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## **The Influence of Living and Working Abroad on the Identities of Researchers and Native Speaker Teachers**

### **Abstract**

The study investigates the influence of living and working abroad on the identities of researchers and native speaker teachers. Following Block (2009), Hall (2012), and Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004), identity is assumed here to be dynamic and multiple, where the different identities of a person can be more or less relevant in a given context (Hall, 2012, p. 33). Moreover, identities at the time of globalization tend to be hybrid (Marotta, 2011) and, in the case of migration, they can be bicultural (Comănanu, Noels, & Dewaele, 2017), but as Comănanu et al. (2017, p. 539) observe, each bicultural person's identity is different, depending on his or her life history, language proficiency, psychological traits, etc. Simultaneously, there is evidence that multilingualism increases cognitive empathy (Dewaele & Li, 2012) and makes people more open-minded (Włosowicz, 2019), so it could be assumed that the participants would recognize their hybrid identities as an enrichment rather than a threat to their native identities, even though identification with their native languages and cultures, with their families, etc. would remain an important part of their identity. The research tool used in the present study was a questionnaire completed by forty native speaker teachers and researchers living abroad. As the results show, the participants' identities are indeed highly complex, hybrid, and influenced by different factors, however, the native language and the family remain very important components of identity, unlike, for example, one's profession. Still, they also admitted that foreign language knowledge enriched them culturally, intellectually, and emotionally.

*Keywords:* identity, multilingualism, mobility, linguistic and cultural awareness

## Introduction

The purpose of the study has been an investigation of the identities of researchers and native speaker teachers working abroad. The target group (language teachers and researchers) was chosen on purpose. It was assumed that they would have higher linguistic and cultural awareness connected with their professions and that they would thus be more aware of the changes in their identity produced by constant contact with another language and culture, or even with other languages and cultures, since many native speaker teachers move from one country to another, as in the case of some English teachers or German teachers sent by the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (the German Academic Exchange Service). In fact, such changes might be assumed to be relatively subtle. More precisely, as a hybrid identity (cf. Marotta, 2011) develops, it is gradually enriched by the language user's intercultural experience, but while some elements of identity may change, others may remain stable. As Marotta (2011, p. 197) observes, in reference to Anthias (1999, as cited in Marotta, 2011, p. 197, see Section Identity and Mobility below), a hybrid identity does not have to mean greater openness, but in some cases, it may just involve the incorporation of minority cultural ideas and practices by members of the dominant culture. Certainly, here the situation is more complex: even though foreign language teachers and researchers belong to a minority in the country where they live, they may actually be regarded as members of a dominant culture, for example, teachers of English as a global language in a country whose language is hardly ever studied abroad.

The study focused, in particular, on how living in a foreign country on the one hand, and knowledge of foreign languages on the other, influenced the respondents' identity, their perception of their native language and culture, as well as their objectivity in both research (in the case of researchers) and teaching, and in their approach to their native language and culture. Indeed, the participants were all bilingual (one person) or multilingual (i.e., at least trilingual), although their language repertoires varied both in terms of the languages known and the proficiency levels. It could therefore be assumed that, while the participants would be aware of the changes in their identity, their identities would also be very complex and varied, which would be reflected in their responses to the questionnaire. Special attention was paid to the dynamic process of identity development and the different elements of identity which had changed due to the participants' residence in non-native countries and, to some extent, due to their multilingualism and contact with other cultures, as well as to those elements of their identity which they perceived as stable and relatively immune to such influences. It was also attempted to find out what

the participants generally identified with, and which elements of identity varied to a greater extent and were thus more individual.

## Identity and Mobility

By and large, identity seems to be quite difficult to define and, while different definitions have been proposed, they vary considerably. On the one hand, some researchers equate identity with ethnicity or cultural identity and thus regard it as pre-determined and stable. For example, Friedman (1994, pp. 29–30, as cited in Tong & Cheung, 2011, p. 58) defines “cultural identity” as “the attribute of a set of qualities to a given population,” which is “not practiced but inherent, not achieved but ascribed.” He adds that it is “expressed as heritage, or as cultural descent” (Friedman, 1994, pp. 29–30, as cited in Tong & Cheung, 2011, p. 58), which is learnt by all individuals and reflected in their individual behavior. In a similar vein, Hall (2004, p. 3, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 218) claims that “one’s identity can be thought of as the particular set of traits, beliefs, and allegiances that, in short or long term ways, gives one a consistent personality and mode of social being.” On the other hand, Gee (1999, p. 39, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 218) distinguishes between “socially situated” and “core identities.” While he defines socially situated identities as “the multiple identities we take on in different practices and contexts,” core identities, in his view, constitute “whatever continuous and relatively “fixed” sense of self underlies our continually shifting multiple identities” (Gee, 1999, p. 39, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 218).

However, as Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004, p. 5) remark, assuming a one-to-one correlation between language and ethnic identity reflects a monolingual and monocultural bias. An example of that approach is the definition of ethnic identity as “a subjective feeling of belongingness to a particular ethnic group” (Noels, Pon, & Clément, 1996, p. 246, as cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, p. 15). Identity is not fixed, but rather, it evolves over time, and it can be negotiated, asserted, challenged, defined, etc. in different social contexts. Block (2009, pp. 218–219) questions Gee’s (1999) concept of a fixed, underlying sense of self and suggests that a better definition of identity is that proposed by Weedon (2004, p. 19, her emphasis, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 219): “the ‘limited and temporary fixing for the individual of a particular mode of subjectivity as apparently what one *is*.” Thus, identity can only temporarily be perceived as fixed, but it changes over time. From the point of view of the so-called “left” theories of identity based on Lacan’s (1977, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 225)

work, identity is “fluid and unstable” (Block, 2009, p. 225), in response to both changes in the environment and to certain emotions.

Indeed, just as a speaker’s dominant language can change as a function of his or her country of residence (Elwert, 1973, as cited in Hoffmann, 2001, p. 15), identity can also be influenced by moving to another country or even becoming multilingual. As Maines (1978, p. 242, as cited in Panicacci & Dewaele, 2017, p. 421) observed, “identities migrate every bit as much as bodies.” If, following Weedon (2004, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 219), one assumes that identity is subjective and can be defined by what one apparently is, it can be supposed to be connected with one’s self-perception, which can certainly change. As Panicacci and Dewaele (2017, p. 423) conclude on the basis of a body of earlier research:

In summary, the literature suggests that migrants’ personality profiles, cultural orientation and self-perception are pieces of a complex puzzle. While no researcher would disagree that migration experiences trigger changes across all aspects of an individual’s psyche (Dewaele, 2016), nobody has yet—to our knowledge—investigated the cumulative effects of personality, cultural orientation and sense of feeling different. Such a research is challenging since the directionality of the relationship between the variables can never be completely established.

It can therefore be seen that identity and personality are interconnected. As has been remarked above, Hall (2004, p. 3, as cited in Block, 2009, p. 218) regards identity as the set of traits which contribute to a consistent personality. Still, as Mijatović and Tytus (2016, p. 231) have shown, the relationship between bilingualism and biculturalism on the one hand and a changed self on the other is highly complex. While bilinguals are sensitive to feedback from their interlocutors and adjust to it, bilingualism and biculturalism do not necessarily mean feeling different while using one language or the other. One trait which contributes to a feeling of a changed self is Agreeableness, which makes speakers seek harmony and thus change one’s behavior to please the interlocutor. Last but not least, as Mijatović and Tytus (2016, p. 231) observe, “[a] crucial role could further be attributed to cultural differences, a bilingual’s proficiency in the L2 as well as varying emotionality of both languages.” While, in the course of time, one acquires experience with two or more languages and cultures, one also tries to keep that experience coherent. As Drabarek (2018, p. 13) observes, one “strives towards a sense of continuity and inner identity by integrating past and present experiences.” In her view, “the content of identity will include individual beliefs, interests, needs, motivations, but also one’s way of thinking determined by axiological criteria” (Drabarek, 2018, p. 13). According to her (Drabarek, 2018, p. 14), identity might be regarded as synonymous with identification, which is related to social bonds, common

interests, and the internalization of certain values. In the case of multilingual and multicultural individuals, these relationships can be even more complex, as their proficiency in the different languages varies even more and the language users' experience with different cultures can be more varied too.

However, language is a salient marker of identity (Giles & Byrne, 1982, as cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, pp. 4–5), therefore, minority groups whose ethnolinguistic vitality (including the boundaries between the native and the second language) is weaker, learn the L2 and assimilate more easily than those whose ethnolinguistic vitality is stronger. Even so, identity does not have to be connected with a single language. Sometimes it is even difficult to determine a person's native language and some multilingual participants indicate two native languages (Kashema, 2003, pp. 163–164; Müller-Lancé, 1999, p. 86; Włosowicz, 2011, p. 496). As Boutan (2003, pp. 138–139) has concluded, it is the language of the mother rather than that of the country. Certainly, learning the national language is a necessity for the country's citizens, but, at the same time, their native, minority languages should not be neglected (Boutan, 2003, p. 149).

Undoubtedly, there are differences between immigrants and other minority language speakers whose languages are not prestigious and who experience language anxiety and even subtractive bilingualism and L1 loss (Herdina & Jessner, 2002; Sharwood-Smith, 1989; Van Gelderen et al., 2003), and native speaker teachers and researchers, but exposure to the foreign language and culture and everyday contact with its speakers are likely to influence the foreign teacher or researcher, too. At this point, it is worth mentioning that this may also differ according to the person's native language and the language of the country. Following Giles and Byrne's (1982, as cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, pp. 4–5) suggestions concerning the role of ethnolinguistic vitality, there might be supposed to be a difference between a speaker of a less prestigious and less widely taught language (for example, a Romanian researcher in France) and a native speaker teacher of a more prestigious language (such as a native speaker of English in Poland), as well as a speaker of a language of a comparable status (for instance, a Spanish speaker in France).

At this point, it can be concluded that not only are identities dynamic and change over time, but they are also multifaceted or even multiple if different aspects of our identity are regarded as a number of "intersecting social identities" (Hall, 2012, p. 33). According to Hall (2012, p. 33), the relevance of our identities changes from one context to another, for example, a person's identity as an American tourist is more relevant in one context, while in another the same person's most relevant identity is that of an English language teacher.

The fact that identities can be multilingual and multicultural has given rise to the notion of hybrid identity. According to Marotta (2011, p. 189), in the contemporary, globalized world, identities are often hybrid, or based on

“the intermingling or mixture of people from different cultural backgrounds.” Similarly, in their study on migrants’ acculturation, personalities and self-perceptions, Panicacci and Dewaele (2017, p. 434) observe:

the coexistence of different cultures and languages in migrants’ minds might induce a sense of hybridity, especially visible in individuals’ psyches. However, migrants’ appreciation of local practices and their ability to regulate emotional responses have the potential to minimise the sense of alienation emerging from switching languages, possibly transforming it in a sense of enrichment.

Undoubtedly, migration—including employee mobility, student mobility, etc.— influences individuals’ identities very strongly. As Comănaru, Noels, and Dewaele (2017, p. 526) point out, migration

contributes to the complex dynamics of current societies, and individuals living in these changing contexts need to juggle their affiliations with the various social and cultural groups with which they interact, and, if possible, integrate them into a coherent sense of self.

One of the kinds of hybrid identity is bicultural identity, which is the result of the integration of two cultures. In their model of bicultural identity integration, Roccas and Brewer (2002, as cited in Comănaru et al., 2017, p. 528) propose four different orientations in managing multiple cultural identities:

1. Hyphenated identities (a fusion of both the heritage and the host culture);
2. Cultural dominance (the host culture perceived as preferable);
3. Compartmentalization (alternating between both groups, as a function of contexts);
4. Integrated biculturalism, or “the formation of the identity as a world citizen, rather than belonging to one or more cultural groups” (Comănaru et al., 2017, p. 528).

On the basis of their study, Comănaru, Noels, and Dewaele (2017) conclude that bicultural people are different, and the patterns of bicultural identity are influenced by such factors as “life histories, family dynamics, language proficiency” (Comănaru et al., 2017, p. 539), as well as other personal, psychological, and contextual factors. It can be supposed that also the participants in the present study had developed largely bicultural identities or even, given their increased linguistic and cultural awareness as linguists and/or language teachers, they had reached “integrated biculturalism.”

## **Increased Language Awareness and Tolerance in Multilinguals**

In general, multilingualism is not limited to the knowledge of foreign or second languages, but it is connected with a number of cognitive and affective effects. Following Grosjean (1992), it is assumed here that a bilingual is a person who uses two languages regularly, but is not necessarily fluent in both. For example, a native speaker teacher living in a foreign country may possess basic competence in the country's language, but contact with that language and culture enriches him or her intellectually and, arguably, can also influence his or her identity. In fact, even a minimal knowledge of L2 means that one is no longer monolingual (De Angelis, 2007, p. 127). Similarly, a multilingual does not have to be fluent in all three or more languages. Therefore, assuming that there are different degrees of bi- and multilingualism, including, for example, minimal bilinguals (cf. Safont-Jordà, 2005, p. 26), it must be stated that all the participants in the study were bilingual or multilingual.

However, it must be remembered that there are qualitative differences between bilingualism and multilingualism, which is why models of multilingual competence should be based on multilingualism and not on bilingualism (Hufeisen, 2018). According to the Factor Model 2.1 (Hufeisen, 2018, pp. 184–186), in contrast to L1 acquisition, based on neurophysiological factors and such learner-external factors as the learning environment and input, the factors involved in L2 learning additionally include educational aims, the cultural heritage, the L1, which is already in place, affective factors (motivation, attitudes towards languages and cultures, life experiences, the perceived language distance, etc.) and cognitive ones, such as language awareness, metalinguistic awareness, learning strategies and experiences, etc. On the other hand, L3 learning includes, apart from the factors already involved in learning L1 and L2, “Foreign Language Specific Factors” (Hufeisen, 2018, p. 186), for example, the previous interlanguage(s) and the L3 interlanguage, as well as “foreign language learning experiences and strategies,” such as “the ability to compare, transfer, and make interlingual connections” (Hufeisen, 2018, p. 186), which means increased language awareness developed while learning the L2. Indeed, as shown by Jessner (1999), multilingual learners possess increased language awareness. Yet, as the present study focuses on identity, language awareness is relevant here only to the extent to which it allows multilingual teachers and researchers to reflect on their language biographies and on the influence of foreign language learning, and especially mobility, on their identity, while the awareness of language structures is beyond the scope of this paper.

Moreover, as shown by Dewaele and Li (2012), multilinguals have a higher level of cognitive empathy, defined as “the intellectual/imaginative apprehen-

sion of another's mental state" (Lawrence et al. 2004, p. 911, as cited in Dewaele & Li, 2012, p. 355). Yet, mere knowledge of multiple languages is not enough, as the effect is stronger in the case of frequent use of those languages (Dewaele & Li, 2012, p. 362). As Dewaele and Li (2012, p. 363) conclude, multilingualism, combined with the frequent use of multiple languages, increases cognitive empathy and thus the ability to adopt the interlocutor's point of view, which makes multilinguals more skillful in conversation.

In fact, multilinguals perceive themselves as more open-minded and tolerant thanks to their knowledge of multiple languages (Włosowicz, 2019). However, as admitted by the participants, tolerance of other cultures is not unlimited, for example, if tormenting animals is a part of another culture, it cannot be tolerated. Similarly, even though knowledge of other languages increases openness and tolerance and can contribute to international understanding, it is not legitimate to assume that it can lead to peace in the world, as international relations are highly complex and peace depends, in particular, on political and economic factors (Włosowicz, 2019, p. 225).

Therefore, as multilingualism increases different aspects of language awareness and, given greater cognitive empathy and the ability to see the world through the interlocutor's eyes, also cultural awareness, it can be assumed that the participants in the present study were aware of the effects of multilingualism and mobility on their identity and that their answers would provide interesting insights into the role of mobility in multilingual identity development. However, taking into consideration the complexity and dynamics of language biographies, it must be remembered that, while certain observations might be common to a number of respondents, individual experiences could vary considerably and might not necessarily depend on the language repertoires or the status of the languages involved.

## **The Study**

### **Participants**

The study was carried out with 40 participants teaching languages and/or academic subjects such as linguistics, literature, language teaching methodology, etc., doing research or teacher training. One respondent (L1: Polish), in addition to teaching academic subjects and English as a foreign language in Norway, teaches history and philosophy in Norwegian at a secondary school. Similarly, an L1 Spanish speaker teaches Spanish geography and history in Spanish at a bilingual secondary school in Poland. One Frenchman living in

Poland, in addition to teaching and research, makes professional translations and works as a consultant for French language examinations and advertisements. Only one person (a Polish L1 speaker living in Slovakia) is a manager and administrator in an international NGO, rather than a teacher or a researcher.

The participants' language biographies are indeed complex. Their L1s include: English (9), Polish (7 participants, 4 of whom chose the questionnaire in English and 3 in French), Spanish (5; in fact, two indicated Spanish and Galician) and one Spanish-English bilingual, German (5), Russian (4), French (2) and one French-Dutch bilingual, Hungarian (2, they filled in the English questionnaire), and Portuguese (1), Uzbek (1, questionnaire in English), Greek (1; she lives in France, but she chose the English version) and Romanian (1; questionnaire in French). As was mentioned above, only one of them is bilingual (in Grosjean's (2012) sense), as she is a native speaker of English living in Poland and possesses a communicative (by her own admission) level of Polish. All others possess various levels of competence in three or more languages, from the beginner level (A1) to near-native (C2). The second or foreign languages in their language repertoires include: English (28 respondents), French (24), German (18), Polish (12), Italian (12), Russian (11), Spanish (10), Latin (5), Portuguese (4), Norwegian (3), Catalan (2), Ukrainian (2), Swedish, Dutch, Chinese, Japanese, Slovak, Czech, Finnish, Breton, Irish, Korean, Bosnian, Esperanto, Belarusian, Serbian, Croatian, Greek, Welsh, Hebrew, and Yiddish (one person each).

They live and work in the following countries: Poland (14 participants), France (11), Austria (4), Spain (2), Italy (2), the United Kingdom (1), Norway (1), Slovakia (1), the Czech Republic (1), Portugal (1), Finland (1), and Kazakhstan (1). One (L1: English) respondent wrote he lived in Germany but worked in Poland and, similarly, one German L1 participant wrote: "Poland (and Germany)." By the time of the study, they had lived there from 1.3 years to 36 years (mean 15.67 years,  $SD = 9.944$ ). However, for twenty-four of them, the current country of residence is not the first foreign country they have lived in, as they used to live and work or study in other countries as well, both in Europe (for example, in Norway, Germany, Denmark, Russia, Italy, France, Spain or Sweden) and on other continents (the United States, Japan, South Korea, Georgia). It can thus be assumed that their experience of living abroad was sufficient to exert some effects on their identity and also to make them aware of those effects.

## Method

The research tool used in the study was a questionnaire sent to the participants by email. As identity is a highly personal matter, the participants had

the possibility of filling out the questionnaire in their native languages, or at least in their dominant foreign languages (they had a choice, but the English version was the basic one and they all received it as a point of reference). The questionnaire was written in five language versions: English, French, German, Spanish, and Portuguese. (The English one is presented in the Appendix at the end of the article.)

The questionnaire included two kinds of questions: closed (both multiple choice questions and marking responses on a five-point Likert scale, from 1—completely disagree, to 5—fully agree) and open ones, which involved commenting on the influence of knowing foreign languages and living abroad on their identity. Such a form was chosen in order to allow a combination of mixed methods—both qualitative and quantitative—which, according to Dörnyei (2007, pp. 45–46), is better than qualitative or quantitative methods alone, by eliminating the weaknesses of both approaches and increasing their strengths. While quantitative research is regarded as “systematic, rigorous, focused and tightly controlled” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 34) and enjoys a high reputation, averages do not reflect the complexity of individual lives, “[s]imilar scores can result from quite different underlying processes” (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 35) and they are not sensitive enough to explain the reasons for the phenomena observed. By contrast, qualitative research can better make sense of complex and dynamic phenomena and answer “why” questions, but at the same time it may focus on individual stories and not be sufficiently generalizable, and there is a risk of creating theories that are either too complex or too narrow, based on individual cases (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 42). In the case of mixed methods, complex issues can be analyzed on multiple levels and the qualitative component adds depth to the results of the quantitative analysis, so the validity of research and the generalizability of results are improved (Dörnyei, 2007, pp. 45–46). In the present study, general tendencies revealed by the mean values of responses marked on the Likert scale can be supplemented with the participants’ autobiographical narratives. As Gabryś-Barker and Otwinowska (2012) have shown, personal narratives can reveal a lot about the development of multilingual systems, of learning strategies, language awareness, motivation, etc. It can thus be assumed that even short narratives (because of time limits, answering the open-ended questions) could provide interesting insights into the development of the participants’ identities.

The research questions were as follows: First, what factors can be observed to influence the participants’ identities and to what extent? Second, how do they perceive the development of their identities? Third, what do the results reveal about the identities of multilingual teachers and/or researchers living in foreign countries?

## Results

First of all, the participants were asked what they did in the foreign countries, that is, whether they were teachers of their native language or another language, teachers of academic subjects, researchers, or whether they did something else (Table 1). As they could indicate more than one kind of work, the sum of the percentages is more than one hundred. However, as was remarked in Section “Identity and Mobility” above, it could be supposed that the status of the participants’ native languages in their countries of residence could also play a role in the development of their identity and their perception of it, as well as in the kind of work they did. For example, a Polish L1 speaker in France was more likely to be a researcher and/or a teacher of academic subjects (linguistics, literature, language teaching methodology, etc.) than a teacher of Polish. By contrast, an English or a French L1 speaker in Poland could be a teacher of his or her native language as well as a researcher or a teacher of academic subjects. However, a foreigner may not necessarily teach his or her native language, but also a non-native language, such as English. Therefore, the participants were divided into three groups: “more prestigious L1 speakers,” “less prestigious L1 speakers,” and “speakers of comparably prestigious languages.” Certainly, this division is relative, as different factors can influence the status of a language, but it can be assumed that English as the world language is the most prestigious and the most desired language abroad, also in terms of the demand for native speaker teachers (Holtzer, 2001; Szczurkowska, 2007), so all native English speakers were classified as “more prestigious L1 speakers.” The same category included, for example, French, German, and Spanish teachers and researchers in Poland and in other countries whose languages are not widely studied, such as Finland or the Czech Republic, and consisted of 21 participants. By contrast,

Table 1

*The types of work done by the participants in the foreign countries*

Work type	All (40)		More prestigious L1 (21)		Less prestigious L1 (15)		Comparable languages (4)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Teaching academic subjects	27	67.50	15	71.43	9	60.00	3	75.00
Research	25	62.50	13	61.90	11	73.33	1	25.00
Teaching one's native language	19	47.50	17	80.95	1	6.67	1	25.00
Teaching a foreign language	6	15.00	2	9.52	4	26.67	0	0.00
Other	7	17.50	5	23.81	1	6.67	1	25.00

speakers of less popular and less widely taught languages than those of the countries of their residence (e.g., native speakers of Polish, Greek or Russian in France) were classified as “less prestigious L1 speakers” (15 participants), while speakers whose languages had comparable prestige (e.g., a native Spanish speaker living in France or a Polish speaker in Slovakia) were labelled “speakers of comparably prestigious languages” (4). The percentages are calculated for all the participants and for each group separately.

As the figures indicate, the type of work done by the participants seems to depend on their native languages. While 80.95% of the more prestigious L1 speakers teach their native languages abroad, this is done by only one less prestigious L1 speaker (6.67%) who teaches Portuguese in France. On the other hand, the percentage of participants doing research abroad is higher among the less prestigious L1 speakers (73.33%) than among the more prestigious L1 speakers (61.9%). Because of the demand for their native languages, more prestigious L1 speakers are more likely to work abroad as language teachers, but, as the results show, they also tend to teach academic subjects (71.43%) more often than speakers of less prestigious L1s (60%). For example, academics who are native English speakers can teach English linguistics or literature abroad. In order to find out whether the type of work actually depended on the participants’ L1s, a chi-square analysis was carried out for the three groups and the results proved marginally significant at  $p = 0.01088$  ( $df = 8$ ). (The difference would not be significant at  $p < 0.01$ , but admitting  $p < 0.02$ , it might still be regarded as significant.) Therefore, there is a certain relationship between the status of one’s native language and the kind of work done abroad.

The next question concerned the languages they used in their countries of residence, as it was also assumed that language use played a role in the development of multilingual repertoires and could also influence the participants’ perception of their identity, for example, as more hybrid. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2

*The participants’ language use in their countries of residence*

Language use	All (40)		More prestigious L1 (21)		Less prestigious L1 (15)		Comparable languages (4)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
English as L1	9	22.50	9	42.86	0	0.00	0	0.00
English as a foreign language	20	50.00	9	42.86	8	53.33	3	75.00
Native language (not English)	16	40.00	11	52.38	5	33.33	0	0.00
The country’s language	32	80.00	18	85.71	10	66.67	4	100.00
Other	8	20.00	2	9.52	4	26.67	2	50.00

Again, they are calculated for all the forty participants as well as for each group separately, and the sums of the percentages exceed one hundred, as the respondents could indicate more than one language.

As the results show, most of them (80%) do use the language of the country they live in, whether their native language is more (85.71%) or less (66.67%) prestigious than the country's language, or comparable in status (100%). English is certainly also used, whether as a native or a non-native language (in the case of one participant, English is also the country's language, but he marked it only once, "English as a non-native language"), but, apparently, in the long run it is not enough if one lives in a foreign country, which supports Szczurkowska's (2007, p. 42) observation on the limitations of English as a global language. Not surprisingly, speakers of more prestigious L1s use their native languages more often (52.38%) than speakers of less prestigious ones (33.33%), but they cannot use them everywhere either. Undoubtedly, a French L1 speaker can use French at the university department where he or she teaches, but he or she would be unlikely to communicate in French in Poland, for example, in shops. By contrast, the "other" category included languages used only in particular contexts, for example, Esperanto, or Spanish as the native language of a participant's husband. The chi-square analysis comparing the use of languages by the three groups did not show any statistically significant difference between them,  $p = 0.08152$ ,  $df = 8$ . This can be explained by the fact that, even though native speakers of English and other international languages were more likely to use their mother tongues abroad, they also used the languages of their countries of residence, just like the speakers of less widely used L1s, and that English as a foreign language was used by all groups.

As for their attitudes towards the languages and cultures of their countries of residence, the participants were asked whether the language had become a part of their identity, whether they felt more emotionally attached to their native language or to still another foreign language, etc. (see questions 2b and 2c in the questionnaire). They could mark more than one answer because, given the complexity of the phenomena under investigation, one could, for example, know very well a language and regard it as a part of one's identity, but still be more strongly attached to one's native language. The percentages of their attitudes towards the countries' languages are presented in Table 3.

As the results indicate, for most of the participants (57.5%), the language of the country of residence has become part of their identity, especially in the case of speakers of less prestigious L1s (86.67%). It is possible that, while integration into the target society involves the use of its language, which, in turn, influences one's identity, speakers of less prestigious languages, who cannot use their L1s in the foreign countries, are more likely to integrate the country's language into their identities. However, regular use of a language

does not have to mean emotional involvement, as 20% of the speakers of less prestigious L1 and 25% of the speakers of languages of a comparable status claimed they were not emotionally attached to the country's language, while only 4.76% of the more prestigious language speakers claimed not to be emotionally attached to it. Quite surprisingly, the proportion of the participants less attached to the country's language than to their native languages was relatively low (22.5%), and highest among the speakers of more prestigious L1s (33.33%), which suggests that, even though the native language remains an important part of one's identity (see below), one also becomes emotionally attached to the language of one's country of residence. (It could have been supposed that a higher percentage of the participants would stress the fact that, despite knowing the country's language well, they were less attached to it than to their native languages.).

Table 3

*The participants' attitudes towards the languages of their countries of residence*

Attitudes towards the languages	All (40)		More prestigious L1 (21)		Less prestigious L1 (15)		Comparable languages (4)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
It is a language I know very well, so it has become a part of my identity.	23	57.50	8	38.10	13	86.67	2	50.00
It is just a language I teach or write in, but I do not feel emotionally attached to it.	5	12.50	1	4.76	3	20.00	1	25.00
I know it very well, but I feel less emotionally attached to it than to my native language.	9	22.50	7	33.33	2	13.33	0	0.00
I know it well, but I am more emotionally attached to another foreign language.	5	12.50	1	4.76	3	20.00	1	25.00
It is reserved for particular situations, such as talking with friends, but I do not teach or write in it, so my attitude towards it is quite personal.	5	12.50	4	19.05	0	0.00	1	25.00
I only have basic competence in it, so I can make myself understood in everyday life, but I do not identify with it.	3	7.50	3	7.50	0	0.00	0	0.00
I do not know it at all.	2	5.00	2	9.52	0	0.00	0	0.00

Table 4

*The participants' attitudes towards the cultures of their countries of residence*

Attitudes towards the cultures	All (40)		More prestigious L1 (21)		Less prestigious L1 (15)		Comparable languages (4)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I have adapted to it very well and, in a way, I feel at home here.	32	80.00	15	71.43	13	86.67	4	100.00
I have adapted to it well enough to live in this country, but I still regard it as a foreign culture.	8	20.00	5	23.81	2	13.33	1	25.00
I do not feel the need to adapt to it, as I only work here as a researcher and/or a teacher.	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
I have tried to adapt to it but I have failed.	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
I identify only with my native culture and I feel completely alienated here.	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
I identify only with my native culture, but this country's culture is interesting and I enjoy discovering it.	2	5.00	2	9.52	0	0.00	0	0.00
Other	3	7.50	3	14.29	0	0.00	0	0.00

It can be seen (Table 4) that the overwhelming majority of the participants (80%) became adapted to the foreign cultures, especially the speakers of comparable languages (100%; here the cultures were also to some extent similar, for example, Polish and Slovak) and those of less prestigious L1s (86.67%). Certainly, even respondents who had adapted to the foreign cultures could still regard them as foreign (20%), but no-one felt alienated, no-one felt any need to adapt to the country's culture, and no-one had failed to adapt to it, which suggests that foreign language teachers and researchers' high levels of linguistic and cultural awareness help them to recognize the need for adaptation and to adapt to the target culture better.

The three groups' answers were then compared by means of a chi-square test, but the difference between them did not prove to be statistically significant,  $p = 0.116$ ,  $df = 12$ . Similarly, the three groups' attitudes towards the cultures of the countries they lived in were compared by means of a chi-square test and, again, the difference between them was not statistically significant,  $p = 0.51217$ ,  $df = 6$  (the three items with 0% of positive responses in all groups were excluded). This indicates that neither the participants' attitudes towards the languages nor towards the cultures of their countries of residence depended on the relative status of their native languages, and that members of all the groups had adapted to the foreign languages and cultures.

To investigate the participants' views on identity, they were asked, first, what they immediately thought of in connection with their identity, and, second, what they associated it with. The first question seems to have been quite difficult and, as one participant remarked, it was not a matter of an immediate decision. However, many participants did provide some immediate associations and wrote such things as: "work," "Irish, followed by Polish and European," "Belgian European Londoner," "multicultural, multilingual, traveller, teacher," "Earthling," "unclear question: first of all, an educated European Catholic," "Orthodox Christianity, Romania" (my translation from French), "my family (a difficult question)," "Russia and France" (my translation from French), "it depends on many factors, it can be Spanish, English or French" (my translation from Spanish), "my native region" (my translation from German), "Polish, but also a little French" (my translation from French), "nationality, customs, habits" (my translation from Spanish), "[I think] about perspective/perspective-taking and, through the stay abroad, about a change of perspective" (my translation from German), etc. As the responses show, their identities are not only varied, but also often hybrid.

Table 5 shows the percentages of the things the respondents identify with, calculated both for all the participants and for each group. Again, the percentages exceed a hundred percent, as the participants could indicate more than one answer.

Table 5

*Things the participants identify with*

Element of identity	All (40)		More prestigious L1 (21)		Less prestigious L1 (15)		Comparable languages (4)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Their nationality	22	55.00	12	57.14	8	53.33	2	50.00
Their native language	25	62.50	11	52.38	12	80.00	2	50.00
Their family	22	55.00	9	42.86	12	8.00	1	25.00
Being an international researcher or language teacher	12	30.00	7	33.33	4	26.67	1	24.00
Their profession or specialization	15	37.50	9	42.86	6	40.00	0	0.00
The country where they work	16	40.00	9	42.86	6	40.00	1	25.00
The university, school or company where they work	7	17.50	4	19.05	2	13.33	1	25.00
Being a citizen of the world	12	30.00	4	19.05	6	40.00	2	50.00
A hybrid identity	23	57.50	10	47.62	11	73.33	2	50.00
Difficult to say	3	7.50	1	4.76	2	13.33	0	0.00
Other	10	25.00	9	42.86	1	6.67	0	0.00

It can thus be observed that the participants identify most strongly with their native language (62.5%), especially among the speakers of less prestigious L1s (80%). This might be surprising, as speakers of more prestigious L1s might be supposed to be proud of their languages and cultures, and only 52.38% of them claimed to identify with their native languages. It is possible that speakers of less prestigious L1s regard the mother tongue as a salient marker of identity, or else they might lose their identity and simply become members of the dominant society. At the same time, it is possible that more international languages, especially English, are no longer such strong markers of identity; for example, English might be regarded as the global language in the first place, rather than a marker of British, Irish, etc. identity, that is why its native speakers might identify with it less strongly than, say, Poles with Polish. However, taking into consideration the next result, the former interpretation seems more plausible. The majority of the participants (57.5%) marked a hybrid identity, yet, while this tendency was particularly pronounced among the speakers of less prestigious L1s (73.33%), only 47.62% of the speakers of more prestigious L1s indicated a hybrid identity. Thus, one may agree with Giles and Byrne (1982, as cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004, pp. 4–5) that the ethnolinguistic vitality of a language plays a role here: prestigious languages such as English or French may have enough ethnolinguistic vitality to prevent their speakers from being “absorbed” by the dominant society. Still, some caution is needed here because, as was mentioned above, the status of an L1 in a foreign country is relative. For example, Portuguese is a relatively international language, as it is spoken in Portugal, in Brazil, in Mozambique, etc., but in France it is obviously less prestigious than French.

The next, equally strong points of identification, were the family and one’s nationality (55%). However, there are visible differences between the groups: while the speakers of less prestigious L1s very strongly identified with their families (80%) and less strongly with their nationalities (53.33%), those of more prestigious L1s showed the opposite pattern: 57.14% identified with their nationalities and only 42.86% with their families. By contrast, the percentages of the participants who identified with the countries where they lived and worked (40%), with their professions (37.5%) and with being international researchers or teachers (30%) are undoubtedly lower. This suggests that the profession is not a salient point of identification. Still, also only 30% identified with being citizens of the world (only 19.05% of the speakers of the more prestigious languages, more among those of less prestigious (40%) and comparable (50%) languages), which indicates that, while a hybrid identity may incorporate one’s nationality and identities related to one or a few countries one has lived in, being a citizen of the world is too broad a concept to identify with. Even so, while speakers of the more prestigious L1s rarely thought of themselves as citizens of the world, such a broad identity was more acceptable for speak-

ers of less prestigious L1s and those of a comparable status, so the status of a language may also play a role in one's identification with one's nationality or, on the contrary, with being a world citizen. Finally, the "other" category included a number of different things, from religion, being European or being a EU citizen, gender, hobbies, books, personal experience, ancestry, regional identity, or even the local people's attitude towards foreigners.

However, the chi-square test carried out in order to check whether the participants' identification with particular things depended on the status of their native languages (more prestigious, less prestigious or of a comparable status) did not reveal a statistically significant difference between the three groups,  $p = 0.78$ ,  $df = 20$ . Thus, even though some differences can be observed, they are not significant and the participants' identity (following Drabarek, 2018, it is assumed here that identity can be regarded as identification) does not depend on the status of their native languages.

The next part of the questionnaire focused more precisely on the participants' perception of the influence of living and working abroad on their identities. The means and standard deviations of the results marked on the Likert scale are presented in Table 6, both for all the participants and for each of the three groups.

In general, the participants' identities have been enriched by all the languages they know and they are quite unanimous about it, as the mean is 4.6923 ( $SD = 0.655$ ). This is particularly visible in the case of the speakers of less prestigious L1s (mean = 4.8667,  $SD = 0.5164$ ), but even speakers of more prestigious L1s recognize the identity-enriching potential of multilingualism (mean = 4.5714,  $SD = 0.7464$ ). It has also been influenced by all the languages they know (mean = 4,  $SD = 1.1239$ ), in particular, by the best-known language (mean = 4.2,  $SD = 0.964$ ) and, especially in the case of the impact of the best-known language, the respondents are fairly unanimous. However, living in a foreign country, regardless of their fluency in the country's language, seems to have had less impact on their identities, but there are bigger differences between them (mean = 3.667,  $SD = 1.352$ ). It is possible that, either, the very fact of living abroad has a lesser effect on a person's identity than the character of his or her interactions with people, the length of his or her stay, the cultural differences between the native and the foreign countries, or that such effects are subtle and more difficult to notice than the effects of multilingualism, especially if the native and the foreign cultures are not very different. This hypothesis might be supported by the high standard deviation: while some participants noticed considerable changes in their identities brought about by living abroad, others did not. In fact, the way in which the statement was formulated, that is, that residence in a foreign country had an effect on one's identity regardless of one's fluency in the language, seems to support this result too. It can be supposed that knowing the country's language allows one to make friends and to integrate

better into the society than, for example, speaking only English as an international language (Szczurkowska, 2007, p. 42), that is why in the former case the effect on identity is greater. Another possibility might be that the participants agree that living in a foreign country influences one's identity, but some of them disagree that the influence is independent of their language proficiency. An example might be a German living in Poland, who used to live in Georgia for three years, and who indicated no proficiency in Polish or Georgian. He marked "1" ("completely disagree"), which suggests that language competence is an important factor and its lack makes it more difficult to experience an impact of living abroad on identity.

Table 6

*The participants' perception of the influence of living abroad on their identities*

Statement		All	More prestigious L1	Less prestigious L1	Comparable languages
Knowing a foreign language/foreign languages has enriched my identity.	Mean	4.6923	4.5714	4.8667	4.667
	SD	0.655	0.7464	0.5164	0.57735
My identity has been influenced by all the languages I know.	Mean	4	3.6	4.333	4.75
	SD	1.1239	1.095	1.1127	0.5
My identity has been influenced the most by the language(s) I know best.	Mean	4.2	4.056	4.4615	4.5
	SD	0.964	0.8726	0.9674	0.577
My identity has been influenced the most by living in a foreign country, regardless of whether I am fluent in its language or not.	Mean	3.667	3.7895	3.231	4.25
	SD	1.352	1.357	1.235	1.5
Living in a foreign country has changed my perception of my native language and/or culture.	Mean	4.1842	4.222	4.4	3
	SD	1.159	1.2154	0.91	2
Because of living in a foreign country and having some experience of its culture, I can look at my native culture more objectively.	Mean	4.3077	4.3	4.4667	3.75
	SD	0.922	0.65695	0.9155	1.893
Speaking or writing in a foreign language, I can be more objective as a researcher or a teacher than while using my native language, because I am less emotionally involved.	Mean	2.368	2.238	2.3077	3
	SD	1.344	1.261	1.3156	1.633
Because of living in a foreign country, I feel even more strongly attached to my native language and culture than I would be if I lived in my native country.	Mean	2.8	2.619	2.8	3.75
	SD	1.471	1.4655	1.373	1.893
I identify with the international academic community more than with any particular language and culture.	Mean	2.7632	2.05	3.4286	4
	SD	1.4225	1.05	1.4525	1.1547

At the same time, living in a foreign country does have an effect on one's perception of one's native language and culture. Taking a distance and changing one's perception of one's native language and culture is a fairly visible result of living abroad (mean = 4.1842, SD = 1.159). More precisely, one acquires a more objective look at one's own native culture (mean = 4.3077, SD = 0.922), and in this respect the participants seem quite unanimous. This applies especially to the speakers of less prestigious L1s (mean = 4.4667, SD = 0.9155), but also to those of the more prestigious L1s (mean = 4.3, SD = 0.65695), which suggests that, because of contact with another culture, speakers of international languages (especially English, but also French, German or Spanish) can develop more objective views of their native cultures. However, such a changed perception of one's native culture can be a mixture of both positive and negative observations. As a Greek L1 respondent living in France remarked, she was aware of Greek flaws and Greek habits to which she had not paid attention before, but she had also got to appreciate Greek culture more and was becoming more and more nostalgic with time.

However, in the participants' opinion, living in a foreign country and using a foreign language rather than the native one does not necessarily influence one's objectivity as a researcher or a foreign language teacher (mean = 2.368, SD = 1.344). While looking at one's native culture from a distance, one acquires a more objective approach to it, in contrast to people living in their native country and speaking their native language all the time, but a researcher has to be objective, whether he or she lives in his or her country or abroad. Thus, they may have learnt to be objective at the time of learning research methodology (during their studies, doctoral studies, etc.) and living abroad did not have much influence on their objectivity as researchers. Similarly, being a foreign language teacher requires some objectivity and the participants acquired it during their studies or teacher traineeships, rather than during their residence abroad. It is also possible that what they disagree with is the suggestion that they are more objective because of lower emotional involvement than if they used their L1s. A researcher should be objective and avoid an emotional bias while writing in any language, whether native or non-native. Yet, as the standard deviation is quite high, the participants' opinions differ and some of them regard themselves as more objective teachers and/or researchers thanks to their residence abroad and foreign language use, while others do not.

In contrast to the above statements, which presupposed some changes in one's identity or some distance towards one's native culture, the next one concerned the opposite question: whether, because of living abroad, they actually felt more attached to their native cultures. It was possible that, because of some cultural differences and misunderstandings, they were more aware of belonging to a different culture and thus felt more emotionally attached to it. However, as the results show, living in a foreign country does not generally make one

more strongly attached to one's native culture than if one lived in one's native country (mean = 2.8, SD = 1.471).

On the other hand, identity is more strongly connected with one's language and culture than with being a member of the international academic community. The participants do not generally identify more with the international academic community than with any language and culture: mean = 2.7632, SD = 1.4225. The highest level of identification with the international academic community was observed among the speakers of languages of a comparable status (mean = 4, SD = 1.1547), but, possibly, it is because three of them are academic teachers and/or researchers and one works for an international NGO. Indeed, the lowest mean (2.05, SD = 1.05) was observed among the speakers of more prestigious L1s, who are often teachers of their L1s but not necessarily researchers, so they may not necessarily identify with the international academic community. However, as was already mentioned above (see Table 5), the participants did not generally claim to identify with the international academic community, so both these results are consistent.

The participants were also asked to evaluate on a five-point Likert scale statements concerning their emotions and attitudes towards the languages of their countries of residence. Item 3b was aimed at respondents being able to speak the language, and item 3c—at those who did not speak the country's language sufficiently well, but, as it turned out, participants with a basic knowledge of the country's language filled in both 3b and 3c, at least partly. Moreover, only in the more prestigious L1 group were there respondents who admitted to no or insufficient knowledge of the languages of their countries of residence, so the earlier division into groups could no longer be used in the analysis. Rather, the means and standard deviations were calculated for the responses to items 3b and 3c. While speaking the language of the country they live in, the participants do not feel much different than while speaking their native languages, though their opinions in this respect differ (mean = 3.083, SD = 1.5). However, they no longer think the same way as a typical native speaker of their L1s (mean = 4.147, SD = 0.9888). They generally disagree that speaking the foreign countries' languages they feel less authentic than when they speak their mother tongues (mean = 2.556, SD = 1.4029), and they even more strongly disagree that they do not feel authentic at all (mean = 1.7059, SD = 1.0597). At the same time, they generally admit that, while their identities are multilingual and multicultural, as language teachers and/or researchers, they can look at all those languages and cultures more objectively (mean = 4.09, SD = 0.9799).

On the other hand, respondents who do not speak the country's language (sufficiently), do not really identify with their countries of residence (mean = 3, SD = 1.095). Yet, they disagree that they identify only with their L1s and feel no need to learn the language of the country (mean = 1.5, SD = 0.83667). By contrast, they would rather integrate into those cultures better, but here their

opinions differ (mean = 3.833, SD = 1.472). To some extent, their knowledge of other languages allows them to observe the foreign countries' cultures better and adjust to them (mean = 3.6, SD = 0.8944), and also, arguably, as teachers and/or researchers they can look at their native cultures more objectively, even though they do not speak the languages of their countries of residence well (mean = 3.75, SD = 0.957). The former result suggests that, while the knowledge of foreign languages increases cultural awareness, getting to know a particular culture well requires learning its language. The latter indicates that being a researcher or a language teacher might theoretically make one more objective about one's native culture and related cultures, but this is not necessarily the case.

Last but not least, the participants' comments reflect their experiences, attitudes and to some extent the development of their identities. Some examples are presented below.

Example 1 (a Polish L1 speaker living in Spain):

[...] As a English young learner in England and an adult Spanish learner in Spain I have always identified myself with the target community which resulted from the need to communicate and integrate. Consequently, I developed various language identities from Polish (native) being affected by and developed into English which in turn has been influenced by the Spanish one. This complex transition process made me look at various cultural differences in perspective. I became more tolerant and objective. Moreover, I feel significantly less emotionally attached to my native language. Finally, the experience of living in different countries has considerably enriched my international identity, at the same time decreasing the level of attachment to any particular [...] language or culture.

Example 2 (a Polish L1 speaker living in Norway):

Knowing other languages helps to see how my native language is a member of the European family of languages—with all the mutual influence on the form of loan words etc. It makes my perception of my country's culture as less special, less exceptional but, on the contrary, as part of the common European tradition and an important contributor to this tradition. More inclusive rather than exclusive.

Example 3 (an English L1 speaker living in Poland):

Learning Polish has had a huge impact on my self-awareness. I now realize that I can learn other languages and, as a result, learn about new cultures. While I sometimes get a bit frustrated with certain aspects of Polish culture,

it has given me fresh insights into the things I take for granted as a British citizen, and I do have more of an objective position when I reflect on my own country.)

Example 4 (a Hungarian L1 speaker living in Austria):

I believe all the listed things have an impact on one's identity, or to be more personal, they have had an impact on mine, and it is also true that languages are important for me, but I do not identify myself with any or all languages I know. I use the language as a tool, I enjoy using it to have access to "new worlds" and people.

As the examples indicate, foreign language learning and living abroad increase one's cultural awareness and influence one's identity, but the effects can differ from one person to another. While some people's identities become more hybrid, others just take a more objective look at one's native culture. Similarly, for one person a foreign language can become part of his or her identity and for another just a tool. Therefore, even though the impact of foreign languages and cultures on identity is generally undeniable, its role in the development of particular people's identities is highly individual.

## Conclusions

In general, the participants' identities are indeed highly complex and influenced by a number of factors. To answer the research questions, first, the most important factors seem to be the knowledge of foreign languages, especially that of the language of one's country of residence, and language use during one's stay abroad. Living in a foreign country definitely influences one's identity, but, as the participants themselves admit, not independently of one's proficiency in the country's language. On the one hand, multilingualism has been associated with a number of benefits, such as cognitive empathy and improved social skills (Dewaele & Li, 2012) as well as increased open-mindedness and tolerance (Włosowicz, 2019), so it can be assumed that, being multilingual, the participants were able to adapt to the foreign cultures better, which, in turn, affected their identity. On the other hand, knowledge of the country's language, rather than just English as the global language, allows one to make friends and to integrate into the foreign society more easily (Szczyrkowska, 2007), so those who knew or learnt (as in the case of the Englishwoman who learnt Polish in Example 3) the language of the

country of residence could, arguably, understand the culture better and thus adapt to it. Undoubtedly, multilingualism is connected with higher linguistic and cultural awareness, so as a factor influencing one's identity, it should be considered more broadly, not only as the knowledge of several languages, but also as a complex system of linguistic and cultural knowledge, combined with increased awareness. In fact, as the participants admitted, multilingualism had enriched their identities.

A certain role is also played by the status of the native language in relation to the language of the foreign country, but it must be remembered that there was considerable variation among the participants. The fact that more speakers of less prestigious L1s indicated a hybrid identity than speakers of more prestigious L1s suggests that, on the one hand, a less prestigious L1 speaker more strongly needs to learn the country's language because he or she is unlikely to use his or her native language there, which allows him or her to integrate into the dominant society and develop a hybrid identity. On the other hand, to avoid being absorbed by the dominant culture, one needs to preserve one's identity, for example, by maintaining one's native language. However, such factors as nostalgia and identification with one's family help one to preserve one's native identity to some extent. Even though there were visible differences between the three groups in terms of the percentages of particular answers, the differences proved not to be statistically significant, so the status of the native language turned out to be a less important factor than it might have seemed.

Second, the development of the participants' identities appears to be both complex and dynamic and, at the same time, largely individual. Generally, they admit that the foreign countries' languages have become part of their identities (57.5%), especially in the case of speakers of less prestigious L1s (86.67%), who had to learn the languages well in order to communicate. They also adapted to the foreign cultures well, and no-one failed to adapt or felt no need to. Especially at the cultural level, the results indicate a subtle interplay between the linguistic and cultural awareness of the participants as both multilinguals and teachers or researchers, the interest in the target culture and the need to adapt to it, and, finally, an effect on their identities. They also notice a change in their perception of their native cultures, in particular, the development of a more objective approach.

Third, the most important component of the identities of teachers and researchers living abroad seems to be the native language, as indicated by 62.5% of the participants, which confirms Giles and Byrne's (1982, as cited in Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004) statement that language is a salient marker of identity. What is particularly interesting is the fact that more participants indicated a hybrid identity (57.5% of all the respondents, and as many as 73.33% of the speakers of less prestigious L1s) than claimed to identify with their nation-

alities (55% of all, 57.14% of the more prestigious L1 speakers, 53.33% of the less prestigious L1 speakers, and 50% in the case of languages of a comparable status). However, a hybrid identity does not necessarily mean being a citizen of the world: rather, one identifies with one's native language/nationality and the country one lives in. The family is also a very important component of identity, while one's profession or workplace is much less important, just like being a member of the international academic community. Moreover, some participants provided their own responses, ranging from religion, through the native region on the one hand and being a European or even an Earthling on the other, to such personal items as books and clothes. Therefore, while a hybrid identity may be characteristic of teachers and researchers working abroad and the native language may also serve as a salient marker of identity for them, identification with one's family seems to be a rather universal component of identity.

What is particularly salient is the complexity of the participants' identities, which cannot be easily generalized and summarized in a few sentences. As one of them remarked, if the present author wanted a simplified answer, he could just quote the nationality indicated in his passport. Indeed, the respondents themselves perceive their identities as very complex and, as the comments show, they admit that learning languages increases one's awareness of other cultures, tolerance, as well as awareness of the place of one's native language among other European languages, and it enriches one culturally, intellectually, and emotionally. At the same time, it makes one more objective, especially as regards one's native language and culture, because objectivity as a teacher or researcher is acquired mainly through study and professional work.

This might offer some implications for the training of foreign language teachers and researchers, who are mostly also academic teachers. First, apart from acquiring detailed knowledge of the language one is going to teach, some multilingual competence combined with linguistic and cultural awareness would be advisable. In fact, one may learn practical grammar, vocabulary, language teaching methodology, etc., but awareness-raising activities do not seem to be frequently included in the program of philology studies. Second, as living abroad and taking a different perspective makes people more objective, it might be capitalized on more in teacher and researcher training. For example, student exchange programs, such as Erasmus scholarships, might include more traineeships abroad for future teachers, rather than just lectures and classes. Similarly, there might be more exchange programs for doctoral students where they would learn to do research in other countries, broadening their perspectives as future researchers and academic teachers.

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## Appendix

**The questionnaire used in the study (English version)**

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex: F \_\_\_\_\_/M \_\_\_\_\_

1a) L1: \_\_\_\_\_

L2: \_\_\_\_\_ Level of proficiency: \_\_\_\_\_

L3: \_\_\_\_\_ Level of proficiency: \_\_\_\_\_

What other languages have you studied? Please, indicate your proficiency levels:

1b) Which country do you live and work in? \_\_\_\_\_

How long have you lived there so far? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you lived and worked in other countries in the past? If so, please, indicate where you lived and how long you lived there.

1c) What do you do in the foreign country? (You can choose more than one answer.)

I teach academic subjects such as linguistics, literature, etc.

I do research.

I teach my native language to foreigners.

I teach a foreign language (not my native language).

something else (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

1d) What language(s) do you use in the foreign country, both at work and in other situations? (You can choose more than one answer.)

English (as a native language)

English (as a non-native language)

my native language (if it is not English)

the language of the country (if it is a bilingual or a multilingual country, please, specify which one: \_\_\_\_\_)

another language (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

If you use more than one language, which of these languages do you use the most often?

2a) If you think of your identity, what do you immediately think of?

What do you associate your identity with? (You can choose more than one answer.)

- my nationality
- my native language
- my family
- being an international researcher or language teacher
- my profession or specialization
- the country where I live and work
- the university/school/company where I work
- being a citizen of the world
- a hybrid identity (partly my nationality and partly the country I live in)
- difficult to say
- something else (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

2b) What is your attitude towards the language of the country you live in? (You can choose more than one answer.) If it is a bilingual or a multilingual country, please, specify which language you are referring to. \_\_\_\_\_

- It is a language I know very well, so it has become a part of my identity.
- It is just a language I teach or write in, but I do not feel emotionally attached to it.
- I know it very well, but I feel less emotionally attached to it than to my native language.
- I know it well, but I am more emotionally attached to another foreign language. If so, please, specify the language and explain why. \_\_\_\_\_
- It is reserved for particular situations, such as talking with friends, but I do not teach or write in it, so my attitude towards it is quite personal.
- I only have basic competence in it, so I can make myself understood in everyday life, but I do not identify with it.
- I do not know it at all.

2c) What is your attitude towards the culture of the country you live in? (You can choose more than one answer.)

- I have adapted to it very well and, in a way, I feel at home here.
- I have adapted to it well enough to live in this country, but I still regard it as a foreign culture.
- I do not feel the need to adapt to it, as I only work here as a researcher and/or a teacher.
- I have tried to adapt to it but I have failed.
- I identify only with my native culture and I feel completely alienated here.
- I identify only with my native culture, but this country's culture is interesting and I enjoy discovering it.
- other (please, specify) \_\_\_\_\_

3a) To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 – completely disagree, 5 – fully agree)

Knowing a foreign language/foreign languages has enriched my identity. 1 2 3 4 5

If so, in what way?

My identity has been influenced by all the languages I know. 1 2 3 4 5

My identity has been influenced the most by the language(s) I know best. 1 2 3 4 5

My identity has been influenced the most by living in a foreign country, regardless of whether I am fluent in its language or not. 1 2 3 4 5

Living in a foreign country has changed my perception of my native language and/or culture. 1 2 3 4 5

If so, in what way?

Because of living in a foreign country and having some experience of its culture, I can look at my native culture more objectively. 1 2 3 4 5

Speaking or writing in a foreign language, I can be more objective as a researcher or a teacher than while using my native language, because I am less emotionally involved. 1 2 3 4 5

Because of living in a foreign country, I feel even more strongly attached to my native language and culture than I would be if I lived in my native country. 1 2 3 4 5

I identify with the international academic community more than with any particular language and culture. 1 2 3 4 5

3b) To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 – completely disagree, 5 – fully agree.) **Please, answer these questions only if you can speak the language of the country where you live, at least to some extent.**

Speaking the language of the country where I live, I feel different from when I speak my native language. 1 2 3 4 5

I know more than two languages and speaking each of them makes me feel different (not only in terms of possible communication difficulties, such as insufficient vocabulary knowledge, but mainly in terms of the emotions the language makes me feel). 1 2 3 4 5

Because of living in a foreign country and knowing a foreign language/foreign languages, I no longer think the same way as a typical native speaker of my L1. 1 2 3 4 5

Speaking the language of the country where I live, I feel less authentic than when I speak my native language. 1 2 3 4 5

I only use this country's language as a tool for teaching, lecturing, writing, etc., but when I speak it, I do not feel authentic at all. 1 2 3 4 5

The main problems I have encountered here are caused by cultural, not linguistic, differences. 1 2 3 4 5

My identity is to some extent multilingual and multicultural, but at the same time, being a researcher or a foreign language teacher, I can look at all these languages and cultures more objectively. 1 2 3 4 5

3c) To what extent do you agree with the following statements? (1 – completely disagree, 5 – fully agree.) **Please, answer these questions only if you CANNOT speak the language of the country where you live, or if you only have basic competence in it.**

Even though I do not speak its language (well), I identify with this country and its language to some extent. 1 2 3 4 5

I identify with my native language and culture only, that is why I feel no need to learn the language of this country. 1 2 3 4 5

I only use this country's language for basic communication, so I cannot identify with it. 1 2 3 4 5

I would like to learn the language in order to integrate into this culture better. 1 2 3 4 5

Even though I do not speak this particular language well, I know a few other languages and this allows me to observe this country's culture more accurately and adjust my behaviour to it. 1 2 3 4 5

Even though I do not speak this particular language well, as a researcher or a foreign language teacher, I can look at it and at my native language, as well as at the related cultures more objectively. 1 2 3 4 5

4) In a few sentences, please, comment on the impact of learning languages, travelling abroad, doing research in linguistics/literature/culture, working in a foreign country, etc. on your sense of identity. You can do it in your native language even if it is not English.

Teresa Maria Włosowicz

**Der Einfluss der Fremdsprachenkenntnisse und des Kontakts  
zu einer fremden Kultur auf die Identität von wissenschaftlichen  
Mitarbeitern und Lehrkräften – im Ausland lebenden Muttersprachlern**

Zusammenfassung

Der Untersuchungsgegenstand ist der Einfluss des Lebens und Arbeitens im Ausland auf die Identität von wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeitern und Lehrkräften – Muttersprachlern. In Anlehnung an Block (2009), Hall (2012) sowie Pavlenko und Blackledge (2004) wird angenommen, dass die Identität dynamisch und vielfältig ist, wobei unterschiedliche Identitäten derselben Person mehr oder weniger relevant in einem bestimmten Kontext sein können (Hall, 2012, S. 33). Darüber hinaus können Identitäten in Zeiten der Globalisierung hybrid (Marotta, 2011) und im Fall der Migration bikulturell sein (Comănanu, Noels & Dewaele, 2017). Die Identität jeder bikulturellen Person variiert allerdings, wie Comănanu et al. (2017, S. 539) betonen, in Abhängigkeit von ihrer Lebensgeschichte, ihren Sprachkenntnissen, ihren psychologischen Merkmalen usw. Außerdem gibt es Hinweise darauf, dass die Mehrsprachigkeit die kognitive Empathie (Dewaele & Li, 2012) und die Aufgeschlossenheit des Geistes erhöht (Włosowicz, 2019), so dass man davon ausgehen kann, dass die Probanden ihre hybriden Identitäten eher als Bereicherung und nicht als Bedrohung für ihre einheimischen Identitäten betrachten, obwohl die Identifikation mit ihrer Muttersprache und Kultur, mit ihrer Familie usw. ein wichtiger Teil ihrer Identität bleibt. Das Forschungsinstrument war ein Fragebogen, der von vierzig wissenschaftlichen Mitarbeitern und Lehrkräften – im Ausland lebenden Muttersprachlern – ausgefüllt wurde. Wie die Forschungsergebnisse beweisen, sind die Identitäten der Befragten in der Tat sehr komplex, hybrid und werden durch viele Faktoren beeinflusst. Muttersprache und Familie bleiben jedoch, z.B. im Gegensatz zum Beruf, sehr wichtige Komponenten der Identität. Die Probanden gaben auch zu, dass die Fremdsprachenkenntnisse sie kulturell, intellektuell und emotional bereichert hatten.

*Schlüsselwörter:* Identität, Mehrsprachigkeit, Mobilität, sprachliches und kulturelles Bewusstsein