Shaping the Futures of Learning in the Digital Age

A Collective Case-Study on Navigating Faculty Bilingualism, with Reflections on the Research Experience

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Abstract: This article is both a research paper and a reflection piece, describing the core of a research project about examining faculty experience and some of the author's related self-learning and reflection fueled by the project. This qualitative case-study asked: for bilingual faculty whose native language and academic discipline is French, in what ways is language intertwined in their experience of higher education in English-language universities in the United States Midwest? Semi-structured interviews with three individuals suggested this multifaceted idea: for these faculty members, their experience of higher education is intertwined with 1) their relationships with individuals and groups of various linguistic characteristics; 2) complexities of identity/personality; and 3) power dynamics. Parallel to this research about faculty experience was the author's experiential learning about the research process and reflections on her relationship to research and practice in the field of education. This article sketches this learning alongside the research study.

Introduction

How is language intertwined in the experiences of bilingual faculty?
To what extent do I enjoy conducting research?
As a Masters of Education student at Loyola University Chicago, I initiated this independent research project seeking clarity in two areas: first, a research question about faculty and language, and second, the role that I want research to play in my professional work. I took care to document and write up my findings for the first topic (to conclude this project in fall of 2018) and I share much of that content here. Though I was open with my research committee about the second, parallel research aim, I took less care in documenting my (arguably more important) learning in this area. In this piece, I aim to share a bit of both — the core of my research project and some of the related self-learning and field reflection it has fueled. This article is ordered around the research process, using a likely recognizable paper structure and a more formal tone of voice for these sections. My reflections and experiences in conducting the research are interspersed throughout and marked with "[Reflections]" to indicate a more personal narrative that reflects my parallel learning.

The Research Project

English is increasingly used as a language for academic scholarship globally. In numerous contexts, it appears as a language for research and for teaching (Altbach, 2016). This trend raises questions about the benefits, disadvantages, and complexities of the evolving linguistic landscape (Altbach, 2016; Ives, 2010).

My research project took place in the context of broader discussions surrounding language use in academia, particularly the use of a common language for scholarship across various institutions and countries. Currently, English is the primary common language under discussion, though these tensions may be seen with other languages in other contexts; for example, Russian could be considered a common language among some post-Soviet countries (Altbach, 2016; Cunska, 2010; Galbreath, 2006; Ives, 2010; Silova, 2015). A review of the literature suggested a question that could further our understanding of this topic and as well as considerations for the construction of the research project.

Literature Review

Altbach (2016) and Ives (2010) provided a high-level perspective on the influences and complexities of English in the international higher education community and the relevant theoretical context. Both authors provided a valuable foundation on the topic. Yet, their macro-level foci could not address with precision nor depth the varied experiences of individuals and organizations within this international higher education context.

Much of the current research surrounding linguistic use in higher education centers on European countries and the European Union (EU). Gerhards' (2014) study, especially when considered alongside Gazzola (2016), highlights the question of how to define linguistic and communicative ability in research. The theoretical framework presented in these articles was helpful for my conceptualization of linguistic difference and suggested elements to look for in my own research.

Significant research has been done on language use of faculty in various contexts. This literature in particular shaped the content and the methods of my inquiry. Gentil and Séror's (2014) dialogue-based self-case study explored the linguistic experiences of researchers in

Canada's bilingual context. Their work provided a strong methodological example for the formulation of my study, and modeled thoughtful validity practices in a case study design.

Kuteeva and Airey (2014) and López-Navarro, Moreno, Quintanilla, and Rey-Rocha (2015) explored some of the complexities related to language use and academic discipline. These two studies suggested academic discipline as an important factor in bi/multilingual faculty experiences. With this in mind, my study focused on faculty whose academic discipline is French. Muresan and Pérez-Llantada (2014) examined the publication language(s) used by Romanian scholars. This study modeled a qualitative-first mixed methods study and suggested the use of self-assessment of language proficiencies in my study (Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014). This study, along with López-Navarro et al. (2015), also suggested the inclusion of publication-related questions in my semi-structured interview protocol.

Research Question

The goal of my research study was to better understand, on both a specific and personal level, the multilingual faculty experience within English-language universities in order to further contribute to the larger ongoing discussion surrounding the experience and roles of language in international higher education. Specifically, the central question of this study was: for bilingual faculty whose native language and academic discipline is French, in what ways is language intertwined in their experience of higher education in English-language universities in the United States Midwest?

A review of the literature suggested several research opportunities that I considered in constructing a project to expand our understanding of higher education. Much of the existing research focuses on language use for publication, faculty use of English in non-English speaking regions or institutions, and language in Europe and the European Union. My research builds upon the existing work and contributes to our understanding of some outstanding related questions. First, my study included questions about publication, but its focus went beyond academic writing. Second, this study was conducted in an English-speaking national and institutional context with a focus on faculty whose native language does not match their current environment. Third, this study was situated in the United States, where much research has been done on international or multilingual students (see Marshall et al., 2012; Shi, Harrison, & Henry, 2017; Tardy, 2004), but very little on bilingual faculty. In addition to contributing to the quantity of knowledge on this topic, this study could contribute to future theoretical developments or refinements. Finally, the experience of participating in this study and thoughtfully exploring the research question impacted the researcher, and perhaps also the research participants.

[Reflections]. Yes, it definitely impacted the researcher.

Positionality

Particularly because this project follows a qualitative case-study design, it is important to acknowledge my positionality as a researcher. This project focused on language and academia and touched on ideas of linguistic ability, identity, and power. In the introduction to my first interview with each participant, I shared a little of my own linguistic background. My native language is English and my second language is French; I can be described as an advanced independent French speaker. Conversely, the study participants' first language is French and their second language is English. I invited each participant to change the language of our conversation from English to French if they preferred, but there was likely some form of pressure on the participants to continue our conversation in English. This means that our conversations

took place almost exclusively in my primary language and their secondary language. As one participant, Martine, suggested: there is arguably power in speaking your primary language. My other identities also shape my positionality relative to this research, including the following: white, cisgender woman (her, her, hers pronouns), heterosexual, and U.S. American. Additionally, I discussed with each faculty member their experiences in academia while I was simultaneously a participant in academia as a graduate student, intern, and recent staff member. Because of this, it is possible that my relationship with each research participant contained elements of a researcher-research subject, student-professor, and staff-faculty dynamic. My position as a student may even have aided me in conducting this higher education research. Acknowledging elements of my positionality is an important step toward the goals of fairness and trustworthiness in this study.

Methodology

This study followed a qualitative collective-case study design consisting of three individual faculty cases. Participants were selected through a non-random convenience sampling technique from the population of francophone multilingual faculty at two research-active English-language universities (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). To collect data, I conducted two semi-structured interviews with each participant and analyzed the first round of data to inform the second round of interviews. This study aimed to explore the experiences of faculty participants in order to understand how language is intertwined in their academic lives. Because the primary goal of the study is exploration, an in-depth consideration of several case studies was the most suitable of the qualitative methods. The focus of the research question is such that generalizability is of minimal interest, and random sampling is not possible. For these reasons, quantitative methods were not the best choice for this study (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). This study method facilitated the investigation of the research question in a way that was feasible and valuable.

Definitions

This study considered the experience of bilingual or multilingual faculty whose native language and academic discipline is French, asking in what ways language is intertwined in their experience of higher education in English-language universities in the United States Midwest. This question includes several terms that are important to clarify:
- bilingual: in this study, the self-reported ability to function well in two languages;
- native language: in this study, the self-reported first language and/or the language of the individual's home, country, culture, or family; and
- academic discipline: in this study, a broad topical and theoretical area of scholarly specialization.

Participants

Context & Population

Participants for this research study were selected from two English-language universities with high levels of research activity in the United States Midwest. Multiple universities were included to both increase the size of the target population and increase the diversity of experience represented. The specific institutional culture and experience was not of interest to this study. I chose to focus on research-active universities because research involvement appeared as a

component of faculty experience in the literature review (López-Navarro et al., 2015; Muresan & Pérez-Llantada, 2014). Specifically, I selected two R1 research institutions as defined by The Carnegie Classifications of Institutions of Higher Education (The Carnegie Classification, n.d.). The Midwest region of the United States was chosen for convenience.

Within this context, the sample was selected from the population of faculty who met the criteria specified by the research question. While I originally intended to focus on tenure-track faculty members, this came to be impractical during the recruitment phase. I did, however, exclude temporarily visiting faculty from institutions outside the United States.

Sampling

This qualitative collective case-study employed nonrandom sampling techniques: convenience and snowball sampling (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). I selected the sample for convenience from the population with the necessary characteristics and used snowball sampling to identify additional potential participants. Participant selection was designed to maximize variation in the following areas:

- Self-reported gender identity and
- Self-reported ethnicity and/or country of origin.

The purpose of these techniques was to increase population inclusivity and, to the extent possible for such a small number of cases, provide a holistic picture of the ways in which language is intertwined in the experience of francophone faculty. Additionally, these sampling methods were chosen for feasibility — to create a study that I could reasonably complete based on temporal and funding constraints — while maintaining the usefulness of this study.

The primary weakness of these sampling practices and sample size was that they restrict the generalizability of the study. Generalizability of these findings could be increased over time through the accumulation of literature that replicates these findings with other populations. However, generalization was not a goal of this study, and the research question could be addressed with a sample size of three faculty members.

Recruitment

To recruit participants, I first identified two potential research sites to which I could obtain access and verified the existence of my target population using online resources. After receiving approval from the Institutional Review Board at Loyola University Chicago, I proceeded to recruit individual participants.

I relied on online resources and readily available information to identify potential participants, and used snowball sampling to identify additional potential subjects (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). For those faculty interested in participation, I shared additional information about the project and verified that they fit the selection criteria. Unfortunately, only three potential participants both met the criteria and were interested in participating, limiting my ability to maximize variation in the selection of participants. I invited these three to participate and arranged the initial meetings and consent form reviews.

[Reflections]. I underestimated both the time required and the frustration of identifying and recruiting research subjects, and was perhaps too hesitant to leverage my professional network in this endeavor. I argued, both in my research proposal and in the final write-up, that an exhaustive search for all faculty who met the study's criteria was unnecessary and impractical, and yet I pressured myself to do as much of this as I could.

Procedure

Data Collection

Data was collected following a semi-structured interview instrument. This protocol was developed based on relevant literature and revised with feedback from my research supervisory committee. The choice of a semi-structured interview approach allowed for a thoughtful but not restrictive exploration of the topic.

For each subject, I conducted two semi-structured interviews in a location of the participant's choosing, approximately one month apart. The first-round interviews were all in-person, but, due to travel and illness, two of the second-round interviews were conducted via phone/video conference. With the participants' consent, I audio recorded each interview.

The first semi-structured interview for each participant focused on the individual's story of becoming bilingual and their relationship with language in professional settings. In this and subsequent conversations, I used member checking to verify that I correctly understood the participant's comments.

After a round of data analysis, I conducted the second semi-structured interview with each participant. The focus of these interviews was to verify that I correctly understood the participant's comments from the first interview, discuss emerging themes from the first round of data analysis across all cases, and provide each participant the opportunity to share anything else they wanted me to know.

[Reflections]. As I talked with these individuals and analyzed the qualitative data, I found myself frustrated by the barrier between my world and theirs. In my role as researcher, I was the observer; I could not act in the space occupied by my participants. They shared challenges, raised questions, and described interesting interpersonal dynamics within their professional worlds. I listened and learned from their sharing but could not impact their experience of international higher education. In other roles within higher education I have felt energized, and often internally compelled, to address the leadership, communication, and teamwork challenges of the groups of which I have been a part. This research process was unique in that my potential agency was purposefully and necessarily limited to a pre-defined sphere and the role of researcher. Looking to the future, I am drawn to the possibilities of projects that challenge and deconstruct the barriers between researcher and research subject, practitioner and client, educator and learner. As my first research experience, I perhaps overly cautious in maintaining the formality of our interactions; I'm still not sure I have the perspective to determine this. It's left me wondering how I could have enacted the principles of ethical and respectful research while letting more of my humanity, my complexity shine through in those interactions.

Analysis Process

Data analysis occurred during and after the data collection process. Interim analysis between the first and second round of interviews enabled me to better focus the next stage of data collection. Throughout this process, I used memoing to record my emerging thoughts

and interpretations. Audio data from interviews was transcribed by an automated transcription service, and I corrected the transcripts. Next, I coded the data using inductive codes and looked for co-occurring codes. A factsheet including demographic data was attached to each transcript. Borrowing from grounded theory coding procedures, I followed a process of open, axial, and selective coding that led me to several themes shared across cases (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). I focused on thematic analysis and identifying suggested relationships between the categories that arose in the data. I reviewed themes and categories between single-case data sets and then analyzed these themes across cases, searching for shared and unique experiences of these bilingual faculty (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). These study-wide themes and their associated questions and complications make up the findings for this study.

[Reflections]. I loved finding themes in my interviews, connections and contradictions in the experiences of my different participants, and possibilities to explore. Rather than systematic coding, I wanted to spread everything on the floor and attack it with colored markers and scissors; to follow the bounds and swerves of intriguing ideas without having to document my path, and then turn my attention to what I could do with these ideas. Instead, I coded the data, and tried to be as procedural as possible. I wonder about the intersection of fluid, nonlinear analysis and systematic coding for future projects.

Limitations

The primary limitation of this study is generalizability. The non-random, small-scale, convenience case-study sampling approach used greatly restricts my ability to generalize findings to a larger population. Generalizability is relevant to this study only insofar as it may assist in shaping future discussions of theory. As the research community accrues additional studies, generalizability may become increasingly feasible.

Nevertheless, it was necessary to address several validity considerations for this study to be trustworthy and valuable. My primary strategies for increasing validity were reflexivity and member checking as triangulation (Johnson & Christensen, 2013). First, to reduce and illuminate my impact on the data and analysis, I engaged in written and non-written reflexivity. In searching for themes and answers to the research question, I looked for elements that did not meet my expectations or that disagreed with the themes I developed, specifically by asking my research participants for feedback on emerging themes. Second, I used member checking as triangulation to increase the validity of my results. I communicated with each study participant at various stages in the data collection, analysis, and writing process to verify that I was accurately representing their experiences and associated meaning-construction. While I am the sole investigator on this study, a research project supervisory committee provided a degree of critical oversight (Johnson & Christensen, 2013).

[Reflections]. *With the perspective of a year's break from this project, I am willing to say that this study would be improved by expanding the scope — speaking with more people and/or speaking with the three participants an additional time or two. It was frustrating to feel like I had barely scratched the surface; that my findings we a long way from being actionable; and that I had succeeded in accumulating more questions and weariness than findings. As my learning around that second, personal research question grew, my willingness to expand my pursuit of the first research question — at least in this research process — diminished.*

Findings

Subject Introductions

The three participants in this study, Martine, Thomas, and Françoise have several characteristics in common. They are all native French speakers, have strong English language skills, and identify as white. Each participant is a faculty member working in an English-language university context in the U.S. Midwest, with an academic discipline of French. The subsequent paragraphs contain a brief overview of each participant's linguistic history.

Martine

Martine has been a faculty member for 31 years and has lived in an English-speaking country for 33 years. She describes her English skill as fluent. Martine identifies as a woman (her, her, hers pronouns), Belgian, and is 64 years old.

Martine grew up in Belgium and learned French as her first language. She attended school in France and began studying English in high school. After high school, she spent a year in the United States as an exchange student. Having learned British English, it took her some time to become comfortable with American English. Upon returning to Belgium, Martine initially had some difficulty with French but it came back to her quickly. Her university studies in Belgium were in French. When she moved back to the United States, she had no trouble with English the second time. It did take some time for her to feel linguistically and culturally comfortable in the United States. After teaching in the United States for a while, Martine went back to school in the United States to get a master's degree, and so began using English academically.

Thomas

Thomas has been a faculty member for 1 year and has lived in an English-speaking country for 9 years. His second language is English. Thomas identifies as a gay man (he, him, his pronouns), French, and is 40 years old.

Thomas grew up in France and learned French from his family and from his surroundings. He attended school in France in French until his later move to the United States. In secondary school, he studied German as his first foreign language and English as his second foreign language. During his last year of high school, Thomas took an intensive English class. He lost most of his English ability in subsequent years due to lack of practice. During his doctoral work in France, Thomas decided to come to the United States to start a second PhD in English. He worked to learn English on his own while still living in France. When he arrived in the U.S., he found it difficult to speak and work in English, and to some degree, still finds it difficult. Thomas completed both of his PhDs and found a job as a faculty member.

Françoise

Françoise has been a faculty member off-and-on for about 33 years, 26 years at her current university. Françoise has lived in an English-speaking country for 46 years. She describes her English skills as fluent in most contexts. Françoise identifies as a woman (her, her, hers pronouns), French, and is 65 years old.

Françoise grew up in France and learned French as her native language. She had some exposure to the English language through English family members. Though she did not speak English, Françoise spent a week in England just before high school at the English-language school where her aunt taught. She started studying English in high school. Françoise moved to

England shortly after high school. She engaged in intellectual discussions and read philosophy in English and completed her university studies in French. She later moved to Canada and then to the United States. Most of Françoise's English language ability comes from living in English-speaking countries.

Themes

My interviews with Martine, Thomas, and Françoise suggested this multifaceted idea: their experience of higher education is intertwined with relationships with individuals and groups with various linguistic characteristics, complexities of identity/personality, and power dynamics. While my research question implied a focus on the professional lives of bilingual faculty, it was difficult to maintain a separation of professional and personal linguistic experiences in conversation, and arguably this distinction is an unnecessary or false dichotomy. For these reasons, examples related to participant's personal and professional lives are included.

Relationships

In the experiences of Martine, Thomas, and Françoise, language and interpersonal relationships are deeply connected, both within and beyond higher education. Specifically, the language these faculty use in communicating with someone is shaped by their interlocutor's characteristics and norms of the relationship between them — and this in turn may shape the relationship itself.

The language that Martine, Thomas, and Françoise use is influenced by the language ability and linguistic comfort of their audience. In general, Françoise speaks French with her French-speaking colleagues and English with other colleagues. In her personal life too, she takes her audience's preferences into account. As Thomas put it, "if I can speak English or if I can speak the language of my interlocutor, I think it's polite to do so. And I think also that if it's more efficient that way, I will go to efficiency." Martine's experience is similar: "I guess it's just uncomfortable to speak whatever language they speak, French, with somebody who does not speak very well, if you're not in a teacher-student relationship where it's quite natural" (Martine).

Furthermore, Thomas, Françoise, and Martine all described relationships in their personal and/or professional lives that take place specifically in one language, even if they shared multiple languages with an interlocutor. For these faculty, speaking with someone in a language other than the established language feels uncomfortable. As Martine put it,

> In general, I feel that when you establish a language with a person, you stick with it. It's often difficult to change. If you've established a relationship in French, it's kind of a little awkward to continue in English, or the other way around (Martine).

Thomas suggested that the performance of who you are changes when you switch languages. "If you change the language the interaction cannot be the same" (Thomas). Françoise shared similar observations in her personal and professional life. For colleagues with whom she speaks French, "if one of us tried to speak English to the other systematically it would actually be offensive" (Françoise).

Françoise also described relationships that are not characterized by a single language. With her daughters, and one daughter in particular, it is normal to switch between French and English within a conversation. Perhaps, this is an example of relationships without a set

linguistic nature, or perhaps it is a relationship with an expectation of switching. My conversation with Françoise touched briefly on both possibilities: "You could say that our linguistics sphere is one of switching. It's never one of mixing" (Françoise).

All three research participants commented on the discomfort inherent to breaking the linguistic expectations of a relationship. One such complication occurs when another person joins the conversation, someone whose presence causes a language switch. The impact of this switch on the relationship of the original conversation pair seems to vary. For Françoise, this switching does not make the relationships between their first conversation partner feel 'weird.' Thomas described something about the initial relationship shifting. Martine describes it as "a little strained."

In conducting this research, I shared two languages with each participant. I initiated communication in English in the recruitment emails. As part of the first interview, I switched momentarily to French to invite each participant to change the language of conversation if they preferred. Nobody chose to switch languages with me for more than a couple words here or there. Perhaps this is because my French language ability was inferior to their English language skill; because of a language-power dynamic; or perhaps because our initial communications were in English, setting a linguistic expectation for our relationship.

Identity Expression

Martine, Thomas, and Françoise suggest that a person may have a different identity or personality in French and in English. My interviews with these three faculty members raised several interesting ideas around this topic, but there is also room for confusion and ambiguity particularly about the meanings of terms like identity and personality. Additional research in this area could be useful to clarify.

For Thomas, who he is is different in each language and he has a wider vocabulary, wider possibilities to express an identity in French than in English. Specifically, he performs a different identity in each language.

> I don't believe that we have any identity that pre-exists what we perform. So, it means that the identity I perform in French isn't the same as the one that I perform in English. Of course, there is a lot of commonalities between the two, but I would never go as far as to say there is my true self and I express this true self differently in French and in English…. And so, I would say even though there is no true self beyond what we performed, there is room for many misunderstandings (Thomas).

Françoise suggested that personality is how you are with other people. "I suppose then I have two different personalities with the two different languages and there's no way around it" (Françoise). Françoise feels that she is more outgoing in French than in English, probably because the expectations for conversation are different in French and in English. She feels she is less talkative in English, perhaps in part because she does not want to interrupt or break the conversational expectations in English. Furthermore, when she uses language in her professional sphere, her identity is not at stake.

Martine has noticed some people who have a different personality in each language. She suggested that language could be thought of as an integrated part of a person's personality, and so someone's personality really can be different from one language to another. "I do think that the

language definitely assimilates, probably, a part of your personality that can be different according to the language" (Martine).

Power

In the research participants' professional settings, there appeared to be relationships between power and language. Power dynamics likely interact with other language-experience factors like relationships and identity expression. The participants' experiences raise interesting questions and highlight the need for further research, but do not provide enough information to make claims about common power experiences or specific power-language relationships in higher education. Below are some of the observations and experiences that they shared.

All three of the study participants work in departments that teach other language(s) in addition to French. In each, English is used in official communication and official meetings, regardless who was involved. However, Martine shared an example that complicates this picture: teaching-track faculty meetings often take place in French, even though official meetings take place in English. This raises the question of what makes a meeting or communication 'official,' who decides what language is appropriate, and how this language choice shapes who has power within the group.

Participant experiences similarly suggest language-power complications that go beyond official situations. Thomas shared a couple of examples of language excluding or including people in professional conversations, and perhaps being used intentionally to do so. Martine suggested that when communicating with someone with whom you share multiple languages, choosing to speak in your native language asserts power. "Say I speak with an American colleague, if I decide to speak French I'm the dominant one. If they speak English, they are the dominant one" (Martine).

Furthermore, each participant noted different levels of French language competence and comfort among their colleagues who teach French subject matter. This raises questions about the way in which language interacts with, facilitates, or obstructs connections between people in professional settings, and how this intersects with power and career success. Martine also suggested that historic relationships between countries or between peoples are carried by individuals, and sometimes this comes out in how individuals interact with each other. She shared an example of a grammatical disagreement in which French speakers from France seemed to have more linguistic authority than French-speakers from other countries. One important unanswered question is how a faculty member's linguistic identity intersects with their other identities, and what influence this has on their higher education experiences.

Conclusion

This qualitative case-study aimed to better understand the bilingual faculty experience within English-language universities, and in this way, contribute to the ongoing discussion of language in higher education. Interviews with three francophone faculty members working in English-language universities suggested that their experience of higher education is intertwined with 1) their relationships with individuals and groups of various linguistic characteristics; 2) complexities of identity/personality; and 3) power dynamic. This research suggests several directions for further inquiry and raises questions about the implications of these faculty's experience for several aspects of higher education.

Exploration of several variables and topics could deepen our understanding of bilingual faculty experience. First, because my research participants shared an academic discipline, this

study cannot speak to the potential relationship between subject matter and faculty experience. Second, the relationships between language and academic publication — an important feature of existing literature — appeared only minimally in the experience of these faculty members, possibly because of their academic discipline or job positions. Third, the topics of power, identity, and intersectionality are touched on to various degrees in this project, but warrant additional study.

An expanded understanding of individual faculty experiences raises questions about group experience, department function and purpose fulfillment, and leadership. What role does language play in connecting faculty members and in the power dynamics of these relationships? For example, do sub-groups of faculty form within a French department based on language skill, with different groups dominating in different types of internal meetings? What does this mean for department function and the fulfillment of its teaching or research missions? For example, perhaps students sense an implied hierarchy of French-speakers based on the interactions of faculty from different countries. Finally, what are the implications of these faculty experiences for the ways faculty and staff engage in formal and informal leadership, both within and beyond a multilingual department? Who has power over departmental functions and educational activities in different situations? How does leadership take place across official English-language meetings, informal conversations in various languages, and other professional interactions? Do bilingual faculty use different leadership processes inside and outside their department? Further research could expand our understanding in these areas.

[**Reflections**]. *I love the learning that sits at the heart of research and have immense respect for researchers; yet my energy faded in the face of the incremental pace, methodological demands, and isolation I experienced in this project. Most of all, I struggled with the purpose and value of my research — why do this if it had little hope of positively impacting the lives of my research participants, who volunteered their time and thoughts?*

I am irrevocably drawn to the 'why' behind my efforts, and the alignment of my work with purposes and values that I believe is a driving force behind my career shifts. This project illuminated and sifted some of these 'whys', helping me distinguish between purposes that appeal to me intellectually and ones that speak to my mind and my energy. For example, in my flexible time I found myself repeatedly deprioritizing my research project tasks — preferring to grab some brainstorming supplies or dig into a leadership textbook in response to a challenge or opportunity in my other education contexts. Over the course of this research project, I pinpointed a core point of friction for me: the mission of addressing my research question was less intriguing to me than the dream of joining my research participants in their context and working together to shape their experiences within higher education.

I have learned that I am drawn to scholarship that is very close to practice and to practice that is intertwined with intentional discovery and learning. I am driven to engage in education leadership and change processes, and to do so in a way that is grounded in theory and scholarship. The intriguing combination of educational practice and action/participant research, or less formal "research" speaks directly to the frustration I felt with this project, and describes a compelling path for me, and I expect, others in the field.

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