und im Restaurant gearbeitet.” (21gym1)

Three other participants spent a year in Great Britain after their studies and before starting their work as teachers. Teachers 16 and 20 participated in standard academic exchange programs, in which they attended classes and worked as language teaching assistants, while Teacher 25 took an intentional break from “classroom” English by working in the retail business in England. She enjoyed this gap year abroad and even debated staying on permanently, but decided to return to Germany to teach.

The other 15 participants had not been able to spend time abroad before starting teaching, but many of them have traveled since then. They have spent time not only in

the countries of the inner circle, but also in the expanding circle countries. Those non-NESTs who were still in school or at university in 1990 benefited from later travel to non-English-speaking countries, such as Norway, Spain, or Israel, where English was widely used. Several were impressed by how easily and readily other EFL learners used English to communicate, and noted that it is not always necessary to spend time in England in order to practice English.

On the whole, however, most participants reported that most of their English learning had taken place in Germany, in formal classroom settings, and that they had learned English primarily as a foreign language and as a subject in school and at university. Even the five non-NESTs who had spent a year in a country where English was spoken remarked that their basic grasp of the language—i.e., the grammar, the core vocabulary, and how English should be taught to school pupils—stemmed from time spent in classrooms, simply because they began learning EFL in Germany. The participants in this study do have non-classroom learning experiences in their language biographies, but the input from EFL classes remains dominant.

5.1.4 Language preparedness for becoming an English teacher

As shown in the three case studies, the participants reported very different feelings about how prepared they were to teach English upon leaving university. These feelings were tied not only to the conditions under which they had received their qualifications, but also to the specific teaching contexts in which they planned to work, and to their personal and family lives at the time. Although they entered the teaching profession with the same standardized state certifications, they had very different confidence levels concerning their language skills.

While the majority of teachers (75%) reported that they generally felt comfortable with English and were prepared to start teaching, there were several teachers who were still actively concerned about their language preparedness. The three non-NESTs with the greatest feelings of insecurity were those who had received their qualifications for English as an additional subject post-unification (Teachers 12, 13, and 19). Whereas for Teacher 12 this perceived deficiency in language skills was related to her reported lack of interest in the language and to her resistance to learning and then teaching it, for Teachers 13 and 19, there were other factors involved. Both of these women had already

turned 40 when they began to study English, and they were aware of the challenges going back to university part time would bring. Teacher 19 pointed out that her knowledge of English was, at best, rudimentary when she began her studies, and stated clearly that she did not feel at all confident about starting the process:

“Nein, nein, nein, nein. Das war so, als wir da in die Universität, ja, das fing da ganz grottig an. Ich erinnere mich, dass wir da am Anfang einen Einstufungstest geschrieben haben. Dann haben die gesagt, oh Gott oh Gott! Was ist denn DA los? Und dass ich ganz viel wieder neu, doch wieder heraus gekramt habe und dann auch mal, doch wieder neu.... Ja, das muss ich auch dazusagen. Nee, nee. Das war also ein Prozess, der wirklich bei ganz doll wenig ganz anfang und dann ging das los.” (19reg1)

Teacher 13 mentioned in both interview sessions that she would most likely never be as competent in the language as someone who had studied it for several years as a regular student. She believes that her fellow teachers who started younger and spent twice the number of semesters at university engaged in language study are inherently better speakers of English than she is: “So ein Fernstudium kann dir nicht das geben. Ich kann mich nicht mit den anderen Englischlehrern vergleichen,” (13reg1). Although she is grateful for the opportunity she was given to receive certification and she enjoys teaching English now, she is realistic about her level of English:

“Es ist eine Art von Minderwertigkeit. Man muss es auch so betrachten, von der Realität her. Man hat uns nur in bestimmten Bereichen geschult. Ich bin auch FROH über diese Zeit, das habe ich ja schon gesagt. Vom methodischen her, vom didaktischen her, haben wir viel Neues mitbekommen. Aber es ist, letztendlich, trotzdem zu wenig im Vergleich zu denjenigen, die vier Jahre das gemacht haben.” (13reg2)

Despite their perceived deficiencies, both Teachers 13 and 19 emphasized that they are proud of what they have learned so far, and are confident that they are able to teach English at an adequate level in their schools today. Their language skills may not be as developed as they might wish, but they are able to seek help and work with new input when they encounter problems. Although their English skills are not as polished as those of their colleagues, neither of them said they feel inadequate as teachers now. Instead, due to their hard work and years of classroom experience, they not only feel satisfied with what they have achieved, they are also more positive regarding their English skills, and see their abilities as quite sufficient for their current jobs: “Mit meinen Schülern versuche ich ihnen immer aktuell zu zeigen, was geht. Ich denke ich bin da jetzt ganz gut. Doch,” (19reg1). The act of learning English (again) and earning qualifications is an achievement they recall with pride, and this pride gives them confidence:

“Also meine eigenen Kinder waren auch stolz, da setzt sich die Mutter noch mit 40 Jahren hin und macht das. Mein Mann war auch stolz. Man ist stolz auf sich. In dem Alter. Das packst du noch, da kannst du

noch was schaffen. Da kommt noch eins hinzu. Es ist nur nicht nur Stolz. Ich habe auch das Gefühl gehabt, ich bin unabhängiger, ich bin freier. Also, die *Midlife crisis* habe ich so, auf diese Art, gut überstanden (*lacht*).” (13reg1)

Two of the non-NESTs who had studied English in a traditional manner, for four or more years, also reported having felt a high level of insecurity upon entering the profession. One was Teacher 14, who left university as the mother of one child, and with a second on the way. She was delayed a year before beginning independent teaching in a school, and was worried that she would forget too much English in the interim. Her solution was to teach an evening class to adult learners twice a week so that she would be forced to maintain her English skills and use them in a classroom. Despite this extra effort, she recalls feelings of inadequacy at the outset of her career: “Weil ich Angst hatte, dass mir viel verloren geht. Da kamen Unsicherheiten. Bin sowieso nicht ein überselbstbewusster Mensch gewesen. Die hatte ich. Selbstzweifel hatte ich,” (14reg1).

The other was Teacher 31, whose uncertainties came about because of her first job. After graduating from university, she started work in a *Gymnasium* in a large city. The school was a magnet school for many professional and wealthy families, and burnished its reputation for high standards with international exchanges and extracurricular activities. Many of the parents struck Teacher 31 as being demanding and impatient. She felt that her language skills were not adequate to teach classes leading to the *Abitur* exam, and to incorporate all of the new materials and methods that families were demanding: “ich hatte nicht das Gefühl zu genügen. Ich wusste, dass ich mit dem, was ich aus der Uni mitbrachte, nie klarkommen werde,” (31gy-reg1). She immediately sought to improve her language skills by returning to the university to attend afternoon and evening courses. During her summer vacations, she took part in a holiday exchange program in which she accompanied German pupils to different countries, serving both as a guide and a teacher. These trips, repeated each summer, helped her enormously, as she was given new opportunities to use English, and she was forced to act and perform in many different situations.

As was mentioned earlier, some of the teachers were convinced that their English was no longer as fluent or precise after they had spent time at university, but most of these non-NESTs said that, on the whole, they felt prepared to teach English to schoolchildren after taking their final exams. Although a few said they did not feel overly confident

about their ability to speak English “perfectly,” for the most part they believed their language skills would be adequate for the classroom. Most agreed that they had learned enough English—whether at school, at university, or through travel—to begin a teaching career in the school system. They felt, if not perfectly confident, at least optimistic at the outset about their ability to speak English, to run a classroom in the foreign language, and to identify and correct pupils’ mistakes. In the next sub-chapter, I will describe the language change the participants experienced after their formal language training ended and they started their jobs as teachers.

5.2 Language change after becoming a teacher

Language change (gain, loss, or a combination thereof) is a phenomenon all of the teachers in this study have observed since leaving university. While this project focused on changes in English, the non-NESTs also reported gains and losses in other foreign languages they worked with, most notably in Russian. In this section, I will first briefly outline how participants view language change for foreign languages other than English. I will then examine specific changes the teachers have observed in their levels of English since they have become teachers, and explore the reasons for these changes.

5.2.1 Changes in foreign languages other than English

Participants were selected for this project because they teach EFL, yet many of them also hold qualifications in other foreign languages, and several of them have a working knowledge of languages that are not typical school subjects. One teacher grew up in a bilingual home, and another comes from a large extended family that uses seven languages, including Dutch and Chinese. Five of the 20 teachers claim that English is their only foreign language, and that their knowledge of any other languages is merely at the basic tourist level. Thus, this first sub-section focuses on the 15 participants who speak, or spoke, at least three languages (German as a native tongue, English, and at least one additional language), and how they have observed change in their third language.

5.2.1.1 Changes in Russian

True language loss was observed primarily in Russian, a language which 13 of the 20 teachers had originally studied and taught, and which none are currently actively teaching. The older teachers, who had more years of pre-unification teaching experience, had all taught Russian as a subject, and some continued to teach it post-unification. For most, however, it became clear during the 1989-90 school year that this language would soon no longer belong to the standard curriculum. The teachers in this study did not comment in great detail on the reasons for this; most references to the switch from Russian to English as the primary foreign language were cursory: “Ich habe nur 2 Jahre, glaube ich, Russisch unterrichtet. Dann kam sowieso die Wende nachher,” (14-reg1). It was not necessary to expand upon the fact that, with the disappearance of the GDR as a separate state, the educational system would change, and the state-supported ties to Russia and other Eastern Bloc countries would diminish. The unification process also changed the curriculum and brought English into position as the first foreign language, which meant that Russian would no longer be required as the main foreign language in schools. The younger teachers in this study who had completed their degrees during or after the transition to unification had very little or no experience teaching Russian. Those who had received a double qualification in Russian and English and entered the profession after 1990 were not assigned to teach Russian, but were instead given a large number of English classes, which were in growing demand. The changing structure of the schools limited their chances to use Russian in a classroom setting, and there was little professional incentive to engage in language maintenance.

All of the former Russian teachers reported major losses in all areas of the language, from basic vocabulary to syntax, colloquialisms, and oral fluency. For some, this loss was intentional and inevitable because they chose to focus on improving their English and devoted their energy to this task, deliberately ignoring Russian or blocking it out:

“Russisch habe ich total abgehakt. Ich habe dann nur Englisch. Russisch, das ging dann so weit, dass ich, also, ich müsste mich dann, ich habe es richtig blockiert. Ich brauche das auch nicht mehr.” (19reg1)

This teacher says that Russian not only took a secondary position to English in the curriculum after unification, but that she had also “blocked” it out in favor of English.

Because she “no longer needs” it for her work, she deliberately ceased language maintenance in Russian to concentrate on other subjects, including English.

For most Russian teachers this loss was unwelcome, and being reminded of it saddens them, even to this day. For several of them, this sadness is tied to a sense of professional loss. Not only have their skills in Russian deteriorated to the point where they can no longer consider themselves language experts, but these skills are longer valued by the educational system in which they work. Because Russian is no longer “needed” by the schools, the teachers had few reasons to maintain the language. Other languages in addition to English are now seen as more valuable or worthy of inclusion in the curriculum than Russian, such as French or Spanish, Swedish or Italian, or even the “dead” language Latin. Whereas prior to unification a teacher of Russian knew that his or her skills were in demand, today the title of “Russian teacher” is no longer of much value. Because the subject has been pushed so far out of the curricular listings, teachers of Russian often feel the need to emphasize their other subjects. Although Russian may be taught in some schools at a minimal level, it truly is “not needed” by the teachers anymore.

This sense of professional loss can also be tied to feelings of personal loss. Whereas study abroad in connection with British or American studies was next to impossible for future English teachers, nearly every Russian teacher had spent an academic year in the Soviet Union prior to sitting their certification exams. Exchange programs in schools were subsidized and frequent contacts with speakers of Russian were encouraged. These official school contacts often led to personal relationships or friendships with Russian speakers, which in turn helped with language maintenance. Those participants who have not been able to maintain these contacts, or who did not have sufficient time at the start of their teaching to develop such contacts, point out that not only is there no opportunity for them to use Russian in school now, there is also little or no opportunity to use the language at all. One teacher described her love of Russian literature and her interest in linguistics seminars during her time at university, sighing as she reflected on how little time she spends with the Russian language now: “Eigentlich finde ich das schade. Denn ich war ja sogar da, ein halbes Jahr. Und das geht dann irgendwann verloren, wenn man keine russischen Freunde hat” (16ges1). She has no friends or colleagues with whom she can maintain her language skills, but her love of great Russian literature remains,

although she now reads the works in German. When I asked her if she could still read Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky in Russian, she gave an emphatic no and said she did not even know where her old books were, and that she had no desire to even try to find them. Her Russian had deteriorated to the point where she did not even wish to attempt to read the books she had enjoyed so much during her studies.

Only two of these 13 teachers said they have continued to maintain contact with Russians they had met before unification. Both women are close to retirement age now, so they belong to the dwindling cohort of teachers who taught Russian for several years. One of these women also has family members living in parts of the Russian Federation, with whom she exchanges letters on a regular basis. However, for both of them the language of communication has switched to German (with the family members) or to English (with professional colleagues). Both women seem a bit embarrassed at this, but were adamant that their Russian language skills have deteriorated to such an extent that they are no longer able to communicate in Russian at all:

“Doch, persönliche Beziehung habe ich. Doch, doch! Die ((Name)), sie ist Deutsch-Englisch Lehrerin in ((Ort in Russland)), und wir unterhalten uns nun auf Englisch. Wir haben es auch auf Russisch neulich versucht aber, mein Russisch ist so grottig jetzt, das ging nicht.” (19reg1)

This teacher pointed out that, even though her friend in Russia was a teacher of both English and German, their common language is now English, a foreign language for both of them, and not German. She still communicates with this teacher in a foreign language, but the language has changed.

All 13 of these teachers accepted that their losses in Russian were probably inevitable, given that the school system no longer supported their efforts to maintain their language skills. This loss is also tied with pangs of guilt, and for a few teachers it is a rather sensitive point. Even though their employer no longer encouraged language maintenance, a few of them felt that they should have been able to prevent attrition:

“Ja, es ist alles weg. ALLES. Und ich bin doch ja traurig darüber. Aber ich hätte auch was dagegen tun können. Privat, meine ich, hätte ich was dagegen tun können. Unterrichten kann ich das nicht mehr, da sind keine.... (Pause). Aber ich hätte was machen können. Ich selbst.” (35ges1).

This teacher is “sad” about the loss and feels that she “could have done” something to prevent it, but she is not sure what. Like Teacher 19, she had also been teaching many Russian classes prior to unification and was then asked to teach only English classes. Professionally, she also had no reason to maintain her Russian skills, but the fact that

she could have done so “privately” still gnaws at her and gives her a feeling of guilt in connection with the loss.

Only one teacher said he would like to make an effort to stem the loss, but added that he currently had no time for this. Teacher 10, as was mentioned in the case study chapter, said that, if he were able to find time to attend a language refresher class, he would place Russian higher on his priority list than English (“dann würde ich natürlich lieber mal Russisch,” 10reg2). He was, however, the only teacher who expressed an interest in reactivating his Russian language skills at all, and even for him this was more of a hypothetical question. For the other 12 participants, Russian has become a language they used to speak, and is not an area in which they currently wish to invest. For them, this loss was not only understandable, but it seems to have also been grudgingly accepted. One teacher explained that she would not want to reactivate her skills in Russian, even if her school decided to offer the language again:

“Inzwischen ist es ja auch so, dass ich das jetzt nicht mehr möchte, weil es jetzt für mich ein Heidenaufwand wäre, jetzt mich da wieder einzufinden. Die Lehrbücher sind anders, der Wortschatz war damals doch ein ganz anderer. Vor der Wende. Also, nee.” (36gym1)

Unlike Teachers 16 and 19, who claimed they would no longer be able to speak Russian and were thus unwilling to try, Teacher 36 though she might be able to, but only after great effort. In order to reactive her Russian language skills to the point where she would be able to teach the language again, she would have to work very hard. Thus, she said, even if she were offered the chance, she would not take it. This is not because she lacks the ability, but because she does not wish to invest so much time and energy in learning, or relearning, a language. As will become apparent in the next sub-section, this is not because Teacher 36 is inherently lazy, but rather because she knows from her experience with French exactly how much effort it takes to reactivate and expand upon language skills in order to become a qualified teacher.

Of the 13 teachers who had studied Russian as one of their two subjects, 10 had studied it in combination with English, and of these 10, five are now teaching English as their sole subject. Although they are certified to teach two subjects, they are only assigned contact hours in one subject. The other five have added new subjects since German unification and are now accredited to teach two subjects. Two of them have added new subjects that were not foreign languages (Teacher 20 added religion and Teacher 35 added history), and the other three added French as a new foreign language to replace

Russian. Next I will look at the three teachers who are now teaching French as a new foreign language in school, and at the participants' relationships with other foreign languages in general.

5.2.1.2 Changes in other languages

Very few participants said that English was the only foreign language they were interested in. After Russian, French was the most popular language, with five non-NESTs claiming to have at least a working knowledge of the language. All five had had a few years of French in school but had not continued learning the language after completing their *Abitur*. Of these five, three teachers (16, 18, and 36) returned to university following unification to obtain an additional teaching certificate in French. They did so not only because there was a greater demand for this language in schools and this was a way to secure their jobs, but also because they had always been attracted to the language, and had not been able to work with it in depth before:

“Ich wollte gern Englisch und Französisch studieren, und da hat mein Klassenlehrer zu mir gesagt, na Frau ((eigener Name)), zwei kapitalistische Sprachen, das geht ja wohl nicht (*lacht*).” (16ges1)

“Diese Kombination, Französisch und Englisch, gab's nicht. Glaube ich nicht.” (36gym1)

Like the two teachers who studied religion and history following unification and the three who added English, these new teachers of French faced many long hours of study in the evenings and on weekends. Many of them did not receive adequate support from their school directors or colleagues. They were granted reductions in their teaching schedules of between two and four hours so that they could attend classes, usually Fridays after school and most of Saturday mornings, and they had to do the homework and self-study activities in their free time. They all recalled these years of investment as being incredibly difficult in terms of time and effort, both for themselves and for their families. Although they had a sense of pride in their accomplishments, their predominant recollections center on the difficulties of learning the language and the amount of effort they had to invest: “In den großen Ferien waren wir in ((Ortsnamen)). Und haben da richtig jeden Tag acht Stunden schönen harten Schultag gehabt. Das war hart,” (18reg1). The words “hard” and “strenuous” were used by all teachers as they recollected this phase in their lives. While most are glad that they made the effort, they

are all relieved that this phase is over and they no longer have to spend every free moment worrying about their workload.

These new language teachers also admitted that, even after their enormous efforts, their current language skills in French are nowhere near as strong as their skills in English. The reasons for this are twofold. Like Teachers 12, 13, and 19, who obtained their qualifications in English later in life, these teachers agreed that learning a language at the university level, which is required for teaching, is best done as a full-time endeavor and that it demands a learner's complete attention:

“Ich fühle mich in Französisch nicht so sicher, weil ich das nur so nebenbei studiert habe. Und dabei lange nicht so sehr viel Zeit da investieren konnte, wie in Englisch,” (36gym1).

Teacher 36 expressed the opinion that successful language learning cannot be done on the side, after a full day of teaching other subjects, and said this is one of the reasons why she was also unwilling to consider re-activating her Russian skills.

The second reason given was that, even though the demand for French language instruction is increasing, the schools still have fewer contact hours of French than English, and French is usually only offered as a second foreign language, beginning a few years after English. Because pupils rarely reach the same level in French lessons as they do in English, the teachers do not need to teach upper level courses, and this affects their willingness to invest in continued language learning:

“Ich bin im Französisch nicht so *top*. Das ist, vom Niveau her, bei mir leider so nicht so dolle, ist so ein bisschen eingeschlafen. Das Wenige, was ich hier unterrichte, ist auf einem sehr niedrigen Niveau. So habe ich leider auch keinen Ansporn, für mich, das alles so *top* drauf zu haben.” (16gym1).

As Teacher 16 pointed out, she spends fewer classroom hours working in French and she has no advanced courses, which limits her interest in becoming “top” in this language. She noted that, although she reached an acceptable level of competence in French during her weekend and evening studies later in life, she rarely uses French beyond the very basic level in the classes she teaches now, which is detrimental to her own language skills. This issue of teaching higher level classes will also be discussed in sub-section 5.2.2.2 for English, as it seems that foreign language teachers have more reason to engage in language development when they are required to teach upper level courses. However, despite the difficulties they faced in obtaining their qualifications and the limitations in their own levels in French, these three teachers said they are still glad they made the effort to become certified, and can now teach the language in

schools. Although they may not feel as secure in the language as they do in English, they all reported feeling satisfied with their level of French for the classroom.

Teacher 16 also has some experience with Swedish, and has taught this language in her school as well, although she holds no formal certification. If there are enough pupils who wish to learn Swedish in an elective course as a third foreign language, she will offer a work group or afternoon session for them. However, the small number of contact hours and the extremely small number of learners mean that this language is always in a distant third place for her, trailing English and French.

Spanish is another foreign language that many participants had shown an interest in, although only one of them teaches it as a school subject. Teacher 24 not only holds an academic degree (non-teaching) in Spanish and Portuguese, she also claims that her skills in Spanish exceed those in English. One reason for this is that she is the only teacher at her school who teaches Spanish, whereas there are several other English teachers. This means she has a higher proportion of Spanish classes, including classes with fifth- and sixth-year learners, and fewer contact hours in English. This is not a problem for her, as she simply requests English classes at lower levels and knows that she will not be called upon to teach *Abitur*-level English at her school:

“Das ist total okay, für mich. Da ich mich sowieso immer mit Spanisch besser fühle! Weil ich mich nicht so fit fühle, mit Englisch. Weil ich nicht so sicher bin. Spanisch liebe ich.” (24gym1).

The other foreign languages the participants had been exposed to were Hebrew (Teacher 21 went to Israel on a work-study program), Chinese (Teacher 31 has a sibling who lives in China), Arabic (Teacher 30’s husband is from the Middle East), and Hungarian (Teacher 24’s grandparents live there). Although none of them claims to be fluent in or plans to invest more time in any of these languages, on the whole these non-NESTs were very open to the idea of language learning. It seems that having learned one foreign language well, generally Russian or English, expanded their interest in other languages: “Man sagt so, jede Sprache die man noch dazu lernt, da wird das mal leichter weil man ja, das denn dazu hat. Weil man das System durchschaut,” (24gym1).

5.2.2 Changes in English since becoming a teacher

Teaching a foreign language requires teachers to interact with both learners and the language itself. According to these teachers, this interaction with English on a regular

basis is one of the main reasons they have seen language gains since entering the profession. However, the fact that the interaction mainly takes place in a specific setting (classrooms) at a specific level (with pupils) has, for some teachers, also resulted in language loss. Some aspects of gain or loss were universal for all 20 teachers, regardless of the level at which they were teaching or the number of hours of instruction they gave, but some aspects varied. The variation was not necessarily linked to the teachers' ages, nor did it depend on the type of school in which they taught.

The teachers who reported the most significant gains in their level of English were the three non-NESTs who did not receive certification in English until after unification. In many ways, their relationship with English is similar to that of the three teachers who became certified in French after unification. Because these teachers represent an exception to the rule, I will examine them first, before turning to the full group of non-NESTs as they evaluate their gains and losses in the foreign language over the years.

5.2.2.1 Teachers who added English as a “new” language post-1990

Three teachers, all of whom had been teaching German and Russian prior to unification, added English as a third subject after 1990. These three women reported that their English skills have continued to increase in all areas since completing their new studies, yet their language levels are still not equal to those of their colleagues. As expected, all three reported making significant advances in English during the time they were working toward their certification. Although all three were intimidated by the gap between their initial skills and the levels they were expected to master, they recalled this time as one of progress and learning. Their first years of teaching English independently also brought significant gains, and, on the whole, these three non-NESTs reported no language loss in English since receiving certification.

Teacher 19 said she has attended two sessions of practical language classes in England since finishing her degree, and that she sees this time as having been very rewarding for immersion in the language. She was highly motivated to make every moment of her language learning count, and could still describe, over a decade later, the types of grammar exercises she completed and how new vocabulary was introduced. She was a highly motivated learner who was able to immerse herself in ideal learning conditions, which she recalled with enthusiasm:

“Da war ich schon zwölf Tage lang in ((Ortsnamen)), und dann bin ich in ((Ortsnamen)), bei ((Name der Sprachschule)), gewesen, was ich SUPERTOLL fand, von dem Angebot. Von dem was ich raus ziehen konnte. Ich bin also damals hingefahren und wollte ALLES, so das Maximum, rausholen. Und habe mich damals so ganz intensiv damit beschäftigt, so dass ich VOLL drin war.” (19reg1)

For this non-NEST, language development in English has continued in a steady curve since she was admitted to the certification program, and it did not cease with her certification. Although she is not as confident about her language skills as Teacher 22, who was profiled in the case studies chapter, Teacher 19 is also an active language learner with a low affective filter, and she is determined to attend more English classes abroad in the summers to come.

Teachers 12 and 13 have not been able to invest in their language development in the same way, and they have different relationships to English. As described in the case study, Teacher 12 seems to have accepted her “not perfect” level, and is not actively seeking to work on her language skills now. Teacher 13, however, told me she sees a need to continue learning English, not only to improve her skills, but also to maintain a level of English that is acceptable for her job. She views her language skills as being sufficient but less than ideal, and she believes that these skills are not stable. As she sees it, a non-NEST in her position should continue practicing and should travel abroad in order to stay abreast of the language. She has not done so, and is therefore unsure about her current level of skills, to the point where she considers them to be “worse” than they should be. In some areas, particularly that of verbal production, she is worried that her pronunciation is “too German,” and that the pupils will not have a good role model. Although she said she is sure she has learned a great deal of English since receiving her certification, she remains concerned that she is unable to monitor herself in pronunciation. In our conversation, she referred to this as a form of loss, although her definition of loss pertained to the fact that she is not actively working toward gains:

“Ich denke, es ist im Großen und Ganzen schlechter geworden. Ja, ja. Alles, was mit Schulenglisch zu tun hat, ist in Ordnung. Aber das reicht ja nicht. Für’s Ganze. Das heißt, äh, eigentlich, so denke ich mir, das würde bei mir mit dazu gehören, damit ich auch jetzt schulmäßig *up-to-date* bin, dass ich immer wieder mal ins Ausland müsste. Oder irgendwie Weiterbildungen praktisch machen müsste. Wo so Crash-Kurse sind. Wo man auch von der Aussprache her so aufgefrischt wird. Wo man da auch richtig so von der Aussprache so richtig, von allem aufgefrischt wird. Da würde ich mir schon wünschen, dass in Weiterbildungen, solche Sachen dann angeboten würden. Mit phonetischen Auffrischungen, und so weiter und so fort. Ich hab’s kaum noch gemacht, und ich denke, das MÜSSTE eigentlich ein Englischlehrer. Da gehöre ich nicht dazu. Und insofern hat sich das verschlechtert, bei mir.” (13reg2)

Teacher 13 said she believes her language skills are fine for the level of English taught in schools, but they do not extend past this level. Her image of an ideal English teacher is that of a professional who continues with language development, and she has not done this. She became painfully aware of this gap while accompanying pupils on a school exchange program to England for a week. Prior to departure she was fearful of situations in which she would not be able to understand host parents or bus drivers, and she worried about her ability to react in an emergency situation; e.g., if a pupil got lost or had a medical problem (“Ich hatte eine WAHNSinnige Angst davor,” 13reg2). While in England she was often frustrated with her inability to communicate smoothly, and she became acutely aware of basic gaps in certain areas (“Da ich habe dann auch gemerkt, *wow*, dein Wortschatz ist ganz schön eingeschränkt,” 13reg2). It was this school trip that convinced her that her language skills, although acceptable in the classroom, were not sufficient for many practical situations.

Like Teacher 22 in the case studies chapter, Teacher 13 also sees travel abroad as a good chance to measure and practice her foreign language skills. Although she would like to be able to travel to England again, she has so far not done so. Her reasons were partly due to her family, as she is assisting her grown children by caring for grandchildren, but also because of her lack of self-confidence. She knows of several colleagues who applied for funding to attend classes in England, but she has not been able to summon the energy or initiative to do the same, and claims that she feels too old for such activities: “Da habe ich, zum Teil auch schon, mich da zu alt gefühlt, da noch was zu machen, dahin zu fahren. Sage ich Dir ganz ehrlich, doch,” (13reg2). Although she knows she should be doing more and would like to attend courses or travel, she shies away from taking the first step. Her excuses are, as she readily admits, mere excuses (family, age, finances). Even though she told me that she would like to commit more energy to learning English, she doubts that she actually will do so.

As will become clear in the next sub-section (5.2.2.2), non-NESTs attribute some of the improvement in their English skills to the act of teaching the language to others, and these three new English teachers have experienced this most intensely. As was mentioned in the case studies, Teacher 12 related much of her positive language change to the fact that she is teaching English on a daily basis. This forces her to expand her present abilities in the classroom and adapt to new textbooks as they are introduced,

because teaching constantly introduces new lexical items as the pupils explore new areas. She is certain that she is not only maintaining her skills but is also bettering them (“ich lerne immer noch,” 12reg1). Teacher 19 also noted that teaching classes at different levels is an excellent means of improving her own language skills. After her trips to England, she began teaching evening language courses for adults twice a week:

“An der VHS unterrichte ich zum Beispiel heute Abend einen B-1, Kurs. So weit komme ich doch an der Schule natürlich gar nicht. Also ich habe da an der VHS, das sage ich Ihnen ganz ehrlich, doch SELBST viel gelernt. Es ist ja eine Herausforderung. Für mich. Und ich sage immer wieder, das ist für mich. Es ist eine sehr nette Gruppe und eine sehr schöne Atmosphäre. Wenn ich da etwas noch nicht weiß, dann sage ich das ganz einfach, *sorry*, *don't know* und dann schaue ich auch nach, und versuche das denn so raus zu kriegen.” (19reg1).

Teacher 19 has continued to teach these evening classes in part because of the “challenge” they offer her and the opportunity to work with English at a higher level than her normal school classes call for. The level of the courses is usually higher than the level she experiences at school, where she is generally assigned to grades 5 to 8, and the evening courses allow her to work with adults. She obviously enjoys the “very nice group,” and she also relishes the range of topics which come up in such courses. Her adult learners deal with different issues than schoolchildren, and this forces her to expand her knowledge of English on topics beyond the normal school curriculum. Rather than feeling insecure or embarrassed when asked about something she does not know, she “simply says sorry” and then “looks it up” later.

These three non-NESTs who received their English certification later than the others have noticed some change since they began teaching the language, but the change has primarily been positive, as they are still adding to their repertoire. The reasons they gave for these positive changes and for their greater feeling of security were similar to those given by the other participants: teaching English at different levels or in different settings can lead to gains, and new material or questions from learners provide an impetus to language improvement for teachers. We will now look at the overall gains that all participants have observed in their language skills after becoming teachers, and also at the specific activities that have supported improvement.

5.2.2.2 Gains in English and why they happen

All of the non-NESTs in this study claimed that some aspects of their English skills have improved since they began teaching. These gains, defined as additional learning or

acquisition, or as an enhancement of previously learned language, were reported in the areas of grammar, spelling, understanding dialects, and vocabulary; with progress in the area of grammar being the most widespread. Reves & Medgyes (1994) also found that non-NESTs throughout the world had become confident about their knowledge of English grammar, although the realm of vocabulary was seen as more of a weakness by participants in their study. Both grammar and vocabulary are strongly tied to classroom language work, so it is perhaps not surprising that the teachers in this study, with so many years of classroom experience, reported gains in these areas.

What was confusing for many of the non-NESTs in this study was the distinction between “gaining” new knowledge and “solidifying” pre-existing knowledge, especially regarding vocabulary. Although most teachers reported learning new words, some of them were unsure about exactly what types of lexical items were examples of “new learning” and what types of items were examples of “remembering previously learned” words. Obviously they had come across new lexical items, but only a few teachers could name specific examples of “new” words they had learned since leaving university.

However, all of the teachers reported feeling more security and greater levels of confidence in their ability to teach grammar to their pupils. Nearly all agreed that these gains were not “new learning” of constructions or different rules than those they had previously been exposed to. Rather, they said, their understanding of English grammar is more complete now than at the end of their teacher training, and they linked this directly to their teaching experience. In the following, I will look first at grammar, then at spelling and comprehension of dialects, and finally at vocabulary.

a) Grammar

The teachers reported having a better grasp of basic English grammar, and said they have more self-confidence teaching it than they had at the start of their careers. They are, for the most part, convinced that they have a firmer control of syntax in the English they produce, be it spoken or written, and that their English is either just as “correct” as, or more correct, than it was when they finished their training. This gain was reported both by the non-NESTs who said they had not really enjoyed or been good at grammar exercises in school or at university, as well as by those who had always enjoyed the mechanics of word order, sentence structure, and complex tenses. The experience of

teaching grammar and enforcing rules in classrooms helps teachers to solidify and expand this knowledge, which in turn leads to more accurate speech production and fewer problems in writing. Teacher 20 recalled his problems with conditional verbs when he was a student at university. Now, after more than 15 years of teaching the conditional and correcting his pupils' mistakes, he said he no longer has any difficulties. He now is not only able to teach this aspect of grammar, he also is able to produce spontaneous sentences of his own that are error-free.

All of the participants felt more confident about producing grammatically accurate speech or writing. They also reported being able to understand grammatical constructions used by others, and having a greater interest in syntax on the whole. In other words, not only had their productive skills improved, but their receptive interest in reading and listening to others had also become better. When reading texts or listening to the speech of English speakers based in both the inner and the expanding circles, the non-NESTs said they had a heightened awareness of language constructions. They were interested in the accuracy of speakers' and writers' constructions, and also in the examples of deviations from the norms they had learned.

The participants also reported being able to identify their pupils' errors and to hone in on the particular aspect which caused the error better now than they had been at the start of their careers. In addition, they are more confident at presenting and explaining grammatical aspects of English to their learners. Some teachers said, however, that there are still some areas in which they are unsure and will seek help, whether from a colleague, a reference book, or an online resource. This was often the case for the eight participants who teach upper level classes at *Gymnasien* in which pupils had already spent time abroad. These pupils return with very fluent language skills, but may not speak as accurately as the teachers think they should ("Sie sprechen wie ihnen der Schnabel gewachsen ist," 22gym1). The pupils make grammatical mistakes, yet they often claim that their version must be correct because they learned to speak this way overseas. If a pupil produces a word or phrase in English that the teacher views as incorrect, but the pupil insists that this is "how all native speakers say it," a non-NEST may have some doubts about his or her own knowledge of English. It then becomes the teacher's task to decide whether the language being used is correct, and this is not always easy to do: "Da kommen immer wieder solche Situationen, wo ich da sitze und

wirklich mal nachschlage, und frage,” (31gy-reg1). In the end, the non-NEST must not only decide on the “correctness” of the pupil’s construction, she or he must be able to defend this decision and offer an example of what would be deemed “correct” for classroom purposes. Although several non-NESTs reported experiencing a certain level of anxiety when challenged, they employ a wide network of resources to find answers and to defend their stance, which in turn leads to an expansion of their own language skills.

Even though the teachers’ grammar skills have improved, not every non-NEST is satisfied with his or her own perceived level of grammar competence. As will be discussed in section 5.3, some participants admitted that, in more complex situations that demand higher language levels than those used in the classroom, they are sometimes unable to express themselves properly, or they do not always fully understand some grammatical choices made by native speakers. However, such gaps in higher grammar competence cannot be seen as a “loss,” but must instead be viewed rather as an existing deficiency, as these constructs were usually never fully mastered and are not typical of the grammar a school teacher must know in order to teach. There was no true loss of school-level grammar reported. On the contrary, the participants said their understanding of core grammar has improved, and that their experiences as teachers have enhanced their abilities to apply it in their own speech and writing, to decode it in source texts, and to teach grammar to others. Because teachers are actively involved with basic grammar on a daily basis, they are quite confident about their use of all school-level constructions, and they stated unequivocally that this confidence stems directly from their experiences as teachers.

b) Correctness of spelling

Nearly all of the teachers said that they had always been good spellers and that their teaching experience has only served to confirm this skill area. Two exceptions were Teachers 21 and 23, both of whom had spent a longer period of time overseas before starting their studies, and neither of whom originally set out to become language teachers. Each said that their spelling had improved somewhat while at university, but that they had made huge gains since becoming a teacher. Teacher 23 has a mild form of dyslexia, which had not been diagnosed but had always caused her problems in school

as a child. She described herself as being a cautious and methodological speller now, and said she encourages her pupils to self-check their work with a dictionary. She also reported relying heavily on mnemonic devices, and passing them on to her pupils at all grade levels. She knew that her own spelling skills were weak and that an English teacher must be able to spell correctly, so this has been an area in which she has invested a great deal of effort, and in which she has noticed improvement.

Teacher 21 did not experience the same problems with spelling as Teacher 23, but she acknowledged she had never been an excellent speller in any language. Her spelling has improved as a direct result of her teaching, and it is something she works on actively together with her pupils. If there is a word she is unsure about, the class will take a “dictionary break” and find the correct spelling:

“Wir schlagen es nach und dann schreibe ich das auf. Ich habe da an der Tafel immer einen ziemlich breiten Rand, an der Seite, wo wir die Wörter sammeln. Dann schreibe ich mir das selber auf, weil man es ja wieder brauchen wird. So hat man das öfter.” (21gym2).

After teaching the same grade levels and working through the same text books for several years, she has become much more secure in her ability to spell correctly and to recognize spelling mistakes in her pupils’ writing. There are, however, still a few words that confuse her and cause her problems when she must write them on the board:

“Es gibt schon ein paar Wörter, wo ich irgendwie zittere, weil ich da nicht nachgeguckt habe. Da weiß ich eigentlich NIE so genau. So, *necessary*, oder sowas. Na, wo ist das C, wo ist das S, na? Ich meine, inzwischen weiß ich das ja, habe es ja endlich gelernt. Aber das sind solch-, so Sachen, wo ich mir, bei der Schreibweise, manchmal nicht immer ganz sicher bin.” (21gym2).

The word “*necessary*” is a tricky word for many learners to spell, and Teacher 21 says that it now (“inzwischen” and “endlich”) belongs to the repertoire of words she can write on the blackboard without checking. There are other words she struggles with still, and she was very open about this issue. She has improved her spelling immensely since becoming a teacher and believed that she will continue to do so through her work in the classroom.

c) Acceptance of dialects

One problem all of the teachers now face is the wide variety of Englishes pupils bring into the classroom, either through travel abroad or song lyrics or movies. Whereas many teachers were taught standard RP and the rather firm rules of what constitutes acceptable Commonwealth English, they are now exposed to a wider range of dialects

and variations than ever before, and these differences may be in direct contrast to the forms of the language they feel comfortable with. None of the participants in this study was in favor of demanding that British English be the only classroom standard, and they all agreed that it is important to accept different Englishes in the classroom. If a school encourages pupils to spend time abroad, then the school must make room in the curriculum to accept the language contributions of the pupils returning from these travels:

“Wir sind dann jetzt zum Glück auch so weit, wir akzeptieren alles. Das amerikanische Englisch, das kanadische, das australische, weil die Schüler ja so oft im Ausland sind. Dann kann man auch nicht sagen, ab hier nur RP und nichts anderes. Das geht nicht.” (23gym1)

However, many of the participants said that they preferred to keep to one standard set of rules for themselves and their own use. Although they might accept slang expressions from pop music texts, some of the English phrases their pupils have picked up and use in class strike them as odd, and they do not necessarily want to add these expressions to their personal repertoire. They are, for the most part, open to accepting the slang in a passive sense but they do not wish to initiate or imitate it. Although they no longer view such dialects or variations as “errors” or correct them in class, this does not mean that they have fully accepted them for their own English use: “Naja, wenn sie ganz doll, diesen amerikanischen- (*Pause*). Das fällt mir denn manchmal denn ganz schön schwer. Das ist nicht meins,” (24gym1). These non-NESTs have found it necessary to expand their own knowledge of different acceptable pronunciations in order to be in a position to verify whether a pupil’s speech is standard and acceptable. A few teachers said they would tolerate the pronunciation of “gonna” for “going to,” as long as it was followed by an infinitive verb, but they drew the line at “gangster rapper” phrases they deemed to be obscene. The increasing predominance of outer circle varieties of English and the ability of many pupils to travel to English-speaking countries other than Britain and the USA have meant that teachers must be informed about other standards as well. This expansion of knowledge and understanding of varieties was reported by all of the participants, but primarily by those teaching at the upper *Gymnasium* level.

d) Vocabulary

The last main area of language gain is in the range of vocabulary, although these gains are more complex in scope than those of grammar or spelling. All of the teachers

reported an overall increase in their vocabulary, and many of them related this to changes in the school system in which they work. Because English is introduced as a school subject at lower grade levels than before, schoolchildren have a greater total number of contact hours in English now than 20, or even 10 years ago. For the older non-NESTs in this study who had taught English before unification, the fact that English is now required as of grade 5, instead of being an elective starting in grade 7, has meant that they have had to increase their lexical knowledge to keep pace with the expanding curriculum:

“Dadurch war das Anspruchsniveau in der 10. Klasse höher als wir das anfänglich gewohnt waren. Da haben wir, ja auch ICH, Vokabeln neu gelernt oder uns mit Sachen beschäftigt, die wir so im Vokabelschatz gar nicht im Studium gelernt hatten. Auch Themen, zu denen wir uns im Studium gar nicht so geäußert haben.” (14reg2)

This increase in standards and contact hours intensified a decade after unification, as English was phased in as a subject in elementary school for younger learners. In today's schools, fifth graders already have a rudimentary knowledge of basic words concerning their homes, pets, hobbies, and families, and teachers therefore no longer need to introduce the first language chunks. Although the participants did not necessarily agree about whether today's pupils learn more vocabulary at school, or if they merely learn the same number of words over a longer time period, they all believed that English instructors now face new standards in grades 5 and 6 in terms of pacing and range. The learners are no longer beginners, and the courses are different: “Wenn man sich das jetzt so überlegt, ist es ein ganz schöner Sprung,” (12reg2).

However, these shifts did not happen suddenly, and none of the teachers reported feeling overwhelmed by unmanageable new lists of words or discouraged by the effort they had to make. On the contrary, they were often fascinated by the new topic areas and by the new terms they found, either in the textbooks or in the supporting material they gathered. Although they did need to apply some effort to keep pace with the curriculum and the changing standards for their learners, this effort was spread over a long time period, and they were able to develop their vocabulary range at a steady rate. Several teachers referred to this language growth as a natural extension of continued language learning, one which they embraced and actively engaged in, whereas others told me they often did not notice their own gains until much later. For these non-NESTs, the process was so gradual that they were almost unaware of it. One woman linked her language gain not only to that of the curriculum or her pupils, but to the

overall changes at her school, which shifted from being a local middle level school (POS) to becoming a *Gymnasium*, and then to becoming a magnet *Gymnasium* with a special focus on languages and the fine arts. As the standards were gradually raised, she was able to expand her skills to keep pace, and she “grew” into her new role with relatively few difficulties:

“Ich bin mitgewachsen, habe mitwachsen können, hier. Die Schule ist auch erst gewachsen, von damals zu heute, mit Oberstufen und Abitur und so bin ich ja gewachsen. Wenn ich jetzt Klasse zwölf jetzt so anfangen müsste, dann wäre das harte Arbeit, aber ich bin hier mit hineingewachsen.” (25gym1)

The participants in this study agree that most lexical items in their active vocabulary are tied to materials in the syllabus and vocabulary gains are usually “theme clustered” in that they relate directly to a unit of study. Many of the current “youth topics” are different than those the teachers discussed when growing up. Some of them, such as Internet privacy and social media, are truly new in that they did not exist before, whereas others are now being addressed differently than they had been a generation earlier:

“Die ganze Geschichte *smoking* oder *taking drugs* allgemein, oder diese ganze Ernährungsgeschichte, Fettsucht und *Anorexia*, und so was alles. Ich kann’s auch ganz ehrlich sagen, ich wusste NICHT, was Fettsucht auf Englisch heißt.” (14reg2).

Exam topics also influence what is taught each year, and those teachers preparing pupils for school-leaving exams often must cover different, broad lexical areas with their learners. Recent exam subjects have focused on environmental protection, forms of alternative energy, health issues, or European identity. This requires teachers to read up on topics and immerse themselves in subject-specific vocabulary, which in turn leads them to discover and acquire new words.

Vocabulary gains are most likely to come directly from activities in the classroom or preparation work for teaching, and what was surprising was that all teachers commented on how they discovered new lexical items in the most unlikely situations. New vocabulary does not necessarily depend on the grade level taught, but is rather related to the topics covered and the questions pupils ask. For most participants, there is a close connection between unfamiliar lexical items in a reading or listening text and the vocabulary pupils will not understand and will wish to have defined. A teacher who selects a text and prepares it for pupils can usually anticipate what words will need to be pre-taught, paraphrased, translated, or otherwise conveyed, and which words will be evident from the context. These didactical choices regarding how to convey meaning or

explain word usage in a text require teachers to have a solid understanding of the lexical items in question.

When preparing a text and anticipating problems, a teacher can be faced with new words, or with words that may seem familiar but take on a new meaning in context. Many teachers were unable to decide if this vocabulary gained through preparation work was “new,” or if it was “re-learned” or expanded in a new context:

“Jetzt habe ich am Montag einen Artikel über Obama rausgesucht, und da hat man denn so einen Artikel vor sich, und da waren auch zwei, drei Wörter drin, wo ich gedacht habe, oh, da musst du erst mal nachschlagen. Und das ist dann immer so. Wo im Unterricht die Kinder fragen, was heißt denn das. Und ich konnte das sagen. Und da habe ich wieder dann für mich gemerkt, na, okay, jetzt hast du es dir schon wieder eingeprägt, und dann noch wieder dann noch ein Wort dazu gelernt.” (23gym2)

In this passage, Teacher 23 identified these two different aspects of lexical gain. On the one hand, she was confronted with words she may have seen before and which have become fossilized in her mental lexicon; in this case, the preparation work led her to recall them and solidify her attachment to them (“schon wieder eingeprägt”). On the other hand, she may not recognize, or she may be unsure of the exact meaning of certain words in a text. In these cases, she will seek help from an outside resource (“erst mal nachschlagen”). By looking up the words and then teaching them in the classroom, she first interacts with the word herself and then guides the pupils’ engagement, and both of these actions help her add to her own mental lexicon (“noch ein Wort dazu gelernt”).

Often teachers encounter a word or phrase which they have already seen, but had mentally placed in a different context or had not used in a certain way before. This leads to a modified learning, or re-learning, of the word and an expansion of knowledge about the different ways in which it can be used. Such re-learning can occur not only when a word is identified in a text (oral or written), but also when specific lexical items are needed in a phase of language production. When pupils are preparing a role play or writing a short essay, they will invariably seek to use specific words to express themselves, and such words may not be part of their active vocabulary. In most cases, they will look to the closest resource available, perhaps a dictionary but usually the teacher. Even in cases in which the teacher “knows” the word being sought, there is often a phase of uncertainty in which the teacher and pupil must agree on the meaning and the usage. Such situations also provide opportunities for lexical gain:

“Gerade wenn sie eigene Texte produzieren müssen, wollen sie so auch viele Sachen wissen, die man nicht im Lehrbuch hat. Ich muss MAL ein Wort nachgucken und im Wörterbuch mal nachblättern, das muss ich wohl. Oder man vergisst manche Sachen auch. Heute hat mich zum Beispiel ein Kind gefragt,

(*mimic*) was heißt, sie haben sich erschreckt? Und ich so, (*mimic*) erschreckt? Danach hat mich EWIG kein Kind gefragt. Und ich habe nachgeguckt, da war *frighten*. Also, ich habe das so abgespeichert als „Angst haben“ und so. Aber es gibt für „erschrecken“ ja dann kein Äquivalent. Bis ich nachher im Nachhinein gedacht habe, naja, es ist dir noch nie aufgefallen. Und SO wurde ich nicht nach dem Wort gefragt. Ich meine, es ist auch kein großartiges, oder so ein neues Ding, was ich da so abgespeichert habe, aber so etwas kommt nun mal so vor. So, dass man eben etwas vergessen hat und dann ist da etwas, was einem auffällt, und einfällt.“ (16ges2-4:17)

In the above passage, Teacher 16 pointed out that even simple words can take on a new meaning depending on the context. She was familiar with the verb “to frighten,” and no doubt would have been able to produce a phrase using this verb, but in this particular situation she was forced to rely on a dictionary and then determine that her pre-existing knowledge of this base word was incomplete. As she noted, this vocabulary gain is not something she finds especially challenging or noteworthy, but it is an example of how she is occasionally reminded of lexical gaps and of how the act of teaching leads to rediscovery. The language level of the pupil in this situation was not particularly high, as it was an eighth grade classroom, but this did not mean that she was not able to gain from the exchange. What made the situation challenging for her was that it was unexpected and she had not been prepared for the question (“Danach hat mich EWIG kein Kind gefragt”). She pointed out that, had she assigned the class a writing task on the topic of “Halloween” or a scary event, she might have anticipated the question. However, because the pupils were writing about something more benign (what they did on the weekend), she was taken by surprise and was forced to learn, or possibly re-learn, the word together with her pupils.

Whereas some of the vocabulary these teachers view as “new” are words that they might have seen or learned before and then forgotten, other lexical items are truly new in that they were simply not part of the average repertoire of general English vocabulary in the curriculum 10 years ago. One *Gymnasium* teacher recalls his first encounter with a previously unknown word during a class project on saving energy:

“Ja, da sage ich nur, *incandescent light bulbs*. Braucht kein Mensch lernen, oder? Ich meine, *light bulb*, kannte ich doch, und nun kommt dieses Verbot, mit den 100 Watt Birnen. Da reicht doch *regular light bulbs*. Oder *normal light bulbs*, was weiß ich! Aber nee, im Text steht *incandescent*. Also (*lacht*) kann ich das jetzt auch aussprechen! Wieder was Neues gelernt.“ (20gym2)

Teacher 20 explains here that he already possessed several adequate words for describing the older kinds of light bulbs that were being discussed in the text, and he would have been fully capable of moderating a discussion with his own lexical choices. The material chosen for the teaching unit, however, contained a new word. Not only

was he unfamiliar with the word, its spelling, its pronunciation, its origins; but he at first rejected the word for himself and for the class session (“Da reicht doch *regular light bulbs*”). It was not until he realized that this lexical item was now part of the academic norm, and that his pupils might be expected to use it in the *Abitur* exam (“Aber nee, im Text steht *incandescent*”), that he made the effort to learn it, pronounce and spell it, and to require his pupils to do likewise.

A few participants, such as Teacher 16 recalling her example in eighth grade above, noted that it is wrong to believe that new words can emerge only when teaching older pupils or at the gymnasium. Some non-NESTs have had memorable experiences with new vocabulary that emerged when working with young beginners or lower achievers. A *Gymnasium* teacher who was teaching at an adjacent elementary school recalled being surprised by the number of practical, everyday objects which are named for beginners in grades 3 and 4, but which were not necessarily part of the beginning vocabulary offered in grade 5 standard textbooks:

“Ich habe für die Grundschule auch viel neuen Wortschatz lernen müssen. So, Alltagssachen. Ich wusste nicht, was ein *sink* ist. Es ist zwar nicht lebenswichtig, aber das sind ganz viele Wörter, so *everyday life*. Es ist in meinem Studium nicht Gegenstand gewesen. Es ist nicht Gegenstand in der weiterführenden Schule. So, ja, die kleine Dinge. Ich habe da am Anfang, wo ich mich da reingearbeitet habe, das waren ganz viele kleine Dinge. Es ist alles keine Sache, die einen, wer weiß wie fordert. Das ging ruck zuck, dann habe ich das drauf. Aber da habe ich eher eine Erweiterung erfahren, in der Grundschule.” (22gym2)

Early English curricula for young learners are largely determined by the life knowledge the children bring, and vocabulary clusters reflect those areas that youngsters have already mastered in their native language. Lessons generally focus on the here and now and they draw from the concrete, with the vocabulary being tangible and relevant for the children. Early elementary learners master colors and numbers, pets, and words from their immediate environment, so it is no surprise that they will be exposed to words such as “*sink*” or “*toothbrush*” early on. For a *Gymnasium* teacher who has been working with terms such as “*incandescent light bulbs*,” it may be difficult to make the mental switch back to the level of “wash your hands in the sink after using the toilet.” As Teacher 22 pointed out, these are not huge demands, and she did master them quickly, but she was still fully aware of the gaps in her mental lexicon and the fact that teaching young children filled in certain areas of immediate usage words.

Several participants believed that a foreign language teacher, at any level, can expand his or her vocabulary range by continuing to incorporate new material into the

curriculum. One teacher described her deliberate efforts to bring at least one new resource into each class every semester, which is not only entertaining for her pupils, it is also beneficial for her own language development:

“Für mich ist es immer ein Anspruch, es macht mir auch immer Spaß, was Neues mal zu machen. Auch in der Hauptschulklasse, da mal auch was anderes zu machen und nicht jedes Mal das Gleiche. Zum Beispiel, jetzt habe ich eben ein schönes Lied gefunden. Das kann man übersetzen und dazu auch eine neue Aufgabe machen. Natürlich ist es für die Schüler, aber es ist auch für mich, dass ich nicht jedes - mal - (*klopft rhythmisch auf den Tisch*) - immer - wieder - alles - gleich - habe. Und natürlich sind dann neue Vokabeln, auch für mich, dabei. Und die habe ich vorher nie gehört oder sage, nun, das ist nun seltsam. Oder einfach inhaltlich neue Sachen, wo du denkst, hä? Kennst Du das Lied *Facts of Life*? Da singt er, erzählt er zum Beispiel, alles Mögliche, so (*erklärt das Lied ausführlich*). Und zum Schluss (*lacht*) singt er, *so help me God*. Und das ist schön, das Lied. Es ist witzig, die Schüler fanden das auch witzig und es hatte auch die eine oder andere Formulierung auch drinne. Es ist einfach, du verstehst es zwar, aber dann so, hä? Was Neues. Also, über die Schiene versuche ich das so.” (31gy-reg1)

Teacher 31 said she believes new input can and should be incorporated at all grade levels, and with pupils of all ability levels. She believes that if a non-NEST only follows a course book and does not explore new sources, there will generally be no gains, and this is detrimental for the teacher and bores the learners. On the whole, most participants in this study noted that the act of teaching different topics, regardless of the learner level, is beneficial to their own active vocabulary knowledge as well. Although some thought that they learned new words or recognized familiar words in new settings, while others believed they recalled previously learned lexical items, all of the non-NESTs here pointed out that being an English teacher helps expand both their vocabulary range and grammar awareness, and that changing subject matter is valuable for their own language growth: “Allein dadurch, dass immer wieder neue Themen dazukommen, ist auch der Sprachzuwachs da,” (35gym1).

As was discussed in chapter 2.3, researchers tend to track language change over time by examining recall of grammar skills and vocabulary range (Olshtain 1986, Moorcraft & Gardner 1987, Weltens 1989). It is significant to note that these are precisely the two areas in which the non-NESTs in this study reported the most development in their own language skills. They see these gains as being closely linked to their actions in the classroom, as these are the main areas in which their pupils must demonstrate competence and with which they spend the most task-based time. It would seem that time spent in a classroom, including as a teacher, contributes to growth in those language areas that are emphasized in the curriculum. Such skills were labeled as “very specific classroom-taught structures” by Pan & Gleason, who pointed out that they could have “only marginal significance” in regard to language change (1986:198). For

these teachers, however, the vocabulary gains made in conjunction with classroom learning and teaching were the most effective and remained with them as active vocabulary. Lexical items gained from reading, watching TV or movies, or even learned while on exchange programs tended to be available as passive vocabulary.

In the example of the word “*sink*” given above, Teacher 22 noted that she had “learned” (as opposed to “re-learned”) this term while teaching elementary learners here in Germany. As outlined in the case studies chapter, this teacher was very interested in American English and was pleased to hear the word “*sink*” on her travels to the USA. She had heard “*basin*” and “*washbasin*” during her own school days, but claimed that she had never been exposed to the word “*sink*” in her own English classes as a child. Because her school uses some supporting materials from ESL programs based in the USA, she was first able to see the word while teaching young learners, then confirm this addition to her mental lexicon on a subsequent student exchange with older learners, all of whom were also learning that the words “*basin*” and “*sink*” are interchangeable in most instances. Without her experiences of teaching learners at the primary level, Teacher 22 would most likely not have known the word prior to travel. She now uses both words in her classrooms, but emphasized that her learning of the new word “*sink*” stemmed from a classroom experience as a teacher, not as a pupil, and that she had not heard it first in a real-life exchange.

Another teacher, who had been to the USA several times in connection with her daughter’s high school exchange, claimed that the words she has learned only through interacting with American speakers have remained passive. The vocabulary items are not confirmed by her classroom experience, and she only needs to access these lexical items in specific situations, such as when she is writing or speaking with her daughter’s host family. She said there are several words that she uses only once a year, and, that, although she can easily recognize these words in context when she comes across them, they are not words she can recall immediately:

“Mit Kochen und Backen geht das ganz gut, seitdem wir diesen Kontakt mit den Gasteltern haben. Sonst hätte ich das nicht gekonnt, weil so was ist ja nicht Inhalt der, naja, Inhalt MEINER Ausbildung. Also, wir tauschen Kochrezepte aus, wir haben dann immer zusammen gekocht und ich habe diese Wendedinger, diesen Spatz, spet, diesen (*zeigt*)... (Frage d.Intv.: *Spatula?*) Ja! *Spatula* oder so ähnlich hieß das Ding doch.” (14reg1)

Teacher 14 enjoys cooking and enjoys speaking English with her daughter's host mother, and she certainly is able to combine the two activities and learn new words in the process. However, the new words remain passive acquisitions. Unlike Teacher 22, who is eager to use her new-found American vocabulary, Teacher 14 has not added "*spatula*" to her collection of daily lexical items, and she was unable to recall it in our interview session. She claims that she "forgets" the word when she does not need it, presumably when cooking a meal in Germany, but that the word is easily recognizable in context when preparing a meal in the USA. When she is in an American kitchen, she is not always prepared for the new words and often has to check on their meaning ("Da muss ich also öfter mal nachgucken"), and she refers to these lexical items as things she picks up in passing, or "nebenbei" (14reg1).

As was evident in our conversation, Teacher 14 does not need to or wish to be able to access these words readily, and she did not seem to be interested in retaining the word past that moment in our conversation. Although she was pleased that I could provide the word, her attention did not dwell on the fact that she had been unable to access it and she seemed to forget it again quickly ("oder so ähnlich") and move on to a new subject. She repeated this a minute later with another word she had been exposed to in the USA when she had rented a car:

"Ich wusste nicht zum Beispiel, beim Abschluss, was eine Beule ist, was, was (*Pause*) Dell-, Den-, äh... (Frage d.Intv.: Delle?). Nee, wie mit T was- wie... (Frage d.Intv.: *dent?*). D- *Dent*. Doch, irgendwas mit D war's, ja. Das musste ich mir mal erklären lassen, ich kannte das ja nicht. Und das Wörterbuch war, (*lacht*) im Koffer." (14reg1)

Such words are "nur durch die privaten Kontakte" (14reg1) and are not words that she feels a need to have at her active command. Teacher 14 does not have any difficulties understanding new words in context, and she recalls vocabulary work in school, both as a pupil and later as a teacher, as being highly effective. For her there is a difference between the casual form of acquisition she finds in an American kitchen and the manner of vocabulary learning in school:

"Vokabel lernen war kein Problem, da haben wir sehr Themen-orientiert gearbeitet. Es gab immer ein Tafelbild, weiß ich jetzt noch, und das war immer sehr schön in einem Kontext eingebunden. Da kann ich mich noch erinnern, und das haben wir so gelernt." (14reg1)

Words that she learned systematically, in combination with a written form and embedded in the context of a lesson, are more present in her active vocabulary, more "fest" (14reg1), than words she has picked up sporadically in non-school settings. She

does not need the words “*spatula*” or “*dent*” in her classroom, so these lexical items fall into disuse. This is not to say they are unimportant, but they are not a part of her active work range. In this sense, Teacher 14 contradicted the idea of “only marginal significance” put forth by Pan & Gleason, as she claimed that she gained a firmer and more lasting control of English within the structures of her classroom, and that words that are “private” and are not connected with her work remain “only marginal” for her. As foreign language learning is certainly more complex than accumulating vocabulary and implementing grammatical rules, I will now examine other areas of language development for these non-NESTs. In the next sub-section, I turn to those areas in which the participants believe there has been stagnation or a negative language change since they entered the profession.

5.2.2.3 Losses in English and why they happen

Just as the teachers in this study noted gains in certain areas of language competence, some of them also reported aspects of language attrition or loss. Not all of the participants noticed losses and of those who did, all of them said it was to a much lesser extent than the gain they had noticed. Most of these non-NESTs said that loss was restricted to the realm of language production at levels not connected with their work as teachers. They claimed that, in some ways, they are no longer functioning at the academic level they had reached at the end of their own active language learning phase while at university. However, for their job of teaching schoolchildren, all of them agreed that their English was sufficient. In other words, no teacher thought that this loss of English skills had any direct influence on their daily teaching.

This leads to the question of why self-observation of such negative language change might be important, and whether the teachers themselves are concerned with it. The possible “loss” does not seem to affect the non-NESTs in their daily work, and it is not an overriding concern for their sense of professional identity. However, it does seem to influence how they see themselves as speakers and users of English on the whole, which in turn may change how they view their own competence. As Seidlhofer (1996:76) noted, it is quite possible for a non-NEST to have confidence as a language instructor, but, at the same time, to be insecure as a speaker of the language.

On the whole, the idea of language loss was a complicated subject for many participants to address at all. During the first interviews, the area of language “loss” was more difficult for the participants to articulate and reflect upon than that of “gain,” and the data for this input were more widely scattered throughout the interviews and observation sessions. Very few teachers were able to respond immediately to a direct question of “what had changed for the worse,” although they had been able to comment quickly upon what had improved. There are several reasons for this.

First, language loss can be seen as an affront to language teachers and as an insult to their professional competence. Those participants who reported loss in Russian were saddened and somewhat embarrassed at this, even though they knew that the attrition was not entirely within their control. If non-NESTs are asked to comment on loss in English, a language they are now responsible for teaching, this compromises their public image and sense of self-worth as a professional. Some of the non-NESTs were very forthright and open about this issue, but others were more remote, distancing themselves from the changes. Whereas comments on language gain were often made as I-statements (“Ich kann...”), reflections on loss were usually less closely linked with the individual, signified by the use of the passive form or prefaced with a general phrase (“Man kann sagen...”). Also, the examples of things forgotten were not given in a coherent list, but as random comments made in connection with other ideas. Although I doubt that these teachers were consciously unwilling to provide such information or were unduly worried about making a favorable impression, it was obviously more of an effort for them to discuss their shortcomings and weaknesses than it was to report on positive change.

Second, even though the teachers were basically willing to explore the concept of their own language loss, they occasionally had trouble recalling exactly what it was that they had been able to do earlier. Because the period of active language learning for many of these non-NESTs is in the distant past, 20 or 30 years ago, it was difficult for many of them to remember exactly what sort of language they had been dealing with at school and university, or when traveling. It was not always helpful to rely on typical categorical descriptions of content or complexity, as these were difficult to define in hindsight. One non-NEST remembered that she had been required to write an essay at university as a semester exam with a set topic as a title, and she noted that this topic is

often part of the standard curriculum for younger pupils in school today: “Da haben wir in einem Aufsatz geschrieben, in der Prüfung, so als Thema: Wie ist ein guter Freund? Ich meine, SOWAS mache ich heute in Klasse 8 oder 9,” (31reg-gym1). Upon closer reflection, she could describe the similarities between the two tasks (number of words or overall length, use of topic sentences and connectors, and proper placement of adjectives). What she could not remember was exactly how complex her sentences had been or what expressions she had been expected to produce in order to receive a good mark, and therefore she was unable to say for sure if she would be able to replicate an essay at this level now. Although she could state exactly what sort of language abilities she currently expected from her pupils, she was not able to recall how she herself had performed this task so long ago: “Da müßte ich (*lacht*) mal nachgucken!” (31reg-gym1). The general task was not forgotten, but the specifics of her language production were no longer present in her memory. Many non-NESTs were unable to recall finer details of their own language learning phases, and they were often hard-pressed to say whether certain aspects of their English had been more developed at a certain point many years ago. This is, of course, the main drawback of relying on self-evaluation of language change: Although many participants are confident about analyzing their own status now, their perspectives of past abilities are clouded to a great extent by the present, and by the language they are working on with their pupils under a modern curriculum.

This lack of exact recall brings us to the third point: that it is difficult to make direct comparisons between “then” and “now” because the language tasks the teachers must perform now, as teachers, are very different from the tasks they performed before, as learners. While at school and university they were constantly being asked to prove their skills in the form of tests, essays, classroom contributions, or presentations; and their language output was evaluated by an instructor. As teachers today, they no longer need to perform for an instructor and are not evaluated, and they rarely write essays or receive any feedback on their language production. Instead, they must give feedback to others and evaluate their pupils’ language production. Although they still produce the language, their speaking and writing skills are primarily directed at providing a model for learners. In some cases, the classroom language tasks are similar to those they performed, and, as in the case of Teacher 31 above, the participants can reconstruct their

past levels in light of what they know and use today. In other instances, the classroom language tasks have changed, and a direct comparison is not possible.

This issue is one of the major shortcomings of this study, and it was considered in the project design. Not only did I lack the ability to evaluate the level of language the participants had achieved at the end of their studies, often the participants themselves no longer had access to this information. Teacher 31 might still have a written record of an essay she wrote many years ago, but she does not have an audio record of herself speaking English. The teachers also would not have any data regarding their level of receptive skills beyond that which they recall. Even if they still had exams or homework assignments that had been marked by their instructors, these would not necessarily correspond to their actions now.

The area of “listening comprehension” is, in particular, new for most teachers, as many had relied primarily on their own teachers for spoken input. Pupils today have easy access to audio material and are exposed to a wider range of accents, dialects, and slang expressions than these non-NESTS ever were. The participants also pointed out that there were certain tasks which they had only recently mastered, the main one being telephone calls. Because most non-NESTS in this study had not had the opportunity to converse with a native English speaker on the phone prior to 1989, it is a moot point to wonder about whether they believe they can understand spoken English on the phone more easily or with more difficulty than before. It makes little sense to compare listening comprehension of highly didactically adapted recordings in a university language laboratory with international podcasts from around the world. As Andersen (1982) remarked, a skill cannot be labeled as lost if it was never acquired to begin with. Thus, some of the skill areas in which the participants reported being less able than at the end of their studies are not necessarily areas of loss; they are areas in which the bar has been raised since they completed their training.

For these reasons, the participants seemed hesitant and uncertain when trying to recall their past skills and areas of possible loss. It was not unusual for comments made in the first interview session to be contradicted in the second, or for the teachers to tie in interview content with an example from a site visit. Whereas all of the teachers in this study stated clearly that their English has improved in some ways since leaving university, half of the participants also reported a minimal amount of language loss in

areas of production, but not in reception. Whereas all of the non-NESTs said they can read and comprehend non-adapted texts better now than they could at university, and most of them agreed that they can follow rapid and natural speech more easily, roughly half of them said they believe these gains are not reflected in their own productive skills of speaking and writing. These teachers did not feel “fluent,” because they often had to slow their production of English in certain situations. Thus, they were often convinced that they had been more fluent before they started working as teachers. These feelings of being less able were primarily found in the area of articulatory phonetics, followed by overall speed of production when speaking non-scripted English (fluency); and only to some extent in the area of written English. Whereas nearly half of the teachers admitted that their skills in spoken production have weakened to an extent that causes them concern, only two non-NESTs said they are worried that their skills in academic written English have deteriorated since leaving university. In the following, I will look at spoken English and the three areas of possible attrition: phonetics, overall spoken fluency, and formal writing.

a) Phonetics

One area in which over half of the participants (12 of 20) have observed some negative language change is in the consistency of pronunciation accuracy, or articulatory phonetics. Phonetics, the study of physical speech, focuses on how people perceive sounds (auditory phonetics), on the physical composition of speech sounds (acoustic phonetics), and on the “physical apparatus used to produce speech sounds and the physical and cognitive factors that determine what are possible speech sounds and sound patterns” (Oxford Bibliographies 2011). This third area, articulatory phonetics, examines how sounds are produced, and is an important area for language learners as they seek to imitate new sounds in the foreign language. Teachers must not only have mastered articulation in the language themselves; they must also be able to demonstrate, monitor, and intervene when necessary with the sounds their pupils produce.

While none of the non-NESTs in this study claimed to have truly poor pronunciation of any distinct phoneme, several were unsure about whether they always pronounced individual sounds as accurately as they had while at university. The rules and formation of phonetic sounds in English posed no problem, nor did the notation thereof. All of the

teachers were able to decode and differentiate between the two ways of pronouncing “the” when the definite article proceeds nouns starting with consonants (such as [ðə] before “*window*”) and those starting with vowels (such as [ði] before “*office*”). Nearly all of the teachers were able to pronounce different median fricatives (such as [ð] and [θ]) from notation, and to give examples of English words that called for such sounds (cf. Walther 2010). The teachers were also confident that they could model and explain to their pupils how to make such sounds. However, even though they were able to produce the complicated sound of the English “th,” they said they did not always do so reliably when using these words in front of the classroom. The reasons for this varied among the participants, as did the extent to which they noticed this change or viewed it as problematic.

One woman believed her pronunciation was indeed different now, but that it had not necessarily changed for the worse or the better: “Im Studium, da war ich eigentlich nicht so unfit. Also, die Aussprache, die war eigentlich immer schon gut. Man wird immer verstanden aber ich glaube, das klingt jetzt eher wie Schulenglisch,” (37reg1). She said she believes her pronunciation had always been “good,” and that she can always make herself understood. During her studies, she was often praised for her good English, both written and spoken, and she had no concerns about her ability to articulate any words in English. Now, after over 20 years of teaching and correcting the pronunciation of her pupils, she is still able to produce the sounds she wants to make, and has, if anything, become more accurate. The only “loss” she reported was that she now sees her pronunciation as over-correct and somewhat stiff. It is still “good,” but it is now more appropriate for school settings and for teaching rather than for small talk with exchange partners. One example was the blending of words, which she no longer produces. Instead of slurring words together in phrases such as “wanna go” or “want t’go” (for “want to go”) as would be typical in rapid casual speech, she articulates each of the three words carefully. Although this may sound more like “school English” than natural speech, for her this is not a “loss” per se. She said she has become so used to producing clear and precise accurate speech as a model for her pupils that she maintains this over-articulation at all times. This may be a loss in terms of sounding natural, but it is also a gain for her language production as a teacher, and she sees this as a necessary improvement combined with a certain type of loss.

As was noted in the case studies chapter, Teacher 10 also said his speech patterns have changed as a direct result of interacting with his pupils, but for him the change has not necessarily been positive. He was unwilling to call it a “lowering” of level, but he did indicate that he saw a difference, and he noted that the classroom level was not his personal desired norm. His concept of phonetic loss included his inability to form consistently the sounds as he wanted to produce them. Although he is able to pronounce and teach the difficult “th” sound, he told me that he occasionally observed himself “slipping” on this:

“Sie fragen, ob ich das kann. Ich kann das erklären, ich kann es demonstrieren, ich kann es mit ihnen demonstrieren, ich kann ihnen erklären, wie sie ihre Sprachwerkzeuge benutzen sollen. Aber wenn ich jetzt selber spreche, merke ich so auch, da, nun da ist es mir weggeflutscht.” (10reg1)

This teacher did not explicitly say that such “slips” stemmed directly from his work as a teacher, and he is not excessively unhappy with his phonetic skills now. However, he did note that during his studies such “slips” were nearly non-existent, and that he had prided himself on being able to produce RP English sounds very well, including a proper “th” at all times (“Das ging immer, da war ich gut.” 10reg2). Now, as a teacher, he knows he must provide a good model of pronunciation for his pupils, but he believes the learners in his classroom (at a *Regionalschule*) cannot hear the difference. Whereas at university he had been surrounded by instructors and fellow students who placed a high value on accurate sounds, he is now surrounded by learners who do not seem to hear the distinctions he makes. He was unable to say if he had become lazier or less accurate as a result of the pupils’ lack of ability to differentiate the sounds he makes, or if this was a result of an absence of good role models in his current environment.

This issue of “slipping” came up in several other interviews, although the teachers viewed it very differently. Teacher 35, who described herself as an insecure speaker of English, said that accurate pronunciation is important for learners, partly because it is an area of potential mastery. Even those learners who are not particularly skilled at learning foreign languages or even at communicating in their native tongue can, with practice, learn and apply phonetic rules and produce acceptable English sounds. She focuses on correct pronunciation in the classroom through the use of pattern drills, homonym exercises, and various reading-aloud techniques, yet at the same time she worries that her own pronunciation is no longer as good as it once had been. After nearly 25 years in the classroom, she knows that, while she as the teacher is the primary

source of information about English pronunciation for her pupils, learners can also access different types of natural spoken language via the Internet or DVDs. Because of this new access for learners, she has become concerned that she may, in comparison, be seen as less than accurate. She said she is worried about the influence her own pronunciation might have on the pupils, and she told me she spends a lot of time wondering whether she is speaking correctly:

“Also (*seufzt*), wissen Sie, das ist eine Frage, wo ich hoffe, ja. Ich gebe mir wirklich Mühe und ich hoffe, dass mein Englisch, jetzt, noch okay ist, und ich bemühe mich auch. Aber trotzdem kann ich, und das wird Ihnen die ((Name der Kontaktperson)) auch bestätigen, ich leide unter ständigen (*Pause*) Gewissensbissen. Doch, so hier, und so da, und dann ist mir da was durchgerutscht, und so weiter. Aber ich GEBE mir schon Mühe.” (35reg1)

This teacher said her English pronunciation was once “okay,” and then expressed uncertainty about whether it still is adequate (“noch okay”). She did not say whether she had experienced loss in specific areas of articulation, yet she was very concerned about her pronunciation skills on the whole. Her “loss” is perhaps not a case of forgetting what she had once learned, but is rather an example of a teacher having to improve to keep pace with changes in the field. What might once have been “okay” may not be enough now. If this lack of progress on her part is combined with sounds that have “slipped,” then she will no longer feel confident as a role model. Her desire to be a good role model is apparent, and she assured me that she “tries hard” to get the pronunciation right, yet she suffers from pangs of guilt and is aware of her mistakes.

Other teachers who experience occasional “slips” claimed they are not as worried about this. Unlike Teacher 35, who “tries hard” to keep to a certain standard, Teacher 14 sees her main task as being on the receptive end of pronouncing words by monitoring her learners’ speech closely. She must listen to the various sounds that 25 or more children are producing, and she must make instantaneous decisions about when to intervene and how to help them. If, in the chaos of normal classroom activity, she occasionally makes a mistake herself, she does not see this as a problem: “Es kommt schon MAL vor, hört sich so anders an. Ich find’s natürlich schade, aber ich sehe das eigentlich nicht verbissen. Ich schäme mich nicht,” (14reg2). In her opinion, it is no crime for a language teacher to produce sounds that are not entirely accurate, as long as this is the exception and the teacher is aware of the mistake. She explains that she must have different phonetic skills as a teacher than those which were expected of her as a learner, and therefore it is inevitable that mistakes will happen. If she mispronounces a word

that she has consistently pronounced correctly before, this is not a “loss” so much as it is a slip of the tongue, and it should not be overrated.

Another non-NEST who describes her English skills as good (“Ich habe eine gute Aussprache,” 21gym2) had the same opinion. She has traveled widely, using English in inner and outer circle countries, and was very used to adapting her pronunciation to fit with local expectations. This broad exposure has given her a wide range of options, and she freely acknowledges that she occasionally mixes them up in the classroom. She admitted that, on the whole, she is not the sort of teacher who always speaks correctly, and that she often stumbles over words, also in her native language:

“Na, ich mache Fehler, das weiß ich. Aber während ich spreche, merke ich es. Und ich mach’s ja im Deutschen auch. Also ich bin da eine, die sich schnell mal verspricht. Ich könnte nie Kabarett machen oder so, weil ich mich da so oft verspreche. Einfach häufig, zu viel. Ich bin da zu unkonzentriert. Und so geht es mir im Englischen auch.” (21gym2)

This teacher explained that her pronunciation skills, like all of her other language skills, are fluid in nature, and that she does not claim to have the consistent mastery she had demonstrated during her studies. While at university, she had practiced hearing and producing speech in a language laboratory, using a microphone and earphones to record and to check her work. Since then, she has acquired new accents and expanded her skills to such a degree that she no longer produces only careful RP English, but instead mixes different pronunciations. In becoming fluent and versatile, she has indeed “lost” some articulatory precision, but her range has widened.

The changes in English pronunciation that these non-NESTs have observed seem to be, in most cases, an adaptation to their surroundings, and are not true examples of negative change as described in the literature, and as would be typical of normal language attrition. They seem to be a form of language alteration that is not always welcome, but is accepted. Although 60 percent of the teachers in this study claimed to have noticed some deterioration in their articulatory accuracy, most did not view this as a problem, either for themselves as speakers and users of English, or for their role as teachers of English. The next area of perceived language loss, that of “fluency,” was observed by far fewer teachers, yet was seen by those who experienced it as more troublesome.

b) Fluency in free speech

While the study of phonetics is concerned with individual sounds, the term “fluency” refers to how words and phrases are joined together. A person who is fluent has the

“ability to speak easily and smoothly” (Merriam-Webster 2012). Spoken fluency is also sometimes equated with the “flow” of the language produced. A fluent speaker of a language is able to connect thoughts and create speech without unnatural breaks or undue pauses that interrupt this flow.

Of the 20 participants in this study, seven thought that their spoken English is less fluent now than it was at the conclusion of their learning phase. However, most of them were unable to pinpoint exactly what aspects of fluency had been lost or when, and why such a loss might have occurred. For many of these teachers there was simply a general feeling of helplessness in some situations, and they were not always able to state whether fluency had been “lost” or had been deficient in the first place, and had simply not improved as they had wished. Teacher 25, who had spent a year in the UK after her studies before entering the classroom, said that she did not always speak with the same rate of fluency, and that her feelings about her ability to speak English well depended on the time of day or her mood. When she is relaxed and feeling good about herself, she is very fluent and enjoys speaking English. When she is tired or under stress, she notices that her English is slower and causes her more frustration: “Montag früh, zum Beispiel. Es ist auch manchmal schwierig, in die Puschen zu kommen. Da muss ich auch erst mal, mit der Zunge erst mal warm werden (*lacht*),” (25gym1).

Two of the participants who noted changes in their ability to produce consistent phonetical accurate sounds were among those who were also dissatisfied with the development of their overall fluency in spoken English. These two teachers, one male and one female, each see a link between their jobs and their loss of fluency. For Teacher 10, this link is fragile and he differentiates between language he uses in school while teaching, and language he uses while on exchange trips during which he converses with English people. Whereas in the classroom he is confident of being able to construct utterances on the spot, he sees conversation with English speakers as “strenuous” and slow at times (“Es ist eben anstrengend,” 10reg2). Using English in England obviously requires different conversational skills, which Teacher 10 said he possesses, but has not developed to the same extent as his spoken classroom skills. Whether this is because he has more time to practice “teacher speaking” than he does to practice engaging in fluid small talk, or whether it is because his speaking skills are so adapted to the classroom that he finds it difficult to switch, is unclear. He did state, however, that he did not feel

that conversation lessons with tutors from England had been “strenuous” while he was at university, and he recalled being able to discuss a wide range of topics with more ease than he can now. Again, for him there is no direct cause and effect between fluency and being a teacher, but he has noticed some loss in his speaking skills.

Teacher 37 has noticed the same loss, but for her the reason is clear: because she constantly speaks with her pupils at a lower level, using shorter sentences and a clear-cut range of vocabulary, her own speaking skills have changed. She is no longer able to react quickly to unexpected comments or questions when in England or when speaking with exchange partners here, and she no longer feels as fluent as she once was:

“Ich bin jetzt schon über 20 Jahre im Geschäft, und es ist schon denn so, dein Englisch verkümmert auf Schulniveau. Also, ja, es ist sicherlich noch schon ein Stück besser als Schulniveau, das würde ich schon so einschätzen. Aber da ist schon irgendwo was da dran.” (37reg1)

It is important to note that this teacher sees herself as a good language instructor, and she sees her own language skills as being more than adequate for the classroom. Whereas Teacher 10 reported having a vague feeling that something was different, but could not give many examples of his own level of fluency, Teacher 37 was able to recall clearly what she had been able to do at university, and to explain what she can and cannot do now: “ich denke, ich kenne meine Stärken und Schwächen ja ziemlich gut. Ich kann da, manche Dinge da, richtig gut,” (37reg1). She listed topics and areas in which she is able to speak fluently and confidently, and she also named areas that are now problematic for her, but in which she does not need to be competent in order to teach. The reduction in fluency she has observed over the past two decades is offset by gains in the spoken English she needs for the classroom. She admitted that she now speaks at “school level” and just above, but added that this level is sufficient for teaching. Her feelings of loss (“verkümmert”) are offset by feelings of being a “good” teacher and of having developed precisely those spoken language skills (“manche Dinge richtig gut”) she needs for her classroom.

The other participants who noted a loss of fluency in their spoken English did not report feeling overly concerned about this loss, and did not appear to worry that their spoken English was not good enough to work in their profession. However, they were acutely aware of the fact that their skills have changed, and will continue to change. Loss is often seen as a failure and is unwelcome, and many of these non-NESTs said they seek to limit this negative change by monitoring themselves and their production, and by

taking direct action. Many of them noted that these actions are separate from the classroom, and that they feel a sense of responsibility to maintain a level of spoken English that is fluent, even though this fluency will most likely go unnoticed by their pupils.

Two of the non-NESTs who made this point most clearly were the younger participants who had each spent longer periods of time in English-speaking countries before their studies. Teachers 21 and 23 both entered the teaching profession with a high level of fluency and self-confidence as speakers of English, and neither of them felt that English was “foreign” or problematic (“Keine Fremdsprache. Es ist meine zweite Sprache,” 23gym2). Living in a non-English-speaking environment is detrimental to their spoken language skills, and they both try to balance this with trips abroad as often as they can afford them. When I asked Teacher 21 about her summer travel plans, and about how her employer sees this language work she does in her free time at her own expense, she was adamant in emphasizing that traveling has nothing to do with her teaching:

“Für mich, ist das. Also ich merke, bei mir selber, dass ich dran bleiben muss. Sonst verliere ich wieder was. Also nicht, nicht die Regel, oder so. Sondern das wieder, so beim Sprachfluss. Ich versuche das aufzuhalten, indem ich immer dagegen steuere. Dann muss ich fahren, für mich.” (21gym2)

Through travel and active interaction with native speakers of English in Germany, Teacher 21 maintains a level of fluency she sets for herself based on her personal norms. She sees it is as important that she remains fluent, even though her skills as an English teacher do not improve directly from this fluency. Teacher 23 echoed this sentiment as she recalled her frustration in not being able to access exactly the word she needed at the moment she needed it. While conversing on the phone with her American host family, she forgot a simple, everyday term, and this bothered her greatly. Although she was able to keep communication flowing through use of a synonym, this incident upset her so much that she dreamed about it later. For her, not being able to access words that she believes she should always have readily available is more than a nuisance; it is a sign that her second language is suffering because she is surrounded by her first language:

“Ich habe SCHON manchmal erlebt, wenn ich ein bisschen länger nicht Englisch gesprochen habe, dass ich dann selbst überlegen muss, oh GOTT! NEIN! Wie war denn noch mal das Wort? Und es kommt einfach so nicht raus. Ich habe das Gefühl, je weniger Englisch ich spreche, desto mehr gerät natürlich auch wieder in Vergessenheit.” (23gym2)

She speaks too little English in Germany to maintain her second language at the level she desires, and the few hours she spends each week teaching it in a classroom situation are not enough to offset this loss. This was also the case for Teacher 21, who explained that being an English teacher is helpful, as it allows her some access to the language, but that teaching alone does not enable her to maintain her language skills at the level she desires. Her pace of speaking in school is not the same as the tempo she uses when overseas, and she “forgets” things more quickly as the school year moves on: “Ich merke, dass ich eine Vergessensquote habe, wenn ich in einer deutschsprachigen Umgebung bin,” (21gym1). It is only during summer break, when she spends several weeks using English abroad, that she feels her fluency returning to the level she wishes to have. Both teachers said they want more constant, active practice with spoken English than a school classroom can offer them.

Other non-NESTs who did not claim to have such high levels of spoken fluency also noted the sense of frustration that sets in when they have not been overseas for a while, and are then suddenly faced with rapid speech. Although their receptive skills are well-developed and they can understand much of what is being said to them, they are often unable to respond as they wish. One teacher said that, when she first arrives in an English-speaking country, she is unable to combine accuracy and fluency, and it takes several days before she can speak as she wishes. She is either able to speak quickly and naturally, but with a large number of mistakes and words that are not exactly those she would normally choose, or she can reply in correct English, which is stilted and marked with unnatural pauses. Both speaking styles identify her as a foreigner, and she dislikes the stiltedness and hesitancy her speech has upon arrival. Usually she is up to speed after a few days and is able to converse at a level she finds acceptable, but this level disappears when she returns to Germany:

“Man merkt auch die Defizite. Nach drei Tagen, dann hast du’s plötzlich schon wieder drauf, und man denkt ja, so, das nächste Mal passiert dir das aber NICHT, dass du das nicht mehr weißt. Und wenn ich aus London zurück komme, nach EINER Woche schon, es ist, nach ein paar Tagen schon, wieder weg! SO schnell geht das.” (17reg2)

Although she always leaves the country determined that she will maintain this level of fluency in her L1 environment (“das nächste Mal passiert dir das aber NICHT”), she said she finds that she is unable to speak enough English at home to remain at this desired level between exchange trips. The topic of maintaining fluency through

continual language practice will be explored again in section 5.4, in which the participants describe steps they take and would like to take in order to maintain or improve their English.

c) Academic writing

Although many teachers also noted that they no longer write as much or as well as they had while at university, only two of the participants expressed feelings of regret about this loss. This is most likely because, while an English teacher must speak the language often, she or he is rarely required to produce longer passages of complex written language on a regular basis. Whereas during their studies the non-NESTs had written essays or longer responses to questions, they are now guiding the writing of their learners. In order to be able to read and mark the papers their pupils produce, teachers must employ different skills and develop new strengths than what they would need in order to draft and revise a research paper themselves. Although some teachers may design writing assignments which involve longer lead-in texts or detailed questions, they are clearly no longer required to produce lengthy pieces of writing for evaluation. Most teachers, when they write in conjunction with their job, must focus on creating texts that their pupils can understand and work with, and they concentrate on familiar and simple structures and on the use of defining phrases that will aid the learners. Their productive language skills must be adapted to fit the learners' needs as opposed to the expectations of a language instructor at the *Abitur* or university level. One participant explained how this adaptation in the classroom to "school level" language has affected her own skills:

"Ich bin sicherlich, nachher, irgendwann nicht mehr so gut gewesen, wie im Studium. Was das sprachliche Niveau anbelangt, auch im Schreiben, weil man sich ja immer irgendwo, ich zumindest, ja im Grunde genommen, sich irgendwo auf das Niveau der Schüler einstellt." (14reg2)

This non-NEST did not give other details about this supposed loss; she simply assumed that her writing skills were no longer "as good" as they had once been.

Other teachers who noted that their writing skills had deteriorated were also not worried about this. Their job is to teach English to learners at a certain level and they no longer need to be able to produce finely-tuned essays on academic topics. The act of language teaching, of following their learners' progress, is also an interesting challenge and they do not feel they are lacking a necessary skill. As one teacher pointed out, it may not be a

good thing that she is not as proficient a writer as several years ago, but she also does not see it as a problem:

“Ich habe da keinen Anlass, mich mit sowas auseinander zu setzen, weil ich in der Schule ausgelastet bin. Ja, sicherlich denke ich jetzt, manchmal, dass es schade ist, dass diese Kompetenz weg ist. Das hat aber damit zu tun, dass das, was ich jetzt mache, hier, also mit Englisch, dass ich so vollkommen glücklich und zufrieden bin.” (37reg2)

For this teacher, the act of teaching has taken precedence over the act of producing pieces of crafted writing at a higher level. It is a “pity,” but it is not a loss for her, as she has other challenges that interest her more.

Only two teachers expressed frustration at their current level of writing skills, and of these two, only one is working to improve her writing. This was Teacher 31, who had attended additional university level courses after her studies and continues to work on her writing skills now, albeit on her own. She knows that her writing is not as sophisticated as it was while she was a student: “Ich kann einen Aufsatz schreiben und weiß, dass das so okay ist, aber meine Stilebene ist nicht mehr auf Universitätsniveau, wenn’s mal anspruchsvoller ist,” (31gy-reg1). For this teacher, writing at “university level” is a goal that she is currently unable to reach, and this bothers her. She believes that she wrote at a different level while at university, and says she had been proud of her skills. She came to university with strong language skills, and had been disappointed by the low expectations at the start of her program. She was, however, pleased with the more challenging academic work she was required to produce in later semesters. Upon leaving university, she was able to write excellent essays and argumentative papers, and she said she believes she is not currently attaining this level. In order to write at this level, she added, she must exert more effort and devote more time to writing (“Da muss ich noch da was tun,” 31gy-reg1). This is not something she needs to do for her job, (“es ist, von sprachlichen Niveau, hier, an der Schule, natürlich ganz was anderes,”), but it is a personal choice (“das nehme ich mir vor,” 31gy-reg1).

When asked to describe why she, as a school teacher, should be able to produce “university level” texts, she laughed and was unsure of her reasoning. After repeating that she had no direct opportunity to engage in academic writing herself as part of her job, she still held firm to the belief that an English teacher who had been trained at university should be able to write at a certain level, and to maintain this level after leaving university. For her, this was part of her professional identity, even though it was not directly linked to her daily work, and she viewed it as an important skill area to

maintain: “Wenn das Teil deines Berufes ist, dann möchtest du das denn auch ordentlich machen,” (31gy-reg1). Her reasoning is that, even though she does not have to produce such texts as “part of her profession,” she is still a professional with a skill set that should include being able to write well. She would like to be able to write at the level she remembers having reached during her final years at university, and she believes that if she were only “ein bisschen *more sophisticated*” (31gy-reg1) that she would be happier. There was no direct need for her to be able to reactivate her writing skills, but she could not shake the overall feeling that her English was now lacking. She admitted her reasoning was not defensible, but said she still felt her skills were incomplete: “Also irgendwie ist man da schon irgendwie permanent beschäftigt. Und ich finde, dass es einfach besser wäre, wenn du’s leichter hättest,” (31gy-reg1).

Teacher 31 was the only participant to express frustration at a “loss” of writing skills, and she was also the only teacher who was currently engaged in concrete activities to prevent deterioration. She spends a large part of her summer breaks teaching at international summer programs, during which she seeks out opportunities to write at different levels and to obtain feedback from other teachers, including English native speakers, who work with the program. She noted that this work is not recognized by her employer, and does not have any direct benefits for her pupils. Teacher 31 differentiates between the skills she needs for her profession, and the skills she believes a professional teacher should have. This distinction will be maintained in the next sub-chapter, when I examine participants’ self-evaluations of their current strengths and weaknesses, relative to their prior levels.

5.3 Non-NESTs’ self-evaluations of present language levels

Thus far, I have examined how the 20 teachers in this study recalled their foreign language learning throughout different phases of their learner biographies, and any improvement or deterioration in their skills they have noticed. I will now look at how the participants view their current language skills, and what they see as their strengths and weaknesses after many years in the profession. The participants’ observations about their current levels of ability in English are outlined in the following three sub-sections. The first section describes how teachers see their use of English in the classroom, when interacting with the pupils face-to-face. The second deals with the different language

skills they need for all other work-related situations outside of the classroom. The last section describes how the teachers view their language skills when they are interacting in English and are not serving as classroom instructors or school employees, although this third category is not necessarily “private” in nature. The fact that these participants are certified language instructors influences their relationship with the language beyond the school premises, and their experiences with English outside the classroom often affect their relationship with English inside the classroom. In all three categories, the data were taken from interview transcriptions, the Can-Do lists, and from informal comments made during site visits.

5.3.1 English skills as they pertain to teaching situations

These non-NESTs were unanimous in stating that their levels of English in all skill areas were adequate for teaching situations. The term “teaching situation” refers to all classroom activities in which language learning is intended, as well as to other teacher-pupil interactions in which the focus is on the pupils’ foreign language learning process. Regardless of how these teachers had felt at the outset of their careers, they all said they are certain that their English language skills now are good enough to teach German schoolchildren. This sentiment was repeated by all of the participants in all of the data collection situations (interviews, site visits, and Can-Do lists), and this consistency in all three datasets underlines the certainty the participants have on this matter.

In the first dataset, during the interviews, the participants stated repeatedly that their level of English as pertaining to teaching is satisfactory, and that they do not encounter any situations in which they feel that their knowledge of the language or ability in any skill area is not good enough. After years of teaching, these non-NESTs are familiar with classroom phrases, and they have extensive experience with the language as it is taught. Even those teachers who recalled being uncertain about their English skills at the beginning of their careers said they are now very confident about their classroom-level English. They have developed a routine of presenting and correcting language, and know what to expect in teaching situations. While acknowledging that their English may not always be perfect, they stressed that it is certainly good enough for school (“für die Schule ist es wirklich ausreichend,” 10reg1), and there were no comments made in any of the interviews that implied a lack of confidence in this area.

In the second dataset, the site visits in which I was able to sit in on a class, the comments the teachers made to me underlined this feeling of being “good enough” and feeling confident in the classroom. Although these comments were not transcribed, there were many notations of teachers telling me about and pointing out the “low” level of English their pupils had. Their learners are still struggling with subject-verb agreement or with word order in short sentences, and these are areas in which the non-NESTs are proficient. Even if a teacher made a “slip” in pronunciation or used an incorrect preposition, she was able to model the type of language her pupils were working on and monitor her learners’ progress.

The third set of data regarding participants’ self-evaluations of English in teaching situations was taken from the first Can-Do list, which was usually filled in at the end of the first interview session. Of the 10 items on this list, nine related directly to the language a teacher would use in a classroom. With one exception, the 20 teachers rated themselves on each of these nine items, resulting in 179 numerical answers, shown in Table 4. The top possible mark was 1 for items the participants believed they could do “very well,” and the lowest was 4 for items the teachers thought they could do “not at all.” Although the non-NESTs were asked to choose one mark for each item, some teachers were unable to decide on a number and ranked themselves in the middle. Such mixed answers were assigned a value of 1.5 or 2.5 in Table 4.

I can...	Number of answers assigned to mark:						Average self-mark
	1	1.5	2	2.5	3	4	
hear if pupils are pronouncing sounds correctly and intervene with suggestions	15	1	4	0	0	0	1.23
read texts out loud clearly	15	0	5	0	0	0	1.25
pronounce a “th-“ sound	13	0	7	0	0	0	1.35
explain complex grammatical concepts clearly*	8	0	11	0	0	0	1.58
find synonyms quickly in order to define new words in English	6	1	12	1	0	0	1.70
be confident that I provide a good model of the language in my classroom	6	1	12	0	1	0	1.73
assess the correctness of my pupils’ writing	7	0	11	1	1	0	1.73
improve pupils’ pronunciation by explaining and demonstrating phonetic models	6	1	10	0	3	0	1.83
tell simple jokes or riddles, use puns or word games	5	1	4	1	9	0	2.20

Table 4: Can-Do self-evaluations in teaching situations

*Only 19 rankings assigned. The participant working with learning disabled children does not teach anything beyond very basic grammar and chose not to rank herself in this area.

The overwhelming majority of teachers ranked themselves high for classroom situations. They believe their strengths lie in the areas of pronunciation and reading aloud, as well as in teaching grammar and explaining words (finding synonyms) in context. As was discussed in section 5.2.2, grammar and vocabulary are the two areas in which teachers had observed the most improvement since entering the profession. It is therefore not surprising that the participants now feel very confident of their own skills in these areas. It is unfortunate that the Can-Do lists were not designed to have multiple items asking for a more detailed description or examples of grammar or vocabulary, as these areas were seen as “strengths” by the teachers. When the lists were designed, there was no way of knowing which areas the teachers would be extremely positive or negative about, and these points did not become clear until after the first several interviews had occurred. For reasons of consistency, the Can-Do lists were not altered during the study, and that is why there was only one item that inquired about the strengths of “vocabulary” in the form of synonyms.

The area of pronunciation was one in which the participants had noted some loss, or lack of precision, yet the non-NESTs gave themselves the highest marks for the three Can-Do items that involved articulatory phonetics (reading aloud, pronouncing “th-“) and auditory phonetics (listening to their pupils’ pronunciation). The explanation for this apparent inconsistency seems to be that they see their own language abilities as being so much greater than those of their pupils that they can state with confidence that their skills in these areas are good. The fourth Can-Do item involving pronunciation (improve learners’ pronunciation with explaining, demonstrating with models) has a lower average because three teachers gave themselves a mark of three. These three teachers chose lower scores for this item not because they see their own phonetic skills as lacking, but because they felt uneasy with the phrase “phonetic models.” Two of them (Teachers 11 and 16) recalled the anatomically detailed diagrams of lips, tongues, and teeth they had been exposed to during their studies and said that they did not work with such diagrams in their classrooms. For these two teachers, the concept of a “model” as they had experienced it at university was an ideal, and they could not say with certainty that they could draw upon or explain such models. The third participant (Teacher 19) offered no comment on her relatively low mark here, simply saying that she was not good at giving such explanations.

There was one Can-Do item from the category of classroom situations (telling jokes or using word games) that was ranked distinctly lower than the rest. This seems to be less an issue of language than it is a question of personality. Ten participants interpreted the terms in the Can-Do item (“Witze” and “Wortspiele”) as “telling jokes.” In their interpretation, a “Witz” must be funny and appeal to the audience, i.e., the pupils in their classes. A few participants said they were simply not good at telling jokes in any language, and that they just were not funny people. One participant (Teacher 25) said she always forgot the punch line, and another (Teacher 36) claimed her sense of humor was different than that of her pupils. Teacher 10 gave himself a mark of one, but also considered choosing mark four because he said he did not use jokes in his classroom anymore. His pupils’ language skills are so low that he would have to repeat and explain the words in even simple jokes, which would make them less funny. He said he sees himself as a good joke teller, but added that he has given up telling jokes because his pupils are too weak to follow along in English: “Ich kann Witze erzählen, aber das mache ich hier nicht mehr. Hier versteht mich keine Sau” (10-reg1).

Half of the teachers interpreted this Can-Do item differently, seeing the term “Witz” as referring to mnemonic devices, which they used often and with great success. Teacher 20 actually presented an amusing English grammar rule rhyme during the site visit. A traditional German verse for using the third-person “s” with simple present verbs is “He, she, it, das S muss mit” (“the S has to come along”). This teacher changed the verse to English, much to the amusement of his seventh grade pupils: “He, she, it, when you forget the S, it’s all a pile of shhhh...” The class gleefully provided the last two letters of the word and chanted the rhyme with gusto whenever a pupil forgot the third-person “s” in class that day. After the class, Teacher 20 told me that he often resorts to near gutter-level humor if it helps get pupils’ attention and drive a point home. Other teachers who used such “jokes” or comic elements consider them essential in class and said they relied on them often.

Personality differences among the 20 participants in the study became evident in questions such as these, but the actual self-ratings given were not truly that different. The non-NESTs in this study reported having no serious concerns regarding their English skills used in day-to-day classroom situations. They see themselves as good language role models for their pupils, and they believe are able to conduct their classes

in English without any problems. Even those teachers who said that they were not overly-confident learners or who had not experienced major gains claimed that their English was more than sufficient for teaching situations. Next, I will look beyond the classroom to other school situations in which teachers use English.

5.3.2 English skills as they pertain to overall school situations

The non-NESTs in this study employ work-related English primarily in the classroom, but they must also use the language for other tasks that are not directly connected with pupils' learning. Such situations are referred to here as "overall school situations," and include all of the instances in which a teacher utilizes his or her English skills in connection with his or her job, but in which the goal is not to instruct or to evaluate learners' progress. The self-evaluations made in conjunction with the Can-Do lists and during interviews and site visits were slightly lower than those made for teaching situations, and the examples given by the participants varied widely. The teachers cited many different examples of English used in school situations, and their self-perceived ability to perform well in these situations varied more than their abilities in teaching situations. As with classroom language, the non-NESTs reported feeling secure in school situations in which they had some experience or practice and over which they felt they had control. Situations for which they were not prepared or for which they could not anticipate various aspects caused them anxiety.

Descriptions of the various tasks at school in which teachers used English outside of the classroom setting were collected most often during the site visits and interviews, as the Can-Do lists contained only two items. The first Can-Do item asked if the teachers could make phone calls in English in order to set up school exchange programs. The second inquired if the teachers were able to read professional subject-based literature in their field that was written in English, such as articles on teaching or testing methods, international reports, reviews, or linguistics papers. While filling in the Can-Do lists, two teachers added an additional category in writing at the bottom of the lists relating to their ability to react in an emergency situation when accompanying pupils overseas. Even though other teachers had mentioned such situations in their interviews, Teachers 10 and 13, independent of one another, thought this was important enough to add in writing to the list, which is why this item is included in Table 5. Other items not

included in Table 5, such as other aspects of school exchanges and the administering and marking of examinations, are also discussed below.

I can...	Number of answers assigned to mark:						Average self-mark
	1	1/2	2	2/3	3	4	
make phone calls in English (such as with exchange partners) without any problems	5	0	9	1	5	0	2.03
read literature in my subject field in English*	5	0	6	1	6	1	2.18
react in emergencies, call for help, make reports as to what happened**	0	0	1	0	1	0	2.50

Table 5: Can-Do self-evaluations in overall school situations

*Only 19 rankings assigned. The participant working with learning disabled children claimed that she did not read such reports as part of her job and chose not to rank herself in this area.

** supplementary answer given only by Teachers 10 and 13 while filling in the Can-Do lists

The highest self-evaluations were given for “making phone calls” in conjunction with school exchanges, although this was not something the teachers enjoyed doing. Many participants noted that they also do not like making such phone calls in their native language, and even teachers who claimed to be able to do this well stipulated that they did not always look forward to the task. Several cited difficulties when speaking over the phone without any visual clues (facial expressions, gestures, etc.) to help their understanding. The five non-NESTs who said they could make such phone calls “very well” all had established contacts with whom they have already spoken on the phone and whom they knew. Two of them told me that they had no problems making such phone calls, but that they might find it more problematic if they were calling a stranger or a new contact person. Still, a phone call is something that one can prepare for and practice in advance, and many non-NESTs noted that they make adequate notes before placing a call overseas.

The question of whether the participants could read publications in English from their field was understood very differently by the 20 teachers. Even though the Can-Do list contained examples of what “subject-based literature in my profession” might be (“methods, reports, didactics, linguistics, reviews”), the teachers interpreted this item in many ways and commented on this extensively. Two of the *Gymnasium* teachers who gave themselves very high marks (Teachers 20 and 21) included all teaching materials and journals in this category, including a magazine called “Spotlight,” which contains basic texts they might use in or adapt for the classroom. In their view, this magazine was “Fachliteratur,” and something they found very easy to read and work with. Thus, they gave themselves high marks. Another participant (Teacher 35) had been following

the results of the PISA study for many years and also reads international study reports in English, for which she rated herself a “2,” and said she had no problems. After writing down her answer, however, she asked if this meant she could use a dictionary while reading such reports. She said she would rate herself as “okay” if she has a dictionary at hand to help her when she encounters unfamiliar terms, but that she would rate herself with the lowest possible mark if the Can-Do item did not allow for a dictionary. For the analysis, her rating of two was used, but this does not necessarily reflect her true opinion or level of confidence. In her mind, she is a good reader of official texts as long as she has the option of checking meaning, but she would be a poor reader if she did not have access to a bilingual dictionary. She also admitted that the dictionary was more of a psychological buffer than a tool she truly needed. She often read such official texts without resorting to her dictionary at all, but it made her feel better to have a dictionary within reach.

Teacher 16 gave herself three different ratings for this item, depending on what was meant by “Fachliteratur.” She pointed out that there are many different types of subject matter material she might want to read, and that the source and level of the writing will affect how she approaches it:

“Ich mache viel mit dem Internet und gucke da Erfahrungsberichte, so was, und DAS ist nicht so schwer. Aber jetzt, Fachdidaktik, oder hier Sprachwissenschaft. Naja. Also, ich denke, es kommt auf das Niveau an. Das kann ja wirklich etwas sein, so, was mache ich mit Bildern im Unterricht. Das verstehe ich sicherlich. Aber es kann ja sehr wissenschaftlich angesetzt sein. Und dann weiß ich nicht, also. (*Pause, schaut auf Can-Do list*). Na (*lacht*), ich sage mal 2 bis 4.” (16ges1)

In this case, the self-rating of three was used as an average, but it does not truly reflect the answers that Teacher 16 wanted to give for this item. Like many teachers, she indicated she feels somewhat confident in approaching certain reading tasks, but she knows that there will be cases in which she will have difficulties or need assistance. Such examples are important in understanding the non-NESTs’ interpretations of language levels and the range of ability they attribute to themselves. These differences in interpretation also show the limitations of self-assessment in a project such as this. Unless participants are given a specific example of what is meant by “subject-based literature,” there is no way of knowing what reading comprehension level they consider themselves to have.

Also included in Table 5 are the two comments on coping with emergency situations when accompanying pupils on trips abroad. Many teachers mentioned that they have to

employ a wide range of language while on such exchange trips, and that these tasks call for language that is not typical of the classroom. When teachers accompany pupils abroad, they are responsible for dealing with any complications that may arise. Emergencies cannot be planned for; they are often unexpected and involve not only language, but high levels of personal stress as well. Teacher 22 recalled an incident in which two of her pupils were given counterfeit money in an American airport. She described how she negotiated with the police on their behalf, which meant using phrases she had never practiced before and having to understand legal warnings given at a rapid clip in an unfamiliar dialect. Teacher 31 had to accompany one of her pupils who developed appendicitis to the hospital:

“Ich musste bei einer Operation dolmetschen. Am Anfang, *wow!* Sowas habe ich nicht gelernt, und dann musste ich das aber, das brauchte ich. Da habe ich, glaube ich, sehr viel gelernt.” (31gy-reg1)

Teachers cannot practice for such situations in advance, and this is what concerns most non-NESTs. They not only must be able to react in an emergency on behalf of the pupils, they must do so using phrases in English that they cannot anticipate. Classroom management phrases can be practiced and the non-NESTs in this study can rely on work experience when dealing with predictable school language. But because most people have never observed an operation or been arrested for possessing counterfeit money, not even in their own language, such experiences are unfamiliar. The fact that the emergency is taking place in English, and in a foreign environment, adds to the levels of stress. Theoretically this language is part of an extended school situation and the emergencies come about while the non-NEST is on duty; however, the English needed to deal with such a situation cannot truly be seen as “school language,” and it is not in the teachers’ realm of control. It is the lack of control and the worry of “what if” that makes many teachers not only uncertain but also fearful:

“Ich hatte echt Angst davor, dass ich die nicht verstehe. Und ich habe gedacht, wenn da etwas irgendjemanden was passiert, wenn jemand einen Unfall hat, und du musst zu den Behörden, na? Wir waren zwei Kolleginnen, dann waren noch 2 Mütter dabei, die könnten aber alle kein Englisch. Ich meine, es ist ja alles gut gegangen, aber...” (13reg2)

The teachers in this study were not so afraid of emergency situations that they would avoid participating in such exchanges, but most of them were very much aware of the responsibility they bore and the fact that there was only a certain amount of preparation they could make for such trips. There is no way for them to anticipate all of the

potential situations they might have to manage, and this lack of control is reflected in their apprehensions preceding such trips.

Exchange programs are often reciprocal, and several non-NESTs in this study stated that they are usually the primary contact person for partner schools and are heavily involved in hosting activities when pupils and teachers from other countries come to their schools in Germany. They are often called upon to act as interpreters for colleagues or to negotiate problems between visiting pupils and the German host families. While some exchange schools are in Britain, most school exchanges involve partners in other expanding circle countries, and English is a lingua franca for all participants. On the whole, the teachers reported feeling good about their contribution to these exchanges. Many said they experience a certain amount of nervousness or excitement when they are asked to interpret or to present information to guests, but that once they have started such activities, they enjoy doing them and feel confident:

“Wir haben hier öfter Gäste aus den USA und da bekomme ich eigentlich immer das Feedback, sie verstehen mich, ich verstehe sie, es ist gut. Ich würde nicht sagen, dass ich perfekt Englisch spreche, aber ich komme zurecht. Es gibt da relativ wenig Probleme.” (37reg1)

Language anxiety during these activities seemed to be slightly lower than when accompanying pupils overseas. They are still largely responsible for the welfare of pupils and may very well be the only person who can interpret and negotiate in an unexpected situation, but they are doing so in an environment in which they feel at home and more confident.

In addition to school exchange programs, these non-NESTs brought up two more areas in which their English skills are needed beyond the classroom: examinations and professional development (PD) sessions. Neither of these had been included on the first two Can-Do lists, although the third Can-Do list dealt with plans for future language learning and therefore included various PD activities. The participants' comments on their self-evaluations of English while at PD seminars are included in section 5.4, together with the results for their continuing education goals. I will therefore examine here only the area of oral and written examinations.

The non-NESTs in this study described several types of tests that they are expected to design and/or administer, depending on which grade levels they are teaching. All of the teachers must plan and design continual assessment tests, usually in agreement with colleagues teaching courses at the same level. Because schools can mandate a minimum

number of “exam marks” per pupil per semester, these tests must be divided evenly throughout the school year and must reflect the material taught. Teachers may elect to use ready-made tests as a base, but they must make sure that the test is set up in such a way that their pupils can deal with the material. All of the non-NESTs in this study said that they are now able to design exam questions, formulate topics for essays or short-answer items, and draft clear written instructions for pupils. They also reported having no difficulties when marking such exams and determining the “correctness” of a pupil’s answer. In line with their assessments of their teaching situation skills described in section 5.3.1 above, the participants stated that they are able to design and conduct such exams in English. A few of the *Gymnasium* teachers mentioned that they are slower and more methodical when correcting tests given in the upper grade levels, in which pupils write longer answers in essay form. Occasionally there is an expression or turn of phrase which gives the teacher pause, either because it is unfamiliar or because the teacher is unsure of its correctness. However, for the most part, the non-NESTs in this study are confident when correcting tests they have designed themselves.

The situation is slightly different for centralized exams in which the content is beyond the control of the teacher. Such exams include the written and oral school-leaving tests administered at the end of grade 10 for the *Regionalschule*, and the *Abitur* exams at the end of grade 12, but also comparative testing situations, such as the *Vergleichsarbeiten* (VerA) testing administered in grades 6 and 8. Nearly all of the English teachers have the option of attending a training session in which they can practice marking mock exams for the *Abitur* or *Mittlere Reife*, and they have all said that, when marking comparative tests they can follow the detailed instructions on how to give points. However, this marking period is fraught with anxiety for some non-NESTs. The exams may or may not be marked a second time by a central institution, and some teachers are worried that their corrections may be re-evaluated by a supervisor later on. One teacher explained that she feels the English teachers at her school have become hyper-vigilant when looking for mistakes:

“Möglichst VIELE Fehler finden, immer Fehler finden. Und dass wir uns manchmal nicht darüber im Klaren sind, ob man das vielleicht nicht in der täglichen Sprache DOCH sagen kann. Umgangssprachlich ist sicherlich vieles erlaubt. Und wir streichen das natürlich dann knallhart an, so (*mimic*) ‚S‘ fehlt, dritte Person, wup! Na? (*lacht*). Und wir freuen uns dann, wie die Aasgeier, Fehler gefunden, angestrichen, Schluss. Und das ist dann natürlich auch irgendwie nicht richtig.” (11reg1)

Her worry is that she and her colleagues feel they must find and mark in red every single mistake the pupils make in order to be seen as competent. Finding a mistake is a sign that they are doing their job, and there is even a sense of joy in identifying mistakes and marking them (“wir freuen uns”). There is little room to comment on the positive aspects of the pupils’ language production, and there is always the risk that the teachers might overlook a mistake and later be told that they were inept. Several teachers said that when marking exams that may be double-checked by an external evaluator, they are overly careful to find all possible mistakes. Especially at the beginning of their careers, the non-NESTs compare notes with colleagues and make sure that they are marking in a similar way. Other participants, such as Teachers 16 and 20, have shown examples of pupils’ exam work to a colleague at a different school or a family member who is also an English teacher in order to ask for their advice, and Teacher 31 said she once made photocopies of an *Abitur* essay and mailed them to a colleague in a different city so they could compare certain phrases together over the phone. She admitted that this was probably illegal and that she would get into trouble if anyone ever knew, but she had no other local resources with whom she could confer. Basically, the participants said they were concerned about missing mistakes in written exams and also about marking phrases as mistakes that might be correct. These concerns are greater when there is the possibility that someone from a commission or a school overseer’s office might be checking their work.

Oral exams are different, as they are administered locally and the content cannot be double-checked by an outside party afterwards. However, for some non-NESTs, these exams are also problematic because they involve speaking English not only with pupils, but also in front of their colleagues. Some non-NESTs in this study work in supportive environments in which they have a good working relationship with other teachers, but some do not. In schools in which the English teachers do not get along or support each other, oral exams can be a source of nervousness for the teachers as well. Teacher 11 works at a small *Regionalschule* in which she is one of three English teachers. This means that she is always an oral examiner for the 10th grade leaving exams, and she always conducts the exams with the same people:

“Was ich natürlich merke, wenn wir eine Abschlussprüfung in Klasse 10 durchführen, dass wir drei vor einander auch so ein bisschen Hemmungen haben. Das ist eben wieder das typische- (*Pause*). (Frage d.Intv.: *Alle prüfen zusammen?*) Ja, einer ist ja der prüfende Fachlehrer, der führt dann das Gespräch auf Englisch, muss sich dann in diverse Rollen rein versetzen. Zum Beispiel, ich bin jetzt deine Mutter und

du bist mein Kind und dein Zimmer ist gerade so unordentlich, und ich werde jetzt mal mit dir meckern, und so. Und das sind ja ganz spontane Situationen und dann passieren natürlich auch Fehler. Und dann hat man immer gleich Angst, oh Gott, die anderen beiden, was denken die jetzt? (*zuckt mit den Schultern*). (Frage d.Intv.: *Die anderen Prüfer?*) JA! Und hinterher wird dann immer sofort (*zeigt „flatternde Hände“*). Und dann sagt man (*mimic*), oh Mensch, und tut mir leid, und ich habe die und die Fehler gemacht und, und, und, ne? Und dann, dass der Andere sagt (*mimic*), ist nicht so schlimm und so. Aber man macht sich dann vor einander irgendwo doch- (*Pause*). Ja, es ist nicht schön.” (11reg1)

This teacher is not unhappy with her job and she does not actively dislike the people she works with, and she also told me that there is no overt competition among the three colleagues for better hours or more classes. However, she said she feels insecure when she has to perform the role of oral examiner in front of her peers. She was unwilling to criticize them directly, and, as can be seen in the quotation above, she left many things unsaid, resorting to hand gestures and unfinished sentences. For her, oral exams are stressful, not necessarily because of the responsibility that comes with administering an exam and deciding on a final mark, but because she is worried about making mistakes in front of her peers. Even though it is the pupil who is being examined, the teacher also feels pressure to perform well. Not all of the participants said they worry about such situations, and those who admitted they do said they view the issue of exams as a small problem that only affects them once a year.

For the most part, the majority of non-classroom overall school situations are “okay” for the non-NESTs. Their self-ratings were slightly lower than those given for teaching situations, but they were still on the positive end of the scale. As will be shown in the next section, these self-ratings changed when the teachers were asked to comment on their skills in English for tasks not directly connected with school or teaching.

5.3.3 English skills not connected with school situations

In addition to giving self-evaluations of their English skills connected with teaching and other school tasks, the teachers also evaluated their language skills in areas not necessarily associated with their profession. Although some of these self-evaluation items might be tasks a teacher would also perform at school, the participants were asked to comment on their language abilities when using English on their own, away from school, when they were “not being teachers.” This distinction between English needed for work-related tasks and English used away from work was difficult for many teachers to make. Some non-NESTs described their interest in and confidence as a “user” of English as very high, and they reported that they actively sought out opportunities to use

the language away from work. Meanwhile, others said they viewed English as something they used at work but not in their free time. Although this interest varied according to school type, the non-NESTs who saw themselves as “good” EFL teachers were not necessarily those who claimed to be active users of English. Some of the teachers who said that they were effective EFL instructors were among those who claimed to use English rarely, if ever, beyond the classroom.

Most of the data in this section were taken from the second Can-Do list, which was usually completed at the end of the first interview session, and comments made in both SSIs. The second Can-Do list used the same numerical scale as the first, but it contained 11 items, one of which (reading subject-specific literature) appeared in Table 5. The remaining 10 items are presented in Table 6 and include three types of statements.

I can...	Number of answers assigned to mark:							Average self-mark	No reply*
	1	1/2	2	2/3	3	3-4	4		
ask for directions in a new place and understand the answers I hear	15	0	5	0	0	0	0	1.25	
make a phone call without being nervous, e.g. with friends	7	0	9	0	3	0	0	1.79	1
read English newspapers or magazines (e.g. Times, Guardian, Newsweek) with no problem	5	0	10	1	4	0	0	1.98	
I could describe to an English person how to do something “typically German” (baking, crafts, etc.)	6	0	4	4	6	0	0	2.10	
I would have no problems taking part in a conversation about politics, religion, or social “hot topics”	4	0	5	2	9	0	0	2.30	
I could open a bank account or rent a car in an English speaking country even if I did not have a dictionary	4	1	4	0	10	0	1	2.38	
I am not at all afraid of or shy about speaking English with other people	6	1	10	1	2	0	0	1.80	
I watch English movies (DVDs) only in English, never in German	6	0	6	1	2	2	1	2.08	2
I prefer to read books like “Harry Potter” or bestsellers in English	7	0	5	0	7	0	1	2.10	
I like to read Shakespeare, Joyce, or other classics only in the original	3	0	4	0	2	2	7	2.89	2

Table 6: Can-Do self-evaluations in non-school situations

*Some participants elected not to rank themselves because they “did not do” this. For example, one teacher said she has no contacts with whom she would ever speak on the phone in English, two teachers said they have not tried to read classic English literature since university, and two indicated they do not watch movies in English.

Three of the 10 items were listed as clear “I can do” statements, in which the teachers were asked to indicate how well they thought they could perform a task. These three statements (“I can make a phone call in English without being nervous,” “I can read an English newspaper or magazine without any problems,” and “I can ask for help to find my way around and understand directions”) were rated with relatively high marks, all

averaging between one and two. Those participants who gave themselves slightly lower marks of three did so because they said they could not claim full mastery as described in the item. Several teachers emphasized that they prefer to have a dictionary available when reading newspapers or magazines, even if they did not actually have to use it. Others said that they were good at making phone calls, but that they were always a bit nervous about it, so they could not truly claim not to be nervous.

The remaining seven items in Table 6 are not strictly “Can-Do” points, as the sentences do not begin with the phrase “I can.” Three items used conditional phrasing to allow the teachers to state how confident they would feel if they were in such a situation, even if they had not actually done this before. These three items were rated lower by the participants, many of whom were unsure of their ability to react in these specific situations: “I could describe to an English person how to do something ‘typically German’,” “I would have no problems taking part in a conversation about politics, religion, or social ‘hot topics’,” and “I could open a bank account or rent a car in an English speaking country without using a dictionary.”

Half of the teachers indicated that they believe they would be able to explain something they were familiar with, such as finding amber on the beach or baking a cake, and rated themselves with a 1 or a 2. Many of the teachers pointed out that, in such a situation, it is always possible to use hand gestures to compensate for missing vocabulary. The ratings given for the other two items were distinctly lower, as more than half of the teachers indicated they are not confident about being able to partake in a discussion about a complicated topic (average 2.30), or about their ability to purchase car insurance or to open a bank account (average 2.38). Nearly all of the participants, including those who ranked themselves higher, said that they would not approach a bank teller or a car rental agency without having prepared themselves for the conversation in advance. Even then, they would wish to have a dictionary available in case of difficulties with specific terms. Teacher 16, who had opened a bank account during her year in England, recalled that it was difficult but not impossible, and said that having done this successfully already, she could rate herself with a 1 now. Teacher 22 recalled her many conversations while on the school exchange program in America, and felt very good about rating her ability as a 1 on the item concerning discussing politics or religion. In each instance, the non-NESTs based their high self-rating on the fact that they had

already performed such tasks; while teachers who had not had such experiences were more reserved. Three other teachers who rated themselves with a 1 on both of these items (Teachers 20, 21, and 31) did not comment on such experiences, yet these three had given themselves top ratings on all of the other items on this Can-Do list, with the exception of Teacher 31, who opted out of one item, as described below. These three participants were consistent in rating themselves higher than the others, and they were very open to the idea of entering new situations that were challenging in terms of language. Their high self-ratings here might reflect how they view their abilities, but these ratings might also reflect the fact that they are less fearful about using English in new situations overall.

The third type of Can-Do item in Table 6 were four statements of intent or preference, in which the participants were asked to adapt their answers to indicate how strongly they felt the statement was true. The items were: “I am not at all afraid of or shy about speaking English with other people,” “I watch English movies (DVDs) only in English, never in German,” “I prefer to read books like “Harry Potter” or other bestsellers from England/USA in the English original,” and “I like to read Shakespeare, Joyce, or other classics only in the original language.” The answers to these four items varied widely, as did the additional comments the non-NESTs in this study made.

The vast majority of participants said that they were not insecure as speakers of English, and that, in regard to the first of these four items, they were not shy or afraid when speaking with other people. Even though they may not be “perfect” in English, most participants enjoy using the language as a means of communication and feel confident about speaking it with other people. All of the participants interpreted the phrase “other people” in this item to mean speakers of English from the inner and outer circles. Occasionally they would refer to people from expanding circle countries other than Germany. Teacher 11, who had told me that she felt self-conscious when administering oral exams with other non-NESTs at her school, related to me in connection with this item that she is very eager to practice her spoken English with native speakers. She recalled the time an American exchange student came to visit her class for an hour and she nearly monopolized the question and answer session that the pupils were having:

“Da war ich total heiß darauf zu fragen und zu reden. Dass die Schüler schon sagten (*mimic*) nun Mensch, Frau ((Name)), nun hören Sie doch mal auf! Wir wollen auch noch mal! Also da habe ich auch keine Hemmungen, das machte mir auch Spaß. Das war so ein bisschen, endlich mal, die Möglichkeit, sich mal auszuprobieren. Da greife ich schon so am Schopf. Dass ich da Angst habe, nein.” (11reg1)

Like many non-NESTs in this study, Teacher 11 describes differences in her confidence levels depending on with whom she is speaking. She is more open to conversing with native English speakers than with Germans who have mastered EFL. Whereas speaking English in front of her fellow teachers occasionally makes her nervous, she sees a visit by a foreigner as a “chance” to “finally try out” her language skills. She rated herself with a mark 2 on this item, not because she is shy or afraid, but because she wanted to indicate that she does not see her oral skills as being especially good: “Also ich, vielleicht schätze ich mich einfach zu gut ein?” (11reg1). The question of to what extent the language ability of the partner determines the willingness of the non-NEST to speak will be taken up again in the next section.

This statement made by Teacher 11 is another example of how difficult self-assessment ratings can be for the participants; and, specifically how hard they often find it to rate themselves on a numerical scale. Teacher 11 was not at all afraid or shy, and she might well have assigned herself a mark 1 on this item, but she also did not want to be seen as being too confident of her own abilities, and thus chose to give herself a lower mark. This example also demonstrates the extent to which many non-NESTs believe their profession influences their “private” language use. Although the Can-Do list stated that these were “non-teacher-specific-skills,” and I had asked Teacher 11 for examples of how she uses English outside the classroom, she nonetheless referred to an American visiting her classroom or to her sister-in-law in Berlin (“sie ist auch Englischlehrerin,”11reg1) as examples of “non-teacher” language. Her primary language contacts are all related in some way to her job, or they share a connection to school and teaching. This was not unusual and was echoed in interviews with many participants in this study. Many non-NESTs view English as intrinsically work-related, and find it difficult to distinguish between language “for teaching” or “for school” and language “not related to the job.”

Two items that had a wide range of self-ratings but similar averages were the statements about watching movies and reading popular works of fiction, both of which elicited information not only about language preferences when reading or watching films, but also about what forms of text and audio-visual media the non-NESTs have access to, and how their families can affect their language choices. Many of the teachers had not had easy access to a wide range of reading material when they entered the profession,

whereas today it is very easy to obtain English books and magazines. At least three of the 20 participants have invested in an electronic reader (such as a “Kindle” or “E-reader”), which enables them to purchase newer books immediately and at lower rates than print versions. Two of them also mentioned that electronic books help reduce the shelf space needed at home if family members have already purchased the titles in German translation. These three teachers were among the seven who rated themselves with a 1 on the item asking about casual or popular reading preferences. The 12 teachers who said that they read such books exclusively or often in English (marks 1 and 2) did so in order to expand their language skills. They indicated they read for pleasure, but also in order to learn new words or expressions, and some of them remarked that reading for pleasure is loosely connected with their profession, in that it improves their receptive skills. One teacher told me that, even though she only reads “easy” books intended for a wide audience, this type of reading still provides her with the opportunity to learn new language:

“Wenn das komplizierter wird, da muss man dann schon ganz genau überlegen. Gebe ich zu! (*lacht*) Manchmal, wenn ich ein Buch lese, überlege ich auch so, Mensch, warum haben die hier diese Zeitform genommen? Hätte ich ja nie im Leben gedacht.” (14reg2)

While stressing that she reads English books for herself, not for her job, she said she notices when the books use language she has not yet fully mastered, or which she has not been exposed to through her work in school. Even though she is basically satisfied with her language ability, Teacher 14 is also open to new language input. Reading books and articles in English, especially texts that have no direct connection with her work, is both a pleasure and an impetus to think more about the language.

Not all of the participants view reading in this way. Seven of the 20 teachers rated themselves with a 3; and one gave herself a 4, saying she would never read a book in English unless it was directly connected with her job:

“Wenn du in der Schule den ganzen Tag- (*Pause*). Ich meine, irgendwo braucht man da seine Freizeit, ja? Also Freizeit ist für mich, mal irgendwas anders zu machen. Außer lesen und sich vorzubereiten und sonst was. Das ist Arbeit.” (18reg2)

Teacher 18 did not view independent reading in English as an activity she wished to pursue in her free time. Her colleague in the double interview session also indicated that she was unwilling to spend her own time and money on an activity that might be related to work: “Nee, da muss ich nicht extra mir so eine Zeitschrift kaufen, um das jetzt extra auf Englisch zu lesen,” (17reg2). These teachers drew a distinct line between reading as

an activity they do for pleasure on their own and reading in English, which is an activity they would only do for their jobs. Dealing with an English text is seen by these participants as work, and it is not something they wish to spend their “free time” doing. It was not that these teachers claimed they were unable to read non-adapted texts in English, but that they refused to do so because they considered it “work.”

It is interesting that the self-rankings on this item varied according to the type of school at which a teacher was employed. Six of the seven who rated themselves with a 1 were teaching at a *Gymnasium*, although one *Gymnasium* teacher (Teacher 24, who gave herself consistently lower marks in most areas) rated herself with a 3. Nearly all of the teachers working at a *Regionalschule* or *Gesamtschule* gave themselves marks of 2 or 3, with two exceptions. Teacher 18 gave herself a mark of 4, as mentioned above, and Teacher 31, who had been trained as a *Gymnasium* teacher but is now working at a *Regionalschule*, chose to mark herself with a 1. The *Gymnasium* teachers seemed more interested in reading books and other materials in English, even if the texts had no direct connection to their school work. They also reported being able to read more for pleasure and with a certain level of speed, which made reading more enjoyable and less of a chore. Those *Regionalschule* teachers who said they read for pleasure in English were more apt to mention that they found this difficult or slow, that they used dictionaries to look up unknown words, and that that they viewed the activity as somewhat of a challenge. For most of them, it is an enjoyable challenge, and it is not so difficult that they would refuse to read books in English, as seems to be the case with Teachers 17 and 18. However, on the whole, they reported feeling less confident about their ability to read and enjoy non-adapted texts than the *Gymnasium* teachers.

The question of what language the non-NESTs prefer to hear when watching commercial movies from an English-speaking country is rather complicated. Nearly all of the participants had entered the teaching field before DVDs or Blue Ray discs with dual language tracks were available. Movies or documentaries on videotape did not offer the option of “selecting” a language, and thus could only be consumed in English if they had been purchased overseas. Today’s technology not only allows viewers to choose between the English original or the German dubbed version; it also offers the option of adding subtitles in either language. Websites such as “YouTube” and other online video platforms add to the audio-visual material available in English.

Not all of the teachers watch films in any language, and two of them opted out of ranking themselves on this item. Teacher 16 said she does not own a TV, and that she uses her computer for work so much that she has no desire to watch movies on the computer screen in the evenings. Teacher 14 indicated that she and her husband, who owns a small business, simply do not watch TV in the evenings, and that she does not watch movies at home at all. She said they both get up early and work long hours, adding with a laugh that she would fall asleep over any movie, no matter what the language.

As with reading for pleasure, the language chosen for watching movies was also divided roughly according to the type of school at which a teacher worked. Six out of the seven *Gymnasium* teachers gave themselves positive rankings, indicating that they would most certainly view an English film in the original if possible, but the seventh, Teacher 24, gave herself a much lower mark. She said that, although she watched movies in English, she prefers to watch them with subtitles (in English or in German), and therefore she could only rank herself between a 3 and a 4. She does not feel confident about watching a film in English without any aides. This relates to the lower mark she had assigned herself in the category of reading for pleasure, and it is consistent with her self-critical attitude towards her ability in English. The other *Gymnasium* teachers said they would prefer to watch British or American movies in the original, and that they enjoyed doing this. Teachers 20, 21, and 25 have partners who speak English, and all of them mentioned that this is very helpful, as there are no arguments about which language to choose. Teacher 25 also watches sports in English with her husband, and they have subscribed to a private television service that offers dual tracks for soccer, snooker, golf, etc. Even though she is not a sports fanatic, she enjoys watching such events in English. For some non-NESTs, viewing movies in English is something they look forward to and actively seek out, and it is something they feel comfortable with.

Other teachers, most notably those teaching at the *Regionalschule* level, said they do not like to watch movies in the original language, and that, if they do view films in English, they are less confident of their ability to understand everything. Teachers 12 and 35 said they could watch a film in English, but would prefer to use the English subtitles to help them better understand the spoken language. Teachers 11, 13, and 19 all had spouses who speak little or no English, and this affected when and how they were able to watch

a movie at home. Watching a film together as a couple or as a family is only possible if the spouse is willing to read subtitles in German, or if the non-NEST forgoes watching the movie in English. Teacher 19 said she often watches movies twice, the first time dubbed in German together with her husband, and then later in the English original alone. Because she already knows the plot and the content, she feels that she is able to concentrate on the language better. All of these teachers said they were therefore unsure about how they should rank themselves on this item. It is not that they do not watch DVDs in English, but the item listed the conditions as “immer nur auf Englisch an, nie auf Deutsch,” which was not something they could claim. Therefore, most of these teachers chose an answer of 2 or 3.

One teacher said she would never watch a movie in English for enjoyment or in order to improve her listening skills, and she gave herself a 4 on this Can-Do list, which she underlined twice for emphasis:

“Ich gucke mir keine Filme auf Englisch an, um mein Wissen zu verbessern. Also mich würde das nerven, muss ich Ihnen ganz ehrlich sagen. Mich da ständig zu überprüfen, kannst du jetzt alles verstehen oder so, mich ständig unter Druck zu setzen.” (17reg2)

This non-NEST said she avoids situations in which she feels that she, as a teacher of English, must prove to herself and others that her language skills are good enough. She is confident of her language skills as a teacher, and ranked herself with nearly all 2s on the Can-Do items pertaining to classroom and teaching, but she is not confident of her language skills outside the classroom, and she also sees no reason why she should apologize for this or prove herself in these areas. In her view, her “private” interests have no bearing on the job she does. She recalled that, when she was younger, before she decided to become a teacher, she had been interested in listening to music or reading texts in English and trying to figure out what was being said. Now that she is an English teacher, she no longer engages in these activities for personal enjoyment. Again, her colleague echoed this feeling in the interview session, saying that she too would not watch a movie in English on her own or try to decipher music lyrics: “Heute ist es nur ein BERUF, Englisch zu unterrichten,” (18reg2). It is not that these two teachers dislike the language, but they drew a clear line between the activities they must do for their jobs and the activities they enjoy doing after leaving the school building.

The final item with the lowest average of self-rankings (2.89) was the question concerning the preferred language for higher level or “classic” literature, which

appeared immediately following the item on bestsellers, with the example of “Harry Potter” and reading preferences. Only five participants gave themselves the same marks for both items: Teachers 20, 21, and 23 gave themselves a 1, and Teachers 11 and 18 chose 3 and 4, respectively. All of the other teachers gave themselves lower marks on reading the classics than on reading mainstream literature, sometimes by as much as two levels, and 11 of the 18 who responded to this item marked themselves in the lower range.

Two participants opted out of this item, saying they no longer read literature at this level in English, so they did not have scores to contribute to the average. Teacher 16 had already told me that she did not read her favorite authors in Russian in the original, and the same was true for English. If she had had to assign herself a mark, she said, it would be a 4, and she certainly would not now read in English the works of literature she had covered in her studies. If she were to read these books at all, she added, she would read them in translation. However, since she left the space on the Can-Do list blank, her answer is not recorded.

Teacher 31 also left this item blank, primarily because of the wording of this item:

“NUR in der Originalsprache lesen. Also, das stimmt eigentlich nicht. Ich lese Shakespeare, Sonette, im Original und ich lese sie auch auf Deutsch. Und ich diskutiere mit meinem Bruder, wer das 66. Sonett besser übersetzt hat, mit verschiedenen Varianten. Aber dass ich da ganze Stücke im Original konsumiere, zu meiner eigenem Freude, oder James Joyce, nein. Da schlafe ich ein! Also ich kann’s, theoretisch, glaube ich schon, aber ich mache es halt nicht gerne.” (31gy-reg1)

This teacher reported that she continues to read classic literature in English, and said she is still actively interested in many works that she read as a student at university. What caused her to leave this blank was the fact that she does not select her reading material systematically, and that she does not read works she finds dull. There are “difficult” pieces of literature in English that she enjoys (Shakespeare), and there are those that she finds boring (Joyce). During site visits and in several situations since the interview in which we met informally, I noticed that she always had English reading material in her bag, and that she borrowed from and loaned books to friends who shared her love of reading. Her range is wide and eclectic, and her self-rating for this item should have been a 1. In this instance, the teacher’s words in the interview played down her true abilities and interests. Had the item not contained the example “Joyce,” she might well have responded differently.

The Can-Do list of non-school situations included the skills of speaking, listening, and reading, but there were no items focusing on how well participants believe they can write in English. Additional input on current writing ability was provided by a few teachers, who said they sometimes write in English to host families or friends (Teachers 14 and 31). Most of the teachers who write in English outside of school do so at a level at which they feel comfortable, and they are satisfied with their current skills. Only two teachers described feeling frustrated at their level of writing: Teachers 31 and 36. Teacher 36 reflected upon a book project she had been involved with several years ago. She had enjoyed writing for a group production that was not connected with her job, but before sending the final documents to press, she asked an English friend to proofread her contribution. This friend made many corrections and suggestions on her writing, which upset her:

“Als ich das vorbereitet habe, da habe ich die Zusammenfassung zu meinem Oxford Student geschickt. Er hat sie dann korrigiert und mir dann zurückgeschickt und dann habe ich da gedacht, naja. So wirklich, so (*seufzt*) Scheiße. Ja, so MAN! Es war so viel, was er geändert hat. Das war so- (*Pause*) Neel!” (36gym1)

She said she is, for the most part, content with the level she has achieved to date, but added that her writing skills are not as good as she would like. Since having her work proofread, she has become uncertain about her ability to write in English.

Overall, the participants in this study indicated that they are content with their levels of English in most situations. Their strengths appear to lie in the area of classroom English, as they reported feeling confident about the language they use with their pupils in learning situations. They also expressed confidence in their abilities to deal with other situations relating to school activities. Their views on their own language skills differ in terms of which skills they utilize outside of the realm of school. However, they also have a wide range of expectations of themselves, and about what constitutes “good” and “bad.” These differences, in turn, influence how they view language maintenance and the steps they should take to improve their English over their careers. This will be the topic of the next section: the participants’ attitudes regarding professional development of language, and their needs, wishes, and plans for the future.

5.4 Plans for continuing language learning and development

The non-NESTs in this study were able to reflect on how they learned English and on the language change they have observed since becoming teachers. They were also quite

willing to make statements about how they view their current language skills and where they see their strengths and weaknesses. In this section, I describe the teachers' plans for the future in terms of continuing language learning, language retention, and professional development (PD) in English. First, I investigate whether the teachers see a need for specific actions, and why. Second, I look at which activities they currently take part in, or would like to have available. Finally, I examine some of the factors that influence whether a non-NEST actually seeks out and attends PD activities that include a language component.

The data for this section were taken primarily from the second interview sessions, in which I asked the participants specific questions about their views on continuing language learning and about their interest in language development and maintenance; and from the third self-evaluation sheet, in which the teachers were asked to comment on different language development options. Only 19 out of the 20 participants filled in this self-evaluation sheet and discussed their plans and hopes for future work. For this reason, all of the information presented in this section is based on data gathered from 19 participants.

5.4.1 Do teachers perceive a need for language PD?

As was described in section 5.3, the participants in this study are fairly confident that their English language skills are sufficient for teaching. The level of English they use in the classroom is stable, and they have seen specific gains since becoming teachers. Some teachers have noticed a language loss, or that there are areas in which they do not perform as well as they had previously, but this does not pose a problem for them. If there are small lapses in pronunciation or areas of oral fluency, this does not necessarily make them poor teachers. Such mistakes are rare, and the teachers believe, for the most part, that their pupils do not notice them (“Also ich glaube, das merkt man dann nicht,” 36gym1). There seems to be no pressing need for these teachers to engage in active language PD activities, because there are no areas of teaching which present them with difficulties:

“Ich habe jetzt nicht das Bedürfnis, dass ich jetzt unbedingt was machen müsste, um den Anforderungen hier jetzt besser gerecht zu werden. Also, ich bin mit dem zufrieden, was ich kann, und da habe ich jetzt nicht- (*Pause*). Ich sehe nicht die Notwendigkeit, sagen wir es jetzt mal so.” (16ges2)

Despite these expressions of confidence, many participants did indicate an interest in continuing to work on their English skills, if not in order to work better with pupils, then for personal fulfillment or for some vague expectation of professional duty.

The teachers with the lowest level of interest in language maintenance were those who work primarily with lower-level learners, or who teach at the *Regionalschule* level. The most extreme example is Teacher 30, who works with learning disabled pupils and teaches English at only a very basic level. She left the self-evaluation sheet blank and said that language maintenance was, for her, simply not an issue because of the simple structures her pupils are expected to work with. She stated that any PD sessions she would attend would not be connected with English, but with aspects of education related directly to the learning disabled and their special needs.

This sentiment was reflected to some extent by a few of the *Regionalschule* teachers, who noted that the range of English in their classrooms was rather limited. Their pupils spend a great deal of time working on rudimentary structures and a small core of vocabulary that the non-NESTs have long since fully mastered. Although none of the teachers claimed that their English was “perfect,” or that they would not benefit from investing in their own language skills, several said there are more pressing matters to worry about, and that they would place language PD very low on their priority list. As was mentioned in the case studies chapter, Teacher 10 expressed considerable skepticism about language PD for English, adding that, if he were to attend any language courses, he would rather invest time in Russian classes, as this was the language in which he had experienced the most attrition. English loss was not an issue for him, nor was improving his English important for his teaching tasks. In the double interview sessions, Teachers 17 and 18 were also highly doubtful that they would take part in any structured English improvement sessions or would invest much time in language maintenance:

“Mal okay, ein BISSCHEN, aber nicht SO viel. Dass ich jetzt sage, ich müsste irgendwo da HIN trotten, um mich jetzt da, für Sachen vorzubereiten, solche Sachen für den Unterricht, die man SOWIESO nicht braucht, NEE! Dass ich, für mein persönliches Ego-, nee. Nee, nee. Das habe ich nicht nötig.” (17reg2)

Teacher 17 said that, while she is not fundamentally opposed to working on her English, she does not see the point of investing time, effort, and possibly money into working on skills she “does not need anyway” as a teacher. These three participants said they do not believe they need to improve their English in order to be good EFL teachers, and

stressed that they have no interest in doing language work only for the sake of their “personal egos.” Because there is no reason for them to work on improving their English, they do not wish to do so.

Some of the teachers working at the *Regionalschule* level expressed a different view, saying that, while they do not see an immediate need for language PD, they also consider continuing language learning to be a natural part of their jobs and professional identities. Teacher 11 said she is not worried about language attrition, but that she tries to maintain her English skills (“Ich bemühe mich schon, dass ich da ein bisschen am Ball bleibe,” 11reg1). Although she does not seek out or participate in formal or structured language PD, she makes a concerted effort to watch BBC or CNN newscasts, and she reads newspaper articles in order to stay informed about what is going on in English-speaking countries (“versuche, immer auf dem Neusten zu bleiben”), which, in turn, improves her language skills (“Kenntnisse aufzufrischen,” 11reg1). Whether she does this only for herself or because she believes it benefits her professionally is unclear. Although she could not identify any real gaps in her professional language knowledge, she said she feels obliged to practice English in some way. Whereas Teacher 17 might attribute this desire to “personal ego,” Teacher 11 seems to hold the view that non-NESTs should want to “freshen” their language skills.

Teacher 13 also stated that she assumes that foreign language teachers would want to take part in activities outside of school that required them to use or to improve their language skills. Because her certification for English was obtained in a two-year course, she was worried about her speaking skills and pronunciation, which led her to believe she should still be attending training sessions of some sort. Ideally, she would like to work under supervision in a language lab, or in courses in which she could practice pronunciation directly and receive immediate feedback from an instructor, as she had done at university years ago: “Da würde ich mir schon wünschen, dass in Weiterbildung, solche Sachen angeboten würden,” (13reg2). While she does not appear to think she is a bad teacher, or that she has such poor pronunciation that her pupils cannot learn any English from her, she seems to believe she could be doing more. In her view, any improvement she makes would benefit not only herself as a language professional, but also the pupils in her classrooms, and these two benefits are intertwined.

One of the *Regionalschule* teachers did, however, report that she invests in language classes for the sake of learning English for herself, and that the skills she learns in these classes are not necessarily tied to her job. Teacher 19, like Teacher 13, received her qualifications in a shorter re-training program. Thus, Teacher 19 said she is certain that her language skills are not as polished as those of some of her colleagues who had attended four- or five-year programs. Yet her desire to continue attending language classes and to travel to the UK does not stem from an interest in improving her teaching, but from a strong wish to speak and understand the language better. She said she has already attended several language courses overseas, and plans to attend more after she retires in a few years. She said she hopes she will finally have time to travel to England more often and to further improve her English. Even though she will not be teaching, she said she plans to continue to improve her language skills in order to finally reach the level she desires. She indicated it is important for her to speak English well in her classroom, but added that her main goal is to become more proficient outside the classroom.

Other teachers, especially those who had been trained for the *Gymnasium* level, made much clearer distinctions between learning for their own benefit and maintaining language skills for professional reasons. Like the non-NESTs working at lower levels, they said they feel little need to maintain or improve their English for the classroom or for the benefit of their pupils. Rather, they said they seek to work on aspects of the language for personal reasons, including that doing so makes them feel happier and better about themselves. Whereas none of them indicated that they see a need to become more proficient as a language instructor, many of them expressed a desire to become a more expert user of English, and said they are willing to go to great lengths to initiate private language PD activities or attend structured events they believe would help them improve. However, the results of this study did not make clear why *Gymnasium* non-NESTs show a greater interest. These teachers may have always had a stronger interest in language learning, which led to the decision to teach at the *Gymnasium* level instead of at the *Regionalschule*. It may also be the case that teaching older learners in a more academically oriented setting exposes them to different levels of English, and indirectly inspires them to invest more heavily in language maintenance.

The non-NESTS who indicated they are the most motivated to invest in language PD were Teachers 21 and 23, both of whom had spent longer periods of time in English-speaking countries prior to enrolling at the university. They said very clearly that they want to maintain their strong oral skills in English, and that they want to speak well for their own benefit, and not to prove themselves as users or teachers. They each spoke of not wanting to “forget” the English they had learned so far, and they demonstrated that they are more willing than the other participants to invest in travel to the UK or the USA. For them, English is no longer a foreign language; it is part of their identity (“Es ist meine zweite Sprache,” 23gym2). Therefore, they are unwilling to lose any ground (“Ich versuche das aufzuhalten indem ich immer dagegen steuere, immer,” 21gym2). Whereas some teachers said they view international travel as an expensive requirement, or as something that they “should” do more often, Teacher 23 said she regards it as a reward she gives herself (“jetzt belohnst du dich selbst,” 23gym2), and that she would continue to travel even if she were no longer working as a teacher.

In addition to school type, the participants’ ages and gender are also relevant in how they view their need for or interest in language PD activities. The teachers who are closer to retirement (age 45 and over at the time of the interviews) were more likely to say they see continued language learning as a personal matter, and not necessarily as a useful activity for their professions. The younger teachers (only three of whom had not yet turned 40 at the time of the interviews) were, by contrast, more apt to say they see language development activities as potentially useful for themselves as language instructors. One reason for this difference may be that teachers with less job experience are still forming their own language identities as teachers, and therefore have a greater interest in language PD than their older colleagues. It is also possible that the older teachers’ years of experience have given them a higher level of professional confidence, and that this confidence lowers their perceived need for language PD. It is also possible that, like Teacher 19, these participants are already beginning to think about retirement, and about whether or how English will remain a part of their lives once they have left the classroom.

In terms of gender, the two men in the study (Teachers 10 and 20) demonstrated that they are less interested in participating in any sort of language development activities than their female colleagues. Although this study population is very small and the two

men cannot be seen as being representative of all male non-NESTs, it was evident that they were not as willing as the female participants to consider language PD. It could be that these men are simply more satisfied with their own language abilities than the women are. However, it might also be the case that these men engage in forms of language maintenance at home without noticing it. Both are married to women who are also qualified English teachers (but who did not take part in this study), and they discuss work issues at home; perhaps this input is enough for them. Although several of the female participants had spouses or partners who were competent speakers of English, none of them co-resided with an EFL teacher, as the two male participants did. In light of the very small numbers of non-NESTs in this study, it would be wrong to draw any conclusions, either about gender or about the effect of being married to a fellow non-NEST. It can only be said that the male participants, when considering the various activities suggested on the self-evaluation sheet, gave a greater number of responses that indicated they are not interested in these activities. Next, I will look at the activities proposed on this sheet, and other possible activities for language PD that came up during the interviews.

5.4.2 Activities for continued language development and maintenance

The data on language PD activities came from two different groups among the participants. Teachers 10 to 25 are all “normal” teachers, in that they usually attend some sort of professional development sessions once or twice a year for at least one of the subjects they teach, or they attend a session in an area of general pedagogy. These 15 teachers are consumers of PD activities and were asked about what language activities they choose and why, how often they participate in them, how they select PD sessions, and how effective they believe these to be.

The other five participants are “PD experts,” in that they have either offered seminars of their own, or they are responsible for organizing or disseminating information about specific English PD activities to colleagues beyond their own schools. This smaller group includes Teachers 30 and 37, who have offered sessions or published material on teaching EFL to pupils with mental or physical handicaps; as well as Teachers 31, 35, and 36 who, at the time of the interviews, were responsible for organizing various PD events at the regional level. These five teachers all gave only one longer interview in

which they were asked additional questions, not only about their own language PD preferences as consumers, but also about which activities they see as being particularly valuable, popular, or necessary among their peers.

Of the 20 participants, all but one (Teacher 30) filled in the 11-point questionnaire on language development activities. This questionnaire asked the non-NESTs to indicate whether they participate in or pursue such language PD work “often or regularly” or “sometimes.” If they indicated that they do not participate in the proposed activity, they could also state whether they plan to engage in this activity in the future (“I’d like to do this but have not (yet) done it”), or they could give a reason why not. The possible answers for not doing a certain activity included: “I have no time or energy,” “I have never thought about doing this,” “it is not offered here,” “it would be a waste of time, boring, or would not interest me,” or “it would be too complicated or expensive.” Multiple answers were possible, and it was also possible to mix answers. For instance, Teachers 20, 21, and 22 all indicated that they “sometimes” attend PD activities for English teachers, but Teachers 21 and 22 also said that such activities are “not offered here,” and Teacher 20 said that these activities are “too complicated or expensive.” Despite ticking answers that might imply they do not take part in these activities, these three teachers indicated that they do participate in them, at least “sometimes.”

The types of possible PD activities can be divided into roughly 3 categories. The first encompasses PD which is organized or structured by someone other than the non-NESTs themselves. This includes PD sessions for English teachers which do not necessarily have a language component (section 5.4.2.1), as well as different types of language courses a non-NEST might attend (section 5.4.2.2). The second category includes suggestions for things that participants might do together with other non-NESTs at an informal level (section 5.4.2.3), and the third category contains language activities that a teacher might do on his or her own, outside the realm of organized seminars or meetings (section 5.4.2.4). I will look now at the first category, in which EFL teachers are welcome, but in which English is not the primary focus.

5.4.2.1 Structured non-language PD activities

Although this first category of structured PD events for English teachers is not directly relevant to their language skills, it is important because such sessions are the first

examples that teachers think of when asked about their PD activities. As can be seen in Table 7, PD sessions offered through well-known channels have a high rate of attendance in that all 19 participants indicated that they take part in the activities either “often/regularly” or “sometimes.” The two main activities mentioned are an annual day of workshops for modern foreign language teachers held in the late summer or early autumn (the *Fremdsprachentag*), and various seminars for language teachers offered either in their own schools or in nearby venues during the year. Participation in these activities is, to some extent, mandatory, as teachers are expected to attend a certain number of PD sessions each school year. The teachers in this study noted that this requirement is easy to fulfill, and that the main costs and responsibility for organizing these activities are borne by someone other than themselves, usually a government agency or a publishing house; teachers pay only for their transportation costs and occasionally a nominal registration fee.

	Take part in PD sessions (LISA and others) more actively
I do this often / regularly	15
I do this sometimes	4
Would like to but I don't have the time/energy	1
Always wanted to, but have not (yet) done this	0
Never thought about it	0
Is not offered here	2
Would be boring/ waste of time/ no fun	0
Too expensive/ complicated to organize	1

Table 7: Participation in structured PD activities for teachers of English

A few of the participants in this study attend far more sessions than required. If there is an interesting PD session offered which is feasible to attend, some non-NESTs will do so, even if they have fulfilled the required number of sessions for the school year:

“Ich besuche SÄMTLICHE Fortbildungsveranstaltungen, die es gibt. Also alles, was den Lehrern angeboten wird. Ich möchte sagen, zu 90%, bin ich dabei, habe ich gemacht, kann ich nachweisen. Mache ich immer, schon über die Jahre und nicht erst seit gestern und heute, für mich selber.” (19reg1)

Teacher 19 engages in PD not only for her job, but also for her own enjoyment and personal growth. She enjoys meeting colleagues from other schools at such sessions, she appreciates the books and material distributed by the organizers, and she is proud of the fact that she is an active consumer of PD offers. She expressed the opinion that any seminar, workshop, or lecture offered in connection with English has something to offer her professionally and personally.

However, the majority of participants in the study said they generally select PD sessions based on their needs at that point in time, which might include the age groups they are working with and the topics they are expected to cover during the school year. The teachers who work with grades 9 and 10 at the *Regionalschule* and with grades 11 and 12 at the *Gymnasium* said they nearly always attend information sessions on leaving exams or training sessions on how to mark these exams. The teachers who work with grades 5 and 6 said they are more interested in learning about activities they can use with mixed-ability groups and how they can adapt material to fit learners' needs. Several teachers said they are very pleased with the range of PD sessions offered, and that they have been well-served by those who organize such activities. Most of the teachers agreed that the content of the PD session determines whether they attend:

“Es ist nicht so ein MUSS, so eine bestimmte Anzahl von Stunden an Weiterbildung im Jahr abhaken. Wenn mich das so interessiert, dann fahre ich da hin. Und wenn ich sage, das gibt mir wahrscheinlich nix, dann lass ich es bleiben. Aber eigentlich alles, was interessant ist, versuchen wir schon daran teilzunehmen.” (17reg2)

Only one teacher said he thinks twice about whether he will attend a session that is not directly in his school, as he has young children and too little time to travel far. For Teacher 20, it is more important that a PD session is offered at a convenient time and close to his home or school. He believes that, once his children are older, he will be more open to selecting PD sessions based on his interests and needs. For now, however, he selects his PD activities based on convenience rather than content.

Other participants noted that, if they do not find what they need or want listed in a catalogue or online, there are opportunities to make suggestions for new topics or sessions, and that they can help determine what is offered:

“Man kann sagen, wozu man noch gerne Weiterbildung hätte. Unsere Fachschaftsleiterin, die fragt, was ist und was hättet ihr denn gerne? So, Anfang des Schuljahres, was wollt ihr gerne? Und dann können wir das eigentlich immer äußern.” (23gym2)

Teacher 23 works at a school with many foreign language teachers and is pleased with her school's willingness to provide rooms for PD sessions. While teachers from other schools must travel to attend interesting PD sessions, she said that, after she makes a request at a staff meeting, her school will generally offer the desired session within a few months. One of the teachers who helps organize such sessions confirmed this, saying that she collects ideas throughout the school year, and that she specifically elicits requests from all of the foreign language staff: “Einmal im Jahr sitzen wir mit den

Fachkollegen, und dann wird gefragt, WAS möchtet ihr? Und dann kommen ein paar Sachen daraus, was jeder möchte,” (35reg1). The teachers’ requests are generally related to changes in the school system or to new requirements or textbooks, and she noted that the topics the teachers requested often matched those that had been suggested by education experts at the regional and state levels.

Although the content of such PD activities varies, the participants agreed that the main goal of such sessions is not to maintain or improve the non-NESTs’ English, but to help them become better English teachers or better teachers in general. In terms of the latter, many participants working at the *Regionalschule* level said they believe that such PD general pedagogical sessions are inherently more important than language PD activities, because the school system has changed so much in the past few years. Many of them have specific questions about learning disabilities, legal issues, social concerns when dealing with problematic families and issues of child abuse or alcoholism, or even questions about routine matters, such as the new report card format. For these participants, such “administrative” or “social” issues are more important than subject-specific sessions, as there are more changes in structures and administration than there are in the basic elements of teaching and learning foreign languages.

When the goal of the PD session is to help the participants become better EFL teachers, the teachers are able to express clearly what they need and value, and what they do not find useful. Almost all of the non-NESTs agreed that PD sessions that do not address their needs as EFL teachers are of no benefit. According to the participants, an effective and useful PD session for English teachers generally has four characteristics: it provides new ideas, it covers topics that are applicable in the classroom and are not overly abstract, it is led by speakers who disseminate the information or materials in a ready-to-use format, and the time is used effectively for all participants.

The first complaint of the participants is that many PD sessions purport to be presenting **new ideas** that are, for these non-NESTs, common knowledge. Although many of the older teachers recalled that, directly after unification, they appreciated PD sessions that exposed them to different methods, they pointed out that most of these methods have become second nature by now, and they react negatively when someone tries to explain them anew:

“Viele Veranstaltungen, die jetzt vom Schulamt laufen, das ist so, dass dann einer dir noch mal erklärt, wie Gruppenarbeit geht. Na (*lacht*), das will hier keiner mehr hören. Wirklich nicht,” (31gy-reg1).

During one site visit, I attended a PD activity in which the presenter was proudly explaining why “freeze frames” are an effective means of learner-directed activity in the language classroom, and why the teachers should consider using them. The non-NEST participants were, however, already several steps ahead of the speaker and were comparing notes on how they had employed them not only in EFL classrooms, but also as part of interdisciplinary classes during project weeks. For these teachers, the idea was not “new,” and this PD session therefore had little to offer. In the SSI following this PD session, the teacher commented that he rarely hears “new” ideas in such sessions:

“Es ist ein bisschen erschöpft. Zur Zeit find ich alles ein bisschen abgegrast, was der letzte Schrei so hergibt, in der Unterrichtsdidaktik,” (10reg2).

Teacher 10 therefore emphasized that he has given up on getting useful suggestions through standard PD channels offered through his school.

The non-NESTs also expressed frustration with PD sessions that are not **applicable** to their teaching situations. This idea of direct relevance for the classroom was repeated in many interviews, and the teachers often expressed disdain for the more abstract and theoretical PD activities they have experienced. A common complaint is that the speakers or presenters often seem to have forgotten what a typical school EFL classroom looks like, and what activities and topics are appropriate for children of different age groups:

“Eigentlich suchen wir Sachen, die auch für den Unterricht was bringen. Also nicht Methodik, oder die Didaktik-des-so-Blah-Blah-Blahs, so Theorie! Nichts gegen den Herrn Professor da, aber das hat wahrscheinlich nicht so viele Vorteile.” (17reg2)

Teacher 17 is no longer interested in attending PD sessions in which a “theory” is presented without being tied to concrete teaching examples. She wants “things” she can use in class, and she recalled certain worthwhile PD sessions in which she learned a new song and taught it to her pupils the following week, or was shown an example of a timeline with funny pictures to display verb tenses in class. For her, such “things” are useful, and make the time spent in a PD session worth her while, whereas more “theory” is unnecessary. She said she values PD sessions specifically designed for non-NESTs who work with schoolchildren, and she wants concrete examples of teaching materials. In addition to applicability, the participants in this study said they expect PD sessions to supply them with **tangible materials** that they do not have to generate themselves and are ready for classroom use:

“Wir brauchen wirklich konkrete, schöne Ideen. Ein Lied in Englisch und dann dazu, dass man sieht, man kann das so und so oder SO und hier (*zeigt mit Fingern auf den Tisch*). Dass man zeigt, das machen die Kinder eigentlich ganz gerne. Und dass man das ausprobieren kann, dass man wirklich eben ganz konkret sieht, wie man’s macht. Ja, konkrete Sachen. Was Brauchbares, Nutzbares, und das, was eben nicht aus uns SELBST generiert wird.” (31gy-reg1)

Teacher 31 explained that, in addition to being taught a song, she also wants the presenter to demonstrate several ways of working with this song. She expects speakers to provide new “input,” and practical advice on how to conduct a particular lesson in the classroom. However, she does not want to participate in a session in which she and her colleagues are expected to brainstorm or relate what they do. Although she said she values her colleagues and has good ideas of her own, she indicated she seeks new input that does not have to be “generated” by a group attending a session.

Several of the teachers said they do not approve of a recent trend in which the non-NESTs attending PD seminars are expected to collaborate on creating classroom materials as a group. Such events are often billed as a forum for teachers to share their ideas and experiences and help each other, but most of the non-NESTs in this study said they do not find these sessions useful:

“Ich gehe nicht zu einer Veranstaltung, wo ich ein Thema kriege, und dann soll ICH da was ausdenken, und da noch den anderen Kollegen das vorstellen. Da kriege ich, wenn ich Glück habe, vielleicht eine, mal zwei Ideen. Dazu brauche ich keine Veranstaltung. Und viel mehr kommt da nicht.” (31gy-reg1)

Several of the participants noted that, because they already prepare their class materials and share them with colleagues, these sessions do not offer them anything new. The materials produced at such sessions are rarely finished on time, and most of the teachers said they did not implement them in their classes afterwards. Teacher 31, who helps organize PD seminars for her colleagues, explained that most non-NESTs she knows are “consumers,” in that they ask for finished products, either in the form of a book, a worksheet, or at least a list of direct Internet links where they can obtain copies of items they can use.

An effective PD session should, according to these teachers, not only introduce new ideas, but provide the teachers with concrete materials that are ready for use in the classroom, or that require only minor modifications by the teacher. Teacher 12 recalled a PD session in which she was shown a new technique for introducing certain texts. At the end of the session, she asked for copies of the material and was told she could find everything online. The person administering the PD session did not know the exact link where such texts could be found, but said it should not be hard to find using standard

search engines. Teacher 12 said she was furious about this (“da war ich ja richtig sauer,” 12reg2), and could not understand why she and the other participants should be expected to conduct an Internet search for something that the speaker had failed to prepare. After spending 90 minutes in a PD session, she expects to leave the room with materials or ideas that can be employed immediately (“das kann ich nehmen, damit kann ich loslegen,” 12reg2). In this case, she would have to spend an additional hour at home to find and download the material in order to use it. Her scorn was obvious: “Das ist für mich denn doch keine effektive Fortbildung. Das ist Zeitraub!” (12reg2).

Other participants had the same feeling, and explained that they resented the amount of time they were expected to spend online or searching through other media to find materials and then to adapt them to the needs of their learners. Although the Internet has been a boon in some ways, it also takes more time to select and cull the offerings in order to get what they need:

“Es ist so viel STUSS dabei und es kostet ja viel ZEIT, alles auszusuchen. Das, was man WIRKLICH für den Unterricht benutzen kann, und dass es so ist, da wo der Schüler ist, wo ich als Englischlehrer da Material finde, oder Anregungen.” (16ges2)

The participants also said they want to have access to all of the information they need without having to check the legality of using the materials. Teacher 24 recalled attending a session in which the speaker was showing teachers how to work with a pop song and the lyrics. When the teachers asked if it might not be a copyright infringement to photocopy the lyrics from the album cover and distribute these in class, the speaker was not sure and suggested they ask someone in their school if it was permitted. Teacher 24 remarked that such “Halbwissen” is less than helpful, and that the distribution of these types of materials is “nicht effektiv,” (24gym2) as they most likely cannot be used in classrooms. In short, the teachers said they want to be given a unified set of materials, with ideas about how to implement these materials in the classroom. In PD sessions, they wish to receive a product, learn a technique, or hear about a tangible and applicable idea.

The final concern for most teachers is that the **time is well-spent**. They do not want to spend an entire afternoon or Saturday morning doing “busy work” or creating things in a group simply in order to fulfill a certain requirement for a minimum number of minutes or hours. They want the time in PD activities to be used effectively and be devoted to new information:

“Wenn da solche Dozenten kommen und Zettel verteilen, und ich muss schreiben, wie fühle ich mich und was war da gut und was da nicht gut (*lacht*). Na? Ein Lehrer macht das den ganzen Tag lang. Nee, er will hin kommen und er will dann da einen INPUT kriegen.” (31gy-reg1)

Several of the teachers criticized PD sessions that place too much emphasis on “the group” and on the session itself. Just as Teacher 31 said she dislikes filling in feedback forms and discussing “how she felt” that day with a group, other teachers complained that many PD sessions devote too much time to warm-up activities and games:

“Ich möchte hingehen und nicht irgendwie lange rum labern oder irgendwelche Spiele machen, weil ich einfach einen anstrengenden Tag hinter mir habe. Ich möchte hinkommen und ich möchte neue Ideen vermittelt bekommen, hier, kurz und knapp. Auch MAL ein Training, wo WIR als Englischlehrer was probieren, aber das ist mir bei einigen Veranstaltungen manchmal zu- (*Pause*). Da wird zu viel Zeit gewidmet. Bin sowieso mehr der Mensch, hier, zack-zack-bingo.” (19reg2)

The participants observed that sessions offered after a full day of teaching are particularly stressful, and added that they dislike being asked to play introduction games with colleagues they see every day. Like Teacher 19, they said they want information and “ideas,” and they want to receive these quickly, and without a lot of “labern” (“gabbing”) or wasted time.

PD sessions that give participants complete and valuable materials or ideas are useful for the non-NESTs as teachers, but not necessarily as speakers, of English: “du kriegst da sehr viele schöne Tipps, für den Unterricht, aber so vom Sprachlichen her, das fehlt” (13reg1). Some teachers said they would welcome the opportunity to attend structured language PD activities beyond those currently offered:

“Eigentlich sind das Werbeseminare vom Verlag. Die sind natürlich hilfreich, aber das Sprachliche, das fördert das nicht. Ich würde gerne einen Kurs besuchen, wo man selber seine kommunikativen Fähigkeiten ausbauen könnte. Wirklich nur Englisch spricht, nicht Deutsch, und das auffrischt.” (23gym2)

In the following, I will look at how these non-NESTs might focus on their English skills through structured language activities.

5.4.2.2 Structured language development PD activities

There are no structured language PD activities offered specifically for non-NESTs in the area. Most local classes are aimed at a much lower level than the teachers would need, and are not designed for individuals who have state certification as English instructors. The courses at the university level are not targeted at in-service teachers, and there seem to be no other channels for structured language development. This lack of offerings is matched by a lukewarm interest on the part of the non-NESTs in attending structured

“classes” for language maintenance, or at least a slight unwillingness to make much effort to attend courses.

The third self-evaluation sheet listed three possible types of structured courses that might match non-NESTs’ language levels, but, as Table 8 shows, the participants in this study had widely different responses to these suggestions.

	Take courses, at the university or some other “higher level”	Apply for funding to attend summer language classes in the UK, the USA, or Malta	Take online language courses, at home / in my school’s computer room
I do this often / regularly	3	2	0
I do this sometimes	2	2	2
Would like to but I don’t have the time/energy	5	1	1
Always wanted to, but have not (yet) done this	6	3	1
Never thought about it	3	9	11
Is not offered here	5	1	0
Would be boring/ waste of time/ no fun	0	0	5
Too expensive/ complicated to organize	1	3	0

Table 8: Participation in structured language PD activities

Five of the 19 participants said that they have attended language classes at a “higher” level since receiving certification, usually overseas. This means that the answers for attending courses at a “higher” level usually overlapped with the answers given to the item concerning attending “summer language classes” in inner circle countries. Of those who said they did this “often or regularly,” Teacher 19 indicated she had been to a language school in England twice and was preparing for her third trip when we spoke, Teacher 24 said she was attending courses at the local university, and Teacher 11 did not elaborate on her coursework. The two participants who indicated that they attend advanced courses “sometimes” are Teachers 31 and 35, both of whom said they are involved in organizing PD activities for their peers, and who had attended PD sessions in other cities in Germany in conjunction with these activities. Upon further questioning, they described these “courses” as methodology training rather than language classes; but because the sessions were conducted in English, they viewed them as beneficial to their own language skills. The majority of the non-NESTs said they have never attended courses, and they gave a variety of reasons for not doing so.

Nearly half of the participants said they had “never thought about” applying for funding to attend language classes overseas, and many said they thought that such funding was not available to them, or that there would be too much paperwork involved. Teachers

31, 35, and 36 who organized PD activities told me that they had arranged several sessions in which non-NESTs who had successfully completed such applications and attended classes spoke of their experiences and gave tips on how to navigate the system. Teacher 31 said she believes these sessions motivate other teachers to apply, but Teacher 35 said she is more pessimistic: “wenn es da nicht immer so MÜHEVOLL wäre, sich da anzumelden, zu bewerben, und dabei 30 SEITEN auszufüllen,” (35ges1). She believes that many teachers might consider courses overseas, but that the actual number who fill in all the forms and go is extremely low.

Teacher 19 is one of the speakers who indicated she had related her experiences in such sessions, and she said she is hesitant to do so again (“ich halte mich zurück. Ich will nicht, dass sie denken, ich will sie damit belehren,” 19reg2). In her opinion, it is not only the paperwork and amount of effort necessary to obtain funding; there is also an element of not wanting to make any effort beyond the minimum. She is frustrated by what she sees as a low level interest in language PD activities among the teachers at her own school:

“Ich habe zum Beispiel zu meinen Kolleginnen gesagt, hier, mit Canterbury, Mensch, das gibt es. Leute, guckt doch mal her, schaut euch das an. Und dann kam zurück (*mimic*) Ich habe in meinen Sommerferien was Besseres zu tun. (*Pause*) Ja, das war die Antwort. (*Pause*) Gut. Kann man nicht (*zuckt mit den Schultern*). Es ist so.” (19reg2)

While she is interested in attending language classes in the UK, her colleagues have “better things to do,” and are unwilling to spend part of their six-week summer break in a language school. For these teachers, packing and traveling are associated with a holiday trip, not with language courses and homework.

The participants expressed a slightly higher level of interest in attending courses locally, perhaps through the university, than in applying for funding to go overseas. Six of the participants said that they would be interested in auditing a university class or attending language courses at a “higher level,” but have not yet taken any steps to do so. Three indicated that they do not believe there are any courses at the university they would be allowed to join (“not offered here”), and one said she is uncertain about the costs and schedule of university classes. Although she expressed an interest in sitting in on a seminar, she said she had heard that they were oversubscribed, and that she would therefore have to pay student fees. She admitted that the steps involved in investigating the details of such courses have been too much trouble for her, and she therefore has not attended any.

Many teachers said they are aware that the local university sponsors one-day annual workshops for English teachers, with lectures given in English on topics that they might want to use in their classrooms. Several of the non-NESTs working at the *Gymnasium* level said they have attended these workshops, but added that they are unsure whether they had gained anything in terms of language by participating. Although they found the content “interesting” and were able to glean a few new facts for their classrooms, their participation was primarily passive. They could ask questions and perhaps discuss certain aspects of the topics, but these sessions did not constitute real “language development”. Other participants in the study said they avoid these day-long workshops because it is too much trouble to apply for a day off (the sessions are held on weekdays during the school year), and they do not really see the point of them. In particular, the non-NESTs working at the *Regionalschule* level said they cannot see the connection between what is offered by the university and what they “need” as teachers:

“Es wird hin und wieder mal eine Vorlesung zu irgendeinem Thema auf Englisch gehalten. Dann sind das Themen, die irgendwie völlig, so eher die gymnasiale Stufe ansprechen. Ich meine, sage ich jetzt einfach mal, das Wahlsystem in der Vereinigten Staaten. Da habe ich keine Lust, mich da hinzusetzen (*lacht*). Ich weiß auch nicht, ob ich das denn so vollständig begreife. Und ich kann’s nicht mal gebrauchen.” (14reg2)

Like many participants, Teacher 14 intertwined in her response language PD and non-language PD. On the one hand, such a session might be challenging for her in terms of language and content (“weiß nicht, ob ich das begreife”), which might be a reason to attend or to avoid it. On the other hand, she cannot see a clear use for the content in her teaching situation (“ich kann’s nicht mal gebrauchen”). She said she wants a PD activity that provides content that helps her to improve her English, and that gives her the opportunity to talk about issues in English that actually come up in her classroom, and that relate to the level of learners she works with on a daily basis:

“Diskussion irgendwie, zu bestimmten Themen. Auch über landeskundliche oder geschichtliche Faktoren. Es ist ja nicht so, dass das mich nicht interessiert (*lacht*). Aber dass man dann noch darüber redet. Dass man da viel Sprachpraxis, in kleinen Runden, und dann auch viel sprechen kann.” (14reg2).

According to Teacher 14, the day-long events offered at the university do not focus on topics that she, or her learners, deal with, and the audience is too large to allow her to get much practice in speaking herself. She said she thinks a smaller group would be better: “Nicht zu viele, nicht so mit 30 Leuten. Es wäre schon schön, wenn das kleine Gruppen wären, dass man wirklich auch so Sprachpraxis hätte,” (14reg2). For her, a

“small” group would include no more than 10 participants, so that everyone would have a chance to practice speaking about the topics.

The participants in the study were divided on the questions of how often and how long structured language activities should be. A few of them said they believe that language maintenance is best done in a small group who meet regularly; if not weekly, then perhaps monthly or at set intervals. In such a setting, the members could help each other and would feel comfortable with the group dynamics, and they would benefit from continual effort (“Das wäre schon eine tolle Sache, wenn man irgendwo was STETIGES, was Festes hätte,” 18reg2). Others said they would not consider attending a regular course. They said they prefer sessions offered in isolation, and which they could join when they had time and interest. According to these teachers, committing to a set day of the week or month is neither desirable or feasible: “Ich möchte nicht jede Woche, jeden Monat,” (16ges2). Teacher 16 explained how complicated a teacher’s schedule can be. Even though she teaches the same children with the same schedule at school, her workload is constantly changing due to class trips, meetings, external tests, colleagues who are ill, substitution rotations, etc. Theoretically, she is willing to attend regular courses, but she could not say that she would actually attend because her workload fluctuated so much.

One type of language PD activity that might offer a solution to this problem are “online courses,” which were listed as the third item on the evaluation sheet. One advantage of e-learning is that participants can determine the pace of their progress through the course content. They do not have to reserve a specific day for the activity, nor do they have to travel to a classroom. Depending on how a virtual classroom is set up, learners can work on units or tasks on their own or they can interact with the instructor and other learners using written text, video, or audio sources. In light of many non-NESTs’ concerns about traditional courses, online classes would seem to be a good alternative.

The majority of participants (11 of 19) said that they had never considered e-learning for themselves. Of these teachers, nine thought that this might be an interesting option, but said they have no idea of how to go about finding such a course. These teachers said they have no information about how such courses function, what the costs might be, and whether they have the necessary technology. While filling in the questionnaire, many of them said they think e-learning might be useful and feasible, but said that it simply had

never entered their minds. Two of the 11 (Teachers 14 and 24), however, said that e-learning sounds like something they would not be interested in doing. Some of the participants said they had thought about it before (Teachers 16, 21, and 36), but added that they are not interested in e-learning, and they rejected such classes outright. Teacher 16 said she spends enough time working at the computer as is, and that if she were to participate in any additional PD activities, these should not involve a screen or keyboard.

Two participants told me that they “sometimes” attend online courses, yet upon further investigation, these Teachers (19 and 35) related that they were referring to online projects their pupils had completed and which they had monitored. One of the largest is the “Big Challenge” (<http://www.thebigchallenge.com/de/index.php>) contest between schools. Another example given was contributing to the forums on Leo (<http://dict.leo.org/>), which the teachers said they find useful. However, neither of these activities involves structured or formal coursework at a level that would challenge the non-NESTs and help them add to their language knowledge base. They are activities designed to help learners at lower levels, not non-NESTs.

In terms of structured language PD activities, there seems to be a combination of a lack of interest and of lack of opportunities for the non-NESTs. Although some of the participants are occasionally engaged in various forms of formal or organized language development, most of them either have no interest in such activities or cannot gain access to them. Continued language development does not, however, have to be organized in classes or official sessions. There are activities that any non-NEST can do, either alone or with colleagues, which might improve his or her English language skills as described in the next two sub-sections.

5.4.2.3 Language development with other non-NESTs

Two of the items in the questionnaire proposed language maintenance activities that the participants might engage in together with other English teachers. Both suggestions involved using other non-NESTs as resources, and did not entail formal organization or official structures. The first suggestion was to “speak English with my colleagues” who work at the same school who also teach English. The second was to form or become involved in a “group of English teachers” who use English as a means of

communication to discuss professional or personal matters. As can be seen in Table 9, neither of these suggestions met with much resonance. Nearly all participants said they are uninterested in using their fellow English teachers as language developers.

	(Always) speak English with my colleagues at my school	Form an English teachers' group, meet monthly to speak English (small talk, compare coursework/tests, etc.)
I do this often / regularly	0	2
I do this sometimes	2	1
Would like to but I don't have the time/energy	0	6
Always wanted to, but have not (yet) done this	3	4
Never thought about it	6	3
Is not offered here	0	2
Would be boring/ waste of time/ no fun	5	2
Too expensive/ complicated to organize	2	3

Table 9: Independent language PD with colleagues

Of the 19 respondents, only two reported using English to communicate with other English teachers at their school during the day, and they said they do this only “sometimes.” They both said such interactions tend to be extremely short and deal only with specific school topics. All of the other participants indicated that they never use English with other non-NESTs at their school, and most said that they do not necessarily wish to do so.

Six of the 19 said they have never considered using English in the staff room or hallways, and they expressed doubt that they ever will. Teacher 12 said she thinks it would be “strange,” and Teachers 17 and 18 laughed at the idea, saying that they might possibly use a set phrase as a joke, but that they would never converse in English. They said other non-NESTs might think they were showing off and would judge them negatively, and that the colleagues at their school who do not speak English would feel left out. Teacher 35 said she thinks the idea is not a bad one, but that it had never occurred to her. In her classroom, she strives to use very little German with her pupils and to speak only English to them, but she admitted she had never considered doing so with her colleagues. Other participants pointed out that they do not spend much time interacting with colleagues anyway, and that their exchanges between classes tend to be hurried in nature:

“Wir reden generell wenig hier miteinander (*lacht*). Man schießt so ins Lehrerzimmer, einfach so rein so raus. Und tagtäglich so im Vorbeirasen, wahrscheinlich würde das wenig bringen.” (22gym2)

Teacher 19, who had been disappointed at the lack of interest her colleagues had in attending classes in the UK, said she would love to speak English with colleagues, but that she sees two main problems. The first, as Teacher 22 mentioned, is time:

“Im normalen Schulablauf, da ist einfach keine Zeit. Ich weiß nicht warum, aber es ist ein WAHNSINN was da abläuft, was da immer so kommt, wo man sich immer kümmern muss (*nennt Beispiele*). Man kommt nicht dazu, sich eine Tasse Kaffee zu machen oder sein Brot zu essen.” (19reg2)

The second issue, in her view, is that her colleagues do not wish to use their English beyond the classroom. During a site visit, she told me that her current colleagues “do not like to speak English” that much, and they show no interest in using English after the school bell had rung. Teacher 19’s example demonstrates that the option of using English with colleagues is not only a question of whether a non-NEST wishes to do so, but also of whether the non-NEST works in an environment that supports this. In this study, most teachers said that their school environments are not conducive to such activities.

The second item asked whether English is used as a means of communication with non-NESTs who work at other schools. Specifically, the item asked whether they would like to “form an English teachers’ group, meet monthly to speak English (small talk, compare coursework/tests, etc.).” The participants were also encouraged to consider this question more openly, beyond the idea of “forming” a group, and to consider joining a pre-existing group of teachers or meeting more often with non-NESTs in other areas. As can be seen by the numbers in Table 9, the participants showed even less interest in the idea of forming or joining an English-speaking group than they did in the idea of speaking English with colleagues.

Only three participants (Teachers 12, 25, and 36) claimed to be involved in any sort of teachers’ conversation group at all. Of these three, two noted that English isn’t really spoken in these sessions, and that the focus is on exchanging worksheets or conversing about school issues in German. Only Teacher 36, who is involved in organizing PD activities, reported that she attends meetings in which English is used as a means of communication with other non-NESTs. Although she indicated that she attends these sessions “often/regularly,” her participation is limited to one afternoon a year. She has attended regularly for the past several years, but she does not spend a great number of actual hours speaking English with other non-NESTs.

Some of the teachers in this study said they have considered joining such a group, but have not done so for various reasons. Six said that they either do not have the time or do not want to invest the time in such a group. Others said that they might be interested in attending a conversation group, but that they have never really made the effort to find out if there is such a group in the area. Five of the respondents were more adamant in saying that such a group would be “boring” or would not be helpful, or that organizing a group of teachers would be difficult. Even some of the teachers who said they might consider getting involved in such a group admitted they are unsure whether they would enjoy speaking English with other non-NESTs or spending more of their free time with other teachers. There are two main reasons the teachers gave for rejecting this idea: insecurity about their own language skills, and a belief that other non-NESTs do not have as much to offer as language partners as native speakers.

The first issue, of **insecurity**, is prevalent throughout much of the data, and is connected to how the non-NESTs see their own language skills. One example was given by Teacher 10, who said she sometimes feels embarrassed about the mistakes she makes in front of her fellow teachers during orals exams. When non-NESTs converse with other non-NESTs, there can be an element of comparison and judgment involved as to who has a better accent or who makes more mistakes. This judging of others, and a fear of being judged, is something that most of the participants did not articulate clearly, but is nonetheless obvious. Some of the teachers made a point of stating that they are not worried about being judged by others, or that they are indifferent to others’ opinions (“Sollen die denken, was sie wollen, das juckt mich nicht,” 20gym2). By emphasizing that they do not care about what others think about them, they indirectly confirmed that they believe such opinions are being formed.

Some teachers said they are hesitant to engage in conversation with non-NESTs who are extremely confident or fluent because they feel uncomfortable with their own skills in comparison. Teacher 17 explained that she felt intimidated by a fellow participant at a past PD event, and that she had avoided being paired up with this person:

“Da gibt es hunderte Leute, wo ich denke, deren Niveau ist so ungefähr wie ich habe, aber manchmal sind welche, da denke ich, OOOPS, die muss jetzt doch nicht (*lacht*) unbedingt meine Partnerin sein! Muss ich jetzt ganz ehrlich sagen. Obwohl, man muss sich vielleicht auch nicht verstecken, aber es IST eben so. Da habe ich wirklich das Gefühl, die reden so von der Leber weg, mit so einem Akzent, mit so einer Souveränität, dass man denkt, NAjaaa. Aber die war da ja SO sicher. Und ich dann noch, mit so ein paar Brocken, da wo ich dachte, so OOOPS. Oder (*zu 18*), das geht Dir auch manchmal so, oder?” (17reg2)

Even though she feels that her language skills are better than average (“hunderte Leute ... so ungefähr wie ich”) and that she has no reason to be ashamed of her English (“man muss sich nicht verstecken”), in this situation she felt uncomfortable. She thought the other non-NEST was more fluent and self-confident, and believed her own language skills were lacking in comparison (“ich ... mit so ein paar Brocken”). This anecdote demonstrates not only Teacher 17’s fear of being judged and found lacking, but also her willingness to judge others. She is aware that judgments occur and that she is a participant in this process. She assumes that other teachers notice this as well (“das geht Dir auch so”).

Those teachers who indicated that they might be willing to practice oral skills with other non-NESTs noted that the composition of the group would be important. For example, they suggested, the group members should all be at a similar level, and the size of the group should be limited. A small group would be desirable, not only because each member would have more time to speak, but also because they would feel more comfortable:

“Ja, kleine Gruppen müssten es sein. Wenn man mit vielen fremden Leuten erst mal zusammen ist, gibt es gewisse Sprachhemmungen. Hätte ICH zumindest. (Frage d.Intv.: Wie klein ist klein? Wie viele/) Na, es können auch wirklich so ein paar Leute schon sitzen. Aber ich denk mal, nicht zu viele. Vielleicht acht oder zehn. Mehr nicht.” (14reg2)

Teacher 14 used the word “Sprachhemmung” to describe her unease at speaking English, which for her is still a foreign language, in front of other people. Even though the other group members would also be non-NESTs, she would feel uncomfortable using English with too many people whom she did not know very well. Her qualms at speaking English with strangers appeared to shift according to the composition of the group. Whereas she said she has no problems speaking English with the many members of her daughter’s host family in the USA or using English in a classroom full of children, she found the thought of speaking English in front of a group of her peers intimidating.

Even if a non-NEST does not feel overly intimidated at the prospect of speaking English with other non-NESTs, there is the problem that German non-NESTs share a common L1, and both of the conversants are aware of this fact. This can make **interactions in English feel artificial**. Most participants in this study expressed doubts that they could and would interact with German-speaking non-NESTs in the same way that they could relate to someone who did not share their L1. Teacher 16 dismissed the

idea of practicing English with other non-NESTs emphatically: “Nee, finde ich Quatsch. Ich finde es so künstlich,” (16ges2). When I pointed out to her that she and I had spoken English at PD events, she explained that there was a difference: “Ja, aber das ist dann doch wenigstens Deine Muttersprache. Aber für mich und für meine Kollegen, das geht gar nicht!” (16ges2). For her, there is a difference between speaking English with someone who grew up speaking it, or who cannot communicate with her in German, and speaking English with people who share her L1. Speaking English with other Germans strikes her as “künstlich,” and she has no desire to use English with other teachers.

Those participants who said they would be open to practicing with other non-NESTs noted that they would only do so if all of the parties were committed to using English. Teacher 19 recalled being disappointed when a German non-NEST attending her course in England intentionally switched to German, even though the group had committed itself to using only English:

“Da hatten wir uns geeinigt vorher. Da, im Raum, sprechen wir Englisch. Wir wollen hier mal wirklich eintauchen und reden. Kaum waren wir draußen, da war so eine Kollegin, sie sagte (*mimic*) so pffft! So, huh? Wir sind hier alle Deutsche, wir reden Deutsch miteinander. (*Pause*) Wenn man sowas hat, dann macht es einem auch nicht mehr so Spaß. Wissen Sie, was ich so meine? Wenn man da solche Leute mit drin hat, das finde ich nicht so schön.” (19reg2)

She and the other group members felt embarrassed about continuing with the target language after one person had spoken German: “Es ging nicht nur mir so. Man ist da irgendwie noch gehemmt,” (19reg2). Thus, she pointed out, if only one member shuns the use of English, the group members may become reticent about using English exclusively, which for Teacher 19 is the whole point of being in such a group. This is one of the reasons why she now enrolls only in mixed-nationality courses: “weil DA reden wir Englisch miteinander,” (19reg2). Another solution is to include NESTs or other native English speakers in a group: “Das ist immer sehr schön, wenn wir Muttersprachler haben. DANN reden alle English!” (19reg2).

Other participants repeated this idea that a native speaker of English would be preferable to a non-native person as a conversation companion. Although a few (Teachers 21 and 31) said that they had benefited from speaking with non-NESTs from countries other than Germany, most teachers in this study cited the proverbial “native English speaker” as the ideal person with whom to practice their English, both written and oral. This is because native English speakers provide an excellent source of input

and would not make the mistakes that a NNS might make, as their grasp of the language is automatic and unconscious: “Erstens brauchen die nicht darüber nachzudenken, was richtig ist und was falsch. Die haben das halt drauf,” (12reg2). The preference for talking to a native speaker is also tied to the belief that it is polite to address a conversation partner in a language the person can understand, and that facilitates communication: “Das ist seine Sprache, um ihm Höflichkeit entgegen zu bringen. Das hängt für mich damit zusammen. Und Respekt letzten Endes auch” (12reg2).

The native speaker is still seen as the ideal conversation partner when it comes to maintaining fluency and continuing oral acquisition, but also for defining aspects of what is and is not correct in written texts. What is significant is that these non-NESTs said they would prefer to seek out native speakers in order to help maintain their own oral fluency, not only because of the input a speaker from England or America can provide, but because of the language that they themselves must generate when they engage in conversation with native speakers. In other words, when a non-NEST is producing spoken English, the level of the addressee is important. When teachers are producing language for learners in their classroom or for fellow teachers, they generally do not try as hard as they would when they are addressing a native speaker. The input that the native speaker provides is important, but it is often secondary to their own output. The fact that the non-NEST is producing output for a special kind of listener, a native speaker, is of primary importance.

The reasons for this are unclear, but one explanation may lie in the fact that most “native English speakers” are not fluent in German, which puts the burden of being fluent on the German person using English as an additional language. This seems to be the underlying point for many non-NESTs, who insist that they improve their English language skills when they go overseas, only to lose ground when they return home. Of course a trip to London offers them a wealth of input, but it also requires them to produce language actively at a different level than they are required to use in Germany. Any advantage a native speaker might offer as a conversation partner becomes nearly nonexistent when this person is fluent in German, as the necessity of maintaining the conversation flow is then shared by both conversants, depending on the language chosen. This phenomenon was described by Teacher 36, who is one of the few participants who has maintained a long-term relationship with an NS.

Teacher 36 had once hosted a language assistant at her school, also providing room and board for the young man. She remains close to him, and she referred to him as “mein drittes Kind” several times during our interview. She prefers British English to American English, and was fascinated by his accent, his choice of words, and his ability to produce such beautiful, fluent English: “Ich höre ihn total gerne sprechen, weil er so ein richtiges *Oxford Englisch* spricht. Herrlich. Also, richtig *standard* und *RP* und vom Feinsten. Ich höre ihm richtig gerne zu,” (36gym1). Because the man has spent so much time in Germany since then, his German is now quite fluent, which vexes Teacher 36 to some extent. While his skills in German have developed well and he has become a balanced bilingual, her skills in English have remained stable in most areas, and she now sees herself as being less fluent in comparison.

At the beginning of their relationship, Teacher 36 often insisted on practicing English with the language assistant, even though he preferred to speak German in order to learn: “Ich habe den manchmal gezwungen, ja gezwungen, mit mir Englisch zu sprechen. So, DU redest jetzt Englisch mit mir. Ich WILL Englisch jetzt reden!” (36gym1). As his German improved and he became more fluent, he became less interesting as a conversation partner for this teacher:

“Dann war’s mir unangenehm, weil ich ja genau weiß, ich bin nicht so gut wie er. So, wie er in Deutsch, bin ich nicht so gut in Englisch. Also ich kann mich verständlich machen und wir können auch über dieselben Themen reden, aber ich weiß genau, dass ich Defizite habe und DAS ist mir ja unangenehm. Das mag ich nicht. Weil das mir ein bisschen peinlich ist.” (36gym1)

Because Teacher 36 believes that this man speaks “better” German than she can speak English, she no longer sees him as a language resource or as a speaking partner with whom she can maintain her fluency skills. She no longer asks him to engage in longer conversations in English, although she will ask his advice on a turn of phrase or slang. In her eyes, this “third child” of hers is no longer a language resource for fluency practice, because he is so fluent in her own L1. She no longer “forces” him to speak English with her (“da bestehe ich jetzt nicht mehr darauf,” 36gym1). She would rather practice her English with someone who is less competent in German. In other words, she wishes to speak English with someone for whom she would be responsible for the pacing and fluency.

For Teacher 36, the ideal English native speaker conversation partner is one who has not mastered German, and for whom she must employ her English in order to enable communication. Her definition of “a native English speaker” does not take into account

the possibility that this person may also speak her L1. She is apparently not alone in her view, as some researchers have pointed out. Cook (1999) described how many researchers incorrectly assume that the native speaker of English is “a monolingual person” who can speak no other languages: “(A) common assumption is that the native speaker speaks only one language. ... In Chomskyan linguistics, monolingualism is part of the abstraction involved in obtaining the idealized native speaker” (1999:187). Cook criticized the imprecise gradients of terminology, and he also argued that the idea of “a native speaker” is not at all helpful when looking for language models. The participants in this study seem to value native speakers of English as conversation partners, not only for the flawless English that they may model for them and the input they provide, but also for the interaction and the chance to produce more spontaneous English utterances aimed at a conversant who is dependent upon them to be fluent and clear.

With this in mind, I will now turn to the third category of possible language development, which encompasses the language activities a non-NEST could engage in independent of his or her school and colleagues. Several of these activities also involve contact with native speakers of English in which teachers might be able to maintain or improve their spoken and written language skills.

5.4.2.4 Independent language development

The third type of language development activities in the questionnaire involves actions that can be done without reliance on organized activities or coordination with fellow non-NESTs. These five items include actions that would help to improve or maintain reading comprehension and writing skills (e.g., “write to a pen pal (also online) weekly”), as well as items that might (also) include both written and oral skills (“travel (alone) to English-speaking countries,” “join an English book club or conversation circle,” “host foreign tourists,” and “volunteer to work with refugees or asylum-seekers”). Nine of the 19 respondents added an additional item (“read English books”) by writing it down on the questionnaire or mentioning it while filling in the form, so this was added to the data. As can be seen in Table 10, the participants are more open to independent language development than they are to organized events.

The most popular form of independent language work involves travel to countries where English is widely spoken. Of the 19 respondents, 15 reported that they make such

trips at least “sometimes,” and some of them do this on a regular basis. For many teachers, such travel is essential for maintaining their language skills and providing them with experiences which they can relate to their pupils in class. During the site visits in which I was able to observe the non-NESTs teaching a class, these teachers made references to places they had visited while in England or the USA, and the pupils showed a great deal of interest in these anecdotes. For the teachers, being able to provide personal input to a class that goes beyond the pictures in a textbook is important, and they value their experiences abroad. There seems to be an unspoken understanding that an English teacher will have spent time in England, if not during his or her studies, then at least during the school breaks.

	Travel to English-speaking countries	Write a pen pal (also via Internet) weekly	Host foreign tourists (e.g. tour guide)	Volunteer to work with asylum-seekers/refugees	Join an English book/ conversation club	Read English books *
I do this often / regularly	6	4	0	0	0	4
I do this sometimes	9	3	3	0	0	5
Would like to but I don't have time/energy	0	2	6	5	9	0
Always wanted to, but have not (yet) done this	2	2	5	2	4	0
Never thought about it	0	0	8	9	3	0
Is not offered here	0	0	0	0	2	0
Would be boring/ waste of time/ no fun	1	8	0	3	4	0
Too expensive/ complicated to organize	1	0	1	2	0	0

Table 10: Private language development or maintenance activities

*Only half of the participants gave answers for this item.

One teacher explained that, although it is important for her as an English teacher to travel and bring back experiences and new expressions, she also feels it is her job as a teacher that has enabled her to travel in the first place. For her, this was one of the main reasons for becoming a teacher and for staying in the profession. When I asked her if she could envision ever doing anything else with her English skills, she replied that she doubts she would ever be able to find another job that gives her the same degree of flexibility to travel. She likes being a school teacher: “wegen der Urlaubszeit, wo man reisen kann. Sechs Wochen im Sommer, ich sehe kaum einen anderen Beruf, der mir das bieten würde,” (21gym2). Being a teacher gives her time to travel in the summer and during shorter phases in the academic year. The issue of whether this travel is valuable for her in her job or could benefit her pupils is rather secondary in her view. Her job fits her general wish to travel; it did not initiate this desire.

Many of the teachers remarked that such trips are expensive and that, because they are forced to work part time and have less income, trips to English-speaking countries can be difficult to afford. Some participants have not been able to pay for private travel during the school holidays due to their family situations. Teacher 12 is a divorced mother of two and was, at the time of our interviews, just starting to envision a future in which she might be able to use her own resources for travel. Teacher 37, who is also divorced and a parent, said she hopes to eventually be able to afford a vacation in an English-speaking country, but as of yet has not been able to do so.

Two teachers objected to the idea of traveling “alone,” as the questionnaire proposed. Teacher 10 is married to a non-NEST and said that he would be more likely to travel to England with his wife, in which case he would not really be “alone,” and might speak more German than if he were to travel with colleagues or strangers. Teacher 13, who was one of the oldest participants, also said she would rather travel with friends or colleagues, even if it meant that she spoke more German: “Mit Kollegen würde ich gehen. Gerade auch wenn man älter wird, man fühlt sich noch wohler, wenn man in einer Altersgruppe ist,” (13reg2). While acknowledging that the idea of touring around England sounds nice, this non-NEST said she thinks “travel” would be less effective than a language class in England, in which she worked with a group. Because she does not have an outgoing personality and finds it difficult to chat with strangers, she said she would feel more secure speaking English with people she could get to know: “So in den Ferien, so ein Crash-Kurs. Von morgens bis abends sprichst du Englisch und nach einer Woche sind die Hemmungen weg und da öffnest du dich richtig,” (13reg2). Both Teacher 10 and Teacher 13 have been to England, and said they enjoy speaking with host families and acquaintances, but that they do not wish to travel “alone.”

There are other ways to speak English on a regular basis with foreigners, other than travelling to inner circle countries. One option might be to act as a tour guide or host for tourists who attend larger festival events in the region, and this is something that three of the respondents have tried. Teachers 12 and 31 had acted as tour guides for friends of family members or neighbors from other countries who were in the area on vacation. When he was a student, Teacher 20 earned money by guiding American tourists around the area on day trips. He found this to be a useful exercise because he was asked to explain not only very simple things, but also to give his opinion about many different

topics in his home country. He was also the only person to reject outright the idea of doing such work now, in addition to being a school teacher, as it involves “viel Stress, viel Zeit” (20gym2). Six of the respondents said they would not have the time or energy to do this, especially during the school year, although they thought it might be something that would help their spoken language skills.

Another item in the questionnaire suggested doing volunteer work with refugees or asylum seekers, many of whom do not speak German and must rely on English as a lingua franca. This suggestion elicited a much more muted response from the non-NESTs, many of whom said they doubted they would enjoy such work, or that it would benefit their own English. Most of the participants said they assume that the “refugees” would be from Third World countries and would not be “native speakers,” and that they thus considered them less attractive as conversation partners. Those teachers who said they have considered volunteering to help others as an interpreter or an advocate in matters with authorities added that their primary motivation would be to help a fellow human being or to do something worthwhile, and not to practice English. Several of them said they had already thought about it and would like to do it. However, they indicated that they do not view such actions as an opportunity to use English, but rather as an act of charity for which they would not expect to get anything in return.

Another suggestion in the questionnaire involved the possibility of joining a book club or a conversation circle that was not comprised of teachers. None of the respondents belong to such a group and many said they would be hesitant to join one. For most of them this reluctance was due to the element of time, and their unwillingness to commit to a fixed time with a group. If they could attend such a group sporadically, some of them said they might be willing to try it. For the most part, however, they said they do not like the idea of having to do something on a specific date in a set place. They said there are enough activities after school, both in the afternoons and evenings, and that they do not wish to schedule another event. Many teachers indicated that they are not fundamentally opposed to the idea, but that the effort involved seems to be too great an obstacle for them to take a first step. Four of the non-NESTs (Teachers 10, 16, 20, and 36) rejected the idea outright, saying that they thought a book club would be dull or that they would not like having to speak with people in a group just for the sake of practicing English. Teacher 36 said she thinks such a group would work well only if

there were native English speakers involved, and if these people could not or would not speak German. Teacher 16 said she does not like the idea of spending her free time with people not of her own choosing, and perhaps having to discuss things she finds uninteresting.

This concern about having to discuss uninteresting topics was not relevant for the final suggestion on the questionnaire; namely, that of exchanging letters or e-mails in English on a regular basis. If the non-NESTs were to find their own pen pals and guide the topics of exchange on their own, they would have the opportunity to focus on the subjects that interest them, while developing their reading and writing skills. Although the questionnaire did not specifically mention it, it would also be possible to use video and audio connections on the Internet, which would allow them to practice their speaking and listening. Seven of the teachers currently correspond with a friend or pen pal in English, through traditional “snail mail” letters (Teachers 14, 19, 22), e-mail (Teachers 21, 23, 31), or Skype (Teacher 20). Several of them also said they communicate with other non-NESTs working in different parts of Germany and throughout the world, with whom they discuss school projects or exams in English. Others said they maintain contact with former host families from exchange programs or people they have met while traveling. In all cases, the contact with the pen pal was made prior to a letter or mail exchange, and there was a personal reason to maintain communications. None of the respondents were writing strangers simply because they wished to write in English. The idea of “finding a pen pal” and establishing a relationship only for the sake of communicating in English struck the participants as odd. This is why eight of the 19 teachers noted that they thought it would be “boring” or “no fun” for them, and Teacher 16 said that this is something that she might have done as a young girl, but not as an adult. The remaining four teachers said they are open to the idea, but that they would have to find the time and a partner with whom there was a mutual interest in writing. Simply writing e-mails or letters in English “for practice” sounded dull; there would have to be a motivation to communicate.

One independent form of language maintenance or development that at least nine of the participants engage in is recreational reading in English. While all of the non-NESTs read English at some level for their work, many also read novels or print media that are not at all related to the work they do in school. Five of the teachers, four of whom work

at the *Gymnasium* level, said that they read English books, newspapers, or magazines “often,” and that this reading plays no role in their work. Teacher 25 is married to a man who speaks excellent English, and they read English books and discuss them. She enjoys novels and he likes historical biographies, and they each have expanded their repertoire to include books the other person has read and liked. Teacher 21 also reads the same books as her husband in order to discuss them with him, but he reads in German while she reads in English. While he borrows his material from the library, she often must purchase the book in English. Teacher 31, who was qualified for the *Gymnasium* but works at the *Regionalschule* level, trades books with a wide circle of friends and acquaintances. She said that she always has something in English to read on her nightstand or in her bag, and that she is an avid reader of many genres and authors. If a book is written in English, she will read it (“ich verschlinge sie,” 31reg-gym1). For these teachers, reading in English is an activity they enjoy and find challenging, and it helps them maintain their language skills. Even if they are not “teaching” the material in these books or articles, they are exposed to new words or expressions. It is important to note that these teachers also enjoy recreational reading in English due to the content and the impetus this content gives them for discussions with other readers, whether in English or in German.

The other three participants who said that they sometimes engage in recreational reading are teachers at the *Regionalschule* level, and their reading habits are slightly different from those of teachers with *Gymnasium* qualifications. Teacher 11 occasionally buys a magazine or newspaper and enjoys flipping through the different articles. She has not read a full-length novel since her studies ended, but she will read a wide range of newsstand material, from car magazines to fashion spreads. During the site visit, Teacher 10 mentioned an English book about a music group he is a fan of, which a friend had given to him to read. Teacher 10 said he is interested in the content but admitted it is slow reading, and that he needs much longer to understand it in English than he would have needed if the book were in German. Teacher 19 told me that she enjoys reading in English, but the examples she gave during the site visit were of materials that were at a much lower level. She reads adapted books or learners’ magazines, most of which she obtains through her workplace. Her reading is recreational in that she is not interacting with these texts for the classroom, but her

reading skills are not sufficient for tackling non-adapted material. Still, she said she views any reading in English as worthwhile, and feels it has benefited her English skills by expanding her vocabulary range.

In sum, there are numerous language development or maintenance activities that non-NESTs may engage in, both formal and informal, as well as at an individual or group level. Not every participant in this study sees a need for activities, and those who do pursue them do so at different levels. In the next section, I look at what influences whether or not an English teacher chooses to participate in language PD, in terms of content and other factors.

5.4.3 What helps or hinders non-NEST participation in language PD?

For those non-NESTs who wish to take part in some sort of language PD, there are several questions. What activities are offered, what content do they include, and how well do they correspond with a teacher's goals of improving or maintaining his or her foreign language skills? These questions influence the likelihood of a teacher actually taking part in a certain activity at a certain time. Even if language PD activities are available, are there any external factors that play a role in a teacher's decision to participate? This sub-section outlines both the content and inhibiting factors of language PD activities the participants in this study mentioned, and will attempt to summarize common statements.

The data here are incomplete, as this study did not systematically follow up on teachers' actions, aside from a few coincidental and sporadic interactions after the interviews and site visits. The data must also be viewed with more caution than the statements participants made concerning their language acquisition or their self-evaluations of current skill level, because the questions were posed regarding not only past behavior, but also about future plans. A teacher who stated that he or she "should" or "would like to" engage in an activity may not necessarily follow through; just as a teacher who "would not want to" engage in a specific activity may very well do so later, for reasons that may be unclear here. In most of the interview situations I sought to confirm participants' statements by asking a follow-up question or requesting an elaboration on certain points. Even so, the assertions made by the non-NESTs in this study concerning their plans and wishes for their future language PD cannot be strongly confirmed or

denied by the data, but should rather be understood in tandem with their other statements.

5.4.3.1 What content and form should language PD take?

With the exception of Teachers 21 and 23, both of whom entered the profession after a year spent overseas and with excellent self-reported language skills, the participants in this study indicated that they view their knowledge of English as incomplete. Whereas Teachers 21 and 23 wanted to maintain their excellent skills in what they felt was a “second language,” the other non-NESTs are interested in improving their skills in a foreign language. Most of their contact with English is through their profession as teachers, and this is also the primary reason they are involved with the language. Therefore, even though most of them said they do not have a direct need for language improvement in order to teach, nearly all of them said they see room for improvement through their work. It is their work as teachers which guides their interests in language development, rather than an abstract notion of language improvement.

Most non-NESTs in this study stated that the content of language PD should relate in some way to school and to the interests of children and young adults. Because teachers have already been exposed to the content of the school curriculum at some point, they do not need a review of this language. Instead, they would like to expand upon it in order to be able to cope with new questions their pupils might pose. Three participants used the same example regarding a standard unit on “communication devices” in an eighth grade textbook. Their pupils had asked how to say “mein Handy aufladen” in English, as the phrase was not included in the textbook. The verb “*aufladen*” was in dictionaries, but not in the sense of adding money to a prepaid cellular telephone card, and this was something children did often and wanted to be able to talk about. They needed this word in order to conduct the class discussion on mobile phones and the issues pupils had with their parents and with money. There was a discrepancy between what the textbook offered in terms of language and what the pupils wanted to know, and the teachers were not prepared to deal with this gap. As one participant said, she has never owned or used a mobile phone outside of Germany, and she had no idea how to translate the verb “*aufladen*” in this sense. Her solution was to find an Irish exchange

student at a different school and ask this person about his cell phone habits at home. The vocabulary she gleaned from this interaction was then passed on to her pupils.

In this instance, the non-NEST arranged for a personal form of language development, using local resources she was able to mobilize, and she was pleased with the results. She claimed to have gained more language in her short conversation with the pupil from Ireland than in all PD activities during the previous year. Those structured activities had focused on “folk songs” and “the election system in the USA,” both of which had been interesting but did not provide much new language input for her. They also were not necessarily on topics that her pupils could get excited about. Other teachers echoed their wish to practice English by discussing practical, everyday topics which were similar to the ones their pupils discuss. When I asked one participant to describe her ideal language PD activity, she formulated her desire to focus on the simple conversation topics at a more basic level:

“Also ich glaube, sprechen, einfach sich unterhalten, zuhören, einfache Fragen stellen, das ist das, was ich am meisten tun würde. Ich brauche keine *Essay Writing* oder Übersetzungstheorie machen. Es geht hier wenig ums Übersetzen, hier bei uns in der Schule. Es geht um DRÜCKE-aus-DASS.” (18reg2)

Many non-NESTs in this study stated that they wish to spend more time practicing “speaking, conversing, and listening,” and that they do not need more formal academic classes of the same sort they had attended during their studies. They said they want language PD to be closely linked to the lessons they use in the classroom, at the level of their pupils, and believe that these topics should reflect the ones their pupils are interested in:

“Mich würde wahnsinnig Schule interessieren. WIE läuft es da in einer normalen Schule ab? Oder diese ganz allgemeine Landesroutine, alle möglichen Themen, was die Kinder so interessiert. Das möchte ich wissen, und dann hören sie auch gut zu, wenn man ihnen dann was erzählt.” (18reg2)

Teacher 18 said she does not have firsthand knowledge of the British school system, and that she believes that such knowledge is important. She indicated she would like to expand her knowledge base (“möchte ich wissen”) in order to be able to share the information with her pupils, as she knows that topics such as cell phones are more interesting to her pupils than election systems. Because her goal is to get pupils to listen and speak in class, she feels that she must find topics they can relate to. Other teachers mentioned that, because languages change over time, they feel they should be more up to date on what was now “in” in terms of youth culture and life in English-speaking countries. Most non-NESTs never had the chance to experience daily life overseas

themselves, yet this is of enormous interest to pupils. Non-NESTs who did not attend a school or university in an English-speaking country lament the fact that they do not have firsthand experiences with which to augment their classes.

In addition to language PD being relevant for the classroom, a few teachers also expressed a desire to be able to influence the direction of a course, or to guide a PD session to the topics and areas that interest them most. For example, Teacher 36, who described how upset she had felt when her British language assistant had made so many corrections and suggestions on her writing, noted that she might want to work on improving her writing skills: “Für mich, ein Schreibkurs. Zu bestimmten Sachen, wo ich Fragen hatte. Das würde ich gerne machen,” (36gym1). Specifically, Teacher 36 said she would like to attend a course in which she could ask her own questions on issues she wants to learn more about, and not simply a general English writing session. She remembered being asked to write essays while in school and at university, but said she no longer writes English this way for instructors. She writes in order to communicate with other teachers and to construct materials for her advanced classes. Therefore, she would not like to attend a PD session in which she was given an assignment and evaluated, but rather one in which she could formulate her own ideas and receive professional feedback.

Other teachers also mentioned that they had language questions and would appreciate having the opportunity to take part in language PD activities in which they could ask these specific questions and get answers. Teachers in all types of schools expressed similar desires, especially in connection with exams. When marking school leaving exams, whether after grades 10 or 12, several non-NESTs said they were sometimes unsure about the correctness of a pupil’s sentences, and did not know whom they could ask for help. Some, like Teachers 16 and 31 who have a wide network of professional friends, reported making lists and comparing notes with other non-NESTs. Others said they rely on their own gut-level feelings and hope that the decisions they make are correct. In all cases, these teachers said they would like to have an official resource to whom they can go for help while marking. The PD activities offered in connection with exams currently take place prior to exams, and explain the structure and marking scales so that the teachers can better prepare their pupils for the tests. A number of teachers said it would be helpful to offer language PD activities during the marking phases as

well, in which teachers could compare questions and get answers. As an alternative, several non-NESTs mentioned that they would appreciate having a “hotline” or an Internet forum in which they could ask specific questions at exam time.

Two teachers suggested combining language development with curriculum development. They said they would, for example, like to attend structured PD activities in which they are given time and language support for developing materials for classes. Teachers 23 and 36, both working at the *Gymnasium* level, said they would like to select and draft reading course materials for their upper-level classes, possibly together with other teachers. Teacher 23 envisioned an exchange with teachers in the inner circle countries through which she could benefit from their experiences:

“Dass man sich mit muttersprachlichen Lehrern mal austauscht. Mit Literatur in den Oberstufenklassen, mit England oder Amerika. Die lesen ja mit ihren Teenagern die Bücher, und dass man sich darüber austauschen kann. So, was lest ihr, und wie behandelt ihr das, und was macht ihr da so, für Projekte oder für Workshops. Dass man sich da auch über Literatur da austauscht, und dass man guckt, dass man ganz andere Methoden, vielleicht auch übernimmt, von einem ganz anderen Schulsystem.” (23gym2)

She said she would like to set up a standing system in which teachers in different countries exchanged ideas and materials. The goal, she explained, would be to use lesson plans other teachers had developed, and also to share her own plans so that more school pupils would be exposed to a wider range of reading materials and methods. Teacher 36 recalled having actually done this once with several colleagues via e-mail. Her pupils had made suggestions for modern literature for their last year at school, and she spent the summer prior to teaching this class doing research and drafting worksheets on two recent American novels the pupils had chosen. While admitting that the work took much longer than planned, she said the effort paid off in that she and her pupils learned a lot, both in terms of language and about American culture:

“Es ist eine Heidenarbeit, auch eine Herausforderung, aber es macht auch Spaß. Und man hat MEHR eine Resonanz von den Schülern, als wenn man nur das macht, was an ihnen vorbeigeht.” (36gym1)

This preparation work entailed not only reading the works herself, but also reviews and analysis articles, and collecting supporting materials. She drafted worksheets for individual and group projects and outlined assignments to accompany her pupils’ reading steps, and then traded these drafts with two other teachers. She said she would like to repeat the project again, but is reluctant to take on such a huge amount of preparation work alone in the summer. She added that if there were PD activities in which she could design such class projects and collaborate in English, she would like to

attend them; but she also said she doubted that many non-NESTs would be interested in investing so much work:

“Das ist eine WAHNSINNS Sache auf der fachdidaktischen Ebene, aber das würde ich gerne so aufbereiten, dass man das so nutzen kann, im Unterricht. Für andere. So, hier, das könnt ihr dann machen.” (36gym1)

The fact that such curriculum development activities are so work-intensive is one of the reasons that only two teachers out of 20 mentioned such a PD combination, and only one said she has actually done this so far. Most other participants in the study said they view language PD as something that was done in smaller segments and tied in directly with topics they were already working on with their pupils.

The first factor that nearly all teachers mentioned concerning the content of PD activities intended to help develop or maintain language skills was that it should be relevant to school or classroom English. The second main factor, stipulated by three-quarters of the participants, was that they felt it was better to use English, not German, as the means of communication:

“Ich mag diese Methodenseminare nicht, wo die alle auf Deutsch sind. Ich hätte es gerne so praktisch, an einem Beispiel, und dann auf Englisch gemacht. Wo man mit anderen Englischlehrern sich austauscht, wo man dann nur WIRKLICH Englisch spricht. Nicht Deutsch. Wo man einfach das auffrischt.” (23gym2)

Language choice on the part of the participants appeared to be a touchy subject, likely as a result of the behavior of group members at PD events. As Teacher 19 recalled from her language courses in the UK, if only one participant chose to revert to German, this could alter the group dynamics and make the others feel uncertain about using only English. Most non-NESTs said they would want to use only English at a PD event, but they would do so only if all of the other non-NESTs adhered to the same code of conduct. According to the study participants, it takes only one person breaking ranks and using German to make others feel uncertain about using English. This was the main reason why it was seen as advantageous to have a native English speaker conducting the event: “Ich finde, Fortbildung für Englischlehrer sollte ganz viel mit Muttersprachlern besetzt sein,” (19reg1). Whereas most non-NESTs agreed that PD events could be conducted in English even if there were only Germans present, they emphasized that the presence of a person from an English-speaking country added to the incentive to use, and to continue to use, only English.

This ideal mixture of content (relevant to school) and language choice (use of English) was, the teachers said, achieved when the person leading the PD event was either a

NEST or a non-NEST who had lived in an English-speaking country for several years and felt comfortable conducting the session in English. Teacher 31 recalled a German non-NEST who had lived in the USA and had been particularly active in sharing her ideas and materials with other teachers. Her sessions had always been well-attended, and the participants looked forward to them:

“Das haben die auch gerne gemacht. Das hat sie für Klasse 7 geplant, und dann hat sie die Veranstaltung auf Englisch gemacht. Da waren ganz viele Unterrichtsmaterialien für die Kollegen. Dann hat sie mal so ein Spiel benutzt, auf Englisch, aber es hatte trotzdem für Lehrertätigkeit, mehr so gehabt.” (31gym-reg1)

Another PD instructor who was mentioned in nearly all of the interview sessions was a British woman who was teaching in the German public school system and who offered seminars on a multitude of topics:

“Ich meine, ((Name)) ist ja gerade das ideale Beispiel. Eine Muttersprachlerin zu haben, die ja auch noch aus der Praxis spricht, die dir dann noch TIPPS geben kann, das ist natürlich denn ja ein Idealfall. Sie weiß, wovon sie redet.” (18reg2)

This NEST was a popular PD speaker because she was working in the same situation as the non-NESTs, and her examples were practical and highly relevant. She not only “knows what she’s talking about,” but she is able to talk about it in English, which adds value to the sessions. This combination of content and language was seen as being very valuable by the non-NESTs in this study, even if it adds an extra layer of effort to PD activities: “Es ist natürlich anstrengender, ihr zuzuhören als jetzt mit einem Deutschen, aber das bringt schon was” (17reg2).

Not all of the PD sessions offered provide the combination of content and language that the teachers in this study desire, but many do. The teachers were divided in their views about whether there were enough sessions (“Man findet immer was, was gut ist,” 20gym2) or too few (“VIEL zu wenig,” 22gym2). However, it was generally agreed that there are some PD activities available that can help with language maintenance or development, and that it is up to the teachers to attend these as they see fit. The question then arises of whether or not teachers attend such PD events, and what factors play a role in their decision to attend.

5.4.3.2 What factors affect the choice to participate in language PD?

The data in conjunction with this question are very individual, and most teachers prefaced their statements with qualifying phrases to emphasize that they could only express their own opinion, and could not speak for others:

“Die Sprache lebt auch und entwickelt sich weiter und so viel kann man alleine ja gar nicht machen. Da wäre Bedarf, da bin ich mir ziemlich sicher, dass es so ist. Bloß, ich weiß nicht, jeder sieht das anders. Der eine sagt (*mimic*) um Gottes willen! Naja, es ist sehr unterschiedlich.” (11reg1)

Despite these individual reasons, several factors were mentioned by nearly all of the participants as having a bearing on their decision to participate in different types of language PD, and a number of other factors were mentioned by several participants.

There are five main factors that can influence a teacher’s decision to attend a PD event: time, cost, location, administrative issues, and family constraints. Often they are intertwined, and there are several issues to consider. Teacher 18 summarized a number of the most challenging aspects of attending formal language PD classes when I asked her if she would ever consider attending a language school in England for a few weeks:

“Wann mache ich das, im Sommer? Statt Urlaub? Man muss tausend Euro erst mal hin packen, und dann muss ich meinem Mann sagen, also ich fahre dahin und du, da gibst du mir tausend Euro, und den Haushalt, das machst Du denn AUCH noch alleine (*alle lachen*). Und das findet er denn gut, wa? Das glaube ich nicht!” (18reg2)

The first question involves **time**, especially if such courses take place during the summer break. There is little time to complete coursework during the normal school year, an issue Teacher 18 said she knows very well having completed an additional degree (in French) by attending weekend courses. The summer break for teachers lasts just five weeks (with the sixth week being reserved for in-service preparation for the upcoming school year). Attending a language course during the summer would leave teachers with less time for their own vacations.

Many language courses and other PD activities are scheduled on weekends or in the evenings, when teachers generally expect to have time off. Attending such events is seen by the teachers as additional “work” and not as “relaxation.” Creating a work-life balance is an issue that concerns all of the participants, and several of them pointed out that, in order to be able to perform well at work, they need time for fitness, family, and relaxation in the evening and on weekends: “ich muss als Lehrer dafür sorgen, dass ich fit bin, für den nächsten Tag” (10reg2). Language PD events often interfere with private time, and some teachers resent this added work.

The issue of “time” is closely tied in with that of **family**, as Teacher 18 noted when she referred to her husband. For families with school-aged children or a parent who is a teacher, the official school schedule dictates to a large extent when they can spend free time together. Teacher 18’s husband is not a teacher, but he also has to adhere to the

school schedule if he wants to spend his vacation with his wife. If a teacher who is a parent leaves home for a week or more to attend a class overseas, families with younger children may have to adjust their childcare arrangements. Some of the teachers observed that attending a language class does not carry the same work-related significance as accompanying a class on an official school trip, and that their partners might object if they were away for a longer period of time. In short, teachers must negotiate these trips with family members, with whom arguments may arise about the extent to which a language class constitutes “free time” or “work.”

The issue of gender did not come up as the teachers discussed family roles. Although the majority of participants in this study are female, they did not refer to any stereotypical need to “ask permission” when discussing the prospect of leaving home for an extended period of time. Their concerns about family negotiations were expressed in gender-neutral terms. This was also the case for the two men in this study, both of whom explained that they had family responsibilities, which made it difficult for them to justify leaving home for a trip not directly related to work:

“So habe ich eben auch Bedenken, wenn ich mal irgendwann zu egoistisch werde. Wenn ich sage, so, ich brauche jetzt Ruhe, ich mache jetzt mein Ding und sieh mal zu, wie du damit klar kommst, mit den Dingen. Nee, das wird sich meine Frau (*lacht*) sich das sowieso nicht gefallen lassen.” (10reg2)

The other male teacher in this study, Teacher 20, was on a six-month parental leave with his youngest child when we met for our interviews. He stated clearly that, even though he and his wife take their jobs seriously, their first priority at the moment is the care of their two pre-school children. According to this teacher, the resource of “time” should be devoted first and foremost to the family unit; thus, if structured PD infringed upon family time, he would not agree to take part.

The topic of “family” is also closely related to **cost**, because even with scholarships or grants, teachers must bear at least some of the expenses for travel, room, and board when attending classes overseas. The figure of 1000 euros for such trips mentioned by Teacher 18 was repeated by many of the teachers, all of whom agreed that this sum is the equivalent of the cost of a week’s vacation in Germany for a family of four. Several of the teachers who are working part time due to a state-mandated reduction in hours also referred to this amount as a month’s net pay. Teacher 18’s colleague pointed out that many teachers who are being paid to work a part-time schedule are actually working far more than 40 hours per week:

“Da biste ja schön DOOF, kriegst ja nur noch zwei Drittel bezahlt und machst hier noch mehr wie eine Vollzeitkraft, und dann noch alles selbst bezahlen. Will nicht jammern, aber das ist behämmert. Man mache GERNE Alles, und auch ein BISSCHEN über das Maß hinaus, aber nicht SO.” (17reg2)

Within the next few years, many of these teachers may be allowed to return to a full-time work schedule, which would improve their financial situations. However, an increase in pay will not necessarily translate into more teachers attending language PD:

“Mich schrecken halt immer diese Preise ab, weil ich das einfach nicht kann. Sicherlich wird sich meine Situation demnächst hoffentlich verbessern, aber, ob ich das dann in meine englischsprachigen Fortbildung so stecke (*lacht*), das glaube ich nicht wirklich.” (12reg2)

Teacher 12 told me she has never been able to invest private resources in language classes, and that she has always shied away from purchasing reading materials or professional journals in English. Because of her financial limitations, she has not developed the spending habits reported by some of the other teachers in this study, which include spending money on private travel or English-language DVDs. Even if she were to receive a higher salary in the future, she added, she would not necessarily change her habits. She freely admitted that, if her salary were to double tomorrow, she would rather take her children on a nice vacation to a warm beach than attend a language class in London.

The issues of cost are tied in with **administrative issues**, as investments of time and effort in PD activities generally are not recognized or honored. Several teachers said that they had withdrawn from attending day-long events held during the work week, or had arrived late at events scheduled for the afternoon, because other teachers at their school were absent and they had had to take on additional tasks. Even though their directors had approved the PD activities in advance, these teachers had not been able to participate due to their workloads. With one exception, a university-sponsored day for English teachers, none of the non-NESTs had applied for an external course or event scheduled during normal school hours, as these were categorically not approved.

There was also a general feeling that educational administrators did not necessarily support all PD activities, or that there was only token support. One teacher who works at the *Regionalschule* level had been involved with a committee to develop the school-leaving exam for the past several years, partly because she wanted to contribute to the field at a more professional and far-reaching level, and partly because she felt it helped her English. She enjoyed reading and selecting texts and discussing possible questions with a group of non-NESTs from around the state. Yet every year when she applied to

take time off from teaching to attend committee meetings, she was told by her director that she was shirking her duties as a teacher, and that the school could ill-afford her absence. She felt that she was doing more work and was being criticized for her efforts. Other teachers who were not involved in committees or boards also mentioned that district and state authorities did not seem to recognize how much time and effort many of their colleagues invest:

“Da wird eben nicht mehr viel kommen, weil die Leute nur zwei Abminderungsstunden kriegen, für eine WAHNSINNS Arbeit. Das kann eigentlich nicht so sein! Man müsste mal auf die Barrikaden gehen, für die Leute, die sich die Zeit nehmen und tagtäglich machen und tun, und dann gerade mal zwei Stunden kriegen, das ist LACHHAFT. Dass das keiner machen will, ist logisch. Da ist kein Anreiz.” (17reg2)

While Teacher 17 said she appreciates the work her colleagues put into organizing PD activities and providing her with materials and input, she added that she cannot understand why these teachers continue to make the effort. She called the reduction of the teaching load by only two contact hours per week a “joke,” given the amount of time these non-NESTs devote to the activities. Her colleague also objected to the idea that teachers are expected to attend PD events in the afternoon, after a full day of classes, or on the weekends:

“Es muss einem auch die Zeit gegeben werden, sich damit zu beschäftigen. Also wie gesagt, nach Feierabend, dann hat man auch nicht mehr den Kopf dafür frei. Das bringt keinem was.” (18reg2)

She pointed out that, although there are other jobs in which employees are expected to work overtime, teachers already have more than their fair share of extra work after hours, including preparing classes, correcting homework, and meeting with parents. She said she opposes scheduling PD activities in the “nach Feierabend” phases of late afternoons and weekends, because these are times when teachers are less receptive to input and will not benefit as much from the sessions. She added that administrators who do not recognize this fact and will not approve PD activities during normal working hours make it more difficult for teachers to participate in PD. Although Teacher 18 was especially vocal on this point, several other participants noted that, for PD to be useful, they needed to have the time and mental energy to engage with the content.

The final and least problematic issue that typically arises in selecting which language PD events to attend is that of the **location**. For a few teachers, primarily those with younger children, distance is a factor that influences their PD choices. A commute of less than a half an hour is seen as unproblematic, but some teachers said they would not consider participating in PD activities in cities located farther away. The expenses

associated with traveling, such as train tickets, gas, or parking fees, were not seen as an encumbrance, although two teachers mentioned that they consider parking availability. Teacher 31 reported that her car had been towed away once when she arrived late for a PD session and had parked illegally, and Teacher 19 said she does not like driving in unfamiliar areas and parking in unlit lots. Because she is often the only non-NEST from her school who attends workshops, she either asks her husband to pick her up or she leaves the session early so that she does not need to return to her car in the dark. Neither teacher said she believes that providing parking is the responsibility of PD organizers, but both of these participants mentioned that it is one more issue that they must consider when deciding whether to attend a PD event.

The rooms in which PD sessions take place vary greatly, but this is not a factor in the teachers' decisions. One publishing house offers a yearly event in a rather nice hotel conference center, and the teachers praised the clean facilities and full catering services. Yet they also said that they could be just as satisfied attending a session in an empty school classroom without any amenities. A few of the teachers mentioned that if an event is scheduled to run a full day, they appreciate having access to a cafeteria or inexpensive restaurant for lunch, but others said they pack sandwiches and thermos bottles, and thus do not care much about food options.

Location is the main issue the teachers said they take into account when considering attending structured language classes overseas. Most of the teachers expressed a clear preference for traveling to the UK. Of the four participants in this study who had attended language schools overseas since leaving university, three had done so in the UK or Ireland. Teacher 23 attended a summer session in the USA only because she wanted to visit friends while there. The costs of traveling to the British Isles are much lower than to the USA, Canada, or Australia, and therefore nearly all of the teachers who said they might consider such a trip indicated that they would prefer to stay within Europe.

Although the teachers cited factors of time, money, family, and administrative support (or lack thereof), the extent to which these considerations actually affect their PD choices remains unclear. There is no guarantee that, even if all of these perceived barriers were eliminated, the non-NESTs would take part in more activities or would benefit more from them. As long as they feel that the content of the structured PD

activities is useful or interesting, they will try to attend. If the content is lacking or there is nothing new or useful to be gained, then most of the teachers will choose to do something else instead.

6. SUMMARY

The 20 non-NESTs in this study reflected on how they learned English and the changes in their language skills since they became teachers. All of the participants reported having enough confidence with their current level of English skills to teach in an EFL setting. Although some occasionally have questions or feelings of uncertainty, most of the non-NESTs believe that their own skills in English are adequate for what they need in their profession. If there are problematic areas, the teachers believe they are able to compensate for these, either by utilizing various resources during their preparation work, or through the experience of teaching their pupils. None of the teachers reported feeling a pressing need to engage in continued language learning due to a serious lack in any area. This confidence in their own language ability, coupled with their years of experience as language teachers, matches much of what is reported about other non-NESTs worldwide, especially in other expanding circle countries.

In terms of their confidence in their ability to use English beyond the classroom, the participants in this study differed greatly. Some of them saw themselves as strong users of the language, while others were nervous or hesitant to employ their English outside of a school setting. For most of the non-NESTs in this study, English is still a “foreign” language, and there are vast areas of practice in which they do not feel secure. Some of the teachers are attempting to close these gaps through continued language learning or travel overseas, or by seeking out alternative situations in which their language skills can be expanded. Other non-NESTs are not concerned about what they see as their deficiencies as users, and they feel no need to improve their language skills. For many of those teachers, English is a language they use primarily for their job and they do not consider it essential that they speak it fluently in non-school settings.

Nearly all of the participants observed that their English has changed since they became teachers, and that these changes move in two directions. Non-NESTs often see improvements in their knowledge and use of grammar rules, and in their ability to

present and initiate grammar learning in the classroom. They have also expanded their vocabulary range through teaching new material and working with pupils on different areas of interest. A few teachers believe that they have increased their accuracy in spelling as a result of teaching. Many teachers reported feeling more comfortable with listening tasks involving various accents or dialects. However, it was unclear whether this sense of having improved came from their teaching experience, or from greater exposure to more World Englishes over the past two decades.

Negative language change, or loss, was often perceived in the areas of phonetic accuracy, although this is a skill area in which the teachers usually felt confident when teaching. Whereas many said they can explain, model, and correct their pupils' pronunciation with no difficulties, they no longer always feel sure about their own pronunciation, especially outside of the classroom. Even in the classroom, some teachers believed that they were not always as strict about adhering to their own phonetic standards as they had been while at university, and they reported occasional "slips" with certain sounds. A large number of non-NESTs said they believe that their fluency in oral communication had deteriorated as well, as they are rarely called upon to engage in a conversation in English. As with pronunciation, some teachers attributed this deterioration to a lack of conversation partners who function at the same level they do, while others said they believe they have lowered their levels in order to provide clearer and more comprehensible input for their pupils. In addition to oral production, a few teachers lamented the loss of higher-level writing skills, and reported that they are no longer able to produce academic texts with the level of competence they had achieved when they were at university. Although this skill has no bearing on their jobs, a number of teachers expressed some dissatisfaction with their losses in this area.

Teachers' willingness to seek out and engage in additional language development activities to maintain or improve their language skills depended to a large extent on the role English plays in their lives. A few of the non-NESTs in this study viewed improving their English as a personal pursuit, and saw their language goals as being quite separate from their professional goals. These teachers sought to expand their English skills not in order to become better teachers, but in order to become more fluent or competent users in non-teaching situations. For most of the participants, however, English is a job skill, and it is not something they work on merely for personal reasons.

Their language goals are closely related to the type of school they work in and their professional plans for the future.

Those teachers who work in the *Regionalschule* with pupils who are functioning at a lower level are less generally interested in investing time, money, or effort in additional language development. For many of these non-NESTs, other aspects of PD, such as working with special needs children or dealing with discipline issues, take precedence over continuing language work. Because they teach lower-level learners, they are rarely faced with language that is challenging or new for them, and they therefore do not feel a need to expand their language base. The few *Regionalschule* teachers who said they engage in language PD do so either for a sense of personal enjoyment, or because they wish to improve their language skills for activities not directly related to their work. One teacher working at a *Regionalschule* was certified to teach at the *Gymnasium* and she hoped to return to this level someday; her attitudes matched those of the *Gymnasium* teachers.

The non-NESTs working at the *Gymnasium* level reported having a greater interest in PD activities involving language improvement, and they showed a slightly higher level of willingness to invest private resources in such activities. Some of these teachers viewed language PD, whether structured or unofficial, as a part of their professional identity, and as a natural extension of their job. For others, their relationship with English was less dependent on their job as a teacher, and was more centered on activities outside of school. On the whole, teachers working at the *Gymnasium* were more confident of their English language skills and saw themselves as competent users of the language in most situations, professional or private. It was unclear whether this confidence stemmed from the fact that they work with upper-level pupils and deal with a wider range of English texts and contact situations, or if they had this confidence before they entered teaching. In other words, it may be the case that more successful and confident learners choose a path that leads to certification as *Gymnasium* teachers, while less optimistic users of English do not aspire to teach at this type of school.

The vast majority of non-NESTs in this study said they are open to language PD activities, but they also indicated clearly what they want and need from PD sessions. If a teacher decides to participate in language PD as a part of her job, he or she will want the content to relate to professional tasks, to be conveyed in the target language, and to fit

into an existing work schedule. The teachers said they are reluctant to invest in activities they deem to be too distant from the topics they need for school, and that they do not appreciate PD sessions that are not well-prepared or are overly theoretical. Many of the non-NESTs expressed a desire for smaller sessions in which they can focus on their own specific questions and issues, saying they prefer small workgroups to large presentations in which they are merely passive consumers of language and content. Nearly all of the teachers said they want to hear about new ideas and to receive materials they can use in or adapt for their own classrooms. Sessions led by a native or near-native speaker are seen as being advantageous, but only if the NS understands how EFL is taught in schools and targets the session to the levels at which the teachers are working.

Policy makers and sponsors of PD involving a language component would be well-advised to consider non-NESTs' interests and needs in English, and to link their activities and offerings directly to the teachers' classroom experiences. Because the non-NESTs in this study said they see themselves as competent and effective teachers of English, they do not necessarily need to continue with language PD in order to perform their jobs. They do, however, value language PD that broadens their scope of knowledge and that supplies them with new input for their classrooms. They also emphasized that the timing and funding of such activities should make the teachers want to participate. The non-NESTs in this study have a good sense of their current skill levels and know what aspects of English are the most troublesome for them. They reject the idea of being "retrained" or "sent back to school" to improve their language skills or to fulfill a requirement set by an institution. Instead, the teachers said they believe that they themselves know best what their strengths and weakness are, and what sort of language support they need in order to maintain or expand their language skills. It would be beneficial if official language PD activities reflected these insights, and supported non-NESTs in their work.

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Appendix I: Information sent to potential participants

Letter sent to potential participants via the schools

Dear Teachers of English:

Für mein Dissertationsprojekt suche ich Lehrkräfte, die in den Klassen 5-10 bzw. 5-12 Englisch unterrichten und die bereit sind, mir zwei Interviews zu geben. Die Interviewfragen sind so konzipiert, dass die Gespräche hervorragend in eine Freistunde passen (ca. 40 Minuten) und können bei Ihnen in der Schule stattfinden.

Mein Projekt befasst sich mit Englischlehrern und wie sie über die Fremdsprache denken. Ich möchte wissen, wie und warum Sie selbst Englisch gelernt haben, und wie Sie die Sprache im Berufsleben weiter lernen. Viele Promotionsstudien untersuchen die Lehrenden oder Schulabsolventen und deren „Qualität“, oder sie testen die „Effektivität“ einer bestimmten Unterrichtsmethode. Mein Projekt aber befasst sich ausschließlich mit der Sichtweise der Lehrkräfte auf die Fremdsprache. Kurz gesagt, es geht um Sie: um Ihre Erlebnisse und Meinungen.

Wenn Sie jetzt Englisch an einer allgemeinbildenden Schule unterrichten und Ihre Referendarzeit schon hinter sich haben, würde ich Sie wirklich gerne kennen lernen und Sie zu diesem Thema befragen. Die Lehrkräfte, die bisher teilgenommen haben, haben mir gesagt, dass sie die Gespräche schön fanden. Es hat ihnen Spaß gemacht, eine kurze Zeit für sich zu nehmen und dabei über ihre Beziehung zu der englischen Sprache zu reden.

Auf der Rückseite dieses Briefes finden Sie einige Details zum Ablauf der Interviews. Sollten Sie Fragen haben, hoffe ich, dass Sie Kontakt mit mir aufnehmen. Ich würde mich wirklich freuen, Sie kennen zu lernen und mit Ihnen zu sprechen.

Mit freundlichen Grüßen,

Appendix I: (continued) Information sent to potential participants

(Information sheet distributed prior to first SSI/site visit)

Informationen für die Teilnehmer:

- Es ist nicht mein Anliegen, die Lehrerin/den Lehrer zu testen oder zu überprüfen. Ich bin weder bei der Universität angestellt oder als Prüfer berufen, noch arbeite ich für ein Amt oder eine Behörde. Meine Fragen beziehen sich nur auf mein Dissertationsthema: die Sichtweise von Lehrern auf ihr eigenen Fremdsprachenfähigkeiten und -erfahrungen.
- Es gibt keine „richtigen“ oder „falschen“ Antworten. Auch gibt es keine Fragen, die beantwortet werden müssen. Sollte ein Teilnehmer sich zu einem Thema nicht äußern wollen, bleibt die Frage unbeantwortet.
- Alle Informationen, die ich während unseres Gesprächs sammle, werden vertraulich behandelt. Die einzelnen Teilnehmer werden nur über eine Codierungsnummer, nie namentlich, mit direkten Zitaten oder Beschreibungen in Verbindung gebracht.
- Das Gespräch wird auf Tonträger mitgeschnitten. Danach wird das Interview schriftlich erfasst und die schriftliche Transkription wird mit der Codierungsnummer versehen. Transkriptionen und Audioaufnahmen werden nie an Dritte weitergegeben, die Bearbeitung erfolgt nur durch mich selbst. Erwähnung von Ortsnamen oder Personennamen werden abgekürzt bzw. geändert, falls die Möglichkeit besteht, dass eine Identifizierung des Probanden dadurch möglich wäre. Mein Gesprächspartner hat auch das Recht zu verlangen, dass der Tonträger zwischenzeitlich ausgeschaltet wird, oder sich das Interview nach Abschluss anzuhören.
- Unser erstes Gespräch soll nicht länger als eine Stunde dauern, möglichst viel kürzer (30 bis 40 Minuten). Sollten wir nicht alle Fragen des Fragenkatalogs abarbeiten oder sollte dem Teilnehmer etwas im Nachhinein einfallen, können wir diese Punkte beim zweiten Gespräch wieder aufnehmen.
- Bevor ich meinem Gesprächspartner eine Frage stelle, hat der Teilnehmer die Möglichkeit, mir Fragen zu stellen – zum Projekt, zu meiner Person, oder zum bevorstehenden Interview.

Appendix II: Information on participants' data

Teacher code ¹	School type ²	Age ³	Teaching experience (total years) ³	Teaching English (years)	% workload English	Additional subjects ⁵	Types(s) of site visit ⁶	Total SSL time (minutes)
10	reg	43	19	19	100%	Rus	Hospi.	101
11	reg	40	18	18	100%	Ger	Hospi./Prep.	67
12	reg	45	23	15	75%	Rus/Ger	Hospi./Mtng.	81
13	reg	59	34	15	100%	Rus/Ger	Hospi./Mtng.	107
14	reg	45	21	21	100%	Rus	Prep.	92
16	ges	39	15	15	60%	Rus/Fre	Mtng./Prep.	133
17	reg	48	26	26	50%	Ger	Prep.	115
18	reg	48	26	26	65%	Rus/Fre	Prep.	115
19	reg	57	34	17	66%	Rus/Ger	Mtng./Prep.	80
20	gym	42	15	15	22%	Rus/Rel	Prep.	202
21	gym	30	4	4	30%	Math	Mtng.	101
22	gym	41	17	17	100%	Ger	Hospi./Mtng.	204
23	gym	32	4	4	30%	Bio	Mtng./Prep.	99
24	gym	37	13	10	33%	Spn	Hospi./Mtng.	64
25	gym	43	21	21	100%	Rus	Mtng./Prep.	93
30	sp.ed.	39	11	8	18%	SpEd	Prep.	70
31	reg	42	20	20	100%	Rus	Mtng./Hospi.	113
35	ges	46	23	23	100%	Rus/Hist.	Prep./Mtng.	170
36	gym	47	25	25	66%	Rus/ Fre.	Prep./Mtng.	67
37	reg	46	25	25	100%	Rus	Hospi./Prep.	101

¹ Missing numbers (e.g. 15) were originally assigned to teachers who had expressed an interest in participating in an interview, but who did not do so.

² School types: reg=Regionalschule (through grade 10), gym=Gymnasium (through grade 12), ges=Gesamtschule (intergrated school), sp.ed.=Förderschule (through grade 9 or 10 for children with learning disabilities/social problems/truants)

³ Age at time of first interview

⁴ Independent teaching, since passing second state certification exam (generally 2 years after leaving university)

⁵ Other subjects: Rus=Russian, Ger=German, Fre=French, Rel=religion, Math=mathematics, Bio=biology, Spn=Spanish, Hist=history, SpEd=special education for learning disabled

⁶ Site visits included Hospi=Hospitation (class observation), Prep=review of class preparation or marking assignments, Mtng=staff or departmental meeting

Appendix II: (continued) Contact form for each participant's data

DATENBANK EINTRAG #	
Datum INTERVIEW 1 Ort (Schule/privat/anders)	
Datum INTERVIEW 2 Ort (Schule/privat/anders)	
Datum KONTEXTGESPRÄCH Ort (Schule/privat/anders)	
<i>Name</i>	
Geburtsjahr / Alter	
Muttersprache Deutsch?	
Männlich / weiblich	
Wohnort	
<i>Kontaktinformation</i>	
1. Staatsexamen absolviert (Jahr)	
<i>Wo studiert</i>	
<i>Wo Praktikum/Referendariat</i>	
2. Staatsexamen absolviert	
<i>Wo / an welchem Institut</i>	
Wie lange schon Englisch unterrichtet	
An welcher Schulart jetzt	
Andere Fächer (außer Englisch)	
schon immer an dieser Art Schule?	
auch Klassenlehrer/in?	
andere Funktionen (z.B. Schulleiter)?	
Wie viele Unterrichtsstunden pro Woche?	
Wie viele davon Englisch?	
<i>Andere Arbeit (VHS, private Nachhilfe)?</i>	
<i>andere Berufe gelernt / ausgeübt?</i>	

Die kursiv markierten Felder werden nicht elektronisch erfasst.

Appendix III: Questions and probes for SSI sessions, questions in interview 1

<p>Einstieg</p>	<p>Wie sind Sie Englischlehrer(in) geworden? Warum haben Sie Englisch gewählt? Warum Lehrer(in)?</p>
<p>Sprachen lernen in der Schulzeit</p>	<p>Wie war das damals, als Sie in der Schulzeit Englisch gelernt haben? Wie war der Unterricht für Sie? Erzählen Sie mir bitte von Ihrem Lehrer. Haben Sie sich immer für Fremdsprachen begeistern können? Warum (nicht)?</p>
<p>Sprachen lernen nach der Schulzeit</p>	<p>Und nach der Schule? Wie war das dann, als Sie an die Universität kamen? (Wie) war es anders, dort die Sprache weiter zu lernen?</p> <p>An der Universität: haben Sie noch konkrete Beispiele im Kopf von bestimmten Lehrkräften oder Übungen - wo Sie besonders viel oder wenig mitgenommen haben? Woran erinnern Sie sich, als Sie damals Anglistik (Amerikanistik) studiert haben bezüglich des Lernens der Sprache? Kennen Sie noch die Namen/Kurse/Inhalte?</p> <p>Wie haben Sie noch Englisch gelernt, außer in der Schule und an der Universität? (Wo, wann, warum?) (Auslandsaufenthalt oder andere Lernmethoden?)</p>
<p>Wie war Ihr Englisch, als Sie als Lehrer angefangen haben?</p>	<p>In wie weit haben Ihre Ausbildung, Praktikum und Referendariat Sie auf Ihren Beruf, bezüglich der Sprache, vorbereitet?</p> <p>Als Sie mit der Universität fertig waren, waren Sie mit Ihren Fähigkeiten und mit Ihren Prüfungsergebnissen zufrieden? Wie war Ihr Englisch? Was waren Ihre Stärken, wo haben Sie noch Reserven gehabt?</p>
<p>Im Nachhinein...?</p>	<p>Würden Sie irgendetwas an der Hochschulausbildung oder am Referendariat ändern, um angehenden Lehrern zu helfen, Englisch zu lernen? Ist das nötig?</p>

Appendix III: (continued) Questions and probes in interview 2

<p>(Wieder-) einstieg (Anknüpfen an erstes Gespräch)</p>	<p>Beim ersten Treffen haben wir darüber gesprochen, wie Sie Englisch gelernt haben, bevor Sie Lehrer(in) wurden. Haben wir etwas vergessen? Gibt es etwas, wonach ich nicht gefragt habe? Etwas im Nachhinein eingefallen? Jetzt habe ich (weitere) Fragen darüber, wie Sie heute mit Englisch umgehen.</p>
<p>Sprachveränderung:</p>	<p>Wie sind Ihre Englischkenntnisse jetzt (im Vergleich zu Studentenzeiten oder früher) - Änderung, in der Fähigkeit, Englisch zu sprechen? - Was für Änderung (noch), sei es besser oder schlechter, anders?</p>
<p>„Verlust/ Schlechter“</p>	<p>Wie merken Sie das? (konkrete Beispiele oder eher ein Gefühl?) Was genau vergessen, verloren, wo baut man ab Konstant mit der Zeit, mehr am Anfang oder immer noch? Wie fühlen Sie Sich, wenn Sie an diesen „Verlust“ denken? Ist das persönlich oder beruflich ein Thema, oder beides?</p>
<p>Gewinn/ Besserung“</p>	<p>Was genau können Sie besser als damals --- woher kommt das? Ergebnis der Arbeit und Inhalte, oder persönliches Interesse? Hält das an, schwankt das manchmal? Wie merkt man das? Sind Sie stolz? Machen das andere Lehrer auch?</p>
<p>„keine Veränderung“</p>	<p>Sprachfähigkeiten aufrecht halten, was genau machen Sie?</p>
<p>Fortbildung in der Sprache –</p>	<p>Wie viel Arbeitszeit (Stunden oder %) verbringen Sie mit Fortbildung? Was genau für Fortbildungen? Mit „Sprache“ oder „Sprachpraxis“ seit dem Studium aktiv Englisch lernen?</p>
<p>„nicht viel“/ „überhaupt nicht“</p>	<p>das Gefühl, eine Fortbildung machen müssen oder verlangt wird? Oder keinen Handlungsbedarf Ihrerseits / von Seiten der Schule? Wie wäre es leichter für Sie?</p>
<p>„etwas mehr“/ „sehr viel“</p>	<p>Kommt das von Ihnen, oder müssen Sie Auflagen erfüllen? Unterstützung, oder selbst in die Hand nehmen?</p>
<p>„offizielle“ sprachliche Fortbildung</p>	<p>Ist es wichtig, selbst weiterhin die Sprache aufrecht zu erhalten Möglichkeiten im Umkreis Wenn es (mehr) (Sprach-) Kurse gäbe, würden Sie diese besuchen? Was für Kurse/Angebote wünschen Sie Sich? Wie sähe ein idealer Englischlehrer-Sprachkurs oder -gruppe aus, oder ist so etwas gar nicht realisierbar? Hätten Sie die Zeit/Energie, solche Fortbildungsangebote wahrzunehmen?</p>
<p>„inoffizielle“ Fortbildung und soziale Netzwerke</p>	<p>Kontakt mit anderen Englischlehrern, anderen Schulen? Erfolge oder Probleme reden? Unterstützung oder Verständnis? Job Zufriedenheit, wie lange noch, wie wichtig ist ein „gutes Englisch“</p>

Appendix IV: Transcription symbols used

Symbol	Denotes	Example
.	End declarative sentence or phrase	
!	End emotional or louder sentence	
?	End question, rising intonation	Was meinen Sie? Na?
,	Hesitation, pause < 1 second	
...	short pause, 1-2 seconds	
(Pause)	longer pause, 3+ seconds	
(long pause)	Silence of > 10 seconds	
-	Short self-interruption or correction	Er sagte mir, da- dass ich dabei
-.	Longer self-interruption	Das war damals so-. Ja, das war...
/	Interruption by other person	A: Ich meinte, dass es/ B: Ja, so meinte ich das auch.
.....	Run-off sentence, silent prompt	A: Ja, so ist das denn gewesen..... B: Also meinen Sie, dass.....
CAPS	Stressed emphasis	Um ein VIELfaches besser Ich war SO deprimiert!
<i>italics</i>	Foreign words or phrase, spoken with English intonation/pronunciation	Also bin ich nicht <i>up-to-date</i> dabei
<i>ITALIC CAP</i>	Sound effects, imitation of noises	<i>WHIZZT!</i> <i>KERBANG!</i>
(<i>italics</i>)	Sounds or actions, often non-verbal	(<i>lacht</i>) (<i>klopft auf den Tisch</i>)
((Ort))	Omission of names, places	ich komme aus ((Stadt)) die Frau ((Name der Leiterin))
(<i>mimic</i>)	Imitation voice, falsetto	Sie sagte (<i>mimic</i>) also SO nicht.
(<i>extra mimic</i>)	Extra, overdone imitation	Und die Kinder so (<i>extra mimic</i>) boah ey!
Du, Dir, Dich	Direct form of address to speaker	Sage mir mal, was Du denkst.
du, dich	Indirect, in the sense of "one" (could be replaced by the German "man"), OR reflective of self	Dann wollten sie, dass du dann dir das alles merkst. Dann sagte sie zu mir, das musst du so machen.
Äh, ähm, hm	Stalling pauses	Ich denke, äh, dass es gut ist.
(multiple letters)	Drawn-out emphasis	Hmmmmm, ich denke... Alsooooo, das war so...

Appendix V: Sample of a transcribed interview session (no analysis)

Teacher 10, Interview 1: 3. Stunde, im Klassenraum (Regionalschule, Landkreis)

- 0:23** Ich wollte mal fragen, Sie- Sie arbeiten hier in ((Ort)), und seit wie lange?
- 10-- 0:27** Seit, tja, äh, seit fünf, ja fünf Jahren. Und jetzt, bin ich, im sechsten Jahr.
- 0:34** Mmm. Und haben Sie, andere Fächer, außer Englisch?
- 10-- 0:36** Ja, ich hab noch Russisch, aber nicht hier. Das heißt, ich unterrichte es nicht, nicht hier. Ich bin aber ausgebildet, in Russisch.
- 0:42** Also, Sie unterrichten gar kein/
- 10-- 0:44** Nee, ich habe Russisch, die ersten beiden Jahren, unterrichtet, und, äh, dann lief die Klasse, dann liefen die Klassen aus, oder verließen die Schule, und es kamen keine neuen Klassen hinterher.
- 0:55** Haben die Kinder, nicht so, ein Interesse mehr?
- 10-- 0:57** Ja, es ist, nee, das ja, das ist geTEILT, das Interesse. Aber wenn dann ein Französischschüler mehr, ist, als ein Russischschüler, dann, dann wird eben Russisch unterrichtet-, äh, Französisch unterrichtet. Und es werden dann eben nicht zwei Fremdsprachen zusätzlich unterrichtet, sondern immer nur eine.
- 1:16** Und das ist/
- 10-- 1:19** Und das ist Französisch. Und in diesem Jahr haben wir es auch so, dass nur vier Schüler in Französisch sind. (*Winkt mit Hand, schaut zum Fenster*).
- 1:24** Das sind aber genau so- (*pause*). Aber die haben eine Klasse dafür, aufgemacht?
- 10-- 1:30** Ja genau. Nun ja, das ist so, wir haben ja nur eine Siebte, ne? Und, insofern, geht das ja auch, noch. Die anderen machen, dann Wahlpflicht. Mich hätte ja mal interessiert, wie viele Schüler dort Russisch gewählt haben. DAS hätte mich mal interessiert.
- 1:44** Hm. Sind Sie auch Klassenlehrer?
- 10-- 1:46** Ja, ich bin Klassenlehrer. Für die Zehnte.
- 1:49** Für die Zehnte, das heißt, (*Pause*). Sie haben dieses Jahr jetzt auch Prüfung mit ihnen?
- 10-- 1:54** Genau, ja, nee, in den Zehnten habe ich in den letzten Jahren auch immer Prüfungen gehabt.
- 1:57** Mmm. Machen Sie also immer, jedes Jahr, weil da so wenig Kollegen sind.
- 10-- 2:04** Ja, genau. (*lächelt, nickt, erste Augenkontakt*)
- 2:06** Also, sechstes Schuljahr hier, das ist- äh, und wo waren Sie vorher? Sie müssen auch irgendwo vorher irgendwo gearbeitet haben, oder?
- 10-- 2:13** Ich war vorher an der ((Name))schule in Rostock.
- 2:16** Die ((Name))schule ist auch, äh, ist keine private Schu-, oder?
- 10-- 2:19** Nee, das ist eine normale, Schule, Trägerschaft der Hansestadt Rostock. Die wurde aber, im Zuge, von, der, des Schulkonzeptes, wurde abgebaut. Im wahrsten Sinne

des Wortes. Die ist also auch nicht mehr vorhanden. Ja (*lacht*), die ist schon, die ist weg!

2:37 Schon zur Eigentumswohnung verarbeitet, oder/

10-- 2:39 Ja, ich weiß auch nicht, wozu sie verarbeitet wurde. Vielleicht liegt die jetzt, als irgendein Schotter, unter irgendeinem Straßenbelag, (*lacht*) das kann ich nicht- (*lacht*).

2:50 (*mitlachen*) Ja, die Schule von meinem Mann ist auch nicht mehr da, ist schon irgendeine Einkaufspassage (*beide lachen*). Naja, okay, ich fange mal an. Sie haben, Sie haben irgendwo Englisch gelernt und, warum, warum sind Sie dann Englischlehrer geworden?

10-- 3:05 Weil mich Fremdsprachen interessiert haben, oder überhaupt fremde Sprachen, fremde Kulturen.

3:11 Deshalb auch Russisch und/

10-- 3:12 Ja, genau.

3:14 Und warum nicht Russisch und Spanisch, oder etwas ander/

10-- 3:18 Weil, das bei uns damals, die, gängigen Sprachen waren. Russisch, Englisch. Französisch seltener. Und die Ausbildung im Lehrerbereich, umfasste auch wirklich nur, meines Erachtens, Russisch und Englisch. Ich glaube Französisch wurden gar kein, keine Lehrer für, na gut, mussten auch, doch klar, aber, es gab ja auch Französischlehrer bei uns. Sie werden irgendwo ausgebildet worden sein. Es gab ja auch, es gab ja auch Lateinlehrer bei uns, sie müssen ja auch irgendwo ausgebildet worden sein. Also da war, ähm, also ICH wüsste jetzt nicht wo, an welchen Orten, man hätte noch, noch Französisch, studieren können. ABER, für mich wäre das gar nicht in Frage gekommen, weil für mich, ja, nun, Russisch und Englisch das naheliegende war, die naheliegenden Sprachen waren. Die naheliegenden Sprachen waren. Ja.

4:06 Wussten Sie das schon immer? So, so, so in der 8. Klassen gesagt, ich werde auch Russisch-Englischlehrer?

10-- 4:10 Nee. Ich wollte eigentlich auch erst Dolmetscher werden.

4:14 Und. Und die Lehrerausbildung kam im Prinzip als, als Ausweich, dazu?

10-- 4:17 Genau. Weil das damals so nicht geklappt hat. Also, das war bei der Armee, und sie haben gesagt, (*mimic*) ja, Ihr Englisch, es ist ja ganz PASSABEL, aber leider, ist im Warschauer Vertrag die Hauptsprache nun Russisch. Ruhe, aus, vorbei. Aber nun, (*mimic*) Sie können ja auch noch Lehrer werden. (*andere mimic*) Wieso Lehrer? Wenn ich jetzt nicht so gut Russisch kann? (*mimic*) Naja, Sprechen ist ja was anderes als Unterrichten! Nun ja, nein, und da habe ich dann schon, mich, das für mich so entschieden. Dass es etwas mit Sprachen was zu tun haben sollte. Und ähm, also die Berufsberatung, zu DDR Zeiten, ging also nicht, da war ja auch nicht so, dass man sich aus, aus einer Vielfalt aussuchen könnte. Sondern die Berufsberatung lief in DIE Richtung, dass die Jungs und Mädels alles, alles schon hatten, was man hätte machen können, nach der Schule laufen könnte. Und dann sagten sie so, (*mimic*) das wäre doch jetzt super, DAS zu machen, und das wäre noch super, DAS zu machen.

5:12 Und du wirst DAS.

10-- 5:14 Eben. Du wirst das, und du wirst jenes, und so war's bei UNS Praxis, in ((Ort)). Woanders weiß ich nicht, ob das noch woanders anders lief, oder, ob anderen, Möglichkeiten bestanden, aber in ((Ort)) war das die Praxis. Also, das heißt bei MIR, an MEINER Schule, war das so, wie das war.

5:28 Äh, Sie kommen aus ((Ort)). Und in der Schule, Sie hatten dann beides, Englisch und Russisch?

10-- 5:33 Mmm, ja.

5:35 Und wie war Englischunterricht damals für Sie als Schüler, als Sie selber auf der Schulbank saßen? So POS, dann EOS. Wie waren Sie als Englischschüler? (*beide lachen*). Na, ich meine waren Sie immer ein guter Englischschüler, waren Sie immer total begeistert dabei? (*er lacht*). Okay, was konnten Sie gut, damals, in Englisch?

10-- 5:50 Ach, mittlerweile kann ich mich gar nicht so, nicht so richtig, zurück, erinnern, das ist alles inzwischen so weit her. Ich weiß immer noch, dass wir in der, in der POS, ja in der POS, nur ganz sporadisch Englisch hatten. Da hatten wir kaum Englisch, und wenn, dann mit sehr, vielen Unterbrechungen. Und für mich war damals die Motivation, zu verstehen, was die, ja, was die Rock und Pop Größen da im Radio sangen. Da war für mich die Motivation. Und da habe ich dann immer vorm Radio gesessen, (*beugt sich nach vorne, „hört“ mit Hand am Ohr*) und dann habe ich gehört, und dann, wenn ich was nicht verstanden habe, dann habe ich versucht, anhand der Soundbilder, die entsprechenden, die entsprechenden, ähm, die möglichen Schreibweisen mir vorzunehmen, und die habe ich dann im Wörterbuch aufgesucht, oder versucht zu finden, und habe den, und hab dann so, eben, im wahrsten Sinnes des Wortes daraus, ein Reim zu machen, das, was sie gesungen haben. Und DAS war für mich wichtig, dass ich da, sowas, so, verstehen konnte. So. Und dass ich da in der, im Unterricht, oder in der Schule war, dass ich da noch Englisch hatte, das war so sekundär, das hat mich nicht alles so interessiert. Ich war natürlich, ich war natürlich, äh, *keen* da darauf, da was mit zu bekommen, was zu lernen, was zu verstehen, das ist klar, ne? Aber die Thematiken, die da im Unterricht besprochen worden waren, damals, die dort-. Ja, die waren jetzt nicht SO von, von solchem eindringlichen, Interesse. War nicht-. Ja.

7:20 Mmm. Es war ein Schulfach, eben.

10-- 7:22 War ein Schulfach. Und das Gleiche, auch, auch mit Russisch. Und dann ist es ja auch so, dass das, dass der Alltag ja immer alles kaputt macht. Und insofern. Oder sagen wir mal, nicht kaputt macht. Das ist Quatsch. Aber dass der Alltag so, bestimmte Leidenschaften dämpft.

7:38 Schulalltag?

10-- 7:39 Ja, der Schulalltag, und, in dem Fall auch der Schulalltag.

7:44 Also, Sie hatten nicht irgendwie einen Super-Englischlehrer, wo Sie gesagt haben, ach, so wie sie oder er, so möchte ich mal werden. So ein Vorbild?

10-- 7:50 Nee, hatte ich nicht. Nein. (*Pause*) Ich, ich fand sie alle auch ganz nett, aber so... Ich wollte gerne herumreisen, in der Welt (*lacht*), wollte ich. Das wollte ich, da,

was kennen lernen von der Welt, und dazu brauchte ich eine Sprache, oder mehrere und-. Ja, deswegen. Ich war auch nicht so besonders zielstrebig. Also ich war nicht so besonders zielstrebig. Ich war einmal zielstrebig, oder zweimal, zur Vorbereitung auf irgendwelche Prüfungsvor- Prüfung, ne. Prüfung gar nicht, sondern diese, ach, wie heißt- (*Pause*). Na! Diese Vorbereitung für die Aufnahmeprüfung, zum Dolmetscher. Naja, und da habe ich versucht ein bisschen, systematisch auch, voranzugehen, so. Aber ansonsten-, und ein bisschen zielgerichtet, aber ansonsten waren systematisch und zielgerichtet, war nicht so, in dem, damals, in dem Stadium, das war nicht so mein Fall.

8:47 Äh, Sie haben dann in ((Ort)) studiert, Ihre Englischlehrausbildung. Das war wie eine Pädagogische Hochschule?

10-- 8:53 Ja, genau, Pädagogische Hochschule hieß es auch direkt.

8:56 Und war das anders, wo Sie da ankamen? War das einmal, mit Sprachpraxis, und mit Unterricht/

10-- 9:02 Es war genau das Gleiche.

9:03 (*Pause, wartet*) Genau das Gleiche. Also, so, so super begeistert waren Sie nicht, von dem Englischunterricht, was Sie bis dahin gehabt haben? Oder waren Sie/

10-- 9:10 Nee, es, ich weiß auch nicht. Das Problem ist auch, äh. Also, ich habe eigentlich so, im Nachhinein, für mich vermisst, äh, dass ich, so Stützen... Hilfen, vermittelt, äh, bekommen haben könnte, die für mich so wichtig waren. Wichtig wären so ein bisschen, Systeme hereinzubringen. Weil ich habe das so, eigentlich ziellos gemacht alles, ne? Also ich wollte das alles nur so verstehen, so, und habe das denn alles so aufgenommen, und habe dann aber dann nachher gemerkt, bei den Vorbereitungen zur Dolmetscherprüfung, oh Mensch, hier ist ja alles, das ist ja, so alles, das hat ja alles so ein System und so, und ähm, das hätte ich mir gewünscht, im Nachhinein, dass da jemand gut, mich so ein bisschen so darauf dahin geschubst hätte, alles vorher, oder dass ich aus der, aus dem Unterricht, das, das hätte vorstellen können, sagen können, ach Mensch, das ist doch etwas systematisches, das alles. Das habe ich in ((Ort)) habe ich das in der englischen Sprach- ja, Praxis, habe ich das im vierten Studienjahr erst mitgekriegt. Das ist, ja, dass (*lacht*) ja, dass sowas geht.

10:19 Also kurz vor Schluss.

10-- 10:21 Ja, (*lacht*). Das war Professor ((Name)), den kannten wir aber alle schon. Der hatte damals so einen Berg verfasst, in der DDR, das war das sogenannte *Yellow Monster*. Naja, das hieß nicht, aber es war so ein gelbes Buch, mit so einem gelben Umschlag, und so.

10:32 Und das war so ein Klopper (*zeigt mit Finger und Daumen „dickes Buch“*).

10-- 10:34 Ja, SO ein Klopper (*zeigt mit beiden Händen „noch dickeres Buch“*), genau. Und das hatte er auch selber *Yellow Monster* auch so genannt. Und das war die Sprachpraxis, ne-, warte mal... nicht die Praxis, doch so, das war... grammatisch, äh. Also die Englische Grammatik. Aber auch nicht so in diesem, nicht so ein, unbedingt, in diesem System gehalten, wie wir kennen, von unserem grammatischen Übersichten. Sondern er hatte so eine andere Sichtweise auf Grammatik. Also weg von diesem, naja,

nun gut... das war auch systematisch, so, ein System hatte das auch. Nun ja, nun wie soll ich das sagen. Naja, sie hatten aufgegriffen, so, Erscheinungen, wo wir jetzt versuchen Erscheinungen zu trennen, und entsprechend einzeln zu betrachten. Äh, zum Beispiel das Subjekt. Es ist ein Wortar- wird von einer Wortart wieder, wiedergegeben, das Substantiv. So. Was ist aber nun, wenn es nicht, zum Beispiel, ein Wort, sondern das Subjekt heißt, *a girl from New York*? Denn ist es ja ein Satz, es, äh, dann ist es eine Wortgruppe. Und dann ist es dann auch einmal, ist es, na, was ist denn das? Was ist dann *from New York*, was ist denn das? So. Und so hatte er diese Grammatik, eben bestimmte, ja, Betrachtungsweisen auf bestimmte Erscheinungen eben in der Sprache, die eigentlich ganz interessant waren. Und da wo ich dachte, Mensch, das könnte man mal in der Schule auch noch machen. Aber wo ich dann sagte, naja, wo ich dachte, nun ja, da jetzt etwas, so, Neues hereinzubringen, was eigentlich so von der herkömmlichen Art und Weise abweicht, ob das günstig ist, in einem Sprachprozess, weiß ich nicht. So. Und in so fern, hätte ich machen, hätte man's machen können, mit den Schülern in der fünften Klasse. ABER, sämtliche Bücher, sämtliche, ähm, Unterrichtsmittel sind ja aufgebaut nach den herkömmlichen Grammatiken. Und das wäre dann für mich Verschwendung gewesen. Also, wenn ich oder die Kinder schon so ein Buch haben, oder so ein Unterrichtsmaterial haben, dann sollen sie, um das ein bisschen effektiv zu gestalten, auch mit dem Material arbeiten, was da drinne ist. Find ich, so finde ich das. Ich mein gut, nun gut, es ist ja auch mittlerweile, wird es ab-, wird davon noch abgegangen, aber das halte ich für etwas Negatives, zur Zeit, in der heutigen Zeit, dass immer wieder versucht wird, zu ändern, zu wechseln, was Neues, ähm, herkömmlichen Muster umzustoßen, weil sich irgendjemand einbildet, dass diese ausgedient HÄTTEN. Und ähm, dann sagt, da muss was Neues her, wir müssen was neues SCHAFFEN, wir müssen etwas ANDERES probieren. Hmm. Aber dabei nicht bemerkt, dass dies nicht an den Mustern liegt, sondern dass es an, dass das an anderen Dingen liegt. Dass es an ganz anderen Dingen liegt. Und, ähm-, naja.

13:23 Also, (*Pause*). Äh, Beispiele, die Sie im Studium haben, oder selber irgendwie als Schüler gehabt hatten, wie jemand das so Ihnen verklickert hat. Sie greifen nicht unbedingt dazu zurück. Und sagen, so/

10-- 13:32 Doch.

13:32 Doch?

10-- 13:33 Doch, aber das ist allgemein, dass ist, zum Beispiel, wenn ich jetzt zum Beispiel die *Tenses* behandle und so, und dann sage ich zu meinem, dann führe ich meine Schüler ein... so, nun. Dann sage ich... Ich weiß gar nicht, ob ich dann damit, die *Tenses* da anspreche, weiß ich gar nicht. Das mache ich eigentlich so allgemein. Aber das mache ich das nicht auf Englisch, sondern dann mache ich das auf Deutsch, weil sie mich dann so verstehen, was ich meine, und dann versuche ich, dann versuche ich ganz, ganz, ganz einfache Sätze zu machen, zu bilden, und auf Englisch, mal, und in, in diesen Klassen, die wir jetzt haben, ist es auch nicht mit einfachen Sätzen getan. Also, da spreche ich zwei an, die das verstehen würden, und der Rest hört auf. Und bei diesem, und bei diesen heutigen Voraussetzungen der Schüler, was die

Überwindungsbereitschaft betrifft, was die Anstrengungsbereitschaft betrifft, ist es sinnlos. Ich kann mich tausendmal hier hin stellen, und verlangen, das und das, und so und so, das machen sie nicht mit. Sie machen nicht mal Hausaufgaben. Obwohl sie wissen, das muss, das dient ihnen zur Vorbereitung, zur Befestigung ihrer eigenen Kenntnissen, Fähigkeiten, Fertigkeiten. Und ähm, obwohl, man da vielleicht auch sagt, (*mimic*) Oh Mensch, das war heute eine tolle Sache im Unterricht, das war leicht, was ich verstanden habe! Und dann gehen die nach Hause, und sagen, (*mimic*) ach war ja leicht, oder (*mimic*) ist ja nicht so schlimm, wenn ich da nichts mache. Oder immer natürlich davon ausgehen, (*mimic*) ich habe was viel besseres vor... Und denn, war's das. Also, insofern, ich denke mal, da... da gibt es, ähm, da sollte man sich nicht jetzt, mit aller Macht aufs Englische verlegen, wenn man das übermittelt. Und insofern mache ich das also auch auf Deutsch, der, die Grammatik. Und sage dann, so, passt mal auf, (*mimic*) wie ist'n das denn nun? Warum versteht ihr nun das, wenn ich euch das sage? (*extra mimic*) Weil wir Deutsch verstehen. Ich sage, na klar. Aber ja, aber ich kann euch ja auch mal, ich kann ja ein anderes Deutsch mit euch sprechen. Und dann greife ich irgendwie was auf der Luft, was Bruchstücke sind, was Wörter sind, die wahllos aneinander gereiht sind, Nonsens-Satz, den sowieso keiner versteht, und so weiter. Und dann versuchen wir dann raus zu kriegen, warum, weshalb hat das jetzt keiner verstanden. So.

15:56 Also, dass Sprache Regeln hat.

10-- 15:57 Ja, warum hat das jetzt keiner verstanden? Und dann kommen die Kinder, und dann kommen sie darauf, (*mimic*) ja, weil Sie ja das und das nicht beachtet haben (*Pause*). Und (*mimic*) weil ja, weil Sie das und das nicht gemacht haben. Ähm, naja. „Nicht beachtet haben“ kommt nicht. Das sagen sie ja natürlich nicht. Eher, (*extra mimic*) weil Sie das jetzt so gesagt haben! Und (*extra mimic*) weil Sie das so gemacht haben! So kommt es dann. Also auf diesem Niveau. Und aber, dann ähm, nähern wir uns eigentlich auch immer schon der Hauptrichtung, wo wir sagen, aha, wir können Wörter verändern. Damit unser Nachb-, unser Gesprächspartner uns, das versteht, was ich sage. Wir müssen den eben verändern. Wir können dem nicht irgendwas an den, den Kopf schmeißen, was er, wenn er das nicht versteht. Genau so wie ich ein Paket nicht in Briefkasten rein stecken kann, es kommt ja nie an, das Paket. Ein Briefkasten ist ja dazu da, dass wir, was wegschicken, dass ein anderer da von uns eine Information erhält. Es ist also ein Informationsübertrag-, Überträger. Und wenn ich jetzt da ein Paket rein stecken will, passt nicht rein, kommt nicht an. Ich muss also das Paket so gestalten und umformen (*klatscht mit den Händen*), dass es darein passt, und dann WHIZZT! Kann's los zum nächsten, der was damit anfangen soll. So. Und dann kommen wir weiter. Und dann sage ich so, aha, schaut mal, nehmen wir die Wörter, wie, die haben, die es auf sich (*unverständlich*). Die müssen wir auch so (*klatscht mit den Händen*), zusammen falten, und verpacken, und die müssen wir auch einkleiden, damit die nachher, der andere, damit er, dass sie da rein passen. Und mein Gesprächspartner, mein anderer Gesprächspartner, mich ja also versteht. Und dann gehen wir los, da kommen wir auf die Endungen, und so weiter, na? Und das ist eben auch so etwas, was ich eben in

((Ort)), was ich in diesem letzten, oder vorletzten Studienjahr, was ich da hatte, so mitbekommen habe. Ich hatte diesen Menschen nicht, vorher, die ganzen drei Jahre. Das wäre wahrscheinlich auch denn, auch anders gelaufen. (*Lacht*). Ich weiß es nicht. Wäre, äh, ist jetzt auch Quatsch, ja darüber zu sinnieren. Und ähm, es hat mir auch nicht geschadet, das andere, da- (*lacht*). Das muss man ja auch sagen. Aber so bestimmte Dinge, so bestimmte Dinge, äh, vom Verständnis her, hätte man vielleicht effektiver machen können.

17:52 Wenn man ihn ein bisschen früher gehabt hätte, im zweiten Semester, statt erst im vierten Studienjahr.

10-- 17:56 Ja. Weil ja, die wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung mit, die wissenschaftliche Auseinandersetzung kann ja auch nicht so einfach sein, wie ich das eben erklärt habe. Weil die Wissenschaft den Anspruch erhebt, für jeder, jede Erscheinung eben bestimmte Dinge eben auch äh, erklären zu können, oder jede Erscheinung erklären zu müssen. Das erhebt ja, der. Das Problem ist aber eben, wenn wir das machen, wird's eben für die meisten unverständlich. Das muss also, wenn schon, denn schon, ja in Kreisen der Wissenschaft bleiben. Aber leider ist es auch so, dass viele Wissenschaftler versuchen, ihre wissenschaftlichen Theoriegebäude, Gedankengebäude, und so weiter und so fort, auch gerade in die Schule REIN zu tragen. Und äh, wo ich sage, meines Erachtens, das sind Gedanken dabei, da könnt ihr euch dabei bei euch in der Uni damit beschäftigen. Die haben hier nichts zu suchen. Nicht weil sie FALSCH sind, oder so, sondern weil sie hier keine Anwendung finden, schlicht und ergreifend.

18:48 Wäre das was anderes für Sie, wenn Sie in einem Gymnasium unterrichten würden?

10-- 18:50 Glaube ich nicht.

18:51 Oder der eine andere Schularart? Berufsschulen, auch nicht?

10-- 18:55 Nee. Nein, das glaube ich nicht. Das ist genau das Gleiche. Ich ärgere mich auch immer so sehr über die Gymnasien eigentlich, obwohl ich da gar kein Grund hätte, weil ich so einen Gymnasiumunterricht eigentlich gar nicht kenne. Kenne ich nicht. Ich kenne das nur vom Hörensagen, von den Kindern und so weiter. Aber da, da ärgere ich mich oft, wenn ich da höre, wie manchmal die Schüler auf Dinge losgelassen werden, ohne dass sich die Kollegen vorher mit ihnen darüber beschäftigt haben. Also, sie sollen, also so ein Beispiel, mein Sohn kam in der siebten Klasse nach Hause, und sollte eine Mappe über die Ritter anfertigen. So. Was ist das nun, diese Mappe über die Ritter? Was soll das nun sein? Ist das denn eine Materialsammlung, ist das eine Arbeit, eine Betrachtung, ein Essay, was ist das nun? (*mimic Kinderstimme*) Naja, mit Text, so über die Ritter, und mit Bildern, und so!

19:40 Text und Bilder, ist ja cool.

10-- 19:42 So. Ja- (*rollt mit den Augen*). Was ist das. Und da wundere ich mich auch. Es ist ja gut. Gymnasien müssen ja die Leute auf wissenschaftliche Arbeit vorbereiten. Aber wissenschaftliche Arbeit fängt für mich an, für mich, beim Studium. Dann habe ich im Gymnasium, damals noch die elfte, zwölfte und dreizehnte Klasse Zeit, um ein

Schüler, neben der Vermittlung von Wissen, das nach wie vor läuft, bestimmte Arbeitsweisen anzueig-, äh, bei-, beizubringen. Und, äh, da habe ich drei Jahre Zeit! Und ich weiß denn nicht, warum ich da, in der siebten anfangen muss, irgendwelche Dinger dort, ähm, den Leuten da einzupeitschen, ähm, die von den Kindern, von den meisten Kindern, abgesehen mal von denen, die auch Interessen dafür habe, die es vielleicht aus Büchern kennen, Abenteuer, Literatur, die dahinter stehen, die forschen wollen, die auch vielleicht einen ganz anderen Zugang zu Wirklichkeit haben, weil sie interessiert sind, und so weiter. Abgesehen mal von diesen Kindern, ist es QUATSCH, meines Erachtens, (*leise*) meines Erachtens, die Leute zu diesem Zeitpunkt, mit solchen Aufgaben zu behelligen. (*wieder laut*). Also das find ich, eigentlich unverantwortlich. Aber, wieder, es gibt ja verschiedene Auffassungen, und äh, aber in dem Fall, also. Es ist eigentlich das Härteste, was passieren kann, dass dem Jungs und Mädels ab-, so trainiert wird, sich für was zu in-, ja, zu interessieren. Aber, gut. Nee. Aber ansonsten, wie gesagt mit Gymnasium, und Unterricht, glaube ich, ist es-. Unser Unterricht unterscheidet sich nicht groß. Das ist, der einzige Unterschied ist es, eben, Arbeitsweisen zum wissenschaftlichen Arbeiten, sich anzueignen, das brauchen wir hier nicht.

21:18 Aber die Grammatik bleibt, Wortschatz müssen sie lernen, die müssen Rechtschreibung beachten.

10-- 21:22 Sie müssen versuchen, sich relativ viel Wissen anzueignen, müssen die hier auch versuchen...Ja. Dass sie das nicht KÖNNEN, ist eine ganz andere Frage, aber versuchen müssen sie es hier genauso.

21:33 Nicht können, oder nicht wollen? Weil Sie vorher gesagt haben/

10-- 21:35 Na, sie können es nicht, weil sie es nicht wollen. Es ist für mich ein Zusammenhang Also, ich unterscheide, es ist-, nicht zwischen Wollen und Können.

21:42 Oder sie wollen es nicht, weil sie es nicht können?

10-- 21:44 Ja, und sie können es nicht, weil sie es nicht wollen, und... Also das ist für mich total verbunden. Weil den Willen für irgendwas, einen WILLEN für etwas aufzubringen, hängt ja auch von biologischen, Dingen ab, Ursachen, und so weiter, auf die wir keinen Einfluss haben. Die chemische, was chemische Reaktionen betrifft. Was biologisches Zusammenspiel betrifft, und so weiter. Und da haben wir ja keinen Einfluss darauf, auf unserem Willen. Wir denken natürlich immer, wir haben, ich denke, ich will. Ich denke, also bin ich, hat ja (*lacht*), hat einer mal erzählt. Ist ja, mag ja auch richtig sein. Ich will das ja nicht, da bin ich auch der Letzte, der darüber bis ins Detail Ahnung hätte, oder sonst was (*lacht*). Aber, das sind eben so kleine Widersprüche, die sich da irgendwie auftun. Und deswegen würde ich sagen, ja, Wille und Können hängen eng miteinander zusammen. Und ich glaube nicht, dass der Mensch, oder dass der Schüler, da Einfluss darauf hat. Denn einen anderen Willen zu entwickeln, das ist eine Arbeit, das können wir Lehrer, glaube ich, auch nicht leisten, das können Lehrer nicht leisten. Unbewusst, ja, natürlich, wenn wir jetzt bestimmte Mechanismen, Abläufe, und so weiter, ja irgendwo präferieren, ja. Aber denn heißt das doch lange nicht, dass der Schüler, darauf eingeht. Auch wenn wir ihm das ja ständig vorleben, oder wenn wir

sagen, das ist richtig so. Ein Schüler oder ein Mensch generell hat ja immer seine eigene Sicht auf die Dinge, und, Einsichten zu haben, ist ja eben, schwierig. Das ist ja nicht abhängig von einem anderen Menschen, eine Einsicht zu finden. Es kann an einem Menschen hängen, aber das ist davon nicht davon abhängig.

23:23 Also, irgendwo die Idee, Schüler motivieren, durch guten Unterricht oder gute Beispiele, oder so. Ist das da wo, so Sie sagen, da irgendwo gibt's Limits? Ich kann mich auch abstrampeln und machen und tun, aber irgendwo/

10-- 23:35 Ja, das ist situationsmäßig, an der Situation gebunden, ist es immer okay. Also sie freuen sich natürlich immer, wenn ich hier herumspringe wie Thomas Gottschalk oder die freuen sich wenn ich hier rumspringe wie, oder wenn ich hier solche Quizze mache wie Familienduelle wie von Hartmut Schulze-Erdel, da freuen sie sich total, das finden sie auch TOLL. Dann gehen die da raus, und sind sie happy. Aber wenn sie da RAUS sind, die TÜR zumachen, ist es WEG. Und sie gehen nach Hause, und sie sagen es war heute TOLL, ich mache nichts. (*Pause*) Weil es da heute so toll war. Das glaubt man nicht, aber GENAU so läuft es ab.

24:08 Jetzt komme ich aber zurück. Sie haben ja selber, Englisch gelernt. In der Schule, im Studium. Ein Jahr im Ausland so, da haben Sie damals nicht machen können, na?

10-- 24:16 Ich war im Ausland. Ein halbes Jahre in Russland, in ((Ortsnamen)). Ich wollte erst ein ganzes Jahr fahren, dann hat sich dann aus familiären Gründen dann geändert, aber ein halbes Jahr war ich auch in Russland.

24:30 Kein halbes Jahr in England. Das war/

10-- 24:32 Dafür hatten wir in ((Ort)) sehr gute Bedingungen, im Sinne von *Tutors*. Das waren alles... auserlesene Kommunisten, und *Morning Star* Leser, aus London und Umland (*lacht*). Nein, aber, die waren alle in Ordnung, also das muss man einfach mal, mal so sagen. Das war ideologisch überhaupt nicht, in keinster Weise, beeinflusst. Wir hatten also Gastdozenten und alles, wir konnten wirklich mit ihnen Englisch sprechen. Ich hatte eine Seminargruppenleiterin, die mit mir nur Englisch sprach. Und ähm. (*Pause*). Nee nee, wir hatten die *Drama Group*, natürlich, mit englischen *Tutors*, also, wie soll ich es- (*Pause*). Also, ähm, ich, Nein. Es war, es war, von diesem Umfeld her, eigentlich perfekt. Kann man schon sagen.

25:19 Waren Sie mit Ihren Englischkenntnissen zufrieden, wo Sie, Ihr Studium abgeschlossen haben? Danach kommt dann so, eine Referendarzeit, oder hinterher die Praktika, oder so. Aber Sie waren eigentlich ziemlich selbstbewusst, so, ja, ich habe ein Gerüst für mich. Ich kann das gut rüber bringen.

10-- 25:33 Ja genau. Ja, ja.

25:34 Und Sie selber haben gesagt, ich kann auch gut Englisch.

10-- 25:37 Nee, nee, das kann ich nicht. Also, es reicht für die Schule. Also für die Schule ist es wirklich ausreichend.

25:43 Für die Schule, und nicht fürs Leben?

10-- 25:46 Ja, gut (*beide lachen*). Ach nein, ach nee. Ich war schon, ab und zu im Urlaub in England, und war auf Klassenfahrten, in London, und wir haben da schöne

Abende verbracht, auch mit den Menschen zusammen. Aber. (*Seuftz*). Es ist eben noch anstrengend. Also, wenn ich einen guten, eine gute, wenn ich einen guten Sprachschatz, Wortschatz habe, dann ich sind Gespräche, dann ist Konversat-, Konversation nicht so anstrengend.

26:14 Also, Sie waren zufrieden.

10-- 26:16 Ja. Doch, doch.

26:22 Sie sind dann selbstbewusst dann, und Kopf hoch. Ähm, es ist schon lange her, aber Ihre Hochschulausbildung damals wenn Sie daran denken, Studium, Referendarzeit, hätten Sie irgendwas im Nachhinein geändert? Von Form, oder Sie sagen würden, so, hätte ich mehr aufgepasst/

10-- 26:41 (*Lacht*) Ja.

26:42 Ich frage ja nur, (*lacht auch*), es kann ja sein!

10-- 26:44 Ja ja, doch. Von Referendar her, von Referendariat her, eigentlich, Ne, das war super. Wir hatten Frau ((Name)) hier, als-. Und da, also, das war-, ja.

27:02 Sie kommen aus ((Ort)), Sie haben in ((Ort)) studiert, und dann wieder nach ((Ort)). Warum haben Sie in ((Ort)) studiert, und nicht in ((Ort))?

10-- 27:08 Ich wollt weg. Von zu Hause. Weg, und ich wollte einfach mal was anders kennen lernen.

27:14 Also es war nicht so, dass der Studienplatz einfach zugeteilt ist, und Sie mussten dahin, sondern so absichtlich wollten Sie/

10-- 27:18 Ja genau. Naja, für die Englisch-Russisch Ausbildung gab es verschiedene Standorte. Greifswald, Rostock, Potsdam, naja, was war da im Süden, da war ein/

27:28 Ja, Leipzig, glaube ich?

10-- 27:30 Ja, genau, Leipzig, auf jeden Fall.

27:34 Und nach diesem Studium, was einigermaßen gut war, wo Sie zufrieden waren, dann wollten Sie unbedingt wieder hier hin, nach ((Ort))? Oder hatten Sie auch gedacht/

10-- 27:40 Ja genau, so ist es. Ich wollte in ((Ort)) bleiben. (*Pause*) Ja, wie das eben so ist. Mal raus, weg, mal was anders sehen, und dann wieder nach Hause zurück.

27:55 Ja, so ist das normalerweise gedacht (*beide lachen*). Das hat bei mir nicht geklappt.

10-- 27:57 Naja, kommt vielleicht noch! (*Lacht*). Ist ja nicht zu Ende, das Leben.

28:03 (*Lacht*) Ich mache weiter. Ich habe hier 2 Listen. (*Erklärung der Can-Do Listen*)

10-- 30:30 Na denn (*liest*).

31:03 Ja, das „th“ hier

10-- 31:05 Wenn ich Lexik so einführe, dann kann ich das richtig und bestens. Da bin ich richtig gut. Aber wenn ich jetzt selber spreche, merke ich so auch, da, nun da ist es mir weg geflutscht.

31:16 Also, wenn Sie darauf achten, da können Sie es.

10-- 31:34 Ja, ja. (*liest noch mal*) So (*atmet tief ein*). Na, das Ziel, Sie fragen ob ich das erklären kann, und nicht, da, was dabei rauskommt. Ich kann das erklären, ich kann

es demonstrieren, ich kann es mit ihnen demonstrieren, ich kann ihnen erklären, wie sie ihre Sprachwerkzeuge benutzen sollen. Aber ich merke immer wieder, dass sie es trotzdem nicht bringen oder machen. Zum Beispiel, wenn ich ihnen sagen so, jetzt dürft ihr eurem Lehrer mal die Zunge alle raus strecken. Strecken sie die alle raus, ich so, nun beißt ihr drauf, so JUMMM und versucht ihr mal so, in dieser Stellung so *th* zu machen.

32:12 So, Thhhhhh ank you.

10-- 32:14 Genau, oder FFFFF, da ist ein dicker Brummer dann kommt ZZZ, so, jetzt macht ihr eine Fliege FFFF und dann gucken sie mich alles an, strahlen, freuen sich, und dann.....

32:26 Und zwei Tage später hören Sie dann ZZZ.

10-- 32:28 Zwei Tage? Zwei Sekunden. Echt. Beim nächsten Wort. Dann kommt's doch wieder, wenn ich darauf achte. Ich so, jetzt Zunge raus, drauf beißen, jetzt so, gut. Dann gehe ich zum nächsten, Karl Heinz, *Zank you (lacht)*. Ja. *Zank you wary much*.

33:13 Okay. Sie können es vor machen und erklären und mit üben.

10-- 33:20 Und das geht eben, bei mir, an die Substanz. Das kann ich nicht, weil ich da nicht freundli-, ich kann, kann da nicht-. (*Pause*) Deswegen, es ist diese Sache mit dem Willen. Die wollen alle. Sie wollen es alle machen. Die wollen es alle aussprechen. Sie können es aber nicht. Sie können's nicht. Und jetzt kommt das nächste, sie können es. Sie haben es mir ja gezeigt. Dass sie ihr Zunge ausstrecken können, aufbeißen können, sie können darauf verhalten, und dann kommt der Kontext, der Kontext soll mal kommen und dann, dann- (*lange Pause*). Also, es ist ein weites Feld. Kann man sich so das, mal angucken. Aber, es macht kaum einer. Da, sie quatschen uns an mit anderen Sachen, alle voll, die total unwichtig sind. Solche Sachen, da kommt keine Sau darauf. Nee. Will auch keiner wissen. Habe auch noch nie einen gesehen, der hierhergekommen ist, der mal gefragt hat, wie sieht die praktische Umsetzung dessen, und dieses, und solche Sachen aus. Und so weiter. Die wollen alle ihre Gedanken, die sie haben, wollen sie alle weiter entwickeln, wollen alles toll haben. Und wollen alles toll machen. Aber das Nahliegende ist, wie gesagt, nicht SO wichtig. (*Pause, kurzes Nebengespräch über Änderung der deutschen Sprache*)

10-- 36:31 Ich kann Witze erzählen. Konnte ich mal. (*erzählt ein Witz über "nun" und "none"*). Mache ich aber nicht mehr. Also, konnte ich früher, bringe ich hier nicht an, hier versteht mich keine Sau. Und selbst wenn ich das Wort „Nonne“ hier einführe, dann geht es nicht, weil die andere Wörter dabei, wenn sie nicht dabei darum herum sind, wenn ich das Wort *occupation* auch nicht einführe, dann (*erklärt, warum einer diesen Witz nicht verstanden hat*).

37:34 Einer versteht es, vielleicht, einer schmunzelt.

10-- 37:37 Einer vielleicht. Der mich mag.

37:39 (*Lacht*) Ja, der armer Lehrer.

10-- 37:41 Etwas Gnade, dafür kriegt er ein Zahn von mir zu sehen. So. (*weiter Witze, Fragebogen 1A fertig, bleibt auf dem Tisch liegen, Teacher 10 zeigt darauf weiter*).

38:27 Was noch, was fehlt hier? Was muss ein Lehrer unbedingt können?

10-- 38:40 (*Witze über Russisch*) So, das sind aber die Kriterien, die man eigentlich, ja, so, so, da. Schule ist da, ich habe eine Wand, nehm meinen Mörtel, schmeiße den an die Wand ran, will den verwischen, aber ständig hält mich da einer am Arm fest, und rumpelt an mir rum, und ich kann das nicht machen. Ich sagte da, zu meiner Frisörin, da gehe ich hin, und sage, stellen Sie sich mal vor, so, Schule ist, wenn Sie hier (*klopft an seinem Stuhl*) ein Jungen darauf haben, oder ein Mädchen, hier, an Ihrem Stuhl, und er bewegt sich andauernd, und Sie wollen ihn frisieren. Das ist Schule. Das ist der Unterschied. Ich habe natürlich, ja, ich habe natürlich eine große Auswahl, vielfältige Möglichkeiten, methodisch, didaktisch, und so weiter da vorzugehen. Aber ich werde ständig daran gehindert! (*Lacht*). Das ist das Problem. Und das jetzt zu umgehen, das macht die Arbeit aus, eines Lehrers. Und das ist die Arbeit, die Zeit kostet. Es ist nicht die Arbeit, die Zeit kostet zu sagen, so ich nehme, ich mache jetzt hier diese Aufgaben, ich mach die Aufgaben und ich mache die Aufgaben. Weil das so, und das so, und das und das und das verlangt. Nun weil das so sinnvoll ist oder weil das und das.

42:27 Aber nicht nur von den Schülern, oder? Sie müssen auch mit Eltern, mit der Schulleitung, oder irgendwelche Studien oder Sachen.

10-- 42:38 Genau.

42:40 Also nicht nur die Schüler, oder?

10-- 42:43 Hmm. Nicht nur, aber-.

42:45 Aber hauptsächlich.

10-- 42:46 Das eine ist nur, das ist die Arbeit, und das andere-, mit dem anderen, geht es immer relativ, reibungslos. Da ist hier so eine-, das sind wir hier, bei uns, relativ, pragmatisch. Und wir sagen uns ja auch immer, ja, so können wir immer machen, ob das was wird? Und in, insofern, grundlegende Dinger, sind da-, werden bei uns ja auch beachtet, ja? Also, dass wir jetzt Hörtexte machen, dass wir Lesetexte machen, dass wir, Vermittlung so und so vorgehen, das ist schon so, das ist okay, das ist Grundlegende. Wir haben hier die Arbeitsmaterialien. Aber so die Situation in der Klasse ist (*seufzt*). So, naja, nächster Zettel. (*nimmt Fragebogen IB Can-do*). Ich kann hier-. Ja, ich lese jetzt gerade eine Biografie von den Beatles, in Englisch.

44:21 Ist das weil es das nur auf Englisch gab, oder wollten Sie extra/

10-- 42:23 Na, das hat mir so ein Kumpel mal geschenkt. Das ist so, ein Anglophiler, und, er schenkt mir alles (*lacht*) so auf Englisch. (*lacht*).

42:33 Und/

10-- 42:37 Ja. (*lange Pause*). Diese Frage hier, kann ich das, ich kann's, aber manchmal denke ich, nicht, dass ich das will. Ich lese manchmal gerne diese *Spot On* Dinger (*Pause*). Oh Gott. Ich kann das hier nicht. Ich will das auch nicht. Also ich würde mich durch quälen. So mache ich schon mit meiner Ringo Biografie. Aber, nun. So das durch quälen, das mache ich ja nur, weil ich das verstehen will. Aber. So den groben-, über- (*Pause*). So, dann weiß ich Bescheid, was da drinne steht. Aber ich will alles wissen. Also, nicht nur, dass er in Liverpool gelebt hat, und, mit 14 Kindern da, so aufgewachsen ist. Und, so der kleiner Ringo genannt wird. So, ich will ein bisschen mehr, Sachen wissen.

45:48 Dann ist das ein bisschen mehr Aufwand?

10-- 45:53 Ja, so mühsam. Dann ist das "kann ich das nicht so gut", ist das dann hier. So gut. (*Pause*) Ach, Joyce, so was hatten wir im Seminar. Hoch, äh, interessant, aber so lesen-, nee. Und ich fand auch, ich fand, ob man das alles so, mit der *Odyssey*, kannte ich mich so ein bisschen aus, aber. Und dann die Vergleiche, fand ich ein bisschen komisch, aber so. Aber da gibt es diesem einen Buch, dann gibt es, so ein Gebäude, so groß wie unsere Schule, wo da die Sekundärliteratur so steht. Und.

46:35 Da sind so meine Schreckfragen. Ich meine, so ein Harry Potter Roman in der Hand nehmen ist eine Sache, aber hier Shakespeare.

10-- 46:35 Shakespeare auf Englisch ist nur Graus, Joyce auf Englisch ist nur Graus,

46:42 Ist ein Graus, lesen Sie nicht.

10-- 46:44 Naja, *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, so, oder diesen.....

46:48 Ist alles so im Studium-. Wenn man Anglistik studier/

10-- 46:55 Ja, das alles. Die wollen dann auch einen auch fertig machen.

46:57 Auf Deutsch heißt das dann so Faust, Schiller, Heine.

10-- 47:31 Oberflächlich hier, auf jeden Fall. Auf jeden- (*seufzt*). Wobei, ich habe mal eine Rolle gespielt als Priester/

47:44 (*Lacht*).

10-- 47:46 Doch, (*lacht*). Von Carolyn Churchill, hieß sie, glaube ich. So eine englische Autorin, sie machte so, in den 90er Jahren, so gerade herausgebracht. Mensch, wie hieß dann das Ding. Nee, das war Frank Mc (*unverständlich*). Auch ein englischer Autor, natürlich. (*langes Erzählen vom Theaterstück*). Also egal (*liest*). Ich schaue, immer nur auf Englisch, nie auf Deutsch. Hier Filme.

49:14 Dann sollte ich hier fragen, was Ihre Ehefrau hierzu sagt.

10-- 49:17 Ach, das mag sie doch auch gerne. (*lange Pause, liest bis 49:40*) Doch, das könnte ich, ja, doch. Also nicht 1, aber hier doch 2. So.

50:04 Das waren meine Fragen, heute. Ich wollte so wissen, wie Ihr Englisch so, wie Sie das so einschätzen, und, naja wie Sie das sehen.

10-- 50:14 Da, rezeptiv bin ich auf jeden Fall besser, so, als produktiv. Ganz klar. So sehe ich das, so betrachte, ich-, ja.

50:21 Das sind auch Fragen, wo es etwas streckt und weh tut, wo man sich wirklich fragt, kann ich das, muss ich das können, will ich das überhaupt können?

10-- 50:29 Man ärgert sich immer dann, wenn so mal eine Situation mal da ist, wenn man das so braucht auf einmal. Wo man denn doch sagt, so, das brauche ich jetzt auf einmal. Und um, das ist, da ist so ein Moment, wo man sagt, heute habe ich keinen Bock darauf zu arbeiten, in dem Moment. Und dann könnte man es doch auf einmal gebrauchen.

Appendix VI: Can-Do Lists

Interview 1: Can-do Liste A

“Teacher-specific skills“

Diese Liste beschreibt einige sprachliche Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten, die Sie als Lehrer(in) vielleicht brauchen. Können Sie sich hier – spontan – einstufen? Geben Sie bitte Ihren ersten, groben Eindruck, ohne Nachgrübeln.

- 1) Kann ich bestens
- 2) Kann ich okay
- 3) Kann ich nicht so gut
- 4) Kann ich gar nicht

Ich kann komplexe grammatische Ideen gut erklären.	
Ich kann schnell Synonyme finden, um neue Begriffe verständlich auf Englisch zu erklären	
Ich lese Texte klar und deutlich vor.	
Ich kann die sprachliche Richtigkeit meiner Schüler einschätzen, wenn sie Texte (Essays, Hausarbeiten) schreiben.	
Ich kann das „th“ richtig aussprechen.	
Ich kann hören, ob meine Schüler eine korrekte Aussprache haben und auch Verbesserungsvorschläge machen.	
Ich kann die Aussprache meiner Schüler verbessern, indem ich ihnen phonetische Modelle erkläre und demonstriere.	
Ich kann ohne Probleme in Englisch telefonieren, z.B. um Schüleraustausch-Programme zu organisieren.	
Ich kann einfache Witze erzählen oder Wortspiele machen, die meine Schüler interessant finden.	
Ich bin überzeugt (auch wenn ich kein(e) Muttersprachler(in) bin), dass ich immer ein gutes sprachliches Beispiel abgebe.	

Appendix VI: (continued) Can-Do Lists

Interview 1: Can-do Liste B

“Non-teacher-specific skills“

Diese Liste beschreibt sprachliche Fähigkeiten und Fertigkeiten, die Sie eher nicht tagtäglich als Lehrer(in) brauchen. Würden Sie sich hier – genauso wie bei der vorherigen Liste – bitte einstufen?

- 1) Kann ich bestens
- 2) Kann ich okay
- 3) Kann ich nicht so gut
- 4) Kann ich gar nicht

Ich kann nach dem Weg fragen, wenn ich in einer fremden Stadt bin, und verstehe die „directions“.	
Ich kann ohne Mühe und ohne aufgeregt zu sein auf Englisch telefonieren, z.B. mit ausländischen Freunden.	
Ich kann problemlos Zeitungen/Zeitschriften (Times, Guardian, Newsweek) lesen.	
Ich lese Harry Potter oder andere Bestsellers aus GB oder USA lieber auf Englisch.	
Ich lese gern Shakespeare, Joyce, oder andere „classic literature“ nur in der Originalsprache.	
Ich kann Fachliteratur in meinem Berufsfeld lesen – Testmethoden, PISA-Berichte, Fachdidaktik, Sprachwissenschaft, Rezensionen, usw. – auf Englisch.	
Ich hätte kein Problem, mich an Gesprächen über Politik, Religion oder brisante soziale Themen auf Englisch zu beteiligen.	
Ich schaue englischsprachige Filme (DVDs) immer nur auf Englisch an, nie auf Deutsch.	
Ich habe absolut keine Angst oder Scheu, mich mit anderen auf Englisch zu unterhalten.	
Ich könnte mühelos einem Engländer beschreiben, wie man etwas typisch Deutsches kocht, bäckt, bastelt...	
Wenn es sein müsste, könnte ich ohne Wörterbuch eine Autoversicherung abschließen oder ein Konto eröffnen.	

Appendix VI: (continued) Can-Do Lists

Interview 2: Can-do Liste "Fortbildung"

Diese Liste beschreibt Punkte, die mit Erhalt oder Weiterentwicklung Ihres Englisch zu tun haben, oder haben könnten. Können Sie mir sagen, ob ein oder mehrere von den Punkten 1-8 für diese zutreffen?

- 1) Mache ich oft/regelmäßig
- 2) Mache ich, manchmal
- 3) Würde ich gerne, aber mir fehlt die Zeit/Energie
- 4) Wollte ich schon immer machen, hab's aber (noch) nicht getan
- 5) Ist mir nie eingefallen
- 6) Wird hier nicht angeboten
- 7) Wäre eine Zeitverschwendung/ langweilig/würde mir gar keinen Spaß machen.
- 8) Wäre zu kompliziert/teuer/nicht durchführbar mit der Organisation.

Kurse besuchen, eventuell an der Universität oder auf einem anderen „hohen Niveau“.	
Online -Kurse besuchen, von Zuhause oder im Computerkabinett meiner Schule.	
Mit Kollegen/Kollegin nur Englisch sprechen, immer.	
Einen Brieffreund übers Internet finden, wöchentlich schreiben.	
Fortbildungsangebote (LISA und andere) besser wahrnehmen.	
Öfter (alleine) ins UK oder anderes englischsprachiges Ausland fahren.	
Fördergelder beantragen, um Sommersprachkurse in UK, USA, oder Malta zu besuchen.	
Einem englischsprachigen Lese- oder Konversationszirkel beitreten.	
Eine English-teachers-Gruppe gründen -- monatlich treffen, um Englisch zu sprechen (small talk, Prüfungsaufgaben vergleichen oder anderes).	
Mich als Freiwillige(r) melden, um ausländische Touristen zu betreuen (z.B. Hanse Sail, Stadtführungen, IHK).	
Als Freiwillige mit Asylanten oder Flüchtlingen arbeiten.	